

“Rebels Coming!”: Skirmishing in the Arcadia Valley, Iron County, Missouri, September 26, 1864 - An Historical and Archaeological Study



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Preface

We began this study as an archaeological effort to find evidence of the Confederate movement into the Arcadia Valley through Shut-in Gap during Gen. Sterling Price's Raid in 1864. Archaeology of the historic period, especially work focusing on conflict and battlefield sites does not occur in a vacuum. Historical documents as much as physical evidence are integral to understanding past events. In this case the physical evidence was limited, and the historical sources became the paramount data set to aid in reconstructing and understanding what did or did not occur in the valley on September 26.

The purpose of this report is to review some of the many historical sources that bear on the events of September 26, 1864 and to describe the methods and results of archeological investigation of the battlefield.

A Note on Sources:

An essential source of primary information on the military operations of the Civil War, both Federal and Confederate, is the 128-volume series titled *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*.¹ Published by the United States government between 1880 and 1901, these volumes contain a wealth of historical documents pertaining to the war, principally reports and correspondence of officers from both sides of the conflict. The series of documentary volumes is accompanied by an atlas of maps. Virtually every modern historian who has written about the Civil War has relied heavily on these volumes for primary information. Needless to say, they contain much information about Price's 1864 invasion of Missouri and his assault on Fort Davidson near Pilot Knob.

After the Civil War, several historical publications appeared which described the Battle of Pilot Knob. Many of these, notably works by Hinton (1994; originally published 1865) and Britton (1994; originally published 1899), and others published in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, have been criticized as "generally biased and inaccurate," and too general or incomplete in nature.² However, in 1914 a book appeared that provided the first scholarly, comprehensive story of the battle. Moreover, that book, by Cyrus A. Peterson and Joseph M. Hanson, was based solidly on firsthand accounts of the battle collected directly from battle participants by its senior author.

Much of what is known about the events that took place at Pilot Knob and in the Arcadia Valley on September 26 and 27, 1864, is due to the historical research of Cyrus Asbury Peterson, a resident of St. Louis and two-term president of the Missouri Historical Society (1905 and 1906). Beginning about 1900, Peterson engaged in extensive correspondence with dozens of Union

¹ For brevity, the *Official Records* volumes will be cited simply as "OR" in this report. The history and organization of the ORs is explained in *A User's Guide to the Official Records of the American Civil War*, by Alan C. and Barbara A. Aimone(1993).

² I.e., Suderow 1986:viii and Suderow and House 2014:9, 12 fns 2-4.

veterans of the battle and received detailed recollections from many of them (Busch 2010:67 et seq.). These formed the basis for the book he co-authored with Joseph Hanson Mills, *Pilot Knob: The Thermopylae of the West*, an indispensable reference for study of that pivotal battle (Peterson and Hanson 1914, 1964, 2000). Today, these individual veterans' accounts are archived at the Missouri Historical Society in St. Louis (Brooks 1993).³ The large preponderance of Peterson's veteran informants had fought on the Federal side during the Civil War and Peterson himself likely was biased in favor of the Union cause. Interestingly, Peterson's father served in Company M of the 3rd Missouri State Militia Cavalry, an important unit that participated in the Pilot Knob action, but Company M was not present at the Battle of Pilot Knob (Ross 2005:241; Daniel Peterson's military service record, Record Group 94, Publication M405, Roll 733, Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from the State of Missouri, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.).

Peterson was born in North Carolina in 1848 (Stevens 1909:654). When he was thirteen, Peterson's family moved to Missouri and young Cyrus' education from that time onward was largely self-taught through readings in numerous subject fields, including law and medicine. He graduated from the Missouri Medical College at St. Louis in 1878. His checkered career included a brief stint as town marshal at Fredericktown, Missouri, as well as farming; school teaching; shoe salesman; practicing medicine in Cape Girardeau County, Missouri, and Denver, Colorado; ranching in Nebraska; real estate investments; vice-president of a St. Louis detective agency; and long-term associations with a number of learned societies, including two years as president of the Missouri Historical Society (Stevens 1909:655-656; Anonymous 1916; Ross 2005:161-162, 204, 225, 259). Along with Thomas Ewing, Jr., the son of the general who commanded the defense of Fort Davidson, Peterson was a key figure in the effort to preserve the remains of Fort Davidson as a public memorial, and served as the initial secretary and later corresponding secretary of the Pilot Knob Memorial Association (Busch 2010).⁴ Peterson died at his suburban St. Louis home on November 19, 1915, the year after *Pilot Knob: The Thermopylae of the West* was published (*St. Louis Republic* newspaper articles, November 20 and 21, 1915, in Necrology Scrapbook B at the Missouri Historical Society; Anonymous 1916).

Peterson's co-author, Joseph Mills Hanson, was an accomplished writer in his own right. He was born in Yankton, South Dakota in 1876. After graduating from a military academy in New York state, he contributed many articles to magazines and newspapers, and served in the American Expeditionary Force in Europe during the First World War, including duty as a writer for the *Stars and Stripes* service magazine. He also wrote books about the war. He lived for a time in St. Louis, where he collaborated with Peterson on their Pilot Knob book. Western history buffs best know him through his biography of the steamboat captain Grant Marsh, *The Conquest of the*

³ Copies of much of the information collected by Peterson also appear to be archived in the Ewing Family Papers in the Manuscript Division at the Library of Congress. These copies possibly resulted from communication between Peterson and Thomas C. Ewing, Jr., the general's son (Brooks 1993:31-32). General Ewing's biographer, Ronald D. Smith (2008), and historians Bryce A. Suderow and R. Scott House, who have written the most comprehensive account of the Battle of Pilot Knob, consulted this information extensively in their research (Suderow 1986; Suderow and House 2014).

Missouri, published in 1909. He ended his career working for the National Park Service, serving as superintendent of Manassas National Battlefield Park from 1942 through 1947, when he retired. He died in 1960 and is buried at Yankton, South Dakota. Hanson's papers are archived at the State Historical Society of South Dakota in Pierre (history.sd.gov/archives/data/manuscript/hanson.aspx).

Pilot Knob: The Thermopylae of the West was first published in 1914. For the centennial of the battle in 1964, a facsimile reprint was published by Ramfre Press, Cape Girardeau, Missouri. A second edition was published in 2000 by Two Trails Publishing (Independence, Missouri) with light editing and different pagination. The Two Trails edition also contains an index, which the 1914 edition lacks, and an addendum of contemporary telegrams transcribed by Walter Busch, some of which do not appear in the ORs. As a careful reconstruction of the battle of Pilot Knob, both editions of the Peterson and Hanson book are indispensable references.

The book is not without shortcomings, however. Suderow and House (2014:9) used it as major source for their own thorough reconstruction of the battle, but admonished readers that:

"Unfortunately, many very good reminiscences were not used in the [Peterson and Hanson] book. Also, the authors seem to have been so baffled by the contradictory statements of the veterans that they despaired of writing a cohesive, factual narrative of the battle. Instead, the conflicting accounts were presented in much of their original form, without reconciling them, and with only a few sentences of narrative to hold the reminiscences together."

As the centennial of the Civil War approached, renewed interest in Price's 1864 invasion of Missouri was sparked (Castel 1958; Rea 1959; Monnett 1961; Oates 1961). Several insightful articles about the Pilot Knob battle were published for the battle's centennial (Brownlee 1964; Margreiter 1964) and the Peterson and Hanson book was reprinted (1964).

Interest in Price's Raid and the Battle of Pilot Knob surged again in the 1980s and 1990s, with the publication of several studies (Monaghan 1984; Thompson 1989; Kerby 1991; Sallee 1991; Castel 1993; Ponder 1999), the best of which for Pilot Knob was Suderow 1986, a published version of his master's thesis. In 1994 the Iron County Historical Society produced a brief summary of the Battle of Pilot Knob, funded by the National Park Service's American Battlefield Protection Program. The report contained captions for 16 proposed on-site historical markers at significant battle event locations throughout the Arcadia Valley (Noble 1994).

With the beginning of the twenty-first century, several important new studies of the Civil War in the Trans-Mississippi West have been published, which shed considerable additional light on the Battle of Pilot Knob. Foremost among these is *The Battle of Pilot Knob: Thunder in Arcadia Valley*, by Bryce A. Suderow and R. Scott House (2014), a greatly expanded version of Suderow's master's thesis, which was published in 1986. Other important recent works include Gifford 2003 and 2014; Busch 2010 and 2010, comp.; Titterington 2013; Forsyth 2015; and Sinisi 2015.

Mark A. Lause has told the story of Price's raid in two books. He (2011) describes the opening phases of Price's 1864 raid through Price's advance on Jefferson City in *Price's Lost Campaign: The 1864 Invasion of Missouri*. He concluded the story of the raid in a subsequent volume entitled *The Collapse of Price's Raid: The Beginning of the End in Civil War Missouri* (2016).

A recent book by Thomas W. Cutrer (2017) encompasses the military history of the entire Trans-Mississippi theater during the entire war, but devotes only one of 23 chapters to Price's 1864 raid, and only four paragraphs in that chapter to affairs at Pilot Knob. Moreover, he depends heavily on outdated sources such as Hinton and Britton and ignores important recent scholarship. He also makes a few errors, such as placing Fort Davidson below Ironton and stating that the Confederates assaulted the fort at daybreak on September 27.

Among other recent studies of interest are Crawford's (2017) revisit of the details of the capture and subsequent murder of Major James Wilson and the six 3rd Missouri State Militia Cavalry comrades who were captured with him; two excellent recent studies of Ewing and the Ewing family (Smith 2008; Heineman 2012); and Scheel's (n.d.) detailed review of the northward retreat of the Fort Davidson garrison between September 27 and 30.

Introduction

Nestled in a small picturesque valley in the Ozark highlands of southeastern Missouri is the little town of Pilot Knob. Today home to about 750 persons, in September 1864 the village had about 200 to 300 residents, plus a Union garrison of several hundred soldiers. Pilot Knob was the terminus of the St. Louis & Iron Mountain Railroad, which originated at the city of St. Louis. The railroad transported pig iron ingots to St. Louis and other industrial destinations in the northern states. High-grade iron ore was mined in the rhyolitic hills that surround Pilot Knob village, as well as at Iron Mountain about six miles to the north. Ore from this region was smelted in a furnace near the base of Pilot Knob Mountain, and shipped to markets as pig iron to be used for railroads, other industrial needs, and, during the Civil War, for war materiel to arm and supply the Northern armies.

The closest topographic eminences overlooking the village were Pilot Knob to the east and Shepherd Mountain to the southwest. Cedar Mountain and Rock (aka Oak and also Depot) Mountain lay farther away to the north and northeast of the town. Though towering only between 500 and 600 feet over the valley floor, these prominent landmarks were locally regarded as "mountains."

The quarter-mile-long saddle between Pilot Knob and Shepherd Mountain is the Ironton Gap, named for the county seat about a mile to the south. South of Ironton Gap stretches the beautiful lower Arcadia Valley, home to the communities of Ironton and Arcadia. All three communities lie within the appropriately-named Iron County of Missouri.

The smaller, upper valley where Pilot Knob village is located, is drained by two branches of Knob Creek which flow through Ironton Gap and merge into Stout's Creek, which in turn drains the gently rolling plains of the lower Arcadia Valley and exits through a narrow gorge called Shut-in Gap on the valley's southeastern margin. The road from the Arcadia valley to Fredericktown, about 20 miles to the east, lay through Shut-in Gap and was a major thoroughfare for passage into and out of the lower valley. Outside the Arcadia Valley, Stout's Creek flows into the St. Francis (aka Francois) River which in turn flows into the Mississippi River.

To protect the mines and furnace at Pilot Knob as well as the railroad, the Union army stationed soldiers in both the upper and lower parts of the valley early in the war. At times, the number of soldiers in the Arcadia Valley may have been as high as 2,500.⁵ Construction of a fort at Arcadia commenced in the fall of 1861. The fort was initially named Fort Hovey after Colonel Charles E. Hovey, commander of the soldiers of the 33rd Illinois Volunteer Infantry who performed the initial construction work. In 1862 the fort was renamed Fort Curtis, in honor of Brigadier General Samuel R. Curtis, recent victor of the Battle of Pea Ridge, Arkansas.

Eventually deemed too far from the mines and railroad at Pilot Knob, which the fort was intended to protect, Fort Curtis was abandoned and another one was built close to Pilot Knob

⁵ Busch 2010:17. At least one other estimate places the figure at 8,000 soldiers in the early months of the Civil War (Iron County Historical Society 1995:22).

village in 1863. The later fort, named Fort Davidson after Brigadier General John W. Davidson, who formerly commanded the District of St. Louis and the Army of Southeastern Missouri,⁶ consisted of a six-sided earthwork surrounded by a defensive ditch. The fort was armed with artillery removed from the abandoned Fort Curtis, consisting of four 32-pound siege cannon, three 24-pound howitzers, and two Coehorn mortars. Outside its earthen embankments, two fortified extensions were dug on the north and south sides as positions from which defending infantry could fire on attackers. These were called the north and south rifle pits. The fort was located close to Pilot Knob village and the junction of the east and west branches of Knob Creek. Militarily, Fort Davidson was at a topographic disadvantage, being overlooked by promontories from which the fort could be dominated by enemy troops equipped with artillery, particularly Pilot Knob and Shepherd Mountain.⁷

Fort Davidson served as the headquarters of the Third Sub-district of the District of St. Louis, which included small garrisons in the towns of Patterson, Centerville, Farmington, and Fredericktown in southeastern Missouri. In September 1864 the fort was commanded by Major James S. Wilson of the 3rd Missouri State Militia⁸ Cavalry. In addition to its importance as a post that protected the railroad and mines at Pilot Knob, Fort Davidson served as a supply depot for military outposts in its sub-district.

Fort Davidson was the scene of fierce fighting on September 27, 1864, as Major General Sterling Price's Confederate army repeatedly assaulted the fort as the first objective of Price's famed invasion of Missouri from Confederate Arkansas. The Arcadia Valley was the scene of skirmishing on the day previous, September 26, as Confederate forces filtered into the valley from the southeast and skirmished with Union patrols and small detachments at Ironton and elsewhere. The skirmishing that took place in the valley on September 26 is the subject of this study. For a broader perspective on political and military planning and preparation that preceded Price's advance on Fort Davidson and the course of the raid after the Battle of Pilot Knob, the reader is referred to excellent recent scholarship, notably Lause 2011, 2016; Forsyth 2015; and Sinisi 2015.

Price's Missouri Raid

On September 19, 1864, a Confederate army of approximately 12,000 men crossed into southeastern Missouri from Confederate Arkansas.⁹ A summer campaign in Missouri had been long desired. As early as May 16 Lt. General Kirby Smith, commander of the Confederacy's Trans-Mississippi Department, anticipated an eventual movement into Missouri and on May 19

⁶ Boatner 1959:223; Welcher 1993:85, 102; Dyer 1994, 1:545-547; Busch 2010:23.

⁷ The topography and geology of the Arcadia Valley, as well as the valley's occupation by Union troops and the building of Fort Curtis and Fort Davidson, are summarized in Suderow and House's (2014) Chapter 9 (pp. 145-156).

⁸ Hereafter MSM.

⁹ Reports of Sterling Price, September 19 and December 28, 1864, in O.R. I, Vol. 41, Part I, pp. 623, 627; Forsyth 2015:111.

he issued an order to Major General Sterling Price to prepare for such.¹⁰ Price readied troops for movement into Missouri by the second week of July, but the objectives and scope of the invading army were not explicitly decided until early August.¹¹

On August 4, 1864 Edmund Kirby Smith,¹² issued an order to Major General Sterling Price to raid Missouri with a cavalry force.¹³ The specific military objectives specified in the order were to recruit loyal Southerners for the Confederate army in Arkansas and to capture St. Louis with its military supplies and stores. In the event of the raid's failure, Price was ordered to retreat through Kansas and the Indian Territory. Additional objectives considered at an earlier August 1 conference before Kirby Smith issued his specific order to Price were more strategic in nature, though not specified by subsequent written order. They included the diversion of Union forces from theaters of the war east of the Mississippi to provide some relief for the beleaguered Confederates battling the forces of Ulysses S. Grant and William T. Sherman; wresting Missouri from the Union and into the fold of the Confederacy by establishing a Confederate state government at Jefferson City, the state capitol; and influencing the outcome of the 1864 Federal election in favor of George McClellan, who was considered a "peace" candidate.¹⁴ Though not specified in written orders, these larger strategic objectives were very much in the mind of Price before and during the raid. To facilitate the political ends of these latter objectives, Thomas C. Reynolds, Missouri's Confederate governor-in-exile, would accompany the expedition.¹⁵ The raid into Missouri was a desperate last measure to reverse the waning fortunes of the Confederacy's struggle for independence from the United States.

By the spring and summer of 1864, the Confederacy had begun to ebb in a major way. The turning-point, three-day battle at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, had been lost by the Confederates on July 3, 1863, followed closely by the loss of Vicksburg, Mississippi, to Federal forces on July 4. With the fall of Vicksburg, the Confederacy lost control of the Mississippi River. Federal gunboats patrolling the river made it increasingly difficult for soldiers from the Confederacy's Trans-Mississippi Department to cross it and reinforce Confederate armies in the Eastern and Western theaters. During the summer of 1864 Robert E. Lee's Confederate army was bottled up by Ulysses S. Grant's Union forces at Petersburg, not far from the Confederacy's capitol at Richmond, Virginia. Also in 1864, Philip Sheridan's Union forces commenced a devastating "scorched earth" campaign in the Shenandoah valley of Virginia in August; Atlanta fell to William T. Sherman's soldiers in early September; Admiral Farragut destroyed a Confederate flotilla in Mobile Bay on August 5; and Sherman was preparing to march across Georgia to the sea. By late 1864, the Confederacy had been militarily dissected by the Union armies.

¹⁰ Kerby 1991:321, 323.

¹¹ Kerby 1991:323-324.

¹² Kirby Smith assumed command of the Trans-Mississippi Department on March 7, 1863, replacing Lieutenant General Theophilus Holmes (Kerby 1991:53; Parks 1992:253).

¹³ O.R. I, Vol. 41, Part II, pp. 1040-1041; Suderow and House 2014:66; Kerby 1991:335; Forsyth 2015:102.

¹⁴ Forsyth 2015:100-102; Kerby 1991:335-336.

¹⁵ Kerby 1991:335; Forsyth 2015:101-102..

Confederate efforts to send a large infantry force across the Mississippi River to reinforce the defenses of Mobile, Alabama, where a Union attack was anticipated, failed during the summer of 1864.¹⁶ At the urging of Missouri officers in his command, notably Major General Sterling Price, a former governor of Missouri, and the capable cavalry commander, Brigadier General Joseph O. Shelby, Kirby Smith considered an invasion of Missouri from Arkansas since at least early May.¹⁷ Instead of his original intention to commit a large combined force of infantry and cavalry to this effort, Kirby Smith cautiously planned to reduce the scope of the campaign to a raid by cavalry alone, thus reserving his infantry to keep Union forces in Arkansas bottled up at key places like Fort Smith, Little Rock, and elsewhere.¹⁸ On August 4, Kirby Smith issued an order for the raid.¹⁹ He selected Major General Sterling Price to lead the raid, a questionable choice for that role.²⁰ Price was a man of unquestioned courage and substantial military experience, but lacked experience in commanding cavalry and was a poor administrator.²¹ A celebrated veteran of the Mexican War, Price was a former commander of the Missouri State Guard during the first two years of the Civil War and was presently the Confederate commander of the military District of Arkansas. Both Kirby Smith and Governor Reynolds had reservations about Price's competence to lead the raid.²² Nevertheless, after considering several other senior officers for the command Kirby Smith designated Price to lead the expedition.²³

The force assembled for the raid consisted of three divisions of cavalry, commanded by generals James F. Fagan, John S. Marmaduke, and Joseph O. Shelby, a total of about 12,000 men and 14 artillery pieces. The raiding army was not as formidable as it appeared on paper; by Price's own admission, it was "encumbered...by unarmed men and undisciplined recruits," the number of unarmed men being stated at 4,000.²⁴ Although a cavalry force, many of the raiders had no mounts or rode horses and mules of questionable quality.²⁵ In addition, the three divisions possessed only four artillery batteries and one section of artillery, a total of 14 guns.²⁶

Price's army moved northward into southeast Missouri in three separate columns that converged on Fredericktown about 20 miles east of the Arcadia Valley. Shelby's division moved on the

¹⁶ Suderow and House 2014:56-57; Forsyth 2015:94-98.

¹⁷ Suderow and House 2014:50, 59-62; Kerby 1991:321, 323. On May 19, 1864, Kirby Smith issued orders to Price to prepare for a movement on Missouri (Sinisi 2015:13; OR 34:1:538 and 34:3:826-829.

¹⁸ Suderow and House 2014:62.

¹⁹ Suderow and House 2014:66 and 72, note 15.

²⁰ Suderow and House 2014:63-65.

²¹ Forsyth 2015:98-100.

²² Forsyth 2015:98-99.

²³ Forsyth 2015:99-100.

²⁴ Price reports of September 19, November 2, and December 28, 1864, in O.R. I, Vol. 41, Part I, pp. 623-640.

²⁵ Sinisi 2015:40.

²⁶ Forsyth 2015:110. There is some confusion about the total number and types of artillery in the Confederate force during the raid. Price reported 14 guns (O.R. I, Vol. 41, Part I, p. 627). Banasik (2019:347-350) discusses Price's artillery extensively, citing sources that specify differing numbers and kinds of artillery used by the Confederates.

left, Fagan's in the center, and Marmaduke's on the right.²⁷ Price reached Fredericktown on September 24 and soon completed the consolidation of his forces.²⁸

At Fredericktown, Price heard that Union Major General Andrew Jackson Smith had arrived with reinforcements for the defense of St. Louis and was reportedly encamped with 8,000 seasoned veterans of the XVI Corps on the St. Louis & Iron Mountain Railroad line about 10 miles from the city.²⁹ This intelligence changed Price's plan for the raid. The original objective of the capture of St. Louis no longer appeared feasible, so Price determined to attack and destroy the closer, and much less formidable, Fort Davidson in the Arcadia Valley.³⁰ Several factors played a part in Price's decision to invest Fort Davidson. If he bypassed the fort in his advance on St. Louis, a sizeable Union force would remain intact in his rear. He knew that General Thomas Ewing, infamous in the eyes of Southern-sympathizing Missourians for his notorious Order No. 11 which depopulated several counties in western Missouri, commanded the Fort Davidson garrison. And two of his three division commanders favored an attack on the fort.³¹ Accordingly, Price dispatched Shelby's division to the north to interdict the railroad line and prevent Smith from reinforcing the approximately 1,000-man garrison at Fort Davidson. In the meantime, he planned to advance on Pilot Knob with the bulk of his force, with elements of Fagan's division in the lead and Marmaduke's division following.

Union commanders in Missouri were worried about persistent rumors that the state would be invaded by a Confederate army from Arkansas, but they had little concrete knowledge of Confederate movements, strength, or the whereabouts of Price himself. Major General William S. Rosecrans, overall commander of the Department of Missouri, expected the Confederates to advance on any of several important objectives that included St. Louis, Rolla, Jefferson City, or Springfield, so he did not anticipate Confederate movements in strength in southeastern Missouri.³²

Brigadier General Thomas Ewing, Jr., commander of the District of St. Louis, which included Pilot Knob and Fort Davidson in its Third Sub-District, shared Rosecrans' uncertainty about Price's intentions. As early as September 16, Ewing ordered Major James S. Wilson of the 3rd MSM Cavalry, the commander of Fort Davidson, to send a scouting detail to the town of

²⁷ Price report, December 28, 1864, in O.R. I, Vol. 41, Part I, p. 627.

²⁸ Ibid.; Suderow and House 2014:131.

²⁹ Price report, November 28, 1864, in O.R. I, Vol. 41, Part I, p. 628. The figure of 8,000 men reported to Price was incorrect; the actual number of XVI Corps men with Smith was about 4,500 (Suderow and House 2014:100). Smith and one of the divisions from his XVI Corps were diverted to Missouri because of the emergency expected to result from the Price raid (Forsyth 2015:114-115).

³⁰ Sinisi 2015:65.

³¹ Forsyth 2015:123-124. Shelby was the dissenting division commander who recommended proceeding on St. Louis as rapidly as possible and bypassing Fort Davidson.

