

## Colonel James Harvey Blood

### Part One 1833-1868

Born 29 December 1833, Dudley, Worcester County, Massachusetts.<sup>1</sup>

Died 29 December 1885, Village of Winnebah, Akantim, Ghana, West Africa.<sup>2</sup>

Buried 1887 in Green-Wood Cemetery, Brooklyn, New York.<sup>3</sup>

He was not at Shiloh, nor at Gettysburg, nor at any of the other legendary sanguinary battles of the Civil War. He never faced the armies of General Robert E. Lee. James Harvey Blood was nonetheless a Civil War hero and played crucial roles in one of the most important campaigns of the war: the capture of the Mississippi River and the siege of Vicksburg. The campaign's success cut the Confederacy in two by opening Union control of the Mississippi River from New Orleans northward and marked a turning point of the direction of the War.

During his tenure in the 6<sup>th</sup> Missouri Volunteer Infantry, Blood proved himself to be an officer and a gentleman, and commanded the respect of his subordinates as well as his superiors, most notably Major General William T. Sherman. He also took risks off the field, risks that demonstrated a focused, fierce determination to separate right from wrong and truth from lies.

The physical and emotional scars of the war left him a changed, and some might say damaged, man. He began to lead a double life immediately after returning home. He impetuously left his wife and young daughter and lived bigamously for a year with the woman who would become his second wife after he was divorced in 1866. The symbiosis of Victoria Woodhull and James Blood cannot be underestimated in later years, but in the mid-1860s, he was an emotionally and physically damaged war hero and she was a recently separated young mother trying to support herself and two young children in a society with few avenues for work open to her. Their early relationship was an education for both as they navigated through their emotional traumas.

The Civil War period offers a more complete view into the core character of James Harvey Blood than any other material. During the war, he was visible by necessity; after it ended, he withdrew from both record and public life. The immense amount of documented evidence, in the form of his superiors' and his own reports, letters, newspaper stories, pension records, and seemingly boring military commentary, helps to complete a portrait of a man who was so famously quiet and reclusive later. In many respects, his experiences of the war and the wounds he received offer direct evidence of the man he would become.

After leaving the army, Blood championed increasingly radical causes for the remainder of his life. The post-war years were, however, also marked by a near constant physical deterioration that finally resulted in his death at the age of fifty-two.

### Early Life

---

<sup>1</sup> *Vital Records of Dudley, Massachusetts, to 1850*. Available at [ma-vitalrecords.org](http://ma-vitalrecords.org), originally published by the New England Genealogical and Historic Society, births, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> James H. Blood pension records, file #459314 (invalid) and 362422 (widow). National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC. [hereafter JHB pension, NARA.]

<sup>3</sup> He is in the Fogg family plot with his third wife, brother and sister [https://www.greenwood.com/burial\\_results/index.php](https://www.greenwood.com/burial_results/index.php) His step-son and business partner Frank Fogg had gone to Africa and identified his remains and arranged for Blood to be returned to the United States for burial.

James Harvey Blood was born in Dudley, Massachusetts, a village outside of the city of Worcester, the eldest son of Nathaniel Blood and Clarinda Coombs.<sup>4</sup> In about 1855 the Blood family moved away from their Yankee roots to settle first in Illinois, then in St. Louis, Missouri.<sup>5</sup> In so doing, the family was not unlike many other New Englanders who drew up the stakes and went west as the country grew.<sup>6</sup> Through the 1803 Louisiana Purchase and Andrew Jackson's 1830 Removal Act,<sup>7</sup> America was suddenly huge and filled with promising opportunity for any free white person willing to work hard enough. New England Yankees, seeing the opportunity, abandoned their small farms and head west in droves.

Prior to the beginning of the Civil War Blood's life was unremarkable. He married Mary Anna C. Harrington, the daughter of a Baptist clergyman,<sup>8</sup> on 2 October 1855 in Framingham, Massachusetts,<sup>9</sup> and he had obviously known her in Massachusetts before the Bloods departed for the west: he gave his residence as Moline, Illinois on the register. The couple settled with his family in St. Louis, had an infant son who was born and died in May 1856,<sup>10</sup> and a daughter, Carrie Louise, who was born in October 1858.<sup>11</sup>

In the 1850 US Federal Census of Dudley, Massachusetts, he was called a farmer, but by the 1860 census of St. Louis, he was described as a 24-year-old clerk. In actuality, "clerk" was not a particularly apt way to describe his position, because between 1856 and 1861, Blood was the deputy comptroller of the City of St. Louis.<sup>12</sup>

Blood's only other record of note before 1861 was the fact that he was elected to be the secretary of the St. Louis Society of Spiritualists in 1858.<sup>13</sup> The president of the society was Peter E. Bland, a well-known St. Louis attorney whose wife was a trance medium.<sup>14</sup> Bland became Blood's immediate superior in the 6<sup>th</sup> Missouri.

---

<sup>4</sup> *Vital Records of Dudley, Massachusetts to 1850*, op cit.

<sup>5</sup> By the 1860 US Federal Census he, his wife and daughter, and his parents, sister and brothers were all in St. Louis.

<sup>6</sup> The seminal work on this mobility is provided by the Frenchman Alexis de Tocqueville in his 1838 *Democracy in America*. Historian Charles Sellers expands it further in his *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815-1846*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

<sup>7</sup> The controversial Removal Act forcibly evicted native Americans to places further west, or simply allowed the government to kill them.

<sup>8</sup> US Federal Census of Leicester, Worcester County, Massachusetts, enumerated 28 August 1850, p. 20, line 8.

<sup>9</sup> Town Clerk of Framingham, MA, Return of Marriages Registered in the town of Framingham, Massachusetts for the year 1855, p. 75, entry #4, also the Town Clerk, Town Records of Framingham, Mass., 1739-1854, p. 527. He was living in Moline, Illinois, was 21 years old, gave no occupation, was born in Dudley, Mass., the son of Nathaniel Blood, and it was his first marriage. She (called Mary Anna C. Harrington in the town records) was a resident of Framingham, age 19, born in Spencer, Mass., the daughter of Moses & Lucy Harrington; it was her first marriage.

<sup>10</sup> The child was buried in the now defunct Wesleyan Cemetery in St. Louis; cemetery records give his father as J. H. Blood. See records of the St. Louis Area Cemeteries, St with Louis Genealogical Society, <https://stlgs.org/research-2/life-death/cemeteries-2/st-louis-area-cemeteries-list> (membership required to view records.)

<sup>11</sup> 1900 US Federal Census of New London, CT (ED 459, New London City, Ward 2, 40 Huntington St., line 32, which gives her birth year and month. On 5 January 1881, at Framingham, Mass., Carrie Blood married, as his third wife, Silas Leroy Blake, D.D., a Congregationalist minister. He was 24 years older than his wife. They had no children of their own but did have an adopted daughter. (Andover Theological Seminary, *Necrology, 1902-1903, Prepared for the Alumni Association and Presented at its Annual Meeting, June 10, 1903*, Boston: The Everett Press Company, 1903, p. 91.) Carrie Blake died 15 July 1935 in Framingham, Mass., and was buried in Cedar Grove Cemetery, New London, CT.

<sup>12</sup> JHB pension, sworn affidavit of James H. Blood, dated Governor's Island, N.Y., 23 August 1882.

<sup>13</sup> Emma Hardinge Britten, *Modern American Spiritualism: A Twenty Years' Record of the Communion Between Earth and the World of Spirits*, New York: Britten, 1870, p. 376.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

When the war broke out in April 1861, Union patriots in Missouri scrambled to form volunteer regiments to respond to Lincoln's call for 75,000 volunteer troops in answer to the firing on Ft. Sumter. Blood organized the Sixth Missouri Volunteer Infantry in May and June 1861. In the early months of the war, an air of haste and unpreparedness permeated Missouri; the militias, newly-formed regiments, and the civilians population were equally affected. The newly formed volunteer regiments were poorly equipped and clothed. Rife corruption and bureaucracy in passed for the state government caused shortages of ammunition, uniforms and even food. Believing the conflict would be over quickly, many men only agreed to three months of service and were wearing the same clothes they had on at their enlistment at the end of their three months. It took months before the supply situation could be sorted out.

### The Sixth Regiment Missouri Infantry (Volunteers) May 1861-May 1862: Intrigue in Missouri

The Sixth Missouri Infantry was the first of the Missouri volunteer regiments to agree to the long enlistment of three years instead of three months.<sup>15</sup> Fellow Spiritualist Peter E. Bland was commissioned as the Colonel, and Blood became the regiment's Lt. Col.<sup>16</sup> The Sixth remained in Missouri as a part of the Department of the West, coping with rumored invasions and raiding bands of Confederate guerrillas until May 1862, when they were sent to Corinth, Mississippi and absorbed as a regiment in the Second Division of Major General W. T. Sherman's Fifteenth Army Corps.<sup>17</sup>

The inexperienced officers and men of the Sixth Missouri had their fair share of problems, particularly in the second half of 1861 and the opening of 1862. They were in no battles, only skirmishes and scouting expeditions. The regiment was engaged in what amounted to military police work: tracking down and arresting suspected secessionist sympathizers, putting an end to jayhawking,<sup>18</sup> trying to protect Unionist citizens from marauding Confederate sympathizers, and coping with occasional (and usually false) threats of invasion from Confederate forces in Arkansas.

The Department of the West, under the tenure of the colorful General John Fremont, was rife with corruption. Fremont formally took command of the Department on 25 July 1861 and had been given the nearly impossible task of organizing, equipping and leading the Union Army down the Mississippi River to reopen commerce on the river and break the Confederacy in two. He was given only 23,000 men, most of whom were three-month volunteers. He had no weapons to arm the men, no uniforms or other military equipment, and he was saddled with faulty

---

<sup>15</sup> "Female Financiers' Feuds," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 8 May 1871.

<sup>16</sup> *Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served in Organizations From the State of Missouri*, Washington, The National Archives and Records Service General Services Administration, 1962, Microcopy No. 405, Roll 428. [Here after Service Records.] This particular roll includes the regiment's records as well as the individual records of those whose surnames began with A-BI. All volumes are available from [www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> The term was applied to Union troops, often led by abolitionists from Kansas, and was a generic term for bands of soldiers who plundered and looted from civilians. During the summer of 1861, under orders from the Union command in St. Louis to protect the borders from Confederate General Price, jayhawking regiments instigated a reign of terror throughout Missouri. The troops applied a broad interpretation to their orders and overstepped their authority, becoming notorious for robbing, plundering, and burning the farms of pro-slavery and Southern migrant families. Many self-professed jayhawkers considered all Missourians as the enemy and paid no attention to the citizen's loyalty or slave holding status. The tactics employed by jayhawkers actually drove many Missourians into Confederate service.

intelligence that indicated the Confederate forces were larger than they were. As an opportunist, he was also the worst possible man for the job. Fremont ran his St. Louis headquarters extravagantly and surrounded himself with unscrupulous men from his California days. Huge personal profits were made through army contracts that were neither subjected to competitive bidding (as required by Federal law) nor particularly scrupulous about the quality of the goods they delivered.

I saw old Baron Steinberger, a prince among our early California adventurers, come in and look over the register. I avoided him on purpose, but his presence in St. Louis recalled the maxim, "Where the vultures are, there is a carcass close by;" and I suspected that the profitable contracts of the quartermaster, McKinstry, and drawn to St. Louis some of the most enterprising men of California. I suspect they can account for the fact that, in a very short time, Fremont fell from his high estate in Missouri, by reason of frauds, or supposed frauds, in the administration of the affairs of his command.<sup>19</sup>

The result was chaos and eventually Fremont's supply lines, along with his quartermaster Maj. Justus McKinstry, came under Federal scrutiny for graft and profiteering. General (and well-known Missouri politician) Frank Blair complained that Fremont's command was a 'horde of pirates' defrauding the army, and his complaints were heard in Washington. The subsequent investigation became a national scandal, culminating in a Congressional subcommittee confirming Blair's charges. Fremont escaped charges and was given a new command (and became an early Republican favorite to replace Lincoln in the 1864 election); his quartermaster, McKinstry, was court-martialed and cashiered.

The upshot was that the Sixth served without pay from their organization until mid-September. The men were poorly equipped and clothed, and even food rations were a problem. Nothing was resolved until Maj. Gen. H.W. Halleck finally replaced Fremont in November 1861.

The Sixth's first post was at Pilot Knob in the Acadia Valley of Missouri. The strategically important region was a rich source of high-quality iron ore and was networked with railroads which moved the ore to St. Louis and from there to the rest of the country. In July, the regiment was at Ironton, in the heart of the Valley, though the regiment was still was not fully organized.<sup>20</sup>

On July 2, several officers of Blood's regiment were sent on a scouting expedition in which they killed one captain and thirteen "privates of the Secessionists in a little skirmish near Valley Forge on the 4<sup>th</sup> . . . they administered the oath to some 50 of its citizens."<sup>21</sup>

It was on this scouting mission, or another about this same date, that Blood sustained the first of his war injuries. Riding at night, he was struck in the head, knocked off his horse, and

---

<sup>19</sup>W.T. Sherman, *Memoirs of W. T. Sherman* (1886 ed.), Vol. 1, pp. 222-223. Sherman's memoirs were published twice during his life: 1875 and 1886. The 1886 edition was revised with corrections and additions. Unless otherwise stated, the 1886 edition is referred to in these footnotes. pp. 224-225.

<sup>20</sup> Report of Chester Harding, Jr., Assistant Adjutant-General, Missouri Volunteers, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies Prepared Under the Direction of the Secretary of War, by Bvt. Lieut. Col. Robert N. Scott, Third U.S. Artillery and Published Pursuant to Act of Congress Approved June 16, 1880*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1881. [Hereafter: *OR*] Series 1, Vol. 3, pp. 391-392.

<sup>21</sup> "Latest Reports from Missouri," *The New York Times*, 8 July 1861. Administering the oath of loyalty to the citizens of Missouri soon became an exercise in futility. Later reports refer to those who had taken the oath but who were only "loyal in the presence of the Union Army."

was left senseless for nearly a day.<sup>22</sup> He was taken to the military hospital at Pilot Knob and immediately began to suffer the insomnia and headaches which would plague him for the rest of his life. While medicine at the time was not aware of the symptoms or even potential severity of a concussive blow to the head, these classic symptoms are easily recognizable today.<sup>23</sup>

By the tenth, Blood had his regiment together, numbering about 1,000 men, but requisition requests for uniforms and supplies continued to be ignored at command headquarters. On one occasion the regiment returned from a mission barefoot.<sup>24</sup> Another problem plaguing the Sixth was an utter lack of discipline within the ranks, causing frequent blunders in the field.

By early August, rumors were swirling that “several thousand troops from the Southern Confederacy have concentrated on our Southern border for purposes that are well known.”<sup>25</sup>

The expedition did not amount to much; the secessionists although near us kept out of sight which they could very easily do, being well mounted, while the 6<sup>th</sup> Regiment were all on foot. About seven miles south of here a courier came rushing in and informed the Colonel that four miles ahead of us were 2,000 cavalry, and that we would be attacked in less than an hour. The line of battle was immediately formed, and we were kept on our guns for twelve hours in anticipation of a good fight, but no cavalry came, and the march was continued, much to the disappointment of the boys, who are getting very anxious to have a little fun as they call it . . . The secessionists are committing numerous and most outrageous depredations about the country. If one neighbor has any feeling of animosity against another, all that it is necessary for him to do is make the accusation of his neighbor’s being a Union man and the family will be killed, the houses burnt, and everything valuable stolen. A number of innocent men, women and children have been murdered within a few miles of our camp during the last five days.<sup>26</sup>

On 8 August, the situation started to change, at least for Blood. While he could do little about the stalled supply trains, he did begin to learn how to install discipline in the ranks. He got his introduction from a notoriously quiet colonel who would become the pivotal and most important general of the War, Ulysses S. Grant.

Shortly after my promotion I was ordered to Ironton, Missouri, to command a district in that part of the State, and took the 21<sup>st</sup> Illinois, my old regiment, with me. Several other regiments were ordered to the same destination about the same time. Ironton is on the Iron Mountain railroad, about seventy miles south of St. Louis, and situated among hills rising almost to the dignity of mountains. When I reached there, about the 8<sup>th</sup> of August, Colonel B. Gratz Brown—afterwards Governor of Missouri and in 1872 Vice-Presidential candidate<sup>27</sup>—was in command. Some of his troops were ninety days’ men and their time

---

<sup>22</sup> JHB pension, file #459.314, certificate #310.015 (invalid pension) and 362.422, certificate 241.507 (widow’s pension).

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/post-concussion-syndrome/symptoms-causes/syc-20353352>

<sup>24</sup> “Report of Col. B. Gratz Brown, Fourth Missouri Infantry, *OR*, Series 1, Vol. 3, pp. 416-7. “Colonel Bland’s regiment returned barefoot, and with a very insufficient supply of clothing. It should be put in condition for effective service promptly. He complains very bitterly that his requisitions have received no attention.” It should be noted that Blood’s younger brother, Lt. John Allen Blood was the quartermaster of the Sixth.

<sup>25</sup> “The situation in Missouri,” *The New York Times*, 8 August 1861, forwarding a report from the *Missouri Republican* of 3 August.

<sup>26</sup> “Matters in Missouri, An Illinois Boy at Ironton,” (Correspondence of the *Chicago Tribune*), *The New York Times*, 8 August 1861.

<sup>27</sup> He ran on the ticket with Horace Greeley.

had expired some time before. The men had no clothing but what they had volunteered in, and much of this was so worn that it would hardly stay on. General Hardee—the author of the tactics I did not study—was at Greenville, some twenty-five miles further south, it was said, with five thousand Confederate troops. Under these circumstances Colonel Brown’s command was very much demoralized. A squadron of cavalry could have ridden into the valley and captured the entire force. Brown himself was gladder to see me on that occasion than he ever has been since. I relieved him and sent all his men home, within a day or two, to be mustered out of service.<sup>28</sup>



Grant in 1861.

