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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

TITLE:

THE CIVIL WAR IN MISSOURI: A NINETEENTH CENTURY CONFLICT
RELEVANT TO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY WARFIGHTER

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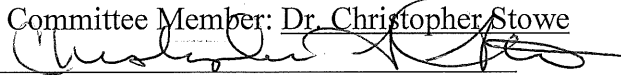
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Executive Summary

Title: The Civil War in Missouri: A Nineteenth Century Conflict Relevant to the Twenty-First Century Warfighter

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Thesis: The complexity of the American Civil War in Missouri is relevant to today's warfighter and policymaker as it combines the study of a distinctive strategic culture capturing the political turmoil within the context of westward expansion and slavery, the element of conventional warfare waged by Union and Confederate troops, and the element of irregular warfare which was imposed by guerrilla forces. Furthermore, it provides the modern warfighter with an understanding of how policy decisions at various levels affect outcomes and may lead to unintended consequences.

Discussion: The American Civil War continues to hold a prominent place in military studies. The battles occurring in the Eastern Theater, particularly in Virginia between the Army of the Potomac and the Army of Northern Virginia, often overshadow the battles occurring across the nation, including those in the Trans-Mississippi Theater, and specifically those which occurred within the borders of the state of Missouri where the headquarters of the Union's Department of the West (later named the Department of Missouri) was located. Although some scholars have minimized the significance of the Civil War in Missouri, it played an important role in President Abraham Lincoln's national strategy. Missouri, a border state, remained in the Union despite its Southern culture and slavery status, and keeping it and other border states in the Union was a predominant driving factor in Lincoln's approach to the war. Missouri's complex strategic and sociopolitical cultures were unique, and led to the establishment of two state governments, two opposing armies, and roaming guerrilla bands – proslavery and anti-slavery. Some have estimated that over 1000 battles and skirmishes occurred within its borders. In the first nine months of the war alone, Missouri and Virginia witnessed most of the Civil War fighting; by the end of the war, Missouri's battlefield status would rank it third in significance behind Virginia and Tennessee. The decisions points military and political leaders faced were complex, not unlike what the leaders of today face – policy and political considerations, and enemies organized in conventional units and irregular forces.

Conclusion: The study of the Civil War in Missouri is still relevant to today's warfighter and policymaker as the conflict combines lessons on understanding a distinctive strategic culture, the element of conventional warfare, and a component of irregular warfare as a result of its guerrilla insurgency. The study of Missouri also provides lessons in how decisions by politicians and leaders affect the battlefield environment.

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Preface

As we climbed the hill north from the courthouse in the small Midwest river town of Lexington, Missouri, the County Seat of Lafayette, we could hear the deafening clap of musket fire, smell the acrid smoke of burning black powder, and feel the angst coming from the commotion of a group of men scurrying and yelling about. As we crested the hill we could see, just to the right of where we stood, what was causing the commotion. A group of men of all ages, dressed in blue sack coat fatigues, were popping their heads up above split-rail fences and makeshift barriers likely constructed in haste, firing their muskets in a northerly direction. Just in front of the men the ground sloped down into a natural defilade created as a result of the rolling landscape. On the other side of the defilade, the ground, a freshly harvested hemp field, gradually sloped up again. Dotting the field were round hemp bales, some slowly rolling down the slope pushed by men also armed with muskets and dressed in mismatched gray clothing, momentarily exposing themselves from behind their rolling crop shields just long enough to return volleys in kind at the men dressed in blue.

To the left of us was the former home of a local hemp producer, Oliver Anderson. The large home was now towering over a lawn from which terrifying screams of injured men drifted through the crisp autumn air. Some were dying and one was being held down by his comrades as a surgeon, with his crude bow saw in one hand, made deliberate sawing motions cutting into one of the man's limbs. The surgeon wore an apron over his yellowed white muslin shirt, sleeves rolled up, but the apron hardly protected his clothing from the blood.

When the gunfire stopped, a man declared the fighting was over, and I ran out onto the battlefield with the other children to collect the unexpended, prepackaged black powder cartridges to take as souvenirs. I had just witnessed my first American Civil War reenactment – The First Battle of Lexington, also known as the Battle of the Hemp Bales. The atmosphere was surreal – nostalgic, somewhat morbid, and yet it provoked a level of reverence and reflection. Rangers from the Missouri State Park Service were on post to answer questions, and uniformed Cadets from the local Wentworth Military Academy helped manage the crowds. Later in my childhood, my parents took me and my sister to the Battle of Lone Jack Museum to expose us to more of the Civil War history that exists in the area, and to the Gateway Arch at Jefferson National Expansion Memorial in St. Louis exposing us to more of Missouri's rich history.

When I was in Boy Scouts, we would often camp at a cabin near an old stage route in my hometown of Warrensburg, the seat of Johnson County. At night, we would gather up the boys and cross an old barbed wire fence onto an old chicken farm where a nineteenth century family cemetery was located. We would carefully walk through the headstones which eerily reflected the glow from our flashlights as we searched for the markers that had messages indicating their interred inhabitants were killed by Bushwhackers. Warrensburg was used as a post for the Union, and the likes of the notorious Bushwhacker leaders William Clark Quantrill and "Bloody" Bill Anderson, along with their followers who included Jesse James and Cole Younger, would often pass through, harassing Union details and civilians across the county.

I was reminded of my childhood experiences just a few years ago while my family and I were on leave back home in Johnson County. Grandpa Burrell Corson told me about how Great-Great-Grandpa William Corson and his two brothers served in the Missouri Volunteers on the Union side during the war. I was intrigued and wanted to know more. While researching about my family's involvement in the war as well as Johnson County's history, I realized just

how complicated the Civil War in Missouri had become, and its influence in the context of the greater-war.

This monograph is intended to provide a brief analysis of Missouri's role in the early stages, primarily the first two years, of the Civil War. My hope is that the reader, particularly modern warfighters and policymakers, will be able to walk away with an appreciation for the complex nature of fighting in Missouri and of the decisions leaders made. Missouri leaders faced it all: complex political considerations, a deeply rooted strategic culture, conventional war, and an insurgency. Leaders of today face similar complex challenges: carrying out national policy decisions, employing conventional weapons, countering guerilla forces, and dealing with local populations – all within the same battlespace, not unlike what leaders in Missouri faced. Because of those challenges, I believe the Civil War in Missouri is a relevant study for today's warfighter and policymaker.

Acknowledgements

First, I want to thank my late Grandpa Corson for sparking my interest on this subject. I would also like to thank my parents who saw value in exposing me and my sister to subjects of historical significance and taking us to state and national historic sites. I owe a great deal of gratitude to my mentor, Dr. Bradford Wineman, Command and Staff College, Marine Corps University, for providing guidance, and more importantly patience, as I trudged along in my research and writing. Last, but not least, I want to sincerely thank my wife, Shannon, and my two boys, Michael and Matthew, for their unwavering support and putting up with my long hours of study – I love you.

P.S. Boys – there's a reason I drag you to historic sites and museums...

