NORTHERN LEADERSHIP IN MISSOURI IN 1861: THE INFLUENCE
OF FRANK BLAIR, CAPTAIN NATHANIEL LYON AND MAJOR
GENERAL JOHN C. FRÉMONT

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Problem</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sources, Method and Organization of Study</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sources</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method of study</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization of the study</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background of Blair, Lyon, and Frémont</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francis P. Blair, Jr.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathaniel Lyon</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Charles Frémont</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. THE ISSUE IN DOUBT</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri politics before 1861</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri traditions and sentiment:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political complexion of Missouri on the eve of 1861</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentiment in Missouri on the eve of 1861</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE ISSUE FACED</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary activities of the secessionists</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities of Blair</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other activities of Blair</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The State Convention</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## CHAPTER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IV. THE ROAD TO HOSTILITIES AND LYON'S SUMMER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAMPAIGN</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The advent of Lyon and the struggle for the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Louis arsenal</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camp Jackson</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The road to open war</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyon's summer campaign</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| V. FREMONT'S ONE HUNDRED DAYS                | 99   |
| Fremont takes command                        | 100  |
| Other activities of Frémont: his break with  |      |
| northern leaders                             | 106  |
| The recall of Frémont                       | 120  |

| VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS                  | 127  |
| Summary                                      | 128  |
| Conclusions                                  | 132  |

| BIBLIOGRAPHY                                 | 134  |
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Although a century has passed since the American Civil War ended, this great intra-national struggle and the decades of sectional strife leading to actual hostilities are still very much within the realm of the interpretative historian. These events have bequeathed to the present age a great number of perplexing historical controversies.

This struggle was, and to a degree remains, a personal issue to historians of this nation. It is, of course, extremely difficult to achieve objectivity on this subject. The Civil War involved all Americans deeply, including the national historians of that time whose thoughts and writings must be the starting point for today's analyses of the subject.

The strongest feelings were engendered by the controversy, and a degree of these feelings has tended to persist to this day. Any search for historical objectivity in this area is wrought with potential danger. This objectivity is difficult to ascertain for it is often veiled with a century's prejudice resulting from original preconceived judgments or opinions.

This paper is written not to praise nor to blame.
It will present an evaluation of the activities of three men—Francis P. Blair, Jr., Captain Nathaniel Lyon, and Major General John Charles Frémont—who were intimately involved with the Union cause in Missouri during the first year of the war. It will attempt to present an objective and thoughtful analysis of the effectiveness of these activities in keeping Missouri in the Union during those critical months.

Contemporary observers were caught up in the crisis. Their comments on this subject reflect their political and emotional inclinations; they were writing to make a point and usually had an immediate objective in mind. Since today's historiography must be based on the words of these men, widely conflicting views on the subject are found.

The decision that Missouri made in 1861 on the question of secession was of critical importance to the Union cause in the Civil War. For this reason it is appropriate to re-examine the activities of Frank Blair, Nathaniel Lyon, and John C. Frémont during that year.

I. THE PROBLEM

Geographically and demographically Missouri was in a unique position at the outbreak of the Civil War. Probably in no other border state was the sectional issue more fiercely contested. And in no other border state was the question of secession more in doubt.
Missouri was tied to the southern states by many factors. By tradition and inclination she was one of them. Many of her inhabitants had come from the South. She was a slave state, and it is clear that a pronounced and vocal southern sympathy existed throughout her area. Many of her influential political leaders (including Governor Claiborne Jackson, Lieutenant-Governor Thomas C. Reynolds, United States Senators James S. Green and Trusten Polk, ex-Governor Sterling Price, ex-United States Senator David Rice Atchison, and St. Joseph Mayor M. Jeff Thompson) were either outright secessionists or were inclined to accept the Southern point of view.

Union sentiment in the state was largely dispirited, and was divided into conditional and unconditional Union forces. These two groups were not disposed to work together. The conditional Unionists, who were in the majority, were inclined to favor moderation and compromise and to wait and "hope for the best." Considering the situation of the time, this philosophy operated to the advantage of the active secessionists.

Only the unconditional Unionists, largely Republicans, were prepared to support the Union in any actions it took to deal with the crisis. Subsequent events would prove that this attitude was necessary to save Missouri for the Union.

But the unconditional Unionists in Missouri were in a small minority as the Civil War commenced. They had an
effective organization only in St. Louis. Elsewhere in the state they were scattered, discouraged, and largely inarticulate.

Yet the Unionist cause in Missouri did receive leadership and organization sufficient not only to keep the state in the Union during the critical year of 1861, but to bring Missouri into active participation in the war against the seceded states. The first and most serious crisis of secession in that state was passed by the time of Frémont's recall in November, 1861. By then it was reasonably certain that Missouri would remain in the Union and would continue to render valuable assistance to the northern cause in the sectional struggle.

How did this come to pass? Why did Missouri remain in the Union during these months, and, just as importantly, how did Missouri become drawn into active participation on the northern side? This was tantamount to supporting a Republican administration with which most Missourians had no sympathy, and it was in direct opposition to the moderate philosophy of the majority who opposed using force to coerce the seceded states back into the Union.

Blair, Lyon, and Frémont were directly involved with the unconditional Union viewpoint in Missouri during the first eleven months of 1861, and, in the light of subsequent
events, it would seem that these men succeeded in working their minority will upon the majority sentiment of the people of Missouri. But Frank Blair held no state political or military position. His authority and influence were negligible in Missouri outside of the city of St. Louis. Moreover, he was identified with Lincoln and the Republican party, a faction which most Missourians opposed. Blair has been called by many a radical who used unnecessarily extreme measures and alienated many people in his fight for Missouri. Lyon and Frémont were not Missourians. Lyon was not transferred to St. Louis until February, 1861, and he was unable to exercise effective authority until several months later. Frémont did not arrive on the scene until the latter part of July, and he was soon embroiled in a bitter feud with Blair. In many historical evaluations, Lyon has been called a trouble maker who did more harm than good to the Union cause in Missouri. Frémont has been called an incompetent who deserved his removal in November.

In light of this, can it be said that the activities of these three men were primarily responsible for Missouri's remaining in the Union during 1861? Or were other factors responsible for Missouri's decision? It is clear that Blair, Lyon, and Frémont were leaders of the Union cause in the state, but how much effective assistance did they render that cause? If, in truth, the first and most dangerous
crisis of secession was passed by the time of Major General Frémont's recall, their contributions in the preceding months must have been effective. Finally, in view of the existing alternatives available to them, were their extreme measures justified?

This study will seek to examine the effectiveness and wisdom of the activities of these three Union leaders in Missouri and will suggest answers to the questions posed above. It will be necessary to examine closely the existing sentiment in Missouri, the leadership of the secessionist and conditional Unionist factions, the prevailing conditions under which these three men acted, and the situations they faced. The conclusions of this study will take into consideration the circumstances these men faced, and the facts of the period as they appeared at the time.

II. SOURCES, METHOD AND ORGANIZATION OF STUDY

**Sources.** Many of the sources used for this study were of a primary nature. The *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* proved to be a basic and invaluable repository of pertinent data. The correspondence reproduced in these volumes gave a firsthand insight into the thoughts and motivations of the personalities involved. Written for private use, these letters were usually frank and honest accounts of what was going on behind the facade of public declaration.
Memoirs and accounts written by those involved, as well as newspaper articles of the period, were invaluable also, but for a different reason. As stated before, these authors were deeply involved in the conflict, emotionally and often physically; and their accounts usually reflected their biases. Works written for public dissemination had to be studied with this in mind. But, when this fact was observed, they were very important. First, of course, the authors were contemporary observers, and their knowledge of the subject was necessarily basic to the research. Secondly, the views expressed, for example, by James Peckham (a Republican state representative who later served in the Union army) or Thomas L. Snead (who at different times was secretary to Governor Jackson, acting Adjutant-General of the Missouri State Guard, and member of the Confederate Congress) offered excellent insights into the feelings and thinking of their respective factions. By analyzing and comparing these conflicting views, the search for a plausible interpretation of the wisdom and effectiveness of the activities of Blair, Lyon, and Frémont could be begun.

An examination of later historical works also proved valuable. The same facts were found over and over again, but when different writers gave varying emphases and differing degrees of credence to the same basic facts, they reached quite different interpretations.
Method of study. This study was based on reading, library research, and reappraisal. The first step consisted of becoming familiar with the period through an examination of works of a general historical nature. It was soon apparent that views on the subject differed substantially. It was then necessary to trace these views to their sources—to the original judgments and opinions expressed by those involved.

It was then possible to study, analyze, and compare these primary sources and to repeat this same process with the resulting interpretations of latter-day historians. By these means, it was possible to arrive at a thoughtful understanding of the subject.

Most source material for this study came from the library of the Missouri State Historical Society, Columbia, Missouri, and the student is grateful for the kindness and cooperation he received there. Additional valuable material was found at the library of the Iowa State Historical Society and at the Library of Drake University.

Organization of the study. The remainder of this chapter is devoted to a discussion of the backgrounds of Blair, Lyon, and Frémont, so far as these are pertinent to the subject of this study. This relevant background information is necessary to understand and explain why the
three men reacted as they did to the developments of 1861. A second chapter closely examines the conditions and sentiment in Missouri prior to the outbreak of the war and the attitudes of leading Missouri politicians and public figures as the controversy developed into the crises of 1861. Three subsequent chapters trace the reactions of Blair, Lyon, and Frémont to the conditions they faced in that year: the preliminary activities in the spring months which led to actual hostilities, the summer campaign into Missouri, and Frémont's one hundred days in command. A final chapter consists of a summary and conclusions. A comparison of the relative strengths and positions of opposing factions in Missouri is repeated throughout the study. This is necessary to show how these positions fluctuated throughout the period as a result of the activities of Blair, Lyon, and Frémont.

III. BACKGROUND OF BLAIR, LYON, AND FRÉMONT

Francis P. Blair, Jr. It was predictable that Blair would take the lead against the proslavery element in Missouri in 1861, for he had been prominent in the opposing faction for a decade.

He was born in Lexington, Kentucky, in 1821. After graduating from Princeton in 1841 and studying law at Transylvania University for a year, he moved to St. Louis and began to practice law there.
His father, Francis P. Blair, Sr., was a powerful political organizer, and had been a member of Andrew Jackson's "kitchen cabinet." The elder Blair opposed the territorial expansion of slavery, and in 1848 supported Martin Van Buren, the Free-Soil candidate for president. He was one of the founders of the Republican party and was influential at the Republican convention of 1860.

The son also soon opposed the extension of slavery, chiefly because he thought it was an economic hindrance to western development.\(^1\) Blair became a supporter of the great anti-slavery Missouri Democrat, Thomas Hart Benton, at a time when state-wide Missouri politics were coming more and more under the control of the pro-slavery Democratic faction.\(^2\)

Though this faction brought about Benton's defeat for re-election to the Senate in 1851,\(^3\) anti-slavery Missouri politicians could still be elected from certain St. Louis districts. In 1852, Benton was returned to


Congress as a Representative from St. Louis, and Blair served from 1852 to 1856 in the Missouri legislature as a Representative from that city. Though called a "Black Republican--Benton Democrat"1 by the state Democratic organization, Blair won the election by a safe majority. The Republicans declared that this victory meant that St. Louis would no longer be dominated by the "insolent Slave Oligarchy." The Democrats recognized it as proof that that city was "hostile to the institutions of the State." 2

At this time, Benton, past seventy-four years of age and dying of cancer, retired to Washington and "the field in Missouri was left for a battling ground between Frank Blair and the pro-slavery elements." 3

The 1856 presidential election was held three months later. Blair further alienated himself from the national and state Democracy by supporting the Republican candidate, Frémont. He soon became a fierce critic of the new president, Buchanan, and was "read out of the Democracy"4 by Buchanan's supporters. In 1858, Blair "announced for Lincoln and supported him with speech and pen."5


2Ibid., pp. 374-75. 

3Ibid., p. 375.

4Ibid., p. 418. 

5Ibid., p. 421.
Blair regarded himself as a Jacksonian Democrat who had remained loyal to the tenets of the party while the Southern Democracy had fallen on evil ways. Blair charged that "the administration at Washington had not one scintilla of a democratic principle; its pledges were forfeited, and it lay at the feet of the slave oligarchy."\(^1\) He called his party the "Freed Democracy"—that term being more acceptable to the Free-Soil Democrats and to any who might oppose Buchanan\(^1\)—in his own bid for re-election in 1858. He believed the ultimate extinction of slavery would benefit Missouri and called for gradual compensated emancipation: "Give us Missouri for white men, and white men for Missouri."\(^3\)

His opponent, Richard Barret, was a nominee of the regular state Democratic organization. Thus, the lines were drawn in St. Louis between the pro- and anti-slavery factions. The resulting vote in the district was so close that both candidates claimed victory. This controversy was not settled until July 8, 1860, when the House voted 93 to 91 to seat Blair.\(^4\) This Congress was the ill-fated 35th, and the House vote was strictly along sectional lines.

By the beginning of 1860, Blair had determined to join the Republican Party. He, like his father and

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 430.  \(^2\)Ibid.  \(^3\)Ibid., p. 430.  \(^4\)Ibid., p. 442.
brother, Montgomery, was influential at the Republican
convention of that year, attending as a delegate-at-large
from Missouri.

The Blairs at first supported Edward Bates of
Missouri for the presidential nomination but were fully
prepared to campaign for Lincoln after he was successful.
Frank Blair returned to Missouri and publicly stated that:

I will support Abraham Lincoln because he represents
the cause of human rights and the preservation of the
Union. I will support him because of the broad states-
manship he has shown in the notable debate with his
renowned adversary. I will support him because he is
true and honest and will be faithful in discharging
the duties of the high position to which the people
of the nation will assign him.¹

On July 9, St. Louis Republicans unanimously
nominated Blair as their nominee to Congress from the
First District of Missouri. He won by a plurality in
August but soon turned his entire attention to the national
campaign. He began a speaking campaign for Lincoln through-
cout central Missouri. It required a brave heart to speak
for "Black Republicanism" in this area. His reception by
the Democrats was anything but cordial or courteous, and
the Republicans were not numerous enough to control the
vast and excited crowds which poured out to hear him.²
But he continued this campaign until called East by
Republican leaders who believed that he could accomplish

¹Ibid., p. 485. ²Ibid., p. 498.
more for the party in more responsive areas.

In November, 1860, Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States. As will be seen shortly, the state government of Missouri was now in the firm control of pro-southern Democrats. The battle lines were thus drawn for the coming struggle for Missouri.

Nathaniel Lyon. Lyon was born in Ashford, Connecticut, in 1818. He graduated from West Point in 1841 and took part in a campaign against the Seminole Indians in Florida. After serving in the Mexican War and spending several years in California, he was ordered to Kansas in 1854 to assist in the enforcement of laws in that troubled territory. Though originally a supporter of Pierce, he soon became fanatically opposed to "slave power" and to the extension of slavery.

A contemporary said of him:

Whatever he felt, he felt with a force that carried everything before it. There was no middle ground with him in any matter that engaged his attention, and he conceived that it was his duty to enforce his doctrines or his ideas upon all with whom he came in contact, even to the extent of being offensive.

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This observer continued that:

Douglas, Pierce, Buchanan, and all the advocates of the "Kansas-Nebraska Bill" met with his scorn and contempt, and no words short of oaths—for he never swore—were too strong for him to use to express his condemnation of what he conceived was their treason to the cause of freedom.1

Lyon soon joined the Republican party and during the presidential campaign of 1860 wrote a series of articles for the Manhattan (Kansas) Express attacking the Democrats and supporting Abraham Lincoln. His attitude toward slavery is said to have attracted the attention of Blair at the time, and his transfer to St. Louis is supposed to have been made at the latter's request.2 At any rate, Lyon was transferred to St. Louis on February 6, 1861, and "he immediately got in touch with Francis P. Blair, Jr., and other leading Unionists in that city."3

John Charles Frémont. Only Frémont's one hundred days in Missouri are within scope of this study. In brief, Frémont became a national figure through his expeditions into the West, which were largely made possible by the expansionist interest and governmental influence of his father-in-law, Thomas Hart Benton.

1Ibid.
3Wood, loc. cit.
The discovery of gold in California made Frémont a multimillionaire. In December, 1849, he was elected for a short term as one of the first two senators from California. Though defeated for re-election by the pro-slavery party in 1851, his popularity and national reputation led to his nomination for the presidency of the United States in 1856 by the new Republican party.  

When the Civil War broke out, Frémont was in France. After purchasing a supply of arms in England for the Union army, he returned to the United States. He arrived on July 1 and offered his services to President Lincoln. Through the influence of the Blairs, he was appointed to the command of a new Department of the West with headquarters in St. Louis, and he arrived in St. Louis on July 25. This department consisted of Illinois and all the states and territories west of Illinois between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains.  

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2Parrish, op. cit., pp. 48-49.
CHAPTER II

THE ISSUE IN DOUBT

Missouri politics before 1861. The question of whether or not slavery should be allowed to extend into the territories had been before the American people since 1820 and gained force and feeling with passing years.

Missouri Senator Thomas Hart Benton had stood staunchly against slavery expansion during his thirty years in the Senate. But as the Democratic party fell more and more under the sway of its militant southern minority, his position became increasingly precarious. During the 1840's, southern Democrats "came to regard Benton as the great obstacle in their path, and determined on his political extinction." In Missouri, "a revived, concerted, and determined opposition to Benton was organizing."\(^2\)

When Benton took a strong stand against the extension of slavery into the new territories in 1849, the split between pro- and anti-Benton factions in the Missouri Democratic party became overt. As a result of the excitement in Missouri resulting from the introduction of the

\(^{1}\text{Chambers, op. cit., p. 341.}\quad ^{2}\text{Ibid.}\)
"Wilmot-Anti-Slavery Proviso," Carty Wells, a Democratic state senator, introduced into the upper house of the legislature a series of pro-slavery resolutions on various parts of the Wilmot Proviso, which was referred to the Senate Committee on Federal Relations. On January 15, 1849, Claiborne Jackson reported from this committee to the Senate the modifications of Wells' resolutions known as the Jackson Resolutions.

These stated, in part, that Congress had no power to legislate on the subject of slavery, and that:

The right to prohibit slavery in any Territory belongs exclusively to the people thereof, and can only be exercised by them in forming their constitution for a State government, or in their sovereign capacity as an independent state.

