

“THE OLD FIRST IS WITH THE SOUTH”: THE CIVIL WAR, RECONSTRUCTION,
AND MEMORY IN THE JACKSON PURCHASE REGION OF KENTUCKY

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AND MEMORY IN THE JACKSON PURCHASE REGION OF KENTUCKY

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A Dissertation

Submitted to

the Graduate Faculty of

Auburn University

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the

Degree of

Doctorate of Philosophy

Auburn, Alabama

May 9, 2008

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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AND MEMORY IN THE JACKSON PURCHASE REGION OF KENTUCKY

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Doctor of Philosophy, May 9, 2009
(M.A., Eastern Kentucky University, 2001)
(B.A., Eastern Kentucky University 1998)

315 Typed Pages

Directed by Kenneth W. Noe

This dissertation examines the secession crisis and the Civil War as a watershed moment in the Jackson Purchase region of Kentucky. In 1819, following the acquisition of land from the Chickasaw, the Purchase became the last area added to Kentucky. It was settled by small farmers who migrated from the Bluegrass and Green River areas of the state, as well as other parts of the south, particularly Tennessee and North Carolina. During the antebellum period, the Purchase became a Democratic Party stronghold in a state dominated by the Whig Party. During the 1850s the area experienced an economic boom through river trade with the south and railroad construction. The improved cultivation of tobacco during the same period greatly increased the number of slaves and slaveholders at a time when the institution declined in the rest of the state.

During the secession crisis, the Purchase was the only area of the state to overwhelmingly support John C. Breckinridge and agitate for separation from the Union. After Kentucky voted for neutrality, Purchase secessionists threatened to secede from Kentucky and join west Tennessee. In addition, the area contributed more soldiers to the Confederate Army than any other region of Kentucky. Yet from late 1861 to 1865, the Federal army occupied the Jackson Purchase. The area was overrun with guerrilla warfare and irregular activity. The 1864 so-called “reign of terror” instituted by Union General Eleazor A. Paine had a particularly profound effect on Purchase citizens. Federal occupation continued through Reconstruction as the area became one of the few regions of Kentucky to host a branch of the Freedman’s Bureau.

In the decades following the Civil War the area increasingly celebrated its Confederate roots through veterans and memorial groups. Residents increasingly defined themselves through their wartime experiences. They added to their regional distinctiveness by emphasizing their southern roots and highlighting their devotion to the Confederacy. As such, they reinforced their “separate” identity from the rest of Kentucky.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Writing this dissertation has been one of the most rewarding, yet difficult processes I have encountered and I have many people to thank. I want to especially thank my advisor Dr. Kenneth Noe for always being honest with me. He had an inordinate amount of patience with me when my first dissertation topic fell through and likewise endured countless hours of me sitting in his office seeking his advice. If I can only be half the teacher, writer, and mentor that he is, I will have achieved something remarkable in my life.

My husband Ray has been a rock through this process. He always encouraged me to get back on my feet when I felt like quitting and always believed in me. He also is to be commended for feigning interest when I excitedly talked about illicit trade and guerrilla warfare. He likewise was kind enough to accompany me to the Jackson Purchase on unforgettable research trips.

Lastly, I want to thank my parents Patrick and Mary Ann Hoskins. Though he never had the opportunity to go to college, my father is an enthusiastic lover of history and politics and he transferred that love to me as a young girl. My mother has always been my loudest cheerleader, has talked me out of several panic attacks, and always pushed me on with the words “I have faith in you.” They have sacrificed throughout their lives to give my sisters and I what they never had. As such, I dedicate every page, sentence, and word of this dissertation to them.

Style manual or journal used: *The Chicago Manual of Style*. 15th Edition.

Computer software used: Microsoft Word

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INTRODUCTION

Attention southern rights men, let's show the submissionists of this State that the old first is with the South.

-Congressman Henry C. Burnett,
First Kentucky Congressional District,
June 1861

In 1944, famed Paducah author, newspaper columnist, and humorist Irvin S. Cobb published an essay entitled "Away Back Yonder," which detailed his life growing up in the Jackson Purchase area of Kentucky during the late 19th century. Schooled at the feet of ex-Confederates, Cobb was proud of what he saw as his distinctly "southern" heritage. Yet he eschewed the popular postwar image of Kentucky as a prewar land of Confederate gentry, sitting on their veranda's sipping bourbon and counting their horses and slaves with equal enthusiasm. To him, the independent, Democratic-voting, small farmer of the Purchase was the real representative Kentuckian and southerner. Indeed, he consistently pointed to the Purchase as the *only* area of Kentucky to rightfully lay claim to Confederate heritage:

Central Kentucky was divided and the mountains of eastern Kentucky might be overwhelmingly for the Federal cause, as they were, but these counties in the toe of the sock showed their sentiments in the latest election before avowed hostilities began, by sending to Washington as their representative an ardent advocate of secession—with a thumping big plurality behind him. To this modern day, Democratic spellbinders love to proclaim that of all the congressional districts in the whole country, this is the only one which, neither when armed troops held the polling places nor in the Carpetbagger period following, nor in any subsequent political upheaval, ever went Republican...Indeed, it

was said certain unreconstructable veterans insisted on voting for Jeff Davis every Presidential election.¹

Cobb put to paper what white Purchase residents had long believed, namely that their region was different, more southern than the rest of Kentucky. That difference stemmed from the area's late development, distinct settlements patterns, economic ties, political affiliation, and isolation from the rest of the Bluegrass state. Most importantly, however, they traced their uniqueness to their Civil War experiences. The following work explores how the Jackson Purchase became the most "southern" part of the Bluegrass State.

* * * * *

Kentucky is a difficult place to understand. Like many states, it has several geographic regions with distinctive cultural characteristics that prevent general classification. Much of the difficulty in defining Kentucky stems from the Civil War and the decades that followed. While Kentucky shared slavery and commerce with the South, it shied away from the separationist politics of the Democratic Party in favor of Henry Clay's Whig ideals. When the political crisis of 1860-61 finally came, the state voted for Constitutional Unionist John Bell and chose to remain neutral. In what historian Anne Marshall has called "one of the great paradoxes of Civil War history" Kentuckians

¹ Irvin S. Cobb, *Exit Laughing*, (Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1941), 41.

nonetheless embraced the Lost Cause mythology following the war and forgot their neutral status and Unionist sentiments.²

Historians have long grappled with the myriad reasons Kentucky embraced the Union and then formed a Confederate identity after the war. E. Merton Coulter and Michael Flannery both point to Kentuckians individuality and unique experiences during the war to explain why they could at once support the Union yet decry federal encroachment in state affairs. Thomas Connelly, in contrast, posits that the Confederate leaders who dominated post-war politics within the state used pro-southern rhetoric to gain control of competing geographic and economic interests. Most recently, Marshall has argued that long term cultural practices through participation in parades, monument construction, Confederate veterans groups and other organizations determined Kentucky's post-war memory. While the conclusions of these historians may differ, they all share a commonality in that they disregard the fact that one area of Kentucky had an actual reason to identify with the South. The Jackson Purchase area overwhelmingly voted for secession, threatened to secede from Kentucky after state leaders leaned toward neutrality, and contributed more soldiers to the Confederate Army than any other section of the state. In other words, there was no "great paradox" to the Purchase's Confederate heritage.³

² Anne Elizabeth Marshall, "A Strange Conclusion to a Triumphant War: Memory, Identity, and the Creation of a Confederate Kentucky," PhD Dissertation, University of Georgia, 2004, 3.

³ E. Merton Coulter, *Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1926, 438-439; Michael Flannery, "Kentucky History Revisited: The Role of the Civil War in Shaping Kentucky's Collective Consciousness" *Filson Club Historical Quarterly* 71 (January 1997): 27-51; Thomas Connelly, "Neo Confederatism or Power Vacuum? Post War Kentucky Politics Reappraised" *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 64 (October 1996); Marshall, "A Strange Conclusion to a Triumphant War," 6.

That the region's uniqueness is ignored is not surprising, however. In the many histories of the state of Kentucky, no region has been given less attention or generated as little enthusiasm as the Jackson Purchase. Historians and writers of the state typically focused on the Bluegrass and Appalachian regions. The former contains the cities of Lexington, Louisville, and the state's capital, Frankfort. Its horse farms, genteel homes, and bourbon distilleries dominate the historic and present-day image of Kentucky. The Appalachian region, meanwhile, has received substantial interest since its "discovery" in the late 19th century. Over the past thirty years, historians have paid considerable attention to the area, exploring its economic disparities and rich cultural heritage. Historians recently have also highlighted the Black Patch Wars of the Pennyroyal region.

Conspicuously absent in these histories is the Jackson Purchase. When the area is mentioned at all, it is likely in relation to the formation of the area or the role played by the region during the Civil War. Such practices are over a century old. Setting the stage was Richard H. Collins' two-volume history of the state. Collins makes note of the date of the Jackson Purchase; details the career of Linn Boyd, the most prominent politician from the area; and includes discussion of the area during the secession crisis and Civil War. Of the 738 pages Collins' devotes to descriptions of counties, in other words, only nineteen are devoted to the eight counties that make up the Purchase.⁴

In 1886, Z.F. Smith followed up Collins with *The History of Kentucky*, which failed to add any new information on the Purchase. The 824 page tome contains approximately twenty-one pages devoted to Purchase topics. In William Connelly and E. Merton Coulter's history of the state, edited by Charles Kerr in 1922, the authors discuss

⁴ Richard H. Collins, *Collins' Historical Sketches of Kentucky: History of Kentucky*, Vol. I, II (Covington, KY: Collins 1878, 1882); Z.F. Smith, *History of Kentucky* (Louisville: Courier-Journal, 1886.)

the historical significance of the Purchase as well as its geographic features. In their discussion of antebellum politics in Kentucky, they note the area's loyalty to the Democratic Party as well as railroad construction in the area. Additionally they devote considerable attention to the area during the Civil War, noting that "Southwest Kentucky was the first part of the state to fall under the yoke [of Union forces] and here it fell hardest and remained longest." Four years later, Coulter published his still standard *Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky*, which highlights the crisis of neutrality in the Purchase region and the contest to take Kentucky that climaxed at Columbus. He likewise includes ample detail of General Eleazor Paine and the Federal Army's occupation of Paducah.⁵

The year 1939 saw the publication of one of the few histories of the state to discuss the Jackson Purchase in any depth. *Kentucky: A Guide to the Bluegrass State*, compiled by the Kentucky Federal Writers' Project under the Works Progress Administration, contains over thirty pages devoted to the region, including an eight-page description of Paducah which the authors describe as a "rather busy place." They include details of the town's black population, as well as a general history that includes manufacturing and agricultural data, and also information on the history and settlement of the towns of Columbus and Clinton.⁶

In 1969, the best known of Kentucky's modern historians, Thomas D. Clark, published *Kentucky: Land of Contrast*. Clark devoted fifteen pages to the Purchase,

⁵ Charles Kerr, ed., *History of Kentucky: Volume II* (Chicago: The American Historical Society, 1922), 702, 868,872-75,1029-30; E. Merton Coulter, *Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1926).

⁶ Federal Writers' Project of the Works Projects Administration for the State of Kentucky, *Kentucky: A Guide to the Bluegrass State* (New York: Hastings House, 1939), 221-29, 322-28

including a description of the Civil War in the area and biography of Paducah's Alben W. Barkley, Vice President to Harry S. Truman. Steven Channing's 1977 work, *Kentucky: A Bicentennial History*, makes no reference to the Jackson Purchase other than his description of Paducah as the hotbed of secessionist sympathy within the state.⁷

The most recent comprehensive study on the Bluegrass State is Lowell Harrison and James Klotter's *A New History of Kentucky*, published in 1997. While the book delivers on its promise to include women and minorities into the state's history, the Jackson Purchase is once again conspicuously left out. The area is mentioned a mere four times throughout the book, primarily in reference to the fact that the Purchase was the only region to be systematically surveyed.⁸ Out of the eight counties in the area, moreover, only the towns of Columbus and Paducah are discussed, the former in discussions of Kentucky's precarious neutrality and the latter in relation to its quasi-battle in 1864 between Nathan Bedford Forrest and the Union Army. Klotter's *Our Kentucky*, did include much more information on the Purchase than his work with Harrison, including geographic and agricultural statistics, information on manufacturing and tourism in the area, descriptions of notable artists and writers from the region, and strangely enough, the lack of support for woman's suffrage in Paducah.⁹

The only full-scale history of the Purchase as a region, meanwhile, was published over a century ago by W.H. Perrin, J.H. Battle, and G.C. Kniffin as part of a supplemental series to their 1885 publication *Kentucky: A History of the State*. The

⁷ Thomas D. Clark, *Kentucky Land of Contrast* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), Steven Channing, *Kentucky: A Bicentennial History* (New York: Norton, 1977).

⁸ See Harrison and Klotter, *A New History of Kentucky*, 21, 23, 25, 53.

⁹ James Klotter, ed., *Our Kentucky: A Study of the Bluegrass State* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1992), 2, 7-9, 172, 179, 224, 237, 195.

supplemental material for the Purchase, aptly titled, *Histories and Biographies of Ballard, Calloway, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, McCracken, and Marshall Counties, Kentucky*, remains the only attempt at relating the areas' historical significance. The authors note that "much of the information used in their preparation was gathered from pioneer settlers and public records no longer extant."¹⁰ Yet they also call for a history of the region "which the general historian has largely ignored." Notably, the authors reported that the citizens of the Purchase were "placed at a serious disadvantage in respect to their proper rights and privileges under the State government" and as a result wished to join west Tennessee.¹¹

In addition to Perrin, et al., a handful of local histories detail the history of the Purchase and focus especially on the Civil War. Alan Bearman and Berry F. Craig both produced unpublished masters theses that deal with the Purchase during the secession crisis and the Civil War. Bearman posits that Purchase citizens identified with the South out of their religious affiliation with evangelical churches that supported slavery. Craig, meanwhile, notes the impact that the pro-secession press had on the area's support of separation. L. Carter Barton's article "The Reign of Terror in Graves County" meanwhile deals with that areas' treatment at the hands of occupying Union soldiers during the Civil War. Carter claims that the majority of residents supported secession because they migrated to the region from the South. Paducah historian Fred Neuman published the first history of the town in 1929, while John L. Robertson has published more current works which incorporate the city and McCracken County into the larger picture of

¹⁰ J.H. Battle, W.H. Perrin, and G.C. Kniffen, *Histories and Biographies of Ballard, Calloway, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, Fulton, McCracken, and Marshall Counties* (Louisville and Chicago: F.A. Battey Publishing Company, Inc., 1885), i.

¹¹ Battle, et al., *Histories and Biographies*, 1, 6-7.

Kentucky history. Both highlight the impact of the war, particularly the effects of Federal occupation, on the town. In 1965 Fulton County judge Hunter B. Whitesell published a series of articles that detailed military operations in the area during the war. Finally, several county histories have been published by local historical societies, all of which include genealogical information of residents.¹²

Civil War historians of the western theater also have touched on the Purchase area during the war. Benjamin Franklin Cooling in particular focused on the Confederate army's loss of Forts Henry and Donelson in 1862 and the subsequent impact it had on the the Purchase and the regions around it. Cooling especially details the rise of guerrilla warfare in middle and west Tennessee and Kentucky between 1862 and 1864. In his article "Civil War Exodus: The Jews and Grant's General Order No 11," Stephen Ash discussed illicit trade in the Purchase and the expulsion of Jewish families from Paducah in 1862. Historians Jack Calbert and Steven Woodworth both produced articles that detail Polk's invasion of Columbus and the resulting end of Kentucky's neutrality policy in 1861. Brian S. Wills, Thomas Jordan and J.P. Pryor, Robert Henry Selph, and John Allen Wyeth produced biographies of Nathan Bedford Forrest detailing the Battle of Paducah and the Purchase soldiers who rode with the Confederate partisan. Still, the war in the Jackson Purchase largely remains unknown beyond its borders.¹³

¹² See Fred Neuman, *The Story of Paducah*, (Paducah: Image Graphics, 1929); John E. L. Robertson, *Paducah, 1830-1980: a Sesquicentennial History* (Paducah, KY: by the author, 1980); Berry F. Craig, *The Jackson Purchase Region of Kentucky in the Secession Crisis of 1860-1861* (Murray State University: Unpublished Masters Thesis, 1973); Lon Carter Barton, "The Reign of Terror in Graves County" *Kentucky Historical Register* 46, (January 1948), 484-495. Alan Bearman, *"The South Carolina of Kentucky" : How Evangelical Religion Influenced the Jackson Purchase Region of Kentucky to Support Secession* (Murray State University; Unpublished Masters Thesis, 2000).

¹³ Benjamin Franklin Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson: Key to the Confederate Heartland* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1987); *Ibid.*, *Fort Donelson's Legacy: War and Society in Kentucky and Tennessee, 1862-1863* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1997); Steven Ash "Civil War Exodus:

This dissertation, the first on the Purchase during the Civil War era, attempts to understand why the Purchase identified so closely with the South during the secession crisis and how wartime experiences shaped its regional identity. Census records, diaries, newspapers, manuscripts, and records of the Union and Confederate Armies comprise the bulk of this study. Due to a lack of resources, I have relied upon tax lists, land records, travel accounts, and newspapers to detail the early development of the Jackson Purchase. Much of my information for this period was gleaned from statistical analysis. This work regrettably lacks information pertaining to the pre-war lives of slaves in the area. The use of Freedmen's Bureau records and newspapers, however, provide a glance at African-American's post-war lives.

Chapter One traces the development of the Jackson Purchase. The region became the last area added to the state of Kentucky when Andrew Jackson "purchased" the land from the Chickasaw Indians in 1818. Familiar with the rolling, fertile land of the Bluegrass and Green River regions, settlers initially avoided the area. Beginning in 1820, the area was mapped and land was set aside for over 200 Revolutionary War and War of 1812 veterans. In 1825, non-military sales of lands opened up. Soon after, 8000 land warrants were issued to potential settlers attracted by cheap land.

The Jew's and Grant's General Orders No. 11" *Historian* 44 (August 1982): 505-523; Jack Calbert, "The Jackson Purchase and the End of the Neutrality Policy in Kentucky," *Filson Club Quarterly* 38 (July 1964): 426-434; Steven Woodworth, "'The Indeterminate Qualities': Jefferson Davis, Leonidas Polk, and the End of Kentucky Neutrality," September 1861, *Civil War History* (December 1992): 289-297; Thomas Jordan and J.P. Pryor, *The Campaigns of Lieutenant General Nathan Bedford Forrest and of Forrest's Cavalry* (New Orleans: DeCapo Press, 1996); Robert Henry Selph, "*First With the Most*" *Forrest* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1944); Brian Steel Wills, *A Battle from the Start: the Life of Nathan Bedford Forrest*, (New York: Harper Collins, 1992); John Allen Wyeth, *That Devil Forrest: Life of Nathan Bedford Forrest*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989)

Prior to and during early statehood, Kentucky developed as a “poor man’s paradise.” Tens of thousands settlers from Virginia made the move to the burgeoning frontier. The increase in slavery, as well as tobacco and hemp production created a class of elites who quickly gobbled up the best lands in the Bluegrass. They pushed poorer farmers and tenants to the Green River valley west of central Kentucky. The same pattern repeated there, and once again small farmers found themselves forced off the best land. A large number then moved west and crossed the Tennessee River into the Jackson Purchase. Additional settlers also came to the Purchase during this period from Tennessee and North Carolina. The majority of migrants settled on small farms that averaged between two and three hundred acres.

Chapter One also traces the growth of the Purchase during the antebellum period. In the first forty years of its creation, population in the area grew rapidly, reaching almost 55,000 by 1860. Purchase farmers maximized the use of their land, growing corn, wheat, livestock, and even cotton. Dark fired “black patch” tobacco production also boomed in the area after 1840. Residents developed a lively trade with the south via the Mississippi and Tennessee Rivers.

The chapter likewise traces the development of the town of Paducah during the antebellum period. Founded in 1830, the town soon became the largest city in the Purchase as well as the commercial hub of west Tennessee and southern Illinois. Located at the point where the Tennessee River flows into the Ohio River, Paducah boasted a thriving wharf with naval stores and a marine way, as well as a booming manufacturing economy. In 1854 Paducah became a terminus for the New Orleans & Ohio Railroad,

while Columbus became the northernmost terminus of the Mobile & Ohio Railroad. The advent of the railroad firmly connected the Purchase to markets in the South.

Chapter One finally traces the growth slavery in the area, which grew apace with the increase of tobacco production. Like most Kentuckians, Purchase residents were accustomed to and accepting of the institution. Because of the small size of farms in the area, slavery was never as prevalent in the Purchase as it was in the Bluegrass and Green River counties. In 1860, slaves made up 16 percent of the total population. Slavery and slaveholding, however, grew in the Purchase at a time when it was on the decline in the rest of the state. Indeed, in the decade preceding the Civil War, six of the seven counties in the Purchase experienced at least a 30 percent increase in slave population. The growth of slavery, coupled with ever increasing economic connections with southern markets, greatly influenced the Purchase's position during the secession crisis.¹⁴

Chapter Two examines the political climate of the Purchase leading up to secession. The first election that Purchase voters participated in was the 1824 contest between Andrew Jackson and John Quincy Adams. Voters in the Purchase, designated the First Congressional District in 1821, overwhelmingly voted for Jackson. Devotion to the "party of Jackson" became a pattern as the area consistently voted Democratic in both state and national elections in the decades leading up to the secession crisis. During the secession winter of 1860-61 Purchase secessionists lobbied for Kentucky's withdrawal from the Union, while a small but vocal group of Unionists supported state leaders in cautioning separation. After Fort Sumter, area secessionists formed

¹⁴ *Seventh and Eighth Census of the United States, Slave Schedules, 1850 and 1860*, Ballard, Calloway, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, Marshall, and McCracken Counties, Kentucky, <http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed January 12, 2006.

conventions and called for the Jackson Purchase to secede from neutral Kentucky and join Confederate Tennessee. Thousands of Purchase men joined other pro-southern Kentuckians and crossed state lines into Tennessee where they formed Confederate regiments. Four regiments in particular, the 3rd Kentucky, 7th Kentucky, 8th Kentucky, and 12th Kentucky Confederate Infantry Regiments contained large numbers of Purchase soldiers.

In the fall of 1861, the Purchase commanded state and national attention as Kentucky's precarious neutrality collapsed in early September when Confederate General Leonidas Polk occupied Columbus. Three days after Polk's invasion, Union General Ulysses S. Grant occupied Paducah. Chapter Three discusses the early years of the war in the area and the beginning of Federal occupation of the area. Pro-southern residents in the Purchase heartily supported the Confederate incursion and hoped that Polk's actions would convince the Kentucky legislature to support the state's secession. The legislature, however, condemned Polk's actions and maintained neutrality. Throughout the fall and winter of 1861, men from the Purchase continued to form regiments. The standoff between Union forces at Paducah and Polk's army at Columbus ended after the Battles of Forts Henry and Donelson in February 1862. The Confederates withdrew from Columbus by March, marking the last time the regular Confederate Army would occupy the Purchase. The area remained in the hands of the Federals for the duration of the war.

Chapter Four details the advent of the guerrilla warfare that plagued the region after 1862. The Jackson Purchase's geographic location along the Tennessee, Ohio, and Mississippi Rivers made the area rife for illegal commerce with the South. The vast amount of trade led Federal authorities to pass trade restrictions and impose harsh fines

on the civilian population. These restrictions and the ever increasing number of Federal garrisons at Paducah, Columbus, Mayfield, Benton, Murray, and Hickman, led to a rise in guerrilla warfare between fall 1862 and winter 1863. This increase was met by a small but efficient group of Home Guard militia. After Paducah became the first area of Kentucky to recruit African-American soldiers, Purchase soldiers in Nathan Bedford Forrest's ranks attacked the town in March 1864. The raid was the largest military skirmish fought in the Purchase during the war.

Following the attack on Paducah, guerrillas, Home Guards, and bushwhackers increased their attacks on Federal outposts in the Purchase. Illegal trade increased exponentially as well. In response, leading Unionists in the Purchase requested that General Eleazor A. Paine take charge of the district. Chapter Five examines Paine's so-called "reign of terror" in the Purchase and his role in shaping the area's post-Civil War memory. Purchase residents accused Paine and his subordinates of extortion, banishment, and murder. In November 1864 Paine was court-martialed but received only a light reprimand. Paine remains to this day an arch-villain and symbol of crushing Federal authority in the popular history of the war in the Purchase.

Chapter Six details the era of Reconstruction in the Purchase. After war's end, several areas of the Purchase, in particular Columbus and Paducah, received an overwhelming number of African-American refugees. Between 1866 and 1868, the Purchase became one of the few areas of Kentucky to contain a branch of the Freedmen's Bureau, although technically the state was not subject to Reconstruction. The bureau's officials attempted to establish schools, ensure employment, and protect the rights of the former slaves in the area. Purchase whites, however, thwarted the progress of freedmen

through violence, intimidation, and murder. Politically, meanwhile, Democrats in the Purchase rebounded following the war, filling the seats of local and state offices. In addition, the economy of the area quickly improved. Tobacco production in the region exploded.

Chapter Seven explores the last three decades of the nineteenth century in the Purchase. Between 1870 and 1900, agricultural production and the acquisition of new railway lines continued to boost the economy. Along with booming economy came an increase in the African-American population. Paducah alone experienced a 120 percent increase in black population between 1880 and 1900. The increase in black population led to increasing violence against the black community. Between 1870 and 1916, 49 African-Americans in the area were lynched or murdered.

At the same time that the Purchase was experiencing a nadir in race relations, Purchase whites founded Confederate memorialization organizations. Chapter Seven also highlights commemoration activities of the United Confederate Veterans and United Daughters of the Confederacy in the Purchase. The UCV and the UDC and along with local writers, greatly contributed to Purchase resident's Confederate identity.

* * * * *

Geographically, the Jackson Purchase differs from the rest of Kentucky. The region is separated from the rest of the state by the Tennessee River and is bounded to the north by the Ohio, and to the west by the Mississippi, forming a virtual peninsula. Additionally, it is bordered to the north by Illinois, to the west by Missouri, and the south

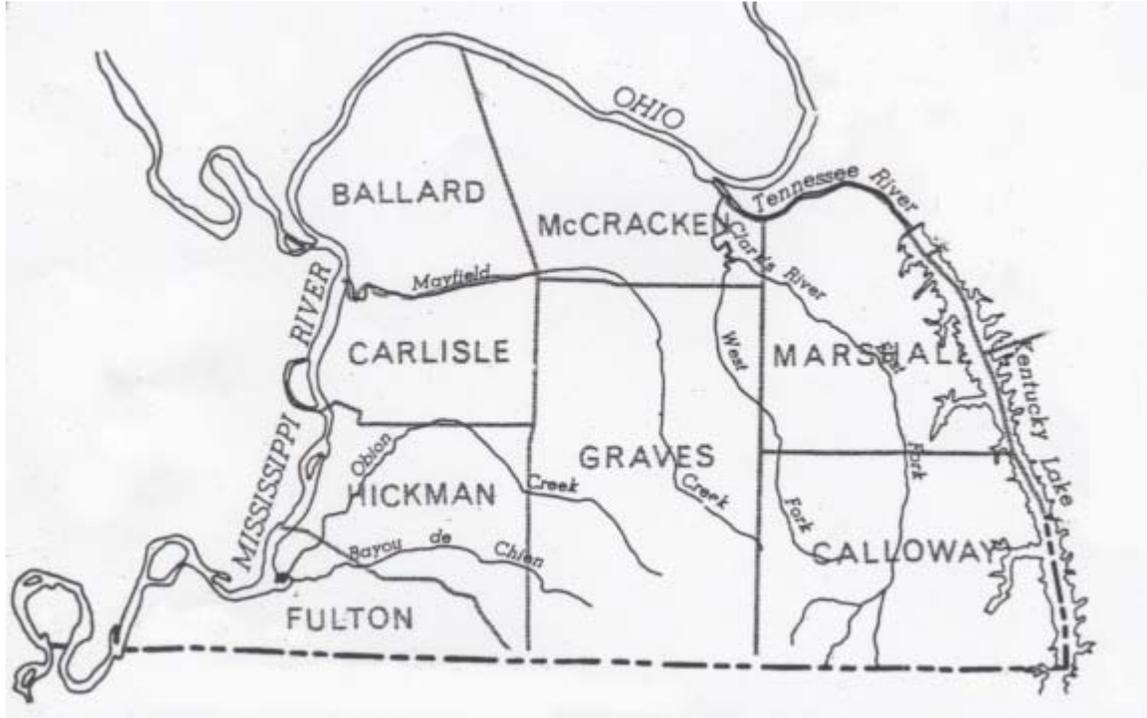
by Tennessee. Geologists divide the Jackson Purchase into seven subdivisions based on topography. “The Big Bottoms” and “Second Bottoms” encompass an area around 150 square miles along the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers and are the most distinct region in the Purchase. The Bottoms were subject to overflow at the high water stages of the great rivers, forcing any residents to build along the highest land. Settlers to the areas learned quickly to build their houses on posts with connecting bridges to barns and other outbuildings. Despite flooding, the Big Bottoms contains some of the most valuable agricultural land in the state.¹⁵

Adjacent to the Big Bottoms are the Cane Hills, which are marked by deep ravines and flat land covered in loess. The Barrens were flat prairie lands when settlers first came to the area. Poor drainage and exhaustive tobacco farming quickly reduced the quality of the soil. The Oak and Hickory Hills contain irregular hills covered in wooded pasture, with thin-soiled slopes that restrict farming. A small section of land in Marshall County labeled the “Flatwoods” is covered by pine forest. The last subregion, known as the “Breaks of the Tennessee,” is a hilly, highly eroded area.¹⁶

¹⁵Darrell Haug Davis, *Geography of the Jackson Purchase* (Frankfort, KY: Kentucky Geological Society 1923), 67-69.

¹⁶Karl B. Raitz, “The Jackson Purchase” in P.P. Karan, ed., *Kentucky: A Regional Geography* (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt, 1973), 117-119; Kleber, *The Kentucky Encyclopedia*, 461; Davis, 69.

Map 1: Map showing current boundaries and waterways in the Jackson Purchase



Source: <http://www.sos.ky.gov>

After the area was opened to settlers the legislature initially divided it into four counties, and eventually created eight. Hickman County, located south of Carlisle County on the Mississippi, holds the distinction of being the first county created in the Purchase. The land in the area is flat with bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River. In addition to eventually producing corn, soybeans, and livestock in the antebellum period, the area was one of only two counties in Kentucky capable of producing cotton. The earliest town to be established within the Jackson Purchase, Columbus, is located in the area. Originally called Iron Banks, Columbus was founded in 1804 by French travelers along the Mississippi who believed the red-dirt along the bluffs contained iron. Below the Iron Banks are the Chalk Banks, which contain rich deposits of white clay used in modern day pottery-making. Columbus thrived as a river port and railroad center during the

nineteenth century, eventually containing the northern terminus of the Mobile & Ohio which later became the Illinois Central.¹⁷

McCracken County, established by the Kentucky General Assembly in 1821, became the most well-known of the Purchase counties. It is composed of 251 square miles and is located at the juncture where the Tennessee flows into the Ohio before it begins its descent to the Mississippi. The county seat developed only after 1830 due to a disputed land claim involving the heirs of George Rogers Clark, who died in 1818. Eventually the claim went to his brother William Clark of Lewis and Clark fame, and the first city lots were sold in 1830.¹⁸ McCracken County was quiet fertile along the river and creek bottoms, but the waterways quickly established the area as a bustling trade and manufacturing center that included lumberyards and stores, sawmills, brickyards, and distilleries. In his 1848 guide to towns “on the western waters,” author George Conclin described a town of two thousand inhabitants with a number of store fronts and thriving trade along the Tennessee River.¹⁹

Calloway County, comprised of around 386 square miles, was the third county formed in the Purchase. Old Wadesboro, the first “capital” of the Purchase and location of the land office for the area in 1820, stood. The town was named for the county’s first settler, Banester Wade, who came to the area before statehood from Greenville, South

¹⁷ Kleber, ed., *The Kentucky Encyclopedia*, 427-428; Battle, et.al, 61-73.

¹⁸ Kleber, *The Kentucky Encyclopedia*, 460-61; John E.L. Robertson, *Paducah 1830-1980: A Sesquicentennial History* (Paducah: Image Graphics, 1980), 4-5; Harrison and Klotter, *A New History of Kentucky*, 20-21.

¹⁹ George Conclin, *A New River Guide, or a Gazeteer of All the Towns on the Western Waters* (Cincinnati, 1849), 53.

Carolina.²⁰ Like Graves County, much of the Calloway County is covered in barrens which, after cultivation, became conducive for the growth of cereal crops. In addition, the area contained great timber stores which created a bustling lumber economy.²¹

In 1824 Graves County was formed. Encompassing around 557 square miles, it is the largest county in the Purchase. Criss-crossed by several waterways, including Clarks River, Mayfield and Little Obion Creeks and Bayou de Chien, the area was initially a prairie. Subsequent cultivation, however, proved the land was highly conducive to growing tobacco. According to county historian Lon Carter Barton, settlers came to the area attracted by the one-dollar per acre sale of land. Another resident, James Ross, came to the area from North Carolina, where he had served in the Continental Army during the Revolution. These early settlers brought with them knowledge of the cultivation of dark-fired tobacco.²²

To the west of McCracken county is Ballard County, located at the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. Comprised of 254 square miles, it was formed in 1842 out of Hickman and McCracken counties. Once occupied by Native American mound builders who left extensive sites in the town of Wickliffe, the area was reportedly a cultural curiosity to seventeenth and eighteenth century travelers on the Mississippi River.²³ It was in this area that George Rogers Clark built Fort Jefferson to fend off the Chickasaw Indians. A distinguishing feature of the area is the Ohio River floodplain, or

²⁰ Second Federal Census of the United States 1800, Greenville County, South Carolina; Third Federal Census of the United States, 1810, Caldwell County, Kentucky, <http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed October 12, 2006.

²¹ Kleber, *The Kentucky Encyclopedia*, 152-53.

²² Battle, et al., *Histories and Biographies*, 46-60; Kleber, *The Kentucky Encyclopedia*, 384-385; Barton, *Reign of Terror in Graves County*, 6-15; D. Trabue Davis, *Story of Mayfield Through a Century* (Paducah, KY: Billings Printing Company, 1923).

²³ According to Collins, French explorer La Salle stopped at the mounds on his exploration of the Mississippi River in 1682. Cuming also mention the mounds at Wickliffe in his *Sketches of a Tour*.

the bottoms, which extends around five miles into the interior, creating swamps, ponds, lakes, and sloughs. In spite of the threats of flooding, the region was favorable for growing corn, wheat, soybeans, and tobacco. The county's principal towns during the nineteenth century were Blandville and Wickliffe, both of which became thriving trading centers along the Mississippi.

Located north of Calloway County is Marshall County, also created in 1842. The terrain varies from bottomlands to hilly terrain, which presented a problem to early farmers who found the land almost impossible to cultivate in great quantity. This lack of arable land would result in the highest poverty levels in the Purchase and ultimately the lowest percentage of slaves during the antebellum period.²⁴

Located in the bottom western-most tip of Kentucky is Fulton County, which is bordered to the west and northwest by the Mississippi and to the south by Tennessee. Created in 1845, the county is relatively flat with floodplains distinguished by sloughs, marshes, and ponds. During the nineteenth century the area flourished with trade along the river and agricultural production. The county is noted for being divided in to two parts by the flow of the Mississippi creating a peninsula in the western part of the county called Madrid Bend. During the nineteenth century and well in to the twentieth, the Madrid Bend was utilized for growing large amounts of cotton. Another noted feature of the area is Reelfoot Lake located on the Kentucky –Tennessee border. The lake was formed when a series of earthquakes in 1811 forced the Mississippi River to flow backwards and flood the area.²⁵

²⁴ Kleber, *The Kentucky Encyclopedia*, 611; Davis, *Geography of the Jackson Purchase*, 74.

²⁵ Battle, et al., *Histories and Biographies*, 36-46; Kleber, *The Kentucky Encyclopedia*, 360-61; Ouida Jewell, *Backward Glance* (Fulton, KY: Fulton Publishing Company, 1973), 1-10; Fulton County

The last county created in the Purchase was Carlisle County, carved out of Ballard and Hickman counties in 1886. Located along the Mississippi River, the mostly flat land is home to many streams, natural springs, and artisan wells and is highly conducive to growing dark-fired tobacco, corn, soybeans, and livestock. Much of the lands' fertility is due to the yellow loam covered areas which are underlain by ten to twelve feet of lime and loess, the latter a windblown deposit of fine-grained, calcareous silt or clay.²⁶

All in all, the Jackson Purchase encompasses less than 2400 square miles, or less than 6 percent of Kentucky's land area. Despite its small land mass, settlers in Kentucky during the early 19th century would find the area the last great bastion of the Bluegrass state's disappearing frontier. Indeed, it would be this drive westward that would begin the area's march toward becoming the "South Carolina of Kentucky."

Historical Society, *Fulton County History* (Paducah, KY: David Turner & Associates, 1983).; Davis, 36-41.

²⁶ Davis, *Geography of the Jackson Purchase*, 40-41.

Chapter 1:

“One of the Greatest Country’s in the World”: The Creation of the Purchase

In his landmark thesis on the American frontier, Frederick Jackson Turner called Kentucky “the goal of the pioneers” for whom the Ohio River “by force of its attraction tore away from an uncongenial control by the Old Dominion” of Virginia.¹ For Turner, Kentucky represented a triumph in American history. Here was a land of pioneers who broke free from the shackles of her overbearing mother to become a democracy of men, free to hunt, range, utilize the western waters for commercial gain, and own property. The idea of the freedom that accompanied the frontier was a heady tocsin to the men who had been pushed to the backcountry and Piedmont regions of the eastern states.

Like most of the “west,” Kentucky began as a hunters’ paradise. During the late 1760s, as “Kentucky fever” hit the nascent American population, hunters in search of new grounds entered what was then part of the Virginia frontier. What they found was an area replete with dense forests and bountiful streams, teeming with wild game, fowl, and fish ready for the taking, as well as a burgeoning fur trade to provide income. They also found that they were not the only ones tapping into the area’s hunting potential. The Shawnee, Wyandot, Delaware, Cherokee, and Chickasaw had been hunting in the area for decades. Kentucky had originally been the home of several Native American groups, but

¹ Frederick Jackson Turner, “An Address before the Ohio Valley Historical Association” in *The Frontier in American History* (1934; repr., New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1994).

by 1750 disease, encroaching white population, and warfare with neighboring groups had forced them out. Eventually the Treaties of Fort Stanwix in 1768 and Sycamore Shoals in 1775 would seal the fate of indigenous groups in the Ohio Valley as much of what is now Kentucky was purchased from the Shawnee, Chickasaw, and the Cherokee²

With the “Long Hunters,” so-called because they entered the frontier to hunt for long periods of time, came men in search of a different type of wealth. Land speculators from Virginia also entered the future Bluegrass state in search of lands to survey and possibly settle. These speculators were employed by land companies such as the Ohio Land Company, the Loyal Company, and the Transylvania Company. Some of the most wealthy and prosperous men in Virginia, including Governor Robert Dinwiddie, George Mason, Robert Carter, and Edmund Randolph, were involved with Kentucky speculation. Despite constant clashes with the Shawnee, pioneers Daniel Boone, James Harrod, and Benjamin Logan created settlements at Boonesborough, Harrodsburg, and Logan’s Station.³

By the time of the Revolution, 200 pioneers were estimated to be living on the frontier. Left to fight off the British *and* their Indian allies, with little help from Virginia, these clashes brought another pioneer to the state. In 1778 a young George Rogers Clark, concerned about Kentuckians on the frontier, convinced the Virginia legislature to supply him with troops to defend the frontier. Because the frontier extended to the Mississippi, Clark and his troops were the first Americans to “discover” the region that would become the Jackson Purchase. Making his way down the Falls of Ohio at Louisville he

² Aron, *How the West Was Lost* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1996), 35-41; Harrison and Klotter, *New History of Kentucky*, 24-32. See Reginald Horsman, “American Indian Policy in the Old Northwest,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 18 (January 1961), 35-53.

³ Harrison and Klotter, *New History of Kentucky*, 24-32.

constructed Fort Massac just opposite present-day Paducah in Metropolis, Illinois. In April 1780, Clark came down the Ohio River to Mayfield Creek, located in present day Ballard County, where he built Fort Jefferson. The fort was intended to serve as a supply link with New Orleans and Clark's Illinois troops. The Chickasaw attacked Fort Jefferson and its five hundred soldiers and civilians in July 1780. Other Kentuckians, including Daniel Boone distinguished themselves in the Battle of the Blue Licks, the last battle of the war to be fought in Kentucky.⁴

From 1775 to 1800, Kentucky's population exploded as people who had been pushed to the backcountry of Virginia and North Carolina came to the frontier in an attempt realize the Jeffersonian dream of small, self-sufficient farms with vast hunting grounds free from elites. According the Stephen Aron, Kentucky represented a "good poor man's country" where independence and the ability to provide for ones family could be achieved.⁵ Yet threats to that independence came in the form of land claims and the exhaustive road to statehood that created factions of men who disagreed over who would hold power in the Bluegrass.⁶

⁴ Kathryn M. Fraser, "Fort Jefferson," *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 81 (Winter 1983): 1-25. The Battle of the Blue Licks occurred ten months after Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown. The battle was an effort by the British and their Indian allies to retake the Ohio Valley and resulted in a virtual slaughter of the Kentucky militia. George Rogers Clark, heretofore a hero, was widely condemned for patrolling the Ohio River with his men instead of coming to the militias' aid. In response to the criticism, he led 1,000 men on a retaliatory raid, burning five Shawnee villages along the way. Clark's reputation never recovered and he died in 1818, almost penniless, at the home of his sister in Louisville. See John Bakeless, *Background to Glory: The Life of George Rogers Clark* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1957) and Lowell Harrison, *George Rogers Clark and the War in the West* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1976).

⁵ Aron, *How the West Was Lost*, 192-193.

⁶ For more on the factions that contributed to the writing of Kentucky's state constitution see John D. Barnhart, "Frontiersmen and Planters in the Formation of Kentucky" *Journal of Southern History* 17 (February 1941), 19-36. Barnhart contends that the frontiersmen won a small victory by gaining popular elections, freedom of religion, equal representation, and no property qualifications for voting in the writing of the 1799 constitution. He notes that large landholdings and slavery were the only features of the Tidewater aristocracy to "cross the mountains into Kentucky"—a short sited observation considering

Kentuckians, disgruntled over Virginia's indifference to their Indian problem and fed up with taxation and trade restrictions, began lobbying for separation from their mother state in 1783. It would take almost nine years and ten statehood conventions for delegates to agree on terms of separation. While Kentuckians agreed that Virginia did little to protect them from the ever present threat of Indians on the frontier and other grievances, they disagreed on who would control the rights to land ownership. This struggle for land eventually concerned three groups of Kentuckians: "partisans," the "court party," and the planters.⁷

The partisans were landless men for whom Kentucky had seemed the best land for a poor man. In 1776, Virginia actually gave preference to the partisans by declaring that anyone present within the state a year before 1776 or had raised a corn crop was entitled to four hundred acres. This must have seemed a dream come true for men like William Hickman, who desired simply to "get but ten acres for my children in this rich new land."⁸ The 1799 Land Act claimed that anyone who held a claim and raised a corn crop prior to 1778 was entitled up to four hundred acres, priced at \$2.25 per hundred acre. If they built a home on the land, they were allowed to preempt one thousand acres at \$40.00 per hundred acres. To obtain land, one had to purchase a warrant and file an entry with the county surveyor. Next the surveyor conducted a survey—a problem since many were illiterate or simply ignorant of the profession. Lastly, the survey had to be turned into the land office within a year. This burdensome process led to shingled claims—since land

slaveholders with large landholdings became the movers and shakers of Kentucky antebellum politics. Instead of "frontiersmen" I choose to use Harrison and Klotter's designation of "partisans" to describe the landless faction of men who took part in Kentucky's formation.

⁷ Harrison and Klotter, *A New History of Kentucky*, 53-55;

⁸ Aron, *How the West Was Lost*, 74.

offices had few maps of Kentucky, controversy over natural landmarks that designated surveyed lands, confusion over warrants, and eventually, the entry of attorneys into Kentucky.⁹

The entry of lawmakers into Kentucky, best represented by men such as Henry Clay, eclipsed the Turneresque dream of the frontier West. It was the lawyers who in 1779 created a court of land commissioners to settle land disputes. During 1779-80, the court made decisions involving close to 1.5 million acres, many of which dispossessed those who had no land. Thus, many settlers lost lands on which they had created homes intended for the betterment of their families. The courts compensated somewhat by allowing for what seemed to be a boon to landless Kentuckians. An Act of 1781 allowed poor families four hundred acres at twenty shillings per hundred acres. Previous land acts, however, had lead land jobbers to unscrupulously grab up hundreds of thousands of acres that were never intended for farm use. Thus, by the time the battle for statehood rolled around most Kentuckians were tenants. Indeed, around two thirds were landless—hardly the vision that had inspired the pioneer trek towards the West.¹⁰

While the lawyers and the courts stole land legally, planters gobbled up the best agricultural lands and strained to become the political elite. To this end, they acquired lands in the most fertile part of the state, the Bluegrass, where they built estates dependant on slave labor. Aron notes that, “for gentlemen of the Tidewater and Piedmont, burdened down by worn-out lands, excess sons, and unprofitable slaves, the Inner Bluegrass proved a hospitable environment in which to replicate and regenerate the

⁹ Harrison and Klotter, *A New History of Kentucky*, 53-55.

¹⁰ Aron, *How the West Was Lost*, 195.

planter culture.”¹¹ The introduction of slavery as an economic system transformed Kentucky forever. While the first pioneers who came to the state in the last quarter of the eighteenth century hungered “for lands that would that would allow families to get by with greater security and less effort,” the planters hungered for an extensive market system based on slave labor.¹²

The fencing laws of 1798 that privatized land in the Bluegrass destroyed that vision as large-scale landowners gained hold of property. These landowners, Aron explains, solidified slavery as a system in Kentucky and created massive class cleavages through ownership of private property. Men like Clay gained control of politics in Lexington and began extolling commercial progress, manufacturing, and slavery. Thus, Kentucky may have been fought for and won by the pioneer but it eventually became a backyard breeding ground for the elites they had tried to escape.

The wresting of land by elites in the Bluegrass eventually pushed poor men into the Green River country of Kentucky. In this area, located southwest of the Bluegrass, settlers once again had the opportunity to realize the dream of independence on a “new” frontier. Land in the Green River area, called the Barrens, was cheap and considered undesirable to wealthy landholders. Covered in what seemed to be flat, treeless prairie, early pioneers avoided the area. The squatter who did venture to the area found that once he planted a patch of prairie, the soil, while not as rich as the Bluegrass, was arable

¹¹ Ibid., 125.

¹² Aron, *How the West Was Lost*, 194. Michael Flannery agrees with Aron’s “Turneresque” interpretation of frontier Kentucky. Flannery posits that far from shrugging off the baggage of European mores, Kentucky elites worked quickly to reestablish those traditions through the formation of colleges, universities, theaters, and other humanistic endeavors. As a result, political elites circumvented the needs and rights of the landless. Through this process Kentucky gained key status in the early republic and shed its “frontier” status. See Flannery, “The Significance of the Frontier Thesis in Kentucky Culture: A Study in Historical Practice and Perception,” *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 2 (1994): 239-266.

enough. As word spread of the area's potential, squatters began flocking to the Barrens. Lands in the Green River area, however, had originally been awarded for service in the Revolution, thus creating the same land-claim melee that existed in the rest of the state. In a calculated move on the state legislature's part, they passed the Green River Homestead Act which allowed squatters to claim the lands they had illegally occupied.¹³

By 1800, the population of the Green River teemed with settlers who could scarcely afford land in the Bluegrass. The story of Daniel Trabue, a Chesterfield County, Virginia native, is illustrative of many who made the move to Green River country. Trabue became enthralled with the Bluegrass as a soldier under George Rogers Clark during the Revolution. Originally settling near Lexington in 1787, he found that in the Green River country he could achieve the respectability and status that eluded him in the "Athens of the West." Purchasing land in 1796, he became a plantation owner and justice of the peace. The achievements of Trabue and men like him, however, did little to change Bluegrass perceptions of the area as inferior. Indeed, for men like John Breckenridge, the region was rife with "nothing but hunters, horse-thieves, & savages."¹⁴

Under the leadership of Felix Grundy the "Green River Band" lobbied successfully for land relief. In 1800, the legislature passed an act which allowed landholders to preempt up to four-hundred acres, which meant that homesteaders in the Green River country could claim up two-hundred extra acres. As a result, between 54 to 67 percent of settlers in the Green River owned the land they lived and worked upon at a

¹³ Aron, *How the West Was Lost*, 164-69; James Ramage, "The Green River Pioneers: Squatters, Soldiers, and Speculators," *Register* 75 (July 1977): 177-78; Neal Hammon, "Land Acquisition on the Kentucky Frontier" *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 78 (Autumn 1980): 297-321.

¹⁴ Chester Raymond Young, ed., *Westward Into Kentucky: The Narrative of Daniel Trabue* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1981), 4-7; John Breckenridge, quoted in Harrison and Klotter, *New History of Kentucky*, 69.

time when the state average for Kentucky was less than 50 percent. This allowed landowners to cultivate more acreage and ultimately introduce tobacco to the area which resulted in the growth of slavery, commercial centers, and land speculation. Grundy ultimately found it advantageous to adopt Clay's ideas of banking and internal improvements, selling out small farmers in the process. These factors worked to cement the bonds—politically, economically, and socially—between Green River and Bluegrass planters and merchants.¹⁵

Thus, the westward march of pioneers that Turner so eloquently if incorrectly invoked, and the ideas of democracy they brought with them, appeared to come to a screeching halt as poor men were left with few choices to implement their dreams of self-sufficiency. The Green River country stopped at the Tennessee River and the Chickasaw owned the lands beyond it. Most pioneers also steered clear of the area because it was “of no great concern” to these early wanderers.¹⁶ Indeed, only one white man was known to defy the norm and venture beyond the east into the western part of the state that would one day become the Jackson Purchase. In 1776, Benjamin Cutbird and his party steered away from the Cumberland Gap to follow a lesser known Indian trail through the Appalachian Mountains. They hunted along the Kentucky-Tennessee border, eventually making their way to the Mississippi. Setting a pattern that would later define the area, the Cutbird party carried their pelts to New Orleans where they convinced Spanish

¹⁵ Aron calls this process the “blueing of the Green River Country”, 168.

¹⁶ George Morgan Chin, *Kentucky: Settlement and Statehood, 1750-1800* (Frankfort, KY: Kentucky Historical Society, 1975), 4.

authorities to let them trade. Like most of the long-hunters, they moved on to greener pastures after hunting season was over.¹⁷

In the years before President Monroe determined to treat with the Chickasaw in 1818, several squatters and a number of Revolutionary soldiers moved into what would become the Purchase. Fortesque Cuming, who wrote an account of his travels down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, mentions settlers in the area. Setting out from Pittsburg in 1807, Cuming and his party reached the point where the Tennessee River meets the Ohio in May 1807. According the Cuming, this point, later to become the sight of Paducah, contained three settlements. After being chased by Indians out of Wilkinsonville, just across the Ohio River in southern Illinois they continued down the river where they purchased supplies from the Petit family.¹⁸

A decade later, in September 1818, Andrew Jackson himself was in trouble. Having just returned from the Seminole War, the highly popular general faced censure from an angry Congress who resented his high-handed tactics against the Spanish in Florida. President James Monroe initially refused to discuss the situation out of fear of alienating the highly sensitive and volatile Jackson. When Monroe at last chose to address him, he accused Jackson of declaring war on the Spanish by attacking their

¹⁷ Harrison and Klotter, *New History of Kentucky*, 10-11.

¹⁸ Reuban Gold Thwaites, ed. *Early Western Travels 1748-1846. Volume IV, Cuming's Tour to the Western Country, 1807-1809*. (Cleveland, OH: Arthur H. Clark, 1904), 183-88. Cuming's book was originally published as Fortesque Cuming, *Sketches of a Tour to the Western Country through the States of Ohio and Kentucky: A Voyage Down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers and a trip through the Mississippi Territory and Part of West Flordia* (Pittsburg: Cramer, Spear, Bichbaum, Franklin, and Head Bookstore, 1809). The only settlement that Cuming mentions being close to the Purchase area is Smithland, located in Livingston County, on the Cumberland and Ohio Rivers. The area borders present day Marshall and McCracken counties and has often been called a "gateway to the Jackson Purchase." He described the town as a miserable place, containing a dozen houses, a couple of stores and taverns, and oddly enough, a lone "billiard table." He noted the inhabitants were a lazy sort who relied on trading with river craft to eat rather than cultivating the land, fishing, or raising livestock.

outposts. Jackson responded with the assertion that he would go to any lengths to ensure American citizens on the frontier were protected. Speaker of the House Henry Clay of Kentucky, however, was not about to let Jackson off the hook. He was indignant over Jackson's treatment of the Indians and said as much in a scathing diatribe in which he warned that the public might applaud the general, but to do so would be a triumph "over the constitution of the land."¹⁹ With that speech, Henry Clay made a lifelong bitter enemy out of Andrew Jackson.

Thus, it must have been galling to Clay when Monroe chose Jackson to purchase lands in the western part of Kentucky from the Chickasaw Indians and move the sellers west of the Mississippi River. Despite his harsh treatment of the Seminoles in the late war, Jackson was still an able and cunning negotiator, skilled in treating with the Indians. White settlers were calling for fulfillment of claims going back to the 1780s when North Carolina and Virginia sold off the land to repay its debts from the Revolutionary War. In addition the perfection of the steamboat in 1811 made control of the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers crucial to the commercial success of the country. The Tennessee and Kentucky legislatures had repeatedly appealed to Congress for help with these claims and by 1818, the President was ready to take action. Accompanied by former Kentucky governor and war hero Isaac Shelby, Jackson set out from Washington to his hometown of Nashville to bargain with the Chickasaw.²⁰

Jackson in truth was in no mood to go. Indeed, he had had his fill of the "red children" and their alleged penchant for bribes and stalling. But unfortunately for Old

¹⁹ Robert Remini, *Andrew Jackson and His Indian Wars* (New York: Viking Press, 2001), 165-67.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 168. According to Remini, the foremost biographer of Jackson, Old Hickory was chosen to accompany Shelby because the former governor was believed to be too docile to deal with the Chickasaw.

Hickory, the Chickasaw *were* in the mood to negotiate and they were not about to give up the fertile lands of west Tennessee and Kentucky for a pittance. Indeed, the three leaders of the Chickasaw—William, George, and Levi Colbert—declared that “they would lose every drop of blood in their veins, before they will yield to the United States another acre of land.”²¹ They had a rightful claim to the land, they continued, as the westernmost areas of Kentucky and Tennessee were understood to be their hunting grounds, acquired in the Hopewell Treaty of 1786. Under the treaty, no whites were allowed to settle in the area. Indeed, despite the fact that prior to the treaty a number of private land grants had been issued in the area, the United States, fearful of further enmity with the Chickasaw, had forbidden emigration onto these lands. When that did not stop squatters from attempting to settle the land, the Kentucky General Assembly enacted harsh laws against anyone attempting to survey lands or issue deeds in the preserve. Yet, try as they may, the Assembly was unable to stop potential settlers from moving into the area, a fact which brought the federal government and Jackson into the picture.

Luckily for the federal government, Jackson knew how to play the treaty game. On October 12 he addressed the Chickasaw leaders, reminding them of the white claims and the fact that their “white father” had kept settlers out of Tennessee and Kentucky,

²¹ Remini, *Andrew Jackson and His Indian Wars*, 169; Thomas D. Clark, “The Jackson Purchase: A Dramatic Chapter in Southern Indian Policy and Relations,” *Filson Club Historical Quarterly* 50 (1976): 302-20. According to Clark, Jackson’s peaceful negotiations and willingness to meet the monetary demands of the Chickasaw was a continuation of Thomas Jefferson’s Indian Policy. As President, Jefferson instituted a practice of obtaining Indian lands through remunerative negotiations, or purchase, in order to remove the Indians from lands west of the Mississippi. Remini argues that Jackson’s “negotiations” were nothing more than a continuation of the General’s high-handed treatment of the Indians. Remini argues that as a young man living on the frontier of South Carolina, Jackson developed a deep, lifelong hatred and suspicion of native groups. Believing them to be savage and barbaric, Jackson felt the only recourse was the “removal, if not the elimination of the Indian from civilized society.” See Remini, *Andrew Jackson and His Indian Wars*, 13-20.

known as Chickasaw hunting ground, for thirty-five years.²² But now, he went on to explain, the game was gone and “his white children claim it...from him.” They now had two choices: exchange the land for new lands west of the Mississippi or take a “fair and reasonable price” for it.”²³ The Chickasaw responded by declaring that they would “part with the lands for the price the United States get for theirs.” A fuming Jackson replied, “these are high toned sentiments for an Indian.” He reminded them of a caveat in the Hopewell Treaty which gave Congress the right to regulate the affairs the Chickasaw nation. Realizing they could quite possibly receive a paltry sum for the lands, the Colberts agreed to deal. After several days of negotiating, they sold their land for around \$300,000, to be dispersed over fifteen years.²⁴ This treaty, and the Kentucky lands that accompanied it, became known as the Jackson Purchase, an apt title considering that his ideas of American democracy would come to define the area.

Andrew Jackson returned home to Nashville and great fanfare. The grateful people of west Tennessee gave him and his staff a splendid ball, while Secretary of War John C. Calhoun wrote Jackson a letter in which he conveyed his and President Monroe’s unflagging support and congratulations.²⁵ In Tennessee, newspapers were abuzz with excitement over local hero Jackson’s newest venture. On September 22, 1818 his hometown newspaper, *The Nashville Clarion and Tennessee Gazette*, noted Isaac Shelby’s arrival and dinner at Jackson’s home and went on to print all thirteen toasts given by the guests. Seven days later, they noted “we have never witnessed an event which has excited so deep, universal, and lively an interest in this state, as the treaty with

²² Clark, “The Jackson Purchase,” 303-304.

²³ Remini, *Andrew Jackson and his Indian Wars*, 175.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 171.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 181.

the Chickasaw Indians.”²⁶ They went on to extol the “Western Purchase” by describing the many benefits of its geographical location. The land obtained contained valuable salt licks, fertile land conducive to growing tobacco, and more importantly, the Mississippi River town of Chickasaw Bluffs, later renamed Memphis. By December 1 of that year, surveyors began advertising “information to owners of granted land.”²⁷

In Kentucky, however, “Jackson’s Purchase” barely made headlines. The *Kentucky Gazette*, the leading newspaper in the state, printed the treaty word for word on February 12, 1819, yet enthusiasm for the transaction was absent from its pages. The *Kentucky Reporter*, another Lexington paper, failed to mention the event at all. Instead, the paper focused on Creek Indian affairs, the recent Seminole Wars, the sale of lands in Illinois, and current revolutions in Latin America.²⁸ Unbeknownst at the time, the Kentucky newspapers’ lack of interest in the Jackson Purchase was a pattern that would be repeated often by historians and politicians of Kentucky.

If Kentucky newspapers ignored the significance of the event, settlers and military land warrant holders did not. Former Virginia and North Carolina soldiers who had been issued patents by the Military Surveyor prior to Kentucky statehood in 1792 began calling for fulfillment of their claims. On December 19, 1820, the Kentucky General Assembly approved legislation for the surveying of “military claims West of the Tennessee River.” While the 242 military patents were being issued to claimants, William T. Henderson mapped the Jackson Purchase. The next year the legislature approved the sale of non-military patents for the lands mapped by Henderson.

²⁶ *Nashville Clarion and Tennessee Gazette*, September 22-29, 1819.

²⁷ *Nashville Clarion and Tennessee Gazette*, December 1, 1818.

²⁸ *Kentucky Gazette*, April 12, 1819

Advertisements for the lands were placed in the *Western Argus*, *National Intelligencer*, *Kentucky Gazette*, and “one or more papers in Tennessee, North Carolina, and Virginia.”²⁹

At the beginning, Kentuckians, including the ones who made the journey to settle in the Purchase, were wholly ignorant of the inherent potential of the area. Accustomed to the gentle, green slopes of the Bluegrass and the fertile tobacco lands of the Green River valley, the Purchase hardly seemed inviting. Indeed, the barren prairie, flood plains, and chalk and iron banks that characterized it appeared alien to those seeing the region for the first time. Worse, it was hard to reach. The twenty-four hundred square miles of the Purchase were isolated from the Kentucky counties to the east by the northward flowing Cumberland and Tennessee rivers, which discouraged western moving migrants. Moreover, the juncture of the Cumberland and Tennessee meet with the Ohio some fifty miles from where they dump into the southward flowing Mississippi. In short, the eight counties essentially form a peninsula bounded by the Tennessee, Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. Nineteenth-century historians J.H. Battle, W.H. Perrin, and G.C Kniffin, in their early history of the area, posited that “the Jackson Purchase is substantially an annex to the State of the Kentucky.”³⁰

After the Kentucky General Assembly began surveying, mapping, and granting military warrants, non-military tracts were sold off in quarter sections to around 9308 potential settlers. While this mapping and selling of land in quarter sections seems inconsequential, it was a stark deviation from the norm in Kentucky. By acquiring lands

²⁹ West of Tennessee River Military Patents, Kentucky Land Office, Secretary of State, online database, <http://sos.ky.gov/land/military/tnriver>, accessed January 12, 2007; Acts of the Kentucky General Assembly, 1821, (Frankfort, KY, 1822), 145, 409-415.

³⁰ Battle, et al., *Histories and Biographies*, 6.

that had been surveyed and mapped first, Purchase settlers ultimately avoided the problem of competing and overlapping claims that had made the state rife with litigiousness.³¹

Despite the fact that the Jackson Purchase was the only area in Kentucky to be systematically surveyed, the same confusing land warrant process applied to patent-holders for lands in the area. After separating from Virginia in 1792, Kentucky stopped honoring Virginia Revolutionary War Warrants. Many Virginia veterans or their assignees had to use another Virginia Military District located in southern Ohio. Those who did not use their patents for Ohio often sold their claims or willed to them to heirs upon their death. Because the Jackson Purchase was not surveyed until 1820, many veterans had died. Of the 241 warrants in the Kentucky State Land Offices' "Lands West of the Tennessee River" series, ten veterans left seventy-eight warrants to their heirs. For example, the heirs of Richard Anderson of Louisa, Virginia, held thirty-one warrants for lands while the heirs of Stephen Thompson Mason held sixteen warrants. In addition multiple warrants were issued to individuals or land companies. Rawleigh Colston of Berkeley, Virginia held seventeen warrants while the town of Iron Banks was sold to four trustee companies by the Kentucky General Assembly.³²

A perusal at genealogical records and the United States Census show that many of the early settlers had begun their march toward the west in much the same way as many Kentuckians had. James G. Seay, for example, came to Hickman County in 1834 where he became a prosperous farmer. Born in Washington County, Kentucky in the Bluegrass

³¹ Harrison and Klotter, *New History of Kentucky*, 20.

³² Kentucky Secretary of State, State Land Office. Military Registers and Land Registers, West of Tennessee River Military Patents, <http://sos.ky.gov/land/military/tnriver/> accessed September 12, 2006.

region in 1799, he was the nephew of the Green River Group leader Felix Grundy. His parents were born in Amelia County, Virginia, but became enthralled with the “west” after his father served in the War of 1812. John M. Robinson was born in Harrodsburg, Kentucky (one of the original settlements in the state) in 1816 and at age sixteen went to Columbus with his parents, where they operated one of the first hotels in the region.

James Mott was born in Lancaster, Virginia but moved to Jessamine County, just south of Lexington in 1812. In 1828 he came to Fulton County where he entered 480 acres of land. Other early settlers who followed similar patterns were Isham Miller, born in Richmond, Virginia in 1807. He moved with his parents to the Green River Valley in 1819, before moving farther west to Logan County. After the Purchase was opened for settlement he moved to Ballard County where he farmed a modest one hundred acres.³³

One of the first settlers of Graves County was Thomas Cargill. A native of South Carolina he settled on Clark’s River in 1819. Another South Carolina native was Vincent Anderson, who immigrated to Livingston, Kentucky with his son John. John Anderson purchased the first piece of land in Mayfield after Graves County was formed. Most of the settlement patterns of the Purchase area were almost identical to that of James Seay, John M. Robinson, James Mott, Isham Miller, Thomas Cargill, and John Anderson.

