

JOHN RITCHIE'S CIVIL WAR:

A Documentary History.

by Bryce Benedict

Introduction.

In Topeka in the summer of 1861 John Ritchie recruited men for a cavalry company, which informally was given the name of the Lane Guards. Not attracting enough men for a full company, Ritchie consolidated his company with one being raised by William A. Creitz of Holton. The Lane Guards were mustered into the service of the United States on July 16 at Fort Leavenworth. At that time the officers of companies were selected by popular vote of the men of the company. Ritchie was elected as captain, and Creitz as first lieutenant. The Lane Guards became Company A of the Fifth Kansas Volunteer Cavalry regiment, which was commanded by Colonel Hamilton P. Johnson of Leavenworth. The Fifth formed part of a brigade commanded by U.S. Senator James H. Lane.

Company A moved to Kansas City, and on July 23 it was called into action. Missouri secessionists threatened Union forces at Harrisonville, Missouri, and the Union troops asked for assistance. Company A was one of several companies sent to their aid. Some slight skirmishing occurred before the Federal troops entered Harrisonville, but Company A apparently did no fighting in this short campaign.

It must be explained that at that time there were no Confederate forces in Missouri. That state had not seceded from the Union, but the pro-southern Missouri militia—the Missouri State Guard—was, with the encouragement of the governor of Missouri, opposing Federal attempts to control the state. In addition, local armed bands were being formed all across the state. Some of these acted independently, and others cooperated with the Missouri State Guard. Confederate forces did briefly enter the state, and fought alongside the Missouri State Guard at the bloody battle of Wilson's Creek on August 10.

Ritchie's Company A subsequently moved to Fort Scott, Kansas, where in late August it made a raid into Vernon County, Missouri. Secessionists had constructed some sort of a fortification at Ball's Mill (also known as Balltown). Ritchie attacked, killing one of the enemy, and taking twenty prisoners, without suffering any loss on his side. The prisoners were forced to destroy the fortification, and then released.

Lane's brigade at Fort Scott made frequent scouts into Missouri. After one such scout, Ritchie returned on August 29 with two hundred cattle taken from what was reported as a secessionist encampment.

Three days later, on September 1, a raiding party of the Missouri State Guard attacked the mule herd of the Fourth Kansas regiment just outside of Fort Scott, killing the herders and making off with sixty mules. Lane's cavalry, including Ritchie's

company, was hastily sent in pursuit, and although gunfire was exchanged, the enemy was not overtaken.

The next day a more organized effort was made to catch the rebels. The Kansans caught up with the raiders at Drywood Creek in Vernon County, Missouri. The rebels had been reinforced, so now the Kansans were heavily outnumbered. The resulting battle lasted about an hour, before the Kansans made an orderly retreat. Casualties were light on both sides, and would have been higher but that the high prairie grass made it hard to see one's target. The tall grass also kept the rebels from realizing how few in number were the Kansans.

A week later, on September 10, Colonel Johnson called on the officers of the Fifth regiment to fill the vacant post of lieutenant colonel. William Creitz, Ritchie's first lieutenant, alleged that Johnson's nomination of Ritchie was initially opposed because of Ritchie's "tyrannical disposition." Creitz claimed that Ritchie was then elected only on the condition that two other officers would get promotions. Creitz took command of Company A.

After Wilson's Creek the Confederate forces had fallen back into Arkansas. The Missouri State Guard however, under the command of Major General Sterling Price, marched northward to Lexington on the Missouri river.

On September 17, at Morristown, Cass County, Missouri, Colonel Johnson was killed while leading Company A in an ill-advised cavalry charge. Following this Lane promoted Ritchie to colonel of the Fifth, and several days later the Fifth participated in the sacking and burning of Osceola, Missouri. Thereafter Lane's brigade was marched to Kansas City where it was to form part of Major General John C. Fremont's "Grand Army" which was being organized to chase Price's army out of Missouri. Fremont's pursuit of Price was less than vigorous. Lieutenant Colonel James G. Blunt of the Third Kansas wrote that the pursuit "was noted for nothing very remarkable except that our trail was marked by the feathers of 'secesh' poultry and the debris of disloyal bee gums." Springfield was reached in late October, and Fremont, having accomplished little, was removed from command, following which the brigade returned to Fort Scott in mid November.

Upon returning to Fort Scott, Lane gave up command of the brigade and returned to Washington, leaving Colonel James Montgomery of the Third Kansas regiment in command. Around November 23 Ritchie took the Fifth on a six-day scout through southwest Missouri. Upon his return, Ritchie learned the rest of the brigade had marched toward Kansas City to meet a threatened rebel invasion, and he was to join them.

Although Montgomery congratulated Ritchie for the "brilliant sweep" through southwest Missouri, Captain Creitz wrote that it accomplished nothing but to physically break down the men and horses. Creitz alleged that on the ensuing march northward to rejoin the brigade that "horses died by dozens," and many of those not killed were left

lame and worn out along the route, with the men so broken that only a third were fit for duty.

The threatened invasion turned out to be nothing but a rumor. The Fifth went into camp at Osawatomie, where it was determined that there may have been some irregularity in the formation of the regiment, and that to cure this, a new election of officers would be required. In an election by the officers, Ritchie was not chosen for any position. A dispute ensued, and it was agreed to hold another election and this time the enlisted men were to be included as voters. If Ritchie believed he was wildly popular among the enlisted men and this would carry the day, he was mistaken, for he only received 2 votes out of 475 cast. Major James H. Summers was elected to the colonelcy, but Ritchie refused to honor the results, and in this he was aided in Governor Charles Robinson's not issuing commissions to the men that were elected.

After the Fifth moved south to Fort Lincoln, another election was held. This time he received six votes. Thoroughly humiliated, Ritchie resigned and left the regiment.

After returning to Washington, Lane had schemed to get command of an expedition which would drive south from Kansas, through the Indian Territory, and into Texas. In connection with this, in late January 1862 he appointed Ritchie as a major and aide-de-camp on his staff, a staff which Lane had no authority to possess. One report suggests Lane arranged for General-in-chief George McClellan to appoint several such officers to temporary assignments on the staff of Brigadier General David Hunter in Kansas. Whatever the arrangement was, Ritchie and a number of other officers were recognized for their service and given honorable discharges by the War Department on March 21, 1862. Ritchie would next command a regiment of native American Indian troops.

In 1861 Federal forces had abandoned the Indian Territory (present Oklahoma). The Confederate government entered this vacuum and negotiated treaties with the so-called five civilized tribes: the Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw, and Seminole nations. Within the Seminole, Cherokee and Creek nations there were significant factions which were opposed to an alliance with the Confederacy, but lacked the strength to maintain neutrality.

Decades earlier the five nations had been forcibly resettled into the territory; many of their citizens had adopted much of white culture. Some had taken European names, some not. Some wore European clothes, while others retained traditional clothing. Some spoke and read English, others spoke only their native tongue. A Kansas soldier at Tahlequah in the Cherokee nation in 1863 commented that:

Before the war broke out there were many Cherokees who owned from two thousand to five thousand head of cattle, and hardly any head of a family owned less than a hundred. As a nation, the Cherokees were undoubtedly the richest people in the world. Besides their individual wealth, they owned large amounts of property in common, from which

they endowed two large seminaries, one male and one female. This secured to every Cherokee child a very liberal education, in the Indian and English languages, and most other branches of learning free of expense... Many of the Cherokees owned slaves and many of those were led to join the South and are in the Southern army at present. Others stayed and are now, since their negroes emancipated themselves, anti-slavery men.¹

In January 1862 thousands of Indians, mostly of the Creek Nation, fled from the Indian Territory into southern Kansas. The Federal government decided to arm the refugee Indians and use them against the Confederacy and their Indian allies. In April, Ritchie and Robert W. Furnas were given permission to organize two regiments of Indian Home Guards from the refugees, with the intent that the loyal Indians would regain control of the Indian Territory. This authority was countermanded by Brigadier General Samuel Sturgis, the Department commander, who ordered that no Indians be enlisted. Ritchie, and Superintendent of Indian Affairs William G. Coffin, replied that their authority came not from the War Department, but the Interior Department. Any further conflict with Sturgis was averted when he was replaced by Brigadier General James G. Blunt, who endorsed the policy of enlisting Indians.²

Ritchie became colonel of the Second Indian Home Guard (IHG) regiment. Initially his regiment was understrength, and was a polyglot assemblage of one company each of Delaware, Kickapoo, Quapaw, Seneca, and Shawnee, and two companies each of Osage and Cherokee. The officers above company level were white, many of them coming from Kansas. Ritchie's brother, Andrew, was the regimental surgeon.

The IHG were issued smoothbore muskets. Although mustered in as infantry, initially about half rode their own ponies. As to their uniform, Superintendent Coffin described the men of the First and Second IHG in June 1862: "[T]he Indians with their new uniforms and small Military caps on their High Heads of Hair made rather a Comecal Ludecrous appearance." An anonymous Kansas soldier wrote:

We broke up camp at Humboldt June 21st and started for Dixie, our Indian Regiments having received their outfits in clothing and arms. Their clothing is similar to ours, their arms the old-fashioned sporting rifle. It was amusing to see them when they received their clothing. Some put on all that was issued to them, overcoat and all. Some of their blouses had red lining; these they turned wrong side out. Some of them rolled their knapsacks in their blankets in order to prevent the dust from soiling them.

¹ Letter dated Tahlequah, July 29, 1863, in the August 8, 1863 Leavenworth, Kansas *Daily Conservative*.

² Annie Heloise Abel, *The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War*, Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1919, pp. 105-106.

They carry them strapped on so as to swing on the small of their backs. They march in much better order than I expected they would do.³

Wiley Britton, a soldier in the Sixth Kansas Cavalry, described the Indians after a new shipment of clothing was received in April 1863:

What was known at that time as the ‘Hancock Hat’ was issued to the Indian soldiers, while the white soldiers generally wore the regulation cap...Care was not taken to see to it that the clothing issued to the Indian soldiers fitted them properly. The pants leg were frequently too short or too long, and the coat rarely ever fitted as a white soldier would have insisted that it should, giving the Indian soldiers a comical appearance, mounted on their ponies with badly fitted clothing, and wearing ‘Hancock Hats,’ with their long black hair falling over their shoulders, and legs astride their mounts coming down near the ground.⁴

Superintendent Coffin described a march of the First and Second IHG In June 1862: “[T]hey marched off in Columns of 4 a breast singing the war song all joining in the chourse and a more animated seen is not often witnessed.” Britton described a similar march of the IHG in the spring of 1863:

It was an interesting feature of these Indian scouts on starting out on the march in the morning, to see the Indian soldiers mostly Creeks and Seminoles, decorated in war paint and feathers, and to hear the war whoop commencing at the head of the column and running back to the rear, to be repeated several times. But there is one thing that should be mentioned to the credit of these Indian soldiers, and that is they were rarely, if ever, charged with unlawful depredations, plunder, robbery, on the march or in the neighborhood of their camps. The white people were afraid of them, but they did not molest any one in their homes.⁵

What was known as the Indian Expedition, under the command of Colonel William Weer, invaded the Indian Territory in early June 1862. In addition to the two IHG regiments, five white regiments and two artillery batteries marched with the expedition. On July 3 rebel forces were defeated in a small battle at Locust Grove. Colonel Weer reported, “The fleeing enemy ran to Tahlequah and there spread the report of their disaster. It caused the immediate disbanding of Drew’s regiment of rebel Cherokees, some 1,000 strong. Four hundred of them have already joined Colonel Ritchie’s regiment, thus filling it up, at a point some 20 miles north of the scene of the

³ Coffin to Dole, June 25, 1862, in Annie Heloise Abel, *The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War*, Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1919, p. 123, n. 309; J.H.H. to Mr. Editor, dated Camp on Wolf Creek, July 5, 1862, in the Wyandotte, Kansas *Commercial Gazette*, July 19, 1862.

⁴ Wiley Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, Kansas City, MO: F. Hudson Publishing, 1922, p. 226.

⁵ Coffin to Dole, June 25, 1862, in Annie Heloise Abel, *The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War*, Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1919, p. 123, n. 309; Wiley Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, Kansas City, MO: F. Hudson Publishing, 1922, pp. 61, 188, 226.

fight, where I had caused the army to encamp.”⁶ For some bureaucratic reason the new Indian recruits had to go to Fort Scott to be mustered in.

Colonel John Drew’s regiment, the First Cherokee Mounted Rifles, had been raised under the authority of John Ross, Principal Chief of the Cherokee, largely as a counter-balance to Stand Watie’s Cherokee battalion, which had been raised under the authority of a Confederate general. While Watie was strongly pro-Confederate, Ross had wanted to remain neutral, but he felt unable to resist the Confederacy and its Indian allies, and had eventually signed a treaty with the Confederacy.⁷ Colonel Douglas H. Cooper “found an irreconcilable feud and the most deadly hostility existing between” the Cherokee troops raised by the Ross and Watie factions.⁸ It appears most of the men in Drew’s regiment had been waiting for an opportune time to change sides.

In mid-July a detachment of Weer’s troops captured the capitol of the Cherokee Nation at Talequah, as well as John Ross. (Ross may have been complicit in arranging his own apprehension, and he was quickly paroled.) Following these events enough Cherokee men flocked to the Federal banner that Weer organized them into the Third IHG regiment, under the command of Colonel William A. Phillips. This marked the high point of the expedition. The Federal advance had been stalled by a combination of the summer heat, a lack of supplies, and Weer getting drunk. The inaction was so intolerable that a number of officers led by Colonel Frederick Salomon, commander of the First Brigade, mutinied and placed Weer under arrest on July 18.

The next day Salomon began a retreat to Kansas with the white troops, leaving the three IHG regiments behind “as a corps of observation along the Grand and Verdigris Rivers; also to guard the fords of the Arkansas.” Historian Annie Heloise Abel characterized Salomon as “brutally abandoning” the Indian regiments, who “were thus expected to cover his retreat, while he, unhampered, proceeded to Hudson’s Crossing.”⁹

The three IHG regiments were formed into a brigade under the command of Colonel Robert B. Furnas of the First IHG. Furnas “retained his colonelcy of the First Indian, while Lieutenant-colonel David B. Corwin took command of the Second and Colonel William A. Phillips of the Third. Colonel Ritchie had, prior to recent happenings,

⁶ Weer to Moonlight, July 6, 1862, in the *Official Records*, vol. 13, pp. 137-138.

⁷ Joseph B. Thoburn, “The Cherokee Question,” *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. 2, no. 2, June 1924, pp. 148, 160. D.N. Cooley, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, argued in 1866 that Drew’s regiment changed sides not because of any true loyalty to the Federal government, but only because they were “unpaid, unclothed, uncared for” by the Confederacy, and that Ross did so only after being abandoned by Drew’s regiment. *Id.*, pp. 156-157. The better evidence indicates Cooley was mistaken, and Thoburn suggests that for post-war treaty renegotiation purposes there were incentives to impugn the loyalty of the Cherokee.

⁸ Cooper to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, May 16, 1866, in Joseph B. Thoburn, “The Cherokee Question,” *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. 2, no. 2, June 1924, p. 217.

⁹ Annie Heloise Abel, *The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War*, Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1919, p. 143.

been detached from his command in order to conduct a party of prisoners to Fort Leavenworth, also to arrange for the mustering in of Indian recruits.”¹⁰

Instead of remaining in the Indian Territory, the Second IHG went into camp at Baxter’s Springs, Kansas, and as was his wont, Ritchie aggravated those around him. Colonel Phillips complained that Ritchie refused to cooperate with him, and was trying to steal recruits that should go to Phillips’ regiment. Colonel Weer wrote that “Colonel Ritchie utterly refuses to obey my orders. His camp is, from what I can learn, a motley assemblage. His presence in the army is nothing but embarrassment to the service, and I most urgently recommend his dismissal.” For some reason Ritchie had put under arrest First Lieutenant Joel Moody of the Second IHG, and a civilian, Reverend Gilbert Bishop. Brigadier General Blunt ordered Ritchie to release both men.

Now Ritchie was the one to get arrested.

Colonel William R. Judson of the Sixth Kansas Cavalry was the unlucky messenger of orders, directed to Ritchie, that the Second IHG was to join Colonel Weer at Carthage, Missouri. For some reason Ritchie not only refused to obey the order, but placed Judson under arrest, and personally dragged Judson off his horse. Colonel Phillips later learned what had happened, and placed Ritchie under arrest. After the Second IHG was marched to Carthage, Weer ordered Ritchie released, telling him he could return to his regiment, or to hell. An observer wrote that “Col. Phillips says that Ritchey is crazy.”

Whereas Brigadier General James G. Blunt only months before had written that “the Indian regiments mustered into the United States service have more than met my expectations as efficient soldiers,”¹¹ he now heaped especial scorn upon the Second IHG: “all, except the Cherokees, proved worthless as Soldiers...Of six companies, all but about twenty, deserted after the return of [Colonel] Salomon from the Indian Territory.” Blunt ordered the men in the six skeleton companies to be mustered out, and the absent men to be listed as deserters. Blunt claimed that treating them as deserters “has been salutary upon the other Indians.”

By late November six new companies of loyal Cherokee were organized and mustered into the Second IHG, making the regiment nearly all Cherokee.

In his September 21, 1862 letter to Brigadier General Blunt, Ritchie had written: “If I am thought incompetent to defend my Indians for God’s sake have me removed, as I do not intend to resign in the face of the enemy.” Blunt apparently took him up on this suggestion; according to Ritchie’s compiled military service file at the National Archives, he was absent from his regiment under arrest since September 25, 1862. Writing on November 21, Blunt noted Ritchie “was entirely incompetent as an officer. He is now

¹⁰ Annie Heloise Abel, *The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War*, Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1919, p. 144.

¹¹ Blunt to Stanton, July 21, 1862 in the *Official Records*, vol. 13, p. 486.

under arrest and should be discharged from the service by order of the President.”¹² In Ritchie’s absence command of the regiment fell to Lieutenant Colonel Frederick W. Schaurte. While under arrest Ritchie was allowed to travel, and he returned to Topeka, where his comments there led to his being excommunicated from the Congregational Church in 1863. Eventually he was “released from arrest and put on detached service as Commander of Ft. Larned [Kansas] per special order No 75 dated Hd. Qrs. Dist of Kansas Ft. Leavenworth Apr. 17/63.” For unknown reasons he never took command of Fort Larned; presumably he remained in Topeka until returning to the Indian Territory in August.¹³

During Ritchie’s absence from his regiment, Federal forces including the Second IHG again invaded the Indian Territory, and this time they stayed, occupying the Cherokee Nation and Fort Gibson. Commissioner of Indian Affairs D.N Cooley wrote that the Federal invasion:

drove the Ridge party under Stand Watie from the Cherokee Nation in confusion, capturing all their train and provisions. They abandoned their homes and property to the Ross party, who remained in possession of the nation. For two years marauding parties of the rebel army, composed largely of Cherokees of the Ridge party, crossed the Arkansas river into the Cherokee country and plundered the Ross party until the latter were in as destitute a condition as the former. The depredations were reciprocal, and the black flag seemed to be the banner under which both parties fought.¹⁴

The war inflicted grievous harm upon the five nations; the Cherokee certainly suffered the worst. From a pre-war population of about 21,000 Cherokee, perhaps 14,000 remained.¹⁵ According to Patrick Minges, “Some 2,200 Cherokee fought on the Union side; as many as eight hundred lost their lives. Even as early as 1863, one-third of the adult women in the Nation were widows and one-fourth of the children were orphans. A total of 3,530 men from the Indian Territory served in the Union Army, and 1,018 died during their enlistment. No state suffered greater losses than did the Indian Territory in

¹² Ritchie appears to have escaped trial by courts-martial. Staff at the National Archives found no reference to Ritchie in the “Index to Court-Martial Case Files, 1809-1938,” Record Group 153, Records of the Office Judge Advocate General. Private communication from T. Juliette Arai, National Archives, to author, December 26, 2006.

¹³ “Appears on Returns as follows,” John Ritchie compiled military service file, 2 Indian Home Guards, Kansas Infantry, National Archives; private communication from George Elmore, Fort Larned National Historic Site, to author, January 4, 2007.

¹⁴ Joseph B. Thoburn, “The Cherokee Question,” *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. 2, no. 2, June 1924, p. 160.

¹⁵ Cooper to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, May 16, 1866, in Joseph B. Thoburn, “The Cherokee Question,” *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. 2, no. 2, June 1924, p. 216; Blunt to Commissioner of Indian Affairs, May 4, 1866, *id.*, p. 214; Patrick Minges, “The Keetoowah Society and the Avocation of Religious Nationalism in the Cherokee Nation, 1855-1867,” (1994, 1998) <http://www.tngennet.org/tncolor/keetood5.htm> (accessed February 1, 2007).

the Civil War.”¹⁶ For their impudence in defying the United States, and violating their pre-war treaties, the nations were compelled after the war to renegotiate their treaties at considerable cost.¹⁷

Instead of taking command of his regiment in August 1863, Ritchie was given temporary command of the 1st Brigade of the “Army of the Frontier” in the Indian Territory. On November 16, 1863 he was relieved of command of the 1st Brigade, put on detached service, and ordered to report to Brigadier General John McNeil at Fort Smith, Arkansas. What he may have done there is a mystery.

Ritchie again left the Indian Territory in January 1864, under orders “to settle his ordnance affairs.” This suggests there was some allegation of improper bookkeeping. Ritchie appears to have languished at Fort Leavenworth for many weeks until Major General Samuel R. Curtis intervened. Curtis had a dilemma in returning Ritchie to duty. Colonel Phillips was in command at Fort Gibson, an arrangement which was to Curtis’ liking. However, by virtue of his date of rank Ritchie was senior to Phillips, and Curtis was concerned Ritchie might try to supplant Phillips; Curtis had also heard that Ritchie “seems ‘crazy’ at times.” Ritchie returned to his regiment on March 24; Curtis sent Ritchie and the Second IHG to Mackey’s Lick where, among other duties, they harvested salt. The chain of command was arranged so that Ritchie would report directly to Major General Blunt, thus the paths of Ritchie and Phillips would not need cross.

Mackey’s Lick was on the east bank of the Illinois River, near the Fort Smith-Fort Gibson military road. The salt harvested there originated from a pipe inserted into a saltwater spring underneath the river. A pump transferred the salt water to one-hundred salt evaporating kettles.¹⁸

Ritchie’s last significant action with the Second IHG came on June 15, 1864. The steamboat *J.R. Williams*, destined for Fort Gibson, had been ambushed by rebel forces concealed on the south bank of the Arkansas River. Cannon fire drove the boat to the north bank, where it ran aground. Rebel forces were able to cross the river, move the boat to the south bank, and begin carrying off supplies. An official report recounts what happened next: “The next day, about 10 o’clock, Colonel Ritchie, of the Second Indian Regiment (home guard), reached the north bank of the river opposite the boat, and with 40 men, by musketry firing across the river, drove the enemy both from the boat and from the freight, and kept them from it until the rise in the river washed away the greater part

¹⁶ Patrick Minges, “The Keetoowah Society and the Avocation of Religious Nationalism in the Cherokee Nation, 1855-1867,” (1994, 1998) <http://www.us-data.org/us/minges/keetood5.html> (accessed February 1, 2007).

¹⁷ Hugh T. Cunningham, “A History of the Cherokee Indians,” *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. 8, no. 4, December 1930, pp. 407, 428; Joseph B. Thoburn, “The Cherokee Question,” *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. 2, no. 2, June 1924, pp. 142-145; Patrick Minges, “The Keetoowah Society and the Avocation of Religious Nationalism in the Cherokee Nation, 1855-1867,” (1994, 1998) <http://www.tngennet.org/tncolor/keetood5.htm> (accessed February 1, 2007).

¹⁸ Grant Foreman, “Salt Works in Early Oklahoma,” *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. 10, no. 4, December 1932, pp. 486-487.

of the goods. The enemy, however, about the time Colonel Ritchie arrived, fired the boat and destroyed her.” Four of Ritchie’s men were wounded in the skirmish.¹⁹

Ritchie was again relieved of command on June 28 and placed on detached service. The reason for this, or of what the detached service consisted, is unknown, but at some time in the fall of 1864 Ritchie returned to Kansas. In October and November he served as a volunteer aide to Major General Curtis, who commanded forces opposing an invasion by Confederate Major General Sterling Price. Toward the end of this campaign, in a dispute over who would take possession of rebel prisoners, he managed to get himself arrested a third time—surely a record for a full colonel in this war!

