

SERIES 3, VOLUME 2

VOLUME OVERVIEW

Volume 1 of this series ends with discussion on the Harney-Price Agreement, and the topic continues into Volume 2. The *Central City and Brunswicker* of Chariton County indicates its satisfaction that Gen. William S. Harney is keeping up his end of the agreement and refutes rumors that Missouri State Guard Maj. Gen. Sterling Price will begin aggressive movements. Gov. Claiborne F. Jackson's official paper, the *Jefferson Examiner* of Cole County, also pleased with the agreement, says that the troops at Jefferson City will disband, but the state will proceed to organize its defense under the Military Bill.

Gen. Harney is dismissed from his command of the Department of the West on May 30, 1861, and he is replaced by Gen. Nathaniel Lyon. Nevertheless, Price writes to his brigadier generals that the peace agreement between him and Harney must continue to be honored. However, the *Marshall Democrat* of Saline County assumes that with Lyon now in command, the federal government will no longer wish to make any compromises with state authorities in order to promote peace. It fears more violent incidents like the Camp Jackson affair of May 10. The *St. Joseph Journal* of Buchanan County appears to agree. In response to Price's letter to his generals, the *St. Joseph Journal* suggests Jackson and his men are waiting to get guns, anxious to start the fight. The *Hannibal Messenger* of Marion County presents the opinion of former Gov. Robert M. Stewart, who refers to Price's letter to his general as a "codicil to the Price and Harney treaty." In Stewart's view, the "codicil" is unimportant "other than as showing the smolderings of secession fires at Jefferson."¹ In agreement with the *St. Joseph Journal*, he notes that the secessionists "have combustible materials about the governor's headquarters, and it is all his Excellency can do to keep off an explosion until the 'Enfield rifles' are smuggled in through the rebellious states." The newspapers disagree on who actually broke the Harney-Price Agreement. The *Marshall Democrat* claims Lyon repeatedly violated the terms of the agreement, while the *Louisiana Journal* of Pike County claims Jackson broke the treaty, and Lyon had no authority to enter into any further agreement with those attempting to take the state out of the Union.

Despite the decision of the Missouri State Convention, on March 19, 1861, not to secede from the Union, the issue continues to be debated in the papers. *Central City and Brunswicker* emphatically answers, "No, never,"² asserting that secession would do more harm than good. It explains that Missouri has enough trouble with a corrupt system of legislature and believes Jackson does not have enough means to carry out a revolutionary purpose. The *Hannibal Messenger* of Marion County blames pro-secession newspapers for trying to persuade the public to believe secession is the answer, and it urges citizens to ignore them, stressing that "in Union, there is strength; in disunion, certain and inevitable ruin."³

The Military Bill, which became effective on May 14, also continues to be a subject of discussion in the newspapers. The secessionist *St. Louis State Journal* argues that the Military Bill is constitutional, and those who disagree are enemies of Missouri and want to hand her over to her adversaries. On the other hand, the *Glasgow Weekly Times* of Howard County says the bill is a "military despotism"⁴ and gives Gov. Jackson too much power over the people, to which Ex-Congressman Seaton E. Graves responds (in a letter published in the *Marshall Democrat*) that the Military law of Missouri is "as liberal as any military law can be, to be effective."⁵ The *Louisiana Journal*, however, agrees with the *Glasgow Times*. It notes that while secessionists had complained of military despotism when Harney issued his proclamation that the Military Bill was unconstitutional, the real despotism is under Jackson, since the Military Bill "proposes to place the whole state under the absolute control" of the governor, and "every man who takes the oath prescribed by that bill is a more complete subject to Claib. Jackson, than is any British subject to Queen Victoria."⁶ The *St. Joseph Journal* calls the Military Bill "a rebellious act" because it conflicts with the Constitution, and it demonstrates these conflicts with quotes from the bill, especially focusing on the oath which the soldiers must swear. The *Liberty Tribune* of Clay County says opposition to the bill is growing, and it also raises questions specifically regarding

¹ See (FLP: Ser 3RN-Jun#20).

² See (FLP: Ser 3RN-Jun#3).

³ See (FLP: Ser 3RN-Jun#4).

⁴ See (FLP: Ser 3RN-Jun#9).

⁵ See (FLP: Ser 3RN-Jun#62).

