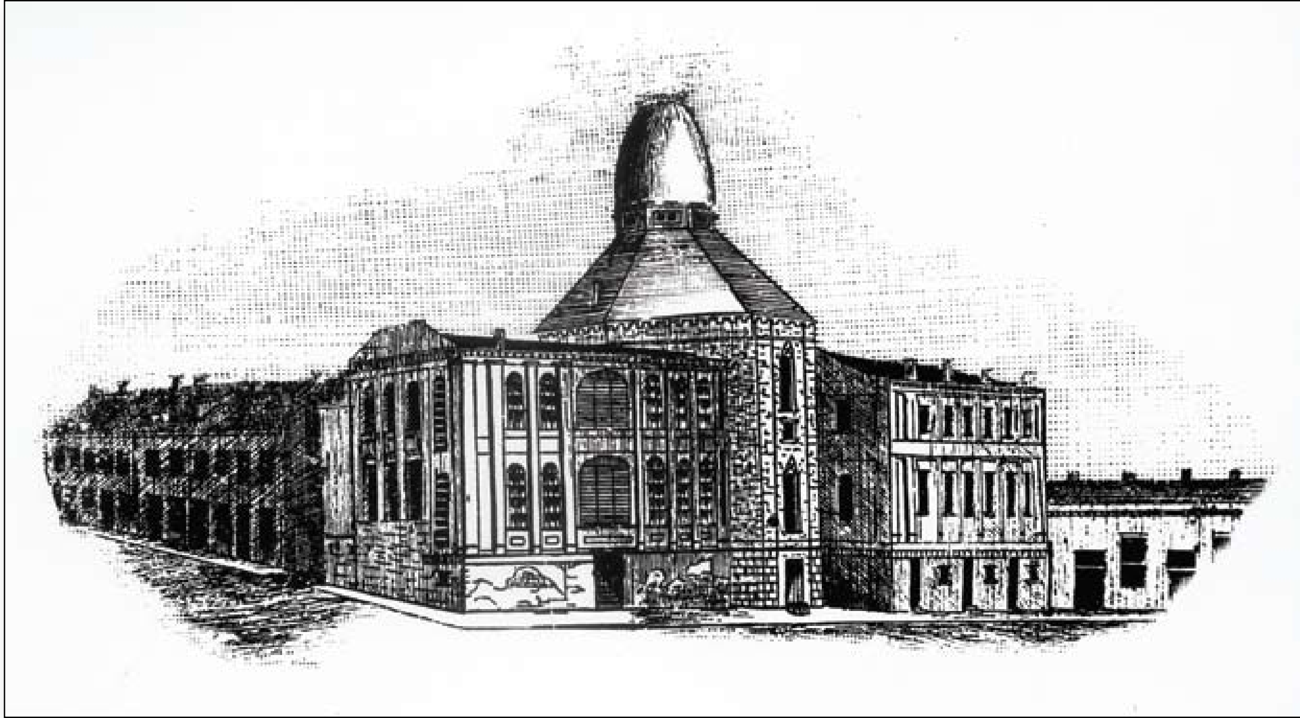
"Making War On Women" and Women Making War:

Confederate Women Imprisoned in St. Louis During the Civil War

BY THOMAS CURRAN



The Gratiot Street Prison was used by the Union Army to house not only Confederate prisoners of war, but also spies and suspected disloyal civilians—including women. The prison at Eighth and Gratiot streets in St. Louis was actually three buildings: the northern wing along Eighth was originally a medical college; next to it was the former Christian Brothers Academy, with the former McDowell family home to the south. *(Image: State Historical Society of Missouri Photo Collection)*

In his postwar memoir based on diaries kept secretly during the Civil War, Confederate captain Griffin Frost often condemned the "Yanks" for "making war on women." In the many months he spent as a prisoner of war in the Gratiot Street Prison in St. Louis and the Alton Military Prison in Illinois, Frost directly or indirectly encountered many female prisoners held by Union army authorities. How, he questioned, in this "progressive age" of the nineteenth century could women be kept as "political offenders"? Frost could not understand any circumstances that would justify the incarceration of women by the federal government. "It is a barbarous thing to imprison [women] at all," he insisted, even though he knew that the women often bore guilt for the crimes with which they were charged.[1]

The plight of the women Frost encountered was not unique. At least 360 women are known to have been arrested in St. Louis or to have been sent there after their arrest elsewhere. A large majority of them spent time in the various military prisons in the St. Louis area. Indeed, many of these women openly and boldly took credit for the actions for which they were held accountable, all in the name of the Confederate cause.[2] Griffin Frost failed to realize that the women in the same prison had been fighting for that same cause that he and other Confederate men had defended.

As residents of the region within which the war was predominantly fought, Southern women had ample opportunity to show their loyalty to the Confederate cause by embracing roles as public supporters, spies, smugglers, guerrillas, and even soldiers. Often these activities put the women in harm's way and in some cases brought them into conflict with, and often the custody of, Federal military authorities.[3] Some of the women arrested and imprisoned during the conflict were truly victims of war, arrested for no other reason than their relation to a male serving the Confederacy whom they had not seen for months or even years, or for simply being in the wrong place at the wrong time. For the majority, however, arrest and imprisonment were consequences of conscious decisions they made to do whatever they could to advance the Southern cause and assist those in armed rebellion against the United States government. Those who experienced arrest and imprisonment represent only a portion of the Southern women who refused to remain inactive when so much, both politically and socially, was at stake for the South.[4]

The actions of these Confederate women extended far beyond the recognized boundaries of mid-nineteenth century gender constraints, carrying with them significant political connotations. Historian Paula Baker has defined "politics" as "any action, formal or informal, taken to affect the course or behavior of government or the community."[5] By taking part in these activities, Confederate women sought to lend aid to the Confederate government in its war for independence. The political nature of these actions did not go unnoticed by Federal officers. To be sure, these military men did not concern themselves with the challenge the women's actions posed to gender relations. They arrested the women for the same misdeeds they accused rebellious men of committing and essentially treated the women the same way as male transgressors. Federal authorities took women's activities seriously, considering them of a treasonable nature. The crimes of these women were against the government, not against societal norms, and authorities responded with measures they deemed the women's actions deserved.

