

## The Foreign Soil Beneath 402 South Bolivar St.

By  
Lad Moore



*Yea, what poetic letters and hallowed journals have sprouted from  
these stained and revered grounds! —Lords*

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The original structure has long been razed, but the soil beneath it remains rich with history at what is now 402 South Bolivar in Marshall, Texas. For a time, the knotty-pine floors groaned and jingled with the heavy boot and spur traffic of men coming in and out of that location. Their purpose? Maintaining an exiled government far from its native home. How could this be? What things were happening around Marshall that made her so celebrated? Why the swishes of men rushing to and from their duties? What was all the excitement about?

Early Marshall was ever prosperous, rich in cotton and timber, and boasted openly of its human resource—having more slaves than any other county in the state. There had long been a struggle to seat the county government at the Sabine River, but the Republic of Texas eventually prevailed to place the county seat in Marshall, largely because Peter Whetstone and Isaac Van Zandt had provided free land for such use. The city was at the confluence of several important stagecoach lines and was heralded by travelers for its “lovely hilly terrain and abundant clean water.” It was also lauded as “The Athens of Texas” for its several colleges, although at the time they were little more than secondary schools by true college measure.

The city prospered further with the connection by telegraph to New Orleans, the first town in Texas to have such communications. By 1860 it was the fourth largest Texas city, and Harrison County was considered to be the wealthiest in the state.

But in 1860 there was a growing noise heard among Marshall’s famous Seven Hills as their forested corridors sang with the winds of war. The strong population of slaves and their importance to the local economy and trade made Marshall an immediate hotbed for anti-Union sentiment. It would only be natural that the fervor led to the town’s quick embrace of the Confederacy and its important roles in that struggle. Strongly pushed by Robert W. Loughery’s ultra-Southern newspaper, the Marshall *Texas Republican*, Marshall voted unanimously for secession in 1861. The paper had not only spoken fervently against the Union, it was among the staunchest supporters of the Confederacy during the war years, when it insisted until the end that Texas could and should become a redoubt for all the remnants and remains of the Confederacy. There was a never-surrender attitude seated strongly in the hearts of the men and women of the area. One such woman, Marshall’s Lucy Holcombe, said to be the most startingly beauty in the state, was also one of the most vocal and fervently active slavery advocates in the south.

Texas’ secessionist pressures boiled over as Sam Houston, then Governor, refused to join the Confederacy. As a result, Marshall’s own Edmund Clark became Confederate Governor, a link that would further solidify the city’s eventual important contributions to the war, including the forming of blockade-running channels. Marshall was home to several Confederate army industries—a military uniform plant, factories for the manufacturing of saddles, harnesses, and pistols, and a facility making gunpowder for the troops. Such militancy in Marshall later became a magnet to the likes of the guerilla raider William Quantrill, Generals Kirby Smith and J.O. Shelby, and the famed Walter Lane—all fast-track fighting men and renegades that would each in some way link to the area.

Of these men, perhaps Walter Lane is most noted because of his heralded actions in wartime and afterward. A quiet Marshall merchant and storekeeper when the war broke out, Lane quickly joined Texas’ Third Cavalry, figuring prominently in the battles of Wilson’s Creek, Pea Ridge, and the heavy fighting at Franklin, Mississippi. Tough charging, Lane had at least ten horses shot from beneath him. He was thus affectionately nicknamed “*Hell on Horses Lane*.” After the war, he returned to Marshall, and was a chief figure in its post-war militancy. Upon his death on January 28, 1892, General

Lane's was the first military funeral held in Marshall. Governor James Hogg ordered the flag lowered to half-mast on the Texas Capitol in his honor. An eight-foot marble monument to Walter Lane is found in the Marshall Cemetery along with a lengthy CSA historical marker citing his service.



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Meanwhile the state of Missouri had its own legislative strife underway. It all began when in 1820, Missouri statehood was made contingent on its admission as a freemen's state. A part of the Louisiana Purchase, it was feared that if Missouri were permitted entry as a slave state it would cause an imbalance in the slavery-freemen states count. Therefore, in the Missouri Compromise, it was permitted to become a slave state by the separation of far-away Maine into an abolition state. This move was intended to placate the rest of the Louisiana Purchase territories and prevent them from lobbying for slavery status. As a result, all lands beyond a certain geographic latitude would be denied slavery status in order to maintain a legislative par between the two factions.

