



*The Lawrence massacre. Published in Harper's Weekly, September 5, 1863. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.*

---

# Little-Known Accounts of the Lawrence Massacre

*Edited and introduced by William D. Haynes*

**T**he Lawrence Massacre was a defining event in the decade-long Kansas-Missouri border conflict. In August 1863, this sectional violence—which had become absorbed into the nationwide Civil War—escalated when Confederate guerrilla chieftain William C. Quantrill led several hundred Missouri “bushwhackers” on a raid into Kansas. They determined to destroy the abolitionist city of Lawrence and slaughter its adult male residents, citing as justification crimes committed by Lawrence-based jayhawkers and other Union forces in western Missouri.

Riding up from the southeast, Quantrill’s force reached the undefended city of about three thousand residents near dawn on August 21. In the four hours that followed, they killed at least 150 people; looted and burned scores of businesses, homes, and outbuildings; and leveled almost all the commercial district on Massachusetts Street. Quantrill and his men then departed Lawrence. Eluding Union pursuers that included a band of massacre survivors led by Gen. James H. Lane, the raiders escaped back across the border, leaving behind devastation and outrage.<sup>1</sup>

Survivors of the Lawrence Massacre were instrumental in shaping its memory. After addressing urgent needs for food and medical care, and after burying the dead, traumatized Lawrencians took up two major tasks: rebuilding their community and recording what they had witnessed. The flood of firsthand narratives in the wake of the massacre continued into the early twentieth century, providing historians with a wealth of documentation.<sup>2</sup> This article highlights three accounts, written in the raid’s immediate aftermath, that have remained obscure despite their descriptive powers and corroborative details.<sup>3</sup>

## **Elizabeth Peabody**

Elizabeth Holmes Adams was born in Vermont in 1831, an offspring of the prominent Adams political family. At the time of the massacre, she was married to David G. Peabody and lived with her children on Pinckney Street, just west of downtown Lawrence, while David was away serving in the army. After

---

William D. Haynes, *director of engagement and learning at the Watkins Museum of History in Lawrence, earned a PhD in history from the University of Kansas in 2017. He is a member of the Humanities Kansas Speakers Bureau and recently published an article on the Lawrence Massacre in the autumn 2023 issue of Kansas! magazine.*

1. Albert Castel, *Civil War Kansas: Reaping the Whirlwind* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1997), 126–35, 142–48.

2. Richard B. Sheridan, *Quantrill and the Lawrence Massacre: A Reader* (Lawrence: Privately printed, 1995); Fred N. Six, ed., “Eyewitness Reports of Quantrill’s Raid: Letters of Sophia Bissell and Sidney Clarke,” *Kansas History* 28, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 94–103.

3. Copies of all three accounts are housed in the Douglas County Historical Society Archives, Watkins Museum of History. They have been transcribed verbatim, and any footnotes that appear are those of the editor.

Elizabeth's death decades later, the *Lawrence Daily World* printed her diary entry for the day of the Lawrence Massacre.<sup>4</sup>

Fri. Aug. 21, 1863.

A never to be forgotten day of horrors. A little before sunrise we were aroused by a continuous discharge of firearms. I leaped from my bed and looking from the window saw some colored women and children running along the road and screaming "secesh, secesh."<sup>5</sup> It was the work of a moment to slip on my clothes and, seizing David's papers and money and my jewelry and silver, I hastened to secret it. I had over five hundred dollars pinned inside the bosom of my dress. Then watched and waited, rejoicing that my husband was away. I had no fears for the personal safety of myself or the children but of course expected the house would be plundered and burned.

In five or ten minutes after we heard the firing those fiends in human form were all around us. They galloped up to the houses and ordered out the men. If they came and surrendered they were robbed and in most cases shot down. If they did not come out the house was fired and the blood thirsty wretches watched for their victims as they were driven out by the smoke and heat and shot at them as they ran until they either fell or reached a ravine where they could hide. The women they allowed to leave, and in some cases even helped them get out their things. One as he passed our house called to me as I was sitting by a window, "You had better be getting out of that house. It is stone, but it has got to burn for all that." As the houses of my neighbor's were blazing around I thought it best to take his advice and packed our trunks with clothing and tied my bedding in bundles ready to throw from the windows. But time pressed them, they dared not continue this

4. "An Interesting Story," *Lawrence Daily World*, January 29, 1906, 3; Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Dictionary and Register of the United States Army, from Its Organization, September 29, 1789, to March 2, 1903* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1903), 1:777. For its appearance here, the diary entry has been divided into paragraphs.

5. Slang for secessionists (i.e., supporters of the Confederacy).

work of carnage as they knew the country around would soon be aroused.

Between nine and ten they withdrew, leaving hundreds of women and children in the streets, many of them without a change of clothing or a mouthful of food for breakfast. On all sides were blazing buildings and smoking ruins. Our house was one of the fortunate that escaped. Our loss will not probably exceed three hundred dollars and is scarcely to be thought of. Again, our horse escaped. I saw a bushwhacker lead her from the stable, and leaving her with his own horse he went into another stable and brought out two fine animals. Meanwhile our horse had strayed around the house and he did not take the trouble to look for her, so she was saved. I think they were informed that there was no man here as they did not come to the house, though they often passed by. There was a woman with them.<sup>6</sup>

Leaving the children with a girl who was staying with me I sallied out. I cannot describe the heart rending scenes I saw. I first went to the house of Dr. Griswold. He was lying dead upon his woodpile, having returned from the East the day before. On the grass was lying Mr. Trask dead, and Mr. Thorp and Mr. Baker both shot through the body and apparently dying.<sup>7</sup> Mr. Collamore and two other men suffocated in Mr. Collamore's well.<sup>8</sup> All day I have been about amongst the

6. Presumably this reference is to Sallie Young, a nineteen-year-old Lawrence resident who accompanied the bushwhackers around town and may have saved some townspeople's lives. See Burton J. Williams, "Quantrill's Raid on Lawrence: A Question of Complicity," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (Summer 1968): 148; R. G. Elliott, "The Quantrill Raid as Seen from the Eldridge House," *Publications of the Kansas State Historical Society* 2 (1905): 186-87; Sheridan, *Quantrill and the Lawrence Massacre*, 193, 223.