As the largest city in the West, St. Louis played a crucial role in the Union Army's Western Theater. St. Louis

Between 1862 and 1864, much of the fighting in western Missouri was guerrilla warfare, pitting Southern "bushwackers" against Kansas "Jayhawkers." These were generally smaller skirmishes that pitted neighbors against one another, as portrayed here in J. W. Buels' The Border Outlaws (1881). *(Image: State Historical Society of Missouri Photo Collection)*

became a key supply and troop disbursement center for new regiments awaiting assignment. Many of these fresh troops trained in the city's existing military facilities. The St. Louis region also served as home to three important prisoner of war camps: in the city itself, the Gratiot Street Prison, a former medical college and residence; the Myrtle Street Prison, a prewar slave auction house; and the Alton Prison just upriver from St. Louis, a condemned state penitentiary in Alton, Illinois.[6] It was common for prisoners to pass back and forth between these facilities, and all three counted women among their inmates. Of course, the women would be held in rooms separate from the male prisoners. In addition, several smaller temporary prisons in the city held only female prisoners.

The Civil War bitterly divided Missouri, and guerrilla strife raged through the state throughout the conflict. A majority of the women who passed through the St. Louis region's military prisons came from the city or other parts of the war-ravaged state. Still, a significant number of female prisoners were from other Southern states that fell to Union occupation and a few states that had never seceded.

St. Louis' first provost marshal, Justus McKinstry made his initial civilian arrest on August 14, 1861, the same day that Major General John C. Fremont, then commanding the military department that included Missouri, declared martial law in the city. Martial law would follow throughout the state two weeks later. Thus began a steady stream of civilians entering Federal custody in the region, arrested for activities or utterances considered disloyal and treasonous.[7]

While it is unlikely that Southern-sympathizing women remained silent during the early months of the war, it appears that their activities at first evoked little concern from McKinstry and his successor, John McNeil. Perhaps at first the provost marshal could discount the actions of women as insignificant. The subversive activities of Ann Bush and her friend, Mrs. Burke, could not go overlooked, however. According to a newspaper account in October 1861, the two women had been "using their influence to make rebels of young men of their acquaintance." On October 20, 1861, Bush and Burke became the first women arrested in St. Louis for disloyal activities.[8]

Between the time of Bush and Burke's arrest in October 1861 and mid-July 1862, only thirteen other women came into custody in St. Louis, all for relatively minor infractions compared to what was to come. Almost all, in one way or another, had openly displayed support for the Confederacy; for instance, two women draped a rebel flag out of an apartment window, several publicly sang secessionist songs, and others uttered "treasonable language." A Mrs. Bruneen destroyed a small United States flag in front of neighbors, and Margaret Ferguson's second visit to the Myrtle Street Prison to wave at prisoners in the windows secured for her a few hours in custody. Fanny Barron and Margaret Kelson came before

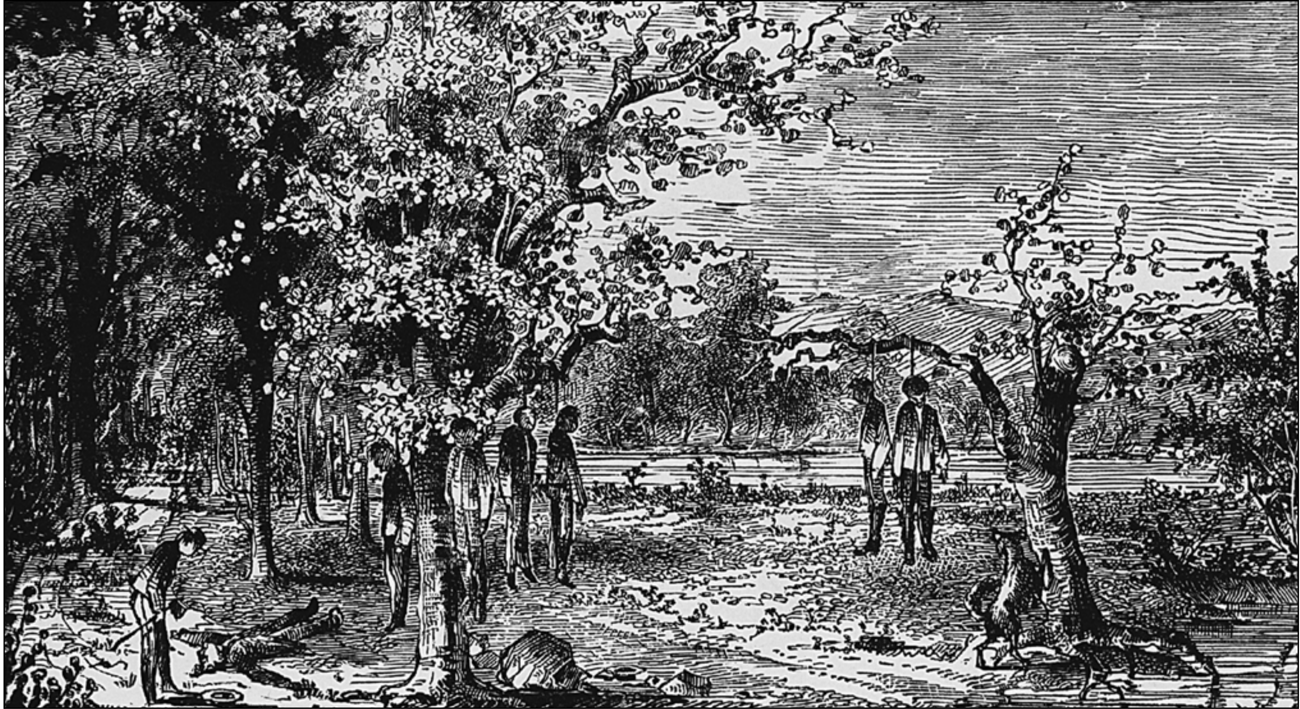
Much of the guerrilla warfare in Missouri involved the ambushes of people or families in rural settings. Horse theft, shown here, was one way for Bushwackers to replentish needed supplies. *(Image: State Historical Society of Missouri Photo Collection)*