The remainder of his military career is a bit of a mystery. Records show that he was in Topeka in early 1865—on February 6 he attended a board meeting of Lincoln College, and a March 27 deed to Lincoln College documented his presence in Shawnee County. By a special order of the Department of Arkansas, dated April 25, 1865, he was continued on detached service, but he apparently returned to the Indian Territory, for on May 16 Major General Blunt gave Ritchie command of the Indian Brigade whose headquarters was at Fort Gibson. By General Order No. 97 of the War Department, dated May 26, 1865, Ritchie was awarded the brevet rank of brigadier general, with an effective date of rank of February 21. After being a brevet brigadier general for five days, Ritchie was mustered out of the service on May 31, 1865.

From April 1862 to May 1865, Ritchie was with his regiment or in the Indian territory for only fifteen of those thirty-eight months. If his involvement in the Price Raid is included, he was off duty more than he was on.

The following documents contain mentions of the wartime service of John and Andrew J. Ritchie. Original spellings and punctuation have been retained. If the source of the document is *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 128 volumes, 1880-1901) it is cited as *Official Records*. Where only a relevant portion of a document is copied, it is noted as an (*extract*). The *Official Records* can be found online at <http://moa.cit.cornell.edu/moa/browse.monographs/waro.html>

The Documents.

Letter from “Volunteer,” dated Camp Union, Kansas City, July 20, 1861

I embrace the first opportunity since leaving Topeka, to post you as to our whereabouts, what we have been doing, and what we have yet to do as far as I know. We arrived at Fort Leavenworth on the evening of the 16th and were immediately mustered into the service of Uncle Sam--remained there until the evening of the 18th, when **Capt. Ritchie** received orders to report himself to the Commanding Officer at this place, (Capt. Bingham,) with all possible dispatch. We marched all night and arrived here the next

¹⁹ Thayer to Steele, June 22, 1864, *Official Records*, vol. 34, part 4, pp. 503-504; Wiley Britton, *The Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War*, Kansas City, MO: F. Hudson Publishing, 1922, pp. 406, 408.

morning. Our boys on the march received their first instalment of the soldiers disagreeables, in the shape of a severe thunder shower, with good grace. Last evening, several of the Guard were detailed under the command of the Captain, to escort to camp the Government train recently ordered to Fort Scott, which order had been countermanded on account of the report that the rebels are in force about forty miles below here intending to intercept it.--Your correspondent was one of the lucky ones, or as some of our Western friends say, *all got for to go*. We performed the feat successfully and the train consisting of some forty wagons is now safely corralled under the guns of the camp. There is but one gun mounted here at present, a six pounder; but in a few days we will have a thirty-two pounder in position, and ready for service. Our camp is on a rise of ground commanding the city, surrounded by a breastwork and ditch. **Our Capt.** is very popular with his men. At the election for officers, held at the Fort, he was elected without a dissenting vote. He is unwearied in his exertions to provide for the comfort of his men--consequently he is the hardest working man in the company. Last night during our absence, two companies of Infantry arrived on the boat from Leavenworth, and are now encamped inside the works. I have just learned that we are under marching orders for some point south of here. We will leave in about two hours, accompanied by Captain Williams' Company of mounted rifles.

(Topeka, Kansas *State Record*, July 27, 1861)

Letter from "A. B. M.," dated Camp Union, Kansas City, July 29, 1861

We left Camp Prince on the 23rd about noon, and proceeded toward Harrisonville.—On the 24th we started about 6 o'clock A.M., and camped on the bank of Grand River at night. It was about noon of this day, that we passed through a small village called Crescent Hill. While here a scout came in and reported a party of armed men, about 30 in number, three miles to the south. Capt. Williams started in pursuit with 20 men. As soon as our party came in sight the seceshers wheeled and retreated at a 2:40 speed. We chased them into their camp where we found about 200 of the critters, and, "thinking of something we had failed to recollect before," we returned to our camp.

This same day a squad of eight went out as scouts. About 10 o'clock A.M. they saw a party of thirty men, and thinking they were friends, one of our sergeants (Wm. A. Hill) proposed to the rest to go and meet them, but finding them unwilling, he proceeded towards them alone. When he had got within about ten feet of them he was fired upon by two of the party and immediately fell from his horse. Our party then fired at them, killing two.—Robert Colman, a young man about 22 years of age, who was 1st corporal in our company, dismounted to fire. The report frightened his horse so that he broke away and Colman was taken prisoner. We have since learned he was *killed* by them.

On the 25th, about 2 o'clock P.M. we came in sight of a large party, about 300, drawn up in line, and seemingly waiting for an attack. The bugle sounded the charge, and forming into line we galloped towards them. We had not got within gun shot when they retreated, leaving us far in the rear. When we gained the eminence lately occupied

by the *chivalry*, the much talked of city of Harrisonville first met our view. It is situated in a small valley and surrounded on the north, south and west sides with heavy timber. The next object was to get through the wood and gain the vacant space on the east, (we then being south.) Just then a scout brought in a prisoner who unwillingly was obliged to conduct us through, taking a by-path about two miles below town. We were preceded by Capt. Jennison with his 14 men, and Capt. Tucker with his *mounted muskets* brought up the rear.—When we had gained the opposite side of the timber, Capt. Tucker halted his command and nothing could induce him to proceed farther towards the town. We went on about one-fourth of a mile to a small rise, dismounted, and put our horses in a yard; we then went to a house close by, where we were furnished with all the milk we could drink and also bread and cheese. After refreshments the bugle sounded the assembly and the men fell “into two rows, like the regulars” with unusual alacrity. Lieut. Brown was then detailed with ten men to guard a road leading into town. A guard was detailed to stay with the horses, under Lieut. Moore. (These were the only dissatisfied ones in our command.)

I will here state that on the east of the town is a large field of corn from 150 to 200 acres, and the road guarded by Brown ran through the middle of this field. Capt. Williams with 30 men, and Capt. Jennison with 14 marched through the corn and crept up along a stone wall until they came to another lane, where they saw at least 200 mounted men drawn up in line. Our men with one accord rose and gave them the contents of their Sharp’s, and then came the fun. Such a stampede was never witnessed before! We think from their actions that they enjoyed it too, for they would throw up their arms and scream and yell, and those on the ground would draw up their legs and then straighten them out with a jerk.

The chivalry formed again in another lane, running parallel with Browns, and were again attacked by our men and driven into the timber. We then climbed the fence and took the road for camp, marching in four platoons, to the tune of “Happy Land of Canaan.” When about half way through Brown’s lane, three men were discovered sitting on a fence in the edge of the timber, occupied by the enemy, which was about half a mile from us. The rear platoon was halted and wheeled to “face the enemy,” and the command: “ready—aim—fire!” was strictly and quickly obeyed. The three men immediately jumped from the fence—*backwards, and head first.*

When we got back to camp we found the command had all arrived, also Col. Weer, in a high state of excitement, guarded by the gallant (?) Capt. Tucker. The reason we first discovered the enemy, was that we were the advance guard that day, and were about one and a-half miles in advance of the command. We made the charge without orders, and we are not sure but Col. Weer will have us all court-martialed, (in a horn.)

On the 26th the following order, from “Head Quarters” was read to the men standing in ranks. {Our correspondent here gives Col. Weer’s proclamation. We are obliged to omit it till to-morrow.—ED.}

We marched into town in the following order: Capt. Jennison and command; next, Capt. Williams and command; next, **Capt. Ritchie** and command, and last companies A and B, Maj. Van Horn's command.

We saw none of the Seceshers, they having seceded during the previous night. We marched in and formed a square around the Court House, and then the Stars and Stripes were planted upon the top of the same, and loudly cheered by both citizens and soldiers. Capt. Jennison not being under the command of any one in particular, and being somewhat noted for Jay hawking, proceeded to search a few of the stores; finding 8 kegs of powder in one of them, he presented 7 to Capt. Williams. He also found a considerable quantity of ready-made clothing, boots and shoes, hats and caps, dry goods and groceries, &c., all of which were liberally distributed throughout the camp, he keeping scarcely anything for himself. The donation was very acceptable, especially the clothing, boots and shoes, as Uncle Sam has been very slack about providing for the wants of his dutiful children. We dont know whether Capt. Tucker was under the command of Col. Weer or not, but we do know that he took two large wagon loads of goods from the city that Capt. Williams and Jennison fought to get possession of while he was standing with his command a half a mile from the conflict—we dont know whether he trembled any or not.

The printers were set to work on the proclamation, but a dispatch from Kansas City, stating that it was in danger, brought a command from "Head Quarters" to march immediately, which we did, arriving here on the 27th.

We lost no men in the Harrisonville Fight. The bodies of 23 Rebels were found after we left. The house where our horses were left belonged to a Union man. It has since been burned.

(Leavenworth, Kansas (daily) *Conservative*, July 30, 1861)

"M" [*Chaplain H. H. Moore, Third Regiment Kansas Volunteers*²⁰] to Friend Speer, dated Fort Scott, August 24, 1861

FRIEND SPEER: The lay of the land, in a military point of view, is apparent to any one who has been out even a short time in this place. Fort Scott will remain Gen. Lane's Headquarters for some weeks to come, unless something important and unexpected should take place. The General is now on the Osage, twelve miles north of this place, fortifying a camp. He has selected a high bank on the north side of the river, where a bend like a horse-shoe occurs, and yesterday, as I passed through, about one hundred men were at work with teams, axes, spades, etc., and in a few days "the place will be secure from any force that may be brought against it." His object is to provide a

²⁰ The *Republican*, in its September 12, 1861 issued, identified its correspondent as the Reverend H. H. Moore.

safe depot for his stores and provisions; and in case he should be driven out of Fort Scott, a place well fortified will be near by, that he can fall back upon.

Gen. Lane was in Fort Scott Monday night, and lost no time in laying his plans and getting to work. His presence inspires the greatest confidence and enthusiasm among the soldiers and people.

Col. Montgomery is in command at Fort Scott, and every thing is kept on a war footing. Capt. Stewart and Capt. Seaman, with a force of one hundred and fifty, have gone to break up a secession camp about twenty-five miles south of this. We have not heard from the result of the expedition.

Capt. Williams, with a force of about fifty men, on the 16th inst., went to Nevada City, about twenty five miles east of Fort Scott, and attacked a rebel force of at least eighty, routing them entirely, killing seven and took a wagon load of camp plunder. Capt. Williams has the reputation of being one of the daring, dashing kind of men, and is generally successful.

Capt. Ritchey, of Col. Johnson's Regiment, with fifty-two men, was sent out on the 22d inst. to destroy a fortification which the secessionists had constructed at Ball's Mills, about twenty-five miles from here. Last night he returned, having been entirely successful. He pounced upon them whilst at breakfast, killed one and took twenty prisoners. None of his men were injured. He took from them some powder, lead, six horses, two stallions, a safe receipt for making counterfeit money, and various articles contraband of war. The prisoners were set to work and compelled to destroy their fort. The prisoners were then set at liberty. They were nearly scared to death. Col. Montgomery has given his men orders not to swear in any rebels.

A small company of Osage Indians are in town, anxious to be mustered into service. They want to fight the Cherokees; they say Col. Montgomery treated them very handsomely, but what encouragement he gave them I can't say. Last night intelligence was received that the rebels were in force southwest of this about twenty five miles. Measures were at once made to meet any emergency that might happen.

In addition to our regular forces, there is a respectable Home Guard, under command of Major Judson, of this place. A very respectable force of Missourians has also been here for some time under command of Major Dean. These forces constitute an important arm of the service.

It is the intention of this Brigade to act with vigor and make the power felt. If the enemy does not come to us we shall go in search of him. A couple of contrabands got into **Capt. Ritchey's** track and came into camp last night. You may expect to hear that this Regiment does something besides sleep upon its post.

(Lawrence, Kansas *Republican*, August 29, 1861)

Letter from Chaplain H. H. Moore, dated Fort Scott, August 28, 1861

At four o'clock, as usual, Montgomery's regiment appeared on the parade ground for drill to-day, but to the surprise of all the boys, they were marched back to their quarters without performing an evolution. On their arrival they were drawn up in single file, and forty rounds of cartridges were given to each of them, which were carefully deposited in their respective boxes. Orders were then given that no man should leave his quarters, and that they should sleep with their arms by their side.

"What's up?" "What does all this mean?" "Is the Secesh army coming?" "Good! we'll have some fun," and kindred expressions passed around among the boys, and soon this new movement was known to the citizens generally. The officers, especially Col. Montgomery, appeared calm and serious. Gen. Lane was quietly gliding about as usual. Fort Scott, on the whole, was somewhat excited.

After a while the cause began to leak out. Capt. William's command, which left town only the day before, had attacked and destroyed Belltown, Missouri. In this place was one of the best flouring mills of the State, and one of the proprietors was a violent Secessionist. It was only last week that **Capt. Ritchey** destroyed a fortification there. But this time a force of some three hundred men had gathered and were running the mill night and day, manufacturing flour for the rebel army. The report now is that the enemy's pickets shot Captain William's horse from under him, and fled into the town, and that the enemy then fled; that our boys shelled the mill and burned it; that the town was also burned; that six or seven rebels were killed, and that the dashing captain is now on his way back with seven "contrabands," three hundred head of cattle, and other spoils of war. It was supposed our small force would be pursued into Fort Scott, and hence the preparation to give the enemy a warm reception.

Southern and Western Missouri are being utterly ruined. What Secessionism has spared among its own friends is now likely to fall into the hands of the Federal forces, and nothing will be left to the inhabitants. Of course the rebels merit any fate that may be meted out to them, and the weak, pusillanimous course the Unionists have taken, is not well calculated to inspire respect for them or pity for their misfortunes. The ruin, the waste, and the horrors of war, no pen can describe; and what an account is gathering upon the heads of the leaders of this rebellion! It will be seen, ere long, that this Brigade will crush out Secessionism in Western Missouri, even if the country is laid waste and left without an inhabitant.

(Lawrence, *Kansas Republican*, September 5, 1861)

Letter from Chaplain H. H. Moore, dated Fort Scott, August 29, 1861

Everything here is astir, and in a whirl of excitement. The monotony of camp life has not come upon us yet. What is that keeps us all in motion, it is hard to tell. The

various companies of Montgomery's regiment are ambitious to excel in drill, military bearing and everything that constitutes the soldier. They seem cheerful to submit themselves to the most rigid and laborious discipline. Orders have been issued by Col. Montgomery, who is in command at this point, for all the soldiers to keep their arms, cartridges, &c., where they can get hold of them, and be ready for a fight at a moment's notice. Capt. Snyder has more men than any other company, and they have seen more hard service. They have the appearance of warriors hardened to their calling, and ready to meet the foe.

Most of the captains have issued orders that there shall be no profanity in their camps. In this, however, they are but enforcing the rules and regulations of the army. One of the captains, who had not been very particular in this respect in former times, was among the first and most zealous to call the attention of his men to the rule, and stated that he should insist upon its observance. One of his tall boys had been forgetful on various occasions, and one morning he had been indulging rather excessively, which breach of order and rules started the ire of his commander, who addressed the guilty, trembling culprit in the following style: "Joe, now hush up there. You know I have forbidden profanity in this camp. I've had to reprove you two or three times before, and now, I'll be d----d if this"----He did not finish the sentence, but I believe Joe has not used profane language any more.

From this regiment there are about twenty cases of sickness in the hospital, most of which are doing well.

Col. Johnson's regiment is not full, but is receiving additions every day or so. Col. Weer has but the smaller portion of a regiment as yet. Additions are made to Col. Montgomery's every day. Capts. Williams, Stewart, and Seaman are almost constantly out on duty. By various ways we have daily intelligence of what is going along on the border as far back as forty miles. Whenever a squad of rebels get together they are routed in double-quick time. **Capt. Richey** came in last night with about two hundred beeves, taken from a camp the secessionists had deserted on his approach. **Ritchey** is a bold, dashing fellow. You will hear from some of our boys along the border between here and Kansas City before this comes to hand.

As nearly as I can judge, it is Gen. Lane's intention to recruit, drill, and get ready to march a force some 10,000 strong into Arkansas by the first of November. At the same time it is expected that a force will invade Texas from California, and that Gen. Fremont will move down the Mississippi with his flotilla of gun boats. The seat of war may then be transferred to the Southwest. In any event Lawrence has nothing to fear.

(Lawrence, *Kansas Republican*, September 5, 1861)

Chaplain H. H. Moore to Friend Speer, dated Fort Scott, August 30, 1861

FRIEND SPEER: Full reports have been received of the battle at Ballstown, or, as the place is named on the maps, Ballsville. Wednesday morning, the 28th inst., the mounted companies of Capt. Williams, Capt. Stewart and Capt. Seaman, of Montgomery's Regiment, and Capt. Moonlight, with eight men and one 12-pound howitzer, from the 4th regiment, under command of Captain Williams, were detailed to advance upon Ballstown and do whatever work the interests of the country demanded. At this place was one of the best flouring mills of Missouri. It was owned jointly by a Unionist and a rank Secessionist. But as Secessionism is the prevailing sentiment in all that region, the mill had been taken possession of by the rebels, and was used for traitorous purposes. The place had been assaulted and a fortification destroyed only one week ago, by **Capt. Ritchey**, of Colonel Johnson's Regiment. Word was brought in that a force of some three hundred strong had gathered there, and that they intended to make a stand. Not only this place, but Fort Lincoln, on the Osage, was threatened. Hence the attack and what followed.

About two miles this side Capt. Stewart took a prisoner, who gave them much valuable information touching the situation of the rebel forces. As they approached within about five miles of the town, the main body of Capt. William's force was delayed, whilst he continued on alone, and seeing a half dozen mounted men at a distance, he rode up to them, supposing they were a scouting party of his own men. Just as he saw his mistake, one of them asked him who he was. He promptly answered, "I am a United States officer; who are you?" They answered, "By G-d we ain't;" and at once Williams drew his revolver and fired upon them. They returned the fire and killed the Captain's horse. He fired again, and after pouring a volley or so at him the eight rebels fled. The forces behind, hearing the firing, rushed on just in time to get a sight at the flying rebels. The town was then fully in sight, and the movements of the rebels could be seen. About two miles this side they ascended a sudden rise of ground, and the trusty howitzer was opened upon the town. The mill was gutted and other buildings shelled and burned to the ground. The rebels fled in great confusion. On a distant eminence they tried to rally and form into line, but were not able. They lost in killed about fifteen men, and some half dozen were taken prisoners. The reports contained in my last prove to be true in the main. The contrabands, about twenty in number, are to be set at work on Fort Lincoln. On our side not a man was hurt.

(Lawrence, *Kansas Republican*, September 12, 1861)

Chaplain H. H. Moore to Friend Speer, dated Fort Scott, September 4, 1861

FRIEND SPEER: The space required to narrate the occurrences of the past few days you may not be able to spare; but as they form part of the history of Kansas, and the military operations of this war for the Constitution, I trust you will be as liberal as possible.

Sunday morning, Sept. 1st, the camp awoke, anticipating the pleasures of religious services, and a day of general quietude and rest. The wind was high, the dust

filled the air in all parts of the city, and the Third Regiment repaired to a grove near by to attend to the ministrations of the Word of Life. The sermon, from the chaplain, was from the words, "Quit you like men: be strong;" and an attempt was made to show the value of the moral element in the army. The Colonel followed in some very appropriate and pungent remarks, whilst the soldiers crowded around him to hear.

Every thing was quiet, and, I must say, a little careless, when, at about 4 o'clock, a messenger came to Colonel Weer, informing him that the enemy had come in, killed the herdsman and driven off the mules attached to his train. The word "enemy" was taken up and passed from lip to lip throughout all the camp and quarters about the town, as if by electricity. A message was dispatched to Col. Johnson's command, and three companies of the 3d Regiment which were in camp on the ridge about a half mile south of the fort.

"And then there was mounting in hot haste,"
The mustering squadron and the clattering car."

Col. Weer ordered Capt. Veal to go in pursuit of the enemy and engage him without regard to numbers. This company is from the region of Quindaro, and is made up wholly of raw recruits; but the order was promptly executed and obeyed to the letter. The gallant captain came in sight of the enemy's cavalry, posted about two miles from town, and, though vastly superior, he passed on. When within some 300 yards of them, a company of infantry, but a short distance in advance, rose out of the tall grass, and poured a volley into his command. Nothing daunted, they halted and returned the fire. In the mean time, the enemy's cavalry rushed on in overwhelming number, and Veal ordered a retreat. From town we could see them, on the return, at full speed, pell mell. Veal in the advance and the enemy driving on. By this time, Capt. Williams, of Montgomery's Regiment, had moved out of camp and was galloping in a compact column to the field of action. He met the advancing foe and made a stand; Sharp's rifles were brought to bear at once, and the enemy turned and fled, hotly pursued by Veal and Williams. The firing was distinctly heard from town. By this time Col. Johnson's command could be seen winding its way up the hill, and Col. Montgomery, Lieut.-Col. Blunt and Major Williams were in the field, and the battalion was formed. Gen. Lane seems to have come upon the ground with infantry and artillery, as he was forming them into line of battle, when I first saw him.

The impression was prevalent that the enemy was in position and force, in a body of timber, about two miles in our advance. Some pretended they had seen the gleam of their bayonets, and others reported he had been distinctly seen through a glass; and here we stood for some time, not knowing what to do. Finally Col. Johnson's command was dispatched to out flank his supposed position, and in some way stir him up and provoke to fight. He passed down the ridge on our right, up and over another ridge, and finally disappeared. We waited some time, and, as he did not reappear, became worse puzzled than before. We knew nothing of the position of the enemy or of Johnson either. Soon, however, Col. Montgomery ordered an advance, and learned that the rebels, with about 70 of our mules, had passed beyond our reach for the night, and probably

forever. But we passed on and soon overtook Johnson returning. The Colonel had overtaken the foe and engaged him as best he could, with no weapons but sabres and navy revolvers, except the Sharp's rifles in **Capt. Ritchey's** company. Had our entire force passed hard on we might have recovered our property, and given the enemy a good thrashing for his insolent boldness. (I am inclined to believe it was the enemy who took so much pains to make us all believe the marauders were in the timber just before us, and his object was to give them time to escape).

About 8 o'clock our forces all returned. Capt. Veal had two men wounded slightly. No other casualties had happened. The enemy, I think, had two or three killed or wounded, as the people along the road said they carried some of their comrades off the field. The object of their attack was simply to gain time to save the booty.

It is reported they found one of the herdsmen, named Finley, bathing, and shot him. He has not been found. They also made a dozen prisoners of citizens along the road.

It now became evident that we had something more than boys' play on our hands. No doubt existed that the enemy was numerous and strongly posted within striking distance of Fort Scott. To ascertain his locality, his strength, the nature of his arms, and his intentions, were matters of the first importance. It was because of the utter indefensibility of Fort Scott, that Fort Lincoln had been built, and the orders were not to hazard our immense military stores for a moment. The order had been given some two weeks before to vacate the Fort, and it appeared that the matter could not be delayed much longer.

During the night Col. Jennison's command had been brought in, and every thing was ready early Monday morning for action. As Col. Johnson had seen the enemy last, his force was ordered to advance. Col. Montgomery soon followed with a portion of his mounted men, and Col. Jennison was left to bring up the rear.

It had been made Col. Montgomery's duty to find the enemy, to ascertain his strength, the nature of his arms, to test his fighting qualities, to ascertain his purposes and resources, and fight him unless his force was too strong; but the command was imperative not to allow his force to be cut to pieces by a superior power.

About one o'clock the enemy was discovered on the west bank of the Dry-Wood, a distance of about twelve miles east from Fort Scott. Our scouts killed one and captured three of their men at this point. They fled in disorder through the timber, and about a half mile further on passed out of sight over a ridge and went into the head of a ravine which was timbered further down. Our men, of course, knew that the small force they had encountered was but a bait to lure them into danger, and perhaps destruction. They had emerged from the timber but a short distance, when they heard the booming of cannon and the noise of shot flying over their heads. The object of the enemy was to drop some shell in among our troops to prevent their forming line on the prairie, in the advance of the timber. But Col. Johnson gallantly led the advance direct up to the brow

of the ridge on the right, just keeping out of sight, and his column swung around and closed up on the left in admirable order. In the center Capt. Moonlight posted his 12 pound howitzer. Capt. Stewart, Capt. Veal and Capt. Arawood were stationed on the left. Capt. Williams supported the howitzer. All under command of Col. Montgomery. This was done in double quick time, and the enemy continued an incessant fire on the supposition that the federal troops were some 600 yards back near the woods. Their shells, grape and musket balls passed about ten or fifteen feet over their heads. The enemy must have been terribly excited or our boys could not have poured into him some forty rounds before he knew they were so near the brow of the hill. The two forces, when in action, were in the form of a semi-circle; the enemy on the inside of a circling ridge, and our force on the outside. The fight continued about an hour and a half, and during a large portion of that time the air above our "boys" heads seemed full of missiles of some kind. As soon as Col. Montgomery ordered the men to dismount, put the horses in charge of every sixth man, and crawl up to the brow of the hill and fight in a prostrate condition. When every thing was in order the Colonel commenced examining the numbers, strength and fighting qualities of the enemy, that he might be prepared to fight. Once Capt. Stewart and **Capt. Ritchey** silenced a battery, and raised a yell of triumph, which soon passed along the whole line. Some of our boys who were looking through the grass at the enemy saw one of the shell's from Moonlight's howitzer burst among them, creating a terrible commotion.

