
Events of 1856.

53. Prelude.—The shadows of this eventful period darkened as the winter hastened by. Armed men from the South flocked into the Territory, and before spring had fairly opened, companies of “settlers—equipped and provisioned for one year,” from Georgia, Alabama, and South Carolina, showed that the Pro-slavery men were in deadly earnest. The pretext of “settlers” might just as well have been thrown aside. Such men as Major Buford and his followers were bent on conquest only.

The Free-state men sent messengers through the North to rouse to action those who sympathized with them. To check the new tide of immigration that resulted, the steamers on the Missouri were stopped and plundered of all goods destined for Free-state men and of the baggage of incoming settlers, many of whom were so alarmed that they turned homeward. Finally, all travel by river was virtually at an end; the more determined coming by what was known as the Iowa route.

54. Murder of R. P. Brown.—The election under the Topeka Constitution occurred on January 15th. The severe weather prevented another invasion of the polls; the Pro-slavery men very generally refused to vote; and the Free-state men had things their own way. Dr. Robinson was elected Governor.

But the election was not without its tragedy. The Mayor of Leavenworth forbade opening the polls, and the vote was taken secretly at a private house in East

The Free-state men were attacked several times during the day; and finally, in quite a sharp conflict, a Pro-slavery man was mortally wounded. The Kickapoo Rangers were at once called out, and on the following morning seized Capt. R. P. Brown and several other Free-state men who had taken part in the affray. These were confined in a store at Easton during the day, while efforts were made to organize a "Court" to try them. As the crowd became more and more intoxicated and uncontrollable, and bloodshed seemed imminent, the Captain of the Rangers allowed all but Brown to escape. The latter was then attacked by the mob, and hacked and stabbed till at the point of death. He was then thrown into a lumber wagon and driven ten miles over the frozen ground, suffering the most cruel indignities during the entire ride. Reaching home, he was thrown roughly from the wagon, was dragged into the house by his wife and some neighbors, and died in about three hours. No efforts were ever made by the Administration to bring the murderers to justice.

55. The Free-State Legislature met at Topeka on the 4th of March. The Governor's Message was a clear and able history of the Free-state movement, and was circulated through the North with good effect. Lane and ex-Governor Reeder were elected to the United States Senate; and a memorial was prepared, asking admission to the Union. The session lasted but four days.

56. Increasing Lawlessness.—Sheriff Jones still held the writs issued in the Branson case, and was determined to use them, though checked by the treaty of Lawrence. It was well known that another attack would be made on the town as soon as the weather made camping out comfortable. Meanwhile lawlessness increased everywhere. In many counties Pro-slavery juries indicted the men

who took part in the Free-state election. Pardee Butler, returning to Atchison, was stripped to the waist and tarred and covered with cotton. The Free-state Hotel and the Free-state newspapers at Lawrence were declared nuisances, and orders were issued to abate (destroy) them. Gov. Robinson, Reeder, and others were indicted for high treason. An attempt was made to arrest Reeder, but he fled from the Territory in disguise. Gov. Robinson started East, with his wife, but was arrested at Lexington, Mo., without a shadow of legal authority, and was taken back to the Territory a prisoner. Sheriff Jones finally entered Lawrence, attempted to arrest S. N. Wood, but failed. He called on the citizens to aid him, and they refused to obey. That was enough.

57. The Sacking of Lawrence.—As rapidly as possible the Administration forces were brought together. They consisted of companies of Pro-slavery men organized in the Territory and called the "Territorial Militia," their officers being commissioned by the Governor; companies from the Southern States; and the usual mob of Missourians. Before the middle of May they were again gathering around Lawrence. The old earthworks had been strengthened, and the obnoxious hotel, a substantial stone building just completed, was a very respectable fortification. But Lane was in the States, soliciting aid; Robinson and many others were in prison; and scores of others were in hiding, as the Pro-slavery officials were scouring the country and making wholesale arrests. The new Committee of Safety did all it could for the town, but felt powerless to resist the entire weight of the Administration, backed by the forms of law.

On May 21st, cannon were planted on Mount Oread, the armed forces of the invaders were drawn up, and Sheriff Jones, with Atchison at the head of the posse,

entered the town. No resistance was offered. Some arrests were made, and the work of destruction began. The hotel, over which had been raised the flag of South Carolina, was battered down and burned; the printing-offices were gutted, the presses broken, and the type thrown into the river; and then the mob were turned loose, as the legal work was done. Pillage was the order of the day; Governor Robinson's house was burned, citizens were insulted and assaulted, and finally the plundering band dispersed. The total loss to Free-state men was not less than \$200,000.

58. Retaliation.—At last it seemed that patience had ceased to be a virtue. Within forty-eight hours it was evident that a regular guerilla war had begun. Free-state men took to the road, asserting that their time had come, and that it should no longer be a one-sided conflict. Straggling bands from the retreating force were attacked and robbed of their plunder. Depredations were committed on the houses and property of noted Pro-slavery men. Almost instantly the Territory was in a state of anarchy.

