

## **Yankee Invasion of Texas Never Recorded, Never Acknowledged, But True**

It was a Godsend that Colonel William C. Quantrill chose to ride south to Texas with his guerrilla company during the winter of 1863. The week before Christmas brought fear and panic into North Texas. From an upstairs window of the Glen Eden plantation Sophia Butts saw Yankee soldiers riding up the Preston Road. This was an advance scout of Kansas Jayhawkers who forded the Red River above Preston Bend. Sophia immediately ascertained what their motive and mission was. It was discovered that a larger force of Federals commanded by General James C. Blunt with a portion of the 14th and 15th Kansas Jayhawker Regiments along with a mob of Jayhawkers had crossed at Bound's Ferry and had advanced as far as Gainesville. Unbelievably Jayhawkers had ridden all the way through Kansas and the Indian Territory intent on attacking Quantrill and annihilating his command as payback for their past battlefield defeats.

While enjoying the forced entertainment of Glen Eden the hostess got the soldiers drunk then locked them in her wine cellar. Sending a messenger to Quantrill's camp a little over a mile away Sophia sent two trusted slaves, one to warn General Henry McCulloch at Bonham and another to warn Texas militia forces in McKinney. Sophia herself rode north to warn Colonel James G. Bourland and his men at Fort Washita in Indian Territory that Union troops were at her plantation. When Bourland received Sophia's news he ordered Private James W. Dougherty and a detachment of soldiers from Fort Washita to ride to Glen Eden and bring back the captive Yankee scouts locked up in Sophia's cellar.

Union spies had reported to General Blunt that Quantrill was camped 15 miles north of Sherman with 400 men and relayed the exact location of his camp. Yankee enemy troop strength estimates were usually incorrect. Quantrill only had 150 total men who left Missouri with him when he headed south. Constant condemnation about Blunt's past leadership capabilities affected him greatly. Quantrill was Blunt's worse nightmare. Blunt's purpose was to get revenge on Quantrill for both the highly successful Lawrence Raid and his humiliating defeat at Baxter Springs, Kansas a few months earlier. His intention was to sneak into Texas and catch Quantrill unawares and annihilate his command. After crossing the Red River Blunt's advance scout rode along the south shore arriving at Glen Eden with the hopes of launching a surprise attack on Quantrill's Mineral Springs camp.

When warned of the Jayhawker's approach Quantrill was incredulous that Jayhawkers had invaded the security and sanctity of his winter refuge. Quantrill's officers shouted out quick commands and the guerrillas immediately responded. After looking to their weapons they ran for their horses, then swung themselves into their saddles barely touching the stirrups before riding off. When the unsettling news reached General McCulloch's headquarters informing him of an apparent invasion of Texas by Kansas Jayhawkers, his worse fears had been realized. Kansas troops had completely penetrated Indian Territory and had crossed the Red River without his knowledge. He immediately sent dispatches and couriers to his outlying camps to try to bring together enough forces to confront the invaders and drive them back. McCulloch immediately relayed the information to higher headquarters in Houston:

*Headquarters Northern Sub-District of Texas Bonham, December 22, 1863*

*Captain Edmund P. Turner, Assistant Adjutant-General, Houston:*

Captain: News of a reliable character reached me this morning at daybreak that the Indians or jayhawkers in considerable force (number not known) had penetrated as far as Gainesville at 9 o'clock last night, and news of a less reliable character has just come in that they occupy that place this morning, Indians and Federals, 400 strong. I sent all the cavalry force I had this morning at 8 o'clock, numbering only some 200 men, from this place, directing Quantrill, from Sherman, to meet them at once, and have sent orders to all of Colonel Martin's companies that are within reach to concentrate at

McKinney and Pilot Grove, to move forward as rapidly as possible. If the last report be true, it is the advance of a Federal and jayhawking force, or a heavy raid of some character. I have not more than 150 infantry here, and all the cavalry I can concentrate in three days will not amount to over 500, and not a single piece of artillery, from which you will see but too plainly that I have no force to defend the granary of Texas with if I should be called upon to do so. A general without troops is worth but little in defending a country.