Claiborne Fox Jackson, a Democrat, ran for Missouri governor on the anti-secession platform. Once in office however, he shifted to a more states-rights posture, supporting the will of his state to determine its own direction in the war. He believed that Missouri, having been settled by Southerners, had a natural bent toward slavery.

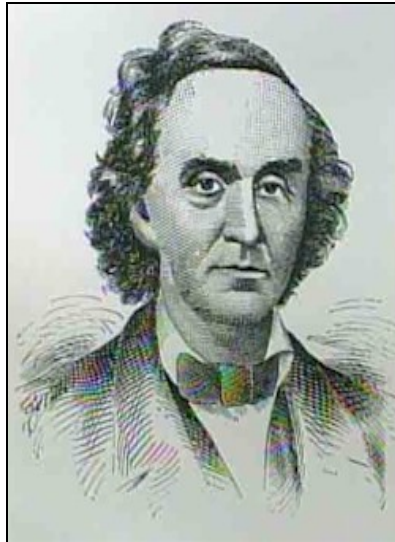
When the elections of 1860 were finalized, votes had created the Confederacy and as expected, Missouri's Governor Jackson was in open support of it. But abolitionist forces

seemed equally determined to keep the state from seceding. Union forces prohibited the enactment of Missouri slavery status, setting the stage for what would eventually become two governments.

To satisfy the Union sympathizers, Claiborne Jackson agreed to establish the state as “Arms Neutral” meaning he would not provide troops or funds to either side. Secretly though, he was in fact supplying both men and money to the South.

Learning of this, Abraham Lincoln refused to recognize Missouri’s neutrality, and the President sent a communique to Jackson ordering him to provide State Guard troops and militia to fight against the South. Jackson was insulted by the command and tersely responded to Lincoln:

*“Sir: Your dispatch of the 15<sup>th</sup> instant, making a call on Missouri for four regiments of men for immediate service, as been received. There can be, I apprehend, no doubt that the men are intended to form a part of the President’s army to make war upon the people of the seceded states. Your requisition, in my judgment, is illegal, unconstitutional, and revolutionary in its object, inhuman, and diabolical and cannot be complied with. Not one man will the State of Missouri furnish to carry on any unholy crusade.”*



*Governor Claiborne Jackson*

Governor Jackson then appointed pro-secessionist supporters to command his State Guard troops and accepted weapons from President Jefferson Davis. He ordered his troops to assemble at what would become Camp Jackson near St Louis, for “weeks of battle training.” Captain Nathaniel Lyon, appointed for the purpose of putting the state “back in order,” infiltrated Jackson’s camp dressed in women’s garb to validate first hand

the presence and quantity of Confederate arms. Lyon assessed the strength, then returned with a volunteer force and quickly overran Jackson's militia. The captured soldiers were forced to march in a column through the streets of St. Louis where many were shot and killed for public exhibition, an action known as "The St Louis Massacre." Innocent civilian bystanders rose up against the Union forces, resulting in a bloody riot. Twenty-eight were killed and hundreds wounded or injured, among them women and children. The unintended result of this episode was to further polarize the state between unionists and secessionists and drive up the fervor.

On May 11, 1861, Governor Jackson named General Sterling Price to head his Missouri State Guard, a formal move to resist a rumored Union invasion of Missouri. Lincoln promptly answered by promoting the aggressive Lyon from captain to brigadier general. Lyon promptly ran Governor Jackson out of St Louis and set about to capture the government at Jefferson City and arrest the members of the pro-slavery legislature. Once this was done, he installed his followers who then formally voted not to secede. Lyons then called a special session in which his hand-picked Hamilton Gamble was appointed the 'Legitimate Provisional Governor of Missouri.'

Fighting escalated. Known as the second major battle of the Civil War, troops under Lyon clashed with soldiers under Jackson at a place known as Wilson's Creek. Lyon's celebrated fast rise to high standing ended when his troops were overrun and Lyons himself killed. The Union army fled back to Springfield. Oddly, their retreat was not pursued by the Confederate troops, and this lapse was later considered to be a strategic military error. Over 500 Union and Confederate soldiers were killed in this battle.