7. Newspaper editor Josiah C. Trask, State Senator Simeon M. Thorp, and grocer Harlow W. Baker had been boarding with their wives in the home of Dr. Jerome F. Griswold and his family. Raiders lured the four men out of the house before shooting them down. Only Baker survived his wounds. Sheridan, *Quantrill and the Lawrence Massacre*, 154-55, 262, 273-77.

8. George W. Collamore, mayor of Lawrence and general in the state militia, and his hired hand Patrick Keefe, hid in Collamore's well to escape the raiders. When they failed to resurface, Joseph Lowe crawled into the well either to rescue them or retrieve their bodies. All three died from suffocation or drowning. *Ibid.*, 154, 194, 201, 252.

dead and dying. There has been nothing done here today but to make coffins for the dead. But most of the carpenter shops are burned down and they cannot work fast enough. Tonight there were twenty-eight bodies in the Methodist Church, ten in a shop near by, and along the sidewalks were many who have been drawn from the ruins too much disfigured by fire to be recognized.

Men have poured in from the country about and there is now a large number under General Lane in pursuit of these devils. May the last one be taken. Several were killed in town. Gen. Lane's beautiful residence is a blackened ruin. Very many of the prominent citizens of the town are dead and men who last night counted their property by thousands are now penniless. I am very tired tonight, but so excited that to sleep seems impossible. Ah, how thankful I feel that David is not here.

Elizabeth Peabody (whose surname became Bailey when she later remarried) was the only writer of the three who lived a long life, dying as a well-respected citizen of Lawrence at the age of seventy-five.<sup>9</sup>

### William Kempf

A report by William Kempf is valuable for its close descriptions of key incidents.<sup>10</sup> The German-born Kempf had been an early settler of Leavenworth, was active in the free-state movement, and worked as an attorney and justice of the peace. By August 1863, he had moved with his family to Lawrence. A Leavenworth editor later eulogized him as "a proud spirit, intelligent, full of courage, a refugee of Europe of '48" and a

"devoted friend" of the Kansas antislavery cause.<sup>11</sup> This account was published in the *Leavenworth Evening Bulletin* on August 22, 1863, one day after the raid. It remains one of the earliest detailed accounts and includes some graphic depictions of the raid's aftermath.

### STATEMENT OF WM. KEMPF.

We publish the following statement written for THE BULLETIN by Mr. Kempf, an attaché of the Provost Marshal's office, at Lawrence. It was written hurriedly; giving simply plain facts as witnessed by him. His escape from death was miraculous:

Yesterday, the 21st of August, about 4 ½ o'clock, the citizens of Lawrence were surprised to hear a body of Cavalry ride rapidly towards the Kansas River. As soon as the first of these men reached the river by Massachusetts street and the streets east and west of it, they raised a shout, which was repeated down the streets as far as it was possible to hear. The citizens, startled by the noise, rushed into the streets to ascertain the cause. Many of the citizens were then shot down. With the quickness of lightning the news spread over town that the accursed Quantrell, with his bushwhackers, was in town. The surprise was so complete that it was utterly impossible for the citizens to undertake anything whatever for their defence. The few, who heroically run out with their guns, were quickly murdered, as were, in fact, all who showed themselves during the first half hour. The hills above, and the woods below the town were well guarded by guerrill[a]s, so that it was impossible for persons living on the outskirts of town to make their escape. Everything was done by command, or well understood beforehand by these murderers. After they had spread over town they commenced to plunder in the most deliberate manner conceivable.— Every store was broken open by a few men, guarded against surprise by the inside. The first thing they looked after was

9. "An Interesting Story," *Lawrence Daily World*, January 29, 1906.

10. After its initial appearance in newspapers, the account has been cited by very few historians. See "Doc. 119. The Massacre at Lawrence, Kansas. Statement of William Kempf," in *The Rebellion Record: A Diary of American Events, with Documents, Narratives, Illustrative Incidents, Poetry, Etc.*, ed. Frank Moore (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1864), 7:399–401; J. T. Headley, *The Great Rebellion: A History of the Civil War in the United States* (Hartford, CT: American Publishing Co., 1866), 2:235–36; Thomas Goodrich, *Black Flag: Guerrilla Warfare on the Western Border, 1861–1865* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 80.

11. *Leavenworth Daily Conservative*, August 24, 1861; *Leavenworth Times* quoted in the *Atchison Weekly Free Press*, December 1, 1866.

the safe, then everything else of value. Every safe was bursted open when they could not get the key; but they were so well informed about everything that they sent, in several instances, to the private residences of persons, demanding the keys for the safes in the stores. Well informed citizens think they took three hundred thousand dollars in cash along with them. It would seem they took more. They had been in town some time before they commenced burning the buildings.