I. Introduction

The American Civil War is one of the nation's most indelible conflicts. It was a war that tested the resolve of the republic, and a struggle that arose from sociopolitical underpinnings constructed by years of discord related to disparate ideas about the role of government and of human bondage. It shaped a country whose citizenry still clutches to some of its regionally-centric, social artifacts, almost with religious fervor. It has been widely researched, well documented, and strongly debated. The American Civil War still holds a prominent place in modern-day military studies, students of which still glean lessons on leadership and general officer-ship, military strategy and tactics, strategic culture, operational art, and campaign planning. Dominating those lessons are studies on battles occurring predominantly in Virginia within the Civil War's Eastern Theater which was made up of the coastal states along the Atlantic seaboard from Maryland down to North Carolina's coastal ramparts.¹ Of those studies, the battles between the Army of the Potomac and the Army of Northern Virginia often overshadow all others. Then there was the Western Theater which consisted of battles in states West of the Appalachian Mountains, but East of the Mississippi River (Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Alabama); and states on the Eastern seaboard south of Virginia (the interior of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida).² Operations occurring within all remaining states and territories west of the Mississippi River fell within the Trans-Mississippi Theater including the state of Missouri, a state central to the theater's role in the greater-war, and influential to the overall Union strategy.³

To some, this theater, and more specifically the role of Missouri, can often be viewed as insignificant in the context of the greater Civil War. Meaningful interest on the study of warfare in Missouri is largely consigned to the phenomenon of guerrilla warfare, and its impact on

shaping the character of war within and around its borders, often overlooking studies on the state's conventional battlefield conflict and of the policy decisions made at the state and Federal levels. Author Louis Gerteis points out in his book, *The Civil War in Missouri*, that two leading Civil War historians, James McPherson and James Hogue, consider the war in Missouri as “peripheral to the principal military campaigns of the war,” placing more emphasis upon the significance of guerrilla warfare within the state than of the significance of its conventional battles. Although the importance of Missouri's conventional battles has been minimized by some scholars, Gerteis goes on to write that the 1993 Civil War Sites Advisory Commission Report on the Nation's Civil War Battlefields determined that out of the identified 384 principal battles across the United States, Missouri had 29 ranking the state third in significance behind Virginia and Tennessee. Three of those battles ranked in the highest level of significance, and three in the second level of significance (the battles of Wilson's Creek, New Madrid/Island No. 10, and Westport; and Fort Davidson, the First Battle of Newtonia, and Byram's Ford respectively - see figure 1).⁴ Furthermore, the majority of the battles which occurred in just the first nine months of the war took place in Virginia and Missouri.

In addition to battlefield significance, the war in Missouri provides lessons on how its political differences and military conflicts shaped decisions made by principals on both sides of the Civil War, particularly decisions made within the first two years of the conflict, because of the unique challenges the state presented to military leaders, and state and national politicians. That is not to say the other border states were not unique given their place on the nation's sociopolitical stage in context their own political and strategic cultures. Similarly, all border states (Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, Missouri, and later West Virginia) were slaveholding states. Delaware, however, was “virtually a free state” with close to 92 percent of its black

population living in a free status.⁵ Geographically, it did not share a common land border with a Confederate state like the other border states (the border states essentially created natural buffers between the free soil North and the slaveholding Confederate South which affected national and military strategy for both the Union and the Confederacy). Also, Delaware's legislature disapproved of secession several months before the attack on Fort Sumter, putting to rest any question of its loyalty to the Union.⁶ Preventing Maryland from secession was an early priority for President Abraham Lincoln because a seceded Maryland and a seceded Virginia would have geographically surrounded Washington D.C. by the Confederacy. Secessionist efforts made by pro-South Marylanders were circumvented due in large part to the military occupation of the state's capital and other key areas by Union troops before the summer of 1861.⁷ West Virginia was unique due to the fact that it was created by Unionists in western Virginia, reuniting a portion of their state back into the United States, and making West Virginia the only dominion to secede from the Confederacy.

Kentucky, like Missouri, wanted to remain neutral – a point the Confederacy also recognized, and any misstep taken by the North or the South could sway Kentucky (and Missouri) one way or the other. Kentucky was also able to remain neutral throughout the summer of 1861 likely due to the restraint exercised by commanders and leaders on both sides of the political divide. That afforded the state enough time to execute three separate elections over the summer months resulting in Union-favored majorities (although Kentucky entered the war in the fall of 1861, its government remained loyal to the Union.)⁸ The complexities surrounding the political issues in the border states (Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, Missouri, and later West Virginia) were alone significant contributing factors to Lincoln's national and military strategies.

The Civil War in Missouri is a subject that combines an entanglement of divisive political consequences, colliding ideologies, campaigns between conventional forces, and an insurgency consisting of unpredictable marauding guerrilla forces. This combination of factors occurring all within the confines of one state's borders makes Missouri unique in American Civil War studies. Today's leaders are faced with similarly perplexing challenges, albeit modern in character. The complexity of the American Civil War in Missouri is relevant to today's warfighter and policymaker as it combines the study of a distinctive strategic culture capturing the political turmoil within the context of westward expansion and slavery, the element of conventional warfare waged by Union and Confederate troops, and the element of irregular warfare which was imposed by guerrilla forces. Furthermore, the first two years of the Civil War in Missouri provides the modern warfighter with an understanding of how policy decisions at various levels affect outcomes and may lead to unintended consequences.

II. Missouri's Strategic Culture

Understanding the strategic culture of Missouri is perhaps most critical to understanding the complexity of the events that took place within its borders leading up to and during the war. This culture was cultivated during the turbulent years of the antebellum period, which occurred between the War of 1812 and the American Civil War. Missouri's strategic culture was an amalgamation of geography, slavery, and politics, all of which collided within the city of St. Louis.

Located in the Midwest region of the United States, the geography of Missouri (see figure 2) is a mix of rolling plains and hills located in the northern half of the state making the area suitable for grain and livestock farming, river valleys suitable for crops near the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers (where occasional bluffs rose above the same valleys and rivers), and

low-rising mountains towering over the tributary waters of the Ozarks in Southern Missouri. The Missouri River, originating in Montana, forms the state's northwestern border, and cuts across the state from Kansas City west to east, meeting the Mississippi River in St. Louis which forms the state's eastern border and meets the Ohio River in the bootheel located in the southeastern area of the state near New Madrid County. Both rivers have served as major lines for transportation and trade which had long contributed to the state's economy. It was along the Missouri River where slavery was most common, and the region became aptly known as Little Dixie – a diminutive moniker based on Missouri's slave-enabled agrarian economy connecting it by name and culture to the South's land of Dixie, although the scale in which the institution of slavery in the state was implemented did not necessarily place Missouri land and slave owners on the same level as the aristocratic planter class of the South.⁹ Slavery was also practiced on an even smaller scale along the Mississippi River and family farming operations around the state. Due to the state's institution of slavery and desire to enter the Union as a slave state, the resource-rich state of Missouri would epitomize the political culture of the time. Missouri would take center stage in the slavery debate within the halls of Congress.

