The Danville Raid

On October 11, 1864, at Boonville, Missouri, Confederate General Sterling Price met with an already infamous “Bloody Bill” Anderson, during Price’s westward march on his 1864 Missouri Expedition. Price instructed Anderson to take his party east to disrupt and destroy the North Missouri Railroad. Anderson’s men, traveling east on the Boonslick Road, passed through Franklin and Rocheport, and skirting Columbia, then continuing to Williamsburg and Danville. After the attack on Danville, described here, the raiders moved on New Florence and Columbia. The raiders moved east, to New Florence, about midnight and left most of the town in flames and ruins.

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After High Hill, Anderson’s men camped on the New Florence - Hermann Road several miles southeast of here, then crossed the Missouri River west of Hermann. The Draper sisters believe they saw the infamous “Bloody Bill” Anderson at Danville, but some of the literature also places him at Glasgow, Missouri on the wrong date – i.e., on the same day at the Danville Raid. The Draper sisters believe they saw the infamous Anderson here. If he was not, then his sidekick, the diabolical “Little Archie” Clements (at right) was in command.

The Female Academy was founded in 1853 by the Reverend James H. Robinson at a time when the Danville Female Academy became a substantial facility during the years of its operation (1853-1865). The Female Academy was founded in 1853 by the Reverend James H. Robinson at a time when the academy became a substantial facility during the years of its operation (1853-1865). The Rev. Robinson moved to St. Joseph, Missouri, in 1865, and he became a prominent educator there.

You are standing on the site of the Danville Female Academy, and at your front is the sole surviving building of the Academy, the chapel and dormitory. The chapel and dormitory survived the raid. One of the girls hung her petticoat on a staff over the front door of this place as a sign of truce. Whatever the reason, the school survived and it is considered one of the first female “colleges” west of the Mississippi River. The chapel survived, a testament to the grit of the students housed in the second floor dormitory ran for the woods, while some came out to confront the guerrillas, claiming they were southern girls and begging the school be spared. Local lore holds that while some came out to confront the guerrillas, claiming they were southern girls and begging the school be spared. Local lore holds that while some came out to confront the guerrillas, claiming they were southern girls and begging the school be spared. Local lore holds that while some came out to confront the guerrillas, claiming they were southern girls and begging the school be spared.

Danville was an important stop on the Boonslick Road, a rare segment of which survives two blocks northwest of here. Danville was a predominately Unionist settlement at the time and was garrisoned by Union troops operating out of a large blockhouse that stood at the southeast corner of the public square. The night of Anderson’s Raid, these union troops were stationed several miles to the east, protecting the North Missouri Railroad. Arriving in town at 8:30 p.m. without warning, Anderson’s men began their rampage by indiscriminately killing several of the townspeople, including 12-year-old Ira Chinn. For three and one half hours, the southern raiders practiced their grisly trade. Some, like “Little Archie” Clements had been at Carlotta just two and a half weeks earlier and knew well how to terrorize a town. The raiders moved east, to New Florence, about midnight and left most of the town in flames and ruins. Still intact was the substantial brick home of Missouri legislator Sylvester Baker, which stands to this day down the road a mile to the east. The most fascinating story to come out of the Danville Raid happened right here. Guerrillas entered the academy grounds believing that Union troops had secreted themselves in the chapel and demanded the keys from Mrs. Robinson. While this scene transpired, some of the students housed in the second floor dormitory ran for the woods, while some came out to confront the guerrillas, claiming they were southern girls and begging the school be spared. Local lore holds that while some came out to confront the guerrillas, claiming they were southern girls and begging the school be spared. Local lore holds that while some came out to confront the guerrillas, claiming they were southern girls and begging the school be spared.

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Was Bloody Bill Anderson at Danville?

Major historians have disagreed on the issue of whether Anderson commanded the raiders at Danville, but some of the literature also places him at Glasgow, Missouri on the wrong date – i.e., on the same day at the Danville Raid. The Draper sisters believe they saw the infamous Anderson here. If he was not, then his sidekick, the diabolical “Little Archie” Clements (at right) was in command. Copyright © 2005 Missouri’s Civil War Heritage Foundation, Inc. Made possible by a grant from the Bank of Montgomery County.