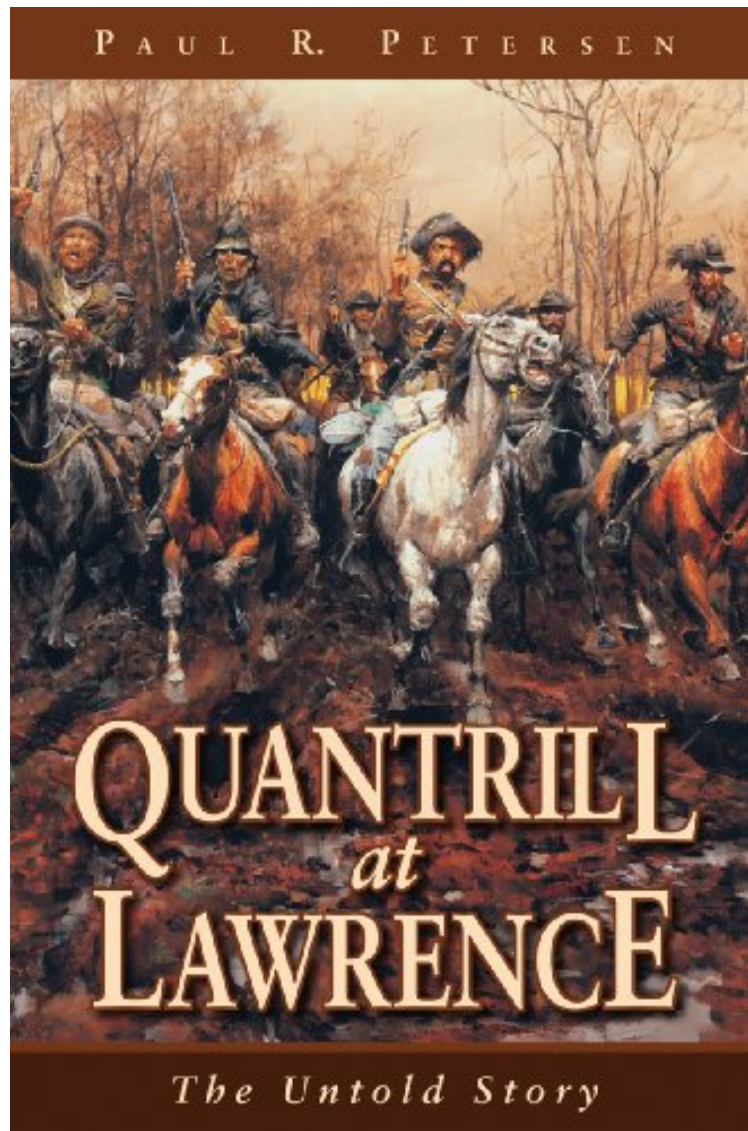


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Quantrill at Lawrence: The Untold Story

Paul Petersen

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Paul Petersen : Quantrill at Lawrence: The Untold Story before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Quantrill at Lawrence: The Untold Story:

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. A Usefu Balance to the StoryBy Richard DerhamIf history is about what was it like to the people living through it, Petersen takes us into the world of those who lived in western Missouri, those who raided Lawrence, and helps us feel the world as they saw it, and to understand why they acted as they did..I rate this book five stars if it is part of a balanced reading program. If it is the only one, I rate it as two stars. Explanation to follow.In the past three months I have read several books about Quantrill, Lawrence and the border