The first half of the nineteenth century marked an era of political tug-of-war between legislation limiting slavery and promoting slavery. By 1819, there was equal representation in the Senate between free and slave states. Missouri petitioned to be admitted into the Union as a slave state, largely because of the deep roots that slavery had set within the territory, a practice traced back to its French possession. This would, however, offset the proslavery versus anti-slavery representation in Congress. Henry Clay, Kentucky Representative and Speaker of the House, proposed a compromise to admit Missouri as a slave state while also admitting Maine (also seeking admittance at the time) as a free state so long as any future admittance of any state

north of the 36° 30' parallel would be free (which was later reaffirmed by the Compromise of 1850, but invalidated by the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854).¹⁰ Passed as the Missouri Compromise of 1820, Maine was admitted to the Union as a free state, and Missouri as a slave state once again ensuring equal representation.

Missouri's charged sociopolitical environment, developed throughout the antebellum period, was consistent with the sociopolitical turmoil taking place at the national level. This was due to a confluence of disparate viewpoints affecting the state: Northern and European immigration versus nativism, proslavery versus anti-slavery, and unionism versus secessionism. These conflicting issues and viewpoints perhaps appropriately manifested concomitantly in Missouri's largest city, St. Louis, where the two longest rivers in North America meet, the Missouri and Mississippi, both of which form a considerable amount of Missouri state boundary. The rivers also provided the nexus for state communication, transportation, and trade; and still links the state to fourteen other states by water alone. The Mississippi River had served as a demarcation between the eastern portion of the United States and the territories in the West for years – Missouri at its center, with St. Louis becoming aptly known as the Gateway to the West. Whoever controlled the rivers would arguably control the fate of the West, a detail both the North and the South understood.

St. Louis was also where free state and slave state ideologies collided. It became one of the major access points between the free states of the North via Illinois, and the South's only claim (Missouri) west of the Mississippi River and north of the 36° 30' parallel. Lastly, St. Louis, became a hub for the westward expansion and speculation movements of Northerners and European immigrants, mostly of German and Irish ancestry who settled in the city and entered into the interior of the state along the Missouri River, the influx which was like a wedge

protruding into the center of the state.¹¹ It was a wedge geographically, but also figuratively speaking because of the common prejudice against immigrants who introduced alien cultures and opposing perspectives. In particular, the Germans brought anti-slavery viewpoints to this legally recognized slave state, only amplifying the cultural xenophobia.¹² St. Louis became a uniquely positioned feature on the map between the North and the South. It would also serve as the source of political influence in Missouri in 1861.

This converging sociopolitical environment led to a fracturing of the population within and around St. Louis. Leaders had to take these factors into account when addressing the problem in Missouri, and missteps occurred on both sides of the conflict as a result of those leaders not fully appreciating the intricacies of the city and the state's strategic culture. Despite the factionalism, most Missouri citizens did not support secession. This was affirmed by vote during the state's second Constitutional Convention of the year on March 21, 1861, when the state convention moved from the state capital in Jefferson City to St. Louis under rather surreptitious Republican influence, perhaps to ensure the vote would favor Unionism.¹³

Missouri largely identified itself as a Democratic state despite the growing Republican Party movement in St. Louis. The predominant Democratic Party could not, however, assemble a unifying partisan message for Missourians. Within the Democratic Party (see figure 3) there were proslavery Unionists, anti-slavery Unionists, and proslavery secessionists. Of the Democratic Unionists there were two additional splits: Unconditional Unionists and Conditional Unionists. Unconditional Unionists were citizens who would not support secessionism at any cost. Conditional Unionists were citizens who supported remaining in the Union so long as the Federal government did not coerce Southern states into returning to the Union under the threat of

force, or prevent Missouri (or any other state for that matter) from seceding (presuming, of course, states had the right to secede as they wished based on their own sovereignties).¹⁴

Just as in today's civil arenas and combat environments, political and military leaders had to understand the intricacies of Missouri's sociopolitical environment in order to develop strategies to counter the possibility of its secession as the nation drifted closer to war. Lincoln had to design a national strategy that would prevent Missouri and other border states from seceding from the Union.

III. Union Strategy

President Lincoln faced a nearly impossible challenge entering office in 1861. By the time he took office in March, seven states had already declared secession from the Union, and under the leadership of newly-elected President Jefferson Davis, Senator from Mississippi, the Confederate States of America was created.¹⁵ Lincoln had to quickly develop a strategy to address the crumbling Union. He understood that the issue of slavery correlated to the South's secessionist declarations, and that any suggestion of Federal intervention targeting slavery would drive other states into the Confederacy. He had to convince Southern states, namely those not yet seceded (including Missouri) that the Federal government was only interested in keeping the Union together despite growing vocal abolitionism primarily coming out of the North (which did more to hinder Lincoln's narrative than help). Author and historian James McPherson wrote, "To maintain maximum support for the war, Lincoln initially insisted that it was a war solely for preservation of the Union and not a war against slavery. This policy required both a national and a military strategy of leaving slavery alone."¹⁶ This policy of preserving the Union was especially important in the border states of Missouri, Kentucky, and Maryland which were slaveholding states, but largely Unionist.

The South craftily convinced, however, anyone of Southern sympathies that if the Federal government interfered with secessionism, particularly with any show of force or violence within a respective state's borders, it would be viewed as an act of coercion over a state's sovereignty. The federalist philosophy behind the United States was important, but in those days secessionists placed loyalty to one's own state over that of the Union.¹⁷ Many believed a federal government had the potential to emerge as an oppressive power imposing tyranny over the sovereignty of individual states, an ongoing debate since the ratification of the Constitution seventy years earlier.

Although he was speaking specifically on the issue of the ensuing siege on Fort Sumter, Lincoln's enmeshed national and military strategies were realized when he addressed the rebellion attack on the South Carolina citadel rising out of the Charleston Harbor: the Union must "hold, occupy, and possess [U.S.] property," or "it would discourage the friends of the Union, embolden its adversaries, and go far to insure to the latter a recognition abroad; that in fact it would be our national destruction consummated."¹⁸ He recognized that the use of Federal forces could not be avoided, but employing them would have to be done in a delicate and calculated way. If the United States handed over Fort Sumter to the Confederates in order to end its siege and prevent conflict, then Lincoln ran the risk of declaring to Southern states not yet seceded (and to foreign nations keeping a curious and watchful eye on the still infant democratic nation) that the Federal government was not strong enough to defend its interests. On the other hand, if the United States responded in force to protect its property, then Lincoln ran the risk of validating the tyrannical act of coercion Southerners were purporting – a perception that might ultimately lead to the secession of more states including Missouri.