the provost marshal for "inducing one Ja. Tho. Jilton to join a rebel band of bushwhackers." And the family of a Miss Bull found themselves under house arrest, with guards at all exits, because someone allegedly waved a Confederate flag out of one of the house's windows at prisoners arriving from the Shiloh battlefield. The family remained confined for two weeks before the guards were removed.[9]

The provost marshal usually dealt with the women by requiring them to take a loyalty oath and then releasing them. When that failed, the women were banished from the city, county, or state, a punishment commonly meted out by civil authorities when dealing with recalcitrant offenders. In one instance, an arresting officer turned a woman who expressed disloyalty over to the local police. She made her public utterances while highly intoxicated and could be charged with the civil crime of disturbing the peace, removing from the most recently appointed Provost Marshal, George E. Leighton, responsibility of handling her case.[10]

Because these women were arrested by the local provost marshal's order, he had discretion over the way the women were treated. Clearly McKinstry, McNeil, and Leighton exhibited a reluctance to confine the women in the prisons. With the exception of Ann Bush, who spent one night under lock and key before her release, only two other women among these early arrests were confined to prison for more than a few hours, and neither of these women committed infractions designed to aid and comfort the Confederacy. A Mrs. Walton, arrested with her husband for defrauding the government on a cordwood contract, spent a few nights behind bars before her release.[11] And Bridget Connor, arrested for "keeping a disorderly dram shop," gained release after five nights in custody "upon taking an oath not to sell any more liquor in the city to soldiers without special permit from" the provost marshal's office.[12]

A speedy release was not the case for Isadora Morrison who, on July 25, 1862, became the first female inmate sent for confinement indefinitely in the St. Louis region military prisions. Arrested on July 12, 1862, in Cairo, Illinois, for spying and then sent to St. Louis to be imprisoned, Morrison's fate rested in the hands of the Federal officer who ordered her arrest, and not with St.



Guerrilla warfare was particularly brutal along the Missouri-Kansas border, as was the Union's response to it. General Thomas Ewing was committed to ending Confederate support for Bushwackers along the border by any means necessary. *(Image: State Historical Society of Missouri Photo Collection)*

Louis' Provost Marshal Leighton. Leighton could not order her release under any circumstances. To further complicate matters, on the fourth day of Morrison's stay in the former medical college on Gratiot Street, she attempted to commit suicide by drinking a vial of chloroform. Perhaps Morrison wanted to martyr herself for the cause she embraced. Or perhaps she never intended to take her life. The incident caused Morrison's removal to a local hospital for women, from which she escaped.[13]

From this point onward, officials in St. Louis evinced less hesitancy in imprisoning women arrested on their orders. Between late July and the end of 1862, at least 24 women faced arrest in St. Louis and several spent at least one night, some women many more, in confinement by order of the Office of the Provost Marshal. Expressing support for the Confederacy and the general accusation of disloyalty proved to be common charges aimed at Confederate women during this period. At the same time, the women expressed a rather militant posture toward the Federal government and those who supported it. A Mary Wolfe, arrested in September 1862, allegedly asked her young son if he had enough "secesh" in him to hit their Unionist neighbor's son, whom she called a "little damn black republican," on the head with a "little hatchet." Lucinda Clark, reportedly a "very quarrelsome woman" who continually abused Unionist neighbors, sang this version of the song "Dixie": "I wish I were in the land of cotton and see old Lincoln dead and rotten." Her wish that "the Union folks ought to be shot for arresting secessionists" did not deter the provost marshal from having her arrested.[14]

According to numerous depositions against her, Catherine Farrell's "Reputation for Loyalty is Bad." Described as a "strong secessionist. . . .violent and abusive," Farrell supposedly "kept a rendezvous for disloyal persons since the breaking of this Rebellion." She referred to the German-American militia as "Damn Dutch Butchers" and called one Unionist woman she met in the street a "Black republican Bitch," while threatening to "cut her heart out." She also abused a particular neighbor and his family because he had taken a position with a government office; at one point, Farrell threw a tumbler at the man's mother as she walked past Farrell's open window. At the time these depositions were taken, Farrell had already been arrested once and ordered banished from the Army's Department of the Missouri, but due to a change in personnel in the provost marshal's office, the order slipped through the cracks. Whether it was carried out at this point is not made evident in the records.[15]