That in the event of the passage of any act of Congress conflicting with the principles herein expressed, Missouri will be found in hearty co-operation with the slave-holding States, in such measures as may be deemed necessary for our mutual protection against the encroachments of Northern fanaticism.

That our senators in Congress be instructed and our representatives be requested to act in conformity to the foregoing resolutions.¹

After much opposition, the Jackson Resolutions were adopted without modification. Of course, Benton would not obey the instructions contained in these resolutions, and pro-slavery Democratic politicians believed that this would furnish them with an excuse to refuse to return him to Washington for another term.

Benton, seeing the danger, took his campaign to the people but was unable to arouse enough support to save himself. With the help of the pro-slavery Whigs in the legislature, the pro-slavery, anti-Benton Democrats ousted him from the United States Senate in 1851 and accepted a Whig in his place. The following year, the newly-elected Democratic governor, Sterling Price, helped the pro-slavery forces secure control of the party machinery. Benton's followers had enough strength in the legislature, however, to prevent the re-election of David Rice Atchison, a strong proponent of slavery extension, to the Senate in 1854. The fight between the two groups was by then so fierce that a deadlocked legislature allowed this Senate seat to remain vacant for two years.

The final showdown came in 1856 when Benton ran for governor. When the votes were counted, "he found the Claiborne P. Jackson element of the Democracy seated firmly at Jefferson City."\(^1\) Trusten Polk, a pro-slavery Democrat, was elected and Benton had run a poor third on an Independent Democratic ticket. Following this defeat, the latter's followers either drifted back into the regular Democratic party or joined the "meager ranks of the Republicans."\(^2\)

\(^{1}\)William Ernest Smith, *op. cit.*, I, 375.

\(^{2}\)Barrish, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
The 1860 Missouri Democratic convention met early in April with the pro-slavery element of the party "still in firm control of the organization machinery."\(^1\) The pro-slavery leaders nominated Claiborne Jackson, "one of the most active of their number,"\(^2\) for governor, and Thomas C. Reynolds for lieutenant-governor. The platform, strongly reflecting the southern point of view, stated that slavery could not be excluded from the territories either by Congress or by the territorial legislatures.

When the national Democratic party split into Douglas and Breckinridge factions, Jackson found himself being pressed by both sides for an endorsement of their respective nominees. "His natural proclivities were to the South. The state platform on which he had been nominated expressed the Southern stand on the slavery extension issue."\(^3\) But Jackson and Reynolds realized that it would be difficult for them to repudiate the nominees of the regular Democratic party on the national level with any hope of success. They also guessed that more Missourians would be inclined to support Douglas than Breckinridge.

After much deliberation and consultation, they both endorsed the Douglas ticket early in July.

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 4.
\(^2\)Edward Conrad Smith, op. cit., p. 66.
\(^3\)Parrish, loc. cit.
Thomas Peckham stated that:

Without the position of more than ordinary sagacity, those leaders saw that the majority of the people, while tolerant toward slavery, were yet averse to secession, and, as Douglas was looked upon as a middle man, they adapted the cheat of carrying into the gubernatorial chair, under his "Douglas's" banner, one in whom they felt they could trust the interests of the South, in any emergency that might arise. 1

This observation seems largely correct. Jackson and Reynolds endorsed Douglas because they wanted to win. They knew that the Missouri Democracy would split, no matter which set of nominees they endorsed, since feelings were so high. They chose to take the route that would alienate the smaller faction.

A few leaders in the Democratic State Central Committee then repudiated Jackson and Reynolds and nominated Hancock Jackson and Monroe M. Parsons as replacements. 2 This did not mean that all pro-slavery voters switched their support to these new candidates, however. Many of them refused to accept this arrangement because of their fear that a party split would allow Samuel Orr, the Constitutional Union party candidate, to become governor. Led by Senator James S. Green and aided by the custom of holding the state election in August prior to the national


2 Parrish, op. cit., p. 5.
balloting in November, they endorsed and actively cam-
paigned for the Jackson-Reynolds ticket.¹

This action saved the day for Jackson and Reynolds.
Claiborne Jackson was elected governor over Orr by a vote
of 74,446 to 66,583; Hancock Jackson ran a poor third with
11,416 votes, and James B. Gardenshire, the Republican
candidate, received only 6,137.² Most of the Republican
strength centered around the St. Louis area with its
strongly anti-slavery German population.³ However, Breck-
inridge candidates won pluralities in both Houses of the
state legislature.⁴ This election placed the state gov-
ernment of Missouri in the hands of the pro-slavery element
at a critical time.

The presidential election in November echoed the
same general sentiment as had the state election in August.
Douglas carried the state by a tiny margin of 429 votes
over the Constitutional Union candidate, Bell. The respec-
tive votes received by these two men were 58,801 for
Douglas and 58,372 for Bell. Breckinridge received 31,317
votes, while Lincoln ran a poor fourth with 17,028.⁵

¹This. ²William Ernest Smith, op. cit., I, 496.
³Parrish, loc. cit.
⁴Walter R. Nye, Missouri: Union or Secession
(Kashville: George Peabody College, 1931), p. 176.
⁵Parrish, loc. cit.
Many historians say that the results of this election prove that the great majority of Missourians were conservative and wanted no extreme action taken on the slavery question. This was true: 70 per cent of the voters favored compromise with either the popular sovereignty of Douglas or the vague, middle-ground assurances of Bell.¹

Thus, most Missourians wanted compromise, but this fact did not make that state safe for the Union. What would Missourians do—in what direction would they go—when compromise was impossible? Would they still be waiting and "hoping for the best" while Missouri's political leaders took that state out of the Union? Would they rally behind these leaders or would they resist any attempt at secession? These questions were yet to be answered.

One disquieting fact should be pointed out: radicalism was growing in Missouri. The Northern Democrats, Douglas and Jackson, lost 15,645 votes from August to November. The Constitutional Unionists, Bell and Orr, lost 8,211. Thus, these two moderate parties, while they continued to dominate voting, lost a total of 23,856 votes in less than three months. The two radical parties gained a total of 30,792 votes in the same period: the Republican party, Lincoln and Gardnershire, gained 10,891 votes, and the Southern Democratic party, Breckinridge and Hancock Jackson, gained 19,901 votes. These figures must show

¹Ibid.
that extreme factions were gaining influence in Missouri during the fall of 1860 at the expense of the moderates.¹

Then, just forty-five days after the election of Lincoln, South Carolina passed an ordinance of secession. It was followed by a declaration of independence which stated that:

The State of South Carolina has resumed her position among the nations of the world as a separate and independent State, with full powers to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and do all other acts and things which independent states may of right do.²

As South Carolina expected, other southern states quickly followed its lead and committed war-like acts against the national government. Ordinances of secession were passed in rapid succession by Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and Georgia.³ From the secession of South Carolina on December 20, 1860, to January 11, 1861, just twenty days, the southern states had taken forts worth $5,497,000, with a war capacity of 5,430 men, and 1,099

¹Author's figures from total Missouri returns in gubernatorial and presidential elections. Sources of these statistics: Ibid., and William Ernest Smith, op. cit., I, 496.

²As quoted in Ryle, op. cit., p. 168.

guns. Moreover, they confiscated property belonging to northern people and sequestrated debts due northern creditors amounting to several million dollars. 

Campaign threats of secession from the South had become realities. Compromise had failed, and "Lincoln's election did not satisfy many more Missourians than it did South Carolinians." What would Missouri now do? The answer to this would be of fateful importance to both North and South.

Missouri traditions and sentiment: background. The question posed above cannot be answered by a mere demographic discussion. The issue was too complex for the people were pulled in opposing ways by different factors. Nevertheless, a brief description of demographic features in Missouri is necessary for an understanding of that state's sentiment in 1861.

First, of course, Missouri was a slave state. It was "largely populated by emigrants from Kentucky, Virginia and other Southern States, or by their descendants. . . ." The amount of southern influence had tended to increase as the course of settlement proceeded westward. Since slavery

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1 Yule, loc. cit.  
2 Ibid.  
3 Ibid., p. 169.  
4 History of Missouri, op. cit., p. 94.  
5 Edward Conrad Smith, op. cit., p. 12.
was prohibited in the Old Northwest, most slaveholders who wished to take their slaves with them when they left their homes in Kentucky or Tennessee went to Missouri. By 1830, these slaveholders had settled the bottoms along the Mississippi and Missouri rivers and were pushing toward the boundaries of the state in every direction. "They had occupied the whole of it before there was any important immigration from the Northern States."  

In later years, however, many settlers who were opposed to slavery came to Missouri. These were augmented by a large number of Germans who immigrated to the United States following the European revolutions of 1848. By the time of the outbreak of the Civil War, over 50,000 of these Germans lived in St. Louis—almost a third of the population of that city. In all, 60 per cent of the population was foreign born in 1860.  

By 1860, Missouri's agricultural economy was being supplemented by a strong industrial and commercial one, and new railroad routes were challenging the traditional Mississippi and Missouri waterways. Many inhabitants of

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1Ibid., p. 13.

2According to the Eighth Federal Census, the population of St. Louis was 160,773 in 1860. Of these, 95,036 were foreign born—50,510 of them Germans, 29,926 Irish, and 5,513 English. Source: Harrison Anthony Trexler, Slavery in Missouri 1804-1865 (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1914), p. 226.

3Parrish, op. cit., p. xiii.
Missouri were more interested in building a new western society than in being tied to the older culture of the South.

Slaveholders had never been able to duplicate the plantation system of the South in Missouri—at least to the degree that it dominated all other segments of society. The main industry in Missouri was the raising of livestock, for in many parts of the state this was the only practical way to use the land.¹ The holding of slaves in these areas was not profitable. The shorter growing season in Missouri made the production of cotton—the crop best suited to slave labor—impossible in most of Missouri. Though many Missouri plantations were able to grow hemp profitably in combination with other cereals, in no part of the state was slavery a controlling factor in the life of the people. Missouri had only 115,000 slaves in 1860 out of a total population of 1,200,000. Nearly 30,000 of these slaves were within twenty miles of the Missouri River, far from other slaveholding areas.²

In the decade before the Civil War, slavery became less important, proportionally, as the white population grew much faster than the Negro population. During that period the number of slaves increased 25 per cent (from

¹ Edward C. Smith, op. cit., p. 15.
² Ibid., pp. 29-31.
87,422 to 114,931), the white population increased almost 100 per cent (from 592,004 to 1,063,489). Missouri was a slave state, yet it was not a southern state, and it was in the process of developing its own, distinctive system of labor.

By 1860, railroads were playing an ever-increasing role in Missouri's economy. They were turning more and more of the state's commerce toward the East. The Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad tied these cities to Chicago. Likewise, lines extending through St. Louis to Sedalia, Rolla and Ironton linked central and eastern Missouri to eastern cities. While these railroads were binding Missouri to the East and North, no lines had yet been built between that state and any point in the South.

Still, the attitude of the people of Missouri at the beginning of the Civil War was not overly influenced by the above factors. How the people viewed themselves was certainly as important as the facts stated above, and these two--the thought and the fact--were not always the same. Few Missourians as yet realized that the state's most important commercial ties were now with the East and North. Many Missourians tended to think of themselves as being more southern than they really were, and they were disposed to cling to traditional attitudes. Though they

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1Traxler, op. cit., p. 225.
were not a plantation society, they tended to sympathize with the South in the sectional controversies leading up to the outbreak of the war. They were antagonized by northern abolitionist agitation, and as feelings grew more intense, this attitude tended to develop into an aggressive pro-slavery sentiment. Border hostilities with Free-Soilers from Kansas in the 1850's also contributed to this sentiment. This feeling, coupled with able and willing leadership from powerful, pro-slavery political figures "nearly resulted in turning the people toward the complete support of the Southern program."1

Although a majority of Missourians remained conservative, at least in their voting habits, they tended toward a southern and pro-slavery point of view. Would the crisis of civil war push this tendency into an acceptance of secession as state political leaders wished? Obviously, it did not. But why did it not? The key word in the above quotation is "nearly." Missouri was close to secession early in 1861, but this final break never came about. Was this fact because of the basic complexion of Missouri society and the economic and commercial tendencies of the state as outlined above? Or was it primarily because of the Union leadership the state received during 1861? In an effort to answer these questions, this study

1Edward Conrad Smith, op. cit., p. 35.
will now examine the crises of 1861.

Political complexion of Missouri on the eve of 1861. As has been stated previously, most state political leaders in Missouri were secessionists. Thomas Snead, who was acquainted with most of them, declared that:

Conspicuous among the Secessionists were the Governor and Lieutenant-Governor of the State, a majority of the members of the General Assembly, both United States Senators (James S. Green and Trusten Polk), and General David R. Atchison. James Peckham called Lieutenant-Governor Reynolds "the leading spirit of the secession cause in Missouri in 1861." Of Reynolds's activities, Peckham continued:

Really, the energy of this man was wonderful. Under his inspiring counsel, the work of secession organization was pushed rapidly forward. Committees were organized and kept constantly at work, carrying on extensive correspondence, selecting reliable agents in every county, devising expedients to advance his purposes, drafting bills subsidiary to his plans. By means of the Military Bill, he anticipated such a complete organization of the State as would make it a powerful auxiliary to the Southern cause. He carried on a complete system of signals with the Southern leaders, and received with the most extreme complacency the rebel emissaries whom the Gulf States forwarded to Missouri, to seduce her from her allegiance to the Union.

Jackson was fully as ambitious as Reynolds in his secessionist objectives. Though he voiced the compromise

2 Peckham, op. cit., p. 27.
3 Ibid., p. 28.
beliefs of Douglas in his campaign in order to placate the conditional unionists and be elected,

his profession of loyalty was merely a pretense. Events prove that he was cordially in the interests of the South, even before his inauguration as Governor, and that he was ready to throw off all disguise the very moment it should be safe and proper to do so.

There can be no doubt that Jackson was a "secret secessionist." His earlier political life proved that he was unalterably pro-southern; subsequent events would prove that he was fully prepared to take Missouri out of the Union. As early as December, 1860, he had definitely decided, in case of a civil war, to lead Missouri into the Southern Confederacy. Early in that month, he wrote to a friend:

The time has come, in my judgment, when a settlement of all the questions in controversy must be had. . . . Suppose those offending Northern states should agree to repeal their odious enactments and should actually do it, may they not re-enact them the year following. . . .

Some of the Union savers and some of our more timorous friends are insisting that we must wait yet a while longer, until Lincoln shall commit some "overt act." They tell us his election is no good cause for secession. . . . when we consider that Lincoln is the representative man of the Black Republican party; that he was taken up by the Chicago convention, and afterward elected by his party, solely because he was the author of the declaration that "this Government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free," I

\[\text{Ibid., p. xvii.}\]

\[\text{2Richard S. Brownlee, Gray Ghosts of the Confederacy; Guerilla Warfare in the West, 1861-1865 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1950), p. 6.}\]
ask if his election under these circumstances is not committing the "overt act." . . . if, after having tried all the remedies within our grasp, these should fail, as I fear they will, then I say, let us dissolve the connection and maintain the rights which belong to us at all hazards and to the last extremity.  

What was the complexion of the Twenty-first General Assembly which met in Jefferson City on the last day of 1860? The membership of this body did not reflect the voting in the recent gubernatorial and presidential elections. The Breckinridge Democrats dominated with sixty-two members in the House and Senate as compared with forty-six Douglas Democrats, forty-four Constitutional Unionists, and thirteen Republicans.  

The Senate consisted of 33 members, divided as follows: Breckinridge Democrats, 15; Douglas Democrats, 10; Bell-Everett men, 7; Republicans, 1. The House had 132 members: Breckinridge Democrats, 47; Bell-Everett men, 37; Douglas Democrats, 36; Republicans, 12. On a joint ballot the Breckinridge Democrats had 37 per cent of the total membership; Douglas Democrats, 27.9 per cent; Bell-Everett men, 26.6 per cent; and Republicans, 7.9 per cent.  

The Breckinridge Democrats had one member in the General Assembly for each 505 votes cast in the

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2Parrish, op. cit., p. 6.

3Kyle, op. cit., p. 176.
election; the Douglas Democrats, one member for each 1,278 votes cast; the Constitutional Unionists, one member for each 1,326 votes; and the Republicans one member for each 1,309 votes.¹

This alignment included fourteen holdover Breckinridge senators. Most of the other pro-slavery Democrats came from sparsely settled counties which enjoyed representation in the House equal to that of more heavily populated counties.² It was also due to the fact that the southern Democrats had secured control of the state party in the 1850's. The nominations for state and county offices were made before the split at the Charleston Convention. Since the leaders in control were southern Democrats, most of the nominees for the General Assembly were of the same faith. After the national party split into Douglas and Breckinridge factions, the Missouri nominees became Breckinridge Democrats.³

Though the Breckinridge Democrats held pluralities in both houses, they and the Douglas Democrats recognized the need for preliminary cooperation in order "to keep the offices within the grasp of the nominal organization."⁴ As a result of this coalition, John McAfee, a pronounced pro-slavery Breckinridge Democrat,⁵ was easily elected Speaker.

¹ibid. ²Parrish, loc. cit. ³Ryle, loc. cit. ⁴ibid., p. 177. ⁵Parrish, loc. cit.
of the House. Of this acquiescence by the Douglas Demo-
crats to the Breckinridge Democrats, one Missouri newspaper
said: "The glittering tinselry of office and the glitter-
ing reality of gold have been too strong to be overcome by
such an absolute idea as that of principle."¹

The Senate was presided over by Reynolds, and War-
wick Hough, also an avowed secessionist,² was elected
secretary of that body. On January 3, 1861, Reynolds met
with certain pro-southern senators to select members for
the various committees of the Senate.³ This group elected
the members of the Senate's committees in such a way that
the secessionists had absolute control.⁴ "In the House the
Speaker had the power to appoint all of the committees,
which, of course, were controlled by the secessionists."⁵

Thus, the legislative branch of the state govern-
ment, as well as the executive branch, was in the firm
control of the pro-southern element. Peckham, a Republican
member of the House from St. Louis, declared that: "Of all
the officers and clerks of both branches of the legislature,
I know of but one who was not an avowed secessionist."⁶
The Missouri Republican showed that 58 members of the

¹Fulton Missouri Telegraph, January 4, 1861.
²Peckham, op. cit., p. 22. ³Ibid.
⁴Ibid. ⁵Kyle, op. cit., p. 178. ⁶Ibid.
House were from the border states (including 15 native Missourians), 54 were from the lower South, 14 were from free states, and six were from foreign countries.  