Grant immediately recognized the problems plaguing the regiments at Ironton and gave orders that all commanders would be responsible to bring things under control. He – contrary to his notorious reputation – ordered that all commanders would be responsible for their troops’ public drunkenness,<sup>29</sup> a very real problem when liquor was openly sold in encampments and forts. Company commanders were to read the articles of war “at least twice within the next four days,” and “hereafter the strictest discipline is expected to be maintained in this camp and the General Commanding will hold responsible for all his officers, and the degree of responsibility will be in direct ratio with the rank of the officer.”<sup>30</sup> He also ordered an end to indiscriminate firing of weapons and ordered at least five roll-calls per day.<sup>31</sup> Grant’s short presence made an impression on the young Lt. Col. because after that date it is clear from Blood’s actions that he

<sup>28</sup> Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, vol. 1, pp. 275ff. Grant’s rank was technically still “colonel” though he had received congressional approval for his promotion to brigadier general. It was a matter of paperwork; however, because his name was on the congressional list in a higher position than his replacement at Ironton, Gen. Prentiss, Grant was correct that he was the senior officer.

<sup>29</sup> Even during his lifetime, Grant had a reputation of being a drunkard. Historians agree, however, that much of this reputation was based on rumor and tall tales. His close friend and adjutant, Colonel John Rawlins, and his wife Julia were the individuals who formed the first line of defense between Grant and liquor. For an interesting discussion on how Grant’s reputation as a drunkard came about see Rick Beard, “General Grant Takes a Spill,” *Disunion, The New York Times*, 4 September 2013, <https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/09/04/general-grant-takes-a-spill/> See also Ron Chernow, *Grant*, New York, Penguin Press, 2017, for a discussion of Grant’s alcoholism in which he argues that Grant was well aware that he had no capacity to hold his liquor, and therefore abstained.

<sup>30</sup> Symington, *Grant Papers*, op cit., Vol. 2, pp. 89-90.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

was a quick study of the importance of discipline and its relationship to loyalty from the men under his command.

Grant's assessment of the Missouri regiments was not kind.

From all that I have yet learned from spies, and loyally disposed citizens I am led to believe that there is no force within thirty miles of us that entertain the least idea of attacking this position, unless it should be left so weak as to invite an attack. It is fortunate too if this is the case for many of the officers seem to have so little command over their men, and military duty seems to be done so loosely, that I feel at present our resistance would be in the inverse ratio of the number of troops to resist with. In two days more however I expect to have a very different state of affairs, and to improve them continuously.<sup>32</sup>

Unfortunately for the Sixth and its improvement, Grant was transferred to Jefferson City after only three weeks. Fremont felt Grant would be better placed protecting Jefferson City than the railroads in Ironton. Shortly after Grant's departure, some officers within the Sixth began to take advantage of the situation for their own personal gain, causing a growing distrust within the ranks. The one man that inspired the least trust of all was the commanding officer, Col. Peter E. Bland.

An anonymous letter dated 16 September 1861 was received by headquarters. Addressed to Gen. Fremont, it set in motion a series of events that would continue for fifteen months.

87. The loyal citizens has no confidence in Colonel Bland but he is highly honored by Secessionists; after the 6<sup>th</sup> Missouri he was out of hearing of the new born union men of Arcadia (what I mean by new born are those that are union in the presence of a union army.) They were cheered with the following acclamations: go you d.d. black Republicans you are thieves Colonel Bland is Ashamed of you, you think he is a black Republican but you are mistaken, he is our Friend. The conduct of the Colonel in turning Spies loose and giving aid to Burr (a noted Sesessionist) to bind his negroes to carry them with 2 or 3000 lbs flour off south is sufficient cause for the union men to believe some of the above remarks.

88. Ironton September 16<sup>th</sup> 1861

Dear Sir,

Us officers has failed or withheld from reporting the mistrust of Colonel Bland In discharging his duty as commander of This important military post; I will give A brief report of his conduct on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> and Sunday the 15<sup>th</sup>. It was reported that the Rebels was on Sheperd Mountain and the Col. without considering the impossibility {from the situation of the pickets} of an exit by approaching to that point he immediately ordered the Missouri 6 and 21<sup>st</sup> Illinois Regiments<sup>33</sup> to march round the hill Which they did without leaving any force to Defend the southern pass this leaving Canon Magazine and baggage exposed to The enemy if any number had been coming In, and this was all done without giving Colonel Thayer notice of the above movement. And when the above named Regiments approached Near the [??] Regiment They was mistaken for rebels and every man seized their arms, and was within a hairs breadth of firing into them with a 27 pounder and small arms which would have cut down half the men at one fire. Yesterday he ordered the pickets occupying the most important posts called in without replacing others; thus leaving Artillery magazines entirely exposed till 1 or 2 o'clock last night and

---

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Grant's regiment.

This occurred amongst a treacherous but cowardly Foe. every officer and soldier here will testify to the above statement.

To Major General Fremont } Volunteer<sup>34</sup>  
 Commanding Western Division }

Bland was frequently ill, but in October Blood, who should have been acting colonel during Bland's incapacity, was detached from the regiment and assigned to be the acting Provost Marshal of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division of the Department of the Missouri.<sup>35</sup>

In September, Lincoln had finally had enough of Gen. Fremont and recalled him. Major General H.W. Halleck, the man who would finally be able to turn the situation around, was appointed Fremont's replacement. Halleck was told,

You have not merely the ordinary duties of a military commander to perform, but the far more difficult task of reducing chaos to order, of changing probably the majority of the personnel of the staff of the department, and of reducing to a point of economy . . . a system of reckless expenditure and fraud, perhaps unheard of before in the history of the world.<sup>36</sup>

"Affairs here in complete chaos." Halleck reported in November. "Troops unpaid, without clothing or arms. Many never properly mustered into service and some utterly demoralized. Hospitals overflowing with sick. One division of 7500 has over 2000 on the sick list."<sup>37</sup>

Unknown to Bland, Blood was slowly compiling evidence against him, though it is not known if he was responding to events he witnessed or heard of as the Sixth's Lt. Col., or if he was under orders to investigate the charges in the anonymous letter received in September. What he was doing put him at an enormous personal risk; it would take months to gather all the evidence in a way that it could be presented without invoking the dangerous charge of mutiny.

It had to be done. Bland's blunders had affected pay grades for his men, and his tactical blunders had earned the Sixth "the taunting and insulting appellation of the 'Cowardly Sixth.'"<sup>38</sup>

The situation was worse than simple incompetence. What Blood uncovered in the field and within his own regiment was mirrored in an assessment of the Missouri situation by his commanding general. On 25 March 1862 Halleck wrote E.M. Stanton, Lincoln's Secretary of War:

That many and in some cases horrible outrages have been committed in this State I do not doubt. They have been committed by three classes of persons.

1<sup>st</sup>. The enemy's guerrilla bands. . . it will require some severe examples to be made in order to suppress them.

<sup>34</sup> Peter E. Bland service records, NARA, op cit., roll 428. "Volunteer's" identity is unknown.

<sup>35</sup> James H. Blood Service Records, NARA, op cit., roll 428. Provost marshals were army officers charged with maintaining order among both civilians and soldiers – a nearly impossible task as chaos and anarchy continued to plague Missouri.

<sup>36</sup> Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan to Maj. Gen. H. W. Halleck, *OR*, op cit., Series 3, Vol. 1, p. 568-569. Dated 11 November 1861.

<sup>37</sup> Maj. Gen. Halleck to Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan, 27 November 1861. *OR*, op cit., Series 1, Vol. 8, p. 382.

<sup>38</sup> James H. Blood's comment in Peter E. Bland service records, NARA, op cit., roll 428.



2<sup>nd</sup>. The Kansas jayhawkers, or robbers. . . They wear the uniform and it is believed receive pay from the United States. . . I will now keep them out of Missouri or have them shot.

3<sup>rd</sup>. Our own volunteer troops. It cannot be denied that some of our volunteer regiments have behaved very badly, plundering to an enormous extent. I have done everything in my power to punish the guilty. Many of the regimental officers are very bad men and participate in this plunder. In such cases it is impossible to reach them by courts martial. When regiments are moving in the field courts cannot be assembled, and when courts are ordered the witnesses cannot be procured, or, if private soldiers, are frequently overawed by their colonels or other officers.<sup>39</sup>

In late March Blood was sent into the field in command of a party charged with rounding up secessionist rebels in Moniteau County: “It is necessary that these bands of lawless guerrillas should be thoroughly broken up and exterminated, and I have selected you in this instance to accomplish this most desirable and important duty, and I hope, by your energy and secret and rapid movements you may be able to give the outlaws a terrible and long-to-be-remembered lesson.”<sup>40</sup> He was given 170 foot, 9 horse and two pieces of artillery. “My object in giving you thus large a force is that you may crush out this band of outlaws, guerrillas, and robbers, and utterly annihilate them.”<sup>41</sup>

The expedition was successful, with several rebels dead, more wounded, and many arrests, and “the command was conducted with energy and decision. . . [and] reflects credit upon all who participated.”<sup>42</sup>

Report of Co. A, 2 April 1862. Company ordered on a scout through mountains and marched that day to Pisgah where it was joined by detachment from the 6 Mo. from California and Jefferson City; two companies of state troops and a section of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Indiana Battery, the whole under command of Lt. Col. Blood. Then proceeded to a place called “Sink Hole Woods” where they engaged a marauding band of twelve who fired into the officers without effect.<sup>43</sup> The fire was instantly returned, killing 10 and wounding another, while the remaining one was taken prisoner. It was thought at the time they were pickets of a large force supposed to be encamped in that vicinity but our information proved to be incorrect. We returned to Tipton on the 21 having captured about forty prisoners and a large amount of contraband.<sup>44</sup>

The majority of the prisoners were thrown into the jail at Blood’s command post at Fort Tipton. In all, Blood held 26 prisoners from the raid. He filed a report that included a succinct list of names and offenses, with his own commentary. Typical of his writing style, Blood underlined and capitalized certain words for emphasis:

Milton Stevens. . . A prominent secession Leader, contributing Stock and other means to aid the Rebels. Also harboring and feeding Bands of secessions & Recruits. Also publicly declaring “All Lincolnites should be shot like Pigs. . . Charles W. Cassady.

<sup>39</sup> Maj. Gen. Halleck to E. M. Stanton, Secretary of War, *OR*, Series 1, Vol. 8, pp. 642-43.

<sup>40</sup> Brig. Gen. James Totten to Lt. Col. James H. Blood, *OR*, Series 1, Vol. 8, pp. 638-9.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> Report of Brig. Gen. James Totten, *OR*, op cit., Series 1, Vol. 8, pp. 349-350.

<sup>43</sup> The raid is commonly, and erroneously, called “Sink Pole Woods.” It is correctly “Sink Hole Woods,” as noted in Company A’s report.

<sup>44</sup> Regimental Records, Sixth Missouri, Company A, NARA, op cit., Roll 428.

Vicinity Mt. Vernon. A rabid blatant Secessionist. At Boonville Battle. . . Merton Price. North part Moniteau C. Has been both a private and an officer in the Rebel Army. A most impudent opposer of the U.S. Government, boasts of the same and of what he has done against it. . . Thos. Pate. . . A Rampant unreasonable Rebel and Dangerous Man.<sup>45</sup>

Blood's political beliefs, demonstrated by his vehement accounts of the men in his jail, were those of a Radical, or "Black," Republican, holding no sympathy for any who chose to turn against the Union. After his service he was openly aligned with the liberal subset of the Republican party.<sup>46</sup>

Events came to a head in the beginning of April. Blood had been keeping a calm outward demeanor and attended to the affairs of the Sixth as though what was going on was completely normal for any regiment. He answered letters and investigated problems:

Colonel It is represented that you have in confinement at your post one Dr. Sydney Robinson, a citizen living in the vicinity of Versailles, Morgan County. It is represented that a Lieutenant Walldorf, Company I, Sixth Missouri Volunteers, caused the arrest of the said Doctor Robinson; that at the time of the arrest of Doctor Robinson Lieutenant Walldorf caused and permitted a rope to be adjusted around the said doctor's neck and made preparations for hanging him. Upon the doctor's objection to this outrageous and unauthorized treatment and refusing to take the oath of allegiance under such circumstances he threatened to send Doctor Robinson to Cairo but finally caused him to be conducted to your post.

It is also represented that other persons were maltreated by the party under command of Lieutenant Walldorf in the vicinity of Versailles. . . one of whom was twice Suspended by the neck until senseless. . . If these representations be correct as above set forth Lieutenant Walldorf and his party deserve the severest punishment for their outrageous disregard of law, order and discipline. Lieutenant Walldorf has violated the orders of General Halleck published at various times for the regulation of arrests and he must answer for his disregard of these orders. . .<sup>47</sup>

Walldorf submitted his statement of what happened, which Blood forwarded to Headquarters. In it, Walldorf asserted that his guides led him to conclude that Robinson was connected "to a gang of jayhawkers who were traced from his house. Further I would remark that when I said he should not be hanged if he could find one man to speak in his favor as a just,

---

<sup>45</sup> Union Provost Marshals Files, #21937. <https://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/provost/provostPDF>

<sup>46</sup> Blood, along with B. Gratz Brown, attended numerous state meetings representing the Radical Republican party (see 24 November 1865 *Daily Missouri Republican*, p. 1). The faction of the Republican party stood for a complete, permanent end of slavery and secessionism, without compromise. They were opposed during the War by the moderate faction of the party (led by Abraham Lincoln) and by the anti-abolitionist and anti-Reconstruction Democratic Party. It was the Radical Republicans that pushed the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment through Congress and opposed allowing ex-Confederate officers to retake political power in the South, emphasizing equality, civil rights and suffrage for the recently freed slaves. Notable Radical Republicans were Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts, General Ulysses S. Grant, Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, General (and Senator) Benjamin Butler of Massachusetts, Rep. John A. Bingham, framer of the Fourteenth Amendment, Senator (and former general) John A. Logan, Governor Thomas Clement Fletcher of Missouri, and Senator Samuel Pomeroy of Kansas.

<sup>47</sup> Lucien J. Barnes, Captain and Assistant Adjutant-General to Lt. Col. James H. Blood, 10 April 1862, *OR*, op cit., Series II, Vol. 1, pp. 277-278

honest, good Union man all . . . testified that they knew no good of him.”<sup>48</sup> Two days later, after his own inquiry into the matter, Blood fired off another letter to headquarters.

For some time previous to the 20th of March daily complaints came to headquarters of outrages committed upon Union citizens living in and around Versailles most of which could be traced to a band of some fifteen or twenty jayhawkers. These were all perpetrated during the night time. Those taking the most active part in these matters were disguised in some manner, as with false whiskers, slouched hats, army overcoats, &c., which led to the conclusion that they were citizens of that part of the country. On the evening of March 22 they fell upon two Federal soldiers and stripped them completely of all their clothes. . . I determined to find them out and bring them to justice. With this intention I secretly fitted out an expedition. . . I had selected good men for the purpose and had prepared full instructions. The evening of the 24th of March was the one selected for putting in execution the plan. The orders for the Moniteau County expedition and the substitution of Company D for Company H at this post entirely disarranged the arrangement. The result was Acting Lieutenant Walldorf and men of Company D were sent by Captain Van Deusen instead of those I had selected.

I deem this preliminary statement necessary, first, to show the necessity of the expedition; second, to show how it was that Walldorf came to go in command. From all the evidence I can obtain relating to the trip I submit the following summary-leaving you to decide upon the merits whether those concerned shall be held to answer in the manner referred to by you . . . I have examined numerous persons in regard to the affairs in question and their testimony is all to the same effect in regard to the hanging. Acting Lieutenant Walldorf requested three of the State militia, two citizens, and Edward Tigh, of Company I, Sixth Missouri Volunteers, to act as jury upon the case, believing as they did that he (Robinson) was connected with the band of jayhawkers whom they supposed they had traced from his house. . . Mr. William V. Parks, a man well known as a reliable person (one of the citizens), acted as foreman. The decision of this jury was that although justice required immediate hanging mercy should hold him for a less prompt retribution. 'Tis true a rope was adjusted around his neck but he was not harmed at all.

Up to this point after his arrest he had been very abusive, using expressions like the following: “All your devilish artillery can’t make me take an oath to support such a Constitution as you are fighting for,” and “all the devils in hell combined with all the military power of the United States could never make a Union man of me.” There were some fifteen citizens gathered and none of them would say a word in his behalf when called upon to do so. . . All these circumstances combined with his statement to Mr. Parks that he would arm his negroes and had bought revolvers for every member of his family justly led Walldorf to believe him capable of being a leader in this system of jayhawking . . . The representations made to you are if I am any judge in the matter widely apart from the facts. . .

The above statement contains the facts I have been able to collect regarding the questionable conduct of Acting Lieutenant Walldorf. The discrepancies between the information furnished you and the facts as they exist have decided me to forward this statement and await your further orders before preferring the charges called for by yours of the 10<sup>th</sup> instant.<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> Lt. Col. J.H. Blood to Capt. Lucien J. Barnes, 10 April 1862, *OR*, op. cit., Series II, Vol. 1, p. 278.

<sup>49</sup> J.H. Blood to Capt. Lucien J. Barnes, 12 April 1862, *OR*, op. cit., Series II, Vol. 1, pp. 279-280.