The inmates of the Eldridge House were roused up by somebody violently beating the gong. Most of them soon assembled in the hall and it was found that not an arm was in the house. Capt. Banks told them the best thing they could do was to surrender, and this being agreed upon Capt. B. took a white sheet and waved it from the balcony.<sup>12</sup> This was greeted by a universal shout from the guerrillas. The commander of the bushwhackers around the house asked B.: Do you surrender this house? [Banks replied:] We do, and hope that you will treat our women and children with decency. To this the rebels agreed, and B. asked for Col. Quantrell. Quantrell was sent for, and soon came. He asked B. whether he was a Federal officer, and being answered in the affirmative assured B. that they would all be treated as prisoners and should not be molested. They were all searched and everything valuable taken away from them—even the fingerings of men and women. The whole house was then ransacked and everything of value taken out by the guerrillas. The prisoners were marched over to the Whitney House and there guarded.

By this time most of the plunder had been secured on horses driven together from all parts of the town. The safes had all been broken, some blown up by powder, others deliberately chiseled open. They picked out the horses, only retaining the best, and driving the poorer ones off.

At about seven o'clock they set fire to the Court House. We heard several explosions, which, at a

12. Captain Alexander R. Banks, Provost Marshal of the Southern District of Kansas, was boarding at the Eldridge.

distance, would have been taken for cannon shots. We heard some person riding down the street, commanding their friends to burn the stores; and we soon heard the crackling of the fire, and saw most of the buildings east and west of us wrapped in flames. To the south we could not see from the houses we were in.

During all this time citizens were being murdered everywhere. Germans and negroes, when caught, were shot immediately. Many persons were shot down after they had been taken prisoners, and had been assured that they would not be hurt if they would surrender. Messrs. Trask and Baker, and two other citizens were so taken, and while being marched towards the river as prisoners, after being assured that they would not be harmed, some guerrillas asked their names. Mr. Trask gave the names, when they were immediately fired upon, and all four killed on the spot, except Mr. Baker, who is not expected to live, however. Mr. Dix had been taken prisoner and his house set on fire, when one of the fiends told him if he would give them his money, he would not be killed, otherwise he would. Mr. Dix went into the burning house and got a thousand dollars and handed it over. He was told to march toward the river, and had not proceeded twenty steps when he was shot dead from behind. Mr. Hampson, clerk of the Provost Marshal, had a revolver and tried to defend the few things he had saved from the Johnson House. His wife interfered, and they told him if he would surrender he should be treated as a prisoner and be safe from harm. He surrendered, and was immediately shot from behind, the ball entering near the spine and coming out below the kidneys in front. The wound is not considered fatal.<sup>13</sup>

In one instance the wife and a daughter of a man threw themselves over his body, begging

13. Ralph C. Dix and his brother Stephen H. Dix were both killed. Joseph F. Hampson survived his wound thanks to the care of his wife, Angeline Hampson. Sheridan, *Quantrill and the Lawrence Massacre*, 150, 207; *White Cloud Kansas Chief*, September 3, 1863; (Lawrence) *Kansas State Journal*, April 28, 1864.

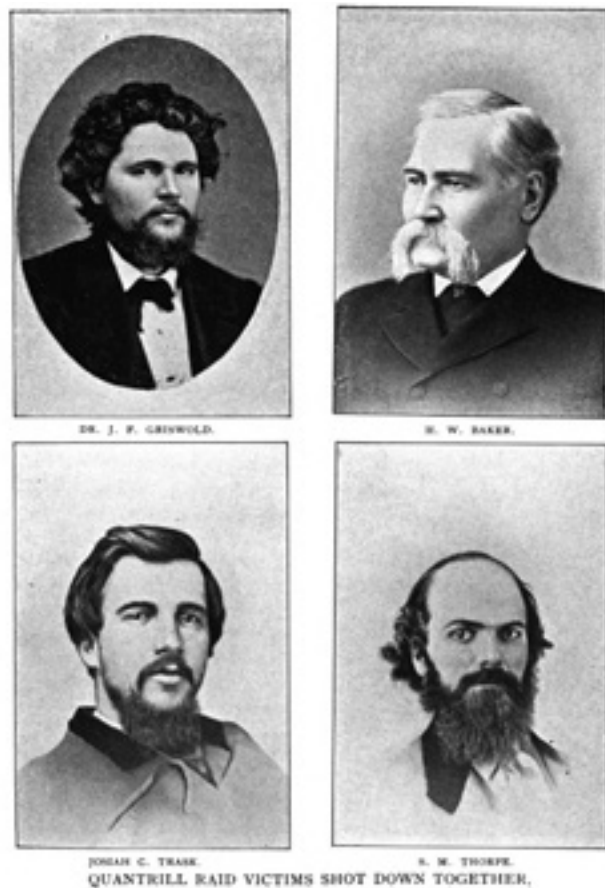
for his life. But one of the murderers deliberately thrust his revolver down between the two women and killed the man.<sup>14</sup>

Before ten o'clock the body of the guerrillas left with their plunder, leaving a guard over the prisoners in town, and a few stragglers. The few persons wounded were wounded at this time by the passing fiends. In the earlier part of the day most persons were fired at from very near, and killed instantly.