Sentiment in Missouri on the eve of 1861. It would seem that popular sentiment in Missouri at this time appeared encouraging to secessionist leaders. The outright secessionist sentiment in the state was small but vocal and energetic and "exerted influence far beyond its numbers."  

Hyle stated that

The fact that the Unionists were quiet, and had little to say deceived the secessionists as to their actual strength and determination. The secessionists were noisy, and had a great deal to say about what they were doing and intended to do if certain things were done. . . .  

The secessionist leaders were encouraged to think that the majority of the people were behind them.

They, with Governor Jackson and his friends, believed that the people were strongly sympathetic with the South and that the state could be joined to the Confederacy lawfully, and by act of the people.  

Galusha Anderson, who was living in Missouri at this time, wrote that

1St. Louis Missouri Republican, January 21, 1861.  
2Brownlee, op. cit., p. 10.  
3Hyle, op. cit., p. 169.  
... no one who was not a close observer of events of that day can form any conception of the proscription and malignant spirit which existed among the secessionists throughout the State.¹

The majority sentiment in Missouri seemed definitely adverse to secession. Newspapers in various sections of the state voiced loyalty to the Union after Lincoln's election. On the day after his election, the St. Louis News, which had been a Bell supporter, declared that "if law is to prevail over passion, there is nothing for us to do but to acquiesce in the decision."² A leading Douglas paper, the Jefferson Inquirer, stated that "it is the duty of every good citizen to submit quietly to the election of Mr. Lincoln."³ After the secession of South Carolina, this newspaper expressed hopes that "the people of Missouri would stand firm, and not be led off by the political excitement of other States."⁴ Two leading St. Louis newspapers, the Missouri Democrat and the Missouri Republican, both upheld the Union cause. However, the St. Louis Bulletin, a leading pro-southern paper, stated that it was "the interest and the duty of Missouri to make common cause"⁵ with her sister

¹Douglas Anderson, A Border City During the Civil War (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1903), p. 145.
²St. Louis News, November 8, 1860.
³Jefferson (City) Inquirer, November 10, 1860.
⁴Ibid., December 22, 1860.
⁵St. Louis Bulletin, November 6, 1860.
slaveholding states of the South. After the secession of South Carolina, this newspaper openly advocated the secession of Missouri and exerted its full influence to that end. ¹

On November 23, 1860, the Missouri Statesman reported a large Union meeting held at Columbia. The paper said that after Unionist speeches were "well received," the "vast throng" ² voiced its approval of anti-secession resolutions. The Jefferson Inquirer declared that "every paper in the State, so far as our knowledge extends, with the exception of four: the Examiner, Bulletin, States Rights Gazette, and Milan Farmer, denounces secession as treason." ³

A majority of Missourians sincerely hoped that a compromise could be worked out to save the Union. But this attitude should not beguile one into a feeling that Missouri was safe for the Union, no matter what transpired. The Jefferson Inquirer stated that

The fealty of the people of Missouri to the Federal Government, and their love for the Union as it is, cannot be doubted. That they will cling to it while there is a shadow of hope for its maintenance upon equitable principles, all must believe who know anything of them. . . . ⁴

¹Ibid., op. cit., p. 171.
²Missouri Statesman, November 23, 1860.
³Jefferson Inquirer, January 26, 1861.
⁴Ibid., January 10, 1861.
However, this article concluded by saying that if the Union were permanently disrupted into two parts,

there can be no doubt of the destiny of Missouri. The sympathies of a large majority of her citizens are with the South. . . . No unprejudiced observer can doubt that Missouri would go with the South, if she must go anywhere; and it is equally clear that her citizens will acquiesce in no attempt to coerce the cotton States into submission. . . .

Most of the anti-secession sentiment in Missouri was conditional. Many holders of this attitude believed that Missouri should remain in the Union so long as there was reason to hope that the North would compromise or guarantee to the South that the United States would protect slavery where it then existed. However, these conditional Unionists thought that if the North refused to give these guarantees within a reasonable time, "it would be the duty of Missouri to secede from the Union and to unite with the South for the protection of Slavery and the defence of their common interests." They also believed that if the North, "pending attempts to adjust matters peaceably, should make war upon any Southern State, Missouri would at once take up arms in defence of such State."

This was the complex sentiment in Missouri on the eve of 1861. The secessionist faction was small but vocal.

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1Ibid.  
2Snead, op. cit., p. 56.  
3Ibid.
and powerful. The majority of Missourians tended toward conservatism. They did not wish to secede, and they hoped that the Union could be maintained. But, if compromise broke down—if actual war came—few were prepared to support the northern cause against the southern states. In this case many, if not most, of these conditional Union men would be inclined to take a stand with the South.

If Missouri were to be saved for the Union after civil war came, she would have to be saved by the unconditional Unionists. But this faction was in a small minority, and lacked organization or influence outside of St. Louis. What the leaders of this group would do in 1861 would be critical for Missouri—and for the Union. How could these leaders save Missouri in the crisis that lay ahead?
CHAPTER III

THE ISSUE FACED

Preliminary activities of the secessionists. Two weeks after South Carolina seceded from the United States, the Missouri General Assembly met in joint session for the inauguration of Claiborne Jackson. This twenty-first General Assembly first heard the farewell address of retiring Governor R. N. Stewart. Stewart discussed the crisis that was upon the Union, depicted the inevitable ruin and bloodshed that must attend secession, and concluded with an eloquent appeal for the maintenance of the Union. He said that:

Missouri will stand to her lot, and hold to the Union so long as it is worth an effort to preserve it. She will seek for justice within the Union. She cannot be frightened from her propriety by the past unfriendly legislation of the extreme North, nor dragooned into secession by the restrictive legislation of the extreme South. . . . The idea of voluntary secession is not only absurd in itself, but utterly destructive of every principle on which national faith is founded. . . .

However, Governor Jackson in his Inaugural address, "left little doubt as to where his real sympathies lay." He called the Republican party "purely sectional in its

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1History of Missouri, op. cit., p. 95.
2Kyle, op. cit., p. 179.
3Parrish, op. cit., p. 6.
locality and its principles, and stated that:

The destiny of the slave-holding States of this Union is one and the same. The identity, rather than the similarity, of the domestic institutions--their political principles and party usages--their common origin, pursuits, tastes, manners and customs--their territorial contiguity and intercommercial relations--all contribute to bind together in one brotherhood the States of the South and South-West. Missouri, then, will in my opinion best consult her own interest, and the interest of the whole country, by a timely declaration of her determination to stand by her sister slave-holding States, in whose wrongs she participates, and with whose institutions and people she sympathizes.

In order that 'the will of the people' might be ascertained, Governor Jackson recommended that a state convention should be called immediately, to consider Missouri's relationship with the Union. Peckham observed that this speech was greeted with prolonged applause by both members and lobbyists who favored secession, in sad contrast to the reception given the loyal message of the retiring Governor. It taught the few Union men in either branch that they were surrounded by dangers they had little anticipated.

In some respects these two messages were in accord. But upon the question of coercing a seceding state back into the Union they differed radically. In such a situation, Stewart thought it was the duty of Missouri to adhere to the Union, while Jackson thought its duty was to stand with the southern states. Jackson insisted that this

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1Kyno, loc. cit.
2History of Missouri, op. cit., pp. 95-96.
4Peckham, op. cit., p. 22.
did not necessarily foreshadow disunion, but by this he was covering up his true intentions. It must be remembered that he had already decided to take Missouri out of the Union in the advent of a civil war.

The next day Jackson's supporters in the legislature "set to work to put into operation the machinery necessary to carry Missouri into the Southern Confederacy." Or, as Snead stated:

Responding to the recommendations of Governor Jackson and to the manifest will of the people of the State, it [the Assembly] forthwith initiated measures for ranging Missouri with the South in the impending conflict.

A consultation of pro-southern sympathizers and leading secessionists was held. It was attended by members of the General Assembly and by leading secessionists from St. Louis and the interior of the state. Here it was decided that St. Louis must be put under state control, and that Frank Blair "must be cleaned out." It was decided to introduce three bills in the Assembly as the

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1Parrish, op. cit., p. 7. 2See pages 31-32.
3Ryle, op. cit., p. 181.
5Ryle, loc. cit. 6Backham, op. cit., p. 24.
best means of accomplishing the goal of secession: "The Military Bill; An Act Creating a Board of Police Commissioners, and Authorizing the Appointment of a Police Force for the City of St. Louis; and An Act to Provide for Calling a State Convention."\(^1\)

The Military Bill would place absolute control of the state in the hands of the Governor. It provided penalties, including death, for talking disrespectfully of the Governor or Legislature. It prohibited freedom of speech, and of action and relieved the people of their allegiance to the national government.\(^2\)

The Police Commissioners Bill would take the power to suppress mobs out of the hands of the Unionist mayor of St. Louis and vest that power in the hands of the Governor and the agents he was authorized to appoint.\(^3\)

The Convention Bill would provide for the election of "delegates to a Convention of the people of the State of Missouri . . . on the 18th day of February, 1861."\(^4\) The delegates elected were charged to meet at Jefferson City on February 20 and organize themselves into a Convention and then to consider the existing regulations between the Government of the United States, the people and Governments of the

\(^1\) Ryle, op. cit., pp. 191-2.
\(^2\) Rockham, op. cit., p. 24.
\(^3\) Ryle, op. cit., p. 132.
\(^4\) History of Missouri, op. cit., pp. 95-96.
different States, and the Government and people of the State of Missouri; and to adopt such measures for vindicating the sovereignty of the State, and the protection of its institutions, as shall appear to them to be demanded.¹

However, it was provided that

no act, ordinance, or resolution of said Convention shall be deemed to be valid to change or dissolve the political relations of this State to the Government of the United States, or any other State, until a majority of the qualified voters of this State, voting upon the question, shall ratify the same.²

This last provision was known as the Hardin Amendment, which the Senate approved by a close margin.³ It was generally understood that "the object in calling for a convention was to commit Missouri to secession."⁴ Therefore, the Hardin Amendment was a defeat for the secessionists. Conservative elements in the Assembly had been able to muster just enough strength to pass it.

Why did secessionists in the state government call for a convention to consider secession when they could have tried to exercise this power themselves? No doubt they thought a convention would abolish all legal complications and relieve them of direct responsibility in taking such momentous action.⁵ It is also certain that these

¹Ibid., p. 96. ²Ibid.
³Nyle, op. cit., p. 163.
⁴Missouri Democrat, December 31, 1860.
⁵Nyle, loc. cit.
secessionist leaders were deceived as to the amount and extent of their following throughout the state when they decided to submit the question of secession to the people. They expected their position to be vindicated by the electorate.  

The secessionists were able to push two of their three measures through the Assembly. The Police Commissioners Bill became a law by the signature of the Governor on January 14. Jackson signed the Convention Bill on January 21. However, through parliamentary strategy, conservative elements in the Assembly were able to prevent passage of the Military Bill. This Bill had still not passed when the Legislature adjourned in March.

Nevertheless, at the end of January it appeared that the pro-secessionists were in a good position to carry out their objective. They had confidence that the people would choose a convention that would recommend taking the state out of the Union.

To those not in the secret, it seemed as if secession in Missouri was an accomplished fact; and so certain were Jackson, Reynolds & Co. that the people would decide in their favor, that they willingly submitted the question of a convention to a vote of the State.  

Snead states that Jackson was preparing to seize the Federal arsenal at St. Louis if a convention favorable to his policy were elected.  

1Lockham, op. cit., p. 30.  
2Ibid., p. 56.  
3Snead, P.L., I, 264.
General Daniel W. Frost of the Missouri Militia to confer
with Major Bell, commander of the arsenal, and the results
had been encouraging. On January 24, Frost had written
to Jackson, in part:

I have just returned from the arsenal, where I
have had an interview with Maj. Bell, the commanding
officer of that place. I found the Major everything
that you or I could desire. He assured me that he
considered that Missouri had, whenever the time came,
a right to claim it as being upon her soil... In a word, the Major is with us, where he ought to
be, for all his worldly wealth lies here in St. Louis
(and it is very large), and then, again, his sympathies
are with us.

This arsenal, if properly looked after, will be
everything to our State, and I intend to look after it,
very quietly, however. I have every confidence in the
word of honor pledged to me by the Major...

His idea is that it would be disgraceful to him as
a military man to surrender to a mob, whilst he could
do so, without compromising his dignity to the State
authorities. 1

Three days before the election of delegates to the
convention was to be held, the General Assembly passed a
resolution stating that it regarded "with the utmost
abhorrence the doctrine of coercion... believing that
the same would end in civil war and destroy forever the
Federal Union." 2 Therefore:

if there is any invasion of the slave states for the
purpose of carrying such doctrine into effect...
the people of Missouri will instantly rally on the
side of their Southern brethren to resist the invaders
at all hazards, and to the last extremity. 3

1History of Missouri, op. cit., p. 107.
2Ibid., p. 96. 3Ibid., p. 97.
Thus were the preparations of the secessionist leaders made to take Missouri out of the Union. The first phase of the crisis of 1861 was at hand. What would be the answer of the people of Missouri on February 18?

Activities of Blair. Blair began his attempt to hold Missouri in the Union long before the inauguration of Lincoln. 1 He had been closely watching the activities of the secessionists, and he had been busy with activities of his own.

In 1860, Blair had been chiefly responsible for identifying the Missouri Free Soil or "Freed Democracy" party with the national Republican party. 2 He organized a Missouri delegation to the Republican convention in Chicago, and, as had been stated above, campaigned actively for Lincoln. Throughout 1860 he was, without question, "the leading spirit and adviser" 3 of the Republican party in Missouri. However, in January, 1861, there were not over twenty thousand Republicans in the whole state, and "only in St. Louis did they maintain any kind of organization." 4 In short, though Blair had stated that "St. Louis should secede from Missouri if the latter seceded from the Union," 5

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1 William Ernest Smith, op. cit., II, 19.
2 Pockham, op. cit., p. x. 3 Ibid., p. ix.
the Republicans did not have enough strength to save Missouri on their own. They were not powerful enough to triumph over an aggressive secessionist leadership and a moderate population that would tend to side with the South if actual civil war broke out.

Blair saw in the action of the conditional Union men an opportunity to increase his own strength greatly, by drawing to it those supporters of conservative sentiment who were not eager to vote for the secession of Missouri, even if compromise should fail. These men were numerous, but they looked upon the Republicans as radicals and "felt an inconquerable repugnance to joining that party. They were Union men, but they would not be Republicans." Blair determined to make the co-operation of this faction easier by organizing it and the Republicans into a larger Union party.

Many Republicans opposed this action, but Blair with tenacious energy was able to carry it through. Invitations to the meetings which were to select candidates for the Convention were addressed to "all Unconditional Union men" rather than just to Republicans. "In these meetings a great many anti-Republicans took part, and united in the selection of delegates to the nominating conventions." So with tact, moderation, and persuasiveness, Blair

1. Ibid., op. cit., p. 57.  
2. Ibid., pp. 57-58.
was able to ally large numbers of conditional Unionists to his cause. It was during January that this action was taken.

Prospects looked bleak in the early part of that month for the pro-Union element. The secessionists were in control of the state government, and their activities extended throughout the state. Peckham stated that:

From all parts of the State letters reached Mr. Blair, asking for advice, and begging aid and comfort. I have a great number of these letters before me as I write. Any one of them is an index to the contents of all. Secession was rampant everywhere. Families were removing to more congenial sections. Union men dared not utter their convictions. In all places the secesh [sic] were noisy and undisturbed. The enemies of the Government were rapidly providing themselves with arms and ammunition, and preparing for organization under the new military bill, which they confidently expected would speedily pass the Legislature.¹

On January 6, the secessionists held a mass meeting in St. Louis for the purpose of organizing the pro-slavery sentiment of the city. Lieutenant-Governor Reynolds was the instigator and leading spirit of the meeting.² The most important step taken was the organization of the "Minute Men,"³ whose stronghold was in the northern and central portion of the city. The Minute Men established headquarters at the Perthold Mansion from which floated the "Dobel Flag."⁴ Perthold Mansion was to be the

¹Peckham, op. cit., p. 56.
⁴Peckham, op. cit., p. 30.
headquarters of the pro-slavery activities of Missouri from this time until the capture of Camp Jackson. The meeting closed with the adoption of a resolution in which the Minute Men pledged

a hearty co-operation with our sister Southern states, in such measures as shall be deemed necessary for our mutual protection against the encroachment of Northern fanaticism and the coercion of the Federal Government.

On the following day the constitutional Union men met to consider the critical situation of the state. Among other things, they appointed a committee of twenty to act "for the purpose of opposing Black Republicanism." According to Peckham, these moderates began to profess a willingness to remain in the Union, but they had fought against Frank Blair so long, they did not now aspire to assist in saving the Union by standing shoulder to shoulder with him. . . . they were "Union men, but by no means abolitionists."

Now Blair, without orders or authority from anyone, acted to bring these conditional Unionists into co-operation with his Republican faction for the purpose of saving Missouri for the Union.

It required the utmost of that political tact and management . . . and the most careful and prudent kind of argument, to effect such a coalition between hitherto opposing elements as should serve the cause of the nation in the State of Missouri.

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1Ryle, op. cit., p. 186.  
2As quoted in Ryle, Ibid.  
3Ibid.  
4Peckham, op. cit., p. 49.  
5Ibid., pp. 49-50.
Blair made his appeal to "all Unconditional Union men."

The radical Republicans opposed Blair’s course by contending that no delegate should be nominated except those who had voted for Lincoln. Blair replied that he cared little as to what party any man had belonged; it was a question of what he stood for "now," and who would stand for the Union under all circumstances. He persuaded them to forget their names as Republicans and join the constitutional Unionists to save Missouri.¹ So bitter was the feeling that it required all of Blair’s tact and management to induce these factions to work together against the common enemy.