Lincoln understood the strategic importance of Missouri and he could not allow its secession. Control over the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers was essential to the North. The Missouri River created a corridor that linked the free East represented by Illinois, with the free West represented by Kansas; and the Mississippi River provided a link between the northern states of the Midwest and the Gulf of Mexico. If the Confederacy gained control of the rivers, the North would be cut-off from Kansas and from its territories farther west, losing control of major lines of communication. Overwhelmingly, Lincoln's political strategy in Missouri was to prevent its secession, but to do so he had to make sure not to alienate the Unionist slaveholders.¹⁹ His desire to retain possession of the border states, and those not yet seceded was a dominating factor in how he approached the Fort Sumter situation. Lincoln was faced with an incredible dilemma: reinforce Fort Sumter, and draw other states away from the Union; but withdraw, and legitimize Southern secession, likely prompting more states, including the border states, to join their Southern brethren anyway.

In addition, and prior to the attack on Fort Sumter, the political divide in Missouri was at a breaking point by February 1861. Despite his pro-Southern sympathies and personal desire to join the Confederacy, Governor Claiborne Jackson insisted on Missouri remaining neutral under a policy of armed neutrality (remain neutral, but maintain a force for defense) because most Missourians just wanted to be left alone. The policy of armed neutrality in any state was not supported by Lincoln, and he addressed his opposition to those policies in a speech to Congress later that year stating the concept of neutrality "recognizes no fidelity to the Constitution, no obligation to maintain the Union; and while very many who have favored it are, doubtless, loyal citizens, it is nevertheless, treason in effect."²⁰ Armed neutrality for Missouri meant that it

would remain neutral if a war between the North and South broke out, but it would be prepared to fight in defense of its sovereign borders from aggression imposed by either side.

In the end Lincoln failed to prevent the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861. To many, the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter was representative of an attack upon the United States and war had essentially been declared. Lincoln's national strategy quickly shifted to "maximizing public support for the war."²¹ Militarily, General Winfield Scott, Commander of the United States Army, proposed a plan later to be referred to as the Anaconda Plan, to attack the South's economy using blockades along Southern ports and seizing the Mississippi River which included the Trans-Mississippi Theater and the state of Missouri.²² Lincoln, however, wanted a more offensive strategy which would ultimately lead to the first major battle of the war, and the Union's first devastating defeat on July 22, 1861, known as the First Battle of Bull Run located in Manassas, Virginia.²³ The Union army crossed Virginia's border, and force-on-force conflict between the North and the South had begun. Lincoln's military dilemma had just become worse, and he needed the appropriate leadership to build and lead an army that could defeat the Confederates.

According to historian David Work, the Union army only had five generals at the beginning of 1861. This included General William Harney who commanded the Department of the West headquartered in St. Louis, of which operations in the state of Missouri fell under.²⁴ Lincoln needed more generals to command the growing Union army and he turned to political appointments to bolster the ranks and lend to his political strategy even though he had a corps of regular army officers in the lower ranks. Some had combat experience (albeit limited), many had potential for promotion, and some even possessed West Point credentials. That corps of

officers, however, was undermanned largely due to recent resignations on grounds of either having personal opposition to the war, or for personal desires to join the Confederacy.

More importantly, Lincoln needed an army that was representative of the influential disparate groups prevailing in all corners of the nation including, “Republicans and Democrats, antislavery and proslavery, nativists and immigrants, high tariff and low tariff, and many other competing interest and ethnic groups.”²⁵ He believed it was important to represent each group within his general officer ranks, so that it would bring greater support for the Union cause. According to Work, “appointing generals was a tool he used to solidify support for the Union,” and did so “in ways to secure the loyalty of three basic groups: his own Republican Party, the rival Democratic Party, and ethnic groups, specifically the Germans and the Irish.”²⁶ This gambit of considerations all intersected within the borders of Missouri. Political appointments became critical to maintaining the support of the border states, especially Missouri and Kentucky where intrastate political divisions were most prevalent, and where a political miscalculation could potentially push either state into secession.

IV. The Creation of Two Opposing State Militias: Conventional War in Missouri Begins

As mentioned earlier, the Civil War in the Trans-Mississippi Theater, especially in Missouri, has been overshadowed by the engagements that occurred in the Eastern Theater. The conventional conflict in Missouri, however, had parallels to the battles in the Eastern Theater and contributed to other significant battles occurring in the Western United States. Gerteis points out that just like the First Battle of Bull Run in Manassas on July 21, 1861, the Battle of Wilson’s Creek in Southwest Missouri, which occurred less than a month later on August 10, was also a Confederate victory raising morale for the Confederacy just as the victory in Manassas delivered a morale boost to the South in the Eastern Theater. Union victories in Missouri were just as

important. The Union defeated Confederates along the Mississippi River February through April 1862 at New Madrid and Island Number Ten in Southwest Missouri which ultimately paved the way for the capture of Vicksburg by General Ulysses S. Grant in July 1863.²⁷ The development of the conventional war in Missouri, however, was not as straight forward as the conflict in the East (pitched battles between Northern armies and Southern armies). War in Missouri was largely internal, and it was linked to the political turmoil mentioned earlier.

When Lincoln called for 75,000 militia to be mustered for a period of three months just days after the fall of Fort Sumter, Governor Jackson refused to muster the Missouri Volunteers for service to the Union.²⁸ Despite this refusal, pro-Unionists devised a plan to raise a militia anyway. Leading Missouri Democrat-turned-Republican Frank Blair, an Unconditional Unionist who would later be appointed Colonel and then General in the Missouri Home Guard, returned from a trip to Washington in April 1861. Under the authority granted by the War Department, directed the raising of a Union-backed state militia with strong ties to the Republican Party in St. Louis. The recruits were primarily drawn from a local, political paramilitary group, the Wide Awakes, mostly consisting of German immigrants with the help of a reluctant General Harney and an enthusiastic Captain Nathaniel Lyon from Kansas.²⁹ The new militia was called the Missouri Home Guard. This was a bold decision by Lincoln to usurp the authority of Governor Jackson and the state's Constitutional Convention.

Regular army Captain Lyon arrived in St. Louis in March 1861 under orders to assume command of the St. Louis Arsenal and work directly for Harney. Captain Lyon was a staunch Republican whose political leanings were considered by some to be radical, and was assigned to duties in the Kansas territory prior to St. Louis where his personal politics were likely shaped as a result of working closely with anti-slavery advocates.³⁰ Lyon was directed to recruit volunteers

to the new Union-backed Missouri Home Guard under Blair's concocted state militia plan negating the authority and responsibility of the state government to maintain a militia. The new volunteer army mustered five regiments of men at Jefferson Barracks, mostly Wide Awakes of German ancestry.³¹ The state now essentially had provisions for two state militias – one militia of state-recognized Missouri Volunteers which had just mustered out of service after fighting skirmishes in Western Missouri against Kansas guerrilla fighters known as Kansas Jayhawkers, and a new militia of volunteers called the Missouri Home Guard sanctioned by the Federal government and prepared to carry out the Federal mandate of providing forces to the Union cause since Governor Jackson refused to offer the Missouri Volunteers. In May 1861, the new Missouri Home Guard's first task was to defend the St. Louis Arsenal located near the Missouri River about eight miles north of Jefferson Barracks to prevent it from following a similar fate to that of the seizure of Fort Sumter, a fate that befell the Federal government's Liberty Arsenal on April 20, 1861 in Liberty, Missouri; as well as other ordnance stores in nearby Kansas City, Missouri on May 4, 1861 at the hands of pro-secessionists (although those seizures were met with little to no resistance and did not involve violent attacks like at Fort Sumter).³² Preserving Federal property was key in meeting Lincoln's strategy and Lyon intended to uphold Lincoln's policy.