Blood's words had an effect. On 26 April 1862 – ten days after Blood's letter was written – Walldorf was transferred and promoted to the adjutant general's office on orders of General Halleck.<sup>50</sup>

Also in early April, Blood filed the formal charges that he had been gathering against his immediate superior and former friend Peter E. Bland.<sup>51</sup> The list of charges and evidence was impressive: Neglect of duty, conduct prejudicial to good order and military discipline; utter disregard for the health and comfort of the men under his command; unlawful assumption of authority; violation of the 15<sup>th</sup> Article of War;<sup>52</sup> conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman; cowardice; and inefficiency as an officer.<sup>53</sup> The lists of witnesses that accompanied every charge was also impressive, and included most of the officers of the Sixth, as well as generals, private citizens, and officers of other regiments.

Bland responded with a weak refutation, complaining mostly of the illness – gastro-intestinal distress and headaches – that had plagued him since joining the army. In his letter, Bland insinuated he “had learned that a conspiracy had been formed with a view to my removal to give place to some aspirants in which some five persons were engaged.”<sup>54</sup>

Some of the officers who had participated in the recent Sink Hole Woods expedition accused Blood of mutinous conduct,<sup>55</sup> including Capt. E. Milton Joslin, the Sixth's Assistant Surgeon, who was named in the original charges against Bland,<sup>56</sup> and Major John W. Fletcher, one of Blood's subordinate officers, who was himself charged with offenses as a result of Blood's inquiries.<sup>57</sup> Blood demanded an inquiry.

Bland tried to retaliate by sending a letter to headquarters calling Blood and his fellow officers “conspirators” and the charges “the most damnable plot ever conceived in the brain of a scoundrel.”<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup> F.A. Walldorf service records, NARA, op cit., roll 438.

<sup>51</sup> Peter E. Bland Service Records, NARA, op cit., Roll 428

<sup>52</sup> “Every officer who shall make a false muster of man or horse, and every officer or commissary of musters who shall willingly sign, direct, or allow the signing of muster-rolls wherein such a false muster is contained, shall, upon proof made thereof, by two witnesses, before a general court –martial, be cashiered, and shall be thereby utterly disabled to have or hold any office or employment in the service of the United States.”

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid. Bland was, more often than not, on the muster rolls of the Sixth as “present – sick.”

<sup>55</sup> James H. Blood Service Records, NARA, op. cit., Roll 428.

<sup>56</sup> While Eliab Milton Joslin, Assistant Surgeon of the Regiment, later Surgeon, was disliked by the men in his regiment, they did respect his abilities as a surgeon. He was difficult to-get along with, irascible and curt. Joslin's service records, once the regiment joined the 15<sup>th</sup> Army Corps, are filled with letters complaining of a lack of supplies and complaining of mistreatment by superior officers. (E. Milton Joslin service records, NARA, op cit., roll 433.) His July/August 1862 muster roll notes that he was absent in August “by order of Lt. Col. J.H. Blood awaiting action of Court Martial.” The August 18, 1862, Special Muster roll noted he was “in arrest at quarters since August 8, 1862 by order of Lt. Col. J.H. Blood.” See Lowry, Thomas Power and Jack D. Welsh, *Tarnished Scalpels: The Court-martials of Fifty Union Surgeons*, Stackpole Books, 2000, pp. 221ff. He was charged with being absent without leave and stealing a case of wine and eight bottles of whiskey intended for the sick. He was also charged with stealing and selling thirty pounds of candles. The charges were filed against Joslin by George S. Walker, the senior surgeon of the Sixth. According to Col. Bland's testimony, given shortly before his own resignation, Joslin was gone from the 29 July until August 7<sup>th</sup>. Lt. Col. Blood testified that Joslin had asked for leave but had been turned down. The verdict eventually was not guilty on the charge of theft (it seemed to have been a case of an accounting error) but he was found guilty on the charge of absent without leave. His sentence was to be reprimanded by the commanding officer of the regiment at a dress parade.

<sup>57</sup> Peter E. Bland Service Records, NARA, op cit., roll 428.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

Blood was having none of it. He wrote another letter, offering more proof of the complicity in the affair by the men of the Sixth.<sup>59</sup> He then unleashed more damning charges to further his case. This time he named co-conspirators, the most seriously accused having brought the charges of mutiny against Blood.

Something more than a month ago, charges were preferred against Colonel Peter E. Bland, 6<sup>th</sup> Mo. Vols . . . We believed that our cause was just and that our rights would be respected, and that justice would be done all concerned, which was all we sought or now seek. Some of said charges are of a serious nature, but none were made there is not proof upon.

As notice has been taken of said charges, on the part of the General commanding, except it be that he has allowed Col Bland to have the same on which we had arranged upon the face of each specification the witnesses by whom I was expected to prove them, this fact has been taken advantage of by Col Bland to take *ex parte* testimony from which we believe has been used to our prejudice and the prejudice of the true merits of the case. . . After having preferred the charges as above, another matter came to light of a still more serious nature and in which the same Colonel P. E. Bland played a prominent part as ever as Major John W. Fletcher who appeared more upon the surface of the matter. We found the proof so plain against him that we immediately preferred charges against him and for a no less crime than being engaged in a regular system of plundering the Country and Government in the form of taking horses and disposing of them for their own profit or what amounts to the same . . . It also shows a large amount of other property taken from the surrounding country and disposed of by the Band. Also involve a large number of citizens as well as officers and I take it as a matter that demands investigation not only to give justice to those already concerned but to show up the system of Jayhawking that is still carried on in the country.

Notwithstanding the serious nature of these charges, no notice has been taken of them and Major Fletcher is now a member of a military commission in session at this Post. But what we particularly protest against is the use being made of the time afforded them, they are getting up charges against the more prominent ones who do not take open sides with them some of whom are already under arrest and they declare the “whole clique” will be within ten days while they confidently assure that they are safe. Are they to thus have the opportunity of attempting to crush out the opposition to them originating on account of their crimes and are we to stand quietly by and see them apparently triumph? If there is any means of redress we demand it. We are willing to stake our Commissions upon being able to show what we charge them with – for we know that this same Colonel and Major have been engaged in taking and disposing of horses and other property and that to an extent we were alarmed of . . . We know they have employed soldiers in the pay of the Government to do their dirty work. We know they have consented that soldiers should be engaged in selling liquor and that one of them was and now is this same Colonel’s Orderly.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. Appended to this letter in Col. Bland’s service records is a detailed list of charges against Maj. John W. Fletcher, who was serving, at the time of the alleged charges, as the Provost Marshal at the Post of Otterville. The charges included jayhawking and defrauding the government and violation of the usages and customs of war and included in the charges were multiple specifications of evidence. Blood had Fletcher arrested in May; the Major resigned 6 June 1862.

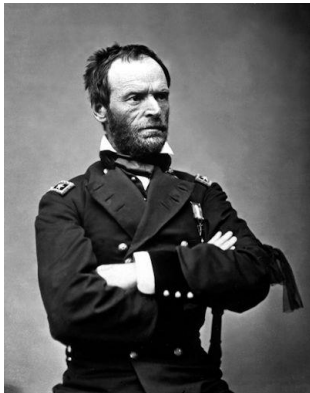
Blood further charged Bland with aiding and abetting robbery; sharing in the proceeds of property fraudulently taken; and defrauding the Government of the United States.

Totten replied with “a complete unflinching and exceedingly mild and gentlemanly answer to the charges preferred against Col. Bland . . . The action of the officers preferring the charges . . . show most evident signs of a malicious combination . . . on a settled determination to drive the latter from the command of this regiment . . . with evidence of insubordination” supporting Bland’s “charges of a combined conspiracy of a most culpable and mutinous character.” He agreed that, while an investigation should be ordered if the necessary men for the purpose and of sufficient rank to do justice to the matter could be spared, but they weren’t available. Totten then tabled the matter due to lack of staff, noting that a Court Martial or Court of Inquiry could not be drawn from the ranks of the Sixth because “there exists too much prejudice to arrive at any wholesome result by the assemblage of such a Court.”<sup>61</sup>

The material remained in Bland’s service records and Blood bided his time, knowing that the poor reputation of the Sixth fell directly on the shoulders of his inept commanding officer.

### May 1862-July 1863: A Very Different War

In the opening weeks of May 1862, the companies of the Sixth were transferred to Pittsburg Landing, Tennessee, where they joined Gen. Halleck’s camp and bivouacked at Shiloh Church, the scene of the first great battle of the Western Theater. They were just under 19 miles from their intended goal of Corinth, Mississippi, where, in a refrain from their service in Missouri, it was believed the rebels “were in great force.” The troops began the painstaking march through densely wooded terrain, sometimes only covering a mile or so a day. On the eighteenth they reached the first parallel before Corinth and the regiment was assigned to the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, commanded by Col. Morgan L. Smith,<sup>62</sup> in the 5<sup>th</sup> Division under the command of Maj. Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman.<sup>63</sup>



Gen. William T. Sherman



Gen. Morgan L. Smith

<sup>61</sup> Ibid. General Totten himself would be cashiered in 1870 for “Disobedience of Orders, Neglect of Duty and Conduct to the Prejudice of Good Order and Military Discipline.”

<sup>62</sup> Morgan L. Smith was promoted Brigadier General in July. Like Blood had the Sixth, he raised the 8<sup>th</sup> Missouri Volunteer Infantry at the outbreak of the war. He commanded the brigade at the capture of Fort Donelson and performed well at Shiloh. He was then transferred to the command of the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade in Sherman’s division. Severely wounded at Chickasaw Bayou, his brother, Col. Giles A. Smith, also of the 8<sup>th</sup>, replaced him as brigadier. The two Smiths and Blood seemed to share a close and respectful relationship.

<sup>63</sup> Service records of 6<sup>th</sup> Missouri Volunteer Infantry, NARA, op. cit., roll 428.

Halleck's troops, which included a division led by Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, had received their first taste of the realities of battle at Shiloh a few weeks before. The troops came out of the bloody victory changed men.

The men have entirely recovered from this "spoiling for a fight," which is invariably assumed to be an attendant of their entrance to the field. They have learned that a battle is a dread reality, not a pastime—that it involves the fearful consequences of suffering and death—that the enemy are not contemptible "secesh," but strong earnest, determined men, led by Generals of profound sagacity and eminent ability. Knowing these things, they are better prepared for the issues which must be met—and they will meet them like sober thinking men—men who appreciate their task, who have full confidence in themselves, their cause, and their leaders.<sup>64</sup>

From this point on, life in the army was going to be very, very different for the men of the Sixth Missouri. The military discipline Gen. Grant attempted to instill in the regiment during his brief assignment in August 1861 was fully in place in Halleck's armies. It had to be: the march to Corinth was not only excruciatingly slow, but the regiment's companies faced Confederate pickets and skirmishers almost every day.

The men of the Sixth were not received with open arms, and Bland—still technically in command—was regarded with ridicule. "Our Regt. at the time of the advance on Corinth was firstly stigmatized as an armed Mob in consequence only, as I believe, of his being its Commander."<sup>65</sup>

During the advance of the Army of the Tennessee on Corinth, after the Battle of Pittsburg Landing,<sup>66</sup> the 6<sup>th</sup> Mo. Vol. Was assigned to my Brigade of Gen. Sherman's Division, Col. Peter E. Bland was in command & the Regt. was in the very worst condition.  
General Morgan L. Smith<sup>67</sup>

Bland took to his sickbed in early June and never left it; Blood was the acting colonel.

As the Union troops closed in on Corinth, the fighting became more intense. Morgan Smith's brigade was in the thick of it. "This was the signal agreed on, and the troops responded beautifully, crossed the field in line of battle, preceded by their skirmishers who carried the position in good style, and pursued the enemy for half a mile beyond."<sup>68</sup> "Eight men were wounded from the ranks of the Sixth, one mortally, 6 severely, and 1 slightly. Two of the Eighth Missouri were wounded severely."<sup>69</sup>

The regiment finally reached Corinth on the 30<sup>th</sup>, only to find it had been evacuated. During the latter part of June and first half of July the Sixth was in or near Grand Junction, La Grange, Moscow, and Lafayette building railroad trestles and bridges, fighting off marauding cavalry detachments from the south, and "waging an everlasting quarrel with planters about their

<sup>64</sup> Galway, "Gen. Halleck's Army, *The New York Times*, 15 May 1862. "Galway" was the pen-name of Franc Bangs Wilkie, who had come to prominence as a correspondent covering the western theater of the war.

<sup>65</sup> John H. Pinney service records, NARA, op cit., roll 438.

<sup>66</sup> Better known as the Battle of Shiloh, 6-7 April 1862.

<sup>67</sup> JHB pension. Letter recommending Blood for consular service, 23 March 1869.

<sup>68</sup> Sherman, *Memoirs*, op. cit., Vol. 1, pp. 279-281.

<sup>69</sup> Report of Col. Morgan L. Smith, Eighth Missouri Infantry, commanding brigade, dated Headquarters, 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 5<sup>th</sup> Division, Army of the Tennessee near Corinth, Miss. 29 May 1862. *OR*, op cit., Series I, Vol. 10.1, pp. 856-857.

negroes and fences—they trying, in the midst of moving armies, to raise a crop of corn.”<sup>70</sup> Despite occasional cavalry attacks, the months of June and the first part of July were fairly quiet in the Western Theater. Not so in the east and Lincoln found it necessary to reassign his generals. General Halleck was sent to the Army of the Potomac. General Grant was to replace him, and in turn, General Sherman took over Grant’s vacated post, and his armies transferred to Memphis.

The Sixth went along to Memphis in mid-July 1862, where things were relatively quiet, quiet enough that Mrs. Sherman “came down with the children to visit.”<sup>71</sup> Sherman enforced battalion and brigade drills so that “when the season approached for active operations further south, I had my division in the best possible order.”<sup>72</sup>

On one Sunday in August, Blood was returning from a dress parade. His horse stumbled badly. He was thrown against the pommel of his saddle injuring his perineum. For days afterwards, he had to be catheterized in order to urinate, something he had to continue to do, on and off, for the rest of his life. His insomnia worsened as a result of the pain.<sup>73</sup> Treated at the military hospital in Memphis, he was released back to active duty. Scar tissue began to form at the neck of his bladder, further interrupting his capacity to urinate and causing what he termed “a seminal weakness.”<sup>74</sup> Eventually, the scar tissue would cause a stricture. Because of the intimate nature of the injury Blood requested that the information not be recorded on record, and had one of his officers, Major James Temple – who had some medical training – assist him with the catheterizations as they were needed.<sup>75</sup>

Col. Bland, still prostrate from gastro-intestinal distress suffered for many long months, tendered his immediate and unconditional resignation on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Unfortunately for Bland, he couldn’t even get this simple task right. Bland also asked for leave in a separate letter. The resignation was approved by Gen. Morgan Smith and was sent up the chain of command to Gen. Grant who sent it back for the required surgeon’s certificate. Bland had mistakenly appended the certificate to his request for leave. Once the certificate was found, it was forwarded to the proper authorities, and his resignation was accepted on 23 August 1862, almost two months after his request to go home. It proved eventually to be a severe blunder for his ambitions.

Perhaps as revenge against his former Lt. Col., Bland wrote Missouri Governor Gamble:

St Louis Sept 22<sup>nd</sup> 1862<sup>76</sup>

Governor:

Permit me to recommend to you for appointment to the vacancy occasioned by my resignation as Colonel of the 6<sup>th</sup> Mo. Vols. Captain Alfred Gibbs of the regular army – a gentleman who is a stranger to me but who, I am assured by those who know him well, is an excellent man and an accomplished officer.

I have the honor to be Respectfully  
Your Obedient Servant  
P. E. Bland

To His Excellency            }  
H. R. Gamble Governor of Missouri }

<sup>70</sup> Sherman, *Memoirs*, op cit., Vol. 1, pp. 286-287.

<sup>71</sup> Sherman *Memoirs*, op cit. Vol. 1, p, 306.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> JHB Pension.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Hamilton Rowan Gamble Papers, Missouri Historical Society, Box 10.



Captain Gibbs is well known to me and has the highest reputation as a soldier among all of his brother officers. I have reason to believe that he will accept the appointment if tendered to him.

Respectfully,  
Frank P. Blair

Unbeknownst to anyone, and certainly not Frank Blair or Alfred Gibbs, Peter Bland had already appealed directly to Governor Gamble of Missouri for reinstatement.<sup>77</sup> He was recommissioned by the governor on the twenty-ninth of September and ordered reinstated on October 22. General Grant ordered him to duty. Though the muster rolls of the Sixth had never removed him from their roster, instead citing “absent, cause unknown,” the implications of Bland’s reinstatement were not lost on the regiment’s officers. Fortunately for them, Bland was subpoenaed to testify in the court martial of Gen. John Fremont’s quartermaster, Justus McKinstry, and was delayed in St. Louis.<sup>78</sup>

A torrent of resignations was handed to Blood, not one of which was sent up the chain of command. Some are formulaic, suggesting collusion, but the intent and the plan of Blood and his men is clear:

Sir: I hereby tender by immediate and unconditional resignation as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut of Co. F, 6<sup>th</sup> Mo. Vol. Inf. For the following reasons.

1<sup>st</sup>. I have no confidence in Col. Bland as a military commander, nor as a Gentleman, and ever can have, as his past conduct as satisfied me. He is neither the one or the other. Since I cannot conscientiously nor willingly serve under him.

2<sup>nd</sup> The 6<sup>th</sup> Mo. Under its present commanding Officer can compare favorably with the best Regiments in the field, but under Col Bland were always an object of ridicule, nor never was Skilled or Disciplined; and I have every reason to believe that upon the resumption of its command by Col. Bland it will relax into its former condition. This to me would be deeply mortifying, and I do not wish to remain to see it.