"I don’t believe," said a Republican partisan, 'in breaking up the Republican party just to please these tender-footed Unionists. I believe in sticking to the party.' "Let us have a country first," responded Blair, 'and then we can talk about parties.'²

Blair called for a public Republican meeting on January 11, and there his ideas were implemented. It was decided to call another meeting for the following evening and to invite all Union men to attend. On the next evening fifteen thousand men, including many prominent citizens, gathered. Followers of Bell, Douglas, and Lincoln—even a few Brockinridge men—gathered in a fusion of parties to

¹William Ernest Smith, op. cit., II, 23.

elect delegates to the convention. The Union movement was thus launched with a wide and powerful following. ¹

Blair and his followers pointed out throughout the campaign that any Union man could join this movement. They spoke the words of moderation that many Missourians wanted to hear, and their influence spread throughout the state. They pointed out that remaining in the Union was necessary to Missouri's economic well-being.

They posed as the champions of law and order; they advocated the established order which appealed to those who dreaded change and uncertainty; they claimed to be opponents of radical and dangerous experiments; they posed as the peace party; and the suddenness of the issue and election was in their favor. ²

At the same time, the secessionists, not as efficiently organized or careful in their selection of candidates as the Unionists, were alienating the voters by being more aggressive and abusive in their campaign methods than their opponents. ³

The moderate attitude of the Unionists, which had been masterminded by Blair so that the unconditional Unionists and the conditional Unionists could work together, won the day. The Unionists polled approximately 110,000 votes and the secessionists only 30,000. ⁴ Thus, they carried the state by a majority of 80,000 votes. In the

¹William Ernest Smith, op. cit., II, 24.
²Ibid., op. cit., p. 200. ³Ibid., p. 208.
St. Louis area, Blair's organization had offered fourteen candidates—seven Douglas men, three Bell men, and four Lincoln men—and these carried the district by a majority of 5,000 votes. Of the ninety-nine men elected to the convention, many were conservative and some were pro-slavery, but none was considered a secessionist. "This decisive victory of the Union forces was largely due to the astute leadership of Francis Preston Blair." Even Snead admitted that "to the courage, moderation, and fact of Francis Preston Blair this result was greatly due."

Blair had proved that conditional Unionists, with wise leadership, could work with his Republicans to promote the cause of the Union in Missouri. The result of this election amazed and discouraged the secessionists. They had not thought such a show of Union strength was possible. It doomed any possibility of passage of the Military Bill until the convention met and arrived at a decision. In fact, it largely paralyzed all secessionist planning and activity until after the convention adjourned. Snead complained that

Panic-stricken, they sought safety in the ranks of Submissionists, and turned Missouri over, unarmed and defenceless, to Frank Blair and his Home Guards.

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1 William Ernest Smith, op. cit., II, 25.
2 Ryle, loc. cit. 3 Ibid.
4 Snead, I, 1, 263. 5 Ibid. 6 Snead, op. cit., v. 66.
Snead further said that a result of this Union victory was the overthrow of the Secessionist majority in the House of Representatives, and the consequent defeat of all measures for organizing, arming, and equipping the militia, and for getting the State ready for war.¹

Finally, the Southern rights men had been so demoralized by the defeat which they had sustained in the election of delegates to the Convention, that they were in no condition to attack the St. Louis arsenal, as they had intended to do if the election had gone in their favor.²

**Other activities of Blair.** In 1860, Republican meetings in St. Louis were often interrupted and sometimes broken up by unruly gangs of secessionists. This prompted Blair to advise the organization of a political club for self-protection. This club became known as the St. Louis Wide Awakes.³ "The 'Wide Awakes' were supported, encouraged, and inspired by the unwavering determination of their founder--Francis P. Blair."⁴ The Wide Awakes were soon effective in guaranteeing security for Republican meetings in St. Louis during the campaign of 1860. Blair was not long in realizing that the election of Lincoln would lead to war, so he counseled the reorganization of

the Wide Awakes into a semimilitary organization. ¹ In the latter part of December, 1860, he issued calls in different wards of St. Louis for meetings to reorganize the Wide Awakes. They were soon organized throughout the city, and, under the leadership of James Peckham, immediately began to drill and learn the rudiments of military tactics.² To avoid clashes with the secessionists, these training meetings were always held in secret, and this secrecy was so well guarded that the secessionists did not realize their existence.

To procure arms for these men, Blair arranged for an "art exhibit" to be held in St. Louis.

There were many boxes shipped from the East, marked "plaster casts—handle with care." Among them were to be found boxes of rifles. Those who arranged the exhibit made it appear that they were so busy that they could not work on it until late at night, in order that the boxes of rifles might be hauled to one of the places where the 'Wide Awakes' were assembled.³

The arrangements for the rifles to be shipped to St. Louis were made by Blair with some eastern firms. "In fact, the entire exhibit was planned by Blair, though executed by others."⁴

Blair kept this organization highly disciplined and held a series of meetings with leading Republicans through

¹Anderson, op. cit., p. 11.
²Kyle, op. cit., p. 188.
⁴Kyle, op. cit., p. 189.
December, 1860, and early January, 1861, to make sure that all were kept fully abreast of developments. In early January, Blair decided that the Wide Awakes should be turned into an outright military organization. This was soon accomplished. The January 11th meeting referred to above led to the founding of the Union Leagues, which any anti-secessionist might join, and to the establishment of the Union Safety Committee to co-ordinate the Leagues' development and activities. Within a short time sixteen companies were organized and drilling (still in secrecy—floors of the meeting places were covered with saw-dust and the windows were covered with blankets to avoid undue noise in drilling.) in St. Louis. These Union Leagues were organized for the purpose of

sustaining the flag and the government of the Union, and to protect the Union men in the city; but more especially to protect the St. Louis arsenal from falling into the hands of the rebels.  

The companies ranged in size from forty to one hundred men, and practically the whole membership of each was German.  

Organization was tight, and Blair retained "absolute authority over all matters concerning the defense and safety of all the Union men of the city."  

It was an extreme measure for Blair to develop a

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1Peckham, op. cit., p. 34.  
2Ibid., Appendix.  
3Ibid.  
4Iwe, op. cit., p. 162.
secret military organization in St. Louis to counter the secessionist Minute Men. But the times seemed to warrant this action. Many militant secessionists lived in the city, and they had publicly vowed to drive the Union men from the city and state. It must be said that Blair's Wide Awakes and Union Leagues contributed much to the success of the Union cause in St. Louis, and, ultimately, in Missouri. It must also be said that both were defensive organizations. They protected Union men and Unionist meetings, but attacked no secessionists. "Blair constantly worked and advised all to do their best to prevent" any clash with the opposing faction. The very fact of their existence probably prevented violent collisions, for their organization and strength made the secessionists cautious and wary.

The State Convention. The ninety-nine members of the State Convention assembled at Jefferson City on February 28. The election had made the outcome of the Convention fairly predictable since no avowed secessionists were elected. Yet, according to one observer, fifty-two were unconditional Union men and forty-seven favored

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1Peckham, op. cit., p. 29.
2Ryle, op. cit., p. 189.
accretion under certain circumstances.¹ Still, they were thoughtful men—not extremists—whose experience and occupations made them able to detect and appreciate the economic interests of the state.

But Blair was taking no chances. As soon as the Convention was organized, he arranged for an offer to be made that it come to St. Louis for the remainder of the session. The members were offered free transportation to St. Louis, free use of the spacious Mercantile Building and other conveniences.² So the members moved to St. Louis and resumed business on March 4. Blair was convinced that the Unionist sentiment in St. Louis was much stronger than in Jefferson City, and he saw no reason to believe that the members of the Convention would not be influenced by their environment.³ The delegates discovered that their new assembly hall had been festively decorated.

A visitor entering the hall might have assumed that the room was the site of a patriotic rally: oversize American flags had been placed on either side of the chamber, and red, white, and blue bunting decorated the large alcove at the west end of the quarters leading into the anterooms. This assumption would have been strengthened when, as the meeting opened, a large American eagle was carried into the hall amid the applause of the delegates.⁴

¹L. L. Webb, Battles and Biographies of Missourians, or the Civil War Period of Our State (Kansas City, Missouri: Hudson-Kimberly Publishing Company, 1900), p. 89.
³Ibid.
⁴Parrish, op. cit., p. 11.
Sterling Price, a conditional Unionist then considered strongly pro-Union was elected president of the convention. James O. Broadhead, a supporter of Blair, soon pointed out that the climate of Missouri was not suited to wide-spread use of slaves,¹ that between 1850 and 1860 the slave population of Missouri had increased only one-fourth as rapidly as the white population,² that the entire taxable property of the state, which, aside from slaves, amounts to $315,000,000, would all be exposed to destruction in a war waged to protect slave property valued at only $45,000,000.³

The vital economic ties with the East were pointed out, and it was stressed that with secession, values of slave property would be greatly reduced because "Canada would be brought to the borders of the state,"⁴ and slaves could easily escape. This argument was not lost on the slaveholders, and "it is undoubtedly true that the ownership of slave property exerted a greater influence for the Union than for the Confederacy."⁵

In the end, facts like these, repeatedly stressed by Unionists at the Convention, many of these members of

²Ryle, op. cit., p. 228.
⁴Ibid. ⁵Ibid.
Flair's St. Louis organization, carried the day, and the first resolution of the Convention stated that

at present there is no adequate cause to impel Missouri to dissolve her connection with the Federal Union, but, on the contrary, she will labor for such an adjustment of existing troubles as will secure the peace, as well as the rights and equality of all the States. ¹

This resolution may appear to be somewhat timid, yet, after all, it was astutely worded by the unconditional Union men in order to secure the support of the State Rights and conditional Union men so that there might be unanimity of action. Thus, its very weakness was its strength. Ryle was convinced "that this was a part of the well laid plans of Francis P. Blair. Again, Jackson, Reynolds, and their cohorts had been outwitted."²

A second resolution declared that the people of Missouri

are devotedly attached to the institutions of our country, and earnestly desire that by a fair and amicable adjustment all the causes of disagreement that at present unfortunately distract us as a people, may be removed, to the end that our Union may be preserved and perpetuated, and peace and harmony be restored between the North and South.³

Other resolutions endorsed the Crittenden Compromise, called for a convention to propose amendments to the Constitution, and entreated

¹History of Missouri, op. cit., p. 96.
²Ryle, op. cit., p. 229.
³History of Missouri, loc. cit.
the Federal Government as the seceding States, to withhold and stay the arm of military power, and on no pretense whatever bring upon the nation the horrors of civil war.¹

Thus, the Convention stood opposed to secession and to civil war. It resolved to meet again on the third Monday of December, 1861, but appointed a committee with power to reconvene the convention at an earlier date if that committee deemed it necessary to do so. Then the Convention adjourned on March 22.

Frank Blair and the Unionists had won the first battle in the struggle for Missouri, but the crisis of 1861 was not yet over.

¹Ibid.
CHAPTER IV

THE ROAD TO HOSTILITIES AND
LYON'S SUMMER CAMPAIGN

The advent of Lyon and the struggle for the St. Louis arsenal. The Governor of Missouri only became more determined in his advocacy of secession after the Convention election. On March 1st he appeared with the Commissioner of Georgia and publicly declared that the honor of Missouri compelled her to stand by the South.¹

Neither was he prepared to accept the verdict of the Convention. In a letter to a confidant he stated:

If it be the purpose of Paschall and Price to make me endorse the position of the Republican, and the miserable, base, and cowardly conduct of Governor Price's submission convention, then they are woefully mistaken.²

Indeed, even though the election and proceedings of the Convention had been disasters for the secessionists, other events were more encouraging. Abraham Lincoln had become president on March 4th, and his inaugural address

¹Edward Conrad Smith, op. cit., p. 132.

²James O. Broadhead, "Early Events of the War in Missouri," War Papers and Personal Reminiscences, 1861-1865, Read Before the Commandery of the State of Missouri, Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States (St. Louis: Trecktol & Company, 1892), 1, 23. Hereafter referred to as Broadhead, War Papers, 1, 23.
caused some apprehension among Missourians who believed his policy would lead to war. It was soon increasingly apparent that the possibility of war was growing more imminent, and many Missourians tended to draw back somewhat from their pro-Union attitude.

Jackson and his assistants, noting a "fluctuation in public opinion" in the latter part of March, "appealed to the people for support in putting Missouri in a state of defense to repel an invasion of the North with its Republican President." Two conditional Union leaders who had been prominent at the Convention, Hamilton Gamble and Sterling Price, voiced sentiments that Missouri should not be forced into participation in a civil war by the North.

The voting element fell into line with Jackson, defeated the Unconditional Union men in the spring elections, encouraged the secessionists, and caused the Flair Republicans no little worry as to what course Missouri would take.

The Republicans even lost control of the city government of St. Louis for the first time since 1857 as their candidate was defeated by the Constitutional Unionist candidate by twenty-six hundred votes. Was it possible that

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1 Edward Conrad Smith, op. cit., p. 149.
2 William Ernest Smith, op. cit., II, 30.
3 Ibid., p. 31. 4 Ibid. 5 Ibid.
6 Edward Conrad Smith, loc. cit.
Missourians would forsake the Union cause if war broke out and would become receptive, after all, to the overtures of the secessionists?

Evidently Blair thought so, and so he pursued a course of action in April and May, 1861, that has always been open to controversy. "Blair strongly believed that St. Louis with its German population and federal arsenal nearby was the key to Missouri and planned accordingly."¹ He felt that to secure control of the arsenal would give the Unionists a firm control of the state. He used all of his authority to insure that the arsenal would remain firmly in Union hands. As Captain Albert Tracy, who was stationed at the arsenal, stated in his diary on April 12:

We can sum it up, though. The vigilance and earnestness of a few officers and men in this Arsenal, are saving it as effectively as any victory, to the Union. Let us but relax or listen to the voice of the deceiver, or of even the lukewarm, and the host with its magnificent outfit of arms, munitions and machinery were gone within the briefest space. With the Arsenal, the City—with the City, the State!²

Governor Jackson also believed that the "big prize"—the key to St. Louis and Missouri—was the federal arsenal which held

60,000 stands of arms, mostly Enfield and Springfield rifles, 1,500,000 cartridges, 90,000 pounds of

¹Parrish, op. cit., p. 15.
powder, a number of field pieces and siege guns, a
great quantity of munitions of various kinds. There
were also machinery and appliances of great value.¹

Jackson had been endeavoring to gain control of the
arsenal since January, and had planned to seize it if the
February convention election had gone in his favor.²

Blair and his supporters had used their influence
to have Major William Bell, the arsenal commander, replaced
late in January, but it was soon obvious to them that the
replacement, Major Peter V. Hagner, also sympathized with
the secessionist cause.³

The removal of Bell and the appointment of Major
Hagner to command the arsenal somewhat disconcerted
the conspirators; not that they had no confidence in
Hagner, but they were annoyed at the idea of General
Scott having an eye upon the place.⁴

The election in February had discouraged and paralyzed the
secessionists, but by the beginning of April prospects
looked brighter, and they determined to make another
attempt to seize the arsenal. As Catton observed:

If the secessionists could seize it they could
equip a whole army and control the entire state.
To prevent such a seizure there was nothing much

¹James M. McElroy, The Struggle for Missouri (Washington:
²Snead, D&L, I, 264.
³Peckham, op. cit., p. 47; and Snead, op. cit., p. 118.
⁴Peckham, op. cit., p. 52.
but Blair's iron determination and the presence of energetic little Captain Lyon.\(^1\)

On February 6, a company of eighty United States troops arrived in St. Louis from Fort Riley, Kansas, to reinforce the arsenal. The commander of this company was Captain Nathaniel Lyon. Blair had become aware of Lyon through the latter's strongly pro-Unionist writings in the *Manhattan (Kansas) Express*, and the Captain was probably transferred to St. Louis at Blair's request.\(^2\)

At any rate, Lyon immediately met with Blair and the Union Safety Committee and was soon secretly helping to organize and train the companies of the Union League.\(^3\)

Lyon discovered that the arsenal was powerless in case of the anticipated attack, and Lyon met with no sympathy from Major Hagner, who commanded the post. To remedy this, Mr. Blair, failing to get prompt responses to his important letters to Washington, concluded to visit the national Capital in person, for the purpose of securing for Captain Lyon the necessary authority to act in any emergency as circumstances might demand.\(^4\)

Lyon wanted to secure the defenses of the arsenal, but was blocked by Hagner. Tracy wrote in his diary on February 16th, that "Lyon is in immediate command of


\(^2\)Edward Conrad Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

\(^3\)Peckham, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

\(^4\)Ibid., p. 66.
defenses of the post, but bitterness is arising, as it must arise between himself and Hagner for the full command of everything. 1 Lyon complained in a letter to Blair on February 25th that:

Major Hagner refuses, as I mentioned to you, to do any of these things, for the defense of the arsenal and has given his orders not to fly to the walls to repel an approach, but to let the enemy have all the advantages of the wall to lodge himself behind it, and get possession of all outside buildings overlooking us, and to get inside and under shelter of our out-buildings, which we are not to occupy before we make resistance. This is either imbecility or d---d villainy... 2

Blair was able to accomplish his objective; Lyon was placed in effective charge of the defenses of the arsenal soon after Lincoln became president. The order reached General William S. Harney, Commander of the Department of the West, about the middle of March, but:

it was construed by that officer in its literal sense, viz. that Captain Lyon's command included only the troops in the arsenal and that particular post. 3

Therefore, on the instructions of General Harney, Major Hagner issued the following order on March 19:

In compliance with Special Order No. 74... assigning to Captain N. Lyon, Second Infantry, the command of the troops and defenses of this post, the undersigned turns over to Captain Lyon all command and responsibility, not appertaining to the commanding officer of the arsenal and his duties as an officer of ordnance. 4

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1Irwin, op. cit., p. 12.
2Peckham, op. cit., p. 67. 3Ibid., p. 69.
4O.L., 1, 1, 669-90.
During March, Lyon had been urging General Harney to let him adequately fortify the arsenal. He had also been meeting nightly with the Union Safety Committee and had been giving the soldiers of the Union League training and instruction. His actions soon came to the attention of Jackson and his supporters, and these were able to exert enough pressure to influence General Winfield Scott to issue an order commanding Lyon to appear before a Court of Inquiry at Leavenworth, Kansas. The secessionists planned to seize the arsenal in Lyon's absence. The Governor then came to St. Louis to concert with General D. W. Frost (who commanded a small brigade of volunteer militia) measures for seizing the arsenal in the name of the State.

Blair persuaded General Scott to revoke the order sending Lyon to Leavenworth, and so another secessionist scheme was thwarted. Lyon remained in St. Louis and proceeded to do what he could to insure the safety of the arsenal.

