

# Montgomery Raid-Background Material

The truce brought about by the peace convention was broken the following November by the indictment of Benjamin Rice for the robbery of pro-slavery farmers in the county. Upon his arrest, Rice was also served with a warrant for a murder in April. Yet according to the terms of the peace convention in June, all past crimes were supposed to be referred to the grand jury, a condition that was not met in Rice's case. Seeing that as a violation of the truce, Montgomery began gathering free staters from throughout the territory to march on Fort Scott and free Benjamin Rice.

On the night of December 15, Montgomery and his forces were joined by John Brown and five of his followers along the Marmaton River. After attempting to assume command of the whole party, Brown refused to join in the expedition to release Rice. Supposedly, Brown had intended to burn Fort Scott and drive out all the governmental officials. Montgomery issued orders that no one was to be molested unless resistance was offered. The homes of those that did resist were to be set afire. At dawn, the raiders entered Fort Scott and divided into three groups. One squad was assigned the task of guarding the homes of the best-known men in the town: another surrounded the Free State Hotel where Rice was imprisoned, and a third stormed the hotel to release Rice. Rice's liberators freed him by severing his chains with an axe.

The citizens of Fort Scott were taken completely by surprise. As they awakened and stepped outside to learn the cause of the disturbance, Montgomery's men captured them, formed a ring around them, and held them as prisoners. Montgomery's men began harassing the captives in the ring.

The noise of Montgomery's raid attracted the attention of John Little. John Little was a pro-slavery advocate, a former deputy marshal and had previously been involved in the arrest of several free state men. On the morning of Montgomery's raid, John Little was staying at his father's store. His father, Blake Little, owned a dry goods store which he operated inside the former post headquarters. As the raid began, John Little opened one of the doors and fired at one of the raiders near the store. The gunfire attracted the attention of some of the other raiders, who also started approaching the store. In the meantime, John Little moved to another door, placed a box against it, and climbed atop the box to look out the window. The window was apparently smudged as accounts of the incident say that he used a handkerchief to wipe off the window. This movement attracted the attention of one of the free staters, who aimed his weapon toward the window and fired. His bullet went through the window, struck John Little in the head and John Little fell dead.

Thinking that there were more armed men inside, the raiders brought a cannon to bear on the building and were preparing to use it until someone shouted that there were women and children in the building. Townspeople entered the building, found John Little dead, and carried him to the part of the store that served as a residence. Gene Campbell, John Little's fiancé, was brought to her fiancé's side. At some point, Montgomery's men also entered the store and proceeded to carry off \$4,000.00 of goods. After looting the store, Montgomery's men, with Rice in hand, left Fort Scott.

An understandably distraught Miss Campbell later wrote a letter to Montgomery, calling him a "minister of the devil" and a very superior one at that. She told him that even though she was a girl that she could fire a pistol and that if she ever got the opportunity, she would send Montgomery to the place where there was "weeping and gnashing of teeth".

# Montgomery Raid-Narration

On the morning of December 16, 1858, Montgomery and his raiders entered Fort Scott and divided into three groups. One squad was assigned the task of guarding the homes of the best-known men in the town: another surrounded the Free State Hotel where Rice was imprisoned, and a third stormed the hotel to release Rice. Rice's liberators freed him by severing his chains with an axe.

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Gene Campbell, John Little's fiancé, was brought to his side, where she grieved at the loss of her fiancé. An understandably distraught Miss Campbell later wrote a letter to Montgomery, calling him a "minister of the devil" and a very superior one at that. She told him that even though she was a girl that she could fire a pistol and that if she ever got the opportunity, she would send Montgomery to the place where there was "weeping and gnashing of teeth".

# Montgomery Raid-Historic Document

Letter to Montgomery written by Gene Campbell

Fort Scott

January 4, 1859

Montgomery:

Listen to me. Today I heard that you said in a speech a few days ago that you were not sorry you had killed John Little. That he was not killed too soon. Can you before God say so? Oh, the anguish you have caused. He was one of the noblest men ever created, brave and true to his country and to his word. You can't prove that he ever injured an innocent person. A few days more and we were to have been married, then go south to trouble you no more.

But through your influence, he was killed. He was sent to another world without even time to pray or to say goodbye to his friends. But thanks to God, though you did kill his body, you can't touch his soul. No. No, it is in the spirit land. Now the cry of "the Osages are coming!" can awaken him no more. He quietly sleeps in our little graveyard.

But remember this. I am a girl, but I can fire a pistol. And if ever the time comes, I will send some of you to the place where there is "weeping and gnashing of teeth". You, a minister of God? You mean a minister of the devil, and a very superior one too. I have no more to say to you and your imps. Please accept the sincere regards of your future repentance.

# Cast of Characters-Instructions for Placement-Props Needed

## Montgomery's Raid

### Setting

The setting for this scenario is the Free State Hotel and Dr. Little's General Store on the morning of December 16, 1858.

### Characters

- Montgomery- Stands in front of hotel facing northwest. Stands toward the southeast end of the hotel. Aims gun toward hotel. Wears hat and carries gun.
- John Little-lies on ground in front of door of Little's store.
- Gene Campbell-stands behind John Little with head in hands facing toward audience-wears bonnet
- Benjamin Rice-Comeing downstairs of hotel with one raider following behind him –has hat.
- Raider 1-Stands behind Ben Rice with gun in air coming downstairs-Wears hat and carries gun
- Raider 2-Stands about 100 feet back from Little's store with gun up raised and pointing toward window of store-Gun and Hat
- Raiders 3, 4 and 5- Raiders 3, 4 and 5 help to form a circle around the prisoners, guns pointing toward the circle.-All three have guns and hats.
- Townspeople-3-All three townspeople stand in the prisoners' ring, one man and two women-all look concerned and all have nightcaps.

### Reader

- Gene Campbell-reads letter that she wrote to Montgomery.

### Props Needed

- Eight Civilian Hats
- Three Night Caps
- One Bonnet
- Seven Guns

### Materials Needed

- Historic Document
- Placement Map
- Student Instruction Cards
- Narration