One of the first persons out was Col. [George W.] Deitzler. Mr. Williamson and myself helped him carry off the dead. The sight that met us when coming out, I cannot describe. I have read of outrages committed in the so-called dark ages, and horrible as they appeared to me, they sank into insignificance in comparison with what I was then compelled to witness. Well known citizens were lying in front of the spot where their stores or residences had been, completely roasted. The bodies were crisped and nearly black. We thought at first that they were all negroes, till we recognized some of them. In handling the dead bodies pieces of roasted flesh would remain in our hands. Soon our strength failed us in this horrible and sickening work. Many could not help crying like children. Women and little children were all over town hunting for their husbands and fathers, and sad indeed was the scene when they did finally find them among the corpses laid out for recognition. I cannot describe the horrors; language fails me, and the recollection of the scenes I witnessed makes me sick when I am compelled to repeat them.

The town is a complete ruin. The whole of the business part, and all good private residences are burned down. Everything of value was taken along by the fiends. No store is left, and it is necessary that the good people of Leavenworth send provisions immediately. Persons who were rich yesterday are now utterly destitute.

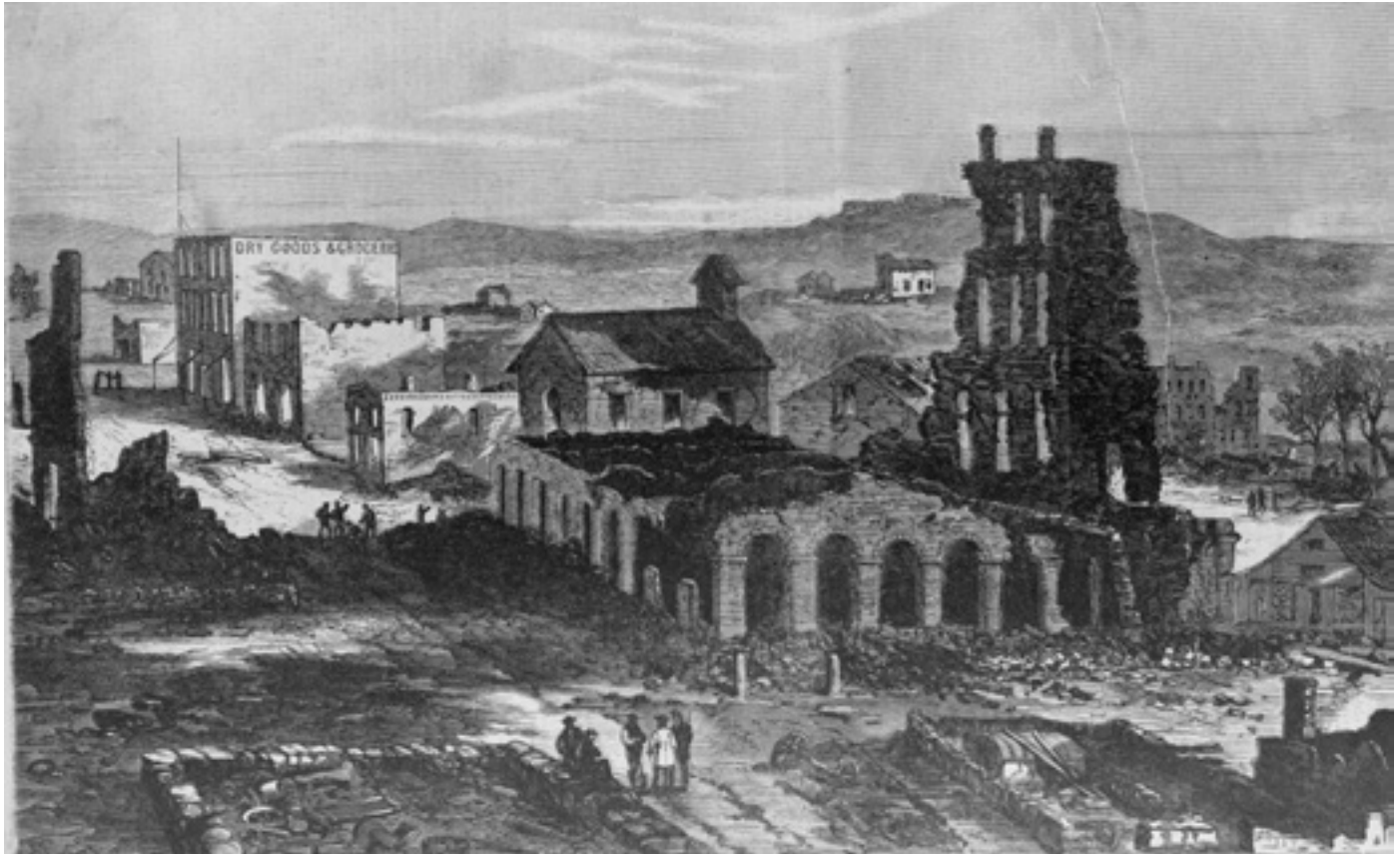
14. Judge Louis Carpenter was killed despite the efforts of his wife Mary, and possibly her sister as well, to shield his wounded body. See Sheridan, *Quantrill and the Lawrence Massacre*, 155, 194, 202, 263.