Governor Claiborne Jackson and other pro-slavery powers moved the government seat to southern Missouri and began governing from there. He declared that Missouri had indeed officially seceded and was accepted as representing the twelfth star position on the Confederate battle flag.



*The "Battle Flag of the Confederacy," including stars numbered 12 and 13 for Missouri and Kentucky.*



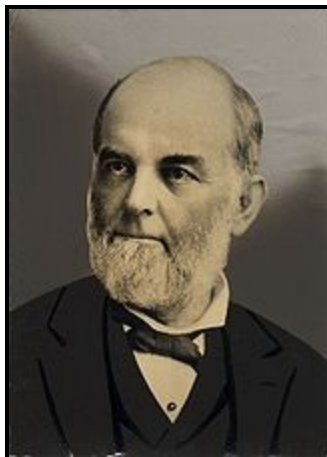
*The "Bonnie Blue Flag"*

"...And to **Missouri** we  
 Extend both heart and hand  
 And welcome her a sister  
 Of our Confederate band  
 Tho surrounded by oppression  
 No one dare deter  
 Her adding to our Bonnie Blue Flag  
 Her bright and twelfth star! "

*Lyrics, Bonnie Blue Flag, by Harry McCarthy, 1861.*

As the war waged on, the Union occupied almost all of Missouri. Confederate war setbacks forced Jackson and his government to flee the state under duress. They first relocated to Camden, then Arkadelphia, Arkansas. Jackson died there, and his successor, Lt. Governor Reynolds, assumed leadership and control of the state government. The Union forces continued to make life uncomfortable and as they closed in on the capture of Little Rock, Reynolds and his government moved themselves to a "protection-certain" refuge in Marshall.

The exile government, possessing the official state seal of Missouri, continued to function as an unrecognized "paper government" until the fall of Texas at the conclusion of the war. While in Marshall, they housed their government offices at a one-story frame house belonging to Supreme Court Justice Asa Willie, at what is now 402 S. Bolivar St. Lt. Governor Reynolds' "State Mansion" was a smaller one-story cottage directly across the street. Willie, a major in the Confederate Army, was serving with the Seventh Texas Infantry.



**Asa H. Willie 1829-1899**

*(Major Willie was captured and placed in a stockade in Ohio, later being freed in a troop exchange. He promptly returned to the fighting with the Army of Tennessee until its surrender. After the war, Willie did not return to Marshall. He moved to Galveston, where he later served one term in Congress. 402 South Bolivar is now the site of a medical practice office.)*

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Marshall's playing temporary host to the Missouri Government earned it the nickname the *City of Seven Flags*—a recognition that the flag of Missouri deserved a place amidst the other six flags that have flown over the city. But such lauds and recognition were not always good. Considering the war effort in total, including the blockade-running, munitions, uniforms, the welcoming of an exiled capital and so many other overt actions, the city was a highly prized Union target. Marshall's high rank in the Confederacy is illustrated by the Confederate States government sending \$9.0 million in Treasury notes and \$3.0 million in postage stamps for safekeeping in Marshall, stirring speculation that the city was considered a safe destination for a government preparing to flee from advancing armies. The areas around Marshall, East Texas, and Western Louisiana had long been a thorn in the Union's side. Known as the "Back Door to the Confederacy," the area thrived on the blockade-running of cotton shipments. Crops were transferred overland to the Mexican-border port of Bagdad and shipped to Europe in exchange for supplies. The Union army vowed to put an end to this trade, but their many campaigns all resulted in defeats.

