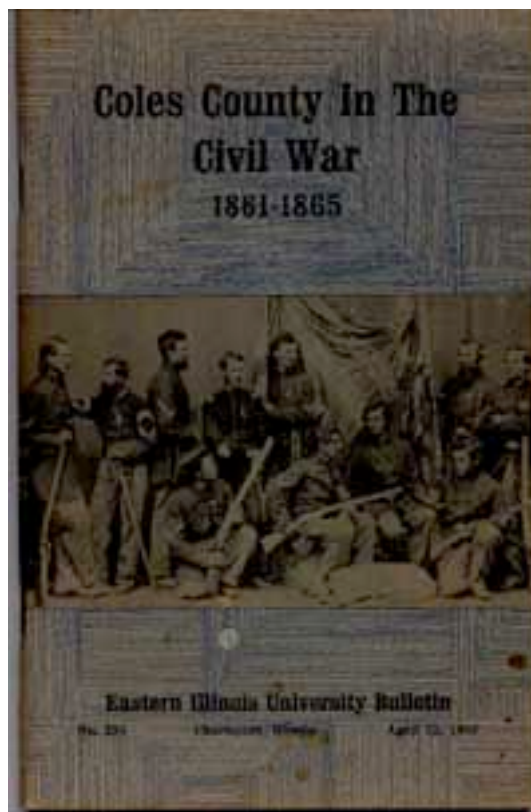


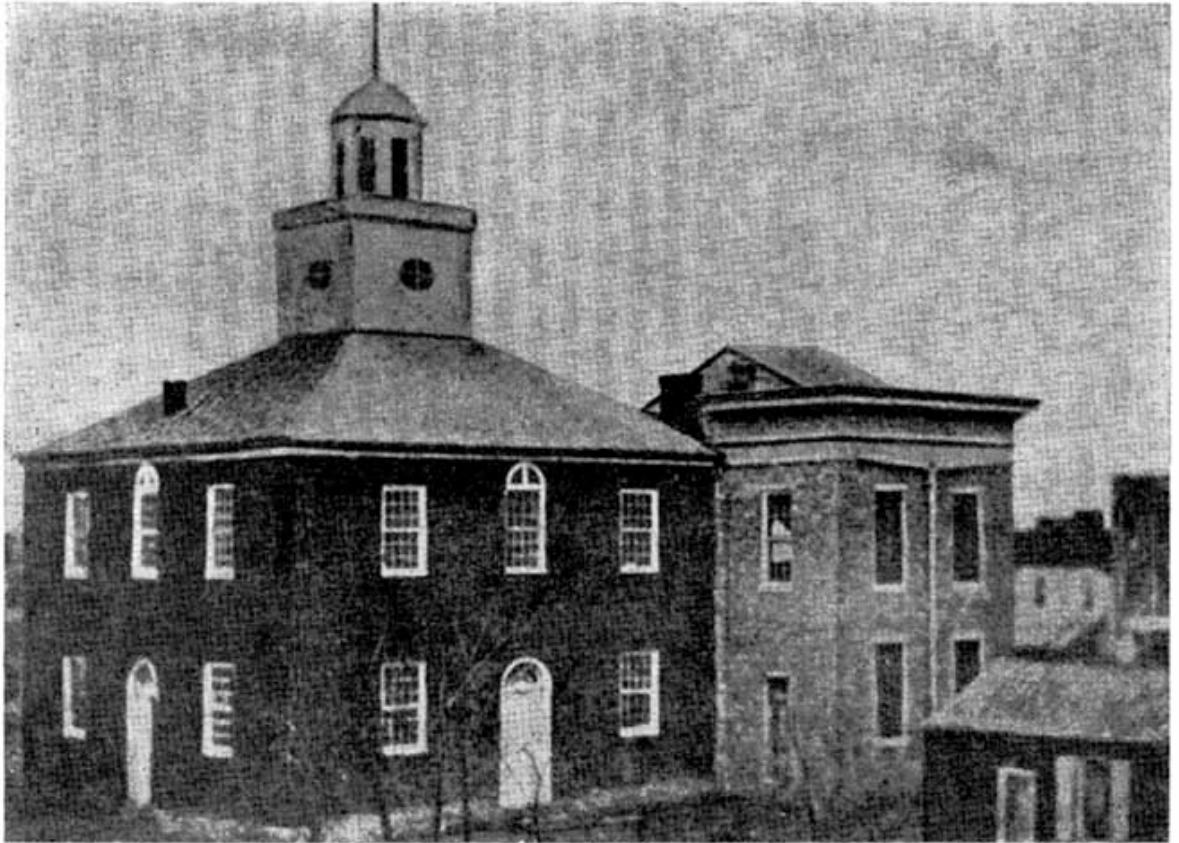
**Coles County in the Civil War
1861-1865**
Eastern Illinois University Bulletin

(Two Printings)

No. 234 Charleston, Illinois April 12, 1961

No. 257 Charleston, Illinois July 1, 1965





Coles County Courthouse, Charleston, Illinois, 1864

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THE CHARLESTON RIOT, MARCH 28, 1864

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Reprinted from **Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society**, March, 1940. Volume XXXIII, 1.

Abraham Lincoln was no hero to many of his parents' neighbors. Thomas and Sarah Lincoln moved into Coles County, Illinois, in 1831 after a brief residence in Macon County. In 1837 they moved to a two-room log house on the "Goose Nest Prairie" in Pleasant Grove Township in southern Coles where they resided to the time of the death of Thomas in 1851 and that of the stepmother, Sarah Bush Johnston Lincoln, in 1869. Children of Mrs. Lincoln by her first marriage and relatives of Thomas Lincoln's first wife, Nancy Hanks, also lived with or near them. Descendants of the Johnston and Hanks families still live in the county.

Mr. Lincoln never lived with his father and stepmother in the county, although he visited them at intervals. Local tradition (probably not correct) has it that Abraham assisted his father in the erection of the Goose Nest Prairie house. Charleston, the county seat, was, however, one of the courthouse towns at which Mr. Lincoln practiced law during the 1840's and early 1850's. Local tradition, in this case with a greater degree of probability, pictures Mr. Lincoln walking or riding down the dusty seven-mile road from the village to his parents' home, carrying with him a basket of groceries for the old folks, on the occasions when his legal practice brought him to Charleston. His last visit to the county was in February, 1861, when he visited his stepmother, at that time living with her daughter and son-in-law (Matilda and Reuben Moore) in the hamlet of Farmington, about half a mile north of the Lincoln home where Tom had died ten years earlier. This was just before Lincoln left Illinois to go to Washington for his inauguration as President.

With such intimate associations with President Lincoln, we would expect to find that Coles County was enthusiastic in its support of his administration. Such, however, was not the case, but on the contrary during the Civil War the county was almost evenly divided in its political sympathies.

Coles was in the Seventh Congressional District from 1852 to 1872. In 1858 that district elected a Democratic representative, James C. Robinson of Marshall, by 13,588 votes to 11,760 for his Republican opponent, Richard J. Oglesby. In the same year one of the Lincoln-Douglas debates was held in Charleston. In 1860 Coles County gave Lincoln a slight plurality; 1,495 votes to 1,467 for Douglas and 79 for Bell.¹ In 1862, the Seventh District elected a Democratic member of Congress, John R. Eden,² at the same time that Coles County elected a Democratic sheriff, John H. O'Hair. In 1863, in a local election, the Republicans elected a county treasurer by less than 200 votes, or 1,535 to 1,368 for the Democrats.³ An analysis of this county vote, by townships, shows that the Republicans were strongest in the western half of the county, which looked to Mattoon as its center, and that the Democrats were strongest in the eastern half. Charleston, the county seat, was nearly evenly divided, 293 Democratic votes to 277 Republican. In the presidential election of

1864 the Republicans carried Coles County with an increased majority, the vote being Lincoln, 2,210; McClellan, 1,555.⁴

Coles County, especially the southern and eastern parts, had been settled for the most part by southerners, chiefly from Kentucky. Although the greater part of these settlers had not been slave-holders, many brought with them a hearty dislike of Abolitionists, a dislike that remained with their Democratic descendants in the 1860's.

On the other hand the Republicans in the county were equally decided in their opinions, and bad feeling between the more violent partisans in both political camps was rife during the war years.⁵

The Union strength in the county was greater, proportionately, than the voting strength of the Republicans. This is demonstrated by the fact that although Lincoln received 1,495 votes in 1860, Coles furnished 1,870 volunteers for the Union armies in the years 1861-1863. This was 531 more men than her quotas under the various calls for troops. On March 14, 1864, two weeks prior to the riot, the President called for 200,000 men to be drafted if volunteers were not forthcoming. Illinois was the only state with volunteers exceeding her quota under this draft. The Seventh Congressional District (including Coles County) furnished 2,167 more men than its draft quota of 1,374. This was twenty-eight per cent more than the state average on this call.⁶

Not only did the men of eastern Illinois and Coles County volunteer for military service in greater numbers than the average for the state as a whole, but they deserted the service in smaller proportion. Out of a total of 2,001 deserters arrested in Illinois from June 1 to October 10, 1863, 124 came from the Seventh Congressional District. In proportion to the total population of the state this was thirty less than the average.⁷

Those Democrats who refused to co-operate with the Lincoln administration in the prosecution of the war were known variously as "Peace Democrats," "Butternuts" or "Copperheads."⁸ The more militant of the Copperheads in 1862 formed an organization known first as the "Knights of the Golden Circle" and later (in 1863) as the "Order of American Knights" and finally (in February, 1864) as the "Sons of Liberty." Started in Indiana upon the model of a prewar proslavery organization active in Kentucky and other border slave states, the K. G. C. (and its later forms) spread all over the Middle West, especially Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. Led by the fiery C. L. Vallandigham of Dayton, Ohio, and other extremists among the Peace Democrats, the Knights (or Sons) were active in opposition to war measures which they held to be unconstitutional, such as the military draft and the imposition of military rule in the northern states by overzealous army commanders.

The Peace Democrats or Copperheads followed a course that was condemned by their fellow citizens as treasonable. It seems clear, however, that the Peace Democrats were sincere in their belief that the war was a mistake and a failure, and that the Republican administration was ruining the country by engendering sectional hatred that would make peaceable reunion impossible. Their slogan was "The Constitution as it is and the Union as it was." The outcome of the war proved that forcible reunion was possible. But that is not to say that peaceable reunion, after the passions of 1860-1861 had cooled, would have been impossible. Some of the Copperheads were Confederate sympathizers, but the great majority of them were sincere and patriotic Union men from their own point of view. That their position would lead them to the borderline of treason was inevitable. Hating the administration that was fighting to restore the Union, and loving that Union at the same time was a difficult position at best. Their opposition to various war measures was technically sound in some cases. Lincoln had a broader and more statesmanlike view of the

constitutional aspect of some of the measures made necessary by the war. He put the preservation of the Union ahead of the preservation of constitutional principle. Of what use would a Constitution be if there were no Union for it to constitute?