Finally Montgomery ascertained that his force of 450 was contending with an enemy not less than 6,000 strong, which a prisoner says was 7,000, a large portion cavalry, and that they were working against him seven pieces of artillery. He saw at the same time that they were bringing the guns into range, and that an attempt was being made to out-flank him on the left. Having fulfilled his mission, he determined to fall back, but to get his little force of raw recruits out of the hands of such an enemy across the Dry-wood, which had but one very narrow crossing, seemed to call for the skill and experience of a Seigle. Let me here note that on Montgomery's left was a cornfield, and that by some means a small force of independents had been driven into it by his men as they advanced up the hill, and that there they had remained during the battle. As the enemy crossed over the ridge to turn his flank, the Colonel quietly passed along his line and said, "Boys, fall back, fall back." He was guarding against a stampede and being piled up in a heap in the narrow crossing. He prudently avoided sounding a retreat with the bugle, that the enemy might remain ignorant of his intentions. In filing to the left he faced the flanking force and also the force in front, and a retreat was not suspected until half his column had crossed the creek. The enemy supposed our men had fallen back on the brow of the ridge for greater safety. As the flanking force came opposite the cornfield, the boys who had strangely, but, perhaps, providentially, got in it, poured into them a deadly fire, cutting down the flag and checking pursuit. Two of Col. Johnson's companies could not comprehend the reason of such a slow retreat in the midst of such a fire, and it was only by the most vigorous and decisive measures that he kept them in place.

The command of Col. Johnson and Capts. Stewart and Williams were posted near the crossing as a rear guard, and a sharp conflict ensued, in which Captain Stewart

lost one man killed and two missing. Before the enemy could bring his cannon to the summit of the cone behind which he had fought, the Federal troops were beyond his reach. As he saw us in the distance he raised a sort of yell of gladness which indicated how pleased he was that Montgomery's inspection was over. His cavalry, which was probably twice as numerous as our own, came down the slope, crossed the stream, and formed; but as he saw our column moving off steadily and in line of battle he turned back again, and we saw him no more. What astonishes our troops most is that they were kept in such a storm of shells, balls and shot so long and experienced so little damage. Capt Veal had his spur shot off, and he has preserved the musket ball which struck it, as it fell to the ground. A shell burst very near Col. Montgomery and Capt. Williams, and some of the fragments very slightly wounded the Colonel's horse.

Our loss in killed, as far is known, is 3; wounded 5; missing two. 15 or 20 horses were shot from under their riders. It was impossible to tell the effect of our own shot upon the enemy; but we know he suffered considerably.

When Col. Montgomery made his report to Gen. Lane, orders were given to vacate the town, for everything to be removed, and everybody to leave except the cavalry. The infantry were to move at 3 o'clock next morning, and, as Col. Weer's mules were missing, it became necessary to press into service teams for transportation wherever they could be found. By 8 o'clock on the morning of the 2d inst. Fort Scott was nearly desolate. The families were gone, the government stores were on the way to Fort Lincoln, and Col. Montgomery, with about 450 cavalry, was in the field for the purpose of engaging the enemy, in case he should be found advancing upon us.

I have spent some time in doing what I could to assist some aged persons and a family with seven small children to get away, and seeing them provided for. I started for the field, determined to see the fight if there was one, and assist in taking care of the wounded. I passed various squadrons, and reached the advanced column about twelve o'clock, just after it came to a halt, eight miles from the Fort. Col. Montgomery and a few other officers were on a high mound a little to the left making observations with glasses. I was soon among them, and the situation of the enemy was in full view. The camp was on a bend of the Dry-wood, and most advantageously situated for defence. The heavy timber protected their rear right and left flank. By the aid of our glasses we could count about two hundred tents. Indeed their camp looked far more imposing than most Kansas cities. We had no difficulty in believing that the force of the enemy was at least 7,000, as reported by the prisoners taken the day before. Col. Montgomery was satisfied that an attack was not mediated then, but that the enemy had posted himself in full view, challenging an attack from us. At sight of the camp of the enemy the ardor of our men rose to fever or fighting heat, and deep were the regrets that we had not at least half their number. Could we have mustered 4,000 men and six pieces of artillery, nothing more would have been seen of the army of Gens. Price and Rains. Why is it that the Federal troops must always be outnumbered two, and some times four, to one by the rebels? Does not the government yet understand the nature of the work it has on hand? Gen. Lane's army should be increased to at least 10,000 men and 12 pieces of artillery.

Slowly and sullenly we came down from the mound, and the order was given to countermarch and go back to town. Our movements no doubt were known to the enemy, and it was my expectation that our not attacking him would be taken as an acknowledgment of weakness, and that we would be attacked the next day. This was the expectation of the whole of our little army, and every preparation was made to render his advance as barren of results as possible.

The people had left, our army stores were all in Fort Lincoln, the soldiers had nothing but their arms and horses, not a change of clothing was to be found among the officers--all--all had been removed, and the torches were prepared for burning the town! The property had been assessed, and the order was generally acquiesced in by the people, it had been made the duty of Col. Montgomery and Lieut.-Col. Blunt to harrass the enemy, to deceive him, to out-wit him, and by strategy keep him back if possible, but in no case allow him to occupy fort Scott, only as he found it wrapped in flames.

To fortify the place was wholly out of the question, and the only alternative was to destroy it or allow it to fall into the hands of the rebels. If he were permitted to possess it Kansas would be disgraced, and a large force would be required to drive him out; and in leaving, such is the vandalism of the enemy that he would certainly burn it. It was though best to make short work of the matter, and keep the control of every thing in our own hands.

As I walked about the doomed city on the eve of the 2d inst. I realized some of the horrors of war. Two or three women had not left, and could not bear to leave their comfortable home. They wept and wondered why things should be thus. On a door step I saw a little spaniel dog whining most piteously because his mistress did not allow him to come in as she had done aforetime. Others of a larger kind were about the quarters that had been vacated by the infantry, chonching bones and feasting largely upon the refuse rations the soldiers had thrown into the street. One, I noticed, had fed his full, but could not find his master, and was howling most mournfully. The horses seemed to partake of the intensity of interest which was prevalent among the soldiers, and were more than ever ready for duty. But the swine, wholly unconscious that any thing new had taken place, except that an unusual amount of corn, oats and straw were scattered about the streets, was having a very fine time. And, I confess, I was glad to see something happy.

Night came on and no enemy appeared. Sentinels were posted in all directions, and on the east they were thrown out at least four miles from town. At this date, Sept. 4th, 4 P. M., everything remains *status quo*.

MORNING SEPT. 5TH.--Every thing quiet. The names of Lane, Montgomery, Jennison and a few others have been to us a terror of strength. The enemy, 7,000 strong, is kept at bay by 500 men.

(Lawrence, Kansas *Republican*, September 19, 1861)

*Special Order [unnumbered], dated Head Quarters, Kansas Brigade, Camp Montgomery at West Point, Mo., September 17, 1861, addressed to **Lieut Col. John Richey** [sic]*

Confiding in your courage, gallantry & skill I do by these presents designate you Colonel of the Fifth Regiment Kansas Brigade in place of Col. H. P. Johnson who fell this morning while gallantly leading said Regiment at the attack on Morrystown. You will assume the command of said Regiment and report to Col. Montgomery for orders.

J. H. Lane
Comd' Kansas Brigade

(John Ritchie compiled military service file, 5th Kansas Cavalry, National Archives)

"X. Y." to Eds. Journal, dated Camp near West Point, Missouri, September 18, 1861

EDS. JOURNAL:--I have time to write a few words before the escort with Colonel Johnson's remains leaves for Leavenworth.

On Monday, the 16th inst., a part of our force, consisting of about 350 cavalry and 100 infantry, left this point in the direction of Morrystown. The infantry were mounted in wagons. They camped at about 10 o'clock at night at Jonesville, a small town six miles from Morrystown, under orders to march on the latter place at an early hour on the next morning.

Col. Montgomery was in command, assisted by Col. Johnson. The plan of the attack was this: Col. Johnson with two companies of cavalry and one mountain howitzer, was to start about two hours in advance; make a detour around the town, and take a position on the east to cut off retreat, while Col. Montgomery, with the balance of the command, was to come up from the west and make the attack, which was to be the signal for Johnson to attack also. Had this plan been carried out, much more satisfactory results would doubtless have followed.

Col. Johnson started about two hours in advance of the remainder of the force, made a circuitous march, but came into town on a road that brought his command in at the west end of the town, precisely where Montgomery was to commence the attack, and without waiting for the latter, charged into the camp of the enemy, taking them by surprise and putting them to a precipitous flight, leaving most of their horses, wagons, tents, camp equipment, &c. Soon the force within the buildings commenced a fire upon our men who were securing secesh horses, &c. Col. Johnson gave the order to fall back, but before it could be done, fell from his horse dead, his only exclamation being: "Oh, my dear wife." An examination of his body shows twelve wounds from the left, one half of which might have proved fatal. Three bullets passed through the neck, and one entered the left side.

Mr. J. M. Copeland, from Topeka, was killed instantly by a charge right through the head, making a hole two inches in diameter.

W. W. Wallace, of Captain Clark's company, 5th regiment, wounded by a large ball entering the left side and back of the neck, and passing under the shoulder blade, and out at the lower corner of the same.

Mr. Harrison, Chief Bugler of the 5th regiment, who was by the side of Johnson, was wounded in the fleshy part of left thigh by a slug, probably from a shot gun or musket.

David Forks, Capt. Kreitse's [Creitz] company, formerly **Ritchie's**, was wounded by a ball entering the forehead, over the right eyebrow, fracturing the outer shell of the skull. It was taken out immediately over the left eyebrow.

Benjamin Palmer, a New York Indian, one of the Brothertown tribe, Capt. Veal's company, 4th regiment. Ball entered right fore arm, passing toward the elbow, ball not extracted.

A Lieutenant, don't know his name, shot through the arm, and several others slightly wounded. At the time of the attack, which was just at daybreak, Col. Montgomery's command was about two miles from town.--Ten prisoners were taken, including some officers, and tried by a drum head court-martial, and five of them condemned to be shot. They were marshaled out to their open graves and executed.

There was, also, taken fifteen army tents, ten team wagons, and about one hundred and forty horses, so that the infantry that went out all returned mounted.

The force of the enemy was estimated at from two to four hundred; the horses and camp equipage certainly indicated over two hundred.

The town is built mostly along a single street, that skirts a thickly wooded ravine, connected with a considerable body of timber. The timber was fortified by a precipitous and rocky bluff, making a first rate breastwork, and a very strong position for an army. The camp was but a few yards from this ravine, and they all retreated for it on the first alarm.

Morristown, I think, was a burgh containing about two hundred inhabitants. Most of this place was burned by our troops before leaving. Indications are now that Lane's force will move toward Kansas City soon.

It is not known that the enemy lost any in killed, though some were known to be wounded.

Col. Johnson has in every instance since he joined the brigade, shown himself a very brave man--brave even to a fault, though, had his bravery been properly tempered

with prudence, he would, with experience, have proved a valuable officer. His precipitancy and rashness has several times needlessly endangered the lives of those under him, when more strategy would have told more disastrously on the enemy and less so on his command. The command of the regiment falls upon **Lieut. Col. Ritchie**, a man whose discretion, I fear, is the lesser part of his qualifications.

(Lawrence *Kansas State Journal*, September 26, 1861)

Chaplain H. H. Moore to Friend Speer, dated Camp Montgomery, Missouri, September 25, 1861

FRIEND SPEER: About the 18th inst. Gen Lane received a dispatch from Capt. Prince, informing him that Gen. Rains had been repulsed by Col. Mulligan, and that, probably, he would be compelled to retreat from before Lexington in a few days. He also learned that a large quantity of army stores and provisions for the rebels were deposited in Osceola, the shire town of St. Clair county, Mo. With the hope of cutting off Rains's retreat, and for the purpose of visiting Osceola and attending to matters there, his army left camp Tuesday evening, the 19th inst. It had also been reported that a rebel force about 300 strong had gathered in Papinsville, and a night's march was made, that we might surprise it early in the morning. But Papinsville was without an enemy, at least open and in arms, and we pushed on. Everywhere we found farms deserted, and desolation reigning supreme. My business with the army during this march was in part to observe the effects which our late efforts to suppress stealing and plundering, which some call jay-hawking, had produced. I was glad to observe that, when passing orchards of peaches and apples, not a soldier left his ranks, and that all seemed to submit cheerfully to the new discipline. The first night out we camped in the prairie, far from any house, and there was no chance for depredations. But the second night we were surrounded by the greatest temptations to break over the new rules, and as an illustration of the discipline of the army, I will refer to the course pursued by Gen. Lane. Our camp was in the highway on the premises belonging to a widow by the name of McCulloch, and aunt to old Ben. himself. She at first expected Gen. Lane's application for corn for his cavalry, and he was about to pass on to another farm-house, when I assured her that the army would regard sacredly all her rights and injure nothing. She then consented to let us have all the corn we needed. Lieutenant Irving was detailed to direct the soldiers wher to get it, and the Gen. stood by the roadside; and as the teams came along, each one was instructed to follow the directions he would receive from Loring. The lady having a large peach orchard near by, I asked her what she could do for the boys in that line? She kindly offered us all we needed. I asked Lieut. Allen, of Capt. Bickerton's company, to detail twenty men and a wagon, and gather all they could and supply the camp. They returned after dark with some eight or ten bushels, which was distributed out among the companies. Close by the road was a small apple orchard, and two trees were loaded with the most handsome and luscious fruit. The good lady gave us a few apples, and we bought all she had to spare. Three sentinels were posted along the roadside, who guarded the orchard during the night. Not an apple was disturbed, and the promise made the woman that all her rights should be sacredly regarded, was fulfilled to the very letter.

She was a secessionist, and had one son in the rebel army; but, as Gen. Lane told his men, his army was not at war with widows. This sort of discipline was observed all along the march. Not an apple or peach, or anything else, was touched only by the permission of the owner or the officer in command. When farms were found deserted, and fruit was just going to destruction, the boys were permitted to help themselves, but cautioned against breaking limbs, or in any way injuring the trees.

But by break of day we are on the march. We cross the Osage at the same fording which the huge army of Price and Rains crossed it, on their way to Lexington. Theirs was an army of destruction. Throughout their entire march, loyal citizens were robbed and plundered, until little except life was left.

Gen. Lane's army moves in two divisions. Col. Montgomery leads the advance, and we fully intend to prevent the escape of Price, if he is retreating. We have just learned that the rebel force in Osceola is only 300 strong, and that it is without cannon. Gen. Lane will not move his column further unless the enemy is reinforced. Col. Weir led the advance, composed of the infantry of his regiment, into Osceola. As he approached the town, after dark, a heavy fire was opened upon him from the bushes, by the roadside. He halted, and, by platoons, returned the compliment. Three rounds were fired, and the enemy fled. Whilst the Col. was waiting for further developments, and thinking of what should be done, another volley was poured in upon him from a log house, near by. Capt. Moonlight's little howitzer was then brought into requisition, and the house was shelled and set on fire. This was the last we saw of the enemy that night. Our casualties were small. But two of our men were wounded and those slightly. Fourteen of the enemy were killed and wounded. Their bullets passed from two to four feet over the heads of our boys. Our men slept upon their arms that night. The first object that greeted their eyes as they came in sight, of town, was a large secession flag floating over the court house. It was supposed the enemy was fortified there. Capt. Moonlight was ordered to send over some of his feelers, and ascertain the facts. The enemy was not there. We then carefully and slowly felt our way into town. Every place of ambush was thoroughly searched, but the rebels had fled. The town had scarcely an inhabitant, except women and children. It had been reported that Osceola was thoroughly infected with the leprosy of treason; that it had been a place of rendezvous for the rebels, and a place of deposit for their ammunition and provisions. A little search discovered a large amount of lead--many tons--cartridge paper, some powder, and a place where cartridges had been made, clothing and provisions for the rebel army. Our infantry had been taken to the place in wagons, and it was at once decided that they should return on foot, and that the wagons should return on foot, and that the wagons should be filled with such things as would be useful to the army. Every wagon was loaded to its utmost capacity, and the trains started for camp again. As much of the lead as it was thought would be useful to us was brought away. The question then came up in reference to the disposition that should be made of the rebel town. The subject was earnestly discussed by Cols. Montgomery, Weir and **Ritchey**. Col. Weir favored sparing the town--the others decided to burn it. The reasons assigned were, that it was traitorous to the core; that the enemy intended to make of it, during the winter, a military post; that it was a

strong position, and could be easily fortified; that we could not leave a force there; and that the Government could not afford to make weekly expeditions to disperse the rebels.

In military affairs these reasons may be good and binding, but still the heart revolts at such a destruction of property. Col. Montgomery ordered a tannery to be spared, and all the private residences situated in the outskirts of the place, that the women and children might have a place of refuge till further provisions could be made for them. Here we come to the horrors of war. They surpass all description. War is the sum of human wretchedness; and yet there are men whose souls are feasted and glutted with delight at the sight of distracted women, weeping children, and burning cities. As the sun went down Sunday night, Osceola was a heap of smouldering ruins. The residence of Senator Waldo P. Johnson shared the common fate. The sorrow and regret I felt at the general ruin perhaps should not be indulged in in times of war; but, whether in peace or war, I shall ever school my heart to pay tribute to all the demands of humanity.

On our return, a scene occurred at the Sac river which, I hope, may not meet my eyes again. A Mr. Harris, learning of our approach towards Osceola, had undertaken to dispute our passage. Rains had burnt the bridge, and there was but one place at which the river could be forded. Harris was taken in arms, and he admitted that he was a secessionist; that he had been Quartermaster in the rebel army. He was a man of wealth and large influence in that community. His slaves, about twenty five in number, had loaded up all their plunder, and had largely replenished their wardrobe from that of their mistress; had taken a supply of provisions; the men had each supplied himself with a horse or mule, besides teams to haul the wagons, and were about to start on their pilgrimage to the land of liberty. I asked them, one by one, if they wanted to leave? and set before them all the hardships they would have to endure in providing for themselves; and in each case the reply was emphatic and earnest in favor of getting away. We asked Harris if he had read Fremont's Proclamation, and he said yes, and confessed that we were only putting it into force. To see him, his domestics, and stock to the amount of four or five thousand dollars, torn away from an intelligent and sensitive wife and three lovely children, was as painful as it was lawful and just. Harris's fate is still undecided.

Gen. Lane carried with him a package of his late Proclamation, and distributed them among the people. The loyal citizens rushed to his ranks and camps with great joy, and every encouragement was extended to them. Scores of families fell into his train, and left the State, as he returned.

On our return we passed through a little town called Pleasant Gap, and found it inhabited mostly by women and children. The loyalists had been driven away, and the rebel men were in Price's army at Lexington. Not the least violence was done to any one or anything in the town; but we gave them a fair warning of what would come if they made war on the army.

We passed on to Butler, where we stopped for the night. It was nearly deserted--a few loyal citizens only were left. We learned that the notorious Lock had left town that afternoon, on a sick bed. **Col. Ritchey** and about 70 men were sent out to

capture him. He was found in a log house, about 5 miles from Butler. The house was surrounded, and one man was posted at the window, and another was sent in at the door to make the arrest. Lock shot and mortally wounded the man that entered; wounded the man at the window and made his escape. He was found next morning in a cornfield, near by, and shot on the spot. He was the most desperate character that Western Missouri ever produced. The rebel that harbored him was also killed.

Capt. Foreman was also sent out to capture the notorious jay-hawker and freebooter, Raney, but was not successful, as the man had fled. As he surrounded the house, one of his guards was posted near the door of a negro cabin. A very aged negro, perfectly blind, came to the door, and with his cane commenced feeling for the steps. In the darkness of the night this cane was taken for a gun by the nervous guard, and at once he leveled his Sharp's rifle upon the old fellow, and snapped twice before he discovered his mistake. Without waiting for any apology or explanation, the negro says: "Massa, hab you any 'bacca? It seems as if in dese 'citing times cullud pussons couldn't git nuff 'bacca."

This expedition was a terrible blow to the rebels in Bates and St. Clair counties. The plunder taken from the rebels and brought back and turned over to the Quartermaster, in times of peace would be worth forty or fifty thousand dollars.

(Lawrence, *Kansas Republican*, October 3, 1861)

Letter from "H. D. F" [Chaplain Hugh D. Fisher, Fifth Kansas Cavalry], dated Camp Mitchell, near Kansas City, October 11, 1861

In reading your paper of the 8th inst., I perceived that you have called attention to the Kansas regiments. Two of which are named the Fourth and Fifth. It is well known to your numerous readers that Col. H. P. Johnson, of the Kansas Fifth, fell nobly at his post, as he led the column under his command into the very heart of the enemy's camp at Morristown, Mo.; where our forces gained a complete victory. **Col. John Ritchie**, of Topeka, who has shown himself a soldier of no ordinary qualities in every engagement with the enemy, was by the fall of Col. Johnson put in command of the regiment. **Col. Ritchie** had been in the field actively engaged for several weeks prior to the organization of the regiment.

The fall of Col. Johnson was a stroke at the very heart and life of his command and every man felt that the loss was irreparable, yet **Col. John Ritchie**, while he is not the "idol" of the regiment, is deservedly held in high appreciation by his officers and men. Ever active, vigilant and brave, we feel satisfied he will lead his command to victory every time. He is an uncompromising anti-slavery man and will stand by the flag and Constitution amidst a storm of leaden hail, and in the face of death.

His Captains and Staff Officers are men of known integrity and ability, and great unanimity of spirit prevails.

That great speech of Gen. Lane in Leavenworth has been received and publicly read by the chaplain of the Fifth Regiment. The whole regiment was formed into a hollow square and cheer after cheer went up as the reading proceeded; then came their endorsement of the resolutions and when **Col. Ritchie** put the question such an expression of awe I never heard. Then three cheers for Gen. Lane and his speech were given with a will, such as only Gen. Lane's followers can give. The chaplain was immediately invited by Maj. Williams to read to Col. Montgomery's Regiment. The fife and drum were brought into requisition and soon a hollow square was formed and the same scene enacted.

The speech read, the resolutions were adopted and three times three given until the welkin rang with the shouts of a free soldiery for their gallant leader J. H. Lane.

The Brigade Surgeon reports that the Sanitary Department under the efficient and skilful care of Drs. E. B. Johnson and _____ Honteene [Huntoon] is superior to that of any other regiment.

As to the military training and efficiency of the various companies, all believe they are second to none in this department, and not only know how but *are ready to fight*, and will do so to the utter discomfiture of the enemy, whenever they can be overtaken.

As to the morals of this band of patriots we can safely say that from the Col. down we are not excelled, and though, there is room for reformation in many cases, yet the slanderous reports circulated for sinister purposes are unmitigated lies.

We have been in camp in McGee's addition to Kansas city for ten days past and are wondering why Price, Rains & Co. don't come up and pay their compliments to "Old Jim Lane." I suppose the reason is they know he will fight and that the people will rally to his standard.

I have the pleasure of saying that Col. Montgomery's, Weer's and Jennison's regiments show that they are perfectly willing to be led by Lane against any number of Price's army. Let every lover of his country's cause come and join the noble Fifth of "Lane's Brigade."

(Leavenworth Conservative, October 12, 1861)

Letter from "Kansas," dated Mound City, Kansas, December 2, 1861

On Thursday last, the 3d and 4th Regiments; on Friday, Capt. Barnes Company of 135 men, and on Saturday, the Fifth Regiment of Kansas Volunteers, under the command of Col. Montgomery, passed through this place, en route, from Fort Scott to Shawnee, Johnson county.

Reliable information reached Col. Montgomery, on last week, that three divisions of Price's army were passing North, and, from information then received, their destination was for the Missouri river, and their purpose the taking of all the military stores, clothing, provisions, &c., that they could find between Boonville and Kansas City, going up, if possible, as far as Fort Leavenworth, and then returning through southern Kansas, capturing what stores, cattle, horses, wagons, and such articles as they could remove, and should need for their use during the winter. They would then go into winter quarters in the valley of the Arkansas, near Fayetteville, of that State.

