William Lewis Cabell, known as “Old Tige” to his troops, was born in Virginia in 1827. He graduated from West Point in 1852, and served in the regular Army until 1861, when he entered the Confederate service in Arkansas. He was a Brigadier General on October 25, 1864, when he was taken prisoner at the Battle of Mine Creek, Kansas. After the War, he moved to Dallas, Texas, and served four terms as the mayor of Dallas. He died in Dallas in 1911. Edward H. Wolfe was raised in the town of Rushville, southeast Indiana, and attended Hanover College near Madison, Indiana. He helped recruit the 52nd Indiana regiment which entered service in early 1862, and rose to the rank of Colonel commanding the regiment. He received the brevet rank of Brigadier General in 1865. Later, he was elected State Auditor of Indiana. He died in 1915 and is buried in Rushville.

In 1864, the Confederate Army mounted a major incursion into Missouri, designed to liberate the state from federal control. Known as Price’s Expedition, a force of 12,000 cavalry and mounted infantry, under the command of former Missouri governor Maj. Gen. Sterling Price, entered southeast Missouri on September 16, 1864. A brigade of Arkansas Cavalry, under command of General William Cabell was detached near St. Clair and ordered to Pacific, (still called Franklin by many) to destroy the railroad facilities here. On the way here, Cabell’s men destroyed the railroad bridge over the Meramec River at Moselle, which was a substantial structure that took Union soldiers some weeks to rebuild.

Cabell’s troops entered the town at sunrise on October 1, 1864, and burned the railroad depot, car shops and water tanks, and looted the stores. A detachment proceeded east on the St. Louis road (now Business Route 44) and burned a railroad bridge two miles from town. Union authorities in St. Louis reacted quickly to Cabell’s threat. Three divisions of the 16th Army Corps, commanded by Gen. A.J. Smith, arrived at Jefferson Barracks in mid-September, 1864. These troops had been slated to join Sherman in Atlanta, but were diverted to deal with Price’s Expedition. Smith’s troops included a substantial force, which was encamped at Union. Price’s army moved west towards Jefferson City, with one division, under Gen. John Marmaduke, tracking the route of present day Highway 100 to Hermann. Price’s army moved west towards Hermann before rejoining the main Confederate force, which was encamped at Union. Price’s army moved west towards Jefferson City, with one division, under Gen. John Marmaduke, tracking the route of present day Highway 100 to Hermann. There was a small battle at Hermann on October 3, 1864 and a larger one in Jefferson City on October 7.

General Smith moved his headquarters to Pacific on October 4, 1864, with 8,000 Union troops of his divisions, and soon departed to chase Price across Missouri. Two months later, Smith and Wolfe were in Nashville, Tennessee. The 16th Corps broke the Confederate line on December 16 on Shy’s Hill, to signal the end of the Battle of Nashville.

The Battle of Pacific City

Hawley Needham was the son of a preacher, and he grew up in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. He joined the 134th Illinois Infantry in May 1864. Hawley Needham sat near this spot on October 8, 1864, and described the scene that is in your view:

“I again resume my writing after a silence of several days. It is now Oct. 8th I think, I am now sitting on the side of one of the highest hills or rather mountaintops which overlook the valley in which lies the little town of Franklin. I said little, but only in size. Famous in name for probably by this time there is scarcely a Hamlet in the land but has heard of it. One week ago today Price was close by here and his men entered the place pillaging everything and burning all the property belonging either to Uncle Sam or the Railroad. The buildings were said to be the finest on this R.R. line.

I suppose if we had been ready to move in season we should have burned a little powder. But for continuing my history I will describe the scenery a little. At my feet is the valley, containing probably not more than 2 or 3 hundres acres and skirted on all sides by a succession of ridges and hills rising one above the other in an almost continuous height nearly making a complete circle and forming a most beautiful amphitheater winding around the base of the hills. Opposite creeps a height nearly making a complete circle and forming a most beautiful ridge. It is now Oct. 8th I think. I am now sitting on the summit of this bluff, to command your view:

The scenery a little. At my feet is the valley, containing probably not more than 2 or 3 hundred acres and skirted on all sides by a succession of ridges and hills rising one above the other in an almost continuous height nearly making a complete circle and forming a most beautiful amphitheater winding around the base of the hills. Opposite creeps a height nearly making a complete circle and forming a most beautiful ridge. It is now Oct. 8th I think. I am now sitting on the summit of this bluff, to command your view:

The Battle of Pacific City

Missouri’s CIVIL WAR

Pacific in the Civil War

Learn more at www.mocivilwar.org

Copyright © 2010 Missouri’s Civil War Heritage Foundation, Inc.

Funding by the City of Pacific.