³² Suderow and House 2014:94, 121. After several initial successes in the Civil War, Rosecrans suffered a major defeat at the Battle of Chickamauga in September 1863, and was reassigned to the less-active command of the Department of the Missouri in January 1864 (Welcher 1993:92; Lamers 1999; Moore 2014).

Doniphan near the Arkansas border to try and ascertain Price's whereabouts and strength.³³ This patrol, led by 1st Lieutenant Erich Pape of Company K of the 3rd MSM Cavalry, reached Doniphan late in the afternoon of September 19, the same day that Price's army crossed into Missouri, and fought a skirmish with Confederate advance scouts in the town. Pape's patrol then advanced to the Arkansas border but did not encounter Price's main force and returned to burn Doniphan to the ground in retaliation for incidents that had occurred there earlier.³⁴ During their return toward Fort Davidson the following day, September 20, Pape's camped men were surprised by Confederates sent by Shelby to "pursue the vandals" who had burned Doniphan. After losing several men, Pape and the survivors of his command reached Patterson by the evening of September 20. From there he informed Wilson by telegraph that several thousand of Shelby's men were in Missouri, but discounted a rumor that Price was not far away.³⁵

On September 22, the Union detachment stationed at Patterson, plus the remnant of Pape's patrol that had sought refuge there, under orders to abandon the town if Confederates turned up, attempted to break through a Confederate encirclement. They succeeded, though suffering several casualties, and reached Cape Girardeau and Pilot Knob the following day.³⁶

Reports of Confederate presence and movements in southeast Missouri continued to reach Major Wilson at Fort Davidson, who sent out several patrols that returned with inconclusive reports. The Union detachment from Fredericktown, the convergence point of Price's divisions, evacuated the town upon hearing rumors of approaching Confederate troops and reached Pilot Knob on September 23, where they reported that 8,000 Confederates were only 20 miles from Fredericktown.³⁷

When mounting evidence seemed to indicate Confederate movements in southeastern Missouri, Rosecrans concluded that either St. Louis or Rolla was Price's immediate objective.³⁸ For either, Price's army would have to move through the Arcadia Valley and bypass Fort Davidson at Pilot Knob.³⁹ On the evening of September 24, Rosecrans at St. Louis ordered Ewing to patrol the St. Louis & Iron Mountain Railroad with a brigade of A.J. Smith's men.⁴⁰ That brigade consisted in

³³ Suderow and House 2014:106.

³⁴ Suderow and House 2014:106-109. The 3rd MSM Cavalry was especially despised by Southern partisans and sympathizers because of the unit's ruthless aggressiveness toward guerrillas in southeast Missouri (Lause 2011:32-33; Sinisi 2015:63-64).

³⁵ Suderow and House 2014:109-111; Lause 2011:33-34.

³⁶ Suderow and House 2014:117-118, 130; Lause 2011:34.

³⁷ Suderow and House 2014:130.

³⁸ Forsyth 2015:115.

³⁹ Forsyth 2015:116.

⁴⁰ Suderow and House 2014:134; Forsyth 2015:116; Ewing report, October 20, 1864, in O.R. I, Vol. 41, Part I, p. 445. According to Captain William V. Lucas of Company B, 14th Iowa Volunteer Infantry, Rosecrans also ordered Ewing to remove all "portable" government property at Pilot Knob to a place of safety so it would not be captured by Confederates (William V. Lucas, "My Recollections of the battle [sic] of Pilot Knob Mo. Sept. 27 1864, May 14, 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis). Pilot Knob was a supply depot for the Third Sub-District at the time.

part of the 14th Iowa Volunteer Infantry, a unit that would play a significant role in the subsequent Arcadia Valley skirmishing and the defense of Fort Davidson. Ewing left St. Louis on a train during the morning of September 25 and proceeded south toward Pilot Knob, dropping off detachments of troops at several places enroute to patrol and protect the rail line.

September 25: A False Alarm

The rumors and reports of Confederate presence in force in southeastern Missouri that reached Fort Davidson since September 20 were vague, unconfirmed, and generally discounted, but contributed to rising apprehensions among the fort's garrison and the civilian residents of the Arcadia Valley. Highly exaggerated rumors of the number of men in Price's army circulated widely. As an extreme example, Dr. Seymour D. Carpenter recalled hearing that Price's force was "just about 100,000 strong" when the doctor reached Pilot Knob during the evening of September 26.⁴¹

Major Wilson stationed pickets outside the fort to give warning of the approach of any Confederates. The locations of these picket posts are mostly unknown, except for one which seems to have been the first point of contact between the two opposing forces. Sam B. Rowe, a young recruit in the 47th Missouri Volunteer Infantry who was appointed as the regiment's quartermaster sergeant, referred to two "lines" of picket posts in his account of the battle, written 37 years afterward, in 1901.⁴² Rowe recalled:

"The first line of pickets were placed from a mile to a mile and a half from the fort, generally in the hollows, and on roads running into the town--each consisting of a corporals guard of from five to seven men. I learned that beyond those were outposts at varying distances according to the supposed probability of an enemy approaching."

These outliers may be what Rowe referred to as "the second picket line": "I had never been South of Arcadia, but had accompanied the officer of the day on the grand rounds on several occasions--and with the natural inquisitiveness of youth I saw most everything inside the second picket line."

Henry C. Wilkinson, formerly a sergeant in Company H of the 47th Missouri Volunteer Infantry, years later described one of the picket posts in a letter to Cyrus A. Peterson:⁴³

"This post was two miles east of Arcadia and Ironton, and was at what was known as Russellville, and near the 'Shut in' or mountain gorge through which Stouts creek flows. As far as we ever knew, this picket post was the most advanced post in the direction of

⁴¹ Letter, S.D. Carpenter to Mrs. Thomas Ewing, October 4, 1864, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

⁴² Sam B. Rowe, "Recollections of Dr. Sam B. Rowe," September 1, 1901, in the Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

⁴³ H.C. Wilkinson, "Letter No. 17," in the Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

Fredericktown from whence we hourly expected Price to advance in the attack of Pilot Knob."

On September 25, a returning patrol was mistaken for Confederates by nervous Union pickets east of Pilot Knob and shots were exchanged. An alarm was raised in the fort. Company H of the 47th formed up in its camp outside the fort, other defenders took position in the fort and the two rifle pits, two of the siege cannon fired warning rounds, the smelting furnace's whistle sounded, Montgomery's guns unlimbered and faced Ironton Gap; and nearby citizens were alarmed.⁴⁴ The confusion was quickly resolved and life at Fort Davidson and Pilot Knob returned to normal, but rumors and inconclusive reports continued to filter in.⁴⁵

Rowe also commented on this September 25 "false alarm," though he was evidently confused as to the day of the week:

"On Saturday [i.e., Sunday] afternoon, Sept. 25th, 1864, a call to arms was sounded and every man able to bear arms was assembled in the fort and rifle pits. In a few hours the alarm subsided, and we learned later that our outpost at the 'shut in' had been fired on."⁴⁶

H.C. Wilkinson, a former sergeant in Company H, 47th Missouri Volunteer Infantry, years later recalled in detail the excitement that followed receipt of the false report at Fort Davidson after dinner on September 25:⁴⁷

"Dinner came, and passed off with the usual 'Hard Tack' and beef and 'Linkun' coffee &c. Then, the writer had been quietly notified by Adjut. Murphy that he had better see that the men carried clean guns at "Guard Mountings". So, we said: "Co. H! If you dont clean your muskets, you are sure to go to the Guard House"! This put Co. H to work at once; but hardly had we began to clean up our muskets--some in bad fix when drawn, when we saw Lieut. Fessler, the Fort commander, go by us from Post H'dqrs [in the town of Pilot Knob] on a gray horse at a furious gallop towards the fort, and crossing the drain or branch that flows South through Pilot Knob into Stouts Creek, his horse came near falling, and some one exclaimed "Look at that horse shoe"! In stumbling the horse threw a shoe off his foot a way up above the Lieut's head as the horse regained his feet, and ran on to the gate of the Fort. Here as he dashed into the fort over the draw bridge, he hurriedly shouted to his men, then quartered just outside South of the gate. The drummer snatched up his drum and rattled off the 'Long Roll'! Something [was] up [for] sure!

⁴⁴ Suderow and House 2014:137-138.

⁴⁵ In a letter written on September 26 and published in *The Missouri Democrat* on September 29 (page 1, column 3), a newspaper correspondent identified as "OCCASIONAL" reported the false alarm that occurred on Sunday, September 25, and another, briefer note about it appeared later in the same issue of *The Missouri Democrat* (page 4, column 2) (Busch, comp. 2010:43-44, 50).

⁴⁶ Sam B. Rowe, "Recollections of Dr. Sam B. Rowe," September 1, 1901, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

⁴⁷ H.C. Wilkinson, "Letter No. 16," Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

`Fall in Co H! Then, as there were no com. [i.e., commissioned] officers present, we looked towards Regt. H'dqr's, and saw Adjutant Murphy come dashing out bear headed [sic], pen in hand, as he was then making out his Regt Report. He looked to see Lieut. Fessler's men dashing into the fort, then he turned to look to the 47th, then camped East of the fort in column by companies--ours the North Company, then he dashed into his marquee, then instantly out again, bare headed and his glittering sword in hand, which he had snatched without belting on. He saw Co. H already formed, and awaiting orders, and here he came! `Where is Captain Powers'? He asked as he dashed up, `Dont know sir! Perhaps over to Post H'dqurs!' we replied. Then springing to the place of the Captain he shouted `Co H. Forward by file left, double quick, MARCH!' `Right shoulder shift ARMS!' and away we went from the South rifle pit! As we were passing under the muzzle of the North East 32 [cannon], she fired the alarm, and two of Co. H concluded that they were killed, and they fell flat! Then as we passed under the South East 32 she fired, and threw the fire, and bits of the flannel cartridge all over us. Then the old iron furnace whistle was giving the `long whistle,' and the men came running out of the furnace building, many coming to us. We were soon in line at right-angle to the South Rifle pit near Stout's Creek facing the gap between the mts of Pilot Knob and Shepherd's, and Co. H won the ribbon! She was first in line of battle of the whole part of Pilot Knob! Then Adjut[ant] Murphy ran to the next Company of the 47th that was ready and placed them on our left. Then Battery H dashed up on this Company's left on the higher ground, where two days latter [sic], the dead and wounded Rebs covered the ground. The Bugle Sounded `Unlimber and prepare to fire to the front!' Never, while memory stays with us, will we forget the sound of that Artillery bugle. Then came the clatter and hurried orders of the gun commanders as they unlimbered and wheeled their guns to the front ready to load and fire. Soon were the five companies of the 47th in line and on either side of the battery as support. The cavalry were no less active also. Now one poor fellow who we will call `Dave,' who belonged to Co. H began to pray and beg, to the general merriment of his comrades. He said: `Lord, why dont they tell us to get in the ditch ah'? (Rifle pit) Then, `Lord, what are they going to do with us--ah'? For his enlightenment we said `Dave we are here to support that battery up there!' Then he said: `Lord I dont want to go--ah!' A very short time was sufficient, to learn that two of our scouting parties, out on the Farmington road, had mistook each other for the enemy, and began firing at each other. Then soon as the battery was out of our way, and the 47th already in line, Adjutant Murphy put us through a short Batallion drill--our first, and only batallion drill we had previous to the battle of the 27th. Drill was soon dismissed (and we retired to camp[])."

A scouting party that had been sent out by Wilson on the evening of September 24 south toward Patterson and Cedar Creek returned on the 25th to report that a substantial number of Confederates had camped on Cedar Creek and moved on toward Fredericktown and that Price was reported moving toward that place.⁴⁸ This information, and a report from the commander of the garrison at Cape Girardeau that Confederates were moving north in large numbers, convinced Ewing that Price's army was indeed moving on Fredericktown.⁴⁹ But this still needed to be

⁴⁸ Suderow and House 2014:134-135.

⁴⁹ Suderow and House 2014:135.

conclusively proven, which would soon happen.

About noon of September 26: Arrival of Ewing

At Pilot Knob and Fort Davidson, Monday morning, September 26, began peacefully for the Federal soldiers who garrisoned the fort. In the words of Henry C. Wilkinson, a sergeant in Company H of the 47th Missouri Volunteer Infantry (Figures 1, 2):⁵⁰

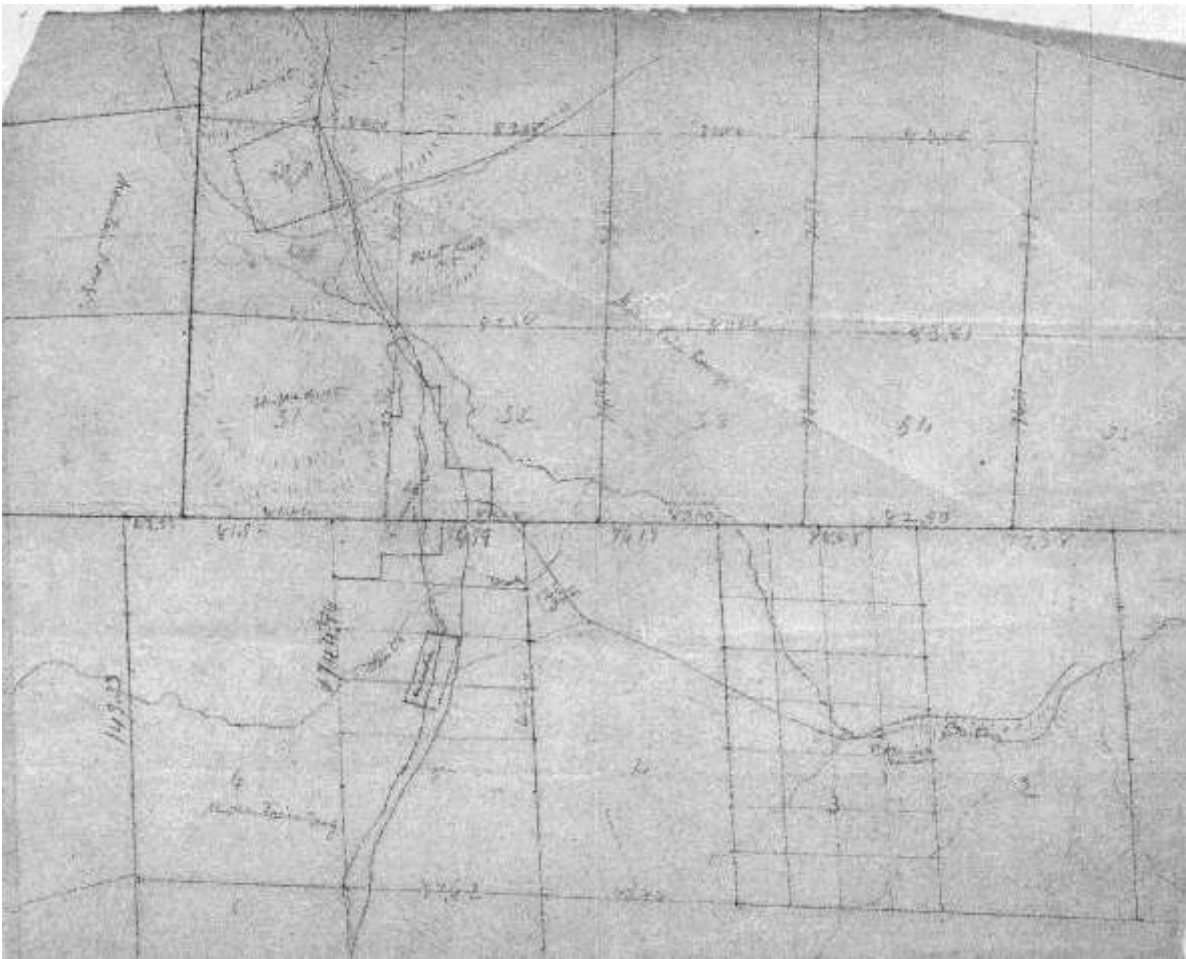


Figure 1. Sgt. Henry Wilkinson's sketch map of the Pilot Knob battlefield. Cyrus Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

"Monday Sept. 26th, 1864 dawned upon us nice and clear, and scarcely breeze enough to cause our large beautiful post flag on a high pole in Ft Davidson, to stand out in waves. As yet, we (of the boys) had heard nothing definite as to Prices whereabouts. Roll call, then breakfast, then general details were reported for 'Guard Mounting.'...By Monday

⁵⁰ H.C. Wilkinson, Letter No. 17, "Fight Down in Ironton," in the Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

morning we had begun to look for our expected reinforcements, but we looked in vain...The forenoon passed very quickly among the men, the new picket details relieved the different picket posts as their 5-days were out on that Monday morning...Dinner came on about the usual noon hour..."

Wilkinson went on to say "...as every thing [sic] seemed so quiet, the writer asked permission to go over to the creek west of the fort to wash and put on clean clothing. Permission being granted we at once departed. Comrade John Holmes went with us."

However, early that morning, movements were put into motion that would begin the two-day Battle of Pilot Knob. Having stopped at Mineral Point on the railroad line about 30 miles north of Pilot Knob, Ewing received more rumors and reports about Price's presence in Missouri. Convinced that if Price indeed was in Missouri and that Fort Davidson would be a likely target for attack, Ewing determined to continue on the train to reach Pilot Knob, take command of Fort Davidson, and conclusively determine Price's whereabouts. He was accompanied by portions of five companies (B, C, D, E, and H) of the 14th Iowa Volunteer Infantry, battle-hardened veterans of the fighting east of the Mississippi River.

Wilson had consolidated his forces by recalling the garrisons from the outlying posts at Patterson, Centerville, Fredericktown, and Farmington.⁵¹ The defenders of Fort Davidson now consisted of six companies (A, F, E, G, H, and I) of the newly organized 47th Missouri Volunteer Infantry, one company (F) of the 50th Missouri Volunteer Infantry (a regiment not yet mustered into Federal service), six companies (A, C, D, H, I, and K) of the 3rd Missouri State Militia Cavalry, one company (L) of the 2nd Missouri State Militia Cavalry, and one company (G) of the 1st Missouri State Militia Infantry, as well as Captain Montgomery's newly-arrived battery of six 3-inch ordnance rifles.⁵² By Ewing's account, the combined strength of all of these units totaled 1,051 officers and men.⁵³ In addition, a hundred or more volunteer citizens, both white and black, helped prepare and man the defenses.⁵⁴ With the addition of Ewing's Iowa

⁵¹ Ewing report, October 20, 1864, in O.R. I, Vol. 41, Part I, p. 446; Sinisi 2015:61.

⁵² Ewing report, October 20, 1864, in O.R. I, Vol. 41, Part I, p. 446; see also Table 1. Captain William Montgomery's Battery H of the 2nd Missouri Light Artillery had arrived at Fort Davidson from St. Louis on September 22 (O.R. I, Vol. 41, Part I, p. 458). The battery consisted of six 3-inch ordnance rifles.

⁵³ Ewing report, October 20, 1864, in O.R. I, Vol. 41, Part I, p. 446.

⁵⁴ The civilian volunteers were organized by Captain Patrick F. Lonergan, Company G, 1st MSM Infantry and Provost Marshal at Pilot Knob (Busch 2010:89). They were (probably after the war) referred to as the Citizens' Defense Organization (ibid.:88). Forty-three years after the battle, William Russell recalled an interruption of his September 25 Sunday church service by an officer from Fort Davidson: "...on Sunday before the Battle of Pilot Knob came to the Presbyterian Church in Ironton while Service was being held, an officer of the Command at Department Head Quarters at Pilot Knob & Stopped the Service to State that there was an invading force of [the] Confederate army approaching & that the Commanding officer hereby orders all able bodied Citizens to report to head quarters at Pilot Knob on the firing of Cannon as [a] Signal to help defend the fort at Pilot Knob we were ordered to hold ourselves in readiness to rally to [the] fort on [the] Signal being heard" (Letter, William Russell to C.A. Peterson, November 14, 1907, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical

troops (totaling 142), the total military force at Fort Davidson numbered about 1,175 officers and men, exclusive of the civilian volunteers.⁵⁵ Sergeant Henry C. Wilkinson of Company H, 47th Missouri Volunteer Infantry, recalled that "near four fifths" of the Federal soldiers at Fort Davidson "had seen service more or less" as Volunteers or militia.⁵⁶

Ewing arrived at Pilot Knob at about noon and immediately sent two scouting parties in the direction of Fredericktown by different routes to gather information about the Confederate presence there.⁵⁷ Developments began rapidly from that time onward.

Society, St. Louis). This order to the populace probably explains why some of the civilians volunteered to help defend Fort Davidson. Years later former sergeant Henry C. Wilkinson recalled that "Several of these patriotic citizens were of German extraction-- '(Lop-eared Dutch)' who added greatly to the fortunes of the day, on Tu. the 27th, by throwing off their coats and assisting the weary and worn out men of Co. G 1st Regt. M.S.M. Inft. Vols. to handle the big guns in Ft. Davidson" (H.C. Wilkinson, Letter No. 17, "Fight Down in Ironton," Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis). Wilkinson said the white volunteers numbered about 35 men, augmented by "a small company of colored troops." The blacks were led by local men named Charles Thurston, Solomon Lax, and "Captain" Jim Fares (Lause 2011:41; Sinisi 2015:62). An article from *The Missouri Democrat* of October 4, 1864 (page 1, columns 3 and 4) praised the efforts of these volunteers (Busch, comp. 2010:85): "THE CITIZENS. From Pilot Knob, Ironton and Arcadia fought well, most of them. It would be obviously improper, in view of their own interests, to mention names in this connection, but the manner in which they proved their Unionism by assisting to man the guns that were sighted at the invaders will not be forgotten by those who witnessed it, and, it is to be hoped, will not remain unrecognized. THE NEGROES. Fought well and discreetly. They were in an exposed part of the fort, and with their rifles picked off many and many a rebel. They were remarkably cool, and did not waste their ammunition, but generally reserved their fire until it could be effective, in a word, they went into the fight in earnest and as though they understood their business."

⁵⁵ Various estimates of the strength of the defenders of Fort Davidson have ranged from about 1,000 to 1,400 or more. See Lause 2011:40 and Sinisi 2015:62 for estimates of 1,450 men.

⁵⁶ H.C. Wilkinson, Letter No. 17, "Fight Down in Ironton," Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

⁵⁷ Ewing report, October 20, 1864, in O.R. I, Vol. 41, Part I, pp. 445-446.

Table 1. Union units and officers present at Fort Davidson, September 26-27, 1864.

Unit/officers	Strength
Brigadier General Thomas Ewing, Jr.	
General Ewing's staff Col. Thomas C. Fletcher, 47th Missouri VI Lt. Col. Amos W. Maupin, 47th Missouri VI Maj. H.H. Williams, 10th KS VI[?], acting aide-de-camp Maj. James S. Wilson, 3rd MSM Cavalry, commanding Fort Davidson Capt. Charles S. Hills, 10th Kansas VI[?], aide-de-camp Lt. David Murphy, 47th Missouri VI, acting adjutant Surgeon Seymour D. Carpenter	
14th Iowa Volunteer Infantry (Captain William J. Campbell, commanding, detached from Co. K) Company B (Capt. William V. Lucas, 2nd Lt. Allen E. Holmes) Company C (Capt. Herman A. Miles, 1st Lt. John Braden) Company D (1st Lt. Smith Thompson, 2nd Lt. Theodore F. Baldwin) Company E (Capt. William B. Davidson) Company H (18 men commanded by Sergeant Edwin T. Langley) (1st Lt. Hugo Hoffbauer, detached from Co. A as acting adjutant)	142
47th Missouri Volunteer Infantry Company A (Capt. James S. McMurtry, 1st Lt. James T. Sutton, 2nd Lt. Pleasant A. Hodges) Company E (Capt. Franz Dinger; 1st Lt. George J. Tetley, 2nd Lt. John Schwab, Jr.) Company F (Capt. William F. Adair, 1st Lt. Christian Helber, 2nd Lt. William B. Connelly) Company G (Capt. Morgan Mace, 1st Lt. William B. Wilson, 2nd Lt. James E. Davis) Company H (Capt. Pinkney L. Powers, 1st Lt. Merida Tate, 2nd Lt. Edward P. Settle) Company I (Capt. Hugh M. Bradley, 1st Lt. Charles H. Cummings, 2nd Lt. William A. Dunlap)	Ca. 500
50th Missouri Volunteer Infantry Company F (Capt. Robert L. Lindsay, 1st Lt. Henry O. Clark, 2nd Lt. William D. Counts)	Ca. 80
1st Missouri State Militia Infantry Company G (Capt. Patrick F. Lonergan, 1st Lt. John Fessler, 2nd Lt. Louis Jerger)	58

2nd Missouri State Militia Cavalry Company L (Capt. Amos P. Wright; 1st Lt. William H. Smith; 2nd Lt. John A. Rice)	45
3rd Missouri State Militia Cavalry Company A (Capt. Abijah Johns, 1st Lt. Henry Sladek) Company C (Capt. John W. Hendrick, 1st Lt. Lafayette Praul) Company D (Capt. Robert McElroy, 1st Lt. James A. Blain) Company H (Capt. Henry B. Milks, 1st Lt. James Copp, 2nd Lt. John P. Rogers) Company I (Capt. Hiram A. Rice; 2nd Lt. Warren C. Shattuck) Company K (1st Lt. Erich Pape, 2nd Lt. William Brauner)	347
2nd Missouri Light Artillery Battery H (Capt. William C.F. Montgomery; 1st Lt. Morgan Simonton; 2nd Lt. Thomas W. Montgomery, 2nd Lt. Phillip Smiley)	137
TOTAL	Ca. 1175

Table Sources:

14th Iowa VI: Suderow and House 2014:161-163, 166fn11; "The 14th Iowa Volunteer Infantry at Pilot Knob" by Lewis W. Sutton, formerly Sergeant-Major of the regiment (Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis (hereafter in this table CAPRC, MHS).