Col. Montgomery, who has been in command of the Brigade since Gen. Lane left for Washington, deeming it advisable and prudent to send up as large a force as could be spared, to some point in Kansas, as near the Missouri river as possible, leaving some 800 or 1,000 men at Forts Lincoln and Scott, to guard those points. Shawnee was the place designated for their march from here; yet circumstances may alter their course and destination.

Positive information has since reached here that Rains with a force of 5,000 crossed the Osage, at Osceola, on Sunday the 24th of last month, on Tuesday the 26th, another force of some 4 or 5,000 more crossed at Warsaw, supposed to be under Johnson, and on Wednesday another force of about the same number, under Clarke, crossed at a place West of Warsaw, and that all were marching rapidly north.

The person who brought the last express had his horse shot from under him, and he himself barely escaped amidst a shower of bullets. He, however, made his escape, pressed a horse, and arrived safe, though he reports the whole country East of here alive with "secesh" men and soldiers.

Col. Montgomery, having no authority from his superiors, has made this move of the troops under his command at the risk of his commission, fearing a flanking of his army, and a general devastation of the towns along the river, before Gen. Hunter was made aware of their march, and of the true state of things as they exist.

Rumor has reached here that all the union forces from western Missouri are to be withdrawn, for the purpose of giving all the citizens of that State--Union and "Secesh"--the privilege of returning home on the promise of their remaining peaceable citizens. Should such a course be pursued by those in authority, although no prophet, yet I will predict that, in sixty days after such an arrangement, not a Union man in western Missouri will be left alive, as they either will be driven out or killed; and southern Kansas would be as on the morning when the angel of death swept over the Assyrian camp.

Some two or three weeks ago, a company of Jayhawkers started from this place for Missouri, and when near Butler, in Bates county, encountered a rebel band of Jayhawkers, under the lead of the noted Jackman, of that State, who gave the Kansas Jayhawkers battle; the attack was so sudden, and probably unexpected, that almost the entire number took flight, leaving behind them some five or six of their number, who as yet, have not been heard from, and are probably killed. The names of those missing from

this town are Manard, Hart and Barr. The other names not recollected. They also lost several horses and some two or three wagons. The men missing, and supposed to be killed, have left wives and young families, in destitute circumstances.

Since this incident occurred, Jayhawking has been at a discount around here; and, now if the Jayhawkers are as patriotic from principle as they claim they are, splendid opportunities are now opened for them to show their zeal for their country's good, by enlisting in some of the Regiments organized, instead of prowling in banditti bands and preying as often on the property of Union men as of the Rebels.

Col. Montgomery is very popular with the whole Brigade, although there is talk some of the Commissioned Officers, and perhaps some of the Chaplains, resigning, which I suppose arises from a declaration made by the Colonel, not long since, that the Jayhawking and taking of property without making the proper returns to the Government, should be stopped, if it required the whole united force under his command to effect it.

One of **Col. Ritchie's** men was wounded by another of his Company, on Saturday last night, in a drinking saloon.

A report has just reached here that four families were robbed on the little Osage, last night, and one man killed.

(Lawrence *Kansas State Journal*, December 5, 1861)

Letter from "Jack," dated Osawatimie, Kansas, December 4, 1861

The report of Price's northern movement together with the announcement that we were to be paid off induced Col. Montgomery to move the Brigade to this place.

The sensations from Price have been fully sifted and amount to this: he does not intend coming to Kansas and does not dare cross the Osage. Our troops at Rolla, Sedalia, Jefferson and Tipton, desire nothing more than to have Price cross the Osage. The "entrapping" on which Fremont so stupidly failed is now a well settled possibility, and if Price moves north that is the end of him; at least, that is a settled conviction here.

Our scout system, as you are aware, is nearly perfect. We have been through Missouri so often that we know every locality, almost every prominent man. When the Kansas men fail to get correct news of the position and strength of the enemy then the best right hands will cease to have cunning.

Price is encamped a short distance below Osceola with about 12,000 men and is in no condition to move. His men are poorly clad and have not half the tents they need. The result is a greater amount of sickness than was ever known in a camp of that size. In a proclamation published by him on the 22d of November he says he has lost three men by sickness where he has lost one by bullets. That proclamation is a most painful and

humiliating appeal for help. He asks for 50,000 men, and a dozen times over the demand is reiterated. He says boys have done the fighting while men of vigor and wealth have remained safely at home, and says the cause is lost unless he can have more and better aid. In short Price is despondent and if Halleck and Hunter half do their duty he can be speedily played out.

The danger to Kansas just now is from the marauders who have deserted him and taken up the more fascinating business of plundering and assassination. You must look out for them; they are “pizen wherever found.”

A disturbance has arisen in **Col. Ritchie’s** regiment. The men have elected a new set of officers and **Col. Ritchie** has resigned. We all regret the rupture but hope it may be amicably settled.

Col. Weer’s regiment moves up to Wyandott and we go back to Fort Scott for winter quarters.

(Leavenworth Conservative, December 7, 1861)

Private William H. Fisher, Third Kansas Volunteers, Acting Chaplain for Fort Lincoln, to Editor Republican, dated Fort Lincoln, Kansas, December 12, 1861

EDITOR REPUBLICAN: On last Sabbath it appears that some rebels who have been prowling along the line east of this point for some time, made an inroad into Kansas for the purpose of stealing stock. Capt. Miller with his company of scouts being in the vicinity of Barnesville, showed signs of fight, which caused the rebels to draw up in line of battle. Our “boys” thought from appearances that their number was about 150. Reinforcements to the number of about twenty was immediately sent to Capt. Miller’s assistance. Different reports reached us, during the day, until a dispatch to Col. Montgomery, stating that the above force was only the advance of 3000 marching on to Fort Lincoln, and 2000 on to Fort Scott, was sent to the command at Osowatomie asking assistance. On Monday morning, 10th inst., the command moved for this place. On Tuesday evening scouts sent out by **Col. Ritchie**, brought word that if any forces had been in Kansas, they had *run*, as usual. **Col. Ritchie** camped near Fort Lincoln where his regiment still remains. All is quiet here at present, and the general health of officers and men is good.

A sad accident occurred near here last night. It appears that some four or five men went from here last evening to Mapleton, distant about six miles. At Mapleton they secured some liquor and made free use of it. On their way back, one, who had a revolver, flourishing his pistol over his head, accidentally discharged it, the ball taking effect near the left breast and coming out on the left shoulder. His comrades left him, but he was shortly after found and brought to the Fort. His wound was dressed this morning by Dr. Huntoon, Surgeon Fifth Regiment, and Dr. Ainsworth, Surgeon of Post. His case, I believe, is pronounced a dangerous one. He has been taken to Fort Scott and placed in

the hospital. This is the effect of liquor. The cause ought to be removed, so that the effects might cease.

We have fine, very fine weather, for December. More anon.

(Lawrence, *Kansas Republican*, December 19, 1861)

Letter from "Your Own," dated Mound City, Kansas, December 14, 1861 (extract)

This is written at the camp of the regiment of which **Col. Ritchie** was commander but resigned, and of which Maj. Somers is supposed to be Colonel, although Gov. Robinson has not commissioned him. We expect a new deal, want a new deal, and if an entirely new man is placed in command it will suit us just as well.

Gen. Denver is now here and doing well.—some unfavorable talk went round before his arrival, but since he reached here his acts have [been] universally approved, and the malignant tongue is silenced.

(*Leavenworth Conservative*, December 17, 1861)

Special Orders No. 17, Head Quarters Troops in Kansas, Fort Lincoln, Kansas, December 17, 1861

Leave of Absence for twenty days is hereby granted to **Colonel John Ritchie** 5th Kansas Volunteers. At the expiration of his leave **Col. Ritchie** will report to the Commanding Officer of the Troops in Kansas at Fort Leavenworth.

By Command of Brig^d Genl Denver

(John Ritchie compiled military service file, 5th Kansas Cavalry, National Archives)

1862

George E. Flanders, Company A Fifth Kansas Cavalry, to Dear Mother, dated Camp Denver, Barnesville, Kansas, February 10, 1862 (extract)

....The papers state that Apostle John (who's surname is Reitschay [**Ritchie**]) has got a position as Major on Lane's staff which suit the boys very well, as that don't bring him in direct contact with the men.

(Virginia A. Swenson, compiler, *Civil War Letters Written by George Edwin Flanders During his Service in the Kansas Volunteer Cavalry*, Topeka, Kansas: privately published, 1989, vol. 1, p. 3)

Adjutant-General Lorenzo Thomas to Major General Henry W. Halleck, dated Washington, D.C., April 4, 1862

GENERAL: The Secretary of War, with the concurrence of the Secretary of the Interior, has granted authority to Robert W. Furnas and **John Richay**, esqrs., to raise two regiments from such loyal Indians as have been driven from their own country into Kansas by other Indians in rebellion against the United States Government. These regiments are to be raised for the purpose of restoring their lands to the loyal Indians and offering them protection while planting their crops. The colonels of these regiments will report to you for instructions when their command shall have been completely organized. When this shall have been done it is the desire of the Secretary of War that you furnish two regiments of volunteers to aid these Indian troops in effecting the purpose for which they are to be raised.

(*Official Records*, vol. 8, pp. 659-660)

Lieutenant Albert C. Ellithorpe, First Indian Home Guard regiment, to William P. Dole, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, June 9, 1862 (extract)

The second [Indian] regt. is now forming from the various other tribes and I have no doubt will be filled, it would have been filled long ago, but **Col. Ritchie** did not repair here for a long time in fact not till after our Regt. was raised—Adjutant Dole came here promptly to do his duty—but in the absence of his **Col.** could not facilitate his regt. without assuming a responsibility that would have been unwise. I regret that he could not have been placed in our regt. for he will prove a faithful and reliable officer and should I be transferred to any other position which I am strongly in hopes I may be, I hope you will exercise your influence to transfer him to my place, this will be agreeable to all the officers of the 1st. regiment and desirable on his part.

The condition of the Indians here at the present writing is very favorable, sickness is abating and their spirits are reviving. I think I have fully settled the fact of the Indians capability and susceptibility to arrive at a good state of military discipline. You would be surprised to see our Regt. move. They accomplish the feat of regular time step equal to any white soldier, they form in line with dispatch and with great precision; and what is more they now manifest a great desire to learn the entire white man's discipline in military matters. That they will make brave and ambitious soldiers I have no doubt. Our country may well feel proud that these red men have at last fell into the ranks to fight for our flag, and aid in crushing treason. Much honor is due them. I am sorry that Dr. Kile did not accept the appointment of Quartermaster but owing to some misunderstanding with **Col. Ritchie** he declines.

(Annie Heloise Abel, *The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War*, Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1919, pp. 114-115, footnote)

William G. Coffin, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, to William P. Dole, June 25, 1862

I have just returned from Humboldt—the army there under Col. Weer consisting of the 10th Kansas Regiment 4 Companies of the 9th Kansas Aliens [Allen's] Battery of Six Tenths [ten-pound] Parrot Guns and the first and second Indian Regements left for the Indian Territory in good stile and in fine spirits the Indians with their new uniforms and small Military caps on their Hugh Heads of Hair made rather a Comecal Ludecrous apperance they marched off in Columns of 4 a breast singing the war song all joining in the chourse and a more animated seen is not often witnessed. The officers in command of the Indian Regements have labored incessantly and the improvement the Indians have made in drilling is much greater than I supposed them capabell of and I think the opinion and confidence of all in the efcency of the Indian Regements was very much greater when they left than at any previous period and I have little doubt that for the kind of service that will be required of them they will be the most efcient troops in the Expedition.

(Annie Heloise Abel, *The American Indian as Participant in the Civil War*, Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1919, p. 123, footnote)

"J. H. H." to Mr. Editor, dated Camp on Wolf Creek, July 5, 1862

MR. EDITOR.--As I had a little spare time this afternoon, I thought I would write you a short account of our proceedings this far.

We broke up camp at Humboldt June 21st and started for Dixie, our Indian Regiments having received their outfits in clothing and arms. Their clothing is similar to ours, their arms the old-fashioned sporting rifle. It was amusing to see them when they received their clothing. Some put on all that was issued to them, overcoat and all. Some of their blouses had red lining; these they turned wrong side out. Some of them rolled their knapsacks in their blankets in order to prevent the dust from soiling them. They carry them strapped on so as to swing on the small of their backs. They march in much better order than I expected they would do.

Lieut. Taylor, of Moonlight's old company is along with us; he is a Lieutenant in Allen's Battery. The surplus of my old company are in the Battery. They have six pieces of rifled guns, ten-pounders, and I think will do good service if opportunity offers. Camped on Big Creek this night having made twelve miles.

June 22d. Nothing new--traveled over the same road we did going to Humboldt.

June 23d. Passed the Mission. There I saw Indians cutting wheat. Crop appears to be very good. Corn and oats look well considering the drouth. Marched fifteen miles this day--bad water after leaving the Mission.

June 24th. A long march over dry prairie ground, very hot. I don't think [word missing] is more than fifteen feet below the surface. I never knew what it was to want water right bad until this day's march. Our route lay over a part of what is called the Neutral Lands. I think an appropriate name, for either party would be fools to claim it. Eighteen miles made this day. The road is called Whisky road, but ne'er a drop of the "critter." I would have taken a little, provided I could have got it, notwithstanding my strict temperance principles.

June 25th. Marched to Spring river 18 miles, there to make a final outfit for a march on Fort Gibson, and from there to Fort Smith.

June 29th. Marched to the Neosho river 16 miles, and camped at Hudson's Crossing. A fine day for marching, and a beautiful country. There is plenty of timber, and better water and more of it.

June 30th. Marched 18 miles before breakfast. Began to get pretty hungry before we got through. Beautiful country. Timber mostly on the bluffs. The valleys look to be very rich. The people are nearly all secesh. The boys are pitching into their sheep-folds and poultry-yards.

We are now about 100 miles from Ft. Scott, and about 50 or 60 miles from Ft. Gibson. Our command is divided into two Brigades, one commanded by Col. Salomon, of the ninth Wisconsin, and the other by Col. Judson of the Kansas sixth, the whole under the command of Col. Wm. Weer.

July 1st. Made about 17 miles to-day. The two Brigades marched on different roads, but in supporting distance of each other.

July 2d. Marched 25 miles. **Col. Ritchie's** mounted Indians ran into some secesh to-day, and made them get and dust--killed ten or twelve and took about 200 head of stock; didn't lose anything whatever.

July 3d. Word came in last night that there was a party of rebels across the Grand river, 25 miles below us. Col. Weer ordered a detail of ten men from each of the companies of the 10th Kansas cavalry [*sic*], one section of Allen's battery under Lieut. Taylor, and 200 of the 2d Indian Regiment, put the infantry into wagons, and started about 9 o'clock for the rebel camp, the boys of our regiment commanded by Capt. Quigg and Lieuts. Malhone and Stewart. I could not go as I was on grand guard. They traveled all night and came upon the enemy while they were at breakfast, taking them completely by surprise. The Indians went yelping into their camp led by Col. Weer and the cavalry. The boys said they could hear Weer's voice distinctly above the din of the fight.

Col. Clarkson, the old Border ruffian Postmaster of Leavenworth was in command. He bellowed out, "I surrender, I surrender." They took him and one hundred and five white men prisoners, and our Indians killed from thirty to forty of the rebels, principally Cherokees. We got thirty wagons, all their supplies, and about 600 head of stock, with a loss of only two men on our side, one of the Kansas ninth and the surgeon of the Indian Regiment. He was dressed in citizen's clothes, and was shot through mistake by one of the ninth.

July 4th. I was just thinking about how to celebrate the day, when I was detailed with company "I" to go on a foraging expedition. Went six miles from camp, brought in one good carriage and a good wagon, both loaded with goods, a lot of corn, and about forty slaves followed us into camp, all the property of a wealthy old rebel Cherokee Half-breed. The old chap was hid in the brush with his goods and teams, but the darkies pointed out his hiding place, and we gently took him and his outfit in.

The boys fired thirty-four rounds in camp for the Fourth.

(Wyandotte, Kansas *Commercial Gazette*, July 19, 1862)

Colonel John Ritchie, Second Indian Home Guard Regiment, to Brigadier General James G. Blunt, dated Camp Cabin Creek, Indian Territory, July 5, 1862

SIR: I have ordered Lieutenant-Colonel Corwin to Fort Scott with three companies of Cherokees just enlisted. He will take with him a herd of cattle and some 20 or 25 prisoners taken from General Rains on Sunday in his disgraceful flight from our wild Indians. His force was 1,400 strong; ours then only 500. The principal object of his (Colonel Corwin) going to Fort Scott is to have the three companies mustered.

I have now a full regiment of nearly 1,000 men and nearly all mounted; if permitted, could have them all mounted. I have reliable information that there are 2,000 more Cherokees that will join us in a few days. Our enemy is retreating. No large body is reported this side of Tahlequah, the capital of the Indian Nation.

I hope that you will see that a mustering officer is sent immediately to Fort Scott to meet Lieutenant-Colonel Corwin with his recruits. "I wish I was in Dixie." "Sing, boys; only 225 miles yet."

(*Official Records*, vol. 13, pp. 463-464)

Letter from "Maumee," dated Camp near Grand River, Cherokee Nation, July 6, 1862

I herewith transmit a few lines in reference to a skirmish which occurred at Locust Grove, twelve miles south of this camp, on the 3d inst.

The 2d Brigade under the command of Col. Judson, arrived at Cabin Creek, July 2d. The Colonel received information that the enemy, 500 strong, under Col. Stanwatie, the notorious rebel leader of the hostile Cherokees, had left Cabin Creek the day previous, taking a northerly course, but had sent his supply and baggage train to Locust Grove.

Colonel Judson immediately directed one section of Captain Allen's Battery, a detachment of infantry belonging to the 10th Kansas, consisting of details from the various companies, amounting in all to 68 men, with Lieutenants Milbourne and Stewart under the command of Captain Matthew Quigg, companies D, E and H, of the 9th Kansas Cavalry, also about 200 mounted Indians of the tribes of Creeks, Cherokees and Seminoles, of the 1st Indian Regiment, commanded by Lieut. Col. Wattles, to be in readiness at 9 o'clock, P.M.

The unexpected arrival of Col. Weer prevented Col. Judson from taking command of the expedition. He was ordered to remain in camp.

Col. Weer marched with the command detailed by Col. Judson at the time specified, and crossed Grand River at Landrum Ford, at 4 A.M., next morning, after a fatiguing march. The advance guard, consisting of twelve men of company F, 6th Kansas Cavalry, under Captain Schaurte, very soon came upon a party of 25 or 30 rebels, at the premises of Messrs. B. M. Adair and John Davis. Adair was accidentally shot a few weeks ago. The guard immediately charged, scattering the enemy in all directions like chaff before the wind, wounding one and taking ten prisoners. The main body of the union forces coming up, proceeded immediately to the rebel camp. The entire rebel outfit was in a very short time either dispersed or taken. Our loss was but three killed, one of them accidentally, by our own fire. One private of the 9th Kansas received four shots and had his head nearly cut off by a saber or home-made knife.

We have taken 106 prisoners, and killed several. We also took a large number of horses and ponies; about 1,500 head of cattle, thirty six loaded mule teams, and a large quantity of camp and garrison equipage, also 500 stand of arms of all descriptions.

The rebel camp was situated upon the summit of a hill, in the midst of a thicket. The resistance was feeble.

Colonel Clarkson, ex-Postmaster of Leavenworth City, surrendered to Geo. J. Clark, Division Quartermaster of the Indian Expedition. The rebel defeat was complete.

The number of prisoners has been since increased to 120, who have left this afternoon together with a large amount of contraband property for Fort Scott, in charge of an escort of 50 men detailed from company F, 6th Kansas, and a number of mounted Indians.

Great credit is due to the troops actually engaged--the detachment of company F, the Indians and two companies of the 9th Kansas Cavalry.

FORT SCOTT, July 11.

Some interesting details reached me this morning, from a reliable gentleman now with the expedition. His letter is dated Camp Phillips, eight miles below South Spring river. Of course you know where that is!

Col. Ritchie, with a part of his Indian Regiment, in all 500 men, had a fight with a greatly superior secesh force under Rains, no less than 1400 men. The rebels were beaten and put to flight. At the same time, the Colonel captured a portion of their baggage train, and a large amount of cattle and horses. These are now en-route to this Post, and parties curious in the study of natural History, will very soon have an opportunity to inspect them free of cost. There are some fine specimens among the lot.

At the present time **Col. Ritchie** has with him 300 Indians of his own regiment--the 2nd, and one company of the 6th Kansas Cavalry, under command of Lieut. Phillips. They have over 200 prisoners, captured in battle. Among the latter is a former citizen of Leavenworth, Col. Clarkson, taken prisoner at the battle at Grand Saline. The Col. (Clarkson), has a body guard of twenty five loyal Indians, whose especial duty it is to attend to his personal health, and see that he does not stray beyond the lines and thereby get lost!

Col. Ritchie's Indian Regiment is now full. The entire complement of men have been mustered into the ranks. The applications continue as strong as ever. Over 500 Indians have personally asked to be received into his command, since the regiment has been made up.

My correspondent says, of this body of troops, everybody who has seen them is agreeably surprised; and their Colonel speaks in glowing terms in regard to them. They make good soldiers, easily controlled, and deport themselves well generally. The Colonel is constantly with them, devoting his entire energies to accomplish what very few persons thought possible, make good soldiers out of the original material. He has succeeded remarkably well.

Col. Ritchie has reliable information that John Ross was about to join the expedition with 1500 men under his command--"about to come in with his warriors," is the expression used.

(Lawrence, *Kansas Republican*, July 17, 1862)

"S. J. W." to *Dear Journal*, dated Fort Scott, July 9, 1862

Dear Journal:--Agreeable to promise, I will drop you a few lines. My journey was very pleasant. The weather, all things considered, was cool, but the earth is crying for rain. The showers enjoyed in the vicinity of Lawrence did not extend farther south than the hills along the Wakarusa. From Prairie City south to this place the crops are suffering. Spring grain is a failure, and in many instances worse, for it has filled the corn-fields with chinch-bugs, and in some instances they are doing considerable damage. Winter wheat is good, the best on the whole, perhaps, that was ever raised in Kansas. Early planted corn, if it rains in two weeks, will make a fair crop. The late planting will not do much, and it may be set down and remembered by the farmer, with profit that planting corn late seldom pays.

Fort Scott looks to me like a twenty years ago speculation revived. It has been trying very hard to rain since last night.

The Expedition is now more than 150 miles from here, and is now in camp waiting for Gen. Blunt and re-inforcements. Four regiments of our troops and the Indians encountered from 1,500 to 1,800 of the enemy July 3d, of all colors. Our forces were victorious. The enemy left 30 dead on the field, and lost 33 prisoners. Our Indians went in nobly and won golden opinions, from all. I get this statement from a man who was there, but it needs confirmation.

I expect to have to go 250 miles before I overtake the brigade. I will make a note of anything that transpires which will interest your numerous readers and transmit it as soon as possible. I am to start the 12th.

JULY 10.--Last night it commenced raining and rained moderately all night. This will help the corn and potatoes for some time to come.

This place will have a gala day to-morrow. **Col. Ritchie**, with 500 of his Rangers, will be here. They are escorting 100 prisoners and 1200 head of cattle, with mules and ponies too numerous to mention. Clarkson, of Leavenworth notoriety, is among the prisoners.

No news from Curtis.

...[Our correspondent appends a note to the above letter in which he says that he has seen and conversed with other parties who were on the battle-field alluded to, and they do not corroborate the representations of his first informant as to the conduct of the Indians upon that occasion.--ED. JOURNAL.]

(Lawrence *Kansas State Journal*, July 17, 1862)

Ritchie to Colonel Frederick Salomon, Commanding 1st Division Indian Expedition, dated Cabin Creek, July 3, 1862

Sir: I have the honor to report that I have on hand 82 head of confiscated cattle, and would most respectfully ask that you will instruct me as to their disposal, as it is my desire report all the stock taken by me. My command has been somewhat delayed in its movement by accumulation of Indian ponies, and persons of color or Africans. I would report that Capt Bevenue of comp. G. of Rigt I.H.G. that while one of his men was drinking at the side of the road, he was fired upon by those who should be our friends. I would further report that I have been informed by messengers through Capt. McDaniels of comp. A. that there are three hundred Cherokee Indians out side of our camp desiring to join the Union Army. They reported that they killed two of Stanwaities's men while on their way here.