A system of signals was established, by which the Union men of the city and the Captain at the arsenal could instantly acquaint each other with the movements of the enemy. The arsenal buildings were undermined; bags of sand procured; banquettes arranged; batteries

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1 William Ernest Smith, op. cit., II, 36.
2 Ibid.; and Peckham, op. cit., p. 74.
3 Snead, L.L., I, 264.
put into position; holes made in the wall, through which to point cannon; guards established at the gates and a surveillance instituted over all persons desiring admission.1

Lyon continued to feel thwarted by both Hagner and Harney in his attempts to fortify the arsenal. On April 6, he wrote to Blair who was still in Washington that he could not acquire "a hammer, spade, ax, or any needful tool" without the concession of Major Hagner or through the order of General Harney. Lyon continued that his every attempt to further provide for the defense of the arsenal was frustrated by either Hagner or Harney.2 He soon decided, however, that he would do whatever necessary to save the arsenal, with or without authority.

Rumors were rife at this time that the minute-men intended to attack the arsenal. Peckham attended a meeting of Unionist leaders and reported that Lyon expressed his doubts as to Hagner's loyalty, and his own determination to do whatever was necessary to save the arsenal. He further remarked that if he caught Hagner "endeavoring to aid Jackson in his treason, by surrendering the arsenal, under any pretense whatever, he would throw him into the river."3 One Unionist remarked that the Union men, though fully organized, would need additional arms if attacked but

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1Peckham, loc. cit. 2Ibid., p. 70. 3Ibid., pp. 74-75.
could not get them while Hagner was in command. Lyon replied:

Major Hagner had control of the stores in this arsenal, but he treats me and my men like dogs, hardly giving us what is indispensably necessary. However, those men yonder (pointed to his company then on parade) are under my command, and if the necessity arises, you shall have the guns.¹

Thus matters in Missouri and in St. Louis stood when, on April 12, the Confederates opened fire on Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor. President Lincoln promptly issued a call for 75,000 men to put down the rebellion. The Secretary of War notified Governor Jackson that Missouri's quota was 4,000 men, but the Governor refused to provide a single man to the nation's forces on the grounds that they would no doubt be used to "make war on" the people of the seceded states. On April 17, Jackson replied as follows to Cameron:

Your dispatch of the 15th inst., making a call on Missouri for four regiments of men for immediate service has been received. There can be, I apprehend, no doubt but these men are intended to form a part of the President's army to make war upon the people of the seceded States. Your requisition, in my judgment, is illegal, unconstitutional and revolutionary in its objects, inhuman and diabolical, and cannot be complied with. Not one man will the State of Missouri furnish to carry on such an unholy crusade.²

¹As quoted in Peckham, Ibid., p. 75.
²O.R., 3, I, 82-83.
Numerous meetings were held throughout the state to draft resolutions supporting the Governor's stand. Quite probably the majority of Missourians agreed with this stand.\(^1\) Most Missourians did not wish to secede, but they were not yet prepared to participate in a civil war against the South.

On the same day that Jackson made the above reply to Cameron, he sent representatives to Jefferson Davis asking for siege guns and mortars to help in capturing the arsenal.\(^2\) He also issued a call for a special session of the state Legislature to begin on May 2. It was to take "measures to perfect the organization and equipment of the militia and raise the money to place the state in a proper attitude of defense."\(^3\) To this proclamation, the St. Louis Missouri Democrat later rejoined:

"In a proper attitude for defense!" Defense against what and whom? While Missouri is a member of the United States, the Federal government will not invade our borders. . . . Is the defense of which the Governor speaks to be made against the Confederate States? That supposition is too ludicrous to call for a serious remark.\(^4\)

At the same time that Jackson called for the Legislature to meet, he ordered the state militia to assemble in their

\(^1\)Parrish, op. cit., p. 17.
\(^2\)C.R., I, I, 688-90.
\(^3\)William W. Smith, op. cit., II, 37.
\(^4\)Missouri Democrat, May 7, 1861.
respective military districts to go into "encampment for six days of instruction and drill, as provided by law."¹

Frank Blair returned to St. Louis from Washington on the same day that Jackson refused to send troops. He brought with him an order from the War Department giving Lyon 5,000 stands of arms from the arsenal to be used in arming loyal citizens. On April 17, Blair wired Cameron for authority to fill the state's quota by mustering into service the Union Guards of St. Louis.²

Blair and Lyon now believed that the secessionists were going to attempt to seize the arsenal at any time. On April 16, without consulting Harney, Lyon wrote to Illinois Governor Richard Yates, suggesting that he requisition a large supply of arms from the arsenal, thus preventing their falling into unfriendly hands.³ Lyon sent patrols into the city to give an alarm if the secessionists attempted an attack. The presence of these patrols caused the pro-Jackson police board of that city to protest to Harney. Harney ordered the patrols to cease and withheld permission for Lyon to distribute the arms placed at his disposal under the requisition which Blair had brought from Washington. Blair had believed for some

¹Parrish, op. cit., p. 20.
time that Harney's moderation was a handicap to the Union cause in St. Louis, and when he learned of the above actions, he dispatched a special emissary to Washington to accomplish Harney's removal. He also wrote to his brother, Montgomery Blair, Lincoln's Postmaster-General, to aid in this.¹

Results now came quickly. On April 21, Hagner was dismissed,² and Harney was called to Washington.³ Another order authorized Lyon to muster into the United States service the four regiments—or up to 10,000 men—which Jackson had refused to furnish.⁴

(These could be none other than Blair's Germans, the Union Leagues who had been zealously drilling, often with Captain Lyon's aid, in Turnverein halls all winter.) In addition, Lyon was told that if he, Blair, and Blair's committee of public safety thought it necessary he could proclaim martial law.⁵

These were extraordinary instructions, but across the bottom of the order General Scott had written: "It is revolutionary times, and therefore I do not object to the irregularity of this."⁶ That same day, Lyon mustered volunteer Union Guardsmen into the United States Army,

¹Parrish, op. cit., p. 18.
²William E. Smith, op. cit., II, 28.
³Parrish, loc. cit. ⁴G.R.R., I, III, 669-70.
⁵Catton, op. cit., p. 31.
marched them to the arsenal and distributed arms to them.

Three days later, Captain James H. Stokes of the Illinois militia appeared at the arsenal. He carried Governor Yates's requisition for arms and ammunition for 10,000 men.

The purpose of his visit was well suspected, and Stokes found quite a crowd of civilians gathered at the arsenal gates when he arrived. In order to decoy them, Lyon sent a few boxes of old flintlock muskets up to the levee as if he were preparing to load them on a steamboat. The crowd followed, seized the muskets, and carried them away to hiding places in the city, believing they had a quantity of serviceable weapons.1

Shortly before midnight, another steamboat was brought to the levee and quickly loaded with the requisitioned arms. Lyon and Stokes then decided that it would be wise to send additional arms to Illinois for safekeeping. So, 11,000 additional stands of arms were taken from the arsenal without requisition or authorization for shipment across the river. Then they were transferred to a train and carried inland.2

When Jackson learned of this, he ordered the militia in St. Louis to collect all the arms they could find in the city and send these to Jefferson City.3 Already, on April 20, state militia had seized the arms at a small federal arsenal at Liberty.

1Parrish, op. cit., p. 10. 2Ibid. 3Ibid., pp. 20-21.
On April 23, Jefferson Davis wrote Jackson that our power to supply you with ordnance is far short of the will to serve you. . . . We look anxiously and hopefully for the day when the star of Missouri shall be added to the constellation of the Confederate States of America. . . .

He agreed that the St. Louis arsenal was an important target, and he said that four siege guns were being sent to Frost to help capture it. Jackson replied that

Missouri, you know, is yet under the tyranny of Lincoln's Government, so far, at least, as forms go. . . . We are using every means to arm our people, and, until we are better prepared, must move cautiously.

Camp Jackson. Jackson called out some seven hundred troops of the state militia under General Frost, and on May 6, Frost established Camp Jackson on the edge of St. Louis. The hills overlooking the arsenal, where he had originally planned to camp, had already been occupied by Lyon. There can be no doubt as to the purpose of Camp Jackson. Snead observed that Jackson had decided that Frost should camp his brigade upon the hills adjacent to and commanding the arsenal, so that when the opportunity occurred he might seize it and all its stores.

The secessionist St. Louis Police Board formally demanded on this same day, May 6, that Lyon withdraw all

1) ibid., 1, I, 638.  
2) ibid.  
3) ibid., 1, I, 689.  
4) Snead, LXI, 1, 264.
United States troops from positions outside the arsenal, but Lyon, of course, refused,\textsuperscript{1} thereby rendering Camp Jackson virtually harmless from the offset. Two days later, the arms and ammunition which Jackson had requested from Davis arrived. They had been brought up river to St. Louis in boxes of various sizes marked "marble Tam- aroa." State militia officers had met the boat as it docked and had quickly unloaded the "marble" and taken it to Camp Jackson.\textsuperscript{2} However, one of the boxes had broken open on route to the camp, and its contents were revealed.\textsuperscript{3} Lyon and Blair now decided to capture Camp Jackson. They knew that, while the Union flag flew over the camp, small Confederate flags were attached to many tentpoles. They also knew that two of the camp's main streets were named "Davis" and "Pleuregard" avenues after Confederate heroes.\textsuperscript{4}

Lyon brought the proposal to capture Camp Jackson before the Union Safety Committee on Thursday, May 9. Blair and three other members supported the idea; two opposed it because they felt it was unnecessary.

Critics have stated that Lyon wanted to capture

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\item[1] Parish, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 22.
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Camp Jackson to thwart an attack by Frost. They point out that this idea was ridiculous, since

... with the removal of the arms to Illinois, Frost no longer had any reason for attacking the arsenal; the militia had but 700 men against Lyon's 10,000; the location of Camp Jackson and Lyon's occupancy of the heights overlooking the arsenal made it impossible for Frost to make a surprise move against that post; had the militia made an attack, they could have expected little help from the Confederacy, for neither Arkansas nor Tennessee, the nearest Southern states, had yet seceded.¹

Moreover, the time limit of the Missouri militia would expire in two days, and then the camp would be broken up.

It seems impossible to believe that Lyon and Blair were not aware of these obvious facts. Hence, it is necessary to conclude they were prompted by other than military motives. Lyon and Blair were, of course, completely aware of what Camp Jackson was and what it symbolized. To them it stood for secessionist sentiment in Missouri, and its very presence was a challenge and an insult to the Federal Government. Lyon and Blair believed that it would be dangerously encouraging to the secessionists to let it disband peacefully. They resolved that the secessionists should be taught a lesson. When Lyon called the camp a threat to the United States Government,² he obviously was speaking symbolically.

On the afternoon of May 10, Lyon marched his men

¹Ibid., p. 22.
to Camp Jackson and surrounded it. He sent the following note to Frost:

Your command is regarded as evidently hostile toward the Government of the United States.

It is, for the most part, made up of those secessionists who have openly avowed their hostility to the general Government, and have been plotting at the seizure of its property and the overthrow of its authority. You are openly in communication with the so-called Southern Confederacy, which is now at war with the United States, and you are receiving at your camp, from the said Confederacy, and under its flag, large supplies of the material of war, most of which is known to be the property of the United States.

Lyon demanded that Frost surrender his command within one-half hour. Frost had no alternative except certain destruction. He quickly complied, and the Union forces--made up mostly of St. Louis Germans--placed the Missouri militia under arrest and marched them out of the camp. A large crowd of citizens which had gathered along the road to watch the procedure soon became unmanageable. They began throwing rocks and verbal insults at the soldiers. Someone in the crowd fired a gun, and an officer gave the command to return fire. Before this melee was over, some twenty citizens had been killed and others wounded. The Missouri Democrat of St. Louis reported that "many" citizens had fired at the United States troops before this

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1Ibid. 2Varrish, op. cit., p. 24.
fire was returned. About this unfortunate event, Lyon later declared that:

The troops manifested every forbearance and at last, simply obeying the impulse, natural to us all, of self-defense, discharged their guns. If innocent men, women, and children, whose curiosity placed them in a dangerous position, suffered with the guilty, it is no fault of the troops.2

Frost's command was marched to the arsenal as prisoners of war, but was released the following day after subscribing to the following parole:

We, the undersigned, do pledge our words as gentlemen that we will not take up arms nor serve in any military capacity against the United States, during the present civil war. This parole shall be returned upon our surrounding ourselves, at any time, as prisoners of war. While we make this pledge with the full intention of observing it, we hereby protest against the injustice of its exaction.3

Was the capture of Camp Jackson a wise move? Many historians have called the whole affair a serious blunder for several reasons. First, it excited much sentiment in Missouri against the Union cause and drove many conditional Unionists into the ranks of the secessionists. Foremost among these was Sterling Price, a popular figure and able military man who wrote that the capture of Camp Jackson was:

... an equally plain violation of our constitutional rights, and a gross indignity to the citizens of this state, which would be resisted to the last extremity.

1Missouri Democrat, May 14, 1861.
2O.R., 1, III, 4.
3History of Missouri, op. cit., p. 102.
The people of Missouri cannot be forced, under the terrors of a military invasion, into a position not of their own free choice. A million of such people as the citizens of Missouri were never yet subjugated, and if attempted, let no apprehension be entertained of the result.1

Secondly, it overawed the opponents of the secessionists in the Legislature, which had met again on May 2, and made it possible for the latter to pass the Military Bill which Jackson had been trying to get since January. This bill gave him the power to wage war in Missouri for the secessionist cause. Thirdly, it brought war to Missouri.

It should be pointed out that many observers thought the capture of Camp Jackson was not a blunder. Even Snead observed that this action had completely frustrated "the scheme to seize the arsenal."2 Another observer said that the capture "destroyed the captivating aggressiveness of the Disunionists, and threw their leaders on the defensive."3 U. S. Grant and Missouri Senator Champ Clark both believed that the capture "saved Missouri for the Union."4 Wiley Britton, a contemporary, said that: "The Union men

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2Snead, P. L., I, 264.  
3McElroy, op. cit., p. 74.

all over the State now began to take courage when they saw that the Government was in earnest in regard to affording them protection."

Broadhead claimed that Lyon's action was wise and justified because of "secret movements which were being made in St. Louis and in other parts of the State by enemies of the Government" of which he was aware. Ashbel Woodward, another contemporary, stated that:

When at length the time for action came, the brilliant exploit at "Camp Jackson" fell with crushing weight upon the astonished plotters of treason. Thenceforth the city of St. Louis was freed from the outward exhibitions of disloyalty. Enemies of the country no longer flauntingly displayed the insignia of rebellion in conspicuous places, but slunk away into secret corners whence the mutterings of discontent might not be heard.

Though the views of some of these observers were biased, it is probably true that

The encouragement to the North and a halting administration was worth far more to the cause of the North than the Union men, who were scared into the Confederacy by Blair and Lyon.

Since only 40,000 Missourians joined the Confederate army during the course of the war (31,317 Missourians had voted for Breckinridge in November, 1860)—as opposed to 111,000

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2 Broadhead, War Papers, p. 22.


who joined the Union army—it must be said that "the number of true Unionists among the 40,000 who were precipitated headlong into the Confederacy by the capture of Camp Jackson must have been small, indeed."¹

Perhaps the action did bring war to Missouri, but the nation was at war, and what would the alternative have been? Jackson had been urging that Missouri adopt a position of "armed neutrality," but what did this mean? "Armed neutrality," observed the Missouri Democrat, "is simply the preliminary to secession."² Surely the times were too dangerous, the stakes too high, to let the secessionists pursue their activities at will and flaunt their authority before the people of Missouri.

Flair and Lyon had a point to make, and they had made it. There was to be no toleration of secessionist activity in Missouri and "no middle ground of safety" for the undecided mass of people. Missouri would have to participate in the war, and the state would pay a terrible price for this participation in the years ahead. But the preservation of the Union was at stake, and this end surely justified the price Missouri would pay.

The road to open war. The evening after the capture of Camp Jackson, "terror quickly spread among the

¹Ibid. ²Missouri Democrat, May 7, 1861.
secessionists of St. Louis."\(^1\) The streets soon filled with rioting, angry men, and sporadic rioting continued through that Friday night and on into the weekend. In the midst of this excitement, General Harney returned from Washington on Sunday, May 11, to resume command of his department. He had justified his actions to the satisfaction of his superiors. Lyon was relegated once again to a subordinate position, and Harney attempted to calm the situation and work out a compromise with the secessionists. A meeting on May 21 resulted in an agreement between Harney and Price by which the former pledged (in effect) that the federal government would respect the neutrality of Missouri.\(^2\) Both governments—federal and state—were to help maintain peace. Price, now the commander of the Missouri Militia, was to have active control of this undertaking, with Harney's troops to be used as a reserve force when needed outside St. Louis.

This agreement caused considerable alarm to the Unionists in St. Louis. Writing for the Union Safety Committee, Broadhead complained to Montgomery Blair on May 22:

> We fear that no good will come of the arrangement but that it will only result in putting off the evil

\(^1\)Parrish, op. cit., p. 24. \(^2\)Ibid., p. 29.
day until such time as the enemy will be better prepared to make resistance.\(^1\)

As soon as Harney returned to St. Louis, Frank Blair sent an agent to Washington to press for his removal a second--and final--time. After much indecision, President Lincoln decided to go along with Blair. On May 20, Blair received an order for Harney's removal with a personal letter from Lincoln asking him not to serve this order unless, "... in your judgment it is indispensable. ..."\(^2\) to do so.

