

## SERIES 3, VOLUME 1

### VOLUME OVERVIEW

Series 3 of the *1861 Missouri Speaks Collection* is presented in two volumes, Volume 1 covering the months of January through May. The articles found in this series come from 52 different newspapers, representing the various points of view found in Missouri in 1861, and covering issues relevant to slavery, union vs. disunion, abolitionism, secession, and anything else associated with the Civil War. A map is included in this volume, showing the publishing cities for these newspapers, spread out through 35 different counties.

The volume introduces Governor-elect Claiborne F. Jackson with a letter addressed to his friend, in which Jackson discusses an upcoming meeting to consider a clear-cut settlement on the fugitive slave law. Jackson indicates he prefers remaining in the Union but Missouri's secession may be necessary if the Union does not support Southern slavery. He urges the Southern states to act together as a group, whether remaining in the Union or seceding.

Though South Carolina seceded December 20, 1860, the news is published by the *Marshall Democrat* of Saline County on January 2. South Carolina took possession of government property, and many federal workers then resigned from their positions. According to the *Randolph Citizen* of Randolph County, the people of Missouri, however, want to remain in the Union. They do not believe they have an obligation to either the North or the South, nor is the concept of becoming a middle republic feasible, as it would be too small. They hope, though unlikely, that a compromise will be made. The *Louisiana Journal* of Pike County says that members at a meeting, called to take into consideration the condition of the country, condemned both sides for their extremist views. The *Journal* believes a compromise is needed to save the country. It admits to deploring the election of President-elect Abraham Lincoln, but believes at this point that it is not a cause for disunion. It suggests Missourians should demand their rights within the Union.

Outgoing Gov. Robert M. Stewart's farewell address about the deplorable condition of the country is well received. He urges the people of Missouri to try and remain with the Union, explaining that secession would only bring devastation to the state. (The full text<sup>1</sup> of his speech is included in the Annex section of this volume.)

Jackson, in his Inaugural Address, on January 3, vows to cooperate with the Missouri General Assembly regardless of which decisions they make regarding the Union. However, if the North refuses Missouri's constitutional rights, he believes the Southern states, including Missouri, should unite. The pro-states' rights *Marshall Democrat* of Saline County favors Jackson's speech over that of Stewart's. The anti-secession, pro-peace *Glasgow Weekly Times* of Howard County, however, says Jackson's speech proves he's a secessionist, while Stewart's more closely represents the sentiments of Missourians—to stay in the Union even if the Southern states secede. The Unconditional Union paper, the *St. Joseph Free Democrat* of Buchanan County, describes Jackson's speech as unmistakably secessionist, while Stewart's is about “moderation and forbearance.”<sup>2</sup> It also notes, concerning Jackson, that it is “strange that a man who has but just taken a solemn oath to support the Constitution of the United States can be so lost to his duty as to set about undermining that Constitution before he has fairly seated himself in the gubernatorial chair.”

There is much discussion on whether Missouri should unite with the South or not. *Liberty Tribune* of Clay County says the North has only itself to blame if trade and manufacture suffer because of its persistence in warfare, and it urges Missourians to work together as a force, with the intent to convince the North to accept Southern rights while keeping the Union together. The *Bolivar Courier* of Polk County encourages Missourians against rushing into secession. It says that even though the election of Lincoln is a great evil to the country, it is not cause for any state to secede. It believes all means should first be exhausted to win Southern rights, and only then would the paper advocate secession. (After the State Convention of February 28-March 19, 1861, the *Liberty Tribune* moved from being a states' rights advocate to a secessionist paper.) According to an article

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<sup>1</sup> See (FLP: Ser 3RN-Jan-Annex-2).

<sup>2</sup> See (FLP: Ser 3RN-Jan#32).

published by the *Louisiana Journal*, the Southern and Northern factions of the Missouri state legislature settled their differences and together voted against a resolution denying the state the right to secede.

