

SERIES 2, VOLUME 1

VOLUME OVERVIEW

Volume 1 of Series 2 of *1861 Missouri Speaks* deals with the months leading into the Civil War, specifically events and circumstances affecting the state of Missouri. Several events occurred in 1860, which laid the groundwork to the events of 1861. On August 6, 1860, the Missouri gubernatorial election was held, and Claiborne Fox Jackson was elected as a Union candidate. On November 6, Abraham Lincoln was elected president, and as a result, South Carolina seceded from the Union on December 20, 1860. These events were the start of what unfolded in 1861 Missouri.

By the time Claiborne Jackson took the oath of office, on January 3, 1861, it was evident to many that he was not a Union man, as he had falsely presented himself during the elections. In his inaugural address, he declared Missouri must stand with the Southern states, even if that meant secession, to protect its interests from Northern interference, especially the abolitionists. Six states seceded after South Carolina within the first month of 1861—five in January and one on the 1st of February: Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas, in that order. These seven states met in Montgomery, Alabama on February 4, 1861, to form the Confederate States of America. On February 20, the deputies of the Confederacy established a constitution, based on the Constitution of the United States. The Confederate Constitution is included in this volume.

This volume includes a letter from Jackson to a friend named Shields, written sometime in early December 1860 (exact date unknown), where he states that Lincoln's election was nothing "less than a declaration of war upon the whole slavery property of all the Southern states," and if he had the authority, he'd call the legislature to appoint a commissioner to the Southern states to convince them to meet in convention to determine if they should leave the Union. Over two-thirds of the volume deals with the discussions over holding a state convention to decide on the issue of slavery; on discussions over whether the border states should stick together in whatever they decide regarding secession; and on the struggle between Capt. Lyon and his superiors over Lyon's desire to strengthen the defenses of the St. Louis Arsenal. Gov. Jackson makes his non-Union views clear, and so does then Lt. Gov.-Elect Reynolds, who, in a letter to the editor of the *Missouri Republican*, a Democratic paper, which had backed Sen. Stephen Douglas for president and the Jackson-Reynolds ticket for governor, says that Missouri should firmly declare her determination to oppose any attempt to coerce any seceding state, and thus, she needs to organize a militia immediately and make other preparations for defense. Such a militia was organized—the Missouri Volunteer Militia (MVM), commanded by Gen. Daniel M. Frost.

Several key players in 1861 Missouri first appear in this volume: Capt. Nathaniel Lyon, who, at the start of the year, was performing peacekeeping duty along the Kansas-Missouri border, and would arrive in St. Louis by early February; Gen. William S. Harney, commander of the Department of the West; Congressman Francis P. Blair, Jr., an influential Republican who would support Lyon; Montgomery Blair, brother of Frank and the postmaster general after Lincoln took office; James O. Broadhead, who attended the first session of the Missouri Constitutional Convention of February 28-March 19, which resolved against secession; John C. Fremont, "The Pathfinder," who recommends Lincoln pick Montgomery Blair for a cabinet position; David Hunter, who asks President Lincoln to consider him, as a Republican, for the office of brigadier general (Lincoln did appoint him general in May); and the members of the St. Louis Union Safety Committee, among others.

Soon after Lyon's arrival in St. Louis, he guessed that Gov. Jackson intended to take the federal arsenal in that city. He tried to strengthen the Arsenal's defenses, but was opposed by Maj. Peter V. Hagner, in command at the St. Louis Arsenal, who continuously used his authority to restrict Lyon's access to the Arsenal. Even Gen. Harney did not support Lyon in his endeavor although he was ordered by the commanding general of the Army, Lt. Gen. Winfield Scott to make the guarding of the Arsenal his priority. After Lincoln's inauguration on March 4, Congressman Blair, Jr. exerted pressure on the War Department to remove Hagner and replace him with Lyon, and Lyon received command of the troops and defenses of the post at the Arsenal on March 19, while Hagner retained his duties as an officer of ordnance. Gen. Harney, however, continued to deny

there was any danger of the Arsenal being attacked and would himself eventually be replaced by Lyon, but not until May (in Volume 2 of this series).

This volume also includes letters from Congressman Samuel R. Curtis to members of his family, in which he frankly details his views on events, the possibility of war, and the people involved. The volume includes President Lincoln's first inaugural address and Missouri Ex-Gov. Stewart's state of the state message (as outgoing governor) and his speech to Missouri's Secession Convention in March. There are letters from President Lincoln's Attorney Gen. Edward Bates regarding his views on guarding the St. Louis Arsenal, the secession crisis, the split in the Democratic party, and, in a letter to his son, what it is like to work in the Cabinet. Also included is the text of the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Bill, passed on March 27, 1861.