I would most respectfully desire to know why my saber was demanded of me, with an order to take my place in the rear of my command. Assured of your friendship, and that you are a high minded officer, I will look for a speedy answer to my last inquiry. Would that an enemy had asked to have done this.

(John Ritchie compiled military service file, 2 Indian Home Guards, Kansas Infantry, National Archives)

Allegations of misconduct, dated Fort Scott Kansas, August 25, 1862

Whereas, **Co¹ John Ritchie**, Commanding the second Indian Reg't Home guards, has taken horses indiscriminately on the Neosho river between Lightning Creek and Leroy Kansas, and in many places deprived honest citizens and others of their private and personal property, without any compensation therefore I, Charles F. Coleman, Cap't Commd'g Co 'D' 9th Reg't Kans Volns, prefer the following charge and specifications against the said Co¹ Ritchie.

1 Charge. That the said **Col Ritchie** commanding the "Second Indian Reg't Home guards," has taken at divers times and places, horses not contraband of war, the private property of soldiers belonging to the 9th Regt Kans. Volns. and mounted upon said horses negroes and others belonging to his Reg't thereby appropriating them then to his own interest and subverting the ends of government.

1 Specification. In this, that the said **Co¹ Ritchie**, did take, in person on the morning of the 8th day of Aug, 1862 from A. W. Pickering on the road leading from the Osage Catholic Mission to Humboldt Kansas, one iron gray horse, not contraband of war, the property of Isaac O. Pickering, said horse is a light iron-gray, about fifteen hands high, a preponderance of white in the left eye—a mark on the inside of hind leg, done with lariat rope, also on the left side, done with saddle girth, the said horse is 5 yrs old—also in this that the aid **Co¹ Ritchie** peremptorily refused to give the said W. Pickering anything that would show that he had taken said horse, and that he now has him in his possession, and has not reported him to the proper authorities at Ft. Scott. The said horse was mustered into the service of the United States, and had become disabled in that service and was being sent home to [*indecipherable*], the said I. O. Pickering having supplied a horse from home, until the disability of said horse should be removed.

2 Specification. In this, that the said **Col Ritchie** did, on the 7th day of August, 1862 take at Big Creek on the road leading from the Osage Catholic Mission to Humboldt Kansas, the following described horse, the property of Edward N. Lewis, private in Co D 9th K.V., said horse was four years old last Spring, about 15 hands high of a light dunn color, branded K.I. on the left fore shoulder, has a lump on the left side of the lower jaw. Said horse has not been reported to the proper authorities at Ft. Scott.

3 Specification. In that the said **Co^l Ritchie** did on the 7th day of August 1862, [take] the following described mare, the property of A H. Sherman private in Company F 9th Reg't K.V. not contraband. Said mare is 4 years old of a light-brown color, blaze face, both hind feet white above the pastern joint, the top of the neck marked with [*indecipherable*], and said mare is about 14 hands high. The said mare was taken from the farm of the said A.H. Sherman on the Neosho river, by Daniel Shepard who rode her to the command there on Spring river, and who was, subsequently, on his return, arrested, sent to Ft. Scott, and imprisoned by order of the said **Col Ritchie**. Said mare was on the contrary detained with his command and is yet in his possession.

The above charges and specifications will be substantiated by competent witnesses upon oath.

(John Ritchie compiled military service file, 2 Indian Home Guards, Kansas Infantry, National Archives)

Colonel William A. Phillips, Third Indian Home Guard Regiment, to Brigadier General James G. Blunt, dated Neosho, September 5, 1862 (extract)

SIR: I have been in Neosho since Tuesday. I drove the enemy's outposts or scouts out of town, killing 3 and wounding 1, all of which I have already reported to you. The enemy occupy several camps south, southeast, and southwest of this. I expected an attack on three different nights and was prepared for them.

As they have female spies and other means of information, I have always chosen one position (not defensible) in the day-time and a strong position at night. They are afraid to attack my Indian riflemen. Major Foreman has just re-enforced me, but with only half the number of men I sought. I want to strike at this camp, as I am now satisfied that it is all the chance I can have at them. **Colonel Ritchie** refused to send the command of the Fifth Kansas over here and has crippled me very much. I held this town at first with only 350 men and one piece of artillery. My re-enforcements I shall not enumerate, but it is not as large as might have been spared from camp. I am satisfied that the force kept on Cabin Creek by **Colonel Ritchie** is chiefly for recruiting purposes and to enroll them before I could enroll them in the battalion I was to raise.

(*Official Records*, vol. 13, pp. 614-615)

First Lieutenant Joel Moody, Company H, Second Indian Home Guards, to Brigadier General James G. Blunt, dated Camp Hunter, Spring River, September 11, 1862

Sir: I would submit the following.

Charges & Specifications preferred against **Col. John Ritchie** of 2nd Indian Reg. Home Guards,

Charge 1st Violation of the 22nd article of war by receiving and entertaining deserters & not reporting them to their proper corps.

Specification 1st In this that the said **Col. John Ritchie** has received & entertained and still continues to entertain in the 2nd Indian Reg. H.G. one D.W. Boutwell a soldier who deserted from the 5th Reg. Kas. Vol. in the month of ____ 1861, and the said **Col. John Ritchie** has caused said deserter to do a soldiers and a Lieutenants duty in the 2nd I.H.G. and with the full knowledge of his desertion has now never confined him nor given notice to the corps in which he last served. Thus in gross violation of the 22nd article of war being guilty of receiving and entertaining deserters & not reporting them to their corps.

Charge 2nd Tyrannous, Unjust & Illegal Assumption of Power

Specification 1st In this that the said **Col. John Ritchie** on or about the 1st day of Sept. 1862 did transfer one Geo. W. Weed Sergeant Major of the 3rd Indian Reg. Home Guards from said Reg. to the 2nd Indian Reg. Home Guards giving him thereby a Lieutenants position. Thus in direct violation of the Army Regulations being guilty of Tyrannous Unjust & Illegal Assumption of Power. (See Art. 15 Sec. 145 Army Regs.)

Specification 2nd In this that the said **Col John Ritchie** at Sundry times & places while Acting Brig. Gen did assume to control in person the differing Regts under him at the same time ignoring the existance of a Regimental Commander, being thus guilty of Tyrannous Unjust & Illegal Assumption of Power.

Specification 3rd In this that the said **Col. John Ritchie** on or about the 1st day of Sept. 1862 did while acting in the capacity of Brig. Gen. arrest and confine Lieut. Joel Moody of 2nd I.H.G. while Lt. Col. D.B. Corwin was in command of said 2nd Ind. Reg. H.G. keeping said Lieut. in arrest & confinement and up to this date still continues to keep in arrest and confinement without reporting it to his immediate Commander or preferring charges against the said Lieut. thus in direct violation of the Army Regulations being guilty of Tyrannous Unjust & Illegal Assumption of Power.

Charge 3rd Tyrannous & Capricious Conduct.

Specification 1st See Charge 2nd specification 3rd being thus guilty of Tyrannous & Capricious Conduct.

Charge 4th Wreckless destruction of Government Property.

Specification 1st In this that the said **Col John Ritchie** on or about the 24th day of June 1862 did cause his regimental Baggage train in which was being transported a large amount of Government Property to be driven at great speed without a Public necessity, over rough & broken ground to the great loss of said property and damage of Government mules & wagons. This while on march from Humboldt to Baxter Springs Kas. being thus guilty of wreckless destruction of Government Property.

Charge 5th Violation of the 83rd Article of War, in Conduct unbecoming an officer & a gentleman.

Specification 1st in this that the said **Col John Ritchie** on or about the 18th day of August 1862 did in a most insulting manner, and with gross & abusive Language order Major Moses B.C. Wright to his tent and at the same time without any just cause falsely & wickedly charging him with drunken & mutinous conduct. This at Camp Henning, Spring River. And at sundry other times & places while the said officer was on duty the said **Col. John Ritchie** in a menacing manner used gross & abusive language to him, being thus guilty in violation of the 83rd article of war of conduct unbecoming an officer & a gentleman.

Specification 2nd In this that the said **Col. John Ritchie** on or about the 15th day of Aug. 1862 did in an insulting & menacing [manner] without any just cause threaten to shoot one Geo. W. Spencer clerk in 2nd I.H.G. the said **Col. John Ritchie** at the same time placing his hand on his revolver. This at Camp Henning, Spring River. And at sundry other times & places while the said Spencer was upon duty the said **Col. John Ritchie** used violent & abusive language to him being thus guilty of conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman.

Specification 3rd In this that the said **Col. John Ritchie** on or about the 1st day of Sept. 1862 did in a great fit of rage without any just cause or provocation assault by threatening to shoot and thrusting his hand rapidly towards his revolvers, Lieut. Joel Moody of 2nd I.H.G. This at Camp Corwin, Spring River being thus guilty of conduct unbecoming an officer & a gentleman.

Specification 4th In this that the said **Col. John Ritchie** on or about the 1st day of Sept. 1862, did in a very insulting and menacing manner falsely charge Lieut. Joel Moody with theft and did in a most gross & abusive manner slanderously call him a thief This at Camp Corwin, Spring River; being thus guilty of conduct unbecoming an officer & a gentleman.

Specification 5th In this that the said **Col. John Ritchie** did at sundry times & places unjustly abuse in language the most devoid of sense, & insulting John Jones, Chaplain, Dr. M.A. Campdoras, Asst. Surgeon & other officers belonging to the 2nd Ind. Regt. Home Guards, being thus guilty of conduct unbecoming an officer & a gentleman.

Specification 6th In this that the said **Col John Ritchie** on or about the 18th day of August 1862 did use the following language to Major M.B.C. Wright “I tell you to go to your tent whether I put you under arrest or not, and you can obey it or disobey it at your peril”; being thus [guilty] of conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman.

Charge 6th Defrauding the United States Government.

Specification 1st In this that the said **Col. John Ritchie** on or about the 11th day of July 1862 did give to Joseph B Gale two fine sorrel mares property taken from the enemy Cherokee Nation without properly answering therefor. The said Gale being a private citizen from Topeka, who took charge of “contraband Stock” without having been hired to do the same and only performed the service from about the 29th day of June to about the 10th day of July 1862 Thus being guilty of Defrauding the United States Government.

Specification 2nd In this that the said **Col John Ritchie** on or about the 11th day of July 1862 did send by Joseph B Gale to the said **Col John Ritchie’s** own home at Topeka two colts & one horse, without properly answering to the Government therefor said property having been contraband of war. Thus being guilty of Defrauding the United States Government.

Charge 7th Incompetent as an Army officer.

Specification 1st In this that the said **Col. John Ritchie** on the 4th day of July 1862 did try to prejudice the minds of his command against Gen. Salomon Wis. 9th [Infantry] by using the following language in a speech to the soldiers. Salomon says you are thieves, and Salomon put me under arrest for saying you were not thieves. This at Camp Cabin Creek, Cherokee Nation. Being thus Incompetent as an Army officer.

Specification 2nd In this that the said **Col John Ritchie** persisted in refusing to sign a receipt in person for Q.M. stores taken at Humboldt Aug 4th 1862 but ordered a subordinate to sign **Col John Ritchie’s** name per the subordinate. Being thus totally incompetent as an army officer.

Specification 3rd Under Charge 2nd Specifications 1st 2nd & 4th Thus being incompetent as an army officer.

Specification 4th Under Charge 4th Specification 1st being herein incompetent as an army officer.

Specification 5th In this that the said **Col. John Ritchie** in the every day business transactions of the regiment shows himself entirely incompetent as an army officer.

List of Witnesses

Col. Phillips

3rd I.H.G.

Lt. Col. Corwin

2nd I.H.G.

Lt. Col. Wattles	1 st I.H.G.
Maj. Wright	2 nd I.H.G.
Maj. Ellithorpe	1 st I.H.G.
Adj. Geo. Dole	2 nd I.H.G.
Dr. Campdoras, Asst. Surg.	2 nd I.H.G.
John Jones, Chap.	2 nd I.H.G.
Lieut. Silas Hunter	2 nd I.H.G.
Lieut. Joel Moody	2 nd I.H.G.
D.W. Boutwell	
John Wright	2 nd I.H.G.
J.W. Britton	2 nd I.H.G.
Geo. W. Spencer	2 nd I.H.G.
J.T. Cox, Clerk	2 nd I.H.G.
Joseph B. Gale	2 nd I.H.G.
O'Brien	Humboldt, Ks
Lamden, Sutler	2 nd I.H.G.

(John Ritchie compiled military service file, 2 Indian Home Guards, Kansas Infantry, National Archives.)

Colonel William Weer to Captain Moonlight, dated Headquarters, Second Brigade, Army of Kansas [in Missouri], September 12, 1862 (extract)

....**Colonel Ritchie** utterly refuses to obey my orders. His camp is, from what I can learn, a motley assemblage. His presence in the army is nothing but embarrassment to the service, and I most urgently recommend his dismissal.

(*Official Records*, vol. 13, p. 627)

Special Orders No. 28, Headquarters Department of Kansas, dated In the Field, September 13, 1862 (extract)

....**Colonel Ritchie**, Second Indian Regiment, will immediately on receipt of this order release from arrest and restore to duty First Lieutenant Joel Moody, Company H, Second Regiment Indian Home Guards; also release from arrest citizen-prisoner Rev. Gilbert Bishop, and provide him with a pass through our lines.

....By order of General Blunt.

(*Official Records*, vol. 13, p. 630)

“Second Brigade” to Dear Journal, dated Camp near Carthage, Missouri, September 15, 1862

DEAR JOURNAL:--As I promised, I will give you a few facts in relation to **Colonel Ritchey** arresting Colonel Judson. Colonel Judson was ordered to go down and bring up a section of Allen’s battery that was with **Ritchey** and Col. Phillips. He went to **Col. Ritchey** and delivered his order for the gun, in his command. **Ritchey** ordered his adjutant to copy the order. Having done so, he then refused to deliver the gun, and likewise to allow Col. Judson to leave camp without his permission. Judson told him he did not wish to make any trouble; he had only delivered the order, and there need be no difficulty, and attempted to mount his horse. **Ritchey** ordered his guards to arrest him, but did not wait for them to execute his orders; but laid hands on him and succeeded in unhorseing him, and throwing him on the ground with violence, dragged him into his tent, and ordered him not to leave without his orders. He then went towards the gun. In the meantime Col. Phillips had heard what was going on, and came out and arrested **Ritchey**, he making no resistance. Col. Phillips released Col. Judson.

I should have stated that when **Ritchey** assaulted Judson, he (Judson) ordered Capt. Lucas of his regiment to bring up his company. The Captain attempted to do so; but **Ritchey** ordered his guards to shoot him if he attempted to obey the order.

The command then broke up camp by order of Col. Judson, and marched for Col. Weer’s Headquarters, which they reached this afternoon. Col. Weer released **Ritchey** who has joined his Regiment. Col. Judson was not severely injured.

These are the simple facts very briefly stated as communicated to me by parties who saw all that was done. Col. Phillips says that **Ritchey** is crazy. This is the only reasonable solution of the difficulty. What will be done in regard to the matter I do not know.

We are ordered, this moment, to march for Springfield. We start to-night or early in the morning. The Brigade is in excellent condition, and I have no doubt will give as good an account of itself as other Kansas men that have gone before. We expect to have all we can do, and will do all we can.

Hindman, it is reported, is marching for Missouri with a large force. If we come together you will hear of it. I will attempt to keep you posted in such matters as will interest your readers.

(Lawrence *Kansas State Journal*, October 2, 1862)

Charges and Specifications preferred against Col. John Ritchie by Major Moses B.C. Wright, 2d Indian Home Guard, September 17, 1862

Charge 1st Inciting Soldiers and Officers to Mutiny

Specification 1st In this that the said **Col John Ritchie** on or about the 16th day of Sept 1862 did use language in a public speech to Officers and Soldiers, Substance of which is as follows. “You Soldiers were enlisted as Home Guards to stay in the Indian Country. It was my desire to keep you there, but a conspiracy was entered into against me by Col. Phillips of the 3rd Indian Regiment Home guard and other white officers and Soldiers. I was informed of that conspiracy unofficially and when the traitor came, I threw him from his horse and choked him. A Set of traitors cowards and drunken officers have dragged you here against my wish and I have named this camp Cowards Retreat. As also Traitors, Cowards, and Thieves, have been turned loose since I have been taken away,” and other inuendoed and the most insulting language towards Senior and Junior Officers whereupon many of the Indian Officers declared that they only enlisted to stay in the Indian Country and believed **Col Ritchie** was Sincere in wishing to keep them there and were resolved to go back, thus, falsely representing the United States Volunteer Service to those who have no other means of knowledge, save what is told them. This near Carthage Missouri, being thus guilty of inciting officers and Soldiers to mutiny.

Charge 2nd Violation of the 22nd article of war in receiving and entertaining deserters and not reporting them to their proper corps.

Specification 1st In this that the said **Col John Ritchie** has received and entertained and still continues to entertain in the Second Regiment Indian Home Guards, one J.W. Palmer, a private in Company A, fifth Kansas Vols. who has been appointed by the said **Col John Ritchie** a 1st Lieutenant in the Second Indian Home Guards, while absent from his own regiment on furlough, having had no discharge and this under the full knowledge of the said **Col John Ritchie** who had not confined him, nor reported him to his proper corps, thus being guilty of the violation of the 22nd article of war.

Charge 3rd Conduct unbecoming an Officer & a Gentleman

Specification 1st In this that the said **Col John Ritchie** did on the 15th day of Sept 1862 confine Maj. M.B.C. Wright to the limits of the Regt. and refusing to put him under arrest, yet making him do duty, thus being guilty of conduct both unmilitary and ungentlemanly.

Specification 2nd In this that the said **Col John Ritchie** did on the 16th day of Sept 1862 in the presence of the Commissioned officers and a number of Privates name his camp “Cowards Retreat” for the purpose of degradeing Maj. M.B.C. Wright, who established that camp under orders of his Superior Officer.

Specification 3rd In this that the said **Col John Ritchie** did on the 15th day of Sept 1862 order citizen Gilbert Bishop to leave his lines immediately on penalty of being thrown into the Guard House if he remained. Said Gilbert Bishop haveing just been released by order of Brig. Gen. Blunt.

Witnesses

Lieut. Col. D.B. Corwin, 2nd Ind. Home Guards
Lieut. Joel Moody, 2nd Ind. Home Guards
Lieut. D.A. Painter, 2nd Ind. Home Guards
Chaplain J.B. Jones, 2nd Ind. Home Guards

(John Ritchie compiled military service file, 2 Indian Home Guards, Kansas Infantry, National Archives)

Colonel John Ritchie, Second Indian Home Guard Regiment, to Brigadier General James G. Blunt, dated Camp C. M. Clay, Indian Territory, September 21, 1862-11 a.m.

SIR: Yesterday morning, at about 8 o'clock, our picket guard was fired upon, and a regular stampede of 1,500 women and children crowded into camp for protection, making a Bull Run retreat. Everything seemed to partake of the spirit, but only a moment after orders were given every man was ready for any emergency. My infantry, or those who had no horses, mostly gave the war-whoop and rushed in the direction of the firing of the pickets, which were closely pursued. Soon after a most terrific fire was commenced, and resulted in the rout of the enemy. Soon I was informed that our forces were about to be surrounded. I immediately put out companies to avoid anything of that kind. After putting a suitable guard around our supply train and camp I marched to the scene of conflict. Before starting over I had ordered Major Wright to pass around, and if possible to surround the party. Upon arriving upon the battle ground I saw the enemy's flag waving, bidding us defiance, and that they were drawn up in line of battle. I ordered my infantry to conceal themselves in a ravine, and I would take a party of cavalry and try to drive them in close to the timber. Seeing Major Wright's party already in view, I took about 100 men and advanced near enough to draw them out, but no farther than to leave them upon high ground. I instantly ordered everything forward, and such another skedaddling could not have been beaten only by the women and children in the morning, and that only because they were more in number. I felt that everything depended upon our success, and was determined to drive them or die. We took and killed their flag-bearer and took their vile flag; killed 2 officers certain, and can count 20 of their dead. We slept upon the battle ground, and at sunrise this morning marched to this point, where I had ordered my train. At the same time ordered a company to bring in their herd of cattle.

Our loss in killed is from 12 to 20, including Captain George Scraper, of Company H, who fell bravely at the head of his men, and 9 wounded. Two negro teamsters and 1 six-mule team were taken while out foraging.

Taking all the circumstances connected with my command I cannot close this report without feeling grateful to God for his goodness in giving me such means in officers and men to give us the victory with our means, faith, and works. Do send us supplies and re-enforcements. Again I ask you to send me artillery. I could have made good use of it yesterday. Papers show that Irwin's and Jackman's men were in the rebel force; others show Stand Waite's and Livingston's, but nothing reliable as to who they are. Their force has been estimated at from 300 to 4,000.

If I am thought incompetent to defend my Indians for God's sake have me removed, as I do not intend to resign in the face of the enemy. As Colonel Corwin and Major Wright have both resigned, see that their places are filled at the earliest possible moment. You can get us supplies here before we suffer if you use due diligence, and this humanity calls for.

(Official Records, vol. 13, pp. 277-278)

Letter from "W. B.," dated Fort Scott, September 21, 1862

Major Wright of the 3d Indian Regiment, **Col. Ritchie**, has just returned from the command, and from him I learn the particulars of a fight which took place on Saturday, between the Indian regiment and a large force of rebels.

Ritchie's command was camped near Shirley's Ford, on Spring river, ten miles north west of Carthage. The rebels came upon our forces about 10 o'clock in the morning, taking them almost entirely by surprise. The pickets were driven in and the refugee Indians numbering about 1000 were thrown into a great excitement, and it was sometime before they could be got out of the way, when the troops formed into line. Maj. W., however, succeeded in rallying about 200 men and sent them out to engage the enemy until reinforcement should arrive. They went out as infantry and attacked the rebels in the woods, and after fifteen or twenty minutes hard fighting drove them from their position. The enemy then formed in a ravine and three companies of Cherokees and Osages, under Capt. G. Scraper, an Indian, were sent out to engage them. He disposed of his forces so as to attack them on three points and for the second time drove them out of the ravine and from the timber.

In the meantime **Col. Ritchie** had ordered Maj. W. to move to the left with a party, in order to guard against a flank movement by the enemy. After traveling hard for several miles he succeeded in getting in their rear just as they had been driven out from the ravine, but **Col. Ritchie** motioned to him to retire, and he gave the order to retreat. Ritchie then attempted to drive the rebels again into the timber, where his principal force was stationed, but they had enough of that and commenced a "retrograde movement." Major Wright now attacked, when **Col. Ritchie** came to his assistance, and the third of battles was fought, resulting in the complete rout of the enemy with a loss of from 60 to 90 killed.

The fighting lasted from 10 o'clock in the morning until 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Our loss was 16 killed and 9 wounded. Among the killed was Capt. Scraper, who was considered the best Indian captain in the service. He was a young man, not over 22 or 23 years of age, and his loss will be a heavy blow to the regiment.

The rebel force numbered about 600 men, among whom were some 80 or 90 Cherokees. The rebel Cherokees indulged in the greatest pastime of scalping our dead,

several of them having been found after the battle with their scalps taken off. No time did **Colonel Ritchie** have over 300 of his men engaged, but those who were in the fight done magnificently. The rebels also captured a four mule team, sent out to get corn, taking the negro teamster and one of the escort prisoners. Outside of the above there is nothing of any importance transpiring in this vicinity. The town wears its usual dull appearance when the troops are gone, and the hospitals are full of sick soldiers.

To-day two cases of small pox were discovered in the principal hospital, and the patients at once removed to other quarters. Possession was taken of one of the numerous whisky shops for that purpose, which, I suppose, no one but the proprietor will regret. I understand that Capt. Insley has received orders to erect such buildings here as may be necessary for the Government service.

The Department has been compelled, in a good many instances, to take possession of private property for military purposes, and still there is not room enough to accommodate the business that has to be done here. The order to build comes not one moment too soon, still it will relieve the minds of a large number outside of the Quartermaster's department, who have been constantly in fear lest they should have to vacate the premises at a moment's notice.

(Leavenworth *Daily Times*, September 24, 1862)

"X" to Editor Republican, dated Fort Scott, September 22, 1862

EDITOR REPUBLICAN: I send a few items from this post, the present "Headquarters of the Department of Kansas, in the Field," which may be of interest to your readers.