Disapproval of the war on theoretical grounds was not the only factor in creating Peace Democrats. A large portion of the Peace Democrats in the free states adjoining the Ohio River were farmers who long regarded the South as the best market for their produce. Cut off from this market by the war, they were bitter against those responsible.

Many Copperheads of eastern Illinois, and Coles County and Edgar County (to the east of Coles) in particular, were members of the Knights of the Golden Circle. One deposition taken in Charleston after the riot was to the effect that in June, 1863, just before the first draft of troops under the draft law of that year, a group of over one hundred Coles County Copperheads met in Seven Hickory Township (northeastern Coles County) under the leadership of one Bryant Thornhill to engage in military drill and to discuss plans for resisting the draft. These men were presumably members of the "Knights." One witness testified that Thornhill said that "Jefferson Davis was fighting for his rights" and that the speaker "had no doubt of his success;" that the cause was right and that Davis would never be conquered. About the close of the speech Thornhill said that the purpose of the meeting was to resist the draft. "Those was was [sic] around him (they had formed a circle) answered that they would resist the Government in the draft, to which Thornhill replied, yes,—resist it unto death."

There is a local tradition that the Coles County Copperheads not only met for drill and to organize in resistance to the draft, but they collected arms and actually acquired a small cannon. They also made threats against local Republicans and in some cases, according to tradition, marked the houses of those who were the particular object of their hatred with a "K" within a circle—the mark of the Knights of the Golden Circle. Local tradition has it also that the local Copperheads or Knights were drilled by one "Johnny Powder-horn" from Kentucky, supposed to have been active in a guerrilla or "bushwhacker" during the war.¹⁰

Opposition to the draft had been pronounced in various parts of the North in 1863 and resulted in rioting in New York City and Noble and Holmes counties, Ohio, and elsewhere. Democratic opposition in eastern Illinois to the military policies of the government was openly avowed.¹¹ An incident early in March, 1863, involving Charles H. Constable of Marshall, Illinois, judge of the fourth judicial circuit, is described by the late Speaker Joseph G. Cannon of Danville, as follows:

One of the early military arrests in Illinois was that of Judge Constable while holding court at Charleston, the county seat of Coles County. The judge was of an old Maryland family, a lawyer of the old school, who held the civil courts in such high esteem that he could not conceive of any higher authority even in time of civil war. A number of [four] deserters from Indiana regiments were followed by their officers across the state line and arrested at Charleston, where Judge Constable was holding court. Friends of the deserters appealed to the judge, and he, considering the action of the military authorities of another state an invasion of the civil jurisdiction of Illinois and a judicial outrage, promptly released the deserters and ordered the arrest of the [two] army officers as "kidnapers."

This action by Judge Constable aroused the combative spirit of Governor Morton, of Indiana, who at once demanded of General [Colonel Henry B.] Carrington, who represented the War Department, a prompt redress of

grievances. The General proceeded to Charleston with a file of soldiers, surrounded the courthouse where the judge was hearing the case of the kidnapers, and placed the judge under arrest for interfering with the military operations of the Government. The judge was about to be taken to Indiana as a military prisoner when Judge [Samuel H.] Treat, of the United States District Court for Southern Illinois, interfered and ordered his release.¹²

Some idea of the extent of Copperhead opposition to the government in Indiana and Illinois may be gathered from Colonel Carrington's report to the War Department of this incident. From Indianapolis under date of March 19, 1863, he reported:

When the detachment under my command passed through Livingston to arrest Judge Constable, of Marshall, Ill., a gray headed old man knelt down in the mud, crying, as he prayed, "Thank the Almighty Father we have a Government again."¹³

Constable's feelings were somewhat assuaged the following June 17, when he attended a Democratic mass meeting in Springfield. He was chosen as one of the vice-presidents of the convention, and among the resolutions adopted was one denouncing his arrest.¹⁴

Some idea of the Democratic strength in Coles County at this time may be obtained from the fact that even the Republican Gazette of Mattoon reported an attendance of 3,000 at a Democratic rally in that village on August 1, 1863. Banners carried at the meeting advocated "For President, Horatio Seymour, for Vice President, C. L. Vallandigham."¹⁵

Early in 1864 increased activity by the Sons of Liberty and Copperheads generally, was noticeable in eastern Illinois in preparation for the political campaign of that year. They were reported to be collecting arms to defend themselves and the newspapers friendly to them, and there was much loose talk of resisting the draft, defying the government, etc. Republicans were not silent in the face of these evidences of Copperhead activity and the bad feeling between the two groups became more and more outspoken. A verse popular among Republicans in eastern and southern Illinois at that time was:

Butternut Britches
and Hickory Poles—
Democrats, Democrats
Damn their souls.¹⁶

Feeling ran especially high between the Copperheads and returned soldiers on leave. A favorite sport of the soldiers, especially after having consumed some of the corn whisky, which at that time was produced in such abundance in Coles County, the "Buckle on the Corn Belt," was to stop civilians known to be Democrats on the street—even dragging farmers from their wagons—and forcing them to their knees, where they were required to take this oath of allegiance: "I do solemnly swear to support the Administration, Abraham Lincoln, all proclamations now issued and all that may hereafter be issued, so help me God."¹⁷ On January 29, 1864, soldiers on leave in Mattoon had forced, among others, such eminently respectable citizens as Judge Constable and Dr. J. W. Dora of Charleston to take such an oath. The next day the bad feeling resulted in actual violence. Charles Shoalmax, of the 17th Illinois Cavalry, shot through the back and killed a Copperhead, Edward Stevens, on the streets of Mattoon. This murder was deplored by the local Republican journal and the incident was used to point a moral concerning the evil of excessive drinking by soldiers. The brazenly disloyal and defiant attitude of the

Copperheads was held to be a partial justification for Shoalmax's action. Stevens is reported to have invited Shoalmax, who had been drinking, to violence by saying to him that he would "fight on the rebel side, if he fought," after Shoalmax had endeavored to force him to take the oath of allegiance to the government.¹⁸

Such incidents in Mattoon led the Illinois State Register, Democratic newspaper in Springfield, to comment editorially after the riot in Charleston:

Let it be remembered further, that since this 54th Regiment has been stationed in Mattoon [since February 12], they have actually beaten two unoffending citizens to death, whose only fault was their Democratic politics, besides committing various other outrages.¹⁹

These charges were denied by the Mattoon Gazette, which admitted, however, that "soldiers have occasionally knocked down and dragged out a Copperhead, but none have ever been seriously injured with the exception of a common thief [Stevens] who was shot, sometime since, by a drunken soldier."²⁰

The violence in Mattoon had its counterpart in Paris, seat of Edgar County, to the east. On February 16, Milton York of the 66th Illinois Infantry, son of Dr. Shubal York, surgeon-major of the 54th Illinois, who was later killed in the Charleston riot, shot and seriously wounded a Copperhead named Cooper. Accounts friendly to young York claim that Cooper hit York, who shot in self-defense.²¹ This incident may have been responsible for the death of the father, Major York, in the riot six weeks later. At all events, the Yorks were known as ardent Republicans and Abolitionists, and were generally hated by the Copperheads. On February 22, a more serious conflict took place in Paris between six soldiers of the 12th and 66th Illinois Infantry and a group of fourteen Copperheads. Two soldiers were wounded and one Copperhead, Kennedy, was killed. The fight was over possession of an arsenal collected by the Copperheads to defend the Democratic newspaper, Paris Times (Amos Green, editor), which the soldiers had threatened to wreck. The Republican Gazette of Mattoon reported that the Copperheads fired first. The Chicago Tribune's account of this affair some weeks later, relying upon the Republican Beacon of Paris, reported that soldiers had threatened to demolish the Times office, but that editor Green had apologized to them for his anti-Republican attacks. The local Copperheads, under the leadership of Sheriff William O'Hair of Edgar County, were determined on vengeance, and the sheriff, according to this account, collected a group of armed Copperheads as a posse comitatus. It was this group, according to the Beacon, that came into conflict with the soldiers.²²

Although there had been no murders in Charleston, the county seat, like its neighbors east and west, had had its share of altercations between soldiers on leave and Copperheads. Early in March two local Democrats, Ben Dukes and a man named Bridgeman, had been severely beaten by soldiers in Charleston. On Saturday, March 26, soldiers had attacked and disarmed two Copperheads in Charleston, James O'Hair, Sr., and Frank Toland.²³ There were rumors of Copperhead retaliation for these attacks, and reports that they were collecting arms and drilling in preparation to oppose the soldiers. On the other hand, stories were circulated among the Democrats that the men of the 54th Illinois Infantry who had been ordered to assemble at Mattoon on Monday, March 28, at the expiration of their furlough, proposed to stop off in Charleston and "clean up the Butternut Court," or the court of Judge Constable, which would be open in Charleston on that day.²⁴

It appeared that March 28 would be a gala day for Charleston Democrats. Not only was court to be held, with Democratic Judge Constable on the bench, and Democratic

Sheriff John H. O'Hair (elected in 1862) in attendance, but Democratic Congressman John R. Eden of that district was scheduled to speak at a Democratic rally. The Copperheads who desired vengeance on the soldiers for various assaults and insults the occasion was propitious. The day also had its advantage for those soldiers who wished to impress Democrats with the serious risk which accompanied opposition to the Republican administration. The town would be full of Democrats including many Copperhead extremists, and furthermore plenty of soldiers would be present, on their way to Mattoon to rejoin their regiment. Thus was the scene laid for a violent explosion: a Democratic rally, court in session presided over by a judge who was anathema to the soldiers, many irate and vengeful Copperheads, a large number of soldiers present, and finally, whisky enough for all. It is no wonder that a riot broke out. It would have been a greater wonder if the day had passed peacefully.

Most of the soldiers who figured in the Charleston riot were members of Companies C and G of the 54th Illinois Infantry, Colonel Greenville M. Mitchell of Charleston commanding. This regiment had been organized at Anna, Illinois, in November, 1861. They were mustered into federal service in February, 1862. Colonel Mitchell became the commander in December, 1862, shortly before the regiment moved to Tennessee to see active service. In that campaign, detachments of the regiment were captured by Confederate General Nathan B. Forrest. The regiment took part in the last month of the siege of Vicksburg (May 30-July 4, 1863). In January, 1864, their two-year period of federal service having expired, three-fourths of the regiment reenlisted. These men received a veteran furlough to last until March 28. In August, after the riot at Charleston and the return of the regiment to active service, all but two companies were captured by Confederate General Shelby. The captured men were exchanged in December, 1864, and the regiment was mustered out of service in October, 1865.²⁵ The men of the regiment nearly all came from eastern Illinois, and Companies C and G, especially, contained many Charleston and Coles County men.

Realizing that many soldiers would be in town, a number of Copperheads brought arms with them when they came to Charleston that day. In many farm wagons there were shotguns under the straw, and many men attending court or standing around the square had pistols in their pockets.