The *Cape Girardeau Eagle* of Cape Girardeau County, initially a Conditional Union paper, urges the legislature to pass an act calling for a state convention to provide a plan for dealing with the difficulties between the states and federal government. Pro-Union meetings are being organized in which resolutions are passed to stay in the Union. According to the pro-Union *Jefferson Inquirer* of Cole County, there are only four papers not denouncing secession as treason—the *Examiner*, *St. Louis Bulletin*, *States' Rights Gazette*, and *Milan Farmer*. The legislature calls for a state convention, and the *Randolph Citizen* of Randolph County, for one, does not see a good reason to hold such a convention, as in their view, Missouri is not in favor of secession, and a convention will only create agitation. The *Charleston Courier* of Mississippi County expresses the belief that secession “will be the death knell” to Missouri’s prosperity. However, it also believes that the Convention will undoubtedly be a *secession convention* and that “the days of this Union [are] numbered.”<sup>3</sup> With the decision made for a state convention, the papers continue to provide their opinion on whether or not Missouri should join her sister states of the South. The *Louisiana Journal* cautions people not to vote for any member of the Convention that is concerned about the matter of coercion, as such a person would be a disunionist. On the other hand, the *Osage Valley Star* of St. Clair County believes Missouri should join the Southern states—“our fortunes are with the South. There repose the bones of our fathers, kindred, friends, and there we will live and die.”<sup>4</sup> The Unconditional Union paper, the *Missouri Statesman* of Columbia, Boone County, argues that if Missouri secedes from the Union, she will no longer be a slave state, due to the fact that she is bordered on three sides by free states, and it would take a huge increase in taxes for her to protect her borders and keep her slaves. This same paper, in a separate article, proclaims secession dead in Missouri, and it notes that no candidate for the State Convention has dared announce himself in favor of secession. The *Osage Valley Star* expresses pleasure with the results of the election of delegates, with few, if any, disunionists elected, though some are Conditional Unionists. It objects, however, to secessionists calling anyone who declines to bow to their “disunion god” a Black Republican or abolitionist, insisting that there are plenty of true Southern men in the Union party.

After Lincoln’s inauguration on March 4, several papers published editorials either praising or criticizing his Inaugural Address. The *Louisiana Journal* and the Unconditional Union paper, Jackson County’s *Western Journal of Commerce*, both describe Lincoln’s address as conciliatory. On the other hand, the *Missouri (Fulton) Telegraph* of Callaway County, an Unconditional Union paper at this time, finds fault with the tone, character, and clarity of the Inaugural Address. It accuses Lincoln of hiding his true policy. It asks why if the president means war, he does not inform the people, or if his intention is a policy of peace, why not say so. The *La Grange National American* of Lewis County, does not provide its own opinion but rather that of the people around La Grange, who it says described Lincoln’s speech as conciliatory and says only the secessionists, who expected a virtual declaration of war against the seceded states, were disappointed. It says that moderate and conservative parties thought the tone was peaceful, and they will give Lincoln a chance to see what he will do in office. The *Bolivar Courier* claims the Inaugural Address is weak and partial to the North, and it (the speech) avows continued aggression, which will result in a bloody war with no desire for compromise. The *Courier* believes Missouri should exhaust every effort to maintain her rights in the Union before forsaking the Stars and Stripes.

At its conclusion, on March 19, the State Convention voted against secession. The *St. Joseph Free Democrat* applauds the decision, but the *Clay County Flag* of Clay County believes the Convention has misrepresented Missourians. It disagrees with the Convention’s vote opposing the Moss Amendment, which refuses to support President Lincoln’s war efforts. It claims that this vote means Missouri is in favor of coercion and warring against her sister Southern states, but it argues this is not what Missourians want. It calls for a public meeting to be held to declare Missourians will not raise a hand against the South. The *Louisiana Journal* is pleased with the results of the Convention. It affirms that Missouri is for peace and compromise to settle the nation’s difficulties, and it believes “the acts of convention will be heartily endorsed by the people of the states. Its patriotism, prudence and wisdom reflect honor and credit upon the state, and none but envious jealous minds will refuse to accord the praise justly due a body of such dignity and patriotism.”<sup>5</sup> The *Charleston*

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<sup>3</sup> See (FLP: Ser 3RN-Jan#53).

<sup>4</sup> See (FLP: Ser 3RN-Jan#59).

<sup>5</sup> See (FLP: Ser 3RN-Mar#18).