3<sup>rd</sup>. It is my belief that the restitution of Peter E. Bland as Col soon of his having resigned was effected by false and disparaging representation on his part, and can but regard it as an act of injustice to the Regiment and as detrimental to all of its best interests.<sup>79</sup>

Sir: I hereby tender my immediate and unconditional resignation as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. Of Company “P” 6<sup>th</sup> Regiment Mo. Vols. Inf. For the following reasons.

1<sup>st</sup>. I have no confidence in our present Colonel Peter E. Bland as a Military Commander, or faith in him as a Gentleman. Our Regt. At the time of the advance on Corinth was firstly stigmatized as an armed Mob in consequence only, as I believe, of his being its Commander as I know that our men are brave and true.

2<sup>nd</sup>. After nearly, or quite, fourteen months of persistent efforts, the Officers of the Sixth Succeeded in ridding themselves of him, as their Colonel Commanding but he, by Political or other influences, has again forced himself upon us against the wishes of three fourths of the Officers of the Regiment, and, nine tenths of the privates, as I have good reasons to believe. I think therefor I can no longer serve with honor to myself or respectfulness to my Country under a man in whom I have not the least faith as a military

<sup>77</sup> Peter E. Bland service records, NARA, op cit., roll 428.

<sup>78</sup> Fremont had managed to create a scapegoat in McKinstry and thus escaped reprimand.

<sup>79</sup> 10 November 1862, Edward R. Messenger service records, NARA, op cit., roll 435.

commander, and one who I am well assured does not possess [*sic*] the Confidence of either Officers or Privates of this Regiment.<sup>80</sup>

Blood finally managed to do what he could not earlier in the year. A review was ordered, and after seeing the documents in Bland's file, the matter was referred to Lincoln with a recommendation for discharge. The president assigned a military board to review the case and charges against Bland. He was dishonorably discharged by the Secretary of War based on an "adverse report approved by the President" Special Order No. 407 of the War Department.<sup>81</sup>

James H. Blood was promoted Colonel of the Sixth on December 22, but it took a few months for the promotion (and pay raise) to make its way through military bureaucracy.

Camp 6<sup>th</sup> o. Infy. Vols.<sup>82</sup>  
In Front of Vicksburg, January 25, 1863

To His Excellency  
Gov. H.R. Gamble,

Sir: The undersigned commissioned officers of the Sixth Regiment Missouri Infantry Volunteers, fully appreciating the superior military ability, intrinsic worth and high moral and social qualities of Lieutenant Col. James H. Blood, take this method of testifying our entire confidence in and respect for him as a commanding officer. He has been in active service during the past twenty months and has proven himself a brave soldier on the field, a strict disciplinarian and an honest and careful commander.

We would, therefore, respectfully request that you commission him to fill the vacancy occasioned by Special Order No. 407, War Department, A.G.O., Washington, Dec. 22, 1862, an official copy of which is herewith enclosed.

Signed:

F.A. Bragg, Capt., Co. A.  
L. Williams, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt., Co. A.  
C.C. Fletcher, Capt. Co. B.  
Theo. Harrington, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt., Co. B.  
J.G. Rhomberg, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt., Co. B.  
Chas. Adams, Capt., Co. C.  
William S. Jewell, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt., Co. C.  
George H. Stockman, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt., Co. C.  
Jas. S. Gage, Capt., Co. D.  
F.P. Rush, Capt. Co. E.  
Solomon Males, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt., Co. E.  
Ira Boutell, Capt., Co. F.  
J.S. Needham, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt., Co. F.

E.R. Messenger, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt., Co. F.  
Wm. Hollister, Capt. Co. G.  
D. van Deusen, Capt. Co. H.  
I.L. Perley, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Co. H.  
P.G. Galoin, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt., Co. H.  
D.C. Ketcheson, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt., Co. I.  
John H. Pinney, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt., Co. I.  
Robert H. Buck, Capt., Co. K.  
Edwin Stanton, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt., Co. K.  
James S. Temple, Major.  
John H. Blood, Quartermaster.  
Wm. Wolf, Adjutant.

Endorsed:

Hd.Qrs. 15<sup>th</sup> Army Corps  
Jany 27, 1863.

<sup>80</sup> 21 November 1862, John H. Pinney service records, NARA, op cit., roll 436. Among others who handed in letters of resignation were 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Theodore Harrington; 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. L.W. Williams, who noted "the 6<sup>th</sup> properly commanded by one entitled to confidence and respect from subordinate officers is one of the best Regiments in the service;" and Maj. James S. Temple, who noted Bland's vehement opposition to his promotion.

<sup>81</sup> Peter E. Bland Service Records, NARA, op cit., roll 428. The decision was reviewed in April 1864, and it was determined that Bland's health had not been taken into consideration. His dishonorable discharge was reversed to 'honorable.' By this time, Blood and many of the men of the Sixth had left the service. Bland never reassumed his position.

<sup>82</sup> JHB Pension.

I most heartily approve the within and add that Lt. Col. Blood is entitled to this promotion by patient and earnest labor to make the regiment what it now is. To withhold from him so merited a promotion would be an act of injustice that I know Gov. Gamble would not think of.

W.T. Sherman  
Maj. Genl. Cmdg.

Headquarters, 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 2<sup>nd</sup> Division  
15<sup>th</sup> Army Corps, January 26, 1863.

Approved and respectfully forwarded. Lieut. Col. Blood commanded his Regiment with distinguished honor at the Battles of Vicksburg and Arkansas Post, where they made for themselves a reputation second to none in the Army. He has been in command of the Regiment for the last eight months, and has their entire confidence.

Giles A. Smith  
Col. 8<sup>th</sup> Mo. Vol. Inf.  
Comdg 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade.

Hd. Qrs, 2<sup>nd</sup> Division, 15<sup>th</sup> Army Corps,  
Camp before Vicksburg  
27 January 1863.

Approved and respectfully forwarded with a recommendation that Col. Blood be commissioned to date from the date of the order dismissal Col. Bland—Col. Blood having in fact ever since been in command of the Regt.

D. Stuart  
Brig. Genl Cmdg 2<sup>nd</sup> Div.

Perhaps reflecting Peter Bland's political influence, but more likely Gov. Gamble's rejection of Republican beliefs, the governor's endorsement of the promotion remarked "approved though I have no faith in this man."<sup>83</sup>

There were no celebrations, neither of Blood's promotion nor Christmas as the troops remained in their transport steamers waiting for orders from Sherman. "Nobody knew what it [*their presence in Mississippi*] meant, and every body was suffering from listlessness and ennui. A few ineffectual attempts were made to get up Christmas festivities, but the usual staples were *non est*, and the day dragged its slow length along as dismally as can be imagined."<sup>84</sup>

Sherman had already received orders that would set into motion one of the more violent and futile early encounters of the Western Theater, but one that would eventually lead to victory and a change to the course of the war. Sherman was ordered to proceed to the vicinity of Vicksburg and "proceed to the reduction of that place."

In the present instance, our object is to secure the navigation of the Mississippi River and its main branches, and to hold them as military channels of communication and for commercial purposes. The river, above Vicksburg, has been gained by conquering the country to its rear, rendering its possession by our enemy useless and unsafe to him, and of great value to us. But the enemy still holds the river from Vicksburg to Baton Rouge, navigating it with his boats, and the possession of it enables him to connect his communications and routes of supply, east and west. To deprive him of this will be a severe blow, and, if done effectually, will be of great advantage to us, and probably the most decisive act of the war. To accomplish this important result we are to act our part—an important one of the great whole. General [*Nathaniel P.*] Banks, with a large force, has re-

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Moore, *Rebellion*, op cit., pp. 310-319.

enforced General [*Benjamin*] Butler in Louisiana, and from that quarter an expedition, by water and land, is coming northward, General Grant, with the Thirteenth Army Corps, of which we compose the right wing, is moving southward. The naval squadron (Admiral Porter)<sup>85</sup> is operating with his gunboat fleet by water, each in perfect harmony with the other.<sup>86</sup>

General Grant was supposed to join Sherman's 'right wing' of the army but was delayed by an attack on his own troops. The information never reached Sherman.

Most of the individual company reports in the regimental records are terse in describing the next few days, many only giving bare details of their losses. Companies A and I were the exceptions by concluding their reports with "We were obliged to retire but not until our men had covered themselves with glory and won praises even from the enemy."<sup>87</sup> Company and regimental reports of course do not expand out to the whole Division.

Contemporary press accounts of the battle were colorful but chilling:

The Sixth Missouri regiment under command of Lieut. Col. Blood, was detailed to lead the van. It was necessary first to send two companies over to dig away the bank so that when the brigade came over it could rush up and storm the works. The duty was so perilous that Colonel Blood was unwilling to detail any companies, and called for volunteers—one company to take picks and spades, and the other muskets. Company F, Captain Bouton [*sic, Boutell*], and company K, Captain Buck, volunteered for the duty. The plan was to make an excavation under the bank, without breaking the surface through, but so that it could be caved in at any moment. Amid the plaudits of their comrades, the two brave companies started on their perilous march. A perfect storm of bullets met them on the way, and with the loss of more than a tenth of their number, they effected the crossing. No more desperate enterprise was ever undertaken, and none more successfully achieved. Once under the protection of the bank, they commenced plying pick and spade in a manner indicating their appreciation of the fact that they had no time to spare.

In the mean time, to keep down the enemy's sharp-shooters, who were endeavoring to reach over and fire at them down them bank, the Thirteenth regulars were posted on the right, and the batteries from General Steele's and General Morgan's divisions on the left. These kept up a continual fire until the work was completed . . . The heavy firing from Gen. Morgan's division, which was to have been the signal, not being heard, and the excavation under the bank being completed, the men sheltered themselves under it the best they could and waited as patiently as the circumstances would permit for the next move. Our sharp-shooters of the Thirteenth regulars still kept up a fire to prevent firing from the bank, and in some instances their aim was too low, and the consequence was that they shot dead two of their own men. The men sent up a shout, "Fire higher," and the

---

<sup>85</sup> David Dixon Porter (1813-1891) was the second US Navy officer ever to attain the rank of admiral. Porter had commanded an independent flotilla of mortar boats at the capture of New Orleans, after which he was advanced to the rank of acting rear admiral in command of the Mississippi River Squadron. The cooperation with General Grant at Vicksburg contributed to the city's capture. After the war he became Superintendent of the Naval Academy and initiated reforms to the curriculum to increase professionalism. In the early days of Grant's presidency, he was the de facto Secretary of the Navy.

Although on their initial meeting both men were suspicious of one another, Porter's friendship with Sherman developed quickly and lasted until their deaths, one day apart, in 1891. His relationship with U.S. Grant was also close, but it was more strictly professional

<sup>86</sup> Sherman, *Memoirs*, op cit., Vol. 1, pp. 315-316.

<sup>87</sup> Regiment service records, 6<sup>th</sup> Missouri, NARA, op cit., roll 428.

rebels on the banks attempted to drown their voices by superior numbers shouting: “Fire lower.” The parties were so close together that when the rebels reached their guns over the bank and depressed them, those below could easily have crossed bayonets with them. Conversation could easily be carried on, and one rebel cried out: “What regiment is below?” On being answered that it was the “Sixth Missouri,” he replied: “It is too brave a regiment to be on the wrong side.”

It was now nearly evening, and the men had tasted no food since before day, and one of them called out: “Have you got anything to eat up there, I’m hungry?” Immediately a large loaf of cornbread was thrown on the bank to them, and was welcomed heartily. The signal for the assault still being unheard, and a heavy rain coming up, it was deemed advisable by Capt. Bouton [*Boutell*] to send back a messenger for further orders, and private Mallsby volunteered to undertake the dangerous exploit. He crossed in safety, and in a few minutes the remainder of the gallant Sixth, led by Lieut. Col. Blood, started over to their assistance, amid a renewed shower of bullets, and made the passage with the loss of one sixth their number. Col. Blood was wounded in the left shoulder by a ball, which, striking against a memorandum, glanced, or it would have passed through the body. His wound is not dangerous. Lieutenant Vance was the only officer killed. By the time Lieut.-Col. Blood got his regiment across, the day was hopelessly lost by the repulse of the army at other points, and about dark he received orders to retire at discretion. Under cover of the rain and darkness he brought his regiment back, a company at a time, until all were over, without the loss of a man, and only two wounded slightly. . . Not until the night was pitchy dark did the firing all cease, and floods of rain were now descending as if we were to have a second edition of Noah. The ground where the fighting was down was all low and marshy, and soon the water and mud were several inches deep. No preparations, whatever, had been made for the wounded, all the accommodations having been exhausted on the wounded of the day before, and all that pitiless night and all the next day, the wounded lay in their agony on that oozy bed, under a soaking rain, uncared for, and many who had fallen on their faces and were unable to turn themselves, smothered in the mud, and many more died from the exposure. It was horrible to think of. . . Gen. Sherman expressed himself as well satisfied with the behavior of all his troops, but said the Sixth Missouri deserved to be immortalized. General Stuart said he never read of more historic conduct in the annals of warfare.<sup>88</sup>

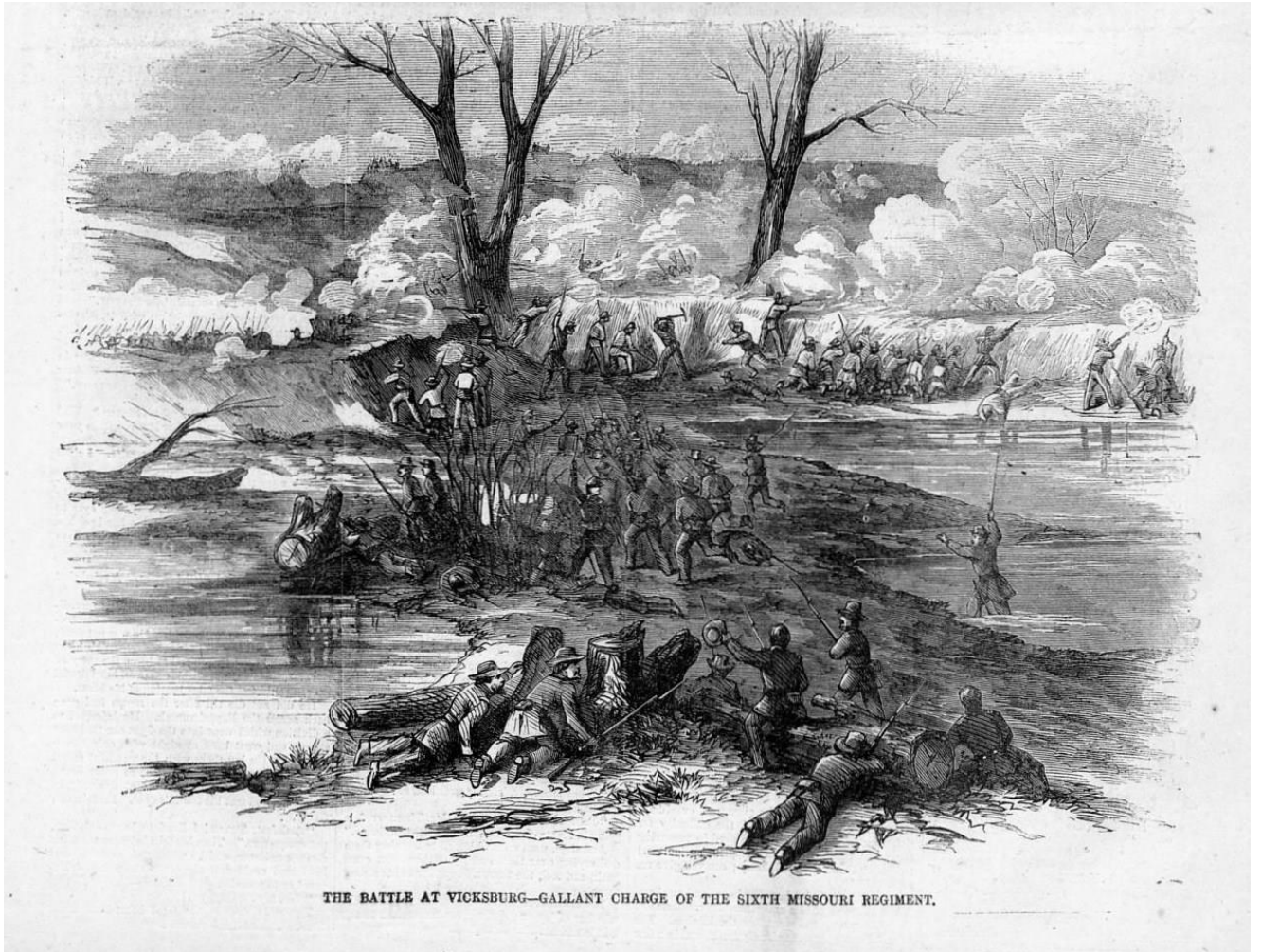
Accounts of the events even made *Harper’s Weekly* on 31 January 1863:

The picture given below illustrates one of the most daring feats of arms ever attempted in the progress of this war, and not surpassed by anything in the annals of warfare. When General Morgan L. Smith's division of General Sherman's command undertook to storm the enemy's works on the banks of the bayou in the rear of Vicksburg, the Sixth Regiment of Missouri Volunteers, under command of Lieutenant-Colonel Blood, was detailed for the advance. The enemy's works were very strong, there being a steep bank of thirty feet high to ascend, fortified with breast-works and rifle-pits, with a heavy force drawn up in line of battle behind them. The only approach was by a road across a sand-bar in the bayou, exposed to a double cross-fire from the enemy, and the only way of ascending the bank was by cutting a road. An order was received for two companies to be sent over in advance for the purpose of cutting the road—one with picks and shovels, and the other with muskets to protect the workers front the enemy's sharp-

<sup>88</sup> Document 91, “General Sherman’s Expedition. *Missouri “Democrat” Account*. Milliken’s Bend, La., 3 January 1863 printed in Frank Moore, ed. *The Rebellion Record: A Diary of American Events, with Documents, Narratives, Illustrative Incidents, Poetry, Etc.*, Vol. 6, D. Van Nostrand, New York, 1866, pp. 315-317.

shooters in the rifle-pits over their heads. Company F, Captain Boutell, and Company K, Captain Buck, were the first to volunteer, the peril being so great that Colonel Blood was reluctant to order a detail. Their services were accepted, and the two companies of heroes went across under a most terrific fire, which left more than a tenth of their number stretched upon the sand. On getting across they immediately commenced operations on the bank, and very soon made a large excavation, almost sufficient for the purpose, when the position of the enemy's forces and batteries were found to be such that the further prosecution of the attempt would be certain destruction to all concerned in it, and without accomplishing any thing. In the mean time Lieutenant-Colonel Blood, with the balance of the regiment, had crossed over to their support, but with still greater loss, one-sixth of his force being killed or wounded.