During the period that the soldiers were on leave in Coles County, Sheriff John H. O'Hair (first cousin of Sheriff William O'Hair of Edgar County) had kept out of Charleston in order to avoid trouble. He had remained at the home of his father, John O'Hair, on "Big Creek" in Edgar County. He felt, however, that as sheriff his presence was required in Charleston on "court day," March 28, so he came to town accompanied by two deputies, his cousin Elsberry Hanks and Jesse Swango, husband of his cousin Nancy Hanks Swango. With them were the sheriff's brothers, James and Henderson O'Hair, and John and William Frazier. Rumors that the soldiers planned an attack on the court made it desirable that they be on hand "to assist in protecting the court, their friends and the officers of the court."²⁶

Present also in Charleston on March 28 was a party of six or eight men from Edgar County with an ox wagon, on their way to the gold mines of the West. Ardent Peace Democrats, these men— as did thousands of others—hoped to find freedom from the draft law, as well as gold, in the western hills. These gold-seeking Copperheads were armed and took an active part in the riot on the twenty-eighth. The party included Nelson and Frank Wells, Green Hanks, Ogdon and Nelson O'Hair. These men were from the "Big Creek" neighborhood of Edgar County.²⁷

About 11:00 a.m. the train from Paris reached Charleston and a number of soldiers got

off instead of proceeding to their assembly point at Mattoon. Evidently they wished to see and perhaps take part in any excitement that might develop. Stacking their muskets at the depot, they proceeded south to the courthouse square, where they found a number of members of their regiment from Charleston and the nearby countryside.

Both soldiers and civilians had been drinking freely, and when the ugly temper of the crowd became obvious, Congressman John R. Eden canceled his scheduled speech, and he, Judge Constable, ex-Congressman Orlando B. Ficklin, and other conservative leaders among the Democrats advised their angry Copperhead friends to go home. Eden himself left the city, and Judge Constable opened court. By 3:00 p.m. about two-thirds of those who had come to town to hear Eden had gone home.²⁸

Early in the afternoon, according to the son of Sheriff O'Hair, the evidence of a coming disturbance became so clear that word was passed to all Democrats in the vicinity of the courthouse to go into the building and remain there until the soldiers had left on the afternoon train for Mattoon.²⁹ But there is no evidence that any such instructions were generally followed.

Trouble started between 3:00 and 3:30 p.m. Conflicting accounts place the blame for starting the shooting on both Copperheads and soldiers, according to the source of the account.

The next morning the local Republican paper, the Charleston Plain Dealer, issued a "broadside" extra giving the story of the fight. After admitting that some of the soldiers "were somewhat excited by liquor," although "more disposed for fun than fight," the account continued:

About four [probably. nearer three] o'clock a soldier, Oliver Sallee [of Charleston, private in. Company C, 54th Illinois] stepped up to Nelson Wells [Copperhead of Edgar County, twenty-three years old, and cousin of Elsberry Hanks], who has been regarded as the leader of the Copperheads in this county. [but note his youth], and placing his hand good naturedly. against him, playfully. asked him if there were any Copperheads in. town? Wells replied, "Yes, God d—n. you, I am one!" and drawing his revolver, shot at Sallee, but missed him. In an instant Sallee was shot from another direction, and fell, but raising himself up, he fired at Wells, the ball taking effect in his vitals. He (W) went as far as Chambers and McCrory's store and passing in, fell dead.³⁰

Frank T. O'Hair, son of Sheriff O'Hair and second cousin. of Elsberry Hanks, in his "Memoirs" based on conversations with "Berry," records that Wells was pointed out to the soldiers as a Butternut (or Copperhead) and that they surrounded him. His cousin Elsberry Hanks started to get him away from the soldiers and into the courthouse, but before Hanks reached Wells, one soldier struck Wells and another (Sallee) shot him. Another pistol shot, from an unknown person, killed Sallee. Wells, wounded, ran across the street to McCrory's store and fell dead.³¹ Thus the Republican account makes Wells the aggressor, and the Democratic account makes him the victim of an. unprovoked attack.

The Chicago Times, a leading Democratic paper of the Middle West, printed an account of the start of the riot which resembled the Plain Dealer account but put Wells in the position of shooting in self-defense:

Sallee put his hand. on Wells' shoulder, who stepped back and said., "If you lay your hands on me I will shoot you." Sallee said. he would shoot back.

A minute after, it is said, Wells fired his pistol, whether at Sallee or not is not known.³²

Colonel Mitchell of the 54th Illinois, who was present and wounded in the riot, in his official report on the riot wrote:

Wells . . . commenced firing at Private Oliver Sallee . . . so far as I can learn without the slightest provocation . . . Sallee fell, but partially rising, shot Wells dead.³³

Mitchell was in the courthouse when the riot started, and thus did not actually witness the first shots.

In view of the conflicting evidence it is impossible to say positively who fired the first shot, although it was probably Nelson Wells, the Copperhead. It is also impossible to say whether or not Wells shot in self-defense. At any rate it is probable that both men had been drinking and were not averse to a quarrel. Evidence given after the riot indicates that before the riot Wells became involved in an argument with a soldier. After the soldier left him, Wells was heard to make the following remark:

By God, we have taken all we are going to take from the soldiers, and if the soldiers do not quit their cutting up Hell would be to pay.³⁴

Evidently Wells was incensed at the soldiers and therefore was quick to resent any move by Sallee.

The shooting soon became general. The altercation between Wells and Sallee took place near the south wall of the county clerk's office in a small building on the courthouse lawn northwest of the west entrance of the courthouse. On the opposite or east side of the courthouse was a small office building used by County Judge Gideon Edwards. According to the Plain Dealer:

The Copperheads were gathered behind Judge Edward's office loading their fire arms, and then would step out and fire from the corner at the soldiers indiscriminately, with guns and revolvers.

According to this account most of the soldiers were unarmed for they were not expecting such an attack. Thus the Copperheads had a decided advantage.

The Copperheads were seen to hurry to their wagons, hitched at the Square and gather there from several guns, which were concealed under the straw. They were freely used and with terrible effect.³⁵

The account then describes the wounding of two civilians, Thomas Jeffries and William Gilman, Republicans, and the near escape of Colonel Mitchell whose life was saved by a bullet striking his watch.

Dr. York, surgeon of the 54th Illinois, while passing through the Court House, was approached by some one from behind, who took deliberate aim and shot him dead—the pistol being held so close to him that the powder burned his coat.

Dr. York, according to this account, did not take part in the fighting prior to his death except for efforts to restore order. The death of one soldier, Alfred Swim of Company. G, and the serious wounding of two others, Deputy. Provost Marshal William G. Hart, of the 62nd Illinois, and James Goodrich, Company. C, 54th Illinois, followed. Hart and Goodrich later died. This portion of the account mentions all of the soldiers who were killed except John Neer, of Company G.³⁶

Colonel Mitchell's report does not vary from the above except to give additional details. After the Wells-Sallee shooting, the Colonel reported:

Immediately firing became general, the sheriff of this county, John H. O'Hair, leaving his seat and taking the lead in the attack upon the soldiers . . .

Immediately on the report of Wells' pistol I stepped out of the west door of the court-room, when 3 men with revolvers drawn, apparently expecting me, commenced firing, 2 of them running by me into the room . . .

Maj. Shubal York . . . was shot from behind as he was leaving the court-room, expiring almost instantly.

The attack could not have lasted over a minute, during which one hundred shots must have been fired, nearly all of my men being either killed or wounded. The fact that my men, scattered as they were over the square, were instantly shot down, and the systematic manner in which the sheriff rallied and drew off his party, together with affidavits of reliable citizens forwarded, leaves no room to doubt that a party of men came to Charleston armed with revolvers and shotguns with the knowledge and consent of Sheriff O'Hair, with deliberate intention of killing the soldiers.³⁷

An account much more favorable to the Copperheads is contained in Frank T. O'Hair's Memoirs. After the failure of his effort to aid Wells, Elsberry Hanks rapidly went to the courthouse in search of the sheriff. Meanwhile, intoxicated soldiers began to shoot at the courthouse indiscriminately, and bullets passed through the courtroom. At the outbreak of the trouble Sheriff O'Hair left the courtroom and shot his way outside of the building, leaving by the west door. As sheriff of the county he sought to restore order. When Hanks entered the courthouse, Major York, according to this account, sought to shoot him, but was killed himself before he could shoot. A picturesque figure during the shooting was John Frazier, a farmer, who had started for home but returned when he heard the shooting. He rode around the square on his horse, shooting at the soldiers and shouting encouragement to the Democrats.³⁸

Judge Constable, according to an account written many years later, hurriedly left the courthouse when the shooting commenced, and sought refuge in an alley on the east side of the square.

[Two small boys] saw Judge Constable, white and trembling, in an angle of the wall in the alley. to their right, evidently uncertain what to do or where to go next. How a man of his portly form could have vacated the Judge's bench, come down from the court room, and got there so soon after the firing began never ceased to be a wonder to those boys.³⁹

The shooting was so intense for a short time that the bark was shot off a number of

trees around the square. Colonel Mitchell reported that some sixteen of his men were present on the square when the trouble started, and that nearly all of them were killed or wounded. Actually nine members of the 54th were casualties—five killed, including Major York, and four wounded, including Colonel Mitchell.⁴⁰

The soldiers were hopelessly outnumbered. The list of those arrested after the riot, and the names of those participating, according to eyewitness accounts taken as affidavits, makes a total of sixty men, thirty-one of whom were actually seen to be shooting, according to the affiants. The Copperhead losses were small. The only death among them, after the shooting of Wells, was after the fighting was over, when John Cooper, who had taken part in the riot and had been captured, tried to break away from his captors when being taken along the south side of the square toward the south door of the courthouse. He ran toward Jenkins Brothers' store (a few doors east of the center of the block on the south side) and was killed. A stray shot of this fusilade also killed John Jenkins, younger brother of the proprietors, and a Republican. He had taken no part in the riot.

A complete list of the casualties shows that the Copperheads were either better armed or better marksmen than their opponents, or both:

KILLED (nine)

Major Shubal York of Paris, surgeon., 54th Illinois. Eyewitness accounts name four different men as his assailants — Elsberry Hanks, Henderson O'Hair, Jesse O'Hair, and George Thomas. Press reports named Green Hanks of Paris.⁴¹

Alfred Swim of Casey., private, Company G, 54th Illinois. Supposed to have been shot by Elsberry Hanks or by Sheriff O'Hair.

James Goodrich of Charleston, private, Company C, 54th Illinois. Probably shot by Sheriff O'Hair.

William G. Hart, deputy provost marshal and member of 62nd Illinois. Shot by unknown assailant.

Oliver Sallee of Charleston, private, Company C, 54th Illinois. Shot at by Nelson Wells. Probably killed by unknown assailant.

John Neer of Martinsville, private, Company G, 54th Illinois. Henderson O'Hair and John Frazier were seen to shoot at him.

Nelson Wells of Edgar County, Copperhead. Shot by Oliver Sallee.

John Cooper of Salisbury., Copperhead. Shot when trying to escape after capture.

John Jenkins of Charleston, Republican. Shot accidentally by fire intended for Cooper.