With this power in his pocket, what was Blair's reaction to the Harney-Price agreement: In fairness, it must be stated that he wrote to Secretary of War Cameron on May 23 saying:

> The agreement between Harney and Price gives great disgust and dissatisfaction to the Union men; but I am in hopes we can get along with it, and think that Harney will insist on its execution to the fullest extent, in which case it will be satisfactory.\(^3\)

Blair's hopes quickly disappeared in the days which followed. Letters began pouring into St. Louis from all corners of the state. Their writers complained of mis-treatment at the hands of the secessionists and of military preparation and organization being carried on by the state government.\(^4\) Blair relayed his misgivings to Harney who,

\(^{1}\)Ibid. \(^{2}\)0.R., I, III, 374. \(^{3}\)Ibid., 376. \(^{4}\)Parrish, op. cit., p. 30.
in turn, sought reassurance from Price. Price replied that these reports were false. Apparently this satisfied Harney, for he wrote:

I anticipate no serious disturbance in the State. I am sure that many of the reports which have reached the President [The letters referred to above were forwarded to Mr. Lincoln by Blair.] relative to the condition of affairs in Missouri have proceeded from irresponsible sources. Upon investigation here of complaints seemingly aggravated it has appeared in several instances that they were groundless or greatly exaggerated. Matters are progressing as satisfactorily in this State as I could expect considering the very great excitement that has lately pervaded the community. ¹

Blair now was fully convinced that the Union cause could no longer afford to retain Harney in command of its forces in Missouri. To him the indications of violations of the Harney-Price agreement were too strong to be overlooked. Harney’s loyalty was not in question, but Blair believed that the General’s policy of moderation and compromise was dangerous to the Union cause in the state in view of the existing situation. He delivered the removal order to Harney on May 30, and Lyon resumed temporary command of the Department of the West.

The wisdom of Blair’s action has long been open to debate, ² but in light of facts mentioned in the last

¹ O.R., 1, III, 331.
section, it seems to have been a proper one. Given the conditions of the times, surely it is impossible to believe that the Harney-Price agreement could have lasted indefinitely. It must be remembered that the Union cause in the East sunk lower and lower through 1861 and 1862, and it is ludicrous to think that the Jackson secessionists would have made no further attempt to take Missouri out of the Union. As Jackson had stated earlier in a private letter:

I do not think Missouri should secede to-day or to-morrow, but I do not think it good policy that I should publicly so declare. I want a little time to arm the State, and I am assuming every responsibility to do it with all possible dispatch. Missouri should act in concert with Tennessee and Kentucky. They are all bound to go out, and should go together if possible. My judgment is that North Carolina, Tennessee and Arkansas, will be out in a few days, and when they go Missouri and Kentucky must follow. Let us then prepare to make our exit. . . . That she ought to go, and will go at the proper time, I have no doubt.

She ought to have gone out last winter when she could have seized the public arms and public property and defended herself. This she has failed to do and must now wait a little while. . . .

The Harney-Price agreement would have certainly worked to the advantage of the secessionists. They could have developed their forces under the newly-passed Military Bill and have been in a better position to secede at a later date. It must be remembered that the agreement did not void the Military Bill. It merely provided that the

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1Broadhead, War Papers, pp. 21-25.
men who had gathered at Jefferson City (Nearly a thousand secessionists had gathered there at the news of the capture of Camp Jackson.) would "return home to be organized by the commanders of their respective districts as the law required." ¹

Price, upon learning of Harney's removal, decided that the agreement between the two had been broken. He sent instructions to his district commanders to hasten the enrollment of the State Guard in order that the expected invasion might be met. ²

Even now, however,

Some well-meaning gentlemen, who vainly imagined that Missouri could maintain her neutrality in the midst of war, now sought to establish a truce between Price and Lyon. ³

It was resolved to hold a "summit meeting" as a final effort to work out a compromise. Under persuasion from Blair, Lyon agreed to give Jackson and Price safe conduct to

visit St. Louis on or before the 12th of June, in order to hold an interview for the purpose of effecting, if possible, a peaceable solution to the troubles of Missouri. ⁴

¹Parrish, op. cit., p. 29.
²Rockham, op. cit., p. 221; and Snead, op. cit., p. 192.
³Snead, P. 1, I, 267.
⁴Rockham, op. cit., p. 384.
The two state officials, accompanied by Thomas L. Snead, Governor Jackson's aide, arrived late on the afternoon of Tuesday, June 11. That evening they conferred at the Planters' House with Lyon, Blair, and Major Horace A. Conant, the latter's secretary. The men argued for more than four hours about the relations between state and nation with Lyon dominating the discussion. Unfortunately, no agreement could be reached. Finally, Lyon rose. With little passion, he deliberately and emphatically closed the meeting with this declaration:

Rather than concede to the State of Missouri the right to demand that my Government shall not enlist troops within her limits, or bring troops into the State whenever it pleases, or move its troops at its own will into, out of, or through the State; rather than concede to the State of Missouri for one single instant the right to dictate to my Government in any matter however unimportant, I would see . . . every man, woman, and child in the State, dead and buried. This means war. In one hour one of my officers will call for you and conduct you out of my lines.¹

So saying, Lyon marched out of the room, and the meeting was at an end. There would be no neutrality for Missouri in the Civil War. She would secede or she would actively join with the North in its fight for the Union.

Jackson, Price, and Snead returned immediately to Jefferson City, stopping only to burn two railroad bridges.²

¹Snead, op. cit., pp. 189-200. Blair's secretary worded Lyon's statement differently, but the meaning is the same.

²Barsh, op. cit., p. 32.
On the day after the meeting (June 12), Jackson issued a proclamation calling into active service fifty thousand state militia men "for the purpose of repelling invasion, and for the protection of the lives, liberty and property of the citizens of this State." He instructed the people that their first allegiance was due to their own state; that they were under no obligation, whatever, to obey the unconstitutional edicts of the military despotism which had enthroned itself at Washington, nor submit to the infamous and degrading sway of its wicked minions in this State.

This proclamation was dispatched to all parts of the state. at the same time orders went out to state militia district commanders that they were to assemble their men immediately and prepare them for action. Jackson and Price went to Poonville from Jefferson City with one company of militia in the belief that that town could be defended more easily than the capital.

Hearing of Jackson's proclamation, Lyon and Blair left St. Louis on June 14 and headed toward Jefferson City with two thousand men. War had come to Missouri.

**Lyon's summer campaign.** It is not within the scope of this paper to discuss Lyon's military campaign in

1 *History of Missouri*, op. cit., p. 106.  
2 Ibid.  
3 Bnead, op. cit., p. 206.
Missouri in great detail. It will suffice to outline it briefly and then to consider what it meant to the Union cause in Missouri.

The Union army occupied Jefferson City on June 15. By then, the secessionists had fled, most of them going with the Governor and Price to Boonville, fifty miles to the northwest. Lyon drove after them, and on June 17 he routed about seventeen hundred state militia men who had gathered there in an almost bloodless skirmish.\(^1\) The state forces retreated in such confusion, that this battle was "often jocularly styled 'the Boonville races.'\(^2\) Jackson now had no choice but to retreat hastily to the south-western part of the state which he did "with some two or three hundred men who still adhered to him and to the cause which he represented."\(^3\) Of Lyon's rapid advance and campaign, Sneed stated:

"From a military standpoint the affair at Boonville was a very insignificant thing, but it did in fact deal a stunning blow to the Southern-rights men of Missouri, and one which weakened the Confederacy during all of its brief existence. It was indeed the consummation of Blair's statesmanlike scheme to make it impossible for Missouri to secede, or out of her great resources to contribute liberally of men and material to the South, as she would have done could her people have had their own way. It was also the most brilliant

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1. Brownlee, op. cit., p. 11.


achievement of Lyon's well-conceived campaign. The
capture of Camp Jackson had disarmed the State, and
completed the conquest of St. Louis and all the
adjacent counties. The advance upon Jefferson City
had put the State government to flight and taken
away from the Governor the prestige which sustains
established and acknowledged authority. The dispersion
of the volunteers that were flocking to Boonville to
fight under Price for Missouri and the South extended
Lyon's conquest at once to the borders of Iowa, closed
all the avenues by which the Southern men of North
Missouri could get to Price and Jackson, made the
Missouri River a Federal highway from its source to
its mouth, and put an end to Price's hope of holding
the rich and friendly counties in the vicinity of
Lexington till the Confederacy could send an army to
his support, and arms and supplies for the men whom
he was concentrating there.1

Price had gone on to Lexington to raise forces. How­
ever, after the battle at Boonville, he, too, had to retire
into southwest Missouri. He intended to organize an army
within supporting distance of a Confederate army on the
northern border of Arkansas commanded by General Ben
McCulloch.

On June 25, Blair left for Washington. The first
phase of his personal assistance to the Union cause in
Missouri was at an end, but it must be said that he played
his part well. By that time

the Federals were ahead of the game in Missouri. They
had played it irregularly, as General Scott admitted,
but they had not been bound by legalisms. In Frank
Blair and Nathaniel Lyon the Lincoln government had
two men who were not afraid to act like revolutionists
once revolution had begun.2

1 Ibid., pp. 267-68. 2 Catton, op. cit., p. 35.
At the same time that Lyon advanced up the river to Jefferson City and Boonville, he sent a small force of nine hundred men under Colonel Franz Sigel to Rolla by train. From there it pressed southwest toward Carthage to intercept Jackson and Price and to prevent the State Guard units they were raising from joining with McCulloch and his Confederates in Arkansas. However, Jackson was successful in quickly raising a large—but poorly equipped—force of several thousand.¹ By the time Sigel met the state forces, he was badly outnumbered. He pressed ahead, though, and a sharp encounter took place near Carthage on July 5. The Union men were soon forced to retreat back to the north, and Jackson continued south until he met with Price, who had already combined his forces with those of McCulloch on the Arkansas border.²

Meanwhile, Lyon had stopped all river traffic at Boonville. Union patrols took over the major crossings and ferries between St. Charles and Kansas City, and an improvised gunboat cruised the stream destroying rafts and boats to prevent enemy forces from crossing south. "By these adroit maneuvers Lyon bisected the state through the heart

¹*History of Missouri*, op. cit., p. 115.
of its most heavily populated slaveholding section. Lyon next had the railroad lines north of the Missouri River occupied by troops called in from Kansas, Illinois, and Iowa. The control of water and rail transportation routes put the Unionists in an advantageous position in Missouri. This action forced Jackson and Price into southwest Missouri, and also tended to paralyze State Guard recruiting. Many State Guard companies and two small brigades commanded by Brigadier Generals Thomas A. Harris and Martin E. Green in north Missouri were stranded and dispersed. In November Price wrote Jefferson Davis that he had been forced to leave between five and ten thousand recruits in central and northern Missouri because of Lyon's swift movements. Time after time Price sent officers into the Missouri River counties to gather those recruits and lead them south. His only offensive action during July was based on these recruiting parties which were also ordered to destroy rail and telegraph communications wherever possible. General Lyon was successful in stamping out most of them as soon as they were formed.

Lyon left Foonville in pursuit of the Governor on

July 3 with about 2350 men.\(^1\) On the 7th he met a Union force of about twenty-five hundred regulars and Kansas troops under Major Samuel Sturgis. On the 9th Lyon learned that Sigel had been defeated and that Jackson and Price had combined with McCulloch. Perhaps he should have then retreated, but this was not in his nature. Instead, he hastened on to Springfield, arriving there on the 13th, and made this town his headquarters.\(^2\)

Now, for all his successes, Lyon found himself in a bad situation. His forces numbered less than six thousand, and the combined Confederate forces totaled over eleven thousand.\(^3\) Lyon requested more troops from Frémont several times, but none were forthcoming.\(^4\) It suffices to say that Lyon refused to retreat from his exposed position.

On August 6, he attacked his foes and the battle of Wilson's Creek was fought. This battle was as fiercely contested as any of the war, and, relative to the numbers involved, one of the most costly in terms of casualties.\(^5\) Nathaniel Lyon fell that day, his career and his fight for the Union abruptly ended. The battle was more of a draw

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\(^1\) Shead, PM, loc. cit.  
\(^2\) Ibid.  
\(^3\) History of Missouri, op. cit., p. 123.  
\(^4\) See pages 104-109.  
\(^5\) Monaghan, op. cit., p. 131.
strictly speaking, than a Confederate victory (Both sides lost about the same number of men, and the Confederates were unable to follow up the Union retreat.), but after Lyon's death Major Sturgis, who assumed command, ordered a retreat back to Springfield. With the Confederates being unable to follow up an offensive, the Union forces were able to continue their retreat without molestation to Rolla, 125 miles distant. They arrived there on August 19.¹

Lyon was not foolish to risk battle, though greatly outnumbered, at Wilson's Creek. His was a brave act, perhaps rash, but not foolish nor irresponsible. For Lyon was no fool; he was a skilled military commander, and he knew that battles had been won against these odds before. To prove his point, he almost won the battle of Wilson's Creek. His plan was bold, excellent, and he might well have won had it not been for the incompetence of a subordinate, Sigel, at a crucial point.² Sigel—sent to attack the Confederates from the rear—failed to maintain discipline among his command after a preliminary success, and was defeated and dispersed.³

¹History of Missouri, loc. cit.
²Ronachan, op. cit., pp. 176-78.
³Ibid.
The battle did tend to benefit the Union cause in Missouri and elsewhere. First, it gave that cause a hero and encouragement— for most northerners preferred to look upon it as a Union victory—at a time when these both were sorely needed. The New York Tribune reported a dispatch from an on-the-scene correspondent. In part, it stated:

... though we drove the enemy from his stronghold, and successfully repulsed his repeated attempts to retake it, forced him to burn his baggage train and tents to keep them from falling into our hands, and captured large numbers of prisoners and horses, we have lost our commander, and our army is compelled to fall back by the numerical force of the Rebels. ...

A review of the events immediately preceding the battle, will show the causes which induced Gen. Lyon to attack an army formidably armed and equipped, and outnumbering his own more than three to one. It will be seen that to the last he was the gallant soldier and true patriot, with an eye single to the cause of the Union. ...

A consultation was held, and the question of evacuating Springfield seriously discussed. ... Gen. Sweeney, however, pointed out the disastrous results which must ensue upon retreating without a battle—how the enemy would be flushed and boastful over such an easy conquest, the Union element crushed or estranged from us, and declared himself in favor of holding on to the last moment, and of giving the enemy battle. ... 1

One participant in the battle wrote to the Missouri Democrat that he knew Lyon well and was with Sigel during the action. He said that Lyon had doubts as to the result of the impending engagement but that he

1 New York Tribune, August 13, 1861.
considered it a battle necessary to be fought.... rather than be considered as deserting the loyal men of southern Missouri, he determined to give the enemy a fight.... In addition, without giving a battle, the army could not have retreated in peace, but would have been harassed from Springfield to Rolla. It was a battle that had to be fought:1

Ashbel Woodward, writing in 1862, pointed out that Lyon's campaign in Missouri had the fortunate effect of "relieving the unfortunate issue of our efforts elsewhere." Woodward continued that Lyon's exploits raised "the descendant spirits of the loyal, and despite our disasters, caused the heart of the nation to beat high with hope."2 In 1866, another observer claimed that Lyon would have surrendered the state to the secessionists if he had retreated without a battle because "the impulse given to the cause of treason would have forced all the unprotected into its ranks." This observer, Missouri Senator B. Grants Brown, concluded that Lyon's actions "exerted an untold influence in strengthening the loyal cause throughout all the nation."3 Of course, these observers were all Unionists. Sned's admiring summary of Lyon's career is noteworthy.

1"L.T.C." to St. Louis Missouri Democrat, September 3, 1861.

2Woodward, op. cit., p. 17.

3B. Grants Brown, "General Nathaniel Lyon" (oration before the General Assembly of Missouri at the inauguration of the Lyon Monument Association, Jefferson City, January 11, 1866), pp. 6-7.
Rarely have I met so extraordinary a man as Lyon, or one that has interested me so deeply. Coming to St. Louis from Kansas on the 6th of February, this mere captain of infantry, this little, rough-visaged, red-bearded, weather-beaten Connecticut captain, by his intelligence, his ability, his energy, and his zeal, had at once acquired the confidence of all the Union men of Missouri, and had made himself respected, if not feared, by his enemies. In less than five months he had risen to the command of the Union armies in Missouri, had dispersed the State government, had driven the Governor and his adherents into the extremest corner of the State, had almost conquered the State, and would have completely conquered it had he been supported by his Government; and now he has given his life willingly for the Union which he revered, and to the cause of Human Freedom to which he was fanatically devoted.  

Throughout the first seven months of 1861, the secessionists in Missouri had been defeated in time of peace by Blair and routed in time of war by Lyon. But now it was August, Blair and Lyon were absent from the scene, and the secessionists were encouraged and on the advance again. The final crisis of 1861 in Missouri was about to be played out.

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1Snead, RL, I, 273.
CHAPTER V

FRÉMONT'S ONE HUNDRED DAYS

The final member of the trio with which this study is concerned—John Charles Frémont—is probably the most controversial and most maligned of the three. It appears that his leadership was effective and valuable to the Union cause in Missouri during his one hundred days in command. His actions during this command were far from perfect; he made many mistakes. But most of these unfortunate mistakes were made with other northern leaders—not with the secessionists. Even while alienating himself from many powerful northern leaders; he was making the best of a discouraging situation and was laying a sound and enduring basis for the Union cause in Missouri.

Though Blair and Lyon had adroitly kept Missouri in the Union during the first half of 1861, the issue was far from settled when Frémont assumed command in St. Louis on July 25. The Union defeat at the first Battle of Bull Run had thrown an entirely new complexion on the whole situation since Lyon had left Boonville on July 3. As Frémont stated: "The Bull Run defeat had been a damaging blow to the prestige of the Union."¹ Many Missourians were

¹Frémont, "In Command in Missouri," R.L., I, 279.
still opposed to the attempt of the Union to coerce that state with military means, and "the successes of the South at Fort Sumter, Liberty, and Bull Run encouraged many Missourians of pro-slavery sentiments to join the Confederates. . . ."¹ The Confederate Government soon resolved to join in the fight for Missouri.

The Confederate Congress "declared that, if Missouri was engaging in repelling a lawless invasion of her territory by armed force, it was their right and duty to aid the people and government of that State; and, on the 6th of August, appropriated one million dollars to aid the people of the State of Missouri in their effort to maintain, within their own limits, the constitutional liberty which it is the purpose of the Confederate States in the existing war to vindicate." General McCulloch, with a brigade of Confederate troops, marched from Arkansas to make a junction with General Price. . . .²

As stated before, for all of Lyon's successes of the previous weeks, he found himself in a precarious position at Springfield. Missouri was not yet saved irrevocably for the Union; it was still possible for the South to win the state. Union fortune in Missouri for the following months would depend on the activities of Prémont. These activities would save the state . . . or lose it.

Prémont takes command. Lyon's nominal career as commander of the Department of the West was short-lived.