47th Missouri VI: Suderow and House 2014:164, 168fn17; "about 500 men" in "Recollections of Dr. Sam B. Rowe," formerly Quartermaster Sergeant of the regiment (CAPRC, MHS).

50th Missouri VI: Suderow and House 2014:164, 168fn17, based on morning reports of two 47th Missouri VI companies, Co. G (77 men) and Co. H (80 men), location of documents not stated.

1st MSM Infantry: Suderow and House 2014:163, 167fn13, Herman Wald to Thomas Ewing, October 3, 1864 (CAPRC, MHS).

2nd MSM Cavalry: Suderow and House 2014:163, 166fn11, based on Amos Wright to H.B. Milks, October 3, 1864, in Ewing Papers, Library of Congress (hereafter in this table EP, LoC).

3rd MSM Cavalry: Suderow and House 2014:163, 166fn11, based on H.B. Milks to Thomas Ewing, "Reports of Killed, Wounded, and Missing of the 3rd Cavalry," October 3, 1864, in EP, LoC.

2nd Missouri LA, Battery H: Suderow and House 2014:163, 167fn13, based on William C. Montgomery to Thomas Ewing, October 3, 1864, in EP, LoC.

Officers identified through Brooks (1993) consolidated roster of Union participants in the Battle of Pilot Knob and regimental rosters in *Official Army Register for the Volunteer Force of the United States Army for the Years 1861, '62, '63, '64, '65* (Adjutant General's Office, eight parts, Washington, D.C.).

William J. Campbell, formerly a captain in command of the 14th Iowa Volunteer Infantry detachment that arrived at Pilot Knob with General Ewing, described the first moments after arriving at the town:⁵⁸

"The noon hour having arrived, my adjutant and I went to a restaurant for dinner. This secured, and to while [away] the time, [we] turned our attention to playing a few games of billiards, and while thus engaged, our attention was attracted to some cavalry forming on the street. I inquired of the landlord if he knew where they were going. He said: 'On a scout'. This was Major Wilson in command of three (six) companies of the 3rd M.S.M. Cavalry. I noticed they went south down Pilot Knob (Arcadia) valley. In the course of half an hour, was heard to the south of us musketry firing. A citizen ran in excitedly saying: 'They are fighting down there!' Others followed, wild with excitement, rushing by toward the Fort. I said to Adjutant Hoffbauer: 'We had better quit', but he said: 'Let us finish this game'. We had played several up to this time. A glance at the proprietor showed he was pale and nervous. We tendered him pay, but he refused, saying he was glad to close up. We walked over to the station and ordered the long roll beat and the men rapidly formed in line. As soon as the line was formed, we marched leisurely towards Fort Davidson and halted some two hundred yards from the Fort to await orders. Saw Gen. Ewing mount a horse and ride out from the Fort, stop and look south in the direction of the firing. Then [he] called to me: 'Captain, forward these men double quick'."

Captain William V. Lucas, commander of Company B, 14th Iowa Volunteer Infantry, also years later recalled the state of affairs at Pilot Knob after Ewing and the 14th Iowa men arrived at mid-day on September 26.⁵⁹

"We reached the town about noon which we found in a State of excitement in anticipation of the Coming of Price's army. Many of the Citizens were departing, taking what property they Could and leaving the balance to the casualties [i.e., fortunes] of war. Reports Came thick and fast of the Certain Coming of General Price's army, which was Said to be only twelve or fifteen miles away. Great haste was made to load the train with government property and get away before the advance Could Strike the town. But when about ready to Start, Scouts from the direction of Potosi reported a heavy body of the enemy at or near Irondale.⁶⁰ Soon the operator reported the wires Cut and Communications lost with all points north, and Soon after that Scouts reported the track

⁵⁸ William J. Campbell, "Narrative of William J. Campbell, Commanding 14th Iowa Infantry," Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis. The narrative indicates that it was written at "Jefferson Barracks, Mo., September 25th, 1864," but this is clearly in error. Possibly a later date of October, November, or December is meant.

⁵⁹ William V. Lucas, "My Recollections of the battle [sic] of Pilot Knob Mo. Sept. 27 1864," May 14, 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

⁶⁰ Irondale is located about 18 miles north of Pilot Knob. This refers to men of Shelby's division who were sent northward to interdict the rail line.

torn up and depot burning at Irondale. At the Same time reports came announcing the appearance of the enemy in the Arcadia Valley, 10 or 12 miles away. It was clear that Ewing and his Command were Caught in a trap and [had] no possible way to get out without a fight and the chances of Success in that way were against him ten to one, or more...When we reached Pilot Knob there were about 900 State Militia of all arms present under the command of Col Thos. C. Fletcher, who was afterward Governor of Missouri. The Cavalry [was] Commanded by Major Wilson a very active and fine soldier. The artillery was put in Command of Major David Murphy,⁶¹ a braver man than whom never lived.

While waiting for the train to be loaded I went into a barber Shop across the Street to be Shaved, while the barber was doing the job and had one Side of my faced [sic; face] Shaved, Suddenly the heavy roll was beaten, I left the chair instantly and reached my company a half a block away, in this Condition; one Side Shaved Smooth while the other maintained a two weeks growth of beard. I did not Complete the Shave until Six days afterwards a Colored barber did the job at Rolla, 75 miles away. While working the dirt and Sand out of the `long Side', the curiosity of the fellow was excited until he Could not refrain longer from Comments, when he Said, `I nevah Saw a face befo, dat one Side was richer dan de odder, but you's is, Suah.' I then explained to him, which Seemed a great relief. I may Say I endured many joshes and jokes on my `fierce looks' from the boys, the best of which came from Jimmy Boyle, an Irishman who in the midst of danger could not repress himself longer and Said, `Ah, bedad what a foine looking Corpse you will make So you will'."

Lucas also recollected hearing inflated estimates of Confederate strength in rumors then circulating there.⁶²

"...every few minutes Scouts came from the front reporting heavy columns Coming and only a few miles away. The estimates they gave of the number was all the way from 15,000 to 25,000 men. Gen Ewing gives the Strength of Prices army at 12,000 which I believe did not include Gen Shelbys troops, which are estimated at 4,000. So as a matter of fact Ewing with his little force of about 1100, was pitted against a force of about `16 to 1'..."

Early Afternoon of September 26: First Contact

Confederates of Slemons' brigade of Fagan's division had begun to filter into the Arcadia Valley through the Shut-in Gap that morning.⁶³ Colonel William F. Slemons, the brigade commander,

⁶¹ At the time Murphy was a lieutenant in the 47th Missouri Volunteer Infantry who was detailed to oversee the fort's artillery. The men of 1st Lieutenant John Fessler's Company G, 1st Missouri State Militia Infantry, served the guns within the fort (Suderow and House 2014:163).

⁶² William V. Lucas, "My Recollections of the battle [sic] of Pilot Knob Mo. Sept. 27, 1864," May 14, 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

⁶³ Historians have criticized Major Wilson for not posting pickets at the Shut-in Gap to defend it from

was ill on September 26 and his brigade was commanded that day by Colonel John C. Wright.⁶⁴ First contact with the lead element appears to have occurred when a seven-man Union picket detail stationed at a place known as Russellville near the juncture of the Ironton, Arcadia, and Fredericktown roads observed Confederate movement while eating lunch at about 1:00 p.m.⁶⁵ The men on picket duty were all from Company H of the 47th Missouri Volunteer Infantry. In the words of one of them, Private Azariah Martin:⁶⁶

"On, or before Sept. 21st, 1864, I was detailed as mounted picket--seven men, and as the non-coms. of our company had not as yet been appointed, I was appointed as acting sergeant to take command of the picket post about three-quarters of a mile northeast of Arcadia and about a mile southeast of the court house in Ironton and nearly two miles southeast of Fort Davidson at Pilot Knob. This picket post was at the junction of three roads,--one to Arcadia, nearby,--one to Ironton and Pilot Knob and one to Fredericktown to the east, from whence we were then expecting Gen. Price hourly, to attack Pilot Knob. This was the most advanced picket post on the Fredericktown road that I then knew of. We were then taking five days tours on picket. Also this picket post was in 'Russleville' [sic]. My five day tour ended at 8 A.M., Sept. 26th, 1864, when I was relieved by Theo. G. Atchison, acting sergeant of my company. In his squad, or detail, there was a young lad named Hildebrand [sic],⁶⁷ who complained of being afraid to stay at this picket post and as this picket post was only about one and a quarter miles west of my old home, where my parents then lived, I volunteered to take young Hildebrand's [sic] place in Sergeant Atchison's squad. So when relieved of duty by acting sergeant Atchison, I

approaching Confederates while the alarm was raised throughout the valley (Sinisi 2015:69). Years later, Captain Thomas Jefferson Mackey (1895:320), Chief Engineer for Price's army, rode with Slemons' brigade as it entered the valley. Around noon on the 26th, he observed the valley from a high point at the valley's edge, presumably near the Shut-in Gap. He makes no mention of Federal pickets being present.

⁶⁴ Sinisi 2015:69; Wright 1982:189. Wright (1982:190) states that he "moved on the right of the road to Pilot Knob, driving the enemy through Ironton," probably on the morning of September 27. For a biographical sketch of Slemons, see Riedel 1992.

⁶⁵ Several houses were located near this road junction, which was locally known as Russellville after the name of several resident families (Azariah Martin, "Azariah Martin's Narrative of the Price Raid," May 5, 1903; and H.C. Wilkinson, Letter No. 17, "Fight Down in Ironton;" both accounts are in the Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis).

Information on the Russells and Russellville may be found in Iron County Historical Society 1995. An historical marker for the location of "Russellville Junction" was proposed in 1994 (Noble 1994:45).

⁶⁶ Letter, A. Martin to H.C. Wilkinson, May 5, 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis. Wilkinson incorporated Martin's account into his Letter No. 17, "Fight Down in Ironton," also in the Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection. Martin's account, in his own words, has been preferred for reproduction here. The story, based on either Martin's or Wilkinson's accounts, has often been repeated, sometimes in extenso, by later historians, including Peterson and Hanson (1914 and 1964:106-111; 2000:79-83), Thompson (1989:154-155), Suderow 1986:62-63, Lause (2011:29, 41-42), Titterington (2013:38-40), Suderow and House (2014:169 et seq.), Sinisi (2015:69-70), and Forsyth (2015:125).

⁶⁷ Brooks' (1993) consolidated roster of Union participants in the Battle of Pilot Knob shows two men named Hilderbrand--Emanuel and Marius--who were both privates in Company H, 47th Missouri Volunteer Infantry. No men named Hildebrand or Hildebrand are listed.

returned to my company quarters near the Hancock Hotel in Pilot Knob and obtained permission of my captain to return to duty in young Hildebrand's [sic] stead. I remained in camp until the noon rations were cooked ready to distribute to the men and I drew cooked rations for the men at my picket post and at once returned without eating myself, until I had reached the picket post which was nearly 1 P.M. of that ever-to-be-remembered afternoon of the 26th of Sept., 1864. Acting Sergt. Atchison said he thought he would call in his vidette, who was then posted some 200 yards in our front, east of us and about the bottom of the swag in our front. Referring to such a disobedience of orders, I said 'What's everybody's business, is nobody's business'. Sergt. Atchison said, 'O, we can watch the road while we are eating.' We were all seated in a circle around the 'mess pan' in the shade of a tree (eating more than we were watching) when we heard a gun fire east of us from whence we were then hourly expecting Price to advance. We looked in that direction and saw a close column of cavalry by platoons, advancing on the Fredericktown road, and the head of the column was then some 50 or 60 yards down the slope of the next rise, which was about 300 yards east of us. They were then about 240 yards from us, and nearing the bottom of the swag. Sergt. Atchison said, 'O, they are our men.' I said, 'No sir-ee! They are rebels! I've seen too many rebels to not know rebels when I see 'em!'⁶⁸ Sergt. Atchison thought best to send a runner to headquarters and to alarm Ironton as he went and that we hold our fire rather than precipitate [sic] a sudden attack on Ironton unawares. One, John Gourley, of our squad, volunteered to go in, and he was at once dispatched at top speed. We waited and watched the enemy until we saw them []By Platoons, Right front into line!' into the lower ground in the field on their right, they having thrown [down] the fence. I think there was the best part of a brigade of them, all cavalry. Not yet hearing a word from Gourley,⁶⁹ I concluded that some one else had better ride in, as their right wing was swinging in towards Ironton and would soon have us cut off completely. I then volunteered to ride in, cautioning Sergt. Atchison to not permit their line to advance beyond a certain point to our left, before he went in also. My sudden move to ride in caused the enemy to quicken their gait on their right down next to Stout's Creek,- so Sergt. Atchison at once started in with his men also,- about 100 or 150 yards behind me."

⁶⁸ Martin, a native of Kentucky who was raised in St. Francois and Iron counties, Missouri, from the age of five, had previously served the Confederate cause (Lause 2011:29-41; Titterton 2013:39; Suderow and House 2014:169; Sinisi 2015:69-70). He was captured in the hospital at Cotton Plant, Arkansas, in 1863 and was subsequently paroled. In August 1864 he enlisted in the Missouri State Militia and in the 47th Missouri Volunteer Infantry the following month (Goodspeed Publishing Company 1888:1109).

⁶⁹ Gourley did not report to headquarters as ordered, nor is he subsequently mentioned in other accounts of the Battle of Pilot Knob. Martin commented: "I hope I may be pardoned for saying so, but I was then and ever afterwards convinced that Gourley aimed to do as he did,-run off and hide, and permit the rebels to take Ironton by complete surprise! He no doubt acted the part of a traitor and deserved to be shot. I never saw him any more that day. If he ever reads these lines, I hope he may be able to prove that I am mistaken in his case (Azariah Martin, "Azariah Martin's Narrative of the Price Raid," May 5, 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis).

Early Afternoon of September 26: Spreading the Alarm

Martin rode through Ironton to alert the men of Company E, who were camped near the courthouse, as well as the citizens of the town, of the approaching danger:

"When I reached the quarters of Company E, 47th Mo., then camped about 140 yards northeast of the courthouse in Ironton, I found the men lounging around and their officers all out, except one Corporal! I told him he had better put his men into line as the rebels were then almost in sight. Then, obeying orders, I began to ride up through Ironton shouting as I went, `Rebels coming! Rebels coming! Rebels coming!' Many of my friends in Ironton tried to stop me to get an explanation, but I had only one explanation for all `Rebels coming!'"

Martin then rode on toward Fort Davidson to raise the alarm, and enroute met a patrol from the fort, probably one of the scouting parties sent out by Ewing on his arrival at Pilot Knob:

"When I reached the ford of the creek above Ironton, and in the gap between Shepherd's Mt. and Pilot Knob Mt., I met some 80 or more of the 3rd M.S.M. Cav. and the commander at once halted and asked an explanation. I had only one explanation for him `Rebels coming!' I told him to ride back to post headquarters and hear my report which he did, leaving his men halted in the road. Soon we reached post headquarters and I reported and the post commander (I think Maj. Wilson of the 3rd M.S.M.) at once ordered the officer who had ridden back with me to at once hasten down to Ironton with his men. I then went over to my company's camp and found it deserted, but I soon found my company posted in about the middle of the south rifle pit, which extended south from Fort Davidson to the creek...Before I reached my company, the guns were popping down in Ironton like popcorn in a hot skillet. Company E, 47th Mo. and the 3rd M.S.M. boys were having a hot time down there."

After receiving Martin's warning of approaching Confederates, the men of Company E prepared to defend Ironton as best they could. In "Letter No. 17" to Cyrus A. Peterson, H.C. Wilkinson, formerly a 1st sergeant in Company H, 47th Missouri Volunteer Infantry, related information provided to him years later by James F. Johnson, a corporal in Company E at the time and one of the defenders:⁷⁰

"On Sept. 26th, 1864, my [i.e., Johnson's] company E--47th, [sic] Regt. Mo. Inft. Vols. was quartered in Ironton about 140 yards N.E. of the Court House, and on the East or opposite side of Main Street from the Court House.

I think is [sic; it] was about 12:45 P.M. I saw about 83 men of the 3rd, [sic] M.S.M Cav. ride down Main Street toward Arcadia. I dont [sic] know who was in command". (They were the men who Comrade Martin met as he went in to report.) "I thought they were going on Scout duty to feel for Price. Soon I saw a commotion in our

⁷⁰ James F. Johnson information in H.C. Wilkinson, Letter No. 17, "Fight Down in Ironton," Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

camp, and I hastened down there. Comrade Martin had just warned them. Then, Orderly Sergt. Ben. R. Lofton ran up and called for Co. 3 [sic; i.e., E] to `Fall in!' Our drummer was absent, and Orderly Lofton snatched up the drum and beat, `Long Roll' himself. We were already in line when our Commissioned officers came in. Then we heard the `feelers' begin firing just about the south side of Arcadia. Then we saw the enemy comming [sic] on a charge from toward Fredericktown, to cut off the 83 men of the 3rd, [sic] M.S.M. from falling back toward Pilot Knob. Co. E then turned loose on the Rebs, and held them in check until the 3rd, [sic] M.S.M. boys could get through, and in reach of reinforcements from Pilot Knob. When the 3rd boys all got through, Capt. Dinger ordered us to the Court House on double quick, as some of the enemy had lodged behind some old stacks of lumber East of Main Street, in front of the Court House, and were firing on us. As we came to the door of the Court House, Lieut. Geo. Tetly [sic] ran in, and about 40-men of Co. E followed him, but Capt. Dinger and some eight or ten men passed the door, and ran on toward the near-by foot of Shepherd's Mt. and thence north toward Pilot Knob.⁷¹ We ran up stairs, and I broke out the front window sash and glass with the breech of my musket, and we at once began firing from the window at the Rebs behind the stacks of lumber..."

During this action Corporal Johnson witnessed the first known casualties of the Battle of Pilot Knob:

"...and then we saw one of the 3rd, [sic] M.S.M. comming [sic] from towards Arcadia as fast as his horse could run, and a Reb. with a red shirt on, after him. Then at our camp, the poor picket boy's horse stumbled and fell and threw his rider over his head. The poor boy jumped to his feet, hands up in surrender, but `Red shirt' deliberately shot him dead right before our eyes! We at once sent a whole volley at `Red shirt,' and off went his hat and carbine as the strap or string was cut by a 58 Cal. [bullet.] He bent or fell forward on his horse which wheeled, now, right in our camp, and ran down Main Street in front of us as we poured shot after shot into him. His Horse [sic] was going so fast that he was compelled to jump a garden fence East of Main Street, and `Red Shirt,' tumbled off a dead man. Our first volley fixed him, but as he fell forward on his horse, he was well balanced. So now, that was, as near as we ever knew, the very first blood shed in the battle of Pilot Knob. One poor federal soldier lying dead in the street and his murderer lying dead over there in the garden."

A handwritten marginal notation on Wilkinson's letter initialed by Cyrus A. Peterson identifies

⁷¹ Captain Dinger and his men were re-united with the rest of Company E during the ensuing night. Dinger and Tetley exchanged sharp words over Dinger's abandonment of his company at the courthouse. Johnson, as related by Wilkinson, continued: "Capt. Dinger had fallen in with the 14th, [sic] Iowa, nad [sic; i.e., and] came back with his men to us, and he and Lieut. Tetley had a `Jaw' over Tetley's disobedience of his orders. Then Lieut. told him that he (Dinger) had disobeyed his own orders by not going into the Court House, as we who were with the Lieut. so understood." James F. Johnson information in H.C. Wilkinson, Letter No. 17, "Fight Down in Ironton," Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

the Union soldier who was killed: "This was W. Rector, private, Co. `I' 3rd Cav. M.S.M. His death has been omitted from all official reports, even those in Adj. Gens. office at Jefferson City. C.A.P."⁷² A roster of Union participants in the Battle of Pilot Knob, which was compiled by Thomas A. Brooks from official muster rolls in the Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, shows Private William H. Rector, Co. I, 3rd Missouri State Militia Cavalry as "Killed 9-26-1864, Ironton, Mo."⁷³ In 1903, Warren C. Shattuck, formerly 2nd lieutenant of Company I, 3rd MSM Cavalry, recalled Private Rector:⁷⁴

"Wm. Rector private of Co I, was left in camp when the Compy. went [on a scout] to Farmington Sunday night Sept. 25th he left the camp without permission and was killed in Ironton. I rode within six feet of his body when the first movement was made from the Knob he was a drinking man about forty years of age."

"Red shirt," the Confederate who killed Rector, has not been identified.

Early afternoon of September 26: A Second Contact

After the Russellville pickets fled from their post, a patrol of the 3rd MSM Cavalry arrived on the scene, as related by James C. Steakley, formerly a sergeant with Company K of the 3rd.⁷⁵ The patrol evidently left Fort Davidson before Martin arrived to raise the alarm. It arrived at the deserted picket post:

"Near the noon hour, Monday, Sept. 26th, 1864, about eighty men and officers of the 3rd Mo. S.M. [sic], part of them being of my own Co. K, but I now fail to recall what companies the other men of the squad belonged to; with Lieutenants Erich Pape, Co. K, 3rd; Lafayette Praul, and -- Blain, I think reported at headquarters for orders, mounted.⁷⁶...Having received our orders, our squad turned and marched south through Ironton, and to the Lawson Hotel in Arcadia where we turned east toward Fredericktown. When we came near to the picket post on that road, a quarter of a mile east of Arcadia, we saw that the picket guard were not at the post. We were marching across a swag, and

⁷² A brief note published in *The Missouri Democrat* on September 28, 1864 (page 1, column 2) briefly (and apparently inaccurately) reported "William Rector, company I, 3rd cavalry, mortally wounded" (Busch, comp. 2010:27-28).

⁷³ Brooks 1993.

⁷⁴ Letter, Warren C. Shattuck to C.A. Peterson, April 7, 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

⁷⁵ James C. Steakley, "Story of Raid," June 24, 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis. Sinisi (2015:70) believes this is the same 3rd MSM Cavalry patrol, likely commanded by Lieutenant Pape, that Private Martin encountered while riding to Fort Davidson and which Major Wilson dispatched to investigate Martin's report, and that Corporal Johnson saw on the main street of Ironton.