WOUNDED (twelve)

Colonel Greenville M. Mitchell, of Charleston, commanding 54th Illinois. Slight flesh wound, bullet stopped by watch. James O'Hair, Sr., was seen shooting at him. Ben. Dukes may have fired the shot stopped by the watch.

William H. Decker of Greenup, private, Company G, 54th Illinois. Slightly wounded.

George Ross of Charleston, private, Company C, 54th Illinois. Slightly wounded.

Lansford Noyes, private, Company I, 54th Illinois. Slightly wounded in the back.

Thomas Jeffries of Charleston. Republican. Severely wounded. Witnesses reported having seen four men shoot at him — Elsberry Hanks, James M. Houck, Bryant Thornhill and Weather-all.

William Gilman of Charleston, Republican. Severely wounded, possibly by Ben Dukes.

John Trimble, Republican. Slightly wounded.
 George Jefferson Collins, Copperhead. Wounded in left arm.
 John W. Herndon, Copperhead. Wounded in the heel.
 Benjamin F. Reardon, Copperhead. Hit on head by a brick.
 Robert Winkler, Copperhead. Wounded in the hand.
 Young E. Winkler, Copperhead. Shot in the arm.⁴²

Sheriff John H. O’Hair was nicked in the chin by a bullet while he was still in the courthouse, but he is not included in the total of wounded.

TOTAL		
Soldiers	6 killed,	4 wounded
Civilians		
Republicans	1 killed,	3 wounded
Copperheads	2 killed,	5 wounded
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	9 killed	12 wounded

Thus it is clear that the Copperheads had the best of the argument. An examination of the after-the-fight affidavits indicates that most of the shooting on both sides was done by civilians and that most of the soldiers were unarmed. No Copperheads were killed in the fighting proper, after the death of Nelson Wells. The five who were wounded were only slightly so, one of them by a brick rather than a bullet. It is impossible to be certain that any one man killed or shot any particular person, although the affidavits indicate that certain men were killed or wounded by certain others. But these affidavits are of doubtful accuracy for two reasons. In the first place they were taken for the purpose of incriminating various Copperheads, and the affiants—most of whom were Republicans—were in many cases eager to show the guilt of those who were known to be Copperheads. In the second place the entire affair took but a few minutes and was attended by the greatest confusion. Eyewitness accounts of such events are notoriously unreliable.

To resume the chronicle of events. After the flurry of shooting, the Copperheads gathered near the southeast corner of the square and withdrew to the east in a group. The Plain Dealer account stated:

Colonel Mitchell soon rallied all he could, citizens and soldiers, and improvising such arms as could be had, gathered at the southwest corner of the Square, as the Copperheads retreated down the street running east therefrom. Dispatches were sent to Mattoon for soldiers, and three hundred were soon on the way. The Copperheads halted somewhere near Mrs. Dickson’s and remained for some time, then turned and went off. Beyond J. H. O’Hair’s residence they gathered together, consulted for a time, and then moved off in a northeasterly direction, cutting the telegraph wire as they went.⁴³ . . . About five o’clock the reinforcements from Mattoon arrived.

Immediately, “squads, mounted upon all the horses that could be found, were started out in every direction in pursuit.”⁴⁴ Colonel Mitchell reported:

Some 75 men, after firing wherever they could see a blue coat, collected

at a grove about one-quarter of a mile from the square east of town., under the lead of the sheriff, held a consultation, and learning the Fifty-fourth Illinois were on. their way from Mattoon, moved out in the country.

As soon as the shooting was over, the Colonel reported his actions as follows:

I telegraphed to Colonel Chapman⁴⁵ at Mattoon to bring men and guns. He arrived at 4:30 p.m. with 250 men. I immediately mounted 75 men and scoured the country in all directions, arresting several parties implicated, and releasing Levi Freesner, private Company C, Fifty-fourth Illinois, who was confined in a house under guard 7 miles from town. He was arrested by Sheriff O'Hair some distance from the square while on his way to the station to take the cars for Mattoon, and knew nothing of the affray.⁴⁶

Freesner was captured about four o'clock, when coming from his home in east Charleston to take the train to Mattoon. to rejoin his regiment. His seizure occurred two blocks east of the square on what is now Jackson. Street, which runs east and west along the south side of the square.⁴⁷ He met Sheriff O'Hair and a party of about twenty men, armed with pistols and shotguns. He testified later:

John O'Hair hollowed at me to halt. I had heard nothing of the fuss and paid no attention to it, until the command had been given three times. I then. stopped and John O'Hair and others run up and took hold of my gun. saying that I should consider myself their prisoner.⁴⁸

Although Freesner did not mention. it in his affidavit, a witness to his capture made affidavit later:

When. they went to arrest Freizner [sic], they all rushed up with their guns, and I think would have shot him but for John O'Hair who said he had surrendered and not shoot him.⁴⁹

Freesner's account of his movements after his capture gives a good idea of those of the party under Sheriff O'Hair. Freesner stated that the sheriff's party (with him in. their custody) went northeast of Charleston to a meadow "where their forces appeared to collect." From there they. crossed the railroad, cutting the telegraph line, and proceeded north, collecting guns and ammunition from houses along their route. They also secured a horse at a farm five miles northeast of the village.⁵⁰ Eventually the party decided to scatter to get supper and feed their horses. After eating, about two hundred men collected "at a Black Smith shop, just on the edge of the timber. This took place about nine o'clock." Freesner was taken to the house of Miles Murphy, nearby, where he was held. under guard until rescued by a scouting party of soldiers about 1:00 a.m. Eight Copperheads, including three Murphys and three Hardwicks, were arrested by the party that rescued him.⁵¹ The location of these events was in the O'Hair settlement" in northeastern Coles County near the present village of Bushton.

A news report, in. a Democratic paper, described the movement of O'Hair and his friends beyond the "O'Hair settlement" as follows:

The O'Hair men passed through the settlement to Gollady's Mills [in Morgan Township], and thence to Donicy's [Donica's] Point, some ten or twelve miles from town [in East Oakland Township, on the Little Embarrass River] . Whatever accessions were made to their force was by representing that the soldiers had risen to break up the Democratic party., and override the liberties and property. of the people—of course giving an. excited. and exaggerated color to the origin. of the fight. It is not now known. what number they enlisted, but the highest probable figure is from one hundred to one hundred and fifty. Their present whereabouts [April 1] are unknown, but it is believed they have disbanded and dispersed. The people of this place and Mattoon have been in. a fever of apprehension in regard to an attack, but no such result has followed their fears, nor will any.⁵²

William Clapp, who joined Sheriff O'Hair's party. after they left Charleston, recounted in some detail the movements of the Copperheads, in. his deposition taken on April 6. At the meeting at the blacksmith shop, mentioned by Freesner, in reply. to the question. as to whether they were taking up arms against the government, Sheriff O'Hair said "not against the government but against a mob." The men (about eighty or ninety, according to Clapp) were ordered to meet the next morning at Donica's Point. About thirty men were at the Point the next morning. O'Hair was not there, and it was reported that he had gone to Edgar County. At this meeting Bryant Thornhill proposed that a large force be collected to return to Charleston. and "clean out the place" but he was overruled. The group broke up into smaller parties. The one Clapp was with remained away. from Charleston until Saturday, going as far south as Martinsville, when. they heard that there was no danger in Charleston for those who had no part in the riot. Thereupon most of Clapp's group started for home.⁵³

Following the withdrawal of the Copperheads, rumors began to circulate that after receiving reinforcements they. would return to attack Charleston. Actually the Copperheads were definitely. "on the run," closely pursued by. the scouting parties sent out by Colonel Mitchell.

A dispatch from Charleston to the Chicago Tribune the morning after the riot reported that about nineteen. prisoners had been brought in. and were being held under guard at the courthouse. By 11:30 a.m. the number had reached about forty, according to the Charleston Plain Dealer: "Colonel Mitchell is now having a conference with Hon. O. B. Ficklin, Judge Constable and other prominent citizens, who appear anxious that steps shall be taken to prevent any further outbreak."⁵⁴ A dispatch to the Chicago Tribune from Mattoon. that morning (the twenty-ninth) reported all quiet in Charleston during the night of the twenty-eighth but referred to about one hundred "rebels" who were encamped several miles east of the city.. According to the Tribune's informant, "Four hundred men of the 54th Illinois leave Charleston tonight to attack the rebels, who are said to be 300 strong, under command of Sheriff John O'Hair, intrenched at Golliday's Mills, ten miles northeast of Charleston." A portion of the regiment was retained in Mattoon. to protect that city, "it being threatened from Shelby and Moultrie counties."⁵⁵

Sheriff O'Hair, in an effort to prevent further violence, left word at a farmhouse some eight miles east of Charleston that if the Colonel would make his soldiers "behave" he would make his followers do the same. The comment of the Charleston Plain Dealer to this offer by the sheriff was that his men. probably would behave.⁵⁶

Rumors concerning movement of the Copperheads continued for four or five days after the riot. In. addition to the rumors that Sheriff O'Hair, with some three hundred men east

of the city planned an. attack in order to free the prisoners, large parties of Copperheads were reported west of Mattoon, south of Mattoon, and southeast of Charleston.⁵⁷ The “rebels” alleged to have been assembled at Windsor, west of Mattoon, took a vote to move on Mattoon and release prisoners held there, but the capture of their spy. frightened them and they disbanded, according to a Mattoon dispatch of March 31 to the Chicago Tribune. The same source reported a similar ending to hopes of the Copperheads who had gathered at Neoga, south of Mattoon. As late as the evening of April 2, five days after the riot, a rumor of large bodies of Copperheads in the region southeast of Charleston lead Colonel Mitchell to take 100 soldiers on a wild-goose chase through the counties south and east of Charleston. He reported: “I found. that bodies of men from 25 to 100 had been seen, but had dispersed; one squad of 16 I arrested but released.”⁵⁸

The combined strength of the various bodies of hostile Copperheads reported to be assembling to attack Charleston or Mattoon. would have amounted to 2,000 men or more. The most exaggerated report noted came from the Confederacy. The Richmond Daily Examiner for April 6 stated: “The Baltimore American of the 2nd instant has been received.. It contains a dispatch from the ‘seat of war in Illinois, representing that a scout reported the rebels fifteen thousand. strong entrenched three miles from Mattoon.”⁵⁹

In order to meet the rumored attacks of armed Copperheads upon Mattoon and Charleston the military authorities concentrated over two thousand soldiers in the county. In addition to the 54th Illinois, already on the spot, the 41st Illinois was ordered to Mattoon. from Springfield on. March 30. The 47th Indiana came from Indianapolis, but remained only one day. A company of the Veteran. Reserve (or “Invalid.”) Corps, from Paris, was held at Charleston from March 29. The 41st left Coles County on April 11 and the 54th on. April 12.⁶⁰

Even the presence of these large bodies of soldiers was deemed inadequate to insure the safety of Charleston, according to one report, so a popular subscription was taken up with which seventy five rifles were bought in St. Louis for use by the Republicans.⁶¹ Perhaps they wished to be prepared for a flare-up by. the Copperheads after the soldiers had gone.