Unable to prosper in the Bluegrass and Green River areas, they moved farther west to the Purchase to create new lives. Indeed, census records show that by 1850, over seventy

³³ *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, Kentucky, Ballard, Calloway, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, McCracken, and Marshall Counties*, <http://www.ancestry.com> accessed October 1, 2006. The 1850 census was the first to delineate the birthplace of U.S. residents. All figures arrived at are those of the author.; Battle et. al, 144, 204, 224, 270, 272.

percent of residents in the Purchase were born in Kentucky.³⁴ If the Green River country was “Kentucky’s best poor mans country,” what was the Jackson Purchase?³⁵

Historian Fredrika Teute has suggested that westward expansion happened in Kentucky out of the desire of the framers of the state constitution to push poor men farther away from the Bluegrass. Men like George Nichols, she argues, wrote universal suffrage into the 1799 constitution to temper the grievances of the landless. Despite this seemingly democratic measure, the elite in the Bluegrass and the Green River country continued to gobble up the best lands and control production. The end result was the creation of a society of white tenants who competed with slaves for jobs. By pushing the poor farther and farther west, elites were able to control the means of economic production and solidify their hold on Kentucky politics.³⁶

Through the acquisition of the Jackson Purchase in 1818, Kentucky also was finally able to rid herself of the “Indian problem” and control commerce along the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers as well. The settlers and squatters who claimed the lands in the Purchase were an extension of the pioneers who first walked through the Cumberland Gap into Kentucky. Yet unlike the Bluegrass and the Green River country, the Purchase never fell under the spell of men like George Nichols and Henry Clay. Of the latter, Turner wrote that “his policy and his power grew out of the economic and social conditions of the people whose needs he voiced—the people of the Ohio Valley.” Far from meeting the needs of the men who settled the Purchase, Clay circumvented their

³⁴ *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, Kentucky, Ballard, Calloway, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, McCracken, and Marshall Counties*, <http://www.ancestry.com> accessed October 1, 2006; Battle et. al, 144, 204, 224, 270, 272. William Lochridge Wells, *The Lochridge/Anderson Family of Graves County, KY: from 1819 to Present* (Mayfield, KY: W.L. Wells, 1980), 3-4.

³⁵ Aron, *How the West Was Lost*, 150.

³⁶ Fredrika Teute, “Land, Liberty, and Labor in the Post-Revolutionary Era: Kentucky as the Promised Land,” Ph.D. Dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1988.

attempts at independence. Ironically, it was Andrew Jackson, the bitter antagonist of Clay, who best came to represent the philosophy of the settlers of the Purchase.

* * * * *

In 1856, young Lizzie Waddill moved to the Jackson Purchase. Writing home to her father in Trigg County, she noted that it was “one of the greatest country’s in the world, especially for young people. It is filling up with people from all parts of the world I believe.” It especially was filling up with Kentuckians moving to the area to make a new start. Waddill observed that most of the newcomers were Christian Countians, drawn to the area since “land was cheap.” So many people were moving from the wealthy western Kentucky county, in fact, that she suggested that “Christian County had better be put on wheels and rolled down here.” She likewise noted the progress of the small town to which she had moved noting that Woodville contained a debating society, two stores, a Seminary with 50 students, and several churches that frowned on “frolicking.” To her widowed Aunt Sally, she added that if she “ever intends on coming to the Purchase now is the time as she is so partial to widowers... there are more here than you can shake a stick at.”³⁷

Elder Thomas L. Garrett of Paducah echoed Waddill’s words in a letter to his father back in Virginia. In his letter Garrett exclaimed, “Oh how often I have regretted your remaining in Virginia. If only you had come here thirty or forty years ago, with but half the work you have done and taken care of, you would now be a rich man. There is no

³⁷ Lizzie Waddill to John F. Waddill, May 8, 1856, June 26, 1856, Waddill Family Letters, 1856-1860, Special Collections, Kentucky History Center, Frankfort, KY.

excuse for a healthy man's being poor in Kentucky.” Indeed, Garrett knew something about financial success. After moving to Paducah he secured the respectable position of minister at the local Baptist church for which he was paid the “healthy man's” per annum income of \$2000.³⁸

Yet another new settler in Ballard County was Oscar Turner, who moved to the county in the 1840s. Turner was born into one of the Deep South's leading families in 1825. His father, Lewis Fielding Turner, was a successful lawyer and judge of the criminal court of New Orleans, while his mother, Caroline Sargent, was the daughter of the governor of Mississippi. Turner moved to Lexington at age one with his parents and later attended Transylvania University where he studied law. After moving to Ballard County he became Commonwealth Attorney and later was chosen to the House of Representatives. Turner apparently stopped practicing law after he was elected and settled down to life as a farmer in the Purchase.³⁹

Greenberry Watson and Daniel Watson likewise saw the inherent possibilities of growing cotton along the fertile Mississippi River bottom lands of Fulton County. Both were born in North Carolina and came to the region sometime between 1840 and 1850.⁴⁰

³⁸ John H.D. Carlin, *A Memoir of Elder Thomas L. Garrett, of Paducah, Kentucky* (Philadelphia: Claxton, Remsen, and Haffelfinger, 1870), 270-71.

³⁹ Battle, et al., *Histories and Biographies*, 34. Turner's mother, who was notorious for her cruel treatment of her slaves, was murdered in Lexington by her carriage driver Richard in 1844. Oscar Turner put out a \$500 reward for the man's capture. By all accounts, the man was never captured. The event was so notable that Robert Penn Warren referenced the murder in his novel *All the King's Men*. See *Lexington Observer and Reporter*, August 24, 1844 and Robert Penn Warren, *All The King's Men* (New York: Modern Library, 1994), 253.

⁴⁰ *Seventh and Eighth United States Census, 1850 and 1860, for Ballard, Calloway, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, McCracken, and Marshall Counties, Kentucky*, <http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed January 2007. *Fulton Genealogical Society, 1846 tax list of Fulton county, Kentucky : Books 1 and 2, copied from the microfilm of the original tax lists* (Fulton County Genealogical Society, 1973). It is possible that Greenberry and Daniel Watson were related although I have not found the records to prove it. Both were born in North Carolina and in 1850 lived in adjacent households. Greenberry is not listed in the tax lists for the 1840s and its possible that he lived on the 2600 acres owned by Daniel. Daniel is listed in

Harriet Turner was another North Carolinian who saw the promise of moving to a new “frontier.” Born in England, she and her husband James were hotel keepers in Warrenton, North Carolina, but after his death she moved to Paducah where she became one of the wealthiest women in the area.⁴¹

Lizzie Waddill, Thomas Garrett, Oscar Turner, Greenberry and Daniel Watson, and Harriet Owen were just a few among many who saw the new opportunities in the newly opened Jackson Purchase. The decades between its opening in 1818 and the 1850s were ones of immense growth. Though created in 1818, the counties of the area did not appear in census records until 1830. In just over a decade, the Purchase had been carved into four counties—Calloway, Graves, Hickman, and McCracken—and included approximately 15,211 settlers. By 1840 the same four counties reported a population of approximately 23,694, a 55.8 percent increase. By 1850 the Purchase had then been divided to create three additional counties, Fulton, Ballard, and Marshall, and contained approximately 39,162 people, a 65.3 percent increase.⁴²

As settlers poured into the area, they settled onto fertile lands ripe for cultivation. Between the opening of the Purchase and 1860, settlers transformed the loess-covered bottomland, prairies, and hills into prosperous farmland. Yet, the plantation system that

the tax lists in the 1840s as owning 2600 acres and an additional 550 acres along the Mississippi, so it is possible that Greenberry could have been living on this property.

⁴¹ *Eighth Census, 1860, for McCracken County, Kentucky*, <http://ancestry.com>, accessed April 2007; *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, for Warren County, North Carolina*, <http://ancestry.com>, accessed January 2007. Neither Harriet nor her son Edwin, age 23, are listed as having occupations. They are listed as residents of District 2 in McCracken County, which was the farming area of the county. Her property was adjacent to a foundry, so it is possible she was hiring out her slaves to work there.

⁴² *Fifth Census of the United States of the United States, 1830, for Calloway, Graves, Hickman, and McCracken Counties, Kentucky*, <http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed June 2006; *Sixth Census of the United States, 1840, Calloway, Graves, Hickman, and McCracken Counties, Kentucky*, [ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com), accessed June 2006; *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, Ballard, Calloway, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, McCracken, and Marshall Counties, Kentucky*, <http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed June 2006.

characterized the Bluegrass and to some extent the Green River country were never replicated in the Purchase. For though the land was fertile, it was not rich enough to sustain large cash crops of tobacco and hemp that fueled the agricultural economy of central and western Kentucky. In the Purchase more self-sufficient yeoman farms dotted the landscape of “barrens” and “bottoms.” According to tax lists for the counties of McCracken, Calloway, and Hickman, the vast majority of residents in the Purchase owned an average of only 200 to 300 acres.⁴³

By 1850, the United States Census reported that the Purchase counties all together contained over 200,000 acres of improved land worth approximately \$2,760,000. Ten years later, the Purchase contained approximately 300,000 acres of improved land in farms worth over eight million dollars in cash. The Bluegrass, by comparison, contained almost four million acres of improved farmland and the Pennyroyal contained two million acres. The two other regions of the state, the Western and Eastern Coalfields, each contained approximately six hundred thousand acres of improved farmland. With 337,093 acres of improved farmland, the Bluegrass counties of Fayette and Scott alone combined had more improved land than the entire Purchase. What is more, at 566 square miles the two counties were less than a quarter of the physical size of the entire Purchase. Thus, in comparison to other Kentucky farms, Purchase holdings were less improved, smaller, and worth less.⁴⁴

⁴³ Don Simmons, *McCracken County, KY., Tax lists, 1824-1836* (Melber, KY: Simmons Historical Publications, 1987); Simmons, *Hickman County, KY., Tax lists 1825-26-27-28-29* (Melber, KY: Simmons Historical Publications, 1987); Simmons, *Calloway County, KY* (Melber, KY: Simmons Historical Publications, 1988). All figures are my own.

⁴⁴ *Agriculture of the United States in 1860: Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census*. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864), 58-65. All figures are my own.

In spite of their relatively small land holdings and comparative dearth of improved acreage, Purchase farmers, like other farmers in Kentucky, learned quickly to maximize use of the land. Most used the bulk to grow tobacco, and added other crops such as cereal grains, corn, and flax. Unimproved acreage went to grazing livestock, especially cattle, sheep, and hogs. Despite its relatively small size and late development, the Purchase, could by 1840 boast a modest agricultural economy. That year farmers in the area produced over one millions pounds of cereal grains, had livestock valued at approximately \$220,000, and produced approximately 6500 bushels of rye, 1.3 million bushels of corn, 27 bushels of wheat, 44,000 pounds of wool, and 2500 tons of hay, hemp and flax.⁴⁵ By 1850 the numbers had increased greatly. According the United States Agricultural Census for 1850, the seven counties of the Purchase contained 192,417 head of livestock, and had produced 87,894 bushels of wheat, 310,753 bushels of rye and oats, 2,253,990 bushels of Indian corn, 172,016 bushels of Irish potatoes, and 7007 bushels of peas and beans⁴⁶

Ten years later Purchase farmers produced approximately 303,616 bushels of wheat, over 60 bushels of rye, 3,354,515 bushels of Indian corn, 12,900 bushels of oats, over 11,000 bushels of peas and beans, 76, 983 bushels of Irish potatoes, and over 130,000 bushels of sweet potatoes. Sweet potatoes seemed a crop especially profitable to Graves County, which at 50,938 bushels was the top producer of the crop in the state.

⁴⁵ United States Department of State, *Compendium of the Enumeration of the Inhabitants and Statistics of the United States, as Obtained at the Department of State, from the Returns of the Sixth Census by Counties and Principal Towns, Exhibiting the Population, Wealth, and Resources of the Country*, reprint. (New York: Norman Ross, 1990), 264-65.

⁴⁶ United States Census Office, *Statistical View of the United States: Embracing its Territory, Population, Moral and Social Condition , Industry, Property, and Revenue; the detailed statistics of cities, towns and counties. Being a Compendium of the Seventh Census*, reprint. (New York: Norman Ross Publishing, Inc., 1990), 238-247. Hereafter, referred to as *Compendium of the Seventh Census*.

The Purchase likewise contained livestock valued around \$2,747,012 and slaughtered animals worth \$640,792. Cotton was also a supplemental crop for Fulton and Hickman counties whose bottomlands along the Mississippi provided lush ground for the most southern of all crops.⁴⁷

Table 1.1. Agricultural Production in the Purchase 1850

County	Cereals (bu.)	Corn (bu.)	Potatoes (bu.) (Irish and sweet)	Livestock (Head)
Ballard	34,611	272,550	18,565	28,781
Calloway	73,178	405,785	28,542	39,545
Fulton	30,622	236,315	20,442	20,739
Graves	136,363	653,838	48,391	58,210
Hickman	46,810	317,691	24,230	25,583
McCracken	24,060	174,976	19,180	16,493
Marshall	30,677	192,835	12,666	19,050

Source: *Compendium of the Seventh Census*, 238-47

Table 1.2. Agricultural Production in the Purchase 1860

County	Cereals (bu.)	Corn (bu.)	Potatoes (bu.) (Irish & sweet)	Livestock (head)
Ballard	56,854	525,269	24,657	35,222
Calloway	29,412	500,608	30,592	37,831
Fulton	36,843	322,040	18,365	21,030
Graves	92,868	1,030,331	72,366	71,134
Hickman	34,564	369,026	17,995	23,908
McCracken	38,598	302,915	22,885	21,796
Marshall	30,446	304,335	20,930	25,379

Source: *Agriculture of the United States in 1860*, 58-68.

⁴⁷ United States Secretary of the Interior, *Agriculture of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census, reprint*. (New York: Norman Ross Publishing, Inc., 1990), 58-68. (Hereafter referred to as *Agriculture of the United States in 1860*.) The second highest producers of sweet potatoes were Christian County at 31,979 and Jefferson County at 31,854.

The Madrid Bend, or Kentucky Bend, section of Fulton County, located on a peninsula in the Mississippi River, was known to have produced sizeable amounts of cotton which were floated down to New Orleans for sale. The amount of cotton grown on this tiny piece of land is not known since none appear in the 1850 and 1860 agricultural census.

The cash crop of the Purchase, however, was tobacco. Like their neighbors in the adjacent Pennyroyal counties, Purchase farmers found gold in the dark-fired tobacco that transformed the landscape and fortune of western Kentucky. When the first agriculture census was compiled in 1840, the Purchase counties produced over two million pounds of tobacco. In 1850, they produced over three million pounds of tobacco and by 1860 the number jumped to 12 million pounds. Indeed, Graves County, with 4,383,215 pounds, was the top five producer of the leaf in the state for the year 1860.⁴⁸

By relying on tobacco as an economic staple, Purchase farmers were simply becoming the newest region to grow a crop Kentuckians had relied on since its inception. Because tobacco was the cash crop of Virginia, it also became the cash crop of Kentucky. The first settlers to the state brought tobacco seeds with them as well as the knowledge to grow them. Much to the chagrin of her mother state, Kentucky became a major threat to the Old Dominion's market as early as 1810 when farmers began floating their product down to New Orleans in exchange for sugar, salt, and coffee.⁴⁹

Bluegrass farmers soon found a new crop as well. The burley tobacco that made the bluegrass such a desirable agricultural region was replaced by another more profitable crop—hemp. As a result, tobacco cultivation, like the population of Kentucky, shifted west. In western Kentucky, the dark-fired tobacco used in snuff became highly prized.

⁴⁸ *Agriculture of the United States in 1860*, 58-68. By far, the top producer of tobacco in Kentucky in 1860 was Christian County located in the Pennyroyal section, one county over from the Purchase. The county produced over 11 million pounds that year, almost as much as the entire Purchase.

⁴⁹ Joseph Clarke Robert, *The Tobacco Kingdom: Plantation, Market, and Factory in Virginia and North Carolina, 1800-1860* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1938), 142-3.

Indeed, according to the 1860 Agricultural Census, the top tobacco producing counties were all located in Western Kentucky.⁵⁰

The shift of tobacco production to the western area of the state ultimately had much to do with the acquisition and settlement of the Purchase. Farmers in the west had access to some of the most navigable and profitable waterways in America. Tobacco farmers in the western counties that bordered the Purchase could simply float their product up the Tennessee River to the Ohio River at Paducah, and down to the Mississippi River at Columbus. In addition, settlers were still pouring into the Purchase as late as the 1840s and they looked to tobacco as a cash crop or at least as a supplemental crop.⁵¹

Table 1.3 Tobacco Production (by pounds)

County	1840	1850	% increase	1860	% increase
Ballard*		152,700		1,817,792	91.6%
Calloway	143,192	957,381	85%	2,379,955	59.7%
Fulton*		222,482		602,792	63.9%
Graves	464,372	1,090,545	57.4%	4,383,215	75.1%
Hickman**	1,410,438	378,580		903,367	58%
McCracken	65,643	84,196	22%	1,137,228	92.6%
Marshall*		122,883		1,042,270	88.2%
Total	2,083,645	3,008,767	30.7%	12,266,619	24.5%

* Did not exist in 1840. These counties were carved out of Calloway, Graves, Hickman, and McCracken which accounts for the discrepancies from 1840 to 1850.

** Several counties were carved out of Hickman which accounts for the decrease in pounds of tobacco between 1840 and 1850.

Source: *Compendium of the Seventh Census*, 238-47; *Agriculture of the United States*, 1860, 58-68.

⁵⁰ *Agriculture of the United States in 1860*, 58-65.

⁵¹ Axton, *Tobacco in Kentucky*, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1975), 48-50.

The pesky plant that had enthralled mankind for thousands of years was also one of the hardest plants to care for and required copious amounts of labor. In March or April potential fields are cleared of trees, stumps, and rocks. The soil must be repeatedly and vigorously plowed and hoed to a fine consistency. Next, the miniscule seeds are scattered and covered with brush to protect from the unpredictable late frost. The seedlings are transplanted in late April or May. The little plants must be pulled up by hand and placed in smaller holes which are watered and fertilized. All through the summer, plants are protected from insects and green caterpillars. Any flowers or leaves that threatened to rob the plant of needed nourishment are cut. The White-Burley tobacco that flourished in the Bluegrass grew to early fall, at which point the tobacco plants were placed on stakes, hanged in a barn, and allowed to cure in the dry October air. In western Kentucky and the Purchase, however, the tobacco stakes were cured quite differently. Instead of drying in the fall air, the leaves were “fire-cured,” smoked by open hickory fires in tightly closed barns.⁵²

As all farmers who gambled on tobacco knew, growing and nurturing it required intense toil, labor that sometimes was provided by a slave population. Oscar Turner certainly was aware of this when he moved to Ballard County in 1845. In 1850 he held \$30,000 in real estate and owned 29 slaves. By 1860, Turner was the second largest slaveholders in the Purchase with around 47 slaves. At only thirty-five years old, Turner had amassed an impressive \$80,000 in real estate and personal wealth.⁵³

⁵² Axton, *Tobacco and Kentucky*, 27-30; John Van Willigen and Susan C. Eastwood, *Tobacco Culture: Farming Kentucky's Burley Belt* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1998), 64-116.

⁵³ *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, for Ballard County, Kentucky*, <http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed April 2007. His brother Henry Fielding Turner was a wealthy lawyer in Henderson County, Kentucky. According to the 1860 census Turner was sharing his home with his wife

Greenberry and Daniel Watson of Fulton County also used slaves to work the massive acres of farmland they owned along the Mississippi. Their lands were some of the toughest lands in the Purchase to clear because of the cypress swamps, sloughs, and ponds that permeated the county. Yet, by 1840 they were two of the largest slave owners in the Purchase with 39 and 30 slaves respectively. In 1840, Greenberry Watson owned 41 slaves and owned real estate valued at around \$20,000. Daniel Watson purchased approximately 3150 acres, accrued over eleven thousand dollars in personal wealth, and owned fifteen slaves in 1840. By 1850 he had real estate valued at over fifteen-thousand dollars and had doubled the number of slaves he owned.⁵⁴ By 1860, the widow Harriet Owen, with fifty-two slaves was the largest slave owner in the Purchase. Owen's real estate was valued at forty thousand dollars, while her personal estate was worth thirty-five thousand.⁵⁵

As citizens of Kentucky, the people of the Jackson Purchase were undoubtedly accustomed to living in a slave society. Kentucky developed as a slave state and the majority of settlers to the Purchase were either born within the state or moved there from Tennessee, Virginia, or North Carolina. Historian Marion Lucas has noted that "blacks and whites entered Kentucky together."⁵⁶ When Daniel Boone and his family walked through the Cumberland Gap they brought with them several slaves, a pattern that would

and young son as well as ten other people, including an overseer and a woman named Mary Marshall whose real-estate and personal wealth were valued at fifty-five thousand dollars. Her young son Lewis, age six, was listed as the owner of seventeen slaves.

⁵⁴ *Seventh and Eighth United States Slave Schedules, 1850 and 1860, for Ballard, Calloway, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, McCracken, and Marshall Counties, Kentucky*, <http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed January 2007.

⁵⁵ *Eighth Census of United States, 1860, for McCracken County, Kentucky*, <http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed April 2007.

⁵⁶ Marion B. Lucas, *A History of Blacks in Kentucky, Volume I: From Slavery to Segregation, 1760-1891* (Frankfort, KY: The Kentucky Historical Society, 1992), xi.

be repeated by subsequent settlers. In 1792, when Kentucky drew up its first Constitution, Virginia required the Bluegrass state to adopt all laws pertaining to slavery. Thus all slaves brought into Kentucky prior to statehood and those born to female slaves were to remain in bondage. Despite protestations from a small group of anti-slavery advocates, most notably the Presbyterian minister David Rice, Kentucky adopted an even harsher slave code in 1798 which relegated slaves and free blacks to second-rate status.

In the first thirty years of statehood, slavery increased dramatically overall in Kentucky. In 1790, approximately 11,000 slaves lived in the Bluegrass state; in 1800 the number increased to almost 40,000 and by 1810 the number jumped to approximately 80,000. By 1820, two years after the Purchase was created, over 126,000 slaves called Kentucky home.⁵⁷ By 1830, slaves accounted for almost a quarter of the state population, a statistic that alarmed many Kentuckians. Consequently, the Assembly enacted legislation that prohibited the importation of slaves into the state after 1833. As a result, the interstate slave trade became a highly profitable venture in Kentucky. The Ohio and Mississippi Rivers became busy thoroughfares for transporting slaves to the Deep South. The dominance of King Cotton made the institution of slavery crucial to the agricultural markets of the South, and Lexington, the gem of the bluegrass region, became a sought after slave market. In the thirty years leading up to the Civil War, over 70,000 slaves were sold out of the state. Yet the absolute number of slaves grew in Kentucky until it reached 225,000, roughly 20 percent of the population, in 1860. Additionally, the number of slave owners in the state grew to 38,000—the third largest slaveholding state in the Union. In 1860, only Virginia and Georgia held more slaves than

⁵⁷ Lucas, *A History of Blacks in Kentucky*, xvi; Clayton E. Jewett and John O. Allen, *Slavery in the South: A State by State History* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2004), 104.

Kentucky.⁵⁸ While the number of slave owners may have been high, the amount of slaves they owned remained modest. Twenty two thousand slaveholders, or 57 percent, owned four or fewer slaves, while approximately 1555 owned twenty or more slaves. Only five owners held more than one hundred slaves.⁵⁹

The percentage of slaves in the state varied from region to region. In the eastern half of the state, slaveholding was practically nonexistent due to a lack of arable land. As a result, slaves constituted a mere 4.6 percent of the population. The Bluegrass area maintained the highest percentage of slaves with 20 to 30 percent population in most areas. Bourbon, Fayette, Shelby and Jessamine counties all contained over 40 percent slave population, while Woodford County's population was over 52 percent black. The growth of dark-fired tobacco in the Green River Country and Pennyroyal led to a dramatic increase in the south western counties of the area. In Henderson, Christian, and Todd counties slaves constituted between 40 and 48 percent of the population.⁶⁰

Despite its late entry as part of Kentucky, in 1860 slaves constituted only 16 percent of the population in the Jackson Purchase. The Purchase, however, comprised twenty-four hundred square miles compared to the Bluegrass area with eight thousand miles, or the Pennyroyal with twelve thousand miles.⁶¹ While the percentage of slaves dropped in the state of Kentucky as a whole, it grew in the Purchase. According to the United States Census and Slave Schedules between 1850 and 1860, the percentage of slaves in Ballard County grew from 14 to 21 percent, while the numbers of slaves in

⁵⁸ Lucas, *A History of Blacks in Kentucky*, xvi; Clayton E. Jewett and John O. Allen, *Slavery in the South: A State by State History* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2004), 104.

⁵⁹ Lucas, *A History of Blacks in Kentucky*, xvi; Jewett and Allen, *Slavery in the South*, 104.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, xx; Harrison and Klotter, *A New History of Kentucky*, 168.

⁶¹ Harrison and Klotter, *A New History of Kentucky*, 22-23.

Calloway County grew from 12 percent to 15 percent. The percentage of slaves in Graves County grew from 12 percent to 17 percent. In Fulton County, a cotton growing area, the slave population increased from 14 percent to 20 percent while in Hickman county slaves grew only 1 percent, from 17 to 18 percent. In McCracken County, due in part to the growth of Paducah, the percentage of slaves grew from 7 percent to 16 percent. Because of its poor soil quality, Marshall County contained the smallest percentage of slaves with 2 percent in 1850 and 5 percent in 1860.

Table 1.4 Changes in Slave Population in the Purchase

County	1850	1860	% change
Ballard	842	1718	50.99%
Calloway	992	1492	33.5%
Fulton	943	1078	12.5%
Graves	1439	2845	49.4%
Hickman	841	1249	32.5%
McCracken	808	1738	53.5%
Marshall	249	251	29%

Source: *Compendium of the Seventh Census, Vol.1, 613-24; Compendium of the Eighth Census, Vol. 1, 1860, 175-177.*

The number of slaveholders in the Purchase meanwhile grew from 1485 in 1850 to approximately 2181 in 1860. Slaveholders in the area, however, owned a modest number of servants. In 1850, 75 percent of slave owners held five slaves or less, while around 8 percent held ten to twenty slaves. Less than 2 percent of slave holders owned twenty slaves or more. In 1860, 70 percent of slaveholders held five slaves or less; nine percent held ten to twenty slaves; and 3 percent held twenty slaves or more.⁶²

⁶² *Seventh and Eight Census of United States, 1850 and 1860, for Ballard, Calloway, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, McCracken, and Marshall Counties, Kentucky*, <http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed April 2007.

Table 1.5 Slaveholders in the Purchase

County	1850	1860	% change
Ballard	182	317	42.5%
Calloway	245	319	23.2%
Fulton	204	213	4.2%
Graves	341	557	38.7%
Hickman	223	288	22.5%
McCracken	207	366	43.4%
Marshall	83	121	31.4%
Total	1485	2181	31.9%

Source: *Compendium of the Seventh Census*, Vol.1, 613-24; *Compendium of the Eighth Census*, Vol. 1, 1860, 175-177.

Table 1.6 Average Number of Slaves per Slaveholder in the Purchase—1850

County	1 slave	5 or less	10 or less	20 or less	20 or more
Ballard	52	80	30	17	3
Calloway	70	114	40	19	1
Fulton	63	82	41	13	5
Graves	109	151	59	1	1
Hickman	79	96	29	14	0
McCracken	61	99	37	10	1
Marshall	31	25	10	1	0

Source: *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, Slave Schedules for Ballard, Calloway, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, Marshall, and McCracken Counties, Kentucky*

Table 1.7 Average Number of Slaves per Slaveholder in the Purchase—1860

County	1 slave	5 or less	10 or less	20 or less	More than 20
Ballard	89	125	61	28	14
Calloway	73	141	66	23	4
Fulton	58	95	36	18	7
Graves	126	250	119	63	8
Hickman	93	118	52	24	3
McCracken	101	156	77	24	7
Marshall	55	48	14	3	0

Source: *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Slave Schedules for Ballard, Calloway, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, Marshall, and McCracken Counties, Kentucky*,

Unfortunately, scant information survives that describes the day-to-day life of slaves in the Purchase. Yet it is possible to deduce that slaves in the Purchase area lived lives similar to many other slaves in Kentucky, in that they belonged to small or middling slave owners, lived in cabin or huts away from the “main” house, received clothing once or twice a year, and had adequate amounts of food. Their work schedule seems to have conformed to that of the Upper South, in that they worked a five-and a-half day weeks with Saturday evenings reserved for personal chores and Sundays for visiting family members on other farms. While tobacco was the primary cash crop in the Purchase, other crops such as corn and other food crops ensured maximum efficiency of the land. The most strenuous aspect of tobacco farming was preparing the ground for planting; once that task was completed, women and children would be used to pick off worms and suckers. Enslaved men were used to stoke the hickory fires that cured the “dark” tobacco, the cultivation of other crops, or as herders and drivers of livestock.⁶³

⁶³Harrison and Klotter, *New History of Kentucky*, 292-293; Jewett and Allen, *Slavery in the South*, 106-07; J. Winston Coleman, *Slavery Times in Kentucky* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1940), 20.

The small percentage slaveholding in Kentucky does not mean the institution was less cruel than in the Deep South. Historians of Kentucky slavery have in the past suggested that slavery in the state was practiced in its “mildest form,” yet evidence does not support that claim. Kentucky was a renowned slave market, a slave state situated perilously across from the Ohio River and freedom. Many slave testimonies reveal the same system of punishment evinced elsewhere in the South, while spectacular stories of cruelty highlight Kentucky’s particular role. Margaret Garner, for example, was a Kentucky slave who, faced with recapture after escaping to Ohio, killed her child rather than see it re-enslaved.⁶⁴ Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* after a visit to Kentucky. Thomas Jefferson’s nephews, who lived in Livingston County on the border of Paducah, murdered, dismembered, and burned the body of one of their slaves in order to teach him to “stay at home” and “obey orders.” Even Cassius Clay, noted abolitionist and cousin of Henry Clay, was not above personal cruelty: when his young son died mysteriously, he blamed a slave girl, Emily, for his death. He imprisoned her for two years, during which time he sold her family down South. After her acquittal, he sold her South as well.⁶⁵ In addition, several “uprising” scares, such as the one that terrified Kentuckians in December 1858, led many slaveholders to beat, whip, or execute their slaves.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Stephen Weisenberger, *Modern Medea: a family story of slavery and child-murder from the Old South* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998).

⁶⁵ Lucas, *History of Blacks*, 18.

⁶⁶ For more on the Lewis brothers and the murder of their slave see Boynton Merrill, Jr., *Jefferson’s Nephews: A Frontier Tragedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976); For more on the Christmas 1858 slave uprising see Herbert Aptheker, *American Negro Slave Revolts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943). For a first hand account of the Christmas 1858 slave revolt in Western Kentucky see the diary of Ellen K. Wallace, Special Collections, Kentucky History Center, Frankfort, KY.

Yet, it is possible that other aspects of slave life in the Purchase were different. Surrounded as it is on three sides by waterways, the Purchase is a virtual peninsula. Situated across the river from Paducah was the town of Cairo, Illinois, a grim town best known for its muddy streets. Settled by southerners, it was no place for a slave to attempt escape, as evinced by former slave Sella Martin. In one of the few slave testimonies to survive from the Purchase, Martin recounted how his master let him work the steamboats up and down the Mississippi River. Martin avoided disembarking at Cairo for “though it was free in name, it was one of the most active depots of the negro catchers, who, because of it peculiar situation [being across the river from the slave state of Kentucky] watched for fugitive slaves, and made quiet a large income by returning them to their masters.”⁶⁷

Additional slave testimony came from Paducah. Although he did not recollect where he was born, Horatio J. Eden’s first memory was being sold around age five in Memphis to a Mr. Eden of Paducah. Eden took the young Horatio and his mother up the river to his farm where, upon seeing the young slave boy, Eden’s son exclaimed, “Papa that’s a pretty little nigger, give him to me.” Another man, McCracken County slave Zachary Fletcher, recalled that his first owner was a “batchler” who later sold him, a pattern that repeated throughout his time in bondage. One of Fletcher’s owners used the young slave as a jockey during horse races.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Testimony of Sella Martin in John W. Blassingame, ed. *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews, and Autobiographies*. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 632-33.

⁶⁸ Blassingame, *Slave Testimony*, 733; Zachary T. Fletcher, Soldier's Certificate, 279,479, Civil War and Later Pension Files; Records of the Department of Veterans Affairs, RG 15, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

While slavery boosted the agricultural economy of the Purchase, other forms of economic growth also developed during the antebellum period. A manufacturing economy was starting to boom mostly due to the growth of Paducah. The city started off slowly due to competing land claims, the Panic of 1819, and lawsuits involving the heirs of George Rogers Clark, but by 1840 it had turned into a bustling town. Paducah's location downstream from Louisville, at the confluence of the Tennessee and Ohio Rivers, made it the natural commercial center of the Purchase. With the invention of the steamboat in 1811, Paducah became a town at a time when traveling the waterways was becoming faster and easier. Boats traveling from New Orleans and Louisville often used Paducah as a stopping point between the two cities. In addition, boats traveling from Louisville and points farther north along the Ohio could access the Tennessee River at Paducah and travel as far as Muscle Shoals, Alabama.⁶⁹

In his travel guide to towns along the Ohio, George Conclin described Paducah in 1848 as the most successful city below the Falls of the Ohio. He noted it included several general stores, a town market, groceries, distilleries, a newspaper, and a local bank. According to the 1840 census, McCracken County as a whole had approximately \$116,000 capital invested in dry goods, groceries, and other stores.⁷⁰ During the 1840s and 1850s the city contracted with Elijah Murray of St. Louis to build a marine railway; by 1854 eight rail sections capable of holding boats 350 feet in length was in operation. The town also received telegraph service in the 1840s and Congress, perceiving the

⁶⁹ Darrell Bigham, *Towns and Villages of the Lower Ohio* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), 67-68.

⁷⁰ Department of State, *Compendium of the Enumeration of the Inhabitants and Statistics of the United States as Obtained at the Department of State, from the Returns of the Sixth Census by the Counties and Principal Towns* (New York: Norman Ross Publishing., 1990), 265.

climate of Paducah to be healthy, funded construction for a marine hospital. James Langstaff, who came to Paducah from New Jersey, built a sawmill and brickyard .⁷¹

According to historian Darrell Bigham, the manufacturing economy of Paducah became the most “expansive of any its Kentucky counterparts on the Ohio.”⁷² By 1840, McCracken County was second only to Fayette County, home of Lexington and the center of the Bluegrass, in the value of machinery manufactured. In addition, the town produced 115 small firearms, and manufactured over \$17,000 in metals, \$4000 in leather goods, \$1500 in marble and granite, and \$5000 in woolen goods. In total, the county had over \$15,000 in capital invested in manufactures. More importantly, the county was the fourth largest producer of bricks in the state with over \$16,015 and close to \$4000 capital invested. By comparison, the other counties within the Purchase in 1840 manufactured \$2350 in bricks, \$200 in machinery, around \$1100 in metals, and 34 small fire arms. The three other counties likewise produced close to \$20,000 worth leathers goods and close to \$7200 in hats and caps.⁷³

Manufacturing in Paducah grew steadily over the years, and by the 1850 the value of manufactured products, around \$650,000, exceeded that of agricultural goods and around 290 hands were employed. In addition to the marine way, McCracken County produced tobacco twists and plugs, cornmeal and flour, railroad ties, ropes and cordage, barrel staves, and iron products. Manufacturing in the six other Purchase counties grew as well by 1850, albeit to a lesser degree than that of McCracken County. The six counties

⁷¹ Thwaites, ed., *Conclins' New River Guide*, 53-67. Other successful Kentucky towns along the Lower Ohio River were Owensboro and Henderson. Robertston, *Paducah 1830-1980: a Sesquicentennial History*, 6-21.

⁷² Bigham, *Towns and Villages of the Lower Ohio*, 47.

⁷³ Bigham, *Towns and Villages*, 67-68; *Compendium, 1840*, 265-9.

together produced \$189,228, though they contained around the same number of workers.⁷⁴

Manufactured items in the home, often dismissed because they were produced by women, were also vital to the economy of the Purchase. In 1850 the value of items manufactured in the home was approximately \$153,867 and in 1860 the amount dropped to \$103,759. In both 1850 and 1860, with an average of approximately \$5463, McCracken County recorded the lowest value in home manufactured items reflecting its status as a commercial center. Items that were made in the home, such as butter, cheese, wine, and molasses, could be purchased or traded at one of the three bakers, seven clothing stores, twenty-three grocery stores, or six wholesale grocery stores that existed in Paducah by 1860.⁷⁵

Yet most counties recorded a modest loss in value of home manufactures between 1850 and 1860 and Hickman County's loss was almost 50 percent, from \$17,462 in 1850 to \$8352 in 1860. McCracken County also experienced a loss in manufacturing. By 1860 the number of hands employed in the county had dropped to 217 while the value of manufactures dropped to just under \$450,000. The top manufactures for the area were leather goods, lumber, flour and meal, and tobacco. The six other counties far surpassed McCracken County in manufacturing by 1860, recording almost \$800,000 in manufactured goods with close to 800 workers. With \$258,905 and \$95,000, Calloway and Fulton counties exceeded in tobacco manufacturing. Flour and meal, with a

⁷⁴ Charles Edward Conrod, "Limited Growth of Cities in the Lower Ohio Valley." Ph.D., dissertation, Northwestern University, 1976, 246-49; *Comendium, 1850*, 241-47. The six other counties of the Purchase contained around 274 workers.

⁷⁵ *City Guide and Business Mirror*, Williams' Paducah Directory, (Paducah: Byers and Clements, 1859); *Compendium 1850*, 241-47; *Compendium 1860*, 61-65.

combined value of \$113,596, were the top manufactured products in Graves and Hickman counties. Marshall County recorded a modest value of \$25,600 in lumber, while at \$13,050, saddles and harnesses were the top manufacture of Ballard County. This paucity of home and regular manufactures in McCracken County and the decline in Hickman County also points to a larger economic change, the advent of the railroad in the Purchase.⁷⁶

Perhaps no other invention, save the steamboat, had more of an impact on Columbus, Paducah, and the counties that surrounded them. In 1848, the Mobile and Ohio Railroad was chartered by Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, and Kentucky in an effort to move products from the Upper Ohio River Valley to the Gulf of Mexico at Mobile. Because they were located north of the mouth of the Ohio River, Paducah and Cairo, Illinois lobbied to be chosen as the site in which to terminate the northern end of the road. Commissioners George Strother Gaines of Mobile, J.J. McCrae of Mississippi, and Colonel Childs, the chief engineer of the Mobile and Ohio, were appointed to determine a logical site.⁷⁷

After a thorough survey of the lands around the mouth of the Ohio, they rejected all sites and chose Columbus, located in Hickman County on the Mississippi River because it was located on “high ground.” Chartered in 1784 by four trustees the town was

⁷⁶ *Manufactures of the United State in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census, Under the Direction of the Secretary of the Interior* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1865), 168-195.

⁷⁷ James Lemly, *The Gulf, Mobile, and Ohio: A Railroad that had to Expand or Expire*. (Homewood, IL: Richard D. Irwin, 1953). George Strother Gaines was one of the leading citizens of Mobile. A friend to several Choctaw Indian leaders in Alabama, he helped finance and relocate them during their removal west in 1830. He likewise opened many mercantile stores in Alabama and Mississippi and started one of the most successful banks in Mobile. Gaines lobbied tirelessly for the railroad, traveling the country to secure investors and promoters. J.J. McCrae served as senator for Mississippi during the Civil War, as well as sitting on the Committee on Ways and Means for the C.S.A

originally called Iron Banks because of the red color of the bluffs along the mighty Mississippi River. Like Paducah, Columbus was a stopping point for the river traffic that traveled to and from Memphis and New Orleans and was what Darrell Bigham calls “the scene of a gigantic movement of people and products.”⁷⁸ The commissioners apparently saw no reason to change the name of the railroad despite the fact Columbus was located along the Mississippi and not the Ohio River. The citizens of Hickman in Fulton County, seeing opportunity in lying thirteen miles down river from Columbus, had by 1853 planned a railway line of their own. In 1853 and 1854, they incorporated the Hickman and Obion (Tennessee) to build a line from Hickman to some point in west Tennessee to then connect to the Ohio & Mobile. Benjamin Carr, known as the first settler in Fulton County, bought two thousand dollars in bonds and gave land from his 1100 acre estate for the road.⁷⁹

While the Mobile & Ohio was being planned, New Orleans interests also saw potential in connecting trade between the Mississippi and Ohio Valley’s through rails rather than water. Hampered by the state of Mississippi which after the Panic of 1837 refused to grant a charter, the Crescent City resisted the railroad until rival Mobile announced its plans. In 1850, through the lobbying of Illinois Senator Stephen A. Douglas, Congress made grants of public land in Illinois to urge the completion of a railroad from Chicago to Cairo. Paducah saw its chance to join the Mobile and Ohio with

⁷⁸ Bigham, *Towns and Villages*, 47. Robert Mize Sutton, *The Illinois Central Railroad in Peace and War, 1858-1868* (New York: Arno Press, 1981), 55-67.

⁷⁹ Elmer G. Sulzer, *Ghost Railroads of Kentucky* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1968), 163; Carr Family Papers, Mobile & Ohio Railroad Bond issued to B.F. Carr, April 4, 1857, Special Collections, Fulton County Public Library, Hickman, Kentucky.

the Chicago and Cairo line of the Illinois Central by joining onto the southern line to end at Troy, Tennessee.⁸⁰

In the 1851 and 1852 sessions, the Kentucky General Assembly made it possible for the town of Paducah to purchase stock in the railroad. In 1853 the town trustees passed an ordinance authorizing the purchase of around \$200,000. Judge L.M. Flournoy, Judge James Campbell, John Crockett, S.F. Singleton, William Norton, Henry Enders, James Langstaff, and B.F. Givens, all trustees of the town, became some of the most vocal promoters of the railway. James Campbell eventually became the president of the railroad and one newspaper lauded him for managing “the affairs the road with great providence and sagacity and the strictest economy.”⁸¹ One of the wealthiest men in Paducah, with an estate valued at over \$27,000, James Campbell was a born in Virginia at the turn of the century and came to the Purchase where he became successful lawyer and president of the local Bank of Louisville Branch in Paducah. To honor Campbell for his tireless determination in securing the railroad, the townspeople christened the engine that pulled out of Paducah in 1859 the “James Campbell.”⁸²

The trustees of the town hired Lloyd Tilghman, a West Point graduate and engineer, to supervise construction during the winter of 1853 and 1854. By July of 1854, seven miles of track had been laid and a barbecue was held in Paducah to celebrate. According to the local *Paducah Herald* “people drove in carriages and ox-teams and came on foot and horse and on mule back from miles around to witness for the first time

⁸⁰ Sutton, *The Illinois Central*, 55-67.

⁸¹ *Paducah Tri-Weekly Herald*, August 31, 1859. The few surviving newspapers that exist for Paducah during the 1850s, do not give any clues about who, if anyone, objected to the railroad coming to the area; Sutton, *The Illinois Central*, 55-67.

⁸² Williams, *Paducah City Directory*.

in their lives the thrilling spectacle of a roaring ‘iron horse’ consuming wood and water and belching forth smoke, fire, and steam as it pulled a train of cars at the amazing speed of 15 miles per hour.” The people of Paducah were especially proud of the fact that the local railway shop, the Paducah Marine Railway Company, produced the parts used in the construction of a locomotive.⁸³

By the end of 1854, Graves County also benefited greatly from the Paducah sponsored railway as rails were laid as far south as the county seat Mayfield. Local newspapers noted that on its maiden run the ‘James Campbell’ “rolled up to the fast growing and prosperous town of Mayfield.” They likewise noted that “the New Orleans & Ohio Railroad has already given to Graves County an unparalleled increase in wealth and energy almost impossible to realize...Mayfield, from a dull, sluggish, uninteresting little village that only lack a pair of tombstones to announce her decease, has grown into an active, prosperous, commercial town.”⁸⁴ By April 1861 Paducah and Mayfield were connected to the Mobile & Ohio line at Troy, Tennessee, linking the Purchase to Jackson, Memphis, Vicksburg, Mobile, and New Orleans by rail and by boat.

An unanticipated result of the growth of the railway industry in the Purchase was the increase in the number of foreign-born settlers moving into the area. Irish immigrants in particular seized on the labor opportunities brought on by the railroad. United States Census records show that between 1850 and 1860, the number of Irish population in the Purchase soared. In 1850, 46 Irish immigrants called Paducah home; by 1860 the number increased to 243. In Graves County, the number was even greater. Of the 258 immigrants living in the county, 210 were Irish men listed as “railway workers” living primarily in

⁸³ *Paducah Herald*, July 5, 1854.

⁸⁴ *Paducah Herald*, November, 22, 1860.

Mayfield. In Hickman County, where the Mobile & Ohio was being constructed the numbers increased even more dramatically, from 26 Irish in 1850 to 155 in 1860.⁸⁵

As the 1850s advanced in the Purchase, residents could look back over decades of growth and success. From a virtual wilderness, the last frontier of Kentucky, settlers had built farms, advanced trade along the Ohio, Mississippi, and Tennessee Rivers, built commercial centers at Paducah, Columbus, and Mayfield, and secured the ultimate badge of progress, the railroad. National events, however, would soon disrupt the idyll as sectional conflicts over slavery gripped the nation. While the Jackson Purchase remained removed from the politics of Frankfort and the Bluegrass in general, the politics of the antebellum era and the looming secession crisis thrust the Purchase to the forefront.

⁸⁵ *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, Ballard, Calloway, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, McCracken, and Marshall Counties, Kentucky; Eighth United States Census, 1860, Ballard, Calloway, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, McCracken, and Marshall Counties, Kentucky, <http://www.ancestry.com> accessed April 2, 2007.*

Chapter 2:

“Our Boasted Constitution Was Simply a Sublime Farce”: The Politics of Separation in the Purchase

On December 26, 1860, Stephen Fowler Hale stepped off a train into the crisp winter air of Frankfort, Kentucky. The Eutaw, Alabama lawyer was returning to the state of his birth, the state where his parents still lived. He came not for a holiday visit, but rather to accomplish a mission. Alabama Governor Albert B. Moore chose Hale just days earlier to represent the state as secession commissioner to Kentucky. His job was to convince the Bluegrass State, and particularly southern-leaning Governor Beriah Magoffin, to stand firm with her southern sisters against the “Black Republicans” and join South Carolina in seceding.

Hale had another reason for fearing the election of Abraham Lincoln: the destruction of slavery, “an institution with which is bound up not only the wealth and prosperity of the southern people, but their very existence as a political community.”¹ In many ways Hale’s impassioned pleas were successful. Governor Magoffin called the state legislature into extra session. It hotly debated the fate of the commonwealth. Ultimately, however, the sharply divided loyalties that rent the state in two eventually led

¹ Letter of Stephen Fowler Hale to Governor Beriah Magoffin of Kentucky, December 27, 1860, in Charles B. Dew, *Apostles of Disunion: Southern Secession Commissioners and the Causes of the Civil War* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia 2001), 53.

instead to neutrality. In one area of the state, however, Hale's words resonated loud and clear. In the Jackson Purchase there was little need for a secession commissioner to persuade them to side with the south. There, leaders would convene their own secession convention over the next few months. Eventually, the area would contribute the largest percentage of Kentuckians to the Confederate army.

The forces that led Hale to Frankfort that December had been festering for decades under the guise of party politics, but in reality had everything to do with the spread of slavery. In Kentucky as in the rest of the South, those forces coalesced under the banners of the Whig and Democratic parties, only to fall apart with the advent of the Republican Party in the late 1850s. In the years since the Jackson Purchase counties had been created, Kentucky had become a bastion of the Whig Party. Yet in every election leading up to 1860, the Purchase counties, with the exception of McCracken, displayed a rock solid devotion to the Democratic Party. The Purchase was far removed in politics and distance from the capital of Frankfort, 200 miles away and dominated by the Whigs. The capital of Tennessee, in contrast was only 120 miles away and was home to the man who had secured the area, Andrew Jackson, as well as many Purchase settlers. Those factors helped propel Purchase voters initially into the Democratic camp and there they would display overwhelming political loyalty.²

² Michael F. Holt, *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party: Jacksonian Politics and the Onset of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Richard P. McCormick, *The Second Party System: Party Formation in the Jacksonian Era*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966); William G. Shade, "Political Pluralism and Party Development: The Creation of a Modern Party System, 1815-1852," in Paul Kleppner ed., *The Evolution of American Electoral Systems* (Westport, Conn., 1982), 77-111; Harrison and Klotter, *A New History of Kentucky*, 113-121;

The first election in which Purchase voters participated was that of 1824, which pitted Bluegrass favorite Henry Clay against Andrew Jackson and John Quincy Adams. Clay four years earlier had saved the country from fissure by promoting the Missouri Compromise, which called for Missouri to enter the Union as a slave state and Maine to enter as a free state. In its final form it also proposed that slavery not be allowed above the 36°30' line. The compromise eventually restored the balance of free and slave states and quelled an impending crisis. Fresh off that victory, Clay decided to make a bid for the presidency. Previously, the state had been overwhelmingly Jeffersonian Republican, but with Clay at the helm of the National Republican Party, a new party in the state began to challenge the status quo.³ During the crucial election, approximately 72.8 percent of Kentuckians cast their vote with Clay and half the counties reported 75 percent or more votes for Clay. The Purchase however, cast its votes for “Old Hickory.” Calloway County gave Jackson 76.6 percent of the vote, while Hickman County went 68.4 percent and Graves County 59 percent for Jackson.⁴ The Purchase was barely five years old at the time of the election, and the settlers in the region had not forgotten Jackson’s role in the creation of their home.

Despite Clay’s constant popularity in his home state, the ever-shifting winds of political change gave the advantage to his bitter enemy in the 1828 election. As Secretary of State to John Quincy Adams, Clay had his reputation to uphold and defend

³ Coulter, *Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky*, 18-19; Frank F. Mathias, “The Turbulent Years of Kentucky Politics, 1820-1850,” *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 72 (October 1974): 309-18; Harrison and Klotter, *A New History of Kentucky*, 113-115; Jasper P. Shannon and Ruth McQuown, *Presidential Returns in Kentucky: A Compilation of Election Statistics and an Analysis of Political Behavior* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Bureau of Government Research, 1950), 1-3.

⁴ Shannon and McQuown, *Presidential Returns in Kentucky* 1-3. In 1824, seventy four Kentucky counties made returns in the election.

as charges of a “corrupt bargain” with the President sullied his name. During the 1824 election, when none of the candidates had received a majority of electoral votes, the election was thrown to the House of Representatives, where Adams was elected over Jackson. Clay became Secretary of State and Adam’s heir apparent. Clay’s enemies pounced, accusing him, as Speaker of the House, of convincing Congress to elect Adams over the people’s clear choice. Four years later, Clay still found himself on the defensive in Kentucky. He threw his political might behind the reelection of Adams.⁵ In the end, Jackson received 55 percent of the vote in Kentucky but once again the Purchase counties rallied behind Old Hickory, with Calloway County showing 90.5 percent support and both Hickman and Graves counties going 80 percent for Jackson. McCracken County’s total Jackson vote was 74 percent. In state elections, Purchase voters elected Jacksonian Linn Boyd of Trigg County to represent the First District from 1827 to 1832.⁶

During the mid-1830s and 1840s, the Purchase counties continued to support Democratic candidates in national and state elections. The Purchase was the only district in the entire state to elect a Democrat to the House of Representatives in 1837, and for the next twenty-three years the area would continue to vote Democrats to the House.⁷ In the 1832 Presidential election all the counties reported at least 60 percent support for Jackson, with Calloway polling the highest at 85.8 percent. During the 1836 election, Democratic candidate Martin Van Buren, whose running mate was Kentuckian Richard

⁵ Leonard P. Curry, “Election Year—Kentucky, 1828” *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 55 (July 1957): 196-212; William G. Morgan, “The ‘Corrupt Bargain’ Charge Against Clay and Adams: An Historiographical Analysis,” *Filson Club Historical Quarterly* 42 (April 1968): 132-149; Robert V. Remini, *Henry Clay: Statesman for the Union* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991).

⁶ Shannon and McQuown, *Presidential Politics in Kentucky*, 5-6.

⁷ John L. Murray was elected to the twenty-fifth Congress in 1837; the county seat of Calloway County, was named for him in 1844. John Kleber, ed., *The Kentucky Encyclopedia* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1992), 663.

Johnson, won the majority of votes in the area despite his general unpopularity among southerners. The election did mark one change in Purchase politics, however, as McCracken County for the first time went Whig. Paducah and McCracken County cast 58.4 percent votes for the unsuccessful candidate William Henry Harrison. In 1840, McCracken County again threw its support behind Harrison, while the rest of the Purchase counties stayed loyal to Van Buren and the Democratic Party. Several factors explain the county's conversion to the new party. The town of Paducah was laid out in 1832, roughly around the time of the founding of the Whig Party. Paducah quickly became the commercial center of the Purchase and much of northwestern Tennessee, southern Illinois, and southeastern Missouri. During the mid-1830s, town leaders touted construction of a naval store, railroads, and lumberyards. During the Panic of 1837, while the Democrats wavered in solutions to the crisis, the Whig Party gained credence with their plan of economic recovery. Paducah's livelihood rested on river trade and increased industrialization, which may explain its consistent devotion to the party. In addition, Paducah had several moderating influences in an ever-growing population of Roman Catholics, Jews, and northern-born residents.⁸

In 1844, the "Sage of Ashland" ran his last Presidential campaign as he faced off, once again, against a Tennessean, James K. Polk. At the forefront of the election was the spread of slavery. Northern Democrats, who favored Manifest Destiny, supported acquiring Oregon, while the south stood solid behind annexing Texas and California, and with it a large mass of land where they could spread the institution of slavery. Polk

⁸ Robertson, *Paducah*, 26; Michel F. Holt, *Rise of the American Whig Party*, 180-200. Holt notes that the Democrats offered no relief for the depression caused the Panic of 1837, while the Whigs touted federal responsibility to spur economic recovery and growth.

supported both.⁹ As usual, the Purchase, aside from McCracken County, defied the pattern of voting in the state and rejected Polk in favor of Clay. One factor in McCracken's demurrals seems to be that Paducah continued to receive settlers from northern states and foreign countries. In the 1848 election the county again voted for a Whig candidate, native son, Zachary Taylor while the rest of the Purchase stubbornly stood behind Democrat Lewis Cass of Michigan.¹⁰

In 1850 the sectional firestorm came to a head. The United States acquired vast amounts of land during the Mexican War. California, filling with settlers, applied for statehood as a free state. Since the Missouri Compromise of 1820 the Union had maintained a balance between free and slave states. Clay now offered a solution. Stephen A. Douglas finally pushed through a series of bills, initially shaped by Clay, that helped pass the Compromise. According to the terms, Texas would be compensated ten million dollars for lands west of the Rio Grande. Texas would in turn use the funds to pay off debt. The territories of New Mexico and Utah would be organized with the issue of slavery left to popular sovereignty, which left the decision up to settlers. California would enter the Union as a free state. In addition, the slave trade in the nation's capital would be abolished. The most important feature of the compromise was the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act, which called for citizens to assist in the recovery of fugitive slaves and denied a fugitive's right to a jury trial. In the Purchase, the terms of the Compromise were especially important since their Congressman, Linn Boyd, played an integral part in the negotiations. Though his role is often overlooked, Boyd presided over a critical debate

⁹ Michael F. Holt, *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party: Jacksonian Politics and the Onset of the Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991) 80-115.

¹⁰ Shannon and McQuown, *Presidential Returns in Kentucky*, 14-18

that helped push through the House a combined measure for defining the Texas boundary and assumption of Texas debt with the organization of New Mexico. Purchase Democrats were proud when, as a result of his efforts, Boyd became Speaker of the House in 1850.¹¹

The growing battle between Northern and Southern Whigs increased as questions over slavery became more pronounced after 1850. Quarrels over the Compromise of 1850 and especially the Fugitive Slave Law, along with a rise in ethnocultural conflicts resulting from mass immigration, would prove the party's undoing in 1852. The Southern Whigs favored Millard Fillmore and the success of the Compromise in curbing disunion, while Northerners chose war hero Winfield Scott. Democrat Franklin Pierce won the Presidency and the Whig Party, unable to withstand the last two decades of squabbles over slavery and sectionalism, grew weaker.¹² In Kentucky, the small margin of victory was gained by Scott, who with 51.4 percent of the vote had received the smallest percentage of votes for the Whig Party in the state's history. The Purchase once again voted for the Democratic candidate, Pierce.¹³ Even Whig strong-hold McCracken

¹¹ William F. Freehling, *The Politics of Disunion: Secessionists at Bay, 1776-1854* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); Michael F. Holt, *The Fate of Their Country: Politicians, Slavery Extension, and the Coming of the Civil War* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2004); Holman Hamilton, "Kentucky's Linn Boyd and the Dramatic Days of 1850" *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 55 (July 1957): 185-195. Texas ceded to the national government 67 million acres of land north and west of a boundary beginning at the 100th meridian where it intersects the parallel of 36°30', then running west along that parallel to the 103^d meridian, south to the 32^d parallel, and from that point west to the Rio Grande.

¹² For more on slavery and the demise of the Whig Party see William James Cooper, *The South and the Politics of Slavery, 1828-1856* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Press, 1978) and Michael F. Holt, *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party: Jacksonian Politics and the Onset of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). Cooper notes that former southern Whigs who flocked to the Know-Nothing Party were not necessarily attracted to its nativist sentiments, which applied almost exclusively to the North. Indeed, he posits that the Know-Nothing's prospered in the South only as a home for former Whigs since it provided the only political base outside the Democratic Party. Cooper, 364-65.

¹³ Shannon and McQuown, *Presidential Returns in Kentucky*, 23-27.

County, reflecting national trends, supported Pierce, but barely. Scott lost by a mere 30 votes.¹⁴

McCracken County still defied the local norm in state elections. Between 1840 and 1858, voters in the county consistently cast their ballots for Whig candidates, while the rest of the Purchase supported Democrats including Congressman Boyd, who served eight consecutive sessions of Congress. The American, or Know-Nothing Party, also found support in the county, reflecting tensions among the growing number of immigrants to Paducah. McCracken county voters threw their support behind Whig candidate Archibald Dixon in the gubernatorial election of 1851. Reflecting statewide trends, Lazarus Powell defeated Dixon, becoming the first Democrat to hold the office in almost twenty years. In 1855 McCracken became the only county in the Purchase to vote the state's first and last Know-Nothing Governor, Charles S. Morehead, into office.¹⁵

In 1854 the battle over the spread of slavery once again hovered like a dark cloud over the country. Stephen Douglas's Kansas-Nebraska Act had created two new territories in the former Louisiana Purchase region. In addition, the act repealed the

¹⁴ Robertson, *Paducah*, 26.

¹⁵ Harrison and Klotter, *A New History of Kentucky*, 121-22; Harrison, ed., *Kentucky Governors*, 71-77. Powell and Dixon were both from Henderson County, located on the Ohio River in the northwestern area of the state. Frank F. Mathias and Jasper B. Shannon, "Gubernatorial Politics in Kentucky, 1820-1851" *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 88 (Summer 1990), 258; James R. Robertson, "Sectionalism in Kentucky from 1855-1865" *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 4 (June 1917): 49-63; *Paducah Weekly American*, August 15, 1855. For more on Linn Boyd see Hamilton, "Kentucky's Linn Boyd and the Dramatic Days of 1850, 185-195. The Know-Nothing Party enjoyed a brief moment of popularity in Paducah during the early 1850s. A local Know-Nothing newspaper, the *Paducah Weekly American*, operated from 1854-55. Both Oscar Turner and Henry C. Burnett, Purchase Democrats who would later support secession, were vehement enemies of the paper. Some Know-Nothing supporters mentioned in the paper were George Morrow, the sheriff of McCracken county, J.Q.A. King, a lawyer who supported Bell in the 1860 presidential election, Dr. A.T. Noe, surgeon at the Paducah Marine Hospital, and William Morrow, a farmer of middling means. Apparently there was not enough support for the paper since it lasted less than a year. *Paducah Weekly American*, November 14, 1854, April 18, July 11, August 6, August 15, 1855.

Missouri Compromise in order to allow popular sovereignty to operate in the two territories. The act terrified anti-slavery advocates, since the territory of Kansas was located on the western border of the slave state Missouri. Slaveholding and non-slaveholding settlers, along with a small number of anti-slavery settlers, flocked to Kansas, each dedicated to controlling the state. Clashes broke out between the two until a semblance of order was restored in 1856. One casualty of “Bleeding Kansas” was the Whig Party, whose members flocked to the American Party or else became Democrats.¹⁶

In 1856 voters again went to the polls to choose a new president, but this time a new party was vying for victory. In 1854 and 1855 the Republican Party, which also absorbed members of the short lived Free-Soil Party as well as most northern Whigs, formed in opposition to Kansas-Nebraska and the spread of slavery. In 1856, it ran its first Presidential candidate, John C. Frémont of California, who narrowly lost to Pennsylvania Democrat James Buchanan. The third-party candidate was former President Fillmore, who had joined the Know-Nothings after the demise of the Whigs. Buchanan chose as his running mate John C. Breckenridge, who as a member of the Kentucky House of Representatives had become an ardent defender of slavery.¹⁷ For the first time

¹⁶ For more on the Kansas conflict see Nicole Etcheson, *Bleeding Kansas: Contested Liberty in the Civil War Era* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004); Thomas Goodrich, *War to the Knife: Bleeding Kansas, 1854-1861* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1998); Alice Nichols, *Bleeding Kansas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954); James Rawley, *Bleeding Kansas and the Coming of the Civil War* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1969); Gunja SenGupta, *For God and Mammon: Evangelicals and Entrepreneurs, Masters and Slaves in Territorial Kansas, 1854-1860* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996).

¹⁷ Freehling, *The Politics of Disunion*, 212-225; Michael F. Holt, *The Political Crisis of the 1850s*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1983), 139-181. For more on the Free Soil Party and the rise of the Republican Party see, Fredrick J. Blue, *The Free Soilers: Third Party Politics, 1848-54* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973), Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), Richard H. Sewell, *Ballots for Freedom: Antislavery Politics in the United States, 1837-1860* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1976).

since 1832, Kentucky voted for a Democratic nominee. In the Purchase the Democrats carried the day once again except for McCracken County which cast 56.7 percent of the vote for the Know-Nothings. In local elections, Democrat Henry Cornelius Burnett, a fiery proponent of the spread of slavery, succeeded Linn Boyd as Congressman for the First District.¹⁸

Antebellum politics boiled over in December 1859 when a radical abolitionist from Kansas attempted to seize the United States Arsenal at the small, mountain town of Harpers Ferry, Virginia. John Brown's raid exacerbated the tensions of the 1850s and caused an explosion. Writing about the raid on Saturday, December 24, 1859, Paducah lawyer Quintus Q. Quigley noted in his journal that "the fanaticism manifested by these men and the encouragement they received by men in high positions ...precludes the idea of the question every being set at rest in the North." An insightful man, Quigley wrote other extensive journal entries that highlighted the chaos that gripped his hometown and the rest of the Purchase during the secession winter. He predicted a dismal future for the country, writing "what will be the developments of a few years almost makes the Patriot heart shutter...each of the glorious stars in our heraldic flag might become separate sovereignties and upon the soil of each might...be enacted scenes of carnage and blood."¹⁹

¹⁸ Shannon and McQuown, *Presidential Returns in Kentucky*, 30-31; Harrison and Klotter, *New History of Kentucky*, 182-83; Wallace B. Turner, "Kentucky State Politics in the Early 1850s" *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society*, 66 (July 1968): 259-278; Berry F. Craig, "Henry Cornelius Burnett: Champion of Southern Rights" *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 77 (August 1979): 266-74. Boyd died in 1859.

¹⁹ George Q. Langstaff, Jr., ed., *The Life and times of Quintus Quincy Quigley, 1828-1910: His personal journal 1859-1908* (Brentwood, TN: Tallant Group, 1999) 41-42. Quigley was born just across the border of the Purchase in Paris, Tennessee, where his parents had emigrated from Pennsylvania via Ireland. He read law with I.W. Crockett of Paducah, where he moved in the 1850s.

A few months later, with Brown's raid still fresh in the minds of southerners, the Democratic convention met in Charleston, South Carolina. On January 3, 1860, the *Louisville Daily Courier* featured an editorial on the delegates to the Charleston Democratic Convention. In relation to delegates from the First District, which contained the Purchase counties, the editorial stated that the area was "the most thoroughly Democratic portion of the state and at one time alone bore aloft the Democratic flag." This "Gibraltar of Democracy," the paper noted, "had been beaten in many conflicts, yet unwavering and undismayed...stood firm and unbroken as Gibraltar itself."²⁰ Oscar Turner, a prominent Purchase lawyer and farmer and one of the largest slaveholders in the region, stated in an editorial that winter "The Democratic Party...never errs. The reason I think we are generally correct is, because we indulge the freedom of debate, act after deliberation...and endeavor to preserve the rules of Andrew Jackson, first to find that we are right, then disregardless of the consequences, go ahead."²¹

Other Democrats, however, were not so willing to "go ahead." Judge Rufus K. Williams of Graves County, a Douglas Democrat, was chosen as one of the delegates to represent the state at large at the Charleston Convention. Williams supported James Guthrie of Louisville in preventing a sectional crisis. In early January the state Democratic party held a convention in Frankfort during which it endorsed Douglas's Freeport Doctrine, which stipulated that Kansas, Nebraska, and other territories should

²⁰ *Louisville Daily Courier*, January 3, 1860.