⁷⁶ First lieutenants Lafayette Praul and James A. Blain are shown on the roster of 3rd MSM Cavalry officers contained in Part 7 of the *Official Army Register for the Volunteer Force of the United States Army for the Years 1861, '62, '63, '64, '65* (Adjutant General's Office, Washington, D.C., 1867). Praul served in Company C and Blain in Company D (see Table 1).

east of the picket post there was a swag in the road and we were unable to see far in front until we were right up near the post; so we marched up the usual way, in two rank[s] until within about 40 yards of the sentinels beat, but no sentinel was there, and when we were able to see the swag (low ground) east of the post what did we behold but a road full of the enemy formed in platoon across the lane, of about 16 deep I suppose. I do not think the officers knew anything whatever of the presence of the enemy or they would not have marched up to them in that shape. Both sides opened fire; our boys, some of them, jumped down and threw the fence down on the south side of the lane. I, myself, being one of the 4th or 5th couple, 'front,' luck being on our side, we had to back as best we could a few yards only until the high ground protected us somewhat while forming a line. How a number of our men escaped being killed or wounded, I never could decide, because I have killed numerous deer and turkey with a muzzle loader (rifle) farther than we were from the Rebs. when we began firing. Though terribly surprised, we charged and skirmished around there a while, and we were fighting six to one. Another command of mounted Rebs. charged across the Russel [sic] and McFarland fields, aiming, as we supposed, to cut us off from our camp in Ironton. All of our squad retreated except twelve, officers and men, and my recollection is that Lieuts. Praul and Blaine [sic] were two of the twelve. We had backed to near the Lawson Hotel, when someone squalled out 'lets charge them again;' we, the twelve, charged right up to that picket post, pushing the attacking party back to where they fired at us first, and not a scratch did either get, of our squad. The result of the skirmish on our side was: 1st Sergt. John Wittmore's horse killed in the road in the beginning of the scrap; the soldier was somewhat injured by the fall, but managed to scramble up and over the fence through Russel's [sic] yard, and reached our quarters; one man of Co. I, 3rd, killed near the saw mill, I now forget his name, and don't know whether he had been with our squad or not,⁷⁷ but I think when they heard the firing, possibly Capt. John Rice,⁷⁸ previously mentioned, with his men, followed on after us, and possibly his presence near the saw mill prevented the enemy from getting into Ironton, or nearer Ironton; they having reached the quarters of the 3rd Mo. S.M. [sic], which were about 200 yards north-east of the court house in Ironton. They looted our tents and gathered up all [the] horses while we were fighting in Arcadia. Capt. Dinzer's [sic; i.e., Dinger] Company 47th Mo. Inf. was camped at or near the court house, and they fired like good fellows, although raw and unexperienced.⁷⁹ After the

⁷⁷ Steakly may be referring to the death of Private William H. Rector of Company I, described in Corporal Johnson's account.

⁷⁸ Steakley is mistaken. Second Lieutenant John A. Rice served with Company L of the 2nd Missouri MSM Cavalry, which was present at Pilot Knob but did not take part in the skirmishing on September 26 (Table 1). He probably meant Captain Hiram A. Rice, who commanded Company I of the 3rd MSM Cavalry. Lause (2011:41-42) may have accepted this misidentification when he described a patrol led by Lieutenant John A. Rice being "brushed aside" by Slemmons' Confederates and taking cover in old Fort Curtis. While Wilson's 3rd MSM Cavalry is pressing the Confederates back toward Shut-in Gap, Lause (2011:43) has Rice's 2nd MSM Cavalry troopers emerge from Fort Curtis and attack the Confederates' left, a movement described as separate and distinct from Lieutenant Pape's flanking attempt. Lause's specific source for this information is not cited.

⁷⁹ This refers to Captain Franz Dinger's men of Company E, 47th Missouri Volunteer Infantry, who fired on the Confederates from the Ironton court house.

twelve of us made our little charge, we also joined our commands, the infantry and artillery then being on 'double quick' from Pilot Knob to the battle ground. One section, two 6 pound brass guns of Battery H, 2nd Mo. Lt. Art., double quicked to where we began fighting. I don't know what infantry and cavalry took part in the fight, though a part of the 3rd were there all evening and until too dark to see the enemy longer, and some of the 47th Mo. Inft. and 14th Iowa Inft. participated; also a small squad of the 13th Ills. Cav., or the 6th Mo. Cav., I am not sure about that.⁸⁰

William H. Cameron, formerly a corporal in Company H of the 3rd MSM Cavalry, briefly described the early fighting on September 26.⁸¹ His account may refer to the action described by Steakley:

"...On the forenoon of September 26 1864 a Scout of the 3 MSM Cav repulsed a Squad of the Confederates at Farmington Mo about 20 miles from Pilot Knob Mo killing one and capturing one of them The one captured told them that General Price commanding the Confederates would attack our post that Evening or next morning. So at noon that day Lieutenant Praul of Co C of Our Regt with about 50 men from the above named companys⁸² of the 3 MSM Went from Pilot Knob on the Fredric Town [sic] road and as I was one of his men I will say when we got in Sight of our pickets we Seen the Confederates attack them so we commenced Skirmishing with the Enemy and lost one man I believe a Co D man..."

Early Afternoon of September 26: Fort Davidson Responds

The reaction from Fort Davidson was swift. Martin recalled:

"Soon the 14th Iowa Inft., one section [two guns] of Capt. Montgomery's battery⁸³ and

⁸⁰ Steakley is mistaken about the presence of the 13th Illinois or 6th Missouri cavalrymen. No one from either of those regiments is known to have participated in the September 26-27 fighting in the Arcadia Valley. He may be referring to mounted men of Company F of the 50th Missouri Volunteer Infantry, who did participate in the skirmishing on September 26. James W. Nations, a private serving in the then newly-forming company (it was not yet mustered into Federal service), commented that after the alarm was raised at Fort Davidson around the noon hour on September 26, "The rebels were said to be just below Ironton and Arcadia, and the mounted men of our company, under command of (former) Capt. Henry Finley, with other cavalry went to meet them, skirmishing during the day. They remained on the ground overnight but retreated before the enemy the next morning, Tuesday, the 27th." Nations was probably not among these mounted men, as he makes no mention of his personal actions on September 26 (James W. Nations, "Battle of Pilot Knob and Subsequent Retreat to Leasburg and Rolla, Mo. Recollections of J.W. Nations," Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis).

⁸¹ William H. Cameron, "Recollections of the battle [sic] at Pilot Knob, Mo. Sep. 26, 1864," April 16, 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

⁸² All of the 3rd MSM Cavalry companies present at Pilot Knob were mentioned in earlier lines of this account which were not reproduced.

⁸³ The gun section was commanded by 1st Lieutenant Morgan Simonton.

Maj. Wilson with more of the 3rd M.S.M. Cav., were on the double quick and trot for the scene of action and in a short time the boom of Montgomery's guns told us they had struck game."

Company I, 3rd MSM Cavalry, had just returned about noon from a "scout" to Farmington. After reporting to post headquarters, the company was sent to its camp near Ironton, where it became aware of Confederates in the valley. The company then returned to Fort Davidson and joined the response force led by Major Wilson, which it accompanied back to Ironton. Warren C. Shattuck, formerly 2nd lieutenant of Co. I, 3rd MSM Cavalry, years later shared his recollections of those moments:⁸⁴

"We returned to Pilot Knob at noon, reported at Headquarters and was ordered in case of attack to report with company at the fort. had just reached the camp at Ironton[,] fed my horse[,] had my dinner before me but had not Touched it when the rebels began to swarm into the town. got the company into line and rode according to orders which I could not help seeing were a mistake to the fort..."

Wilson proceeded quickly to Ironton with a mixed force from the 3rd MSM Cavalry, the 14th Iowa infantrymen, and two guns from Montgomery's field battery. Shattuck recalled that after returning to the fort,⁸⁵

"...the gallant Wilson was always ready. he placed himself at our head and we rode to Ironton [where] we drove the enemy before us to Arcadia we then fell back to Ironton and formed line near the Court House We had ascertained that the rebels had torn down the rail fence around a field about 60 acres in extent in every one of the fence corners there was a rebel rifleman. Two companies of the 14th Iowa Infy, under Captains Campbell and Lucas and a four gun Battery⁸⁶ of the 2nd Mo. light Artillery had reached us by this time and were deployed upon the right of the line."

Although not an eyewitness to the September 26 fighting in the Arcadia Valley, P.H. Harrison Hickman, a private in Co. H, 47th Missouri Volunteer Infantry at Fort Davidson, saw the 14th Iowa soldiers and the two artillery guns leave the fort and heard firing to the south.⁸⁷

"I well remember that it was just after regular dinner time on Monday, Sept. 26th, 1864, when we heard rapid firing begin south of us in Ironton and Arcadia...I then saw the 14th Iowa Infy. going down to Ironton on the double quick; also two guns of Capt. Montgomery's battery; then the remainder of the 3rd M.S.M. not already down in Ironton

⁸⁴ Warren C. Shattuck, untitled narrative, March 28, 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

⁸⁵ Warren C. Shattuck, untitled narrative, March 28, 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

⁸⁶ Here Shattuck errs in the number of guns in the section; there were only two.

⁸⁷ P.H. Harrison Hickman, "Story of P.H. Harrison Hickman," Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

in action. We could tell by the firing growing fainter and passing eastward from Ironton that our boys were then driving the rebels in the direction of Fredericktown."

Captain Lucas, whose shave was interrupted by the alarm raised in Pilot Knob, recalled that he and his Company B men of the 14th Iowa were also part of the response force:⁸⁸

"In a few minutes our battalion was ordered to go out on the Ironton road through the Pass between Pilot Knob on the east, and Shepherd Mountain on the west, and reconnoitre [sic] the Valley toward Arcadia. This we did during the afternoon..."

Lewis W. Sutton, formerly Sergeant-Major of the 14th Iowa Volunteer Infantry, recalled the response at Fort Davidson after word of the skirmishing in the valley reached there:⁸⁹

"About three o'clock that afternoon, pickets stationed about a mile down the valley at Ironton came galloping up, saying 'The Rebels are coming!'⁹⁰ Immediately Gen. Ewing ordered Capt. Campbell with his regiment and a Lieutenant⁹¹ with two guns of Battery B [sic; i.e., H], 2nd Missouri Artillery, to Ironton. The Militia followed as soon as they formed into line."

First Lieutenant Hugo Hoffbauer was detached from Company A, 14th Iowa Volunteer Infantry, to serve as acting adjutant with the 14th Iowa detachment at Pilot Knob. He also recalled the advance of the 14th from Pilot Knob toward Ironton, but strangely did not recall any immediate contact with the enemy:⁹²

"...we, the 14th and some other troops, marched at a rapid pace towards Ironton, and through the town, and in what I though[t] was a southerly direction for perhaps two miles, but we found no signes [sic] of the Johnnies."

Another officer of the 14th Iowa, 1st Lieutenant Smith Thompson, commander of Company D, recalled responding to the emergency, but his account does not agree well with details from other

⁸⁸ William V. Lucas, "My Recollections of the battle [sic] of Pilot Knob Mo. Sept. 27 1864," May 14, 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

⁸⁹ Lewis W. Sutton, "The 14th Iowa Volunteer Infantry at Pilot Knob," February 23, 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

⁹⁰ This likely refers to the arrival of Private Martin from the picket post. He was accompanied by the 3rd MSM Cavalry officer whom he encountered on the way, which might have given an observer such as Sutton the impression that more than one picket arrived. Sutton mistakenly places this event at around three p.m. Interestingly, in his account, former 1st Lieutenant Smith Thompson states that the train carrying General Ewing and his 14th Iowa escort arrived at Pilot Knob "about three o'clock in the afternoon," two to three hours later than most other veterans' recollections and Ewing's own statement in his October 20, 1864, report (Smith Thompson, "Battle of Pilot Knob, Missouri," February 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis).

⁹¹ First Lieutenant Morgan Simonton.

⁹² Hugo Hoffbauer, untitled narrative, February 12, 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

participants in the response force:⁹³

"We reached Pilot Knob about three o'clock in the afternoon. We had not been there more than an hour, when the militia cavalry was driven in by the advance of Price's army that invaded Missouri. There were companies B, C and D of the 14th Iowa under Captain Campbell, Captain Lucas of Company B, Captain Miles of Company C, Lieutenant Smith Thompson of Company D, and Captain Hugo Houfbower [sic] who was acting adjutant; these were the only commissioned officers at the battle from Iowa. There were also eighteen men under a Sergeant of Company H. I was ordered by the General to go out to the front and report, if possible, the forces of the enemy that were advancing on the Fort. I took with me about forty men, and we reached the town of Ironton some two miles from the Fort without opposition, save the retreating militia cavalry. I asked them as they passed--'What is the news from the front?' They answered that I would soon find out. When we reached the town of Ironton it was occupied by Rebel cavalry. They retreated from the town when we entered. We did not think it worthwhile to give them a farewell shot. I then reported to the General that there were only a few cavalry in sight, and they were not at all dangerous and fell back as we approached them. He sent orders to me to remain, as they were evidently the advance of Price's army, and reinforcement would be sent me if necessary, as he wished the Rebel army held in check as long as possible, that the Fort be got in condition for the defense. He sent me two pieces of artillery under a militia lieutenant."

Afternoon of September 26: Pushing the Confederates Back to Shut-in Gap

After being joined by Major Wilson's response force from Fort Davidson, 1st Lieutenant Pape's Company K men participated in the skirmishing that followed:⁹⁴

"Myself with about twenty-five or thirty of Co. K, 3rd, under Lieut. Pape were ordered to post ourselves on a small bluff a quarter of a mile east of Ironton to stand off flankers, which we did, remaining there until the fighting ceased, when we were taken on the battle ground and acted as a chain guard between the enemy, Arcadia and Ironton."

Captain Campbell recalled moving with the 14th Iowa to Ironton, then proceeding further south to camp for the night where he was joined by Major Wilson's 3rd MSM Cavalry troopers, who had attempted to push the Confederates back through Shut-in Gap:⁹⁵

"We passed through Pilot Knob valley into Ironton valley, on down to the town of Ironton, one mile from where we started. The town consisted of one street, two rows of

⁹³ Smith Thompson, "Battle of Pilot Knob, Missouri," February 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

⁹⁴ James C. Steakley, "Story of Raid," June 24, 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

⁹⁵ William J. Campbell, "Narrative of William J. Campbell, Commanding 14th Iowa Infantry," Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

buildings, flanked on each side by high bluffs.⁹⁶ Halted here a short time and learned from a company of the 46th M.S.M. (Co. E 47th Mo. Inf.),⁹⁷ stationed here at the Court House, that they had been fired on by the enemy's cavalry, and a sergeant killed and several men wounded (one private, Wm. Rector, Co. I, 3rd M.S.M. Cavalry, killed), when Major Wilson arrived and drove them back. Fighting was then going on at lower end of Arcadia valley. This was a semi-circular valley surrounded by a low range of hills and slightly undulating, a wagon road passing through its center, and debouching through Shut-in-gap, a mile and a half southeast.

During our stop here, Major Williams, 10th Kansas, of Ewing's staff,⁹⁸ came up with us and assumed command of my troops. My officers and men were hostile, [I] could see it in their countenances. I went to the General and explained to him that I had commanded this regiment since the 22nd of June, 1864. He ordered the Major to 'turn the command over to Captain Campbell as he was (is) its proper commander'. This ended the fiasco and restored good humor on our part. Gen. Ewing told me to attach the militia company (Co. E, 47th Mo. Inf.) to my battalion and follow him down the valley.⁹⁹ Marched about a mile and halted on a small ridge to left of road and went into line of battle, an apple orchard covering our front. Major Wilson drove the enemy out of the valley and through the gap, then retired to our position and formed on our left, putting out cavalry pickets behind a rail fence south of orchard. It was then getting dusk.

Gen. Ewing then left us, with orders to hold the position and rode back to the Fort. In a very short time the enemy made his appearance, going into camp on each side of the road in brigade order, cavalry, infantry and artillery and wagon trains, the rear troops coming always to front."

Although no longer an eyewitness to the fighting in the lower valley, Private Martin recalled:¹⁰⁰

"Our boys soon drove the rebels down the Shut-in on Stout's Creek about two and one-quarter miles east of Ironton,--but night coming on, the firing down there ceased...My father and mother then lived near the Shutin, but some 400 yards south of the Fredericktown road. They told me they saw the rebels hurrying by to the Shutin, but saw only one wounded man, whom they left in the yard of the last house they passed before entering the Shutin, but his comrades soon returned and took him away. They saw no

⁹⁶ At this point in the text, the phrase concerning the "high bluffs" has been circled and a marginal notation, probably written by Peterson, states "Error in topographic recollection."

⁹⁷ Campbell is mistaken in his reference to the 46th Missouri regiment, which was not present in Arcadia Valley at this time. The men of Company E, 47th Missouri Volunteer Infantry did march with the 14th Iowa after the latter unit reached Ironton in the early afternoon of September 26.

⁹⁸ Major Henry H. Williams was an officer of the 10th Kansas Volunteer Infantry who was detailed to Ewing's staff as an Acting Aide-de-Camp (Brooks 1993:233). He was discharged on February 23, 1865 (*Official Army Register for the Volunteer Force of the United States Army for the Years 1861, '62, '63, '64, '65*, Part 7, page 372 [Adjutant General's Office, Washington, D.C., 1867]).

⁹⁹ Preceding this sentence is a handwritten interlineation, presumably by Peterson: "On leaving Ironton marching to the west".

¹⁰⁰ Azariah Martin, "Azariah Martin's Narrative of the Price Raid," May 5, 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

fighting, only the retreating rebels."

As he stood in formation with his comrades of Company H, 47th Missouri Volunteer Infantry back at Fort Davidson, Sergeant Henry C. Wilkinson saw Major Wilson leave the fort with the response force. From the sounds of battle in the lower valley, he concluded that the Confederates were being pushed back toward the Shut-In Gap:¹⁰¹

"As we stood in line listening to the constant firing, we saw the brave Maj. Wilson mount his horse and at the head of his men ride away to the battle field [sic]. Then, there goes two of Capt. Montgomery's battery with them, and yes! there goes the old 14th Iowa, colors flying and we cheering them. They are on the `Double quick!' Ah! Listen! The artillery is giving them `Cush' Now! Now, the guns are receding [sic]; now they are bearing to the left, and the distance is growing, as we could tell by the more distant of the guns, Yes, the Rebs are certainly giving way, and retreating down the `Shut in.'

First Lieutenant Smith Thompson described the fighting that occurred after the Confederate advance was dislodged from Ironton, but his narrative is unclear about whether or not he referred to the Shut-in Gap:¹⁰²

"I left Ironton, advanced across the valley to a narrow place in the road, between two hills, on which the Rebels must advance if they came at all to the Fort. I ordered Major Wilson, who commanded the detachment of the Missouri militia cavalry, to drive the enemy from the narrow place in the road. He made the effort, but was repulsed. I then determined to carry the pass with the infantry under my command. I deployed them on either side of the road and advanced, while Major Wilson drew their fire in front. We reached the pass without being discovered by the enemy and drove the Rebels without much effort from the place. They fell back, giving us no further trouble for some time; yet it was evident that they were massing their forces in our front. It was almost sundown when I was reinforced by Company B, of the 14th Iowa, under Captain Lucas. He also brought an order from the General to fall back from my advanced position to the open valley in front of the town of Ironton, and put my men in a picket line across the valley which I immediately did. After dark the Rebel army came through the pass from the road, and by midnight the entire valley in front of us was bright with Rebel camp-fires. In the morning, before daylight, I sent Captain Lucas back to the Fort with his Company, and at daylight withdrew the pickets and moved back to Ironton, a distance of about a mile. The Rebels remained in their camp until seven o'clock, when their full force began to move. They did not follow the road but moved direct to a point half a mile below the town of Ironton. They then moved direct to the town."

Sergeant-Major Lewis W. Sutton found Major Wilson already engaged with the enemy when the

¹⁰¹ H.C. Wilkinson, Letter No. 17, "Fight Down in Ironton," Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

¹⁰² Smith Thompson, "Battle of Pilot Knob, Missouri," February 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

14th Iowa arrived at Ironton:¹⁰³

"Upon reaching that place, the General found Major James Wilson, 3rd Missouri Cavalry, with three companies, already driving the enemy from the valley between Ironton and Arcadia. Before the infantry could be brought into position at the front, the enemy had retired to such a distance as to be out of reach of all guns, except artillery. A few shells were fired at them to hasten their retreat. While in the valley between Ironton and Arcadia, Lieutenant Smith Thompson was ordered to deploy Co. D as skirmishers. Gen. Ewing, for the time being, attached one company of the 46th Missouri State Militia to Capt. Campbell's command.¹⁰⁴ The General, after taking in the situation more fully, found that an engagement was not likely to occur that night, and therefore, ordered the militia back to Fort Davidson, at Pilot Knob, and employed them in repairing the fort for the coming contest."

After help arrived from Fort Davidson, the Company E men joined Major Wilson's attempt to repulse the Confederates. Corporal Johnson continued:¹⁰⁵

"As we turned away from 'Red Shirt,' we saw the 14th, [sic] Iowa comming [sic] on the double quick, and Maj. Wilson at the head of the 3rd, M.S.M. and two guns of Capt. Montgomery's battery comming [sic] in a trot. We then ran out of the Court House and fell in with them and began driving the Rebs. back on the Fredericktown road. We soon drove them back through Russellville and into the 'Shut in,' two miles East of the Court House, Montgomery's guns pouring into them, shot and shell as they retreated, and we pursuing them, and in support of the guns."

From Ironton the 3rd MSM Cavalry advanced against the Confederates, probably astride of or parallel to the road to Fredericktown. Second Lieutenant Shattuck, who was commanding Company I at this time, deployed skirmishers in advance of the Union force:¹⁰⁶

"This was the situation when I was ordered by Major Wilson to take command of 100 skirmishers and advance in front of the line. it was about 3 o'clock P.M. of Monday Sept

¹⁰³ Lewis W. Sutton, "The 14th Iowa Volunteer Infantry at Pilot Knob," February 23, 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

¹⁰⁴ No unit designated the 46th Missouri State Militia was present at Fort Davidson. In a note appended to his narrative, Sutton explains that many years after the battle, Campbell told him that the company in question belonged to the "46th Missouri." In his official report, dated October 3, 1864, Campbell made no mention of any other unit being attached to the 14th Iowa, although Corporal James F. Johnson, one of the Company E defenders of the Ironton court house, recalled (as related by H.C. Wilkinson) that the men of Company E "fell in" with the 14th Iowa and 3rd MSM Cavalry soldiers who arrived from Fort Davidson (H.C. Wilkinson, Letter No. 17, "Fight Down in Ironton," Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis).

¹⁰⁵ James F. Johnson information in H.C. Wilkinson, Letter No. 17, "Fight Down in Ironton," Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

¹⁰⁶ Warren C. Shattuck, untitled narrative, March 28, 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

26th/64 There was no cover in the whole extent of the field in front of the line, except a row of fence posts about five feet high, and from Ten to fifty feet apart. one half the skirmishers advanced, fired, dropped down upon the ground to reload, then the other half did the same. The skirmishers were all dismounted. I rode up and down in rear of the skirmish line ordering the advance. The the [sic] sun was shining brightly, every button, scabbard and shoulder strap glistening. The whole command in their place in the line was watching the movements of the advancing skirmishers. I was the only mounted man in the field. I had been surrounded by Texans emptying their revolvers at me. [I had] been in forlorn hopes of rear guards, and in the desperate charge of the advance, but all of these were as nothing compared with the advance across that field. The fact that I knew that every Triangle of fence rails sheltered a finished marksman who had a dead rest for his gun did not help me. Men were dropping from the line. The air around me seemed thick with balls, my horse was restive. it appeared that I was the only object to shoot at in all that bright expanse."

The advancing Union line pushed the Confederates back to Shut-in Gap, where Major Wilson was wounded. According to Shattuck:¹⁰⁷

"still the line advanced until we reached the Timbered border of the field and drove out the enemy. The skirmishers received their horses from their holders and joined in the charge from that point to what is known as the Shut-in on the road to Frederick Town. here the rebels had their Infantry posted upon the Timbered hillside along the road. Their fire was Terrific. here Wilson was wounded on the front part of the head, and knocked off of his horse. he fell to the ground. he jumped up the blood streaming down his face, mounted his horse, and ordered the column to fall back."

The Confederates began to push the Union cavalymen back from the Shut-in Gap. First Lieutenant Erich Pape led his Company K troopers to the south, away from the Fredericktown road, possibly seeking to flank the Confederate defenders at the Gap. Second Lieutenant Shattuck was sent to warn Pape of the danger of being cut off from the main force of the 3rd MSM Cavalry:¹⁰⁸

"just before the column entered the Shut-in, Pape either by orders, or accident, had Taken a road bearing to the right of the one occupied by the advancing column. I was ordered by Wilson to notify Pape I rode into the Timber overtook Pape and told him that his command would be cut off if he did not fall back on the charge. I had hard work to make him understand his critical situation. We finally came out on the charge into the road but it was already occupied by the advancing rebels. We charged them upon the left flank of column They gave way in every direction and we rejoined our command a few moments more would have sealed the fate of Pape's column."