Mary Wolfe, Lucinda Clark, and Catherine Farrell fought their own war against the federal government and those who sought to uphold it. Never denying the charges against them, these women defiantly expressed their Confederate allegiance and their hostility toward Federal authority, despite the consequences. As the number of women prisoners expanded, the charges against them grew more complicated and the methods of sentencing them more severe. Paralleling this growth was the seriousness of the infractions women committed and the dedication the women evinced in carrying out their work, as illustrated in the case of Drucilla Sappington. The daughter of a St. Louis-area judge and wife of a Confederate captain, Sappington lived twelve miles from the city in St. Louis County. In early September 1862, a Confederate colonel and his staff were found quartered at her house and arrested; Sappington, however, was not immediately taken into custody, but she would not go unpunished. For "having given information to the traitors of the movement of the U.S. forces and having harbored and aided men in arms against the United States government," Missouri Provost Marshal General Bernard G. Farrar ordered on

September 3 that Sappington swear an oath of parole and pay a bond of $2,000. Farrar further demanded that Sappington leave the state of Missouri and relocate to Massachusetts, where she may have had relatives or friends. From there she was to lodge monthly reports of her good conduct to Farrar by mail.[16]

When Sappington learned that she was about to be served with Farrar's order, she fled the county, heading for southwestern Missouri and presumably Confederate lines. A few days later, authorities found and arrested her and a travelling companion named Mrs. Ziegler 100 miles from the city. The women returned to St. Louis and were placed in Gratiot Prison on September 15. Sappington did not let prison walls stop her from aiding the Confederate cause. In Gratiot, she and Mrs. Ziegler shared a room adjacent to the cell occupied by Absolom Grimes, a noted Confederate mail carrier who had recently been captured in St. Louis and sentenced to be shot. The two women helped Grimes escape confinement to resume his clandestine pursuits. Not surprisingly, Grimes already knew Sappington and had been at her home only a few days before her arrest.[17]

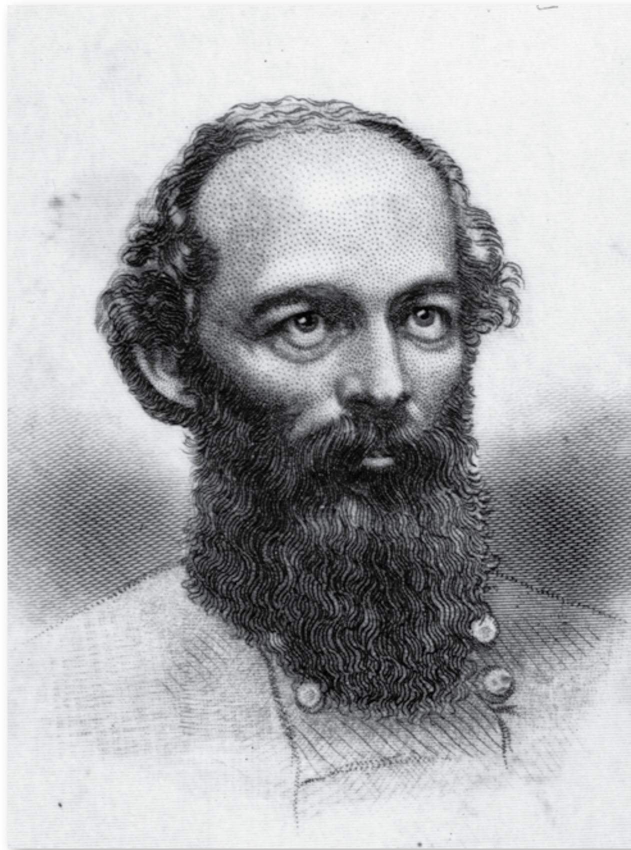
Absolom Grimes (1834-1911) was a notorious Confederate spy and mail carrier during the Civil War, and served in the Missouri State Guard from Ralls County (just north of St. Louis), the same unit in which Samuel Clemens served briefly. After his capture, he made multiple attempts to escape from Gratiot Street Prison; he was wounded in the last one in June 1864, spared being hanged, and eventually pardoned by Abraham Lincoln. Grimes returned to his occupation as a riverboat pilot after the war. *(Image: State Historical Society of Missouri Photo Collection)*

Having taken her oath and posted her bond, Sappington left the prison more than a month after Farrar's initial arrest order. It is unknown whether Sappington ever traveled to Massachusetts, but evidently the threats of further imprisonment and losing her money did not shake her commitment to the Confederacy. Sappington returned to St. Louis and was arrested again in mid-1863. This time she was briefly detained in a temporary prison before being banished to the South beyond Federal lines. Again, she returned to Missouri, perhaps because there she could act upon her political convictions better than she could within the Confederacy. As late as March 1864, Lieutenant General Kirby Smith, commanding the Confederate Trans-Mississippi Department, was still receiving secret communications from Sappington written from St. Louis concerning military affairs in Missouri, Indiana, and Illinois. Smith passed the messages along to Sterling Price, now a regularly commissioned Confederate general preparing to launch a campaign to liberate his home state.[18]

For the most part, the records suggest that authorities investigating suspected women acted with thoroughness. Detectives working under the provost marshal questioned witnesses and suspects and took depositions, often before any arrest was made. Most, but not all, cases appear to have been resolved by the provost marshal himself, rather than the military commissions that had been designated to hear civilian cases.[19] They were also handled expeditiously. In cases of expressing disloyal sentiments, a common charge throughout the war, a stern warning to cease such displays usually sufficed. Bridget Kelly, for instance, had been arrested in August 1862 for singing "secession songs." The provost marshal let her go "as she is sufficiently warned. . . without being kept a night in prison."[20] Thus, many women like Kelly spent just a few hours in custody. Suspicion alone did not prove guilt. For example, accusations that a Mrs. Keating was guilty of "disloyalty and annoying Union people" were "satisfactorily disproven" by the evidence collected in her case.[21] Likewise, the charges of materially aiding in the recruitment of Confederate soldiers faced by Mary M. Barclay were dropped within about 24 hours once they were proved unfounded.[22] And admitted secessionist sympathizer Catherine Duffey, detained for having used "improper language" to an Army surgeon while visiting a St. Louis hospital, was ordered released after apologizing to the doctor. Evidently her language was deemed "improper" but not disloyal.[23]