To counter the creation of the Missouri Home Guard, Governor Jackson directed the commander of the Missouri Volunteers, General Daniel Frost, to report to St. Louis and recruit new volunteers into the state-sanctioned militia.³³ Prior to the start of the war and under the leadership of General Frost, Missouri maintained a brigade of about 500 volunteers in its state's militia, which had been involved in armed conflict against the anti-slavery Kansas Jayhawkers along the Missouri-Kansas border for several years.³⁴ Just as Lyon recruited the Wide Awakes

into the new Missouri Home Guard, Frost proceeded to recruit the pro-secessionist Minute Men paramilitary group into the Missouri Volunteers as a counter to the Union recruitment efforts.³⁵ The Minute Men were at the behest of leading pro-secessionist, St. Louis Democrats (although spelled differently, perhaps the pro-secessionists were summoning the idyllic revolutionary patriotism of the Continental Minutemen by name association – this was, after all, the South’s revolution). Frost established Camp Jackson just four miles west of the St. Louis Arsenal and began training his new recruits. Governor Jackson intended on using the Missouri Volunteers and state-controlled police forces to eventually seize the St. Louis Arsenal and to obtain its weapons and supplies in the hope of eventually convincing his state to secede.

Lyon believed that the establishment of Camp Jackson near the St. Louis Arsenal was a threatening action and decided to surround Camp Jackson with his new Missouri Home Guard forcing an unopposed surrender of General Frost and his just-over 600 Missouri Volunteers on May 10, 1861.³⁶ After the capture, Lyon then paraded the prisoners through the streets of St. Louis putting on display the defeated Missouri Volunteers at the hands of what was essentially a German-born army, causing a days-long civilian uprising resulting in several civilians shot dead.³⁷ This was a turning point in Missouri, drawing it closer to war. On one hand, General Lyon’s decision to defend the St. Louis Arsenal by executing the pre-emptive seizure of Camp Jackson was prudent as arsenals and Federal property were being seized by pro-secessionists across the nation including Missouri; but on the other hand General Lyon’s decision to take military action against a state militia of native-borne citizens by an army of immigrants, and then humiliating the militia by parading them in the streets of their city led to the unification of some anti-Federal government supporters across the state who viewed Lyon’s action as coercive, and had the potential to undermine Lincoln’s strategy.

As a result of the Camp Jackson Affair, Governor Jackson pushed emergency legislation through the Missouri Convention within days, forming a new militia known as the Missouri State Guard (not to be confused with the Missouri Home Guard) as a defense force in opposition to Lyon's forces and against any future Federal movements within the state. The new legislation divided the state into nine districts along county lines. Each district would have a commander, and each county would contribute men to their assigned district.³⁸ Weary of full-blown war, General Harney entered a truce on May 21, 1861 with the commander of the Missouri State Guard, General Sterling Price who was personally appointed by Governor Jackson. Price was a former Missouri governor, slave owner, and a veteran of the Mexican War where he earned the rank of Brevet General for his battlefield successes. The agreement between the two Generals became known as the Price-Harney Truce.³⁹ In its provisions, Price agreed to maintain order within the state's borders using the Missouri State Guard to include expelling any Confederate forces entering the state so long as Federal forces avoided maneuvers outside the confines of St. Louis.

Although Lyon's actions during the Camp Jackson Affair was a threat to Lincoln's strategy, Harney's truce with Price essentially legitimized the Missouri State Guard and demonstrated a tolerance for armed neutrality. Missouri was at a crossroads because two armies were now present in the state – one backed by the Federal government made up of German St. Louisans; and one, veiled in neutrality, yet posing a real threat to the Union because it was prepared to recruit men to service from all over the state who were upset with the 'coercive' actions of Lyon's army. It was also one more step to potential secession.

Harney's agreement with Price conflicted with Lincoln's opposition to armed neutrality. As a result, Harney was relieved of command, and Lyon subsequently took command of the

Department of the West temporarily while Lincoln contemplated a suitable successor. Although Lyon's command of the Department of the West was temporary, he now had free rein to exert his aggressiveness. Like Lincoln, Lyon believed in a more assertive offensive strategy and he was ready to oppose any sign of anti-Union actions by presumed secessionists just as he demonstrated during the Camp Jackson Affair, but Lyon had to avoid provoking any more violence within Missouri's borders, and more importantly his actions had to support Lincoln's strategy of gaining support for the Union's war efforts and keep Missouri from seceding. His aggressiveness, however, was once again demonstrated when less than two weeks after taking command, he requested a meeting with General Price and Governor Jackson on June 12, 1861, where Lyon gave the two Missouri leaders a message that his Federal forces (Missouri Home Guard) were not going to abide by the Price-Harney Truce and would begin moving freely within the state.⁴⁰ If Jackson and Price did not like the new mandate, then their dissention meant war. Price and Jackson promptly left St. Louis for Jefferson City to begin preparations for the mobilization of the Missouri State Guard. War within Missouri was now inevitable.

While General Price and Governor Jackson prepared forces, General Lyon developed a plan to take full military control of the state. His plan was twofold: 1) move forces southwest via Rolla, Missouri, to protect rail and road routes, and 2) move forces east, up the Missouri River in order to capture the capital of Jefferson City and to secure the river, then move Southwest to meet up with the forces moving through Rolla maintaining constant pursuit of the fleeing Missouri State Guard.⁴¹ The fledgling Missouri State Guard was no match for the Union forces in the early summer months of 1861, and Lyon quickly took Jefferson City and Booneville, and continued his pursuit of the now deposed Governor Jackson, General Price, and the Missouri State Guard. Lyon, now a General, had taken initiative and Price and his Missouri State Guard

was on its heels; but Lyon was getting farther away from St. Louis, and deeper into Southern territory as he pursued the Missouri State Guard to Southwest Missouri.

With the helm of the Department of the West vacant and temporarily held by Lyon, Lincoln had to find a permanent replacement for Harney, and he chose John C. Frémont, nicknamed Pathfinder for his reputation as a western explorer. Frémont a Republican, experienced politician, and veteran of the Mexican War who had participated in military actions in California, although limited in scope, assumed command of the Department of the West on July 25, 1861 (referred to as the Western Department just days later).⁴² Lyon would be subordinate to Frémont, but would continue to command his Missouri Home Guard and regulars operating within the borders. Also, by the end of July, Missouri Unionists established a new provisional pro-Union government under the leadership of Provisional Governor Hamilton Gamble in the absence of Governor Jackson and any pro-secessionist politician he took with him when fleeing Jefferson City. Less than two weeks later on August 10, 1861, Lyon, stretched thin but confident in the Missouri Home Guard's momentum, had surrounded a much larger force of Price's Missouri State Guard, which was now reinforced with Confederate forces from Arkansas under the leadership of General Ben McCulloch at the Confederate encampment near Wilson's Creek outside of Springfield, Missouri.⁴³ The Battle of Wilson's Creek would be the first major battle within the state and proved to be a turning point for the Confederates as they defeated the Missouri Home Guard, killing General Lyon. Price would go on and move north defeating Union troops at the First Battle of Lexington, also known as the Battle of Hemp Bales, in September 1861.