*Portraits of four victims of the raid, mentioned in both Kempf's and Peabody's accounts, published in Richard Cordley's 1895 History of Lawrence. Cordley, a well-known minister and abolitionist, narrowly escaped death.*

#### AT THE ELDRIDGE HOUSE.

One of the first places surrounded was the Eldridge House. It seems the guerrillas demanded a surrender before firing into it.— After a short consultation the occupants concluded to surrender, and a white flag (sheet) appeared from the balcony, which was greeted with cheers. Quantrell was sent for, and made his appearance. On being asked what were his intentions, he replied "plunder;" he finally agreed that they should be protected, and gave them an escort to a place of safety. The last named place not being found safe on account of indiscriminate shooting by the men, Quantrell allowed them to go [to] the Whitney House, kept by Mr. [Nathan] Stone. Quantrell said Mr. S. once saved his life and he was not the man to forget past



*The ruins of downtown Lawrence. Published in Harper's Weekly, September 19, 1863. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.*

favors. As soon as the Eldridge was surrendered, the house was searched. The inmates of the rooms were aroused from their beds, and their money, jewelry, and other valuables demanded of them. Some gentlemen from Ohio who occupied one room were not as expeditious as the guerrillas thought, and they commenced firing through the door. One ball took effect in the calf of the leg of one [of] them. This same man was again shot through the shoulder, but is now doing well at the Merchants in this city.<sup>15</sup> The safe was robbed of its contents. Soon after the building was destroyed; whether it was fired or caught from the adjoining buildings, we have not heard. It is supposed that a gentleman who has been connected with L. Levenson & Co., who had a store underneath, was burned.

15. This references the Merchants' Hotel in Leavenworth.

#### SCENES AT THE WHITNEY HOUSE.

After the second move, the Eldridge House party, which numbered about sixty, were safely, as they supposed, located in the Whitney House. Quantrell had chosen this place for his headquarters, and swore he would shoot any of his men who attempted to molest any of them. Many people, knowing this, slipped in and were saved. One brute came in upon his horse while the party were going from one place to the other, and was told by one of Quantrell's head men, named [David] Porter, that he would kill him if he did not dry up. Everything went on very well while Quantrell was there; he promised that he would be the last man to leave town, and none of his men should return. He took a lunch, and finally ordered the command to move out of the city, which they did. After mounting his horse, he lifted his hat to the ladies, and bowing politely, said: "Ladies, I now bid you good morning.

I hope when we meet again, it will be under more favorable circumstances." Putting spurs to his horse, he was soon out of sight. He was dressed in a dark colored shirt, blue blouse, and had on a black hat. After Quantrell left, four of his men came back and said they were determined to kill some one out of the crowd—didn't much care who; that they had been promised the privilege of killing all they pleased, and through some reason, Quantrell had been humbugged. One of the party said that he had a sister killed in the prison at Kansas City, and another said he had a sister shot by Union men; the third said he wanted to kill Miss Lydia Stone, the landlord's daughter; the fourth was a sober man, and seemed anxious to help save the lives of those in the house.<sup>16</sup> It seems that one of the party had forcibly taken possession of a gold ring from Miss Stone, and she informed Quantrell of the fact, who told the fellow if he did not hand it over he would shoot him. But Miss Stone escaped. They wanted also to kill Mr. R. S. Stevens and another man [Horace Stone], but they made their escape through a back door to the bank of the river, where they could be protected by the few soldiers across the river. The men prowled through the house, but did not find what they wanted. Finally they ordered all in the house to form a line outside. This was done. One of them then commenced asking their names and where they were born. One gentleman answered, Central Ohio. The fellow said that was as bad as Kansas, and shot him, but the wound did not prove fatal. Others were shot. Mr. Stone remonstrated with them, when one of them shot him through the head, killing him almost instantly. The party then left. It is reported that three of them were killed before getting out of town.

16. Union troops had arrested ten women suspected of aiding Confederate guerrillas and imprisoned them on the second floor of a building in Kansas City. On August 13, 1863, the floor collapsed, killing four of the women and injuring others. Charles F. Harris, "Catalyst for Terror: The Collapse of the Women's Prison in Kansas City," *Missouri Historical Review* 89, no. 3 (April 1995): 290-306; LeeAnn Whites, "Forty Shirts and a Wagonload of Wheat: Women, the Domestic Supply Line, and the Civil War on the Western Border," *Journal of the Civil War Era* 1, no. 1 (March 2011): 56-78.

#### THE BANKS.

Were robbed, as well as the safes of the stores and offices. One man gave up all he had, and was then shot down. It is supposed they carried away in greenbacks some \$100,000. The other property—except horses—they took away, was not much. The loss is estimated at between one and two millions.

#### HOW GOV. ROBINSON'S HOUSE WAS SAVED.

Among the houses saved was that of Ex-Gov. Robinson, which fortunately is situated on the bank of the river.<sup>17</sup> The guerrillas came and ordered the family (Mr. R. not being at home,) to take out what they wanted as they were going to burn it. They then left for town. When they returned, they were greeted with a volley from a small party of the 12th Kansas on the opposite side, and three killed. Thinking the game would not pay the scamps left.

#### GEN. LANE.

Had a miraculous escape. He heard the firing and saw Willis' stable burning, and made tracks through a large corn-field near his house. Inquiries were made by the gang for Lane's house, and a Mr. [Arthur] Spicer was detailed by them to show his house. Placing a pistol to his head they compelled him to pilot them to Lane's house. They could not catch the General, but burnt his house. The General soon after made his appearance, and is now after the murderers.

#### SOLDIERS KILLED.

Eighteen soldiers, out of twenty-two, of the Kansas 14th, at their recruiting rendezvous, near Lawrence, were shot, also a number of negroes of the 2d Col'd Regiment, were killed.