More serious charges merited more severe treatment. Spying, passing messages, smuggling, and providing direct comfort to the Confederates proved to be common charges leveled against the women in the St. Louis-area military prisons, including the larger facility at Alton. In January

1863, investigators from the U.S. Fourteenth Army Corps in Tennessee arrested Clara Judd, the widow of a Presbyterian minister, on suspicion of trying to smuggle various medicines and a pattern for a knitting machine to the Confederates. Compounding the evidence found in her possession was the fact that Confederate cavalry leader John Hunt Morgan had attempted to raid the Tennessee town in which she had lodged on the night before her arrest. Her captors believed that Judd had something to do with the raid.[24]



A graduate of West Point and veteran of the Mexican War, Edmund Kirby Smith (1824-1893) rose to become one of only seven full generals in the Confederate Army. Smith's command was over the Trans-Mississippi Department of the Confederate Army, leaving him largely cut off from the rest of the Confederacy after the fall of Vicksburg on July 4, 1863. When Smith surrendered his department to the Union May 26, 1865, it was the only Confederate field army of any consequence left. Smith fled to Mexico and Cuba to escape treason charges, but returned in November to take an oath of amnesty. *(Image: State Historical Society of Missouri Photo Collection)*

Though considered by one Federal officer "a dangerous person" and "probably a spy as well as a smuggler,"[25] Judd claimed her innocence. Judd's protestations and her assertion that "I never had anything to do with political affairs, neither do I wish to have,"[26] carried little weight in the eyes of her accusers. Women in Tennessee had proven themselves active participants in the rebellion against the United States government through their smuggling activities. Whether guilty or not, Judd would face the consequences for the actions of all women who aided the Confederacy. With nowhere to confine her in Nashville, she was sent north. Thus, Judd became Alton's first female inmate.[27]

Judd spent six-and-a-half months at Alton for her alleged treasonous activities before being released for health reasons and banished to Minnesota by order of Secretary of War Edwin Stanton. Her release came against the advice of the Union army's commissary general of prisoners, William Hoffman, who considered Judd quite untrustworthy. Perhaps he knew best. Upon her release, Judd immediately booked passage on a steamer bound not for Minnesota but for Memphis. Once discovered, Judd was rearrested and brought back to Alton. Judd eventually arrived in Minnesota, but before the war's end she was arrested at least one more time and incarcerated in Kentucky on unspecified charges.[28]

While Clara Judd strongly denied the claims brought against her, other imprisoned women boldly admitted to serving the Confederate cause in whatever way they could, and readily accepted the fates imposed on them by Federal authorities.

In June 1864, a scouting party from the Fourth Cavalry of the Missouri State Militia arrested four women in Saline County, Missouri. According to Captain W. L. Parker, who led the expedition, the women had provided food to "bushwhackers." To make matters worse, the four not only admitted that they would do it again but that they, in his words, "gloried in bushwhackers." Parker did not define how the women went about glorying in bushwhackers, but clearly the actions of these rebellious women had a distinct anti-Unionist tone. At least two of these women were sent to St. Louis and then to the Alton Prison for confinement; they remained imprisoned until February 1865.[29]

Other women defiantly admitted their guilt to the charges brought against them. Sarah Bond proclaimed that she had fed guerrillas and would do it again.[30] According to the officer who first interrogated her, Nannie Douthitt was "rather candid and discloses being a spy." In a letter to Confederate major Tim Reeves, which was part of the evidence against her, she gave the following words of encouragement: "[M]ay success, glory, and honor crown your every exertion in promoting the interests of the South, adding one link to the gaining of independence."[31] And Susannah Justice, accused of being a guerrilla spy, claimed that "she was willing to do anything, go anywhere, and at any time at the risk of her life to aid the Guerrillas in ridding the country of the 'Feds.'"[32]

Justice's comments suggest that she acted more in response to the influx of Federal troops into Missouri rather than a commitment to the Confederate cause. Yet many women clearly pronounced their Confederate sentiments and their support for the Confederate nation. Arrested for passing through Federal lines without permission, Annie Martin assured that she "would not do anything while in the Federal lines to assist the Southern Confederacy, but when within the Confederate lines would

do all I could to aid the southern Confederacy. Because I believe them right, the people of the south."[33] Lucie Nickolson testified, "I would very much like to see the Southern Confederacy established and then live under Jeff. Davis."[34] Emma English refused to swear an oath of allegiance to the Federal government because "being a Southern sympathizer, and a '*Rebel from principle*,' it would be swearing to a lie."[35]

These testimonies suggest that many of the Confederate women arrested during the war acted from a sense of political conviction, whether it be in opposition to the policies of the Federal government or in support for the Confederacy. These women made conscious decisions to participate in the war, and the Federal army held the women accountable for their choices. To advance the cause they embraced, Confederate women often took extreme measures. These measures often cast them in roles in which they became direct participants in the military conduct of the war. A teenager from Madison County, Arkansas, Sarah Jane Smith devoted nearly two years to smuggling goods from Missouri to Confederate-occupied portions of her home state before expanding her activities to include sabotage. Caught in the act of cutting several miles of telegraph wire in southern Missouri, Smith first received a death sentence for the destruction. General William Rosecrans eventually commuted her sentence to imprisonment for the duration of the war, even though the teen boldly refused to deliver the names of others with whom she associated.[36]