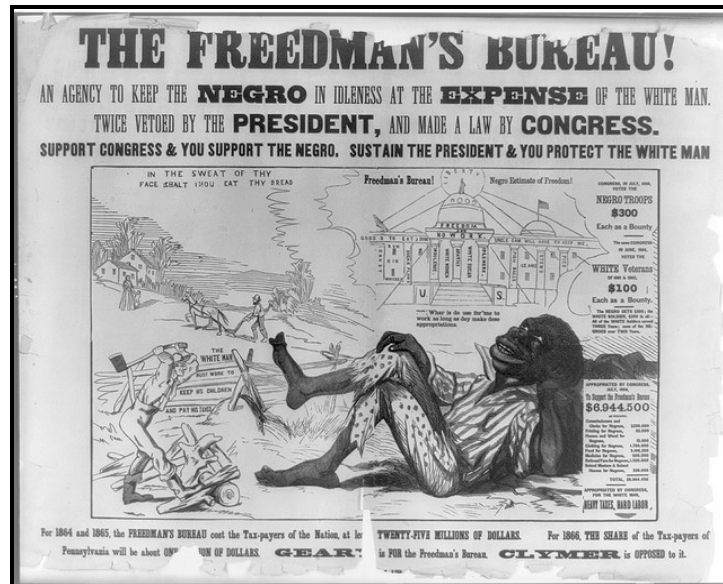
*(Bagdad was a Mexican seaport 50 miles south of Matamoros. During the Civil War, it was inhabited more by refugee southerners than Mexicans. With cotton fetching a dollar a pound, the town was awash in money. Its rowdy bars and brothels soon drew comparisons to the Biblical cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Father P.F. Parisot wrote in his journal: "The saloon and hotel keepers were reaping an abundant harvest. The Gulf, for three or four miles out was literally a forest of ship masts. Ten overland stages were running daily from Matamoros to Bagdad.")*

*Then, as if by divine intervention, a massive 1867 hurricane scoured the town down to bare beach sand. Today only some crumbled bricks and broken glass survive this former city of over 20,000.)*

The attention on disrupting the activities at Marshall grew. It was largely believed that the important battle at Mansfield La involved a 42,000-man Union army mission to capture the Trans Mississippi Capital at Shreveport, then to advance on Marshall. The Confederate victory under General Richard Taylor (son of Zachary Taylor), was fought there on April 8, 1864, resulting in a sound Union army defeat and retreat to New Orleans.

The end of the Civil War did not ease anti-Union sentiment. Fighting continued in the area for months after Lee's surrender. Marshall was finally occupied by Union forces on June 17, 1865.

Reconstruction was ill-received and bitterly controversial as the town became not only the base for occupying Union troops, but for the unwelcome installation of an agency of the Federal Freedmen's Bureau. White citizens screamed in anger as this action drew even more blacks to the area—ex slaves seeking protection from the former Confederate activists. Although the Bureau's original charter from President Lincoln was to assist blacks in assimilating and capitalizing on their new freedom, it soon became nothing more than a military court that handled legal issues and investigated crimes. It was attacked by Southern whites for organizing blacks against their former white masters and was opposed sometimes violently. Some of the local Bureau agents were unscrupulous or incompetent, only serving for personal gain. Many other honest agents were simply thwarted in their efforts by threats and hindrances from former Confederates, and the lack of an authorized military presence to enforce their authority.



*This 1866 poster alleged that federal money was being used to lavish wealth on lazy freedmen at the expense of whites.*

Marshall's Freedmen's Bureau authorities were alleged to have bowed to the white pressures. A partial two-month list of their case activities indeed reveals several questionable outcomes to complaints and investigations:

Freedmen's Bureau Report on Murders and Outrages in Marshall Texas Jan.-March, 1867

To: Lieut. J. S. Kirkman U. S. A.  
 A. A. A. Genl Bu of R. F. and A. L.  
 State of Texas

I have the honor to report in obedience to letter dated March 7<sup>th</sup> 1867 just received with names, dates and particulars as far as possible of outrages & crimes since Jan 1<sup>st</sup> 1867.

1<sup>st</sup> Jan 7<sup>th</sup> Scarborough shot twice at a freedman named Toby Hawkins in Harrison Co. at the residence of Judge Patillo 12 miles from Marshall. I sent a Deputy Sheriff named John Sloan for him but he did not arrest him only told him to come when he got ready and both deputy and prisoner have escaped.

2<sup>nd</sup> Jan 10<sup>th</sup> James Oliver, Rusk Co., shot freedman named Sims Knowles through the head because he would not contract with him. I sent the U. S. Deputy Marshall after him forty miles but he escaped to the woods and cannot be captured, no action on the part of civil authorities.