*Courier*, however, is frustrated with the Convention's decision not to secede, and sarcastically asks whether their part of the state (the Bootheel) can secede with Tennessee, Kentucky and Arkansas. The *Liberty Tribune* is pleased with the Convention's results and notes that the outcome, choosing to remain in the Union, is the opposite of the original intent of those who called for a convention. The *Missouri Statesman*, also pleased the Convention voted against secession, notes that the secessionists complain the Convention was not worth the expense, as it did no good in their opinion. It reminds the secessionists that it was Gov. Jackson and the champions of secession in the legislature, those who were trying to take Missouri out of the Union, who wanted the Convention from the start. The *Boonville Observer* of Cooper County is disappointed that the Convention did not provide some assurance that Missouri would get her rights secured. It wants a resolution to maintain her independence and rights, whether in the Union or out. The *Observer* makes clear its position on secession in another article, where it declares that Judge William A. Hall should be required to resign as a delegate to the Border State Convention. Hall had stated, in a speech he gave at Bloomington, that he was opposed to Missouri withdrawing from the government, "even if all the other border slave states led the way."<sup>6</sup> Hall also stated, in regard to Lincoln's request for men and arms, that "if the federal government calls upon us, we *must* discharge our duty to that government." The *Observer* considers Hall's remarks an "outrage to the state."<sup>7</sup>

After the attack and fall of Fort Sumter (April 12-13), some papers discussed whether Missouri should get involved or remain neutral. The *Hannibal Messenger* of Marion County believes that Missouri's position should be to do nothing at the present time, and merely await events. It suggests that "the stern voice of the Northern people will soon be heard in condemnation of this fratricidal war, and Mr. Lincoln will learn, when it is too late, that it is easier to inaugurate a war than to make it popular."<sup>8</sup> In response to Lincoln's call for troops on April 15, the *Clay County Flag*, a states' rights advocate, declares that war has been inaugurated by the abolitionists, and it asks if Missourians will aid in suppressing rebellion by murdering their brothers and burning their property. The *Louisiana Journal*, after announcing the attack on Fort Sumter and the president's call for 75,000 men, suggests that Missouri's policy should be peace, and she should not participate in war but try to avoid it. The *Glasgow Weekly Times* of Howard County agrees, urging caution and inactivity. To demonstrate the sentiment of the people, it reprints two editorials, one from the *Missouri Republican*, a pro-Union Democratic paper, and one from the *Missouri State Journal*, a secessionist paper, both published in the city of St. Louis. Both of these newspapers, despite their differences, advise inactivity, to "await events." As the *State Journal* puts it, "let nothing be said which, productive of no good, may be productive of much harm... Missouri has no controversy at present with the federal government. Her true policy, for the present, is one of masterly inactivity."<sup>9</sup>

The *Randolph Citizen*, in response to Lincoln's proclamation, calling for troops, says that if fighting is necessary, then they would rather fight the Black Republicans than the South. The *Hannibal Messenger* also disapproves of the president's call, and thinks Missouri will not send any. However, it does not take the side of the South in attacking Fort Sumter but merely believes the government, in order to avoid war, should have withdrawn its forces from the seceding states and not try to subdue them. The *Liberty Tribune* doubts Lincoln will receive the troops he requests from Missouri, and it hopes that Gov. Jackson will answer in the same style as Gov. Beriah Magoffin of Kentucky, who opposed sending troops for the "wicked purpose of subduing her sister Southern states."<sup>10</sup> The *Missouri Telegraph* cautions the public not to be hasty in action, but instead, bide their time. It does suggest that Missouri should prepare and place the state in a position to withstand invasion, then wait. In a later article, the *Missouri Telegraph* severely rebukes President Lincoln for his deceptive policy—outwardly speaking peace yet inwardly planning to subjugate the South. It suggests a central confederacy, believing that Missouri's destiny is with the border states. The *Charleston Courier* fears a bloody war will commence when Lincoln gets his 75,000 troops, which the paper believes he will get before Washington can find camp equipage for them all. The *Missouri Statesman* believes Lincoln has reneged on his promise, made during his Inaugural Address, to devote his time to peaceable solutions. Instead, he has rejected the compromises presented to him to restore peace in the Union, compromises such as the Crittenden

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<sup>6</sup> See (FLP: Ser 3RN-Apr#12).