That portion of our forces which recently occupied Carthage, Mo., left there about a week ago, under command of Brig.-Gen. F. Salomon, for Springfield, and are probably at Springfield at this time. Gen. Salomon's command comprises most of the available force of the 1st and 2d Brigades, to wit: the 9th Missouri, a part of the 9th Kansas, a squadron of the Ohio 2d, one of the new batteries, manned by a detail from the 2d Ohio, and commanded through favoritism by Capt. Stockton, of the 1st Kansas; the 6th and 10th Kansas, Col. Phillip's 3d Indian Regiment, and Capt. Allen's Battery. The cavalry are supplied with a battery of 12-pounder mountain howitzers.

Soon after our force left Carthage, it was occupied by a rebel force, supposed to be Gen. Cooper's command, from the vicinity of fort Gibson.

The 2d Indian Regiment, **Col. Ritchie**, was camped about ten miles from Carthage, at Shurley's crossing of Spring river, and there was skirmishing between the two forces most of the day on Saturday, the 20th. **Col. Ritchie** was taken completely by surprise, as he was getting ready to march in the morning. He lost during the day, 16 men killed and 9 wounded, which shows pretty sharp shooting. Some of his men threw

aside their guns and took to their bows and arrows. One rebel was found dead, pierced through the body with an arrow. The rebel Indians were finally driven to retreat, **Col. Ritchie** holding his encampment and burying the dead. It is supposed that the rebels took most of their dead and wounded with them.

Major Wright and Lieut. Col. [Corwin], of **Ritchie's** Regiment are here, and bring the account. They have tendered their resignations, not liking to serve under **Col. Ritchie**.

Capt. Allen is still here on arrest on the same charges on which several officers, his superiors in rank, were arrested with him and released, as was Col. Weir. This is in violation of law, justice, decency, and anything else that is counted "fair play." No longer than the 17th of last July, Congress passed a law prohibiting the keeping of officers under arrest for more than forty days without trial, and declaring that at the expiration of such time, their arrest shall cease. He has called Gen. Blunt's attention to the law to no purpose, and has now preferred his complaint against Blunt to the War Department.

Col. Cloud's Brigade, also the 2d Battery, a portion of the Wisconsin 3d, and a number of detached companies, are posted within striking distance of this post. The three siege guns spoken of in your last issue, are here, and we think we are good for a larger force of rebels than will be able to get here. Col. Salomon, who has been appointed to the command of the 9th Missouri, formerly commanded by the present Brig.-Gen. F. Salomon, is here with several other officers, awaiting an opportunity to get their commands.

Another meeting transpired about a week ago, down in the "Indian country." **Col. Ritchie**, with his 2d, and Col. Phillips's 3d Indian Regiment, and a section of Allen's Battery, were stationed at Baxter's Springs, on Spring river, with instructions from Gen. Blunt to hold the position at all hazards. Col. Weir, from Carthage, had sent Col. Judson, by way of Spring river, with instructions to bring the 2d Indian Regiment, with the section of battery to join his Brigade at Carthage. **Col. Ritchie** claimed to rank both Col.s Weir and Judson, on the ground that his appointment was from the President. Col. J. could not see it so. They argued the case, and the more they argued the more they couldn't see alike. The debate waxed warm, and fearing that Col. J. would try to enforce his orders with his cavalry, which unfortunately was not right at hand, **Col. R.** ordered him under arrest. Col. J. could not exactly see how that should be, and refused to obey the arrest, and again they reasoned together, or tried to, but could not get to think together. Col. J. mounts his horse, **Col. R.** catches the horse by the bit, and orders a dismount. Col. J. disobeys. **Col. R.** enforces his command with an ungraceful boost. Col. J. is dismounted, choked for his impertinence, and confined in **Col. R.'s** tent, and the guard increased to a full company of Indians. Thus secured, and in the charge of **Dr. Ritchie**, the **Col.** leaves his prisoner and goes to look after the [*phrase missing*] here he meets another of his superior officers, Col. Phillips, who proclaims a *mutiny*, forcibly arrests **Col. R.**, and goes with a squadron of Col. Judson's cavalry to his relief. Col. Judson then takes command, marches the whole force, with **Col. R.** and **Dr. R.** prisoners,

to Carthage. Col. Weir was then in command at Carthage, and having a faint recollection of other mutinous proceeding not long ago, he politely informed **Col. R.** he could go to his command, or to h--l, he would not have anything to do with him. Chaplain Jones vouches for the above in substance.

(Lawrence, Kansas *Republican*, October 2, 1862)

Colonel John Ritchie, *Second Indian Home Guard Regiment*, to Brigadier General James G. Blunt, dated Camp C. M. Clay, Indian Territory, September 23, 1862

SIR: We have a good camp, and are resting in quiet and keeping a good lookout for our foe.

Colonel Cloud arrived here yesterday morning with two howitzers and three companies. He is scouting in person to-day. He arrived just one day too late for our assistance; but, thank God, we were able to rout a regiment of Texan Rangers commanded by Colonel Hawpe. As reports come in we are confirmed in the opinion that they were badly whipped. A Seneca Indian reports that they marched from Baxter Springs, or Camp Hunter, 4 miles this side (north), to Shoal Creek Mills, directly east and in the direction of Neosho.

(*Official Records*, vol. 13, p. 661)

Colonel John Ritchie, *Second Indian Home Guard Regiment*, to Lieutenant Colonel Wattles, dated Camp C. M. Clay, on Cow Creek, 2½ miles west of the Fort Scott road to Baxter Springs, at dusk of September 23, 1862

SIR: I have just learned that the head of the enemy is about 10 miles from us; they are at Shirley's Crossing of Spring River. You will send me all the available force you can immediately, so that it may reach here by daylight in the morning if possible, and report the facts to General Blunt immediately. Colonel Cloud is now out with part of his men, scouting in the direction of Baxter Springs, and unless he gets knowledge of the enemy will not return before some time to-morrow. Much will depend upon your re-enforcing us.

(*Official Records*, vol. 13, p. 662)

"X" to Editors Union, dated Camp Second Kansas Volunteers, Dry Wood, [Missouri,] September 26, 1862

EDITORS UNION--As many of the members of the Second Kansas hail from the Western Counties, where your paper is largely circulated, and as all your readers feel an interest in the welfare of the Regiment, I will write you a few lines, which, if you think worthy, please give space in the columns of your paper.

We are at present camped on Dry Wood, about twelve miles south east of Fort Scott, and a few miles from the memorable battle-ground, and on the "sacred soil" of Missouri.

On the 19th inst., we were all made glad by the arrival of companies A B C and D, commanded by Major Fisk, who for the last six months have been on the plains. They have seen some pretty hard service, escorting trains, pay-masters, &c., to and from New Mexico, but they came into camp looking fine, with their stock in good condition, and but few men on the sick list--which proves that their efficient commander, Major Fisk, with his early California experience, well understands how to manage things "in the wilderness." Both officers and men speak in the highest terms of his ability, gentlemanly conduct, and soldierly management, and there is not a man in the Second Kansas who does not "take stock" in the "little Major."

Detachments from our Regiment are on the march daily, and as we are all mounted, we have to do most of the escort duty and reconnoitering, which keeps us on the march most of the time, and just suits us, as there is nothing so tedious to the soldier as quiet camp life. On the 19th inst., a detachment of our Regiment, of which I was a member, consisting of one hundred men, under command of Captain Russell, and a section of artillery (mounted howitzers), commanded by Lieutenant Stover, with a Lieutenant and forty men from the First Indian Regiment, the whole commanded by Colonel Cloud, marched in a south east direction, the object being to ascertain if the enemy was in force north and west of Springfield. On the 20th, we passed through the town of Lamar, and camped for the night north of Carthage. Here the inhabitants informed us that the enemy, eight thousand strong, occupied Carthage, but our scouts soon brought us word that the rumor was without foundation, as they could hear nothing from them. We rolled ourselves in our blankets, and slept soundly until daylight, without being disturbed by friend or foe. We entered Carthage on the morning of the 21st, and found the town in a fever of excitement, owing to a reported fight between fifteen hundred confederate troops and the Union Indians, commanded by **Colonel Ritchie**, about fifteen miles west of town. We learned that a young man, belonging to the Confederate army, had been in town that morning, and informed his friends that the day before they had engaged and completely routed the Indians, capturing all their transportation and stores, besides cutting them up badly, and that Ritchie was retreating towards Fort Scott, hotly pursued by them.

Colonel Cloud halted his command for several hours, and gave the people to understand that he was the advance of six thousand, that were camped a few miles north of town. He sent his scouts in the direction of the reported fight; but they could find nothing of the enemy, although they found a man that had been taken prisoner the day before by the rebels, and paroled for twenty-four hours, at the expiration of which time he

was to report to them at Carthage. It seems that they intended to engage and defeat Ritchie's command, and be in Carthage the next day. But for reasons which we afterwards found to be very good, they did not fulfill their engagement.

Colonel Cloud, wishing to render all possible assistance to **Colonel Richie**, marched rapidly across the country in a westerly direction, so as to intercept his trail, if he had marched towards Fort Scott, and if followed by the enemy, to fall upon his rear, or if he was still south, to march immediately to his assistance. On the morning of the 23d, about four miles north of the crossing of Cow Creek on the military road, we discovered a mounted picket, and upon approaching it found that it belonged to **Colonel Ritchie's** command, who were camped two miles west, in the timber. As we approached his camp, we found his whole line placed to the best advantage to give us a warm reception, supposing us to be enemies; but when they learned our true character they seemed overjoyed, and yelled and hooted in such a manner that our horses reared and plunged. For several minutes their shouts were deafening, and to one not accustomed to their mode of rejoicing, truly frightful. His whole effective force consisted of about five hundred Indians, of different tribes, although his camp numbered two thousand or more, mostly women and children, refugees from tribes south of his encampment.

From **Colonel Ritchie** we got an entirely different version of the engagement, for instead of them defeating him, he had completely defeated and routed them with considerable loss. Our loss was thirty killed and wounded, and one wagon captured that was several miles distant from camp, after corn.

On the 20th, while in camp on Spring river, three miles south of Medocit, the enemy, about eight hundred strong, attacked his camp and completely surprised him, by either capturing or killing all his pickets. When the firing commenced, the Indians gave the war-whoop and sprang into the brush in the direction of the enemy. **Colonel Ritchie** and his officers tried in vain to form them, but it was contrary to their mode of fighting, and they would not remain in ranks, but with a yell rushed after the enemy, in their own style. After six hours' fighting the enemy were completely routed.

In this engagement the Indians fought well, and I believe, that, given them any where near an equal force to contend with and as a general thing they will acquit themselves honorably, as far as the fighting is concerned. Yet, taking all things into consideration, I think it would be much better if the Government was rid of them altogether.

It is certainly much better to have them fighting for, than against us--for fight they will on one side or the other; and it is the duty of our Government to employ them, not so much for the good they will do in the service, but the harm they would do out of it. They are a disgrace to the service in one sense, but would cost us the lives of many dear ones at home, who are without protection, if they were out of it: so between two great evils I think that our Government has chosen the least. I say that they are a disgrace to the service because they commit crimes that are too dishonorable and disgraceful for a civilized nation to sanction. I have it from their own officers that they have in cool blood

shot several Union men, simply because they rode good horses. And after the late fight, they scalped and then mangled in a shocking manner, all of the enemy's slain. When the fight commenced, they had six white prisoners, taken from houses in close proximity to camp, not because they were known to be secessionists, (for the officers informed that the most of them were Union men,) but for fear they might in some way convey information to the enemy. They were all shot and scalped by the guard. Comment is unnecessary. But what are we to do with them? If we discharge and turn them loose, they will butcher our women and children; if we keep them in service they MAY kill more rebels than Union men. So, of the two, I think it is policy to retain them. I do not think their white officers are to blame, for the Indians are unmanageable. They are Indians, and it is impossible to make any thing else of them. Government may clothe, feed, arm, and try to discipline them, but they will be Indians until they die, and then they will be dead Indians.

On the 23d, Colonel Cloud, with a detachment of fifteen men, and a few Indians, made a reconnoissance in the direction of Bertus Spring, to see if the enemy was in force near that point. Captain Russell, with twelve men, accompanied by myself and two white scouts (Ben Dickerson and S. Langworthy), and a small party of Indians, marched in an easterly direction for the same purpose. We crossed Spring river, passed over the late battle-ground, and from the inhabitants living in the vicinity learned that the rebels in force had visited the ground the day before, and buried some of their dead, which had been overlooked by **Colonel Ritchie's** command, and marched south again, but how far we could not learn. We had not been on the ground but a few minutes when we discovered a party of rebels making towards us, and soon learned that it was the advance guard of a large force that was but a few rods in their rear. They soon discovered us, and sent out "feelers" and skirmishers in all directions to ascertain who and what we were. We remained until they got a good view of their column, and until they were within a few hundred yards of us, when we slipped off into the woods, and by a circuitous route gained our camp about dark, and informed **Colonel Ritchie** of the approaching enemy.

Here again the Indians proved themselves grand humbugs, for out of twelve hundred fighting men, **Colonel Ritchie** could muster but four hundred who were willing, or would fight under any circumstances. Of the two companies of Osages, that mustered over a hundred each, there were but four men for duty, the others being at home, without leave, attending a scalp dance.

As **Colonel Ritchie** had a large train, and other Government property, and so few men to protect it, he very wisely concluded to fall back on Dry Wood, which he did, arriving on the morning of the 25th.

Nothing occurred on the march worthy of note, except that when we arrived near camp, we met a party of Indians going the other direction, and some of **Ritchie's** SOLDIERS, wishing to go along, two hundred of them fell in without leave or license, and marched back. They did not regard in the least the orders of their Colonel, who endeavored to get them to follow him. Great soldiers, they!

Colonel Cloud, with his detachment, arrived on the following morning, having been as far south as Baxter's Springs. On his return he fell in with a large party of rebels, supposed to be the same that we saw the day before. They sent out a force to take the Colonel, but he was too old a hand for them, and after drawing them out so as to get a good view of their force, which was about three thousand strong, he returned to camp to make preparations to meet them with sufficient force. We are confident that before many days he will make them pay heavy tolls for travelling over all the roads within one hundred miles of Fort Scott.

At present, all is quiet around Fort Scott. The First and Second Brigades are in the vicinity of Springfield. I shall not be surprised if we all have plenty to do in a few days, as the rebels are in force, and advancing, and say that they are to take Springfield first, then Fort Scott, and Kansas comes next. They may meet with more opposition than they imagine. Time will show. The health of the Regiment is very good; all are in good spirits, and anxious for the contest.

(Junction City, Kansas *Smoky Hill and Republican Union*, October 11, 1862)

Brigadier General James G. Blunt to Caleb B. Smith, Secretary of the Interior, dated Headquarters First Division Army of the Frontier, on Boundary Line Between Arkansas & the "Indian Nation," 14 miles south of Maysville, November 21, 1862

I have the honor to enclose herewith, a copy of a letter from W.G. Coffin, Superintendent of Indian Affairs and also -- a copy of my letter to the several Indian Agents, to which said letter of Coffin refers, relative to matters connected with the Refugee Indians in Kansas.

I propose to avail myself of Mr. Coffin's letter as the occasion for discharging, what I consider an important duty to the government, one that I ought long since to have discharged, by giving to your Department, a brief history of affairs connected with those Refugees and what has been done by myself and others in the matter.

As early as last winter there was, as I understand, a conference between the Commissioner of Indian Affairs and the head men and chiefs representing the various tribes among the Refugees-- Genl. Hunter acting some part in such conference -- when it was agreed, that two Regiments should be raised of loyal Indians, to act as Home Guards, who, with a military force of white men to accompany them, would move into the Indian Territory, to expel the Rebel Forces and hold the country; and that the Refugee families should then be taken home.

On the arrival of the officers appointed by the President, to organize those Indian Regiments, Genl. Sturgis was in command of Fort Leavenworth, the Headquarters of the District of Kansas, who not only refused to co-operate with them, but issued an order prohibiting the execution of the instruction of the Interior Department upon the

subject. On my taking command of the Department of Kansas, about the first of May 1862, I immediately countermanded the order of Genl. Sturgis and directed the organization of the Indians, to proceed with as little delay as possible.

As soon as they were mustered, armed and equipped, I sent them, accompanied by a sufficient force of white men, all under command of Colonel Wm. Weer, who had specific instructions from me, to expel the Rebels, possess and hold the Indian country and, to relieve and restore the loyal Indians.

The expedition had proceeded as far South as Fort Gibson and was proving eminently successful in accomplishing the object of its mission, and but for the insubordination and mutinous conduct of Col. (now Genl) Salomon and the forcible arrest by him, of Col. Weer and the assumption of command himself, followed by his utterly unjustifiable and disgraceful retreat and the abandonment of the Indian country, the 3,000 refugee women and children, who followed the retreating Army and are now suffering for the want of suitable clothing and shelter, in the vicinity of Fort Scott, would to-day be comfortably settled in their homes and this country, would have been saved from the desolation, that has since been visited upon it.

On learning the condition and movements of the command, I sent a despatch to Col. Salomon, ordering him to advance and support the Indian Regiments, under Col. W. A. Phillips, who had determined to remain and hold the country as long as it was possible to do so, and left Fort Leavenworth, to take command myself in the Field.

On arriving at Fort Scott, I found, much to my surprise, that Salomon with his command was there. I found that my orders had been received by him, when yet seventy miles South of Fort Scott, on his retreat, but had been purposely disobeyed. The Indian Regiments, after holding out as long as they were able, for want of support and supplies, became discouraged and distrustful of either the ability or willingness of the government to protect them; and, before I took command in the Field, for the purpose of recovering with as little delay as possible, what had been lost by Col. Salomon's retreat, many of them, -- particularly the First Regiment, composed chiefly of Creeks -- went to their families at Le Roy, Kansas. I had some difficulty in inducing the Indians to return to their commands. They claimed, that the government had failed in its promises made to them; and it was only by assuring them, that their country should be redeemed and their families, taken home and protected, that I could persuade them to enter Missouri and Arkansas, on the present campaign, which has already resulted so favorably, in defeating the Rebels and redeeming the Indian country.

A large number of women and children had followed the Army out of the Indian territory and, I learned that thousands more were coming. I immediately sent persons to prevent their leaving their homes and to induce them, to remain until succor should reach them. This, to a certain extent, I accomplished. Those that had already arrived in the vicinity of Fort Scott, I ordered to be fed. As to clothing and shelter, I had none for them. Convinced that the Refugees at Le Roy, were all desirous of returning home and knowing that it was the interest of the government, as well as that of the Indian

country, -- to say naught of the question of humanity involved -- that they should be restored, without unnecessary delay, I determined to make good my own promises, as well as those of the agents of the government, previously made.

The Superintendent, Mr Coffin, was absent and the condition of the Refugees, with the non-fulfilment of the promises made them, called for some prompt action in the matter. While I did not desire to interfere with the business of any Department, with which I was not legitimately connected, the interests of these Refugee Indians, were so intimately blended with the military affairs of the Indian Territory, that I deemed it my duty to act in the premises, as indicated in my letter of Sept to the Indian Agents at Le Roy -- and I have yet to be convinced, that I committed any error. As the military commander, having jurisdiction over the Indian Territory, I regarded it as my duty, to make every effort in my power, to restore and protect its loyal people and, to save the country from rebel devastation. The Indians mustered into the Federal service, were not willing to make a second expedition south, unless assurances were given them, that their families should be taken to their homes, as soon as we obtained occupation of the country. With that assurance, they were willing to encounter any danger and to make any sacrifice.

Another reason for my interfering with the Refugees -- one indicated by humanity, as well as to subserve the interests of the government -- was the fact, that their welfare was disregarded, by those whom the government had appointed as their guardians. The fact had been patent, that these Refugees were the victims of a clique of mercenary and unscrupulous speculators, who were resolved upon robbing the Indians and the government of every dollar they could; and the longer the former could be kept in Kansas, the greater their profits. Hence they have not only endeavored to prevent those who were originally in their charge, from being returned, to their homes, but have made every effort in their power, to get the others, who had followed the U. S. Army for protection to place themselves under their care and guardianship; which the Indians, thus far, have had the good sense to protest against. The latter well know that they have not only been unnecessarily kept from their homes, but also, that they are the victims of a corrupt swindle.

I trust the government will cause a thorough investigation into this whole subject connected with the Refugee Indians; and if the developement is not thereby made, that some individuals, holding positions as Agents and Superintendents, have had their pockets well lined with the profits from contracts, then the management of the affairs of the Refugee Indians, will have been greatly misjudged, by all those who have observant, of their operations.

The advantages of taking the Indians home this fall, are briefly these: the Indian country is in our possession. The Indian Regiments in the U. S. Service are able to hold and occupy it. They would be much more willing and contented to do hard service, could their families be restored to their homes; and their families are equally anxious to return. There is no good reason why they should not have been taken back. There is plenty of beef and pork in the Indian country; and salt can be manufactured in abundance there.

The deficiency in grain, can be supplied from Arkansas and, but few supplies would have to be furnished by government. They could occupy their own houses with comfort, instead of passing the winter in a much colder climate, without roof or shelter and, compelled, half-clad, to wear away the tedious days and nights, shivering by a log fire, in the open air.

Another reason why they should be returned this fall is, that they might be there early in the Spring, to cultivate the soil. The season is early, commencing in March, and by putting in early vegetables, they would soon be able to furnish their own subsistence; whereas, they cannot be taken home in the spring as early as March, or in time to prepare and make a crop next season. Consequently the government must feed them and thus, corrupt officials and swindling contractors, may be enabled to prey upon them another year.

But, I am entirely content, to leave this matter to an impartial investigation, to decide whether Mr Coffin or myself, has labored most faithfully, to protect the welfare of the Indians and the interests and honor of the government.

In connection with the foregoing history of affairs, pertaining to the Indian Territory generally, I desire for the information of the War Department, to state further, the following facts in regard to such of the Indians, as have been mustered into the service of the United States. Under instructions from the War Department, in organizing the first and second Indian Regiments, white men only were made Field and Staff Officers; but no white man was mustered in as a Company Officer, though I had recommended to the Department, that at least one officer in each company, should be a white man, for the purpose of keeping the company books and taking care of the government property.

The third Regiment, under Col. W.A. Phillips, -- formerly a Major in the first Regiment -- was organized during Col. Weer's occupancy of the Indian Territory in July last. A portion of the men had previously belonged to the Rebel Regiment of Col. Drew and took part against us, in the battle of Pea Ridge; but, having been forced into the rebel ranks, they availed themselves of the first opportunity, to give evidence of their loyalty to the government.

This regiment, (the third), was organized, with twelve full companies. The officers were chosen by election and, experience in the first and second regiments, having proven the necessity, for at least, one white officer for each company, they were accordingly so organized, the first Lieutenants being selected from among the meritorious non-commissioned officers of the white volunteers, whom I discharged, to enable them to accept their promotion. This Regiment is composed entirely of Cherokees and, it is but justice to say of them, that their discipline and deportment are as good as those of other troops and, their services of as much, nay more value to the government, in this section of country, than those of any other Regiment in the Service.

The first Regiment, (Creeks), now numbers but eight companies, two others having failed to report themselves at Fort Scott, on my order to that effect, after they had left their command and gone to Le Roy as before stated. The reason of their failing to comply with my order was, probably, the influence exercised over them by their old chief, Opothleoholo; Whether they return or not, there will be no difficulty in filling that regiment with Loyal Creeks, so soon as this command reaches a point in somewhat closer proximity to their Nation. Said Regiment also saw the advantage of having one white officer in each company and accordingly, one of the Lieutenants in each of them resigned and their places were filled -- as in the case of the third Regiment -- with non-commissioned officers, selected from the white troops.

The Second Regiment was originally composed of Indians of various tribes -- Cherokees, Osages, Delawares, Shawnees and Qua-paws. They were thus organized, against my advice upon the subject and all, except the Cherokees, proved worthless as Soldiers. Of six companies, all but about twenty, deserted after the return of Genl. Salomon from the Indian Territory, in July last. Had there been an officer over them, fit to command, it might have resulted differently; but their commander, **Colonel Ritchey**, was entirely incompetent as an officer. He is now under arrest and, should be discharged from the service by order of the President. When this Regiment was last paid, about the middle of October -- payment for the 31st of August -- I ordered the fragment of the six companies, before mentioned (about 20 in all) to be paid and mustered out. The remainder were treated as deserters. The effect of this course has been salutary upon the other Indians. Since then six new companies of loyal Cherokees, have been organized and mustered into this regiment.