On. the night of March 30, Mattoon. was seriously expecting an attack by. some thousand to fifteen hundred Copperheads. A Mattoon dispatch to the Chicago Tribune declared: “Every preparation has been. made to give them a warm reception. It is believed that with the united efforts of the citizens and soldiers still here, the place can be held until the arrival of reinforcements.”⁶² Such a report reads as though a division of the Confederate army were expected. One explanation of the riot in Charleston was that it was planned. by the Copperheads to create a diversion of federal interest away from a movement in Kentucky by Confederate General N. B. Forrest, who had attacked Paducah, Kentucky, on. March 25. According to this reasoning, it was not known, up to the twenty-eighth, that Forrest had abandoned any intention. of invading Illinois.

Under the impression, doubtless, that killing a few persons in this locality would draw away the attention of the authorities from the movement of Forrest, was the Charleston affair planned and executed by the Coles County Copperheads. The defeat of Forrest’s forces disarranged the plan of action, and, without a doubt, prevented a general uprising of the traitor faction. in Southern Illinois, and. perhaps in other localities in the State.

The “conspiracy” explanation was admitted by Judge Constable, according to a Springfield paper.⁶³

Over fifty prisoners were taken by the soldiers in Charleston and Mattoon, twenty-seven of them by Colonel Mitchell and the remainder by the military authorities in Mattoon. Those taken by Mitchell were first lodged in the Charleston courthouse and then were taken to Mattoon. where, with the local prisoners, they were held in the Presbyterian Church.⁶⁴ Preliminary examinations led to all but twenty-nine of these men being released.. What had happened, of course, was that in the excitement of the hour any person known to be an. opponent of the administration was likely. to be taken up.

Lieutenant Colonel James Oakes, assistant provost marshal general of Illinois, ordered the twenty-nine taken to Camp Yates, near Springfield, on April 8. Here he examined these men, and the evidence concerning them forwarded from Coles County, and ordered the release of thirteen of them. One of the remaining sixteen, Miles Murphy, died while in custody at Camp Yates, leaving fifteen held for further action. Colonel Oakes recommended that they be tried by military, rather than civil, law in order to prevent probable “future and more daring machinations against the Government.”

The fifteen men were transferred from Camp Yates to Fort Delaware, Delaware, on an island. in the Delaware River, and held there until November. Their names were:

Bryant Thornhill
George Jefferson Collins—wounded in the riot
John F. Redmon
George Washington. Reardon [Rardin.]
Benjamin F. Reardon [Rardin]—wounded in the riot
Blueford E. Brooks
John. Galbreath
Aaron Bryant- —lost his toes while at Fort Delaware
John Reynolds
John T. Taylor
John W. Herndon—wounded in the riot
John W. Murphy and his brother
Michael Murphy, sons of Miles Murphy who died at Camp Yates
Miner Shelborne [or Shelbourne]
William P. Hardwicke⁶⁵

All of these, except Thornhill and G. W. Rardin, had been captured. by. Colonel Mitchell. Although these men were held for seven. months, they were never brought to a military trial, even though a writ of habeas corpus, issued by the United States Circuit Court, requiring them to be delivered up to the civil authorities, had been disregarded by the military authorities. Although a report by the Judge Advocate General to the President, recommending their trial by a military. court, was made in July, 1864, it was not until November 4 that President Lincoln finally disposed of their cases by ordering: “Let these prisoners be sent back to Coles County, Illinois, those indicted be surrendered to the sheriff of said County, and the others be discharged.”⁶⁶

The President’s action may. have been caused by. his reluctance to see the civil authorities overborne by the military, or it may have been a desire to deal lightly with the Coles County men., some of whom he probably had met, and some of whom, the Murphys and. Hardwickes, were distantly related to him by marriage.⁶⁷ A possible explanation for the release of these men may be seen in the recommendations of two commissioners appointed to hear and determine the cases of prisoners of state at Forts

Delaware and McHenry. There were thirty-two such prisoners at Fort Delaware. The commissioner's report, dated September 30, 1864, recommended that eighteen prisoners (not listed by name or by place of confinement) be released on condition that they take an oath of allegiance to the federal government. The nature of the other recommendations indicates that the fifteen Charleston riot prisoners were among these eighteen.⁶⁸

A family tradition provides an interesting explanation of their release. According to this story, the families and friends of the men held in Fort Delaware, in July, 1864, raised a purse of \$1,000 which they offered to ex-Congressman Orlando B. Ficklin, who knew Lincoln, if he would go to Washington, see the President, and attempt to secure their release. Ficklin accepted the commission, went to Washington, but failed to see the President as he arrived at the time of the excitement of Jubal Early's raid on the capitol in July.

Next Dennis Hanks, relative and early intimate of the President, was approached. Hanks offered to go to Washington, but declined any payment other than the expenses of the trip. Hanks saw Lincoln, who cordially welcomed him, presented him with a silver watch, for Dennis had lost his watch on the trip to Washington, and issued the order for the release of the prisoners over the objection of Secretary of War Stanton. So promptly were they released that the fifteen prisoners reached Coles County before Hanks got back from Washington.⁶⁹

Many civilians assisted the soldiers in rounding up Copperheads, but some did not confine themselves to helping the troops. Both the Charleston and rural homes of Sheriff O'Hair were visited by "Home Guards," who, failing to find the sheriff, relieved their disappointment by helping themselves to his property. Furniture, rugs, and food were taken from the Charleston home. A party from Mattoon went to O'Hair's rural home and returned without the sheriff, but with five loads of corn. In Mattoon, it was reported that public disapproval of Copperheads and their sympathizers led to forcing George R. Rust—the correspondent of the Chicago Times, a Democratic paper—out of town, to prevent his being lynched by the angry citizens.⁷⁰

Despite the combined efforts of soldiers and citizens, many of the so-called ringleaders of the Copperheads escaped capture. Chagrined at the escape of the sheriff and some of his particular friends, the men of the 54th Illinois, under a Charleston date of April 2, inserted a reward notice in the local press as follows:

MURDER!

The 54th Regiment, Illinois Volunteers, offer ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS REWARD for the apprehension of

John H. O'Hair, Sheriff of Coles County, J. Elsberry Hanks, John Frazier, James W. Frazier, Henderson O'Hair, Jesse O'Hair, B. F. Toland, and B. F. Dukes. All of whom were engaged in the murder of Major York and four soldiers of the 54th Regiment, and the wounding of several others, in Charleston, on Monday, March 28th, 1864.

DESCRIPTION follows:

John H. O'Hair	5' 11",	age	35, farmer
J. Elsberry Hanks	5' 8"	35,	"
John Frazier	5' 10",		32, "
James W. Frazier	6'	40,	"
Henderson O'Hair	6'	40,	"
Jesse O'Hair	5' 9"	--,	no occupation
B. F. Toland	5' 10",		35, farmer

Added to the notice by the soldiers was this paragraph:

The citizens of Coles County will pay \$300 for the apprehension of J. H. O'Hair, and \$100 for each of the above named, and for Alexander Rogers. This reward will be given whether dead or alive. Dukes is badly cut about the face.⁷¹

In spite of the search by soldiers and civilians, stimulated by reward offers, John H. O'Hair, Berry Hanks, John Frazier, and the others listed in this reward notice were not caught. Most of them remained away from Coles County for a year or so. Upon their return (in most cases after the war was over), they were not molested. John H. O'Hair and his cousin, Berry Hanks, according to a family tradition, went to Canada, where they remained for about a year. The first train they boarded, at Fairmount, Vermilion County, a station north of Paris on the Toledo, Wabash and Great Western Railroad, was filled with soldiers, so they walked the length of the train and got off at the rear, to await a more hospitable train. Thus while they were merrily rolling along on their way to Canada they read news reports from Coles County that pictured O'Hair leading large parties of Copperheads in various parts of eastern Illinois.⁷²

One interesting item about this whole affair is that there is reason to believe that some of the "Charleston rioters" were relatives of President Lincoln, whose administration they opposed. Michael O'Hair, Revolutionary War soldier of Irish birth, reared a family of fourteen children in Kentucky. A son, John married Eliza Hardwicke. They moved to Illinois where they had six sons: M. Elsberry, Nelson, Henderson, James, J. Ogdon, and John Hardwicke, sheriff of Coles County. Mary O'Hair, a daughter of old Michael, married William Hanks, the son of Sarah Hanks, who, according to family tradition, was a daughter of Lucy Hanks, Lincoln's grandmother. To this union there were born twelve children, including John Elsberry ("Berry") and Stephen Greenville ("Green") of this account. Further genealogical details bring the names of Wells, Swango and Murphy into the relationship. Representatives of each of their families were involved in the Charleston riot.⁷³ Thus many of those denounced as traitors and Copperheads by their neighbors were, probably, related to Abraham Lincoln by blood or marriage.

The civil authorities of Coles County made an effort to punish the leaders among the Copperheads. On April 20 Judge Constable ordered a special term of the Circuit Court, to meet in May. The grand jury on June 11 brought indictments for murder against the following fourteen alleged participants in the riot: John O'Hair, James O'Hair, Jesse O'Hair, Henderson O'Hair, Elsberry Hanks, James Houck, Alexander Rogers, John Redmon, Washington Rardin, Robert McLain, B. F. Toland, B. F. Dukes, Robert Winkler and John Frazier.⁷⁴ Eight of these men were among those listed in the reward notice of April 2. Redmon and Rardin were among those taken to Fort Delaware and held until November.⁷⁵

The case came up for trial the following April (1865), but since none of those indicted was in custody, the case was ordered continued on the motion of the state's attorney. The following November (1865) the same action was taken. In October, 1867, the court records show that the case came up again, was continued as before, and that it was ordered by the court that further process issue for the arrest of the defendants. This procedure was repeated in March, 1868, and also in October of that year. The case disappears from the records of the Coles County Circuit Court at this point.⁷⁶ It seems clear

that no very strenuous effort could have been made to arrest and try these men, for many, if not all of them, had returned to their homes long before 1868. Only two of them, Rardin and Redmon, were ever brought to trial, as explained later.

The indictments against these fourteen men were based upon testimony before the grand jury, by twenty-six witnesses, all but two of whom had testified before justices of the peace during the days immediately following the riot.⁷⁷ There had been a total of about a hundred witnesses who made such affidavits. Most of them were Republicans, but a few, such as Orlando B. Ficklin, former Congressman, and Isaiah H. Johnston, acting sheriff and deputy under Sheriff O'Hair, were Democrats.