Governor Jackson, convinced that the Confederates could win back Missouri after defeating Union forces at Wilson's Creek and Lexington, established his own secessionist-

minded Missouri Government in Neosho, Missouri about 65 miles from the Wilson's Creek battle site, and Missouri was subsequently accepted into the Confederate States of America despite a pro-Union provisional government operating at the state capital in Jefferson City.⁴⁴ There were effectively now two state governments in operation – one in exile in Neosho recognized by the Confederate States of America, and one operating as a Federally-recognized provisional state government assuming the political posts at the state capital left vacant by Governor Jackson and his pro-secessionist colleagues. The state was being pulled in two different directions.

General Frémont never could regain lost ground, failing to produce substantive results, especially in the aftermath of the Union defeat at Wilson's Creek and then again after the defeat at the First Battle of Lexington. To make matters worse, he became increasingly frustrated over citizen support to Price's Missouri State Guard and the growing guerrilla activity imposed by the unabated Bushwhackers, and took it upon himself in September 1861 to issue a proclamation declaring martial law and freeing all slaves. Bewildered and fearing that complete secession of Kentucky and Missouri would follow because of Frémont's emancipation proclamation, Lincoln rescinded Frémont's order and relieved the general in November 1861. Lincoln promoted General David Hunter, a veteran of the First Battle of Bull Run, but was himself relieved just months later for incompetence. Lincoln's generals were failing him.

In the East, Lincoln's goal was to restore the Union; but in the West, he was attempting to prevent additional secession. If he did not prevent Missouri and Kentucky secession, the consequences would be grave. If he lost the border states, he would lose the Missouri, Mississippi, and Ohio Rivers, and cut the Union off from the states and territories west of the Mississippi River. Missouri would then serve as a Confederate wedge splitting the Unionized

Midwest up the middle. Lincoln appointed General Henry Halleck under the advisement of General Winfield Scott as commander of Frémont's Western Department on November 9, 1861 (now referred to as the Department of Missouri). Halleck was a West Point graduate who had authored books on strategy, but resigned in 1850 to follow a career in mining law in California.⁴⁵ Halleck was able to turn things around in Missouri, providing Lincoln the breathing room he needed to focus on the war in the East. By the time Halleck was promoted to General in Chief of the Army and moved to Washington the following summer in 1862 he had pushed Price and his Missouri State Guard, and Jackson and his secessionist state government out of Missouri and into Arkansas. Now commanders had to face a guerrilla insurgency not unlike what modern warfighters face following conventional combat operations.

V. Guerrilla Warfare

Although the Civil War began in the spring of 1861, limited armed conflict had been waging in Western Missouri near the Missouri-Kansas border for nearly a decade. The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 was introduced as a pathway for the Kansas and Nebraska territories to enter statehood; however, it also set the conditions for any state entering the Union from that point forward to decide whether it would be a free state or a slave state, regardless of maintaining equal representation in Congress. New emigration companies in the free North were established to help relocate abolition-minded settlers to the region, but Missourians, under the encouragement of Senator David Atchison who helped push the new Kansas-Nebraska legislation through, wasted no time in encouraging Missourians to cross the border into Kansas and begin "squattening" in the new territory as a counter to the threat of the growing anti-slavery influx into the area.⁴⁶ Violence began to erupt, and two armed guerrilla groups emerged: the anti-slavery Jayhawkers of Kansas, and the proslavery Border Ruffians of Missouri, a precursor

to the Missouri Bushwhackers of the Civil War.⁴⁷ When conventional war broke out in Missouri shortly after Lyon nullified the Price-Harney Truce, the leadership of both Union and Confederate armies were forced to deal with an uncontrollable and growing guerrilla insurgency. The ruthlessness of both groups had the potential to undermine the conventional armies' strategies and lead to regional instability.

As Lyon pursued Price in the summer of 1861, proslavery, anti-Federal guerrillas under loose coordination with General Price, began destroying bridges and culverts, rail lines, and telegraph lines throughout the state.⁴⁸ By 1862, Halleck had pushed Price's Missouri State Guard out of Missouri, and the exiled army began fighting for other Confederate causes in places that better favored Confederate operations. When the Missouri State Guard withdrew to Arkansas, a void was created, and remnants of its conventional force was left behind finding their only option was to join bands of Bushwhackers intent on continuing the Confederate cause and disrupting unsuspected Union forces. To compound the issue, Washington did not have a policy to deal with guerrilla forces. According to author Michael Fellman, Lincoln "did not deal with Missouri guerrillas or pro-southern civilians in any significant way, merely dismissing them as bad men who used the cover of rebellion for their evil, personal ends," simply saying, "good men ought to come to their senses."⁴⁹ In the absence of policy from Washington, Union leadership imposed martial law as it saw fit, and individual unit commanders (typically Kansas militia) inflicted their own forms of acrimonious retribution against Missourians, often failing to discriminate between Bushwhackers and innocent civilians believing most Missourians supported the guerrilla bands. These actions created greater civilian animosity toward the Union army.

Although Bushwhackers did have backing from many civilians whose support provided the guerrillas freedom of movement, better intelligence than their Union counterparts, and the ability to conduct offensive operations where they chose (particularly in the form of ambushes), the guerrillas also exacted violence against the public, especially against those believed to be sympathetic to the Union cause. Fellman points out that the actions of both Union troops and guerrilla fighters “drove men either into the Union army or into guerrilla bands as the only places of proximate safety.”⁵⁰ Historian Bruce Nichols asked the question, “Why Guerrillas?” (referring to the Bushwhackers) and provides five reasons Southern sympathizers picked up arms and fought with the guerrilla bands: bitterness, anger, hope, desperation, and excitement.⁵¹ Not unlike the insurgencies of today, civilians sympathetic to the Southern rebellion helped hide riders, stored supplies, and provided intelligence on pro-Unionist neighbors and Union troop movements. Although all Southern guerrilla fighters operating across the greater-Civil War were generally referred to as Bushwhackers, their activity in Missouri was so prevalent that the term is often exclusively associated with the pro-secessionist Missouri guerrillas.