Shortly afterward, the attempt being found impracticable, the regiment was recalled; and under cover of our guns, and favored by approaching darkness and a heavy shower of rain, succeeded in returning without further loss. During the whole time the regiment was crossing, and while it was under the bank, it was exposed to a heavy crossfire which threatened it with annihilation; but it never faltered or hesitated, but marched steadily on, apparently heedless of the storm of bullets which assailed it. Private M'Gee was shot four times, and thirteen bullets penetrated his clothing. As he lay upon the bank, unable to proceed, the enemy's balls still came whistling around him, and to protect himself he scooped a hole with his hands in the sand and crawled into it. The Sixth Regiment Missouri Volunteers has certainly won a niche in the temple of fame. Notwithstanding the ill success of the attack on Vicksburg, such exploits as this will redeem the history of the affair in the memory of our soldiers.



Harper's Weekly, 31 January 1863, drawing of Chickasaw Bayou

For comparison, a photograph taken at the site by Matthew Brady's crew of photographers at about the same date:



Library of Congress

Sherman's reports and memoirs, and those of his generals show that Chickasaw Bayou was, simply put, a disaster.

On our right was another wide bayou, known as Old River; and on the left still another, much narrower, but too deep to be forded, known as Chickasaw Bayou. All the island was densely wooded, except Johnson's plantation, immediately on the bank of the Yazoo, and a series of old cotton-fields along Chickasaw Bayou. . . We met light resistance at all points, but skirmished, on the 27<sup>th</sup>, up to the main bayou, that separated our position from the bluffs of Vicksburg, which were found to be strong by nature and by art, and seemingly well defended. On reconnoitering the front in person, during the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, I became satisfied . . . that the main bayou was impassable, except at two points—one near the head of Chickasaw Bayou, in front of Morgan, and the other about a mile lower down, in front of M. L. Smith's division.

During the general reconnoissance of the 28<sup>th</sup> General Morgan L. Smith received a severe and dangerous wound in his hip,<sup>89</sup> which completely disabled him and compelled him to go to his steamboat, leaving the command of his division to Brigadier-General D. Stuart . . . the Sixth Missouri Infantry, at heavy loss, had also crossed the bayou at the narrow passage lower down, but could not ascend the steep bank; right over their heads was a rebel battery, whose fire was in a measure kept down by our sharpshooters (Thirteenth United States Infantry) posted behind logs, stumps, and trees, on our side of the bayou.

The men of the Sixth Missouri actually scooped out with their hands caves in the bank, which sheltered them against the fire of the enemy, who, right over their heads, held their muskets outside the parapet vertically, and fired down. So critical was the position, that we

---

<sup>89</sup> Smith would never fully return to action, though he did return to duty in late 1863.



could not recall the men till after dark, and then one at a time. Our loss had been pretty heavy, and we had accomplished nothing, and had inflicted little loss on our enemy. At first I intended to renew the assault, but soon became satisfied that, the enemy's attention having been drawn to the only two practicable points, it would prove too costly, and accordingly resolved to look elsewhere for a point below Haines's bluff, or Blake's plantation.<sup>90</sup>

Chickasaw Bayou was the battle that most matured the Sixth into a fighting force. What the men did on that day as reflected in the report of Col. Giles A. Smith:

One company of the sixth Missouri, with a working party of 20 men, were ordered to cross and try to construct a road up the bank. Company F, Captain Boutell commanding, volunteered for this purpose. Captain Buck, of Company K, also volunteered to take charge of the working party.

As soon as this was effected the Sixth Missouri, Lieutenant-Colonel Blood commanding was to cross. When they gained the opposite bank the Eighth Missouri, Lieutenant-Colonel Coleman commanding, was to follow; then the one hundred and sixteenth Illinois. . . after which the Thirteenth U.S Infantry. At the signal for crossing, which was heavy firing from General Morgan's division . . . Company F, with the working party, crossed, but found the only effective service they could render was to dig through the bank which work they immediately commenced . . . I immediately ordered the Sixth to cross, which they did in fine style under a heavy fire. They formed under the opposite bank, where they were comparatively safe from the enemy's fire . . . The enemy were now being heavily reinforced. A battery of four guns was placed not over 40 yards from where we were digging though the levee, and at dark we still had but the narrow path up the bank, the opposite side of which was defended by as many men as could be effectively placed behind it. To attempt a charge up such a defended position in two ranks I considered utterly impracticable. I therefore deployed the Eighth Missouri to strengthen the Thirteenth U.S. Infantry and Fifty-fourth Ohio volunteers as sharpshooters, and ordered Lieutenant-Colonel Blood to recross, which, under the cover of darkness, but through heavy firing, he soon accomplished.

Lieutenant-Colonel Blood, of the sixth Missouri, together with all his officers and men (with the exception of the commissioned officers of Company E, who deserted their company, which was gallantly led by Second Sergt. John F. Bailey),<sup>91</sup> displayed the most gallant conduct throughout the whole affair. Lieutenant-Colonel Blood, although considerably injured in the breast by a spent ball, and requiring the assistance of 2 men to help him along, remained in command of his regiment.<sup>92</sup>

Contrary to the biographies of Blood's second wife, this is the only record of a gunshot wound in Blood's military or pension records.<sup>93</sup> He may have had minor wounds that were never

<sup>90</sup> Sherman, *Memoirs*, op cit., Vol. 1, pp. 318-320.

<sup>91</sup> Capt. Francis Rush was placed under arrest by Blood immediately after the battle. He resigned shortly after. The commentary of the chain of command on his resignation is telling. Blood refused his resignation with the statement that he had made application to have him mustered out of the service for "cowardice shown before Vicksburg." Giles Smith forwarded the resignation to Gen. Sherman with recommendation that the resignation be accepted "because it is the quickest mode of disposing of a useless officer." Sherman ordered his dismissal. Francis Rush Service Records, NARA, op cit., roll 436.

<sup>92</sup> *OR*, op cit., Series 1, Vol. 17.1, pp. 633-4.

<sup>93</sup> See Sachs, *The Terrible Siren*, Goldsmith, *Other Powers* and Underhill, *The Woman Who Ran For President*, Gabriel, *Notorious Victoria*, among others. The actual number of gun-shot wounds varies between the biographers.

reported to the field hospital, but they would have been insignificant compared to this one; this wound not only required treatment, but drew the notice of General Sherman himself. While a spent Minnie ball could still inflict considerable damage, had it been a live round, Blood would have been dead.<sup>94</sup> Although “spent,” or ricocheted, the ball still hit Blood with tremendous force: it entered the skin below his left clavicle, flattened and lodged there, despite going through several layers of clothing and a memoranda book filled with papers. He was treated at the field hospital, and immediately began to feel the effects. The ball had damaged the brachial plexus of nerves. Blood’s left arm grew numb and partially paralyzed “to the extent of his having to carry it in a sling for some time,”<sup>95</sup> and he suffered from the rest of his life.<sup>96</sup> Over time, his arm and the left side of his body atrophied, and he began to experience heart issues, in part as a result of the compression of the left side of his body.<sup>97</sup>

There was to be no rest and immortalization would have to wait until press reports reached the men’s homes. One of the most politically motivated generals in Lincoln’s army, General John A. McClernand, took command of the Army of the Mississippi on orders from the president. He had plans of glory, and sought to out-manuever Grant to win the attention of the president. McClernand arrived at the mouth of the Yazoo river and sent orders for Sherman and Admiral Porter to report directly to him. He immediately reorganized the Army of the Mississippi. Sherman’s Army of the Tennessee was disbanded and reassigned, though Sherman retained command of his Corps.<sup>98</sup>

McClernand was roundly disliked as a “political general,” it soon became clear that the feeling was mutual from not only his fellow officers, but also the ranks. “I soon discovered that any admiral, Grant, Sherman, or all the generals in the army, were nobody in his estimation.”<sup>99</sup> Admiral David Porter, whose gunboats were instrumental in the Vicksburg campaign didn’t mince words. “General McClernand had about as much idea of what a gunboat was, or could do, as the man in the moon. He did not know the difference between an ironclad and a “tin-clad.”<sup>100</sup>

McClernand took it upon himself to attack Fort Hindman, better known as “Arkansas Post,” 117 miles below Little Rock. It was a fairly easy, and certainly not strategic, target, but it was one that McClernand apparently hoped would curry favor with the President and further his career. 129 men were killed, 831 were wounded and it was an almost pointless Union victory.

---

The mythology of Blood’s numerous gunshot wounds seems to have come from Sachs’ interview with Blood’s future step-son, Irving S. Fogg, where he stated that Blood claimed to have been shot five times “and did display five body wounds.” [Emanie (Nahm) Sachs Phillips Papers, Western Kentucky University Archives, MSS 317, Box 5, Folder 1.] Sachs described Fogg as being ‘alternately belligerent and expansive,’ and implied that he would spend up to two million dollars if a lawsuit was necessary if her book slandered the Fogs.

<sup>94</sup> A Minnie is a muzzle-loaded rifled bullet, and as such contributed to greater accuracy and range when fired. The other devastating effect of the Minnie was that, because of its velocity, the ball tended to cut a straight path through flesh. It could cause bone to shatter – that was the intent of its inventor – and resulted in the notorious number of Civil War battlefield amputations.

<sup>95</sup> Affidavit of John A. Blood, JHB pension.

<sup>96</sup> See extensive testimony of fellow officers, treating physicians, and Blood himself in JHB pension. Of particular interest is the affidavit of G.S. Walker, M.D., surgeon of the Sixth, certified that he had treated Blood for the damage to his urethra as well as the gun shot wound.

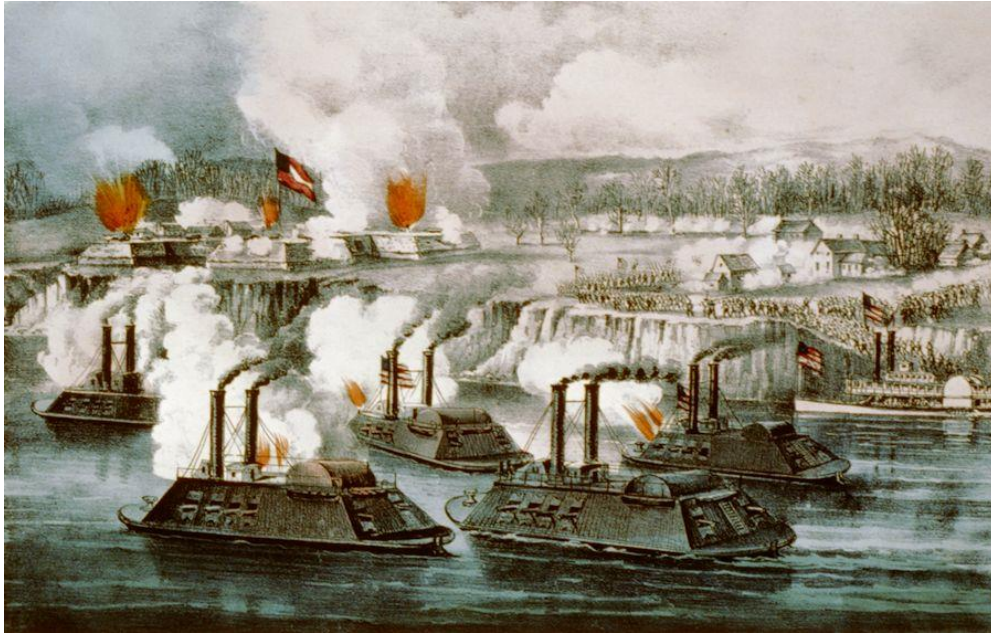
<sup>97</sup> JHB pension.

<sup>98</sup> Sherman, *Memoirs*, op cit., Vol. 1, pp. 318-320.

<sup>99</sup> Extract from Admiral Porter’s Journal, published in Sherman, *Memoirs*, op cit., Vol. 1, appendix 1, “Arkansas Post,” pp. 445-446.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

Blood, ignoring his gun-shot wound, was at the battle, and again the Sixth drew praise from their commanding officers.



Battle of Arkansas Post, Currier and Ives, Library of Congress

What McClelland did not realize, as he celebrated his victory, was that Grant was still his superior, via a confidential order of the War Department, endorsed by Lincoln.<sup>101</sup> “I was up at General Grant’s headquarters, and we talked over all these things with absolute freedom,” Sherman wrote, “Charles A. Dana,<sup>102</sup> Assistant Secretary of War, was there, and

<sup>101</sup> Sherman, *Memoirs*, op cit., Vol. 1, pp, 331-333.

<sup>102</sup> Sherman’s statement here is an anachronism, Dana was not the Assistant Secretary until 1864. However, Dana’s life is worth a brief explanation because of many intersections with Blood in later his own later years.

Early in life Dana had been a radical thinker and member of the utopian Fourierist community at Brook Farm. At the time, he wrote for the Spiritualist publication, *The Harbinger*, which espoused Fourier’s concepts of socialism. Immediately prior to the Civil War, Dana (1819-1897) was managing editor and a top aide to Horace Greeley at the influential Republican newspaper the *New York Tribune*. After a disagreement with Greeley, in 1862 Dana resigned. Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, a noted Radical Republican, immediately made Dana a special investigating agent of the War Department. Dana was often in the field, having been charged with discovering frauds committed by quartermasters and contractors following on the effects of the Fremont/McKinstry scandal. His reports to Stanton included observations about the capacities and methods of Lincoln’s many generals in the field. Originally asked to investigate rumors of Grant’s alcoholism, Dana spent considerable time with the general, becoming a close friend, and did much to alleviate the administrations concerns about Grant. Dana went through the Vicksburg and Chattanooga Campaigns, and it was he who urged placing Grant in supreme command of all the Union armies. After Grant’s promotion in 1864, Dana was appointed Assistant Secretary of War. In 1868, Dana became editor and part-owner of the *New York Sun* a position he held until his death. Although it supported Grant’s candidacy in 1868; in 1872, the paper supported Horace Greeley, reflecting Dana’s disillusion with the corruption in the Grant administration.

Under Dana, the *Sun* became a Democratic newspaper, freely expressing opinions about the affairs of both parties. In 1873, the Grant Administration, after Dana’s outspoken criticisms of maladministration in the White House, attempted to sue Dana for libel, the case to be tried without a jury in a Washington police court. The warrant was refused on the grounds that the proposed trial would be unconstitutional.

Wilson,<sup>103</sup> Rawlins,<sup>104</sup> Frank Blair, McPherson,<sup>105</sup> etc. We all knew, what was notorious, that General McClernand was still intriguing against General Grant in hopes to regain command of the whole expedition.”<sup>106</sup>

Grant, furious at McClernand’s Arkansas Post diversion from his overall strategy in the Vicksburg campaign, resumed personal command and disbanded McClernand’s Army of the Mississippi. The campaign to seize Vicksburg was finally underway for good.

On March 3, Blood applied for a leave of absence “to go to St. Louis on business of the most pressing importance, which demands my personal attention.” The leave was approved with the endorsement of General Sherman: “Col. Blood is one of my best and most reliable officers. If furlough or Leave of Absence are allowed I recommend this. Col. Blood was wounded at Vicksburg but did not even ask for a leave.”<sup>107</sup>

In the coming months, the Sixth was with the Union army under Grant as it pressed forward towards Vicksburg. The campaign was not easy, nor insignificant, and the Sixth had finally got down to their military business and were now operating as a unit of seasoned men. The events of 23 May 1863 led to the awards the Medal of Honor—at the time the only medal awarded—to two men of the Sixth, both privates.<sup>108</sup> The army laid siege to the city, and finally won the day when Vicksburg surrendered on the Fourth of July 1863. The Mississippi River was open from New Orleans to the north and the Confederacy was cut in two. It was clear to Lincoln, thanks to Dana’s and Rawlins’s observations, that he finally had the general he needed in Grant.

---

In 1884, the *Sun*, and Dana, supported the Greenback-Labor candidate, Senator (and former General) Benjamin Butler while bitterly opposing Democrat Grover Cleveland. It is worth noting here that Colonel Blood was a committed Greenbacker and longtime friend of Butler’s. Senator Butler was an early supporter of Blood’s second wife, Victoria Woodhull, and was instrumental in arranging her appearance before the Judiciary Committee in 1871. He also acted as the couple’s representative in an attempt to recoup damages from the federal government after the 1872 Comstock litigation.

When Dana came out in support of Butler in 1884, Blood owned and edited a newspaper that advocated the Greenback cause (see *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, 7 July 1879, “Greenback-Labor Chronicle,” *Greenough’s Directory of the Inhabitants, Institutions, Manufacturing Establishments, Societies, Etc., in the Cities of Lewiston and Auburn for 1880-81*; *The Quincy Daily Whig*, 10 September 1880, p. 1, col. 4, “The Big Battle;” “The Maine Greenbackers,” *New York Tribune*, 22 May 1880, p. 1.