¹⁰⁷ Warren C. Shattuck, untitled narrative, March 28, 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

¹⁰⁸ Warren C. Shattuck, untitled narrative, March 28, 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

The Union force retreated by repeatedly forming lines of battle on the ground over which it had advanced earlier. Second Lieutenant Shattuck observed:¹⁰⁹

"during the afternoon we formed line after line with constant fire upon the enemy, falling back in many cases only a few yards, but the swarming hosts of rebels Kept advancing and Trying to envelope our left flank. The coolness of the firing of the veterans of the 14th Iowa and the 2nd Mo. Artillery were conspicuous wherever They were engaged..."

A Confederate officer, Captain Thomas Jefferson Mackey, Price's Chief Engineer, accompanied Slemmons' brigade as it pushed the Federals back from Shut-in Gap. In a reminiscent article published years after the war, he appears to comment on this phase of the fighting with Wilson's force:

"We attacked vigorously with the first brigade of Fagan's division of Arkansas troops, but Major Wilson handled his command with skill and courage and exacted a heavy toll for each step of our advance. We, however, gradually forced them back through the gap and held it at nightfall, when a violent rain-storm checked further operations."¹¹⁰

Corporal William H. Cameron, Co. H, 3rd MSM Cavalry, briefly described the fighting near Shut-in Gap and the wounding of Major Wilson:¹¹¹

"Major Wilson came to our relief with the battallion [sic] and drove them back to their r[e]serve about 2 miles. Then we had quite a skirmish with their reserve they was infantry¹¹² and outnumbered us they could front and flank us so we fell back Slowly fighting over every foot of the ground Major Wilson's hat was shot off and he got a scalping wound on the temple it bled very much but did not unhorse him or stop his commanding Shortly after this we was reinforced by the 14 Iowa Infantry they were about 120 Strong and good fighters. Then we drove them back about as far as they had driven us the Iowa men taking the center of our line of battle"

John M. Cooper, of Company K, 3rd MSM Cavalry, years later offered a very abbreviated description of the action that took place on September 26 and 27 up to the time of Wilson's capture on Pilot Knob mountain:¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Warren C. Shattuck, untitled narrative, March 28, 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

¹¹⁰ Mackey 1895:320-321.

¹¹¹ William H. Cameron, "Recollections of the battle [sic] at Pilot Knob Mo. Sept. 26, 1864," April 16, 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

¹¹² Several Union participants in the Battle of Pilot Knob commented at various times on seeing Confederate infantry engaged. However, no Confederate infantry units were present. The observed "infantry" were likely dismounted cavalymen.

¹¹³ Letter, John M. Cooper to C.A. Peterson, July 2, 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

"...then we returned back to the knob [from the Farmington "scout"] about 12 or 1. o clock and before we coad [sic] git [sic] our diner [sic] they charged in on us from fredrick town [sic] and we fit [sic] them in open field the balance of that day Major wilson got Slitley [sic] wonded [sic] on the Side of his head and Charley Stamey¹¹⁴ was acdently [sic] killed by one of our own boyes [sic]..."

Evening of September 26, 1864: Withdrawal to Ironton

Sergeant-Major Lewis W. Sutton of the 14th Iowa Volunteer Infantry commented on the withdrawal to Ironton:¹¹⁵

"Sometime after dark, the General was informed that the enemy were in our front. He then ordered the infantry to fall back to Ironton, and with the aid of Major Wilson's cavalry, to hold that place until morning."

Captain Lucas mentioned the disposition of Campbell's force beyond Ironton and the subsequent withdrawal back to Ironton for the night:¹¹⁶

"As the evening drew on Capt Campbell advanced his little battalion down the Arcadia road until he met the advance of Fagans Command, which was moving in force. Campbell realized the utter futility of a handful of men trying to Stop an avalanche, So he prudently fell back toward Ironton where we remained on picket duty until after midnight. During all the forepart of the night we were near enough to the enemys [sic] lines to hear his Commands as the different organizations were going into Camp and hear inquiries as to the location of different regiments. We Could distinctly hear the officers giving Commands, directions and information to inquiries.

After the Camp was quiet, we were ordered to retire to the Court house to get out of a cold and dreary rain which began to fall a little after dark. We gladly obeyed the order and Spent the balance of the night under Shelter Suffering from Cold and hunger. These discomforts were not So much thought about as what day light would reveal to us. Every man realized the Situation we were in was a perilous one, if not absolutely hopeless. Before us was a large Veteran army of men who were determined to Sweep the State with the besom [sic] of their power. To attempt to Stand before them was Sheer folly, to retreat from them was fraught with almost Certain captivity or death. But the Stake being played for was the rich City of St Louis with millions of government Supplies as well as the prestige that its Capture would give the Confederacy. A Consultation with his officers determined Gen Ewing to delay the advancing army until

¹¹⁴ Probably Private Charles Stamma of Company K, 3rd MSM Cavalry, who is not known to have been killed that day (Brooks 1993).

¹¹⁵ Lewis W. Sutton, "The 14th Iowa Volunteer Infantry at Pilot Knob," February 23, 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

¹¹⁶ William V. Lucas, "My Recollections of the battle [sic] of Pilot Knob Mo. Sept. 27 1864," May 14, 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

reinforcements arrived. It was well we did not know then, nor until the battle was fought, that Smiths [sic] forces had been drawn back to the immediate vicinity of St Louis for its Certain protection, and we were left a forelorn [sic] hope to take care of ourselves as best we might."

Sergeant James C. Steakley of Company K, 3rd MSM Cavalry, commented on the night spent at Ironton:¹¹⁷

"We remained there until after midnight, when we were moved back and formed in Ironton, east of the Reid Hotel, where we lay in line, holding our horses the remainder of the night."

In position for the night, Captain Campbell conferred with Major Wilson:¹¹⁸

"I saw at a glance this was more than a scouting party and went to confer with Major Wilson. Found him sitting near a rail fence, his head bandaged, and apparently suffering from a wound received in the fight during the evening. This was our first meeting. I introduced myself and asked if he was badly hurt. Said he had a wound along his right temple by a musket ball and it gave him a severe headache. He expressed pleasure at our meeting. I asked him what he thought of the surrounding scene. Said it looked dark and dangerous for us. I said: `This is Price's whole army coming in here'; said he: `I believe so too'. I said: `Major, we must do something and that quick'. The enemy were getting closer and still marching in; the lower end of the valley was brilliantly lighted with the enemy's camp fire[s]. We decided to send a messenger with a note, acquainting Gen. Ewing of the facts, and requesting privilege to fall back to Ironton, where we could better defend the narrow pass of Ironton valley. Went to a vacant house to our rear, struck a light, wrote the message, both of us signed it, and gave it to an orderly with instructions to deliver to Gen. Ewing. This done, we patiently awaited a reply. Time dragged along tediously, minutes seemed as hours. Oh, for A.J. Smith and his 16th Army Corps! I regretted afterward I had not taken a horse, ridden to the station and sent a dispatch on my own responsibility. Our messenger returned in about an hour and informed us that Gen. Ewing said if we needed two pieces of artillery, he would send them down. When this news came, it angered me. I replied by saying: `Hell and damnation, we have enough to lose here already without losing two pieces of artillery'. Said I: `Major Wilson, you and your men at daylight can ride as fast as the enemy's cavalry, but they will cut off my infantry before we could get to Ironton'.

Wilson concurred in my judgment, so we patiently awaited the results. There was danger of the enemy's lines coming in contact with ours, should they send out a picket. This we most feared, and in extending their camp as the rear troops always march to the front and take the lead on the morrow. Time passed tediously as we lay there in plain

¹¹⁷ James C. Steakley, "Story of Raid," June 24, 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

¹¹⁸ William J. Campbell, "Narrative of William J. Campbell, Commanding 14th Iowa Infantry," Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

sight of all going on before us, but we dare not speak above a whisper lest we alarm our enemy. Could distinctly hear them brag how they would get away with that little fort in the morning. About ten o'clock p.m., we heard a horseman coming toward us in our rear. I walked down a slight incline to meet him and have him dismount, as it was dangerous to ride upon the ridge and expose our position to the confederates. This was Capt. Hills of Gen. Ewing's staff.¹¹⁹ He said he came down to see what was going on. I called a man to hold his horse, and took him to the left of the line of infantry on the ridge, screened from view by the orchard. I said: "There, Captain, look on the panorama and see if you doubt us". His expression was, 'My God!'. [sic] This was spoken in a suppressed tone as we dare not create noise. He said: 'I will go back and tell Gen. Ewing what I saw and if he doesn't order you men back, I will return and do it on my own responsibility'. He returned in an hour with orders to retire to Ironton, the infantry to move in column on the road, the cavalry to lead their horses through the fields. This was done to prevent exposing our position. Cavalry pickets were left where stationed to give alarm at daybreak. Major Wilson alined [sic] his cavalry to the east of the public road and my troops were formed in line to the right on a small elevated plateau near the Court House. Here we felt more secure, our position being backed by precipitous bluffs. The two pieces of artillery sent down were placed in battery to my left. Stacked arms and placed two sentries on guard; broke ranks and ordered the men to lay down and rest. It soon began to rain and I retired with the men into the Court House for shelter, but not to sleep. The sentries were left at their posts with instructions to give warning should anything occur."

Second Lieutenant Warren C. Shattuck, Company I, 3rd MSM Cavalry, reported hearing the enemy's movements in the darkness during the night of September 26-27:¹²⁰

"...by dark on Monday the 26th we had fallen back to the ground from which we started near the Court House in Ironton. we here formed line and stood to arms all night many of us had been without food since our supper of Sunday night during the night we could hear the movements of the advancing rebels and knew that the action would open in full force with the advent of daylight."

Major Wilson and the responders from Fort Davidson had driven the Confederates back to the Shut-in Gap but could not contain them there for long. Wilson's soldiers fell back toward Arcadia and the Confederates resumed their infiltration and occupation of the lower valley. The fighting ceased as night fell.

¹¹⁹ Captain Charles S. Hills was another officer of the 10th Kansas Volunteer Infantry attached to Ewing's staff as an Acting Aide-de-Camp (Brooks 1993:150). He was discharged as a lieutenant colonel on March 1, 1865 (*Official Army Register for the Volunteer Force of the United States Army for the Years 1861, '62, '63, '64, '65*, Part 7, page 372 [Adjutant General's Office, Washington, D.C., 1867]).

¹²⁰ Warren C. Shattuck, untitled narrative, March 28, 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

Corporal Johnson, still with the men of his Company E, continued:¹²¹

"As night was now drawing over us, we fell back and deployed skirmishers along on the North side of Stouts creek, facing the Fredericktown road, and lay in line of battle with the 3rd, [sic] M.S.M. next to the south side of the Mt. of Pilot Knob. Then, the 14th, [sic] Iowa extending West toward Ironton and Co. E still further West and nearer to Ironton."

In a letter to Cyrus A. Peterson dated March 14, 1902, Lewis W. Sutton, former Sergeant-Major of the 14th Iowa Volunteer Infantry, drew a sketch map showing the disposition of Wilson's force at the close of fighting on September 26 (Figure 3). In describing the map, he wrote:¹²²

"As you are looking up all the minor details of the battle, perhaps it will not be out of place to tell again the story of our doings around Ironton, and make it more full. I will now introduce a map, drawn from memory after a lapse of more than thirty-eight years. It is not accurate at all, but it will serve to show the position of each command while in line of battle near Arcadia, as I now remember them.

This line of battle was first formed near the creek and advanced to this position, where the artillery firing was kept up at intervals of half an hour, or perhaps longer. After the artillery firing had ceased, the skirmish line was thrown out about 125 yards in front, about 3 o'clock, P.M., the 26th. My recollection is that about 5 o'clock the General ordered the militia to return to Fort Davidson, and that Capt. Campbell and Maj. Wilson fell back part of the way to Ironton at that time, and after dark fell back to Ironton."

Corporal William H. Cameron, Company H, 3rd MSM Cavalry, reported seeing Confederate signal rockets in the nighttime sky:¹²³

"Then night came and we ceased firing bid each other good night and the lines and Each Side fell back quietly. Shortly after we had taken position for the night We Seen the bright Sky rockets going up away back on the fredric Town [sic] road they went up all night which was leading the confederate army up to our front. We layed in line all night"

First Lieutenant Smith Thompson of Company D, 14th Iowa Volunteer Infantry, who had participated in the Arcadia Valley skirmishing on September 26, observed that the lower valley was illuminated by Confederate campfires that night: "by midnight the entire valley in front of us was bright with Rebel camp-fires."¹²⁴

¹²¹ James F. Johnson information in H.C. Wilkinson, Letter No. 17, "Fight Down in Ironton," Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

¹²² Letter, L.W. Sutton to C.A. Peterson, March 14, 1902, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

¹²³ William H. Cameron, "Recollections of the battle [sic] at Pilot Knob Mo. Sep. 26, 1864," April 16, 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

¹²⁴ Smith Thompson, "Battle of Pilot Knob, Missouri," Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

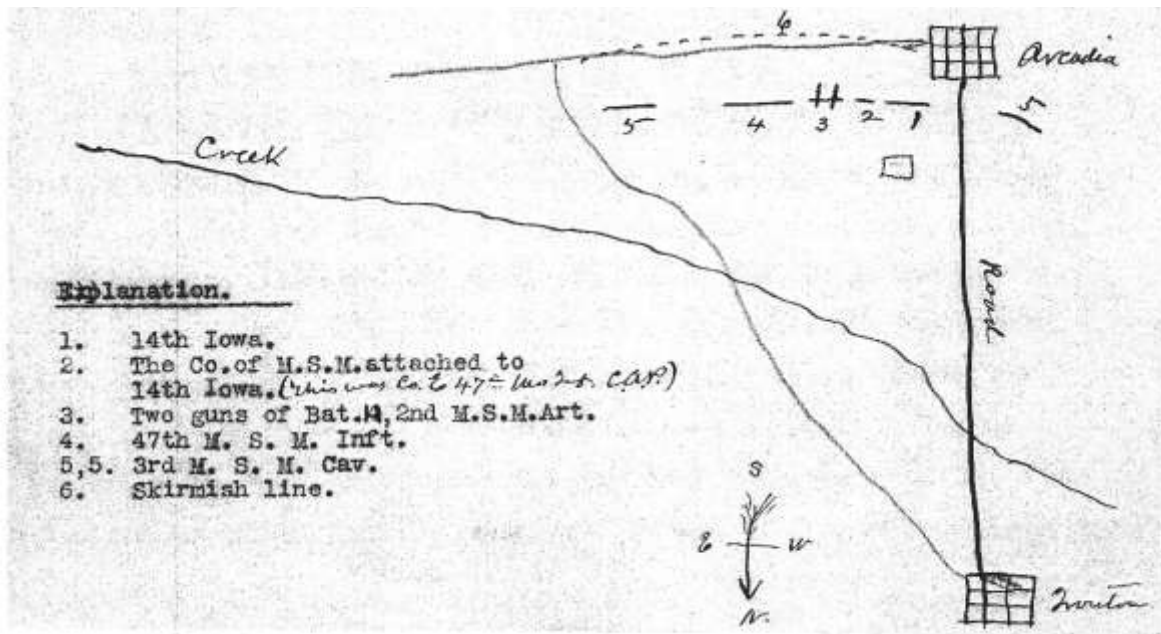


Figure 3. Sgt. - Maj. Lewis Sutton's nap of Union troop deployment at Pilot Knob. Cyrus Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

Daybreak and Morning of September 27, 1864: Retreat to Shepherd and Pilot Knob Mountains

Sergeant H.C. Wilkinson recorded that soon after he awoke at Fort Davidson on the morning of September 27, he heard the sounds of small arms fire to the south and wondered how the Union force in the lower valley was faring. Many years after the battle, James F. Johnson, a former comrade who served in Company E of the 47th Missouri Volunteer Infantry in the lower valley, described that morning's situation to Wilkinson, who repeated Johnson's information in his "Letter No. 18" to Cyrus Peterson:¹²⁵

"Then just as it was light enough to discern the outlines of a man's body at a hundred yards distant, the echos of the beautiful vallies of Pilot Knob, Ironton and the whole 'Arcadia Valley', and the surrounding mountains were awakened by the keen sharp crack of a single Dresden rifled musket down on Stout's creek just East of Ironton!...Then instantly following the first shot, another, then another, then in quicken [sic] succession another, and then came the fearful roll of muskets, carbines, Colt's revolving rifles and revolvers of our Boys, all soon mingling with the roll of the enemies' guns of different kinds,--rifles, shot guns, muskets and revolvers. Thus opened the Great-Little battle of Pilot Knob!...Soon every thing was astir--in and around old Fort Davidson, and in the town of Pilot Knob. How was it going down there with the grand old 14th Ioway, the

¹²⁵ H.C. Wilkinson, Letter No. 18, undated, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

M.S.M., Co. E of the 47th Mo., and Capt. Montgomery's two guns? (which had not as yet so much as said: `Good morning Johnny Rebs'!)

We will now yield, while Comrade Jas. F. Johnson answers our anxious inquiries as to matters `down at the Front.' Continuing his story he says: `As day light grew so as to distinguish the outlines of a man's body at about a hundred yards, we saw the Rebels in line in force immediately in our front on the South side of Stout's Creek, and along the Fredericktown, and Ironton Road. Their line appeared to extend East to probably as far as Russellville, and Westward into Ironton across the Delano yard. `Firing began at once--a single musket shot, followed in quick succession by another, then another until it was one continuous roll of musketry. That part of the valley across which we lay, East and West, is a rolling flat about a half to three quarter mile wide, and our line far too short to extend across it at this point; but it narrows very fast as it extends Northward towards the town of Pilot Knob and Fort Davidson. The enemy's [sic] line extended to the East of the position of Maj. Wilson and the M.S.M. Cav., and far to the West of our right wing. So we began at once to retire Northward towards the gap between Pilot Knob and Shepherd's mountains, which is much less than a quarter of a mile wide, firing at their rapidly advancing line as we fell back. As we approached this gap Co. E lay on the West side along the base of Shepherd's mountain. The Grand old 14 Iowas held the flat in the gap along that prong of Stout's Creek, and Maj. Wilson with the M.S.M. Cav., and Capt. Montgomery's two guns held the base of Pilot Knob, and the road from Pilot Knob to Ironton, which sweeps around the Western base of Pilot Knob Mt, where the Iron Co's log houses stood. We lost no men in killed and wounded that I heard of up to that hour, save a slight wound received in the head, by Maj Wilson the evening before, and the poor fellow who was killed by `Red Shirt.'"

Captain Lucas, who stayed overnight in Ironton with his men, recalled:¹²⁶

"When the morning light Came it revealed the whole valley toward Arcadia Swarming with troops, and for a fact we were in front of Price's army."

The Confederates advanced on the Union position, forcing a retreat toward the upper valley and Fort Davidson. Captain Campbell described the retreat through Ironton and eventually to Shepherd Mountain for the 14th Iowa men and to the slopes of Pilot Knob for Wilson and his 3rd MSM Cavalry troopers:¹²⁷

"At daybreak we heard shots ring out on the morning air. One of my sentries came to give the alarm, saying: `The enemy is coming'. I had already aroused the men and was rushing them to arms. Some had fallen asleep, but we rapidly got into position, took arms, and were ready for action. Our cavalry pickets we had left out in front were seen coming up the road as fast as their horses could run, the enemy following at full galop

¹²⁶ William V. Lucas, "My Recollections of the battle [sic] of Pilot Knob Mo. Sept. 27 1864," May 14, 1902, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

¹²⁷ William J. Campbell, "Narrative of William J. Campbell, Commanding 14th Iowa Infantry," Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

[sic]. Our two pieces of artillery now opened on them, they diverged to the right, apparently discovering Wilson's position, which exposed the flank of their column to our artillery. Another column was seen to the south and west advancing, their horses at a walk. Halted at Arcadia Fort, an old dismantled work (Fort Curtis); two officers dismounted and got upon the works and took a look at us with their glasses. It was out of musket range. Their column was parallel to us and gave artillery a raking fire down their whole column. I called the artillery officer to bring his guns up to our position and open fire on them, but he did not reply. I learned afterwards that these officers were Gen. Price and [his] Chief of Staff that were looking at us through their field glasses from the old earth works. How I wished for a long-range rifle.

Major Wilson now dashed up and ordered the artillery to limber up their guns and gallop for the Fort. He came to me and said: 'Captain, double quick your men up that alley and I will close up the rear', then dashed away at a quick gallop. These were the last words he ever spoke to me and the last time I ever saw him alive.¹²⁸ I immediately obeyed the order. The alley referred to was to my right and rear. We had not got far on our way when, to my surprise, women and children were following us, screaming and crying. This was embarrassing. I let the troops go on, stopped and prevailed on them to go back to their homes, get in cellars and protect themselves as best they could. They took my advice. I had to run hard to catch up with my command. As we came inside the gap separating Pilot Knob from Ironton valley, halted and drew up in line of battle, then sent for rations as my men had not yet eaten breakfast. Rations were issued to them as they stood in line¹²⁹ - hard tack and raw bacon the bill of fare. Major Wilson was contesting every inch of ground with the enemy and they pressing him hotly. It was a matter of only a few moments and he would be driven out of Ironton valley. Not liking my position and receiving no order to move, and being in direct line of fire from our artillery at the Fort, should they open fire, I sent my adjutant to Gen. Ewing, requesting permission to take position on a spur of Shepherd Mountain to our right. The reply was: 'Tell him to do as he thinks best'. Marched up through the timber to the crest of [a] ridge over-looking Ironton valley¹³⁰; formed line. Ordered Lieut. Smith Thompson, Company D, to deploy as skirmishers on my right and extend his line up the slope; this was done to prevent a flank movement¹³¹. The rebels were now in plain sight below us.

Wilson had been forced back to the base of Pilot Knob¹³² and his men were

¹²⁸ Major Wilson was captured during the September 27 fighting on Pilot Knob mountain. He was subsequently executed, along with six other members of the 3rd MSM Cavalry, by Colonel Timothy Reeves, a guerrilla leader cooperating with Price's Confederates. The men of the 3rd MSM Cavalry were especially despised by Confederates and Southern sympathizers for the regiment's aggressive actions against guerrillas in southeastern Missouri (Crawford 2017:114-116). The story of Wilson's capture and execution has been told by Peterson (1906) and most recently by Crawford (2017).

¹²⁹ At this point an interlineation, probably in Peterson's hand, appears: "in plain view of the fort & South Rifle pit".

¹³⁰ Interlineation, probably in Peterson's hand: "(evidently where the Rebel guns were planted later)".

¹³¹ Interlineation, probably in Peterson's hand: "unseen from the fort".

¹³² Interlineation, probably written by Peterson: "(above the road and on Western slope of Pilot Knob)".

fighting desperately on foot at close range¹³³; some using their revolvers. I had deployed sharpshooters in front with orders to open fire. They were now in close action and doing their full duty. The guns of the Fort had now opened fire, the Fort being about twelve hundred yards distant to our rear..."

Adjutant Hoffbauer described the withdrawal toward the upper valley:¹³⁴

"When night came we were at the brow of a hill, in a cornfield, where we rested on our arms, but not very long, however, for we could soon hear the Rebel artillery and wagons moving, and hear the commands given, although we could not understand. We had to keep on the alert and watch for the enemy's cavalry. Soon we began to fall back as the enemy appeared to come closer [sic], apparently several thousand strong, while we were perhaps two or three hundred all told. We fell back slowly till towards daylight when we found that the enemy was trying to surround us, by the way of Arcadia on our right, as we faced the enemy, and also on our left. About sunrise we took position on a little hill commanding the enemy on our right."

Hoffbauer went on to relate that the force he was with fell back with the 14th Iowa acting as rear guard, and reached Fort Davidson that morning. He reports that they had "very little cavalry, if any," with them, so perhaps Wilson's 3rd MSM Cavalry troopers moved separately from the infantry. Strangely, the official report of Captain William J. Campbell, who was detached from Company K to serve as commander of the 14th Iowa contingent at Pilot Knob, omitted mention of any movements near Ironton on September 26.¹³⁵

Sergeant-Major Lewis W. Sutton briefly described the retreat of the 14th Iowa to Shepherd Mountain:¹³⁶

"As soon as the grey streaks of morning light were sufficiently clear, the outline of moving troops could be seen. Major Wilson, who was the ranking officer at the front, ordered Capt. Campbell to fall back, and he, with his cavalry, would cover the retreat. The 14th Iowa, being in advance, soon took a position on the side of Shepherd Mountain."