²¹ *Ibid.*, January 12, 1860.

have the right to choose or reject slavery despite Dred Scot and the Buchanan administration's views.²²

At the Charleston Convention that April Douglas refused to meet the southern demands of repudiation of the Freeport Doctrine and adoption of a federal slave code. When Douglas's anti-slavery plank was voted into the party platform, fifty delegates, led by Alabama fire-eater William Lowndes Yancey, walked out of the convention. The Kentucky delegates refused to follow, however, out of the hope that Guthrie would win the nomination.²³

Unable to secure enough delegates to grant Douglas the nomination, the remaining Democrats decided to reconvene at a later date in hopes of reuniting the party. When they reassembled in Baltimore on June 18, the southern delegates who walked out of the Charleston convention demanded to be seated. Denied, 110 delegates participated in a walkout, now including most of the Kentucky delegates. The remaining delegates nominated Douglas, while the southern delegates reconvened and nominated the Kentuckian John C. Breckenridge to a "southern rights" ticket. The Republicans nominated Abraham Lincoln, while former Whigs and members of the Know-Nothing Party nominated Tennessean John Bell as the Constitutional Union Party candidate. Bell supporters hoped to save the union or, as historian William C. Davis notes, "ignore the sectional crisis and hope it went away."²⁴

²² *Louisville Daily Courier*, January 10, 1860; Coulter, *Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky*, 20.

²³ Coulter, *Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky*, 21.

²⁴ William C. Davis, *The Orphan Brigade: The Kentucky Confederate Who Couldn't Go Home* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980), 5. For more on the Constitutional Unionist Party see John V. Merring, "The Slave-State Constitutional Unionists and the Politics of Consensus," *Journal of Southern History* 43 (August 1977): 395-410. Like Davis, Merring contends that Constitutional Unionists only

In Paducah, Quintus Quigley wished openly for the Whig party's resurrection, writing that: "my political faith has always been that of the Whig...there lives in my mind a respect for and belief in principles of that glorious and imperial old Whig party." In his mind the Whig party could have solved the sectional crisis that plagued his mind that winter. Thus he imagined her banner floating "triumphantly over the country and upon every field...inscribed in letters of gold "The Union Forever." The Democrats in contrast were "fat with spoils and panting yet more for food for hungry men...the frank dishonesty and corruption was enough to sicken the heart and awaken despair in the minds for the preservation of the country by such a party."²⁵

Quigley, like the majority of former Kentucky Whigs, became a John Bell supporter in the Presidential race in 1860. In July of that year, the Unionists in the First District appointed him as First Congressional District Elector for the Constitutional Union party. All that fall, he and his opponents toured the Purchase trying to drum up support for their candidates. Lawrence Trimble, the District Elector for Douglas, gave rousing speeches, positing that the Illinois Senator "was nominated upon the same platform which the Democratic Party had stood upon since 1847" and that "popular sovereignty was the only correct and sensible way to settle the question of slavery." A.P. Thompson, a Breckenridge supporter, declared that the Republican Party was anti-slavery and that his candidate was the only man who "commanded the confidence of the people" when he walked out of the Democratic convention. Quigley, in response, stated that

halfheartedly defended the Union and revealed the "ambivalence" of the border states towards slavery. See also Jack Kelly "John J. Crittenden and the Constitutional Union Party" *Filson Club Historical Quarterly* 48 (July 1974): 265-76.

²⁵ Quigley, Langstaff, ed., 42, 44.

neither the Republican nor Democratic Party had any “conceivable solution upon the slavery question” and that Bell was the only candidate who promoted leaving the Union “as it is.”²⁶

George Pirtle, a young farmer in Watervalley, Graves, County, wrote about the election in his memoirs: “And here is where the bullheadedness began. If the parties opposed to the Lincoln platform would have agreed on one man, they could have elected him easily, as the three parties poled more than three fourths of a million more votes than Lincoln did. But every man would go for his man or rather his own way.”²⁷

Thus Lincoln won. Bell, who received 45 percent of Kentucky’s vote, defeated the Democrat Breckenridge in his own home state. The majority of Purchase counties, in typical fashion, voted for the Democrat Breckenridge, with Marshall casting the largest percentage at 73.8. McCracken County meanwhile showed its Whiggish roots and cast 57.2 percent of its votes for Bell. The election did see another Purchase county steering away from the Democrats. Ballard County voters gave a small margin of victory to Bell, with 39.9 percent of the vote to Breckenridge’s 37.5 percent. Douglas received 22.5 percent of votes. In addition, with only one percentage point separating them, Breckenridge barely defeated Bell in Fulton County. Thus, in November of 1860, it seems that voters in at least three counties were reconsidering their devotion to the Democratic Party. In Graves County, George Pirtle noted that “when the returns of the election in November was heard from, it turned out that Lincoln was elected by a safe

²⁶ *Quigley*, Langstaff, ed., 53.

²⁷ William George Pirtle Memoirs, Chapter 1, Louisville: Filson Club Historical Society Special Collections, Manuscripts Collection, APS72d. Pirtle titled each of his entries as a chapter.

plurality. Excitement became intence, and increased every day in the south as the idea of the loss of their property in slaves did not set well.”²⁸

Table 2.1 1860 Election Results by Percent of Votes in the Purchase

County	Breckenridge	Douglas	Bell
Ballard	37.5	22.5	39.9
Calloway	69.8	9.1	21.1
Fulton	43	15	42
Graves	60.5	6.9	32.6
Hickman	63.8	6.8	29.3
McCracken	19.7	22.5	57.2
Marshall	73.8	9.9	16.3

Source: Shannon and McQuown, Presidential Returns in Kentucky, 35-36. Lincoln received ten votes in the Purchase.

That winter, Quigley remained a strong, former Whig, denouncing South Carolina for her severance from the Union. He regarded secession as “the apple of discord, a new Pandora’s box opened up scattering over the whole country seeds which shall ripen with revolt, revolution, Civil War, and a thousand untold and incalculable evils.”

Disillusioned, he went on to lament that “that a state can thus with impunity throw off her allegiance to the general government only established the fact that in reality we never had such and that our boasted constitution was simply a sublime farce and the changes in making may but foreshadow by her change from sunshine to storm the political state we are reaching.”²⁹

As election results demonstrate there were more than enough vocal secessionists to counter Quigley’s conservative opinions. One was John C. Noble of Paducah. His

²⁸ Shannon and McQuowen, *Presidential Returns in Kentucky*, 32-36.

²⁹ *Quigley*, Langstaff, December 21, 1860, 60-61.

Paducah Herald became a vociferous mouthpiece of the Democratic party in the 1850s and was rabidly pro-secessionist afterward. So vocal was he in his support of secession that on Christmas Day 1860, his opponents hanged him effigy from the telegraph wire at the corner of Broadway and Locust streets in downtown Paducah. Attached to the effigy was a large card inscribed “the fate of a disunionist.” Quigley wrote in his journal that “this in itself might be considered harmless did we not look at the feelings that lead to such acts...the public mind is in an excited and inflammable state and...the slightest circumstances may blow it into a flame which spreads beyond the control of the thinking, cool, and considerate mind of which we are sorry to say there are but few in any community.”³⁰

Congressman Henry C. Burnett also supported secession. He wrote an editorial for the *Herald* in which he proposed that “the legislature...provide at once for the calling of a state convention so that the sovereign voice of Kentucky can be heard in this momentous crisis.”³¹ Burnett was the stereotype of a fire-eating secessionist and would later play an important role in the Confederate government.³²

In the meantime, John J. Crittenden, like his political friend Henry Clay before him, was busy in Washington trying to find a compromise to the crisis. On December 18 he presented resolutions to Congress that protected slavery and extended the Missouri Compromise line to California. In addition, the compromise forbade Congress from

³⁰ Quigley, Langstaff, ed., December 25, 1860, 62.

³¹ *Paducah Herald*, quoted in the *Louisville Courier*, January 18, 1861. Unfortunately, few newspapers from the antebellum and Civil War in the Jackson Purchase have survived. As such, I have utilized newspapers from outside the region to report on events happening in the Purchase during the secession crisis and the war years.

³² Berry F. Craig, “Henry Cornelius Burnett: Champion of Southern Rights,” *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 77 (Autumn 1979): 266-74.

interfering in the slave trade and compensated slaveholders for rescued fugitive slaves. It likewise called for no future additional amendments to the Constitution concerning the abolishment of slavery where it existed. Two days later, however, the Republican-dominated Senate rejected the Crittenden Compromise.³³

Secession was hotly debated over the next couple of months in meetings and newspapers all across the Purchase. On Saturday, December 22, 1860, several citizens, including Quigley, met at Gardner Hall in downtown Paducah. Though the meeting was supposedly called for the purpose of adopting resolutions to save the Union, “antagonistic elements...assembled” who wished to make their support of secession known. Quigley reported that “sides had been taken in advance and that there were a few men self-constituted the champions of the occasion for the purpose of manufacturing for themselves prestige and popularity.” Judge James Campbell, a trustee of the town who was responsible for bringing the railroad to Paducah, took the floor. Quigley was shocked by his address, writing that “although I was apprised that he was fast going over to dissolution I was not prepared for the ultra Southern ground and defiance breathed by the resolutions. They were well written and fine, strong and dignified language but full of resistance...he progressed becoming more and more inflammatory until he equaled a rabid excitement.” That Campbell would give such a speech was a complete surprise, since just weeks ago he was the most vocal supporter of the Union “urging the blood and

³³ Albert Kirwan, *John J. Crittenden: The Struggle for the Union* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1962); Donald W. Zacharias, “John J. Crittenden Crusades for the Union and Neutrality in Kentucky” *Filson Club Historical Quarterly* 38 (July 1964): 193-205.

destruction that would follow, the distress and distrust, the extermination of liberal principles in government, the destruction of trade.”³⁴

J.J.A. King, a wealthy young lawyer, also read a set of resolutions at the Paducah meeting that “were a mere recapitulation of the glory of our institutions.” King’s motions were eventually adopted, causing confusion and squabbling. Quigley’s attempts to offer a compromise, in contrast, were rejected. He angrily noted that secession “cockades are mounted upon the hats of a few and the excitement is fully organized.” He went on to worriedly muse “the public mind is in an excited and inflammable state and the slight circumstances may blow it into a flame which spreads beyond the control of the thinking, cool, and considerate mind.”³⁵

Around January 11, secessionists met in Ballard County to pass resolutions that proposed disunion unless the North secured “the South by additional constitutional guarantees.”³⁶ Several prominent Purchase residents likewise supported secession in editorials written to local and state papers. Edward Crossland, a wealthy Hickman County lawyer and former State Representative, wrote to the pro-secession *Louisville Courier* that Kentucky “ought to act as one, in imitation of the example set by the gallant, glorious little state of South Carolina.”³⁷

³⁴ Quigley, Langstaff, 60-61.

³⁵ Quigley, Langstaff, ed., 61-62. The “cockades mounted upon the hats” that Quigley spoke of refers to a knot of ribbons or rosettes worn on a man’s hat. During the secession crisis palmetto cockades were worn in Charleston and it became fashion among other southern states to do the same to show their support for secession.

³⁶ *Louisville Courier*, reporting on a January 11 meeting, February 6, 1861.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, January 15, 1861. The *Louisville Courier* was owned and operated by Walter N. Haldeman who used his newspaper as a pro-South organ. In September 1861, Haldeman fled Louisville for Nashville where he continued his paper until his return to Louisville in 1865. In a secret negotiation, Haldeman’s paper was purchased in 1868 by Henry Watterson who joined it with George D. Prentice’s

While secession was the dominant sentiment in the Purchase, pro-Union voices strove to be heard. In mid-January, several voters “without distinction of party” met in Mayfield, Graves County and passed resolutions favoring the Crittenden proposals.³⁸ Lucian Anderson of Graves County emerged there as a local leader. Elected to the state legislature as a Whig in 1855-57, Anderson remained a staunch Unionist. Another powerful Graves County Unionist was Judge Rufus K. Williams, who would move his family to Paducah in 1861 and helped raise a Federal company. Edward Bullock of the *Daily Confederate News* cursed Judge Williams for endeavoring to “prostitute that high place of office.” He added that nothing but “curses and execrations will ever greet his ear from his old friends and constituents.”³⁹

In response to the growing crisis throughout the state Governor Magoffin called the Kentucky legislature into special session on January 17, 1861. During the session he asked the legislature to call a convention to conclude “for full and final determination, the future Federal and interstate relations of Kentucky.” Secessionists in the Legislature calling, themselves the Southern Rights Party, looked to align Kentucky with the Confederacy. Pro-Union members of the Union Party meanwhile worked to prevent a convention from occurring. The Purchase area sent three senators and five representatives to the special session. Representatives Virgil Coleman of Calloway County, John Cook of Graves County, Lawrence Husbands of McCracken and Ballard Counties, William L. Lannom of Fulton and Hickman Counties, and Thomas Goheen of Marshall and

Louisville Journal. The *Louisville Courier-Journal* subsequently became one of the most popular newspapers in the nation.

³⁸ Rufus K. Williams to John J. Crittenden, January 23, 1861, in Berry F. Craig, “The Jackson Purchase Region of Kentucky in the Secession Crisis of 1860-61,” 19.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 23.

Livingston Counties were all secessionists. Senator John M. Johnson of McCracken and Marshall Counties and Senator John L. Irvan of Calloway and Trigg County favored also favored secession. Senator Samuel L. Jenkins of Ballard, Fulton, Graves, and Hickman County, initially voted for disunion only to become a Unionist later on.⁴⁰

Pressure in the Purchase mounted on the assembly. The *Hickman Courier* called for the immediate secession of Kentucky, while the *Columbus Crescent* boldly declared that “The Rubicon is crossed and Kentucky may as well prepare immediately to go with the Southern States into a separate Confederacy.”⁴¹ On January 29, the Senate nonetheless voted unanimously to send six commissioners to a peace conference in the nation’s capital, while secessionists in the legislature unsuccessfully called for their own convention.⁴²

In February the *Hickman Courier* continued to agitate for secession:

The Kentucky Legislature has not, and is not, doing a thing towards the adjustment of our national difficulties. We know not what are the feelings of the citizens of the upper portion of Kentucky, but we can not believe that their representatives are reflecting their feelings in this present Legislature. Certain we are, that Southern Kentucky will per force link her destiny with that of chivalrous Tennessee...Wild as the assertion may appear, thousands of hearts have long

⁴⁰ *Journal of the Called Session of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, Begun and Held in the Town of Frankfort, on Thursday the Seventeenth Day of January, in the Year of Our Lord 1861, and of the Commonwealth the Sixty-Ninth.* (Frankfort: John B. Major Printer, 1861), 4-11. In 1861, John M. Johnson was a 34 year-old modest farmer, while John L. Irvan was a 32 year-old farmer with an estate worth \$12,000. Samuel H. Jenkins, in contrast, was a wealthy lawyer with an estate valued at over \$20,000. Representative Virgil Coleman was a wealthy farmer and merchant, while John Cook and Thomas Goheen were modest farmers. Lawrence Husbands was a wealthy Paducah lawyer with an estate valued at around \$32,000, while William D. Lannom, also a lawyer, had an estate valued at over \$10,000. All of the men were southern born; four were native Kentuckians, three were born in Tennessee, and one in North Carolina. *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, for Ballard, Calloway, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, Marshall, and McCracken Counties*, www.ancestry.com, accessed September 16, 2007.

⁴¹ *Hickman Courier* and *Columbus Crescent*, quoted in the *Louisville Courier*, January 24 and 17, 1861.

⁴² Collins, *History of Kentucky, Volume I*, 86.

anxiously favored such a transfer. Only a state pride separates us now...where is the link that binds us? ⁴³

In a letter to the *Louisville Courier*, Richard Gholson, former state senator from Ballard County, concurred, stating his belief that the legislature should call a convention and send delegates to the South to “pledge Kentucky to stand by and share the fate of the South, whatever it may be.”⁴⁴

By the end of February, even the former staunch Unionist Quintus Quigley had started to develop strong misgivings about the link that bound Kentucky to the north. On February 26, he gave a speech in which he stated his belief that once a state withdrew from the Union, “the general government had not moral or political right other than that of force to coerce her back into the Union, but that she should at once be recognized as an independent power.” He went on to argue that Kentucky should go out of the Union and connect herself to her southern sisters and form a Southern Confederacy that would “forever settle the question of slavery.” He noted that the ultra-Union men were kept away from the meeting by the leaders of the pro-secessionists. Quigley went on to blithely note that many of his old political friends now wrote him off as a “Disunionist,” for which he cared little since his premise was “that the government has proved a failure.”⁴⁵

On April 2, John C. Breckenridge addressed the Kentucky legislature and reiterated his belief that the country was a loose confederation of states, and that individual states had the right to secede with adequate cause. He urged them to adopt

⁴³ *Hickman Courier* quoted in the *Kentucky Statesman*, February 12, 1861.

⁴⁴ *Louisville Courier*, February 6, 1861.

⁴⁵ *Quigley*, Langstaff, ed., February 26, 1861, 64.

Crittenden's resolutions, in spite of Republican attempts to block compromise.

Breckenridge also proposed calling a border state convention to draft a plan of accession to both the North and South.⁴⁶

The shelling of Fort Sumter on April 12 destroyed any attempt to call a convention. In Paducah the news of Fort Sumter caused mixed reactions. Newspaper editor R.B.J. Twynam was a Democrat who served as a delegate to the Democratic National Convention from Kentucky, as well as the editor of *The Paducah Democrat*. He noted, that until the secession of South Carolina "there were not half a dozen out-spoken secessionists in Paducah, but as State after State went out and took their stand by the side of South Carolina, the secession element gained strength, and one by one the people turned over to the side of the Southern Confederacy."⁴⁷

The Union party held the majority in Paducah, he continued, but "as soon as wires flashed the news of the surrender of the fortification throughout the country, the war was considered as having commenced, and all were wild with excitement. Men and women seemed really to go mad." The proclamation of President Lincoln, issued soon after, calling upon states for 75,000 troops seemed to Twynam to release the baser emotions of people within the town as neighbor turned upon neighbor. "Calm sober discussions were no longer tolerated. 'Are you for the South, or are you for the North?' was the test question speciously put to all, thus appealing directly to the strongest passions of the heart, and at the same time attacking the weakest points of mans nature. Few, very few, were able to withstand the tempest of excited public sentiment. The weak

⁴⁶ Coulter, *Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky*, 38.

⁴⁷ Battle, et. al., *Histories and Biographies*, 81-82

and the wavering were irresistibly borne down and along with the great flood of secession fanaticism.” In Paducah, secessionist leaders “taking advantage of the trepidation they had strategically produced in the public mind...pressed on the issue of resistance to the Federal government. Men who were wildly declamatory about vindicating their rights against the government, in moments of calmness acknowledged that the government had never assailed their rights.”⁴⁸

Quintus Quigley wrote in a similar manner about the reactions of the Paducah public to Fort Sumter, stating that “yesterday our city was thrown into a state of great excitement...this exposed fully the perfidy of Old Abe and convinced many of our people who had been urging that his policy was peace.” That night in Paducah, while hundreds of citizens were enjoying the entertainment of a circus, the owner announced the surrender of Fort Sumter. The crowd responded with a “deafening shout.” Before the fall of the fort, Quigley added he was filled with anxiety due to the expression of many Paducahans that they held “no preference for either side which in my mind amounts to a very decided support of the North.” The next morning he reported that attitudes had changed “with inquiry upon every face and dejection upon that of many both Southern and Union men.” Quigley hoped to avert Civil War but noted that if it came about “my prayers are for the noble and gallant sons of the South.”⁴⁹

After Lincoln’s call for volunteers, Quigley, like Twynam, noted a change in the attitude of the town. The news “spread like leaping flames over our city and the same day saw us no longer divided but all united in rejecting [Lincoln] and his government and for

⁴⁸ Battle, et. al, *Histories and Biographies*, 81-82.

⁴⁹ *Quigley*, Langstaff, ed., April 14, 1861, 69.

support of the South. Our city grew wild and paraded out formations of companies and hallowing have filled up the town...flags with 15 stars were raised. And so we have inaugurated our war of secession.”⁵⁰

Kentucky’s first official response was neutrality, however, not secession.

Unionists throughout Kentucky beyond the Purchase were attracted to the notion of neutrality proposed by Crittenden and the Union Party of Kentucky’s Central Committee. They opposed using force to subdue the southern states and especially feared invasion by the northern states along the Ohio River. Secessionists temporarily favored neutrality as well. As both Quigley and Twynam noted, a wave of excitement followed the firing on of Fort Sumter and Lincoln’s call for 75,000 troops and secession supporters hoped an invasion on Kentucky soil would finally force the state into the Confederacy.

In the Purchase, however, neutrality was a moot point, as two companies from Hickman and Fulton counties, organized respectively by Henry C. Burnett and C.C. Bowman, crossed into west Tennessee and joined the Confederate 1st Kentucky Infantry Regiment. Other Columbus residents were so anxious for Kentucky to join the Confederacy that they sent a letter to Jefferson Davis inviting his troops to occupy their town.⁵¹ On the same day a mass meeting gathered in the town of Mayfield to hear Breckenridge, who was in the area to address the arch-secessionists. When he failed to appear, the men “having organized some military companies and formed the older men into a Home Guard” adopted “strong Southern resolutions...and stirring speeches” were

⁵⁰ Quigley, Langstaff, April 18, 1861, 69-70

⁵¹ U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 128 vols. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), vol. 52, pt. 2., 61-62. Hereafter cited as *OR*.

given by the County Judge A.R. Boone and others.” In his memoirs George Pirtle noted, “in the spring of 1861 quite a number of us in and about Feliciana...organized a company under the laws of the state, and proceeded to drilling which we kept up all summer.”⁵²

On April 23, 1861, Federal troops under General Benjamin Prentiss occupied Cairo, Illinois, just across the river from Paducah. With this occupation, Federal troops gave Purchase citizens every reason to anticipate invasion from the North. John C. Noble responded with an editorial in his *Paducah Herald* in which he pleaded “To Arms!! To Arms!! In Gods name let it be done.”⁵³ The only organized defense the area had against the forces at Cairo was a regiment of the State Guard which followed orders from the governor.⁵⁴ Led by Paducah engineer Colonel Lloyd Tilghman, the guard fortified Columbus by placing two large cannon on the bluffs, which offered a 12-mile vista of the Mississippi River. The *Memphis Daily Appeal* gleefully reported that local citizens had joined the guard in watching out for invasion.⁵⁵ The *Louisville Courier*, likewise noted that in Paducah “the people were intensely excited...eight companies have been formed.” Colonel Tilghman also traveled to procure arms in St. Louis. According to the *Courier* Paducah citizens reported they had “intelligence that some of the Southern counties of

⁵² *Louisville Courier*, May 6, 1861. In 1860, Judge A.R. Boone was a thirty-year old lawyer with an estate valued at 2500 dollars, <http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed August 25, 2007; Pirtle memoirs, Chapter 5.

⁵³ Berry F. Craig, “Kentucky’s Rebel Press: The Jackson Purchase Newspapers in 1861,” *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 75 (January 1975), 23.

⁵⁴ On March 5, 1860 Governor Magoffin authorized a complete overhaul of the Kentucky State Militia. All men between the ages of eighteen and forty-five were required to join the new militia. From its ranks, volunteers formed the heavily armed State Guard.

⁵⁵ *Memphis Daily Appeal*, April 26, 1861.

Illinois will aid them in an attack upon Cairo, and as a beginning they will tear down the trestle-works of the railroad beyond Cairo.”⁵⁶

Several Purchase citizens, including Oscar Turner, traveled southward to cities such as Memphis and Montgomery for arms. Paducah lawyer A.P. Thompson likewise wrote to Confederate Secretary of War Leroy Pope Walker asking for weapons, boldly declaring that should the Federals attempt to invade Paducah from Illinois “we with arms in our hands, should resist to the death.” Walker, unable to meet the request, wrote to Governors Isham Harris of Tennessee and John J. Pettus of Mississippi asking they help the Purchase by aiding them with weapons. Harris responded by noting that he had troops posted at Union City, just across the Kentucky-Tennessee border, to aid the Purchase should the Federals attack. Pettus added that he believed arming the people of the Purchase was of “vital importance.”⁵⁷

At the end of April, Kentucky State Guard Commander Simon Bolivar Buckner, Lloyd Tilghman, and Charles Wickliffe all conducted meetings with Prentiss at Cairo, assuring him that he had nothing to fear from the Purchase counties. They also protested the blockade that Prentiss had placed on all goods passing through Cairo from the Purchase. Tilghman responded that citizens felt “they cannot ship a barrel of flour” without being subject to the blockade.⁵⁸

Plans for the proposed border state convention went on despite the turmoil in the western counties. At the end of April, elections for delegates took place. The secessionists of Kentucky, in protest of neutrality, withdrew all their candidates.

⁵⁶ *Louisville Courier*, April 29, 1861.

⁵⁷ *OR*, vol. 52, pt 2, 81, 95-96, 75.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 100.

Consequently, all twelve delegates voted to the conventions were Unionists. In the Purchase, Hickman and Marshall County officials refused to open the polls, while voter turnout in the rest of the counties was miniscule. Those Unionists who did show up were harassed and “amid sneers, derisions, and the threats of the crowd made to look at his vote, then... was driven home.”⁵⁹

When the General Assembly reconvened on May 6, the legislature again voted for strict neutrality. The majority of citizens of the Purchase, again, rejected the state’s neutral stance. On May 10 the pro-secession element in the Purchase made a bid to “link her destiny” with southern neighbors when delegates from all seven Purchase counties met in Mayfield, Graves County with delegates from the counties located in the Western Purchase area of Tennessee. According to the *Louisville Journal*, A.D. Kingman, a wealthy lawyer from Fulton County, had helped organized the convention out of fear of “invasion by an army of abolitionists at Cairo” and that western areas of both Kentucky and Tennessee were “wholly unarmed and not likely to get arms soon.”⁶⁰ The *Journal* reported that Kingman told the crowd that Tennessee had proposed a military alliance to defend the banks of the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers.⁶¹

Late on the night of May 21, residents made a move to arm themselves when they took approximately 900 arms and six cannon from the State Guard armory at Paducah, loaded them on to rail cars and sent them to Mayfield. The munitions had been sent to the

⁵⁹ *Louisville Journal*, August 20, 1861.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, May 21, 1861.

⁶¹ Berry F. Craig proposed that proposition of an alliance between the Purchase and West Tennessee came out of a meeting between Gideon Pillow, Memphis authorities, and Oscar Turner around the first of May. I have found nothing to support this and thus believe it is conjecture. Craig, *The Jackson Purchase Region of Kentucky in the Secession Crisis*, 47.

armory by the federal government to arm local Unionists against the pro-southern State Guard. The guard, however, took the arms in anticipation of attack from Federal forces at Cairo. Pro-Confederate troops massed at the ironically named Union City, Tennessee were reportedly armed and ready to defend the Purchase at a moments notice. On May 30 an alarmed Unionist in the Purchase reported to the *Louisville Journal* that a secession ordinance was ready to be adopted in the area. He also reported the troops at Union City and predicted that “in a few months Mayfield would be a military camping-ground with 6,000 to 10,000 soldiers in drill.”⁶² Another concerned citizen noted that “we are constantly threatened from that quarter [the State Guard]” which he described as “directly hostile and menacing to this state; and is looked to by Secessionists here to make war on the Union men of Kentucky.” The *Camp Register* at Cairo observed that “businesses of all kinds is perfectly stagnant in Paducah and many houses are said to be closed.”⁶³

The area, it seemed was moving closer and closer to at least a de facto separation from Kentucky. News of the standoff in the area quickly reached the White House. On May 30, Major General George B. McClellan, commander of the Department of the Ohio, wrote Lincoln that “a very delicate question is arising as to Western, Ky—that portion west of the Tenn. River...a convention is now being held at Mayfield which may declare the Jackson [Purchase] separate from the Ky.”⁶⁴

According to a correspondent of the *New York Times* stationed in Kentucky, McClellan had every reason to be concerned. The “‘Purchase’ portion of the First

⁶² *Louisville Journal*, May 30, 1861.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, August 31, 1861; *Cairo Camp Register*, May 24, 1861, quoted in the *New York Times*, June 1, 1861.

⁶⁴ David Mearns, *The Lincoln Papers* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and CO., 1948), Vol. 2, 625.

Congressional District,” he wrote, was intent on “making trouble.” He noted the State Guard in the area gloried in “being armed neutrals” who upheld the “Jeff Davis construction” of the United States. He derided local secessionist assertions that the guard was simply practicing “‘military instructions’ in the ‘military schools’ at Columbus, Paducah, Mayfield, and Hickman.” The real motive he believed was to “invoke hordes of Pillow’s ‘patriot army’ to come to their rescue.”⁶⁵

A second secession convention took place on May 29. Delegates from throughout the Purchase attended. Oscar Turner submitted a plan for uniting the Purchase counties with West Tennessee, but not everyone assembled agreed with the proposition. Robert Gholson of Ballard County opposed the idea of separating from the Bluegrass State, calling it “contrary to State rights and state sovereignty—the very things for which we are fighting.” In addition to preventing the ultimate goal of seeing the entire state secede, he further warned that they would lose all support from the rest of state should they be invaded from Cairo. He proposed waiting out an inevitable invasion by the Federals which would force the Legislature to adopt disunion. The next day, delegates from Tennessee spoke of Kentucky’s destiny “to belong to the Southern Confederacy” and promised to furnish every man “in Western Kentucky in twenty-four hours with a gun of any size.” Despite the heated talk, the delegates adopted a “wait and see” resolution, stating that secession from Kentucky to join Tennessee was “inexpedient and improper.”⁶⁶ On June 8 the heated debates of the past two conventions seemed worthless

⁶⁵ *New York Times*, June 7, 1861.

⁶⁶ *Louisville Journal*, June 6, 1861. This is the only known report of the convention that happened at Mayfield and was reported by J.N. Beadles of Mayfield.

when the proposal to unify was dropped when Tennessee became the last southern state to secede.

In June, Quintus Quigley relocated his family to his father's home in Paris, Tennessee. He noted that "much of suffering, want, and misery" had afflicted Paducah and caused "trade" and "business of every character" to stagnate. He still, however, believed in the cause of secession and noted "the course of the South moves on in inspiring her victories with certain confidence of ultimate success...never for one moment have I despaired for the success of the South."⁶⁷

In July, nearly 2000 soldiers left the Purchase area and joined the Confederate Army at Camp Boone, just across the border in Montgomery County, Tennessee. Throughout the summer state newspapers commented routinely on the pro-southern attitude that seemed to have enveloped the Jackson Purchase. In July, John C. Noble decried the fact that the state adopted the "contemptible dodge of neutrality" but extolled the portion of the state "below" the "Tennessee River" where secession "triumphed gloriously by the thousands." He called upon legislators such as Henry C. Burnett, Governor Magoffin, Willis Machen, and others who "no one will doubt for a moment are secessionists" to throw caution to the wind and "make a fight...and pledge secession." He closed with the dire plea of "Kentucky *must* leave the abolition Union. The Kentucky Purchase, at least *will* do it."⁶⁸

Yet by mid-summer Union sympathizers and forces were also making their presence known in the area. On June 20 a meeting of pro-secession men took place in

⁶⁷ Quigley, Langstaff, ed., July 3, August 21, 1861, 70-71.

⁶⁸ Paducah Herald in the Louisville Daily Democrat, July 3, 1861.

Milburn, a small town in Ballard County. At the meeting the appearance of several Union men resulted in a fracas in which two men were shot. The *Louisville Daily Democrat* noted that “the Secessionists are drumming up their friends intending to overwhelm the Union men.”⁶⁹ The editors of the pro-secession *Louisville Courier* played up the incident for dramatic effect, writing that “our fellow citizens in that vicinity must be protected against a repetition of that movement, if need be by the whole power of the state.”⁷⁰

That summer Federal soldiers made what is believed to be their first foray into the Purchase, to tear down a Confederate flag flying over the Columbus waterfront. The editor of the *Columbus Crescent* had extremely harsh words for the Federals which betray the feelings of at least one Purchase citizen’s feelings on Yankees: “when the bow-legged, wooden-shoed, sour craut stinking, bologna sausage eating, hen roost robbin Dutch sons of _____ had accomplished the brilliant feat of taking down the Secession flag on the river bank they were pointed to another flag of the same description...and dared to take that flag down.”⁷¹

William Howard Russell, an Irish reporter for the *London Times*, was across the river in Cairo, Illinois when the incident occurred. His observations reflect the apprehension and distrust that existed in the western area of Kentucky and the gloomy Illinois city the Federals occupied. He wrote: “I am living among ‘abolitionists, cut-throats, Lincolnite mercenaries, foreign invaders, assassins, and plundering Dutchmen.’ Such, at least, the men of Columbus tell me the garrison at Cairo consists of. Down

⁶⁹ *Missouri Democrat* in *Louisville Daily Democrat*, July 24, 1861.

⁷⁰ *Louisville Courier*, June 8 1861.

⁷¹ *Columbus Crescent* quoted in William Howard Russell, *My Diary North and South* (London: Bradbury and Evans, 1863), 53-57.

below me are ‘rebels, conspirators, robbers, slave breeders, wretches bent upon destroying the most perfect government on the face of the earth.’” Russell believed that Kentucky, and in particular the Purchase area that would become so crucial in the coming months, would suffer the brunt of the war. “In those border States the coming war promises to produce the greatest misery;” he maintained “they will be the scenes of hostile operations; the population is divided in sentiment; the greatest efforts will be made by each side to gain the ascendancy in the State, and to crush the opposite faction, and it is not possible to believe that Kentucky can maintain a neutral position.”⁷² In the coming months, Russell’s words, so prophetic for an Irishman visiting the United States, would ring more true than he could ever know.

In late July the *Louisville Daily Democrat* reported that “Secessionists down in the Jackson Purchase have established a reign of terror.” The editors pronounced pro-southern citizens as “violent and vindictive” and cautioned that “a Union man is constantly in danger.” The editorial went on to warn that “the Purchase will secede.” The same paper also reported the story of a Unionist by the name of Pickett who disappeared after a squabble with two secessionists at Blandville in Ballard County.⁷³

In mid-August the *Louisville Journal* ran a piece entitled “Rebel Outrages in Southern Kentucky,” which detailed the arrival in Louisville of six young men from Columbus who detailed “a distressing state of affairs in the vicinity.” According to the men, a Confederate officer from Union City, Tennessee had visited Columbus and warned ten Union families to leave within two hours. The officer went on to warn that

⁷² Russell, *My Diary North and South*, 51.

⁷³ *Louisville Daily Democrat*, July 3 1861, July 24, 1861.

they could choose between leaving or hanging. The men went on to comment that they faced serious abuse on the way from Columbus and were forced to “avoid scouting parties of secessionists.” The paper blasted Magoffin for allowing such things to happen, stating “cannot he now do something to protect Union men and Southern Rights men from lawless mobs in that section of the state.”⁷⁴

The *Daily Democrat* also told of outrages, and particularly detailed a “fiendish murder” in the First District. According to the writer, two Confederate sympathizers went to Camp Boone, in Montgomery County, Tennessee. Upon seeing the camp, the men decided against joining the army. The men were subsequently “taken over into Graves County, blindfolded, and shot.”⁷⁵ Additional accounts of abuse were reported over the next few weeks, including to story of “some nine or ten Union men from Milburn, Ky” who were “compelled to leave their homes and property and flee to Cairo for safety.” Twenty to thirty others had “left that vicinity to avoid being overrun and murdered.” The paper threatened that if Governor Magoffin continued to withhold protection from Union men in the Jackson Purchase that the “United States will be compelled to take the responsibility of sending troops to that region. They are close by and an appeal for aid will not be unheeded.”⁷⁶

That summer also saw pro-southern citizens in the Purchase begin to form local defense units to protect against Union invasion. With the State Guard so decidedly pro-southern, the legislature had authorized the formation of armed units of local pro-Union men. Local pro-southern men retaliated and armed themselves against the state-backed

⁷⁴ *Louisville Journal*, August 12, 1861.

⁷⁵ *Louisville Daily Democrat*, August, 13, 1861.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, August 18, 1861.

Home Guards. In Hickman County a “Home Militia” was created to protect the area from Union watercraft on the Mississippi, while in Paducah a man by the name of Fowler organized a vigilante group know as the “Committee of Thirteen.” Ephraim Sherfield of Ballard County also gathered a group of Home Guard, while in Marshall County several “vigilance committees” were formed to disperse all meetings among slaves, to investigate all strangers in the county as to the intention of their visit, and to act against anyone out to “injure” their “rights or property.”⁷⁷

Vigilante groups in secessionist Milburn targeted the town’s Unionist population. A man was hanged for being a Union sympathizer while another family was ordered to leave on threat of the same fate.⁷⁸ One Milburn man complained that “the secessionists from Blandville came over to Milburn three times in the course of as many weeks to curse and abuse the Union men of the latter place, and on the third visit they got up a row, in which several men were shot and killed.”⁷⁹ Similar events occurred in Paducah. As one Unionist noted “the Union men here are having a hard time still—no quarter are given them by the secessionists.” He likewise noted that Mayor John Sauner offered little protection and that Unionists were “watched with the eyes of hawks.”⁸⁰

In late August, three Unionist families from Hickman County fled to Louisville. The *Louisville Daily Democrat* reported that “they left their homes with such articles as they could bring, leaving behind their farms and crops. They report that about fifty families left the county at the same time they did... Two sons of one of the gentlemen

⁷⁷ *Louisville Courier*, July 10, 1861; *Louisville Journal*, August 20, 1861.

⁷⁸ *Louisville Journal*, August 12, 15, 20, 1861.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, August 20, 1861.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, August 17, 22, 1861.

who arrived were secreted and sent forward the night before the family left to avoid being impressed by the Secessionists.”⁸¹ Such occurrences, though horrible, were rare only because the minority element was so small.

More ominous events followed. On August 10, 1861 the *W.B. Terry*, a Paducah based privately owned steamer, captured the steamer *Pocahontas* on the Tennessee River near Calloway County. The crew of the *W.B. Terry* seized tobacco onboard the *Pocahontas* and sent it into Tennessee.⁸² On August 20, 1861, United States gunboat *Lexington* fired a shot across the *W.B. Terry* at Paducah. Two days later the Union navy captured the steamer and took her to Cairo. Colonel Richard J. Oglesby commander of the forces at Cairo, justified the actions of the *Lexington*'s commander and stated “I had indisputable proof which examination of her papers found on board confirmed, that she was running in the employment of the Confederacy. Without hesitating upon the neutrality of Kentucky, I ordered her capture” Of the citizens of Paducah, Oglesby wrote “events have thus transpired clearly indicating the complicity of citizens of Kentucky with the rebel forces.”⁸³

In retaliation, several Paducah citizens, led by White Fowler, captured the *Samuel Orr*, the regular mail packet between Paducah and Evansville, Indiana and sent it up the Tennessee River into Confederate territory.⁸⁴ Eight days later the *Louisville Daily Democrat* reported that “Paducah is intent on sacrificing the little trade she has at these times. A mob seized the Orr at that place, in retaliation for the capture of the *W.B.*

⁸¹ *Louisville Daily Democrat*, August 22, 1861.

⁸² *Louisville Journal*, August 20, 1861.

⁸³ *OR*, vol. 4, 177.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

Terry...the mob put the crew ashore, but they soon left for Cairo. The boat was taken up the Tennessee River. Of course the business men in Paducah don't relish these doings."⁸⁵ On August 22, Quintus Quigley wrote "our city is now all excitement, a thousand puerile plans for retaliation by men who never had the coolness or judgment to plan the capture of a hen roost."⁸⁶

The "coolness" and "judgment" of the men in the Purchase would soon be put to the test as the tense month of August came to an end. Life had become much more difficult for the few Union sympathizers in the Purchase. Secessionists were tiring of Kentucky's neutral stance and were ready to take action. Yet they need not fear what their fate would be for long. August would prove to be the last month that Unionists and Secessionists alike in the Purchase would contemplate what would happen next. By early September both the Confederates and Federals would cross over into the Jackson Purchase, breaking Kentucky's precarious neutrality. The Purchase had taken a gamble on secession. They had gone against their home state and sided with the South. Invasion seemed imminent. Just how successful they were at their gamble would be revealed in the next few months as the war the Purchase so desperately wanted came to their door.

* * * * *

Why was secession so popular in the Jackson Purchase? Over the past several decades, historians have gone to great lengths to understand why people in certain

⁸⁵ *Louisville Daily Democrat*, August 28, 1861.

⁸⁶ *Quigley*, Langstaff, August 22, 1861, 71.

regions of the South chose to agitate for secession, while others reluctantly supported the idea or opposed it entirely. Scholars also have looked increasingly at Unionist strongholds, notably east Tennessee and other parts of southern Appalachia, to also explain how regions could repudiate secession amidst the turmoil of separation.⁸⁷ In regards to Kentucky, historians such as E. Merton Coulter, Lowell Harrison, and Wallace B. Turner grappled with the reasons why the commonwealth was so divided but ultimately aligned itself with the Union. They pointed to the state's devotion to the Whig Party and Henry Clay during the antebellum decades, as well as Kentuckians fear of becoming a battleground should the state choose sides.⁸⁸

Though small pockets of Unionism existed, a majority of Purchase citizens nonetheless chose to side with the Confederacy for economic reasons. The blockade of

⁸⁷ For more on areas of the South where secession was contested see Victoria Bynum, *The Free State of Jones: Mississippi's Longest Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), Martin Crawford, *Ashe County's Civil War: Community and Society in the Appalachian South* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001), Daniel Crofts, *Reluctant Confederates: Upper South Unionists in the Secession Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), Richard Current, *Lincoln's Loyalists: Union Soldiers from the Confederacy* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992), Carl Degler, *The Other South, Southern Dissenters in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), Wayne Durrill, *War of Another Kind: A Southern Community in the Great Rebellion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), Noel Fisher, *War at Every Door: Guerrilla Violence in East Tennessee, 1860-69* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); William W. Freehling, *The South vs. The South: How Anti-Confederate Southerners Shaped the Course of the Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), Paul Horton, "Submitting to the 'Shadow of Slavery': The Secession Crisis and Civil War in Alabama's Lawrence County," *Civil War History* 44 (June 1998): 111-136, John Inscoe and Robert C. Kenzer, eds., *Enemies of the Country: New Perspectives on Unionists in the Civil War South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001), Robert Tracy McKenzie, *One South or Many,? Plantation Belt and Upcountry in Civil War Era Tennessee* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), Gordon McKinney, *Southern Mountain Republicans, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), John V. Merring, "The Slave State Constitutional Unionists and the Politics of Consensus," *Journal of Southern History* 53 (August 1977): 395-410, Kenneth W. Noe, "Red String Scare: Civil War Southwest Virginia and the Heroes of America," *North Carolina Historical Review* 69 (July 1992): 301-22, Kenneth W. Noe and Shannon Wilson, eds., *The Civil War in Appalachia: Collected Essays* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1997), J. Mills Thornton, *Politics and Power in a Slave Society: Alabama 1800-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978).

⁸⁸ See E. Merton Coulter, *The Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky*, Harrison, *The Civil War in Kentucky* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1976); Wallace B. Turner, "The Secession Movement in Kentucky," *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 66 (1968): 259-78.

the Tennessee and Mississippi rivers would devastate the region's burgeoning trade with the south. Other economic factors contributed as well. In his study of the secession movement in Alabama and Mississippi, William L. Barney shows that the most vocal group of secessionists came from areas where the rapid expansion of the cotton economy and the concomitant increase in slaveholding had transformed the local economy. In Alabama and Mississippi, John C. Breckinridge garnered the majority of votes in areas where men were climbing up the economic scale. The ambitious and upwardly mobile believed a vote for Lincoln threatened their "newly won" but not "yet solidified status." The only way to secure economic wealth thus was to allow expansion of slavery in the burgeoning west.⁸⁹

The Purchase conforms to this pattern. Most white residents were beginning to benefit from the growth of tobacco production. Between 1850 and 1860, the seven counties comprising the Purchase had increased their tobacco production from 3 million to 12 million pounds.⁹⁰ In addition, as noted previously, the percentage of slaves in the area had also grown at a time when it had decreased in the rest of Kentucky. From 1850 to 1860, the number of slaveholders increased 32 percent while the number of slaves increased by 41 percent. Landholdings and farm values grew as well. The number of improved acres in the Purchase increased from approximately 200,000 acres in 1850 to

⁸⁹ William L. Barney, *The Secessionist Impulse: Alabama and Mississippi in 1860* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 26-49, 98. The "upwardly mobile" Barney writes of are young white men with new fortunes. I do not suggest that the secessionists in the Purchase were also young, simply that they felt the same economic pressure that Barney writes about.

⁹⁰ *Agriculture of the United States in 1860*, 58-68

300,000 in 1860. The cash value of farms increased from approximately 3 million dollars to over 12 million dollars.⁹¹

The area was also beginning to benefit from the advent of the railroads. The Mobile & Ohio Railroad and New Orleans & Ohio Railroad provided faster trade routes between 1854 and 1859. As historian Kenneth Noe notes in his study of southwest Virginia, the introduction of the railroad more firmly linked that area to the rest of the state and to the south in general, increasing market production and slaveholding. Southwest Virginia did not join the rest of the western part of the state in seceding from their home state in May 1861 as a partial result, but rather sided with the eastern counties and the Confederacy with which it increasingly identified.⁹² W. Todd Groce highlights the same pattern among Confederates in the notoriously Unionist area of east Tennessee. During the 1850s, new railroad routes linked east Tennessee with markets in Virginia, Georgia, and the lower Mississippi Valley. Groce points out that a disproportionate number of Confederate supporters in the area came from that commercial elite that benefited from the material wealth resulting from new markets with the South.⁹³ Thus the transformation of the market economy that drove Alabamians, Mississippians, southwest Virginians, and east Tennesseans, among others, to secession also helped lead Purchase residents to side with the South.

⁹¹ *Compendium of the Seventh Census*, 1850, Vol.1, 613-24 and Vol. 4, 238-244;; *Compendium of the Eighth Census*, 1860, Volume I, 175-177; *Agriculture of the United States in 1860*, 58-68;

⁹² Kenneth W. Noe, *Southwest Virginia's Railroad: Modernization and the Sectional Conflict in the Civil War Era* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 100-105.

⁹³ W. Todd Groce, *Mountain Rebels: East Tennessee Confederates and the Civil War, 1860-1870* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 50-65.

Yet, to be sure, the vast majority of Purchase farmers owned no slaves and many were not touched by the market. In addition to changing markets, longstanding political party affiliations, and an effort to prevent the Republican Party from quelling the rights of white men to own slaves, also were factors. In this sense, the area was similar to other regions of the South who chose secession for the same reasons. The men who agitated for secession were the ancestors of those settlers who had been progressively pushed from Virginia and the Carolinas into the Bluegrass, then to the Green River region, and ultimately to the westernmost area of Kentucky. In his evaluation of the South Carolina upcountry historian, Lacy K. Ford described a similar area in the Carolina backcountry that filled with farmers escaping the stifling domination of Charleston low-country elites. With the introduction of cotton, the backcountry evolved from a subsistence farming area ruled by Jeffersonian Republicanism to one dominated by southern radicals the likes of John C. Calhoun.⁹⁴ In many ways, the Purchase resembles Ford's backcountry Carolina. While not pushed to the area by low-country elites, residents nonetheless were elbowed out of the Bluegrass and the Green River region by large landholders they saw as intent on suppressing the rights and property ownership of small farmers. In their studies of Augusta and South Carolina, J. William Harris and Stephanie McCurry respectively explain that even white non-slaveholders also supported secession in an effort to preserve their white traditional culture.⁹⁵ Their arguments ring true in the Purchase as well; the

⁹⁴ Lacy K. Ford, *Origins of Southern Radicalism: the South Carolina Upcountry, 1800-1860*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

⁹⁵ See J. William Harris, *Plain Folk and Gentry in a Slave Society: White Liberty and Black Slavery in Augusta's Hinterlands* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1985); Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

county with the smallest percentage of slaves, Marshall, cast the most votes, over seventy percent, for the secessionist candidate John C. Breckenridge.⁹⁶

Historian Anthony Gene Carey notes in his study of antebellum Georgia that upcountry and mountain counties there that contained small percentages of slaves cast their votes for Breckenridge in 1860. In many ways the Purchase resembled the region that Carey writes about. Carey and David Weiman as well note that the economic divisions in Georgia, like Kentucky, were clearly drawn, which led both regions to side with the Democratic Party.⁹⁷ North Georgians were alienated by a Whiggish planter aristocracy that dominated the Black Belt region. Like residents in the Purchase, north Georgians owed a debt of gratitude to Andrew Jackson who removed the Cherokee Indians from their land. North Georgia and Purchase voters who voted for Breckenridge in 1860 thus were simply “following patterns of county allegiance that dated back decades.” Most voters were merely doing what they had done for decades: vote Democratic.⁹⁸

In yet another study of upcountry Georgia, historian Jonathan Dean Sarris notes that the northern county of Lumpkin, an area with a small percentage of slaves, consistently voted for Democrats between 1832 and 1860. Sarris points out that Lumpkin County, like the Purchase, experienced an economic boom—by way of gold—during the antebellum period. The industry was worked increasingly by slave labor and the town of Dahlonega became a market destination for North Georgians and east Tennesseans alike.

⁹⁶ Shannon and McQuown, *Presidential Returns in Kentucky*, 30-31

⁹⁷ David F. Weiman, “Economic Emancipation of the Non-Slaveholding Class: Upcountry Farmers in the Georgia Cotton Economy” *Journal of Economic History* 45 (March 1985):71-93.

⁹⁸ Anthony Gene Carey, *Parties, Slavery, and the Union in Antebellum Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997), 228-233.

Throughout the booming economy and increase in slave labor, the area stood steadfastly Democratic in the state and national elections of 1860.⁹⁹

In Carey's words, "the act of secession was a logical, fitting culmination" and the "ultimate expression of white unity" for certain areas of the South where slaveholdings were not sizeable but Democratic Party devotion was.¹⁰⁰ McCurry, Harris, Carey, and Sarris all point to the fact that in 1860 non-slaveholders and small slaveholders alike remained devoted to the Democratic Party out of a belief that white men had a right to pursue ownership of slaves and thus improve and sustain one's economic and social position in their community and the nation at large.

Flush with material progress and long overlooked by the rest of the state, the Purchase during the secession crisis revealed itself as never before to be different from the Commonwealth. For once, Kentucky paid attention. Conservative Kentucky, as E. Merton Coulter pointed out, always suspected the Democratic Party of the antebellum period to be one controlled by the South, ready to "embrace disunion at the first opportune time."¹⁰¹ That was certainly true of the Purchase in 1861 where a majority "embraced disunion" in ways the rest of the state rejected.

⁹⁹ Jonathan Dean Sarris, *A Separate Civil War: Communities in Conflict in the Mountain South* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2006), 30-31.

¹⁰⁰ Carey, *Parties, Slavery, and the Union in Antebellum Georgia*, xix.

¹⁰¹ E. Merton Coulter, *The Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky*, 18.

Chapter 3:

“Not a Shade’s Difference Between the Murderer and the Deceitful Yank”: War Comes to the Purchase, 1861-1862

By the end of August 1861 a tense standoff had developed between Union forces at Cairo and secessionists in the Jackson Purchase. Earlier that summer, men from the Purchase and other areas of Kentucky flocked to Camp Boone on the Kentucky-Tennessee border to join the southern war effort, even as Federal forces continued to group in southern Illinois. Both sides now waited for the next move. By all accounts, that would take place at the small city along the “Iron Banks,” Columbus, Kentucky, just downriver from Union Forts Holt and Jefferson. A glance at the map of the Kentucky-Missouri-Tennessee border suggested that control of Columbus would mean command of the Mississippi River Valley along with Cairo and Paducah. In actuality, Paducah, located upriver from Columbus and situated at the point where the Tennessee meets the Ohio River, was the more desirable location.

Battles and skirmishes in the contentious state of Missouri that summer had helped make Columbus a desired target for other reasons. In mid-June, President Jefferson Davis appointed his friend from West Point and the former Episcopal Bishop of Louisiana, Leonidas Polk, commander of the Confederate forces in Tennessee as well as the upper Mississippi. The position that Polk held was one that General Gideon Pillow, a Tennessean, had hoped to secure. Instead, Pillow would serve under Polk, who ordered

him to Missouri to battle Union forces for control of the state. On August 10, Confederate forces under Generals Sterling Price and Ben McCulloch had defeated Union General Nathaniel Lyon's men at the Battle of Wilson's Creek in southwestern Missouri. Despite their victory, Confederate forces were unable to chase the Federals out of the state.¹

Pillow's counterpart in Missouri was former Republican Presidential nominee General John C. Frémont. On August 28 Frémont appointed Brigadier General Ulysses S. Grant as commander of the District of Southeast Missouri. Headquartered at Cairo, Grant's task was to clear the rebels out of the region and eventually occupy Columbus.² Thus, as summer drew to a close and the first inkling of autumn pierced the air, both Confederate and Union forces set their sites on Columbus. The war was coming to the Jackson Purchase at last.

* * * * *

On September 1, 1861, Polk sat down at his headquarters in Memphis to telegram Governor Magoffin. Polk, who knew of Magoffin's sympathy with the South, got straight to the point. "I think it of the greatest importance that I should be well informed of the

¹ William Garrett Piston and Richard W. Hatcher III, *Wilson's Creek: The Second Battle of the Civil War and the Men Who Fought It* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), iii-xvi. The Battle of Wilson's Creek was a culmination of events that took place during the summer of 1861 in the contentious state of Missouri. In May, Union Brigadier General Nathaniel Lyon captured the arsenal at St. Louis from the pro-Confederate state militia backed by Governor Claiborne Jackson. Lyon moved his forces southwest to the town of Springfield and was attacked by Confederate forces under General Sterling Price. After falling back to the banks of Wilson's Creek, Union forces were defeated. For more on Wilson's Creek see Hans Christian Adamson, *Rebellion in Missouri, 1861: Nathaniel Lyon and His Army of the West* (Philadelphia: Chilton Co., 1961) and William Parris, *Turbulent Partnership: Missouri and the Union, 1861-1865* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1963).

² Nathaniel Cheairs Hughes, *Battle of Belmont: Grant Strikes South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 3; John Y. Simon, ed., *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*, vol. 2 (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1967), 151-52.

future plans and policy of the Southern party in Kentucky,” he wrote “so as to shape my plans accordingly.” The plans that Polk spoke of directly involved the Purchase, and more specifically, the town of Columbus. Back in May 1861, Pillow had decided that the bluffs overlooking the Mississippi at Columbus were the right point from which to defend his home state of Tennessee. On August 28 he informed Polk that the Confederate position at New Madrid, Missouri was inferior. He wanted Columbus. Pillow wrote to Magoffin that Columbus was a much more favorable position for defending Tennessee as well as Western Kentucky.³

Events conspired that summer to convince Polk that invasion of the Mississippi Valley, in particular Columbus, was imperative. Frémont unveiled a plan to defeat the Confederates in southern Missouri, hit Memphis and the Confederate forces stationed there, and gain control of the Mississippi River. On August 28, he ordered Union Colonel Gustav Waagner to Belmont, Missouri, just across the river from Columbus, to destroy Confederate works. By September 2, Waagner controlled Belmont. Fremont wrote to Ulysses S. Grant that he intended to occupy Columbus as well as “soon as possible.”⁴ In addition, Frémont declared a state of martial law in Missouri and ordered all southern sympathizers shot and their slaves freed. Threats were compounded when Major General Robert Anderson returned to his home state from Fort Sumter to command Union troops

³ Nathaniel Cheairs Hughes Jr. and Roy P. Stonesifer, Jr., *The Life and Wars of Gideon J. Pillow* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 49-70; Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 10-14; Gideon Pillow to Beriah Magoffin, May 13 1861 in Hughes, *Battle of Belmont*, 1.

⁴ John C. Frémont to Ulysses S. Grant, August 28, 1861 in John Y. Simon, ed. *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant, Vol. 2*, 151; Bruce Catton, *Grant Moves South* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1960), 23-43. In response to Frémont’s proclamation to arrest southern sympathizers and free their slaves, Confederate Brigadier General Jeff Thompson, replied that for every Missouri southern sympathizer or Confederate soldier killed by the Union army, he would “hang, draw, and quarter” a minion of said Abraham Lincoln,” *OR*, vol. 34, 66-67, 693.

raised at Camp Dick Robinson in Garrard County, Kentucky.⁵ Pillow grew highly alarmed at the turn of events and wrote Polk that “Kentucky is now a boiling cauldron...neutrality is no longer regarded, if indeed it ever was. If you do not intend to let the enemy take possession...you must take it *first*.” He promptly abandoned southeast Missouri for a position in his beloved west Tennessee.⁶

Pillow was not alone in pushing for an invasion of Kentucky. On September 2, a “meeting of native Kentuckians” took place in Memphis. E.B. Bartlett, acting as chair, addressed the audience and pleaded with them to rescue Kentucky “from the hordes who are endeavoring to subjugate that noble state.” He added that it was the wish of the vast majority of Kentuckians to join the southern states but that the sole cause of her not doing so was “difficulty in procuring arms.” Bartlett and several of his colleagues drafted a set of resolutions in which they pledged aid to their home state.⁷

On September 3, 1861 Bartlett and his colleague’s wishes were granted when Pillow, acting on Polk’s orders, violated Kentucky’s neutrality and seized the tiny town of Hickman in Fulton County, just across the Tennessee-Kentucky border. Governor Isham Harris of Tennessee immediately fired off a telegram to General Polk calling the act “unfortunate, as the President and myself are pledged to respect the neutrality of Kentucky. I hope they will be withdrawn instantly.” Polk responded indignantly that he

⁵ Camp Dick Robinson, located in Garrard County, Kentucky, was organized under the direction of Lieutenant William “Bull” Nelson in early August 1861. It was the first camp south of the Ohio River to recruit Union soldiers.

⁶ Glenn Robins, *The Bishop of the Old South: The Ministry and Civil War Legacy of Leonidas Polk* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2006), 157-60; Joseph H. Parks, *General Leonidas Polk, C.S.A., The Fighting Bishop* (Baton Rouge Louisiana State University Press, 1960) ; *OR*, vol. 3, 686; John Y. Simon, “Lincoln, Grant, and Kentucky,” in Kent Masterson Brown, ed., *The Civil War in Kentucky: Battle for the Bluegrass State* (Mason City, IA: Savas, 2000), 9-12.

⁷ *Memphis Daily Appeal*, September 4, 1861.

had “never received official information that the President and yourself had determined upon any particular course in reference to the State of Kentucky” and that General Pillow was “directed by me, under the plenary powers delegated to me by the President...to move from his late position at New Madrid to Columbus.” Polk may have defended Pillow’s action, but Confederate Secretary of War Leroy Pope Walker did not. After hearing of Pillow’s landing at Columbus he quickly ordered “their prompt withdrawal from Kentucky.” Polk defended himself to President Jefferson Davis, stating he sought to offer the Jackson Purchase citizens “that protection they unite to a man in accepting.” Davis curtly responded that “the necessity justifies the action.”⁸

The next day, September 4, Pillow seized Columbus. If Davis and Walker were wary of Polk’s move into Kentucky, Columbus secessionists were not. Harassment of local citizens had escalated that summer, leading many Columbus residents to fear Federal invasion. In late May, a group of Federals from Cairo, alerted by pro-Union citizens in Columbus, pursued the Columbus Rangers, a group of young men organized “for the mere purpose of drill, to learn camp life, and to amuse themselves in hunting.” In their quest for the “hunting and fishing party” the Federal troops harassed and arrested

⁸ *OR*, vol. 4, 180. For more on Walker and Davis’s reactions to Polk’s invasion of Kentucky see Steven Woodworth ““The Indeterminate Qualities””: Jefferson Davis, Leonidas Polk, and the End of Kentucky Neutrality, September 1861, *Civil War History* 38 (December 1992), 289-297. Woodworth posits that the Confederate invasion of Columbus was a massive miscommunication between Confederate military and political leaders. He notes that Polk knew of Pillow’s impetuous plan to occupy Kentucky and failed to inform Davis of his intentions. Woodworth also notes that Leroy Pope Walker was acting on Davis’s orders to inform Polk to remove Confederate troops from Kentucky. Davis and Tennessee Governor Isham Harris were in constant communication about the precarious state of neutrality in the Bluegrass state and were horrified by Polk and Pillow’s actions. Woodworth further notes Davis’s reply of “the necessity justifies the action,” which appears in the *Official Record*, was altered by Polk. In its original context the telegram, located in the Polk Papers of the Library of Congress, read “the necessity must justify the action.” In the end, Woodworth states that “Polk had carried out his own policy, knowing that it was contrary to Davis’s wishes, and he had been dishonest in his attempts to justify and sustain that policy—one that was harmful to the Confederacy,” 295.

citizens in Columbus.⁹ A couple of days later the *City of Alton*, a steamer from Cairo, came down to Columbus filled with Federal troops. The officer of the boat ordered the secession flag be torn down. When the citizens of the town refused, three armed soldiers tore down the flag and “amid shouts, jeers, and derision” stamped on it.¹⁰

Columbus secessionists “trembled in apprehension for the consequences” of their “persons... families, and...property.” In the Yankee invader they saw fiends and as one citizen noted, “We...witnessed the outrages perpetrated by Northern soldiery. We have known private residences of our neighbors across the river in Missouri entered by these soldiers and despoiled, the owner made prisoner or chased into the woods...and insult and indignity offered to unprotected and defenseless females. We knew that we stood within the danger of similar treatment, for our offense was the same.”¹¹

On September 5 townspeople sent Polk a telegram expressing “profound gratification at the advent of the army under your command” for delivering them from the “suffering” of the “tyrannical rules of the Northern government.” The authors assured Polk that his forces did not violate Kentucky’s neutrality since the Union occupation of Cairo necessitated the eventual seizure of Columbus if Federal forces were ever to capture the Mississippi River valley. The letter wryly asked, “Can any man be so blinded

⁹ This event was dubbed the “Mayfield Affair” by the *Cairo Weekly Gazette* who reported that a Kentucky “hunting and fishing party” from Columbus were seen along the banks of Mayfield Creek. Local residents thought they were a military group and alerted Federal soldiers. *Cairo Weekly Gazette*, June 12, 1861.

¹⁰ This is the same incident that *London Times* correspondent William Howard Russell wrote about in *My Diary North and South*, 328. The incident is also mentioned in Charles W. Wills, *Army Life of an Illinois Soldier* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1996), 18- 19. Wills noted that his company “had a little fun” at the town and taunted the townspeople by tearing down the flag. The men tore the flag to pieces and Wills sent a scrap of it to his sister Mary Emily Wills back home in Canton, Illinois. He was a soldier in the 8th Illinois Infantry stationed at “Camp Defiance” in Cairo and later was commissioned First Lieutenant and Battalion Adjutant of the 7th Illinois Cavalry. In 1862 he returned home to Canton and raised a company in the 103rd Illinois Infantry and was elected Captain.

¹¹ *OR*, vol. 4, 181-184.

as to suppose that...the War Department at Washington suffered the declaration of Kentucky neutrality to interpose for one single moment a barrier to the occupancy of Columbus? We sir, from the first hour that Cairo became a military encampment, have felt perfectly satisfied that this place would be taken possession of by Northern troops.” In closing, the letter welcomed Polk and his forces, stating “it is from our hearts filled with such emotions...that this entire community extends to you and to your gallant army a cordial welcome.”¹²

John Milton Hubbard, a private in the Seventh Tennessee Cavalry, wrote that Columbus residents met the Confederates with enthusiasm, noting that “the Kentuckians seemed to be pleased with our coming and recruiting went forward accordingly...we made long marches through the Purchase and saw many evidences of Southern sympathy. Indeed the whole population seemed to be friendly to us.” He recalled that when marching through the countryside outside Mayfield, he came upon family seated on the veranda of their house. The father shouted his support to Hubbard and his fellow soldiers by exclaiming “Hurrah for Jeff Davis and the Southern Confederacy,” while the young daughter trampled the Stars and Stripes.¹³

Newspapers also noted the excitement with which Columbus and Purchase secessionists greeted the southern army. A west Tennessean wrote to the *Memphis Appeal* that the Kentuckians living above him in the Purchase “are a unit in favor of Kentucky taking her natural position with her sister Southern states...Lincoln’s bulls and Frémont’s proclamations have no terror for them. Prompted by a patriotism which knows

¹² *OR*, vol. 4, 181-184.

