

0. ATROCITIES in KANSAS - Story Preface

1. A SON of the SOUTH

2. THE MISSOURI COMPROMISE

3. MISSOURI and the CIVIL WAR

4. JESSE SEES A HANGING

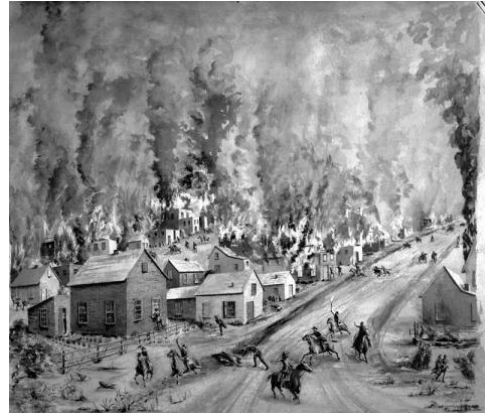
5. ATROCITIES in KANSAS

6. ATROCITIES in MISSOURI

7. CONFEDERATE PARTISANS

8. LEGENDS OF JESSE JAMES

9. ROBERT FORD ASSASSINATES JESSE JAMES



Quantrill's Raiders devastated the town of Lawrence, Kansas on August 21, 1863. The Confederate guerrillas were punishing Kansas for its anti-slavery stance. This image, illustrating the carnage, was published in the September 5, 1863 issue of *Harper's Weekly*. Online via Library of Congress. PD

About three months after Union-supporting militiamen nearly killed Jesse's stepfather, guerilla-inspired violence erupted in Kansas. Nearly a decade before, the Missouri Compromise had been repealed in favor of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, allowing new states to decide for themselves - through a popular vote - whether to enter the Union as "free" or "slave."

Abolitionists from New England had moved to Kansas, hoping to sway the "free" vote. "Bushwhackers" and "border ruffians" tried to convince people otherwise.

After much bloodshed, Kansas finally entered the Union as an anti-slavery state on the 29th of January, 1861. Since Nebraska had also entered as a free state, the delicate balance between "free" and "slave" states - once so carefully engineered by the Missouri Compromise - was disrupted. By that time, however, the issue was moot. Southern states had already left the Union, forming an independent country called the Confederate States of America.

In August of 1863, William Quantrill, and about four hundred of his Confederate raiders, decided to avenge the state's anti-slavery stance. They would attack Lawrence, Kansas, a small town just across Missouri's northwest border. Of Quantrill, noted civil-war historian, James McPherson, says this:

The son of an Ohio schoolteacher, Quantrill had drifted around the West until the war came along to give full rein to his particular talents. Without any ties to the South or to slavery, he chose the Confederacy apparently because in Missouri this allowed him to attack all symbols of authority. He attracted to his gang some of the most psychopathic killers in American history. In kaleidoscopic fashion, groups of these men would split off to form their own bands and then come together again for larger raids. (James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, page 785.)

Quantrill ostensibly attacked Lawrence - where residents were still asleep the morning of August 21st, 1863 - because its citizens had advocated "free" statehood. Historical accounts differ on whether Frank James was part of the attack. Whoever participated, Quantrill and his guerillas destroyed the town - and massacred about 150 men and boys - during four hours of unbelievable brutality. As the *Leavenworth Daily Conservative* noted, two days later, Lawrence was left as "one mass of smouldering ruins and crumbling walls."

As the war dragged on, Christmas of 1863 was not a happy time for many Americans. The raging conflict, which continued to tear the country apart, was on everyone's mind. On the mind of Jesse James, however, was something else. He wanted to be like his brother. He wanted to ride with a group of Confederate guerillas, not just be a messenger for them.

Barely past age sixteen, Jesse was involved in one of the most infamous episodes of America's Civil War. It started at Centralia (then a small Missouri town) when William ("Bloody Bill") Anderson and his Confederate guerillas (variously called bushwhackers and partisans) murdered a group of unarmed Union soldiers going home on leave.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/ATROCITIES-in-KANSAS-Jesse-James>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/ATROCITIES-in-KANSAS-Jesse-James>



"Bleeding Kansas"

U.S. Army image, courtesy Command and General Staff College.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/-Bleeding-Kansas->



Destruction of Lawrence, Kansas

Image, Library of Congress.

From *Harper's Weekly*

September 19, 1863

Image, Page 604

Information and quoted passage, Page 603

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Destruction-of-Lawrence-Kansas>



Christmas, 1863 by Thomas Nast

Image, Library of Congress.

From *Harper's Weekly*

December 26, 1863

Pages 824-25.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Christmas-1863-by-Thomas-Nast>



Jesse James, Age 16

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Library of Congress.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Jesse-James-Age-16>



Location of Centralia, Missouri

Image online, courtesy epodunk.com website.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Location-of-Centralia-Missouri>

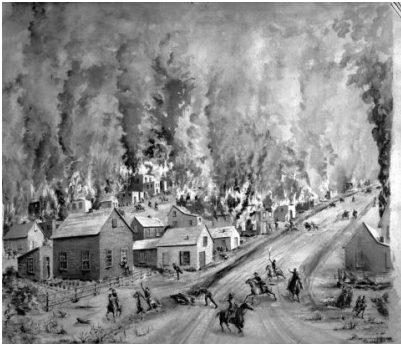


Bloody Bill Anderson

Image, U.S. Library of Congress.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Bloody-Bill-Anderson>



ATROCITIES in KANSAS

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/ATROCITIES-in-KANSAS>