For some Confederate women, imprisonment was not considered sufficient to halt their rebellious activities. Well-connected women of the region's elite class proved to be particularly troublesome. In proposing a plan to arrest a number of these women, Missouri Provost Marshall General Franklin A. Dick noted in March 1863:

> These women are wealthy and wield great influence; they are avowed and abusive enemies of the Government; they incite the young men to join the rebellion; their letters are filled with encouragement to their husbands and sons to continue the war; they convey information to them and by every possible contrivance they forward clothing and other support to the rebels. These disloyal women, too, seek every opportunity to keep disloyalty alive amongst rebel prisoners.

Dick recognized political power and influence in these women. Further, he did not think that power and influence, which he deemed "injurious and greatly so," could be halted with their imprisonment. He therefore recommended that the best way to stop these partisan activities was to banish the women to the Confederacy. A policy of leniency, Dick asserted, had "led these people," both male and female, "to believe that it is their 'constitutional' right to speak and conspire together as they may choose." He disagreed, and would not condone it.[37]

The first and best documented case of such banishment occurred on May 16, 1863. This group had been the focus of Franklin Dick's March 5 letter. On March 20, 1863, Margaret McLure, one of Absolom Grimes' most trusted Confederate mail couriers who had inherited a sizeable estate upon the death of her husband, became the first of this group arrested. For a few days McLure remained in one of the St. Louis prisons while Federal soldiers removed all her possessions from her Chestnut Street home and replaced them with simple cots, converting the residence into a temporary prison for women. They then relocated McLure to her house.[38]

Held at the newly designated prison along with McLure were Eliza Frost (wife of a Confederate general), Mrs. William Cooke (widow of a recently deceased Confederate congressman), and several other women with prominent Confederate connections arrested in April and early May. About a dozen were also confined until boarding a southbound steamer on the Mississippi River. By the end of 1863, at least six more large shipments of banished women departed from St. Louis for the South.[39]

Meanwhile, the number of women entering the military prisons continued to rise. Banishments beyond federal lines continued through the rest of the war, as women would be sent individually or in small groups. But banishments sent women in other directions as well. Imogen Brumfield, the widow of one of "Bloody Bill" Anderson's men, was exiled to Canada in early 1865.[40] Admitted spy Nannie Douthitt received an offer to have her sentence commuted provided she relocate to the Idaho Territory.[41] And a significant number of women were banished to "any of the free states, north & east of Springfield, Illinois, not to return to the State of Missouri during the rebellion without the consent of the Military authorities."[42]

The year 1864 marked an important turning point in the war. In the East, Ulysses S. Grant launched his overland campaign to destroy Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia and to capture Richmond. In Georgia, William T. Sherman conducted his drive southward to occupy Atlanta and then to reach the Atlantic Ocean. In Missouri, the year witnessed an escalation of the war against partisan guerrillas, complicated by a Confederate invasion of the state that ultimately failed. These events necessitated an increased effort to destroy Confederate support. Thus, the flow of disloyal women arriving at the St. Louis-area prisons greatly accelerated in 1864, with at least 170 confined in that year alone. By that time, St. Louis's military prison personnel had grown accustomed to having women among their prison populations. Significantly, some women prisoners continued to exhibit the disloyalty and defiance against the Federal government that precipitated their arrests. Sarah Jane Smith could have been released from prison much sooner than she was if she had revealed the names of those with whom she conspired.[43] Many women accepted imprisonment for not only themselves but also their children rather than revealing the whereabouts of guerrillas operating in Missouri and elsewhere.[44] And some women intentionally found other ways to complicate their releases,

Missouri wasn't the only state ravaged by guerrilla warfare. Mosby's Raiders (the 43rd Battalion, Virginia Calvary) were controversial, even during the war. Small groups of men under Confederate Col. John Mosby staged quick raids against Union targets, then seemed to disappear into the local landscape of Southern farms and homes. Because of their unconventional tactics, many in the Union dubbed them "guerrillas," not unlike those in places like Missouri. *(Image: State Historical Society of Missouri Photo Collection)*

necessitating their further incarceration. Florence Lundy, for instance, completed part of the sentence she received in Memphis for smuggling—six months imprisonment—but refused to comply with the rest of the sentence, paying a $3,000 fine, a sum well within her means. She even turned away offers from friends concerned with her health to pay the levy, preferring instead, in the words of a fellow inmate, to "let the Government vent the full force of its august and dignified anger on her own little person." Only when the friends paid the fine without her knowledge just days before the war's end did Lundy leave Alton Prison, more than a month after her prison term had expired.[45]

The most pressing question faced by prison authorities related to sufficient space to house the women. As the number of women prisoners swelled, prison officials temporarily used several existing structures located throughout the city as well as the regular military prisons to hold women. For instance, a residence confiscated from a William Dobyns held female prisoners in 1863. Likewise, a building on St. Charles Street on the north side of the city served as a women's prison from at least early January through October 1864. Margaret McLure's Chestnut Street home also underwent a revival as a women's prison in 1864. And the prisons on Gratiot Street and Myrtle Street regularly confined women throughout the rest of the war.[46]

By the latter half of 1864, demands mounted for a new site for a women's military prison, and in September a building across from the Gratiot Street structure was converted for this use. Only a month later, however, St. Louis' superintendent of military prisons began advocating yet another new prison to meet the space demands created by the arrests of more partisan women.[47] A partial solution to the overcrowding in the city prisons was to send some women facing longer sentences to Alton. Before 1864, the provost marshal and his superior in St. Louis had shown a

reluctance to do this. The decision to transfer these women to Alton was not an attempt to rid the city prisons of female prisoners. Rather, it reflected the reality that most of the women sent to Alton would be in custody for long periods of time, while more women would be arriving at the city's prisons in the future. By the end of the war, the Alton Prison would receive dozens of female prisoners, about half of whom came from Missouri by way of St. Louis.