In November, 1864, while the Coles County indictments were still pending, two of the defendants, George Washington Rardin and John Redmon, were returned from Fort Delaware and delivered to the Coles County officials. This was in accordance with President Lincoln's order, for they only, of the fifteen held at Fort Delaware, were among those indicted by the Coles County grand jury. Upon their return to Coles County, Rardin and Redmon on November 25 applied to Judge Constable for a change of venue, alleging that they could not "receive a fair and impartial trial in this case in Coles County on account of the prejudice existing in the minds of the inhabitants of Coles County against them." On the same day Judge Constable granted their petition, and ordered the sheriff of Coles County to bring the defendants before him in Shelbyville, Illinois, where he was holding Circuit Court.⁷⁸

On December 3, 1864, Rardin and Redmon were brought into court at Shelbyville, before Judge Constable, and they pleaded not guilty. With the consent of both defendants and the state's attorney the venue of the case was changed a second time, to the Circuit Court to be held at Effingham, Illinois, on December 6. Twenty witnesses were on hand to testify in Shelbyville out of thirty-three subpoenaed from Coles County.. With the change in venue, nineteen of them were placed under \$50 bond to appear at Effingham on December 6. Of these witnesses, three of them had testified before the Coles County grand jury, and three of them, Young E. Winkler, Peter Redmon, and Joseph Carter, had been participants in the riot.

The case of the People vs. George W. Rardin [Rardin] and John Redmon opened in Effingham County Circuit Court on December 7, 1864. In the absence of the state's attorney, three state's attorneys pro tem were appointed by the court. The names on the petit jury panel were challenged by the prosecution, and the sheriff summoned twenty-four bystanders. From these, eight jurors were chosen, and four additional bystanders completed the jury. Thirty-eight witnesses appeared in the case, eighteen of whom had also attended the proceedings in Shelby County.⁷⁹

The Effingham records contain no information concerning the testimony offered at the trial. Eight affiants before justices of the peace in Charleston after the riot testified that they saw John Redmon actually use a gun during the riot. Two of these, Felix Landers and W. A. Braselton, were among the witnesses brought to the Effingham trial. On March 31 at Charleston., Landers made affidavit:

I saw John F. Redmon take a gun out of a spring wagon. . . and in a short time afterwards I saw him loading the gun on the public square, at the east end of Judge Edward's office in a crowd of men who were armed and shooting.

Braselton's evidence, given in Charleston on April 1, was more damaging to Redmon. He swore:

I saw John Redmon run around Judge Edwards' office and shoot at a soldier who was going into the court yard at the north gate. When Redmon fired the soldier acted as if he was hit by the shot, and at the time heard Redmon say, "God damn him I got him." This he said in a loud voice. This shot was made with a large Navy revolver.

Six witnesses in Charleston swore that they saw one of the Rardins use a gun in the riot, but only two witnesses, James D. Ellington and Samuel Bouser, specified George W. Rardin as a participant in the riot. Ellington was a witness at Effingham. At Charleston, on April 2, Ellington testified that when Colonel Mitchell was being attacked during the riot he called upon a soldier, George Ross, to help him. "Ross took hold to assist Mitchell when Washington Rardin gathered Ross and they scuffled out of the west door." This is obviously weak evidence to sustain a murder indictment. Bouser "saw Washington Rardin shoot several times from his pistol at the soldiers in the yard." Bouser, however, was not a witness at Effingham.⁸⁰

In the absence of information concerning the trial proceedings at Effingham it is impossible to know upon what evidence the jury based its verdict of "not guilty." Perhaps Landers and Braselton did not testify at Effingham as they had at Charleston, or perhaps the jury felt that the testimony, even if as strong as that given at Charleston, was not conclusive in establishing the guilt of the accused as murderers. Possibly also, some of the witnesses may have testified to the innocence of Redmon and Rardin. In any event, they were found not guilty, and were discharged.⁸¹

The trial of these two men, neither of whom can be regarded as leading spirits or ringleaders among the more violent Copperheads, was the only criminal prosecution to come out of the Charleston riot.

The question of whether or not the Copperheads involved in the Charleston riot actually committed murder, depends to a considerable extent on determining if the whole affair was planned by them. If it was a premeditated attack on the soldiers (as all Republicans believed or professed to believe at the time) it would be difficult to establish a self-defense plea for the Copperheads. Regardless of who shot whom, the brutal fact remains that some soldiers were shot by some Copperheads. It also is a fact, of course, that two of the Copperheads were killed and five were wounded. So the bloodshed was not by any means one-sided.

Concerning the question of premeditation, some of the evidence taken in Charleston a few days after the riot is of some value. Byrd Monroe testified on April 1 that he had a conversation about March 20 with John H. O'Hair in which "O'Hair said that he could get together 150 men in two hours' notice, all armed, for the purpose of putting down the soldiers." John Gossett testified on April 7 that on March 23 one Aaron Bryant (who took part in the riot on the twenty-eighth) said to him that "he wanted me to come up on the prairie about six miles north of town the next day and join their 'order,' saying they were going to clean out the soldiers and citizens in Charleston on Friday, or Saturday."

Daniel Johnson was in Charleston the morning of March 28, the day of the riot. He witnessed a quarrel between John Frazier and another man during which Frazier said that "they had come with the intention of clearing out a certain crowd." Henderson O'Hair was in the group and said, according to Johnson: "Don't one of you Democrats leave for we came here to attend to this thing, and we must stick right together." O'Hair then remarked: "The soldiers had been running over the citizens, and we are going to clean them out." Just before the start of the shooting Johnson heard John Galbreath,

Copperhead, ask two men. who were at the east door of the courthouse “if they had their pistols ready., and they said ‘Yes.’” Two more men joined them, and all five “went around to the west side of the court house on a fast walk—almost a run—all seemed to be greatly excited.” Almost immediately the shooting commenced.⁸² Johnson further testified that just before the shooting commenced he saw a line of Copperheads form in the courthouse yard west and southwest of the courthouse, facing a group of soldiers, as if they were getting into position to attack the soldiers. During the fight he saw another line of Copperheads, about forty strong, form east of the courthouse. Johnson heard one of the men. in the line shout, “God boys, the town is ours!” Such information by the Copperheads, if Johnson testified correctly, would seem to indicate either that the Copperheads acted on a preconcerted plan, or acted in unison without leadership when they saw that trouble was likely.

Byrd Monroe testified on April 1, that shortly after noon on the riot day he heard Robert McLain say that this was the time to settle the matter. “On this day they [the Copperheads] made many insulting remarks to the soldiers and seemed to be trying to get up a difficulty; they all seemed to be prepared and to understand each other.” Samuel Goodrich of Charleston, whose son James was one of the soldiers killed in the riot, testified on April 1 that on the morning of March 28 he “heard Elsberry Hanks say that they (the Butternuts) would make them (meaning the soldiers) suffer sorrow before we leave town.” Marcus Hill testified that about noon on the twenty-eighth “James O’Hair then came up and said boys don’t return. many words with them [the soldiers] we will give them hell in the outcome.” Just before the shooting commenced Hill heard James O’Hair say “that if he could get Major York he would be satisfied.”⁸³

Robert Leitch gave perhaps the most damaging testimony of all against the Copperheads. About noon or a little later of the riot day he saw a group of about a hundred men in the courthouse yard. They appeared to be excited:

I went over to the crowd of men and expostulated with them and told them of the evils that would be sure to result from raising a disturbance with the soldiers, and told them that I had conversed with the soldiers and knew that they. intended to leave town and would not molest any person. if let alone. Nelson Wells and Frank Tolan [Toland] replied that they had. been. badly treated by them and were going to have revenge. They also said that they blamed the citizens as much as the soldiers, for they pointed them out to the soldiers and they intended to have revenge.

The depositions cast little light on the relations between the soldiers and the Republican civilians, but one affiant (James H. Buggs, former soldier) quoted a civilian, Stephen Miller, as remarking “that in his opinion the soldiers were egged on by such men as Ferguson, McLain M. C. McLain, [notary public?] and other leading citizens.”⁸⁴

It is clear that there was bad feeling between the Copperheads and the Republicans generally.. Under the circumstance of war this was inevitable. It was also inevitable that the resentment of civilians and soldiers alike at the “disloyal” attitude of the Copperheads would lead to blows and assaults, and that the Copperheads would be the victims of violence and would be subjected to various indignities. Copperhead resentment would naturally lead to retaliation. when the soldiers were at a disadvantage, as in Charleston on March 29. Individual Copperheads naturally voiced their desire to “get even.” with the soldiers and those civilians whom they held to be responsible for their troubles. When groups of Copperheads were together there was, also naturally, loose talk of group action

against the soldiers, and some of them foresaw that court day in Charleston, the same day the soldiers were leaving town, would provide a favorable situation for “squaring accounts” with their tormentors. Accordingly, they came to town prepared for trouble and not averse to finding it. They were not disappointed.

But all of this falls short of saying that the Copperheads of Coles County, in any large number, deliberately plotted, under a responsible leader, such as Sheriff O’Hair, to make a premeditated and concerted attack at a particular time and place on the soldiers and their civilian admirers.

Sheriff O’Hair was a respected citizen of the county, and the holder of an important office to which he had been elected by popular vote only a year and a half before the riot (fall of 1862). When the riot started he was engaged in his official duties in the courtroom and took no part in the fighting until he left the courtroom. As sheriff he naturally and properly went to the scene of trouble, armed and ready for action, when he heard gunfire. Knowing the temper of some of the extremists among his Copperhead friends, he probably realized immediately the nature of the trouble. When he left the courtroom he saw his friends and relatives with guns in their hands. Knowing that many soldiers were in town, it is not surprising that he went to the assistance of his friends. It is important to note that the shooting lasted only a few minutes or less, and that the Copperheads, now under the leadership of the sheriff, left the square and passed out of town. There was no large body of soldiers, other than those in Charleston, closer than Mattoon, twelve miles distant. If the extremists had not been restrained by the sheriff and induced to leave town, many more soldiers and civilians would have been shot, for the Copperheads clearly had control of the situation on the square when they withdrew.

Such an interpretation of the facts in the case does not relieve Sheriff O’Hair from all blame, however. If, instead of joining the Copperheads, and using his gun against the soldiers, (as witnesses testified he did),⁸⁵ he had called upon them to lay down their arms, and, if not heeded, he had proceeded to use his weapon against the rioters, he would have fulfilled his obligation as peace officer. But that would have involved shooting at his friends and relatives. Evidently the sheriff dropped the responsibilities of office when he left the courtroom.

The immediate blame for the outbreak must rest on the shoulders of the more extreme Copperheads. If they did not deliberately pick a quarrel with the soldiers they at least welcomed it, and were quick to make a general fight of it after the Wells-Sallee shooting.

On the other hand it should not be forgotten that the Copperheads had a long list of grievances against the soldiers, that men on both sides had been drinking freely, and that loose talk by soldiers as well as Copperheads had prepared the way for an outbreak.

Press comment on the Charleston riot was almost completely conditioned by the political sympathies of the commenting journal. The day after the riot the Republican Plain Dealer of Charleston was bitter in its comment on the Copperheads:

What the end of this state of things will be, we can not tell; but if the government does not now take the matter in hand, we fear that the terribly exasperated soldiery and citizens will. Union men have long been threatened and Union soldiers have been so bitterly cursed, and now brutally butchered, by those from whom better things had been expected, that forbearance will cease—has ceased—to be a virtue. Loyal men here, and the soldiers at the front, are endeavoring to uphold the laws of the land; but they cannot, and will not, stand unconcernedly by and see their fellows assassinated for so doing.⁸⁶

This comment is remarkably restrained, considering the circumstances. Here is no incitement to Republicans to take vengeance on Democrats generally—the sort of thing one might have expected from a party organ published in the community where the riot occurred.