These Indian Regiments are all mustered as Infantry, but nearly one half of them are mounted on their own ponies and, do excellent service as mounted men, especially as scouts. They do [not] receive, or ask any pay, for the services of their horses; but in consideration of the valuable services they render, as mounted men, I have ordered their horses to be shod. As the forage is taken principally from the enemy, there is but little expense to the government on that account. Some irregularities have been permitted by me, in the cases of these Indian Regiments, viz: the employment of citizen teamsters for the Regimental transportation, as the Indians could not be made to fill the places to advantage; but recently, negroes -- slaves of rebels -- who have come within our lines, have been employed as teamsters, under the provisions of a late Act of Congress. Another irregularity, has been the detailing of white soldiers from other regiments to act as clerks and keep the company books, in the Indian Regiments and allowing them extra-duty pay, 25 cents per day therefor. Also -- in some cases -- the employment of interpreters. These were contingencies, that could not be avoided and, which the interests of the service, required to be met.

In conclusion, I may add, that the whole Indian country is now, substantially, in our possession. The Confederate or Rebel power in it is destroyed. The great majority of its people always have been loyal at heart. Many, who for a long time sided, ostensibly, with the Rebels, did so because of their inability -- in the absence of any aid afforded them, by the Federal Government and, surrounded as they were constantly, by

Confederate Agents, who made them the victims of grossly false representations -- to protect and take care of themselves.

All the circumstances, by which they were encompassed, being considered, it is by no means surprising, that they acted as they did. They availed themselves of the first opportunity they could embrace, to prove their allegiance, by tendering to the government their services. In this, they have been earnest and devoted; and, no men in the service are more patient and untiring, in their efforts to serve the government, than the Cherokee soldiers.

The rebel portion of the Indians, have become disheartened and have abandoned the hope of controlling the country. With other troops occupying north-western Arkansas, the Three Indian Regiments, are amply sufficient to hold and take care of the whole Indian Territory. They are in high spirits at the prospect of returning very soon to their own country, and are only desirous of having their families restored to their homes at an early day, which it is manifestly, the interest of the Government, as well as of the Indians, to have done with as little delay as possible.

(Abraham Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress, Series 1, General Correspondence 1833-1916)

Ritchie to Major General Samuel Curtis, dated Topeka, Kansas, December 9, 1862

Sir: I send you a copy of the orders by which I am absent from my command.

Copy.

Headquarters Department of Kansas.

In the Field, Fort Scott Sept 23, 1862

Special Order No. 39

Extract

Col John Ritchey 2d Reg^t Indian Home Guard will immediately on receipt of this order turn his command over to the officer next in rank present and report himself under arrest to the commanding officer at Fort Scott.

By order of Brig Gen^l Blunt

J. Fin Hill 1st Lieu^t 10th Kan Vol.

Act. Asst. Adj^t Genl.

Copy

Head Quarters, Fort Scott, Sept 27th, 1862

Special order No 64

Extract

Col John Ritchie of the 2^d Reg Indian Home under arrest at this Post by order of Brig Gen^l Blunt will be allowed to pass anywhere within the limits of the state of Kansas and will report to these Head Quarters upon notice by letter from the General Commanding Department.

B. S. Henning Major 3^d Wis Cav. Commanding Post.

Soon after my arrival at Topeka I received a copy of charges preferred by Major Wright a boy of twenty years and would be styled a fast young man one who I thought to young to report as unfit for duty he having a habit of Drinking and horing, he having the Clap & Pock & Piles all at the same time. I preferred that he should resign, which he was willing to do and did. I approved his resignation and Gen^l Blunt refused to receive it and ordered him back and my arrest. The other charging is made by Lieut Moody a person that I had arrested for stealing confiscated property for which he refused to account. And he made some pretentions at violence for which I detained him under arrest until he promised obedience and he having a young wife & child. I permitted him to go to Gen^l Blunt. You no doubt have been furnished an account of the charges. I claim that I having my appointment of Col[onel] from the President to rank those having appointment from the Govenors of the States. In this I feel that I am sustained by the Secretary of War in his answer to Gov. Gamble of Missouri.

Now Sir I am not only ready for trial but having tryed to be an honest man, I think I have a right to demand a tryal. I understand that my command which I had rased to 12 companies now only number 7 seven. You will oblige me by ordering me what to do.

N.B. Major Wright has been at Fort Leavenworth for the last two months and attending the theaters nightlly and away from his command.

(John Ritchie compiled military service file, 2 Indian Home Guards, Kansas Infantry, National Archives. Original misspellings are retained.)

1863

Lieutenant Colonel Frederick W. Schaurte, Second Indian Home Guard Regiment, to Acting Assistant Adjutant-General, First Brigade, Army of the Frontier, dated Fort Blunt [Fort Gibson], Cherokee Nation, Indian Territory, July 20, 1863 (extract)

SIR: I have the honor to forward to you the following report of the battle on Elk Creek, Creek Nation, July 17, 1863, in which my regiment was engaged:

I was ordered to get all my available horse in readiness to march on Thursday, July 16, 1863. My command consisted of field and staff officers, Major [M. B. C.] Wright, **Surg. A[ndrew]. J. Ritchie**, Adjutant [Ezra W.] Robinson, Chaplain J. B. Jones, and Sergt. Major Ed. Baldrige; of line officers, 4 captains, 9 first lieutenants, and 5 second lieutenants; of enlisted men, 345, 10 of whom were mounted. Total, 368.

(*Official Records*, vol. 22, part 1, p. 451)

Special Orders No. 41, Headquarters District of the Frontier, Fort Scott, Kansas, August 14, 1863

Colonel John Ritchie, 2^d Indian Home Guards having reported for duty pursuant to Special Orders of Brig. Genl. Ewing, commanding District of the Border, will repair as soon as practicable to Fort Blunt [Fort Gibson], C.N. and report in person to Colonel W. R. Judson 6th Kansas Cavalry, commanding Brigade, for duty.

By command of Major General Blunt.

(John Ritchie compiled military service file, 2 Indian Home Guards, Kansas Infantry, National Archives)

Ritchie revokes an order issued by another commander

General Orders, No. 3, Headquarters Fort Blunt, Cherokee Nation, September 18, 1863.

I. It is hereby ordered that all colored people residing within the limits of Fort Blunt, who are not officers' waiters, nor in the employment of the Government, shall, within the next eight days, remove outside the limits of the Post. If any of the said colored people desire to go North, transportation will be furnished them in the next return train, by applying to the Provost Marshal.

II. The Provost Marshal will see that this order is obeyed, and if, at the expiration of eight days, any persons who come under this order are found still living within the limits of this Post, he will cause them to be forcibly expelled.

By order of Lieut. Col. Schuarte.

Special Orders, No. 56, Headq'rs First Brigade, Camp Williams, Sept. 22, 1863.

The above Order No. 3 is hereby revoked, having been issued without proper authority, and opposed to the principles of humanity. Military orders must be lawful to be obeyed. (See Army Regulations, article 1, section1.)

By order of **John Ritchie**, Col. Commanding First Brigade, Army of the Frontier.

("Contradictory Orders," Leavenworth *Daily Times*, October 29, 1863)

Letter from "Phoenix," dated Camp at Norfolk [North Fork], Creek Nation, September 25, 1863

As the date of this letter will show, you will see that the First Brigade of the Army of the Frontier is now encamped on the north fork of the Canadian river. The

Canadian country is considered as the cornua copia of the Creek Nation, and you may be assured that “our boys” are not slow in appreciating the true worth of sweet potatoes, melons, and apples, that are to be found here. But this is the prerogative of an army, and the boys use it to the best advantage.--Our “southern friends,” when they departed this (part of the) world, bequeathed unto us their fields, well filled with ripened corn.

To give an idea of the abundance of corn south of the Arkansas river, I will just state that Colonel Cloud's brigade fed all their stock on one farm, near Fort Smith, for more than two weeks, and there was still seventy wagon loads left. And, by the way, this farm belonged to a rebel Major--the same that was Agent for the Creek Indians in Jim Buchanan's days--and it was he that embezzled, and appropriated to his own use, the Indians' annuities sent to him in gold just before the commencement of the war. Here we are forty miles from the Arkansas river, and two hundred and fifty miles from home. The boys are *sans souci*, making the best of the times; while some of the men and many of the officers are gone home on furlough. Blunt himself is gone. It is hoped that the *inutil* Schofield may soon be removed, and that Blunt, furnished with a sufficient force to drive out the rebels, may be permitted to march into Texas.

Deserters still come in from the rebel army; and we are doing “a big thing” at Fort Smith, recruiting.--“Wild Bill,” as the rebels call him, came in with eight hundred men; and a more ragged set of men I never saw, but they had the best of horses. These men have been laying in the mountains, and eluding the pursuit of the rebels ever since the war commenced, and they now hail with joy the presence of the Federal forces.--Your readers have, I presume, seen Blunt's address to the citizens of Western Arkansas.

To-day I was conversing with a rebel lieutenant, in a hospital here, who was wounded at Honey Springs. In speaking of Vallandigham, he said that he would be willing to bet two to one that Vallandigham would be elected Governor of Ohio:--He told me confidentially that they all had great faith in the peace party of the North. William Carol, of Co. F, 6th Kansas, was accidentally shot. He died in a few moments afterwards.

The resignation of Major Keale, of the 6th Kansas, has been accepted, and he left for home “by the last train.” The Major was well respected by all the men of his regiment.--They almost idolized him, and he leaves many friends behind. **Colonel Ritchie** is now in command of the 1st Brigade, during the absence of Colonel Judson. Colonel Cloud commands at Fort Smith, and Colonel Schuartie at Fort Blunt. More anon.

(Leavenworth, Kansas *Evening Bulletin*, October 8, 1863)

Letter from “Phoenix,” dated Head Quarters 1st Brigade, Camp North Fork, October 4, 1863

True to the admonition of the old adage--“Try! try! try again!”--General Cooper has essayed to open a game with the 1st Brigade, camped on the North Fork of the

Canadian river; but by the vigilance and energy of **Col. Ritchie** he was foiled in the embryo of the attempt.

Gen. Cooper, thinking it impolitic to allow us to remain undisturbed at Northfork, consuming the “fat of the land,” made arrangements to attack us, first by advancing his pickets. But he had scarcely done this when **Col. Ritchie** learned his purpose; and on the evening of the 1st inst., **Colonel Ritchie**—at the head of 300 of the 6th Kansas, 300 of the 1st Indian, with two pieces of artillery—went out to reconnoiter. He sent Company C, of the 6th, under Lieut. Phillips, to “bag” the pickets; but the bird had flown. On nearing Perryville a signal of three guns was heard, which was not a very good omen. **Ritchie** then passed to the west of Cooper’s camp, and finally getting between him and Fort Washata, passing through a part of the Chickasaw Nation, capturing many prisoners—Among others he captured a Chickasaw captain, who expressed himself much surprised at our kind treatment, and said that when taken he expected nothing but death. The captain said that many of his tribe would be glad to join us. After entreating and assuring the **colonel** that he would return the next morning, he was allowed to go to his home; and, true to his promises, the next morning, at 8 o’clock, he was in camp. In the evening he was permitted to leave again, assuring the **colonel** that he would return in three days and bring with him 100 men. Thus we see that the Chickasaws, as well as the other Indian tribes, have been deceived, and now, having an opportunity, they are willing to return to their allegiance.

To-day, after an absence of three days, **Colonel Ritchie** returned. The information that he gained is of no small importance. He has learned Cooper’s force, and the attack has been postponed; but should it be attempted again, you need not fear the result, for the men have great confidence in **Ritchie**, and they will undoubtedly fight to the last. The Adj. Gen. Lieut. Robison, of the 1st Indian, is admired for his coolness and good demeanor, and has gained the confidence and good will of all the men.

Captain Harvey commands the 6th Kansas. The 2d Brigade is now at Scullyville, and bushwhackers there are said to be troublesome to the pickets and foraging parties.

The sanitary condition of this army is improving.

The mail brings but little reading matter. The men have subscribed for papers, but they seldom come.—Whose fault is it? Can’t some one answer, and remedy the matter? Perhaps Mr. P. M., up North, can.

(Leavenworth, Kansas *Evening Bulletin*, October 14, 1863)

Letter from “Phoenix,” dated Camp Dole, C.N., October 13, 1863

I intimated, in my last letter, that Gen. Cooper’s attack on our camp at Norfolk had been deferred by **Colonel Ritchie’s** appearance in the Chickasaw country, which

proves to be true. The calamity was not altogether averted. It was only postponed until the 9th inst., when Cooper expected to “gobble up” all of that part of the First Brigade camped at Norfolk.—Madam Rumor has been very busy in this department; but now the legitimate, sure, stern reality stares us in the face. The truth is, we have not now, nor never had, enough of troops in this district. This the enemy knows, and they are determined to attack here at the weakest point.—Even the ubiquitous Quantrell has crossed the Arkansas River, and is now maneuvering to share the booty.

On the evening of the 9th, it was ascertained that Cooper was advancing with greatly superior numbers of cavalry and artillery; and it was with not a little reluctance that we could consent to leave the land of corn. It was not until **Col. Ritchie** was fully persuaded the enemy was approaching with overwhelming numbers, that he determined to evacuate without a fight.

About 10 o'clock, P.M., we took up our line of march for the Arkansas river. Everything moved quietly and in order. The boys were cheerful; many were singing; some were singing “Get out of the Wilderness,” and some were telling stories until late at night, when everything “simmered down” into a quaker silence. As we marched north we observed a fire to our left, which we afterwards learned was Quantrell’s camp. It appears that after he drove Blunt north, he set sail for the south, with the black flag flying. He crossed the river on the 8th instant, fifteen miles above Fort Blunt. He had Blunt’s band-wagon, and it is said that he was in a full major general’s uniform.—His advance was in Federal uniform, and in this way he decoyed many. Near here he killed seventeen Cherokee Indians that were moving on the prairies. Near the Agency, he killed several negroes. While Quantrell was in camp he was attacked by Cooper, each supposing that the other was Federal. And during the excitement, Blunt’s negro escaped, whom Quantrell used as a guide, and gave us the above intelligence.

It was not long after we left Northfork, until the enemy made his appearance. The advance consisted of 3,000 cavalry. They came in on two roads, the one leading from Perryville, and the other leading from the north-west by the Methodist Mission.

A scout of the Sixth Kansas has just returned from that region. Prisoners allege that the enemy is 9,000 strong, excluding the Indians, with seventeen pieces of artillery; and some affirm that Gen. Kirby Smith is in command.

If we are to judge from the signs of the times, there will soon be a big fight or a foot-race in this region of country. On the 10th, a dispatch-bearer, named Lambert, of Company K, Sixth Kansas, was shot by some bushwhackers, near Webber’s Falls; and to complete the list, yesterday a train was captured near the same place. The train was in charge of a Lieutenant of the Thirteenth Kansas, who left this place yesterday with about 50 of the Second and 40 of the Thirteenth, en route for Fort Smith. They were attacked just as they were descending the mountain about 18 miles south of this. The boys held the train for some time; but finally the Indians commenced rushing in from the timber, and our boys were forced to yield, but not before several of the rebs had fell. The notorious Sam Gunter was killed. The enemy numbered from three to five hundred. The

casualties on our side are not yet known, as the boys are still coming in. There are yet a few missing.—Most of the men bring in their guns. It is truly strange that so many of the infantry escaped. Perhaps ere you read this the mountains south of the Arkansas river will again echo, and re-echo the roar of the cannon and the bursting of the shell. And if we fail, with whom shall the blame lie? Surely with him who withheld the troops, when it was in his power to give them. But if hard fighting, on our side, will accomplish the end, you need not fear the result.

One hundred and twenty-five men have just arrived from Fort Smith, for the Second Colored Kansas. More anon.

(Leavenworth, Kansas *Evening Bulletin*, October 22, 1863)

Letter from "Creek" to Editor Conservative, dated Camp Dole, C.N., October 20, 1863

Knowing that many of your readers are interested in the movements of the Army of the Frontier, I propose to give you a brief outline of proceedings in the First Brigade since the departure of Gen. Blunt for Fort Scott. This Brigade is now commanded by **Col. John Ritchey**, whom every Kansas man knows by reputation, if not in person. Immediately after the departure of the commanding General, **Col. Ritchey** moved with most of his force for North Fork town, about forty miles south of the Arkansas river, in the Creek country, for the purpose of recruiting the stock belonging to the command, on the corn which was abundant in that vicinity.

This force consisted of ten companies of the Sixth Kansas, under Capt. Harvey, seven companies of the First Indian, under Lieut. Col. Dole, six companies of the Second Indian, under Major Wright, and the Second Kansas Battery, commanded by Lieutenant Wilson.

The strength of the Brigade was considerably reduced, by leaving several companies of the First and Second Indian at Ft. Blunt [Fort Gibson] for garrison duty, under Lieut. Col. Schaurte, while the Third Indian was at Tahlequah, guarding the refugees stores there. On the 23d of September, this small force started out, and arrived at the town on the 25th, without meeting with anything of interest. This Creek town consists of fifteen or twenty log houses, and is about half a mile from the North Fork, and three miles above its junction with the Canadian. About two miles out was a large brick Seminary building, which was, upon our arrival there, occupied as a Rebel Hospital, and had as inmates some ten or twelve of those wounded at the battle of Honey Springs. The **Colonel** did not deem it prudent to leave them within our lines, so they were sent Southward, being furnished with transportation and an escort. Everything then moved quietly for nearly a week. Scouts, however, were continually arriving in every direction, until finally information came in that there was a camp of the enemy on Coal Creek, some forty miles to the South. **Col. Ritchey**, ever on the alert to strike a blow for the good of the cause, determined to make an effort to capture or destroy the whole party; so with a few hundred men he started in that direction. But owing to an error on the part of

the guide, he did not succeed so well as could have been desired. However, some twenty or thirty prisoners were taken, their camp destroyed, and the balance of their force retreated. Cooper, with his force, was then on the Boggy river, well down toward the Texas line.

From that time all went on smoothly till the 9th instant, when positive information came in that Cooper, who had been joined by Bankhead, with several hundred Texans, was marching upon us with a force several thousand strong. He was then only twenty miles from us, and under instructions from Gen. Blunt, **Col. Ritchey** could not fight them, but was obliged to fall back to or near to Fort Blunt. Accordingly, the order was given, and about 10 o'clock P.M., we commenced our march northward, or, in the language of a distinguished "Chieftain," we "countermarched." At daylight the next morning, the advance was at Elk Creek. There we rested till afternoon, and the following evening found us at our present camp, on the South bank of the Arkansas, five miles from Fort Blunt, having marched forty miles in about twenty hours. Nothing scarcely was lost, and nothing destroyed with the knowledge or consent of the Colonel commanding.

It was afterwards ascertained, however, that a few articles of little value had been burned by some parties in the Second Indian, rather than to take them back, although there was transportation for everything.

The day following our arrival here, two men from the Sixth Kansas were started with dispatches for Col. Cloud, at Fort Smith. On the way they were attacked by bushwhackers, and one of them, Stephen Lambert, was killed. The other, Joseph Hutchinson, escaped, having a bullet hole through his coat, passing through his pocket, and cutting the dispatches which he carried. He succeeded in making his way back to our camp. Both of these men were from company E, Captain Dobyns.

The next day a team of ten wagons, with an escort of fifty men from the Thirteenth Kansas, being on its way from Fort Blunt to Fort Smith, was furnished with an additional escort of thirty men from this Brigade, and when near Webber's Falls, was attacked by about three hundred of the enemy, and all the wagons taken, with a loss of one Captain on their side. Our loss was eight killed and several missing.

Quantrile, after murdering Gen. Blunt's men at Baxter's Springs, came down and joined Cooper, on the Canadian. He passed to the West of us about ten miles. Near the Creek Agency he took nine negroes prisoners, and then asked for one among them who had been raised in the country. One presented himself, and [Quantrill] promised to save and give him his liberty if he would pilot him by the nearest route to Cooper's camp, avoiding our forces. The others he killed on the spot. But strange to tell, the negro guide took the bushwhacker and his men through, and Quantrile kept his word by setting him free again, and he arrived at our camp two days after, to tell his story. He reports Quantrile's force at 350, and says that the instruments belonging to Gen. Blunt's Band, together with the General's military suit, were presented to Cooper, causing great jollification in the rebel camp.

The Second Brigade, under Col. Cloud, is at Fort Smith, sixty miles below here while the Third, Col. Bowen, is at Van Buren, seven miles further down.

(Leavenworth, Kansas *Daily Conservative*, November 1, 1863)

Letter from "Phoenix," dated Fort Smith, Arkansas, November 21, 1863

In consequence of an interruption of the express, via Fort Scott, you are without my last correspondence. Our mail now comes by the way of Springfield, Mo., and all persons writing to their friends in the Army of the Frontier, will do well by addressing their letters accordingly.

The enemy still "keeps his distance," notwithstanding his threatening maneuvers. The enemy appears to be posted in our front from Ft. Washataw to Arkadelphia, a distance from us which they considered perfectly safe, but Col. Cloud gave them, a few days ago, quite a "wakening up." Knowing that the enemy had a cavalry force at Mt. Ida, about 100 miles from here, and 40 from Arkadelphia, to act as a flank guard, he sent an officer (I think Capt. Menser) with about 100 men, who did the thing as nicely as could be desired. He took them by surprise, killed and took prisoners more than one hundred; destroyed 5,000 rounds of ammunition, and destroyed a large building full of flour. At present the enemy is no trouble to us, with the exception of bushwhackers, who continue to annoy us. We are now in possession of a very large scope of country south of the Arkansas river. Lieut. Col. More, of the 3d Arkansas, is stationed at Dardanelle, Col. Johnson at Waldron with a large force; some at Scullyville, and also at other points.

The 6th Kansas came down from Fort Blunt on the 18th. They were six days on the road, their mules and horses being so poor that they could not march more than twelve miles per day. Their stock was without corn for more than six weeks. It is not known why **Col. Ritchie** kept them there so long, but no doubt he thought it *pro bono publico*. On the 17th Col. Phillips left for Fort Blunt. The 1st and 2d Indian regiments, with other troops are at Northfork.

Here has been a trick of political chicanery attempted, which, I think has been nipped in its embryo. Representations have been made to certain officials that the Rev. Wm. Wilson, Chaplain of the 6th Kansas, had not been regularly mustered, and in consequence of which the paymaster has been ordered not to pay him. The person that made the representations has attempted to get another in his place. But when this was known in the regiment, a petition to the Col. of the 6th was circulated in favor of the present Chaplain, and when I last saw it, nearly every officer and soldier in the regiment had signed it.

Things everywhere look promising in this district. I have stated before, am now confirmed in my opinion, that there is a great, loyal sentiment in the Arkansas Valley. I thought it to be the case last December, when we were at Van Buren, now it is

fully demonstrated. All that is required to make Arkansas a loyal State, is to drive the rebel army from their midst and give them sufficient assurance that they *will be protected*. It is true that there are rebels here, strong southern advocates; but the great many have become tired of the *imaginary Independent* Southern Confederacy. The trade which is kept up among them tends to win their affections to U.S. It has been said by Cowper, "touch a man's purse and you touch his heart;" and I think it is equally true here. We buy their wheat,--loyal men's wheat--their hogs, or anything they may have for sale, and give them greenbacks in exchange, while they in return buy goods of our sutlers and merchants for one eighth as much as they would be obliged to pay to the Confederates.

Paymasters Sleeper and Adams are here, and to-morrow will commence disbursing, then you may look for a flood of greenbacks in Kansas, for Kansas soldiers never forget their dear ones at home. The sanitary condition of the army is remarkably good. Gen. McNeal is at his ease--not much. Gen. Blunt is here at present; when he will leave for Leavenworth is not known. Col. Cloud will go north on business soon. More anon.

(Leavenworth, Kansas *Evening Bulletin*, December 7, 1863)

Anonymous, dated Fort Smith, Arkansas, November 21, 1863. This is a near duplicate of the preceding letter.

Our mail now comes by the way of Springfield, Mo., and all persons writing to their friends in the Army of the Frontier, will do well by addressing their letters accordingly.

The enemy still "keeps his distance." notwithstanding his threatening maneuvers. The enemy appears to be posted in our front from Ft. Washitaw to Arkadelphia, a distance from us which they considered perfectly safe, but Col. Cloud gave them, a few days ago, quite a "wakening up." Knowing that the enemy had a cavalry force at Mt. Ida, about 100 miles from here, and 40 miles from Arkadelphia, to act as a flank guard, he sent Capt. Menser, with about 100 men, who did the thing as nicely as could be desired. He took them by surprise, killed and took prisoners more than one hundred; destroyed 5,000 rounds of ammunition, and destroyed a large building full of flour. At present the enemy is no trouble to us, with the exception of bushwhackers, who continue to annoy us. We are now in possession of a large scope of country south of the Arkansas river. Lieut. Col. More, of the 3d Arkansas, is stationed at Dardanelle, Col. Johnson at Waldron with a large force; some at Scullyville, and also at other points.