war. It is useful to read any book on a controversial subject with a critical mind, trying to read through the authors statements to the underlying facts. I had already reached some conclusions that Peterson reaches, but in other areas he is too one-sided, not to say polemic. As a combat Marine, Peterson brings a personal perspective not obvious in any of the more academic histories. He is conscious of the difficulties of good intelligence and good execution in any combat operation. His conclusion: In simple audacity, planning and performance the raid was considered one of the most daring light cavalry raids of the war. No other leader but Quantrill could have possibly carried off the raid successfully. Coming from a combat veteran, these conclusions cannot be cavalierly dismissed. Petersen gives valuable insight into the tactical situation and planning of the approach route and the withdrawal route. His extensive chapter on the planning supports his assertion that this was not a mere raid but was a carefully planned military operation. Where sources differ, Petersen accepts the version of interpretation favorable to Quantrill. Fair enough; the hostile version is readily accessible to us all. (And, like most wars, the victors wrote the early history. Many survivors of Lawrence wrote of their experience; few of the raiders did.) I believe he is off base when he states that the death of several women prisoners ten days earlier when their prison collapsed was the most heinous and barbarous act committed by either side, and other writers have concluded that the deaths were negligence or Accident. He calls it murder. That debate is sterile, and deflects from the real point: whatever the cause of the prison collapse, the rage and grief of the relatives of the women killed (including Bloody Bill Anderson) is an understandable motivation for reciprocal brutality. His coverage of the Jayhawker depredations and brutality in Western Missouri in 1861-62, almost to the point of tedium, serves as a useful backdrop to the reciprocal brutality in Lawrence. Likewise fifty or a hundred one-paragraph summaries of different men transforms them from faceless marauders into real individuals with real life histories that led them to Quantrill. Throughout this book, events come into a different perspective in Petersen's treatment. Where Leslie focuses most attention on the killings, Peterson tells many stories of men who got away (including U.S. Army men). Yes, many were able to escape. Where a man on the Kill List is identified by other writers as a Lawrence shopkeeper, Minister or by other occupation, Petersen frequently identifies the same person as a member of the militia, as an active Jayhawker or as a participant in the devastation of Osceola. Both can be true. Knowing only one or the other fact leaves a much flatter understanding of what went on, and why and of the human equation. Specifically, an identification of a victim as a business owner gives an overall impression of indiscriminate slaughter (which forces one to wonder why 450 raiders killed only 150-200 men). Leslie's account makes a stronger emotional impact. Petersen focuses the reader instead on justification as perceived in a partisan warfare context and gives a fuller perspective of the raid as seen by Quantrill's men. Which is true? Well, both are. Can two different truths coexist? Of course. Reading the Leslie account (see below) of the Lawrence killings is justifiably chilling. Should we feel equally appalled at the reprisals over the next three weeks more Western Missouri farmers were killed on their farms than men had died in Lawrence? More farmsteads destroyed. Is it less chilling because it happened over three weeks, one or two men at a time, on isolated farmsteads? Or is it more chilling? If we can accept the depredations of Western Missouri in Sept 1863 by men wearing Union blue as an understandable revenge for Lawrence, can we truly deny any human validity for the reaction of the young men of Western Missouri to the depredations of the Jayhawkers, the destruction of their farms, the murder of their relatives? Can we deny that they, too, were fighting for home and family? The conclusion I have reached after reading several works from different perspectives is this: the leading Jayhawkers in 1861-2 (Jennison, Lane) were brutal, vicious, evil. Some of the bushwhackers (Bloody Bill Anderson) were so as well. For most, and I include Quantrill, they were fighting for cause and country, for home and family under conditions of the border partisan warfare. And many of them (Quantrill included) fought with honor. The book is not without flaws, some simply the result of the authors background. He is not a professional historian. There are technical problems with his footnotes. Which are sparse and don't always match. (A useful and relevant quote he ascribes to Gregg is actually from McCorkles memoirs; a quote from Cole Younger he footnotes as being from Yungers memoirs is not. Is it from a different Younger source?) He is tendentious in places. The book reads more like a brief for the defense than objective history. Accept it as is, read it with other books, and it provides substantial information not available elsewhere and gives the reader a broader perspective of the war on the border. Read by itself, Quantrill at Lawrence is a one-sided presentation, albeit a side not often well-told. Read other books without it, the reader has also missed an important dimension. For a fuller picture, read also: *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, by Edward Leslie, a must-read biography of Quantrill with about 100 pages detailing the events and murders during the raid. That portion is chilling reading. The earlier career of Quantrill shows him as a man of honor, who released captured Union soldiers on their promise not to fight again (parole a custom of both sides in the Civil War.) His practice in this regard was completely opposite to Bloody Bill Anderson. Anderson was a butcher; Quantrill was a soldier fighting in a partisan war environment. *Bloody Dawn: The Story of the Lawrence Massacre*, by Thomas Goodrich, which tells of the lead up to the raid and the raid itself from the perspective of Lawrence. *Black Flag, Guerilla Warfare on the Western Border, 1861-1865*, by Thomas Goodrich (the overall battle in Kansas and Missouri which covers the Bushwhacker raids and also gives full scope to the brutality of Jennison, Lane and the worst of the Kansas Jayhawkers). Is reciprocity justified? Or at least understandable? Remember we are talking, by and large, of young men. (Quantrill was 22 when the war began; many of his raiders were teenagers when their fathers were killed