On the other side of Coles County the Republican Mattoon Gazette denounced the “treasonable designs of the Knights of the Golden Circle in this section” for months prior to the riot. “Murder and house-burning seem to have been the favorite methods of expressing their fiendish hatred for the uniform of the United States.” The riot itself was the culmination of “an organized plan. for the assassination of leading union men.”

The Chicago Tribune (Republican), speaking of the Coles County region., observed editorially:

Copperheads are numerous, and the doctrines of such sheets as the Jeff Davis organ. of this city [the Chicago Times] pass as current gospel The exertions of our officers to capture deserters has kindled the sparks of treason in this county. into a fire that will burn until its fuel is consumed.

The Tribune also declared:

The isolated. cases where a soldier, released from camp discipline, has gone to the excess of liberty and debauchment, furnish no clue to the malignant hatred with which they are followed. by Copperheads. It is not the soldier, but the cause he serves—the uniform he wears—that has provoked this fire in the rear . . . [The Copperheads] have found far less cause for their evil excitement in the deeds of drunken soldiers, than. of soldiers in the possession of all their senses calmly. and fearlessly pursuing their duty in hunting deserters among the secesh neighborhoods of that region.

The Tribune called for summary punishment of the Copperheads:

Any. mistaken lenity now will multiply throughout the West instances of rebel revolt.⁸⁷

The Charleston riot was no mere Illinois news item. It was described in considerable detail by papers in various parts of the country, and was the subject of widespread editorial comment. The Cincinnati Gazette (Republican) commented:

The murderous outbreak in Illinois . . . [is] an exhibition of the organization and nature of the Democratic peace party. It is an illustration of what they mean by peace—a peace of a conspiracy armed for bloodshed and rebellion. To this favor must all come who adhere to the Democratic party.⁸⁸

Democratic journals gave an altogether different interpretation of the riot. To the Dayton Daily Empire, organ of Clement L. Vallandigham, Peace Democratic leader, the whole affair looked “like a legitimate effort of civil authority to protect itself against the encroachment of military usurpation.”⁸⁹

The Washington correspondent of the New York World, writing on March 31, suggested that reports of trouble in Illinois should be taken with considerable allowance:

They will be found to be greatly exaggerated, and parties at the West have a political object in circulating them, and clothing what may be trifles in the most villainous hues. The intention is to directly affect the Rhode Island and Connecticut elections A perfect chain of the most horrible circumstances will be woven, showing that Forrest is about invading Illinois; Buckner, Kentucky and Ohio, and that both rebel forces are to be met with open arms by the “disloyalists” of those states.⁹⁰

The World editorially observed:

The troubles in the West are clearly due to an unhealthy public sentiment among the Republicans, countenancing drunken soldiers in insulting peaceable citizens.

The news of the riot was received with joy in Dixie. the Richmond [Virginia] Daily Examiner enthusiastically described the situation in a confused and exaggerated statement:

Far north on the prairies of Illinois, the Yankee presidential campaign has auspiciously begun, as we trust it is likely to end, in riot and slaughter. A newspaper modestly expresses its disinclination to Lincoln for next President; its office is patriotically wrecked by soldiers; the Democrats of the place, headed by the bold sheriff of the county, one O’Hare [sic], attack the soldiers; a good many are killed and wounded on either side; the troops are reinforced, and occupy the square of the town; whereupon the insurgents retire a few miles and entrench themselves. So in that one obscure corner, to begin with, the Democratic Northwest has fairly taken to the field

But some such demonstration was expected and inevitable; the cause is good and just, for it is the preservation of all the rights and liberties which once gave dignity to an American citizen, and without which life would be a burden. Hampden never had a holier cause than O’Hare; and the occasion for asserting it is, probably, as opportune as any other that will arise hereafter.⁹¹

Such comment from the Confederacy shows that the Charleston riot lent “comfort” if not “aid” to the enemy. Whether they realized it or not, those Copperheads who participated in the riot were acting in a manner that verged on treason—even though they may have felt themselves amply justified on the grounds of vengeance and defense.

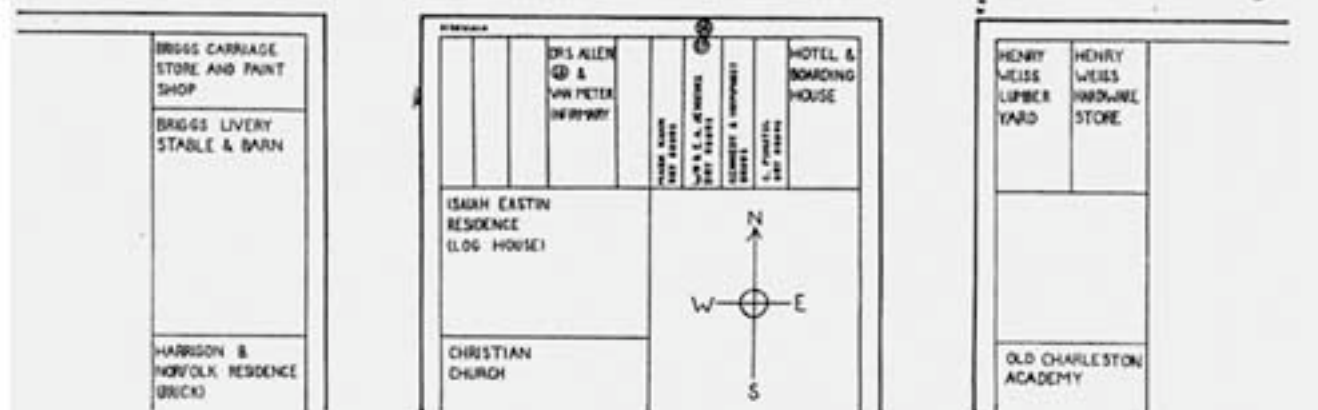
A dramatic aftermath of the Charleston riot occurred during the political campaign of 1864. Richard J. Oglesby, Republican candidate for Governor, spoke in Charleston and despite warnings, commenced his speech with a denunciation of the rioters of the preceding March. Joseph G. Cannon was present, and thus described the scene:

He stepped upon the little stand, where he stood alone, threw back his head, dilated his nostrils, inhaling the air, and then began: “I smell blood! I smell the blood of Union soldiers, here foully murdered by disloyal citizens, your neighbors and mine, shot in the back by as damnable cowards as ever wore the form of human beings!”

Then lifting his hands as though in supplication and speaking in solemn and reverent tones he continued: "May Almighty God damn the souls of those cowardly murderers who committed this hellish crime; and may God in his infinite wisdom damn every man who does not damn them!"

The body of the speech was a denunciation of disloyalty. "He spoke not at all of his own candidacy but for Lincoln and patriotism. He was elected by a big majority."⁹²

The Charleston riot was essentially of local interest, as similar incidents did not occur elsewhere. It did, however, illustrate the factionalism of the time, and it might have occurred in many parts of the North. It represented the culmination of years of political hostility. When a combination of personal grudges and liquor was added to political hatred, the result proved to be explosive. Other disorders occurred in the North during the war—draft riots—f orcible release of arrested deserters—attacks on provost marshals—attacks on Democratic journals—but the Charleston riot was the only incident of the war in which personal hostility rather than a particular issue led to a pitched battle on the streets.



LEGEND

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| <p>1. Where first shot was fired. Oliver Sallee and Nelson Wells fatally wounded.</p> <p>2. Where Nelson Wells died after leaving 1.</p> <p>3. James Goodrich fatally wounded.</p> <p>4. William G. Hart killed.</p> <p>5. Lansford Noyes wounded.</p> <p>6. Thomas Jeffries wounded.</p> <p>7. Alfred Swin killed.</p> <p>8. John Neer killed.</p> <p>9. Colonel Mitchell wounded.</p> <p>10. George Ross wounded.</p> <p>11. Robert Winkler wounded.</p> | <p>12. G. W. Rardin hit on head with a brick.</p> <p>13. William Gilman wounded.</p> <p>14. Major York killed.</p> <p>15. Doctors' office where seven or more of the wounded were treated.</p> <p>16. John Cooper killed.</p> <p>17. John Jenkins fatally wounded.</p> <p>18. Capture of Friesner by Copperheads, two blocks east of the square.</p> <p>19. Line formed by eight to ten Copperheads at start of shooting.</p> <p>20. Route of Sheriff O'Hair.</p> <p>21. Where Copperheads rallied before withdrawing under leadership of Sheriff O'Hair.</p> |
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NOTE.—Location of stores and events was based on local contemporary newspaper accounts, Riot depositions, family tradition, and letters. Only approximate sites could be indicated in some cases. The authors wish to thank Earl K. Anderson, Charleston, Ill., and Adin Baber, Kansas, Ill., for information necessary to the preparation of this sketch.

Footnotes: Warning, there is a chance that footnote 70 will be repeated below but in the document it isn't. All the entries below starting with the second "70" should have one added to it to find the proper footnote in the document. This appears to be a bug in the software that created the HTML.