¹³ John Milton Hubbard, *Notes of a Private* (Memphis: E.H. Clarke and Brother, 1909), 11-12.

no sacrifice—too great for the cause in which they are wholly enlisted—they are ready to meet the issue.” The man went on to declare that the people in the Purchase “bend no knee to the Baal of Lincolnism—know no alter save their country’s honor, to which they are ready to bring their most costly offerings. In a word, a more generous, brave and noble people do not live than that of the Southern Kentuckians. Their many acts of kind hospitality will long be remembered by the whole army, and when the bloody strife shall come, if it must, to save these people from the fanatical rule of an abolition despot, there is no man here who would not lay down his life in their defense.” The author went on to predict that “the time is not far distant...when Kentucky will shine as brilliantly in our constellation of Southern stars as any that now grace our beautiful banner.”¹⁴

Young secessionists in the Purchase, dreaming of the glory of war, particularly greeted the invasion with zeal. In Graves County, twenty-two year old George Pirtle recalled the Confederate invasion, writing that “one evening, a little in september an engine passed down the rail road from Paducah, whistleing danger signals continually...I could not be still...I knew something was wrong somewhere. Quite a number of persons had gathered before I did, all highly excited...we learned the C.S.A army was moving from Union City [Tennessee] to Columbus.” The men in Pirtle’s company left for Columbus two days later amid “a multiplicity of people all feeling great interest in the company and desireous of seeing them off.” Pirtle’s destination was Camp Henry C. Burnett, a Confederate recruiting post and training camp located eight miles from

¹⁴ *Memphis Appeal*, September 12, 1861.

Columbus. Established in September 1861, the camp served as a Confederate recruiting post and training camp.¹⁵

The next day, Pirtle reported, General Pillow sent a recruiting officer “down to our camp, lined us up and swore about sixty of us in to the C.S.A service, for one year.” In a few days “other companys began coming in so that in about a week, we had eight companys present, ours from Feliciana, next one from Clinton, then two more from Graves County, one from Fulton County, and one from Marshall County.” Pirtle scoffed at the rawness of the new recruits, noting that few of them “knew any thing about how to drill except ours, it had been drilling all summer.” His company took great delight in its relative experience and “many were the [jeers] we hurled at the awkward squad, but they soon became our equals.” Pirtle and his men were organized as the 7th Kentucky under Colonels Charles C. Wickliffe, a wealthy legislator and planter from Ballard County, and W.D. Lannom, a wealthy lawyer from Hickman County. The Seventh, along with the Third Kentucky Infantry, raised earlier that summer at Camp Boone, would become the two largest Confederate regiments from the Purchase.¹⁶

Union forces reacted quickly to the Confederate seizure of Columbus. On the same day that Polk made his move, Frémont gave orders to Waagner at Belmont to make a reconnaissance of the town. In his reply, Waagner asked “What shall I do with Kentucky? A new secession flag was hoisted at Columbus this evening and the people out there are very suspicious.”¹⁷ Two days later, Grant issued special orders stating that “the people of South-West Kentucky, having permitted large bodies of armed men in

¹⁵ Pirtle Memoirs, Chapter 15.

¹⁶ Ibid., Chapters 7 and 8.

¹⁷ Simon, ed., *Papers*, vol. 2, 179; *OR.*, vol. 3, 151-52.

rebellion to the government, to assemble upon her soil, to erect Batteries and fire upon the Federal flag, are guilty of an offence which much be resisted and punished.” He directed his commanders on the Kentucky borders to “embarrass their communications with Rebels.” To ensure this he directed his men to seize all ferrys, flatboats, yawls, and other boats.¹⁸

On September 5, a Union spy informed Grant that a sizeable Confederate force was advancing on Paducah. Grant and his troops left the muddy streets of Cairo that evening, determined to reach Paducah before the Confederates. After an all-night journey, Grant entered the city. In a report to Frémont, he noted that after arriving at 8:30 a.m., he found numerous “secession flags flying and the citizens eagerly awaiting the arrival of the Rebel army, which they heard was nearby and close to 4000 strong.” Grant’s army tore down the flags and hoisted Federal banners in their place.¹⁹

In a letter to his wife Julia, Grant described his capture of Paducah with enthusiasm, stating that “it was of much greater importance than is probably known.” He again described the secession flags and added that their arrival put “put a damper on their hopes.” In a letter to his sister Mary Grant, the general assured her that despite the large numbers of Confederates in Kentucky, the difference was more than “made up by having truth and justice on our side, whilst on the other they are cheered on by falsehood and deception.”²⁰

Grant likewise noted the fear his army instilled in the citizens of Paducah. He wrote, “I never saw such consternation depicted on the faces of the people. Men, women,

¹⁸ Simon, ed., *Papers*, 190; *OR*, vol. 3, 150.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 195; Fred Neuman, *The Story of Paducah*, 196-199.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 214, 237.

and children came out of their doors looking pale and frightened at the presence of the invader...the majority would have much preferred the presence of the other army.” John McLean of the 40th Illinois Infantry corroborated Grant’s impressions. The people of Paducah were “terror-stricken” by the arrival of the Yankees, he claimed, and used any conveyance available to leave town including drays, mules, wagons, pushcarts, and even wheelbarrows. McLean recalled that “never before...have I seen such a general exodus of inhabitants. By noon the town was deserted.”²¹

Charles W. Wills of the 7th Illinois Infantry had a different first impression. He noted in his letters home that he “fell in love with Paducah while I was there...I never saw so many pretty women in all my life. All fat, smooth skinned, small boned, highbred looking women.” It did not bother Wills that those same “pretty women” were defiantly shouting “Hurrah for Jeff” at the soldiers.²² A reporter for the *St. Louis Democrat* corroborated Wills story, stating “as we got further up town women and children ran out and cheered for Jeff Davis. The women seemed crazed with excitement.”²³

In Paducah, Grant found complete rations and a large supply of leather intended for the Confederate troops the townspeople believed to be so close at hand. He seized the telegraph office, railroads, and all the money in the banks so that it would not fall into enemy hands. Later that day he issued a proclamation:

²¹ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant, Volume I*, (New York : Charles L. Webster, 1885),158; John McLean, M.D., *One Hundred Years in Illinois, 1818-1918* (Chicago: Peterson Linotyping,, 1919), 132-140. McLean was a native of southern Illinois and joined the first regiment raised in the area. He was mustered out of service in 1862 and returned to Chicago where he practiced medicine. McLean recalls that he and many of the men that marched into Paducah were drunk from drinking whiskey on the boat from Cairo to the Kentucky shore.

²² Wills, *Army Life of an Illinois Soldier*, 29; Bruce Catton, *Grant Moves South* (Boston: Little Brown, 1960), 49.

²³ *St. Louis Democrat*, September 7, 1861.

I have come among you, not as an enemy, but as your friend and fellow-citizen, not to injure or annoy you, but to respect the rights, and to defend and enforce the rights of all loyal citizens. An enemy, in rebellion against our common Government, has taken possession of, and planted its guns upon the soil of Kentucky and fired upon our flag. Hickman and Columbus are in his hands. He is moving upon your city. I am here to defend you against this enemy and to assert and maintain the authority and sovereignty of your Government and mine. I have nothing to with opinions. I shall deal only with armed rebellion and its aiders and abettors. You can pursue your usual avocations without fear or hindrance. The strong arm of the Government is here to protect its friends, and to punish only its enemies. Whenever it is manifest that you are able to defend yourselves, to maintain the authority of your Government and protect the rights of all its loyal citizens, I shall withdraw the forces under my command from your city.²⁴

After reading the proclamation aloud, Grant returned to Cairo, leaving Brigadier General Eleazor A. Paine in command. Altogether, Grant had spent less than four hours on Kentucky soil.

In Frankfort, news of the Confederate and Union occupations met with mixed emotions. On September 9, Polk defended his presence at Columbus in a letter to Governor Magoffin by noting that as the Confederates approached the town “Federal troops were found in formidable number in position on the opposite bank, with their cannons turned toward Columbus...Federal forces intended and were preparing to take Columbus.” The Kentucky legislature rejected his excuses. John M. Johnston, chairman of a committee representing the Kentucky Senate, wrote General Polk “that all the people of this State await in deep suspense your action in the premises.”²⁵

The next day, a Peace Convention opened in the capital as the States Righters launched a last desperate attempt to maintain neutrality in the Bluegrass State. John Helm, former governor of Kentucky, cautioned that “the occupation of Kentucky soil by

²⁴ Simon, ed., *Papers*, vol. 2, 195; *OR*, vol. 4, 198.

²⁵ Simon, ed., *Papers*, vol. 2, 185-86.

Confederate troops will check the run of public opinion and be the occasion of inflaming the public mind against the Confederate States.” He went on to warn that the “Southern men are not organized” and were without arms, a situation that rendered them powerless “no matter how numerous or how brave.”²⁶ Helm’s efforts, and those of the States Righters, went for naught. The next day, the House, by a 71-26 vote, authorized Governor Magoffin to order the Confederates off Kentucky soil. Polk refused to leave. On September 18 the Unionist legislature voted to end neutrality altogether and invited Union forces to enter the state.²⁷

Although the legislature condemned the actions of Polk, the pro-secession citizens of Columbus did not. They articulated their feelings about the situation in an “Open Letter to the Citizens of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.” In the letter they expressed condemnation over Union actions in the Purchase and disgust with the Kentucky Legislature:

You may ask fellow citizens, why we citizens of Kentucky desire that no censure should attach to the Confederate army. We promptly answer that if we must have an armed soldiery gathered in our midst, our experience and observation, as well as our sympathy and judgment, induce us to prefer the Southern to the Northern soldier. You may differ with us about this matter. But we beg you to remember that it is our wives and daughters, our property, our slaves, and our homes, whose honor, safety, and indemnity is involved and not yours, and that this is a matter in which of all others you should grant us license to judge for ourselves.”²⁸

²⁶ John L. Helm to General Leonidis Polk, September 13, 1861 in *OR*, vol. 4, 191-92. John Helm served as governor of Kentucky in 1850 and was reelected for a second term in 1867. He was the son-in-law of Benjamin Hardin, a U.S. Representative and state senator. His son, Confederate Brigadier General Benjamin Hardin Helm married Emilie Todd, the sister of Mary Todd Lincoln and commanded the famous Orphan Brigade before his death at the Battle of Chickamauga in 1863.

²⁷ Harrison and Klotter, *New History of Kentucky*, 192.

²⁸ *Memphis Daily Appeal*, September, 18, 1861.

This mattered little to the legislators, who justified the occupation on the grounds that the Confederates had invaded first.²⁹

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While most white Columbus residents continued to support the Confederate occupation, the city of Paducah suffered most under Union control. Grant's decision to leave General Paine in command of Paducah after pulling back to Cairo initiated a chain of events that would erode Unionist sympathies in the strongest pro-Union county in the Purchase. Grant wanted Paine's men go easy on the citizens of Paducah. He commanded him to make sure that no southern sympathizing citizens were insulted or harmed and forbade any soldier to enter the home of any Rebel citizen or plunder his property. Paine, a West Pointer and lawyer from Ohio, ignored Grant's orders. After meeting with the Union men of Paducah, Paine concluded that they could not be trusted. He wrote Grant that he was "compelled to be severe for nearly every man is a rank secessionist." The day after Grant left, Paine had "accidentally" fired a gun on one of the gunboats to threaten the town's denizens with its destructive power. The shell struck a house, and though no one was killed, the psychological effect was probably terrifying. When he later ordered a local blacksmith to shoe his horse and the man refused, Paine arrested him and gave him two choices: shoe the horse in five minutes or be shot. As he wrote to Grant, he was not about "to give an inch" and "I am not going to be beaten."³⁰

²⁹ Harrison and Klotter, *New History of Kentucky*, 192.

³⁰ Simon, ed., *Papers*, vol. 2, 203-206; *OR*, vol. 3, 475, 480.

Paine's 9th Illinois made things worse, quickly turning to stealing, plundering, and rampant vandalism. Several people were arrested.³¹ In his description of Paducah a reporter for the *St. Louis Republican* noted:

Here in Paducah considerable terror has arisen, among the inhabitants, and thousands would leave if they could. Household furniture is being removed in skiffs, and what other conveyances can be got, to safer points. If affairs in Kentucky continue in their present state three weeks longer, the town will be almost depopulated. Although numberless residences are deserted and stand monuments of blighting secession, society seems to have fled, and gloom and horror taken possession. Not a carriage is seen upon the streets, or lady upon the beautiful walks. The stores are many of them closing, and wagons with the boxed goods standing instead of customers before the doors.³²

In Paine's defense, he probably had just cause in his actions towards the townspeople, as citizens engaged in illicit trade with the Confederacy throughout that fall. On September 8, Commander John Rodgers wrote Grant of the capture of the *John Gault*, a Louisville packet. He accused the crew of acquiring goods at several spots on the Ohio, Tennessee, and Cumberland Rivers and attempting to transfer them to a packet bound for Nashville, a clear violation of Lincoln's ban on trade south.³³ On September 12, Paine wrote Grant that James Enlow, a wealthy Murray farmer, had shipped a number of hogsheads of tobacco from Mayfield to Paducah, supposedly bound for Boston. Union gunboats at Paducah captured the steamboat *Jefferson*, owned by secessionists and containing the tobacco, on the Tennessee River. According to Paine, the *Jefferson* had no intention of going north to Boston, but rather hoped to rendezvous with a railroad running south.³⁴

³¹ *Memphis Daily Appeal*, September 14, 18, 1861.

³² *Louisville Courier*, September 18, 1861, excerpt from the *St. Louis Republican*.

³³ Simon, ed., *Papers*, vol. 2, 277.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 345.

Continued harassment and arrests of Paducah citizens contributed to increased southern sympathies. In September, Thomas Wise Durham, a twenty-one-year-old Union soldier from Indiana, marched into Paducah with the rest of Company G, Eleventh Indiana Infantry, led by General Lew Wallace. Durham and his company boarded a transport at Cairo and upon entering Paducah, “found a rebel flag floating over a large house—the finest house in town. It belonged to a wealthy old rebel aristocrat.” In November, Durham and his company tore down the flag, and hoisted the Stars and Stripes from the house while the regimental band played “The Star Spangled Banner” and “Yankee Doodle.” Wise noted “the rebel flag never again floated over that house as we had informed the owner we would tear the house down if it was raised again.”³⁵

Paine was soon replaced by General Charles F. Smith as commander of U.S. District of Western Kentucky. Well liked by his men, one Union officer described him as “the best all around officer in the regular army” though many felt him too soft against the rebel sympathizers in his district. Smith set to fortifying the city, and though he treated the citizens with more respect than Paine, it seems there was still great opposition in the town. A reporter for the *St. Louis Republican* noted that “in no place yet have I seen so bitterly hostile a feeling existing against the Union as here. Scowling, angry glances, watch with what seems an intense hatred, every movement of a passing soldier...Secession is the rule and Union the rare exception. Whether Uncle Sam has any

³⁵ Jeffery L. Patrick, ed., *Three Years with Wallace's Zouaves: The Civil War Memoirs of Thomas Wise Durham* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2003), 59-61. The “old rebel aristocrat” whose flag was torn down was R.C. Woolfolk, a forty-two-year-old resident who listed his occupation as “gentleman” in the 1860 U.S. Census. In 1860 he was the owner of seven slaves and an estate valued at \$36,000. Unfortunately, the 1861 incident with Union troops would not be Woolfolk’s last. In 1864, after Paine’s return to Paducah, he turned his wrath toward Woolfolk. <http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed September 22, 2007.

medicine as strong as the complaint, is still an open question. On the streets people wear secession caps, and boast that before the week closes, every Federal will be driven out.”³⁶

What the reporter and the townspeople could not know was that Grant’s seizure of Paducah was the beginning of four long years of Federal control of the town.

* * * * *

Back in Columbus, Polk’s forces set to fortifying the area and placed columbiads and howitzers along the two main bluffs, the Iron Banks and the Chalk Bluffs. Higher up, they placed several additional guns, including the largest in the Confederacy, along earthen forts. Just beneath the surface of the water, Confederate engineers placed crude torpedoes intended to detonate on contact with Yankee boats. The most imaginative, and foolish, of Columbus’s defenses was a huge chain that stretched across the river. The chain was buoyed by rafts and each of its links was attached to an enormous anchor. As historian Nathaniel Hughes notes, the chain symbolized Polk’s “determination to defend the Mississippi.”³⁷

By the end of October Polk had over 17,000 soldiers making up twenty-two infantry regiments at Columbus. Many commented that the soldiers looked more like farmers with their rough clothes and hunting weapons, including knives.³⁸ The men were,

³⁶ *Louisville Courier*, September 18, 1861, excerpt from the *St. Louis Republican*.

³⁷ Hughes, *The Battle of Belmont*, 37; William G. Stevenson, *Thirteen Months in the Rebel Army* (New York: A.S. Barnes & Company, 1959), 49-52.

³⁸ Henry George confirms that the men of the 7th Regiment were supplied with the crudest of weapons including flint lock muskets, and knives fashioned from “big files, buggy or wagon springs.” George, *History of the 3rd, 7th, 8th, and 12th KY, CSA*, 27.

however, supplied with an endless supply of provisions from Purchase citizens who hauled “stout old country wagons...with apples, peaches, chicken, butter, etc.” into camp. Purchase residents also supplied the soldiers with plenty of amusement in the form of whiskey. Polk and Pillow, both teetotalers, forbade drinking among their men and even flogged two Columbus civilians in the center of town “for all to see” after they were caught selling alcohol.³⁹ Polk and Pillow, however, had ailments other than drunkenness to contend with, as that fall measles and chronic diarrhea felled many a soldier. Hundreds died of disease at Columbus and were buried daily in a graveyard on the bluffs.⁴⁰

Yet, despite the illness and monotony of camp life, Confederate morale grew stronger. Confederates at Camp Boone, raw recruits subjected to daily rumors of advancing Yankees, were itching for a fight. Twenty-one year old S.P. Ridgeway, a former Deputy Clerk of Graves County who recently joined the 3rd Kentucky Infantry commented on Columbus and Paducah, noting “from the news we learned this morning I expect there is fighting now in Paducah—hope to God it is so. I think we will go there right away. Don’t know anything more than all the straws are drifting that way. We have been drawing provisions for a month until today & today we only drew for ten days...if there is ever a fight between these Kentuckians & the Lincolnites they are as sure to be Whipped as the sun shines.”⁴¹

³⁹ *New Orleans Daily Crescent*, September 26, 1861 and October 21, 1861.

⁴⁰ Hughes, *Battle of Belmont*, 37-40.

⁴¹ A.P. Ridgeway to Jennie Stanfield, September 7, 1861, Historical Records Survey Transcription Unit, Division of Women’s and Professionals Project, Works Projects Administration (Nashville, 1939) in Steven Birchfield, *Civil War Letters, Volume One: West Tennessee* (Melber, KY: Simmons Historical Publishing, 1995), 20.

The Confederates in the western part of Kentucky were ready for a fight, but strategically, their government. In Richmond was contemplating how best to defend its toehold in the Bluegrass State. In mid-September, Jefferson Davis appointed another old friend and fellow West Point cadet, Albert Sidney Johnston, to command Confederate Department Number 2, an expansive area stretching from the Appalachian Mountains in the east, across the expanse of Kentucky to Missouri, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Arkansas.⁴² Johnston set up headquarters at Bowling Green, Kentucky in October. Located in the southern portion of the Bluegrass State, just north of Nashville, the town lay on the critical Louisville and Nashville Railroad. Johnston was certain that the strategic town would be the striking point for the Union army. Johnston's plan, however, left the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers virtually open, for the crudely constructed Forts Donelson and Henry were vulnerable to attack. In the eastern half of the state he ordered Felix Zollicoffer's four thousand troops out of East Tennessee onto the border of Kentucky at Cumberland Ford to guard Cumberland Gap. To safeguard the four hundred mile border of southern Kentucky, an area stretching from the mountains in the east to Columbus in the West, Johnston had less than fifty thousand troops.⁴³

The Confederates at Columbus meanwhile spent their time restoring fortifications and mustering troops into the army. John Milton Hubbard remarked that those days were filled with "dreary nights and weary days with many marches throughout the Purchase." November, however, would bring an end to the marching and waiting.⁴⁴ On November 6,

⁴² *OR*, vol. 4, 405.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 193-194; *OR*, vol. 7, 7-16; Charles P. Roland, "Albert Sidney Johnston and the Loss of Forts Henry and Donelson" *Journal of Southern History* (February 1957): 45-69.

⁴⁴ John Milton Hubbard, *Notes of a Private*, 11-13.

Grant decided to make a stand against Polk and Pillow at Columbus and sailed his men downriver from Cairo. The next morning, he learned that Confederate forces had crossed the Mississippi River from Columbus to Belmont. Grant's forces roused the Confederates and destroyed their camp. Not long after, reinforcements from Columbus counterattacked Grant's men. In addition, they faced heavy artillery fire across the river at the Iron Banks and Chalk Bluffs. Unable to repel rebel forces, Grant's men retreated back to Paducah. Both sides claimed victory.⁴⁵

At Camp Burnett, George Pirtle recalled hearing the sounds of battle on the morning of November 7. He excitedly noted that Colonel Wickliffe called the men into line and ordered a westward march. Wickliffe sent courier after courier to General Pillow that morning, but was told "to stand fast and keep a good watch for the enemy." Like any soldier facing his first battle, Pirtle was itching to fight. He noted "all was wonderful to us, the roar of musketry, and belching of big guns, O how wonderful, perhaps not a man in the whole regiment had ever heard any thing of the kind before." Pirtle's and his comrades in the 7th Kentucky rushed off to Columbus and Camp Burnett remained abandoned for the remainder of the war.⁴⁶

Events were picking up in the eastern part of the state as well. In October Zollicoffer and his men attempted to press into the Bluegrass from the Tennessee mountains via the town of London, Kentucky, in the southeast. On the 21st he was repulsed by the Union army at the Battle of Rockcastle Springs and sent back into east Tennessee. In late November, Zollicoffer moved his men once more into Kentucky. In

⁴⁵ Hughes, *The Battle of Belmont*, 114-162. Union and Confederate forces each lost approximately 600 men during the Battle of Belmont.

⁴⁶ Pirtle memoirs, Chapter 10.

January, the Confederate army in eastern Kentucky was further decimated when Union General George Thomas defeated a mortally wounded Zollicoffer's troops at the Battle of Mill Springs. The Confederates drew once again back into east Tennessee and Johnston lost his foothold in the eastern part of the Bluegrass state. Confederate control of Kentucky now centered on the west.⁴⁷

An increase in military engagements that fall coincided with a dramatic turn in political events in the state. Disgruntled and discouraged over Frankfort's decision to side with the Union, pro-southern delegates met in October to determine a solution. On November 18, over 200 Confederate delegates from 61 counties gathered at Bethel College in Russellville, Kentucky. They cut ties with Frankfort and declared that "we do hereby forever sever our connection with the Government of the United States, and in the name of the people we do hereby declare Kentucky to be a free and independent State, clothed with all power to fix her own destiny and to secure her own rights and liberties."⁴⁸ The Purchase's own Henry C. Burnett, who still held a seat in the United States Senate, presided over the conventions.⁴⁹

In early December, Burnett traveled to Richmond to confer with the Confederate Congress. On December 10, it admitted Kentucky to the Confederate States of America, with Bowling Green designated the capital of Confederate Kentucky. A ten-man council, one from each congressional district, would represent the provisional government.

George W. Johnson, a wealthy Scott County planter and former congressman, became

⁴⁷ *OR*, vol. 7, 7-16.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 4, 741.

⁴⁹ Lowell Harrison, "The Government of Confederate Kentucky" in Brown, ed., *The Civil War in Kentucky: Battle for the Bluegrass State*, 79-98; Coulter, *Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky*, 136-37; Harrison and Klotter, *A New History of Kentucky*, 192-94.

governor.⁵⁰ Two days later, Burnett took his seat in the Confederate Congress as senator, while he was still serving as representative for the First District in the Kentucky House. In January, the General Assembly expelled him for treason and appointed Samuel L. Casey, a Unionist, to fill his vacancy.⁵¹

Other voices in the Purchase had grown rabidly anti-Union by late winter. In January, the *Daily Confederate News*, published by wealthy lawyer Edward I. Bullock of Hickman County, featured a threatening editorial written by its publisher: “The time has come...the hour arrived...the period pregnant...we are determined to rush to the rescue of our country...We want to kill a Yankee...must kill a Yankee...never can sleep sound again until we do kill a Yankee, get his overcoat and scalp. Indian-like we want a scalp, and must have it. We’d think no more of scalping a dead Yank that we would of cutting the throat of a midnight assassin...not a shade’s difference between the murderer and deceptious Yank.”⁵² Purchase citizens who joined the Confederate army would soon find Yankees to kill as the first year of war came to a close.

As winter set in, Confederates contemplated when Union forces would strike. Johnston was still certain that Bowling Green would be the spot, but from his headquarters at Cairo that January, Grant continued to consider the Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers the striking point. Control of the Tennessee River would provide the Union army with access into north Alabama as well as middle and eastern Tennessee,

⁵⁰ Harrison, “The Government of Confederate Kentucky,” 79-98.

⁵¹ Lewis Collins, *History of Kentucky, Volume I*, 99; Kleber, *The Kentucky Encyclopedia*, 222; Harrison and Klotter, *New History of Kentucky*, 193. The other leaders chosen to go to Richmond were William Preston of Louisville and W.E. Simms of Bourbon County.

⁵² E.I. Bullock as quoted in “A Century of Newspaper Service in Hickman County,” *Hickman County Gazette* (1953): Section 1A.

while command of the Cumberland meant control of the vital capital of Nashville. More importantly, as historian Benjamin Franklin Cooling has pointed out, the iron production in the area made it a “proto-Ruhr” of the Cumberland-Tennessee Valley.⁵³

In spring 1861, Confederate forces had located the site of Fort Donelson on a steep hillside about one mile from Dover, Tennessee, roughly eleven miles from neutral Kentucky and seventy-five miles from Nashville. Fort Henry was situated not long afterward on the east bank of the Tennessee River, about twelve miles from the site of Fort Donelson.⁵⁴ Little progress, however, was made in the creation of the forts until that fall when Paducah native son Lloyd Tilghman took over construction. Tilghman immediately realized that Fort Henry, located on the low side of the river across from a steep bluff, was indefensible. In January 1862, Johnston ordered the West Point trained engineer to construct a new fort on the high ground, located on the Kentucky side of the river. Tilghman named the structure after Tennessean Adolphus Heiman who, would command a brigade at the battle of the forts.⁵⁵

Unfortunately for the Confederates, Fort Heiman was not completed when Grant decided to make his move. On January 29, he informed General Henry Halleck of his

⁵³ Cooling, *Fort Donelson's Legacy*, 21-27; Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 44-46. Cooling notes that in 1861 there were seventeen furnaces in Kentucky, located around the Eddyville area. The area surrounding Nashville contained 39 furnaces and 13 forges.

⁵⁴ Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 46-47; Henry J. Upton, *Land Between the Rivers* (Paducah, 1970), 95-100. The site for Fort Donelson was surveyed by engineer Adna Anderson and approved by Governor Isham Harris on the recommendation of Brigadier General Daniel S. Donelson for whom the fort was named. Fort Henry was located on the low water mark of the Kentucky side of the Tennessee River and was approved by Major Bushrod Rust Johnson. The fort was named for Senator Gustavus Henry of Clarksville, Tennessee.

⁵⁵ Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 48-56. General Lew Wallace took command of Fort Heiman on February 6. The area became subject to guerilla raids after Grant's victory, leading the Federal Army to occupy the area in defense of the rivers until March 1863. The fort, along with Henry and Donelson, became a haven for refugees, particularly runaway contraband. In 1864, Forrest would launch a series of daring attacks on Union gunboats from the fort.

plans to advance to the rivers. The move was not only strategically important, Grant noted, but would provide a morale boost to the troops “to advance them toward the rebel States.” The following day, Halleck gave Grant the go ahead to send forward forces from Smithland, Paducah, Cairo, Fort Holt, and other points near the forts. Union troops would be reinforced by federal gunboats commanded by Flag Officer Andrew Foote. On February 4, Grant’s forces, consisting of two divisions, landed approximately four to five miles downstream from Fort Henry.⁵⁶

Fort Henry was manned with outdated guns and almost completely flooded by the Tennessee River. Grant placed his division in two different sites: one on the east bank of the river, which would prevent an escape by the Confederates, and one on the high ground on the Kentucky side of the river, overlooking the fort. Upon hearing Foote’s gunboats and believing Fort Henry to be a death trap, Tilghman sent the majority of his men to Fort Donelson. Remaining with a small remnant of artillery, he and his men surrendered Fort Henry after enduring a ninety-minute bombardment from Flag Officer Foote’s fleet of seven gunboats. Foote admitted that Fort Henry was “defended with the most determined gallantry” by Tilghman, whom he pronounced “worthy of a better cause.” Before heading back to Cairo to repair his boats, Foote ordered his men to destroy the railroad bridge from Bowling Green to Columbus. In his report Grant simply stated, “Fort Henry is ours...I shall take and destroy Fort Donelson on the 8th and return to Fort Henry.”⁵⁷

⁵⁶ *OR*, vol. 7, 120-156; Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 101-121.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 122-152; Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 101-121. Confederate forces at Fort Henry successfully fired upon one of Foote’s gunboats, the *Essex*, which was struck in her boilers and resulted in the death of 28 of the 44 casualties suffered by Union forces.

Grant, however, was forced to wait longer before he could take Fort Donelson. On February 12 he set out with 15,000 troops, later to be reinforced by troops commanded by Generals Wallace, John McClernand, and Charles F. Smith. In addition, four iron gunboats and two wooden gunboats commanded by Flag-Officer Foote joined the effort. Inside the fort, was a force of 12,000 Confederates commanded by Generals Simon Buckner, Gideon Pillow, Bushrod Johnson, and John B. Floyd. Among the troops at Donelson were part of Tilghman's 3rd Kentucky Regiment as well as the 2nd Kentucky Infantry, whose ranks included hundreds of Purchase boys.⁵⁸

On the morning of February 14, Union gunboats engaged the Confederate water batteries in a ninety minute display of fire power. Confederate batteries disabled two of Foote's gunboats, and two others took severe hits, leading to their withdrawal. Confederate commanders were jubilant at their victory over the naval forces, but soon realized a more pressing threat in Grant's large number of reinforcements, which he used to extend his right flank, literally encircling the enemy's forces. The Confederate's only recourse was to break through the Federal right flank, commanded by McClernand and Wallace, and escape towards Nashville. For several hours Confederate forces made repeated assaults on the Federal flank, resulting in close to 3,000 Union casualties. Inexplicably, Pillow called back Confederate forces just as they seemed to be gaining ground. In the ensuing confusion and miscommunication between Southern

⁵⁸ Part of the 3rd Kentucky went to Fort Henry with Colonel Tilghman. The remaining members were sent to General Johnson in Bowling Green. Ben L. Bassham, ed., *Ten Month's in the Orphan Brigade: Conrad Wise Chapman's Civil War Memoir* (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1999), 2; Kentucky Adjutant Generals Office, *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Kentucky: Confederate Kentucky Volunteers, 1861-65* (Utica, KY: Cook & McDowell, 1980), 82-150; George, *History of the 3rd, 7th, 8th, and 12th KY, CSA, 19-22.*

commanders, the Confederates lost their one chance at escape. Grant saw his opportunity and launched an attack on the enemy's right under General Smith's command. Federal forces regained crucial ground in the battle that followed. As night fell Grant and his men camped in the bitter cold, certain that morning would bring victory.⁵⁹

Inside Fort Donelson, Confederate Generals Floyd then Pillow turned over command and slipped away to Nashville with around 2000 men. Other troops followed Colonel Nathan B. Forrest across a swollen creek. While Buckner contemplated surrender, General Johnston pulled his troops out of Bowling Green in anticipation of defeat. Early on the morning of February 16, Grant received a note from Buckner requesting a meeting to discuss the terms of "capitulation of the forces and post under my command." Grant and Buckner knew each other from their days serving in the Mexican War; and Buckner had once loaned a cash-poor Grant money to pay his hotel bill during a particularly trying time in the Union General's life. Buckner's past kindness, however, did not deter Grant from demanding "no terms except unconditional and immediate surrender" from the Kentucky officer. In the ensuing capitulation, 15,000 Confederate soldiers became prisoners of the Union army. Among those captured were the surviving members of the 2nd Kentucky and 3rd Kentucky who were sent to Camp Douglas in Chicago.⁶⁰ With the fall of the forts, Cooling explains, the vital heartland of middle

⁵⁹ *OR*, vol. 7, 159-183. For a more detailed analysis of the Battle of Fort Donelson see Cooling, 122-223. See also James Hamilton, *The Battle of Fort Donelson* (South Brunswick, NJ: T. Yoseloff, 1968); Jack Hurst, *Men of Fire: Grant, Forrest, and the Campaign that Decided the Civil War* (New York: Basic Books, 2007); Harper Allen Gosnell, *Guns on the Western Waters* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1949); Spencer Tucker, *Unconditional Surrender: The Capture of Forts Henry and Donelson* (Abilene, TX: McWhiney Foundation Press, 2001).

⁶⁰ *OR*, vol. 7, 159-386 418-19; Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 200-223. *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Kentucky*, vol. I, 352. Cooling notes that Floyd and Pillow both refused to be party to surrender because both believed that "no two persons in the Confederacy were more sought by

Tennessee, so crucial to the Confederates, fell into the hands of the Federal Army, sealing the fate of west Tennessee and Kentucky.⁶¹

On February 19, Grant, flush with victory, marched south from Donelson and occupied Clarksville, Tennessee on the Cumberland River. In Nashville, the terrified citizens of the capital city feared Yankee retaliation after Confederate troops evacuated the town and pulled out to Murfreesboro, before moving south to Decatur, Alabama, and finally Corinth, Mississippi. With Nashville gone, Columbus could not stand. On March 2, Confederate Secretary of War Judah Benjamin ordered Polk to evacuate the tiny town along the bluffs.⁶²

George Pirtle lamented the evacuation of Columbus in his diary. One evening at the end of January, he and the rest of the 7th Kentucky were ordered to cook rations and prepare to go to Fort Donelson and repulse Grant. Although they were prepared to go the next morning, they were never called to battle. The green troops were keen for a fight, leading “some of the boys” to threaten “to run away and go without orders.” Pirtle noted that he and the rest of the men “waited in suspense” until one night they were awakened by “a heavy lumbering noise and when day light came, could see that every thing in the fort was being run down the bluff near the river and all loaded on steamboats.” Pirtle and

the United States government than he and Floyd.” He likewise notes that Buckner, although left to fall on the martyr’s sword, voiced his belief that Confederate troops could not withstand the battle any longer. An enraged Forrest lambasted the generals for giving up so easily, stating “I neither could nor would surrender my command.”

The majority of the captured Confederate soldiers at Donelson were sent to Camp Douglas in Chicago, Camp Chase in Columbus, Ohio, and Johnson’s Island on Lake Erie in Ohio.

⁶¹ Cooling, *Fort Donelson’s Legacy*, xi-xx.

⁶² *OR*, vol. 7, 418-426; James Lee McDonough, *Shiloh—In Hell Before Night* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1977), 5-9. After the defeat at Fort Donelson, General Albert Sidney Johnston’s army at Bowling Green was expected to rush to Nashville and defend the city. Instead, he passed through the town and briefly camped at Murfreesboro.

his men were “troubled” and “could not understand that movement, but by noon learned that fort donalson had surrendered and the evacuation of Columbus had began.” Pirtle and the rest of the regiment were ordered to Humbolt, Tennessee, New Madrid, and Island Number 10 to protect the Mississippi River.⁶³

Polk delayed but finally issued orders to abandon Columbus on February 24. His men, along with ammunition, commissary and quartermaster stores, and heavy artillery, removed to New Madrid and Union City by March 1. Polk noted glumly in his report of March 2 “the work is done. Columbus gone. Self and staff moved.” On March 4, Flag Officer Foote reported the evacuation of Columbus and added that General William T. Sherman had been left in temporary command of the city. In addition, Brigadier General George W. Cullum enthusiastically posited “Columbus, the Gibraltar of the West, is ours, and Kentucky is free; thanks to the brilliant strategy of the campaign...the enemy’s center was pierced...his wings isolated from each other and turned, compelling thus the evacuation of his strongholds.” Cullum went on to note that the cheering troops took possession of Columbus and planted the Stars and Stripes on the summit of the Mississippi River bluff.⁶⁴

Polk and his men hoped to hold the Mississippi River at the Kentucky-Tennessee-Missouri border at New Madrid and Island Number Ten, about sixty miles downriver from Columbus. The Confederates placed batteries on the island as well as floating batteries in the Mississippi. The Union Army of the Mississippi, commanded by General

⁶³ Pirtle memoirs, Chapter 13; *OR*, vol. 7, 435-36.

⁶⁴ *OR*, vol. 7, 436-37. General George W. Cullum, a former West Point instructor, served as chief engineer of the Department of the Missouri and later became chief engineer at the siege of Corinth. In 1875 he married the widow of General Henry W. Halleck.

John Pope, set out from Missouri to seize both the island and the town of New Madrid. Arriving in New Madrid around March 3 he laid siege to the town. Between late February and early April, Union and Confederate soldiers clashed over the two points before Federal forces finally took possession of New Madrid on March 14 and Island Number 10 on April 8. The Mississippi River from Columbus to Fort Pillow was now in the hands of the Union army.⁶⁵

By early April, the Confederacy had to face the fact that they were losing the west. In less than two months, Union armies there had captured the strategic forts guarding the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers, occupied the crucial city of Nashville, taken Columbus, and had lost the battle to control the upper Mississippi River. Most importantly the heart of Tennessee, with its many iron furnaces, arsenals, and stores, was now laid open to the Union.⁶⁶ The people of the Jackson Purchase were fenced in by a Union army that controlled the Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers to the east, the Mississippi to the west, and the Ohio at Paducah. The situation for Purchase secessionists could not have been worse.

After the evacuation of Columbus, George Pirtle and the rest of the 7th Kentucky went by train to Humbolt, Tennessee, but were soon ordered to march south to Corinth, Mississippi, a city that contained the juncture of the north-south Mobile & Ohio Railroad, and the east-west Memphis & Charleston Railroad. As historian James Lee McDonough notes, by early April southern political and military forces, moved on in no small part by

⁶⁵ McDonough, *In Hell Before Midnight*, 7. For more on the Battle of Island Number 10 see Larry J. Daniel and Lynn Bock, *Island Number Ten: Struggle for the Mississippi Valley* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1996).

⁶⁶ Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 44-62.

public demand for victory, feverishly plotted to defend the railways, win back the Tennessee heartland, and regain control of the Cumberland and Tennessee. Pirtle's comrades joined other southern armies massing at Corinth. General P.G.T. Beauregard called on the governors of Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana for close to 10,000 troops each. His plan was to capture Paducah and close the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers, thus cutting supply lines for the Federal Army.⁶⁷

At Union headquarters, Halleck ordered Grant and his troops, still flush with victory, to occupy the tiny locale of Pittsburg Landing, Tennessee, and wait for General Don Carlos Buell's Army of the Ohio at Nashville to join him. Grant and Buell were to march to Corinth and capture the vital rail connections. On April 3, Johnston decided to go on the offensive, march his fifty-thousand strong army, and surprise Grant at Pittsburg Landing before Buell could reinforce him.⁶⁸

Pirtle and the 7th Kentucky were at Corinth for a week before they were ordered once again to board a train. The troops landed at Bethel, Tennessee, and pitched camp under the command of hard-fighting Tennessean General Benjamin Franklin Cheatham. While at Bethel, Pirtle reported that a couple of days before the first Sunday in April, General Cheatham came around to inspect the soldiers and made sure there "were forty rounds of cartridges in our boxes." The next morning the men were ordered to cook three days rations and be ready to move: a Union reconnaissance had been reported.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ McDonough, *Shiloh*, 11, 64-67.

⁶⁸ *OR*, vol. 10, 108-122; McDonough, *Shiloh*, 76-80. One of the major reasons Grant was unable to move on Corinth in quicker fashion was due to General Halleck's temporary removal of Grant from command following the Fort Donelson campaign. Halleck vilified Grant for moving on Nashville without his authority and later accused Grant of suffering from a reoccurring drinking problem.

⁶⁹ Pirtle memoirs, Chapter 13; George, *History of the 3rd, 7th, 8th, and 12th KY, CSA*, 28.

The Confederate plan of attack consisted of four corps commanded by Generals Polk, William J. Hardee, Braxton Bragg, and John C. Breckenridge. The 7th Kentucky formed part of the Second Brigade of the Second Division of the First Corps commanded by Polk. Their commander was Colonel William H. Stephens of the Sixth Tennessee Infantry.⁷⁰ Pirtle's fellow soldier Henry George noted that "it rained in torrents almost constantly" causing the 7th Kentucky to be late in joining Polk. Pirtle and George both recall being ordered to march in the early morning hours of April 6. Unbeknownst to both men and the rest of the Confederate army, a small Federal reconnaissance discovered part of Hardee's lead army at about five o'clock that morning. The 7th Kentucky's colonel, Charles Wickliffe read the enthusiastic address that General Johnston gave the Confederates the night before. George noted, "it was perfectly apparent to every soldier at that moment that they were going into battle."⁷¹ Pirtle, George, and the other Purchase boys in the Confederate army would soon face around 40,000 Union troops.

On the first day of battle the 7th Kentucky participated in the famed assault on the Hornet's Nest.⁷² At around 8:30 a.m. on April 7, along with the rest of Colonel Stephen's Second Brigade, it marched forward under General Cheatham and was ordered to the right flank of the rebel line. At around 10:30 a.m. Cheatham launched an attack on the field in front of the road with only three regiments. Expecting reinforcements in the rear,

⁷⁰ *OR*, vol. 10, 382.

⁷¹ George, *History of the 3rd, 7th, 8th, and 12th KY, CSA*, 28.

⁷² After surprising Union troops in their camps, the Confederates pushed the Federals, commanded by Generals William T. Sherman and John McClelland back towards the river. One division of blue-clad soldiers, led by General Benjamin Prentiss, was pushed back to a defensive position on slightly higher ground. Throughout the day, the Confederates would make eight deadly and unsuccessful frontal assaults on the Union line. Eventually General Beauregard ordered a sixty-two cannon strong artillery barrage, forcing Prentiss to surrender his force of approximately 2200. See McDonough, *Shiloh*, 132-150; Timothy Isbell, *Shiloh and Corinth: Sentinels of Stone* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2007).

Cheatham sent the men forward.⁷³ Henry George described how the men gathered in a field and prepared for the approaching assault in his memoirs: “The Seventh formed and witnessed for the first time, an artillery duel, and it was through this...field they were destined, in a few moments, to make their first onslaught on the enemy, and to lose so many men from the their withering fire...the brigade was ordered to charge the battery in front of the lines...as soon as our lines entered the field the enemy opened fire upon us from his entire front, a terrific fire of both artillery and small arms.” Within 150 yards of the road, Cheatham and the men of the 7th Kentucky were raked by artillery and within 30 yards the front line was decimated.⁷⁴ The 7th Regiment remained on the field until around 3 o’clock when it was ordered to fall back. The regiment lost their captain, James G. Pirtle of Company A, who was hit by an artillery shell. His friend James A. Collins took over command before he too was hit.⁷⁵

Of the Hornet’s Nest, William J. Stubblefield, Captain of Company F of the 7th Kentucky remembered “we were marching through thickets of blackjack and rough timber, through brooks, jumping over ditches, marching the front and the flank on the double quick time...we came to a Yankee camp where we saw several ghastly figures. One Yankee had his head shot off...Pretty soon the General [Cheatham] ordered a charge across an open field. We began the charge in good spirits but when we got well in to the

⁷³ Larry J. Daniel, *Shiloh: The Battle that Changed the Civil War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 208-09.

⁷⁴ Isbell, *Shiloh and Corinth*, 44.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 29-30. To the best of my knowledge, James G. Pirtle and George Pirtle were not related.

field the enemy...turned loose on us with terrible effect. The balls jumped me on each side and in great profusion during the charge.”⁷⁶

After the horror of the Hornet’s Nest, the 7th Kentucky and the rest of Colonel Stephens’ Second Brigade joined Brigadier General John C. Breckenridge’s four-thousand strong Reserve Corps. The First Brigade of Breckenridge’s corps was commanded by Colonel Robert Trabue and included the 3rd Kentucky Regiment, which was full of soldiers from the Purchase. At around 2:00 p.m., the Confederates charged into Sarah Bell’s peach orchard and received volley after volley of fire from Yankee troops.⁷⁷

After the fierce fighting of the day the 7th Kentucky and the rest of the Second Brigade moved on past Shiloh Church and camped out at an abandoned Union campsite. The exhausted men spent a sleepless night in a driving rain punctuated by the sounds of injured and dying men. The next morning, the Confederate army was surprised by an attack from the combined armies of Grant and Buell. In the ensuing confusion many of the southern troops were ordered forward without a commander—including the 7th Kentucky. Colonel Wickliffe had become separated from his men and spent the night at another camp, but was soon reunited with his regiment. At noon they participated in the battle at Water Oaks Pond where they made small gains before being driven back with devastating losses.⁷⁸ Stubblefield noted that his regiment was “put into the fight the next day and fired with irregularity but vigorously and made one good charge but in another charge a regiment on our right broke which threw us into disorder and ours retreated a

⁷⁶ William J. Stubblefield Diary, Pogue Library, Murray State University, Murray, Kentucky, 3.

⁷⁷ Daniel, *Shiloh*, 218-224; *OR*, vol. 10, 455-457.

⁷⁸ Daniel, *Shiloh*, 287.

short distance but rallied.” During one of the “rallies” Colonel Wickliffe charged forward at the head of the regiment. It would unfortunately be the last time the men of the 7th Kentucky saw their commander as Wickliffe was fatally shot in the head. Of him, General Cheatham noted that “he received his mortal wound at about 12 pm...bravely leading the charge.” In his official report, George Maney, Colonel of the 1st Tennessee, stated, “I had the valuable personal assistance of Colonel Wickliffe...and in my first and main charge against the enemy he was of eminent service; his position seemed at all times wherever danger was greatest or encouragement to the line most needed. His devotion and valor are indeed, a serious loss to this country.”⁷⁹

Wickliffe was not the only loss to the 7th Kentucky. The regiments major, W.J.N. Welborn, a wealthy cabinet-maker and father of six from Columbus, fell on the first day of battle. Welborn’s death must have been particularly harrowing for his seventeen-year-old son James, a seminary student before the war, who served in the same company as his father. Also killed that day was young Martin L. Burnett of Hickman County who, like James K.P. Welborn, was a seminary student before the war. Henry George lost a dear friend at the battle. His boyhood playmate, Captain J.M. Emerson of the 3rd Kentucky, was leading a charge at Shiloh when he “fell, pierced through the breast with a minie ball from which he only survived a few hours.”⁸⁰

⁷⁹ *OR*, vol. 10, 457-58. Henry George notes that after the first day of fighting the 7th was separated from the rest of the Second Division. The campsite they chose was near the center of the firing line on the second day of battle which accounts for their lack of commanding officer.

⁸⁰ *OR*, vol. 10, 442, 458; George, *History of the 3rd, 7th, 8th, and 12th KY, CSA*, 25, 29; *Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Kentucky*, Volume I. Colonel Maney took charge of the Second Brigade after their commander, Colonel Stephens was injured by a fall from his horse. James G. Pirtle was rendered unfit for battle for the remainder of the war.

In his diary, William Stubblefield remembered Shiloh as the “bloodiest battle on the continent” but despaired that it would “not end our troubles for the enemy seems to have a hearty voice and a just sense of social duty.”⁸¹ The battle was a disaster for both the Union and Confederate armies. In the end, close to 3500 soldiers lost their lives, 16,000 more were wounded, and close to 4,000 were listed as either captured or missing. The Confederacy did not achieve its much needed victory in the West and Grant did not take the Charleston & Memphis railroad. The weary Confederate army retreated, once again, toward Corinth, followed by Union General Halleck. Corinth and its coveted rails fell into Union hands at the end of May and a couple of days later, the city of Memphis also fell to the Yankees. Not long afterward, Union gunboats appeared on the Mississippi River, threatening the city of Vicksburg.⁸²

The hope of a Confederate Kentucky, however, did not die in the Purchase. Nor was it seemingly dead among the Kentucky Confederates in Richmond. Confederate General Braxton Bragg, relying on Edmund Kirby Smith’s exaggerated assertions that Kentucky was full of southern sympathizers, would make a last bold attempt to seize the Bluegrass state in fall 1862. The dream of marrying Kentucky to the Confederacy, however, was dashed on the bloody battlefield of Perryville in central Kentucky in early October.⁸³

As for the soldiers of the Purchase serving in the 3rd Kentucky and 7th Kentucky, home would stretch farther and farther into the distance. Captain S.P. Ridgeway of the 3rd

⁸¹ Stubblefield Diary, 5.

⁸² Cooling, *Fort Donelson’s Legacy*, 29-57; Daniel, *Shiloh*, 293-317.

⁸³ Kenneth W. Noe, *Perryville: This Grand Havoc of Battle* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2001), 24-28.

Kentucky seemingly predicted his severance from his home state when he wrote to his sweetheart Jennie from Murfreesboro in late February 1862: “We are getting so far off I feel like I would never see you again...I have almost despaired of ever returning home in peace since we have been driven from our native State. It was not our fault we would have stayed there and fought as long as one remained if we had been allowed to do so—I would have thought it a greater honor to have been killed in Ky than won a victory down here. These are things we cannot control.”⁸⁴

For the citizens of the Purchase, the inability of Confederate forces to soundly defeat Grant’s forces at Forts Henry and Donelson and on the battlefield of Shiloh meant that the Tennessee, Cumberland, and Mississippi Rivers, as well as the town of Paducah, remained in Union hands. Yet, the Purchase, as Cooling notes, continued to be “contested ground” long after Grant’s removal to the South.⁸⁵ In the summer and fall of 1862 appeared the Confederate partisans and irregulars who would challenge Union military authority over the next three years. That challenge would lead Union authorities to crack down even harder on the civilian population of the Purchase as the advent of a new kind of war loomed on the horizon.

⁸⁴ A.P. Ridgeway to Jennie Stanfield, February 24, 1862, in Birchfield, *Civil War Letters, Volume One: West Tennessee*, 21.

⁸⁵ Cooling, *Fort Donelson’s Legacy*, 53.

Chapter 4:

“Guerrillas, Horse-Thieves, and Robbers”: A New Phase of the War, 1862-1864

On November 4, 1863, Union Colonel George Haller composed a desperate message to General John Boyle, Adjutant General of Kentucky Volunteers. Haller, under special orders from General Hurlbut at Memphis, had recently been appointed to recruit a company of home guards from the Purchase. He traveled to the town of Hickman, located on the Mississippi River in Fulton County, only to be dismayed by what he discovered. Although the area had recently been ransacked by guerrillas, the local men were reluctant to form a regiment to protect their community. Haller appealed to their patriotism, even their manhood, but to no avail. The only solution, he informed General Boyle, was to conscript a militia to destroy the “bandits.” To justify his desperate measure, Haller pleaded with Boyle:

Believe me General, the discourse upon which the body politic in now suffering, requires a desperate remedy. Without this, all attempts to clear out this part of Kentucky will be pointless. When before in the history of civilized warfare, has an enemy, other than a barbarous and savage one, been found so lost to every sense of humanity, as to fire upon steamboats and passenger trains in upon which peaceable women and children, not to say men, are being transported [?] Shall things remain so?¹

¹ Colonel George Haller to General John Boyle, November 4, 1863, Adjutant General’s Roster of the Civil War, Fortieth Kentucky Militia, Fulton County, Kentucky, Kentucky Department of Military Affairs, Military Records and Research Bureau, Frankfort, KY.

The disordered situation that Colonel Haller described did not materialize overnight. Between April 1862 and April 1864 the political, military, and social landscape of the Purchase had been transformed. Confederate retreat after Shiloh and the loss of Forts Henry and Donelson left the area firmly in the hands of Federal forces. Paducah and Columbus became Union strongholds in the area. Over the next year several other small towns across the area became outposts. Subversion by the Union Army in state and county elections in 1862 and 1863 led to political unrest. A seemingly unstoppable network of illicit trade involving corruption and bribery meanwhile brought the wrath of Federal officials raining down on both loyalists and Confederate sympathizers alike. In addition, both Columbus and Paducah were inundated with black refugees following the Emancipation Proclamation, and the subsequent formation of an African-American regiment in 1864 heightened an already tense situation. In the tumultuous atmosphere created by the chaos of war, average citizens became guerillas and bushwhackers, while others suffered under or aided their efforts. A small, but visible few remained loyal and instead joined Unionist regiments and “home guards.”

By the time Haller penned his letter to General Boyle, in other words, the “civilized warfare” that he spoke of already had become an afterthought as military officials, guerrillas, and home guards vied for control of the region. The three groups respectively employed violence, intimidation, and coercion to achieve their means. For the majority of people living in the Purchase during this period, their home front had become the new battleground.

* * * * *

In May 1862, General Halleck separated the seven counties that made up the Purchase from the rest of Kentucky and organized them into the Military District of West Tennessee, Department of the Mississippi. The district also included the region of Tennessee between the Mississippi and Tennessee Rivers, as well as the northern half of the state of Mississippi. Though reorganized several times more throughout the war, the Purchase remained separated from other military districts of Kentucky until fall 1864. In addition to the garrison at Paducah, the Federals soon established bases at Columbus and Fort Heiman, located on the Kentucky-Tennessee border near Forts Henry and Donelson. Just over the border of Kentucky to the south, the Federals also manned Union City, Tennessee. Over the next three years, the Union army would construct additional outposts at the smaller towns of Hickman, Clinton, Benton, Moscow, Mayfield, and Murray as well.²

The pattern that now played out in the Purchase resembled that of other garrisoned towns in the occupied south. As historian Stephen V. Ash points out, the Federal army initially employed a “rosewater” policy towards civilian populations in occupied towns, as evinced by the early occupation of Paducah by General Grant in September 1861. Two weeks after he occupied the town Grant had removed Colonel E.A. Paine, whom he left in command, after reports of harsh treatment of the townspeople surfaced. Paine’s successor, General Charles A. Smith, proved so

² *OR*, vol.17, Part 2, 7; vol. 16, Part 2, 20; Hunter B. Whitesell, “Military Operations in the Jackson Purchase Areas of Kentucky, 1862-1865,” *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 63 (April 1965), 147.

conciliatory towards Paducahans that many of his men accused him of being too soft. Ash notes that the Union Army typically became more hostile after determining that the populace was steadfast in its loyalty to the Confederacy. By spring 1862 Union soldiers regarded the citizens of the Purchase as unrequited rebels and looked upon them with mistrust and apprehension. The distrust led military authorities to demand loyalty oaths, punish dissenters, and impose harsh limits on trade.³

The priority for Union commanders, however, was to monitor Kentucky's first state elections since declaring neutrality. Union authorities in the state were vexed by pro-Confederates already in office and wasted little time in preventing more from being elected. In May 1862, Federal officials in the state first attempted to wrest control over western Kentucky courts by insisting that all county judges and clerks take the oath of allegiance to the United States. Colonel Silas Noble, stationed at Paducah, charged the courts with "constantly oppressing Union men" and "talking treason in the very presence of the court." Acting on Noble's orders, the 2nd Illinois Cavalry arrested four members of the courts for refusing to comply, including McCracken County judge G.A. Flournoy and county clerk Thomas D. Grundy. Noble also closed the clerk's office and stripped Grundy and Flournoy from their appointed positions. On June 28 around one hundred and fifty of the "true and loyal citizens of McCracken County" met at Paducah in support of

³ Stephen V. Ash, *When the Yankees Came: Conflict and Chaos in the Occupied South, 1861-1865* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 13-37; Simon., ed., *Papers*, vol. 2, 203-206; *OR*, vol. 3, 475, 480.

the arrests. They reiterated their belief that “the Union ought to be cherished, the Constitution revered, and the laws made in accordance therewith enforced.”⁴

In addition to ordering all candidates to take the oath, Brigadier General Jeremiah T. Boyle, commander of Union forces in Kentucky, issued General Order Number 5, which stated “no person hostile in opinion to the government and desiring its overthrow, will be allowed to stand for office in the district of Kentucky.” The two candidates already running to fill G.A. Flournoy’s position as circuit judge of the First District were Rufus K. Williams, an avowed Unionist from Graves County, and J.M. Bigger of McCracken County. In July Boyle ordered Bigger to decline the office of circuit judge. His failure to do so, Boyle noted, would result in his arrest. Despite protestations from Governor Magoffin on Bigger’s behalf, Williams went on to win the election uncontested. The office of circuit clerk was subject to Boyle’s order as well. Robert Ellison of Calloway County was elected clerk by a landslide in 1856 and held the position until Union authorities arrested and imprisoned him at Paducah in 1862. John B. England, a “staunch Republican” was elected in his place.⁵

⁴ Collins, *History of Kentucky*, 104-107; Coulter, *Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky*, 154-156; *Louisville Daily Democrat*, July 10, 1862. The two other court members arrested by Union authorities were from the nearby town of Smithland, Livingston County. G.A. Flournoy was listed as county judge in the 1860 census with an estate valued at \$18,000. Thomas Grundy was listed as a lawyer with no estate.

Presiding over the Unionist meeting in Paducah was R.B.J. Twynam, a local newspaper publisher, R.A. Bacon, and Albert Bradshaw, both wealthy farmers, and Dr. Edward Duke, a local physician. The Unionist “club” was probably the nascent beginnings of the Union League, which became popular among the loyal men in Paducah in 1862. The Union League determined in large part the way in which the war was conducted in the last two years of the conflict. See Frank L. Klement, *Dark Lanterns: Secret Political Organizations, Conspiracies, and Treason Trials in the Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984), 34-40.

⁵ Battle, et. al, *History and Biographies of Ballard, Calloway, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, McCracken, and Marshall Counties*, 70-85, 283; Collins, *History of Kentucky*, 104-107. In 1860 Bigger succeeded Lawrence Trimble as judge in the equity and criminal court of the First District. He served that position until its abolishment in August 1861. Bigger was an ardent supporter of the Whig Party prior to the war and campaigned for Stephen A. Douglas during the election of 1861. Though he was no doubt

By this time, Union forces also had to confront a growing guerrilla threat. As Cooling notes, pro-Confederate guerrillas only appeared in the Purchase after the falls of Forts Henry and Donelson. Insurgent activity in the area picked up after the Federals garrisoned the area. In early May the Purchase narrowly escaped a raid by Colonel Thomas Claiborne and the 6th Confederate Tennessee Cavalry. Claiborne and his men led an expedition from Trenton to Paris, Tennessee to obtain contraband medicines from Paducah intended for the rebel army. During the raid Claiborne impersonated a Federal officer and tricked a Unionist family into relaying intelligence. He learned that a spy, supposedly an “Englishman from Paducah,” had warned the Yankees of his movements.⁶ Colonel William W. Lowe of the 5th Iowa Cavalry, camped at Paducah, pursued the Confederates and warned Hickman, Mayfield, and Columbus of the threat. After a brief skirmish, Claiborne’s men retreated back into west Tennessee. Lowe responded by requesting extra men in the area west of the Tennessee River so as to protect the “many good and loyal citizens in this vicinity.”⁷

The primary targets of partisan bands in Kentucky and Tennessee in 1862, however, were not contraband medicines, but rather communication and supply lines and railway depots. Between May 19 and 24, Brigadier General Isaac F. Quinby, commanding at Columbus, led a reconnaissance of some 2500 men, including former Purchase Confederate deserters acting as spies, from Columbus down the Mississippi

condemned by Union officials because of his support of the Democratic Party, his association with former law partner Edward I. Bullock, a virulent and vocal secessionist, probably hurt his standing as well.

⁶ Cooling, Forts Henry and Donelson, 205-210; *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, McCracken County, Kentucky*, <http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed May 10, 2008. There were forty-four men living in McCracken County who listed their birthplace as England on the United States census.

⁷ *OR*, vol. 10, Part I, 880-884.

River to ascertain rebel strength at Fort Pillow, Tennessee. After arriving near the fort, Quinby was forced to withdraw his force back to Columbus after reports of a large guerrilla force moving on Columbus and Mayfield were confirmed.⁸

By mid-summer guerrillas had steadily increased their presence in the Purchase through recruitment. Purchase men flocked to Tennessee to join guerrilla outfits. Two Fulton County men, Captain Henry A. Tyler and Captain Gideon Binford, led a group of their neighbors to join the “renegade Tennesseans and runaway Kentuckians” at Colonel W.W. Faulkner’s headquarters at Dyersburg, Tennessee. Faulkner organized a regiment of Kentucky cavalry that eventually became part of the 12th Kentucky Cavalry, known popularly as Faulkner’s Regiment. On August 8, he launched an unsuccessful expedition into Kentucky hoping to recruit more men and capture cotton. Discovered by a small Union force outside Dyersburg, several of the men died and many were captured. Three of the latter were Fielding Bland of Ballard County, and Henry Torpley and W.S. Bennett of Hickman County. From his headquarters at Trenton, Tennessee, Union Brigadier General Grenville M. Dodge of the Central Division of the Mississippi noted that Faulkner’s men were “well armed and fought desperately.” To stifle recruitment from the Purchase and west Tennessee, Dodge suggested burning out the entire area local residents they “paid no attention to the oath” and “feed and guide the rebels.” He added with disgust that two slaves led the Federals to guerillas as “no white man had the pluck to do it.”⁹

⁸ *OR*, vol. 10, Part I, 897-98.

⁹ *OR*, vol. 17, Part 1, 29-30; Henry George, *History of the 3d, 7th, 8th, and 12th Kentucky, CSA*, 68; Simon, ed., *Papers*, vol. 5, 314. Henry A. Tyler, a lawyer, was in his early twenties at outbreak of war. After the war, Tyler returned to Hickman, Fulton County and continued a successful law practice. In 1870

One week later, Dodge's forces fought Faulkner's men in a skirmish near Dyersburg again, this time at Meriwether's Ferry on the Obion River. The 54th Illinois Infantry and the 2nd Illinois Cavalry fought a desperate skirmish with Faulkner's men which turned into hand-to-hand combat after the Kentuckians ran out of ammunition. Faulkner lost 37 men in the skirmish, including sixteen who drowned in the Obion while trying to reinforce the regiment. Of the Confederates, Dodge reported, "they lost everything. We got their horses, arms, and baggage. Some got away naked." Dodge did not celebrate the victory, as he realized "several companies of cavalry from Kentucky are trying to push through South. This was the first that crossed the line."¹⁰

In October, Faulkner and his men, 300 strong, attempted to recapture Island Number 10 in the Mississippi. Using citizens from Hickman and Fulton counties as guides, Faulkner advanced on the island by moonlight, arriving at camp at four in the morning. The plan was to drive the Federals from the island and take the town of Hickman, the hometown of many of his men. Faulkner's men advanced within 100 yards of the camp when a Federal sentinel fired upon the advancing column. The rear forces of the Confederates fired into their own front, leading to the impression that Union forces were advancing from behind. In the ensuing confusion, Faulkner and his men believed themselves ambushed and withdrew. The 2nd Illinois Cavalry gave chase and captured

his estate was valued at \$30,000. By 1900 he and his sons had opened a manufacturing company in Hickman. *Eighth and Ninth Census of the United States, 1860 and 1870, Fulton County, Kentucky*, <http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed May 12, 2008.

¹⁰ *OR*, vol. 17, Part 1, 32-33.

twelve men as well as Colonel Faulkner, Captain R.M. Meriwether, Captain H.B. Blakemore, and Adjutant L.H. Johnson.¹¹

The increasing number of guerrilla attacks in west Tennessee and Kentucky infuriated General Grant. He responded with a series of orders designed to punish “persons acting as guerillas” and their supporters within the community. To curtail the destruction of Federal Army supplies and property, Grant authorized seizure of “a sufficient amount of personal property from persons in the immediate neighborhood sympathizing with the rebellion” to reimburse the government. Grant’s ordered that captured guerrillas also were to be denied treatment as prisoners of war.¹²

In late September, Colonel Fredrick Starring, on orders from General Quinby at Columbus, led the 72nd Illinois Infantry on a scouting expedition along the Mississippi River, in order to ascertain the strength of guerrilla forces on Island Number 10 and the Missouri, Kentucky, and Tennessee shores. In his final report on the expedition, Starring grimly concluded that guerrillas in west Kentucky, Tennessee, and Missouri were impossible to defeat with regular Union infantry. The guerrillas, he complained, had kept themselves apprised of his movements through “pony express,” neighborhood networks, and clandestine tactics such as leaving letters and identifying marks on trees and bushes. Most disturbing to Starring was their practice of blending back into the populace as “peaceful farmers and citizens” until the danger of attack by Union forces passed. A local man, William P. Denny of Wadesboro, Calloway County confirmed Starring’s claims, nothing that several “boys from here” joined guerrilla groups. He added that several

¹¹ *OR*, vol. 17, Part 1, 460-61.