The most infamous of the Bushwhackers in Missouri was William Clark Quantrill. Quantrill, once a Confederate soldier who fought at Wilson’s Creek and Lexington, Missouri, left the Missouri State Guard and created his own pro-Confederate guerrilla unit intent on hunting down Kansans and small Union forces.⁵² His aggressive leadership, tactical expertise, and relative success in disrupting Union operations led to him becoming known as a leading guerrilla figure during the rebellious insurgency of Western Missouri. The Union army in Missouri’s West put a tremendous amount of focus on hunting down Quantrill and his riders because of the instability they brought to the state as evident in correspondence between officers and their higher headquarters which were later published in several series of the *Official Records*

of the Union and Confederate Armies. Author Richard Brownlee refers to one entry where an army Captain described Quantrill's tactics: "I have seen this infamous scoundrel rob mails, steal the coaches and horses, and commit other similar outrages upon society... mounted on the best horses... defied pursuit, making camp in the bottoms... roving over a circuit of 30 miles."⁵³

For anti-slavery Kansans, the Civil War in Missouri provided opportunity to plunder the countryside of their neighboring rivals: "The outbreak of civil war in Missouri gave the Kansas Jayhawkers the chance of their lifetime. Not only would the divided and strife-torn Missourians be able to offer them any effective resistance, but they would now be able to steal horses, plunder farms, and liberate slaves in the name of the Union and under the guise of suppressing rebellion."⁵⁴ The situation was complicated because the Jayhawkers were now incorporated. Much like the Wide Awakes who formed the Missouri Home Guards, the bands of Jayhawkers who used to fight the Border Ruffians along the Kansas-Missouri border filled the rolls of several Kansas militia units – often adopting the Jayhawker nickname. Although the Jayhawkers were seemingly on the same side as Union forces, the Department of the West had difficulty in controlling their behavior. Their actions often crossed the line and were driving otherwise loyal citizens away from the Union in support of pro-secessionist guerrillas.

In one such instance, Brigadier General James Henry Lane led his Jayhawker brigade into the town of Osceola on September 22, 1861. Lane suspected the townspeople of storing supplies for Price's Army and confiscated all materiel and horses, killed several civilians, and burned down the town.⁵⁵ In addition, under the leadership of Colonel Charles Jennison, the Seventh Cavalry known as the Jennison Jayhawkers, "asserted quite openly that Missourians should be punished for their secessionist, slaveholding sins, and they plundered, burned, freed slaves, and murdered with especial zeal."⁵⁶ Such instances were prevalent up and down the western portion

of the state, many of the atrocities happening under the command of General Lane, Colonel Jennison, and their Jayhawkers. Lastly, the practice of “foraging” by Union militia was not uncommon. Foraging, better described as confiscation and plunder, was widely used by militia to help feed, outfit their undersupplied units, and to subdue the civilian population with fear. The act of foraging became known as jayhawking regardless of affiliation to known Jayhawker elements.⁵⁷ The actions of Jayhawkers only reinforced the pro-secessionist Bushwhackers allowing them to flourish and placed greater pressure on Union military leaders. Jayhawker units were eventually forced out of Missouri, and foraging tactics were condemned by Union commanders, although the tactics continued in pockets throughout the state for much of the war.

The Union leadership struggled for years in trying to control Bushwhacker attacks throughout the state. Union commanders were forced to shift from an offensive strategy after Price and the Missouri State Guard were forced out of Missouri, into a defensive strategy protecting lines of communication, Union assets, and civilians. Frustrated and absent of national policy, Commanders in the Department of the West/Department of Missouri imposed a series of general orders over the course of the Civil War seeking to reduce the actions of the guerrilla fighters to that of criminals, their violations often punishable by death on the spot. By 1863, General Halleck now in Washington serving as General-in-Chief of the army, partnered with Francis Lieber, a legal scholar; and developed general orders at the War Department level based on Halleck’s experiences in Missouri. Those general orders attempted to address the guerrilla threat and regulate Union response across the army – the first honest attempt at the national level to address the guerrilla problem as well as to seemingly address the unscrupulous behavior of Union soldiers against civilians.⁵⁸

Quantrill and the Bushwhackers of Missouri and the Jayhawkers of Kansas wreaked havoc in Western Missouri for years. Known for indiscriminate attacks across the countryside, sometimes even attacking those who supported their respective causes, Bushwhackers and Jayhawkers alike killed hundreds of innocent civilians and disrupted military operations. Initially viewed as an inconvenient necessity by both Union and Confederate forces in the early days of the conflict, military leaders realized the groups caused more problems than not because of the instability they brought to the region, and for the needlessness of imposing actions closely resembling a total war that conventional forces had tried to avoid for most of the conflict.

VI. Conclusion

The American Civil War is indisputably important to American culture. The consequences of the war leading up to, during, and in the aftermath of the Civil War still permeate American society. It is also important to the modern military warfighter. There is a profound amount of research and publication on the subject, and an immense amount of time is spent in lecture, discussion, and battlefield tours in an attempt to understand the conflict, and apply lessons on leadership, tactics, and operations. Most lessons focus on the events taking place in the Eastern Theater of the Civil War, specifically Virginia, but much can be gained studying battles that occurred in the west such as those taking place within the Trans-Mississippi Theater, particularly Missouri.

The Civil War in Missouri stands as a unique case study for today's warfighter. The modern soldier, airman, sailor, and Marine are faced with considerable challenges on today's battlefield. They must find ways to combine conventional and irregular warfare operational planning with civil-military considerations, while also considering the consequences of decisions and policy. Factors surrounding the conflict in Missouri combined those similar, modern-day

challenges forcing commanders to make decisions concerning conventional warfighting, guerrilla warfare, politics, and their effects on local citizens.

The study of the complex nature of the American Civil War in Missouri is relevant to today's warfighter as the conflict combines lessons on understanding a distinctive strategic culture shaped by years of political chaos associated with the subject of slavery, the element of conventional warfare between the Union and Confederate troops fighting just as they had in the war in the East, and a component of irregular warfare as a result of the guerrilla insurgency. The study of Missouri also provides lessons in how decisions by politicians and leaders affect the battlefield environment. Today's warfighter can easily find correlations between the unique nature of the Civil War in Missouri and conflicts taking place today.

Appendix A



Figure 1
Major Missouri Battles between 1861 and 1865

This is an illustration of the major battles that occurred in the state of Missouri during the American Civil War, to include 29 listed by the 1993 Civil War Sites Advisory Commission Report which are among the 384 principal battles across the nation.⁵⁹ It has been reported that there were anywhere from 800 to 1200 total military engagements within the state's borders.⁶⁰ In the first nine months of the Civil War, the majority of recorded engagements occurred in Missouri and Virginia.