⁶ See (FLP: Ser 3RN-Jun#13).

the oath. Former Gov. Stewart, according to the *Hannibal Messenger*, notes that even Price admits that the Military Bill is unconstitutional when the latter “declares the rights of the citizens to hold arms for their own defense both under the Constitution of the United States and of this state, for that bill authorizes the mob organized under it to ‘disband’ and ‘confiscate’ the arms of any body of persons, even two or more, having the ‘semblance’ of an armed organization.”⁷

On June 11, Gen. Lyon, accompanied by Col. Frank P. Blair, Jr., met with Gov. Jackson and State Guard Maj. Gen. Price at the Planter’s House. The *Louisiana Journal* notes that the conference between the general and the governor proved a failure, and it states that Jackson’s proposal to ignore the Military Bill *if* the federal troops withdraw from the state, a matter of placing the state above the nation. The *Missouri Republican* of St. Louis suggests that both sides want peace but differ in the means of bringing it about. The *Liberty Tribune* of Clay County mentions the meeting’s satisfactory result, adding that Jackson returned home “burning all the bridges on the route.”⁸

The day after the Planter’s House meeting, Jackson issued a proclamation, calling for 50,000 troops. The *Western Journal of Commerce* of Jackson County agrees with an article in the *Missouri Republican*, which it quotes, describing Jackson’s call as “suicidal” and “a death cup for Missouri.”⁹ The *Louisiana Journal* says Jackson has declared war against the United States with his proclamation. It says that Lyon was right in not conceding to Jackson’s terms at their meeting and gives two reasons—first, Lyon did not have the authority to remove the federal troops in Missouri; second, Jackson could not be trusted to keep any agreement. The paper doubts that 10,000 men will respond to Jackson’s call, much less the 50,000 he wants. The *Hannibal Messenger* quotes the *St. Louis News*, which claims that Jackson proclaimed war against the federal government when he issued a call for troops, plunging the state into a civil war.

Jackson, with like-minded state officers, flees the capital in mid June. The *Rolla Express* of Phelps County asks why he fled rather than defend Jefferson City after his claims of patriotism. The same paper, in a separate article, notes that rebels tend to flee, leaving their belongings, rather than take a stand and fight. With Jackson’s abandonment of the capital, Lt. Gov. Thomas C. Reynolds on a mission to the Confederate States, and a few other members of the government following Jackson, the papers begin to discuss opening a second session of the State Convention and appointing new government leaders. The *Hannibal Messenger* is one that encourages the Convention to exercise its authority to appoint men “in whom the people can have confidence.”¹⁰ The *Glasgow Weekly Times* of Howard County agrees, explaining that with Jackson gone, the next in line would act as governor, but Lt. Gov. Reynolds “has become so deeply implicated in plotting as to render his return to the state improbable, if not impossible.”¹¹ After Reynolds, the next in line would be the Speaker of the House of Representatives, but John McAfee is a strong supporter of the governor and his policies and may also have joined Jackson in his recent military movements. Therefore, the answer is the State Convention since the only other alternative would be interference from the federal government through its military authorities, which the *Glasgow Weekly* considers an unwise move, as it “would produce irritation and animosity, and might even provoke resistance to good measures.” The *Charleston Courier* of Mississippi County, however, opposes the Convention, which it calls “the work of the blockheads at Jefferson City.” It says it does not see what use Unconditional Union men, referring to “Black Republicans,” can be in calling for a convention unless it is to do something, but “it is far too Northern to do anything for the South.”¹² The *Louisiana Journal* hopes the Convention will vacate the offices currently held by the traitors and appoint new men to fill those seats until a regular election can be held. The Convention is set to meet on July 22.

On July 25, Maj. Gen. John C. Fremont arrives in St. Louis and takes command of the newly created Western Department; however, his arrival is not mentioned in this volume until August 1. The *Glasgow Weekly Times*, also officially announces his staff.

⁷ See (FLP: Ser 3RN-Jun#20).

⁸ See (FLP: Ser 3RN-Jun#30).

⁹ See (FLP: Ser 3RN-Jun#36).

¹⁰ See (FLP: Ser 3RN-Jun#61).

¹¹ See (FLP: Ser 3RN-Jul#1).