¹² *OR*, vol. 17, Part 2, 69.

walked about the town of Murray in full daylight without fear of recourse.¹³

The increasing levels of partisan violence that summer and fall finally led Paducah resident Q.Q. Quigley to pick up his pen after an absence of fifteen months. He somberly noted that “I have seen so much since the last date in my book...I have tried to get my consent to write down things transpiring and felt. The task has been so gloomy that from time to time I put it off.” Quigley despaired over current events in the Purchase, noting that “Our country has been the theater of blood, rapine, and murder. Distress, anguish, and sorrow have been established. Peace, hope, and joy are expatriated.”¹⁴

As Quigley’s lament indicates, partisan activities in the Purchase were not supported by everyone, despite what Union authorities believed. In the community of Benton in Marshall County, several men formed a Union company to combat the violence and disruption in their communities. The men, mostly from poor farming families, mustered into service in Paducah in October and voted wealthy Marshall County lawyer Wiley Waller their colonel. Listed as “home guards” by the Adjutant General, they eventually became part of the 15th Kentucky Cavalry with the chief purpose of scouting the area for guerrilla activity. For some time theirs “was the only protection afforded to the loyal citizens” in the area.¹⁵

¹³ *OR*, vol. 17, Part 2, Part 1, 145-148; Barbara Denny George, *The 1860-1862 Journal of William Peter Denny*, (Melber, KY: Simmons Historical Publications, 1995), 26-27. Hereafter referred to as “Denny Diary.”

¹⁴ Quigley, Langstaff, ed., 73-74.

¹⁵ *OR*, vol. 17, Part 2, 498-500; United States Naval War Records Department, *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion*, vol. 23 (Washington D.C.: 1894-1922), 652-53; Kentucky Adjutant General’s Office, *Reports of the Adjutant General of the State of Kentucky, Union Volunteers, 1861-65, Volume I* (Frankfort, KY: State Printers, 1915), 393-403. The 15th Kentucky Cavalry was mustered into service on October 6, 1862 in Paducah. Wiley Waller, a wealthy Marshall County farmer with an estate valued at over \$20,000, was commissioned Lieutenant Colonel after the regiment’s first two officers were killed. John Lockhead, a middle-class merchant from Marshall County

Second only to the army's concern with guerrillas, meanwhile, was the amount of illicit trade in the area. The farmers and merchants of the Purchase kept up a lively trade, both north and south. As historian E. Merton Coulter has pointed out, one of the Union army's primary problems with Kentucky during the war was the allowance of legitimate commerce while attempting simultaneously to crush trade with the Confederacy. Most vexing to Grant during the early part of the war was the movement of cotton along the Mississippi and Tennessee Rivers. Grant reacted by forbidding trade between Illinois and Kentucky, then later required permits for any vessel traveling west of Louisville on the Ohio River. Hoping to pacify Unionist planters in the border states as well as the south, and realizing that most of the north and indeed the world needed the cotton the South provided, President Lincoln relaxed trade restrictions along the Mississippi River in summer 1862. By fall, over three million dollars worth of cotton had been traded northward.¹⁶

Cotton was not the only commodity moving along the region's rivers and railways. Liquor, livestock, and produce were traded in abundance, most troublesomely with guerrillas. Determined to stop trade with partisans, the rivers surrounding the Purchase became the theatre of war as Federal gunboats plied the waters in search of both

was commissioned Adjutant and Thomas Alexander, a middling miller from McCracken County was appointed Regimental Quartermaster. Eugene Dodd, son of a wealthy Graves County physician was commissary sergeant. Samuel Duncan, a very wealthy farmer from Ballard County, was commissioned captain. The majority of the soldiers in the Fifteenth were from Marshall County, the poorest county in the Purchase with the smallest percentage of slaveholders in 1860. Most of the men were family members or neighbors and came from small farming or landless households. They primarily resided in the community of Benton in Marshall County. *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, for Ballard, Calloway, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, Marshall, and McCracken Counties, Kentucky*, <http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed June 20, 2008.

¹⁶ Simon, ed., *Papers*, 267, 426; *OR*, vol. 13, 552-5; See also See also E. Merton Coulter, "Commercial Intercourse with the Confederacy in the Mississippi Valley" *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* (March 1919): 377-395 and David G. Surdam, *Northern Naval Superiority and the Economics of the American Civil War* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001).

guerrillas and illegal trade between the Confederacy and Kentucky and Tennessee. Lieutenant Commander LeRoy Fitch of the U.S. Navy shut down river traffic between Paducah and the Illinois and Indiana shore in October and confiscated all river craft in an attempt to squash the practice, and also forbade any vessel from stopping on the Kentucky side of the rivers. Still, the trade did not stop. Commanders at Columbus and Paducah noted they had confiscated large amounts of cotton, corn, whiskey, and salt headed South, in the late summer of 1862.¹⁷

The issue of illegal trade in the Purchase in late 1862 ultimately led to one of the most notorious events of the war, Grant's issue of General Order Number 11, which expelled all the Jews from Paducah. The orders were not wholly a consequence of Grant's anti-Semitism, as the economic situation in Paducah in 1862 was also a contributing factor. Steven V. Ash maintains the expulsion of Jews from the town was closely tied to the competition that arose among the town's merchants after the Union army cracked down on illegal trade in the area. After the fall of Forts Henry and Donelson, the army had set up a system of permits designed to prevent illegal traffic on the three rivers surrounding the Purchase. The army hoped the permits would prevent "peddlers and corrupt traffickers" from smuggling medicines, supplies, food, and other goods to the Confederate states. Union authorities set up boards of trade all over the state

¹⁷ *ORN*, vol. 23, 435; Amy Hill Shevitz, *Jewish Communities on the Ohio River: A History* (Lexington: University of Press of Kentucky, 2007), 99-105.

that were responsible for issuing trade permits. In the Purchase, the board of trade was fittingly located at Paducah and was made up of local Unionist merchants.¹⁸

The boards of trade thus held sway over who received permits in the city, which often led to disputes and competition. Economic rivalries and political differences led board members to favor particular merchants and farmers over others. Judge Rufus K. Williams, a powerful Unionist, held a position on the board of trade. Williams denied his political rival, Democrat G.A. Flournoy's nephew L.N. Flournoy, a permit to ship a large amount of cotton to Cincinnati. The board was supposed to be supervised by W.P. Mellen, an agent from the Department of the Treasury, but it seemed he too was corrupt. The board accused Mellen of favoring particular merchants, engaging in the illegal trade of tobacco, and returning runaway slaves to their masters. The post commander at Paducah, Colonel Silas Noble, further charged Mellen with allowing large amounts of salt to be shipped south¹⁹

In this chaotic environment, local merchants and traders side-stepped the trade regulations established by Grant in 1861. William Denny of Wadesboro, for example, was a farmer without a permit who nonetheless traveled several times to Cairo and Metropolis, Illinois to trade in oxen and tobacco. In return he received liquor which he traded in Marshall and Calloway counties. By summer 1862, such illegal activities led the army to require an oath of allegiance from all who wished to obtain a trade permit. Denny

¹⁸ Steven V. Ash, "Civil War Exodus: The Jews and Grant's General Orders 11" in Jeffery S. Gurock, ed., *American Jewish History: Anti-Semitism in America* (New York: Routledge Press, 1998), 135-155.

¹⁹ Ash, "Civil War Exodus," 135-155. The men who complained about the board of trade and Mellen were R.C. Woolfolk, James Campbell, R. Enders, and T.H. Terrell who were known to be southern sympathizers. See United State Congress, *Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1863), 564.

traveled to Paducah where he and several family members took the oath in hopes of continuing their trading ventures. No doubt many farmers and merchants such as Denny probably received the oath under less than honest circumstances: the Provost Marshall at Columbus was accused of “taking fees for administering the oath” to citizens.²⁰

Agent Mellen of the Treasury Department, however, blamed Paducah’s Jewish population, composed of approximately thirty families, all of whom he labeled smugglers and traitors for the increasing amount of illegal trade. He openly forced them to take the loyalty oath. Paducah’s board of trade supported Mellen and denied all Jewish merchant’s requests for permits. Grant himself had been worried about the Jews in Paducah as early as July 1862, when he ordered Quinby to arrest all speculators coming south, adding that “Jews should receive special attention.”²¹ In General Order 11, finally issued on December 17, 1862, Grant stated: “The Jews, as a class violating every regulation of trade established by the Treasury Department and also department orders, are hereby expelled from the department within twenty-four hours from the receipt of this order.”²²

Grant’s subordinates quickly expelled over twenty-five Jews from Paducah, including Caesar Kaskel, the local President of the Union League, and at least two Union veterans. According to historian Bertram Wallace Korn, “they still tell stories of the

²⁰ Coulter, *Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky*, 213-219; *OR*, vol. 8, 584-585; George, *Denny Diary*, 17-32; Simon, ed., *Papers*, vol. 5, 416.

²¹ W.P. Mellen to Salmon P. Chase, Press Copies of Letters Sent, RG366, Records of Civil War Special Agencies of the Treasury Department, Records of the First Special Agency, 1861-66, National Archives, Washington, D.C.; Ulysses Grant to General J.T. Quinby July 26, 1862 in Simon, ed., *Papers*, vol. 4, 283; Shevitz, *Jewish Communities*, 100. Mellen first complained to Chase about the Jews in Paducah in a letter written in November 1861. He noted that the “Jews here are making a good deal of fuss, because the committee here will not endorse them more freely for their permits, under which they can continue their troublesome practices.” See United State Congress, *Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War*, 574.

²² *OR*, vol. 17, Part 2, 424.

expulsion in Paducah...of the hurried departure by riverboat up the Ohio to Cincinnati; of a baby almost left behind in the haste and confusion and tossed bodily into the boat; of two dying women permitted to remain behind in neighbors' care." It was only after Caesar Kaskel, his brother Julius Kaskel, and local merchant David Wolff traveled to Washington, D.C. to appeal to President Lincoln that the order was repealed.²³

Grant, however, had much larger problems to consider than illegal trade during the last month of 1862. As soldiers and citizens across the Purchase prepared for the holiday season, a hardened and fearless Confederate partisan leader plotted a raid into west Tennessee and Kentucky. From December 19, 1862 through January 1863, Nathan Bedford Forrest led an audacious raid, the first of many to come, into west Tennessee to destroy Union supply lines. His main objective was the Mobile & Ohio Railroad, running from Columbus to Jackson, Tennessee. The railroad supplied Grant as he confronted Vicksburg. In late December, Forrest captured the towns of Jackson and Humbolt. He destroyed tracks, trestles, rolling stock, and burned stores and munitions. On Christmas Eve, Forrest captured Union City. Later that night he dispatched approximately forty men to Moscow, Fulton County to destroy the railroad bridge over Bayou de Chein. The small Union force guarding the bridge believed the guerrillas to be a much larger force and abandoned the works without a fight.²⁴

Following Forrest's raid on Moscow, Brigadier General Thomas Davies, at the Union garrison at Columbus, wrote to Henry Halleck that he felt Paducah was secure and that Columbus was "out of all danger." He did request additional troops after learning

²³ Bertram Wallace Korn, *American Jewry and the Civil War* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society in America, 1951), 123-124.

²⁴ *OR*, vol. 17, Part 1, 592-97;

from a “reliable source” that Forrest’s men intended to take New Madrid and Island Number 10. The main area in danger, however, was the tiny town of Hickman, which Davies ordered evacuated of its 150-man garrison. In addition to destroying six hundred rounds of ammunition on Island Number 10, Davies’s and his men heaved two sixty-four-pounder navy guns into the Mississippi to prevent them from falling into rebel hands. In the end, Forrest’s destruction along the Mobile & Ohio left it useless to the Union army for a prolonged period of time. In addition to knapsacks and blankets, wagons, horses, and artillery, Forrest also captured ten thousand stands of small arms and one million rounds of ammunition. He likewise killed or captured over 2000 Union troops and recruited countless numbers of west Tennessee and Kentucky men to his ranks. Most importantly, Forrest ascertained that the Purchase area was protected by three insufficient garrisons at Paducah, Columbus, and Fort Heiman.²⁵

As January 1863 and the third year of the war dawned, Union troops and citizens throughout the Purchase briefly forgot about guerrilla raids, torn-up trestles, and illicit trade, as Lincoln’s issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation took center stage in the nation’s drama. On January 1, Quintus Quigley railed against the so called “loyal” men of Paducah whom he reported showed “great outward” zeal toward the “social, political, and moral status of the Negro.” On January 7 he predicted that emancipation would bring reprisals by southerners towards their slaves:

President Lincoln issued his proclamation on the 1st instant declaring all the Negroes free. This is the blackest act in my judgment ever done by Christian man...to every man it

²⁵ *OR*, vol. 17, Part 2, 498-500; *ORN*, vol. 23, 652-53. See also Cooling, *Fort Donelson’s Legacy*, 164-67; General Thomas Jordan and J.P. Pryor, *Campaigns of General N.B. Forrest and Forrest’s Cavalry* (New York: De Capo Press, 1996); Brian Steel Wills, *A Battle from the Start: The Life of Nathan Bedford Forrest* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992), 154-156.

must be apparent that to embrace the terms of his proclamation puts the Negro in a still more distressable state. If taken he can expect not mercy. None of the rules of civilized warfare will be applied to him but execution, fire, and the sword is his portion if ever taken by the Southern Army. A being [who] notwithstanding the humanitarianism preached by the North can never be placed on a basis of equality in either section. Yet many are simple enough to embrace the offers and protection of Lincoln and his government. In so embracing they sign their own eternal doom”²⁶

All over the South, newly freed slaves flocked to Union occupied areas and the Purchase was no exception. Slaves from the Purchase as well as west Tennessee flooded the garrisons at Columbus and Paducah. Later, when the Union army started recruiting African Americans at Paducah, the numbers would explode.²⁷

As 1863 dawned, Grant’s forces in the Mississippi Valley numbered approximately 132,000 soldiers. Major General Stephen Hurbult’s XVI Corps, consisting of close to 65,000 men, protected west Tennessee and the Purchase. At Columbus, Hungarian-born Brigadier General Alexander Asboth commanded. While Asboth had proven a capable commander at the Battle of Pea Ridge, as a garrison commander he turned out to be prone to exaggeration when it came to guerrilla activity in the area. Soon after taking command, he fired off a frantic telegram to Major General C.S. Hamilton, commander of the West Tennessee District, warning that close to 4,000 guerrillas were marching on Island Number 10. Asboth begged for more cavalry to reinforce Hickman and Clinton as well as an additional gunboat. Hamilton denied Asboth’s request, replying that no more than 300 guerrillas were known to be in the area. He admonished the Hungarian “your dispositions are reprovod.” Hurlbut, commanding at Memphis, took

²⁶ Quigley, Langstaff, ed., 74.

²⁷ Lucas, *A History of Blacks in Kentucky*, 150-160; Cooling, *Fort Donelson’s Legacy*, 243. Unfortunately, few sources exist that detail how the average citizen and slaveholder felt about the Emancipation Proclamation in the Purchase. There are likewise no records that record the number of black refugees living in Paducah.

Asboth more seriously, however and sent additional troops to Hickman and Columbus, claiming that the “amount of rascality” in the district “is beyond all estimate.”²⁸

Throughout February Asboth attempted to quell the guerrillas in his district. Like Grant before him, he held the civilian population culpable for insurgent activity. He issued General Order Number 11, which specifically affected citizens living along the lines of the Mobile & Ohio Railroad. Condemned the “lawless band of guerillas” who plagued the Union garrisons and railroads, he stated that they owed their existence to the large numbers of “disloyal” civilians of the Purchase. He thus would insure that civilians would “be held responsible, with their persons and property” for the acts of the guerrillas whom they “cherish.” He further ordered that any family living near the scene of a guerrilla attack would be arrested and held hostage.²⁹

Asboth simultaneously confronted an increase in illicit trade. In February 1863, Fleet Captain Pennock, from his headquarters at Cairo, reported a noticeable increase in illegal commerce. Indeed, Pennock claimed there was so much of it along the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers that he planned to ban all trade between St. Louis, Cincinnati, and Memphis. The chief cause of the smuggling, he added, was the freedom with which custom houses obtained permits. To remedy this, he proposed allowing only military transports to carry goods up and down the rivers. He also suggested closing Kentucky Bend, the tiny strip of land separated from Kentucky by the Mississippi to all boats, since

²⁸ *OR*, vol 24, Part 3, 30-34, 73-74.

²⁹ *OR*, vol 24, Part 3, 74.

the area was the last “neutral” spot on the Mississippi before passing into Confederate Tennessee.³⁰

In March, General William S. Rosecrans ordered the evacuation of Forts Henry, Doneslon, and Heiman due to high water. Shortly thereafter, reports surfaced of an impending attack by General Earl Van Dorn’s forces on a weakened Fort Donelson. Asboth fired off another panicky telegram, this one to General Hurbult at Memphis on March 7, insisting that Paducah and Columbus would be the next target. He worried that “deprived of the garrisons of the three forts on the Tennessee I have hardly anything herewith to check an invasion of the six counties between Columbus and Tennessee.” He proposed instead the creation of more garrisons at Mayfield and Murray in addition to those already active at Clinton and Benton, so as to make a “chain of communication to control properly this portion of Kentucky.”³¹

Asboth, though certainly skittish about guerrilla attacks, correctly predicted the Rebel resurgence. Confederate forces occupied Fort Heiman on March 10, just three days after Asboth’s telegram to Hurlbut requesting more men and posts. Following on the heels of retreating Federals, the guerrillas occupied Fort Heiman, captured several horses, and recruited several men. Federal officers now saw what Asboth already knew, namely that Fort Heiman had functioned to prevent rebel forces from crossing the state line into Kentucky or the Tennessee River. Without it, Paducah and Columbus were open to attack. On March 14, an expedition of Federals personally led by Asboth, recaptured the

³⁰ *ORN*, vol. 24, 442-443.

³¹ *OR*, vol. 23, Part 2, 99-101, 150-151; vol. 24 Part 3, 20-21, 99-102. Before its abandonment in March 1863 Fort Heiman was briefly transferred to the Department of the Cumberland.

fort with little resistance. Asboth soon received his requested posts at Clinton, Benton, Murray, and Mayfield.³²

By spring 1863, the partisan threats in West Tennessee and the Purchase tied down around 90,000 Union troops in the Mississippi Valley. The Columbus and Paducah garrisons alone contained approximately 10,000 troops. In mid-June 1863, however, Grant ordered Hurlbut to strip his district of manpower and redirect the forces towards Mississippi and the Vicksburg campaign. Grant notably exempted the forces stationed at Paducah and Columbus. The removal of garrisons in West Tennessee, Mayfield, Benton, Murray, and Fort Heiman allowed local partisans like Jacob Biffle, Jeffery Forrest, J.F. Newsom, and James R. Chalmers to roam at will. Biffle, who made sport of destroying telegraph wires between Columbus and Jackson, Tennessee, was especially vexing to Hurlbut, who labeled the Tennessean a “damned Rebel.”³³

Predictably, no one was more worried than Asboth at Columbus. He protested to General Halleck that in “the whole country between the Tennessee and Mississippi River ...secessionism prevails and guerillas are constantly organizing.” Of the 10,000 troops that previously guarded the area between Paducah and Corinth, he complained, only 4000 remained. After pleading with a flippant Halleck not to pull troops out of Hickman and Columbus, “Old Brains,” informed Asboth, “I think you have no forces against you but guerrillas. They will *only* devastate the country.”³⁴

As spring gave way to summer, elections, this time for governor and congress, once again became a concern for Union leaders across Kentucky. Running for a

³² *ORN*, vol. 24, 51-56; *OR*, vol 24, Part 3, 100-105.

³³ *OR*, vol. 24, Part 3, 415.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 249, 413-415.

congressional seat in the First District were Lucian Anderson of Mayfield and Lawrence S. Trimble of Paducah. Anderson, an avowed Unionist since the beginning of the war, ran on the Union Democrat ticket. Trimble, a former judge, member of the House of Representatives, and president of the New Orleans & Ohio Railroad, ran against him on the newly formed Peace Democrat ticket. The Kentucky Peace Democrats had formed soon after the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation and were made up of former members of the States Rights Party. They deeply opposed Lincoln's administration.³⁵

Despite the Federals in the midst, the candidates gave speeches across the Purchase that fall. During one campaign stop, Anderson, a skilled politician and rhetorician, publicly interrupted Trimble while he was giving a speech and demanded the Peace Democrat make clear whether he would vote men and money for the war effort if he were elected. Trimble admitted he would not. On June 18 Q.Q. Quigley, wrote that "the radical Union men met here and selected Lucian Anderson as their candidate for Congress." Observing the additional candidates in western Kentucky, he noted "I have not seen or heard what character of resolutions they passed." He concluded that they could be no worse than Anderson, however, whom he characterized as a proponent of "the administration of Lincoln and a total destructor of State rights."³⁶

Trimble, however, still received substantial support from the Purchase, causing one Unionist in the area to worry "Judge Trimble's position has backed up and encouraged traitors very much...unless the Union men can have the assistance of the

³⁵ James Larry Hood, "For the Union: Kentucky's Unconditional Unionist Congressmen and the Development of the Republican Party in Kentucky, 1863-1865," *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 76 (July 1978): 197-215; Coulter, *Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky*, 170-178.

³⁶ Quigley, Langstaff, ed., 78; Hood, "For the Union," 200-01.

military, we are powerless.” Union authorities heeded the call and once again passed a series of measures to prevent the election of pro-Confederate candidates in the state. To quell rebel sympathy Hurbult issued Special Order Number 159 on July 14. It barred all rebel sympathizers in the Purchase from running for office, serving as electors, and voting. On July 29, Asboth attached additional measures to Hurbult’s orders and prohibited anyone heard “uttering disloyal language and sentiments” from running for office. He likewise ordered all county judges to appoint only Union men to the positions of clerk and judge. They in turn removed all pro-southern candidates from poll books. Asboth also ordered that all candidates and electors take the oath of allegiance.³⁷

To demonstrate the seriousness of their orders, Union authorities arrested Lawrence S. Trimble two weeks before the election and confined him in the town of Henderson, Kentucky, located on the river across from Evansville, Indiana. Authorities offered Trimble his freedom if he agreed to remove his name from the ballot. He refused. Military officials throughout the First District struck him from the ballot anyway and kept him imprisoned until the day after the election.³⁸

The crackdown on political activity by the Federals and the arrest of Trimble led to another increase in guerrilla activity. On July 16, two days after the issuing of Order Number 159, three cavalry companies attacked and occupied the town of Hickman and plundered the stores of the Union men in town. The guerrillas also carried a list of loyal men whom they intended to capture and murder. Upon hearing of the list, many Union

³⁷ *OR*, vol. 23, Part 2, 570-72.

³⁸ *Congressional Globe*, 38th Congress, 1st session (1863-64), part 4, 60-1.

men fled to Columbus out of fear.³⁹ The day after the raid, five of the men forced to flee wrote to Asboth requesting protection. The petitioners, H.S. Campbell, Montraville Wilson, George C. Hallet, W.K. Lyle, and I.M Gest, stated that “we are now here as refugees...finding it unsafe to return. With our families still there, our feelings and apprehension may well be imagined.” J.C. Bonner, captain of the gunboat *New Era*, visited the town after the “outrages” and believed he could confidently vouch that loyal citizen’s deserved protection. He reported that many former Rebel sympathizers in Hickman were “now ready to protect the town from all assaults that may be made by guerillas...the Southern sympathizers themselves have asked for protection of the United States.”⁴⁰

The raid on Hickman again set off Asboth’s fear of a massive rebel attack on the Purchase. He sent a small force to Clinton “to observe the rebel movements and “capture the robbing parties.” In the days after the attack he also sent the First Brigade of the Sixteenth Army Corps across the Purchase in pursuit of guerrillas. From Mayfield, Murray, Feliciana, and Clinton, Asboth searched for the enemy, to no avail.⁴¹ He meanwhile sent frantic reports to Hurbult, insisting that General Gideon Pillow was marching toward Paducah with a force of six to eight thousand men. Hurlbut wrote to General J.A. Rawlins’s of Asboth’s reports, but scoffed at the Columbus commander’s fears. He believed the rumors originated in Mayfield to disrupt upcoming elections. He

³⁹ *ORN*, vol. 25, 309-310.

⁴⁰ *OR*, vol. 23, 825-2. Of the list of Unionists found in the petition, only two are listed in the 1860 census. H.S. Campbell was born in Ohio and worked for a livery stable in 1860. At the time of the raid in 1863, he was serving as revenue officer of Hickman. Montraville Wilson was a master brick mason in 1860 and in 1863 he was serving as enrolling officer for the Union Army in Fulton County.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*; *ORN*, vol. 25, 332-33.

asked Rawlins to relieve Asboth and replace him with a man “of sense and judgement” He added that “this district gives me more trouble than all the rest.”⁴²

On July 30, Asboth fired off yet another telegram, insisting once again that Hurbult send more men to the Purchase. To ensure that elections would not be tampered with, he also ordered detachments of Union cavalry at Feliciana, Clinton, and Murray, and sent members of the 15th Kentucky to Fulton County.⁴³ On July 31 Asboth’s wishes were granted. General Ambrose Burnside declared martial law in Kentucky to protect “the freedom of election,” and required all voters to take an oath of allegiance. Burnside’s declaration, combined with Hurlbut and Asboth’s orders and the removal of Trimble’s name from the ballot, sealed the election for Lucian Anderson, who received 4,323 votes to Lawrence S. Trimble’s 711. Across Kentucky, other Unionist candidates were elected, including gubernatorial nominee Thomas E. Bramlette who defeated Charles A. Wickliffe 68,422-17,503. In many counties, including four in the Purchase, Wickliffe’s name did not appear on the ticket. Even Lucien Anderson admitted he was elected “at the bayonet.”⁴⁴

Election fever subsided, but Federal efforts to deal with guerrillas and illegal trade went on unabated. In response to increasingly bold attacks, Union officials enacted sweeping measures. In August, the new commander at Columbus, General J.A. Smith, wrote General Hurbult for permission to raise a group of home guards in the Purchase. Smith had received a petition from the Union men in the area, vouched for by Judge

⁴² *ORN*, vol. 25, 321-22; *OR*, vol. 24, part 3, 530.

⁴³ *OR*, vol. 24, Part 3, 560-62; Collins, *History of Kentucky*, 127.

⁴⁴ *OR*, vol. 23, Part 2, 568-71; Collins, 127; Coulter, *Civil War and Readjustment*, 174-176; Harrison and Klotter, *A New History of Kentucky*, 206; *Congressional Globe*, 38th Congress, 1st session (1863-64), part 4, 60-1.

Rufus K. Williams, insisting their neighborhood was “infested at times with small rebel or guerilla bands” who avoided capture. Smith noted the men promised to “apprehend these guerillas...and bring them to me at this post, or kill, destroy or drive them from their country.” On September 14, General Hurlbut issued General Orders 129, which encouraged post commanders in Kentucky and Tennessee to promote the formation of “Home Guards,” be organized under state militia laws to “repress all robbery, violence, and irregular warfare” within their respective districts. General Smith and his recruiting agent, Colonel George C. Haller, placed posters across the area asking “Who will refuse this opportunity of manifesting his patriotism and his manhood in defense of his home, his wife, and his children?” Many did; in Fulton County, Eliza Howard noted that “General Hurlbut’s orders has stirred up the people very much here...they are running.” Haller confessed that enlistment numbers were poor, but at least 150 men from across the Purchase answered the call and joined the Kentucky State Home Guards.⁴⁵

Guerrillas in the area responded accordingly. They robbed several stores in Murray and Mayfield and harassed several loyal citizens. Hurlbut ordered General Smith at Columbus to ascertain the monetary value of the stolen goods, plus an additional fifty cents per item, and assess said amount on the most “wealthy and notorious sympathizers”

⁴⁵ *OR*, vol. 30, part 3, 66-67; David Nelson Current, *Lincoln’s Loyalists: Union Soldiers from the Confederacy* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992), 57; Eliza Howard to William Allen Howard, November 24, 1863, Howard Collection, Manuscripts Department, Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana; Adjutant General’s Roster of the Civil War, Fortieth Kentucky Militia, Fulton, Graves, and Calloway Counties, Kentucky Department of Military Affairs, Military Records and Research Bureau, Frankfort, KY.

in Murray and Mayfield. The collected money, Hurlburt stated, would go into a general fund to benefit Union citizens and refugees.⁴⁶

The next month, Lieutenant Commander S.L. Phelps informed Major General William Tecumseh Sherman that his men had caught a “private trading voyage” from Paducah on the Duck River in Tennessee. Phelps had been troubled by guerrillas along the river and suspected that the private vessels were engaged in trading with the irregulars. Just as importantly, the trading permits on the captured vessels had been issued by a Paducah customs house agent.⁴⁷ Rumors began to circulate that W.W. Faulkner, along with Newsom and a band of 1000 men, were headed for Murray. Additional reports suggested that Forrest and Faulkner were grouping at Mayfield to launch an attack on Paducah. On November 4, guerrillas went to Mayfield where they “robbed every store, broke up the railroad, and destroyed the rolling stock.”⁴⁸ Colonel Stephen Hicks called out all soldiers and citizens to stand fast in case of another attack; Hicks seemed pleased to report that several citizens answered his call. The guerrilla’s also captured Republican congressman Lucien Anderson and several other local Unionists. Newspapers reported the use of bloodhounds by the Confederates to hunt down Union men in the vicinity. Anderson was little more than a pariah in many parts of the Purchase and the guerrillas hoped to use him as an exchange for Colonel Trusten Polk

⁴⁶ *OR*, vol. 30, Part 2, 645-48; Special Orders Number 217, Issued by Major General Stephen Hurlbut, Memphis, Tennessee, September 10, 1863, RG 393, National Archives, Department of Kentucky 1862-1869, Records of the Provost Marshall, Miscellaneous Records, E2238

⁴⁷ *ORN*, vol. 25, 478-79.

⁴⁸ *OR*, vol. 31, 839; *ORN*, vol. 25, 490-91, 530.

of Missouri, who was being held prisoner at Johnson's Island. Luckily for Anderson, the guerrillas released him unharmed.⁴⁹

Later that month, Grant ordered Union officers to pull up the iron on the railroad tracks at Paducah and Hickman and send it to Tennessee. Paducah Commerce Bank President L.M. Flournoy vehemently protested that the "road was built and owned by the citizens of that section" and that "the loss of the use of the road will fall heavily on the citizens of Paducah and those interested in the road." He added that "we would not complain of the use of the road for military purposes whenever it deemed necessary, but the entire loss of the road is ruinous to our community." Grant flatly denied Flournoy's request, stating "my experience satisfies me that the citizens of Paducah, almost to a man, are disloyal and entitled to no favours from the government. The President of the road, and no doubt nine-tenths of the stockholders, are disloyal men." Grant no doubt was suspicious of Flournoy because of his family's southern sympathies and links to illegal trade. While Flournoy himself never served in the Confederate Army, he had no less than eight first cousins who served in the 3rd and 7th Kentucky.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ *OR*, Series 2, vol. 6, 552,709; *ORN*, vol. 25, Series 2, 529; *New York Times*, November 8, 1863. Trusten Polk was former the governor and senator of Missouri. He was expelled from the Senate when he joined the Confederate Congress. He likewise served in the Missouri State Guard under Sterling Price's command. In 1863 Jefferson Davis appointed him judge of the Trans-Mississippi Department and ordered him to Little Rock. Upon learning that Federal authorities captured his family, he set out to find them. He was captured sometime in September 1863. See Lawrence O. Christensen, ed., et al, *Dictionary of Missouri Biography*, (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1999), 619 and David C. Aamodt, "Conviction of Duty: The Life of Senator Trusten Polk." M.A. Thesis, Central Missouri State University, 1994.

⁵⁰ *OR*, vol 31, Part 3, 263, 270. In 1860, L.M. Flournoy was one of the wealthiest men in Paducah with an estate valued at \$146,600. Flournoy was one the founding eight investors of the Ohio and New Orleans Railroad, a private railway subsidized by the people of Paducah. The track of the O & NO eventually reached Union City and it was the destruction of this road that Flournoy was protesting. Prior to the war, Flournoy was, ironically, a partner with Kentucky Union General Jeremiah T. Boyle in the promotion of the Iowa Land Company, which encouraged the settlement of Iowa and Illinois lands. See Paul Wallace Gates "Southern Investments in Northern Lands Before the Civil War" *Journal of Southern History* 5 (May 1939): 155-185.

After the fall of Chattanooga in November 1863, Forrest gathered his forces once again in West Tennessee and recruited many more from the Kentucky-Tennessee border. By late November rumors abounded of a raid into west Tennessee. On December 6, Forrest himself noted that the “enemy” was strengthening their forces against his men. He boasted that his command stood at 5000 men and he predicted it would exceed 8000 by January if the people of West Tennessee and Kentucky kept flocking to his ranks. He boasted that “the Federals are and have been conscripting in Southern Kentucky, and of 130 conscripted at Columbus over 100 have escaped and joined my command. They are coming in daily at the rate of 50 to 100 a day.”⁵¹

Forrest, however, did not realize that the Union Army and local Union leaders in the Purchase were devising a new method to combat guerrillas in the area. In January 1864 Paducah became the first area in Kentucky where the Union army recruited black soldiers. In November 1863, following his capture by guerrillas, Congressman Anderson wrote a letter President Lincoln requesting that the first black troops come from his district. In early 1864, Union Adjutant General Lorenzo Thomas came to Paducah in regards to the raising of a colored artillery regiment. Thomas appointed Lt. Colonel Richard Cunningham of the 2nd Illinois Artillery to take charge of recruitment. From January to March 1864, he recruited African-American soldiers into the 8th Kentucky

L.M. Flournoy was the son of Thomas Flournoy, one of four brothers who moved to Kentucky from Virginia between 1820-1830. Three of the brothers were living in the Purchase by 1830 and one, G.A., was one of Paducah’s first trustees after its founding in 1832. Thomas Flournoy, L.M.’s, father, was listed as “gentlemen” in the 1860 census and owned an estate valued at around \$52,000, while his brother J.J. was listed as a “tobacconist,” and dry goods and commissions merchant. Their brother William Flournoy held an influential position as minister of the local United Baptist Church. The oldest brother, G.A. Flournoy was the same man whose replacement as circuit judge caused such controversy in the August 1862 elections. *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, McCracken County, Kentucky*, <http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed June 26, 2008.

⁵¹ *OR*, vol. 31, Part 3, 789.

Heavy Artillery, Colored. In theory, the army was allowed only to enlist ex-slaves who fled to the Purchase from Tennessee and other seceded states. Slaves from Kentucky could enlist if their owners were members of the Confederate army or convicted aiding and abetting the army or guerrillas. At recruiting stations in Paducah and Columbus, however, Kentucky slaves were accepted routinely. As early as February 1863 “contraband” slaves from the Purchase had been used to repair fortifications, prompting civil authorities in the area to capture and “return them to their owners *or them that claimed to own them.*” In early 1863, the Western Sanitary Commission established a soldiers’ home at Columbus and also employed several escaped slaves as workers. In late February, the chaplain of the 1st Kansas Infantry stationed at Columbus complained to the President of the Sanitary commission that “the slave hunters have come down on us to day backed up with Sheriff. They marched into our office...& asked permission to search the house for their fugitives.” The African-American employees hid themselves, the chaplain warned, with “fire arms.” He cautioned “there may be scenes in the home.”⁵²

After official recruitments began, a barrage of protests followed, including a nine-page letter to President Lincoln from Governor Bramlette, who charged Cunningham with stealing slaves. Several farmers in the Purchase complained that Cunningham led small groups of soldiers to farms at night to recruit their slaves. As an inducement, he offered each slave a \$300 bounty and freedom for himself and his family. The population of Paducah and Columbus exploded when soldier’s families followed

⁵² OR, Series 4, vol. 4, 138; Ira Berlin, Steven F. Miller, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland, eds., *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation: 1861-1867, Series I, Volume II, The Wartime Genesis of Free Labor: The Upper South* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 630-40;

them to camp. The army removed many of the contraband families to Island Number Ten to appease local slave holders fears.⁵³

In response to the recruitment of black soldiers, guerrillas launched a new round of attacks in the area. In January Colonel Haller of the 40th Kentucky Militia reported that a group of “scoundrels...residing in the extensive bottom stretching down along the Mississippi” carried off approximately eight hundred dollars worth of dry goods at Hickman. At the end of February a band attempted an attack on the Paducah railroad but were caught at Dukedom, on the Tennessee-Kentucky border. A raid on the town of Mayfield, however, did succeed. On February 29 guerrillas entered the town, robbed three stores belonging to Union men, and killed J.B. Happy, a wealthy farmer and “good Union man.” They likewise took as prisoner a local preacher, “Parson” William Dugger, whom they put “in heavy bonds.” The murder of Happy and the capture of Dugger were not random acts of violence. Both men had recently been appointed by the Provost Marshall to collect bonds for the benefit of Mayfield Unionists robbed by guerrillas the previous fall. The money for the bonds would come from “disloyal” citizens. For their efforts, Happy and Dugger both received fifty dollars per month to be paid from the fund

⁵³ *OR*, Series 3, vol. 4, 178-79, 436-38; Robertson, *Paducah: Frontier to Atomic Age*, 40-53; “Paducah Letter,” *Louisville Journal*, January 26, 1864; John David Smith, “The Recruitment of Negro Soldiers in Kentucky, 1863-1865” *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society*, 72 (1974): 364-390; Michael T. Meier, “Lorenzo Thomas and the Recruitment of Blacks in the Mississippi Valley, 1863-65” in John David Smith, ed., *Black Soldiers in Blue: African American Troops in the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 249-276; Lucas, *A History of Blacks in Kentucky*, 160. See also Victor B. Howard, *Black Liberation in Kentucky: Emancipation and Freedom, 1862-1884* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1983).

they collected. Under the circumstances, the men were no doubt seen as traitors to their community, out to take advantage of their neighbors for their own benefit.⁵⁴

In February 1864, meanwhile, the Treasury Department finally removed all trade restrictions from Kentucky and Missouri, prompting Brigadier General H.T. Reid at Cairo to worry about goods leaving Paducah, Hickman, and Cairo and making their way illegally to Tennessee and partisans. Congressman Lucian Anderson also worried and warned Lincoln of the dangers of opening unrestricted trade:

Permit me to say if this is done, down will go all the hopes of the Union men, especially in my district. This unrestricted trade in my district is what the rebels want; and if trade is thus opened, the rebels will be supplied with every thing they desire, which will go into the houses of rebels in their Army. I protest against it so far as the first District is concerned, and ask you candidly to take the matter into serious consideration before acting.

On March 11, guerrillas raided Clinton and captured forty horses and robbed two stores. The following day brought additional raids in the area, including one on Mayfield that left several citizens fleeing toward Paducah and the protection of the Union army. Colonel William H. Lawrence despaired over the situation, stating “it now becomes a military necessity, in my opinion, to prevent the large shipment of goods to these defenseless towns.”⁵⁵

The commander at Cairo, Brigadier General Mason Brayman, agreed. He felt that free trade in the area contributed much of the problem, stating that those engaged were

⁵⁴ Colonel George Haller to General D.W. Lindsey, January 12, 1864, Kentucky Department of Military Affairs, Military Records and Research Bureau, Frankfort, KY, Adjutant General’s Roster of the Civil War, Fortieth Kentucky Militia, Fulton County, Kentucky. *OR*, vol. 32, Part 1, 417, 485; Colonel Stephen Hicks, Special Orders Number 29, February 5, 1864, RG 393, , Department of Kentucky 1862-1869, Records of the Provost Marshall, Miscellaneous Records, E2238, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.; <http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed April 3, 2008. J.B. Happy was 43 in 1860 and owned estate valued at \$16,000. “Parson” Dugger was William Dugger, a local preacher in his late fifties with estate valued at \$8300.

⁵⁵ *OR*, vol. 32, Part 2, 427; vol 32, Part 1, 493-94.

“pernicious beyond measure; corrupting those in service, and furnishing needed supplies to enemies.” Brayman claimed possession of intercepted correspondence that proved Paducah traders who had taken the oath and were issued permits by the Union were conducting business across the Purchase with rebel traders with permits issued by Forrest.⁵⁶

Unlike Asboth, Brayman felt that the additional outposts across the Purchase actually aided the guerrillas instead of impeding them. He characterized the small outposts like the one at Hickman as dens for “smugglers and contraband dealers” and suppliers of guerrillas. He further charged that guerrillas benefited from the “loose trade regulations and supplies at small garrisons.” As a result, he pulled forces out of the tiny garrison at Hickman. With little manpower and few guns, Brayman justified the abandonment of the town as a necessity so as to protect the rivers and important military points.⁵⁷

The raids on Clinton and Mayfield that March were only precursors to a larger, much more organized raid. This time, the Confederates avoided the small garrisons and made a bold move on the town of Paducah itself, the symbol of Union occupation in the Purchase. On March 25, Forrest himself led close to 2000 men into Paducah, including members of the 3rd Kentucky and 7th Kentucky Mounted Infantry who were returning home for the first time in almost two years. Following the Battle of Shiloh, the green recruits of the regiments had been briefly brigaded with General John C. Breckenridge’s division, and they participated in the siege of Corinth and the Battle of Baton Rouge. In

⁵⁶ Frank Moore, ed., *Rebellion Record: A Diary of American Events, 1864* (New York: Von Nostrand, 1865), vol. 8, doc. 1, 1-8.

⁵⁷ *OR*, vol 32, Part 1, 504; Moore, *Rebellion Record*, doc. 1, 1-8.

September 1862 the Kentuckians became the only Bluegrass regiments to join General Earl Van Dorn's Army of West Tennessee, later renamed the Army of the Mississippi. Over the next year and a half, they had participated in the second Battle of Corinth, the Raid on Holly Springs, Mississippi, the Battle of Champion Hill, and the Battle of Okolona.⁵⁸

The 3rd Kentucky and the 7th Kentucky were camped with the 8th Kentucky another Purchase regiment, at Demopolis, Alabama in March 1864 when they received orders to report to Forrest at Columbus, Mississippi. The Kentuckians, commanded by General Abraham Buford, were without mounts and provisions, and by all reports, "had been reduced to skeletons." Henry George of the 7th Kentucky recalled the men were overjoyed at joining Forrest. A lack of horses resulted in many of the Kentuckians marching out of Columbus on foot, yet the men were "happy at the thought of having their faces turned once more toward home." On March 7, in order to accommodate the new men, Forrest reorganized his forces into two divisions under Generals James Chalmers and Abraham Buford. The Purchase regiments became part of Buford's Division and were led by Paducah native Colonel A.P. Thompson's. Thompson was one of the leading citizens of the Purchase and had served as a lawyer in the circuit court of the First District at the outset of war. Like the other Purchase men, he was eager to return

⁵⁸ George, *History of the 3rd, 7th, 8th, and 12th Kentucky, CSA*, 33-73; David S. and Jeanne T. Heidler, eds., *Encyclopedia of the Civil War: A Political, Social, and Military History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000), 107-108; The Third and the Seventh were briefly consolidated into General John C. Breckenridge's division following the battle of Shiloh. In his memoirs George recalls that while the rest of the regiments under Breckenridge's division were ordered to Bragg's army, the 3rd and 7th were ordered to join Van Dorn and Price because "they were recruited in the western part of the State, and it was expected that the army with which they would operate would move through West Tennessee to Kentucky." 47.

home. Forrest placed Thompson in command to give him the honor of “capturing his home town.”⁵⁹

With his men reorganized, Forrest plotted other raids through West Tennessee and Kentucky. On March 18 General Hurlbut, who so often scoffed at former Columbus commander Asboth’s fear of guerrillas in the past, now worriedly reported that Forrest had been spotted at Tupelo with over 7000 men, headed for west Tennessee. Hurlbut, however, was certain Forrest had a different target in mind, noting “I think he means Paducah or Columbus.” Hurlbut ordered the District Commander at Columbus, Brigadier H.G. Reid, to distribute guns to Colonel Hicks at Paducah in case “the contemplated attack should be made.”⁶⁰

In mid-March Forrest launched his raid into western Tennessee and Kentucky. Forrest and his men were shocked by the wasted Tennessee countryside which they characterized as infested with criminals, deserters, and Unionist guerrillas who terrorized the pro-Confederate citizens of the area. On March 20 he and his men entered Jackson, Tennessee, where frightened townspeople regaled them with horror stories about Union Colonel Fielding Hurst and his abusive regiment of Yankees. Hurst and his men had extorted money from Jackson residents, they claimed, committed several outrages

⁵⁹ George, *History of the 3rd, 7th, 8th, and 12th Kentucky, CSA*, 73; John Allen Wyeth, *That Devil Forrest*, 326-327. The other brigades were commanded by Colonels Robert M. McCulloch, Tyree Bell, and R.V. Richardson. See also Robert Henry Selph, “*First With the Most*” *Forrest*, 235-36; Thomas Jordan and J.P. Pryor, *The Campaigns of Lieutenant General N.B. Forrest and of Forrest’s Cavalry*, 403-404; John Watson Morton, *The Artillery of Nathan Bedford Forrest’s Cavalry* (Nashville: Publishing House of the M.E. Church, South, 1909), 106-107; Wills, *Battle From the Start*, 169-172;

According to the 1860 Census, Thompson was 30 years old, with an estate valued at \$23,000. He and his wife lived in downtown Paducah and were the owners of seven slaves. *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, McCracken County, Kentucky*, <http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed June 22, 2008.

⁶⁰ *OR*, Series 3, vol. 32, 91-92.

including murder, and arrested suspected southern sympathizers.⁶¹ Forrest then progressed north to Trenton, where he established a recruiting station, and sent a small detachment on to Union City, where they bluffed the Union commander at the garrison into surrendering on March 24.⁶² That same day, a flurry of messages between Union commanders went out warning that Forrest was advancing on the Purchase and “conscripting everybody.” Colonel Stephen G. Hicks at Paducah found the prospect of a raid by Forrest daunting, but he seemed equally concerned with the guerrilla forces across the Purchase who would join the “Wizard of the Saddle’s” ranks. On the same day that Forrest’s men attacked Union City, Hicks reported that thirty-five guerrillas had met the railroad train in Mayfield, killed one black man, and fired several shots at a local Unionist. At the small village of Fancy Farm, Graves County, guerrillas shot the postmaster, robbed a number of stores owned by loyal men, sacked the Catholic church, and captured five prisoners. The Union commander noted that “no Union man can go out” because “the interior is full of guerrillas.”⁶³

⁶¹ *OR*, Series 3, vol. 32, 117, 663-665; Wills, *Battle from the Start*, 172-173. On March 21, 1864 Forrest wrote Union Brigadier General Buckland at Memphis and demanded restitution for the victims of outrages in Jackson. He requested a sum of over \$5000, the amount extorted by Colonel Hurst, be returned to citizens. He also threatened to kill five captured Federal soldiers unless the prisoners from Jackson were released. Forrest was most outraged by the brutal killing of one his soldiers, Lieutenant Willis Dodd. In February-March 1864 Dodd was attempting to recruit more men to Forrest’s command when he was captured by Union soldiers under Hurst’s command and murdered; by all accounts Dodd was tortured and mutilated. The Dodd murder led Forrest to declare Colonel Hurst and his men “outlaws.”

⁶² *OR*, vol. 32, Part 1, 540-46; Wills, *Battle From the Start*, 174-176. Forrest sent Colonel W.L. Duckworth to Union City to capture the Federal garrison. Thought they were vastly outnumbered, Duckworth convinced the commanding officer that he was Forrest and that he was equipped with heavy artillery. Duckworth and his men captured 300 horses, plus 500 Union soldiers and much of their recent drawn pay which amounted to close almost \$60,000. Brigadier General Mason Brayman, who played a role in the repulse on Paducah, led 2000 troops from Cairo and Columbus, south to Tennessee to stop Forrest. But coming within six miles of the town, Brayman heard of the disaster, turned his forces around, and headed back north. See *OR*, Series 3, vol. 32, 141 and Moore, ed., *Rebellion Record*, doc. 1, 1-8.

⁶³ *OR*, vol. 32, Part 1, 541, 628; Part 2, 126-131.

Jennie Fyfe, a young nurse from Lansing, Michigan who had recently arrived in Paducah to serve at the U.S. Army Hospital, found the town abuzz with rumors of impending attacks. The streets, she noted, were full of soldiers, not civilians. The army stood ready to fire the commissary stores should Forrest and his men attack since they “did not wish to hold Paducah, but plunder it.” Even secessionists in the town were trying to prevent guerrilla attacks, Fyfe noted, out of fear for their own property. Secessionists and unionists alike did not have long to wait for Forrest’s next move.⁶⁴

On the early morning of March 25 Forrest’s men left Union City and started north. Around noon they encountered a group of Federals near Mayfield. Hicks had sent them to scout the area. Shots were fired and Hicks men fell back towards Paducah, where they warned the pickets of the advancing rebels. Anticipating an attack, Hicks took his 650 strong force to Fort Anderson, located in a supply depot. Situated on the western end of town, the fort was around 400 feet long, ran 160 feet toward the Ohio River, and was surrounded on four sides by deep ditches filled with water. Several of the men who retired to Fort Anderson were members of the U.S. 8th Colored Heavy Artillery, who would now get their first taste of battle as Forrest entered Paducah. He also faced Union gunboats *Peosta* and *Paw Paw* on the Ohio River, which arrived an hour before the rebels entered town. Hicks ordered the evacuation of the town’s women and children to the fort and across the river to the Illinois shore. Townspeople scrounged to gather up family members and valuables and headed towards the river. As Union troops assisted them into boats, Forrest’s men hid along the riverbank and fired at the gunboats, secure in the

⁶⁴ Jennie Fyfe to Nell Fyfe, March 30, 1864, Fyfe Family Papers, Special Collections, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

knowledge that Federal troops would not return fire and put women and children in danger. Of his journey across the Ohio to the Illinois shore, Paducah native Louis F. Kolb recalled clinging “fast to the bottom of the boat” as shots whizzed all around them.⁶⁵

The majority of Forrest’s men retired the center of town in late afternoon to rob and pillage, while his sharpshooters positioned themselves in houses along the riverfront to fire at the gunboats and the fort. They also reportedly forced five nurses at the local hospital to stand in front of their lines, preventing fire from Union forces. For the next several hours, Federal troops at Fort Anderson fired on Forrest’s men nonetheless as the gunboats pounded the town.⁶⁶

Forrest sent a flag of truce to the fort demanding surrender and promising “no quarter” should he have to attack. Several newspapers later reported that Confederate Kentucky troops in particular were outraged at the presence of African-American troops in the fort. One correspondent wrote that the troops in Forrest’s command were overheard swearing to “kill every damned nigger” inside the fort. Jennie Fyfe and her fellow nurses at the hospital meanwhile desperately tried to protect the sick black troops in the hospital, noting that if the “rascals” get hold of them “they will show them no mercy.”⁶⁷

While his men continued pillaging, Forrest sent the flag of truce in twice more; both times, Colonel Hicks refused. Orders went out to the 3rd Kentucky and 7th Kentucky to charge the fort. According to Henry George, the Kentuckians had no knowledge of the

⁶⁵ *Paducah News-Democrat*, March 25, 1927; *OR*, vol. 32, Part 1, 540-49.

⁶⁶ *OR*, vol. 32, Part 1, 540.

⁶⁷ *OR*, vol. 32, Part 1, 549; Jennie Fyfe to Nell Fyfe, March 30, 1864, Fyfe Family Papers, Special Collections, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan; Moore, ed., *The Rebellion Record*, 499-510

deep ditches around the fort until they were within a short distance of their objective. By then it was too late. Shots from within the fort and shells from the gunboats decimated the attackers. Thompson himself, “within sight of the place of his birth” died when a shell blew his body to bits. Colonel Edward Crossland, who took over command of the 7th Kentucky after the death of Charles Wickliffe at Shiloh, briefly assumed command of the Confederate troops before he himself fell severely wounded.⁶⁸

Of the African-American troops within the fort, Hicks reported “I have been one of those men who never had much confidence in colored troops fighting, but these doubts are now all removed, for they fought as bravely as any troops in the fort.” Jennie Fyfe expressed admiration for the black troops as well: “Our colored troops fought nobly they fought with perfect desperation... I think far more of the soldier than before I came here—rough, course [sic], and ignorant they may be, but as we watch over them in their pain and suffering can but see something to admire in the bravery manliness and gratitude they express.”⁶⁹

Forrest withdrew from a ravaged Paducah. At Mayfield, he granted the men in his command from the Purchase one week’s furlough to visit their families. George Pirtle of the 7th Kentucky happily reported “glad to meet home folks...talked almost the balance of the night.” Though many were no doubt tempted to remain in Kentucky, Henry George

⁶⁸ *OR*, vol. 32, Part 1, 549; Jordan and Pryor state that the charge on Fort Anderson was advanced by Colonel A.P. Thompson and not ordered by Forrest, 408-412; *New York Times*, April 1, 1864; Jennie Fyfe to Nell Fyfe, March 30, 1864, Fyfe Family Papers, Special Collections, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

⁶⁹ *OR*, vol. 32, Part 1, 549; Jennie Fyfe to Nell Fyfe, March 30, 1864, Fyfe Family Papers, Special Collections, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan .

claimed that “to their everlasting credit” all the men “returned to their command at the appointed time.”⁷⁰

As evening fell and Union authorities took stock of the damage, they determined to punish the townspeople, believing that they had welcomed Forrest into their town. The gunboats opened fire on the houses that held Forrest’s sharpshooters while the town itself was “shelled and made a ruin over their heads.” Colonel Hicks himself ordered the burning of all houses within musket range, an act for which Major General Hurlbut later lauded as “well deserved.” The *New York Times* admonished those who found fault with the shelling of Paducah, noting “their sympathies might well be expended on Charleston.”⁷¹

Forrest moved on to Memphis, which fell to his forces on April 3. Days later the furloughed Purchase men rendezvoused with Forrest and the rest of his men at Trenton. Forrest’s turned to Fort Pillow on the Mississippi River near Memphis. In order to seize the fort he created a diversion by ordering a second raid into Kentucky. Colonel Abraham Buford led the 3rd, Kentucky, 7th Kentucky, and 8th Kentucky back to Paducah. A small detachment, led by Hickman native Captain Henry A. Tyler attacked Columbus on April 11. Posing as Buford, Tyler sent a note to the garrison commander requesting surrender. Knowing he could not defeat the force at Columbus, Tyler attempted to bluff the garrison commander Colonel William Lawrence into surrendering. “Fully capable of taking Columbus and its garrison by force,” Tyler ordered the complete and unconditional

⁷⁰ *OR*, vol. 32, Part 1, 548-552; *ORN*, vol. 26, 196-219; Wills, *Battle from the Start*, 176-77; Frank Moore, ed., *The Rebellion Record*, 499-510; George Pirtle Diary, Chapter 44; George, 78. Following the battle of Fort Pillow in April, the Union called a meeting of the Joint Committee on the Conduct and Expenditures of the War to assess Forrest’s raids into western Kentucky and Tennessee.

⁷¹ *New York Times*, April 1, 1864.

surrender of the town. Tyler added a caveat to the orders and promised that black troops who surrendered would be returned to their masters, but if “compelled to take the place,” he would show “no quarter” to the black troops “whatever.” Colonel Lawrence, however, did not take the bait, having ascertained from several sources that guerrillas were in the area. He simply replied that “surrender is out of the question.” Perhaps, but Tyler succeeded in holding off the force while Buford and Forrest made their respective moves on Paducah and Fort Pillow.⁷²

At Paducah, Colonel Hicks once again prepared for an attack by Forrest and his men. The secessionists of Paducah, flush with “feverish excitement” according to Hicks, were also on the lookout for a second visit from Forrest and the Purchase boys. Buford finally arrived on the morning of April 14. Once again, Hicks fell back into Fort Anderson. Buford sent in a demand for surrender under his own name and granted the women, children, and “noncombatants” an hour to evacuate the town. Hicks agreed to the one hour lull but warned Buford “after that time come ahead; I am ready for you.” Again, the surrender orders were largely a bluff so that Buford’s men could plunder the town for supplies and the approximately forty horses that they missed on their first raid. Flushed with victory, Buford and his men summarily pointed their horses south to join Forrest back at Trenton, leaving the city behind. George Pirtle of the 7th Kentucky happily recorded in his diary “all reunited and riding all over the country.”⁷³

Forrest had by this time perpetrated the infamous April 12 attack on Fort Pillow. In April 1864 it was garrisoned by approximately 575 black and white troops. During

⁷² *OR*, vol. 32, Part 1, 553; Wills, *Battle from the Start*, 178-179.

⁷³ Wills, *Battle from the Start*, 178-179; *OR*, vol. 32, Part 1, 549-550; Pirtle memoirs, Chapter 45.

Forrest's attack on the fort over 65 percent of the approximately 300 black Union troops were killed.⁷⁴ On April 15, 1864, he presented a self-congratulatory report to President Davis of his recent raids into Tennessee and Kentucky. Forrest boasted of his success to Davis, assuring him that Mississippi, west Tennessee, and "Southern Kentucky, west of the Tennessee River" were free from Federal rule. He seemed most proud to report that the Unionist "guerrillas, horse-thieves and robbers" that supposedly roamed the area were scattered and that "many men heretofore of Union sentiment" were now expressing southern sympathies.⁷⁵

In the following weeks Union high command questioned Brayman and Hurlbut's response to Forrest's raids. Brayman wrote a detailed report on the events of March and April that laid the blame directly at the feet of the disloyal people of western Kentucky. In particular he blamed the constant supply of illegally traded goods in the Purchase with furnishing Forrest's troops. "That large force could not have remained so long, and probably would not have come at all" without the provisions provided by illicit trade, he concluded. Purchase citizens invited Forrest and his men into western Kentucky, Brayman stated, to disrupt elections and to instill "insurrectionary control." With summer fast approaching the people of the Purchase paraded their rebel sympathies and determined to "kill, plunder, and expel from their homes all loyal men." Brayman pleaded with General Hurlbut to protect the loyal men in the Purchase, whose dedication

⁷⁴ For more on the Fort Pillow massacre see John Cimprich, *Fort Pillow, a Civil War Massacre, and Public Memory* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005); Gregory J.W. Urwin, ed., *Black Flag Over Dixie: Racial Atrocities and Reprisals in the Civil War* (Carbondale, IL: University of Southern Illinois Press, 2004); Andrew Ward, *River Run Red: The Fort Pillow Massacre in American Civil War* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005).

⁷⁵ *OR*, vol. 32, Part 1, 611-613.

had been “sorely tried” and were now ready to “drive out the armed marauders, silences their sympathizers, and hold Western Kentucky to its allegiance.” In May those same Union men would plead with military authorities to send a capable commander to the area to stamp out their enemies. This time their pleas would be answered. Once again, spring would bring a new phase of the war to the Purchase.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ *OR*, vol. 32, Part 1, 512-515.; Moore, ed., *Rebellion Record*, 1-8, 515-518.

Chapter 5:

“Are you people ready for the federal salvation?” Paine’s “Reign of Terror” and the Hardening of Federal Policy, 1864-1865

On July 19, 1864 a new commander returned Paducah to assume command of the Federal garrison. Described as, “nervous” and “quick as lightning,” he also was said to resemble “General [Andrew] Jackson more closely than any man in the army.” Many of the townspeople no doubt recognized the slight man with the intense gaze, whose shock of white hair contrasted with his dark beard. Brigadier General Eleazer A. Paine had been a memorable visitor in their city following Grant’s occupation of Paducah in 1861. Those who remembered his earlier visit, like R.C. Woolfolk, must have blanched to see him now. Woolfolk had clashed with Paine back in September 1861 after the general threatened his life for refusing to remove a Confederate flag from his home. Others remembered Paine for his remarkable expletives: “God-damn you, I will dig a hole, shoot you in the damn head, and put you in it” had been one of his favorite warnings back in 1861.¹

After establishing his headquarters inside the Paducah Commercial Bank, “delegations” of local businessmen approached General Paine concerning his intentions.

¹ Willis Danforth, “How I Came to Be in the Army and General E.A. Paine’s Plan of Federal Salvation” in *War Papers Read Before the Commandery of the State of Wisconsin, Loyal Legion of the United States, Volume I* (Milwaukee: Burdick, Armitage, & Allen, 1891), 324-338; Collins, *History of Kentucky*, 140; Jeffery L. Patrick, ed., *Three Years with Wallace’s Zouaves*, 59-61.

Apparently fearful of his motives, and hoping to buy him off as well, they offered to make a deal with Paine: if he would turn a blind eye to their illegal trading and business transactions he could receive a kickback of the profits in return. Paine was outraged by the request and allegedly replied with a lengthy diatribe:

Gentlemen, it is a notorious fact that this district is intensely disloyal. It has caused more trouble to the government than all your tobacco, cotton, banks, and business is worth...What do I care about your tobacco interest? The market value of your niggers and cotton? The only question on trial here is: Are you people ready for the federal salvation? If not, *you must die*...you rebels have not learned the grand solemn truth that the life and peace of this great nation are more than the life and peace of the individual...Talk about your rights! Why, you have no rights to talk about. A loyal citizen is the only one left with any rights at this time. And yet you come to me asking for a banking privilege. Great God! The devil might as well ask the Almighty for a front seat in heaven...*If in your prosperity you have despised this great and good Government, you may soon love it in your adversity.*²

Like a judge from the Old Testament, Paine saw himself as the savior, punisher, and redeemer of the Purchase and its people, whom he believed had turned their back on the Union. Over the next fifty-one days, Paine would implement what he tellingly called his “plan of salvation,” a draconian approach intended to castigate southern sympathizers while aiding and rewarding loyalists. This plan would eventually lead to Paine’s court martial for a litany of crimes including extortion, expatriation, and murder. In the end, Paine’s appointment and removal would become the low water mark of the war in the Purchase. Far from feeling redeemed, the people of the area believed themselves victimized. Over the next two of decades, that sense of victimization would color the way everyone in the Purchase remembered Paine and the war.

² Danforth, “How I Came to Be in the Army and General E.A. Paine’s Plan of Federal Salvation,” 331-338.

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The road that led Paine to Paducah began in the aftermath of Forrest's raids. The partisans had both left the countryside in chaos and convinced the Federals at Paducah and Columbus that a majority of citizens in the Purchase supported guerrilla activities. Indeed, the Union high command was stunned by Forrest's impudent and effective attacks, and shocked as well at the army's failure to pursue him effectively. Grant particularly lambasted Memphis commander General Stephen Hurlbut's "timidity," sarcastically asking "Does General Hurlbut think if he moves part of his force after the only enemy within 200 miles of him that the post will run off with the balance of his force?" Sherman too was annoyed with Hurlbut, noting simply, "I don't know what to do with Hurlbut...he has a full 10,000 men at Memphis but if he had a million he would be on the defensive."³

Grant wasted little time in restructuring the command. He replaced Hurlbut with General C.C. Washburn. Brigadier General Henry Prince took command of the District of Cairo. Prince's district would now include a newly created District of Columbus, which embraced all the land in Tennessee and Kentucky west of the Tennessee River and north of Memphis. At Columbus itself, Major General David T. Hunter assumed command. At Paducah, Colonel Stephen Hicks maintained his command. By May 1, 1864 approximately 3,000 troops, of whom over one-third belonged to "colored" regiments, guarded the Purchase. Commanders were ordered to protect Paducah and Columbus at all cost, abandon small posts, keep the rivers open for navigation, and above all root out

Forrest and his supporters. A system of scouts and a fleet of gunboats and “Marines” assisted their endeavors. For his part, Washburn promised the guerrillas no mercy, stating that “I shall not issue any orders requiring the troops...to spare the monsters engaging in transactions that renders the Sepoy a humane being.”⁴

The restructuring of command and additional troops, however, did not stop the guerrillas. Lieutenant Commander James W. Shirk of the Union Navy, commanding naval forces at Paducah, continued to complain about the guerrilla raids that plagued the town. He noted that “the Rebels have troubled us...a great deal.” Much of the problem, he complained, stemmed from the army’s lack of scouts, which led to “absurd rumors.” Shirk described a pattern in which Paducah citizens would report a “vast number of rebels” approaching, which inevitably led pickets stationed on the periphery to run back to town. Citizens and soldiers alike, Shirk stated, would panic, gather their valuables, and flee. The scene, an exasperated Shirk concluded, would be “ridiculous, if it was not so painful to witness.” Shirk thus requested extra gunboats to guard the Tennessee River as “the spring and summer are to be lively in this district.”⁵

The “ridiculous” scene described by Shirk was just one of the consequences resulting from some of Forrest’s men having lingered in western Kentucky following the raids. Though the majority of the Kentucky soldiers returned to Tennessee and Mississippi with the rebel leader, some remained behind both to visit family and wreak

³ *OR*, vol. 32, Part 3, 366-67, 382.