#### THE KILLED AND WOUNDED.

We are indebted to J. M. Winchell, Esq, for a list of killed and wounded so far as heard from. He took down the names as they came in and thinks

17. As of January 1863, Charles Robinson was no longer governor. Castel, *Civil War Kansas*, 77.

he has not half of them. They are as follows . . . [List omitted.]<sup>18</sup>

#### GEN. LANE AFTER QUANTRELL.

Gen. J. H. Lane, with four hundred citizens, is in pursuit of Quantrell. A courier came into Lawrence at 4 o'clock, P.M., yesterday, from him, and reported that Lane had overtaken Quantrell at Brooklyn City, ten miles from Lawrence, and that the latter had faced about to give battle. Lane ordered all reinforcements to come direct to Brooklyn.<sup>19</sup>

#### INCIDENTS.

There were many heroic deeds performed by the ladies. In many instances, they placed themselves between their husbands and fathers and danger when the drunken fiends held cocked pistols at them. One lady we hear spoken of and deserves particular mention; her name is Miss Lydia Stone, daughter of the landlord of the Whitney House. She moved round through the crowd doing all she could to alleviate the suffering. The dead body of one person was on fire, and she at once procured water and put it out. When the scoundrels came back a second time, saying they would kill some one, she replied that "they might as well kill me as anybody." Heroic deeds were performed by other ladies whose names have escaped us.<sup>20</sup>

One of the most cowardly acts was the shooting at men, women and children as they passed down under the bank towards the river.

18. James M. Winchell was among the party captured at the Eldridge and wrote an account for the *New York Daily Tribune* that supports several elements in Kempf's report. J.M.W., "The Sacking of Lawrence," *New York Daily Tribune*, August 31, 1863.

19. Despite their best efforts to stop Quantrell at Brooklyn, which Quantrell's men had also destroyed, Lane and other Union officers failed to defeat the bushwhackers. Castel, *Civil War Kansas*, 133-35.

20. Instances of heroism by Lawrence women are too numerous to list here; in addition to Lydia Stone, many survivors singled out Elizabeth Fisher and Kate Riggs for saving their husbands' lives. Elizabeth disguised her husband, Hugh Dunn Fisher, and sneaked him out of the house before raiders torched their home. Kate Riggs saved her husband Samuel by throwing off the aim of a bushwhacker who was attempting to shoot him. Sheridan, *Quantrell and the Lawrence Massacre*, 160-61, 194-95, 301; *Leavenworth Daily Conservative*, August 23, 1863.

There is no doubt but that Quantrell had spies at Lawrence. One man at the Eldridge House acted as a guide, and pointed out prominent men and things.<sup>21</sup>

One fellow got Capt. Banks's uniform and made quite a display with it.

A riding party of two ladies and gentlemen were met just outside the city, and compelled to go back. Quantrell invited the ladies to ride beside him into town, and they did so.<sup>22</sup>

Gen. Collamore was suffocated to death by damps in his well. When he first discovered the guerrillas in town, he went into the well and his hired man, named Keith, covered it up; after the trouble was over, the man went to the well and found the General at the bottom.<sup>23</sup> He went down after him, and unfortunately met the same fate. A neighbor, named Lowe, passing along went down to rescue both of them, and was also suffocated.

It was peculiarly noticeable that the fury of the incarnate fiends was particularly directed against the Germans and the few unfortunate negroes who were in the doomed city.

In Lawrence, tragedy stalked William Kempf and his family. He and his wife lost a seven-month-old son the following January and soon returned to Leavenworth. Consumed with illness, poverty, and depression, Kempf died by suicide in November 1866, mourned by Kansans who remembered him as a kind, intelligent warrior for freedom.<sup>24</sup>

21. Quantrell reportedly recognized Arthur Spicer among the crowd at the Eldridge and forced him to guide the guerrillas to the homes of Lane and other prominent targets. *Kansas State Journal*, June 16, 1864. Survivors were convinced that Quantrell had spies infiltrate Lawrence before the attack. A kangaroo court convicted and hanged one unfortunate man for supposed collusion with the raiders. Williams, "Quantrell's Raid on Lawrence," 145.

22. Other accounts speak of only one such lady, the aforementioned Sallie Young.

23. This refers to Patrick Keefe.

24. *Leavenworth Bulletin*, January 23 and March 14, 1864; *Leavenworth Daily Conservative*, November 24, 1866; (*Topeka*) *Weekly Leader*, November 29, 1866; *Atchison Weekly Free Press*, December 1, 1866.

## Priscilla Jones

Twenty-five-year-old Priscilla Jones wrote a letter two days after the massacre that exemplifies survivors' grief and shock.<sup>25</sup> Priscilla's father, Rev. Evan Jones, was a famous Baptist missionary to the Cherokee who had fled Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma) when his antislavery activism had led to death threats from slavery supporters.<sup>26</sup> Priscilla lived on the outskirts of Lawrence among a large circle of relatives that included her mother and several siblings mentioned in the letter. She wrote it to her sister Mary "Mollie" Smith in upstate New York.

August 23d 1863

My dear Sister

How can I begin and tell you the sad news, oh, it is awful. I can hardly compose myself enough this morning to write.

Last Friday morning just at daylight the rebels got into Lawrence and, oh, what a sweep of everything, killing every man they saw, robbing the houses, then firing them, and oh, dear Mollie, must I tell you that among the first that was killed was our poor brother Sam.