¹William E. Smith, op. cit., II, 53.
Conservatives in Missouri were not pleased by his appoint-
ment and their representative in Washington, Attorney-
General Edward Bates, backed by General Scott, demanded a
more experienced commander. This agitation led President
Lincoln to place the department under General George B.
McClellan, who was operating in western Virginia. However,
McClellan was too busy directing an eastern campaign go
give much attention to the situation in Missouri.¹

The Flairs (Frank, his brother Montgomery, and his
father, Francis, Sr.) considered the situation critical and
wished the appointment of someone who could take direct
control of affairs on that state. Having failed to secure
this command for Lyon, they asked that Major General John
Charles Frémont receive it.² Accordingly, on July 1,
President Lincoln appointed Frémont the commander of the
Western Department. The President gave Frémont carte
blanche "to use your own judgment and do the best you

Frémont got off to a bad start with his benefactors,
the Flairs, by not going on to St. Louis fast enough to
suit them.³ They believed he should go immediately to that
city, but Frémont did not arrive there for three weeks.

¹O.R., I, III, 385.
²Barrish, op. cit., pp. 48-49.
³Frémont, op. cit., I, 279; and William H. Smith, op.
cit., II, 57.
But, Frémont labored, from the first, under "countless handicaps." Criticism of Frémont's delay is unjustified. "He stayed in the East just three weeks, and would have left sooner—-in fact, would have left on July 16th or 17th--had he not been told that General Winfield Scott had further instructions for him." In these weeks Frémont had a myriad of things to do. He was assembling his staff and sketching the outline of a campaign plan. His main problem was concerned with finding munitions and supplies for his department, and he knew that he could best find these in New York and Washington. On the 14th, he wrote to Montgomery Blair from New York: "The force must be armed, and such arms as can be purchased here I intend to buy, expecting daily now the arrival of the Quartermaster for whom I applied to the Secretary." His department was destitute of all kinds of supplies.

The troops being enlisted ... were wretchedly supplied with blankets, shoes, tents, uniforms, and firearms. ... After obtaining the personal intervention of President Lincoln, Frémont received an order for only 17,000 stands of arms from the government arsenals, the number being later reduced to 5,000. In desperation, he examined various supplies of arms in the hands of private owners, and was on the point of having 25,000 carbines sent to the West; but

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1Maid., p. 57.
finding that they were not rifled, left the transaction uncompleted. The main object of the Administration at the moment was to equip the armies in Virginia, and it was difficult to interest the War Department in Missouri.1

These activities detained him several weeks in New York. As soon as Frémont had accomplished all that he thought he could in the East, he left for St. Louis, arriving there on the morning of July 25.2

Frémont found what he considered to be a critical situation. He believed that St. Louis was seething with secessionist sentiment and felt the danger of that city falling to the Confederates was very real. He found that:

Hardly an American flag was flying; but in its stead the secession banner hung over the buildings in which recruiting for the Confederate armies was being publicly carried on, while in the best residential sections the Stars and Bars were lavishly displayed. Army officers, intimidated and few in number, dared not venture far from the arsenal, the barracks, and the center of the city. At night bands of ruffians, armed or unarmed, marched through the streets hurrahing for Jeff Davis and the rebel cause.3

Plair later declared that the city was quite safe for the Union and that a majority of its citizens favored the Union cause.4 Blair should have been in a position to

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1Nevins, loc. cit.  
2Frémont, R., I, 279.  
3Nevins, op. cit., II, 473.  
know, but it must be remembered that by the time he made these remarks, they were influenced by his feeling against Frémont.

It is difficult to reconcile these conflicting views. Blair had saved the city by using its Union element, which was sizable, but there was also a large number of secessionists in that city. It is impossible to say which group was larger, but it would seem that in late July, 1861, the secessionist faction was the more encouraged, the more energetic, and the more vocal of the two. Coming from New York, Frémont was more impressed and alarmed by visible signs of secessionist sentiment in St. Louis than he would have been had he been an inhabitant of the border area.

Frémont found less than four thousand Union troops in St. Louis and many of these untrained and ill-supplied. He soon learned that most of the arms and equipment he had gathered in New York had been diverted to the Eastern Department. When he wired Montgomery Blair for supplies, the latter answered:

I find it impossible now to get any attention to Missouri on western matters from the authorities here. You will have to do the best you can, and take all needful responsibility to defend and protect the people over whom you are specially set.]

\[\text{William E. Smith, op. cit., II, 60.}\]
Premont also found frantic requests for aid from two commanders: Lyon in Springfield and General Prentiss at Cairo. Lyon's position has been described. On July 29, Prentiss sent the following message to Premont:

Have but eight regiments here; six of them are three-months' men—their time expires this week—reorganizing now. I have neither tents nor wagons and must hold Cairo and Bird's Point. Only two six-pounders ready to move; 3,000 rebels are west of Bird's Point—forty miles; 300 at Madrid and three regiments from Union City ordered there; also troops from Randolph and Corinth; organized rebels within fifty miles of me will exceed 12,000 men.¹

On August 1st, he reported that:

Confederate Pillow at New Madrid with 11,000 well-armed troops; two regiments well equipped cavalry; 100 pieces of artillery; 9,000 reinforcements moving up, promise of 20,000 Confederate soldiers in all. Polk is marching on Columbus, Kentucky.²

Premont simply did not have the troops to supply both commanders. His response seems completely logical and justified. He believed that Cairo was a vital garrison—the key to the whole area. If the Confederates could seize Cairo, he reflected, they could command the Ohio and Mississipi rivers. They would be in good position to threaten St. Louis, and if St. Louis fell, Missouri and Kentucky would follow. The South would then be in a good

¹O.R., 1, III, 617. ²Ibid., p. 618.
position to carry the war into southern Illinois and
Indiana, both areas where southern sympathy existed. 1
Frémont could not forget that the South would be in an
extremely advantageous offensive position if this came
to pass.

In retrospect, it can be said that the Confederates
could not have carried this through. First, they did not
have the troops that Prentiss had reported. But Frémont—
or anyone else at this time—could not have known this.
Anything seemed possible in late July, 1861. Bull Run had
proved to be a rude awakening for many northerners who were
anticipating a quick and easy victory.

In contrast, Springfield seemed an unimportant out-
cost to hold at this time. Its occupation would give the
South no permanent advantages. The Union force could
easily fall back to Rolla and regain the area after rein-
forcements were brought in. 2 At least, the above represented
Frémont's thinking, and it is hard to find fault with it.

So, Frémont ordered Lyon to fall back to Rolla, 3 and
he concentrated on the prodigious task of organizing a
relief expedition for Cairo.

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1 Alice Hyre, The Famous Frémonts and their America
2 Novins, op. cit., II, 464.
3 Ibid.; William H. Smith, op. cit., II, 63; and
Hyre, loc. cit.
Early in August, Frémont led a fleet of eight steamboats loaded with four thousand soldiers—all that he could gather—and what little equipment could be collected,¹ to Cairo.² Very possibly, this action saved the garrison at Cairo. This can not be proved because the Confederate attack on it never materialized after Frémont's arrival.

In contrast, the threat against Lyon definitely materialized. Conditions beyond Frémont's control had invalidated his decision, and Lyon died. As Lyon became a martyr throughout the North, the first criticism of Frémont was voiced.

It was easy to say that he should have reinforced Lyon, and many said it. It was not so easy to say that Lyon should have retreated; nobody outside Missouri knew that Frémont had ordered him to do so unless he were certain of his safety, for Frémont never published his letter. Nobody knew how Cairo had been imploring Frémont for men, how persistent President Lincoln had been that Cairo be safeguarded at all costs, and how limited were his forces in semi-hostile St. Louis.³

In fairness, it is difficult to blame Frémont for Wilson's Creek and for Lyon's death. He had expected and had ordered Lyon to retreat to Rolla. Actually, on August 4, Frémont did send two regiments—the only troops available—to Lyon's assistance. He can be criticized for not sending

¹ Lyon, loc. cit. ² G.d., 1, III, 416.
³ Kevins, op. cit., II, 686-49.
then sooner, but he expected Lyon to fall back to Rolla to meet them. ¹ One messenger from Springfield told Frémont that Lyon would fight whether more troops arrived or not. Frémont replied that "if he fights, it will be on his own responsibility."² The Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War, before which Frémont appeared early in 1862, concluded that he

war peculiarly situated. The first call—that of General Lyon was pressed upon him so soon after he took command of the department, and he was compelled to act so hastily, without time for fully surveying the field before him, and ascertaining the extent of the resources as his command, that even if he failed to do all that one under the circumstances might have done, still your committee can discover no cause of censure against him.³

Other activities of Frémont: his break with northern leaders. Upon his arrival, Frémont had found the Western Department in a chaotic state. But Frémont was a great organizer. With commendable foresight, he began "preparing for a real war, not for a ninety-day insurrection."⁴ He knew what the war would mean, and he intended to make his department as efficient as possible. He built barracks, re-organized his army, fortified St. Louis and issued

¹William W. Smith, op. cit., II, 62; and Nevins, op. cit., II, 426.
²Encad, op. cit., p. 253.
³William E. Smith, loc. cit.
contracts for building a fleet of ironclad gunboats for use on the Mississippi River.\textsuperscript{1} He realized the strategic importance of this river and planned to descend down it to New Orleans in order to split the Confederacy. He believed that this would win the war, and Lincoln and the Blairs concurred.\textsuperscript{2}

Frémont also recognized the importance of the railroads in Missouri. The Northern Missouri and the Hannibal and St. Joseph Lines were guarded as closely as possible against marauding bands of secessionists so that effective communications could be maintained with the loyal Missourians in that area of the state. Frémont sent forces to protect Ironton and the railroad, and to secure connections with Rolla.\textsuperscript{3} He greatly increased the military effectiveness of the railroads by laying track to join the three lines which entered St. Louis.\textsuperscript{4} By establishing a common terminal in that city, he made the movement of troops much more efficient.

Nevertheless, his preparations were more elaborate

\begin{footnotesize}
\footnote{Herbert Bashford and Harr Wagner, A Man Unafraid; The Story of John Charles Frémont (San Francisco: Harr Wagner Publishing Company, 1927), p. 381.}
\footnote{William E. Smith, op. cit., II, 63.}
\footnote{Ibid., p. 61.}
\footnote{George W. Turner, Victory Made the Rails; The Strategic Place of the Railroads in the Civil War (Indianapolis: Bobbs--Merrill Company, 1953), p. 90.}
\end{footnotesize}
than many people thought necessary. He was also criticized for extravagance in renting a large St. Louis mansion, the Grant House, for $6,000 a year. However, it would appear that this rental was proper because it enabled him to house under one roof the whole administrative activities of his department. It is clear that this house was used only for military purposes. Frémont was also criticized for being unapproachable ... of surrounding himself with secretaries and guards. This, though, was a necessary measure of efficiency for Frémont who had much to do and often worked from eighteen to twenty hours a day.

Frémont could have weathered this criticism and remained in command long enough to see his projects through if he had not fallen out with Frank Blair. Though Blair and Frémont had been friends, the two were in the process of becoming bitter enemies through August and September. A close examination of Blair's disenchantment with Frémont does not prove the latter's incompetence, however. Too many other factors were involved. Blair probably began sincerely to believe that Frémont was not the right man for the situation. Blair was disappointed when no quick and final victory was forthcoming, he was grieved by the death of Lyon—the two had become very close friends, and

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1 Keims, op. cit., II, 443. 2 Ibid., p. 493.
he soon became disgusted with what he considered was "the ostentation at Frémont's Court."\(^1\)

The main reason for the break "in the friendly relations between Blair and Frémont was nothing less than prestige or leadership. St. Louis was not large enough to hold the two men."\(^2\) Blair had long been the Unionist leader in Missouri and did not believe that Frémont deferred enough authority or attention to him. As a matter of fact, Frémont, a sad failure of diplomacy, once kept Blair and Major John V. Schofield waiting two hours to see him and then dominated the ensuing conversation with his plans.\(^3\) Blair and Schofield both came away from this meeting feeling that Frémont was pompous and not suited for his command.\(^4\)

Other factors were certainly involved. Blair wanted his friends to receive the lucrative military contracts that Frémont was authorized to assign. But Frémont had his own set of friends. Frémont did, in fact, award some of these contracts as Blair had requested, but many of them he did not.

\ldots it is significant that the latter wrote to his brother, Montgomery Blair, in condemnation of Frémont only a few days after Frémont had refused to award a

\(^{1}\) William E. Smith, op. cit., II, 66.
\(^{2}\) Ibid., p. 67.
\(^{3}\) Ibid., p. 184.  
\(^{4}\) Ibid.
large army contract to Blair's friends in spite of Blair's specific request that he should do so.¹

Blair also saw his Union faction in St. Louis—the Germans who had elected him to Congress—growing more and more attached to Frémont. He observed that the St. Louis Missouri Democrat, the principal Union newspaper in that city, was becoming a Frémont organ and was mentioning him, Blair, less and less.²

Blair considered Frémont foolishly extravagant. Frémont continually had trouble finding arms and supplies for his Department and tended to be willing to pay any price that was asked for what he could find. Frémont at one time contracted, through a friend, to buy a quantity of horses in Canada. It was later discovered that plenty of horses were available in Illinois at a price that was thirty dollars cheaper a head.³ It must be said, however, that Frémont believed that there was a shortage of both horses and arms in the United States (he was correct in the latter) and acted in good faith. Blair also thought that the St. Louis fortifications were a great and useless expense.⁴

¹Ruhl Jacob Bartlett, John C. Frémont and the Republican Party (Columbus, Ohio: The Ohio State University Press, 1930), p. 76.
²William E. Smith, op. cit., II, 68.
³Novins, op. cit., II, 491.
⁴William E. Smith, loc. cit.
Then, on August 14, Frémont declared martial law in St. Louis. One observer pointed out that

... the news of the defeat at Springfield had produced great excitement in St. Louis, and many with Southern sympathies did not conceal their joy at the fall of Lyon. Apprehensions of disorder were excited, and it was judged expedient to take steps towards declaring martial law. Still other urgent considerations, such as the known antecedents and sympathies of certain police officials, suggested the propriety of such a course.¹

Various newspapers were suppressed by Frémont's confidant, Major McKinstry. Circulation in St. Louis was denied the New York News, Day Book, Journal of Commerce, Fremant's Journal, and the Brooklyn Eagle. "According to military law, many of these papers deserved suppression."² However, in September, Frémont unwisely allowed McKinstry to suppress the St. Louis Evening News after this paper had censured Frémont for the fall of Lexington. This paper was Blair-Unionist and anti-Frémont, "and owed its existence to the moral, financial, and political support of Blair."³

Blair had declared that "the declaration of martial law by General Frémont was the offspring of timidity ..."⁴ and was soon exerting every influence toward getting Frémont removed. Blair's father and brother immediately

²William E. Smith, loc. cit.
³Ibid.
⁴Blair, op. cit., p. 9.
joined in the struggle. The father regarded Frank as a possible future presidential candidate and was not going to permit him "to be trampled in the dust by Frémont and his cohorts."¹

The activities referred to at the beginning of this section kept Frémont busy through August. By the end of that month he had decided upon a bold, and rather rash, war measure--his famous emancipation proclamation. His action in formulating this measure was probably motivated solely by the existing situation in Missouri. This emancipation proclamation, the first issued in the United States, was written by Frémont on August 29 and issued on the 30th. To suppress guerilla activity and discourage the secessionists it warned that all persons found within Frémont's lines (which were declared to extend from Leavenworth, by way of the posts of Jefferson City, Rolla, and Ironton, to Cape Girardeau on the Mississippi River) with guns in their hands would be tried by court-martial and, if found guilty, shot. It further declared that:

The property, real or personal, of all persons in the State of Missouri who shall take up arms against the United States, or who shall be directly proven to have taken an active part with their enemies in the field, is declared to be confiscated to the public use, and their slaves, if any they have, are hereby declared free men.²

¹ William S. Smith, loc. cit.
² Nettell, op. cit., p. 154.
The proclamation raised a great storm of controversy and was greeted by abolitionists throughout the North. It did not conform to Lincoln's policy at that time, however, and the President at once asked Frémont to modify it. He wrote on September 2:

Two points in your proclamation give me some anxiety. Should you shoot a man, according to the proclamation the Confederates would very certainly shoot our best men in their hands in retaliation, and so man for man indefinitely. It is, therefore, my order that you allow no man to be shot under the proclamation without first having my approbation and consent. I think there is a great danger that the closing paragraph in relation to confiscation of property and liberating slaves of traitorous owners, will alarm our Southern Union friends and turn them against us; perhaps ruin our rather fair prospect for Kentucky. Allow me, therefore, to ask that you will, as of your own motion, modify that paragraph to conform to the Act of Congress entitled, "Confiscation of property used for insurrectionary purposes."

This letter is written in spirit of caution and not of censure. I send it by special messenger in order that it may certainly and speedily reach you.  

Frémont replied on the 4th:

Between the rebel armies of the provisional government and home traitors in Missouri, I felt the position bad and saw danger. In the night I decided on the proclamation and the form of it. I wrote it the next morning and printed it the same day. I did it without consultation or advice with anyone, acting solely with my best judgment to serve the country and yourself, and was perfectly willing to receive the amount of censure which should be thought due if I had made a false movement... If upon reflection your better judgment still decides that I am wrong respecting the liberation of the slaves, I have to ask that you will openly direct me to make the correction. This implied

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1As quoted in Tyre, op. cit., pp. 266-67.
censure will be received as a soldier always should the reprimand of his Chief. If I were to retract of my own accord, it would imply that I myself thought it wrong and that I had acted upon the reflection which the gravity of the point demanded. But I did not. I acted with full deliberation and upon the certain conviction that it was a measure right and necessary and I think so still...

Whose thinking was right here—Lincoln's or Frémont's? Lincoln issued the famous emancipation proclamation one year later, and this action was definitely advantageous to the northern cause. But he was probably correct in thinking that Frémont's action in 1861 was premature. As a war measure for Missouri, the proclamation would have probably been wise. It would have been justified by the unique situation in the state—the presence of a militant and influential secessionist faction, the presence of a strong and aggressive secessionist armed force, the fact that guerrilla warfare existed throughout the state, and the fact that the Confederacy had marked Missouri for conquest.