⁴ *OR*, vol. 32, Part 3, 397, 430-31, 453, 463, 566; *OR*, vol. 39, Part 1, 5. Cadwallader Colden Washburn was a Congressman and successful businessman from Wisconsin before the war. Prior to assuming command at Memphis, he was Colonel of the Second Wisconsin Volunteer Cavalry. He was promoted to Brigadier General in June 1862. Post-war, Washburn and a brother founded a successful flour mill that later became General Mills. He was elected governor of Wisconsin in 1872. For more see Karel D. Bicha, *C.C. Washburn and the Upper Mississippi Valley* (New York: Garland, 1995).

havoc. Throughout April and May, bands of former Confederates scoured the countryside. Henry Ford, of Graves County, for example, reported a bay horse, ten bushels of wheat, and a “fine lot of corn” stolen from his home. Ford had served as Commissary Sergeant for the 15th Kentucky (Union) for twelve months and was accused of being a member of a Unionist guerrilla unit and spy for the Federals. Using psychological intimidation, the guerrillas also took several articles of his clothing and suspended them from trees in his yard. Ford believed it was “emblematic of the treatment that I would receive if caught.” Later that summer, Ford fled his home out of fear. John Greathouse of Hickman also fled his home for Cairo after “evil and disposed persons” in his community accused him of aiding Federal soldiers and robbed him of two ferry boats and a skiff.⁶

Meanwhile, in Ballard County, Confederate guerrillas scoured the countryside in search of mounts, leading Michael Blackburn, a local farmer to hide his horses in a swampy area along the Mississippi River. In their quest for the horses, raiders ransacked Blackburn’s home, shot two of his dogs, threatened to kill his entire family, and took as a hostage Blackburn’s youngest son. In an effort to gain information, the guerrillas allegedly “sliced strips of skin from the child’s ears, held his head under water...until nearly suffocated, pulled out his hair by the handfuls, and singed his eyebrows.” The men

⁵ *ORN*, vol. 26, 227-228, 244; *OR*, vol. 32, Part 3, 501-02

⁶ “Account of Damages by Rebel Guerrillas on Henry Ford of Graves County, Kentucky, July 24, 1864,” Sworn Affidavit of John Greathouse, September 1864, Letters Received, Department of Kentucky, 1862-69, E2173, Box 1, Records of the U.S. Army Continental Command, 1821-1920, RG393, National Archives and Records, Washington, D.C. Ford was a modest farmer living in Graves County during the war. In 1860, John Greathouse was listed as a middling farmer in Hickman. It is possible that he operated a ferry during the war as Hickman was on the Mississippi and many residents of that town were known to engage in trade along the river during the war. *Eighth Census for the United States, 1860, Hickman and Graves County, Kentucky* <http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed August 25, 2008.

finally left the boy hanging by a tree limb, dislocating his arms. Though the child was rescued by his mother and sister, Blackburn vowed “to shoot on sight any man wearing a uniform, either Union or Confederate.”⁷

On May 1, Naval Captain Alexander Pennock reported insurgents planned to cut off and “retard the passage” of Major General James B. McPherson’s men from Cairo that daily were moving up the Tennessee River to join Sherman at Chattanooga. Reports put Forrest at Corinth, where he was supposedly grouping men to strike north, while Commander Shirk reported other smaller detachments of guerrillas at Mayfield, Dukedom, and Paris, Tennessee. Pennock cautioned that they were “thick between here and Paducah” and warned of constant “emergencies” that kept them from sufficiently guarding the river. From Chattanooga, Sherman ordered Washburn to “hold Forrest and as much of the enemy as you can over there.”⁸

Still another problem for Federals was that the guerrillas constantly harassed Federal gunboats on the Kentucky side of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. Lieutenant Commander John G. Mitchell at Memphis reported that “not a steamer arrives here from Cairo but what has been fired upon by gangs numbering from 12 to 100 men.”⁹ On April 15, the day after Buford’s attack on Paducah, Pennock reported Confederates massed at

⁷ Donna C. Browning, *A History of Carlisle County, KY, 1820-1900* (Milburn, KY, 1976), 10. Michael Blackburn moved to Ballard County between 1860 and 1870. In 1870 he was a middling farmer with an estate valued at \$945. His son’s Levander “Lee” and John Calhoun were still living at home. *Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, Ballard County, Kentucky*, <http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed August 25, 2008.

⁸ *ORN*, vol. 26, 278-79, 290; *OR*, vol. 32, Part 3, 527. James Birdeye McPherson was placed in command of the Union Army of the Tennessee on March 17, 1864. He replaced Sherman, who was placed in command of the armies in the west following Grant’s promotion to command the armies in the east. He was killed during the Atlanta campaign. For more on the Atlanta campaign see Albert Castel, *Decision in the West: The Atlanta Campaign of 1864* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1992) and Richard M. McMurry, *Atlanta 1864: Last Chance for the Confederacy* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000).

Blandeville, Ballard County. He believed that the guerrillas intended to cross the Ohio River to Mound City, Illinois in order to destroy Union ordnance stores. Pennock immediately stopped ferry and skiff services, and warned his men to be on constant “lookout for incendiaries.” Troops in the area were also on lookout for rebel attacks at Hickman. Pennock reported that guerrillas moved in and out of the town at will to re-supply their provisions. The townspeople, he reported, were “decidedly rebel.”¹⁰

On May 12, three days after murdering three Unionists in Marshall County, guerrillas made an attack on one of their favorite targets, the town of Mayfield, home of the leading Unionists in the area, Congressman Lucian Anderson and Judge R.K. Williams. They captured ten soldiers guarding the town. An enraged Prince reported that “the anti-unionism is so strong in this district that large bodies of guerrillas, led by men of respectable families, assemble in the best settled parts.” He worried that guerrillas would discourage the few Unionists in the area and proposed the arrest of ten influential rebel sympathizers in the neighborhood to be held as hostages for the safe return of the soldiers.¹¹

Throughout the summer reports of guerrillas in western Kentucky only intensified. The main target was the railway, which proved especially vexing to the Union troops who recently repaired the damages inflicted by Forrest’s troops that spring. In late May, Hicks reported that his men were fired on while repairing a bridge on the Paducah & New Orleans railway. In addition to killing one of Hicks’ soldiers and wounding an engineer, the guerrillas also burned a railroad bridge. Bridges were also the

⁹ *ORN*, vol. 26, 361.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 216, 225-26, 245-46

target on the Mobile & Ohio Railroad. On May 24, General Prince reported that a group of insurgents burned a newly repaired bridge over the Obion River and captured a man from Moscow.¹²

Two days later a group of Kentucky guerrillas rode into Hickman and spent the night. Additional reports put insurgents at Blandville and Mayfield. In response, Prince sent out a detachment of scouts from the 34th New Jersey to scour the countryside for guerrilla movements. The troops arrived in Feliciana, Graves County, where they arrested Dr. R.D. Lockridge, a prominent physician and Unionist Lucian Anderson's father-in-law, and A.G. McFadden, a wealthy merchant. They held them hostage for the return of the Union man captured at Moscow. Lockridge informed the Federals that 150 to 400 of Buford's men were in the area, along with several groups of guerrillas. One group overran the scouts and their prisoners on their way out of town and captured a Federal "who was straggling at the time." The insurgents rode back to Feliciana with their prisoner, Private James Conover, whom they locked away after stealing his uniform. Later that night, Conover watched from his cell as members of the 3rd Kentucky Regiment rode into town "filling the street from one end of the town to the other." Fearing for his life, Conover "unfastened" his bounds, "got out the window," and rode back to Columbus.¹³

¹¹ *OR*, vol. 39, Part 1, 24-26.

¹² *Ibid.*, vol. 39, Part 2, 44, 47.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 50-54. In 1860, Lockridge was 56 years old with an estate valued at \$24,000. Lockridge's daughter Ann was married to Anderson. His other daughter Eliza was married to Ervine Anderson, a local lawyer, Democratic circuit court judge, and brother of Lucian Anderson. I can find no reason why they would take Lockridge hostage. See *Memorial Record of Western Kentucky, Volume I and Volume II* (Paducah: Lewis Publishing Company, 1904), 75-77. McCracken Co. A.G. McFadden, a wealthy merchant, was 41 in 1860 with an estate valued \$10,000. His son, J.N. McFadden, who was only 15 in

One of the chief contributors to the surge in guerrilla activity was the continuing corruption involved in trade. In spring 1864, the Treasury Department removed all restrictions on trade in Kentucky and Tennessee, prompting Major Brayman to worry about goods reaching Tennessee. In early April, following Forrest's raid, Brayman issued General Order No. 15, which forbade the landing of goods and all watercraft between Paducah and Memphis.¹⁴ Lieutenant Commander LeRoy Fitch confirmed Brayman's worries on June 1 when he reported "an indiscriminate traffic with the rebels in Kentucky" following the reestablishment of trade. Like other military officials in the state, Fitch believed that guerrillas were swarming Kentucky "for no other purpose than to pick up...supplies" carried along the Ohio River. Stating that "we can not be too severe on such people," Fitch outlawed all trade and forbade all steamers and skiffs from landing on the Kentucky side of the Ohio. He likewise ordered anyone found crossing the river arrested. Rear Admiral David Porter, commander of the Mississippi squadron, agreed with Fitch's assessment of guerrillas and open trade. Throughout the month of May the admiral observed watercraft operating under trade permits and loaded with cotton, ply the Mississippi River.¹⁵

In early 1864, Congress voted to permit the sale of cotton from Confederate territory to U.S. Treasury agents along the Mississippi River. Those who sold the cotton were required to take a strict oath of allegiance and were to receive one-quarter of the

1860, was a member of the 7th Kentucky Mounted Infantry. *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Graves County, Kentucky*, <http://www.ancestry.com> accessed August 13, 2008.

¹⁴ *OR*, vol., 32, 514-515.

¹⁵ *ORN*, vol. 26, 338.

profits from the sale; the owners would receive the residual amount after the war.¹⁶

Though Congress meant the relaxing of trade on cotton to inspire Unionism along the river, it inevitably led to reports of corruption among cotton farmers and Treasury agents alike. Farmers from west Tennessee and Kentucky traded cotton at Memphis in exchange for supplies and greenbacks. The proceeds from many of the sales went directly into the hands of the guerrillas that harassed Federal garrisons. Washburn in fact was astounded at the amount of fraud he found at Memphis after assuming command of that city. Indeed, he noted that “Memphis has been of more value to the Southern Confederacy since it fell into Federal hands than Nassau.” Even more troubling was his claim that large amounts of cotton belonging to the Confederate Government were being traded in the city, with the profits going directly to Richmond. To stop further trade, Washburn issued General Orders No. 3, which closed the lines of the army at Memphis. Citizens who wished to leave the city were required to travel by river unless they obtained a special pass. Those who wished to enter the city could not leave without a pass.¹⁷

At Columbus, Prince claimed that “great quantities of goods” went from Paducah to Hickman and thence to Memphis. He agreed with Washburn that free and open trade benefited the “worst men toward the Government” and that a “genuine Union man is prevented from trading.” Yet he initially protested the new regulations maintaining that the banishment of Union men in the district would only discourage their loyalty. He instead proposed allowing post commanders to permit those they felt were “unconditional Union men” to trade a small amount of supplies. Prince soon had a change of heart. On

¹⁶ Ludwell H. Johnson, “Contraband Trade during the Last Year of the Civil War” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 49 (1963): 635-52; Coulter, *Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky*, 230-238.

May 17 he reported a great deal of smuggling between Wolf Island, Tennessee, and Hickman, as well as a force of guerrillas centered on the Tennessee-Kentucky line who protected smuggling activities on the river. To punish the citizens he proposed that cotton and tobacco intended for trade be confiscated to pay for repairs to the railroad and railway bridges destroyed during Forrest's raids. ¹⁸

In May Porter discovered that Union sailors around Greenville, Mississippi were selling Navy issued boots, guns, and uniforms to guerrillas. Enraged, Porter added that Treasury agents along the river were as well "employed in supplying the enemy, instead of protecting the Treasury and the interests of the Government." He maintained that Forrest and other guerrillas in west Tennessee and Kentucky were receiving the supplies because military commanders at Memphis, Columbus, and Hickman endorsed the Treasury permits. Moreover, he likewise implied that Forrest's raid on Tennessee and Kentucky "was undertaken...to enable him to secure large quantities of goods which had been accumulated by arrangement through disloyal agencies" He lambasted the Army and the Treasury Department for their complicity and added "the Treasury agents have been the best friends the rebels have had." From his post at Memphis, Washburn noted that ships loaded with merchandise left the city and landed wherever "they may choose" up and down the river from Columbus to Vicksburg. He maintained that the boats traded

¹⁷ *OR*, vol. 39, Part 1, 23-24.

¹⁸ *OR*, vol. 39, Part 2, 25-26, 34-35.

“with all classes of people, except loyal ones...they negotiate with rebel chieftains...and invite rebel officers and soldiers on board, and drink and hobnob together.”¹⁹

In mid-June General Prince requested Commander Porter at Mound City, Illinois to send a gunboat to Hickman after a group of guerrillas under Colonel E.E. Tansil of Dresden, Tennessee, who had robbed the town for its large tobacco and cotton stores. Hickman was one of the points along the Mississippi River where U.S. Treasury agents were allowed to buy cotton and tobacco, and several farmers in the town had recently sold their cotton to the treasury. Tansil and his men managed to raid the town before Union citizens fired on them and forced them out. The Tennessee guerrilla and his men terrified the loyal citizens of the town for three more days by patrolling the area around the town. Several townspeople fled to Paducah, where they pleaded with General Prince to send pickets to the town to guard their stores. Prince sent 100 men along with the *U.S.S. Robb* to guard the town and assist Union citizens who wished to evacuate. He allowed the owners of the cotton and tobacco to remove their products, but forbade them from bringing more into town. Like other Union commanders in the Mississippi Valley, he was sure relaxed trade regulations led to increased insurgent activity and thus refused to issue any future trade permits in Hickman.²⁰

Illicit trade, however, was not the only factor involved in the surge in guerrilla activity. The implementation of the Federal draft and the actions of Colonel Richard L. Cunningham of the 8th Kentucky Heavy Artillery (Colored), in particular, were also

¹⁹ *ORN*, vol. 26, 337, 340-350, 400-01; *OR*, vol. 39, Part 1, 27-28, 61. Major General Dan Sickles at Memphis concurred with Porter and Washburn and even suggested that Forrest purposefully failed to attack Memphis during his April-May raids because the city was such a constant source of rebel supplies.

²⁰ *OR*, vol. 39, Part 2, 128-129.

contributors. The Federal draft, passed by Lincoln in June 1863, had been postponed in Kentucky until December out of fear of reaction and so that counties could ascertain the number of men eligible for conscription. In January and March 1864, the draft went into effect, but was a failure. Provost Marshall R.H. Hall at Paducah claimed that “armed bands of the enemy” and “disaffected inhabitants acting in the enemy’s interest” impeded his efforts. Hall had the daunting task of enrolling men, drawing names, and serving notice of the draft on the chosen men within ten days. He requested a squadron of cavalry to assist in the drawing of the draft and “the means of a quick” getaway “by obtaining the use of horses or wagons.”²¹

The failure of the draft led Cunningham once more to roam the countryside, conscripting slaves. Cunningham was no doubt encouraged by Adjutant General of Kentucky Lorenzo Thomas, who urged “for recruitment to be fully successful” it must “be done with strong armed parties passing through the counties containing the most negroes.” Lieutenant Commander Fitch reported an incident along the Ohio River involving Cunningham’s men in which “negroes...without an officer with them, entered private houses, broke open the doors, and entered ladies’ bedrooms before they were up, insulted women, and plundered and searched generally.” The conduct of the soldiers, which Fitch labeled a “gross outrage,” seems to have incensed the community. Though the soldiers reportedly did not physically harm the women, the act of entering a woman’s bedroom uninvited was tantamount to rape during the Victorian era. The fact that the

²¹ *OR*, vol. 39, Part 2, 34-36; Coulter, *Civil War and Readjustment*, 203-205. For more on the Federal draft see James W. Geary, *We Need Men: The Union Draft in the Civil War* (Dekalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1991). In early May, Washington called for Kentucky to furnish ten thousand

soldiers were African American, and probably former slaves from the community, only added insult to injury.²²

Some used the draft for sinister purposes. Prince reported that some drafted soldiers were southern sympathizers who promptly used blue uniforms to attack their loyalist neighbors. After one such incident he posited they “knew the Union people, and selected them for annoyance.” Fitch confirmed the accusation as well, noting that most of the guerrillas “are composed of men who were drafted for our service. They are only now showing their true colors and say if they must fight at all they will fight for Jeff Davis; consequently they have run from the draft and joined and gone into the guerrilla service.”²³

After failing to meet the state’s conscription quota, Secretary of War Stanton authorized Governor Bramlette to raise 10,000 Kentucky troops to put down guerrilla operations within the state.²⁴ In actuality, locally styled “home guards” and Unionist citizens already had assisted the army all that spring in tracking down guerrillas. On May 26 Federals captured Moses W. Bozard of Mayfield on the Cumberland River and accused him of being a rebel spy and aiding and abetting guerrillas. Backing up the claims against Bozard was his neighbor Nathan Bowman, a strong Unionist and cousin of loyalist District Judge R.K. Williams of Graves County. Bowman also accused Bozard of

troops to the Union Army. In 1860 R.H. Hall was a 45 year old farmer with an estate valued at \$2400. Hall’s Unionist leanings no doubt came from his having been born in New York.

²² *ORN*, vol. 26, 384; *OR*, Series 3, vol. 4, 499-502. For more on violence against women by soldiers during the Civil War see Ash, *When the Yankees Came*, 197-202; Thomas Power Lowry, *The Story the Soldiers Wouldn’t Tell: Sex in the Civil War* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1994), 123-132; Michael Fellman, “Women and Guerrilla Warfare” in Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber, eds., *Divided Houses: Gender and the Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 146-165

²³ *OR*, vol. 39, Part 2, 34-36; Series 3, vol. 4, 156-157, 288-89; *ORN*, vol. 26, 385.

²⁴ Coulter, *Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky*, 203-205.

revealing his neighbors valuables to insurgents in the area. While his neighbors lost much property, Bozard's possessions remained safe. Bozard also apparently kept a "home-made" Bowie knife for the "especial use of his Union neighbors" and had two nephews in Forrest's ranks. Bowman blamed secessionists in Calloway County for encouraging and instigating Bozard's attempts to ascertain army and Home Guard movements.²⁵

Union sympathizers in the Purchase, however, wanted a strong arm, and they called for the establishment of militias to combat the guerrilla menace. On June 9, 1864 W.W. Tice wrote to Inspector General of Kentucky D.W. Lindsay about the deplorable state of affairs in Graves County. Tice had been forced out of Mayfield after guerrillas under Buford, Forrest, and Faulkner swarmed the county. Many citizens in the area, he warned, faced the same outcome:

For six months now past the life of an active Union man has not been safe in the counties west of the Tennessee River outside of the picket lines. The best citizens of the county have been shot down in the presence of their families or found hanging in the woods. There is scarcely a serviceable horse or mule in the whole county. Many peaceable law abiding citizens have been forced to flee from their houses leaving their families behind them for very lack of means to remove them. The country will be depopulated at least of all loyal and honest men unless protection is afforded to the citizens against the guerrillas and robbers who now hold complete possession of the country.²⁶

The county, he stated, was without protection, and the "militia is not organizing nor can any one now tell when the said organization will be possible." Tice attempted to raise a Union militia in the county in 1862 and pressed Lindsay on the need to reattempt.

²⁵ *ORN*, vol. 26, 332-33. Nathan Bowman and Moses Bozard were both farmers living in Murray in 1860. Bozard was born in Tennessee and in 1860 was in his late thirties with an estate valued at \$6800. Bowman, born in Delaware, was in his mid-fifties in 1860 with an estate valued \$6300.

²⁶ W.W. Tice to D.W. Lindsay, June 9, 1864, Kentucky State Militia Papers, Graves County, Kentucky Department of Military Affairs, Frankfort, KY.

Tice believed that Union forces could never adequately protect the Union citizens as they were “strangers to the people, and utterly unacquainted with the roads...of the county.” Instead, he recommended the organization of a new local militia go to Graves County native Captain J.P. Gregory, “a brave, cool, resolute man who knows every by-path in the country and understands guerrilla warfare probably much better than any man in Western Ky.” Tice certainly was correct about Gregory’s knowledge of guerrilla warfare. Early in the war, “nearly one-hundred men,” intent on fitting them with “a hemp cravat” forced Gregory and his brother from their home at Dublin in Graves County. For the rest of the war he made it his mission to terrorize suspected guerrillas southern sympathizers in the Purchase. But he became particularly notorious for his ruthlessness during the period following Forrest’s raid, when he and his men combed the countryside in search of insurgents.²⁷

Colonel Edward Crossland of the 7th Kentucky, who remained behind to recover from wounds sustained during the attack on Fort Anderson, was one of Gregory’s targets. Crossland and five fellow soldiers from the Confederate 7th Kentucky and 12th Kentucky were convalescing at the home of William Pryor in Mayfield when they were awakened one night by cursing at their window. When they rose from their beds to discover the source of the commotion, according to Crossland, Captain Gregory burst through the door, ordering his men to “kill the last one of them.” Gregory shot Adjutant C.H. Rouhlac through the heart and fired on a fleeing Crossland, hitting him in the armpit. Two of the four soldiers from the 12th Kentucky died and two others escaped, one riddled with

²⁷ W.W. Tice to D.W. Lindsay, June 9, 1864; J.P. “Jasper” Gregory was nineteen years old at the start of the war. He and his twenty-one year old brother Thomas lived at home with their parents, J.H. and

bullets. Crossland hid out in the woods and made his escape the next morning. During the following weeks, Gregory paraded through Paducah on Crossland's roan horse wearing Rouhlac's coat. Crossland later claimed that the Confederate soldiers were betrayed by a former slave who carried information to Gregory's men.²⁸

Following Tice's recommendation, Gregory and M.A. Payne, the latter a former member of the 15th Kentucky Cavalry, traveled to Frankfort to obtain permission to raise a company of State Guards. By July 30, Gregory and his men were part of the ninety-man strong Graves County guard. During the next months, the line between Gregory's home guards, rebel guerrillas, and bushwhackers became blurred, due in part to the home guards lack of uniforms. Despite the urgent demands by Tice, the governor, and the Adjutant General for home guards, supplies for the volunteers lagged. On July 13 Payne complained to Adjutant General John Boyle that his men lacked uniforms and were "in town in their citizens dress, and when out on a scout for guerrillas, it is a difficult matter for me and other officers to find them." Two days later he reported to Boyle that Colonel Hicks, the garrison commander at Paducah, would not permit his men to draw provisions or forage despite the fact that many "are not able pay for their subsistence." Hicks claimed that the state was in charge of feeding the troops since they were not U.S. soldiers.²⁹

Rachael Gregory, whose estate was valued at \$10,000. *Louisville Daily Journal*, July 16, August 12, 1864.
²⁸ George, *History of the 3rd, 7th, 8th, and 12th Kentucky, CSA*, 79-80. C.H. Rouhlac was 28 in 1860 and resided with his mother in Fulton County where he was a civil engineer. The slave who informed on Crossland and his men belonged to M. Saxon of Graves County, an extremely wealthy farmer and owner of thirty slaves. The slave was probably a man listed as 67 year old on the 1860 Slave Schedule. *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Slave Schedules, Graves County Kentucky*, <http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed August 12, 2008.

²⁹ W.W. Tice to D.W. Lindsay, June 9, 1864; M.A. Payne to John Boyle, July, 13, 15, 27, 1864 and M.A. Payne to Governor Thomas Bramlette, July 30, 1860, Kentucky State Militia Papers.

Soon after, Payne reported the guards had yet to receive arms, a situation he found most discouraging since “with spurs and hickory sticks we can not fight the guerrillas.” Payne’s requests grew more urgent at the end of July when a skirmish occurred between the home guards and a group of guerrillas that he termed “bushwhackers.” During the expedition to find the guerrillas, “outlaw’s in citizen’s dress” committed several depredations, crimes for which Gregory’s men received blame. Thus, by the end of July 1864, the much sought after home guard in the Purchase were wandering the countryside in plain dress, without provisions, and without adequate arms, while the guerrillas continued harassing Federal soldiers and Unionists.³⁰

Another example that highlights the blurring of lines concerning home guards and guerrillas occurred during a June scouting expedition by Union troops from Columbus. The troops traveled down the Mississippi and landed approximately thirteen miles below Hickman, where they then traveled to the home of a noted guerrilla named Captain Henry Campbell, formerly of the 7th Kentucky. The men surrounded and searched the home where they found weapons but no soldiers. After seizing two of Campbell’s family members, the Federals traveled toward Moscow and searched the home of Harvey Fleetwood, a farmer with two sons in the 15th Confederate Tennessee Infantry. There they found they had just missed a Captain Campbell, who left behind his uniform jacket with fifty Confederate dollars in the pocket. The soldiers dashed after Campbell, but were unable to find him, no doubt because he blended in with the civilian population.³¹

³⁰ W.W. Tice to D.W. Lindsay, June 9, 1864; M.A. Payne to John Boyle, July, 13, 15, 27, 1864 and M.A. Payne to Governor Thomas Bramlette, July 30, 1860, Kentucky State Militia Papers.

³¹ *OR*, vol. 39, Part 1, 360-61. According to the index of the *OR*, vol. 39, Part 3, the guerrilla Campbell was Henry Campbell. In 1860 there was only one man living in the Purchase named Henry

Soldiers meanwhile discovered that Island Number Eight was inhabited by “three notorious characters” intent on recruiting. They moved between the Missouri and Kentucky shore at will, evading capture by naval forces by slipping in and out of the civilian population. Fitch believed that the guerrillas at Hickman were not attached to any outfit but were merely “a set of miserable horse thieves and robbers.” In addition, a guerrilla by the name of Kesterson, who was known to wear both Confederate and Union uniforms in addition to civilian dress, terrorized the Purchase countryside and was reported to have murdered close to thirty Unionists.³²

As the end of June dawned, Purchase Unionists thus watched as their communities devolved into chaos. A highly corrupt system of trade, endorsed by treasury agents, bolstered guerrillas. Across the countryside, Cunningham’s men stole or conscripted slaves into the Federal army. Bands of men with questionable loyalties targeted Union soldiers and civilians, regardless of allegiance. For many the situation had

Campbell, a 28 year old man living with his mother Eddy Campbell, and his four siblings in Hickman County. Mrs. Campbell was listed as a cotton farmer with an estate valued at \$5200. A Henry Campbell also served as Captain, Company I, Seventh Kentucky Mounted Infantry, an almost exclusive Purchase regiment. His brother Joseph Campbell served as private in the same company. Henry Campbell is also mentioned as a captain in the Seventh Kentucky in Donald L. Livingston, *Fulton Countians in the Civil War: Biographical Sketches of the Men from Fulton County, Kentucky and surrounding area who participated in Our Nation’s Civil War, 1861-1865* (Paducah, KY: Donald L. Livingston, 1985). The brothers probably returned to the Purchase after enlistment or remained behind following Forrest’s raid. Campbell was no doubt visiting his mother and sisters when the Federal troops caught up with him. *Eight Census of the United States, 1860, for Fulton County, Kentucky*, <http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed August 19, 2008; National Park Service, Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System, <http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss/index.html>, accessed August 25, 2008.

In 1860 Harvey Fleetwood was a 56 year old farmer in Moscow, Hickman County, with an estate worth \$4865. The Fifteenth Tennessee Infantry’s contained two companies of men from the Purchase, Company E, recruited from Lake County Tennessee and Kentucky Bend, and Company G recruited from Paducah. Civil War Centennial Commission of Tennessee, *Tennesseans in the Civil War, Vol. I*, (Nashville: TN, 1964).

³² *ORN*, vol. 26, 245-46; “Explanations of Brigadier General E.A. Paine, recently in command of the Western District of Kentucky required by the report of Brigadier General Joseph Holt, Judge Advocate General of the United States, Washington, D.C.” MM1609, Folder 3 in Records of the Office of Judge

become intolerable. On July 11, the Union League in Paducah loudly complained to Major General Washburn at Memphis that goods leaving the interior of Paducah were being traded South. “Rebels are doing all the trade” they complained “and they are reaping all the advantages of trade...we are satisfied in our own minds that if you were acquainted with conditions here, and could see the present workings of men who are now and ever have been enemies of the Government, you would at once bring about a change that would benefit the Union men and the Union cause.” Three members of the Union League, William H. Kidd, Thomas Barchett, and John Perkins, loyal Union men who stood by the Union through “weal and woe,” requested that their “old tried and true friend” General Eleazer A. Paine be assigned to their district. They trusted that Paine would pass restrictions on trade and “give traitors and secret Southern sympathizers their just dues.”³³

Yet another member of the Union League who desired Paine’s return was Lucian Anderson, who as a member of the newly formed Unconditional Unionist Party was diligently working for Lincoln’s reelection. Elected to the First Congressional District in 1863, Anderson had broken with his party and moved to the Republicans. On January 1, 1864, Unconditional Unionists across the Purchase met in Graves County to declare their support for Anderson, and to demand that Kentuckians give unmitigated support to the federal government. On May 25, Anderson was elected as an alternate delegate for the

Advocate General (Army) Court Martial Case Files, 1809-1894 RG153, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

³³ *OR*, vol. 39, Part 2, 171. The President of the Union League, William H. Kidd, was a physician in his mid-forties in 1864 and in 1860 was worth \$1200. Vice-President Thomas Barchett, a 48-year old carpenter, listed no income on the 1860 census. Forty-two year old secretary John Perkins was a grocer and in 1860 was worth \$2800

upcoming Republican Convention in Baltimore and was also appointed elector for the First District. A member of the Committee on Resolutions at Kentucky's Unconditional Unionist Convention in Louisville that spring, he and his fellow Unionists pledged to uphold the "preservation and maintenance of the Union" and to destroy "the rebellion, without any regard to what these objects may cost."³⁴

Though he was vilified by the guerrillas and southern supporters in the Purchase, Anderson, who owned five slaves, had made great attempts over the past year to secure the rights of his fellow loyalist slaveholders. While he supported the enrollment of African Americans into the Union Army, he opposed the alleged coercion of enslaved recruits that plagued the area during spring and summer of 1864. In January he attempted to pass a resolution that would compensate loyalist owners who lost slaves, but lost. The following month he publicly announced that he opposed the conscription of slaves from Union men in his district, fearing that federal interference in slavery would discourage Union loyalties. Anderson eventually supported the conscription act but only after a small bounty was secured for slave owners in the Purchase.³⁵ The raid by Forrest and the increase in guerrilla activity in the area, however, convinced Anderson that harsher measures still were required in his home district. On June 18, Anderson, along with Mayfield Judge Rufus K. Williams, met with President Lincoln in Washington. The two

³⁴ *New York Times*, May 26, 1864; James Larry Hood, "For the Union: Kentucky's Unconditional Unionist Congressmen and the Development of the Republican Party in Kentucky, 1863-1865" *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 76 (July 1978): 197-215. After his election to Congress in 1863, Anderson, along with several other Kentucky Union Democrats, sided with the Republican Party and subsequently formed a new party, the Unconditional Unionists. Though Anderson was appointed district elector he was forced to give up the position since he could not be elector and congressman at the same time.

³⁵ Hood, "For the Union," 207-208; *Congressional Globe*, 38th Congress, First Session, Part I, 333-334. According to the 1860 Slave Schedules, Anderson owned five slaves ranging from thirty-five to

men briefed Lincoln on the desperate situation in the Purchase and urged him to reinstate tax assessments on suspected rebel sympathizers in western Kentucky. They further urged him to send Paine back to the Purchase as commander. Lincoln immediately wrote to Secretary of War Stanton, urging him “do these things for them.” Lincoln specifically endorsed Paine, stating “I personally know Gen. Paine to be a good true man, having a West Point education but I do not know much of his military ability.”³⁶

Unbeknownst to the Union League, Anderson, or Williams was the fact that William Tecumseh Sherman already had Paine in mind as commander of Western Kentucky. Since leaving Paducah in 1861, Paine had served in almost all the major campaigns of the region including battles at New Madrid, Forts Henry and Donelson, Island Number Ten, and Corinth. In 1862 he established headquarters at Gallatin, Tennessee to guard the railroads in western Tennessee and police the civilian population of the town. In Gallatin, Paine was rumored to have executed several suspected spies without trial, adding to the already ruthless reputation he had gained in Paducah in 1861. He likewise reportedly killed returning rebel soldiers who had taken the oath of allegiance. In April 1864, Paine went under orders to Tullahoma, Tennessee to guard the railroad bridges over the Duck and Elk Rivers.³⁷ Sherman finally ordered Paine to report to General Washburn at Memphis in late June. Washburn informed Paine that “matters

five years of age. *Eighth Census of the United States, Slave Schedules, Graves County, Kentucky*, <http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed September 8, 2008.

³⁶ Roy P. Basler, Marion Dolores Pratt, and Lloyd A. Dunlap, eds., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, vol. 7 (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 400.

³⁷ Walter T. Durham, *Rebellion Revisited: A History of Sumner County, Tennessee from 1861-1870* (Gallatin, TN: Sumner County Museum Association, 1982); *OR*, vol. 32, Part 2, 532. The diary of Alice Williamson, a young woman living in Gallatin during Paine’s reign over the town details the supposed atrocities committed by the general. See Alice Williamson Diary, Special Collections Library, Duke University, on-line archival collection, <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/williamson/>.

were all wrong at Paducah; I need a firm hand.” Under Special Order No. 83, Paine took charge of the entire Purchase as well as the post at Cairo. Brigadier Generals Henry Prince at Columbus and Solomon Meredith at Cairo were to report to him.³⁸ Ironically, Paine arrived in Paducah on July 19, that same day President Lincoln issued General Orders No. 233 suspending the writ of habeas corpus and establishing martial law in Kentucky.³⁹

After settling in at his headquarters, Paine outlined his “plan of salvation.” To prevent illicit trade and trafficking to guerrillas, Paine forbade any rebellious citizen from circulating any amount of money—“not a dollar”—and required his approval and signature for all money transactions. He seized the bank deposits of all suspected secessionists for government use and placed an ad valorem tax of 25 cents on all tobacco, cotton, and other merchandise sold in the district. The tax would go to the coffers of the Provost Marshal, Major Henry Bartling, to compensate Union refugees. All Union widows in the district would receive five-thousand dollars to be paid from a \$100,000 fine levied on Purchase secessionists. To the businessmen who protested, Paine added “I will teach you that having encouraged this rebellion, having comforted and aided your country’s enemies, you must, aye, shall reap a traitor’s reward.”⁴⁰

³⁸ “Explanations of Brigadier General E.A. Paine, recently in command of the Western District of Kentucky required by the report of Brigadier General Joseph Holt, Judge Advocate General of the United States, Washington, D.C” in Records of the Office of Judge Advocate General (Army) Court Martial Case Files, 1809-1894 RG153, MM1609, Folder 3, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

³⁹ *OR*, vol. 39, Part 2, 181-182.

⁴⁰ Danforth, “How I Came to Be in the Army,” 333-338.

Paine was also incensed with the dearth of Union volunteers in the Union army from the area. He informed the men in his area that they “must fight” for the Union. He accused them of cowardice and racism:

You are all of you able-bodied men, but think yourselves too good to fight, afraid of Federal bullets or something else. And when I come to get your niggers to make soldiers of them you set up such a howl. Why a nigger is worth a thousand dollars, you can't spare him. Too cowardly to fight yourself, you are too mean and stingy to allow your nigger to go, and yet you are harping about your rights—that miserable insane idea, ‘Southern rights,’ Southern aristocracy. Just as if a man born in Kentucky is better than a man born Illinois.⁴¹

Instead of forcing them to “fight,” however, Paine impressed the citizens of Mayfield in the construction of a fort around their much-maligned city. Under the direction of Colonel W.W. McChesney, townspeople had to perform hard labor unless they paid exorbitant fines, ranging from \$5 to \$400 depending on individual wealth.⁴²

To the delight of local Unionists, Paine meanwhile rewarded them for their sacrifices. He appointed J.E. Woodward, “a reliable Union man,” Superintendent of Trade and authorized only “unconditional Union men” to ship their tobacco, cotton, and other products. He reestablished a Board of Assessors to tax all rebels and rebel sympathizers of their property to compensate Unionists for their losses during Forrest’s raid. To the board of assessors he appointed Rev. William Starks of Calloway County, Rev. William Dugger of Graves County, and Thomas Redd of McCracken County. After seizing money from the bank, he paid C.C. Allard, whose house had been destroyed by the Union bombardment during Forrest’s raid, \$8000 to start a flouring mill that would

⁴¹ Danforth, “How I Came to Be in the Army and General E.A. Paine’s Plan of Federal Salvation,” 334-335.

⁴² “Explanations of Brigadier General E.A. Paine” RG153, MM1609, Folder 3, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

provide the army with grain. Paine also confiscated the goods in the store of Prince & Dodds. John A. Dodds, a Unionist refuge from Tennessee, had to pay \$1000 to reopen the store; when he refused Paine allegedly replied that he would take his “damned head off.” Dodds later claimed that Lucian Anderson had shown interest in buying the store. Paine additionally imprisoned several people including Dr. S.P Cope of Mayfield, who was charged with providing contraband medicines to the rebels. J.F. Davis was arrested for stealing a pass, while William S. Mayes was arrested for harboring guerrillas and stealing Captain R.H. Hall’s horse. Dr. Milan was arrested “without explanation” and imprisoned for fifty-one days. In addition, scores of forage, horses, and food were confiscated from suspected rebel sympathizers.⁴³

Paine often allowed his men to humiliate local southern sympathizers. Colonel Henry W. Barry of the 8th United States Heavy Artillery ordered a bank clerk to pay \$150 gold to a known prostitute whose company he enjoyed. The president of the bank, L.M. Flournoy had to pay two of his slaves \$125 for their labor. Provost Marshal Hall sent a black orderly to the small three-room home that Catherine Halloran rented on Oak Street with her four children. Under orders from Hall, the orderly commanded Halloran to vacate the front two rooms of the house within three days, or he would toss her furniture outdoors. Major Bartling gave over the one of the rooms to a woman whom he ordered Mrs. Halloran “not to look at” and gave the other room to “10-12 contraband negro women and children.”⁴⁴

⁴³ “Explanations of Brigadier General E.A. Paine...” RG153, MM1609, Folder 3, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

⁴⁴ Ibid; *OR*, Series 3, vol. 4, 573; Colonel Henry W. Barry was born in New York and served as the principal of Locust Grove Academy in Louisville at the breakout of the war. Prior to serving as colonel

Among the most infamous of Paine's acts, however, was his order of banishment. Just days after arriving in Paducah, he levied a fine of \$10,000 on Mrs. Rebecca Eaker, whose sons and husband the general accused of being rebels and of conspiring with Kesterson in the murder of J.B. Happy. The Eaker family received ten days to gather their things and go to Paducah, where Paine arranged transport for the family to New Orleans and thence to Central America.⁴⁵ Paine later banished over forty people from Paducah and Columbus to the frosty confines of Canada. On August 11, the *Detroit Free Press* reported the arrival of the prisoners, which included "judges, magistrates, wealthy merchants" from the Purchase. Captain B.H. Norton and twenty black soldiers from the Eighth Kentucky (Colored) Heavy Artillery escorted the prisoners. They ranged in age from fifty-three year old W.G. Malone, whose wife Sophia and their six children accompanied him, to sixteen year old Kate Saunier. Her father, John, the former mayor of Paducah, had recently fled to Cincinnati to himself avoid arrest by Paine. In their journey to Canada the prisoners were packed into the traveling car with their black escorts, apparently to humiliate them.⁴⁶

of the 8th Kentucky he was lieutenant of the 10th Regiment Kentucky Volunteers. After the war he opened a law practice in Columbus, Mississippi. He was elected Congressman on the Republican ticket in 1870 and served until his death in 1875.

In 1864, Catherine Halloran was 35 years old. According to the 1860 census she was born in Ireland as was her husband Thomas, whose name is absent from her deposition as well as the 1870 census. In 1860 Thomas was listed as a 35 year old street contractor worth \$1000. Since he is not listed in any military records for the war, I can only assume he died sometime between 1860-1864 or that he deserted his family. *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, McCracken County, Kentucky*, <http://www.ancestry.com> accessed July 29, 2008.

⁴⁵ Frazer Kirkland, *The Pictorial Book of Anecdotes and Incidents of the War of the Rebellion* (Hartford, CN: Harford Publishing and Philadelphia: National Publishing, 1867), 122; *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Graves County, Kentucky*, <http://www.ancestry.com> , accessed June 12, 2008.

⁴⁶ *Detroit Free Press*, August 11, 1864; *Appleton's Annual Cyclopeda and Register of Important Events for the year of 1864, Volume IV* (New York: D. Appleton and Company & Company, 1866), 453; John E.L. Robertson, *Paducah: Frontier to Atomic Age*, 54; Records of the Judge Advocate General Court

Paine loudly promised to kill every confirmed and suspected guerrilla in the area and he quickly set about making his threats a reality. In mid-July, two notorious guerrillas and adversaries of Captain Gregory, Jim “Old Kess” Kesterson, and a “Colonel Outlaw,” attacked the garrison at Clinton. At Columbus, General Prince sent a group of soldiers to rout the insurgents and happily reported that his men “poured” a volley “into them and killed three and wounded five” of the guerrillas.” One of the injured guerrillas was the leader himself, “Old Kess,” who at age twenty-three hardly qualified as old. Dr. Willis Danforth of the 134th Illinois Infantry performed surgery on the partisan, who had sustained a shot to head that shattered the bones on the left side of his face.⁴⁷ Danforth recalled that after a week of caring for his patient he was ordered to bring Kesterson to General Paine. Paine interrogated Kesterson about the 1863 murder of Graves County Unionist J.B. Happy, to which the guerrilla replied “That Happy was a damned Union man and would not keep quiet; he kept mouthing it about.” At dawn the next morning Paine ordered a group of black soldiers to execute Kesterson. They marched the young guerrilla, still bandaged on one side of his face, down the banks of the Ohio River. There the soldiers shot him in the stomach. Wounded, but not dead, Kesterson sank to the

Martial Cases Files 1809-1894, RG 153, MM2173, Folder 3, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

⁴⁷ *OR*, vol. 39, Part 1, 354-55; John Young Foster, *New Jersey and the Great Rebellion: A History of the Service of the Troops and People of New Jersey in Aid of the Union Cause* (Newark, NJ: M.R. Dennis, 1868), 645-46. According to the 1860 Census there were only 2 men living in Kentucky with the last name Outlaw. W.H. and N.H. Outlaw, both farmers from Hopkins County, were brothers in their mid twenties. I believe “Outlaw” was a moniker for a man named Howell Edmonds whom J.A. Hendley mentions in his memoirs as Kesterson’s “chief aide.” A story in the February 13, 1864 edition of the *Memphis Commercial Appeal* also mentions a group of guerrillas under a man named Howell Edmonds. *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, February 13, 1864. J.A. Hendley, *History of Pasco County, Florida*, (J.A. Hendley: 1927) 34. Jefferson Alexis Hendley was born in Farmington, Graves County in 1855. He and several young men from Graves County moved to Pasco County, Florida in the 1870s and 1880s to operate orange groves.

ground. Raising himself to his elbows, Kesterson “pulled the bandage from his face, and seeing the squad of negro soldiers reloading their muskets begged them not to shoot him again, but to take him to the hospital.” The soldiers instead marched to within four feet of the guerrilla and shot him in the head.⁴⁸

To emphasize the seriousness of his order, Paine then appointed P.B. Jacobs, a reported southern sympathizer, to ride out to every guerrilla commander in the area and read a proclamation: “I have this day shot Captain Kesterson, taken prisoner in guerrilla warfare, and shall shoot in like manner all prisoners so taken, and if I am credibly informed of retaliation being practiced on Union men living in my district I will walk out five of the most prominent citizens of Paducah ...make them “kneel down” and “shoot them. I will do it, so help me God.” Paine meanwhile held Jacobs’ father and brother hostage for ten days until his return. He came back carrying with him the proclamation and the signatures of all the rebel leaders on the back.⁴⁹

Paine’s proclamations, however, did not deter the guerrillas. Indeed, by the end of July events had escalated in retaliation. On July 26 a detachment of Federals led by Major

⁴⁸ Danforth, “How I Came to Be in the Army and General E.A. Paine’s Plan of Federal Salvation,” 324-338; Records of the Judge Advocate General (Army) Court Martial Case Files, 1809-1894, MM1609, Folder 3, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. In addition to Danforth, the soldiers who shot Kesterson gave testimony about the particulars of his execution. After serving as Medical Director of Western Kentucky, Willis Danforth returned to Illinois where he commenced his medical practice. In 1875 he was called as a witness to determine Mary Todd Lincoln’s mental competency. Danforth treated the former first lady for over a year for fever and nervous derangement. It was his testimony that supposedly convinced the court to declare Mrs. Lincoln insane. See Jean H. Baker, *Mary Todd Lincoln: A Biography* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1987), 319-320 and Mark E. Neely, Jr. and R. Gerald McMurtry, *The Insanity File* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993).

⁴⁹ Danforth, “How I Came to Be in the Army and General E.A. Paine’s Plan of Federal Salvation,” 324-338. The “Jacobs” man that Paine sent out with the proclamation was one of the sons of E.P. Jacob, a neighbor of L.S. Trimble, the Peace Democrat who was imprisoned during the August 1863 state elections. Jacob’s other neighbor was J.C. Noble, the vehement and vocal rebel newspaper publisher. Jacob had three sons listed on the 1860 census, Charles, Richard, and Fredrick, all of whom were in their early twenties or

John H. Peck, including soldiers from the 8th U.S. Colored Artillery, left Paducah to scout along the Clark River. The soldiers were to rendezvous with Gregory and several home guards at a spot on the Tennessee River called Haddix's Ferry. When Gregory failed to show, Peck determined to lead the men to Clarks River on his own. The men traveled approximately a mile when they came across a deserted house. Footsteps in the front yard of the house indicated that "someone had preceded us to inform the citizens" and guerrillas. Two men were captured who met the federals with Enfield rifles. After questioning, they denied all knowledge of guerrilla movements. The guerrillas, some of whom claimed to be part of the 3rd Kentucky Mounted Infantry, appeared and engaged the Federals in a three hour skirmish. The Union soldiers completely routed the insurgents, killing five and capturing seven. Several more, Peck reported, died trying to escape. One Union soldier was wounded "in the fleshy part of the thumb" during hand to hand battle with a guerrilla. The major also reported "a notorious rendezvous for guerrillas" was burned to the ground during the skirmish, though "the cause of the fire could not be explained."⁵⁰

In mid-August, rumors spread that Abraham Buford, a noted nemesis of the Union garrisons in the Purchase, was planning another attack with four to five thousand men. Other reports claimed that Captain Henry Campbell, who had already evaded capture, was planning an attack on a Republican political barbeque to be held in the town of Blandeville.⁵¹ Two days later, Colonel McChesney sent a detachment of soldiers out

late teens. *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, for McCracken County, Kentucky*, <http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed June 17, 2008.

⁵⁰ *OR*, vol. 39, Part 1, 365-366.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, Part 2, 268, 301, 346.

from Mayfield on a scouting expedition for a group of rebels reported near the road between the town and Dukedom. Heading towards Feliciana, the soldiers once again took R.G. McFadden hostage before moving towards the town. At Bethel Church they came across a group of six to eight guerrillas and a group of women whom the insurgents used as shields, thus making their escape. McChesney later learned the guerrillas captured forty year old W.S. Caraway, a Unionist from Mayfield, and stole \$250 from him. The Federal soldiers apparently interrupted the guerrillas during a card game. The loser of the game “was to kill” Caraway.⁵²

Paine stepped up executions of captured guerrillas in response to the increase in their activity. A guerrilla named Richard Taylor received the same treatment as Kesterson; Paine executed him on the banks of the Ohio. He also ordered Captain Gregory’s men to kill Eli Enoch, a mechanic from Graves County. Enoch’s neighbors swore that the rumor that Enoch was a guerrilla was a lie and that “although he was a Southern man” he condemned insurgent activities. Paine also executed men by the name of Matthews, who was accused of firing on boat pilots along the Ohio. Dr. James Hendley, a target of Unionists in the past, was arrested near his home in Graves County and taken to Paducah. He apparently escaped execution only after agreeing to care for the ailing wife of “Parson” Dugger, a former tax assessor and target of Confederate

⁵² *OR*, vol. 39, Part 1, 463. W.S. Caraway was listed as a “crockery maker” on the 1860 census and had an estate valued at \$2400. He was probably in business with his neighbors, John Doyle and I.W. Pittman, who were also listed as crockery makers. *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Graves County, Kentucky*, <http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed August 4, 2008.

guerrillas. Ultimately, Paine's enemies accused him of executing over forty people, although a list of the victims has never been substantiated.⁵³

Given the circumstances, it was not long before complaints about Paine began to reach Union authorities. On August 16 Brigadier General Prince wrote Grant that the new commander was "imbued with ...the theory that the sickest patient requires the most violent dosing." Prince protested that just prior to Paine's assignment Purchase citizens were tiring of the guerrilla attacks and beginning to sympathize with the Federals. The actions of Paine and his subordinates, he posited, instituted a "new reign of terror by means of soldiers and hired assassins and unsettles every nook of society." Prince informed Grant of the banishments as well as the executions of Kesterson and Bryant, a man from Dublin who was shot in Mayfield without trial. In light of the events, Prince asked to be relieved of his duty and added his "protest against him in the name of God and of all my countrymen who respect the rights of mankind."⁵⁴

On September 3, Governor Bramlette penned a letter to President Lincoln complaining of Paine's actions. Kentucky was a loyal state, Bramlette wrote, one that eschewed secession in 1861, yet the state was now treated "as a rebellious and conquered province." His biggest complaints were the "multifarious affairs" toward the people of the Purchase whose citizens "have for a long while been the subjects of insult, oppression, and plunder by officers who have been placed to defend and protect them."⁵⁵

⁵³ "Report of J.A. Geneva to Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton, War Department, Bureau of Military Justice, Washington, D.C., December 1, 1864, RG153, MM1609, Folder 4, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.; Hendley, *History of Pasco County, Florida*, 33.

⁵⁴ *OR*, vol. 39, Part 2, 260-61. The murder of a guerrilla named Bryant was also reported in the *Louisville Daily Journal*. He was reported executed by Gregory and his men. *Louisville Daily Journal*, August 16, 1864.

⁵⁵ *OR*, Series 3, vol. 4, 688-690.

Three days later, Assistant Adjutant General J. Bates Dickson relieved Paine of his command and ordered him to turn over all his books and papers. Paine promptly fled Paducah for Illinois, taking with him the majority of the records detailing his administration. The man who demanded the general's resignation was none other than U.S. Grant, whose contempt for Paine's actions were apparent: "He is not fit to have a command where there is a solitary family within his reach favorable to the Government. His administration will result in large and just claims against the Government for destruction of private property taken from our friends. He will do to put in an intensely disloyal district to scourge the people but even then it is doubtful whether it comes within the bounds of civilized warfare to use him"⁵⁶

One person was enraged at Paine's removal, however. Lucian Anderson sent a frantic telegram to Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton trying to stop it. "General Paine was ordered here by the President to collect assessments on rebel sympathizers," Anderson wrote. "Union men all indorse his policy. If sent away the Union men in this end of the State will all leave. All is lost." Anderson fired off a similar angry, curse-laden letter to fellow Kentuckian and auditor of the United States Treasury Department, Green Adams:

Your dispatch from the President read. I confess that the course of the President has deceived me and I can only say that I will do the best I can [.]All the Union men are down[.] Rebels Jubilant[.] the result of this will be the most of the Union men will leave and no vote will be polled for Lincoln. No one is to blame but him for he promised me in June last and in August that Genl Paine should not be removed. Green this work plays

⁵⁶ *OR*, vol. 39, Part 2, 349; Simon, ed., *Papers*, vol. 9, 173-74.

hell with the Union cause in this end of the State [.] And the State will go [against] us. Great God what does the President mean[?] I will write no more I am too damned mad.⁵⁷

Anderson also addressed the issue of the assessments collected during Paine's tenure, stating, "Tell the President for me to Telegraph Genl Grant not to revoke the order the President made in June last making Assessments on Rebel Sympathisers to reimburse Union men in the Seven Counties west of [the Tennessee River] & Green dont fail to do this." Anderson worried that if Grant was not warned "damn me if he won't revoke the Presidents order, and then the President will be sorry it is done." With little regard for his own reputation, Anderson told Adams to deliver his letter directly to the President and warned "His removal will destroy all our prospects for success in this end of the State & all I have promised the Union men here turns out to be false"⁵⁸

One of the reasons for Anderson's hot anger was the fact that several people had implicated him in the alleged crimes committed by Paine. John M. Mackenzie, a U.S. Customs agent at Paducah particularly warned Lincoln that "the Honr L. Anderson is implicated in the maladministration of Genl Paine who is a monomaniac—Let nothing that he the said Anderson may say to you, induce you to interfere with Genl Grants removing Genl Paine from this command." During the investigation into Paine's conduct several other prominent Unionists were also accused of complicity. In September a committee led by Brigadier General Speed L. Fry and John Mason Brown accused Anderson of "advising Paine" and leveling assessments. Thomas Redd and R.H. Hall

⁵⁷ Lucian Anderson to Green Adams, September, 10, 1864, Abraham Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress, American Memory, Digital Collection, www.memory.loc.gov. Green Adams was a former Whig and American Party member of the House of Representatives. He also served as circuit court judge.

⁵⁸ Lucian Anderson to Green Adams, September, 10, 1864, Abraham Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress, American Memory, Digital Collection, www.memory.loc.gov

both were charged with receiving bribes and extortion. John H. Bollinger was charged with confiscation a government steamboat for private purposes of trade. Paine's son, Captain Phelps Paine, was accused of absconding with wagonloads of furniture and carpets after his father was relieved of duty.⁵⁹

In the end, General E.A., Speed and Brown charged Paine with extortion, expatriation, impressments, unlawful executions, and use of foul or abusive language. Paine apologized for few of his actions and defended his authority under Lincoln's proclamation of martial law. He did refute an accusation that he called General Halleck a "damned rascal, a damn, coward, a God damned coward, and an infamous damned coward." Paine claimed that his old nemesis R.C. Woolfolk, an "unscrupulous rebel" made the accusation. Upon resumption of command of Paducah in July 1864 Paine accused Woolfolk of feeding Forrest wine and cake and banished him to Canada. Woolfolk retaliated, Paine insisted, by accusing him of insubordination. The only crime he admitted to ultimately was the use of foul language: "I confess with shame and mortification that I have become addicted to the use of profane language" he said. "It is a wicked vice." Yet in the same breath, Paine excused his profanity noting if "a preacher could be excused from cursing...surely a layman ought to be excused in Western Kentucky. The provocations were great. I appeared in many instances that I was compelled to use expletives."⁶⁰

⁵⁹ John M. Mackenzie to Abraham Lincoln, September 16, 1864, *Abraham Lincoln Papers*, Library of Congress, American Memory, Digital Collection, www.memory.loc.gov.

⁶⁰ Records of the Office of Judge Advocate General (Army) Court Martial Case Files, 1809-1894, RG153, MM1609, Folder 3 and 4, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

Of Paine's rule over the Purchase, Fry and Brown concluded that "The administration of Verres and of Warren Hastings may safely be challenged to show a parallel to the fifty-one days of terror and rapine that measured the duration of Paine's authority." Yet, not everyone agreed with their assessment. In February 1865, a Congressional investigation into Paine's crimes took place in Paducah. In charge of the investigation was Secretary of War Stanton himself. In his final analysis he acquitted Paine, Anderson, McChesney, and all others implicated of crimes. "Upon careful review," he concluded "it is conceived that the violent denunciations of ...Paine...and of his administration...are in the main hasty and ill considered." He called the investigation a "prosecution of the individual rather than a temperate and impartial survey of the official acts." Paine resigned from the army in April 1865. He returned to practicing law in Illinois and New Jersey, where he died in 1882.⁶¹

Stanton's acquittal of Paine enraged many in the Purchase and Kentucky proper, who felt the hotheaded general's acquaintance with Lincoln allowed him, literally, to get away with murder. Yet closer analysis of the general shows that many of his actions were well within the bounds of accepted wartime measures. Indeed, many of his "crimes" were practiced by other Union generals, in particular Sherman, Grant, and Sheridan.⁶² He is most remembered for his banishment of citizens from the Purchase, yet Sherman advocated the practice long before Paine implemented it. Back in late 1863, after requesting of General Hurlbut that a regiment of Federals be sent from Paducah to

⁶¹ *OR*. vol. 39, Part 2, 349; RG153, MM1609, Folder 4, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. Warren Hastings was the first governor general of British India from 1773-1813 who was impeached corruption in 1795. Verres refers to Gaius Licinius Verres, a Roman magistrate renowned for his mismanagement of Sicily.

Florence, Alabama, he added a caveat “notify the people of Paducah if any enemy of good government...insult or offend any of the Union people, the whole town will be held responsible, and the chief men banished and their property destroyed.” The general ended with the stern warning “it is time for Paducah to stop all nonsense.” By July 1864 Sherman suggested Brazil and the Dry Tortugas as new homes for Kentucky rebels.⁶³

Both Sherman and Grant also advocated the arrest of citizens and destruction of crops in areas where guerrilla depredations were strongest, and Paine certainly operated in a “strong” guerrilla area. As historian Mark Neely points out, Paine practiced the same measures against disloyal populations as General Phil Sheridan, who seemed to understand best that hitting an enemy in his wallet did more damage than the bullet. In his memoirs, Sheridan noted “the loss of property weighs heavy with the most of mankind; heavier often, than the sacrifices made on the field of battle. Death is popularly considered the maximum of punishment in war, but it is not; reduction to poverty brings prayers for peace more surely and more quickly than does the destruction of human life.” Paine’s actions in the Purchase thus seem to reflect the philosophy of Sherman, Grant, and Sheridan.⁶⁴

Ultimately, however, most historians of the Purchase and Kentucky vilify Paine as a monster akin to Nero not because of banishments and extortion, but rather for his

⁶² Mark Neely “Was the Civil War a Total War?” *Civil War History* 50:4 (2004): 434-438.

⁶³ Mark Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War*, 142-170; *OR*, vol. 31, Part 1, 718-719; *OR*, vol. 39, Part 2, 241, 247-49. For more on Sherman’s evolving opinion on the treatment of guerrillas and southern civilians see Michael Fellman, *Citizen Sherman: A Life of William Tecumseh Sherman* (New York: Random House, 1995); Lee Kennett, *Sherman: A Soldier’s Life* (New York: Harper Collins, 2001), Lloyd Lewis, *Sherman: Fighting Prophet* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1960) John F. Marselzalek, *Sherman: A Soldier’s Passion for Order* (New York: Macmillian, 1993).

practice of execution. Yet while Paine was accused of committing over forty murders, no records exist to corroborate the claim. While an argument could be made that the names of the victims were conveniently lost during Paine's escape from Paducah, no private letters or diaries, local histories, or newspapers contain a list of the supposed victim's names. Court martial and provost marshal records, which include testimony from dozens of citizens and accusers, detail only four executions ordered by Paine and seven by McChesney. According to Paine, McChesney, and local Unionists, all were guerrillas. Kesterson admitted to murdering J.B. Happy and harassing the pickets at Paducah and Mayfield while Matthews confessed to shooting pilots aboard U.S. Naval transports on the Ohio.⁶⁵

Under General Orders 100, or Lieber's code, moreover, Paine and McChesney were following official Union policy. In 1862 legal scholar Francis Lieber created regulations designed to address the guerrilla warfare that plagued his friend General Henry Halleck, who then dealt with groups of lawless Missouri guerrillas who operated in civilian dress and ignored the rules of war. According to Lieber, partisans such as John Mosby and Forrest were soldiers since they were authorized by the government and wore the uniform of the Confederacy. Guerrillas, such as the ones facing Halleck in Missouri were defined as "small parties of armed country people ...who resort to occasional fighting and occasional assuming of peaceful habits, and to brigandage...devastation, rapine, or destruction." When Paine emphasized the fact that Kesterson attacked

⁶⁴ Mark Neely, "Was the Civil War a Total War?" 434-438 and *The Civil War and the Limits of Destruction* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007); Philip H. Sheridan, *Personal Memoirs of P. H. Sheridan, Volume 2* (New York: Charles L. Webster, 1888), 99-100.

⁶⁵ J.A. Hendley, *History of Pasco County Florida*, 33.

“defenseless old men” while dressed in both Confederate and Union uniform or civilian clothes, he was making the distinction that the guerrilla was a noncombatant, or a “country” person. As such, Kesterson deserved no quarter. Lieber’s Code also allowed for stern punishments on populations that supported guerrilla activities. Viewed through this lens, Paine’s other crimes—banishment, assessments, and confiscation of property—existed within the bounds of wartime measures.⁶⁶

Yet the issue of whether or not Paine acted within the bounds of acceptable behavior mattered little to the people of the Purchase who were affected by his policies; in many ways they were correct in their righteous anger. Several Unionists in the area were not afforded the lofty positions that Lucian Anderson and his friends enjoyed. Indeed, many were treated as badly as their secessionist neighbors. W.W. Tice, a former member of the 15th Kentucky who was forced out of his home by guerrillas, was impressed into the workforce at Mayfield. Dr. S.P. Cope, a member of the same regiment along with his sons, was arrested and imprisoned. According to the Unionist Cope’s testimony, he was imprisoned after refusing Paine’s order to frame a cousin of Captain Gregory, one of Paine’s staunchest allies.⁶⁷

To the people of the Purchase, Paine became the ultimate symbol of the brute force of the Federal Army, and his “reign” was their crucible. Beginning with Richard Collins 1875 publication *History of Kentucky*, Paine has been identified in local and state

⁶⁶ Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War*, 149-151, Michael Fellman, *Inside War: The Guerrilla Conflict in Missouri During the American Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 82-86.

⁶⁷ Records of the Office of Judge Advocate General (Army) Court Martial Case Files, 1809-1894 RG153, MM1609, Folder 4, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. Dr. Cope was a “druggist” in Paducah. Paine ordered him to purchase sulphur and accuse Captain Gregory’s cousin of ordering it to aid guerrillas. I am not certain what use guerrillas would have for sulphur.

history as a lawless fiend who punished an undeserving people, while Unionists in the area such as Lucian Anderson appear as sinister and greedy collaborators. Others, like R.K. Williams would be forgotten. Because of Paine's administration, no other area of Kentucky could boast the wartime experiences of the Purchase. In the decades following the war the area would be embraced by the Lost Cause mythology that enveloped the state, but in October 1864 the Purchase had yet to free itself of the Federal Army. Indeed, the war was far from over.

Table 5.1: List of Prisoners Banished by General Paine (information based on 1860 Census for Hickman and McCracken Counties)

Name	Age	Occupation	Income	Residence
William M. Hubbard	32	Merchant	\$12,000	Columbus
Joe Moore	51	N/A	\$17,000	Columbus
James P. Walker	36	Merchant	\$30,000	Columbus
Burn Walker ⁶⁸	26	Merchant	\$2000	Columbus
T.M. Horne ⁶⁹	25	Merchant	N/A	Columbus
Josephine Overall	17	N/A	N/A	Columbus
W.R. Vance	54	Postmaster	\$4200	Columbus
Richard E. Cook ⁷⁰	37	Merchant	\$16,500	Columbus
James Morton	46	Merchant	\$20,000	Columbus
George B. Moss ⁷¹	42	Farmer	\$30,000	Columbus
Charles Rickee	N/A	N/A	N/A	Columbus
Byron "John" Glenn	32	Clerk	N/A	Columbus
W.G. Malone	49	Farmer	\$20,000	Columbus
Mrs. Robert Woolfolk ⁷²	39	N/A	\$16,000	Paducah
Mrs. Rollston	N/A	N/A	N/A	Paducah
Kate Sauner ⁷³	12	N/A	N/A	Paducah
Mrs. Joe Sam Hobbs ⁷⁴	25	N/A	N/A	Paducah
Robert Shanklin	33	Carpenter	\$200	Paducah

⁶⁸ Burns Walker lived at home with his mother Elizabeth Walker, age 66 in 1860. Mrs. Walker's worth was valued at \$6500. It is likely that Paine went after Walker to get to his mother's money.

⁶⁹ In 1860 Horne was boarding in the home of Catherine King, 32, a very wealthy widow worth \$46,800. Again, it's possible he was banished so Paine could go after the widow's money.