and their farms pillaged.)0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Distorted History (to say the least)By Rod NewmanIt is amazing to see a book that dwells on "Bleeding Kansas" and the Lawrence Massacre without even mentioning the event that ignited the situation - the first sacking of Lawrence in 1856 by the proslavery Missouri Border Ruffians who were proud of the name. This proslavery book continues with a distortion of the facts. While it is well recognized that Lane's jayhawkers were a bad lot, the author airbrushes the likes of Quantrill. The collapse of the Kansas City jail he attributes to deliberate murder - not proven. He excludes the testimony of Dr. Joshua Thorne who stated the collapse was due to soldiers holing the basement walls to gain access to prostitutes - thus the collapse was not deliberate. The author claims this collapse was "the most heinous and barbaric act" of the war - the death of 5 woman. This is laughable compared to other acts such as the massacre of surrendered black troops at Fort Pillow by rebels, but as the author appears content with Quantrill's murder of whites involved in freeing slaves through the underground railway, this comes as no surprise. One could go through this book, page by page, but a perfect example of of distortion is seen on page 325: Following the mass murder in Lawrence, "Quantrill then led his men back to the safety of Missouri." He lost men, in fact, during a skirmishing retreat, and once in Missouri about 100 were hunted down and killed by troops within a few weeks. What kind of safety was that? The massacre also resulted in Federal General Order No.11 which brought more misery to Missouri including "The Burnt District"- all thanks to Quantrill's attack. On page 326 the author conveniently shifts the Burnt District episode to BEFORE the Lawrence Massacre, justifying the attack, when it occurred AFTERWARDS as a result. On page 333 he states, "there are thousands of monuments revealed in gravestones of victims of jayhawker raids located in hundreds of cemeteries all over the border counties in Missouri." Has the author done a count? He provides no proof whatever. Quantrill was a known ratbag even before the war, so much so he had to change his name to Charley Hart, a man who led antislavery friends who had saved him in the past into a murderous ambush at the Walker farm. And yet - "Gallant Colonel," says the author, "Hurrah for Quantrill."17 of 19 people found the following review helpful. Excellant BookBy Texas BobHands down; This is most likely the most detailed, accurate account on Quantrill's raid on Lawrence, KS. Kansas has villianized him as a terrorist, Missouri looks at him as a hero. Mr. Peterson has taken the time and effort to collect accurate information on Quantrill to provide the truth about him and his revenge on Union forces for what they did to his family and the family of his men. This book should quiet the all the people that believe the lies and embellishments that has formed an entirely different and inaccurate portrayal of an American Hero. Good Work. I'm from Kansas and will not go into our State Capital as Kansas, with all it's good people and history, has a mural of John Brown in the Rotunda of the Capital, portrayed as a hero. Get the facts correct as Mr. Peterson has done with his book. Anyone interested in Civil War History, this book is a 'must read'.Should be required reading in high school.

The Lawrence raid of August 21, 1863, was considered one of the bloodiest events of the Civil War. The actions that brought on the raid are researched and explored in depth here for the very first time. What is discovered is a collusion in a "legacy of lies" that surrounded the stories of the raid.

From the Inside FlapThe Lawrence raid is one of the bloodiest-and more misunderstood-campaigns of the Civil War. Catalyzed by the murder of five young women who were related to members of his ranger company, Col. William Clarke Quantrill attacked Lawrence, Kansas, on August 21, 1863. Though the full truth behind the raid has frequently been omitted from history, *Quantrill at Lawrence: The Untold Story* dissolves the legacy of lies.Including testimony from the victims and the raiders, this comprehensive volume provides a firsthand account of what happened during the clash on the Missouri-Kansas border. Chapters scrutinize the causes behind the raid-explaining the reasons why Quantrill felt justified in attacking Lawrence-and pinpoint the men who were responsible for the bloodshed. In addition to describing the precautions taken before the skirmish, sections detail the hours during the attack and consequences that followed.Paul R. Petersen also introduces such historical figures as Capt. George Todd, Col. John D. Holt, and Lt. James L. Bledsoe and defines their roles in the raid. In addition to maps, photographs provide a visual reference for the reader. *Quantrill at Lawrence* describes the temper of the time and the hatred brewing between Kansas and Missouri, bringing a culmination of events into clear focus.From the Back Cover"This very well documented narrative by Mr. Petersen is the best account of what led up to and what occurred at the Lawrence, Kansas, raid that I've ever encountered."-Duncan Hansen, author, *A Reunion in Death*"Petersen's well documented accounting of the times . . . sheds an enlightened view of what happened and why for the first time."-James C. Sterling, professor and Missouri Community Newspaper Management chair, Missouri School of Journalism, University of Missouri"Paul Petersen in *Quantrill at Lawrence* orchestrates a mountain of data concerning the assaults committed by Kansans into Missouri from 1858 to 1861 during which farms and plantations in western Missouri were looted and burned to the ground; many of the people raped, tortured, and killed; and finally nearly all banished from three Missouri border counties. Petersen methodically explains the sacking of Lawrence, and his book will remain long a largely incontrovertible indictment of the Jayhawkers."-Donald L. Gilmore, author, *Riding Vengeance with the James Gang*About the AuthorPaul R. Petersen frequently lectures on the subject of the Border War between Kansas and Missouri during the Civil War. A former master sergeant in the U.S. Marine Corps, he is an infantry combat

veteran of the Vietnam War, Operation Desert Storm, and Operation Iraqi Freedom. He received his A.B.A. from Longview Community College and attends Ottawa University. Petersen is a member of the William Clarke Quantrill Society, the James-Younger Gang Association, and State Historical Society of Missouri. A recipient of the Perry Award for Best Book and the Milton F. Perry Best Non-Fiction Award, Petersen lives in Raytown, Missouri.