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(Marysville, Kansas *Big Blue Union*, December 12, 1863)

Captain A. C. Spilman, Third Indian Home Guard Regiment, to Colonel William A. Phillips, regarding the skirmish near Sheldon's Place, Barren Fork, Indian Territory, dated Fort Gibson, Cherokee nation, Indian Territory, December 23, 1863 (extract)

....As my instructions were to proceed with all possible dispatch to re-enforce Major Foreman, at Rhea's Mill, I resumed the march as soon as satisfied that the enemy had no intention of returning.

Surg. [Andrew J.] Ritchie, Second Indian Regiment, who was in attendance upon the wounded, deemed it advisable to leave them at Roach's house, 4 miles from the scene of the engagement, which was accordingly done. I went into camp at Duncan's place about sundown, having accomplished a march of about 18 miles. The next morning we were again in motion at daylight, and, without further hinderance or incident worthy of note, joined Major Foreman, at Rhea's Mills, that evening.

(*Official Records*, vol. 22, part 1, p. 783)

1864

Letter from "Phoenix," dated Fort Smith, Arkansas, January 12, 1864

The cold weather still continues to the discomfiture of the "natives" and the amusement of the soldiers, who take delight in telling the citizens that this snow and cold weather has been sent for the express benefit of those that have lived in a northern

climate. The snow, which was five inches deep, lay more than a week, but is now melting slowly away.

The Second Kansas, camped twelve miles below Waldron, are doing a fine thing in the way of hunting bushwhackers. About thirty of these gents were brought up from below a few days ago.

Re-enlisting in the veteran corps was going on quite briskly up to the 5th inst., notwithstanding the meagre inducements held out to the men who enlisted on "one-fourth rations." The train from Little Rock will be here in a few days. Gen. McNeal has gone North like his predecessors; for what purpose, it is not known. Col. Judson, of the 6th Kansas, is in command of the district of the Frontier. The corpulent Col. with his smiling countenance and in his obliging manner, manages the affairs to the satisfaction of all.

On the 10th it was reported that the train on the way up from Little Rock had been attacked by a force with the purpose of destroying it. A part of the 12th and 10th Kansas regiments were sent to the deliverance of the train.

Col. Ritchie goes north to-day. He has been ordered north to settle his ordnance affairs, and I am told by one that is acquainted with his military affairs that he has nothing in that line to account for except *one sabre*. It appears that the **Col.** has not learned to court the graces of those that are his superior officers. Among other things he advocates the doctrine that officers and soldiers should lead an honest and virtuous life, which is appreciated by many of the soldiers; but judging from the actions of others they do not agree with him. The **Col.** will not obey the teachings of the old adage: "When in Rome you are, you should do as Romans do."

The mail from the north now comes regular.

(Leavenworth, Kansas *Evening Bulletin*, January 25, 1864)

*T. J. Anderson, Assistant Adjutant General, to **Ritchie**, dated Head Quarters, District of the Frontier, Fort Smith, Arkansas, March 20, 1864*

The Major General Commanding directs that you proceed to Mackey's Salt Works and join your command, making the Headquarters of the regiment if that place (Salt Works.)

You will so dispose your forces as to give security and protection to that portion of the Cherokee Nation bordering upon Western Arkansas, and extending west to a line running North and South ten (10) miles east of Fort Gibson, reporting direct to these Head Quarters. As it is expected that the force under your command will enforce all police regulations over the territory under your jurisdiction, you will therefore use every vigilance in protecting all loyal citizens in their persons and property. All detachments of

soldiers sent out on duty, must be under the command of a commissioned officer, who will be strictly responsible for the conduct of the men under his charge.

No leave of absence or furloughs will be given except approved at these Head Quarters, and all who shall absent themselves from the command with leave or under orders, will be treated as Deserters.

(John Ritchie compiled military service file, 2 Indian Home Guards, Kansas Infantry, National Archives)

Major General Samuel R. Curtis to Colonel William A. Phillips, dated Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, March 23, 1864 (extract)

DEAR COLONEL: Your private letter of the 13th is just received. I suppose a letter of mine, written through General Blunt, with directions for him to read and forward to you, would satisfy you as to some matters of which you write. I have not seen or heard any expression from General Blunt or other officers which were unjust or unfavorable to you, and hope no feeling will allow you to swerve from your proper line of duty. We have to take position according to rank and not according to inclination, and not always according to fitness. I found **Colonel Ritchie** off duty without charges against him, and ordered him immediately to be placed on duty according to his rank.

Having confidence in your abilities to carry on the work and otherwise manage affairs at Fort Gibson, and having myself determined to augment the force at salt-works, I suggested the location of that Second Regiment at that place to report direct to General Blunt, because, as I learned, the colonel ranked you and might disturb my previous arrangements. I have also heard that **Ritchie** seems "crazy" at times. If I believed this I would require charges or other process against him, but I do not credit such expressions. It will not do for me to take notice of mere slang denunciations. Tangible evidence, procured with due notice, should always be required, or the report of some credible person carefully presented in writing before I would make even preliminary steps injurious to a comrade in arms.

(*Official Records*, vol. 34, part 2, pp. 711-712)

Major General James G. Blunt to Major General Samuel R. Curtis, dated Fort Smith, Arkansas, March 30, 1864

GENERAL: In your letter of the 18th instant you remark that you are in receipt of a letter from the honorable Secretary of the Interior, in which he speaks of his "misadventures," "caused last year by promises or expeditions held out by commands in the Indian Territories which were not realized." Since my official connection with the Indians and Indian troops, knowing well the Indian character, I have been very careful to make them no promises except such as I knew I could fulfill; and having always

complied with all my promises, I believe that I have had and still continue to have their entire confidence, as expressed in the resolutions of the Cherokee council last winter, copies of which I inclose.

I am aware that promises have been made the Indians at different times by their immediate commanders, Colonels Phillips and **Ritchie**, that never were fulfilled; but such promises were made without my knowledge or direction. I will see that they do not cause the same difficulty again. I am not at a loss to understand the reason why the Secretary of the Interior intimates that General Mitchell would be preferred to command the Indian Territories. While lately in Washington I observed that General Mitchell was importuning the Secretary of War and the Indian Department to be assigned to this command. The letter you refer to from the honorable Secretary of the Interior is doubtless the result of his (General Mitchell's) efforts, and the reason assigned for the preference was the best that could be found.

(Official Records, vol. 34, part 2, pp. 789-790)

Major General James G. Blunt to Major General Samuel R. Curtis, dated Fort Smith, Arkansas, March 30, 1864 (extract)

GENERAL: For your information I have the honor to inform you that the Indian Territory within our lines is unusually quiet and undisturbed. The Second Regiment Indian Home Guards is at Mackey's Salt-Works, with instructions to report directly to these headquarters. I found it necessary to detach them from Colonel Phillips' command, as **Colonel Ritchie** was the ranking officer and it was not expedient that they should operate together. The First and Third Regiments are at or near Fort Gibson. I intend ordering Major Foreman with a part of the Third Regiment to Scullyville, Choctaw Nation, to serve as an outpost to this place. Three companies of the Fourteenth Kansas Cavalry are under my command; one of them I have ordered to Fort Gibson to do mounted service; the other two companies, five companies of the Eleventh Cavalry; two sections of the second Kansas Battery, and Company A, Second Kansas Cavalry, are here; these comprise all the troops under my command.

(Official Records, vol. 34, part 2, pp. 791-792)

Assistant Adjutant-General T. M. Scott (Confederate) to Brigadier General S. B. Maxey (Confederate), dated Fort Towson, Indian Territory, April 12, 1864, enclosing this statement by William Green

The First Indian Regiment, numbering about 1,600, is camped on both sides of the Arkansas River, part between Grand River and Arkansas, and a part south of the river in the neighborhood of the agency. The Second Indian Regiment, numbering about 600, and commanded by **Colonel Ritchie**, is at Mackey's Lick. The Third Indian Regiment is at

Fort Gibson, Major Foreman commanding. Colonel Phillips commands the brigade, and has his headquarters in Dan Gunter's houses. All pretty well supplied with rations, and expecting a large train from Fort Scott the latter part of this month. Part of the women and families of the Creeks are in camp with the First Regiment; a part at the Government agency, and expected to come down with this train. The Pin families draw rations at Fort Gibson. All the Indian troops are infantry. There is neither white nor negro troops at Fort Gibson, and about a week ago they were looking for a company of mounted men from Fort Smith.

The Fourteenth Kansas, Moonlight commanding, about 600 or 700 strong, composed of Shawnees, Delawares, &c., with deserters from the Southern Army, and fellows taken out of jails and guard-houses, is at Fayetteville. **Ritchie**, in a speech a few days ago, promised protection to people engaged in planting crops for 20 miles around. Phillips made a like speech at Fort Gibson. Common talk is that they will soon be disbanded to go home and make their crops. They are confident in the success of the column gone down to meet General Price, and say when that fight is over their troubles will be at an end, and they can then go home and stay there. The expected train, it is supposed, will take the route west of Grand River. Crab-grass did not stay in the bottom near Fort Smith, but returned to Fort Gibson. After Phillips' raid, Major Foreman went up Arkansas River, and drove in about 2,000 head of cattle. The pickets from Fort Gibson stand only about one-quarter of a mile from that place.

(Official Records, vol. 34, part 2, pp. 762-764)

Assistant Adjutant-General T. M. Scott (Confederate) to Brigadier General H. E. McCulloch (Confederate), dated Fort Towson, Creek Nation, April 12, 1864 (extract)

The latest news from Forts Smith and Gibson represent that on the 2d instant General Cloud and staff arrived there from Fort Scott, and were to be followed immediately by 5,000 troops from Kansas. General Thayer, when he left there for the south, left four pieces of field artillery and about 600 troops. On the 2d, the First Arkansas Cavalry arrived at Fort Smith from Fayetteville. There is at Gibson the First Indian Regiment, numbering about 1,600, camped on both sides of the Arkansas River; the Second Indian Regiment, numbering about 600, **Colonel Ritchie** commanding, at Mackey's Lick; the Third Indian Regiment at Fort Gibson, Major Foreman commanding, Colonel Phillips commanding the brigade, well supplied with rations. All the Indian troops are infantry; there are neither white nor negro troops at Gibson. One company mounted troops expected from Fort Smith.

(Official Records, vol. 34, part 3, p. 774)

Special Orders No. 33, Head Quarters, District of the Frontier, Department of Arkansas, Fort Smith, May 1, 1864

Col. John Ritchie 2nd Indian Home Guards, will, on receipt hereof, report to his regiment at Mackey's Salt Works C.N., under arrest, and is confined to the limits of his camp.

By Command of Col. W. R. Judson

(John Ritchie compiled military service file, 2 Indian Home Guards, Kansas Infantry, National Archives)

Captain Greene Durbin, Assistant Quartermaster, to Lieutenant George W. Huston, Fourteenth Kansas Cavalry, dated Fort Smith, Arkansas, June 14, 1864

You will, upon the arrival of the [steamboat *J. R.] Williams* at Fort Gibson, see that the freight of the boat is properly unloaded. You will make an inspection of the quartermaster's depot at that post and report to me the condition of the transportation and in what manner Lieutenant Robb is managing his department. Upon the return trip of the boat see that she loads on all the lime that is on the bank above the mouth of the Illinois ready for shipment. The barrels that are on the boat will be left as you go up for the purpose of being filled with lime. See that all the salt that **Colonel Ritchie** has at the mouth of the Illinois is loaded on the boats upon her return trip.

By ordered of Brigadier General John M. Thayer:

(*Official Records*, vol. 34, part 4, p. 687)

Brigadier General John M. Thayer to Major General Frederick Steele, dated Fort Smith, Arkansas, June 22, 1864

GENERAL: I have the honor to report that on the 15th instant Captain Greene Durbin, quartermaster of this district, sent the steam ferry-boat *J.R. Williams*, with my approval, to Fort Gibson, for the purpose of transporting quartermaster's stores and bringing back to this post a load of salt and lime. Messrs. McDonald and Fuller, contractors for furnishing goods to the Indians in the Cherokee Nation, under my advice forwarded a lot of Indian goods by the same steamer to Fort Gibson. Being bound by orders from the War Department to furnish military protection to Messrs. McDonald and Fuller, in the transmission of their supplies to the Indians, I preferred that they should send these goods by steamer rather than send an escort by land.

An escort consisting of 1 sergeant and 24 privates, under the command of Second Lieutenant Horace A. B. Cook, Company K, Twelfth Kansas Volunteer Infantry, was placed on the boat. The boat having proceeded up the river about 70 miles, was fired upon by three pieces of artillery, as reported, posted on the south side of river, and a force reported to be about 400 men. The boat moved up toward the north bank of the river and

grounded. Lieutenant Cook and his men immediately left the boat and fled. Lieutenant Cook arrived here the next afternoon about 4 o'clock, but could give me no satisfactory information as to whether the boat was disabled or not. He reports that the captain of the boat and Lieutenant Huston, regimental quartermaster Fourteenth Kansas Cavalry, who was on his way to Gibson, took the yawl and went over to the enemy. They have not been heard from since. This fact, if it be true, explains the manner in which the enemy were enabled to reach the boat. It turns out, however, that the enemy upon reaching her run her across the river and discharged her freight on a sand-bar.

The next day, about 10 o'clock, **Colonel Ritchie**, of the Second Indian Regiment (home guard), reached the north bank of the river opposite the boat, and with 40 men, by musketry firing across the river, drove the enemy both from the boat and from the freight, and kept them from it until the rise in the river washed away the greater part of the goods. The enemy, however, about the time **Colonel Ritchie** arrived, fired the boat and destroyed her. The escort on the boat were, in my judgment, fully able to have prevented the enemy from reaching the boat. If Lieutenant Cook had posted his men in proper positions on the bank he could have prevented the enemy from reaching her until he would have had time to send to me for assistance. I regard the conduct of Lieutenant Cook as a most unjustifiable and criminal abandonment of his post of duty, as it was in his power to have saved the boat. I therefore respectfully recommend that he be dismissed the service. Immediately upon receiving intelligence of the disaster I sent an adequate force, under Colonel Crawford, Second Kansas (colored), up the south bank of the river to rout and capture the enemy if possible, but they had fled.

(Official Records, vol. 34, part 4, pp. 503-504)

J. Utt to Friend Beeler, dated Quartermaster's Office, June 22, 1864

On the 15th inst., a Steam Ferry Boat was ordered to Ft. Gibson, with Commissary and Quartermaster's stores, and one hundred thousand dollars in Indian Goods, for the Cherokees, Creeks and other Indians. Above twenty-five miles above Ft. Smith, "Old Stanwatie," with three pieces of artillery, and some 1,200 "mixed troops," fired into the boat. Lieut. G. M. Houston, Quartermaster 14th Kansas, was in charge. He had been under arrest for two months; that morning he was relieved and assigned to the command of the Boat. The second shot carried away the Pilot House, and disabled the engines; the boat drifted to the north side of the Arkansas, from the rebels. But Houston ordered the skiff around, and he and the Captain of the boat went across the river, and surrendered to the rebels, at the same time advising a Lieutenant who had charge of twenty-five men, comprising the escort, to surrender, which he refused to do. Every man arrived safe from the boat, without any loss whatever, and subsequently arrived at Ft. Smith. Heavy strictures are laid upon Houston's conduct, and also the Lieutenant commanding escort. **Col. Ritchey**, who was commanding at the Saline works on the Illinois river, Cherokee Nation, heard the cannon, and repaired to the scene of action promptly, arrived in time to drive the rebels from the boat, who had been enabled to reach the Steamer by means of the "yawl" that Houston took to the rebels when he surrendered,

otherwise, they could not have done so, as the Arkansas was very high, and they had no boats.

Col. Crawford, Second Colored, was dispatched to the neighborhood with his Regiment, and succeeded in engaging the enemy, and giving him a handsome thrashing, capturing three pieces of artillery, the identical ones that had been used upon the boat.

The 13th Kansas is doing fine, and I think they will be acclimated here. The health of the 14th is improving, and bids fair to be a healthy set of men again. The Camden expedition was a hard one, but the troops are fast recuperating.

(White Cloud, Kansas *Chief*, July 21, 1864.)

Letter from "Phoenix," dated Fort Gibson, C.N., June 25, 1864

We have just arrived here from Fort Scott, and I cannot say that we had a very pleasant and interesting trip, as the only beings that showed us much courtesy were mosquitoes.

We learn that the enemy, a few days ago, captured and burned at the mouth of the Canadian, a small steamboat. Our forces from Fort Smith failed to effect much—so far as we have learned—except to give them a good chase.

The river has a good stage of water, and we are receiving at Fort Smith a large amount of supplies, a part of which constitute 4,000 bushels of corn for the use of the cavalry.

Every nook and corner within miles of this place is occupied by refugee Indians that lately arrived from Kansas.

Col. Phillips is still in command here and **Col. Ritchie** is operating the salt works on Illinois creek, twenty miles east of this place. There have been heavy rains here. The sanitary condition of the Indians as yet is good, and they enjoy themselves well in comparative quietude.

(Leavenworth, Kansas *Evening Bulletin*, July 6, 1864)

Major John A. Foreman, Third Indian Home Guard Regiment, to Colonel C. W. Blair, dated Cabin Creek, Indian Territory, September 20, 1864

The train has been captured on the 19th instant, one-half burned and the balance carried away. The destruction is complete. Colonel Williams, with his brigade, came upon them at Pryor's Creek, and after an artillery duel, the enemy retreated southwest.

They crossed the Arkansas River, strewing the road with quartermaster and commissary stores. On reaching this point I found **Doctor [Andrew J.] Ritchie** at his post, and only for his remaining the wounded would have been murdered and the hospital sacked, all of which has been saved by his prompt and efficient conduct. I will finish burying the dead to-morrow, and collect such Government property that I find scattered, of which I will report to-morrow. I will move on the 22d to the Neosho Crossing. There I will await orders, expecting such from Fort Scott, to escorting the next train down.

(Official Records, vol. 41, part 1, p. 766)

Major John A. Foreman, Third Indian Home Guard Regiment, to Colonel Williams, dated Cabin Creek, Indian Territory, September 20, 1864

SIR: In compliance with orders, I have proceeded to this point. I have found en route at Wolf Creek two graves of men killed by your artillery duel. The train had come to that point, and there they destroyed a large amount of quartermaster's and commissary stores. The road was lined for miles with flour; the destruction was complete. They burned at least one-half the train. I will remain here to-morrow for the purpose of collecting what stores I can. There is considerable that may yet be saved. I found **Doctor [Andrew J.] Ritchie** here tending to the wounded men. The doctor has done well, for was alone, and by remaining at this post he has saved the hospital and its stores. The dead were lying on the field. I have had part of them buried this evening. The enemy has carried away eighty-six prisoners for Tyler, Tex. There are several wagons, with their loads, still remaining. These I will collect and make a full report to-morrow.

(Official Records, vol. 41, part 3, p. 267)

Major General Samuel R. Curtis to Major General Alfred Pleasonton, dated Camp at Shanghai, October 26, 1864 (extract)

....**Colonel Ritchie**, of my staff, as I am informed, was arrested by yourself or some of your officers. While I directed him to obey the arrest, it is proper for me to express some doubts of the propriety of an official act of this sort toward an officer acting, as he was, under my orders, and I desire that the matter may be reported at your earliest convenience.

(Official Records, vol. 41, part 1, pp. 339-340)

Major General Alfred Pleasonton to Major General Samuel R. Curtis, dated Fort Scott, Kansas, October 27, 1864-daylight (extract)

....In reference to the prisoners captured in the late engagements, the misunderstanding doubtless originated from some of your staff officers not comprehending your orders. The Missouri troops felt hurt in not being allowed any participation in guarding the prisoners, and this feeling was increased by a **Colonel Ritchie**, who in the most violent manner began to seize hold of officers of my staff and declare they were arrested by your orders. In this manner he arrested your provost-marshal, and as no remonstrance of mine had any effect on his conduct, I directed General Sanborn to keep him quiet until I could report to you. I repaired to your quarters, but found you had left, and I then requested Major McKenny, your aide-de-camp, to report the facts to you, which he promised to do. A number of persons have since informed me that **Colonel Ritchie's** mind is so weak that he is not fit to be intrusted with any business of importance. I trust this explanation will be satisfactory. Your arrangement for Captain Hall, provost-marshal, to take charge of the prisoners and escort them to Leavenworth, shall be strictly carried out, and I will see that he is furnished a sufficient guard, of both Kansas and Missouri troops, if he desires it. I have heard of no imputations or reflections upon the Kansas troops, and my desire is that the Missouri troops should serve with them in perfect harmony.

(Official Records, vol. 41, part 4, p. 286)

Major General Samuel R. Curtis to Major General Alfred Pleasonton, dated Camp at Coon Creek, October 27, 1864—5:30 p.m. (extract)

....As to the matter of **Colonel Ritchie**, I hope you will authorize his discharge, and I will guarantee no further consideration of the subject will be entertained. He belongs to another department, and as an act of courtesy I accepted his services as a volunteer aide, but do not wish you to make anybody accountable for his extraordinary and perhaps excessive zeal.

(Official Records, vol. 41, part 4, pp. 286-287)

Report of Major General Samuel Curtis, dated Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, January __ 1865 (extract)

....My volunteer aides, Honorables Senators Lane and Pomeroy, were earnest and very efficient in the field. Senator Pomeroy was especially active in bringing the militia forward and correcting their impressions as to the movements, while Senator Lane's experience in former campaigns in Mexico and upon the Kansas border enabled him to be of much service in the field everywhere. Colonel Crawford, Colonel Roberts, **Colonel Ritchie**, and Colonel Cloud, of my volunteer aides, all of whom had experience and zeal to stimulate their exertions, were active, efficient, and useful throughout this and other days of this campaign.

(Official Records, vol. 41, part 1, p. 484)

Colonel W. A. Phillips, 3d Brigade, 3d Division, 7th Army Corps, to Brigadier General Cyrus Bussey, dated Fort Gibson, Cherokee Nation, April 7, 1865

Sir: I deemed it better to notify you that **Col. John Ritchie** came to Fort Gibson from Kansas, yesterday morning.

He had been in command of his regiment for a short time, last Spring, at M^cKey's Lick, but was ordered to Fort Smith, where he remained, under arrest, or otherwise, until October. He was then allowed to proceed to Kansas, with some refugees, under an order of Thayer's, at the beginning of October, last. He comes here without any orders.

I suggested to him the propriety of proceeding to Fort Smith, or Little Rock. He asked to stay a day or two, to see if a boat could not take him down.

In the meantime, he has been seeing the parties here, who are, or expect to get in trouble, by the legal investigations. They can do nothing. If he attempts any mutinous conduct, I shall send him under arrest to Fort Smith. In the meantime, as the quietest mode, I would suggest that he be ordered to Fort Smith, or Little Rock. Gen'l Reynolds assured me, positively, that he would not be permitted to interfere with the command here.

I send down Lieut Col Schaurte to report the circumstance, and for some other business.

My own belief is, that **Col Ritchie** was mustered (as I know he must have been, he being paid from April 22^d, 1862. Consequently, as the regiment is now very small; and, as he has served for three years as Colonel, he ought to be mustered out, as there was no command to retain him. There is enough for a Lieut Col's command. In any event, I presume there is no design of leaving my portion of the Command to such an accident as his control. The only thing that makes it at all delicate, is the number of guilty parties, who hope for any change that might bring relief.

(John Ritchie compiled military service file, 2 Indian Home Guards, Kansas Infantry, National Archives)

Special Orders No. 46, Head Quarters, 3d Division, 7th Army Corps, dated Fort Smith, Arkansas, April 9, 1865

Col John Ritchie 2nd Indian Home Guards, having served three years as Colonel of said Regiment, is hereby ordered to report to Major General Reynold's, Commanding Department of Arkansas, for muster out of service, his Regiment having been reduced

below the minimum. The Quarter Master's Department will furnish the necessary transportation for himself and one horse.

By Command of Brig. Gen. CYRUS BUSSEY.

(John Ritchie compiled military service file, 2 Indian Home Guards, Kansas Infantry, National Archives)

Special Orders No, 100, Headquarters, Department of Arkansas, dated Little Rock, Arkansas, April 26, 1865

Colonel John Ritchie, 2nd regiment Indian Home Guards, is hereby detailed as a member of the General Court Martial convened in Special Orders, No. 66, Extract 2, from these Headquarters, dated March 16th, 1865, and which is now in session in this city.

By command of MAJOR-GENERAL J.J. REYNOLDS.

(John Ritchie compiled military service file, 2 Indian Home Guards, Kansas Infantry, National Archives)