⁷⁰ Richard Cook lived at home with his mother Elizabeth Cook, his wife, brother, and children. In addition to the \$16,500 listed as his personal income, his mother, brother, and wife added an additional \$22,700 to the household income.

⁷¹ Moss lived at home with his father and brother, whose combined income was over \$39,000.

⁷² Mrs. R.C. (Mary) Woolfolk's income was listed as \$16,000; her husband and children added and additional \$22,000 to the household income.

⁷³ Twelve-year-old Kate Sauner was the daughter of Paducah mayor John Sauner.

⁷⁴ Mary Hobbs husband was listed as a grocer worth \$12,900.

Chapter 6:

“Enjoying my Freedom”: The End of the War and Reconstruction in the Purchase

As the excitement of Paine’s removal died down, citizens in the Purchase warily greeted a new commander. In late October 1864 the imposing General Solomon Meredith took command of the district. A prosperous farmer and former United States Congressman, the Indiana native stood six feet seven inches tall. He previously served as a sheriff and U.S. Marshal. Promoted to Brigadier General in 1862, Meredith was wounded in the head by shrapnel at Gettysburg and placed on administrative duty at Cairo, Illinois. While commanding the garrison, he ran for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives in his home state. During the race the hot-headed Hoosier sullied his reputation by openly flogging his opponent with a whip but afterward using his influence and connections to have the charges dropped.¹

Meredith’s first act in upon taking command was to release fifty-one prisoners at Mayfield and others at Paducah’s guardhouse. He next set about reinforcing Fort Anderson, which he found “in very bad condition.” Meredith placed a “double abates around it, together with rifle pits,” and reinforced the base of the fort with sand bags. Much of the work was accomplished by Paducahans whom he ordered to labor just as

¹ See *Biographical and Genealogical History of Wayne, Fayette, Union and Franklin Counties, Indiana*. (Chicago: Lewis Publishing, 1899), 271-276. For more information on Meredith and his post-Paducah career see Craig L. Dunn, *Iron Men, Iron Will: The Nineteenth Indiana Regiment of the Iron Brigade* (Indianapolis.: Guild Press of Indiana, 1995).

Paine had. The *Louisville Journal* reported, however, that many citizens actually volunteered their labor this time and indeed took up arms to protect their town from another attack by guerrillas.²

Despite their hopes for the new commander, some Unionists in the area soon found Meredith almost as unbearable as Paine, especially after he set about reforming the district at the expense of that general's favorites. On October 8 he informed Adjutant General Dickson that he would allow the sale of eight bales of cotton shipped to Paducah by loyal men from Tennessee, despite the fact that they were without a pass and the treasury agent in west Tennessee could not vouch for them. The surveyor at Paducah, Thomas Redd, one of Paine's handpicked men, refused to allow the sale. Meredith countermanded his orders, stating "it is impossible to get along with him...he has shipped large amounts of cotton belonging to speculators and others under the same regulations."³

Major M.A. Payne, meanwhile, complained to General Lindsey about Meredith's high-handed tactics with him and the local militia. Payne alleged that he was unable to train his "raw" recruits because Meredith used his men to guard substitutes and deserters. The general likewise used the men as orderlies and sentinels over "a gang of contraband that is chopping wood" and "negro pickets that cannot even read." After complaining to Meredith, the general reprimanded Payne and "threatened to" report and dismiss him "for not obeying orders." Payne found the threats especially galling considering that his men "had done more scouting and killed three times more guerrillas than the two hundred Federals." He further reminded Lindsay of the danger he consistently faced by being

² *OR*, vol. 39, Part 3, 625; *Louisville Daily Journal*, November 4, 1864.

³ General Solomon Meredith to Adjutant General J. Dickson, October 6, 1864, RG393, E2179, Telegrams Received, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C.

loyal to the Union, writing “I have been robbed and my store, goods, and all have been consumed in fire by the hands of the infernal guerrillas...my family...are subject to suffering.”⁴ U.S. Sanitary Commission nurse Jenny Fyfe also despaired of Meredith’s appointment, noting, “if Payne [sic] did do any good here, which many dispute; Meredith is undoing all of it.” She soon changed her mind however after Meredith called a meeting of all the towns citizens and told them they were required to organize themselves into companies for the protection of their property. He likewise reported that the Union army would protect only government property and in turn forbade removal of their civilian property on reports of guerrillas.⁵

Lucian Anderson was most concerned with Meredith’s potential role in the upcoming presidential election. After giving speeches in several counties in mid-October, Anderson wrote warning him “the people in the Counties where we have been have attended and listened attentively and they profess to be all right in many places[.] [I]n many places I think they intend to do right.” The Congressman complained, however, that Meredith underestimated the importance of securing the area from guerrillas. He noted that Meredith removed troops from Mayfield, which left the town and the surrounding area “subject to rebell & Gurillia rule[.] Unless these Counties are held of course no votes will be polled.” Anderson pleaded for more troops, adding, “I hope

⁴ Major R.A. Payne to General D.W. Lindsey, October 21, 1864 and Adjutant General’s Roster of the Civil War, Fortieth Kentucky Militia, Graves County, Kentucky, Kentucky Department of Military Affairs, Military Records and Research Bureau, Frankfort, KY.

⁵ Jennie Fyfe, to Nell Fyfe, October, 4, 1864, Fyfe Family Papers, Special Collections, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI.

Kentucky will do her duty in this contest, am not however sanguine, if she fails it will not be the fault of the true men of the state.”⁶

Contrary to Anderson’s charges, Meredith was well aware of the need for more troops in his district to secure the upcoming election and maintain the peace. A few days after Anderson sent his telegram to Washington, Meredith canvassed the district and notified the president that “there is the most decided change that I have ever witnessed any where. If I had sufficient force to protect the people, there is little doubt but what you would receive a majority of the Votes in my District.” Meredith requested extra troops to protect his post and soon welcomed 3000 reinforcements.⁷

They arrived in the nick of time. In late October, Nathan Bedford Forrest made his last appearance in the western Kentucky. During the summer and fall of 1864 Sherman was positive that Forrest was out to disrupt his supply lines, and indeed he was. From late September to early October the “Wizard of the Saddle” was back to his old tricks, leading a devastating raid through middle Tennessee. Intent on disrupting navigation on the Tennessee, he inflicted heavy casualties and disrupted supply lines. Forrest’s real object, however, was to destroy the massive supply depot at Johnsonville, Tennessee. On October 25 Forrest and his men camped out in Huntingdon, Tennessee, not far from the Kentucky border. He reportedly sent half his command toward Mayfield

⁶ Lucian Anderson to President Abraham Lincoln, October, 14, 1864, Abraham Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress, American Memory, Digital Collection, www.memory.loc.gov .

⁷ General Solomon Meredith to Abraham Lincoln, October 17, 1864, Abraham Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress, American Memory, Digital Collection, www.memory.loc.gov

and ordered his troops to “take the town.” Among other things, they burned the Graves County Courthouse in Mayfield.⁸

Abraham Buford and several men from the 7th Kentucky and 12th Kentucky then occupied Fort Heiman. There they ambushed the steamer *Mazeppa* and two barges from Cincinnati, both bound for Johnsonville. Both vessels were loaded with a valuable amount of “quartermaster and subsistence stores.” After carrying off the majority of the bounty, the rebels burned both the *Mazzapa* and the barges. The next day, Buford’s guns disabled the gunboat *Undine*, two transports named the *Venus* and *J.W. Cheeseman*, and two barges. Buford’s men then rejoined Forrest. During the first week of November they helped inflict catastrophic destruction on the gunboats, barges, transports, and warehouses at Johnsonville. George Pirtle of the 3rd Kentucky and several of his comrades in Faulkner’s regiment meanwhile took advantage of the return to the Purchase to visit home again. They carried with them some of the prizes from the *Mazzapa*. One of Pirtle’s comrades “had not less than three bushels of shoes” while he “had all I could manage of shoes[,] blouses [,] blankets[,] and other goods.”

Forrest and the Confederates also made desperate attempts to add to their ranks by conscripting troops throughout west Tennessee. Along the way he added over 1000 men to his command. Pirtle who had remained at home for a week, collected around twenty of “the boys that had been absent” since the April raid on Paducah.” He was sorely disappointed, however, when the men started running, noting “they seemed to want to

⁸ OR, vol. 39, Part 3, 437; Collins, *History of Kentucky*, vol. 2, 15; Kleber, *Kentucky Encyclopedia*, 387.

hide from us. Thought of shooting at them, but the idea of killing a runner was rather revolting.”⁹

Facing Forrest’s onslaught, Meredith frantically called for more Federal soldiers to protect the Purchase against Buford’s men at Heiman and Forrest’s at Johnsonville. It was déjà vu as Meredith reported “I need more assistance. All Reports that he is to attack me soon.” Meredith even telegraphed Sherman for permission to issue the amnesty oath to several deserters from the Confederate Army, the majority “sons of good citizens,” so they could protect the town from Forrest and Buford’s forces. Sherman flatly denied his request. He instead ordered Meredith to hold the fort at Paducah and the guns on the Tennessee River at all cost, advising him to “blow them up” if there was any danger of them falling into enemy hands. Meredith also took the proactive measure of loading all government property and stores onto transports, along with “bankers and exchange brokers and merchants money,” and sending them to Vincennes, Indiana, and Cairo. Sherman ordered Colonel J.N. MacArthur to hold the fort at Columbus and burn the town to the ground if necessary to prevent guns, ammunition and stores from going to the guerrillas, adding “I don’t care a cent about the town.”¹⁰

General Buford’s occupation of Fort Heiman signaled the end of major military movements in the Purchase. Forrest moved south, where he participated in the

⁹ *OR*, vol. 39, Part 1, 860-61, 867, 870, 873; Part 2, 282; Henry George, *History of the 3d, 7th, 8th, and 12th Kentucky, CSA*, 127-129; Wills, *A Battle from the Start*, 263-273; Wyeth, *That Devil Forrest*, 460; Pirtle Diary, Chapter 54, Pogue Library, Murray State University, Murray, KY. The raid on Johnsonville was one of the highlights of Forrest’s career, as he inflicted between \$2 million-\$7million (estimates differ) worth of damage on Union transports and supplies. After the raid he was made commander of all cavalry under General Hood, but by then the hopes for a Confederate victory were virtually nil. For more on the Johnsonville campaign see Edward F. Williams III, “The Johnsonville Raid and Nathan Bedford Forrest State Park” *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 28 (1969): 225-251.

¹⁰ *OR*, vol. 39, Part 1, 860-61, 867; Part 3, 474,612-13, 656; General Meredith to Adjutant General Dickson, October 28, 1864, RG393, E2179, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

Confederate calamity at the Battle of Nashville in December. For his part in the Nashville campaign, General Hylan B. Lyon, a western Kentucky native, and his 800 strong cavalry force, including the four regiments of Purchase soldiers in the 3rd Kentucky, 7th Kentucky, 8th Kentucky, and 12th Kentucky rode roughshod over the counties east of the Purchase along the Cumberland River. Sent to disrupt the railways headed south into Tennessee from Kentucky, Lyon also went about conscripting soldiers into the rebel army and along the way proceeded to burn seven courthouses. After retreating from Nashville in late December, Forrest and Lyon's men were granted twenty days furlough. Among those furloughed were the four main regiments of Purchase Confederate soldiers.¹¹

While many of the Purchase's Confederate soldiers took the opportunity to rest and catch up with kin, some found the prospect of fighting Yankees on their home turf much too tempting. Small groups of soldiers set up camp at various points along the Tennessee-Kentucky state line, notably at Dukedom, Feliciana, and Clinton. One soldier who took advantage of the situation was George Pirtle, who rendezvoused with a group of his men at Dukedom, only to find the area overrun with "bushwackers." Indeed, the *Louisville Daily Journal* reported "roving bands of rebels are visiting almost every county of Western Kentucky...they have never been so bold or so numerous." Confederate guerrillas were not the only ones "visiting" the area. Gregory's Home Guards also made a point of causing chaos in the area, especially southern Illinois. Telegraph operator Charles Wallace at Metropolis confirmed that Gregory's men were "robbing and shooting

¹¹ *OR*, vol.45, Part 1, 791-806. Prior to joining Forrest, Lyon commanded the 3rd Kentucky and the 8th Kentucky. After the war he and former Tennessee governor Isham G. Harris went to Mexico and offered their services to Emperor Maximilian. After serving as a civil engineer for one year, he returned to Kentucky and established a mercantile business in Eddyville.

citizens all through this state.” In mid-November, two of the most notorious of Gregory’s men, John Purdy and Shep Bell, were found hanging from trees nine miles outside the city. Wallace hoped the executions would prompt the rest of Gregory’s outfit to “quit their bad habits.”¹²

After the excitement and climax of the Johnsonville raid, Purchase residents turned their attention to the upcoming presidential election. Although Lincoln carried the national election, General George B. McClellan captured the vote in Kentucky, garnering over 64,000 votes to Lincoln’s 27,786. Lincoln and the Republicans made significant gains in the state, carrying 25 counties when in 1860 they carried none. Still, McClellan secured 76 counties for the Democrats, an indication of Kentucky’s disapproval of Union authorities in their state. In the Purchase, election results were drastically different than they had been in 1860. Republicans seemingly made miraculous gains in the heretofore heavily Democratic counties the Purchase, capturing majorities in four out of seven. At Paducah, Jennie Fyfe rejoiced, writing “isn’t our Union victory grand! Had no idea Lincoln would carry with so large a majority.” Lincoln captured 58.5 and 56.4 percent of the vote respectively in Fulton and Hickman counties. Marshall County, which contained the largest amount of Union volunteers and the smallest prewar slave population, polled an impressive 50.3 percent Republican vote while McCracken County cast a whopping 61.5 percent of their vote for Lincoln. While the gains made by the Republicans in the Purchase were impressive, however, it is important to remember the influence of military presence and the fact that a record low percentage of voters turned out in many of the counties no doubt due to restrictions at the polls. Only 18 percent of Marshall County

¹² George Pirtle memoir, Chapter 53; *Louisville Daily Journal*, December 12, 1864; *OR*, vol. 45, Part 1, 918. I was unable to identify John Purdy and Shep Bell.

voters showed up at the polls, while Fulton County polled a mere 13.1 percent; Calloway County had no returns.¹³

Table 6.1 Presidential Election Returns 1864

County	Potential Vote	Actual Vote	McClellan	Lincoln
Ballard	1946	892 (45.8%)	541 (60%)	351 (39.3%)
Calloway	1996	N/A	N/A	N/A
Fulton	1125	147 (13.1%)	61 (41.5%)	86 (58.5%)
Graves	3279	1411 (43%)	769 (54.5%)	643 (45.5%)
Hickman	1526	512 (33.6%)	223 (43.6%)	289 (56.4%)
McCracken	2256	838 (37.1%)	323 (38.5%)	515 (61.5%)
Marshall	1593	296 (18.6%)	147 (49.7%)	149 (50.3%)

Source: *Shannon and McQuown, Presidential Politics in Kentucky, 1824-1948, 37-40.*

Still, as Lucian Anderson and his fellow Unionists greeted the year 1865, they must have done so with the knowledge that despite the removal of General Paine, they had made some gains in the Purchase. Lincoln had made great strides. The fact that those strides were gained at the expense of a large number of voters no doubt bothered Anderson and his friends little: it simply proved that Union authority in their part of Kentucky was strong.

By the second week of November more troops reinforced Paducah prompting Jennie Fyfe to exclaim “we feel quiet safe again after the oft repeated scares.” She noted that a recent threat by guerrillas prompted the “long roll,” prompting soldiers to formation. She recalled “we could them from our windows almost as far as the eye could

¹³ Collins, *History of Kentucky*, vol. I, 146; *Shannon and McQuown, Presidential Politics in Kentucky, 1824-1948, 37-40*; Jennie Fyfe to Nell Fyfe, November 14, 1864, Fyfe Family Papers, Special Collections, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

see.” Military matters also looked promising: by the end of December Nashville had fallen and Sherman had burned his way across Georgia to Savannah.¹⁴

Their hopes were premature. Unionists and the Federal Army had little time to celebrate as January saw yet another return of Purchase guerrillas. During the retreat from Nashville, Forrest and his men fell back to one of their usual haunts, Corinth, Mississippi. Having pushed his men constantly since the Johnsonville Raid, the partisan leader granted his exhausted soldiers a two-week furlough. While most of the Purchase soldiers simply went to visit their families, many again set up camps and over the next couple of weeks launched small demonstrations against the Federals. In a portend of events to come, Colonel W.W. Faulkner, whose 12th Kentucky had harassed the Union garrisons in west Tennessee and Kentucky over the past three years, was shot and killed by two of his own men just south of Dukedom at Dresden, Tennessee. In his memoirs, Henry George recalled that Faulkner’s men “made no effort...to protect him. Colonel Faulkner was a courageous, dashing soldier, but for some reason did not seem to be popular with his men.”¹⁵

At the end of their furlough, many of the men from Forrest’s Kentucky brigades never returned to their commander. The *New York Times* reported that “a great number” of Forrest’s men “are hovering around their homes in Tennessee and Kentucky, conscripting, robbing, and murdering Union men.” In late January Major M.A. Payne found himself once again writing to General Lindsey about local militias. He noted that “The guerillas have appeared in formidable numbers and they say that they will rule now.

¹⁴ Jennie Fyfe to Nell Fyfe, November 16, 1864, Fyfe Family Papers, Special Collections, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

¹⁵ George, *History of the 3rd, 7th, 8th, and 12th Kentucky, CSA*, 139-140.

What I want is if satisfactory to all concerned...authority to raise one battalion or a regt. and drive the rebel guerillas out of our state. We cannot go home. Cannot something be done?" A couple of days later, Sanford Talley, a poor farmer in Ballard County, made a similar request: "There is a cavalry force to be raised west of the Tenn river to protect this county. I have been satisfied by a number of the loyal citizens here to raise and organize a company for the purpose. Please send me a recruiting commission for the same as soon as possible." Talley's request was legitimate. In late February a Cairo newspaper noted "the notorious Mr. McDougall entered the village of Lovelaceville...Wednesday last and carried off goods to the amount of \$10,000." The paper blamed the Union Army's lack of cavalry in the Purchase for the numerous guerrillas swarming over west Kentucky. The paper also proposed "a short shrift and stout rope" for the "scoundrels when caught."¹⁶

Forrest himself confirmed the number of guerrillas swarming over the Purchase. In March he complained to Secretary of War John C. Breckenridge about the troops whom he had only a year before praised during the raid on Paducah. He admitted that close to 1800 men from west Kentucky had joined his command, but admitted they "remain...as long as they can stay in Kentucky, as soon as the enemy presses and they turn southward, the men scatter, and my opinion is that they can never be brought out or organized...the Kentucky brigade now in my command has only about 300 men in camps (Third, Seventh, and Eighth Kentucky Regiments.)" He openly accused the Kentuckians of desertion, asserting that they had "attached themselves to the roving bands of

¹⁶ *New York Times*, January 13, 1865; M.A. Payne to General Lindsey, January 25, 1865 and Sanford Talley to Governor Bramlette, January 31, 1865, Kentucky State Militia Papers, Kentucky Department of Military Affairs, Military Records and Research Bureau, Frankfort, KY; *Cairo War Eagle*, March 2, 1865.

guerrillas, jayhawkers, and plunderers...and...squads of men who are dodging from pillar to post preying upon the people, robbing them of their horses and other property.” He also scoffed at the self-styled “colonels” and “lieutenants” who are “responsible to no one, and exist by plunder and property.” He thus urged that authorities arrest the guerrilla leaders, which in turn he hoped would lead the Kentuckians to join legitimate commands. Forrest was basically admitting that the partisan warfare he had relied on was futile since it led to “bands of lawless men...who give pretext to Federal authority for oppressing the people.”¹⁷

The *Louisville Daily Journal* meanwhile reported that many other “rebel deserters, mostly from General Forrest’s command” were coming in daily to the Federal lines at Paducah to give up. The author added that the Wizard’s men were scattered all over Kentucky and Tennessee, “disgusted and deserted” and convinced “the Confederate cause is collapsed.” A *New York Times* reporter, in Paducah to report on the war in western Kentucky, likewise noted that rebel deserters came in daily to the Provost Marshal’s office to take the oath of allegiance. The men, he recalled were filthy and covered in rags, “a grade of humanity scarcely above barbarism.” The majority, he discovered, had tired of Confederate service and had been living in the “bush” for months, noting “there is too much reason to fear that they have not seen their last experience in the situation.”¹⁸

Some continued the fight, however. Many of the deserters, guerrillas, and bushwhackers launched raids along the Mississippi River area of the Purchase. On February 23 a groups of sixty guerrillas reportedly fired on a steamer of civilians at

¹⁷ *OR*, vol. 49, Part 2, 1124-1125.

¹⁸ *Louisville Daily Journal*, January 20, 1865; *New York Times*, March 9, 1865.

Hickman, but were quickly dispersed by a gunboat. On the morning of February 28, another group of guerrillas claiming to be part of the feared Missouri guerrilla leader William Quantrill's command attacked the town of Hickman. The guerrillas plundered stores, burned several buildings, and abused several citizens, "women and children included."¹⁹

In mid-March, a group of irregulars robbed three men of \$1800 in greenbacks outside of Columbus. The men had been in town selling cotton when they were robbed by men "disguised as negroes, having their faces and hands blackened." In early March, approximately fifteen guerrillas under a Captain Harris entered Hickman "and committed outrages upon some of the citizens." In addition to burning Samuel White's home, they hanged Thomas French from a tree until he agreed to pay them a specified sum of money. During a scouting expedition from Columbus, a battery of Federal artillery encountered a group of guerrillas at Moscow and fought a skirmish into Hickman, prompting the *Louisville Daily Journal* to lament "a most unenviable state of affairs prevails at Hickman." Unfortunately for the townspeople, the guerrilla Harris took a liking to Hickman. It was reported that he "virtually commands the post, granting passes, and giving permits to citizens to sell and receive goods." Harris reportedly commanded both rebel guerrillas and common bushwhackers, pretending "that his object is to put down guerrillas and sustain the rebel soldiers who frequently make their appearance in town."²⁰

¹⁹ *Louisville Daily Journal*, February 23, March 5, 1865.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, March 15, 1865; *OR*, vol. 49, Part 1, 788-89. In 1860, Thomas French was listed as 20 years old with no occupation or income. According to the *Louisville Daily Journal*, by 1865 he was "keeping a woodyard." In 1870, he was listed as a farmer. There is no Samuel White listed in Fulton County or the vicinity in 1860. A Samuel N. White, however, lived in Hickman in 1870 and operated a general mercantile store.

Much of the guerrilla activity still centered around the practice of illegal trade. Thomas Redd, the customs house agent at Paducah, complained to General N.J.T. Dana at Memphis about the illegal trade of cotton between West Tennessee and the Purchase. Redd noted “the trade from here to your district is very heavy at this time, all passing the picket line at this place with permit from board of trade here...these parties represent themselves as living in Kentucky.” The appearance of the gunboat *U.S.S Hastings* prompted the guerrillas to flee, taking with them money, supplies, and whiskey. The commander of the *Hastings*, Acting Volunteer Lieutenant J.S. Watson, blamed the raid squarely on the large amount of illegal trade stemming out of Cairo. He explained that “it has been the custom of persons living in the western part of Tennessee” to go to Cairo, purchase goods, and arrange for their landing at Hickman and Watson’s Landing, Kentucky. The buyers of the goods defied trade regulations by simply crossing over the Tennessee-Kentucky line, retrieving the goods, and then selling them in Tennessee. The goods, however, were subject to guerrilla raids unless retrieved quickly. The citizens of Hickman informed Watson that the town was occupied frequently by thirty to forty guerrillas.²¹

Yet in March, additional reports of illegal trade between naval officials and the local population surfaced once again. A Cincinnati newspaper published an anonymous letter from an “Officer” who reported that Marines on board the *USS St. Clair* had traded large quantities of salt, contained in barrels, with civilians along the Tennessee River. Acting Volunteer Lieutenant James S. French denied the charge, though he admitted to allowing his men to trade “salt, coffee, soda, etc.” for “fowl, butter, eggs, etc.” for his

²¹ *ORN*, vol. 28, 67-68.

men's messes. As to the large barrels of salt he was supposedly observed trading, French stated they were actually containers of "clothing, bedding, provisions, etc. belonging to refugees, who were waiting for passage down the river."²²

French's assertion about the provisions belonging to Union refugees may have been true. On March 23 Jennie Fyfe reported that "over the past week over two hundred refugees fled into Paducah," many of them "formerly wealthy" and "dressed in clothes of their entire manufacture." She stated "many of the southern union people feel every thing has been sacrificed for their principles—they have been driven and humiliated like dogs." Fyfe expressed sympathy for the refugees, stating that she "rather admired" them. One the men, she reported, wanted nothing more than to find a place for his family and then "kill every rebel."²³

In late March, the last major skirmish involving guerrillas took place in the Purchase. About thirty miles outside Paducah, a "desperate fight" involving around ninety guerrillas under a Captain McDougall and Home Guards under Captain Jim Gregory resulted in the death of both men. In a letter home to her sister, Jennie Fyfe expressed grief over the incident, noting that "Gregory with twenty or thirty of his men went out in search of guerillas and was killed—he was a brave defender of his country." One of the rebel guerrillas captured during the skirmish was William Evans, whom

²² *ORN*, vol. 28, 112-114. The *St. Clair* was assigned to Mound City, IL in January 1865 to patrol and escort convoys on the Tennessee River. She also carried dispatches from Paducah and Cairo to General George Thomas at Johnsonville.

²³ Jennie Fyfe to Nell Fyfe, March 23, 1864, Fyfe Family Papers, Special Collections, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

General Meredith sent to the guard house at Louisville. Meredith later requested that Evans be sent back to Paducah for his trial “while witnesses can be obtained.”²⁴

After four years of war, chaos, and Federal occupation, many in the Purchase must have felt a sense of relief upon hearing of Lee’s April 9 surrender to Grant. One soldier who did was George Pirtle. He last participated as a Confederate soldier during Forrest’s defense of Selma, Alabama. In late March, Union General James H. Wilson set out to destroy ammunitions manufacturers and ironworks in central Alabama. The only sizable Confederate force facing him was Forrest’s 5000 strong cavalry, which he defeated at Selma on April 2. Wilson went on to capture Montgomery and Columbus, Georgia, where on April 16 he learned of Lee’s surrender. After Selma, Pirtle and several men were to rendezvous with Forrest, but “their patience wore out.” The men “discussed the history of the balance of the war” and “mounted to ride home to Ky.” After several days travel through Tennessee, Pirtle arrived home. The last entry in his diary was short and to the point: “At home with wife and babies. Enjoying my freedom...went to Paducah and surrendered to Provost. Then to making a crop of corn.”²⁵

Henry George of the 3rd Kentucky reiterated Pirtle’s anti-climatic ending to the war, writing “as soon as the Kentuckians were paroled and permitted to make their way home they left in squads of from twenty-five to one hundred...they soon reached their homes in Western Kentucky, every honorable man determined to make as good a citizen

²⁴ Collins, *History of Kentucky*, 158; *New York Times*, March 27, 1865; Jenny Fyfe to Nell Fyfe, March 23, 1865 Fyfe Family Papers, Special Collections, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan; General Solomon Meredith to General Palmer, March 27, 1865, RG393 District of Kentucky/ Department of the Ohio, E2174, Telegrams Received, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. There were three men living in the Purchase in 1860 who could have been the William Evans arrested as a guerrilla.

²⁵ Pirtle memoirs, Chapter 68, 69; James Pickett Jones, *Yankee Blitzkrieg: Wilson’s Raid Through Alabama and Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1976).

as he had made a good soldier.” George Pirtle, Henry George, and the other soldiers returning to the Purchase may well have prayed for a return to normalcy. The hardship, bitterness, and bedlam produced by four years of war, however, did not dissipate overnight. Indeed as the people of the Purchase soon discovered, the war they had fought for four years was actually far from being resolved.²⁶

* * * * *

In the first months following Appomattox an atmosphere of uncertainty and violence enveloped the Purchase. Concerns centered on the status of returning soldiers and the future of the Federal army in the area. For over four years the areas had been under the control of the Union Army, and for returning Confederate soldiers, guerrillas, and secessionists its removal would result in a much wanted return to pre-war normalcy. To Unionists, however, the loss of the army inspired fears of retaliation and chaos as former Rebel soldiers, bushwhackers, and guerrillas haunted the countryside determined to upset attempts at peace. Thus, while Federal soldiers remained in the area until President Johnson ordered their removal in October in 1865, chaos continued to reign in the Purchase.

On May 1 Major-General George Thomas ordered General Meredith to “send a summons, along with a flag of truce, to all and every band of armed man in your district...and call upon them to surrender to you...upon the same terms as Lee surrendered to General Grant.” Thomas included a strict warning that should the “bands”

²⁶ Henry George, *History of the 3rd, 7th, 8th, and 12th Kentucky, CSA*, 144-45.

of men fail to report to Meredith, they would be treated as “outlaws.” On May 2, just hours after Meredith issued the order, guerrillas crossed the Tennessee River at Fort Heiman and entered the Purchase. Meredith was ordered to by Acting Assisting Adjutant General A.F. Taylor to “use every exertion to capture the rebel force or drive them from the country.” Many men, however, took advantage of Meredith’s order and surrendered to the Provost Marshal at Paducah. Over 1000 “rebel deserters” registered in the First District under General Order No. 4 at the end of April and the first few weeks of May. Meanwhile, over the next months President Johnson pardoned several prominent Confederates from the area including Edward Crossland, who spent the war in the ranks of Forrest’s army, and Confederate Congressman H.C. Burnett. Vouching for Crossland and Burnett were none other than Lucian Anderson, R.K. Williams, and John Bollinger.²⁷

One of the most disturbing incidents to occur in the immediate aftermath of the war involved a group of “outlaws” that apparently took umbrage with Thomas’s order. On May 9, Confederate forces from Western Kentucky under Colonel J.Q. Chenoweth of General Lyon’s Brigade, surrendered to Colonel John A. Hottenstein at Paris, Tennessee. Several of the now former Confederates traveled to the home a “Mr. McClannahan” where they planned to spend the night. Around 9 o’clock that evening a band of

²⁷ *OR*, vol. 48, Part 2, 552-553; 572; *Louisville Daily Journal*, May 20, 1865; Edward Crossland to Andrew Johnson, November 3, 1865, Henry C. Burnett, May 4, 1865, Civil War Confederate Amnesty Papers, M1003-25, Drawer 529 Kentucky Department of Archives and History, Frankfort, Kentucky. Crossland closed the war with the rank of colonel in the 3rd Kentucky Mounted Infantry. He took the required oath of allegiance in Kentucky but applied for special pardon with President Johnson because District Judge Bland Ballard refused to administer the amnesty oath to Crossland whom he termed a “traitor.” Burnett took the oath in Danville, but was arrested in Louisville on his way home to the Purchase. He too was tried before District Judge Bland Ballard, who refused to administer amnesty and released him on \$10,000 bail. *Louisville Daily Journal*, July 7, 1865.

Anderson and Williams probably vouched for Burnett and Crossland out of their pre-war affiliation as prominent lawyers in the Purchase. It is also possible that the men hoped to move beyond the antagonisms of war.

“bushwhackers or thieves” attacked the home, murdering McClannahan and all but one of the Confederates. Captain Frank Gracey, the lone survivor, reported the bushwhackers robbed and burned the home and stripped the soldiers of their uniforms. In a telegram to Meredith, Gracey warned that the men were from Paducah and were headed back in the disguise of the Confederate uniform to supposedly take the oath. Gracey believed they had no intention of doing so, but instead planned on attacking the post.²⁸

The incident described Gracey underscores the fact that though the war had officially ended, the guerrillas, bushwhackers, and criminals it spawned had not faded away. By May William Starks, a long suffering Unionist, was one of the latest in a long string of Purchase citizens to request troops from Governor Bramlette: “Notwithstanding a number of rebel soldiers and guerillas are coming in and taking the amnesty oath—still there are a sufficient number left to keep the country in a very disturbed condition.” Starks was most concerned with the upcoming Congressional elections that summer which had been hampered by disturbances from former guerrillas. Preliminary meetings to select candidates for the elections were impossible due to the chaotic situation. On May 10, Starks noted, a congressional convention was held in Paducah “to make a nomination for Congress and legislature” but “was compelled to adjourn until the 15th of June in consequence of the condition of the county.”²⁹

In the short time the convention was able to meet, Dr. J.D. Landrum, who had been voted into Congress in 1863, presided over the meeting. J.T. Bollinger, S.M. Purcell, and Judge C.S. Marshall made up a “committee on resolutions.” The committee

²⁸ *OR*, vol. 48, Part 2, 691-92.

²⁹ William Starks to Governor Thomas Bramlette, May 10, 1865, Kentucky Militia Papers, Kentucky Department of Military Affairs, Military Records and Research Bureau, Frankfort, KY.

pledged allegiance to the restored United States and vowed to pursue “the punishment of traitors.” They likewise addressed the issue of slavery, stating that “it becomes us as wise men to provide for the removal of the remains of the institution from our midst so that its place may be filled by compensated labor.”³⁰

The uncertain atmosphere was heightened in May when General Meredith lost command following accusations intimating that he “was in sympathy with traitors” and that “under the policy pursued by him, neither the property nor the lives of loyal citizens were safe from rebel guerrillas.” Rumors circulated that “Union men were selling their farms and removing from the district because they have no military protection.” The charges seemed false considering that the top Unionists in the Purchase, R.K. Williams, Lucian Anderson, and C.S. Marshall, had in April telegraphed Secretary of War Stanton to request Meredith’s retention as commander of Paducah. The men declared that Meredith had “produced the happiest results, which promise soon to restore this disaffected region to full loyalty.” As usual, the upcoming election was the top concern of Williams and Anderson. Only Meredith, the men insisted, could guarantee that upcoming August congressional and legislative elections go to Republicans. Should Meredith be removed, they noted, “the loyal men would be ruined.”³¹

Williams, Anderson, and Marshall were not the only one’s who fought Meredith’s removal. On May 17, John B. Husbands and J.N. Beadles presided over a meeting of “at least 2500” people in Paducah. The meeting adopted resolutions in favor of Meredith and “prominent Union men” gave speeches insisting that the general “was not persecuted by the unprincipled coterie at Paducah because he was too friendly with rebels, but because

³⁰ *Louisville Daily Journal*, May 18, 1865;

³¹ *Ibid.*, May 27, 1865.

he was an honest man and scorned partnership with these men for the purpose of robbing the people and the Government.” Husbands and Beadles telegraphed the resolutions to President Johnson himself. Three days later, clergymen from five Paducah churches also protested to President Johnson, pleading that the “interests of the Government, morality, and good order most urgently demand it.” Despite the many protests, Colonel George G. Symes soon arrived to replace Meredith. Prior to his appointment at Paducah, Symes, a native Ohioan, had served as colonel of the 44th Regiment Wisconsin Volunteers.³²

As Anderson and Williams suggested, the upcoming elections were forefront in the minds of other local Unconditional Unionists who feared retaliation should Democrats regain the district. Across Kentucky, Unconditional Unionists and Democrats vied for power on the state level. Democrats in the Purchase identified Unionists like Lucian Anderson with the Republican party and “radicalism,” and that image was only magnified in late May 1865 when the party met at Frankfort and declared support for the presidential administration and the Thirteenth Amendment.³³ Anderson was one of the

³² *OR*, vol 48, Part 2, 466, 823, 852.; *New York Times*, May 20, 1865; *Louisville Daily Journal*, May 27, 1865. In 1860 C.S. Marshall was 39 years old and practicing law at his home in Blandeville, Ballard County. J.B. Husbands, a lawyer, was 54 in 1860 with an estate valued at \$66,000. According to the 1860 census, J.N. Beadles was 34 year old merchant in Mayfield with an estate valued at \$19,000. The clergymen who protested the order were Edward Slater of the Methodist Church, J.F. Brown of the Christian Church, R.L. McElree of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, J.F. Hendricks of the Presbyterian Church, and F.A.J. Any of the Episcopal Church. *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, McCracken and Graves County, Kentucky*, <http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed September 12, 2008.

³³ Ross A. Webb, *Kentucky in the Reconstruction Era* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1979), 12-17. Kentucky’s political parties vied for power in the months following Appomattox. The Unconditional Unionists, as suggested, eventually evolved into the Republican Party. They did not, however, support the radical elements of Reconstruction. In Kentucky the party was led by John Marshall Harlan, James Speed, and Benjamin Bristow and maintained a consistently moderate stance. Democrats in the state following the war were split into two factions, the Union Democrats and Southern Democrats. Union Democrats supported Lincoln during the war, but broke with the administration after the President declared martial law in July 1864. Southern Democrats supported the Confederacy during the war and George McClellan in the 1864 Presidential race. The two wings of the party found common ground in support for states rights and opposition to federal rule. They were led by prominent Democrats such as Garrett Davis and Charles Wickliffe. A smaller group of Conservative Independents opposed the more radical elements of both the Southern Democrats and Republicans. The party was led by Governor Thomas

prominent Unionists who declared support of the controversial measure and reaction to his move in the Purchase was so intense that he declined a bid for reelection. Democrat Lawrence S. Trimble, however, tossed his hat into the ring once again, no doubt seeking to vindicate himself after losing to Anderson in 1863. Trimble's opponent was Republican Collins D. Bradley, a wealthy lawyer from Trigg County. Though the *Louisville Journal* reported "very serious interference" by the military in many counties, Trimble went on to defeat Bradley by over 2000 votes. Other Democratic candidates in the Purchase did not fare as well as Trimble, however. James Brien and John W. Oglevie, elected Representatives from Marshall and McCracken Counties, were arrested along with James C. Calhoun, sheriff-elect McCracken County, for violating a law that excluded ex-Confederates from running for office. The men were held for over month by order of General Palmer before being released at the behest of Governor Bramlette.³⁴

Former Unionists had other pressing problems to deal with than elections. One observer noted "Union men...complain most bitterly of the mean and tyrannical persecution to which they are being subjected at the hands of the rebels and rebel sympathizers." He further noted "it is a notorious fact that union men and discharged union soldiers are being hunted down and indicted by the local courts for offences or pretended offences alleged to have been committed by them on the rebels." One such

A. Bramlette. Many Conservatives joined the Democrats following the Unconditional Unionist Convention in May. During 1866 and 1867 Democrats won several political seats on the county and state level across Kentucky. E. Merton Coulter suggested that the Democratic gains in the state in the post-war era was a manifestation of Kentucky's true political nature. Webb, however, suggests that Kentucky was not showing her secessionist roots by voting for the party of the South. He believes the leaders that emerged were popular before or during the war and would have been elected anyhow.

³⁴ Collins, *History of Kentucky*, vol. I, 163-64. Collins D. Bradley was one of the founders of Cadiz, the county seat of Trigg County. During the 1850s he was elected Judge of the Court of Appeals for the Second District. Both James Brian and James C. Calhoun served in the 3rd Regiment Kentucky Mounted Infantry. John Oglevie was member of the 7th Regiment.

case involved Major George F. Barnes of the 12th Kentucky Cavalry. Barnes was living in Benton, Marshall County in 1862 when he organized a company of soldiers for the 15th Kentucky, the first Union home guard unit in the Purchase. In 1864, he recruited four more companies that were consolidated into the 12th Kentucky. Barnes remained in Paducah following the war and opened a successful merchantile business. In early 1866, he was indicted by the grand jury of Calloway County on charges that he and his men burned several houses in Murray during the war. In June 1866, Barnes traveled to Murray for the trial. On the way to trial he was “followed to the court house by a band of lawless desperados with loaded and primed revolvers in their hands, threatening his life at every step and calling him all kinds of names.” During the trial one of the “ruffians” pulled off his Confederate “coat” and threw it at the judge, smugly telling him to “keep it till called for.” The “danger of bloodshed was so great” that Barnes case had to be secretly adjourned at Mayfield the next day.³⁵

The primary worry of the vast majority of whites in the Purchase, however, regardless of prewar affiliation, centered on the scores of freed slaves in the area, particularly the thousands of black soldiers stationed at Paducah and Columbus. In late May, Unionists Lucian Anderson, J.H. Latham, J.M. White, and John Rodgers sent an urgent missive to Secretary of War Stanton complaining about groups of African-American soldiers at Columbus. The soldiers had allegedly committed “unparalleled depredations” during a recruiting mission in the Purchase and northwest Tennessee. The men complained that the soldiers performed “shameful outrages on persons and

³⁵ John Donovan to Brigadier General John Ely, May 4, 1866, Letters Received, Records of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedman, and Abandoned Lands, RG105, M1904, National Archives, Southeast Region, Atlanta, GA, hereafter cited as BRFAL; Ibid, June 30, 1866; William Henry Perrin, *History of Kentucky* (Louisville: F.A. Battey, 1887), 726.

property,” broke “into the courthouse and public offices,” and utterly destroyed “all State and county records, court papers...dockets, judgments, and title papers.” The inflicted damages, they insisted, were more than “the losses of the war combined.” Anderson and his cohorts begged for “immediate relief.”³⁶

Indeed, reports of supposed outrages committed by freed blacks dominated the summer of 1865. One of the more unusual cases to come before the Provost Marshal was the case of Louis Knox, Arthur Hinton, and John Ayers. The three African-American men were accused of taking “up arms” and joining with disgruntled Confederate guerrillas in Hickman County. The court charged two additional men, George Nivin and Dan Nailin, with the crime of rape. The men supposedly “forcibly and feloniously and against her consent, carnally knew one Mrs. Susan Carroll, white woman of Hickman.” Knox, Hinton, and Ayers were sentenced to thirty days in jail, while Nivin and Nailin were “sentenced to hang by the neck.” George Hardsbrook of the 12th U.S.C.H.A faced similar charges when he was accused of inducing “fifteen year old Emma Rust into his headquarters without knowledge of her lawful protectors” where he had “carnal knowledge of her.” He received “severe reprimand in front of his regiment.” Another incident happened when John Thomas of the 4th U.S.C.H.A. entered the home of Mrs. Alice Young of Columbus “and feloniously assaulted her daughter Miss Maggie Young with a bayonet and forced her to sit beside him and intended to rape her.”³⁷

According to Major N.H. Foster, however, it was the soldiers and freedmen who received constant and contemptible treatment. From his command at Paducah he

³⁶ *OR*, vol. 49, Part 2, 905-06.

³⁷ General Court Martial Orders, RG393, E2182, 1865, No. 62, 65, 1866, No. 1, 7. National Archives, Washington, D.C. There are no records to corroborate whether Niven and Nailin were actually executed for their crime.

reported “from all information I am able to obtain from this section of the state, it appears that the people are in an open revolt—discharged colored soldiers are beaten, driven from their homes, in some instances all blue clothing and U.S. uniforms found in their possession taken from them and burned; and they are otherwise persecuted by the returned rebel soldiers.”³⁸

As it did during the war, African American’s in Federal uniform provoked extreme ire among whites in the Purchase during Reconstruction. Columbus almost erupted in riot when two employees of the Mobile & Ohio Railroad were involved in an altercation with a former member of the 4th United States Colored Heavy Artillery whom they encountered wearing a Federal uniform onboard the train. The men ordered the “colored boy” to remove the buttons from his coat. When the former soldier refused they “came to blows and from blows the white men used knives rather freely and cut and bruised the colored boy considerably.” Other freedmen who witnessed the attack followed the white men off the train where they drew the attention of “authorities.” In the ensuing melee, two freedmen were severely wounded.³⁹

The primary reason for the chaotic situation concerning black soldiers and freedmen in the Purchase was the overall uncertainty about the status of African Americans in Kentucky in the immediate postwar era. Federal authorities in the state considered African Americans free with the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment in January 1865. Kentucky, however, had repeatedly rejected the amendment, which

³⁸ Major N.H. Foster to Colonel Grier, January 10, 1866, RG393, Entry 964, National Archives, Washington, D.C. Jenny Fyfe to Nell Fyfe, August 22, 1865, Fyfe Family Papers, Special Collections, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

³⁹ Collins, *History of Kentucky*, 173; *Louisville Daily Journal*, July 25, 1866; *New York Times*, July 25, 1866. The South was plagued by a series of race riots in the summer of 1866. The largest occurred in Memphis in early May and in New Orleans in late July 1866.

bolstered slave holders who refused to free their former chattel. Indeed, from April to December 1865, when Congress ratified the amendment, over 65,000 slaves remained in bondage in Kentucky.⁴⁰

Moreover there was the desperate situation facing African American refugees within the state. Following Lee's surrender, thousands of former slaves flocked to Kentucky cities, increasing the already large refugee population in places such as Louisville, Columbus, Paducah, and Camp Nelson near Lexington. To remedy the situation the Federal commander of Kentucky, Major General John Palmer issued Order No. 32 in May and Order No. 49 in June. Both allowed refugees and ex-soldiers to leave camps to seek employment. Thousands of African-Americans accordingly crossed the Ohio River to seek jobs, while hundreds more sought employment with the Federal army in the quartermaster stores, as laborers, and as cooks and laundresses. Many others sought out and reunited with long lost loved ones.⁴¹

The freedom to move about, however, had the effect of bringing even more freed blacks to the refugee camps. In the months following Appomattox, African-American families in the Jackson Purchase flocked to Paducah and Columbus for employment and the protection of the Federal Army. Housing and food were in short supply and disease ran rampant in the unsanitary camps. In Paducah, destitute, old, and sick freedmen and women died in the streets, prompting blacks in the town to organize a Freedmen's Aid Society and the Freedmen's Sanitary Commission. Lack of funds, however, prevented any significant change. When the city council attempted to appropriate funds to house

⁴⁰ Marion Lucas, *History of Blacks in Kentucky*, 178-79; James F. Bolton to John Donovan, August 18, 1866, Letters Sent, Columbus, BRFAL.

⁴¹ Lucas, *History of Blacks in Kentucky*, 178-79.

and feed the destitute freedmen, they were met with protests of “I am not going to pay out any money to” assist “the damned niggers.”⁴²

In December, acting on demands from those concerned about the status of freed blacks, Major General Oliver O. Howard finally recommended that a branch of the Freedmen’s Bureau be organized in the Bluegrass State. Howard believed that the Bureau was desperately needed to combat “the rascally rebellious revolutionists in Kentucky.” Because the state lay beyond the arm of the bureau, Howard chose the agency’s director in Tennessee, Major General Clinton B. Fisk, to organize offices in Kentucky. In late December Fisk properly announced the Bureau’s intentions for the state. In February 1866 the Kentucky Senate passed resolutions condemning the Bureau but by March Fisk had organized three sub-districts within the state with headquarters at Lexington, Louisville, and Paducah.⁴³

The Freedmen’s Bureau at Paducah and its sub-district at Columbus would operate from April 1866 until July 1868. At Paducah, the first supervisor in charge of the Bureau office was John Donovan, who assumed the office of Superintendent on April 7, 1866. Lieutenant James F. Bolton became supervisor of the office at Columbus.

⁴² Superintendent John Donovan to Major General John Ely, May 4, 1866, Letters Sent, Paducah, BRFAL; John Smith to Donovan, June 16, 1867; Letters Sent, Columbus, BRFAL; James F. Bolton to John Donovan, August 18, 1868, Letters Sent, Columbus, BRFAL.

⁴³ Marion B. Lucas, *A History of Blacks in Kentucky, 182-187*; *New York Times*, February 15, 1866; Howard quoted in Victor O. Howard, “The Black Testimony Controversy in Kentucky, 1866-1872” *Journal of Negro History* Vol. 58 (April 1973), 144; Ross Webb, “The Past is Never Dead, Its Not Even the Past: Benjamin Runkle and the Freedmen’s Bureau in Kentucky, 1866-1870, *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society*, 84 (Autumn 1986): 348-340. See also Victor O. Howard, *Black Liberation in Kentucky: Emancipation and Freedom, 1862-1884* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1983), Richard O. Curry, ed., *Radicalism, Racism, and Party Realignment: The Border States During Reconstruction* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1969). Fisk served as director of the Kentucky branch of the bureau from December 1865 until June 1866. He appointed Brevet Brigadier General John Ely chief superintendent for the Bureau of Kentucky. Ely was replaced by Major General Jefferson C. Davis. Davis headed the Bureau until January 1867. He was succeeded by Brigadier General Sidney Burbank who oversaw the agency until June 1868. Major General Benjamin P. Runkle presided over the closure of the agency in 1869.

Donovan and Bolton's goals for the Bureau was to provide assistance to destitute freedmen, secure their rights by establishing courts, institute schools, facilitate labor contracts between farmers and freedmen, and reunite families. To the majority of whites in the Purchase, the Bureau seemed to be nothing more than a new phase of federal occupation. In his first letter to his superior General John Ely, Donovan noted that "great prejudice and hostility" existed against the bureau. Indeed, the outlook for organization was less than promising:

the presence as well as the assistance of troops will be absolutely necessary in order to carry out the business of the bureau...so much hostility appears to exist to the prejudice of Freedmen's Rights...The more respectable and intelligent portion of the Farmers, Manufacturers, and Mechanics—The class who represent the sold interest of the county are all disposed towards the Bureau. They believe its existence important to the best interests of both the whites and blacks...they treat the Freedmen humanely...The majority of the people comprising lawyers, doctors, bankers, later speculators in slaves retired gentlemen...merchants, Hotel Keepers, newspapers editors, rum sellers, Bar Room loafers, gamblers, politicians, and the low breed and disaffected rabble—are with exceptions pregnant with hostility.⁴⁴

By April 30, three of his county superintendents had resigned due to "hostility" and three families of freed people in Ballard and Hickman counties had been assaulted by white men who "blackened themselves up." Soon enough, Donovan himself reported an attempt on his life. In late fall, while sitting at his desk in Paducah, someone fired a shot at him. It went through his hat and lodged in the wall behind him.⁴⁵

As in the formerly Confederate states, the Bureau in Kentucky worked diligently to establish schools for freedmen and their families. Between 1866 and 1870, the

⁴⁴ John Donovan to General Ely, June 30, 1866, Monthly Reports, no. 101, BRFAL. James F. Bolton was superintendent at Columbus during the entire duration of the Bureau. In April 1868, Captain Emerson H. Liscum oversaw the closure of the office. At Paducah, John Donovan served as Chief Superintendent from April until December 1866, when W. James Kay took over. Kay served until March 1868. P.T. Swaine and A. Benson Brown oversaw the closure of the office.

⁴⁵ John Donovan to General John Ely, April 7, 18, 30, 1866, Letters Sent, Paducah, BRFAL; Ibid, November 13, 1866.

agency's Educational Division, under the leadership of army chaplain Thomas K. Noble, organized 219 schools in Kentucky. The building of schools became one of the first ventures of the agency in the Purchase. In 1866 and 1867, it erected centers of learning at Paducah, Columbus, and Hickman. Initial attempts to build the school in Paducah met with white disdain. John C. Noble of the *Paducah Herald* no doubt spoke for the majority of Purchase citizens when he scoffed at the idea of educating blacks, noting "to talk about educating the drudge is to talk without thinking." That resentment manifested in violence in April 1866 when white students attacked the first Freedman's school at the instigation of "the community at large." Superintendent John Donovan reported that the "scholars were assaulted...the windows broken in and the teachers compelled to flee." He added that "women were seen to encourage the attack." Donovan complained of the incident in a letter to Paducah Mayor John Fisher who "paid not the slightest to my communication and nothing has been done by the civil authorities." Donovan placed guards outside the school to protect from further harassment and later answered the request of the teacher of the white school to "erect a fence separating the colored playground from theirs."⁴⁶

Attempts to build a school at Mayfield in 1867 also met with extreme violence. In Graves County, Lucian Anderson gathered the local freedmen together where they were treated to a "sumptuous dinner" and speeches that helped raise \$200 for the erection of a brick school building. Anderson's efforts once again went for naught. Not long after the dinner 50 Klansmen appeared in Mayfield and ordered the teacher to leave town. They

⁴⁶ *Paducah Herald*, June 28, 1866; John Kleber, *The Kentucky Encyclopedia*, 357; Harrison and Klotter, *A New History of Kentucky*, 237; John Donovan to Levi Burnett, April 17, 1866, Letters Sent, No. 22, 23, 50, BRFAL. John Fisher, a German immigrant and local brewer, served as mayor of Paducah from 1863-1868.

likewise entered the house of several freedmen and robbed and whipped them. In Hickman, the white teacher, Ohio native Jenny Mead was “insulted many times in the streets” and “threatened with death.” Mead also reported the murder of one her pupils in late 1868.⁴⁷

There were, however, stories of success. Jennie Fyfe and a colleague taught in Paducah in 1865 and 1866. In July 1865 she described her school to her sister back in Michigan as “a very singular one...unlike any you ever visited, with about forty pupils in number from the age of six...to forty years. My pupils are all shades of complexion from nearly white to coal black.” By February 1866 the school had 160 pupils and had held its first “colored school exhibition.” Fyfe faced heavy persecution during her first year of teaching and “was unable to find a boarding place in” Paducah. Donovan who described her as “a most energetic and highly accomplished lady” noted “the prejudice against her is so great.” Fyfe reported the “the scholars certainly did splendidly...far exceeded our expectations and made us very proud of them.” She was particularly pleased with a sixteen year old pupil, a girl who was “sold from her mother” and claimed her former master was her father. Fyfe also commented on the achievements of the girl’s brother, who came to school unable to read or write but by February had advanced to “Intellectual Arithmetic and Geography.” By July 1866, the school had formed a band and performed a concert in which the pupils “sang so pretty.” Between 1866 and 1868 three more schools were built in Paducah, two headed by black teachers. At Columbus a school of

⁴⁷ C.D. Smith to John Ely, June 31, 1867, Letters Received, Paducah, BRFAL. Smith served as sub-assistant and chief agent at Paducah from February to November 1867; Noble to Alvord, M803, Kentucky School Reports, January 12, 1869. I am unable to find the name of Mead’s student who was murdered. I cannot determine if the Klan that appeared in Mayfield was from the Purchase. Several groups of Klan operated across the Tennessee line in Paris, Jackson, and Dresden. A couple of references to “masked” groups of men are scattered in the Freedmen’s Bureau papers and some newspapers, but it is not indicated if they are actual members of the KKK.

115 students operated in 1865 and one year later a brick schoolhouse built by freedmen was opened. In Hickman, a local black carpenter Warren Thomas, donated fifty dollars to build a school; with additional funding from the Bureau the school opened in 1866.⁴⁸

In addition to establishing schools, the Freedmen's Bureau attempted to address the grievances of Kentucky's former slaves by establishing "freedmen's courts" within the agency's districts. Like most southern states, Kentucky's prewar black codes prohibited African-Americans from testifying against whites. In January 1866, General Fisk announced that Bureau-designated courts would handle cases involving freedmen until Kentucky passed laws accepting black testimony.⁴⁹

In the Purchase, the Bureau found trying cases involving freedmen almost impossible due to the apathy or outright hostility of the county courts. In June 1866, Chief Superintendent Donovan tried a case involving a former slave, a youth named George Morton, in one of the courts. Morton accused his former owners and current employers, William R. Brame and his sixteen year old son, John, of "assault and battery and inhumane treatment." Morton was unable to try his case in civil court because "no white witnesses" would "testify in his favor to the unjust and inhumane treatment inflicted" upon him. The case was tried before the freedmen's court which found Brame and his son guilty and imposed a fine upon them. Donovan disgustedly reported that "rebel lawyers" in Paducah advised Brame not to pay the fine but to "enter a protest in

⁴⁸ Jenny Fyfe to Nell Fyfe, June 15, 1865, June 19, 1866, Fyfe Family Papers, Special Collections, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan; John Donovan to Levi Burnett, June 21, 1866, Monthly Reports, No. 72, BRFal; W. James Kay to Thomas Noble, April 4, 1867, Letters Sent, Paducah, James F. Bolton to W. James Kay, December 12, 1867, Letters sent, Columbus; Kay to Runkle, February 5, 1868, Letters Sent, Paducah.

⁴⁹ Victor B. Howard, "Black Testimony Controversy in Kentucky," 140-45

the Circuit Court.” The circuit court issued an injunction in the case and forbade Donovan or any other Bureau official from collecting the fine.⁵⁰

Superintendent Donovan soon discovered that the foremost desire among the freedmen was the reunion of their families. Only a handful of former slaves had been able to locate long lost kin members. At Paducah, Louise Lauderdale was reunited with her two sons who served in the Union army, while Andrew Webb went to live with a long lost son in Iowa. Most were not so lucky, especially those attempting to remove their children from former masters who claimed them as “apprentices.” Kentucky state law allowed county courts to apprentice African-American orphaned and delinquent minors, giving white farmers a boundless supply of free labor. From his office in Columbus, James Bolton, superintendent of Hickman, Fulton, and Ballard counties, reported that “the county courts of each of the counties over which my jurisdiction extends have apprenticed orphans and Abandoned minors of the Freedmen.” Bolton investigated several cases of apprenticed children in Ballard County and concluded that the court “appears to be determined to grind under foot or disregard all orders and instructions of the Bureau.” Bolton and local Unionists claimed recently pardoned former Confederate Colonel Edward Crossland canvassed the county persuading others to “reenslave the niggers” by apprenticing former slave children.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Victor B. Howard, “The Black Testimony Controversy in Kentucky, 1866-1872,” 140-45. John Donovan to Major General John Ely, Reports, June 30, 1866, No. 100. In 1866 William R. Brame was listed as a 40 year old farmer with 7 slaves and an estate valued at \$14,000. His son J.M. Brame was 10 years old in 1860. In 1867, as a result of several court rulings, freedmen’s courts ceased to operate. Because the state denied black testimony, the Bureau used the Civil Rights Act of 1866 to have cases involving freedmen tried in the U.S. District Court. Judge Bland Ballard, a strong Unionist, Republican, and supporter of black rights presided over the cases. Ballard County, ironically, was named for Ballard’s father, a Kentucky pioneer also named Bland Ballard.

⁵¹ Bolton to Donovan, November 9, 1866, Letters Sent, Columbus, BRFal.

James Tisdale of Ballard County threatened his former slave Mary Reynolds when she tried to reclaim her children. Reynolds had fled Ballard in July 1865 to find work across the river in Illinois, leaving her children at Tisdale's farm. In July 1866 she and her new husband attempted to reunite with her children and move them to their new home in Metropolis, Illinois. Tisdale responded by refusing to return her children and threatening to "blow her brains out" should she come back. Austin Tyler of Fulton County also refused to give up a young slave girl to her family, claiming that state laws allowed him to maintain custody of her.⁵² In Graves County, Malinda Neel refused to return Sarah Ann, Dana, and Jerry Hobbs, the children of Emiline Hobbs. James L. Dunbar of Mayfield claimed that seven children between the ages of sixteen and two, legally belonged to him since the county courts authorized former owners to apprentice minor orphans.⁵³

Ann Ezell of Calloway County likewise appealed to the Freedmen's Bureau that her employer, A.G. Ezell of Calloway County, held her child. She complained that A.G. Ezell beat her over the head with a stick when she asked him to return the child to her. Compounding Ann Ezell's problem was the fact that "returned rebels and guerrillas" treated "the negroes with great cruelty and oppressiveness." In addition, the county judge, "a violent rebel," was accused of "binding children, men, and women." In Paducah, Belcher Baker, sought the Bureau's assistance in regaining his wife Lucy Martin Baker

⁵² James F. Bolton to John Donovan, August 24, 1866, Letters Sent, Columbus, BRFal. In 1860 James Tisdale was 48 years old and owned an estate worth \$9000. In 1860 Austin Tyler was a 59 year old farmer with 8 slaves and an estate valued over \$28,000. In 1870 his income increased to over \$30,000.

⁵³ Complaint of Emiline Hobbs to Superintendent John Donovan, September 23, 1866; James Dunbar to Superintendent John Donovan, April 13, 1866. In 1860 James L. Dunbar was listed as a wealthy farmer worth \$23, 270 and the owner of 15 slaves. By 1870 his fortunes had declined considerably to \$7200. In 1870, the home next to his was occupied the family of Frank Dunbar, an African-American farm hand with five children. The children match the ages of five of the seven children James Dunbar claimed as apprentices in 1866.

from their employer P.C. Martin, whom Baker accused of abusing and beating his wife. He claimed that Martin slapped his wife “several times in the face and refuses to pay her for her labor.”⁵⁴

Complaints of violence against freedmen whose former owners had a difficult time accepting their newly freed status swamped the Purchase Bureau offices. Oscar Turner, one of the wealthiest and largest slave owners in Ballard County, became enraged after one of his former slaves, Ann Turner, spilled some cider. He subsequently “whipped her with switches “and cut “her right hand until the blood came.” The young woman left Turner’s employ to work for a Mr. Scott. Several weeks after the incident, Oscar Turner located Ann at her new employer’s home and removed her “by force with a stick” and returned home. He “took her into the field and tied her to a fence rail, stripped her clothes off, and whipped her with switches in the body,” and “put her in the hay press...all night.” The next morning Oscar Turner called Maria, Ann’s mother, whom he blamed for her daughter’s earlier escape, to the house where he cursed her saying “god damn your soul you god damned bitch. I will learn you to run my negroes off.” He tied her to peach tree, stripped off all her clothes, “except an undergarment which he made a little girl pull above my waist” and whipped her. Maria Turner’s cries brought the intervention of Oscar Turner’s wife who untied her from the tree. Maria subsequently fled to the Freedman’s Bureau Office at Paducah where she pleaded to officials to punish Oscar Turner and rescue her remaining five children from Turner’s farm.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Sworn Testimony of Belcher Baker, April 20, 1866, Complaints, Affidavits, and Evidence Relating to Court Cases, Paducah, BRFAL; J.T. Bollinger to Superintendent W. James Kay, Chief Superintendent North West Sub District, January 28, 1866, Letters Received, Paducah, BRFAL.

⁵⁵ Complaint of Maria Turner to John Donovan, n.d., 1866, Letters Received, Paducah, BRFAL.

A similar complaint was made by freedman Alexander Flint, who complained to Chief Superintendent Donovan that his employer “collared” and hit him “across the head with a stick of strong wood” and tore his shirt from his body. He ordered Flint to work or “he would get his pistol and blow my god Damned heart out.”⁵⁶ Robert Robertson of McCracken County fared worse. Robertson caught his employer, a Mr. Titsworth whipping his children and ordered him to stop. After threatening Robertson with the same punishment, Titsworth mounted his horse and started for Paducah. Robertson too headed to Paducah to lodge a complaint with the Freedmen’s Bureau. There he encountered Titsworth, who told him “by God be off and don’t you come back no more.” After ignoring his order, Titsworth shot Robertson in the back as he turned away. As he turned to face his assailant, Titsworth fired again, hitting the freedmen in the thigh. Titsworth rode home and attempted to kill Robertson’s wife, but failed after his own wife shielded the woman.⁵⁷

Accusations of abuse also were made against Dr. Mileum of Graves County. A neighbor of the doctor’s wrote the Bureau to complain that Mileum “takened up a fence rail and beat and bruised” a “honest and industrious colored lady” named Caroline Burnett in his employ. The neighbor accused Mileum of “being one of Col. Faulkner’s vilians of ‘the’ so called Confederacy” and pleaded that the freedwoman “should have rights.” Similar reports of violence were also made. In Paducah, three black children were wounded by “squirrel shot” when someone shot at them while they bathed in the Ohio

⁵⁶ Complaint of Alexander Flint to John Donovan, n.d., 1866, Letters Sent, Paducah, BRFAL.

⁵⁷ Complaint of Robert Robertson to Superintendent John Donovan, August 7, 1866, Letters Received, Paducah, BRFAL. I believe Mr. Titsworth is Joseph Titsworth who would have been approximately 20 years old in 1866. In 1860 there were ten people with the last name Titsworth living in McCracken County. In 1870, there were 21 people with the last name, only three of whom were white. *Eighth and Ninth Census of the United States, 1860 and 1870, McCracken County, Kentucky*, <http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed October 15, 2008.

River. Charles Slaughter, a young invalid whom bureau agents arranged to be moved to a Freedman's Bureau hospital in Louisville, was thrown overboard by the captain of the *Silver Springs* after refusing to take the "damned nigger anywhere." In addition, three reports of rape of black women by white men were reported in Paducah in August 1867.⁵⁸

Murders also plagued the Purchase during the Bureau's tenure. In August 1865 Jenny Fyfe noted that two black men were lynched in the streets of Paducah. She was horrified when her pupils asked her "to turn out school" to watch the spectacle. In October 1866, Superintendent James F. Bolton reported the murder of John H. Elliot, who shot by Benel Howell and his brother in Fulton County after accusing the freedman of "a number of depredations in some three or four houses in the neighborhood." Despite the efforts of Bolton, local magistrates and the county judge of Fulton claimed they were unable to find the Howell brothers, who were "secreted back in the country" and had "friends on the lookout." In January 1867 Jesse Meshew, an ex-Confederate soldier known to hold a grudge against freedmen, shot and killed Washington Gardner "without provocation" in Columbus. Though authorities promised to "spare no pains in making an arrest," Meshew evaded capture. Five months later Bolton reported the ex-Confederate was roaming about the country amongst "a gang of outlaws, burglars, thieves, and robbers" and intended to "make a descent on" the Bureau's office in Columbus.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Complaint of W.H. Ham to Superintendent John Donovan, July 24, 1866, Letters Received, Paducah, BRFAL. Dr. Thomas Mileum of Feliciana was listed on the 1870 census as worth \$2300 in property; John Donovan to John Ely, August 4, 1866, Monthly Reports, no. 138; Ibid, October 29, 1866, No. 140; W. James Kay to Sidney Burbank, August 30 1867, Monthly reports, no. 143.