Appendix A

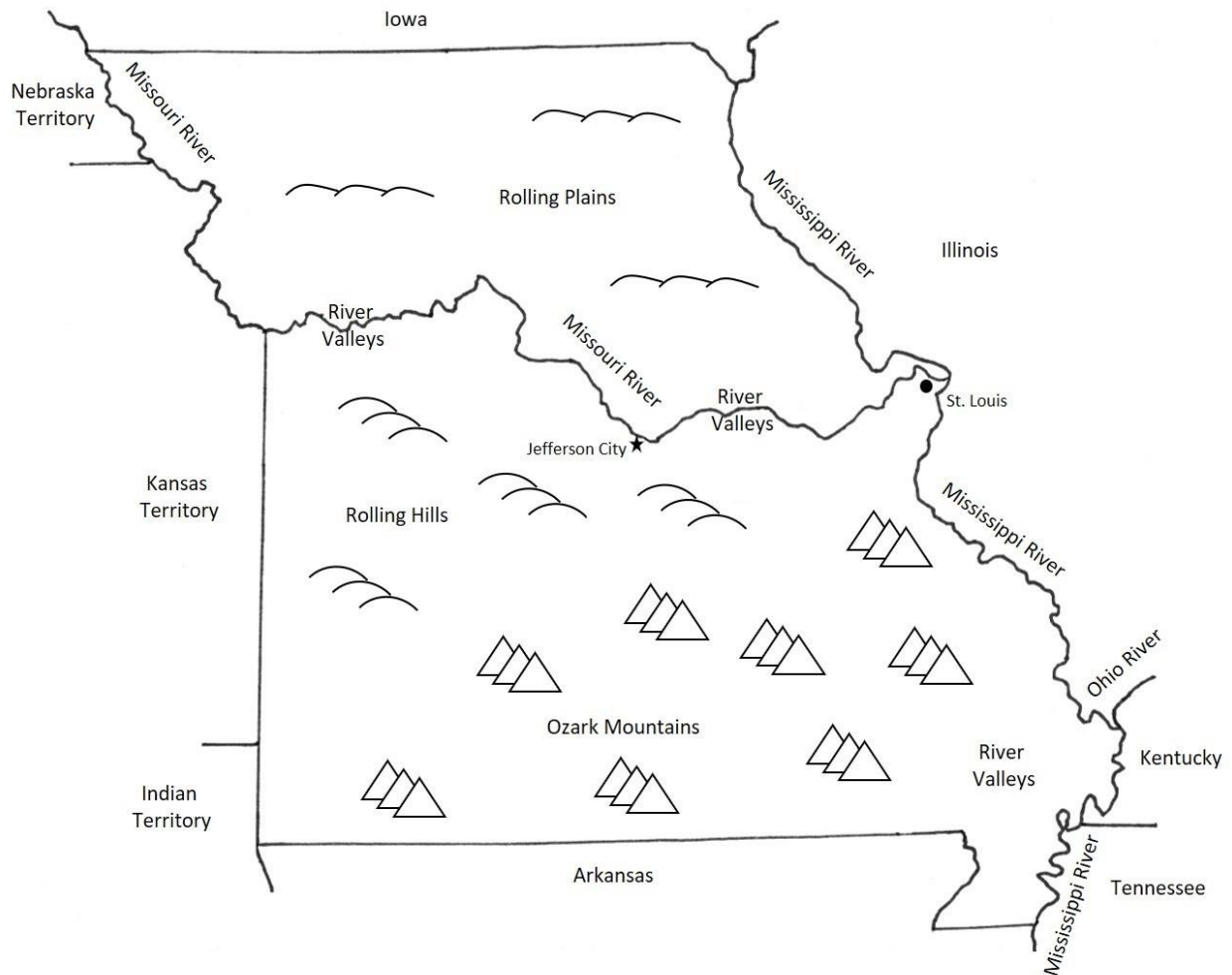


Figure 2
Missouri Geography

This figure depicts the basic geography of Missouri. It consists of a mix of rolling plains and hills, mountains, valleys, and the two longest rivers in North America.

Appendix A

Complexity of the Political Environment in Missouri

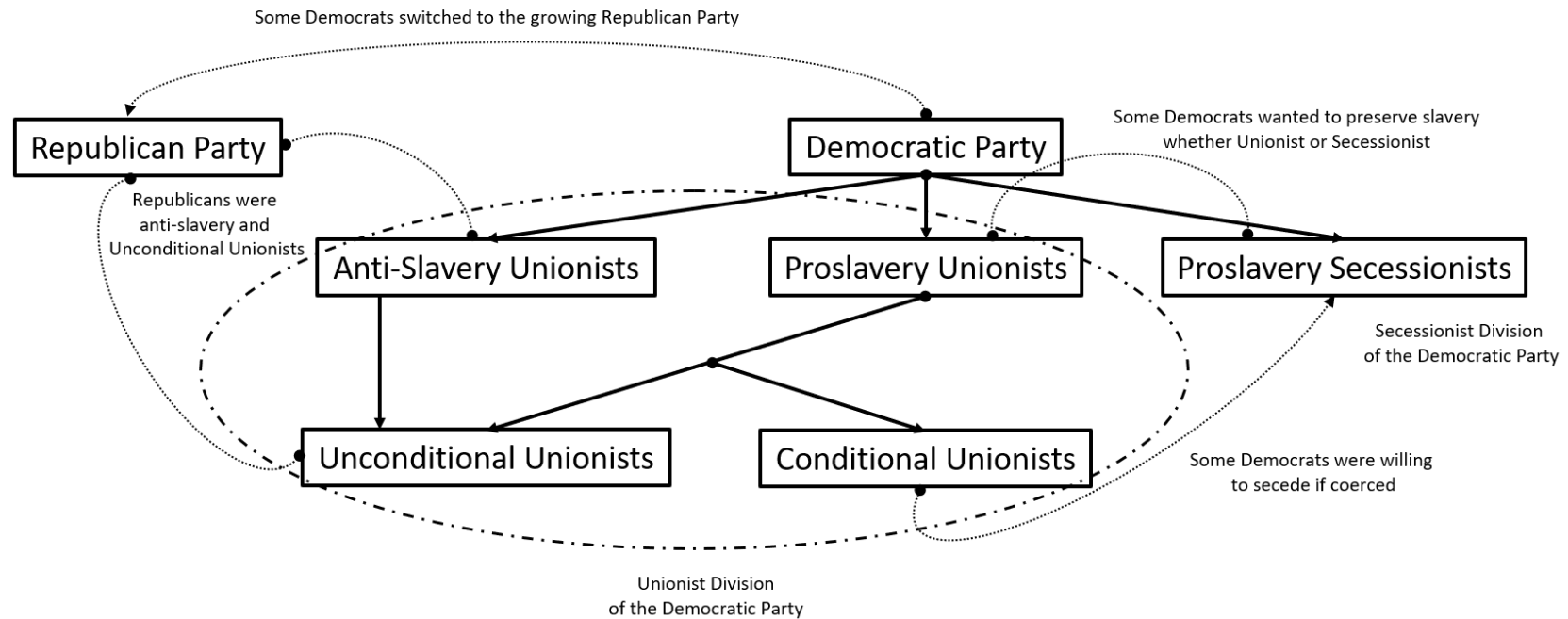


Figure 3
The Complexity of the Political Environment in Missouri

This figure illustrates the complexity of the political environment in Missouri. Most Missourians were Democrats. Of those, there were anti-slavery Unionists, proslavery Unionists, and proslavery secessionists. Of the proslavery Unionists, there were Unconditional Unionists and Conditional Unionists. Unconditional Unionists believed in preserving the Union regardless of stance on slavery. Conditional unionists were willing to secede from the Union if coerced by the Federal government. The Republican Party was, by political ideology, anti-slavery and Unconditional Unionists.

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