Sergeant James C. Steakley, Company K, 3rd MSM Cavalry, described the retreat that began at

¹³³ Interlineation, probably in Peterson's hand: "(They fought mounted until driven in by the 10 AM charge down Pilot Knob)".

¹³⁴ Hugo Hoffbauer, untitled narrative, February 12, 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

¹³⁵ Campbell report, October 3, 1864, in O.R. I, Vol. 41, Part I, pp. 325-326. A copy of Campbell's report is appended to Hugo Hoffbauer's February 12, 1903, narrative (Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis).

¹³⁶ Lewis W. Sutton, "The 14th Iowa Volunteer Infantry at Pilot Knob," February 23, 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

Ironton during the morning of September 27:¹³⁷

"and was there in line when the enemy charged the town just at sun up on the morning of Sept. 27th, 1864. There being a thin line of cavalry only occupying the town of Ironton on the morning of Sept. 27th, we could do nothing but give way at the first charge of the enemy; they having formed their lines in Arcadia, and in the Russel [sic] fields east of Arcadia, south of our thinly extended line, preparatory to making the first attack. After some firing, seeing there were twenty to one of us, we backed and formed on the north side of Ironton and east of what was known as the `Johnson House' and the Ironton pest [sic; i.e., post] hospital, at which place such a small number could not possibly remain long, the enemy coming on to us in such overwhelming numbers...After the first charge made by the enemy in Ironton that morning, I went in the skirmish line, where I remained all day on the south and west side of Pilot Knob Mountain, under command of Lt. Erich Pape, one of the best and bravest men that ever lived."

At daylight on the 27th, the Union force at Ironton fought a similar fighting retreat northward toward the upper valley. Second Lieutenant Shattuck, with Wilson's 3rd MSM Cavalry, reached the western slopes of Pilot Knob mountain:¹³⁸

"Tuesday Sept 27th we held our first line just as long as it was possible and when our flank could no longer be protected fell back and formed a new line thus the line was formed and reformed how many times I do not know, until about 2 o'clock P.M. we began to get in range of the heavy guns of the Fort of course the shells and balls from these guns passed over our heads but in many cases they were aimed so low that it made the men uneasy and required the greatest efforts to maintain the line as we mounted the side of Pilot Knob we could see the enemy in the valley coming from the south and East."

First Lieutenant Smith Thompson described an incident during the morning of September 27 that was not recorded by any other participant in the fighting on that day:¹³⁹

"I ordered the artillery to open upon the Rebel column as they advanced, but for some cause it produced little effect. I then ordered the artillery officer to strike the ground scaling shots about half way between us and the Rebel column, telling him that the line of incidence was equal to the line of refraction, and when the shot reached the Rebel column it would just be the height of the muzzle of his guns. He made an effort to comply, but as his guns were rifle guns he buried the shots in the ground which, of course, did not produce any effect. I then called several of my men, who had served in the artillery, to work the guns which they did with much better results; but as the Rebel column was

¹³⁷ James C. Steakley, "Story of Raid," June 24, 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

¹³⁸ Warren C. Shattuck, narrative, March 28, 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

¹³⁹ Smith Thompson, "Battle of Pilot Knob, Missouri," February 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

rapidly nearing us, I deemed discretion the better part of valor and ordered the artillery to the rear, telling them to stop at the narrow pass between Pilot Knob and Shepherd Mountain."

Overall, aspects of Thompson's account appear to be self-aggrandizing, making it appear that he, not Wilson and Campbell, commanded the Union forces in the lower Arcadia Valley on September 26. He purports to receiving orders directly from General Ewing outside the normal chain of command, giving orders to superior officers, and upstaging the technical skill of the artillery officer in charge of the guns. Thompson also makes no mention of the presence of Company E of the 14th Iowa, commanded by Captain William B. Davidson, nor the presence of Co. E of the 47th Missouri Volunteer Infantry and their determined defense of the Ironton court house. If his description of the fighting at the "pass" refers to Wilson's attempt to force the Confederates back through Shut-in Gap, it does not agree well with other accounts, though scanty, of this phase of the September 26 fighting. In fact, Thompson's story of 14th Iowa men manning the guns of Battery H was challenged by a former comrade in the 14th, Sergeant-Major Lewis W. Sutton. In a letter to Cyrus A. Peterson dated March 14, 1902, he wrote: "You ask for my recollection in reference to a statement made by Lieut. Thompson about some of the 14th Iowa working the guns of Battery H, 2nd M.S.M Art. on the morning of the 27th and that the men in the fort heard musketry, but no artilley [sic] firing. In reply, will say there was no artillery firing that morning by either army, except what came from the fort. It seems that Lieut. Thompson is getting things mixed."¹⁴⁰ Thompson seems to have been highly critical of Captain Campbell, commander of the 14th Iowa detachment. In a January 22, 1905, letter to Cyrus Peterson, he even claimed that Campbell took no part in operations outside Fort Davidson, but remained within the fort during the entire two-day battle. In writing about published addresses delivered at a fortieth anniversary reunion held at Pilot Knob the previous year, he said: "As stated in my report which I sent you two years ago I was the only officer in command in any fight outside the Fort; and Captain Campbell's first sight of a rebel that day was when the rebels came in full view of the Fort where he remained from the time we reached Pilot Knob untill [sic] the little Garrison retreated from the Fort-".¹⁴¹ The booklet about which Thompson offered this and other comments has been republished by Busch (2010:66-91).¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Letter, L.W. Sutton to C.A. Peterson, March 14, 1902, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis. The fact that Sutton's letter was dated March 14, 1902, whereas Thompson's account was given in February 1902, may mean that either Sutton mistakenly referenced the wrong year or that Thompson related the artillery incident story to Peterson in an earlier separate communication. Sutton's statement that there was no artillery firing during the morning of September 27 other than that of the fort's guns is not strictly true, as artillery firing to the south, likely from Confederate guns, is reported by others.

¹⁴¹ Letter, Smith Thompson to C.A. Peterson, January 22, 1905, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

¹⁴² Interestingly, another self-aggrandizing report of the two-day battle is attributed to Captain Charles S. Hills, an officer of the 10th Kansas Volunteer Infantry who was attached to Ewing's staff as Acting Assistant Adjutant General. On September 29, Hills wrote a very brief and abbreviated summary of the battle addressed to General Rosecrans' chief of staff, Colonel John V. DuBois, and published in *The Missouri Democrat* on September 30 (Busch, comp. 2010:52-53). Though very brief, it appears accurate. However, also published in *The Missouri Democrat* on that date was a lengthy, confused, and dubious

Sergeant-Major Lewis W. Sutton described the retreat of the 14th Iowa to Shepherd Mountain and the 3rd MSM Cavalry to the slopes of Pilot Knob mountain.¹⁴³

"During the night the sound of heavy wagons and moving troops could be heard. On the morning of the 27th, while it was yet dark, we knew by the sounds we heard that the rebels were advancing on our position. Our officers, knowing that they had too few men to make a stand, ordered a retreat. Our regiment marched through Ironton on quick time, and when we reached the north side of town, the skirmishing began between the rebels and Maj. Wilson's cavalry, which became quite sharp. It was now beginning to get daylight. Capt. Campbell ordered a double quick and after passing the fields north of town, he turned to the left of the road and was soon concealed behind the small trees and brush on the side of Shepherd Mountain. In a few minutes, Lieut. Thompson with Co. D came up and took his place in the regiment. It was only a few minutes more until the 3rd Cav. came forward on a gallop and turned to the right of the road to Pilot Knob,--thus leaving the road clear for the rebels to pass up the valley,--which they did, until their advance was turned back by the guns in the fort."

Captain Lucas, with the 14th Iowa detachment, also described the Confederate advance on the morning of the 27th and the resulting withdrawal of the small Union force to the slopes of Shepherd and Pilot Knob mountains to leave Ironton Gap clear for the Fort Davidson artillery to repulse the expected Confederate attack on the fort.¹⁴⁴

"Daylight set the enemy into activity and Soon an advance was made toward the little handful of men in their front. General Ewing ordered Capt Campbell to deploy his battalion of Veterans across the eastern base of Shepherd mountain and on the South Slope. Major Wilson, with his cavalry, was assigned the duty of guarding the base of Pilot Knob next the Pass, thus leaving it clear from our troops So as to be raked by the guns from the Fort, which was built with the Central idea, no doubt, of Commanding this approach to the town and Valley back and west of it. Capt Campbell promptly deployed his battalion into line of battle, facing the enemy as he approached. As he came in Such heavy force, we were no match for him. Steadily he pushed us back Step by Step up the Side of the mountain..."

Corporal Cameron of Company H, 3rd MSM Cavalry, described the retreat from Ironton during

account of the two-day battle based on a verbal narrative that Hills presented to General Rosecrans (Busch, comp. 2010:55-59). Like Thompson, Hills appears in this narrative to have had an exaggerated role in the battle, appearing as Ewing's intimate advisor and the active commander of the defense of Fort Davidson. Three days later, on October 3 the newspaper published a brief note that essentially repudiated Hills' story as having been embellished by a "free hand reporter" on the scene (Busch, comp. 2010:68).

¹⁴³ Lewis W. Sutton, "The 14th Iowa Volunteer Infantry at Pilot Knob," February 23, 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

¹⁴⁴ William V. Lucas, "My Recollections of the battle [sic] of Pilot Knob Mo. Sept. 27 1864," May 14, 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

the morning of September 27:¹⁴⁵

"Next morning at daylight we commenced Skirmishing our artillery [sic] threw some Shots over the Enemy's lines and in a little while they came out about 2000 or 3000 Strong Infantry in good order and hallowed to us that they would come to see us we gave them a volley they charged on us beat our lines back and sent our artillery [sic] a flying to the rear with some of their horses missing. Then our Infantry and artillery [sic] went to the fort. And us cavalry skirmished with the Enemy mounted until about the middle of the forenoon when they had us driven out of the field. Major Wilson took us in rear of the fort and had us to hitch our horses there and get more ammunition; then we went out on foot on the slope of Pilot Knob, with a company of the 47th Mo. infantry as support, I believe Capt. Dingle was commanding it. Said mountain was south-east of our fort. We were deployed from a short distance above the foot of the mountain to its top and was about 40 to 70 spaces [sic; probably "paces" is meant] apart on ground, that our fort and cleared the enemy off of while we were hitching our horses in the rear and getting ammunition; the enemy then faced us with about 2000 infantry and first felt our line carefully on the right, left, and centre [sic]; they were easily driven back next, for they felt the entire front of our line and fell back.

Then in a short time, when it was noon, they charged their 2000 infantry on us and cut us all to pieces and captured Major Wilson..."

In a 1903 letter to Cyrus Peterson, John M. Cooper, a former private in Company K, 3rd MSM Cavalry, wrote a very brief description of the retreat from Ironton:¹⁴⁶

"and when nite [sic] come on the fite seaced [sic] and ever[y] thing was quite [sic] till next morning when the rebels made a general move on us we fit them out in open field till a bout twelve o clock that day and they fell back but they keep up kanadading [sic; cannonading] us and we returned the fire but none of us was killed up to that time of that dayes [sic] fite but a bout three o clock of that Same day they made a general charge on us we was in the fort except those that was out on chrimish [skirmish] line and Major wilson and john holaboy was cut off from the fort and was captured..."¹⁴⁷

Historic Documents Summary and Conclusion

Using complementary pieces of information from available firsthand accounts of the events that took place in the lower Arcadia Valley, it is possible to posit six phases of the action that occurred that day:

¹⁴⁵ William H. Cameron, "Recollections of the battle [sic] at Pilot Knob, Mo. Sep. 26, 1864," April 16, 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

¹⁴⁶ Letter, John M. Cooper to C.A. Peterson, July 2, 1903, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

¹⁴⁷ Major Wilson and Private James Holabaugh of Company K, 3rd MSM Cavalry, were subsequently murdered along with five others members of the 3rd MSM Cavalry (Crawford 2017).

Phase 1. Slemons' brigade, the lead element of Fagan's Confederate cavalry division, passed through the Shut-In Gap and advanced along the Fredericktown road into the lower valley where it encountered a Federal picket post of seven men near the informal community of Russellville, which Private Martin described as the furthest advanced of the picket posts in the lower valley. The surprised pickets abandoned their post and fled toward Fort Davidson while Private Martin spread the alarm ("Rebels coming!") to Ironton and eventually Fort Davidson.

Phase 2. Company E of the 47th Missouri Volunteer Infantry attempted to defend Ironton from within the Ironton County court house. The Confederates approached Ironton and a sharp skirmish ensued with the court house defenders, resulting in the first of many casualties to follow in the two-day Battle of Pilot Knob, the deaths of Private Rector and the Confederate known only as "Red Shirt."

Phase 3. At about the same time as the fighting in Ironton, a reconnaissance patrol of the 3rd MSM Cavalry, alerted to the Confederate presence, skirmished with Confederates at the former picket post position, but did not dislodge them.

Phase 4. A reaction force from Fort Davidson, led by Major Wilson, arrived at Ironton. The combined force of 3rd MSM Cavalrymen, 14th Iowa Volunteer Infantrymen, Company E of the 47th Missouri Volunteer Infantry, and two guns of Captain Montgomery's field artillery battery engaged the Confederates and drove them back to the Shut-In Gap, presumably joined along the way by the 3rd MSM Cavalry patrol.

Phase 5. A sharp fight ensued before the Shut-In Gap, where the Confederates fought from high ground. The Union force failed to push the Confederates back through the Shut-In Gap and Major Wilson sustained a superficial wound to the head. A brief flanking attempt by one of the Union companies failed and the Federal force withdrew toward Arcadia, where they formed in line for the night. Thirty-eight years later, Sergeant Major Sutton drew a diagram of the relative positions of units in the Union line (Figure 3).

Phase 6. The Federals further withdrew into Ironton, where they spent the remainder of the night.

Facing imminent attack by the Confederates on the morning of September 27, the Federals withdrew from Ironton into the upper valley, where the infantrymen occupied a position on the slopes of Shepherd Mountain and Wilson's cavalrymen occupied the lower slope of Pilot Knob Mountain. The Ironton Gap was left open for the artillery at Fort Davidson to deal with the Confederates if they attempted to advance through the Gap. During the morning and into the early afternoon, fighting occurred on the slopes of both mountains, where Major Wilson and several other 3rd MSM Cavalrymen were captured; days later they were murdered by the Confederates.

The fighting on the slopes of Shepherd and Pilot Knob mountains during the morning and early afternoon of September 27 concluded the skirmishing between Union and Confederate forces

that began in the lower Arcadia Valley. The fiercest part of the two-day "Great-Little" battle of Pilot Knob would soon follow. After the Union soldiers on the mountains withdrew into Fort Davidson, the Confederates, now consisting of both Fagan's and Marmaduke's divisions, advanced into the upper valley in force. In the afternoon, the Confederates made several repeated mass assaults on Fort Davidson, which were repulsed. After setting explosives to go off in the powder magazine, the Union garrison evacuated the fort and marched undetected in the dark northward past unsuspecting Confederate camps. The magazine exploded early in the morning of September 28 and the Confederates, after later discovering that the Federals had escaped, pursued the Federals northward.

General Ewing's force fought a harassed retreat to reach Harrison (aka Harrison Station and Leasburg), sixty-six miles distant from Pilot Knob. Ewing's men reached Harrison on Friday, September 30, and defended themselves until a cavalry force from Rolla relieved them on the following day.¹⁴⁸ Price's army pursued the Federals who fled from Pilot Knob but did not cause them serious losses during the pursuit, thus diverting the raid from more important objectives for additional days after the battle.

Although Union forces did not achieve victory at Pilot Knob, the stubborn defense of Fort Davidson and the subsequent retreat of its garrison consumed valuable time and manpower for the Confederates, blunted the impact of the Confederate invasion of Missouri, allowed time for Union forces to mobilize for the defense of the state, and drastically changed the objectives of Price's raid. Though not a conclusive victory for either side, the Battle of Pilot Knob played a strategic role in the waning fortunes of the Confederacy during the closing days of the Civil War.

Price's army continued its raid through Missouri after the near-disastrous encounter with the Fort Davidson garrison. The raiders advanced toward Jefferson City, Missouri's capitol, but did not attack the city because of the strength of the Union defenders there. They continued north to the Missouri River and followed it to the Kansas City area, fighting several skirmishes and battles along the way. After losing a major fight at Westport, Price retreated, as instructed by his original order from Kirby Smith, south through western Missouri and eastern Kansas into the Indian Territory, and eventually returned to temporary refuge in Arkansas. His army was decimated.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ Ewing's report, October 20, 1864, in O.R. I, Vol. 41, Part I, pp. 449-451; Scheel n.d..

¹⁴⁹ The course of Price's raid through Missouri and retreat through Kansas which followed, is related in several recent studies, notably Lause 2011 and 2016, Forsyth 2015, and Sinisi 2015.

Archaeological Investigations

The authors undertook a metal detector archaeological inventory of a portion of the presumed 1864 Pilot Knob battlefield. The field effort was conducted on November 11 through 13, 2011.

The inventory commenced at the southeast end of the traditional battle site in an open field on the landscape north of the old Fredericktown Road as it emerges from the hilly area just west and north of the landscape feature known as Shut-in Gap. The parcels surveyed were in pasture. Approximately 90 acres were metal detected with landowner's permission, all between two intermittent drainages that flow in a southerly direction to Stout Creek.

Inventory Project Methods

In archaeology it is not enough to know where artifacts are found, but also where artifacts are not found. A primary research goal of the Pilot Knob Archaeological Inventory was to locate and define evidence of fighting or camping in the project area. The first requirement, then, was to develop field procedures that were capable of examining the acreage available. Faced with examining an approximately 90 acre area, and assuming that most surviving artifacts of war are either metallic or associated with metal, metal detectors were employed as an inventory tool based on the success of the technique at Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument.¹⁵⁰ The use of metal detectors operated by knowledgeable people has overwhelmingly proven its value and is now a common tool employed in archaeological investigations of battlefields and campsites.¹⁵¹

Locational control was accomplished through the use of a Global Positioning System handheld unit and electronic data collector (Trimble GeoExplorer XT, mapping grade). Each item or location recorded on the data recorder was identified by unique UTM coordinates and a previously established identification code.

Inventory Phase

The inventory phase included three sequential operations: survey, recovery, and recording. During survey, artifact finds were located and marked. The recovery crew followed and carefully uncovered subsurface finds, leaving them in place. The recording team then plotted individual artifact locations, assigned field specimen numbers, and collected the specimens.

Inventory operations were designed primarily to locate subsurface metallic items with the use of electronic metal detectors (Figure 4). Visual inspection of the surface was also carried out concurrently with the metal detector survey. Volunteer operators were provided with metal detectors or furnished their own machines. The brands of machines used included Fisher, Garrett, MineLab, Tesoro, and White metal detectors. Metal detector operators were aligned at approximately 5 meter intervals. The operators walked transacts oriented to cardinal directions

¹⁵⁰ Scott and Fox 1987; Scott et al. 1989.

¹⁵¹ Connor and Scott 1998; Espenshade et al. 2002.



Figure 4. The metal detector team making a sweep of the inventory area.

or, as necessary, oriented by topographic feature orientation. Detector operators proceeded in line, using a sweeping motion to examine the ground.

Artifact Recovery

The recovery crew excavated artifact locations marked by pin flags and left the artifacts in place for recording (Figure 5). This team consisted of excavators and metal detector operators. The number of operators and excavators varied from day to day depending on the workload.

Hand tools, such as spades and trowels were used to expose subsurface artifacts. Excavators were assisted by metal detector operators to ensure in place exposure. Detector operators provided pinpointing and depth information to the excavator, thereby allowing a careful and accurate approach to the artifact. After exposure the pin flag was left upright at the location to signal the recording crew.



Figure 5. Thomas Thiessen and Allison Young digging a find location.

Recording

The recording crew assigned field specimen numbers, recorded artifact proveniences, and collected the specimens. Recorders backfilled artifact location holes upon completion of

recording duties. Artifacts were assigned sequential field specimen numbers beginning at 001.

Metal Detected Artifacts - Description and Analysis

The metal detector investigations of the Pilot Knob area yielded only 30 artifacts (Figure 6). Post-battle artifacts that could be definitively identified as such in the field, were not collected during metal detecting efforts.



Figure 6. The metal detector inventory area with metal find locations.

Analytical Procedures

The methods employed in cleaning and analyzing the artifacts are standard laboratory practices. Essentially they consist of dry brushing or washing the accumulated dirt and mud from each artifact and then determining the condition of the artifact to see whether it requires further cleaning or conservation. After it was cleaned each artifact was rebagged in a self-sealing clear plastic bag with its appropriate Field Specimen (FS) number and other relevant information on the bag. The artifacts were then identified, sorted, and analyzed.

The identification, sorting, and analysis consisted of dividing the artifacts into classes of like objects and then sub-sorting the artifacts into further identifiable discrete types. Sorting and identification of the artifacts were undertaken by personnel experienced with artifacts of this period, who compared the artifacts with type collections and with standard reference materials.

Recovered Artifact Descriptions

Bullets, Slugs, and Lead

Eight lead projectiles were collected during the project. FS6 is a modern 12 gauge shotgun slug. It is a pressed projectile made with more than 10% alloy to harden the slug. It was deformed by medium velocity impact, but measures about 0.614 inch in diameter and weighs 19.05 grams/293.9 grains which is consistent with a shotgun slug.

The other bullets are dead soft (near pure) lead and likely date to the nineteenth century (Figure 7). FS19 is a medium to high velocity impact damaged .58-caliber Minié ball. It is a standard military .58-caliber Minié ball. According to Coates and Thomas¹⁵² the Model 1855 Rifled Musket was the first gun produced by the United States to fire the famed .58-caliber Minié ball, actually a conical bullet. It is too damaged to measure for diameter, but the bullet weighs 28.35 grams/437.6 grains. FS23 is a piece of melted lead that has faint remnants of three rings or canelures (grease grooves). The melted piece weighs 27 grams/416.7 grains which places it in the range of .58-caliber bullets.

Two other bullets are spherical balls. FS24 is a .69-caliber spherical ball. The surface is heavily modified by chewing. The teeth marks are consistent with a pig or boar. The ball measures approximately 0.645 inch in diameter and weighs 24.7 grams/381.1 grains. FS28 is an impact deformed circa .54-caliber ball. It measures approximately 0.504 inch in diameter and weighs 8.35 grams/128.9 grains. This ball was cast as is evident by the mold seam and sprue mark. The caliber is consistent with a M1841 Mississippi Rifle caliber, although civilian arms in this caliber cannot be ruled out. The spherical ball is the oldest, most fundamental, projectile used in the Civil War by both sides.¹⁵³

The other three items are deformed lead bullets. FS26 is a high velocity impact damaged bullet that weighs 12.65 grams/195.5 grains which is consistent with a circa .44 or .45-caliber ball. FS27 is also a high impact velocity damaged bullet. It weighs 24.65 grams/396 grains which is roughly consistent with a .69-caliber ball. The final bullet is FS30. It too is a high impact velocity damaged bullet. It weighs 6.5 grams/100 grains which is roughly consistent with a .36-caliber bullet.

¹⁵² Coates and Thomas 1990:14.

¹⁵³ Thomas 1997:98



Figure 7. Bullets and lead recovered during the metal detector inventory.

Personal and Miscellaneous Items

The investigations yielded a few personal items. One (FS25) is a coat size brass General Service button (3/4 inch in diameter). The button was gilded at one time and is likely a personal purchase item (Figure 8). The back is damaged with only a small part of the two-piece back remaining. Impressed letters are evident on the remaining back **ter**, which are probably part of the word Waterbury. There was a Waterbury Button Company located in Waterbury, Connecticut for most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and this 1855 pattern button is likely one of their products.



Figure 8. General Service coat button.

One iron utensil shaft fragment was collected (FS3). It is a piece of an iron shank of a fork or spoon. The remaining length is about 2 inches. Two fragments of pocket knives were collected. One pocket knife (FS17) is a two bladed pocket knife with wood handles or slabs and an iron bolster. The handles are mounted with brass pins. The knife fragment has an overall length of about 2 inches. The second pocket knife fragment (FS16) is a single bladed style with the handles or slabs missing and one iron bolster. Its remaining length is 3 1/2 inches. The blade is closed and broken, but was about 1/2 inch wide. These pocket knives are common styles that date from the mid-nineteenth century to the modern day.