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> See (FLP: Ser 3RN-Apr#16).

<sup>9</sup> See (FLP: Ser 3RN-Apr#20).

<sup>10</sup> See (FLP: Ser 3RN-Apr#23).

Amendment. The *Boonville Observer* declares that the time to be neutral is over, as the border states' appeal to maintain the Union by peaceable means have failed. Because of the president's call for troops, it accuses him of wanting to perpetuate the abolition party. It suggests the slave states, in self-defense, prepare to fight against a common enemy. The *California News* of Moniteau County strongly opposes Lincoln's call and declares that they are unalterable with the South, come what may. *La Grange National American* says its sympathy is with the South, but it does not wish to fight on either side at this time. Instead, it recommends Missouri preserve an armed neutrality, ready to strike whichever party tramples her rights. At the end of April, the *Louisiana Journal* remains firm in its earlier opposition to secession and continues to maintain a policy of neutrality in the Union. It believes Missouri should perform the task of peacemaker. The *Randolph Citizen* applauds Jackson's response to Lincoln's call for troops, which he refused to fulfill. The paper finds it unfortunate that many independent companies are organizing and answering the president's call since their governor refuses to do so. The *Hannibal Messenger* says it still believes the proper position of the border states is armed neutrality and state sovereignty, and that Missouri should act as a buffer between the North and South but not allow the conflict to come into her borders. The *Rolla Express* of Phelps County, considered a Conditional Union paper, asserts that since opinions are so divided in Missouri, the best thing to do is not take sides in the quarrel. It suggests that if Missouri does not rebel against the federal government, there will be very little danger, but if she secedes, civil war will divide families and neighbors.

The *Springfield Mirror* of Greene County presents a different argument from other papers, and the *Central Missourian* of Maries County appears to be in agreement. The *Mirror* denies that the conflict is between the North and the South, but rather is between constitutional law and mob law. It says that secessionists claim that constitutional law may be overturned at will, and it is against this dangerous policy that war is being waged—not against Southern men nor slaveholders.

While most papers are still in favor of neutrality in early May, the *Randolph Citizen* warns those who would organize under Gov. Jackson for the alleged purpose of defending the state, that they will likely find themselves fighting against the federal government since Jackson is a secessionist. The *Liberty Tribune*, however, reports that Jackson opposes secession now that he has looked at the financial problems and defenseless condition of the state. The *Central City and Brunswick* of Chariton County believes Jackson, though a Southerner, will discourage immediate secession, but will urge the legislature to make provisions for thoroughly arming the state. The paper has faith in Jackson doing what is best for Missourians. The *Louisiana Journal*, however, does not. The *Journal* believes that the purpose behind Jackson's message to the legislature is secession. It states that even though he does not specifically mention the word "secession," he does not mention "armed neutrality" either, and it is impossible to read the text without inferring *secession*. It asks whom would he be arming the state against but the forces of the federal government.

According to the *Hannibal Messenger*, the May 10 attack on Camp Jackson is generally condemned and has begun a reign of terror in St. Louis. It believes "there was no occasion for the demonstration which was made, at any time, and certainly not now in the present excited state of the public mind."<sup>11</sup> The paper is pleased, however, with the return to St. Louis of the commander of the Department of the West, Gen. William S. Harney, a man in whom, it claims, "all parties have the utmost confidence." The *Charleston Courier* strongly criticizes the capture of Camp Jackson, believing that the accusations of a secession camp are false, and the soldiers were lawfully gathered. It's convinced that since the Convention had declared Missouri would not secede from the Union, there could not possibly be any secession camps in existence. In explaining the paper's view, it states: "we could not find adjectives enough to express our opinion, nor could we do the subject justice without using some... 'cuss talk."<sup>12</sup>

The Military Bill is subsequently passed, and the *Messenger*, after pointing out some of the outrageous parts of the bill, warns Missourians to prepare "to bow to the mandates of your master...and the balance of the secessionists in secret conclave at Jefferson City, or you will all be made to feel the lash! And if you fail to obey, by this law of Missouri, you will all be judged as traitors; and...you will be shot!"<sup>13</sup> The *Liberty Tribune* publishes a summary of Gen. Harney's proclamation, in which he says there is an attempt being made "to

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<sup>11</sup> See (FLP: Ser 3RN-May#28).