He was killed in the street, shot through the heart, they think. How can we bear it, dear Mollie, just think of one of our dear friends being shot by those awful rebels. Uncle and I went into town in the afternoon, but we didn't know where Sam was, he had been here just the Friday before and said he would be back the next week. We looked for him every day but no, he didn't come. I guess

25. Donna Jordahl, a collateral descendant of Priscilla Jones, donated her typewritten copy of the letter to the Lawrence Public Library, and this copy later joined the archives of the Douglas County Historical Society. It appears here by permission of Mrs. Jordahl. The typewritten copy includes editorial comments attempting to clarify Jones's handwriting and references; for this publication, such comments have been replaced with new bracketed edits and descriptive footnotes, though lack of access to the original letter makes clarification impossible in some places. Donna (Robbins) Jordahl to Lawrence Public Library, February 24, 1995, Douglas County Historical Society Archives, Watkins Museum of History.

26. Patrick N. Mingos, *Slavery in the Cherokee Nation: The Keetoowah Society and the Defining of a People, 1855–1867* (London: Routledge, 2003), 102, 138.

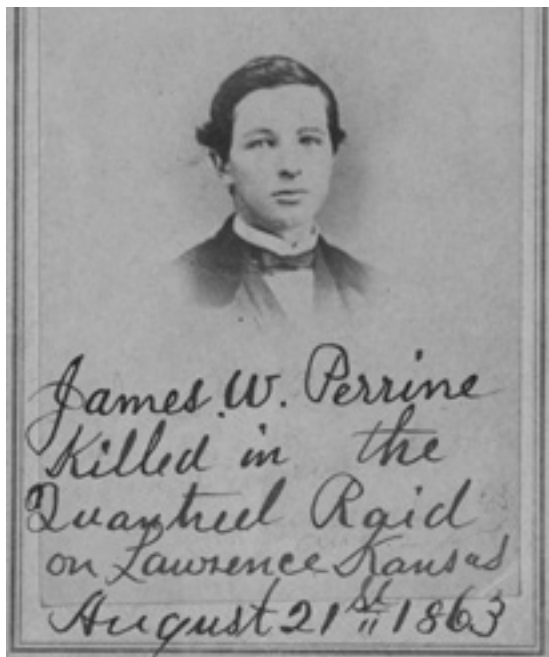


Gravestone of Priscilla Jones in Lawrence's Pioneer Cemetery. Jones did not long survive her brother. Photograph courtesy of William D. Haynes.

he was on his way here when he was killed.<sup>27</sup> Oh, if he had just come on. Uncle went in to see the dead bodies, but saw no one he knew, so we came home.

Yesterday Miles and Mother went to the graveyard with a neighbor whose brother was killed, and Miles was looking around at the boxes. There on a paper was written "This is the corpse of Samuel Jones." He enquired if there was any other by that name, no one knew, so he opened the box, and there he knew him. Poor Miles came near fainting. Oh, we feel so badly to think we didn't find it before, but there were some bodies taken

27. A dispatch printed in the *Leavenworth Daily Conservative* of August 23 noted, "Samuel Jones, a blacksmith, was shot down at his anvil—one of the first victims. His body still lay there at ten o'clock, yesterday morning."



James W. Perrine, who was one of two young men killed in the Country Store, an incident described in Jones's account. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

into a shop that we didn't know of and he was one of them. I don't suppose we could have done any more than was done, but we would have felt better about it.

They all had to be buried just as fast as they could be. Oh, such a sight never was seen, I don't think. They were digging graves all night Friday night, began burying just at daylight Saturday morning and worked till dark last night. We can see them very well from here, there was one hundred and twenty-three bodies found, some burnt so you couldn't tell what it was. They are finding them all the time. If we had been in town, I expect Miles would have been killed. And if Alice hadn't been sick, we all would have been there. Our house was one of the few that was left standing.

We don't know what to do about moving to town now. Oh, that we could get out of Kansas, we could get away well enough but nothing to live on when we were away. But how can we live here. I have been afraid ever since I came, and now I can hardly live. We packed up most of our clothing

and some few things we would like to save, and hid them out in the corn and woods [or possibly "weeds"] and buried the money \$200 in the ground, but they didn't give us a call, just passed a little above us, setting fire to every building they pass.

Uncle and Miles ran the horses as far as they could and hid themselves out. The men could do nothing but try to save their lives. I haven't heard of any woman being killed. They gave them time to get out of the house before they burn them. The Upham family and house were saved.<sup>28</sup> He gave them \$1000 two [illegible] he thought he would be killed. One man told him he was going to kill him, but Mr. U. stepped inside his door and the devil rode on. I can call them by no other name. They say they came though the place like wild things. Oh, such a thing you never saw and I hope never to see again. I never knew anything about this cruel man [Quantrill] before.

Mother says she does not feel safe here as she did in Arkansas. I don't know, but we will be safe enough after this if the rebels get whipped but good. They will hardly dare come back again soon. And Kansas will be looking out for them after this. General [Lane] is in pursuit the last we heard. I don't know the number of his men. There was thought to be about 200 rebels, Quantrill at the head. He has lived in Lawrence and knew the place well. Oh, that they will get him.

There was four or five rebels killed near town. One, a Negro man tied a rope to his neck, and tied that to a horse and dragged it through town as fast as the horse could go, for a long time.<sup>29</sup> It seems

28. Rev. W. P. Upham, like Evan Jones, was a Baptist who had ministered to the Cherokee in Indian Territory before fleeing to Kansas. The Upham family lived on Kentucky Street west of downtown Lawrence. James Upham, *A Sketch of the Life and Character of Dea. Joshua Upham, of Salem, Mass., to Which Are Appended a Sketch of His First Wife, His Ancestral History, and a Genealogical List of His Descendants* (Boston: The author, 1885), 72; Minges, *Slavery in the Cherokee Nation*, 101-102; *Kansas State Journal*, April 16, 1863.