⁵⁹ Jenny Fyfe to Nell Fyfe, June 18, 1865, Fyfe Family Papers, Special Collections, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan; James F. Bolton to Donovan, October 27, 1866, November 6, 1866, Letters sent, Columbus; Bolton to W. James Kay, June 6, 1867, Letters Sent, Columbus. Jesse Meshew was a corporal in the 7th Kentucky Mounted Infantry.

In December 1867, a local white man named John Whitsell murdered a Marshall County freedman on the Kentucky-Tennessee line. Whitsell had overheard the freedman bragging that he had “plenty of money in his possession.” Whitsell lured the man into the woods and shot him in the head. With the help of friends, Whitsell “threw the corpse into a well.” To Whitsell’s indignation, the “plenty of money” the freedman bragged about turned out to be eight dollars. In Paducah in April 1868, Cleary Hardy and R. Thomas shot Richard Williams in the head. The next month a group of masked white men, “representing themselves to be dead rebels,” shot and killed a freedman named Cato in Hickman, Fulton County. The men also pulled Jacob Kyle from his home and shot him in the stomach. The white men traveled across the county threatening freedmen and robbing them of their firearms and ammunition. Several African-American witnesses recognized the voices of the “young villains” as “sons of the wealthiest people” in Fulton County. The fathers of the young white men warned the freedmen that if “they talked of the affair they would be murdered by the Ku Klux Klan.” The superintendent at Columbus doubted justice could be done as the “people who own all the property about this section...wink at this thing and take no measures against it.”⁶⁰

In 1867 white Purchase residents meanwhile occupied themselves with elections. In May, they participated in the first post-war balloting allowing former Confederate officers to vote. Challenging the incumbent Democrat Lawrence S. Trimble was “Carpetbagger” George G. Symes, who had established a law practice in Paducah after

⁶⁰ Captain Emerson H. Liscum to Brigadier General Sidney Burbank, June 26, 1868, Letters Sent, Columbus, BRFAL, Kay to Benjamin Runkle, April 1868, Letters Sent, Paducah, BRFAL. The freedmen who testified in the murder of Cato accused Jeffery Alexander, 16, Samuel McConnell, 17, and Robert McConnell, 21, of Fulton County of being among the masked men. They likewise accused Marsh Glenn, 20, of Obion County, Tennessee. Two other men, Charlie Mills and David DeBeaugh, were also involved. Unknown author to Benjamin Rankle, December 2, 1867

his tenure as commander of Federal forces in the Purchase. Once again, Trimble won the election, receiving over 9,000 votes to Symes' paltry 1,780. Symes, backed by Lucian Anderson and his fellow Republicans R.K. Williams and John Bollinger, promptly challenged, claiming that Trimble had won through the assistance of sheriffs, magistrates, clerks, and former Confederate soldiers who "intimidated and overawed" local Union men. T.A. Duke, another local Republican, confirmed the accusations, stating that "three fourths" of the election officers "were men who have, during the late rebellion, aided, counseled, or advised the separation of Kentucky from the federal union by force of arms...or engaged in said rebellion." In a last bid to regain some semblance of their former power, Anderson and his cohorts waved the bloody shirt and dredged up old accusations that Trimble was pro-Confederate and involved in illegal smuggling activities during the war. They also reminded the committee that Trimble was arrested during the election of 1863 for making "anti-administration" speeches in several Purchase counties. In a hearing before the Committee on Elections in Washington D.C. in June and July 1867 Trimble denied the charges, stating that "democrats and conservatives were threatened with Reconstruction, confiscation, and military rule, if they did not vote" for Symes. He further accused Symes of "publicly denouncing Congress as a set of Jacobins and revolutionists" during several political meetings over the past year. After considering the evidence, the committee upheld Trimble's victory.⁶¹

⁶¹ Zachariah Smith, *The History of Kentucky*, (Louisville: Courier-Journal, 1885), 782-783; *United States House of Representatives Committee on Elections, Digest of Election Cases: Cases of Contested Elections in the House of Representatives from 1865 to 1871* (Washington D.C.: United State Government Printing Office, 1870), 329-340. Lawrence S. Trimble left Paducah in 1879 and moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico. He was the only Democrat represented to the New Mexico Constitutional Convention in 1889. He died in 1904. See Henry Levin, *Lawyers and Lawmakers of Kentucky*, (Easley, SC: Southern Historical Press, 1982), 413. George G. Symes also left Paducah in the 1870s, moving to Montana where he served Associate Supreme Judge. In 1874 he moved to Denver, Colorado where he worked as an

The majority of whites in the Purchase also closely watched the national congressional elections of 1867. Northern Democrats in states such as Ohio and Pennsylvania made great gains in the October contests, highlighting the weakening of Republican strength and bolstering many in the South. Across the South were celebrations of Democratic victories, repeal of black suffrage, and the Reconstruction Acts. In Paducah, Bureau Superintendent Smith reported:

The bitter feelings existing toward the republicans of the north, and the white unionists and freedmen of the south, to all appearances remains unchanged, there was great rejoicing here over the Democratic gains and victories of some of the northern states and especially over the defeat of negro suffrage, and saying many bitter things against the north for trying to force negro suffrage on the south when they will never accept it at home, calling it the consistency of the north radicals. At times it seems as though it was almost impossible for any of the citizens here to express themselves bitter enough against some of the leading men of the north. With most here the feeling is anything but friendly toward any person entertaining northern or union principles.⁶²

At Columbus, Bureau Superintendent Bolton reported similar reactions to the elections, noting “when we received news of the result of the elections in Pennsylvania & Ohio they had a great illumination here and openly boasted that they should have their slaves back again...the great object of the whites here is to keep the freedmen down and reduce them to slavery or something worse.”⁶³

Democrats in the Purchase now anticipated the 1868 Presidential election between one of their old occupiers, General Ulysses S. Grant, who was running on the Republican ticket, and former governor of New York, Democrat Horatio Seymour. Though Grant went on to win the election, the Democratic Party in Kentucky registered its largest

attorney for the Citizens Water Company and the Western Beef Association. In November 1893, Symes committed suicide by poison. See *New York Times*, November 4, 1893.

⁶² Smith to W. James Kay, November 27, 1867, Letters Sent, Paducah, BRFAL.

⁶³ James F. Bolton to Kay, October 26, 1867, Letters Received, Columbus, BRFAL.

victory in the history of the two-party system. Approximately three out of four voters cast their lot with Seymour, who received 75 percent of the entire vote in Kentucky. Indeed, the Bluegrass State recorded the largest percent of Democratic voters in the nation. In the Purchase, the Democratic victory was astounding, with four of the counties giving more than 90 percent of votes to Seymour. The remaining three counties polled between 80 and 89 percent of their vote to Democrats.⁶⁴

Table 6.2 Presidential Election Returns 1868

County	Potential Vote	Actual Vote	Seymour	Grant
Ballard	2202	1451 (65.9%)	1345 (92.7%)	106 (7.3%)
Calloway	2096	1188 (56.7%)	1099 (92.5%)	89 (7.5%)
Fulton	1105	755 (68.3%)	749 (99.2%)	6 (8%)
Graves	3359	2276 (64%)	1830 (80.4%)	446 (19.6%)
Hickman	1554	1028 (66.2%)	987 (96%)	41 (4%)
McCracken	2176	1387 (63.7%)	1146 (82.6%)	241 (17.4%)
Marshall	1757	1087 (61.9%)	970 (89.2%)	117 (10.8%)

Source: *Shannon and McQuown, Presidential Politics in Kentucky, 1824-1948*, 41-44.

The year 1868 had brought other developments in the Purchase. Despite protestations from the superintendents in the Purchase, the Bureau announced that it would cease operations in western Kentucky after July. In March 1868 W. James Kay made one of his last reports to Chief Superintendent of Kentucky Benjamin Runkle. The Bureau had been in operation in the Jackson Purchase for over two years but Kay had little to report in the way of changing attitudes towards freedmen:

The condition of the freedmen in this Sub-District is generally as good as could be expected when the fact is considered that under the laws of Kentucky they have no rights in the courts...and that they are surrounded by those who because they are not permitted to hold them as slaves are the enemies of the African race, who leave nothing undone that

⁶⁴ Shannon and McQuown, *Presidential Politics in Kentucky, 1824-1948*, 41-44.

would in itself have the slightest tendency to degrade and injure them. A large number of Freedmen are awaiting the pay due them. It is almost impossible to persuade the freedmen to leave towns for homes in the country. When contracts are made...a quarrel is made by the employer and the freedmen are compelled to leave their homes. The majority prefer to stay about the towns and pick up a precarious living by doing small jobs of work to the risk of being abused and cheated by the planters. Captain Bolton reports the case of a shooting that occurred in Ballard County...and he complains there is no U.S. Commission in his subdistrict before whom complaints can be brought.⁶⁵

In the Purchase and elsewhere in Kentucky the agency ultimately failed to achieve its intended reforms. It faced constant financial problems, partly because Congress failed to provide funds to Kentucky offices until June 1866, leaving it to officials to feed, clothe, shelter, and protect sick and homeless freedmen and women during the first six months of the agency's existence. Another problem was lack of agents. Between 1866 and 1868 the seven counties of the Purchase were never staffed by more than a total of eight superintendents, sub-assistants, and clerks. The counties of Graves, Marshall, and Calloway went the entirety of the bureau's existence without agents.⁶⁶

The lack of federal troops within the state compounded the problem. At the close of the war, close to 10,000 black troops were stationed in Kentucky, but by October 1865 the number had been reduced to 6,000. As the need for troops in the Deep South grew, the number of troops within the Bluegrass state was constantly reduced until almost all had been discharged by mid-1866. In Paducah, the last African-American federal troops withdrew in April 1866, prompting Q.Q. Quigley to write, "the last troop Negroes left here, leaving us for the first time in over four years to revel in visions of peace. The town begins to assume somewhat of its old looks and habits." Though a small number of troops

⁶⁵ W. James Kay to Benjamin Runkle, March 27, 1868, Monthly Reports, BRFAL

⁶⁶ Lucas, *History of Blacks*, 186-187.

were sent in August 1866, they were unable to quell the violence and hatred of the Bureau.⁶⁷

Yet another factor that played into the failure of the agency was the racist attitudes of Bureau officials themselves. In several reports, agents complained of the allegedly lazy, mischievous, mendacious, and childlike nature of the freedmen. In late April John Donovan noted “dances and shindigs are frequented amongst the negroes of this city and vicinity. These places...give occasion for a variety of mischiefs and have the demoralizing affect upon the Freedmen and especially upon the females whose habits are of such an evil character as will bring on in the course of time a species of moral and physical degeneracy that will compromise the existence of the race.” Donovan made similar disparaging remarks concerning the work ethic of local freedmen, stating that “many of their difficulties grow out of their stubborn indolence and lack of respect to their employers and superiors.” He added, “they think that because they are ‘free’ they have perfect license to do about as they please...they have yet to learn the difference between natural and civil liberty and to comprehend the relation that properly exists between the different classes and orders of society.” When V.A. Brown, a local freedwoman complained that her employer “knocked her senseless” for refusing “to get on her knees and scrub the kitchen floors,” Donovan said Brown “brought it on herself.”⁶⁸

Most importantly, the agency could not survive the intense hatred of the freedmen and mistrust of the Bureau that existed among whites in the Purchase. The few who

⁶⁷ Lucas, *A History of Blacks*, 186-87; *Quigley*, Langstaff, ed., 81.

⁶⁸ John Donovan to Ely, April 30, 1866, Letters Sent, No. 4, BRFAL. John Donovan to Ely, August 4, 1866, Letters Sent, No. 134, BRFAL.

attempted to help the freedmen often displayed an intense racism that left no room for equality. The case of Mary Ann Gerald highlights that dichotomy. In May 1866 Gerald, a former slave, walked into the newly established Freedmen's Bureau office in Paducah. In her hand Gerald held a written complaint against her former owner R.Y. Gerald of Ballard County, who refused to return one of her children. The letter detailed her attempts to regain her progeny, noting that R.Y. Gerald "beat her numerous times and threatened to kill her if she came back again." The author of the letter was Gerald's current employer, a young farmer from Woodville, McCracken County, named Edward S. Thornton. Thornton informed Superintendent Donovan that he believed Mary Ann Gerald's accusations of cruelty against the former slaveholder, noting that she arrived at his farm "almost naked and destitute." He further felt the former slave should be "treated humanely." Thornton, however, stopped short of promoting equal rights for freedmen, stating "Sir, I am not the advocate of the Negro against the white-man, nor the advocate of Negro equality, or any thing of that sort. I did all in my power to keep them in bondage...I would further state that I am not interested at all so far as the child in concern—if she gets it, it will be an expense and no profit to me."⁶⁹

As 1868 came to a close, whites in the Purchase found much to celebrate. The despised Freedmen's Bureau was gone, its last agents having left in June. For the first time in seven years the area was free of what most viewed as Federal occupation.

⁶⁹ Edward S. Thornton to Superintendent John Donovan, May 16, 1866, Letters Sent, Paducah, BRFAL. R.Y. Gerald went so far as to obtain an order to keep Mary Ann Gerald's children in his employ after he convinced bureau officials that the children's supposed father signed them over to his custody. Mary Ann Gerald denied the claim stating that "the man he claims to be the father of her children never was her husband, that she is the only legal parent." Three months after her complaint, the freedwoman's children remained in Gerald's hands.

Edward S. Thornton was a native of Johnson County, Missouri who fought under General Sterling Price in the 2nd Missouri Confederate Infantry. He moved to McCracken County between 1865-66.

African-American equality remained a distant dream as across the countryside former slaves toiled in the same fields they worked prior to the war. Democrats like Lawrence S. Trimble packed local and state offices in the area, while Unionists like Lucian Anderson left politics entirely. And while the Democrats had lost the 1868 election nationally, Kentucky's steady transformation to a Democratic stronghold bolstered the Purchase. A political anomaly during the antebellum era, the Purchase ironically could now boast that Kentucky followed *her* lead. Indeed, the next few decades would see the Purchase and the Bluegrass state grow even closer culturally as they both grasped on to the Lost Cause ideology that enveloped the South. Only the Purchase, however, could lay rightful claim to that heritage as the area once overlooked by the state became known as the "South Carolina of Kentucky."

Back in June 1865 Jenny Fyfe addressed a prophetic letter to her sister. Looking out her window one morning, Fyfe was startled at the number of returned rebel soldiers in the streets still in uniform. Christening them "greybacks," she noted that many walked with an air of defiance: "...many alas! Are as rebel at heart as ever they were—" "Conquered but not defeated" they say "and we will see that our children are reared to think as we think, to feel as we feel." The young Yankee nurse from Michigan had no way of knowing how true her words would ring.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Jenny Fyfe to Nell Fyfe, Fyfe Family Papers, Special Collection, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, June 16, 1865.

Chapter 7:

“The antique modes of the chevaliers”: Race and Memory After Reconstruction

In July 1873 a curious convention opened at Jackson, Tennessee. In attendance were five men from the Purchase: John Martin, Jr., a young newspaper printer; G.A.C. Holt, former Confederate Colonel and future speaker of the Kentucky house; Judge James White; commonwealth attorney and former Confederate captain C.L. Randall; and the well-connected D.A. Weil. They joined convention delegates from west Tennessee, Alabama and Mississippi to discuss the formation of a new state. The delegates drew a line on a map that embraced lands west of the Tennessee River in Kentucky, Tennessee, and north Alabama as well all of the land north of the Tallahatchie River and east of the Mississippi River in the state of Mississippi. All together, the area equaled over 25,000 square miles and would bear the name “State of Jackson.”

Race was at the heart of the Jackson movement. Its originators were from the Democratic leaders in north Mississippi who “wished to escape from the difficulties of negro domination” resulting from the constant “increase in the colored population” in their area of the state. Their ultimate goal, in other words, was to create a “white state” by handing the lower half of Mississippi to the African-American population and adding the rest to the predominantly white areas of west Tennessee and Kentucky. Delegates from Kentucky and Tennessee hoped to drive the African Americans in their states to southern

Mississippi as well. Though the proposition received little backing and was soon abandoned, the delegates from the Purchase heartily supported it. In 1873 over eight years after the war, Purchase whites were still having trouble adjusting to a free black population in their midst. More importantly, at least a few Purchase whites were still trying to separate from Kentucky. The “State of Jackson,” in other words, was evidence that in many ways that the Jackson Purchase was still clinging the past.¹

That past became present over the ensuing decades as people in the region held fast to their Confederate heritage and attempted to forge an identity distinctive from their home state. As historian Anne Marshall notes, the sixty years following the end of the Civil War were the heyday of the Lost Cause in Kentucky. White Kentuckians seemingly forgot their predominantly Union loyalties and built Confederate monuments, joined Confederate memorial groups, wrote songs and plays about the “cause,” embraced the Democratic Party, and subverted the rights of African Americans at every turn. In essence they tried to recapture their status, whether real or perceived, as a southern state. Purchase whites heartily supported these efforts and actively participated in the activities of Confederate memorialization. The region, however, did not suffer from the collective amnesia that gripped the rest of Kentucky. Unlike the rest of the state, the Purchase did not need to evoke the mythical past or prove a questionable allegiance to the Confederacy. The monuments, plaques, and statues they erected in the late 19th and early

¹ Collins, *History of Kentucky*, 245; *New York Times*, June 29, 1873. I cannot identify D.A. Weil, although he was no doubt a member of Paducah mayor Meyer Weil’s family. Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, for Ballard, Calloway, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, and McCracken Counties, www.ancestry.com, accessed November 12, 2008.

20th centuries, merely served to remind them of their distinctiveness as pro-secession Kentuckians.²

Yet in the years following the Civil War the Purchase both embraced and shrugged off the Civil War era. The economy of the area rebounded quickly, largely due to the boom in tobacco sales and the building of railroads. Many heralded an age of progress. Free at last from the Federal Army, meanwhile voters in the First District quickly elected former Confederates and staunch Bourbon Democrats to high political positions. Simultaneously, they erased any semblance of Republicanism from the landscape. In the last decade of the nineteenth century, meanwhile, Confederate Veterans groups asserted cultural domination, notably organizing reunions of their former comrades while women joined the Daughters of the Confederacy to memorialize their “fallen heroes” in stone. The most telling feature of the Purchase’s hold on the past, however, was the treatment of African Americans in the area. Without the backing of the Federal Army and the Freedmen’s Bureau, African Americans in the Purchase soon found their attempts at progress thwarted, often violently. Indeed, the last decades of the century would prove increasingly harrowing as whites and blacks in the Purchase attempted to navigate the waters of the new world produced by the war.

* * * * *

One of the chief concerns of white Purchase citizens following the withdrawal of the Federal Army after the war was securing political offices for the Democrats. The

² Marshall, “‘A Strange Conclusion to a Triumphant War,’ 232-233.

reformation of Kentucky's congressional districts in 1872 helped increase that possibility. Previously, the First District was comprised of the seven counties of the Purchase. The restructuring added Crittenden, Livingston, Lyon, and Trigg counties—all heavily Confederate during the war. As a result, like the majority of western, southern, and central Kentucky counties following the war, the Purchase's political offices became stocked with former Confederates and their supporters. Lawrence S. Trimble continued to serve in the House of Representatives until 1870, when the former colonel of the 7th Kentucky Confederate Mounted Infantry, Edward Crossland, was elected. He served until 1875 and was followed by Andrew R. Boone of Mayfield, once a delegate to the secession convention and enemy of Lucian Anderson who was expelled from the state senate in 1863 for aiding the Confederacy. Oscar Turner, the largest prewar slaveholder in the Purchase, also made a name for himself in politics following the war. He served in the state legislature from 1867 until 1871 and then in congress from 1875 to 1885. G.A.C. Holt, former colonel of the 3rd Kentucky Confederate Mounted Infantry, filled Turner's shoes as state legislator in 1871. Purchase Democrats were especially proud when Holt became state speaker of the house and acting lieutenant governor. Yet another high ranking Confederate to win office was Willis B. Machen of Lyon County, a former Confederate Congressman, who was elected United States senator in 1872. Former colonel Henry S. Holt of the 12th Kentucky Confederate Mounted Infantry, was elected to the state legislature in 1871. In sum, former Confederates assumed political leadership in the Purchase.³

³ Collins, *History of Kentucky*, 211, 227, 232, 235, *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*, www.bioguide.congress.gov, accessed November 14, 2008, Battle, et. al, *History and Biographies*, 53. For more on the Democratic dominance of Kentucky politics see Coutler, *Civil War and*

Rebuilding the economy after the war also occupied the energies of people in the Purchase. Fortunately, the area did not suffer for long and actually rebounded fully by 1870. Tobacco was one major factor. Prior to the Civil War the Bluegrass region still dominated tobacco production in Kentucky, but the worldwide demand for dark fired “black patch” tobacco produced in the western area of the state took off in the last decades of the nineteenth century. In 1870 Graves County produced over 4 million pounds of tobacco, enough to make it the largest tobacco producing county in the state. By 1880 farmers in the county had almost doubled production. After a slight decrease in 1890, Graves County produced a whopping 13 million pounds of the prized leaf in 1900.⁴

Other counties in the area also did well. In 1870 Calloway County produced almost two million pounds. In 1880 and 1890, the county reported over three million pounds produced and by 1900 farmers had doubled their turn out to almost six million pounds. Hickman County also reported substantial increases in tobacco production, increasing from average productions of 554,000 pounds in the years 1870, 1880, and 1890 to over one million pounds in 1900. Marshall County increased from an average of over one million pounds in the nineteenth century censuses to over three million in the 1900 census. McCracken County, never a large agricultural powerhouse, vacillated between over one million and two million pounds in the last three decades of the century. Even tiny Fulton County, with its swampy lands near the Mississippi River, made

Readjustment in Kentucky, 257-86. See also Harrison and Klotter, *A New History of Kentucky*, 242-253 and Thomas L. Connelly, “Neo-Confederatism or Power Vacuum: Post-war Kentucky Politics Reappraised” *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 64 (1966): 257-69. In 1871, the Democrats swept every Congressional district in the state. From 1867 until 1891, the governorship of Kentucky was dominated by Democrats.

⁴ *Tenth Agricultural Census of the United States, 1880, Graves County, Kentucky*, 44-48, http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/Historical_Publications/1880/1880a_v3-01.pdf, accessed November 20, 2009; *Abstract of the Ninth Census, 1870, Bureau of the Census* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1871), 738-744.

significant increases as well, increasing from approximately 380,000 pounds to 650,000 in 1900. Fulton County likewise made significant gains in cotton production.⁵

In 1880, the county reported 391 bales of cotton produced and by 1900 the number increased to 1,345. Furthermore, the 1900 census reported that the fertile areas along the river in Fulton County contained the most expensive land in the entire Purchase. In addition to Fulton County, Graves and Hickman counties also produced a considerable amount. Indeed, the Purchase consistently put out over 75 percent of the cotton produced in the state between 1870 and 1900. Small by wider southern standards, cotton production in the Purchase nonetheless and the recovering regional economy.⁶

Table 7.1 Tobacco Production in the Purchase 1870-1900

County	1870	1880	1890	1900
Ballard	2,803,455	3,700,743	1,937,244 ⁷	4,266,650
Calloway	1,942,502	3,477,520	3,083,535	6,289,160
Carlisle ⁸				1,595,320
Fulton	383,636	410,337	638,475	653,860
Graves	4,774,105	8,001,434	7,988,504	13,867,880
Hickman	570,287	467,940	624,343	1,180,890
McCracken	1,545,050	2,410,825	1,846,203	2,961,380
Marshall	1,416,282	1,411,692	1,173,595	3,194,650

Source: Ninth, Tenth, Eleventh, and Twelfth Agricultural Census of the United States, Kentucky, Ballard, Calloway, Carlisle, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, McCracken, and Marshall Counties.

⁵ *Ninth, Tenth, Eleventh, and Twelfth Agricultural Census of the United States, Ballard, Calloway, Carlisle, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, McCracken, and Marshall Counties Kentucky*, http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/Historical_Publications/ accessed November 15, 2008.

⁶ The Purchase was the only area in Kentucky to report a sizeable amount of cotton production, it is important to remember that even at peak production the area never produced over 3500 bales of cotton. By comparison, the majority of Alabama counties produced over 2 million bales of cotton each.

⁷ The sizeable decreases in tobacco production in Ballard and McCracken counties in 1890 was due to a series of floods along the Ohio River during 1883, 1884, and 1890. The 1884 floods were particularly devastating, forcing Clara Barton and the Red Cross to travel to Paducah to administer relief. For more see Henry Howe, *Historical Collections of Ohio: An Encyclopedia of the State* (Columbus: Henry Howe & Son, 1891), 82-83.

⁸ Carlisle County was created in 1886 from parts of Hickman and Ballard Counties. For more see Mary Ellen Thomason, *A History of Carlisle County, Kentucky for the Years 1820-1900* (Bardwell, KY: 1976)

Other ventures proved profitable to the Purchase economy. The effects of the war nearly destroyed the infant railway lines in the Purchase, as Forrest's troops constantly tore up the tracks of the Mobile & Ohio. In addition the New Orleans & Ohio suffered serious financial setbacks when federal troops shut down the line. Leadership problems plagued it as well. After John Flournoy succeeded Lawrence S. Trimble as president in 1865, the line floundered and was sold in auction in 1869. Renamed the Paducah and Gulf Railroad that same year, it would not survive the Panic of 1873. But by 1878 the reborn Memphis, Paducah, & Northern Railroad gave the Purchase direct rail access to the markets at Memphis. In 1867, meanwhile, the Elizabethtown & Paducah Railroad was chartered to connect Louisville directly with western Kentucky markets. Completed in 1874, the line later became part of the Illinois Central.⁹

The increase in cotton and tobacco production as well as railroad construction brought a steady influx of African-American laborers to the Purchase during the last three decades of the century. That increase in the black population led in turn to an exponential growth in violence against blacks. The period between the end of the Civil War and the beginning of World War II was the high tide of racial atrocities throughout Kentucky and the nation. In his analysis of racial violence, historian George C. Wright points out that the Jackson Purchase bore witness to 49 lynchings between 1865 and 1940. By comparison, the counties of western Kentucky had 100, while the Bluegrass region had 106. Although it had over 50 percent fewer lynchings than the Bluegrass and Pennyroyal, it is important to note that the Purchase only contained seven counties, while the areas of

⁹ Bigham, *Towns and Villages of the Lower Ohio*, 121-23; Robertson, *Paducah: Frontier to the Atomic Age*, 95; Collins, *History of Kentucky*, 236, 247

western Kentucky and the Bluegrass, with over fifty counties, contained the largest percentage of African Americans in the state. Two of the counties in the Purchase, Fulton and Graves, with 22 and 13 respectively, actually contained some of the highest rates of lynchings in the state.¹⁰

Wright points to the Purchase's plantation agriculture economy and southern roots, particularly the fact that many settlers in the region came from Tennessee and North Carolina, as an explanation for resident's propensity for violence against blacks. Purchase farmers, however, generally did not practice large-scale plantation agriculture, while birthplace alone does not predetermine one's racist attitudes. Instead, a combination of other factors seems just as important. Home to the largest number of lynchings in the Purchase, Fulton and Graves Counties also witnessed incredibly high amounts of guerrilla and home guard activity during the war. Hickman was constantly sacked and occupied by guerrillas during the last three years of the war. Mayfield likewise saw inordinate amounts of guerrilla activity and also suffered under Colonel W.W. McChesney, whose African American troops supposedly executed several citizens during General Paine's reign of terror. Perhaps old animosities held over from the war and manifested in violence toward the black community. In addition, Fulton and Graves County sent the largest number of Confederate troops in the Purchase; Fulton gave the most in the entire state. Yet the most telling reason of all for the increase in violence against blacks in the two counties was population change. Between 1870 and 1880 Fulton County's African American population increased from 987 to 1473, a 49 percent increase. Between 1880 and 1900 the black population grew by a whopping 93.9 percent.

¹⁰ George C. Wright, *Racial Violence in Kentucky, 1865-1940* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 1, 72-3.

Though Graves County did not experience a significant change in population between 1870 and 1880, the population between 1880 and 1900 grew by a substantial 39.9 percent. The increase in black population coincided with an increase in agricultural production in the two counties. Both counties reported substantial growth in tobacco and cotton. Increases in production led to a need for more workers, a need that many black families met.¹¹

Table 7.2 Percent Black Population per Total Population in the Purchase, 1860-1900*

County	1860	+/-	1870	+/-	1880	+/-	1900
Ballard	1721 (19.7%)	-17.1%	1426 (11.3%)	3.1%	1381 (8.6%)	+10.5%	1526 (14%)
Calloway	1494 (15%)	-48.1%	775 (8.24%)	+21.4%	941 (7%)	+38.4%	1303 (7.3%)
Carlisle							645 (6.3%)
Fulton	1082 (20.3%)	-8.7%	987 (16%)	+49.2%	1473 (18.4%)	+93.9%	2857 (24.7%)
Graves	2847 (17.5%)	-22.1%	2216 (11%)	+8.75%	2410 (9.97% ⁰)	+39.9%	3373 (10.1%)
Hickman	1267 (18%)	+27.3%	1613 (19%)	+7.94%	1741 (16.3%)	+22.2%	2129 (17.9%)
McCracken	1748 (16.8%)	+84.7%	3229 (23%)	+2.45%	3308 (20.3%)	+121.9%	7342 (25.5%)
Marshall	356 (5%)	+3.3%	358 (3%)	-3.01%	365 (3.7%)	+4.6%	348 (2.58%)

Source: Eighth Census of the United States Slaves Schedules, Kentucky, Ballard, Calloway, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, McCracken, and Marshall Counties; Eight, Ninth, Tenth, Eleventh, and Twelfth Census of the United States, Kentucky, Ballard, Calloway, Carlisle, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, McCracken, Marshall Counties.

*1890 Census for Kentucky was destroyed in a fire in 1921 at the Commerce Building in Washington, D.C.

The first post-Reconstruction lynchings in the Purchase occurred in Boydsville, Graves County, when two unidentified African-American men accused of rape were

¹¹ Wright, *Racial Violence*, 2-73.

found lynched in 1869. The next year the white community lynched six unidentified men in Mayfield. Rape was the typical excuse used to justify lynchings in the area. In 1872, Ross Branson, an accused rapist, was lynched in Baudville, Ballard County. In August of the same year Thomas Bennett of Fulton County reported his young daughter missing. After searching for the child for several hours, the search party focused their attention on one of Bennett's African-American workers. The man was arrested and questioned but later made his escape. Not long afterwards he was shot and recaptured. "Becoming frightened" the man confessed that he attempted to rape the young girl, choked her to death, and "then accomplished his monstrous purpose." He disposed of the body in a nearby pond. The *New York Times* reported that "at last accounts, the incarnate fiend was in the custody of the citizens, but is probably lynched at this time." In December 1873, mobs hanged two more men in Blandville, Lindsay Brown and Levi Clapp for "rape on a married woman."¹²

The increase of such violence in the area during the 1870s led a few African Americans to flee the area altogether. One of the men who chose to leave was Zachary Fletcher, born a slave in McCracken County during the late 1840s. In June 1864, he fled his mistress' home and joined the 8th United States Heavy Artillery (Colored) at Paducah. In the 1870s, with few prospects in the Purchase, he and his wife Jenny, and sons Thomas and Joseph joined thousands of former slaves in the move to Kansas where the family settled on a small farm and Zachary Fletcher worked as the town's postmaster.¹³

¹² Wright, *Racial Violence*, 310-11; *New York Times*, August 18, 1871.

¹³ Zachary T. Fletcher, Soldier's Certificate, 279,479; Civil War and Later Pension Files; Records of the Department of Veterans Affairs, RG 15, NARA, Washington, D.C.; Zachary T. Fletcher, Nicodemus, Graham Co., KS; Page: 203.1000; ED 98; RG 29; and Zachary T. Fletcher, Canceled Homestead File No. 19752, June 7, 1887, Colby, KS, Land Office; Records of the Bureau of Land Management, RG 49,

Most African Americans chose to stay in the Purchase, however, despite the fact that illegal executions of blacks continued to grow. In March 1879, the *Louisville Courier Journal* reported the murder of Jerry Ewing who was “seized by 12 masked men” and shot to death. Ewing was accused of raping a twelve-year-old girl. The posse, which included the brother of the girl, tied a sandbag to Ewing’s feet and tossed him into the river. Two years later, E. Reeves, a black man, was lynched at Ballard County. Reeves was accused of attempting to rape a young girl named Dora Lingston of Graves County after attempting to break into her room at night. Lingston’s cries for help alarmed the neighbors and the “whole country swarmed with pursuers.” After his capture by a large mob at Odgen’s Landing, Ballard County he was carried to the Graves County jail and “subsequently lynched.”¹⁴

The mere idea of a black man alone in the presence of a white woman sparked increasingly outrageous responses in the white community. In 1880, sixty year old Henry Seay went to work on a farm owned by Lindsay Berry, an employee of the Mobile & Ohio Railroad. A group of “banditti,” apparently enraged that an African American was left alone on the farm with Mrs. Berry, attacked the farm and whipped the older man “cruelly and brutally and ordered him to leave the county.”¹⁵ In October 1882 an argument between six African American men and a group of whites in Fulton County

NARA, Washington, D.C. Taylor recalls in his homestead file that his first owner was a “batchler” who later sold him to a man named Anthony Robb. He was then sold to Isaac Davis who used him as jockey in horse races. His final owner was Davis’s widow, Ellen Davis who tried to prevent him from joining the army. In 1860, Isaac Davis was a wealthy farmer with an estate valued at \$10,000. Ellen Davis was his daughter-in-law. Her husband John was a steamboat pilot.

¹⁴ *Louisville Courier Journal*, March 24, 1879; *Cincinnati Commercial*, August 16, 1881, *New York Times*, August 17, 1881.

¹⁵ *New York Times*, August 28, 1880. Lindsay and Mary Berry lived in Spring Hill, Hickman County in 1880 and were the parents of four small children. I believe that Henry Seay is Charles Henry Seay of Columbus. In 1880 he lived with his daughter Jennie Egbert, her husband Walker, and their six children.

resulted in the death of three men. Several reports noted that “the whole country is filled with men armed with rifles and shot guns in pursuit of the negroes.” The *New York Times* woefully reported that the “Bourbons” succeeded in running off the “quiet and peaceable” black citizens.¹⁶

As in other areas of the country, the 1890s proved to be a peak period in racial lynchings in the Purchase. In July 1892 a mob lynched Charley Hill of Paducah by for the alleged rape of a white woman. Several days later, authorities another African American, Tom Burgess, was arrested for “peeping in the windows” of white women, a crime with equally harrowing consequences for the accused. The white community of Paducah reacted with indignation, accusing authorities of treating Burgess with kid gloves. Fearful that a mob would lynch Burgess in the same manner as Hill, several black citizens decided to guard the jail. As the lynch mob approached, one of the black men guarding the jail fired, hitting one man. Paducah authorities urged the governor to send the state guard. Whites armed themselves for what local newspapers termed a “race war.” The following day brought the state militia to McCracken County and the threat subsided.¹⁷

A similar situation occurred in Mayfield in 1896. On December 22 Henry Finley, a local black man, injured a white man during an argument. Later that evening, a white mob gunned Finley down in the streets of Mayfield. The next day, the “posse” attacked Jim Stone, a prisoner in the local jail awaiting trial for the attempted rape of a “Mrs. Green.” The mob carried Stone to the courthouse yard and hanged him from a tree. They then attached a note to Stone’s coat listing the names of several blacks “ordered to leave town” or suffer the same fate. The mob next determined to destroy the drinking

¹⁶ *New York Times*, October 14, 1882.

¹⁷ Paul A. Gilje, *Rioting in America*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 106.

establishment of Tom Chambers. He armed himself against the crowd and shot and wounded an eighteen-year-old white man. In retaliation, the mob burned Chambers' business and set fire to several other buildings "tenanted by rough negroes." In response to the dramatic events, local whites armed themselves to the teeth, swarmed the county, and "whitecapped" several black citizens. Armed Fulton County whites even traveled to Graves County in response to rumors that local blacks had equipped themselves with guns. Along the way they managed to kill eighteen-year-old Will Suett, who had no knowledge of the "riot." He was in town to visit his family from St. Louis when he was gunned down at the train station. The melee finally ended after 100 of the county's African American citizens signed a petition asking for peace.¹⁸

One of the last sanctioned lynchings in Paducah occurred in 1916. It was particularly noteworthy for its brutality and the fact that it occurred in the largest town in western Kentucky. Though McCracken could rightly claim the mantle as the most racially tolerant of the Purchase counties, African-American population increases still put a strain on race relations in the area. Between 1880 and 1900 the number of blacks living in McCracken County increased over 120 percent as African-American workers moved to the area for employment on the railroad. This explosion in population no doubt led to the tensions that caused the 1916 lynching. On October 13, Mrs. Elizabeth J. Ross, the wife of a local building contractor, George Ross, reported a robbery and attempted rape at her home on the outskirts of Paducah. Ross described her assailant as an African- American man, leading not only the police but "all of western Kentucky" to scour the Purchase. After a two day pursuit of the man failed, a reward was offered. Soon

¹⁸ Wright, *Racial Violence*, 75-76, 171; *New York Times*, December 23-26, 1896; *Louisville Courier Journal*, December 25, 1896.

after, a local black man, Brock Henley was arrested. A mob led by George Ross stormed the jail and marched the prisoner three miles to the Ross's home for identification. Along the way, for no explainable reason, the crowd seized another man named Luther Durrett. Marching the prisoners to the center of town, the mob hanged Durrett and Henley, riddled their corpses with bullets, and burned the bodies. A crowd of over 5000 witnessed the event, leading Elizabeth Ross to exclaim, "I did not know I had so many friends." According the *Paducah News Democrat*, escalating tensions in the weeks after the lynchings led many African American families to leave town and move north.¹⁹

Several instances of violence against blacks also occurred during the infamous Black Patch wars that enveloped western Kentucky during the first decade of the 20th century. During the 1890s, tobacco farmers in the Pennyroyal and Purchase regions suffered from the falling price of tobacco. In an attempt to control the stranglehold that the American Tobacco Company (ATC) held over the price of tobacco, several western Kentucky farmers in 1904 formed a protective association to rival the monopoly, the Dark Tobacco District Planters' Protective Association of Kentucky and Tennessee (PPA). They planned to collectively pool their tobacco and withhold it from the market until companies agreed to pay higher wages. Farmers who refused to join the PPA became the target of a vigilante arm of the co-op labeled the Night Riders. They disguised themselves in an eerily similar manner to the Ku Klux Klan, and used violence and intimidation to threaten farmers who refused to join the PPA or sold their goods to

¹⁹ Wright, *Racial Violence*, 113; *New York Times*, October 17, 1916; *Paducah News Democrat*, October 17, 1916.

the ATC. Between 1905 and 1909 the vigilantes preyed on farmers in western Kentucky and the north central Tennessee counties of Montgomery and Robertson.²⁰

In Kentucky, Night Rider violence centered around the Pennyroyal counties of Christian, Caldwell, and Trigg, but several black farmers to the west in the Purchase also suffered attacks. The community of Birmingham in Marshall County was a noted and constant target of widespread Night Rider terrorism. The tiny hamlet was located along the banks of the Tennessee River and contained “some of the best farmland in the Purchase.” African Americans settled Birmingham after the war and by 1870, over 90 blacks lived in the area. By 1900 over 200 of the 340 blacks living in Marshall County lived in the town and many owned their own land, a prospect that rankled the Night Riders. In addition, several Birmingham blacks worked in a local tobacco factory in the county. Attacks on the town began in February 1908. The Night Riders demanded that all blacks leave the area and warned the tobacco factory owner to fire his black workers. County authorities turned a blind eye to the black community’s subsequent pleas for help. In March 100 men rode into Birmingham, shot seven men, and flogged five more. The mob issued the community an ultimatum: leave town in ten days or suffer the consequences. The majority of the families fled to Paducah or Nashville. At the end of March, it was reported that only six African Americans remained in the town and by 1910 the population of African Americans in all of Marshall County had dwindled to just over 100. By 1920, only 25 blacks were listed as residents of Birmingham. In the ensuing

²⁰ Christopher Waldrep, *Night Riders: Defending Community in the Black Patch, 1890-1915* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993); Tracey Campbell, *The Politics of Despair: Power and Resistance in the Tobacco Wars* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1993); Suzanne Marshall, *Violence in the Black Patch of Tennessee and Kentucky*, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1994).

decades, Marshall County became further notorious as a “sundown town” where blacks were not welcome.²¹

One of the most horrific attacks in this period involved an African-American farmer named David Walker of Fulton County. In October 1908 Walker allegedly became involved in a dispute with a white woman in Hickman during which he “cursed” her. At around midnight on October 4, Walker awoke to a group of Night Riders surrounding his home. The men ordered him to come outside and when he refused, they poured coal oil on the house. Walker ran outside and pleaded for the lives of his wife Annie and their children. The mob riddled his body with bullets and struck a match to the house. As Annie Walker ran from the house, the mob leveled their guns at her, striking the infant in her arms and fatally wounding her in the stomach. The three children who followed their mother outside were also shot. One of the children, fearful that he would receive the same treatment, chose to burn alive in the house rather than face the Night Riders.²²

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²¹ Wright, *Racial Violence*, 137-136; Waldrep, 155, 167. The town of Birmingham disappeared under the waters of the Tennessee River when the Tennessee Valley Authority created Kentucky Lake in 1945.

²² Wright, *Racial Violence*, 123-24; *New York Times*, October 18, 1908. In 1908, David Walker was a 38 year old farmer residing outside the city limits of Hickman. His household included his wife Annie six children under the age of fifteen. He also had three older children as well. His mother and father occupied the dwelling next to him. The Walkers were bounded on both sides by white families. In their report on the story, the *Louisville Courier Journal* insinuated that Walker brought his death upon himself by behaving “uppity.” It is probable that the community considered him so since the 1900 census lists him as able to read and write and as the owner of his home with no mortgage.

In the same period that the Purchase experienced the nadir of racial murders, whites in the Purchase formally organized to celebrate their Confederate roots. The *Paducah Herald* had called for a meeting of all ex-Confederate soldiers at Mayfield as early as September 1875. Veterans were asked to bring two days rations, to “go into camp” and create a battalion under Crossland and other officers. Ultimately they hoped to attend the Centennial celebration at Philadelphia in 1876. The paper insisted that the meeting was “nonpolitical” in nature and was intended only to reinforce the “bonds of friendship.” The next month, several Confederate veterans from the Purchase traveled to Richmond, Virginia for the unveiling of two statues dedicated to Generals Robert E. Lee and Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson. The United Confederate Veterans, organized in New Orleans in 1889, became prevalent in the Purchase at the turn of the century. The UCV functioned as a counterpart of the Union veteran’s association, the Grand Army of the Republic, and worked to assist Confederate widows and orphans, cared for aged and disabled soldiers, preserve relics, and organize fraternal reunions and meetings. By the turn of the century, the Purchase hosted eleven camps of the UCV.²³

The primary function of the UCV in the Purchase was organizing reunions. In 1899 the Fulton County chapter of Confederate veterans, the J.G. Pirtle Camp, held a reunion at Reelfoot Lake. Close to fifty veterans of various Confederate regiments from the Purchase met to discuss marching in a parade in Louisville planned for the following year. The next year, the Paducah Chapter of the UCV, the Lloyd Tilghman Camp, also

²³ *Paducah Herald*, September 24, 1875; *Confederate Veteran*, 1901, 361. The UCV camps in the Purchase were at Wingo, Hickman, Mayfield, Clinton, Murray, Fulton, and Wickliffe. There were two camps at Paducah and Benton respectively. For more see Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980) and David Blight, *Race Blight, Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Belknap, 2001), 156-170.

held a reunion in which 650 soldiers from across the Purchase attended. The men were met and escorted to the best hotel in town, the Palmer House which was operated by former Paducah mayor Charles Reed, himself a veteran of the 3rd Kentucky Mounted Infantry. The men enjoyed “sumptuous dinner” after which they had a “love feast.” Other veterans replicated their soldiering experience that night and slept on straw beds strewn about the local fair grounds.²⁴ The UCV also made attempts to preserve several historic sites pertaining to the war. J.D.Willingham of Mayfield began an effort in 1901 to preserve a graveyard at the site of Camp Beauregard where so many of the Purchase soldiers organized regiments. Willingham reported to *Confederate Veteran* magazine that approximately 385 unmarked graves littered the site of the old camp.²⁵

While the men of the Purchase organized reunions, the women of the Purchase worked diligently to memorialize them and their fallen comrades. In 1899 twelve women from Paducah organized a chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. Founded in 1894 in Nashville, the UDC erected an unprecedented number of monuments and worked tirelessly to preserve the memory of the Confederacy during the first two decades of the 20th century. The first act of the Paducah chapter was to raise funds for the erection of a monument of General Lloyd Tilghman. In 1909 members of the chapter and Tilghman’s family dedicated it to and “to the faithful sons of the Confederate States of America who gave all to uphold Constitutional Liberty and States Rights.” Over the next few years Paducah’s UDC would raise additional funds to erect monuments honoring

²⁴ *Confederate Veteran*, vol. 11, 1908, 521; Neuman, *Paducahans in History*, 108-110. Neuman notes that Charles Reed often assembled a military band in front of the Palmer House Hotel to play old wartime tunes for his Confederate comrades.

²⁵ *Confederate Veteran*, January-December 1901, 285. The UCV camps in the Purchase were at Wingo, Hickman, Mayfield, Clinton, Murray, Fulton, and Wickliffe. There were two camps at Paducah and Benton respectively.

Purchase soldiers on the Shiloh battlefield and to construct the memorial to Jefferson Davis in nearby Todd County, Kentucky. In 1910 the Paducah chapter erected an additional Confederate monument, in the shape of an obelisk, at Oak Grove Cemetery. Several years later the women placed a marker at the spot where Colonel A.P. Thompson fell at the Battle of Paducah.²⁶ In 1914, the UDC branches of Mayfield and Paducah assisted in the removal of Thompson's grave. Thompson had lain in rest in Paducah's Oak Grove since the 1864 battle, but the UDC ensured its removal to Mayfield, the home of his widow. The UDC erected a stone slab at his grave that read "in view of home, in the midst of neighbors, he laid down his life...while God keeps his soul the people for whom he died will cherish and defend his memory." They also added stanzas to the stone slab that are typical of the flowery language used by the UDC to glorify fallen Confederates:

No country ever had a truer son.
No cause a nobler champion;
No people a bolder defender.
No principle a purer victim.²⁷

The local Graves County UDC was active as well. In 1909 it erected a monument at Water Valley to commemorate the site of Camp Beauregard. In 1917, they erected a monument in the form of a drinking fountain, symbolically placing the monument in the courthouse square to remind future generations of the hardships faced by Mayfield citizens when Colonel W.W. McChesney forced them to dig a fort around the courthouse

²⁶ *Confederate Veteran*, vol. 19, 323; *Ibid*, vol. 22, 1914, 38. For more on the UDC see Karen Cox, *Dixie's Daughters: the United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2003), *United Daughters of the Confederacy, United Daughters of the Confederacy: Patriot Ancestor Album* (Paducah: Turner Publishing, 1999).

²⁷ Fred G. Neuman, *Paducahans in History*, (Paducah: Young Publishing, 1922), 71.

in 1864. That same year, the Murray chapter of the UDC erected a 16 feet high marble statue of Robert E. Lee. In 1902, the Fulton County UDC erected a zinc statue of a Confederate soldier atop a limestone arch. Rather than depict an officer, the statue instead portrays a common Confederate soldier in slouch hat and homespun holding a rifle. In 1914 the same chapter erected a \$10,000 dollar marble gateway entrance to the local cemetery. Inscribed on the arch was the names of Confederate soldiers from Hickman. The *Hickman Courier* described the scene: “the crowd assembled at Stubbs park and were entertained...with camp fire reminiscences while dinner was prepared. After dinner, a long parade, proceeded by old soldiers, most of them in uniform, headed by a brass band, and followed by the multitude, marched to the cemetery. The huge granite pile was veiled in colors of the Confederacy...the band played patriotic airs dear to the hearts of Southern people.”²⁸

The Fulton County UDC revered the Lost Cause mythology by praising one of their members, Jennie Taylor Collins, wife of Fulton County UCV Camp commander J.A. Collins. Jennie Collins was said to have accompanied her husband throughout the war. At her death in 1907, the UDC and UCV recalled her bravery. Of the event, the *Mayfield Daily Messenger* wrote:

The Confederate Veterans marched in a body to the cemetery... Gen. Henry Tyler, Major H. S. Hale, Capt. Henry George, Col. Tom George and other distinguished veterans from a distance. A most unusual scene took place at the grave when the roll of the Camp was called, and after answering to their names, the veterans spoke in memory of the absent member, Mrs. Jennie Collins and her remarkable heroism during the Civil War. Many a veteran spoke of her courage in following her husband even on the battlefields of Shiloh, Corinth and other places and testified that to her gentle administrations as a nurse while they lay sick and wounded.²⁹

²⁸ *Confederate Veteran*, vol. 19, 1911, 323; *Ibid*, vol. 22, 1914, 38.

²⁹ *Mayfield Daily Messenger*, January 31, 1908, *Hickman Courier*, January 31, 1908.

Local UDC and UCV groups joined other Purchase citizens in memorializing the Battle of Paducah. In addition to erecting markers at noted sites throughout the town, residents revered artifacts attached to the battle. The home of George Schmidt became noted as the headquarters of Forrest and his men after they retreated from a burning Paducah. Confederate memorializers particularly revered a black oak tree under which the “dashing raider” Forrest was said to have tied his horse. Another smaller tree to the left of the house was the supposed resting spot for the “death wagon” which held the wounded from the battle. The tree held special significance since “the groans of the wounded and dying coming from [the wagon] could be heard throughout the night—faint calls for help like those of the dauntless defenders and fearless assailants who after the Battle of Waterloo and while yet alive found a common grave.”³⁰

During the same period, only one camp of the Grand Army of the Republic appeared in the Purchase. The camp, fittingly located in Paducah, was headed by J.H. Ashcraft, a Union veteran and native of Meade County who moved to Paducah several years after the war. Ashcraft was succeeded by Edwin Farley, a native of Wisconsin who also moved to Paducah after the war. The GAR, however, did not succeed in erecting a memorial to Union soldiers in Paducah or anywhere else in the Purchase. Also absent from the Purchase is a memorial commemorating the hundreds of African American soldiers who flocked to Paducah and Columbus to join the first black regiments in Kentucky. Indeed, the entire state erected only one monument to black soldiers, which was placed in Frankfort by the Women’s Relief Corps of the GAR in 1923.³¹

³⁰ Neuman, *Paducahans in History*, 66.

³¹ *Journal of the Forty-Ninth National Encampment Grand Army of the Republic, Washington, D.C.* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1916), 269. Edwin Farley became a successful

The African-American soldiers who defended Fort Anderson at the Battle of Paducah particularly were left out the memorialization process. When their service was remembered, it was usually related in demeaning fashion. In their recollection of the battle, two Confederate soldiers from the Purchase, Captain Kevil Fauntleroy and John Stockdale, used racial stereotypes and caricatures to describe their confrontation with African-American troops. Within fifty yards of the fort the two men noticed a soldier from the 8th United States Heavy Artillery (Colored) raise his head from above the parapet and fire his gun. Enraged that a former slave had fired a gun at them, Stockdale remarked “if that scamp sticks his head up again he will be sorry for it.” When the black soldier’s head “bobbed up again,” Stockdale shot him dead. Fauntleroy “laughingly declared” that his fellow Confederate must have “struck him in a vital place, for he jumped like a wild turkey and fell out of the fort.” A local historian later published the story, describing the event in comical fashion.³²

Local and state historians also increasingly highlighted the Purchase’s Confederate roots. One of the first was Henry George of Mayfield, who fought with the 3rd Kentucky Mounted Infantry and was one of the most popular proponents of the Lost Cause. After the war he served as the Commandant of the Kentucky Confederate Home in Louisville, Kentucky and was appointed commander of the Kentucky Brigade of Forrest’s Cavalry. George wrote a history of four Confederate regiments of the Purchase, in which he not only detailed the battles they fought but also provided a justification of secession. He drew upon a list of grievances, including tariffs, the Northern slave trade,

businessman and prominent Republican after moving to Paducah in 1867. He was appointed postmaster and internal revenue collector by President’s Garfield and Cleveland. See Edwin Farley Collection, Special Collections, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort, KY.

³² Neuman, *Paduchans in History*, 65.

John Brown's raid, and the election of Lincoln, to prove that secession was a justifiable attempt by the South to protect "their constitutional rights from a tidal wave of fanaticism." He stated that his history was intended as "justice to brave men, who gave or risked their lives in defense of the South" who "deserve the truth as they saw and see it."³³

Paducah historian Fred Neuman, writing in the same vein 1920s, styled the Purchase the "South Carolina of Kentucky" and extolled the efforts of local southern sympathizers. He drew particularly upon the story of Emily "Aunt Em" Jarrett, one of the most well-known tales to come out of the war. During Grant's invasion of Paducah in 1861, Federal gunboats fired on a Confederate flag hanging near Third and Broadway streets. Jarrett, whose husband and sons had joined the Confederate army, allegedly ordered her nine year old slave boy, "a quivering darkey," up the pole to rescue the flag. Jarrett secreted the flag in her home and was buried with it when she died several years later. Of the incident, one Paducah resident noted "I remember the bugles playing "Taps"...and finally they gave the Rebel Yell." One of the first acts of the United Daughters of the Confederacy was to erect a bronze plaque at the spot where the flagpole originally stood.³⁴

Neuman also wrote hagiographic histories extolling several former Confederates. Of Lloyd Tilghman, Neuman posited that "he was afraid of nothing, save to do no wrong...he sprang to arms and went to death, on a bare question of principle...he met the shock of battle at Fort Henry, was with the Gray lines at Champions Hill, and gave his

³³ George, *History of the 3rd, 7th, 8th and 12th Kentucky, CSA*, 1,13.

³⁴ Fred Neuman, *The Story of Paducah* (Paducah: Young Printing Company, 1927), 131-32; Cobb, *Exit Laughing*, 40.

life there in stubborn resistance to retreat...Alas! The brilliant eyes will blaze no more. The merry smile faded long ago. That head, that was fit to wear a crown, lies low, for all the years to come.” He went on to praise him as “a handsome man in ordinary attire” who was yet “more striking when mounted,” noted “he was a noble, whole souled, magnanimous man: as pure of honor, as lofty of chivalric bearing as the heroes of romance.”³⁵

No author captured the spirit of the Lost Cause in the Purchase, however, like Irvin S. Cobb. Born in Paducah in 1875, Cobb boasted an impressive Confederate lineage. His father and two uncles both fought in 3rd and the 7th, while his grandfather served as town physician during the Federal occupation. Writing during the heyday of Confederate memorial activities, Cobb produced a series of stories that highlighted the Purchase’s southern roots and its undying devotion to the “Cause.” The most popular of Cobb’s stories centered on the character of “Judge Priest,” who was based on an actual judge Cobb knew as a child, Judge William S. Bishop of Paducah. Bishop had studied law under Oscar Turner, the largest slaveholder in the Purchase. In November 1861, he joined Company F of the 7th Kentucky Confederate Mounted Infantry.³⁶ After the war, he became one of the most respected men in the Purchase. In Bishop, Cobb personified what he believed was the image of a Purchase Confederate: “he was withal, a gentleman

³⁵ Neuman, *Paduchans in History*, 51-53.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 74-77. Like other Purchase men in the 3rd, 7th, 8th, and 12th Kentucky, he participated in the battles of Corinth, Brazos Creek, and Baton Rouge. In 1865 he was captured near Vicksburg. Paroled in April 1865, he came back to Paducah where worked briefly as a school teacher before practicing law. In 1879, Bishop was elected Common Pleas Judge of the First District and in 1891 he was appointed District Judge. As a young man, Cobb spent hours at the feet of Judge Bishop listening to tales about the older man’s heroic wartime escapades.

of true Southern type...generous as a prince of royal blood...his love of truth, fidelity, and frankness were formed in the antique modes of the chevaliers.”³⁷

In the 1911 work *Back Home*, Cobb presented a series of tales in which Judge Priest, his fellow Confederate veterans, the Democratic party, and the “late War” dominated the post-Reconstruction Purchase. Judge Priest constantly employed memories of the war in his day-to-day life and made sport out of outwitting the so-called “Yankees” who lived in the area. In the story “Words and Music,” the fictional Priest presides over a murder trial involving the son of one his fellow Confederates in the 7th Kentucky. From the bench Priest reminisces about his days in the ranks of Nathan Bedford Forrest and moves his fellow “Southerners” in the jury and courtroom to such emotion, that the prosecution, headed by a “dandified” Yankee lawyer, is forced to drop the case.³⁸

In Cobb’s “Five Hundred Dollars Reward” he employs the imagery of the Lost Cause and adds a dash of belated revenge on the hated Yankees. The tale recalls the story of Jim Faxon, a young twenty-year-old weighed down by the burden of his family’s history. The Faxon’s had been involved in a feud with the neighboring Fletcher’s since the 1850s. The last act of violence occurred before the war when Ransom Fletcher shot and killed Jim Faxon’s father. Young Faxon was sent to live with his aunt, grew to be a respected produce salesman, and by age twenty was engaged to be married. In the character of Ransom Fletcher, Cobb described him as “unkempt and mud-crusted and frequently half drunk.” Worse, Fletcher had been a bushwhacker who wore the uniform of both the Confederacy and the Union during the war. In the years following the war

³⁷ Ibid., 76.

³⁸ Irving Cobb, *Back Home: Being the Narrative of Judge Priest and His People* (New York: Curtis Publishing, 1911), 19-37.

Fletcher continued to carry a grudge against the Faxon's. During a busy market day, Fletcher publicly insulted and called out Faxon. Faxon went for his gun and fatally shot the man. Judge Priest set young Faxon free based on an old warrant that the Federal Army put out for the capture or death of the "Guerrilla Fletcher" in February 1865. Since the warrant had never been rescinded, Faxon did nothing more than kill a criminal wanted by the Federal Army. In other words, forty-five years after war's end, Cobb excused the killing of a Purchase man who dared wear the Union blue.³⁹

As the 20th century progressed, the white people of the Purchase, like Cobb, clung to the past and celebrated their Confederate heritage. The monuments, statues, histories, and hagiography served to remind them of their uniqueness and their southern roots. But while rest of the Kentucky continued to look more like the Purchase in politics and Confederate memory that would not last much longer. Changes in the Democratic Party during the 20th century resulted in the Purchase once again becoming the lone Democratic stronghold of the Bluegrass state. Mechanization and industrialization in the coalfields of the eastern half of the state would bring vast amounts of attention to that region, while the Kentucky Derby, the growth of Lexington and Louisville, and Wildcat basketball highlighted the central area of the state. Throughout it all, Kentucky held fast to her claim as a "Confederate" state while ironically the Purchase remained overlooked. Yet, as Irvin S. Cobb believed, the image of the southerner as conveyed by the majority of Kentuckians "was a fragment of the drama and of the story book; a type that had no just claim on existence and yet a type that" is accepted "as a verity." For Purchase residents

³⁹ Cobb, *Back Home*, 70-101.

who revered their southern heritage and Confederate devotion, however, it remained “a verity” through the ages.⁴⁰

Over the past seventy years, the Purchase has experienced significant change. In 1944, the Tennessee Valley Authority impounded the Tennessee River in Kentucky and created Kentucky Lake. In 1966, the Army Corps of Engineers similarly impounded the Cumberland River to create Lake Barkley. The two flooded rivers created the “Land Between the Lakes.” In the years since tourism has brought untold amounts of revenue to Marshall County and Calloway County. Paducah, despite a devastating flood in 1937, remains the largest city in the Purchase and serves as the commercial hub of southern Illinois and west Tennessee. After World War II, the town’s economy was transformed further by textile mills and the Paducah Gaseous Fusion Plant, which remains the town’s largest employer and the nations only remaining uranium enrichment plant. Graves County and Calloway County contain several industries including textile mills, chemical and toy production, and air compressor production. Murray State University in Calloway County became a leading four year college in western Kentucky and currently enrolls over 9000 students. Paducah Community College, a community college within the University of Kentucky system enrolls an additional 2000 students.⁴¹

Yet in many other ways, however, the counties of the Purchase have changed little. Agriculture remains the most important economic feature in the majority of counties. The Democratic Party remained dominant until 1994, when the First District finally elected a Republican Congressman. Several areas remain relatively isolated,

⁴⁰ Cobb, *Back Home*, 3.

⁴¹ Robertson, *Paducah: Frontier to Atomic Age*, 58-79; Kleber, *Kentucky Encyclopedia*, 460-62, 705-706.

reachable only through access roads off Interstate 24. As for Civil War memory, the region's Confederate heritage lingers. The area currently contains four Sons of Confederate Camps, who join Kentucky's remaining 26 camps in "heritage defense." Their latest activities include protesting Kentucky's upcoming 2009 Kentucky Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial; lobbying for use of Confederate symbols; and teaching "Confederate history" in schools and commemoration ceremonies. The area also still boasts at least one active group of the Daughters of the Confederacy. Every March, meanwhile, living historians reenact the Battle of Paducah. Later in September, Grant's occupation of the town is also remembered. In Hickman County, the occupation of Columbus by Polk is celebrated in conjunction with the reenactment of the Battle of Belmont.⁴²

In 1995 Paducah commissioned artist Robert Dafford to paint a series of murals along the city's Ohio River floodwall. The murals depict historic milestones in the town including its founding by William Clark, the devastating flood of 1937, and the various economic and cultural developments in the city. The most popular mural, however, highlights the towns' Civil War experience. The center of the mural depicts the assault on Fort Anderson during the Battle of Paducah. The burning homes left in the wake of the battle, as well as the Federal gunboats *Peosta* and *Paw Paw*, are also featured. The perimeter of the mural is surrounded by large portraits of Nathan Bedford Forrest and Paducah Confederates Lloyd Tilghman and A.P. Thompson. A smaller portrait of Ulysses

⁴² Kleber, *Kentucky Encyclopedia*, 705-706; United States Census, 2000, www.census.quickfacts.gov, accessed December 1, 2008; www.kyscv.org, accessed December 1, 2008; *Commonwealth Communique*, January 2002, (Frankfort, KY: Personnel Cabinet), 28; *Kentucky Living*, April 2001; *The Webfoot: Official Newsletter of the Samuel Rush Watkins Camp #29, Sons of Confederate Veterans*, August-September 2004, (Columbia, TN, 2004), 3.

S. Grant appears as well, along with caricatured depiction of former slaves reading the Emancipation Proclamation. There are no depictions of guerrillas, illicit traders, or African Americans in blue uniforms.⁴³

One of the most significant changes to occur in the area nonetheless is the recognition of African-American heritage in the area. For the past 30 years, Paducah has hosted an annual August 8 Emancipation Celebration. According to local lore, Paducah's slaveholders concealed knowledge of the Emancipation Proclamation from their slaves. As such, they remained in bondage until August 8, 1863. During the celebration, Purchase African-Americans and their relatives enjoy an art show, parade, food vendors, music, a dance, and various sporting events. Whites remain conspicuously absent from the event.⁴⁴

The Purchase finally still struggles to "fit in" as a part of Kentucky. In the 21st century the Bluegrass and Appalachian regions are still the most often identified areas of the state. Never the most economically successful or politically powerful part of the state, the Jackson Purchase remains a stranger in the strange land that is Kentucky. For many in the Purchase, meanwhile, their home remains "Kentucky's South Carolina." In June 1861, Purchase politician Henry C. Burnett circulated an inflammatory pamphlet encouraging his fellow citizens in the First Congressional District to push for secession. In the pamphlet he derided state politicians in Frankfort for their support of neutrality. "Attention southern rights men" he wrote, "let's show the submissionists of this State that

⁴³ Kathy Witt, "Floodwall Murals Cover Our Cities," *Kentucky Living*, November 2005.

⁴⁴ *Paducah Sun*, August 3, 2008.

the old first is with the South.”⁴⁵ Burnett no doubt would be pleased that the “old first” largely still is.

⁴⁵ Miscellaneous Documents of the House of Representatives for the First Session of the Fortieth Congress 1867, vol. 1, no. 47, (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1868), 117.

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