Late in life Dana became an extreme conservative; in 1896 Benjamin Tucker (one of Victoria Woodhull’s purported lovers) published a collection of Dana’s early radical manuscripts in an effort to expose the publisher’s radical past. See Charles Anderson Dana, *Recollections of the Civil War*, D. Appleton and Company, 1909; James Harrison Wilson, *The Life of Charles A. Dana*, Harper & Brothers, 1907; and Janet E. Steele, *The Sun Shines for All, Journalism and Ideology in the Life of Charles A. Dana*, Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1993

<sup>103</sup> General James H. Wilson (1837-1925) who was, at the time, inspector general of Grant’s army. A topographical engineer, he had recently been transferred from McClellan’s army to Grant’s.

<sup>104</sup> Brigadier General John A. Rawlins (1831-1869) was a long-time confidant of General Grant, having served with him from the beginning of the war. Rawlins had been a lawyer in Galena, Illinois, where he became friends with Grant and persuaded the future general to muster and drill a local volunteer company to answer Lincoln’s call. The two men’s careers became entwined: as Grant rose in rank, so did Rawlins, when Grant won the presidency, Rawlings became his secretary of war.

<sup>105</sup> Major General James B. McPherson (1828-1864) was a career army officer who, at this time, had been in the western theater, first under Halleck (being assigned to St. Louis in 1861) then under Grant prior to the battles of Forts Henry and Donelson in early 1862. Following Shiloh he was promoted in rapid succession and given the command of the XVII Corps in Grant’s Army of the Tennessee. When Sherman was promoted to command all the armies of the west in March 1864, McPherson replaced him as commander of the Army of the Tennessee. He was killed in 1864 during the opening skirmishes of the Battle of Atlanta.

<sup>106</sup> Sherman, *Memoirs*, op cit., Vol. 1, p. 343.

<sup>107</sup> James H. Blood service records, NARA, op cit., roll 428. What his business was is not known.

<sup>108</sup> Private Henry F. Frizzell, Co. B, and Private Joseph S. Labill, Co. C.

In the fall of 1863, Blood, probably still suffering from the effects of his gunshot and other wounds of months earlier, was assigned to preside over the committee for examining candidates for the Signal Corps. With him was Lt. Col. J. H. Hammond, Sherman's trusted right-hand man and adjutant general. The board reviewed 21 applicants and passed twelve after examining their skills in topography, reading, penmanship, composition, arithmetic, chemistry, philosophy, surveying and signaling.

In October, General Nathaniel Banks, Commanding the Department of the Gulf from New Orleans needed a staff officer and requested Blood's temporary re-assignment. Subsequent events indicate the request was ignored, but Blood's abilities and efficiency were recognized outside of the milieu of Sherman's corps.

Instead, Blood rejoined the Sixth. In June, Col. Giles A. Smith had been promoted to Brigadier General during the attacks on Vicksburg, taking command of his brother's First Brigade.<sup>109</sup> Ira Boutell was promoted to Lt. Col. and had assumed Blood's duties in that capacity. In July, Gen. Smith was wounded, and Blood was sent to command the First Brigade,<sup>110</sup> a position he held for several months.

The coming months were involved with chasing down Confederates in Tennessee in the Chattanooga Campaign – the Battle of Missionary Ridge being the most notable of the encounters. Nothing the Sixth faced had anywhere near the threat to their lives as they had seen at Chickasaw Bayou. Military life, and war, had become routine.

For the companies of the Sixth, the Chattanooga Campaign involved months of marching—literally hundreds of miles of marching—every mile duly noted in the regimental records. The men, with the rest of Sherman's men, were tired and needed a break.

It will thus appear that we have been constantly in motion since our departure from the Big Black, in Mississippi until the present moment. . . In reviewing the facts, I must do justice to the men of my command for the patience, cheerfulness, and courage which officers and men have displayed throughout, in battle, on the march, and in camp. For long periods, without regular rations or supplies of any kind, they have marched through mud and over rocks, sometimes barefooted, without a murmur. Without a moment's rest after a march of over four hundred miles, without sleep for three successive nights, we crossed the Tennessee, fought our part in the battle of Chattanooga, pursued the enemy out of Tennessee, and then turned more than a hundred and twenty miles north and compelled Longstreet to raise the siege of Knoxville, which gave so much anxiety to the whole country. It is hard to realize the importance of these events without recalling the memory of the general feeling which pervaded all minds at Chattanooga prior to our arrival. I cannot speak of the Fifteenth Army Corps without a seeming vanity but as I am no longer its commander, I assert there is no better body of soldiers in America than it. I wish all feel a just pride in its real honors.<sup>111</sup>

In December, the Sixth Missouri was transferred to their "winter headquarters" in Alabama.<sup>112</sup> Blood, sick with the bronchitis he caught as a result of the strenuous early winter marches through Tennessee, coupled with its effects on his wounds, applied for leave. It was approved to begin January 6, 1864. He went home to St. Louis on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1863.

---

<sup>109</sup> Gen. Morgan L. Smith, wounded at Chickasaw Bayou, would not return to duty for some months.

<sup>110</sup> He did so under General Orders No. 19. James H. Blood Service Records, roll 428.

<sup>111</sup> Sherman, *Memoirs* (1875 ed.), op cit., Vol. 1, pp. 369-385. General John A. Logan briefly succeeded to the command of the Fifteenth, relieving Frank P. Blair who had been in temporary command.

<sup>112</sup> Grant soon did away with the notion of seasonal fighting in an effort to wear down the Confederate armies.

In the fall of 1863 the above difficulties [Blood's wounds] together with the severe campaign of the 15<sup>th</sup> Army Corps, that culminated in the battle of Mission Ridge and the forced march to Knoxville to relieve General Burnside reduced me so much, that when the army returned to Chattanooga and the 15<sup>th</sup> Corps went into camp at Larkinsville Ala., where I was in command of our Brigade (the 1<sup>st</sup> of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Div.) I was compelled to ask for leave of absence on sick furlough.<sup>113</sup>

A general furlough was ordered for the Sixth, and most of the men also returned to their homes in February. On 2 April 1864, from St. Louis, Blood resigned his commission, which was accepted.

I left for St. Louis December 31, 1863. My furlough was extended from time to time on account of my health until my regiment came home on veterans furlough. During this furlough I tendered my resignation as Colonel of the regiment and it was accepted by General Rosecranz. I did not resign because I wanted to leave the service, but because my family physician Dr. Duncan MacRae advised me to do so; and especially because Gov. Hall, the then "Copperhead" Governor of Missouri utterly repudiated my recommendations for promotions in my regiment, and insisted on appointing civilians to the vacant line offices over my experienced Sergeants & Corporals. This insult to the regiment and to one I would endorse and so wrote to General Sherman in explanation of my resignation.<sup>114</sup>

Despite his doctor's orders, Blood had been willing to return to active duty, until he discovered Governor Willard Hall's plans for the Sixth.<sup>115</sup> He said he would resign before he would allow this; the Governor refused. Blood had letters from Generals Sherman and Blair approving "of his course in backing out from the responsibility of preferring green hands to his own veteran soldiers."<sup>116</sup> Blood was mustered out, along with his brother John Blood, the Sixth's quartermaster, April 2, 1864.

Within a year, his life changed forever.

St. Louis and Beyond 1864-1868.

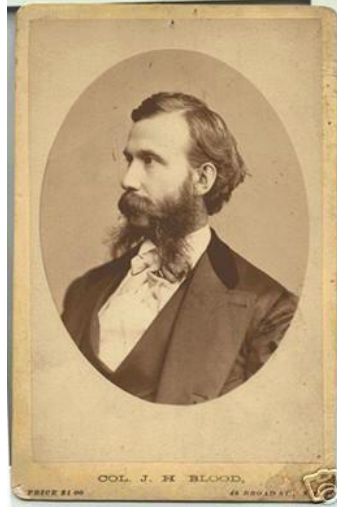
---

<sup>113</sup> JHB pension.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Hall had been Gamble's lieutenant governor. When the latter died in January 1864, Hall assumed office to serve out the term. He did not stand for re-election in 1865.

<sup>116</sup> "Female Financiers Feuds," *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 8 May 1871, p. 10.



Colonel James Harvey Blood

The brothers James H. and John A. Blood formally resigned their commissions on 4 April 1864 and returned to a city that was bustling and recovering from the trauma of 1861. Missouri's government quickly aligned with the Radical Republicans; "Copperhead" governor Willard Hall did not stand for re-election and was replaced in November by Republican Col. Thomas C. Fletcher.<sup>117</sup> Blood's friends quickly found him jobs suitable to his station as a war hero. He became the president of a local railroad (actually horse drawn street cars); he became the City Auditor, and was Commandant of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sub-Military District of Missouri. He was elected to Peter Bland's former position as president of the St. Louis Society of Spiritualists.

With the exception of the attempted incursion of Confederate general Sterling Price into Missouri as a last-ditch, and unsuccessful, effort to secure Missouri for the Confederacy in 1864, for James. H. Blood, the war was over. Blood's return to home and hearth was not as cordial. His mother was ill and died ~~in~~ within a year. His marriage was troubled;<sup>118</sup> his own physical health was poor; and, as subsequent events will show, his psychological health could be called into question. He still suffered from headaches, insomnia, bladder control and pain issues, and a partially paralyzed left arm. Developing "about a year after" the 1862 injury to his perineum he experienced "seminal weakness" or "spermatorrhoea,"<sup>119</sup> a condition particularly horrifying in the

<sup>117</sup> Fletcher was also at Chickasaw Bayou where he was captured.

<sup>118</sup> "Some years ago he married a lady from Massachusetts, with whom, however, he does not appear to have lived in that quiet serenity which should characterize the matrimonial state, and his conjugal infelicity appears to have terminated in final separation." "Sudden Departure of the City Auditor for South America--Romantic Incidents Connected Therewith," *Daily Missouri Republican*, 25 June 1866.

<sup>119</sup> Generally, the two terms are synonymous and differ slightly in interpretation from nocturnal emissions. Spermatorrhoea simply means excessive involuntary ejaculation, and nineteenth-century medicine was filled with treatises on the dangers of male masturbation, indeed thousands of pages were written in the various schools of medical thought that—despite the schools' profound differences in philosophies—all agreed that any expenditure of semen outside of marital intercourse, or spermatorrhoea, led to dire consequences, including consumption, cancer, insanity, and death. Among the recommended remedies were marriage, circumcision, and castration.

For examples of the widely available and widely read literature, see Sylvester Graham, *A Lecture to Young Men, on Chastity. Intended Also for the Serious Consideration of Parents and Guardians*, (Boston: Light & Stearns, 1837); Thomas L. Nichols, M.D., *Esoteric Anthropology: A Comprehensive and Confidential Treatise on the Structure, Functions, Passional Attractions and Perversions, True and False Physician and Social Conditions, and*

mind of a nineteenth-century male because of the perception of the condition's corrupting and devastating effects on the body. None of these conditions standing alone would have enhanced his marital relations, and together they probably furthered the breakdown of his marriage. Not surprisingly, Blood sought the care of his long-time family physician, Dr. Duncan McRae. In a later sworn affidavit McRae said:

At the time said Blood entered the service in 1861, he was in perfect physical health that when he left the service in 1864 he was seriously broken down constantly suffering especially from sleeplessness, seminal weakness, rheumatism of the left arm and darting pains in the region of the heart that showed that organ was also involved . . . that knowing the life and habits of said Blood so well as he did from almost daily personal interaction for years before the War as well as afterwards he is satisfied that none of the diseases from which he was suffering had any other origin than the injuries he received in the service. He was never intemperate, seldom ever drank intoxicants at all; he never had any disease from which the [*bladder*] strictures might have originated. . . the deponent sums up the case of said Blood thus: He entered the service in perfect health and left it after nearly three years of active duty having received the three severe injuries mentioned very much broken down, having conferenced insomnia, dyspepsia, and seminal weakness, insipient stricture, and heart disease. He never recovered from the first three and the last two developed gradually until he was compelled to undergo the operations for the strictures.<sup>120</sup>

Although Dr. MacRae advised against over-doing it, Blood approached his work much as he had done in the military, diligently and methodically. However, he soon found he was not physically up to the demands and so worked less and less.<sup>121</sup> In January 1865, he reached out to his former superiors for letters of recommendation hoping to find a position more suitable for his physical condition and, though it is nowhere expressed, a position that would likely meet the combined salaries of the various positions he currently held. Brigadier General Giles A. Smith and Major General Frank P. Blair both agreed,<sup>122</sup> but nothing came from their efforts.

Then, in February 1865 and out of nowhere, an advertisement appeared in the *Leavenworth (Kansas) Times*, touting the services of "Dr. J. A. Harvey, Renowned Magnetic & Clairvoyant Physician." Dr. (and occasionally "Prof.") Harvey was advertising his services from 99 Washington Avenue, St. Louis. These ads continued in the *Leavenworth Times* and other midwestern papers, including those in St. Louis, for over a year.

Dr. Harvey was James H. Blood and he was leading a double life.<sup>123</sup>

---

*the Most Intimate Relations of Men and Women* (New York: Thomas Low Nichols, 1853); Russell T. Trall, M.D. *Home-Treatment for Sexual Abuses. A Practical Treatise* (New York: Fowlers and Wells, 1853); *Pathology of the Reproductive Organs, Embracing All Forms of Sexual Disorders* (Boston: B. Leverett Emerson, 1862); *Sexual Physiology: A Scientific and Popular Exposition of the Fundamental Problems in Sociology* (New York: Wood & Holbrook, 1873).

<sup>120</sup> JHB service records.

<sup>121</sup> JHB pension.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> See "The Woodhull War, The Blood of the Broad Street Brokers Aroused," *New York Herald*, 17 May 1871, p. 10, col. 1; "Claflin Family History," *The Sun* (New York) 17 May 1871, p. 1, col. 3; and "The Woodhull-Claflin Entanglement," *The New York Times*, 17 May 1871.



Blood had stumbled across a woman with whom he fell deeply in love; whether the pair met when he sought her services,<sup>124</sup> or whether they met as colleagues is an open question. *How* they met is one thing, but *when* they met can be narrowed down to a small window of a few months, thanks to the advertisements magnetic and ‘cancer’ healers regularly published in order to drum up business.<sup>125</sup> It is most probable that Blood and Victoria Woodhull met and began their relationship some months before September 1864, when her first husband, Dr. Canning Woodhull, ceased advertising and disappears from view, and February 1865 when Blood hung out his shingle as a magnetic and clairvoyant physician. For the next few years, James H. Blood and Victoria Woodhull practiced magnetic healing together as “Prof.” and Mrs. J.A. Harvey.

It is worth noting that in these months, Victoria and Dr. Canning Woodhull were in St. Louis alone with the children; Canning’s family was in Effingham, Illinois, and her notorious family were all elsewhere until after Victoria’s relationship with Blood was well established.<sup>126</sup>

---

<sup>124</sup> Blood, as a committed Spiritualist, would have seen nothing odd about engaging the services of a clairvoyant and/or a magnetic healer. He viewed magnetism not only as a viable healing method for physical ailments but also for mental and emotional trauma. Prior to the war, his Spiritualist Society had hosted one of the most famous clairvoyant and magnetic healer in the country – Andrew Jackson Davis – for a series of lectures; attempting to find relief through this method was probably foremost in his mind at the time.

<sup>125</sup> Because of the continuing debate and misunderstandings about the nature of the couple’s relationship, it is prudent to consider a proven time-line of events in relation to the Woodhull family and illustrate their presence in St. Louis at this time.

Victoria Claflin Woodhull was in St. Louis at least by August 1863, when her husband, Dr. Canning Woodhull, established a practice and residence at 41 South Fourth Street with her brother Hebern Claflin. [See *The Missouri Republican (Saint Louis)*, 6, 9, 12, 19 August 1863; *The Quincy Daily Whig*, 30 May 1863, 6, 13, 17 June 1863, 4, 15, 22 August 1863.] From February 1863, before arriving in St. Louis, Canning Woodhull had been advertising himself and his miraculous “Turkish Salve” as a “great Cancer and Chronic Disease” cure. [*The Quincy Daily Whig*, 30 May 1863, 6, 13n, 17 June 1863, 15, 29 August 1863, 5 September 1863, and 17 October 1863.] Probably through his contact with Canning Woodhull, and most likely in Chicago where both were living in early 1863, Hebern Claflin also began to tout himself as able to cure cancer through his own “salve.” After a short sojourn in St. Louis, Hebern returned to Chicago at the end of 1863. Canning joined him there for the winter months, and both used the city as a base as they traveled through the Midwest plying their trade.

James H. Blood returned from the war on sick leave at the beginning of January 1864.

In March 1864, Hebern Claflin left his base in Chicago and settled for the next few years in Quincy, Illinois, and, like his salve, it is probable that Canning Woodhull was the source of his decision. Canning had, throughout 1863, maintained a regular stream of advertising in that city and presumably, because of it, had a business that provided a built-in clientele for Hebern.

Canning’s wife and children apparently remained behind in the St. Louis home, because in March 1864, after several months absence, Canning was again advertised as being in practice in St. Louis at 41 South Fourth Street. [*St. Louis Missouri City Directory*, Richard Edwards, publisher, 1 March 1864.] In addition, Victoria’s mail that had been received in Chicago over the winter remained unclaimed at the post office [*Chicago Tribune*, 28 and 29 February 1864]. Canning continued to advertise his practice in St. Louis through September 1864, when his ads stopped and he dropped from view for the next couple of years.

Blood later said that Victoria divorced Canning in October 1864 [*The Columbia (Tennessee) Herald and Mail*, 17 May 1878, p. 2]; her later statements only said it occurred in “1864.”

