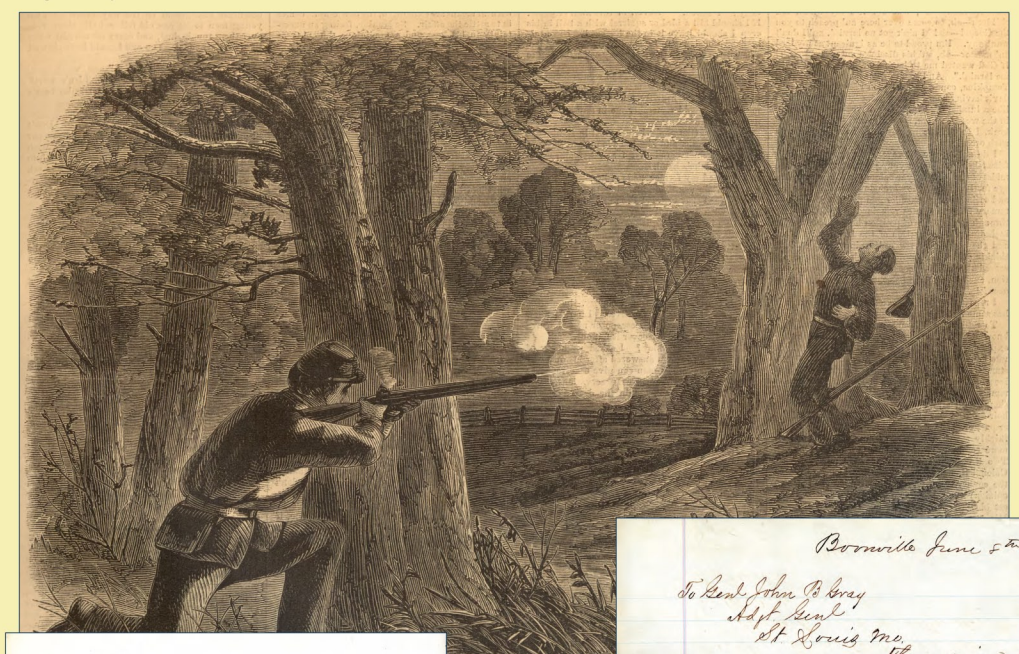
DIVIDED LOYALTIES
CIVIL WAR DOCUMENTS FROM THE
MISSOURI STATE ARCHIVES

MISSOURI AT WAR

"A Rebel prowler shooting a Union picket outside Jefferson City."
Harper's Weekly



THE FINAL ATTEMPT TO WIN MISSOURI

The summer of 1864 saw an increase in guerrilla violence against homes and citizens in northern Missouri. These attacks, which spread panic throughout the state's population, were part of the Confederate plan to draw Union troops away from Missouri's southern border, where General Sterling Price attacked in September. Though Price entered the state with 12,000 troops, many of them were unarmed and in the end they were not strong enough to wrestle the state of Missouri away from the heavily fortified Union defense.

