



### Historians Corner, Paul R Petersen

Paul is the Author of *Quantrill of Missouri*, *Quantrill in Texas*, *Quantrill at Lawrence* and *Lost Souls of the Lost Township*. Petersen is a retired U.S. Marine Corps master sergeant and a highly decorated infantry combat veteran of the Vietnam War, Operation Desert Storm, and Operation Iraqi Freedom. He is a member of the William Clarke Quantrill Society, the James-Younger Gang Association, the Sons of the American Revolution, and the Jackson County and Missouri State Historical Societies.

## Quantrill's Youngest Recruit

When the Civil War started men across Missouri headed south to join the Missouri State Guard commanded by General Sterling Price. Boys too young to enlist remained behind with the women and children. But with Kansas Jayhawkers plundering through the Missouri countryside murdering, raping and destroying everything in their path it set the stage for a deadly retribution. Because 13 year old John Fox had a brother with Quantrill he was shot and killed while his sister and mother had hold of him begging for his life. Federals also killed 14 year old James Nicholson because he had two brothers with Price. In an effort to get information from 12 year old Theodore Blythe Jayhawkers threatened to hang him if he did not talk. When he tried to escape he was shot. Seventeen bullets were found in his body. Nancy Pitcher, whose father was serving with Price said that the Jayhawkers had been killing boys as young as ten years old.

The only safe place for these young boys was to join William Clarke Quantrill's guerrilla company for protection. They had already grown up knowing how to handle a gun and had been raised in the saddle. James Andrew Liddel said he was 12 years old when he joined Quantrill. James Noland was probably 13 when he joined. Ed Noland, Alan Parmer, W. W. Wyeth, Ike Carter, Riley Crawford, William James and Clell Miller were all 14 years old when they enlisted in the guerrillas. But the youngest recruit on record was James Shaw Millikin.

Millikin was 12 years old and didn't even weigh 75 lbs. when the war broke out. He initially joined the Missouri Minute Men, Confederate Dare-Devils in 1861. He stated that "The regular Confederate regiments didn't carry along any wet nurses, so they said they wouldn't take me. Oh, I joined four or five different Confederate companies but they just used me as bait to enlist older boys, and when they started away to the front I got the can, as you

fellows say now days. I got tired of being used as a tool to shame the older boys into going to war, and finally ran away and got into one of Quantrell's companies commanded by Capt. Joe Lee (Captain Joseph C. Lea). Now the Yankees called us guerillas. They called us a lot of other things which wouldn't do to mention in polite company. There was Kit Dalton who became an outlaw after the war. Cole Younger and Frank James also were members of my outfit."

Millikin's history can be found in an old newspaper article published on July 29, 1926. At that time Millikin and Jason W. James, were thought to be the last known survivors of Quantrill's band. Millikin fought at Wilson's Creek, the Lawrence raid and the Battle of Centralia. His thrilling military experiences can best be told in his own words and gives us a remarkable insight into the operations of Quantrill's guerrilla organization.

Milliken recalled, "Quantrell's Raiders were organized in Jackson County, Mo., in 1861, according to history, and served the Confederacy independent of the regular Southern troops. They were of inestimable value to Confederate commanders in scouting, obtaining information as to the strength of the enemy garrisons and performing other perilous missions. Connelley's (William Elsey Connelley, author of *Quantrill and the Border Wars*) history, from the Federal viewpoint, is partisan and denunciatory in reciting the alleged 'atrocities' of Quantrell's raiders. But even this history admits 'that such another body of men never were seen on horseback'."

Milliken was asked about his recollections during the Lawrence raid. "The Yankees said we killed 10,000 people in that memorable raid on Lawrence, Kansas in 1863." When asked how many of the enemy were killed, Millikin replied, "About

1,000 I should judge. That included Yankee troops and enemy citizens. Of course we laid the town low in ashes. I suppose the population was 2,000 to 2,500 at the time. Quantrell's force consisted of 300 men, but we were joined by about 50 Confederate soldiers. Our information as reported back by scouts, was that 7,000 troops barred our entrance to the town. The town proper was garrisoned by negro regiments, and these were supplemented by 600 Redlegs, as Jim Lane's cavalry of Kansas Jayhawkers were dubbed. I don't know what became of the 7,000 Federal troops, the two regiments of negroes and Jim Lane's Redlegs. They left in a hurry and there was little choice of direction, except they did not run our way. They did a lot of damage to fences and young shrubbery."

Commenting on being a guerrilla, Millikin recounted, "The guerrilla cavalrymen rode the finest mounts and carried the best of equipment." When asked how he obtained his equipment Millikin stated, "Well, we didn't raid 27 towns for nothing. We hit up a few banks to say nothing of stores and what we got off the Yankee sympathizers. We had plenty of money. We never stole a horse from a Confederate family. We bought some animals. I paid \$4,500 for my mount, and I saw Capt. Lee buy a fine animal and pay \$7,500 in cash. Of course, we took the pick of animals captured from the enemy, or seized on the farms of Yankee sympathizers. We played a winning game all the way through. We would rendezvous around a town garrisoned by enemy troops and watch for small scouting bodies. These scouting bodies seldom ever returned to their command. We not only cut them off, we cut them down. How many prisoners did we capture? Nary a one. We never asked quarter, we never gave it. It was war to the death. None of Quantrell's men profited, in private gain, by the raids. We found many Confederate families in distress, and to these we gave money without stint. Money we obtained in raids was divided equally among the members of the band, and what they didn't give away was expended in the purchase of equipment and food. No Confederate family was ever preyed upon. They were paid liberally for what they could spare."

Another exciting chapter in Millikin's military exploits was his participation in the Battle of Centralia. "Billy Anderson headed 40 men from

our outfit to go into Centralia from our hiding place. He was going to the blacksmith shop there to have some horses shod. A Federal major by the name of Johnson led a command into Centralia to defend the town. He was warned to let Billy Anderson alone. Major Johnson pursued them in a woodland, but he did not attempt to enter, halting his men on the prairie. They did something there contrary to military tactics, they dismounted and waited out there in the open. Billy Anderson tired of waiting. He gave orders for an attack. Well, sir, we went out those woods like a streak, single file, and using pistols. Johnson's men were panic-stricken by the unexpected, us yelling, shouting and shooting. They simply fled, pell-mell, in every direction. I don't believe one escaped."

When the war started Millikin was living in Louisiana near the Arkansas line on 10,000 acres. When the United States entered the First World War, 68 year old Millikin tried to enlist. Even Senator Randsdall of Louisiana encouraged the President to accept his services. Millikin was a member of the Baptist church and like many of Quantrill's men he was a Mason. Millikin's grandfather served under George Washington in the Revolutionary War. His father served under Andrew Jackson in the Indian Wars and the War of 1812. Besides his 10,000 acres he had vast holdings in North Carolina and Florida. In 1924 he was the Republican nomination for governor of Louisiana. Millikin died at Lake Providence, La. Sept. 11, 1928 at age 79. At his request he was buried in his Confederate uniform.

**Article by Paul R. Petersen** of Quantrill of Missouri, Quantrill in Texas, Quantrill at Lawrence and Lost Souls of the Lost Township. James Shaw Millikin newspaper article in possession of author.

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