<sup>126</sup> Victoria’s parents, Buck and Anna Claflin, her sisters, Tennessee and Margaret (and Margaret’s husband Enos Miles), and brother, Malden Claflin were all in Ottawa, Illinois and would be until June 1864, when a patient’s death caused the family to flee the jurisdiction. [See numerous advertisements in the *Ottawa (Illinois) Free Trader* from 1863 through June 1864.] It is also known that Tennessee joined her brother Hebern for a time in Quincy, Illinois, and that she also traveled between Chicago and Cincinnati, establishing a healing “institute” in the latter city [*Cincinnati Enquirer*, 19 June 1865]. Utica, yet another sister, also joined Hebern in Quincy, where she met a local man named Thomas Brooker, whom she married in 1866.

Because Hebern had a difficult relationship with his father, the elder couple certainly did not accompany their daughter to Quincy when they left Ottawa, and instead most likely went to Cincinnati or Chicago. Malden, who was

While there are no records other than an easily missed statement given to a reporter years later, it is probable that Victoria's parents joined their daughter in St. Louis sometime after mid-March 1865. The Claflin's eldest son, Malden, had died in Chicago the previous December, and the family gathered in Cincinnati to bury him in March 1865. Victoria's sister, Tennessee, who had begun a lucrative business in Cincinnati, paid to transport her brother's body to Ohio for burial and at that time also paid to move all the other Claflin family burials into a single lair in Spring Grove Cemetery.<sup>127</sup>

Blood married Victoria "Claflin" on 18 July 1865 in Cincinnati.<sup>128</sup> While her marital status at the time has been much debated due to lack of records,<sup>129</sup> Blood was certainly a bigamist—his first wife didn't divorce him for another year—and then, not surprisingly, on the grounds of adultery.<sup>130</sup>

Between July 1865 and July 1866, the couple may have travelled as a healing pair before doing so again in late 1866 because Victoria's cousin, Thankful Claflin,<sup>131</sup> who traveled with the family in order to care for Victoria's handicapped son, commented in 1928:

---

in poor health and who would be dead of tuberculosis by December, seems to have gone to Chicago, where he died. However, his wife and children lived in Cincinnati. Margaret and her family certainly went to Cincinnati.

Victoria's sister Mary Burns Sparr was in Detroit with her second husband. [Detroit City Directory for the year 1864, Charles F. Clark, publisher.]

<sup>127</sup> Spring Grove Cemetery records, nos. 14371 (Malden), 8636 (Ross Burns, Jr., the son of Mary Burns Sparr), 13888 (Mary Ellen Claflin, Malden's daughter), and 14370 (Jefferson Claflin, the son of Buck Claflin's twin brother, Samuel Carrington). The lair is located at Section 75, lot 22. Zilpha Ann Burns Johnson, another daughter of Mary Sparr was buried with her family in 1866 (record 17001).

<sup>128</sup> Hamilton County Courthouse, 18 July 1865. Microfilm copy; original record destroyed. Woodhull used her maiden name on the license. It is interesting to note, in view of later discussions of the validity of Blood's and Woodhull's two marriages, that the license portion of this certificate was never signed by either the probate judge or the clerk. The return, however, was signed by the minister.

<sup>129</sup> There is no record found to date of a divorce from Canning Woodhull; Victoria later referred to it as a separation saying she cast him off, he agreed, and things were done. [See "Born Into Spirit Life," *Woodhull & Claflin's Weekly*, v. 4 no 24, 27 April 1872, p. 8, col. 1.] While it is possible that the couple did procure a formal divorce, the question must be asked about how they afforded the expense. Contrary to Claflin and Woodhull reports about how successful they were and how much money they earned as clairvoyant physicians, the fact was the business was not at all lucrative. [See Robert Laurence Moore, "The Spiritualist Medium: A Study of Female Professionalism in Victorian America," *American Quarterly* 27:2 (1975); pp. 200-221, for a discussion on this subject.]

Missouri was one of the few states that did allow absolute divorce because of drunkenness. However, it must be noted that divorce law in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was quite fluid in interpretation and accessibility depended upon the jurisdiction involved. If they, as Anna suggests, "got a bill," if a bill of divorce, it probably would have had to have been adjudicated in Missouri – Canning's and Victoria's residence at the time. It more probable, given Buck's experience at petty lawyering, that he simply drew up what we would call today a separation agreement. Though not recognized by the courts for a number of reasons, the agreements were not uncommon. See Hendrik Hartog's discussion in "Marital Exits and Marital Expectations in Nineteenth Century America," *Georgetown Law Journal* 80 (1991) about the problems of divorce and separation faced by couples at the time, as well as Frank P. Aschemeyer, "Survey of Some Aspects of Missouri Divorce Law," *Missouri Law Review* 2:3 (June 1962). For more general background on divorce in 19<sup>th</sup> Century America, see Hendrik Hartog, *Man & Wife in America, A History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 2000, as well as Norma Basch, *In the Eyes of the Law: Women, Marriage and Property in Nineteenth Century New York* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), and Norma Basch, "Invisible Women: the Legal Fiction of Marital Unity in Nineteenth Century America," *Feminist Studies* 5:2 (1979). Much has been written on the subject, but Basch and Hartog are considered the standout scholars in the field.

<sup>130</sup> At the time, under the law of most states, a bigamous marriage was considered proof of adultery, especially if the plaintiff was an "innocent wronged woman" who had no responsibility for the bigamy.

<sup>131</sup> Thankful Masen Claflin was born 19 February 1844 in the same house in which Victoria had been born in Homer, Ohio. Thankful's father, Amos Claflin, was Victoria's paternal uncle. Thankful died a few months after

“Victoria did travel through the south with Colonel Blood . . . she did the fortune telling, reaping big money, he did the ballhoo<sup>132</sup>, etc. Miss Thankful, Tennessee, Roxanna (the mother) and the children remained in St. Louis. Miss Thankful thinks she unwittingly tipped off to Seth Blood younger brother of Colonel Blood [to] the fact that he and Victoria traveling in the south [sic] and that Seth told Mrs. Colonel and she went after, and broke up the party—Miss Claflin does not remember how.”<sup>133</sup>

The couple must have, however, spent time in Chicago. It is notable that Mary A.C. Blood brought suit for divorce against her husband in that city, and it was granted in July 1866. Why Chicago and not St. Louis? In the nineteenth century, because of the then-accepted definition of marriage,<sup>134</sup> the husband’s state of residence determined the jurisdiction of the case and the wife had no say in the matter, no matter how horrendous her situation might be. Therefore, James H. Blood and Victoria Woodhull must have been in Chicago long enough for him to establish residency. It may have been a conscious decision on Blood’s part to make the divorce easier for his first wife – Chicago was a far more lenient jurisdiction than St. Louis.

Victoria’s mother told a reporter years later:

“Well, I’ll tell yer. When we lived in Fourth street, St. Louis, Blood one day walked into the house, pitched Dr. Woodhull out, an’ just sat down at the table in his place. He has some strange influence over my Victoria, who got separated by a bill from Dr. Woodhull, and Blood took his place. One day Blood’s wife and child came to the house, and Victoria was awful mad because Blood, who was in the auditor’s office, said his wife was dead. Victoria told him he must get a bill from Mrs. Blood an’ marry her; he did get a bill, an’ they were married.”<sup>135</sup>

As might be expected, Blood’s wife got the divorce on the grounds of adultery.<sup>136</sup> Only a few days later Blood married Victoria again in Dayton, Ohio.<sup>137</sup>

In the end, whether or not Victoria actually secured a formal divorce from Canning Woodhull almost doesn’t matter. The Woodhulls and Claflins came from a class in society where the judicial sanction of the end of a marriage was often overlooked and no one usually checked

---

Victoria on 17 April 1928, and is buried in Johnstown, Licking County, Ohio, only a few miles from Homer. She never married.

<sup>132</sup> Advertising and promotion of the business.

<sup>133</sup> Emanie (Nahm) Sachs Arling Philips Archive, Western Kentucky University, MSS 317, Box 5, Folder 3.

<sup>134</sup> Much of American law about divorce evolved from the English Ecclesiastical courts, and marriage and divorce law was an outstanding example of that evolution. American legal standards at the time, defined marriage as a permanent situation, entered into by *the state and the couple* (for the preservation of the community). Not strictly contractual in a legal sense, marriage was usually regulated by few loose statutes, further defined by contractual debate and precedence that usually determined the outcome of a divorce.

Under the belief system defining marriage, better known as ‘coverture,’ the man and woman ceased to be individuals once they were married, and represented what we today would think of as a “unit” – or a single identity (the husband and wife becoming one, the couple). Each had very well defined responsibilities. Hers was the ‘private sphere’ of home, children, and hearth, his was the ‘public sphere’ of providing home, food, and protection for the family. He represented the public face of the marriage at all times, and because of this understanding, held both by the courts and the public, his residence determined jurisdiction.

<sup>135</sup> “The Claflin Clan,” *The New York Herald*, 8 June 1871, p. 6, col. 4.

<sup>136</sup> “Blood v. Blood, Recorder’s Court,” *Chicago Tribune*, p. 3, col. 2.

<sup>137</sup> Marriage Returns, Montgomery County, Ohio, 14 July 1866, p. 518, No. 4379.

unless a legal necessity presented itself,<sup>138</sup> and Canning was not in a position to present any legal problems. Furthermore, regardless of his drinking, he adored his children. That Victoria had custody of them is also an indicator that the couple only had a separation agreement – at the time children, as with all marital property, were almost always granted to husbands in divorce settlements. If Canning wanted to see them, he had to adhere to their agreement. Bigamy, or “serial marriage,” was astonishingly common at the time, and thousands of couples lived, knowingly or not, in marriages that were technically illegal. Canning and Victoria had little to lose if the state of their relationship became public knowledge; you cannot lose a reputation in society that you don’t have.

Blood, however, had much to lose. He came from an entirely different level of society and the risk he took with his marriages to Victoria had little to do with the law courts. As an upright, reasonably wealthy, and up-and-coming citizen of St. Louis, Blood left himself open to extortion. The added potential scandal of his double life only enhanced the exposure – something he did little to assuage by running his weekly advertisements. While no one can analyze his motivations for these behaviors today, they were certainly curious and involved tremendous risk to his reputation, his family, and his wealth.

And, as it happened, he *was* threatened with extortion, and from his new brother-in-law, Benjamin F. Sparr.

On or about May 15, 1866, I being a resident of Cincinnati, was approached by my sister, Mary F. Sparr, the wife of B.F. Sparr, of St. Louis. She said, “Margaret, we are going to make a big raise, and I’ll tell you if you’ll not let it out. Blood (referring to Col. J.H. Blood, of St. Louis) has got plenty of money, and we are bound to get some of it. Sparr and Captain (I forget his name) are going to arrest him for bigamy, and get \$10,000 or \$15,000 for letting him off, which we will divide” I said, “Molly, I wouldn’t do it.” She said, “Sparr is bound to it and I can’t stop it.” In October following, being in St. Louis, Sparr said to me, “Capt. Loring wrote a letter to Col. Blood about that affair I let Victoria have it (the letter) and she wouldn’t give it to me again. I want you to get it from the Colonel and send it to me He appeared very anxious about it.” Margaret Ann Miles.

Sworn, &c., before me, July 10, 1868, B. Harry Hammer, N.P., Chicago.<sup>139</sup>

The first Mrs. Blood had had enough and took matters into her own hands and divorced Blood in July, giving the Colonel a reprieve from the extortion attempts. However, Sparr never gave up his plot, and it came to a very public head in May and June 1871.<sup>140</sup>

Far too much modern wrangling has been needlessly thrust upon Blood’s two marriages to Woodhull. The simple fact is that he did marry her, albeit bigamously, in July 1865. The

---

<sup>138</sup> See the biography of Mary Burns Sparr on this website. Mary’s first husband had deserted her; without the benefit of a formal divorce, she remarried Benjamin Sparr. It was only years later, in 1880s, that it was discovered she had been living in bigamy during her marriage to Sparr. She tried to claim the dower rights of her first husband’s estate because of the lack of a divorce. See also the biography of Tennessee Claflin’s first husband John James Bartle (Bortle) on this website, where it is shown that their “divorce” was also a matter of debate –although in his pension application she did, as Lady Cook, offer a sworn affidavit saying that they did formalize their divorce. For background on nineteenth-century “fluid” marriages, see Beverly Schwartzberg, ““Lots of Them Did That””: Desertion, Bigamy, and Marital Fluidity in Late-Nineteenth-Century America,” *Journal of Social History* 37:3 (Spring, 2004), pp. 573-600; Hendrik A. Hartog, “Marital Exits and Marital Expectations in Nineteenth Century America,” *op cit*.

<sup>139</sup> “Affidavit of Mrs. Margaret A. Miles, Sister of Mrs. Woodhull,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 8 May 1871, p. 10.

<sup>140</sup> These events will be discussed in Part Two of Blood’s biography.

microfilmed records are there for all to see at the Hamilton County Courthouse. Immediately following his divorce, Blood and Woodhull married again on 14 July 1866 in Dayton, Ohio. Despite the fact that this marriage is often held up as proof to question the legality of the couple's marriage, the fact that the minister did not file the return on the marriage is almost laughable (especially when compared to the earlier marriage document when the probate judge did not sign the license!). An examination of the records of marriage for this date and for a few pages before and after, show that the officiant neglected to do this for many other entries in the register.<sup>141</sup> While it is doubtful if the couples involved in these marriages, including the Bloods, realized anything was amiss, it must be pointed out that the lack of returns were, indeed, technicalities that could present legal difficulties, especially if the court record needed to be recalled for proof. For example – and something particularly meaningful at the time – applications for Civil War widows' pensions required a copy of a marriage.<sup>142</sup> Without the return, the county clerk could not record the marriage, so was unable to certify a copy of the record, which, in the case of the pension applications often led to the denial of benefits. However, it was this document that was presented in court in 1871 as proof of the couple's marriage, so it may be assumed that *they believed it to be valid at the time*, a notion further corroborated by the couple's 1868 Chicago divorce – where the attention of modern scholars really ought to be focused—which will be discussed later.

Years later, Blood said he met Woodhull “shortly” after his return from the war and that she was already “established as a literary force” in St. Louis.<sup>143</sup> While it was true that she was in that city when he returned from the war, Victoria was likely not the “literary force” Blood described. At the time she had little in the way of formal schooling and, because she had to meet the needs of herself and two young children with uncertain support from her husband, it is likely she had little time to pursue anything literary. That Blood and Woodhull fell in love is not in question, but the circumstances of their early relationship are probably far more mundane than what was described in Tilton's romanticized biography with its overtones of mysticism.

So, at the war's end, Blood and Victoria Woodhull were both practicing magnetic healing and clairvoyance in St. Louis, on Washington Avenue.<sup>144</sup> In June 1865,<sup>145</sup> he was listed in the St. Louis City Director (James H. Blood, city auditor) at Pine Street, but as J.A. Harvey, was living at 99 Washington Avenue, presumably with Victoria. Both had baggage: his was his legacy of the Sixth Missouri and its battles and his wounds. Hers was a weak, though apparently affable, inebriated husband, a mentally challenged son, and very young daughter. Intellectually, Blood was what Victoria would later describe as a “master-mate,” or a man in a perfect Spiritualist

---

<sup>141</sup> <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:9392-SPSB-8R?i=283&cc=1614804> which will allow moving forward through the book.

<sup>142</sup> See Beverly Schwartzberg, “‘Lots of Them Did That’”: Desertion, Bigamy, and Marital Fluidity in Late-Nineteenth-Century America,” *op cit.*, where her examination of Civil War widows' pensions revealed massive technical irregularities in mid-nineteenth century marriages.

<sup>143</sup> “Victoria C. Woodhull as a Literary Person,” *The Sun* (New York), 27 July 1876. Written shortly before his final divorce from Woodhull, Blood said “I first knew Victoria C. Woodhull through reading and admiring some of her literary productions in the spring of 1864. . . I had just left the army in which, as Colonel of the Sixth Missouri Infantry Volunteers, I had won a reputation. I had no literary taste or ambition, being simply a business man, was Auditor of the city of St. Louis, President of the St. Louis Railroad company, and commander of the Second Submilitary District of Missouri, headquarters in St. Louis, with rank of Brigadier-General, my salaries amounting to \$10,000 a year.”

<sup>144</sup> “Strange Revelations,” *The New York Times*, 4 July 1866.

<sup>145</sup> 1865 St. Louis City Directory, p. 384.

union with his wife and vice versa. Over the next two years, the couple would educate each other.

When they married in 1866, Blood had been a Spiritualist for about ten years and was familiar with the various tenets of the belief. Woodhull's notions of the doctrine were less defined.

Before the war, in his capacity as a board member of the St. Louis Society of Spiritualists, Blood had heard well-known trance mediums such as Emma Hardinge and Andrew Jackson Davis<sup>146</sup> as they traveled to St. Louis to deliver their lectures. Blood also would have been aware of the various threads in the Spiritualist movement from Swedenborgism to Fourierism to Mesmerism. Woodhull, with her limited schooling, is unlikely to have such an educated view of the movement, but what Blood told her would have resonated with her beliefs in her ability to communicate with spirits through her (and her sister Tennessee's) clairvoyant skills – something in which both sincerely believed. Woodhull was a life-long believer in the spirit world, but probably had never put a name to it until she met Blood. In Woodhull, Blood found a quick study and, it may be assumed, comfort from the traumas of the war.

In June 1866 stories broke across the country about the city auditor of St. Louis running off with “the Witch of Washington Avenue.”<sup>147</sup> Though called “Madame Holland” in the articles, she was shown by subsequent events to be none other than Victoria Woodhull.