29. Contrary to what all three writers stated, Larkin M. Skaggs was the only bushwhacker known to have died in the raid. A newspaper correspondent witnessed the abuse of his corpse. C. M. C. to Editor Sentinel, August 22, 1863, in Lela Barnes, ed., "An Editor Looks at Early-Day Kansas: The Letters of Charles Monroe Chase," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 26, no. 2 (Summer 1960): 145.

awful but it is no worse than they did our men. They came in and our men had nothing to help themselves to so unexpected—they couldn't get a gun. I don't think there was but three or four guns fired by our men. They gave up and still they [the raiders] killed and fired on everyone they could.

One young gentleman I knew in Ford's store, they went in, made him give up the safe and give them everything they wanted, hit him over the head every step he would take and then after they got all they wanted, shot him to pieces.<sup>30</sup>

Mr. Upham saw this, he said he never saw such a sight. Oh, I can't tell you anything about the [illegible]. There is in this place so many without homes and friends. Uncle is waiting to take this to the P.O. so I must stop. [Illegible; possibly Joe] has written Father and Ellie to [illegible]. He will write John soon. They say Blunt is retreating but we don't know how true.<sup>31</sup>

I will try and get a Leavenworth paper to send you. There you will see more than I can write. You let Jennie know for I cannot write her now. I will send her a paper if I can get them.

Love to Mr. Smith, and the children. How I should like to see them. Write very soon to your loving sister.

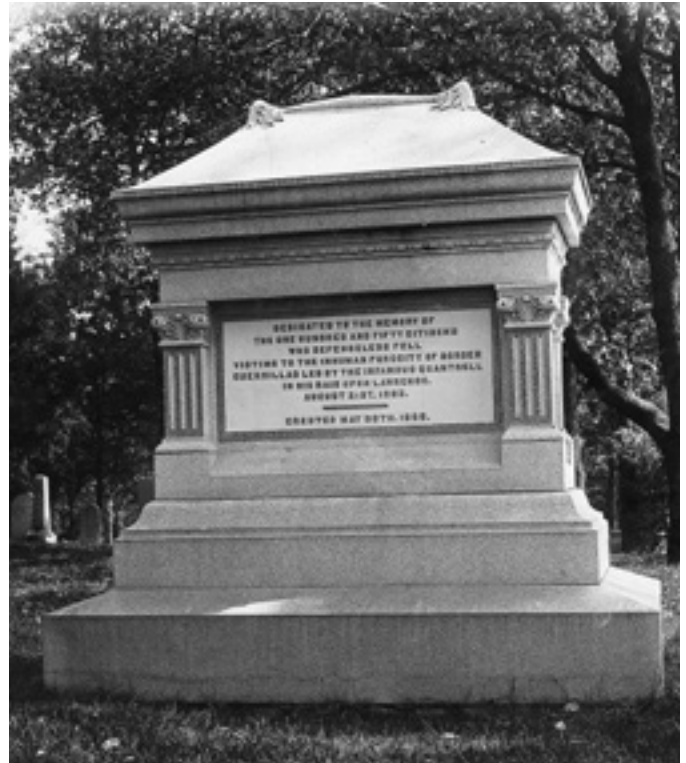
Prill

Three weeks after composing the letter, Priscilla Jones died. According to her father, "her death was hastened by the shock of the carnage at Lawrence and intensified by finding her own brother among the victims." Two of Priscilla's sisters in Lawrence joined her in death soon afterward.<sup>32</sup>

30. George Ford managed the Country Store, part of the Miller Block on Massachusetts Street. *Kansas State Journal*, May 14 and June 11, 1863. The "young gentleman" whom Jones knew was either James Perrine or James Eldridge, who were both young store clerks. According to survivor Hovey E. Lowman, a party of raiders forced Eldridge to retrieve the safe key from Ford's home and return with it; after looting the safe and store, they murdered the two clerks. *Kansas State Journal*, July 21, 1864.

31. At that moment, Union Major General James G. Blunt was not retreating but pursuing Confederates through Indian Territory and Arkansas. Castel, *Civil War Kansas*, 157.

32. Gravestone of Priscilla Jones in Pioneer Cemetery, Lawrence; Evan Jones quoted in Minges, *Slavery in the Cherokee Nation*, 161.



Memorial for the victims of the raid, erected in Oak Hill Cemetery in Lawrence in 1895.

The survivors' anguish after the massacre spread to other Kansans and Union supporters, and the official response was swift and severe. Union forces in western Missouri cracked down on Confederate sympathizers (real and assumed) by enacting a policy of forced removal of much of the civilian population, authorized in the notorious General Order No. 11.<sup>33</sup> In addition to providing documentation for one of the most infamous events in Kansas history, the words and experiences of Lawrence Massacre survivors such as Elizabeth Peabody, William Kempf, and Priscilla Jones remind us that war frequently deals its harshest blows to civilians, and that violence too often begets more violence. [KH]

33. Castel, *Civil War Kansas*, 142–53; Christopher Phillips, *The Rivers Ran Backward: The Civil War and the Remaking of the American Middle Border* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 238–40.