*Most respectfully, &c.,*

*Henry E. McCulloch, Brigadier-General, Commanding Northern Sub-District*

With the meager forces at his disposal McCulloch called out all available military units in North Texas, Quantrill's company being one of them. It would have taken at least 24 hours to get enough men together to mount any type of meaningful resistance. There was not time to try to organize a larger force. Without waiting for the conjunction of Colonel Leonidas M. Martin's Fifth Texas Cavalry in McKinney or for Colonel James Bourland's force to arrive from Fort Washita Quantrill attacked. Initially Quantrill tried to swing to the north and get behind the enemy and force them between him and Martin's Texans but the Jayhawkers were on him before he had time to maneuver. He had his men dressed smartly on line before issuing orders. A deadly silence hung in the air as the guerrillas waited for the signal to attack. When Quantrill hollered out the command "Forward-charge!" the word flashed along the line like an electric current, and then simultaneously the "Rebel yell" burst out from every throat. The yells exploded on the air in one combined sound and were reportedly heard distinctly for three miles above the din of musketry. As the guerrillas bore down on the enemy they bent low over their horses' necks, spurs digging into the horses' flanks, manes stinging the faces of their riders while hearts beat as loud as the hoofs of their mounts bringing them ever closer to the enemy with each stride. Man and beast became one. Accounts say that the Jayhawkers, trying to avoid Martin's regular Confederate forces from McKinney approaching from the south blundered into the guerrillas and were cut to pieces. With the killer instinct that came from years of guerrilla warfare Quantrill's men chased down the remaining Jayhawkers who were trying to flee. They made it as far as eight miles west of the guerrilla's Mineral Springs camp. The Jayhawkers were caught in a deep defile of Walnut Creek called Devil's Backbone, a high limestone ridge about 200 yards long. When the firing ended blue-coated bodies lay like bloody rag dolls all along the base of the ridge. Confederate Choctaw Indians in the area reported that only a handful of the troops escaped. Local farmers were sent out to bury the bodies of the slain Federal soldiers. Along with the hundreds of Federal graves lying beneath the soil at Quantrill's Mineral Springs camp are headstones listing the fallen members of the 14th Kansas Cavalry.

The guerrillas acted with great bravery and determination. Their single action saved Northern Texas from destruction. Following the annihilation of General Blunt's forces there was a great celebration when the victors returned. Historians have noted that the guerrillas only participated in a Christmas celebration in Sherman while in fact it was a victory celebration by Quantrill's men over the hated Yankee invaders. Amazingly a second Yankee invasion of Texas was attempted again two months later. McCulloch received an urgent message from General Douglas H. Cooper on February 15, 1864 stating that enemy comprising 300 cavalymen of the Fourteenth Kansas Jayhawker Regiment from Fort Smith, Arkansas and 300 Federal Indians from Fort Gibson, Indian Territory were within 30 miles of Boggy Depot and heading south. Leading the advance were men of Companies B, K, L and M of the 14th Kansas Jayhawker Regiment under Colonel J. G. Brown along with Federals from Fort Gibson under Colonel William A. Phillips. McCulloch only had 1,000 available men scattered all over North Texas but quickly wrote back, "I have directed Quantrill from [Preston Bend] to Fort Washita at once, and Colonel Bourland to throw his disposable force to Preston and thence on the Cornage Point as early as possible, while I assemble all the companies of Colonel Martin's regiment that I can collect at this place in order to advance from here in case General Cooper has to fall back toward Red River." The danger from enemy invasion was mostly due to McCulloch's decision permitting the state troops to

disband for thirty days to plow. Besides a minor mention in the Kansas Adjutant's report no subsequent record of this military engagement survives but it can be assumed that Quantrill also helped repel the invasion. Yankee writers who have written their version of history purposefully failed to admit in books like the Adjutant General's Report for the State of Kansas 1861-1865 that there ever was a Jayhawker invasion of Texas or that any Federal soldier was killed further south than the Confederate Supply Depot at Boggy Depot in central Oklahoma. Yankee gravestones in Texas disprove the lie. Besides, substantial evidence In the Official Records of the Rebellion clearly pieces together the story of the Federal invasion.

Also ignored by historians is the vast quantity of oral history in the area from farmers who related how their grandfathers were detailed to bury the dead Yankees. Even contemporary eyewitness accounts testifying of human remains still being discovered in their fields in the area of the Devil's Backbone have not been historically researched or documented. Past offers of this valuable information to the popular PBS series History Detectives were rebuffed in lieu of the current political correctness in not wanting to promote any outstanding Southern victory. But despite the overwhelming battle to suppress the truth one Civil War researcher has finally brought to truth to light.

Article by Paul R. Petersen

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