Various and exaggerated reports are in circulation concerning Col. J.H. Blood, City Auditor, to correct which and inform the public of the truth we give the following statement of facts derived from authentic sources:

Col. Blood was a gallant officer, and commanded the Sixth Missouri Infantry in the late war. Retiring from the army at the close of his three years' enlistment, he found many friends to take him by the hand and assist him in every way. His character was without reproach, and he was elected City Auditor, and also received the lucrative appointment of President of the St. Louis Railroad Company, with a salary of \$3,000 a year. He had saved money in the army, and was regarded as an excellent business man. He had acquired a fortune of some \$30,000, and in time might have become one of our wealthiest citizens.

But the spell of the enchantress was laid upon him, and he fell from the path of rectitude. When the Spiritualists began to inculcate their strange and fascinating doctrines in the City, Col. Blood early became a convert, and at this time is President of the Society of Spiritualists in the city.

Some two years ago [1864] Col. Blood, in his intercourse with the Spiritualists, became acquainted with a certain Mme. Holland, who had an office on Washington-avenue, and advertised that she could effect wonderful cures of female complaints by means of clairvoyance, &c. Col. Blood's wife, an estimable lady whom he married in Massachusetts, was an invalid, and he took her to this Mme. Holland for medical treatment. Sometime after this visit to the Witch of Washington-avenue, Col. Blood's friends became uneasy on account of his frequent visits to the siren, and remonstrated him about his extravagant gifts of money to her. They represented that the woman was a bad character, whose only object was to draw money from him; but he insisted that she was a good woman, and promised to retrench his lavish expenditures. He readily admitted that his conduct as a husband was very wrong, and he frequently promised to

---

<sup>146</sup> Hardinge was a nationally famous medium who frequently visited St. Louis, Davis an equally well-known magnetic healer who had lectured and practiced in St. Louis in 1860.

<sup>147</sup> “Strange Revelations,” *The New York Times*, op cit.

reform, but the moment he came into the presence of the enchantress, he seemed to have no will of his own, and yielded to her demands like a slave or a child. His wife returned from a visit to the East last summer, and hearing of the conduct of her husband, called on Mme. Holland to persuade her to break off her connection with her husband. The shameless woman informed the virtuous wife that she had a claim upon her husband as his wife, and satisfied her that she was actually married to him.

Upon making this discovery, Mrs. Blood refused to live with her husband, and prepared to take the necessary steps for obtaining a divorce. Her friends dissuaded her, hoping that matters might be reconciled. They succeeded in inducing the Madam to leave the city, but not until she had bankrupted her victim, and blasted the happiness of a virtuous wife forever. She was a very cormorant, and continually demanded money. She sometimes received as much as \$5,000 at a time, and was still unsatisfied.

During these two eventful years, Col. Blood became fascinated with another blood sucker, a frail woman from Brooklyn, N.Y. She received a portion of his fortune as the pay of a hired prostitute, although she, too, claims that she is married to him. This woman pretends to be respectably connected, and no doubt her people are honest, but for herself she has no excuse.<sup>148</sup>

On account of these irregularities Col. Blood lost his position as President of the Railroad Company, and his confidential friends felt it to be their duty to advise those who were doing business with him to be on their guard. The clairvoyant held the marriage certificate in terrorem over his head, and the fate of a bigamist stared him in the face. There was no hope for him to redeem his squandered fortune, for if he escaped the Sylla of Brooklyn, he would be sure to be wrecked upon the Charybdis of Washington-avenue. He therefore concluded that the only course left for him was to leave the country, and start life anew in South America. Accordingly he procured from the Mayor a leave of absence for twenty days, and on Monday last left the city. He left his resignation in the hands of a friend, to be handed in after a certain time. We are assured that he took no woman with him, and if Madam Holland is with him now, she met him at some other place.

In regard to the debts of Col. Blood, who are informed that his account as Auditor is all correct. He left a note for \$3,700 for which sum provision has been made. His debts, it is thought, are not large, and the money he squandered was his own.

The news of Col. Blood's strange conduct created great surprise among those who knew him. Nothing but the infatuation induced by an attempt to look into the secrets of nature could have so weakened his intellect as to make him fall a prey to the machinations of designing and unprincipled women.<sup>149</sup>

The two did run off, but not to South America. By Christmas Eve, 1866, they were in New Orleans as Madame Victoria and Prof. J. A. Harvey.<sup>150</sup> In early January 1867, the couple was in Memphis,<sup>151</sup> then in May, they were in St. Louis running a branch of her sister Tennessee's, "Magnetic Healing Institute."<sup>152</sup>

---

<sup>148</sup> It is not at this time known to whom this refers; in later years Blood also said that he had no idea who the woman in Brooklyn was that he was supposed to have married.

<sup>149</sup> "Strange Revelations," *The New York Times*, op cit., from the *St. Louis Democrat*, June 26, 1866. See also "Sudden Departure of the City Auditor for South America--Romantic Incidents Connected Therewith," *Daily Missouri Republican*, 25 June 1866

<sup>150</sup> *The New Orleans Times-Democrat*, 24 December 1866.

<sup>151</sup> *Memphis Public Ledger*, 4 and 6 January 1867.

<sup>152</sup> *Leavenworth Times*, 5 and 21 May 1867.

Woodhull's first husband, Canning, became a fixture of their lives.<sup>153</sup> Canning and Blood became close friends and, as Dr. Woodhull, Canning was known to have treated Blood's injuries.<sup>154</sup> The couple took him in, in part because of the children and in part because the two seemed genuinely fond of him. He was a regular presence in the family until his death in 1872.

In January 1867 a cryptic message appeared in the *New York Herald*:

Personals

To Tennie C.—N.—Your sister V. wishes to learn where she can see you. Address A.L.R., room 306 St. Nicholas Hotel.<sup>155</sup>

No one but Tennessee Claflin called herself “Tennie C.,” a pun on “Tennessee Celeste” and “Tennessee.” What they were doing in New York would become clear within a year, but Victoria already knew the city where her daughter was born at 53 Bond Street in 1861, only six years before. It is fairly clear that Demosthenes, the purported spirit guide who led her to New York,<sup>156</sup> had nothing to do with the sisters securing a residence (and clinic) in a mansion at 17 Great Jones Street – less than a block from where Woodhull gave birth to her daughter. Many years later, a friend of Blood's said that Blood believed himself to be the reincarnation of Demosthenes and as such “controlled Victoria,” and further said that she was fearful of entering the premises at 17 Great Jones Street for the first time.<sup>157</sup> That Blood was her Demosthenes is not too much of a stretch of the imagination. In January 1867, it is more probable that the trio were in New York with a view of moving their business to the city.

According to an ad in October 1867, Woodhull and her sister had returned to Chicago and were “permanently” located at 365 Wabash Ave., Chicago.<sup>158</sup> Then, Blood and Woodhull divorced in Chicago on 9 February 1868.<sup>159</sup> The husband's residency again comes to the fore. Victoria's father, Buck Claflin, stood for her and she requested to keep her “maiden name” of Woodhull.<sup>160</sup> How publicly known the event was is anybody's guess, but friends and confidants suggested privately that the divorce was secured on philosophical grounds. One thing must be pointed out in view of this divorce, namely that she requested to keep her “maiden name” (despite Buck representing Victoria and being named as her father) – the Illinois law allowing such a decision on the part of a wife was not to go into effect for another six years.

By now Blood and Woodhull had been together almost four years. Their philosophical beliefs had to have coalesced, and their shared belief in the tenets of free love already becoming established. With Canning Woodhull an ongoing fixture of their lives, one has to ask if the couple were deliberately adding another layer of confusion about their relationship and already developing their shrewd ability to manipulate the press that became a hallmark of their New York careers. Yes, if they were free lovers at this time, this divorce can be taken as a statement of individual freedoms and sovereignty. The later statements the couple made about the issue that she did so for business reasons don't make a great deal of sense. Woodhull, at this time, was

---

<sup>153</sup> Ibid. “Madame Blood, of the above Institute, 112 North Sixth Street, St. Lois Mo., accompanied and assisted by Doctors Blood and Woodhull of the same Institute. . .”

<sup>154</sup> JHB pension.

<sup>155</sup> *New York Herald*, 25, 26 27, 28 and 29 January 1867.

<sup>156</sup> Tilton, op cit.

<sup>157</sup> Sachs Archive, MSS 317, Box 5, Folder 6.

<sup>158</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, 23 October 1867.

<sup>159</sup> Recorder's Court, *Chicago Tribune*, 10 February 1868, p. 4, col. 3.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.



not the established and widely publicized businesswoman her sister Tennessee Claflin had become. Once they joined as partners, Victoria was *always* second billing (if she was named at all—she was often just referred to as Tennessee’s ‘sister’) in Tennessee’s advertisements and *never* ran ads of her own.<sup>161</sup> It seems as if the choice to revert to her “maiden” name of “Woodhull” may have been a deliberate attempt to obfuscate the issue of exactly who her husband was. *If* she had not, in fact, *actually divorced* Canning, keeping his name could allow the public to make whatever assumptions they wanted to.

That the Colonel and she continued to live as man and wife after the divorce was no secret to those that knew them:

That she was married to Colonel Blood and divorced, and they are still living as husband and wife, must be, I suppose, simply a protest on their parts against human laws of marriage and divorce, which seem to them unjust and demoralizing; but in no wise do I understand her to disown or depreciate the divine ordinance of marriage, and I think she approves of a life of chastity beyond the common standard.<sup>162</sup>

When Isabella Hooker’s observation is considered in view of Blood’s injuries, as well as within the rather strict views within both Spiritualism and the free love movement about the need to restrain from too much sexual intercourse, then Hooker may not have been far off the mark.

In time, Woodhull and Blood’s relationship was accepted as common public knowledge:

Some years since she formed a connection with Col. Blood, who has since occupied the position of her husband in fact, but not in name or by legal sanctions or forms – a relation in full accordance with her social theories, founded upon mutual love and adaptation, and to continue while those conditions exist, and no longer.<sup>163</sup>

However, in the years of 1866 to 1868, the nature of the actual relationship between Victoria and her two husbands was not at all clear. She and Blood did behave publicly as man and wife, and did continue to live together until 1875, but they kept the 1868 divorce to themselves and their immediate friends.<sup>164</sup> Many radical Spiritualists had embraced the concept, with its poorly chosen name of ‘free love,’ part and parcel with other societal reforms. Radicals like Stephen Pearl Andrews, Austin Kent, and Hannah F.M. Brown placed the concept of human love, or ‘affinity,’ on a religious plane, describing love unencumbered by societal strictures and laws as ‘pure.’ “Legal marriage,” with its “enslavement” of women was believed to be morally wrong.<sup>165</sup> The only “pure” intercourse between couples was that between two people who shared

---

<sup>161</sup> For a few examples among many, see *Green Bay (Wisconsin) Weekly Gazette* 17 August 1867, p. 4; and the *Chicago Tribune* 23 October 1867;

<sup>162</sup> Letter of Isabella Beecher Hooker, Victoria Woodhull Martin Papers, SIU, Box 3 Folder 18.

<sup>163</sup> Leon Oliver, *The Great Sensation: A Full, Complete and Reliable History of the Beecher-Tilton-Woodhull Scandal with Biographical Sketches of the Principal Characters Illustrated with Life-Like Portraits*, Chicago: The Beverly Company, 1873, p. 36.

<sup>164</sup> A friend of Blood’s, and correspondent of Emanie Sachs when she was researching *The Terrible Siren*, said the couple had married again “somewhere out West in some obscure little place” they went through the ceremony to forestall “any action that might be taken against them.” Sachs Archive, MSS 317, Box 5, Folder 6. It is not clear if they did remarry, and by the time it was suggested they did, their marriage was beginning to fall apart, making the statement unlikely.

<sup>165</sup> When a couple married, under the 19<sup>th</sup> century American laws known as coverture, which followed on established British law, a woman and a man “became one” with all her property, including their children, and rights becoming his. He was viewed as the natural representative of the family’s outward view; she was also legally

a spiritual, loving, bond that was to evolve together. If this was the statement the Colonel and Victoria were trying to make by obtaining a divorce, it certainly would have resonated in the free love circles of Spiritualists.

Furthermore, for free lovers, and this would have bearing on the Blood's marriage, semen was considered a life force and must not be wasted in inharmonious relationships. Even in so-called pure relationships, sexual intercourse was not something to be engaged in on a regular basis – there were proper times and places, as well as terrific risks to the body and most radical physicians counseled “no more than once a month.” To engage in intercourse more often threatened to endanger the health of the couple, and the male in particular because, for him, orgasm meant the expulsion of ‘life force.’<sup>166</sup>

As we have seen the legacy of Blood's spermatorrhea from the Civil War touches on this subject directly, and throws question onto the dynamic of the couple's marriage. Unquestionably, this subject should be explored further, especially in view of Victoria's later rhetoric about marriage, sex, and free love.

In November 1868, probably already making their preparations to move to New York, Woodhull, as Mrs. Blood, visited president-elect Ulysses S. Grant in Galena, Illinois. In a letter to his wife, Grant wrote: “Mrs. Blood has made a pilgrimage to Galena to secure for her husband the position of private secretary to me when I am President.”<sup>167</sup>

Though nothing came of Woodhull's petition to Grant, the couple remained close to Grant's family. Grant's father, Jesse Root Grant, had known Woodhull and her sisters from their Cincinnati days. He, and his son Orville, were frequent visitors to Woodhull and Blood's home in New York.<sup>168</sup>

By late 1868, Woodhull, Blood, Canning Woodhull, and Tennie C. were living at 17 Great Jones Street, New York, running what appears to have been the thriving business of what was now the only one of Tennie's Magnetic Healing Institutes in the country.

#### MAGNETIC HEALING INSTITUTE AND CONSERVATORY OF MENTAL AND SPIRITUAL SCIENCE.

---

beholden to submit to his requests or demands for intercourse, despite any reservations she might have about potential childbearing (tabling for the moment and dislike or lack of attraction she might have felt). The free love radicals raised all of these issues as morally inconceivable.

<sup>166</sup> For more see Ann Braude, *Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women's Rights in Nineteenth-century America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001); Mrs. H.F.M. Brown, *Marriage: the Reason and Results* (Cleveland: Viets & Savage, 1861); John B. Buescher, *The Other Side of Salvation: Spiritualism and the Nineteenth-Century Religious Experience* (Boston: Skinner House Books, 2004); Wendy Hayden, *Evolutionary Rhetoric: Sex, Science, and Free Love in Nineteenth Century Feminism* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2013); Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Rereading Sex: Battles over Sexual Knowledge and Suppression in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Vintage Books, 2003); Austin Kent, *Free Love: or, A Philosophical Demonstration of the Non-Exclusive Nature of Connubial Love* (Hopkinton, N.Y., published by the author, 1847); Mark Lause, *Free Spirits: Spiritualism, Republicanism, and Radicalism in the Civil War Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016); Mary S. Gove Nichols and Thomas L. Nichols, M.D., *Marriage: Its History Character and Results; Its Sanctities, and Its Profanities; Its Science and Its Facts* (New York: T.L. Nichols, 1854); Joanne E. Passet, *Sex Radicals and the Quest for Women's Equality* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003); Hal D. Sears, *The Sex Radicals: Free Love in High Victorian America* (The Regents Press of Kansas, 1977); John C. Spurlock, *Free Love: Marriage and Middle-Class Radicalism in America, 1825-1860*. (New York: New York University Press, 1988); and Lois Waisbrooker, *Suffrage for Women The Reasons Why* (St. Louis: Clayton & Babington, 1868)

<sup>167</sup> Simon, op cit., Vol. 19: July 1, 1868-October 31, 1869, pp. 63-64. Original letter in the Meissner Collection, Washington University, St. Louis, MO, Box 2, folder 94.

<sup>168</sup> “Covington's Great Poet,” *New York Sun*, 23 June 1871, p. 1, col. 4.

This institution is upon a magnificent scale. It is at No. 17 Great Jones Street, and presided over by one surgeon, two physicians, and two sisters, who are the professors of the above mentioned science.

They claim to diagnose all apparent or mysterious diseases, and prescribe so as to secure a perfect restoration, whether the disease be acute or chronic. We have seen one of the clairvoyants, and she is beautiful enough to cure anybody. She is young and childish in her manners, with Titian hair, which falls in rich masses about her head, blue eyes which wear an honest steadfast look, a symmetrical figure which is costumed in excellent taste and a pretty hand which sparkles with gems. Now we can't see why a chronic case of heart disease should be cured at all, with such a healing medium. This lady's name is Miss Tennessee Claflin, and while we admit that there is some power in this art of healing, we confess that we know nothing only that hopeless people go there, and after a brief stay of days or weeks, return home cured.

*The other lady is said to be quite as charming as Miss Tennessee, and is her sister and the wife of the presiding physician, whose name is Dr. C. H. Woodhull.*

Whatever supernatural or other named gifts these ladies possess, they have used them ever since they were able to talk, and have lived in an unhealthy atmosphere always. That they possess the gift of thought-reading, all their visitors admit.

Medicine and magnetism cure all whom they admit to the house for treatment, so the friends of the system claim.

Well, it is curious, and as a curiosity we write it down among the cures of New York. This institution claims to cover all the ground which is parceled out among the special practitioners, and it not only furnishes medicine for the body, but they go boldly into futurity, and tell you what is to come; and as certainty is better than suspicion, people become tranquil over their information.<sup>169</sup>

“And the wife of the presiding physician, whose name is Dr. C.H Woodhull.” The public spin in which Victoria was to excel in the coming years was already in practice. Absolutely no detractor could say she was not the wife of Dr. Woodhull in this statement, and even 150 years later, we cannot. While Woodhull, Blood and Claflin apparently spared no expense for the comfort of themselves or their clients, the question of exactly who was Victoria's legal husband at this time was as murky as ever, and so it would remain right on down to the present day.

---

<sup>169</sup> *Buffalo Daily Courier*, 14 December 1868, p. 1.