

SERIES 2, VOLUME 2

VOLUME OVERVIEW

This volume covers the months of April and May 1861. In the first quarter of the year, Claiborne Fox Jackson had taken the oath of office as governor of Missouri and exposed himself since as pro-secession. The first session of the Missouri State Convention had voted against secession. Capt. Nathaniel Lyon had arrived in St. Louis, and after attempting to strengthen the federal arsenal's defenses against constant opposition from his superiors, he was placed in command of the troops and defenses of the post, but his superiors continued to put obstacles in his way. A state volunteer militia was created, and its commander, M.V.M. Gen. Daniel Frost, was making plans with the governor to take over the Arsenal from the federal government. By the end of the quarter, seven states had seceded from the Union, and Abraham Lincoln had taken the oath of office as president of the United States.

This volume covers Maj. Peter V. Hagner's continuous blocking of Lyon's attempt to strengthen the St. Louis Arsenal. (Hagner was in command of ordnance at the Arsenal, while Lyon commanded the defenses and troops of the St. Louis Arsenal.) It also covers the struggle with Gen. William S. Harney, commander of the Department of the West, who refused to allow Lyon more troops and even requested Washington replace Lyon, as well as his removal from command on April 21, his reinstatement on May 11, and his final, permanent removal, on May 30. The volume also includes a special insert, showcasing the biography of the general.

The letters between Congressman Frank P. Blair, Jr. and Nathaniel Lyon, as well as Blair's letters to the War Department and the president through his brother, the postmaster general, clearly show Blair's strong support of Lyon and his influence in Washington, as seen, for example, with Gen. Harney's removal.

On April 12, 1861, Confederate troops fired on Fort Sumter, and the Civil War officially began. This volume includes President Lincoln's proclamation of April 15, calling for 75,000 state militia troops into federal service for 90 days. (At the time, it was not expected that the war would last as long as it did, so initially, the arrangement was for three-months men.) As a result of the proclamation, the War Department issued orders for the state of Missouri to muster four regiments into U.S. military service. This volume includes Gov. Jackson's response, his refusal to follow these orders, which he declared illegal and unconstitutional. Also included are responses, both in support and in opposition, from the states of Ohio, Iowa, Kentucky, Indiana, and Tennessee.

On April 20, the federal depot at Liberty was attacked. Lyon sent Frank Blair a letter warning him that the weapons taken at Liberty could be used to capture the St. Louis Arsenal. Two days later, Gov. Jackson gave orders to the Missouri Volunteer Militia units to gather for training on May 3, and he called the legislature to convene on May 2, to enact laws and measures needed to improve the organization of the state militia and raise money for the state's defense. Meanwhile, Lyon takes command of the St. Louis Arsenal on April 23, and with his approval and that of the St. Louis (Union) Safety Committee, a plan is made to organize the St. Louis Home Guards.

This volume includes engineer James B. Eads's recommendation for blockading the commerce of rebelling states upon the Mississippi River; C.S.A. President Davis's proclamation threatening to grant letters of marque; and, in response, President Lincoln's proclamation calling for a blockade of ports within the seceded states. It also includes Lincoln's proclamation of May 3, ordering additional volunteers to join forces to increase the regular army and navy. The volume includes the minutes of the Board of Police Commissioners for April and May, and the Board's attempt to stop Lyon from posting troops around the buildings outside the Arsenal, as well as Lyon's response. It includes correspondence showing the vital activities of the St. Louis Safety Committee, and Congressman Samuel R. Curtis's many letters to family, expressing his desire for a commission and his views on President Lincoln and the crisis. The volume includes the War Department's appointment of Curtis to muster into service the quota of Iowa militia called out by President Lincoln, and Iowa Gov. Samuel J. Kirkwood's request to Sec. of War Simon Cameron to appoint Curtis in command of the Iowa regiments.

Claiborne F. Jackson's pro-secessionist views become more apparent in his speeches and correspondence. On May 3, he speaks to the state legislature, explaining his views concerning Lincoln's call for men, and advises that Missouri should arm its people and ready the state for defense. There is also a letter to Confederate State Sec. of War LeRoy P. Walker, where Jackson offers men to fight if Walker can arm them.

This volume covers the events of the Camp Jackson Affair of May 10-11, and a special section is included at the start of that date slot, which lists the title and unique identifier (FLP#) for all documents that deal with this event, including after-action reports, and offers a summary of the bloodless surrender of the camp and the riots that occurred as Capt. Lyon marched his prisoners to the Arsenal. The volume also includes the effects of the Camp Jackson Affair, such as the text of the Militia Acts passed to arm the state and provide Jackson with the funds he requested to allegedly maintain the peace; a summary of Military Bill, made effective on May 14; the organization of the pro-South Missouri State Guard under Maj. Gen. Sterling Price's command; Gen. Harney's proclamation on his return to the command of the Department of the West, and his proclamation on the Military Bill; and Lyon's acceptance of the position of brigadier general of volunteers.

Also included in this volume is the action at Potosi of May 15, and like the affair at Camp Jackson, has its own special section listing the documents related to the event. It contains the text of the Price-Harney Agreement, as well as correspondence among key players discussing the agreement and whether or not Gen. Harney was loyal to the Union. Letters from and to Gen. Harney are included, which show the general's naiveté in trusting Price while still committed to the Union. The Price-Harney Agreement was the final straw that brought about Harney's removal from his command.

By the end of May (and this volume), Congressman Curtis had mustered in the 1st and 2nd Iowa regiments, and the 3rd was in process. (He would be appointed colonel on June 1.) M.V.M. Col. M. Jeff Thompson, who will be a key (secessionist) player in the subsequent months, awaits his appointment for brigadier general in the Missouri State Guard; and Gen. Lyon assumes command of the Department of the West.