



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 Medical Corps

With a military organization as large as Quantrill's command numbering upwards of 400 soldiers at one time it was necessary to have his command aligned in military fashion. Quantrill structured his command with junior officers, an adjutant, orderly sergeants, scouts, quartermasters, hostlers, cooks, and a first-class medical unit. Little recognition has been given to Quantrill's medical team as doctors and surgeons have been considered to be non-combatants. But with the border war being fought as a total war of extermination on the Southern population by the Federal government the doctors in Quantrill's command not only plied their medical trade but also were armed and engaged in battle when called upon. Most often they rode in the rear of the command and were protected at all costs.

With the type of guerrilla fighting done by Quantrill's men the medical care though professional was rudimentary and hastily done. Many men carried whiskey in their canteens as an anesthetic when necessary and as an antiseptic agent for cleaning wounds. Medicines were always in short supply for Southern soldiers because they were considered contraband, but thanks to the heroic efforts of Southern ladies, medicines were smuggled in clothing and hairstyles in order to help the Southern Cause. It was important to get wounded soldiers medical care quickly to combat infections. The guerrillas had no ambulances or field hospitals but did have several medical doctors and surgeons riding in the command on large scale operations. Wounded guerrillas were normally taken to a friendly sympathizer's home or kept convalescing in camp until they were able to ride.

In the Union army when using paper cartridges, a soldier was required to have four front teeth in order to tear apart the cartridges. If he didn't, he was rejected as 4F (missing 4 front teeth). With pistols being the main weapon in Quantrill's company this

requirement was unnecessary especially when any boy old enough to carry a gun was considered eligible to be a guerrilla. Medical prerequisites were often unknown during the Civil War. Doctors gained their knowledge by practical experience and being self-taught. Several of the guerrillas had to undergo amputations as a result of close combat. If an amputation was done within 24 hours the mortality rate was much lower. Guerrilla Fletcher Taylor lost his right arm from a shotgun blast where he was taken to a local doctor and lived many years after the war becoming a successful businessman.

Medical doctors who rode with Quantrill were not treated sacrosanct if captured.

Dr. John M. Angell served both as a surgeon with the regular Confederate army and also rode with Captain George Todd's company in Jackson County. After the war Federals murdered him on July 22, 1864, because he had ridden with Quantrill. A tragic example was Dr. John W. Benson who was Quantrill's personal physician. Benson's fiancée made him an elaborate 'guerrilla shirt' to wear. After swearing him in Quantrill admonished Benson to not pick any bullets out of the hated 'Dutch.' "They're all Yankees at heart." He was described as robust, over six feet tall and a wonderful horseman. In shooting matches Benson had been known as a dead shot, but he had never fired a pistol while with Quantrill. He first enlisted in 1861 and taken prisoner and held in prison until released. Benson took part in the Lawrence raid but was afterwards talked into surrendering with guarantees that he would be treated as a prisoner. Within a month he was seated on his coffin and was executed without a trial by firing squad. He ministered to wounded Union Soldiers and sympathizers as well as Confederates.

Continued on Page 6...

**Petersen continued from page 5...**

One doctor riding with Quantrill was Dr. Thomas B. Hale, who rode in Captain Coleman Younger's company. On February 10, 1863, he was with a squad of twelve guerrillas when they were surrounded by Kansas Redlegs and captured. He was then murdered in cold blood. One doctor who treated Quantrill's men was Dr. P. H. Henry. Henry had been with Quantrill during the 1st Battle of Independence and the Lawrence raid. He had previously been captured by Kansas Jayhawkers for assisting Southern wounded and condemned to death but due to a change in Union command was released in time for him to render aid to Quantrill's men during their victory over Colonel J. W. Buel's forces at Independence on August 11, 1862. Henry was a Southern man who would do anything to help the Cause. He aided guerrilla Andy Blunt to escape from the Federals when he was a prisoner in Independence following the Lowe House fight. Another doctor, Dr. Maurice C. Jacobs also rode along on the Lawrence raid. Jacobs was married to Amanda Hudspeth whose four brothers rode with Quantrill.

During the Battle of Lone Jack in August 1862, a Dr. Summers who had been riding with Quantrill was killed during the battle. A very talented doctor Dr. Caleb Winfrey graduated from the Medical University of St. Louis in 1847. He lived in Lone Jack and was a surgeon in both General Jo Shelby's and Quantrill's command. Winfrey organized and commanded his own company at Lone Jack and afterwards treated the wounded on both sides after the battle. He also took part in the battles of Wilson's Creek, Lexington, Cane Hill, Prairie Grove, Newtonia and Springfield. He was remonstrated for treating the Federal wounded when he angrily replied, "I am a doctor!" After the Battle of Westport, General Sterling Price asked Winfrey to remain behind to care for the wounded and dying. An additional doctor, Dr. William Morris served in Quantrill's company having his name on Quantrill's company roster dated July 6, 1862. Morris fought at Wilson's Creek, Drywood, Lexington, Lone Jack, and Pea Ridge. He was wounded four times during the war.

Guerrilla Lee C. Miller one of Quantrill's noted guerrillas became a doctor himself after the war. On the Lawrence raid were nine of Quantrill's best men leading the withdrawal out of town. They were Cole Younger, John Ross, Warren Welch,

Jack Liddil, James Lilly, John Koger, Fletcher Taylor, and Lee C. Miller and his brother. They were known as "Todd's Bloody Nine." Miller was quoted after the war as saying, "There is no period of my life that I am so proud of as I am of the time that I followed that noble daring (Quantrill) man."

The most humorous incident involving a guerrilla and a doctor occurred in Texas as Quantrill pulled his men south behind Southern lines in 1863. Guerrilla Otho Offutt, who stood 6 feet 3 inches tall and weighing 210 lbs was known as the tallest and most powerful of the guerrillas. Offutt was one of the ten original members of Quantrill's first company, having his name on Quantrill's July 6, 1862 muster roll. He fought in many of the battles and skirmishes like the Tate House fight, the Battle of the Ravines, Lawrence, Baxter Springs, Fayette and Centralia. He was shot to pieces more than once. In one single fight he received seven wounds. In another he was wounded twice. In one skirmish when surrounded by 180 Federals he fought his way out but was shot through the breast with the bullet embedded in his back. The following year when he was with Quantrill during his Texas campaign, he sought a Southern doctor to remove the bullet to ease his pain. He went to a surgeon in Sulfur Springs, Texas, who intimated that he would be most happy to render his services to one of Quantrill's brave men. The operation was performed in a satisfactory manner and as was his custom Offutt asked how much he owed for the doctor's services. In his greed the doctor demanded \$250. Offutt pulled out a handful of Confederate bills along with his pistol and crammed the money in the doctor's mouth and compelled the doctor to eat the money while holding his pistol in his face.

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