¹² See (FLP: Ser 3RN-Jul#18).

Hamilton R. Gamble, a retired judge, joins the Missouri State Convention's Committee of Seven, now the Committee of Eight. The *Louisiana Journal* mostly agrees with the Committee's report, which vacates the seats of the members of the General Assembly, as well as that of governor, lieutenant governor, and secretary of state. The report also provides for an election to be held by the people in November 1861, and in the meantime, the Convention will fill the afore-mentioned offices by appointment. However, the *Journal* believes the report should go even further—every traitor holding office in the state should be removed. The *Missouri (Columbia) Statesman* of Boone County, on the other hand, opposes the appointment of a provisional governor at this time, fearing what it “may cost the people in domestic strife and fraternal war,”¹³ as it will split the people in two and cause more difficulties than it is worth. It approves only of the part of the report that recommends the decision of the Convention be submitted to the people for a vote. The *Sturgeon Weekly News* of Boone County strongly disapproves of the Convention's decision to vacate the state offices and name Gamble the provisional governor, pointing out that the Black Republicans, whose doctrines “the people of the state have always detested,”¹⁴ had elected him to the first session of the Convention, held February 28 to March 19, 1861, and furthermore, “no sane man will suppose for a moment that Gov. Jackson will pay any attention to the acts of this convention.” In the opinion of the *Sturgeon Weekly*, the Convention has no right to vacate the seats, which had been filled by the vote of the people. (Besides the election of new officers, the Convention also voided the Military Bill, which, in turn, illegitimized the Missouri State Guard, which was created under that bill.) The *Liberty Tribune* fears that a change in the state government will cause confusion and divide loyalties. “Under the present arrangement, a man is committing treason to disobey the Gamble state government, and treason to disobey the Jackson state government.”¹⁵

Provisional Gov. Gamble delivers his proclamation on August 1. The *Louisiana Journal* endorses it as an important document for every citizen in Missouri. It explains that Gamble's objective is to restore peace to Missouri, and thus, he assures the people that they will not be arrested on account of their political views, but those who aid and abet Jackson and are under arms in the rebellion, must lay down those arms and return allegiance to the government or they will immediately be dealt with.

On August 5, the now deposed governor issues a provisional declaration, from New Madrid, dissolving the political connection of Missouri with the U.S. government. The *Missouri (Columbia) Statesman* blasts Jackson's proclamation, calling it an atrocity. It points out that on June 12, Jackson had, in a proclamation, stated that Missouri was still in the Union and that the Executive Department of the state does not take it upon itself the power to disturb that relationship; yet, two months later, he has taken it upon himself to disturb that very relationship.

On August 10, the Battle of Wilson's Creek is fought, and Gen. Lyon is killed. However, early news of the battle (the earliest being the 15th of August) by the rural newspapers is initially inaccurate. The *Glasgow Weekly Times* shares news that Lyon has been captured and several men killed, including Gen. Franz Sigel and Rebel (MSG)¹⁶ Gen. Mosby M. Parsons, who actually turn out to be very much alive. However, later the same day, the paper updates the information and announces the death of Lyon. The *Louisiana Journal* reports a victory on the Union side. The *Hannibal Messenger*, which also regards the battle a victory, blames the War Department or “those high in authority under that department”¹⁷ for not reinforcing Lyon before his departure from Springfield to meet the rebels, and it notes that “we cannot afford such victories,” referring to the general's death. The *Liberty Tribune* praises the bravery of the rebel state troops and blames President Lincoln's ambition and lack of common sense and true statesmanship for the violence.

On August 30, Fremont issues a proclamation establishing martial law in Missouri. Some newspapers oppose this move. *St. Joseph Gazette* of Buchanan County, outraged by this proclamation, wants Missourians to awaken and gather whatever arms they can “and assist your brethren to drive the damned tyrant and his hirelings

¹³ See (FLP: Ser 3RN-Aug#4).

¹⁴ See (FLP: Ser 3RN-Aug#5).

¹⁵ See (FLP: Ser 3RN-Aug#10).

¹⁶ After the Missouri State Convention voided the Military Bill, the Missouri State Guard, now an illegitimate organization, is referred to as Rebel (MSG).