<sup>12</sup> See (FLP: Ser 3RN-May#44).

<sup>13</sup> See (FLP: Ser 3RN-May#27).

override the power of the federal government, and warns those engaged in it to desist from their unlawful proceedings.”<sup>14</sup> The paper also mentions that Harney regards the Military Bill as “an outrage on the rights of the people,” and that it is nothing more than a secession ordinance. The *Missouri Statesman*, while acknowledging that Harney is a “gentleman of high character” and one that has done great service in the field, finds umbrage with the commander’s proclamation where he declares the military bill an indirect secession ordinance and “manifestly in conflict with the Constitution and laws of the United States,”<sup>15</sup> and therefore, is invalid and should not be upheld by the people of Missouri. The *Statesman* fears that Harney’s proclamation foreshadows the military occupation of Missouri. It asks why a free state is allowed to organize their militia and arm for defense, but a slave state cannot do the same. However, it appears the paper may have rethought its view on the subject. At the end of May, it publishes an article from the *Missouri Republican*, which clearly explains why the oath included in the Military Bill is unconstitutional and should not be taken by anyone. The bill requires men to pledge allegiance to Gov. Jackson, and there is no mention of allegiance to the U.S. Constitution. Another paper that praises the Military Bill is the *Bolivar Courier*, which explains that once “it is carried into effect, she [Missouri] can secede without the danger of being subjugated.”<sup>16</sup> The *Glasgow Weekly Times*, however, agrees with Harney that the Military Bill is unconstitutional and cannot be enforced since most Missourians are loyal to the Union. It cautions that a policy of peace is the only one which can save the state from bloodshed and ruin. Referring to Harney, it says: “The commanding officer who has now the direction of affairs in this state, under the instructions of President Lincoln, can have no desire to bring about collisions with the people of Missouri.”<sup>17</sup> The article notes that Harney has a large interest in Missouri, is not a politician and has no enemies to punish, and therefore, believes Harney “would like to see this state kept in the Union without the shedding of a drop of blood.”

On May 21, the Harney-Price Agreement is signed. The *Louisiana Journal* optimistically believes the agreement shows that Jackson has backed down, and the Military Bill will not be enforced. It credits Harney’s proclamation, affirming that the “capture of Camp Jackson caught secession with its breeches down, and the proclamation of Gen. Harney will keep them down.”<sup>18</sup> In a later editorial, the *Journal* refutes the perception that the Harney-Price Agreement is in conflict with Harney’s proclamation. It reiterates that the agreement is a result of Jackson backing down, that he saw his tyranny would not be accepted by the people of Missouri, and that troops in Jefferson City and elsewhere are disbanding and going home. It believes without a doubt that Harney will keep his part of the bargain and hopes that Jackson and Missouri State Guard Maj. Gen. Sterling Price will, too. The *Liberty Tribune* believes that the agreement between Harney and Price pleases all parties, and their agreement will preserve the peace. Their understanding is that the Military Bill will not be enforced, and, thus, it will not be necessary to funnel out the school fund or delay the payment of the July interest to finance the bill. Also, the U.S. government will do nothing that will irritate or excite the citizens of the state, nor will it interfere with the legitimate authorities of the state. The *Richmond Northwest Conservator* of Ray County believes that “nearly every paper in the state” looks upon the agreement as a peace arrangement. It quotes several other newspapers to prove its point, including, among others, the *Glasgow Weekly Times*, which calls the agreement a “peace platform,” and the secessionist *Missouri State Journal*, which affirms “the truth and propriety of every declaration” in the agreement.<sup>19</sup> (The truth is that this agreement was the final straw for Gen. Harney, who was removed from his position as commander of the Department of the West on May 30, but the papers have not yet caught up with this news.)

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<sup>14</sup> See (FLP: Ser 3RN-May#48).

<sup>15</sup> See (FLP: Ser 3RN-May#50).

<sup>16</sup> See (FLP: Ser 3RN-May#57).

<sup>17</sup> See (FLP: Ser 3RN-May#61).

<sup>18</sup> See (FLP: Ser 3RN-May#65).

<sup>19</sup> See (FLP: Ser 3RN-May#71).