59. The Pottawatomie Massacre.—John Brown had opposed the treaty of Lawrence. From the first he asserted that war must come, and the sooner the better. When it was known that Lawrence was again besieged, with six sons and a son-in-law he started for the town. On the way he was met by a messenger, telling the story of the outrage already committed. While doubtful as to the next step, hot with indignation and anger, he heard that five violent Pro-slavery men, living near what was known as Dutch Henry's Crossing, on the Pottawatomie, had threatened their Free-state neighbors, and it was rumored were about to strike a blow. On the morning of the 25th the three Doyles, Sherman, and

Wilkinson, the men referred to, were found on the prairie, not far from their homes, covered with frightful wounds—dead. They had been called out late at night by a small band of men and murdered. There is no doubt now that the men who did the deed were John Brown and his followers.

60. Battle of Black Jack.—Capt. Pate, at the head of some Missourians, immediately marched over to Osawatomie to arrest the Browns, who were suspected; and failing to find the father, captured two sons, turning them over to the custody of the United States troops. From his camp, Pate then raided Palmyra and Prairie City, when John Brown and Capt. Shore, with a united force of about thirty men, drove him to cover, and on the 2d of June fought the battle of Black Jack—the first pitched battle on Kansas soil. After a conflict of three hours, Pate surrendered.

61. Dark Days.—Brown encamped near Prairie City; but his forces were dispersed by Col. Sumner, of the United States army, who had been ordered to disband all armed bodies on either side. Contrary to the pledges made to him, however, the Missourians neither left the Territory nor disbanded. On the 6th of June, the regulars having withdrawn, they sacked Osawatomie. Cantriel, a Missourian but a Free-state man, was tried for "treason to Missouri," and, with four others, shot down by the roadside. Bands of marauders, recruited from either party, filled the highways and plundered without restraint. In all the river towns the anti-Missouri men were terrorized and frequently driven from their homes. Free-state men on the river steamers were robbed and threatened with death if they dared complete their journey.

As the Free-state men were deprived of nearly every opportunity for self-support, and were incurring heavy losses, their sympathizers began sending relief. Not less than \$250,000 was put under way for the Territory during the summer and fall. At least half of this fell into the hands of the enemy while in transit.

62. Dispersion of the Legislature.—The Topeka Legislature had adjourned to July 4th. Secretary Woodson, who was acting as Governor, Shannon being absent, issued a proclamation forbidding them to re-assemble. Just at the hour of their meeting, Col. Sumner rode into Topeka, and, with the regulars drawn up in front of the building and cannon in place, entered first the House and then the Senate, ordering each to disperse. He performed the unpleasant duty courteously, and with many expressions of regret, which added much to the respect he had won from the Free-state party. In all this strife, as far as a soldier under orders could express himself in word or deed, he was their friend.

63. Battle of Franklin.—Soon after the battle of Black Jack, a party of young men from Lawrence made a night attack on Franklin—always head-quarters for the Missourians—but with small results. On August 11th, Major Hoyt, under a flag of truce, went to the border-ruffian camp on Washington Creek, to secure, if possible, a mutual agreement to disband, but was waylaid and murdered. It was at once determined to “break up the Pro-slavery nests.” In the attack on Franklin which followed, the villagers occupied a block-house, and defended it vigorously. After sharp firing for three hours, a wagon load of burning hay was backed against the building, when the enemy fled, losing all their arms and ammunition. They escaped to the camp on the creek,

whence the united forces withdrew on the approach of Gen. Lane and Col. Grover. A large quantity of spoil previously taken from the Free-state men was found on the deserted ground and restored to the rightful owners.

64. Defeat of Col. Titus.—There was now but one Pro-slavery stronghold south of the Kansas River, and that was the fortified house of Col. Titus, near Lecompton. A few days after the battle of Franklin, Capt. Samuel Walker, a most daring and successful leader, attacked the place, and in half an hour compelled a surrender, securing twenty prisoners, and burning the building. There were killed and wounded on both sides, but Titus plead for his life and was spared.

65. Shannon Removed.—Right on the heels of the news from Lecompton, word came that Gov. Shannon had been removed. This placed Woodson again in the saddle. He at once issued a proclamation declaring the Territory in a state of insurrection, and called on the “militia” to rally. This meant, of course, that the Pro-slavery men were to have the full support of the Administration; hope revived, and the guerilla bands were reorganized, reinforced, and marched at once towards Osawatimie. Hundreds of Free-state men believed their cause lost, and fled from the Territory.

66. Destruction of Osawatimie.—The Pro-slavery force that had gathered were at once attacked and driven back. But three days later they returned, four hundred strong, well armed and with cannon. Two young men, one a son of John Brown, were shot in the fields, and the force swept on to the village.

There were but forty men ready for its defense, commanded by John Brown. After an obstinate fight they were obliged to abandon the village to the enemy, who

plundered every building and then burned the town. Only four cottages remained. This was on the 29th of August.