¹⁷ See (FLP: Ser 3RN-Aug#24).

forever from the soil of our beloved state.”¹⁸ The *Missouri (Fulton) Telegraph* of Callaway County does not see the necessity for martial law in Missouri and regards it as imposing on the rights and liberties of the citizens. It fears this move will only increase crime and hostilities. It also fears that turning loose slaves belonging to rebels, included as part of the proclamation, will allow them to roam throughout and incite the slaves of Union men into rebellion. The *Charleston Courier* believes martial law causes a fearful state of affairs, as it puts complete power in the hands of the military, and “men are tried without judge or jury, courts-martial being just a number of officers who issue such orders, in every case, as they choose, without any regard to law or statute.”¹⁹ While the *Missouri Democrat* of St. Louis had originally printed that the president approved of Fremont’s proclamation, the *Liberty Tribune* claims that Lincoln did approve at first, but after a delegation of Union men from Missouri and Kentucky laid the facts before him—that the part of the martial law which dealt with the confiscation of the slaves is regarded in those states, and if enforced, “would fairly crush out the Union element”²⁰—the president wrote Fremont to modify the proclamation.

At President Lincoln’s request, Maj. Gen. David Hunter arrives in Missouri to allegedly aid Fremont. He is introduced in a news article from the *Liberty Tribune* on October 4, which says there is “great confidence... expressed in him.”²¹ (He will supersede Fremont temporarily as commander of the Western Department on November 2.)

While Fremont stepped down from his command on the 2nd of November, the first mention in the rural newspapers is on the 8th, by the *Charleston Courier*, which presents the information with a bit of humor, predicting that Fremont “will establish the falsity of the charges against him, shoot Frank Blair, horse-whip Gen. Thomas, who won’t fight, and then be president of the United States!”²² (Adj. Gen. of the U.S. Army Lorenzo Thomas had filed a report on the Western Department, attempting to prove mismanagement under Fremont, and Col. Frank P. Blair, Jr. had filed charges against Gen. Fremont and pressured Washington to dismiss him.) The *Courier* also reports the removal of his staff, of Gen. Alexander Asboth, and “those daredevil fellows under [Maj. Charles] Zagonyi, who took Springfield so recently,” noting that “the fighting stock in the army must be somewhat diminished, and it is possible [Rebel (MSG)] General Price will soon have some more prisoners to release on parole, as at Lexington.”

Maj. Gen. Henry W. Halleck is appointed the commander of the newly created Department of the Missouri, replacing Hunter, on November 9. The *Charleston Courier* notes that with Halleck’s appointment, “Hunter’s nose is out of joint before he could fight.”²³ The *Liberty Tribune* publishes a short and unflattering biography of Hunter, who has no real experience in a battle, and whose only qualifications appear to be that he graduated from West Point, and he accompanied Lincoln from Springfield on his tour to Washington City.

On October 10, the Missouri State Convention met for a third time in St. Louis. Among the actions of the Convention was the enacting of a loyalty oath requirement for all state officials. The *Charleston Courier* asks: “If the Gamble...government is constitutional..., then are not all officers in the state already sworn to support it, and cannot take up arms against it under their old oath of office?”²⁴ It expects many will take the oath under protest, and others will contend that it will not be binding until the people have ratified the act. (The Convention postponed elections until August 1862.) The *Liberty Tribune* publishes the text of the oath and notes that it is “far more *binding* than the one prescribed before.”²⁵ In a separate editorial, the same paper claims the oath is paving the way to turn the country into an unlimited despotism. “What else does it mean when men must swear to oppose any future rebellion? Is even the right of rebellion for just cause to be taken away? Who ever heard that right denied before? Whatever the oppressions, the crimes, the cruelties, and the excesses of the dominant power, must men swear never to rebel against them?”²⁶

¹⁸ See (FLP: Ser 3RN-Sep#3).

¹⁹ See (FLP: Ser 3RN-Sep#6).

²⁰ See (FLP: Ser 3RN-Oct#11).

²¹ See (FLP: Ser 3RN-Oct#1).

²² See (FLP: Ser 3RN-Nov#6).

²³ See (FLP: Ser 3RN-Nov#11).

²⁴ See (FLP: Ser 3RN-Nov#14).

²⁵ See (FLP: Ser 3RN-Nov#15).

²⁶ See (FLP: Ser 3RN-Nov#22).