

burst into their car. "Surrender quietly," they were told, "and you shall be treated as prisoners of war."

They had no choice. They were held up and driven outside with kicks and shoves. Carried along with them was a German who spoke little English and had the bad luck to be wearing a blue shirt.

Guerrillas moved through the other cars, brandishing their pistols and shouting obscenities and threats while robbing terrified men, women, and even children of money, jewelry, and trinkets. Many of the women and children sobbed, cried, or moaned. An occasional shot was fired into the roof to encourage those reluctant to part with precious personal mementos. Afterward, the civilians were ordered to leave the train; most clustered in small groups near the tracks, "clinging to each other, and not daring to leave without permission," related historian Fyfer. "A few, seemingly stupefied or paralyzed with horror, remained in the cars, some of them crouching beneath the seats."

Anderson and Frank James led a squad into the express car and forced the messenger to "deliver up" the keys to the safe. Inside was \$3,000. The next stop was the baggage car, where every valise and trunk was broken open, their contents dumped on the dirty floor. A large cache of greenbacks, said to total \$10,000, was discovered.

A newly prosperous Bill Anderson walked outside and climbed upon his horse. The soldiers had been lined up a little distance to the south and forced to strip off their uniforms. They stood in their underwear, many trembling with fear. Opposite them, twenty paces away, had congregated a large mob of inebriated, filthy, long-haired bushwhackers.

As Anderson came up Arch Clement asked, "What are you going to do with them fellows?"

"Parole them, of course," Anderson answered sardonically.

"I thought so." Clement laughed. "You might pick out two or three, though, and exchange them for Cave, if you can." Cave Wyatt, the sergeant of the band, had been wounded in a recent engagement and had fallen into Federal hands.

"Oh, one will be enough for that, Arch," Anderson replied. "You take charge of the firing party, and when I give the word pour hell into them."

Then he called out pleasantly, "Boys, have you a sergeant in your ranks?" There were several, but apprehensive that Anderson meant to torture or murder them, none replied. Anderson shouted the question a second time, adding, "If there be one let him step aside!"

Sergeant Thomas Goodman hesitantly came forward. Anderson assigned two men to escort him to safety.

At the signal the drunken firing squad cut loose.

"A dozen of the prisoners, shot through the brain or the heart, fell dead at the first volley," wrote J. Thomas Fyfer.

Others screamed and staggered about with a hand pressed to their wounds until, shot again and again, they tumbled lifeless to the ground. One man, Sergeant [Valentine] Peters . . . a man of herculean stature, stripped to his shirt and drawers, was shot five times through the body, and yet knocked the guerrillas right and left, broke through the line, and, with blood spouting from his wounds, succeeded in reaching the depot and crawling under the platform, which was raised some feet above the ground.

Others wandered about, stunned and bleeding, and in their agony staggered against the very muzzles of the revolvers of the guerrillas. One or two started for the railroad and fell dead within a few feet of it. Some cried, "O, God, have mercy!" but most of them merely groaned and moaned in the most agonizing manner. The poor German whined pitifully as he expired.

One man lay flat on his back with his hands clenched tightly in the short grass. Another lay with one bullet-hole over the eye, another in his face, a third in his breast. He was unconscious, his eyes were closed, he did not moan, but, with a sort of spasmodic motion, he dragged his right heel on the ground, back and forth, back and forth. "He's marking time," said Arch Clement, jocosely.

The depot was set ablaze, and when the heat drove Sergeant Peters out, he was killed. The raiders hammered the bodies with carbine stocks and pistol butts and hacked at them with sabers. They threw some of the corpses on the tracks and forced the engineer to run the engine over them.

Through the carnage most of the passengers and townsfolk were silent and still, struck dumb with horror. A smattering of the women wept or prayed, and a few of the men stumbled about aimlessly in a daze.

The train crew was compelled to pull the ties off the track and set fire to the cars and the rolling stock in the yard. As the flames climbed higher a Centralian named Thomas S. Sneed moved through the coaches, shoo-

ing outside the cowering souls who had remained behind. Engineer Clark was then made to start the engine rolling and jump off. It ran three and a half miles before running out of steam.

A gravel train chugged into town, which was halted by throwing a corpse across the tracks. The crew was robbed, and its cars were burned.

The bushwhackers put Sergeant Goodman, still in his underwear, on a mule and tied more whiskey-filled boots in pairs, yoking them over their horses' necks. They rode out of town cheering.

Back in camp many drank themselves into sleep.

At 3:00 P.M. Major A. V. E. Johnston rode into Centralia at the head of a detachment of 39th Missouri Infantry Volunteers. This newly organized regiment had been in service only two weeks and was armed with muzzle-loading Enfield rifles and bayonets but, of course, no pistols. To make matters worse, Johnston had secured mounts for his men by "pressing" stock from "disloyal" citizens of the area; by the late summer of 1864, pickings were pretty slim: "These animals were of an inferior grade," noted Fyfer, "most of them being old brood-mares and plow horses, with some indifferent mules."

