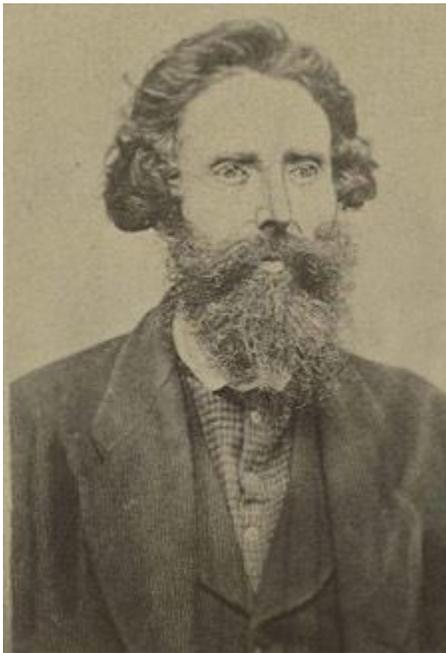


**Colonel James Montgomery, Union Army
December 22, 1814 — December 6, 1871**

Montgomery was one of Kansas' most famous or infamous jayhawkers and staunch abolitionist. He was born in Ohio and migrated to Kentucky in 1837 where he taught school and became an itinerant minister in the Campbellite church. He married Mary Baldwin, and she died in 1825, shortly after the wedding.

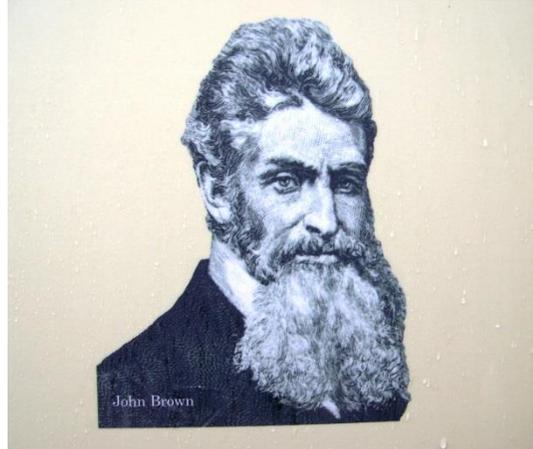
He then married Clarinda Evans and the couple moved to Missouri in 1852. When the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 created the Territory of Kansas the couple moved again and bought a farm for \$11 near Mound City in Linn County. A year later his home was burned by a band of Missouri guerillas. He built a new fortified home that was known as Fort Montgomery.



He was now over 40 years old and he quickly became the leader of the free-state movement and a confirmed abolitionist. In 1857 he organized and led a group known as the "Self-Protective Company" who indiscriminately raided and harassed pro-slavery believers in Kansas and Missouri. He earned the reputation of a violent, but inspiring and courageous leader, who looted, burned and murdered while he felt justified by his religious beliefs. Shortly before the Civil War began, Montgomery and a partner,

Charles "Doc" Jennison, were "operating a ring of 'desperate jayhawkers' engaged in regular robbing. Stolen mounts were recognized up in Iowa, and jocular people said that the pedigree of every good horse was 'out of Missouri by Jennison.'"

John Brown, the more noted abolitionist, collaborated with Montgomery in many of his activities. Montgomery never planned his raids and this caused Brown to refuse to accompany him when Montgomery was going to liberate the town of Rice. After the raid was successful, Brown praised Montgomery. When Brown and his



group were captured by Union forces in Harpers Ferry, Virginia, now West Virginia, Montgomery was recruited by Richard H. Hinton, John W. LeBarnes and Thomas Wentworth Higginson to organize a force to rescue the group. The Kansas "rescuers" got as far as Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, where they met with Higginson on February 17, 1860 to plan the rescue. We can only speculate, but it was probably lucky for Montgomery's group that a snow storm foiled all their plans. John Brown was the first of seven men that had already been hung on December 2, 1859. Among those witnessing Brown's hanging were Thomas (later Stonewall) Jackson, John Wilkes Booth and Edwin Murphy who fired the first shot in the War Between the States at Fort Sumter. On December 16, two white raiders and two black raiders were hung from the same scaffold. That left only two that could have been rescued and they were hung on March 16, 1860. I am unaware of how many troops were guarding the prisoners when the last two were hung, but 800 militiamen were there at Brown's hanging.

On July 24, 1861, Montgomery was elected as Colonel of the 3rd Kansas Union volunteers. This unit, widely known for its jayhawking and lack of discipline, was consolidated with other units to form the Tenth Kansas Volunteer Infantry in April 1862, with Montgomery as its colonel under the command of Brigadier

General John Henry Lane. Lane's brigade was notorious for its raids into Missouri at the start of the war. On September 23, 1861, they sacked Osceola, Missouri, killed nine local citizens, looted and burned the town to the ground. Lane's raid stirred hatred that would contribute to Quantrill's raid on Lawrence, Kansas, leading in turn to the depopulation of four counties of western Missouri. It also led to severe chastisement from US General Henry Halleck, Commander of the Union Forces.

Early in 1863 he transferred to the Second Regiment, South Carolina Colored Volunteers and helped in recruiting black volunteers to fill the ranks. Montgomery would be the commander of the group which later became known as the 34th Regiment Infantry, United States Colored Troops. With these troops he practiced the same brand of warfare in South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida that he had exercised in Kansas. The most controversial of his actions was the Raid at Combahee Ferry on June 1 and 2, 1863, where his forces were guided by Harriet Tubman. They freed 800 slaves but, on June 11th, Montgomery followed up with a raid on the town of Darien, Georgia, which he ordered to be looted and burned even though the town was undefended and offered no resistance.

In February, 1864, the unit participated in the Battle of Olustee, aka Battle of Ocean Pound, in Baker County, Florida. The battle, resulting in a victory for the Confederacy, was the largest battle fought in Florida during the War Between the States. Soon after this battle, Montgomery resigned his commission, returned to Kansas and ended his military career as colonel of the Sixth Kansas State Militia. He resided in Linn County until his death. He is buried in the Woodland Cemetery in Mound City, Kansas.