Two other items were collected from the open fields near Shut-in Gap. One (FS5) is a saw medallion of brass with the manufacturers name and logo cast into the screw (Figure 9). The center of the piece is a keystone symbol, the Pennsylvania state seal surmounted by the words **H. Disston & Sons Phileda**. Disston and Sons began business around 1840 and continued making carpenter tools well into the twentieth century.

The other miscellaneous item is an iron trilobe bucket bale ear (Figure 9). The ear was riveted to the exterior of a bucket to hold the handle or bale. The style was in use from the throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Saddle Gear, Horse Tack, Harness, and Wagon Items

A single iron stirrup was collected as FS29 (Figure 10). The stirrup is similar in style to the early



Figure 9. Disston saw medallion and bucket bale ear.



Figure 10. Iron stirrup of a mid-nineteenth century style.

M1833 Dragoon saddle stirrup.¹⁵⁴ The style was also common in the early to mid-nineteenth century as a civilian stirrup type, and is known to have been used on commercial and military made Confederate saddles.¹⁵⁵

Two horse harness buckles were collected. One (FS1) is a brass center bar buckle that would take a $\frac{3}{4}$ inch wide strap. It is $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches long and 1 inch wide. It is consistent with military halter buckles in use during the Civil War. FS21 is an iron frame center-bar buckle that measures $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches by $1\frac{5}{8}$ inches. The strap width would be approximately 1 inch. This heavy iron buckle was likely used on draft animal harness.

Three iron harness rings were collected. Two are light weight and are consistent with saddle surcingle rings. FS7 is $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter and FS12 is $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter. The third ring (FS18) is four inches in diameter and the iron rod is $\frac{3}{8}$ inch in diameter that makes up the ring. FS18 was intended for some type of heavy drawing. It may be from a wagon or some type of farm machinery. Another harness is a fragment of an iron strap with a square loop on the end. FS 2 is broken but $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches long and $\frac{5}{8}$ inch wide. It is likely part of a team harness pad or a hame. In either case it was part of draft horse harness. FS4 is the only horseshoe collected. It is a large (5 inches across) Burden style light draft horseshoe. The Burden pattern horseshoe was developed in the 1850s and remained a dominant civilian and military horseshoe until the late 1880s.¹⁵⁶

One wagon item was recovered. FS13 is an iron wagon bow staple. It is about 2 inches wide and is bent and broken. The staple had long tangs to drive into the side of a wagon box for support of the bow or strut for the canvas cover. The style is consistent with pre-1875 wagon bow staples as a screw and nut mount system replaced the drive in style about that time.

Two other items represent a broken fragment of an iron hook (FS9) and a light iron chain link (FS20). The hook is likely part of a whiffletree hook and the chain link may be part of a heel chain, both draft harness pieces.¹⁵⁷

Square Cut Nails

Five machine cut nails or “square” nails were recovered in the project area. These nails replaced hand forged nails early in the nineteenth century, and they were superseded by “wire” nails that have round shafts.¹⁵⁸ Machine cut nails were mass produced in huge quantities throughout the later nineteenth century, so they are a mainstay of frontier archeology. Wire nails were introduced in 1886, but machine cut nails persisted as the dominant nail on the market for some time after that.

¹⁵⁴ Dorsey and McPheeters 1999:262-263.

¹⁵⁵ Knopp 2001:125.

¹⁵⁶ Morris 1998

¹⁵⁷ Spivey 1979:24.

¹⁵⁸ Nelson 1968.

Nail sizes are given using the traditional pennyweight (d) system. While there were many sizes available the collected nails were of two sizes, 10d and 12d which are generally used for light construction work such as siding or the construction of heavy crates and boxes. Nails of this type were also used in wagon box construction. The only complete cut nail is FS14, a 10d size that is deformed and bent, likely by being hit by machinery at one time. The other cut nails are all 12d size, but all are broken and all that remains are the head and a portion of the shanks (FS10, 11, 15, and 22).

Observations and Conclusions

The archaeological record is scanty at best regarding the role the area immediately west of Shut-in Gap played in the Pilot Knob Battle. There is ample archaeological evidence of the Civil War battle and overall military occupation of the valley.¹⁵⁹ The limited archaeological finds in the area west of Shut-in Gap and the Fredericktown Road suggest there were limited Civil War related activities in this area. The open pasture land that was metal detected, approximately 90 acres, yielded plentiful evidence of late nineteenth and twentieth century agricultural activities in the form of farm machine parts, both horse drawn and internal combustion engine powered.

Only about 30 artifacts could be easily assigned to a mid-nineteenth century date, such as the square cut nails, wagon harness, and other horse-used tack. Of the recovered artifacts one General Service button and seven bullets are likely Civil War related. A fork, two pocket knives, and the horse drawn equipment items may or may not be Civil War era, although they are most likely nineteenth century in date.

There are only seven bullets, 2 .69-caliber round balls, 2 .58-caliber Minié balls (conical bullets), 1 .54-caliber round ball, 1 .44-caliber round ball, and 1 .36-caliber round ball. The spherical balls might be civilian in origin and associated with local hunting and subsistence activities in the mid-nineteenth century. The conical bullets are definitely Civil War era military types, as is the General Service coat button. This button type was widely used by both sides during the Civil War.

If all the nineteenth century artifacts are Civil War related, it is still a meager artifact assemblage for a battle or campsite. The historic documents and personal recollections clearly show that Price's command passed through Shut-in Gap and followed the Fredericktown road to Arcadia. The Confederates encountered the first Union resistance at an outpost some distance west of Shut-in Gap.¹⁶⁰ Where was the outpost and do any of the artifacts relate to it or the sequence of events at Shut-in Gap? Pvt. Azariah Martin, Co. H, 4th Missouri Volunteer Infantry, stated that the most forward outpost was near the junction of three roads with a vidette 200 yards further east in a swag.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ Grantham 2009; Martens 2011.

¹⁶⁰ Rowe, op cit. Cyrus Peterson Collection.

¹⁶¹ Martin to Peterson, op cit. Cyrus Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Collection, Missouri Historical Society,

Sgt. James Steakely, Co. K, 3rd MSM Cavalry stated the outpost was about one-quarter mile east of Arcadia and east near a swag or low area.¹⁶² Using that measurement as an approximation from either the center of Civil War era Arcadia or its eastern edge that places the outpost on the hill just east of town. Today that area is developed with homes and acreages across the entire hilltop and down its eastern slope. Capt. Campbell, 14th Missouri Volunteer Infantry, confirms this location in his statements to Cyrus Peterson, noting the outpost overlooked a semi-circular valley with the road running through it. It was east of the outpost that Capt. Campbell skirmished with the Confederate advance, in platoon order, from behind some rail fences.¹⁶³

Although there was sharp fighting in the Gap itself, an area which we were not able to examine, several accounts identify the first fighting after passing through Shut-in Gap as occurring on the west side of the small valley formed by the hills of Shut-in Gap on the east and the rises or small hills on the valley's west side behind which lie Arcadia and Ironton. Regardless of the precise location of the Union's eastern outpost it is patently clear that it and the initial intense fighting occurred about 2000 to 3000 meters (can also be read as yards) west of the area metal detected. The few Civil War era bullets found by metal detecting may be overshots from the initial skirmishing at the rail fence. The metal detected finds are on the far eastern fringe of the September 26th fight that began the Battle of Pilot Knob.

As Civil War historian James M. McPherson has summarized:¹⁶⁴

"Although Price put the best possible face on his invasion--boasting that he had marched 1,400 miles from beginning to end, far more than any other Confederate army--it was a greater disaster than any other southern foray into Union territory. Though he had started with 12,000 men and picked up thousands of recruits along the way, he returned to Arkansas with fewer than 6,000. Organized Confederate resistance in Missouri came to an end."

There are multiple reasons for the failure of Price's 1864 invasion of Missouri. Michael J. Forsyth insightfully presents five major reasons for the failure of the raid.¹⁶⁵ First, much valuable time was lost during the confused and long-drawn-out decision-making process before the order to launch the raid was given to Price. The four months that passed during this time--from mid-May to mid-September 1864--saw the Confederacy's fortunes wane to the point that the raid was "too little, too late." Second, logistical preparation and support proved ineffectual for a raid that turned out to be the longest cavalry raid of the Civil War. Third, Price's leadership ability was not equal to the task; he moved much too slowly and lost the advantage of swiftness

St. Louis.

¹⁶² Stackely to Peterson, op cit. Cyrus Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

¹⁶³ Campbell to Peterson, op cit. Cyrus Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

¹⁶⁴ James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 1988:788.

¹⁶⁵ Forsyth 2015:104-105.

and surprise. Fourth, the strategic goals and military objectives were not clearly formulated by the Confederate high command in the Trans-Mississippi Department. And fifth, the raid was too ambitious an undertaking. At this late point in the war, the Confederacy lacked the capability for major military success in the Trans-Mississippi Department.

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Appendix A

The Civilian Experience

The events set into motion during the Confederate infiltration of the Arcadia Valley on September 26 affected not only the soldiers who garrisoned Fort Davidson, but also many of the civilian population. Residents of the Russellville community were among the civilians who came into earliest contact with advancing Confederates; several of them left accounts of their experience during the Confederate invasion.

As noted earlier, an officer from Fort Davidson visited at least one local church, the Presbyterian Church in Ironton, during services on Sunday, September 25, to notify members of the congregation to rally to Fort Davidson if and when the alarm was raised by a discharge of the cannon at the fort.¹⁶⁶ Presumably, other churches in the valley were also so notified.

The source of this information was William Russell, one of three Russell family members who shared information with Cyrus A. Peterson. The three Russell accounts are augmented by a narrative written by the pastor of the Ironton Presbyterian Church, the Reverend David A. Wilson. These four narratives constitute the virtual sum of what is known about how the arrival of the Confederates affected the inhabitants of the lower Arcadia Valley. The Confederate invasion surely touched the lives of Arcadia Valley residents other than the Russells and Wilson, but little information is available from other persons living in the valley on September 26, or at least other civilians did not provide information to Cyrus Peterson after the turn of the century.

"Colonel" Cyrus Russell (Sr.) arrived in the Arcadia Valley in 1838 from Connecticut, with his wife, five sons, and four daughters.¹⁶⁷ They soon became major landowners in the lower valley and built several homes which, together with the homes of nearby neighbors, became the informal "Russellville" community, where the first contact with Price's invading Confederates occurred on September 26, 1864.¹⁶⁸ The Colonel died from a cow goring accident on his farm in 1860. Two sons (second son Cyrus Russell, Jr. [1819-1905]; fifth son William Russell [1825-1909]) and the sister of Cyrus' wife, Mrs. C.J. Pitkin [dates unknown], corresponded with Cyrus Peterson after the turn of the century. In addition, Cyrus' third son, Theodore Pease Russell [1820-1899], wrote an anonymous account of the Battle of Pilot Knob that was published locally in 1890.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ Letter, William Russell to C.A. Peterson, November 14, 1907, in the Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis. Members of the Russell family were members of the Ironton Presbyterian Church, which was formed in 1860 from an earlier Congregational Church (Iron County Historical Society 1995:94-95).

¹⁶⁷ Iron County Historical Society 1995:6, 11-12,

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.:6, 361.

¹⁶⁹ "The Battle of Pilot Knob by One Who Was There," State Historical Society of Missouri Accession No. 1013, Columbia (Russell n.d.). The account was anonymously written but Society records indicate that the author was Theodore Pease Russell and that the narrative was published in an article titled "A Summer in Arcadia Valley," *Iron County Register*, June 26, 1890.

Theodore's narrative summarizes but does not shed light on the details of the events of September 26, 1864, and so is not reproduced here.

William Russell was picking apples in his orchard when he observed riders on the Fredericktown road at about the time of, or shortly before, first contact between the advancing Confederates and the Federal pickets:

"...along about 2 o'clock [sic] on the day the battle began I was gathering winter apples from my orchard near the Road that leads to Fredericktown. I saw in the road some 4 or 5 men ride up opposite me & stop— I did not 'like their looks much'— as they were armed & Ragged— they called to me to go there— I went a few Steps & Said what do you want? they Said Come here— So I went a little farther— then demanded their wants— They said Where are the Pickets Stationed? I told them to ride forward to point of the rise in ground & they would see them at the corner beyond Oh they Said—we dont want to see them—just wanted to know where they were— They Said have you got any 'arms'— I Said yes I've got a 'Shot gun'— have you a '6 shooter'— I Said no—I had a 'fine 7 Shooter'— they Said go & bring these to us— I went & got my 'arms' then went out the back way into a patch of Sorghum near half bent so as not to be Seen by the rebels Sitting out in the Road [waiting] for me to bring arms to them— but as I went half bent they Caught Sight of me & then Sent a volley of bullets after me— you may know I did not Stay bent any longer. they only lent 'impetus' as I Straightened & ran for the timber— they departed— they [thought they had] killed me as I afterward learned—..."

Russell then fled posthaste to Ironton, where he appears to have arrived before Private Martin brought word of the Confederate contact. He alerted an officer in the camp of the 3rd MSM Cavalry outside Ironton:

"...I then ran over across the Valley to where the 3rd Mo Cavalry were camped— I called for the 'officer of the day'— When he Came out of his tent— I told him the Rebels had come— He cussed me & Said d- d likely— they had been out all night trying to find them & that there wasnt [sic] a rebel in 40 miles— I Said- perhaps not— but think you will soon find out— It was not five minutes before I Saw the picket flying down the Road to Camp as fast as horses Could Carry them— & in less time than I can write it the whole company of cavalry jumped on their horses without Saddle or Bridle to run for the fort at Pilot Knob—..."

Russell, as he had been ordered by the Union officer who interrupted his church service the day before, attempted to reach Fort Davidson with his firearms:

"...I found every body on the run for the Fort— & of Course I got excited & ran up through town & got up to the far end of Ironton when the army wagons came flying by on the dead run every wagon had Soldiers in it— I had got 'blowed' from my 2 miles run & hollered to them as they flew by to 'let me ride'. they Said 'Climb in' but they were away out there before I Could Jump for them— but before [long] one Came along I got Close

& Said let me ride they Said `Climb in'— I jumped for the tail board & the fellows in there grabbed my hands & dragged me in `head first'— gun & all— What a relief to be hurrying along at a run with the balance of them—..."

After reaching Fort Davidson, Russell observed a cavalry reconnaissance patrol leave the fort, probably followed shortly by Major Wilson's response force:

"...When we got to the fort Every body Seemed to be `doing nothing'— as there seemed to be nothing we could do— but after a while a party was sent out down the road to reconoitre [sic] & a little later a Company of Cavalry went down the road..."

Russell learned, presumably much later from his wife, that the Union cavalry reached his house and family, where it engaged the Confederates near the point of first contact, then withdrew to Ironton:

"The Union cavalry met the advance of the Rebel army `at my house'— the lines of Skirmish was formed on Each Side of my house— an officer on one Side went & told my wife that a battle was likely to be fought there & they might burn the house & that She & Children had better go to a place of Safety nearer town— so they opened the Ranks of Cavalry & let my wife & Children go through the lines— but before they got 50 yards the Cavalry fell back right at the heels of my family— which kept them on the run— as often as they got ahead the Cavalry would Come up on their rear they finally got to my Sisters— about 3/4 mile nearer town & as my wife went into the door She fell in a `faint'— they remained there untill [sic] after [the] battle was over—..."

Russell remained in Fort Davidson that night and the following day:

"...that night we were all in the Fort— and along about 11 oclock I was ordered to get Some of My Men (a few of them were in the fort) to throw up an embankment on the South Side of the fort looking down the valley to Ironton So as to elevate the field guns high enough to Shoot over the parapet I stood on the ground as the dirt was thrown up & placed untill [sic] [the] Mound was large & high enough to place the Cannon on— there were six field guns on mounds thrown up for that purpose— besides the Six Seige guns located a[t] the different angles of the Fort— there was a drizzling rain & [it was] very dark that night— so after all was quiet we every fellow crowded down beside the parapet or any other place & tried to Sleep— but gravel are not conducive to a quiet rest— Early morning every body that had any thing to do was busy getting ready for the attack..."

During the night of September 27-28, the civilians in the fort were sent into the village of Pilot Knob, prior to the planned evacuation of Fort Davidson and the demolition of its powder magazine. During the afternoon of September 28, William Russell and his brother Theodore, who had also been either in the fort or in the town of Pilot Knob, started walking home together. They encountered so many Confederate cavalry on the

road that they had to walk overland:

"...When every thing was ready the General Commanding told all of the Citizens to remain— to go into town & Stay until morning & Send in a flag of truce— along about 1 o'clock the train exploded the Magazine in the Fort...In the morning [after the magazine explosion] we sent out one man with a flag of truce— but the Confederates paid no attention to us— but took up their march so after we had waited untill [sic] about 2 o'clock in [the] afternoon my brother [Theodore] & Self Started for home down the Valley & found the road full of ragged Cavalry going north— we had to go outside of [the] road to get along..."

When William reached home he found that his wife and baby had safely returned but his farm had been looted by the Confederates:

"...when I got home found my wife Sitting in [the] Middle of [the] Sitting Room holding the baby— Among the debris left of my household they[,] as the Camp followers of the army[,] had taken [all] they could load into the wagons they gathered up of all of the Clothing bedding & Stock Cattle every thing they could carry off— to Supply the wants of the Southern people. Nothing to eat or wear but what they had on— a Confederate Soldier having hunted up my wife after the battle & escorted her home to protect it from further destruction & left a guard to keep off any further depredations from the Rabble— ..."

After laying low for a couple of days to avoid local men with a grudge for his earlier local conscription work for the army, Russell then volunteered to work in the Confederate hospitals in the valley, which he did until Federal forces returned some weeks later:

"...after a Couple of days in which I had kept out of Sight of the hangers on & bushwhackers I found it not safe to be around home because there were those who wanted me for no good— I went to the Ironton Hotel kept by Col Aubuchon & asked him to introduce me to the Head Surgeon of the Hospital in the Hotel— which he kindly did— I was then appointed as Issuing Commissary of all the Hospitals in the Valley— I held that position for Six weeks untill [sic] our Federal forces returned & took Charge of the department. There [were] 5 or Six Hospitals full of wounded— I Saw legs & arms cut off in numbers-..."

For William Russell's older brother, Cyrus Jr., the experience of encountering Confederates on September 26 was much different:¹⁷⁰

"It was Monday Sept. 26, 1864, I was making sorghum molasses in the back yard, when my wife came running to me, and said, 'The rebels are coming.' I drew my purse from my pocket, which she hid in her dress, and I followed her into the house. There was no

¹⁷⁰ Cyrus Russell, Jr., "A Prisoner During Price's Raid," undated, Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

time to escape to the fort, two miles away, for the confederates had surrounded [sic] the house, so I went upstairs and lay down. I had been sick for a long time and was not able to serve in the army.

It was not long before the house was full of soldiers, and they soon found me. Two of them held their pistols at my head and ordered me to surrender. Resistance was useless. As they led me out of the door one of them struck me over the head with the butt of his pistol. I had on an old felt hat with a tarred crown, but the blow was so heavy it cut an ugly gash in my head. He turned to a comrade and said, 'This is a damn black Republican. Strip the house and put fire to it.'

They found I could not walk as fast as they wanted, so as we passed my brother William's house they took one of his horses and put me on it, and we marched down to their camp by the St. Francois River eight miles east. There we had to sit on the rocks in the woods all night in the rain. Next day we were taken into an old sheep stable without any roof and compelled to stand ankle [sic] deep in wet manure all one day and night. There were seven prisoners, William and Andrew Tong, John Ake "Old man" Means and myself besides two of their men. All this time we had nothing to eat. On Wednesday morning I asked a provost officer if they were not going to give us anything to eat. He said he did not know, that he had had nothing himself since the morning before. They brought us each a pint of flour, and about two ounces of bacon. We made a dough of the flour with water and no salt; rolled it on a stick and cooked it and the bacon before the fire.

About ten o'clock Wednesday we started on the march north. We halted three hours in Arcadia, and as we passed my house I was allowed to stop and get my medicine and say a word to my wife. We reached camp twenty two miles away after dark and sat on the rocks in the rain again that night. The next morning we had another pint of flour apiece, and I stole an ear of corn from a mule, and roasted it in the fire. For drink we had water out of the creeks where the horses had been through and washed their feet until it was pretty highly colored and stung [sic; stunk] enough.

Thursday morning we were taken before Gen. Cabell¹⁷¹ who inquired of each one, 'Are you a union man?' I told him I always had been and always expected to be. Some of the prisoners were taken further on the march, but as they did not care to be encumbered with sick prisoners, or to conscript men whose guns were more ready to shoot backwards than forwards, Wm. Tong and I were released and allowed to go to our homes which we reached some time before sundown, that evening."¹⁷²

Another member of the Russell family, Mrs. C.J. Pitkin, the sister of the wife of Cyrus Russell, Jr., provided perhaps the most insightful account of the devastation that resulted among the residents of the lower Arcadia Valley from the Confederate invasion. It was contained in a 29-page undated handwritten narrative sent to Cyrus Peterson.¹⁷³ Mrs. Pitkin was an Illinois

¹⁷¹ Brigadier General William L. Cabell commanded a brigade in Fagan's division.

¹⁷² Cyrus Russell was about 45 years old at the time, and William Tong was three years older than Russell (Iron County Historical Society 1995:12, 14). Because of their age, and possibly Russell's infirmity as well, both men may have been of little use for military service and so were freed.

¹⁷³ Mrs. C.J. Pitkin, "Reminiscences of Price's Raid," undated narrative in the Cyrus A. Peterson

resident who had taught school in southeastern Missouri during the summer of 1864 and visited her sister's family shortly before the arrival of Price's raiders. Her narrative, which agrees on many points with the accounts of William and Cyrus Russell, Jr. (given earlier), begins on Sunday, September 26, and recounts the "false" alarm sounded by the Fort Davidson cannon that day. Her sister and her husband were absent from the farm, attending church services with their two young children, and had left their youngest child, a girl of two years of age, with Mrs. Pitkin:

"Very quiet and beautiful the day seemed, and becoming tired of the monotony, I began to look for the return of the carriage, when, like a clap of thunder, came the boom of cannon. Such a sound as would have startled me any day, but on this sacred day it was fearful. I ran to the gate with little Sarah, who looked into my face doubtfully, but [I] could see nothing, not even the pickets who were stationed but a few rods up the road.¹⁷⁴ It was not long, however, before the family returned, and I ran to meet my sister, whose pale and anxious face told more than words, that danger was near. She hurriedly told me that the rebels were within nine miles of us. Every citizen was ordered to the front [sic; fort], two miles distant. Julius Dicaugen the orphan boy, put the horses in the stable, while Mr. Russell, after giving us a hearty good bye, with gun and blanket shawl, mounted his horse and rode away.

Then we began to realize our situation, alone, without protection. But there was no time to lose. We must in some way secure our valuables. We hastily gathered watch, silver, and other articles of value, and putting them in a box, locked and placed it in an old Dutch oven down [in the] cellar, where were already six boxes of delicious honey, taken up only a day or two previous, and after filling up the opening with pieces of stove pipe, old rubbish etc we ascended the stairs, and gathering the children about us, sat down in silence, waiting our fate.

What a suspense! Each moment seemed an hour. Hour after hour passed on and still we were not disturbed. Near sundown Mr. Russell came home with the cheering words, "It is all a farce." The fact was, our scouts coming in from a reconnoiter fired upon the pickets to see if they knew their duty, and would prove faithful. And as faithful were they that in a very short time every thing was made ready for battle.

We retired to rest in peace, but the shock we received was sufficient to disturb our dreams."

Having passed an uneasy night on September 25-26, Mrs. Pitkin soon witnessed the harsh reality of war during the afternoon of Monday, September 26:

"The day following we went about our accustomed duties and it being Monday we washed as do all good housekeepers on that day. After dinner, our work over, we dressed for the afternoon and with light hearts sat with our sewing in the cool sitting room, giving now and then a look of satisfaction at the well washed linen on the line and laughing over the fright of the day before. The children had asked permission to go over to Uncle

Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

¹⁷⁴ This refers to the picket post manned by Private Azariah Martin and his comrades.