The Volunteers had fought just one skirmish, although they had actually managed to wound three or four of the foe. They had been hunting Anderson and Todd for nearly twenty-four hours. Major Johnston surveyed the smoking ruins of the depot and the cars and the bloody corpses of the butchered soldiers and was determined to have revenge. He interrogated townsfolk about the size of the rebel force and the direction of its withdrawal, then climbed to the attic of the hotel with its proprietor, Dr. A. F. Sneed. Johnston peered out the window toward the enemy camp and saw some men ride out of a small stand of timber a mile and a half away. "There they are now," he cried and raced downstairs. Sneed trailed closely behind, trying to talk him out of attacking. "They largely outnumber you," he argued, "and they are much better armed and mounted, having four good revolvers each and splendid horses." In the morning's excitement he had failed to take note of their Sharps carbines.

The townsfolk had told Johnston that the band numbered no more than eighty, but Sneed believed there were many more in camp—a total of perhaps four hundred. Johnston was rightly incredulous at the number, which was too large by half, but, in any case, he was not going to be deterred.

"And they are armed only with revolvers?" he asked. "Well, they may have the advantage of me in numbers, but I will have the advantage of them in arms. My guns are of long range, and I can fight them successfully at a distance."

When Sneed continued to wring his hands over the size of the rebel force, Johnston brushed him off. "I will fight them anyhow!"

Leaving the wagons, teamsters, two officers, and thirty-five men from Company H in Centralia, Johnston set out with a 120-man column. He soon spotted and chased Dave Pool and ten guerrillas—suspecting that Federals were in the area, Todd had sent Pool on a scout. Pool lured Johnston forward for a mile or two and then gave him the slip, returning to camp with the news. He interrupted Todd and Anderson in the midst of a heated argument. Todd, having heard about the butchery of the soldiers, was furious and scolding, and Anderson was about to break with him, but the prospect of battle caused the two men to put aside their differences.

They came over the crest of a hill and found the Yankees on the next hill, half a mile away. Their plan was to split their force in three: Todd would take about sixty-five men and swing to the left, while Thrailkill and a similar number swung to the right. Their role was simply to distract and confuse the enemy as Anderson made a frontal assault.

Still determined to use his long guns to their best advantage, Johnston ordered ninety of his men to dismount, form a line, and fix bayonets. The other thirty withdrew to the rear to hold the horses, as was common practice with cavalry and mounted infantry when fighting on foot. The horse holders were known as "fourth men."

Seeing the bluecoats dismount, John Koger jocularly called out, "Why the fools are going to fight us on foot!" Then he added soberly, "God help 'em!"

Anderson's men dismounted and tightened their cinches, then climbed back in the saddle and formed a line. They moved slowly down the slope and through a stand of timber, then Anderson shouted "Charge!" They dug in their spurs, laid low on their horses' backs, and pounded up the hill. The Federals fired a single volley. Nearly all the shots were high, though three men were hit. Two of the men, Frank Sheperd and Richard Kinney, were riding on either side of Frank James; Sheperd was struck in the head, and as he fell his brains and blood splashed on James's pant leg. Kinney was not killed outright and clung to his horse, hoping the wound was not fatal. His optimism was unfounded, and he soon died.

The third man, Hank Williams, contracted lockjaw from his leg wound and succumbed four days later.

"Kinney was my closest friend," Frank James remarked solemnly in the fall of 1897. Frank had returned to Centralia because he had been hired to start the horse races at the town fair. He stopped by the battle site, accompanied by various local dignitaries and a *Columbia Missouri Herald* correspondent. Standing in what was now a farmer's hay field, Frank explained,

We had ridden together from Texas, fought side by side, slept together, and it hurt me when I heard him say, "Frank, I'm shot." But we couldn't stop in that terrible charge for anything. Up the hill we went yelling like wild Indians. Almost in the twinkling of an eye we were on the Yankees' line. They seemed terrorized. Hypnotized might be a better word, though I reckon nobody knew about hypnotism then. . . . Some of the Yankees were at "fix bayonets," some were biting off their cartridges, preparing to reload. Yelling, shooting our pistols upon them we went. Not a single man of the line escaped. Every one was shot through the head. . . . My brother, Jesse James . . . killed the commander of the Federal troops, Major Johnson [*sic*].

Frank and some of the others plunged through the line and headed for the "fourth men." Some of these were so paralyzed by fear that they neither fired their muskets nor tried to escape, instead sitting motionless on their horses until shot out of the saddle. Others fired one round and, with no time to reload, galloped for Centralia. Only a few got very far: As Fyfer observed, "the old sickle-hammed brood-mares and plow horses and the sore-backed mules were no matches in speed for the fine horses, the best in Missouri, ridden by the guerrillas."

The chase went across an open prairie. With their single-shot rifles empty, the soldiers were totally defenseless. The bushwhackers killed them one at a time.

Being an officer, Lieutenant Jaynes was better mounted and actually managed to reach town. "Get out of here! Get out of here!" he shouted to the Volunteers who had been left behind. "Every one of you will be killed if you don't!"

Some disregarded Jaynes, hiding themselves in outhouses or under invalids' beds, where they were discovered and killed. Others ran for