Frémont's enemies, of course, fiercely criticized the proclamation. General Samuel R. Curtis, a subordinate of Frémont's who was devoted to the downfall of his commander, recorded his entire disapproval because the exigencies do not require it, and the prudent thought with too much peril to the future liberties of the people. Indeed I doubt the success of it in a military point of view for I fear it will involve

1Ibid., p. 307; and 2Hist., I, III, 447.
the military officers in all the policy regulations of the State that could be better supervised by the civil power and absorb the time of military men that should be employed in commanding soldiers. . . . 1

It must be stated, however, that the situation in Missouri appeared to be critical, and such a proclamation would have been justified by the facts cited above. Moreover, it dealt only with enemies of the country. Finally, it must be pointed out that Union officers were deeply and necessarily involved with "police regulation" of portions of Missouri and other border areas for the remainder of the war.

Lincoln found no fault with the proclamation as a war measure for Missouri. But the President was more perceptive than Frémont in realizing that the proclamation would have a wider influence—a detrimental effect on the northern cause as a whole at this time. It can only be said that Frémont's basic purpose was probably proper, but his realization of his action's overall effect, his timing—and his diplomacy—were in error.

The President publicly modified the proclamation on September 11. Thus, Frémont was repudiated by Lincoln. Many in the North rallied to Frémont's side, but his

2Warflett, op. cit., pp. 74-75.
enemies were encouraged. Frank Blair concluded in a letter to his brother on September 7: "My decided opinion is, that he should be relieved of his command, and a man of ability put in his place. The sooner it is done the better."  

Events now moved from bad to worse for Frémont. Price had advanced back into the center of the state after Wilson's Creek, and on September 13 he began the siege of Lexington. His army then numbered about 15,000, and Colonel Nulligan, who commanded a Union garrison at Lexington, had about 3,000. On the 21st, Nulligan's force was forced to surrender. Price reported the capture of his force, seven pieces of artillery, large quantities of munitions and commissary stores. A great cry of condemnation was raised against Frémont for not going to Nulligan's aid. However, a full week before Nulligan surrendered, Frémont ordered Generals Pope at Palmyra, Sturgis at Mexico, and Davis at Jefferson City, to march to the relief of Lexington. These represented more than three-fourths of his entire available Missouri force at the time. It is no wonder that Frémont

1As quoted in Kettell, op. cit., p. 155.


3Revins, op. cit., II, 523. 4Ibid.


6Kettell, op. cit., p. 158.
had not felt it necessary to lead his St. Louis troops to Lexington! He had only 6,800 men at his disposal in that city, and he felt these were necessary for its defense.\(^1\) He had telegraphed Washington and the governors of Indiana for additional troops upon hearing of the siege of Lexington, but all available men were being sent East.\(^2\)

Pope promised that by the 18th he would have two full regiments of infantry, a detachment of cavalry, and four pieces of artillery in the threatened town, and by the 19th he would have 4,000 soldiers there. Yet none of them arrived. Jefferson C. Davis set out, but let his troops fire into each other in the darkness, and failed to reach his objective. Sturgis came within a few miles of the river opposite Lexington, and then hearing of Price's heavy forces (which rumor exaggerated to 35,000 men), and learning that he had seized the ferries, timidly retired, though if he had hurried on he might have saved the day. In a word, three commanders showed insufficient energy, and Frémont was left to shoulder the blame for their failures.\(^3\)

So, it is difficult to blame Frémont for the fall of Lexington.\(^4\) Pelligrini himself declared that Frémont was not at fault.\(^5\) It must also be pointed out that the fall of Lexington was of minor importance—that Frémont was shortly able to keep the Confederates from realizing any lasting gain from it. But the affair had received far more attention than

\(^1\) Nevin, loc. cit.  
\(^2\) Ibid., p. 525.  
\(^3\) Ibid.  
\(^4\) Ibid.; Monaghan, op. cit., pp. 186-92; Bartlett, op. cit., p. 73; and Kettell, op. cit., p. 158.  
\(^5\) Kettell, loc. cit.
it deserved. "For a week the fate of Lexington had been in the balance, and the press had reported every scene in the drama to an anxious nation."¹ The New York Times, for example, devoted more editorial space to the fall of Lexington than to the battle of Bull Run.²

The recall of Frémont. Other events were conspiring against Frémont. On September 11, the fiery Mrs. Jesse Frémont had gone to Washington to plead her husband's case with Lincoln. She spoke with the President, Frank Blair, Sr., and Montgomery Blair, and it would appear that she inadvertently succeeded in further alienating them all against her husband.³

Frémont, knowing of Frank Blair's growing hostility, made another of his diplomatic errors: he had the latter placed under military arrest in September.⁴ Blair was soon released, but the damage was done. There could now be no compromise. The Blairs were a power in Missouri and in Washington; more and more influential figures began calling for Frémont's recall. On September 26, Blair made

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¹Nevins, op. cit., II, 523.
²Bartlett, op. cit., p. 77.
³William H. Smith, op. cit., II, 74-77.
⁴Kettell, op. cit., p. 155.
official changes against Frémont. On October 11, Lincoln sent the Secretary of War and the Adjutant General of the Army to St. Louis to investigate Frémont's performance in his command. Their report, made in one and one-half days, was sharply hostile to Frémont. It was scarcely objective, however, since Cameron and Thomas were anti-Frémont.

It contained the opinion of General Curtis, who was already known to be hostile to Frémont, and that of General Hunter, who, in addition to being the probable successor to Frémont if he were removed, had already written letters against him. Four other commanders of divisions were not interviewed. Thomas reported the curious and unauthenticated story told to him by General Sherman, to the effect that Colonel Swords had reported that Major Selover had written to a friend that he had made a huge profit out of a contract for guns which he had purchased for Frémont.

The St. Louis Missouri Democrat, while a Frémont supporter, was speaking the truth when it reported:

There can be no doubt that Adjutant General Thomas returns to Washington to "move heaven and earth" in causing Frémont's removal, with every probability of success. I doubt if any proper or sufficient showing can avert that end, unless President Lincoln declares emphatically that no removal shall take place. . . .

The removal will create such a revolt in the Western Army, the results of which can never be foretold. A divided North and an indignant people against an unjust and an unscrupulous Administration would be a fearful state of affairs.2

This report of Cameron and Thomas was immediately made public. Letters continued to pour in on the President from the

1 Hartlett, op. cit., p. 78.
2 St. Louis Missouri Democrat, October 24, 1861.
Blairs and their supporters demanding Frémont's recall.

Finally, on October 24, President Lincoln wrote the order for Frémont's removal. He specified that this order should not be delivered if in the meantime Frémont won a victory, or if at the time the order reached his camp he were on the eve of a battle. It has never been proved, though, that he was convinced of Frémont's incompetence.

Whether Frémont was right or Frank Blair was right on specific matters of fact was a minor question. The major consideration was that their quarrel was dividing the Unionists of Missouri into two gloowering factions, and was going far toward paralyzing all their activities in the war. Such a division could not long be tolerated. And no matter how much of the right was on Frémont's side, Lincoln could not forget that Montgomery Blair was in his Cabinet; he, who thought constantly of the wavering border, could never forget that the Blairs were the most powerful personal force in the Border States. He was still keenly resentful of the radical demand that he make the extinction of slavery a direct object of the war, and he knew that Frémont was a radical hero.

"Few men have put forth greater efforts to win a victory than did General Frémont in his last days in Missouri." On September 27 he left St. Louis for Jefferson City. His extensive preparations and organization were beginning to pay off. He gathered his forces from all over

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Missouri—five divisions—and soon had a force of twenty thousand men.

Price had been planning to advance into northwest Missouri, but upon learning of Frémont’s approach, he was forced to retreat to the south. On the 30th, his force left for Springfield.

The advance toward southwestern Missouri in pursuit of Price’s retreating army lurched forward as rapidly as unfavorable circumstances would allow. A thousand wagons sent him from the East had proved to be made of rotten wood, and were continually breaking down. Rations were scanty, and sometimes the men were on half their proper allowance of food. Cattle had to be collected by foraging parties and tons of corn brought in had to be ground at Frémont’s portable mills. A dearth of horses and vehicles continued. Frémont was attempting to cut off Price’s retreat and force a battle, but he was hindered in his advance by lack of supplies, by the confusion occasioned by the constant rumors of his removal, and by a lack of co-operation on the part of Generals Pope and Hunter who each commanded one of his divisions.

Obstacles were slowly being overcome, however. In mid-October, Frémont’s engineers built a pontoon bridge

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1 Kearns, op. cit., II, 533. 2 Ibid. 3 Hartlett, op. cit., pp. 50-81.
eight hundred feet long, across the Osage River in thirty-six hours. Frémont believed that he would soon overtake the fleeing Confederates, defeat them, and save Missouri for the Union, once and for all. He had built a splendid army under innumerable obstacles and was confident of success. On October 25

Major Zároň and his so-called Frémont Bodyguard of picked cavalrmen, 150 strong, delivered a victorious and memorable charge against the Confederate garrison at Springfield. . . .

which numbered two thousand men. On the 27th, Frémont occupied Springfield.

Critics have maligned Frémont for thinking Price would fight, as if chasing the Confederates out of Missouri would be a foolish act! They said Frémont was "merely" taking this course of action to save his career. However, Price wrote his superiors that:

I am now falling back on Pineville, where General McCulloch and myself have concluded to make a stand. . . . Our position will be so chosen that we will be able to make our artillery effective. . . .

Frémont pushed on from Springfield, but a messenger from St. Louis soon caught up with him, and he was given his order of dismissal on November 2, 1861. He was very

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1Reynolds, op. cit., II, 436.
2Ibid.; Vonaghen, op. cit., p. 203; and Kettell, op. cit., p. 159.
3O.R., I, III, 731-32.
popular with his soldiers who were most disturbed at his removal. One wrote that it seemed a calamity to most of them because:

... the prospect of complete victory was unusually bright; he [Frémont] had in fact, with the smallest modicum of fighting, nearly driven the rebel army from our State. The strong, instinctive feeling ... was that he ought to have had the chance to finish the campaign so auspiciously begun.¹

Another soldier voices his incredulity that Frémont would be ordered to turn over his command to General Hunter at such an inopportune time. He continued that:

This supersEDURE, this crushing insult to one who has labored so long and so earnestly to do service to the Union, has roused an intense feeling ... and there are not wanting those who counsel open dis regard of the order until the battle shall have been fought.²

The Missouri Democrat reported that:

... an overwhelming majority of the people of the West still believe in Frémont. Nor is it too much to say that the rank and file of the army confide in him quite as fully as any other army do in their General Commanding, and soldiers have too much at stake in the question as to whether they are led into battle by a competent or incompetent Commander to be charged with favoritism in their opinions.³

Frémont lost his command in this humiliating way.

Great numbers of people in Missouri immediately voiced their support for him, however.⁴ Perhaps the decision to

¹Anderson, op. cit., p. 224.
²Irwin, op. cit., p. 231.
³Missouri Democrat, November 6, 1861.
⁴Ibid., November 12, 1861; and Davies, op. cit., II, 540.
remove Frémont was wise since his feud with the Blair faction was making effective prosecution of the war in Missouri more and more difficult. Still, Frémont had performed ably in his one hundred days of command.

He had come to Missouri at a time when Union fortunes were at a low ebb all across the country. He faced a state still questionable in its loyalty and with an aggressive and encouraged secessionist force within its borders. Frémont's activities took time and cost money—perhaps too much of both for his own good. But when Frémont was ready to act, he was able to force the secessionists to the border of the state. And, given a little more time, he very probably could have defeated them and ended southern hopes in Missouri for good.

Nevertheless, the secessionist cause in Missouri was in a precarious position at the beginning of November, while the Union cause was organized, confident, and on the offensive. Frémont's activities laid a sound and basic groundwork for the Union cause in Missouri. He certainly deserves credit for his part in keeping Missouri in the Union during 1861.
CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Since Missouri's course during the Civil War was of paramount importance to both North and South, it seemed relevant to re-examine some of the factors that influenced this course. At the beginning of 1861 it seemed that Missouri was tending toward secession. She was a slave state and most of her inhabitants had come from the South. An energetic and dedicated secessionist element of sizable proportion existed in the state; the state government was in the firm control of avowed secessionists; and the majority of the people seemed unwilling to take a firm stand against other seceded states. In fact, if compromise failed and actual civil war broke out, it appeared that this majority element would favor siding with the South, if Missouri were forced into participation in the war at all.

Other factors were influencing Missouri to remain in the Union, however. Slavery had not taken a firm root in the state, and a plantation society had not developed. This society was more western than southern in its complexion. Also, economic and commercial factors were tying Missouri more closely with the North than with the South. On close examination, though, it appeared that these
demographic factors would not have been sufficient by themselves to keep Missouri in the Union during 1861. Missourians in that year were simply not sufficiently aware of them. The state had traditionally looked upon the South as being kindred, and its inhabitants tended to think of themselves as being more southern than they actually were.

What, then, kept Missouri in the Union during 1861? The presence of a small but extremely determined group of unconditional Unionists, largely Republicans, in Missouri, and the presence of three clear leaders of this faction during 1861--Frank Blair, Nathaniel Lyon, and John Charles Frémont--worked incessantly to keep Missouri from secession. This faction, through the activities of its leaders, deserved a major share of the credit for Missouri's decision in that critical first year of the Civil War.

This study was prepared to describe the activities--and the effectiveness of the activities--of Blair, Lyon, and Frémont in their struggle to keep Missouri in the Union during 1861.

Summary. These men performed ably in their roles. They differed in their personalities and backgrounds--and in some of their ideas for saving Missouri. But it is clear that all shared a dream and a goal of a Union united
and supreme . . . and that all were patriots in the finest sense of that word.

Blair began the struggle against discouraging odds. He showed that all men who believed in the Union could stand together, and he made it possible for large numbers of conditional Unionists to join with his Republicans for a common goal. "Let us have a country first," he declared "and then we can talk about parties." 1

Blair skillfully led this faction through the campaign to elect delegates to the March convention and deserves a substantial amount of credit for the defeat of the secessionist faction in that election. He led the convention from Jefferson City to a more Unionist environment in St. Louis, and his supporters made effective use of Unionist arguments during the course of the proceedings.

He organized the Unionist element of St. Louis into an efficient and effective military force, thereby increasing its strength and countering the more aggressive secessionists of that city.

He worked courageously and continually to save the vital federal arsenal in St. Louis. He used his influence to get Nathaniel Lyon into a position of authority. Through

1As quoted in Carr, op. cit., p. 277.
the spring of 1861, these two struggled to secure St. Louis--and Missouri--for the Union. By capturing Camp Jackson, they demonstrated that the Federal Government would tolerate no traitorous activity--symbolic or actual--within its borders.

During the summer of 1861, Lyon put the Missouri secessionist leaders on the defensive and drove them into the southwestern part of the state. He secured water and rail transportation, and, through his energy and dedication, gave the faltering Union cause across the nation inspiration and encouragement. He felt and demonstrated that no compromise could be made while treason was rampant in the land.

Frank Blair remained a politician, and Lyon fell at Wilson's Creek. It was necessary for another commander--John Charles Frémont--to organize the resources of Missouri during the late summer and fall of 1861 and to lay the groundwork for an enduring Unionist military strength in the state. This he did admirably during his one hundred days. He labored continually to procure armies and supplies for his ever-increasing force. He continued Lyon's efforts to secure water and rail transportation. He made errors that brought about his removal, but these did not prohibit the development of his underlying plan. In the end, he was able to muster an irresistible force and was able to force the secessionist army to the border of the state.
The results must prove the wisdom of his strategy. When he arrived in St. Louis, the Western Department was discouraged, his troops were few in number and badly in need of supplies and training. The Union cause was discouraged, and Lyon, for all of his earlier successes, was in a precarious position, facing a large secessionist force that was about to take the offensive. Three months later Frémont was pursuing this same force out of the state. He commanded a large and efficient army that was well-trained and disciplined. The army was encouraged and eagerly looking forward to victory—a victory that would end the Confederate hopes in Missouri once and for all and that would open the way for conquest to the south. The soldiers of this army were devoted to John Charles Frémont. Obviously, this transformation was not the work of an incompetent.

Later Union activity in this area justified the basic strategy of the much-maligned Frémont. One contemporary stated that General Henry H. Halleck "is only carrying out what Frémont originated."

1 Another pointed out that:

Under Hunter the Union troops retreated, but under

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2 General David Hunter replaced Frémont, and, under orders, led the army back to St. Louis.
Halleck they again advanced over the same routes and in the same manner as under Frémont, and many months after, and under less favorable circumstances, but still triumphantly, Frémont's chosen general, Sigel, fought out Frémont's intended battle at Pea Ridge, thus vindicating his policy and his strategy.  

Conclusions. Frank Blair, Nathaniel Lyon, and John Charles Frémont exercised deciding influence upon Missouri's remaining in the Union during 1861. In so doing, however, they brought Missouri into the Civil War and brought civil war to Missouri. Was this justified? Missouri certainly suffered all the horrors of a fratricidal conflict before the war ended.

If Blair and Lyon had not taken a firm stand early in 1861, the pro-secessionist state government would have remained in control in Missouri. Could this government have carried Missouri into the Southern Confederacy? It is very probable that it could have. Popular sentiment may not have acquiesced in secession before actual war broke out, but it appears probable that this would have changed after Missourians witnessed the Lincoln Administration "waging war" on the South. It must be remembered that the Confederacy seemed to be winning the war during 1861 and 1862, and it is almost impossible not to believe that Claiborne Jackson could have led Missouri into the

Southern Confederacy at that time had not strong Unionist leaders earlier stood in his way. Obviously, it would have been simply too dangerous to leave Missouri under this secessionist government in 1861 and 1862. The best the North could have expected to receive in this situation would have been a potentially hostile neutrality.

Should, however, Missouri have been allowed to remain neutral in the Civil War if this were what she sincerely wished? It would seem that, if one state could do this—could by tacit agreement adopt a position of neutrality in a war its government was waging—another state could lawfully secede if that were what it sincerely wanted to do. Since the Civil War was fought to determine what states could and could not do, it seems proper that both of these issues were faced and answered.

But Missouri was saved for the Union and was brought into active participation in the Civil War by Blair, Lyon, and Frémont. Perhaps Missouri's decision was crucial. The North came close to losing the war, and Missouri's secession might have tipped the balance. If this plausibility can be accepted, the activities of Blair, Lyon, and Frémont in 1861 were more important than even they perhaps knew.
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G. MISCELLANEOUS