- ¹ **Albany** [N. Y.] **Evening Journal Almanac**, 1862.
- ² The vote was Eden, 11,361; Elijah McCarty, 10,004. Two years later Eden was defeated by H. P. H. Bromwell of Coles County by a vote of 15,363 to 12,027. D. W. Lusk, **Politics and Politicians** (Springfield, 1884), 44, 146, 165.
- ³ **Mattoon** [Ill.] **Gazette**, Nov. 11, 1863.
- ⁴ **Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois and History of Coles County**, edited by Charles Edward Wilson (Chicago, 1906), 678.
- ⁵ There was a generally held and frequently expressed sentiment among local Republicans that the Copperheads (see **post**, p. 80) were a bad lot; riffraff and low fellows. That this opinion was not justified may be seen even today by a trip through those sections of Coles and Edgar counties where the Copperheads were numerous. Still standing are substantial homes, the equal, or better, of others in the neighborhood, built by members of the O'Hair, Hanks, Swango, and other Copperhead families both before and after the Civil War.
- ⁶ The total figure for the county in all the war years was 2,714. Lusk, **Politics and Politicians**, 172; **Mattoon Gazette**, Feb. 27, 1864; **Chicago Tribune**, March 24, 1864.
- ⁷ **Mattoon Gazette**, Oct. 28, 1863.
- ⁸ The "Peace Democrats," opposed to the war and willing to act in open opposition to the administration, will be referred to as "Copperheads" in this paper. That was the term generally used by their opponents from 1863 on.
- ⁹ Deposition of William T. Wells. April 11, 1864, Charleston Riot Affidavits, p. 2 (Coles County Circuit Court Records, Charleston, Ill.)
- ¹⁰ "The Coles County Raid" in **Chicago Tribune**, June 6, 1895. Also testimony of James Ratcliff, Charleston Riot Affidavits, p. 30.
- ¹¹ Olney, county seat of Richland County, fifty-six miles south of Charleston, was besieged by a mob of 500 persons, who threatened to burn the village if the draft records were not surrendered. Edward Conrad Smith, **The Borderland in the Civil War** (New York, 1927), 340.
- ¹² L. White Busby. "Reminiscences of Uncle Joe Cannon." **Saturday Evening Post**, July 13, 1918, p. 12. A detailed account of this incident is found in Alexander Davidson and Bernard Stuve, **A Complete History of Illinois from 1673 to 1873** (Springfield, 1874), 890-91. The alleged deserters were from the 30th Illinois Volunteers. This account places the arrest of Judge Constable at Marshall.
- ¹³ **The War of Rebellion: A compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies** (Washington, D. C., 1889), 2 ser., V: 367. Livingston, Illinois is on the National Road, about three miles east of Marshall.
- ¹⁴ John Moses, **Illinois, Historical and Statistical** (Chicago, 1892), II: 687-88. Orlando B. Ficklin of Charleston was also a vice-president of this meeting.
- ¹⁵ **Mattoon Gazette**, Aug. 5, 1863.
- ¹⁶ From E. H. Taylor, Charleston, Illinois.
- ¹⁷ John Howard Todd. "Illinois, Thy Wondrous Story." (clipping, n. d., from Mrs. I. H. Johnston, Charleston, Ill.)
- ¹⁸ **Mattoon Gazette**, Feb. 3, 17, April 6, 1864.
- ¹⁹ **Illinois State Register**, April 1, 1864, quoted in **Mattoon Gazette**, April 6, 1864.
- ²⁰ April 6, 1864.
- ²¹ **Mattoon Gazette**, Feb. 24, 1864
- ²² **Paris Beacon**, March 2, 1864; **Chicago Tribune**, March 30, 1864; also testimony of A. J. Baber, of Kansas, Ill., that he saw a group of about twenty-five Copperheads going from Kansas to Paris with the avowed intention of protecting the **Times** from the soldiers (Charleston Riot Affidavits, p. 111). Also similar testimony by James M. Sissel of Kansas, Ill. (**ibid.**, p. 125).
- ²³ **Missouri Republican** in **New York World**, April 6, 1864. Also Charleston Riot Affidavits, p. 114. A revolver was taken from Dukes.
- ²⁴ Memoirs of Frank T. O'Hair, dictated to Mr. Adin Baber, Kansas, Ill., May 13, 1932, F. T. O'Hair was the son of John H. O'Hair, sheriff of Coles County in 1864.
- ²⁵ **Report of the Adjutant General, State of Illinois** (Springfield, 1901), III; 656, 685.
- ²⁶ From Adin Baber, of Kansas, Ill., and Memoirs of Frank T O'Hair.
- ²⁷ From Adin Baber
- ²⁸ **Columbus** [Ohio] **Crisis**, April 6, 1864, quoting **Chicago Times**.
- ²⁹ Memoirs of Frank T. O'Hair.

- ³⁰ **Charleston Plain Dealer**, Extra, March 29, 1864. Family tradition has it that Well's pistol caught in a shawl he was wearing and delayed his fire (from Adin Baber). David Nelson Well's age obtained from tombstone in Elledge-Holley Cemetery, Symmes Township, Edgar County. Chambers and McCrory's store was on the northwest corner of the square, on the site now occupied by the Charleston National Bank.
- ³¹ Memoirs of Frank T. O'Hair.
- ³² **Columbus Crisis**, April 6, 1864. Substantially the same account appeared in the St. Louis **Missouri Republican** (reprinted in **New York World**, April 6, 1864).
- ³³ **Official Records**, 1 ser., XXXII, pt. 1; 633.
- ³⁴ Testimony of Henry G. Green, Charleston Riot Affidavit, p. 86.
- ³⁵ Also affidavits in Charleston Riot Affidavits, pp. 4, 17, 22, 26, 27, 33, 36, 135, for example.
- ³⁶ Affidavits in Charleston Riot Affidavits, pp. 33, 36, 39; **Charleston Plain Dealer**, Extra, March 29, 1864.
- ³⁷ Charleston Riot Affidavits, pp. 4, 14, 26, 28; **Official Records**, 1 ser., XXXII, Pt. 1; 633-34. Colonel Mitchell was attacked by Robert Winkler, but scuffled with him and seized his pistol, according to the testimony of James D. Ellington.
- ³⁸ Memoirs of Frank T. O'Hair; Charleston Riot Affidavits, pp. 13, 26.
- ³⁹ Wilson, **History of Coles County**, 667.
- ⁴⁰ **Official Records**, 1 ser., XXXII, pt. 1; 633.
- ⁴¹ **Mattoon Gazette**, April 6, 1864. Probably not correct. Green Hanks, according to family tradition, did not take an active part in the riot (quoting Adin Baber). His name does not appear in any of the depositions.
- ⁴² Lists compiled from account in **Charleston Plain Dealer**, March 29, 1864, Colonel Mitchell's Report (**Official Records**, 1 ser., XXXII, pt. 1: 633-34) and affidavits taken after the riot (Coles County Circuit Court Records, pp. 4, 15, 28, 33, 36, 38-39, 43, 53-54, 56, 68, 77-78, 90, 95, 97, 100, 112, 129, 131, 140-141).
- ⁴³ Wires cut by Robert McLain, according to local tradition.
- ⁴⁴ **Charleston Plain Dealer**, March 29, 1864.
- ⁴⁵ Lieutenant Colonel Augustus C. Chapman of Charleston. He married Harriet Hanks, daughter of Dennis Hanks, second cousin of Abraham Lincoln.
- ⁴⁶ **Official Records**, 1 ser., XXXII, pt. 1; 633-34.
- ⁴⁷ Affidavit of Robert Smith, Charleston Riot Affidavits, p. 19.
- ⁴⁸ Affidavit of Levi Fresner, p. 121.
- ⁴⁹ Affidavit of H. N. Turner, p. 10.
- ⁵⁰ Affidavit of John Winkleblack, p. 110. The Copperheads took two guns belonging to him, as well as the horse. They threatened to shoot him.
- ⁵¹ Affidavit of Levi Fresner, pp. 121-22.
- ⁵² Charleston dispatch (April 1, 1864) to **Missouri Republican** in **New York World**, April 6, 1864.
- ⁵³ Charleston Riot Affidavits, pp. 49-52. Deposition by Nathan Thomas, pp. 71-73, parallels that of Clapp, without serious discrepancy. Jacob Daisey also testified to similar movements, p. 118.
- ⁵⁴ **Charleston Plain Dealer**, broadside, March 29, 1864.
- ⁵⁵ **Chicago Tribune**, March 30, 1864. See also **Post**, p. 42.
- ⁵⁶ **Chicago Tribune**, April 2, 1864; **Charleston Plain Dealer**, broadside, March 29, 1864.
- ⁵⁷ **Chicago Tribune**, April 1, 1864; **Columbus Crisis**, April 6, 1864.
- ⁵⁸ **Chicago Tribune**, April 1, 1864; **Official Records**, 1 ser., XXXII, pt. 1: 634.
- ⁵⁹ **Cincinnati Gazette**, March 31, 1864; **Richmond [Va.] Daily Examiner**, April 6, 1864.
- ⁶⁰ **Adj. Gen.'s Report**, III, III; 198; **Official Records**, 1 ser., XXXII, pt. 1; 631.
- ⁶¹ Charleston dispatch, April 1, 1864 to **Missouri Republican**, in **New York World**, April 6, 1864.
- ⁶² Mattoon dispatch, March 30, 1864 to **Chicago Tribune**, in **Cincinnati Gazette**, March 31, 1864.
- ⁶³ **Cincinnati Gazette**, April 5, 1864, quoting **Peoria [Ill.] Transcript**, and **Illinois State Journal** (Springfield).
- ⁶⁴ **Official Records**, 1 ser., XXXII, pt. 1: 635; **Cincinnati Gazette**, April 7, 1864, quoting **Chicago Tribune**, April 2, 1864.
- ⁶⁵ **Official Records**, 1 ser., XXXII, pt. 1; 631-32; 635-43.
- ⁶⁶ **Official Records**, 1 ser., XXXII, pt. 1; 643.
- ⁶⁷ See **Post**, p. 43.
- ⁶⁸ **Official Records**, 2 ser., VII; 898.

- ⁶⁹ From John H. Reardon, Jr., of Charleston, July, 1938, story confirmed by Wigfall O’Hair of Edgar County. Hank’s interview with Lincoln described in “Abe Lincoln’s Comrade,” an interview with Hanks by Robert McIntyre of Charleston, reprinted in supplement to **Shelby County Leader** (Shelbyville, Ill.), Feb. 1928. Interview occurred about 1885. The watch incident is recounted in the **Paris Beacon-News**, Oct. 16, 1930, by Thomas B. Shoaff, grandson of Dennis Hanks.
- ⁷⁰ Memoirs of Frank T. O’Hair; **Chicago Tribune**, April 2, 1864; **Mattoon Gazette**, April 6, 1864.
- ⁷¹ **Mattoon Gazette**, April 6, 1864.
- ⁷² From Wigfall S. O’Hair; see also **ante**, p. 34.
- ⁷³ Data from Adin Baber, grandson of Mary Ellen Hanks, daughter of William Hanks and his wife Mary.
- ⁷⁴ Coles County Circuit Court Records, 8:529.
- ⁷⁵ See **ante**, pp. 38 and 41.
- ⁷⁶ Circuit Court Records, 9:242, 456; 11:403; 12:10, 301.
- ⁷⁷ The information about the grand jury indictment in Coles County, and further actions in Shelby and Effingham counties (see **post**, p. 45ff.) comes from records in Effingham County Circuit Court, Effingham, Ill. Examined through the courtesy of Fred H. Hardiek, circuit clerk. See Box 55 for grand jury action, Coles County.
- ⁷⁸ Effingham Circuit Court Records, Box 55.
- ⁷⁹ **Ibid.**, Record C: 351.
- ⁸⁰ Charleston Riot Affidavits, pp. 4, 60, 61, 139.
- ⁸¹ Effingham Circuit Court Records, Record C: 351.
- ⁸² Charleston Riot Affidavits, pp. 21, 64, 103.
- ⁸³ Charleston Riot Affidavits, pp. 21, 23, 39, 65-66.
- ⁸⁴ Charleston Riot Affidavits, pp. 24, 41.
- ⁸⁵ For example, testimony of B. O. Stanley, Charleston Riot Affidavits. p. 28.
- ⁸⁶ March 29, 1864, Broadside Extra.
- ⁸⁷ March 30, April 2, 6, 1864.
- ⁸⁸ April 1, 1864.
- ⁸⁹ March 31, 1864.
- ⁹⁰ April 1, 4, 1864.
- ⁹¹ April 5, 1864.
- ⁹² **Saturday Evening Post**, July 13, 1918, p. 30.