Finally, banishment offered another method of easing the congestion in the women's prisons. As late as April 26, 1865, Department of the Missouri Commander Grenville Dodge ordered the removal of ten inmates from the Gratiot Street Female Prison, "to be sent beyond the lines of the U.S. Forces for disloyal practices." Even with the Confederacy in ruins, gasping its last breath, Dodge deemed these women, all Missourians arrested for aiding guerrillas, too dangerous to remain where they may cause further disruption to Federal authority.[48]

The presence of women in the St. Louis-region's prisons reveals that at least some Confederate women actively promoted secession and rebellion. These women had indeed located themselves amid the politics of rebellion by taking as their own the war against the Federal government, even if it meant arrest and imprisonment. Union officers had little time to be troubled by the potential disruption Confederate women's activities might cause to gender norms and the expectations of womanhood. Rather, authorities remained concerned about the threat the actions of these women posed to the Union war effort and to the authority of the Federal government. From overtly sympathizing with and giving moral support to the Confederacy to more direct insurgency such as smuggling communications and contraband, sabotage, spying, and even enlisting in the Confederate service, Southern women both expressed and acted on the politics they embraced.[49] Through their actions and deeds, Confederate women risked their personal liberty and lives to further their cause. Rather than being viewed as victims of the war, these women should be recognized as public actors who hazarded all in the name of the Confederacy.

After a guerrilla attack at Lawrence, Kansas, known as the Lawrence Massacre, Union General Thomas Ewing accused pro-Confederate farmers in western Missouri of supporting and instigating the attack, so issued General Order No. 11, portrayed here by George Caleb Bingham. General Order No. 11 forced everyone not loyal to the Union to evacuate the region, and their properties were burned. *(Image: State Historical Society of Missouri Photo Collection)*

NOTES

[1] Griffin Frost, *Camp and Prison Journal* (Iowa City, Iowa: Press of the Camp Pope Bookshop, 1994 reprint [1867]), 40, 196.

[2] This study utilized several collections from the National Archives, Washington, D.C., including Union Provost Marshals' File of Papers Related to Individual Civilians [M 345], Record Group 109 [hereafter cited as Individual Civilians File]; Union Provost Marshals' File of Papers Relating to Two or More Civilians [M 416], Record Group 109 [hereafter cited as Two or More Civilians File]; and Selected Records of the War Department Relating to Confederate Prisoners of War, 1861-1865 [M 598], Record Group 109 [hereafter cited as Alton Prison Records]; as well as *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (128 vols., Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901) [hereafter cited as *O. R.*]. Also of particular use were the wartime issues of the *Missouri Democrat* (St. Louis).

[3] Recent studies concerning women's direct contributions to the war effort include Elizabeth D. Leonard, *All the Daring of the Soldier: Women of the Civil War Armies* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999); DeAnne Blanton and Lauren M. Cook, *They Fought Like Demons: Women Soldiers in the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2002); and LeeAnn Whites and Alecia P. Long, eds., *Occupied Women: Gender, Military Occupation, and the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2009).

[4] Little has been written about female Confederate prisoners. In his Pulitzer Prize-winning study, *The Fate of Liberty: Abraham Lincoln and Civil Liberties* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), Mark E. Neely, Jr. argues that the number of women arrested during the war was inconsequential. Thomas P. Lowry's *Confederate Heroines: 120 Southern Women Convicted by Union Military Justice* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006) looks at a limited number of women arrested by the Federal army during the war, some of whom are part of the present study. Lowry limits his research primarily to the Records of the Judge Advocate General's Office (Army), Record Group 153, National Archives, Washington, D.C., which often do not tell the entire story of the arrests, confinements, and ultimate fates of the women prisoners. In a recent essay LeeAnn Whites investigates a particular group of wealthy women arrested in St. Louis and banished to the South in 1863, but her study overlooks the women who came into custody before those she looks at and the many more who came later. See "'Corresponding with the Enemy': Mobilizing the Relational Field of Battle in St. Louis" in *Occupied Women*, 103-16.

[5] Paula Baker, "The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society, 1780-1920," *American Historical Review* 89 (June 1984): 622.

[6] For the best work on St. Louis during the war see Louis Gerteis, *Civil War St. Louis* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001).

[7] *Missouri Democrat*, August 15, 1861; *O. R.*, I, 3: 442, 466-67.

[8] *Missouri Democrat*, October 21, 1861; Individual Civilians Files, Roll 40, Mrs. Burke.

[9] *Missouri Democrat*, May 15, June 16, June 20, June 21, May 3, July 11, August 14, April 16, April 17, April 18, and April 29, 1862; Individual Civilians File, Roll 18, Mrs. Fanny Barron.

[10] *Missouri Democrat*, July 14, 1862.

[11] *Missouri Democrat*, December 5, December 6, December 7, and December 11, 1861; Individual Civilians File, Roll 278, Nicholas Walton.

[12] *Missouri Democrat*, December 28, 1861; Individual Civilians File, Roll 57, Bridget Connors; Two or More Civilians File, Roll 93.