67. Murder of Phillips.—On September 1st, the city election of Leavenworth was held. The city had now a population of some two thousand, many of whom were Free-state men. The "Regulators," under Capt. Emory, a United States mail contractor, so terrorized the town that not a Free-state vote was cast. Under pretense of searching for arms, the band approached the house of Phillips, who had previously been tarred and feathered. He repelled his assailants, killing two of their number, and was riddled with balls, dying instantly. One hundred and fifty Free-state citizens were forced on board a river steamer, and driven from the town—with no provision for their journey eastward, and leaving their property and homes in the hands of the mob.

68. Arrival of Gov. Geary.—The character and experience of the third Governor of the Territory gave promise of better days. He had been a soldier, and as a civilian had seen hard service in the days of the vigilance committees in California. He came to Kansas determined to secure fair play, and to hold the reins of government in his own hands. On his way he held an interview with the Governor of Missouri, which resulted in an immediate withdrawal of the pirates, and in opening the river for travel. His picture of the Territory on his arrival is worth repeating. "Roads filled with armed robbers, and murders for mere plunder of daily occurrence. Desolation and ruin on every hand; homes and firesides deserted; the smoke of burning dwellings darkening the air; women and children, driven from their habitations, wandering over the prairie and among the woodlands, or seeking refuge and protection even among the Indians."

69. Battle of Hickory Point.—The new Governor at once ordered the territorial "militia" to disarm and disband, and all armed Missourians to leave the Territory forthwith. This proclamation was practically unheeded. Two days after it was issued, Capt. Harvey, with a force from Lawrence, made an attack on the Pro-slavery men who had been raiding the country around Hickory Point, about five miles east of Ozawkie, in Jefferson County. Although strongly fortified in three houses, a battle of six hours compelled surrender. Harvey's men were arrested and indicted for murder; but the few who had not "escaped" by spring, were pardoned by the Governor.

70. Lawrence Threatened.—The ruffians who had rallied under Woodson's call were now in the neighborhood of Lawrence, more than two thousand strong, threatening to visit on the town the fate of Osawatimie. Within the fortifications were some four hundred men, well armed and under the command of John Brown—Lane having gone northward to aid and guide the emigrants coming in by the way of Iowa. Gov. Geary rode to Lawrence, learned the true state of affairs, commended their pluck and told them to stand to their arms, rode out to the Missouri camp, met the advance-guard already on the march, faced them about, and by the mere force and determination of his character broke up the entire force and saw them well on their homeward march. This was really the last invasion of the Territory in the North—though the conflict had by no means ceased.

71. Conclusion.—The year brought the Free-state cause to the lowest possible ebb; but with the appointment of Geary, the tide turned. The Free-state men were encouraged, and were disposed to place confidence in the new Territorial Administration—and therefore

very generally made a desperate effort to repair the losses of the year, and to make ready for winter. The Missourians hesitated as to what was the best policy to pursue under all the circumstances. The Pro-slavery men who were actual settlers knew that unless aid came from without they were powerless. Three months of comparative quiet was the result.

The War in the South.

72. Prelude.—Lawrence, as a Free-state town, surrounded by Pro-slavery neighborhoods and settlements, had, naturally, been the center of strife in the northern part of the Territory. Fort Scott, if not a Pro-slavery town, at least the point from which went out most of the opposition and irritation constantly experienced by the Free-state settlers in that portion of the Territory, became the center of the struggle in the south.

In 1842, the site of the present city was occupied as a military post; and it was not till 1855 that the Government withdrew its claim. A number of settlers were already on the public lands, but most of the adjacent country was then in the hands of Indians, and the town company was unable to organize till June, 1857; though a large number of claims were taken subject to the removal of the tribes. Once fairly under way, the town grew rapidly, and except during the Civil War has known almost unbroken prosperity.

73. Cause of the Trouble.—In the spring of 1856 a party of South Carolinians entered the county. These mingled freely with the settlers, who stated without reserve their political opinions, and gave much-needed information as to their means of defence. In this way a list of Free-state men was prepared; one by one they

were "arrested" and taken to Fort Scott, and by fraud or threatened violence were induced to leave the county. At the opening of winter the Pro-slavery men were occupying the deserted claims.

74. The Return.—During the next year, after the Free-state men gained control of the Legislature, the original settlers began to return. Their numbers were largely increased by new-comers who wished to settle in that county, and by others who were anxious to assist in restoring those who had been driven out; and they thought they were able to maintain their rights. The Pro-slavery men were notified that they must abandon the claims; and most of them acquiesced, believing resistance useless. Those who refused prepared to defend themselves; and the efforts of the returning settlers to dispossess them by force led to frequent collisions.

75. The Squatters' Court.—The District Court was disposed to stand by the Pro-slavery men, and in many instances rightfully. But the disaffection of the opposition was so great that they finally organized a Court of their own, known as the "Squatters' Court." Although without legal existence, its proceedings were marked by both dignity and justice.

In December of 1857, the deputy marshal, with a posse of some fifty men, undertook to capture the Court, but was repulsed. On the following day he returned with about a hundred and fifty men; but the Court had adjourned. On the next Sunday, after a meeting on the old ground to celebrate their victory, the Court disbanded.

76. James Montgomery.—No name is more prominent in connection with these Southern troubles than that of James Montgomery. He came into the Territory in 1854, taking a claim near Mound City, in Linn County,