3<sup>rd</sup> Jan 12<sup>th</sup> Freedman name unknown robbed and shot near the Depot in Marshall by person in disguise. I could get no clue to the party. If the civil authorities took any action I have never heard of it.

4<sup>th</sup> Jan 13<sup>th</sup> Bill Hall a freedman was robbed and shot within a mile of Marshall. Was cutting wood near the road. Strangers shot six times only one ball taking effect and that struck him in the elbow ruining his arm forever.

5<sup>th</sup> Jan 13<sup>th</sup> Bob Geer freedman was robbed but not shot as he had some money, which satisfied the highwayman. Bob was chopping near Bill Hall. Again robbed by the same man same time and place.

6<sup>th</sup> Jan 20<sup>th</sup> Case reported by freedmen named Ned and James Waterhouse that three freedmen were hanging to a limb near Grand Bluff, Panola Co. and one apparently struck dead by a single blow. The case was reported six days after they were discovered and I did not deem it necessary to make any investigation, as it would only be a waste of time.

7<sup>th</sup> Jan 30<sup>th</sup> I arrested Thomas Starkey today who shot a freedman named John Brewer during Christmas, tried him and fined him \$200 and the cost of the Marshal who arrested him.

8<sup>th</sup> Feb 14<sup>th</sup> Try Slaughter near Jefferson, Marion Co., shot at two freedmen named Cornelius and Albert Roseborough. I searched several days for him he kept in the woods and several days after he reported in person and had in his possession a bond for \$520 to appear at the next term of the court at Jefferson, Marion Co. which will be the end of the case in my opinion.

9<sup>th</sup> March 3<sup>rd</sup> Freedboy named John Grimes complained that two men, Wade Anderson and Phil Simpson killed his mother last July, that they were now with the gang at Elysian fields, Harrison Co., and that he wanted assistance to get his sister who was at that place but feared his life would be taken and did not go. I could not assist him.

10<sup>th</sup> March 7<sup>th</sup> A. S. Rutherford shot and killed instantly a freedman named Martin Little at Pink Tutle place 14 miles from Marshall because the freedman had reported that he could do more work in a day than Rutherford. I sent the Deputy Sheriff for him but he escaped.

Very Respectfully  
Your Obedt. Servt.  
Charles T. Rand,  
Bvt. Capt. V.R.C. Sub Asst Commr

*(History recounts that despite its corruption, controversy, and failures, overall effect of the Freedmen's Bureau was very successful particularly with its widespread establishment of hospitals and more than 1000 schools. Perhaps the best known of these is Howard University. Much of the progress of integrating blacks was lost in the 1890's with the adoption of the Jim Crow Laws.)*

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The whites calmed somewhat when the *White Citizens' Party* was formed in 1878. The party, led by the same former Confederate General Walter P. “*Hell on Horses*” Lane and his brother George, took control of the city and county governments and ran Unionists, Republicans and many African-American leaders out of town. With Democratic and White dominance brutally re-established, the Lanes declared Marshall and Harrison County “once again redeemed.”

Despite that claim, most of the less vocal blacks were in Marshall to stay, seeking peace and equality through education. That dream had begun in 1873 when The Methodist Episcopal Church Founded Wiley College to educate free men. Progress would continue with the establishment of Bishop College in 1881 and the certification of Wiley by the Freedman’s Aid Society in 1882.

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### *Afterword*

*“We’ve been returned our land from wherest we loaned it. Our cherished Seven Hills have resumed calm murmur and ribbons of sunlight. Our pistols and knives are defanged and packed away—venturing out only for the winter rabbit hunt. Our medals and metals are now but tales for the bedtimes of grandchildren. Our steeds carry burden from farms instead of wheels with cannon. The last remaining battle is the chasm bridge between black and white worlds. Can we put aside this hostile past and embrace the elusive maid of peace? If beneath the slowly-clearing waters we see her image form, will we gladly welcome her? In good time sirs, we shall see.” –Lords*

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*Freedmen's Poster:* Public Domain at the Library of Congress  
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Lords is a pseudonym of the author, Lad Moore

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