[13] Individual Civilians File, Roll 196, Isadora Morrison; *Missouri Democrat*, July 28, 1862.

[14] Individual Civilians File, Roll 295, Mary Wolf; Individual Civilians File, Roll 52, Lucinda Clark.

[15] Individual Civilians File, Roll 89, Mrs. Catherine Farrell; *Missouri Democrat*, September 1, 1862.

[16] *Missouri Democrat*, September 4, 1862; Telephone interview, Olly Sappington, July 18, 2000; *O.R.*, II, 4: 486. The author thanks Mr. Sappington for the biographical information he provided for both Drucilla and William David Sappington. In *Civil War St. Louis*, 178, Gerteis erroneously identifies Drucilla as Jane Sappington, the wife of former governor John Sappington and mother-in-law of Claiborne Jackson. Jane Sappington died a decade prior. See Phillips, *Missouri's Confederate*, 66, n22, 214.

The *Missouri Democrat*, September 8, 1862, identified the officer at Drucilla's house as Colonel John C. Boone, but Confederate mail carrier Absolom Grimes identified him as Hampton Boone. See Absolom Grimes, *Absolom Grimes, Confederate Mail Carrier*, ed. M.M. Quaife (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1926), 75.

[17] *Missouri Democrat*, September 17, 1862; Two or More Civilians File, Roll 93; Grimes, *Absolom Grimes*, 75, 85-93.

[18] *Missouri Democrat*, October 14, 1862, 14 May, 1863; *O.R.*, I, 34, 2: 1077.

[19] *O. R.*, II, 1: 247-49.

[20] Individual Civilians File, Roll 152, Bridget Kelly.

[21] *Missouri Democrat*, August 8, 1862.

[22] *Missouri Democrat*, August 13 and August 14, 1862; Individual Civilians File, Roll 16, Mary M. Barclay.

[23] *Missouri Democrat*, June 20 and June 21, 1862.

[24] *O.R.*, II, 5: 227, 621; Individual Civilians File, Roll 149, Clara Judd (see also *O. R.*, II, 6: 621-24).

[25] *O.R.*, II, 5: 621.

[26] *O.R.*, II, 5: 624.

[27] *O. R.*, II, 5: 621.

[28] Individual Civilians File, Roll 149, Clara Judd; *Missouri Democrat*, August 18, 1863; *The Valley Herald* (Chaska, Minnesota), August 29, 1863, April 1, 1865.

[29] *O. R.*, I, 34, 1: 994-95; Register of Civilian Prisoners, March 1863-June 1864 (Roll 15), Alton Prison Records; *Missouri Democrat*, March 1, 1865.

[30] Individual Civilians File, Roll 30, Sarah Bond.

[31] Individual Civilians File, Roll 76, Nannie Douthitt; General Orders, No. 190, October 6, 1864, in U.S. Army, *General Orders of the Department of the Missouri, 1864* [In two parts, Part II] (St. Louis: R.P. Studley & Co., Printers, 1864).

[32] Individual Civilians File, Role 149, Susannah Justice.

[33] Individual Civilians File, Roll 176, Annie B. Martin. Martin first traveled from St. Louis beyond the lines with her sister Theresa Blannerhassett, who was banished from St. Louis in October 1863.

[34] Individual Civilians File, Roll 203, Lucie Nickolson.

[35] Individual Civilians File, Roll 85, Emma English.

[36] Individual Civilians File, Roll 251, Sarah Jane Smith; Frost, *Camp and Prison Journal*, 207, 217.

[37] *O.R.*, II, 5: 319-21.

[38] Mrs. P. G. Robert, "History of Events Preceding and Following the Banishment of Mrs. Margaret A. E. McLure, as Given to the Author Herself" in *Reminiscences of the Women of Missouri During the Sixties* (St. Louis: United Daughters of the Confederacy, Missouri Division, 1929), 78-79; Individual Civilian File, Roll 186, Margaret McLure; Grimes, *Absolom Grimes*, 76-77.

[39] *Missouri Democrat*, May 9 and May 14, 1863.

[40] Individual Civilians File, Roll 38, Imogen Brumfield; *Missouri Democrat*, January 19, 1865.

[41] Individual Civilians File, Roll 76, Nannie Douthitt; General Orders, No. 190, October 6, 1864, in U.S. Army, *General Orders of the Department of the Missouri, 1864* [In two parts, Part II].

[42] See, for example, Individual Civilians File, Roll 254, Mary Simpson.

[43] Individual Civilians File, Roll 251, Sarah Jane Smith.

[44] Records reflect that some women had their children with them in the prisons, but little other information is available.

[45] Register of Civilian Prisoners, March 1863-June 1864; Register of Confederate and Federal Soldiers and Civilians Sentenced, No. 5, January 1863-July 1864, p. 16, both (Roll 15) Alton Prison Records; Frost, *Camp and Prison Journal*, 240 (quote).

[46] *Missouri Democrat*, June 12, 1863, October 22, 1864; Individual Civilians File, Edward Dobyns (Roll 74); *New York Herald*, June 30, 1863; Michael Fellman, *Inside War: The Guerrilla Conflict in Missouri during the American Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 221.

[47] *O.R.*, II, 7: 772, 1019, 1142; *Missouri Democrat*, October 22, 1864.

[48] *Missouri Democrat*, April 29, 1865.

[49] At least one woman investigated here, Mary Ann Pitman, claimed to have served in the Confederate army disguised as a man. See *O.R.*, II, 7: 345. For more on women who disguised themselves as men and joined the army during the Civil War, see Leonard, *All the Daring of the Soldiers*, and Blanton and Cook, *They Fought like Demons*.