William's to play with their cousins. At two o'clock we heard a strange clattering noise, and looking from the window noticed a perfect cloud of dust rising above the hedge, which hid the road from view. A strange feeling crept over me as I ran through the hall into the street. Here a sight met me which I can never forget. First the unmistakable rebel flag followed by four hundred cavalry men. I have forgotten to mention that Mr. Russell¹⁷⁵ was making sorghum molasses in the back yard, and up to this very moment was ignorant of the peril he was in. My sister hastened to him, urging his concealment, it being too late for him to reach the fort. He had but a moment in which to give her his pocket book which contained fifty dollars in money. This she concealed in the bosom of her dress, and forgetting his watch he went up stairs and lay down upon the bed. He had not been in good health for some time. Of course concealment was out of the question, and this was all done on the instant.

In the meantime the rebels had been busy letting down fences, striding here and there until the yard was full of them. My sister noticed the return of her children, who, pale with fright, said they had met the soldiers who told them to go home for there was to be a battle there in a few moments. Just then two men entered the house with their pistols cocked, and with an oath demanded where the union man of the house was. My sister said she would not tell them, they could search for themselves. By this time others had come in, going down cellar, into the bedrooms opening drawers, pulling beds to pieces, carrying out all they could shoulder of bedding clothing etc. One of the number came from the cellar with a pie in one hand, and a huge piece of honey in the other, shouting to his comrades to help themselves, there was plenty left, guessed this was headquarters.

Of course they were not long in discovering my brotherinlaw [sic], and with a fiendish yell they pushed him down the stairs, demanding his money, at the same time searching his pockets, and disappointed at the result, they jerked his watch from the guard and drove him out of his own door. My sister followed him to the door with her babe clinging to her, and saw one of them strike him on the head with the butt of a pistol. She screamed as she saw the blood flow down over his face, 'They have killed him! They have killed him! My God they have killed my husband!' and in her frenzy she begged them to save her husband's hat, which one of them had appropriated, it being much better than his own, for they had taken the last vestige of clothing belonging to him, one entire suit besides shirts, boots, shoes, everything, but even this was refused her.

We noticed that they were in a great hurry, apparently retreating. One man asked me how many men we had at the fort. I replied I could not tell, but heard we were to have a reinforcement of fifty thousand. With a whistle they left, and backed off towards the woods, and we shouted for joy as the shell came screaming from our fort, and our blue coats made their appearance. On they came in full chase, and in that moment we felt that we were safe.

Well for us that we were ignorant of the smallness of our forces or the magnitude of those of the enemy, else we would have sickened at the result.

We had time now to look about us, and what did we see? There was not a room, nook or corner which had not been visited. Trunks turned upside down, every bureau drawer emptied of its contents, Every article of food eaten or carried off. The orchard

¹⁷⁵ Cyrus, Jr.

stripped of its fruits. The farm wagon and five horses taken. The carriage cut to pieces.

`Well!' sighed my sister, `we will go over to William's and see how they have fared.' He, more fortunate than his brother, had escaped to the fort, with only a missing shot sent after him. The house and surroundings were in much the same condition as our own. We found Ruth¹⁷⁶ in a state of great anxiety, alone with her children and a colored girl. She urged us to remain, but Sister said she must return, consenting, however, to my staying with her until Wash OConner the orphan boy should come from school. She could not have been gone fifteen minutes before we heard voices outside, and going to the door we met one of our men who said, `You had better run, as we are likely to have a skirmish right here.' The mother took her baby in her arms, while I led the boy followed by Betsy the colored girl. My first impulse was to go right home, but on reaching the yard we found the road full of soldiers, our men in front, and the enemy in the rear. We ran with all our might (the bullets whizzing over our heads) across the fields in the direction of the home of Mr. Russell's father Cyrus Russell Sr. Several times our strength gave out, and we stumbled and fell, not daring to look back. We soon got to our feet, and after crossing four lots we reached the house, only to find it locked and the inmates gone. We then tried to get to the road in front, but found it blockaded, so we had to cross another lot before we got to the next house, Mr. Guild's,¹⁷⁷ where we found an open door, into which we rushed, panting for breath. Here we found the representatives of six families. They were eager to learn our story, but from fright and exhaustion we could hardly speak, or express ourselves intelligently for some time. Night came on and with it a `darkness that might be felt.' Supper was prepared by Mrs. Guild but there was little inclination to eat—neither could we sleep. Without [i.e., outside] everything was dreadfully still, and it was a relief when at length the door opened and Major Wilson entered. He was a man of few words, and as he quietly wrote a dispatch to a brother officer, one of our number discovered a wound which [had] apparently received no attendance. Mrs. Guild offered to bathe his head, and after drinking a cup of tea, he left as quietly as he had come, and we were left to struggle through the night of suspense."

The morning of September 27 arrived. Mrs. Pitkin continued:

"It seemed a month before the first light of day which showed us that our men had retreated to the fort under cover of the darkness, while as far as the eye could reach we beheld rebel cavalry. Oh! What a sight—the enemy everywhere! They came pouring in over the hills, from every point, a procession without end.

According to instructions given us the night before, we descended to the cellar, each one bearing some article which might be of service during the day, Bread, water, chairs, bedding for the little ones etc. The firing had already commenced, and we could hear the tramp of horses mingling with the voices of the rebs, as they continued to pass.

¹⁷⁶ Evidently William Russell's wife.

¹⁷⁷ This and the following discussion refer to Albert Barrows Guild and his wife. The Russell and Guild families were intermarried. Albert's younger sister, Emily, married Theodore Pease Russell in 1845, and Theodore's sister, Flora Russell, married Albert Barrows Guild in 1851. The Guilds were neighbors of the Russells on Russellville road. Iron County Historical Society 1995:233.

To look into each other's faces, only increased our anxiety, for despair was written upon every countenance. Towards noon one or two ventured up the stairway to look out, and as the firing became less frequent the rest followed.

Right in front of the house a motley crowd were feasting on a load of provisions left there the night before by our men. Surely these southerners were hungry, and so wolfish did they appear with their grabbing, we were for the first time made to smile at the ridiculous [sic] figure they cut. We could see others pillaging from Dr. Griffith's and mother Russell's¹⁷⁸ house which had been deserted. Mother Russell said she was going to make an effort to get home.— I wanted to go to my sister, and Ruth said we would go together.

Just then a soldier stopped before the window, who wore such an honest, frank face we felt we could trust him. I judge he was not eighteen years of age, but he seemed to be one in authority, and his word among his comrades was law. I told him we wished to return to our homes, would he guard us? He hesitated for a moment, then consented. He shouldered his gun and we followed him through the crowd, not daring to look either to the right hand or to the left. With some difficulty we reached Mother Russell's whose house was full of stragglers from garret to cellar. One had cut a yard square from the Russell's [sic] carpet in the parlor. At the foot of the stairs we met a man carrying a ham, followed by a second with a quantity of dried beef etc. I knew that my sister had not an article of food in her house. I mentioned this to her motherinlaw [sic], who filled a two quart bucket with flour which I took, and started on. I asked our guard how many men they had. He laughed as he replied, 'These are but a drop in the bucket—only ten thousand here.' At that moment we came in sight of my sister's house,¹⁷⁹ and my heart gave a joyful bound as I saw her with the children in the front yard. In the joy of meeting, we for a moment, forgot our sad condition. She tried to tell me how she had passed the night, how the guard had deceived her, letting the men run like rats all over the house, appropriating everything that was left, alarming her by false and cruel reports made up for the occasion, telling her that her house was going to be burned and she would better leave. She has told me since, that the thought of her husband's peril, and her anxiety for the dear helpless ones who were looking to her for protection, gave her courage to stay and trust the Great Being who she felt, would not forsake her.

Another night was drawing near. We were not hungry, but the children needed food. There was neither milk nor salt to be had. She boiled some of the flour in water like minute pudding, and cooling a portion, bade them eat. After several attempts to do so, they ran to the door, spitting it out, while the little daughter said, 'Mamma I suppose folks can eat that if they are hungry but I cant.'

We were worn out with fatigue and anxiety, but everything was in such utter confusion we could not sleep, even if our minds had been at rest. I think it was near three o'clock in the morning that we heard an explosion which I know not how to describe. Every thing shook and trembled like an earthquake. We did not know the meaning then, but learned by daylight that our men at the fort had set a slow match to the magazine and

¹⁷⁸ This refers to Rebecca Pease Russell, the widow of Cyrus Russell, Sr., who had died in 1860 (Iron County Historical Society 1995:11).

¹⁷⁹ I.e., William Russell's house.

quietly left."

The morning of September 28 arrived, following the evacuation of Federal troops from Fort Davidson and the destruction of its powder magazine:

"The next morning we breakfasted upon one potato apiece and cold water. And here I am reminded of a soldier riding up to our door in great haste, and asking politely for a cup of coffee. Of course we could not accommodate him. I simply mention this because he was civil and did not, like the others, demand whatever was wanted.

There was hurry and bustle now in every quarter, for the rebel army had received orders to march. Here comes a man with a quantity of beef for us to cook for him to take along. Another in an official and business-like way offers to pay my sister \$2.00 or more in confederate notes, for seven head of cattle his men had killed. She took it rather haughtily as she told him it amounted to nothing in value, but would serve as a curiosity years hence for her children as a relic of the war.

Presently three men entered together, and with delight we looked down upon the living face of my sister's husband.¹⁸⁰ He was under guard and could only say a few words. They were going to take him with the other prisoners to their General several miles distant where he might get a release or be conscripted, he knew not which but said, 'Look on the bright side. I may come back in a few days. Let us be thankful it is no worse. It is better than I had dared to hope. The house is left and you and the children are spared. Keep up good courage. Good bye.'

To know that he was living was every thing to my poor sister in this hour of trial, although she could not but tell that in his present poor health it was not much better to be dragged along with the opposing army. Still she seemed more cheerful for the rest of the day.

The roads were again thronged with the cavalry, for word had flown like lightning to pursue our men, and they were in full chase. They continued to pass until towards night. When night came, aside from their pickets there was only now and then a straggler. We were now under Confederate rule and very desolate we felt as night brought the darkness again, and we kneeled to ask protection of our Heavenly Father. Every breath had been a prayer all through these dark days, but there had been no place for retirement up to this time since the first day of the raid. How eagerly we turned to God's word for comfort. 'He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust. His truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day. A thousand shall fall at thy hand, and ten thousand at the right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee. For he shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways.' So precious did these words come to us, it seemed as though we read them for the first time. The night was very dark and quiet—we did not dare to undress, but tried to rest the best we could.

At or near midnight we were startled by a gentle rap at the back door. Sister inquired 'Who is there?' The answer came almost in a whisper. 'Theodore' (her husband's brother, Theodore P. Russell). She quietly opened the door, but as altered was

¹⁸⁰ I.e., Cyrus Russell, Jr., who had been detained and taken away by the Confederates.

he in appearance we should not have recognized him but for his voice. He tried to look like a rebel, and succeeded. He said he had run home for a moment to learn the welfare of his family. It was not safe for him to be seen, and in the darkness he had come over to divide the beef which the rebs had left in their haste. Time was precious and as it was not in his power to help us further, he left to conceal himself in some secure place. We felt thankful to see one of our own number again, and as the morning dawned we were more hopeful."

Though the following days brought reunification with Mrs. Pitkin's brother-in-law, Cyrus Russell, Jr., she was confronted by the devastation that the Confederates had wrought on the valley's residents:

"Some time in the forenoon we had a visit from our pastor Rev. D.A. Wilson, who said many comforting things, assuring us that God would take care of us, and after offering a short prayer for our safety, we were again alone.

My sister tried hard to be cheerful, but as the days passed and no tidings came, her anxiety for the absent one increased. She grew restless and impatient and I was relieved at last to see her weep, for she had not shed a tear from the beginning until now. At last she said she must see some one, would go and talk with his mother. I was afraid to stay alone, but promising to return in an hour she started off. I watched her as long as he was in sight, and then wondered how I could wait for her return. It seemed a long time, when I heard voices in the yard, and she soon came in with her husband's mother. She said she could learn nothing encouraging, and disheartened she started with Mother Russell for home. About half way she turned and looking back saw three men, one of whom looked so familiar she waited for them to come up, when her husband¹⁸¹ spoke to her. I will not try to describe our joy and satisfaction at having him with us again. All misfortunes were forgotten in this moment of supreme happiness.

In his account of his release he said as the prisoners one after another were brought before Gen. Cabell he inquired `Are you a Union man?' My brother answered, `Yes I am a union man, always have been, and always expect to be.' Those who were vigorous were put right into the ranks, but Mr. Russell was too ill to be of service, consequently he was released. He brought with him a sample of his fare, namely an ear of corn, and a piece of dough baked on a stick, which he said he could eat with the rest.

It was very discouraging to look around his farm and view the desolation wrought in a few days. He had to borrow clothing until money was sent him by a friend and distant brother to buy new. He must begin at the foot of the ladder again. No horse, no wagon, no harness. And I often laugh at the style in which I left the once and now beautiful valley for my future home in Illinois. Our carriage was a poor rickety cart, drawn by a still more rickety skeleton of a horse, left behind by the rebs, with pieces of rope for harness."

The final civilian account of the events of September 26 and afterward was provided by the

¹⁸¹ Cyrus Russell, Jr.

Reverend David A. Wilson, pastor of the Ironton Presbyterian Church.¹⁸² Wilson had resigned from the chaplaincy of the 8th Missouri State Militia Infantry the previous December, and was preaching at the church when the signal cannon discharge from Fort Davidson was heard on Sunday, September 25.¹⁸³

"On Sabbath, Sept. 25th, I had preached at 11 o'clock, and the Congregation was singing the concluding hymn, when the report of a cannon fired at the Fort broke upon our ears. When the stanza was finished, I remarked, 'We all understand what that means. I hope every man in the house, will, as soon as he gets his arms, report to the Fort, and I shall myself. The ladies I would advise to return and remain at your homes if you would preserve your household property. Your persons, I think, will be safe.'

Most, if not all, complied with my request. It, however, proved a false alarm. A small body of Cavalry had met the advance guard of Shelby's Division, which marched through Farmington, and crossed the Iron Mountain R.R. at Mineral Point. Of course this appeared as that Price was near, and he was confidently expected at anytime."

The following day, Monday, September 26, Wilson was away from his home outside Ironton and was in town on an errand. He witnessed some of the initial Federal troop movements after contact with the Confederates was made:

"About 1 o'clock, Monday I was on my way to the Post Office in the northern part of the town, skirting it on the East side, when I saw a company of Cavalry on the main street of Ironton going South. I had not reached the P.O. when I heard pop, pop, pop. Satisfied that skirmishing had begun between our company of Cavalry and the advance of Price's army, I at once returned home. The encounter took place at a point on the Fredericktown road where a road leaves it for Arcadia.

My object in returning home was to get a shotgun which I kept, and to say good bye to my family. It was my purpose to fall in with a company of home guards Commanded by Capt. Franz Dinger,¹⁸⁴ camped between my house and the Presbyterian Church in the shadow of some stately oaks. As I left my house a short distance from the Main street on the Fredericktown road, our company of Cavalry was coming back pell mell the fastest foremost. The open space around the saw-mill on Stout's creek was crowded with rebel cavalry apparently hesitating whether to advance or retreat."

Failing to unite with Company E, Wilson continued through Ironton on his way to Fort Davidson:

¹⁸² David A. Wilson, "Personal Recollections of the Battle of Pilot Knob," June 6, 1906, in the Cyrus A. Peterson Battle of Pilot Knob Research Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

¹⁸³ Ibid. Wilson was commissioned as the chaplain of the 8th Missouri State Militia Infantry on June 21, 1862 (*Official Register of Missouri Troops for 1862*, page 64 [Missouri Adjutant General's Office, St. Louis, 1863]).

¹⁸⁴ Captain Franz Dinger commanded Company E of the 47th Missouri Volunteer Infantry, which was encamped near the court house. He was a resident of Ironton and served as a long-time mayor of the town (Iron County Historical Society 1995:16, 53).

"When I left my house the company of home-guards had disappeared.¹⁸⁵ I knew not whither, and I kept on toward the fort. Before I had reached the church, a ball struck the ground and raised the dust within a yard of me, when I thought it best to get out of range, and turned into a short street running East into open ground. I had scarcely left that street when three rebel horsemen entered it. Supposing they were after me, I made for a tree a hundred yards or more North East behind which I meant to defend myself. Instead of following me, however, they kept on straight East for a cavalry camp which our men had left an hour before. They were more eager for plunder than for me, and for which, I will Confess, I was not sorry."

From Ironton Wilson decided to attempt to find his son and niece in Arcadia to the south. After encountering them making their way homeward, he decided to check on the welfare of members of his congregation, who evidently lived east of Ironton, where he encountered women and children of the Russell families:

"Pursuing my way forward, I soon saw a section of artillery going South, when I returned and set out for Arcadia where my niece and son were at the Academy. Meeting them on their homeward way, I concluded to see now the families of my church a number of which was strung along the Fredericktown road. Beyond Stout's creek, the fence on the East side of the road was down, giving the artillery room to maneuver. In this open space, one of our Cavalry lay dead. Going on I found the women and children at home. One of the five Russell brothers Cyrus--had been taken prisoner. Ordered to March he was slow in complying, and was rapped over the head with a pistol in the presence of his wife: Mrs. Smith, a sister of the Russells had been at her sister's, Mrs. Dr. Farrar's, obliquely [sic] across the road, seeing rebel soldiers at her house, and on going home found them cutting up her parlor carpet, as they said for saddle cloths. Remonstrating with them for their unsoldierly Conduct, they left doing but little damage. At William Russell's, the furthest of these from town, a squad demanded the arms in his house. Leaving them on the road, he went to the house for them, but changing his mind made through the back door for the brush. Becoming tired [of] waiting for him and the arms, they entered the house, and helping themselves for such things as they wished, emptied and mixed together the flour, sugar, salt and pepper which they did not use."

After finally reaching his own home, his wife encouraged him to seek the relative safety of Fort Davidson:

"When I returned home my good wife thought I would be safer at the Fort than at home. So about dusk I bade them good bye. With the body who had been killed near the Court-house that afternoon, as a companion, I rode in an ambulance to the Knob."¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁵ Probably the men of Company E had withdrawn into the court house as ordered.

¹⁸⁶ This probably refers to Private William Rector, who was the first Union casualty of the Battle of Pilot Knob.

Wilson spent the night of September 26-27 in Fort Davidson and assisted in its defence the following day. He evidently heard later, probably from his wife, that his house and family had been in the midst of fighting early on the morning of the 27th when the Confederates pushed the Union skirmishers back towards Shepherd and Pilot Knob mountains:

"With the retreat of the rebel advance guard the fight for that day ceased. The two forces, very unequal in point of numbers, as I learned afterward, bivouacked [sic] face to face at the distance of a few hundred yards, Stout's creek separating them, Eastward of the Fredericktown road. Early next morning firing was renewed, our men falling back toward the Knob. Soon my house was directly between the hostile [forces] and of course much exposed. The house being frame, and presenting but slight resistance to even musketry, [my] wife surrounded a bed with mattresses, and under it she and the children took refuge. Curiosity, however, was stronger than fear, and now and then they would rush to the windows to see how the battle was progressing."

Among the civilians who were presented with the choice of remaining at Pilot Knob or retreating in the night of September 27-28 with the troops, Wilson chose to remain and try to return to his home:

"The next morning¹⁸⁷ Pilot Knob was occupied by the Enemy. A guard was stationed at each store to prevent looting by the private soldiers and petty officers, giving those with shoulder straps the first choices. In an hour or so, a man in a plaid woolen shirt and on a big horse, stopped in the street near the hotel-hospital. It was Col. McLean, Price's adjutant general. Wishing to go home, my thought was to get a pass from him to Ironton. Introducing myself, I told him my home was in Ironton and that I wished to return. In soldier[ly] fashion, he said, "Well go-- We have come to set you free." Not relishing that kind of talk, I left him without ceremony. Meeting judge Vail, one of my members, I said, 'Judge, I am going home.' 'Very well,' said he 'I'll go with you,' and so we started. On the way, we met hundreds, if not thousands, of rebel soldiers, but not one of them said 'peas.'"

Reaching his home, Wilson found that his wife had reluctantly billeted three Confederate officers as unwelcome "guests:"

"At home it was gladsome to find all safe and well, and besides, two rebel Colonels and a Captain who had been there since Tuesday noon. Col. Childs, for some reason was not on duty. Col. Bustin was sick. At the battle of Pea Ridge he had been thrust through the body with a bayonet in the hands of a German soldier. Clasping him in his arms, he held the soldier fast till one of his own men came up and killed the German. Capt. Calhoun, also for some reason was not on duty. About noon Tuesday they stopped at the house, close to the road, and before dismounting asked Mrs. Wilson if she could give them dinner. She replied that she had but little provision in the house, and begged to be excused. They then asked her where they could be accommodated; She replied that she

¹⁸⁷ September 28.

supposed others were like herself. One of them remarking that his comrade was sick and needed food, and observing that they appeared to be respectable and respectful men, though not likely to take denial, she concluded with the promptitude of [a] woman, it would be better to serve willingly than on compulsion, she said, 'I'll do the best I can for you,' and they dismounted. Col. Bustin finding her with only the children, inquired for the husband. She told him that he was at the Fort. He said there was no need for him leaving home; that Gen. Price's orders were strict that no non combatants should be molested. To this my wife replied, 'My husband is not of that kind. He took his gun with him.' He had from observing my [one word illegible] inferred that I was a clergyman, and no doubt set me down as a 'fighting parson.' After dinner they were about to leave, when Col. Bustin was seized with a violent attack of vomiting, and was unable to proceed, and remained till Thursday morning. They were gentlemen and posed quite a protection to us. I had a quantity of hay and oats which the rebel cavalry had begun to use freely. When this was reported, Col. Bustin ordered it stopped, and it stopped. Another effort to protect us was not so successful. Despite the battle, my wife had baked light bread, and had it wrapped in a blanket. As the rebel soldiers after the battle were falling back, they stopped at the house for a drink of water, and spying the bread eagerly desired some. Mrs. Wilson was cutting off liberal slices and handing it to them from an open window, when one caught the blanket, and away with it and all that was on it, or in it. The exclamation of 'Oh! you have taken my bread,' brought Col. Bustin from the main house; but it was too late. The soldiers were gone and could not be identified.

As a reward for the kind treatment they had received, Col. Bustin had given my son--then a lad eleven years old--a five dollar bill on a Boston bank, presumably good, but I was unwilling that he should keep it. The conduct of these officers was so gentlemanly that all fear of ill treatment had vanished. During Tuesday evening my niece--a girl about 13 years of age--bantering [with] Capt. Calhoun who was a rabid fire eater, said, 'Capt wouldn't you like to see the old flag?' He answered evasively. But Sizzer, unwilling to be then thwarted, went to her room, and soon returned with a small silk flag and waving [it] sang,

'Oh, long may the star spangled banner still wave,
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.'

Col. Bustin had great fear of being made a prisoner, and taken to a Northern prison; and although far from being in a condition to travel, he, with the others, left with the army Thursday afternoon."

Wilson reflected on the aftermath of the Confederate invasion of the valley:

"Wednesday and Thursday forenoon were busily employed by the army in helping themselves to the provisions and clothing in the stores of the three villages of the valley. There was a general shedding of butternut and grey jeans for store clothes, by the soldiers; and for days after they left, unprincipled men could be seen going South with mule loads of dry goods which the soldiers had not taken. The whole valley, indeed, had been pretty well cleaned. Some worn out horses were left, but very few good remained. A mule killed in the road at my gate lay there for days before I could get a team to drag it

away. Coffee, tea, sugar, all groceries, were scarce in the valley until communication by rail with St. Louis was established. For several days we were at the mercy of guerrillas, but they did us little harm. None the less, it was a joyful sight, when a company or two of union soldiers from Cape Girardeau came in.

Many wounded rebels were taken to the Arcadia Seminary. But as doing so closed the school, by request, I interceded, to the disgust of some of the radicals, with the Commander at the Knob, and they were taken to the Court house, where they remained until there was room for them in the large hospital Connected with the Ironton Hotel. It was months before those who recovered were removed. While there I visited them repeatedly, and occasionally preached to them.

The raid was a trying time to the people of the valley; but as 'Providence tempers the wind to the shorn lamb,' so he braces the minds of men for such emergencies."