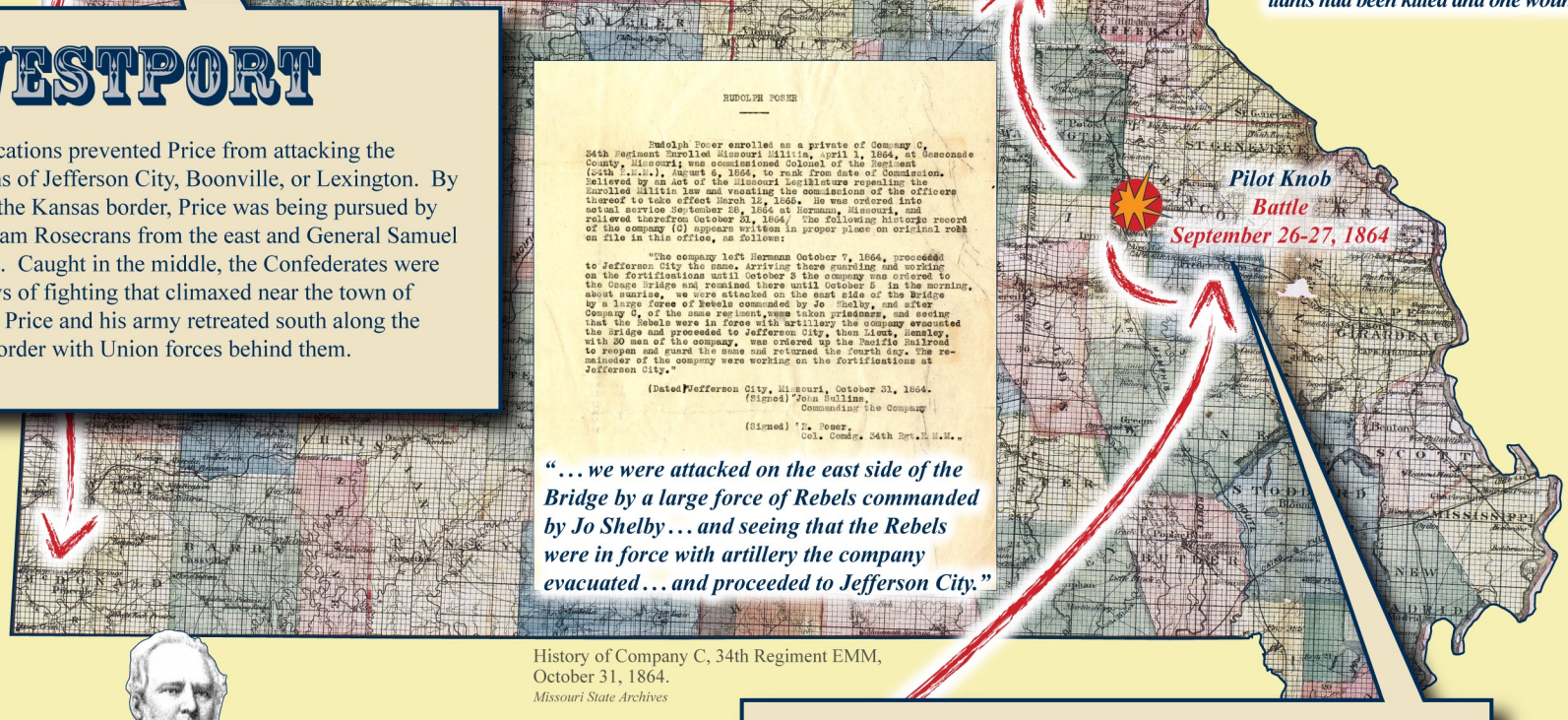
Far left: Colonel James McFerran to Missouri Adjutant General James B. Grey, May 2, 1864.
Left: Citizens of Cooper County, Missouri to Missouri Adjutant General James B. Grey, June 8, 1864.
Missouri State Archives

Colonel C. H. Caufield to Missouri Adjutant General James B. Grey, October 15, 1864.
Missouri State Archives

"[Quantrill's] Guerrillas had just arrived from the South and took Lieutenant Couch and his party by surprise. The band is supposed to number from eighty to one hundred men well mounted, armed, and equipped and are reported to be in Federal uniform."

"The undersigned citizens of Cooper County would respectfully represent to you, that for the protection of the lives and property of our fellow citizens, it is necessary that at least two companies of Enrolled Militia be called into active service in this county."

"... Bushwhackers had burned [Danville] destroying the entire County and Court Records ... some of the inhabitants had been killed and one wounded."



2. WESTPORT

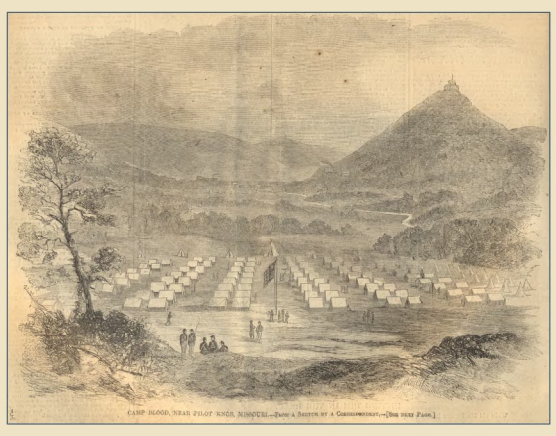
Strong Union fortifications prevented Price from attacking the Missouri River towns of Jefferson City, Boonville, or Lexington. By the time he reached the Kansas border, Price was being pursued by Union General William Rosecrans from the east and General Samuel Curtis from the west. Caught in the middle, the Confederates were forced into three days of fighting that climaxed near the town of Westport, Missouri. Price and his army retreated south along the Missouri - Kansas border with Union forces behind them.

"... we were attacked on the east side of the Bridge by a large force of Rebels commanded by Jo Shelby ... and seeing that the Rebels were in force with artillery the company evacuated ... and proceeded to Jefferson City."

History of Company C, 34th Regiment EMM, October 31, 1864.
Missouri State Archives

General Sterling Price
Missouri State Archives

1. PILOT KNOB



Camp Blood near Pilot Knob
Harper's Weekly

As he moved toward St. Louis, General Price decided that his 12,000 troops could easily take the Union garrison at Fort Davidson near Pilot Knob, Missouri. Outnumbered nearly 10 to 1, the Union army, led by General Thomas Ewing, inflicted heavy casualties from the safety of the fort. While Price eventually forced the Union to flee the fort under the cover of darkness, the victory cost him nearly 10% of his troops and prevented him from following Ewing to St. Louis.

The Battle of Westport, October 23, 1864
By N. C. Wyeth, Missouri State Capitol Mural, Missouri State Archives

1864