

Price's 1864 Expedition

Before the Mother Road



The Springfield and Wire Roads

Pacific is famous for its association with America's mother road, Route 66. Before the age of automobiles this route to the southwest was known primarily as the Springfield Road. Before the Civil War, a military telegraph line was laid from Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis to Springfield, Missouri, then south to Fort Smith in Arkansas. Originally routed through Jefferson City, the telegraph was laid along the Springfield Road to support Federal troops advancing to Springfield in 1862. The road came to be known as the "Wire Road."

The road angled to the southwest at Springfield, entering Arkansas south of Cassville. This section of road was part of the Cherokee "Trail of Tears" in 1838-39, and carried the Butterfield Stage to California in 1858-1861.

The Springfield/Wire Road was a crucial military and logistic resource during the Civil War. In Missouri, battles were fought on, over or near the road at such places as Pacific (1864), Leasburg (1864), Marshfield



Sterling Price

This educational panel erected in cooperation with the Missouri Humanities Council. Learn more at www.mohumanities.org.



Missouri's

CIVIL WAR

At this place, on October 1, 1864, organized Confederate troops achieved their closest approach to St. Louis during the American Civil War. This occurred during Price's 1864 Expedition, a major Confederate campaign led by former Missouri Governor Sterling Price. Price's expedition in 1864 was one of the longest and largest operations by mounted troops in the Civil War.

Price had a force of 12,000 to 13,000 troops that entered Missouri in the southeast corner of the state on September 16, 1864, with the object of capturing St. Louis or Jefferson City. After a major engagement at Ironton, Price's army moved north in three wings before consolidating at Union in Franklin County on October 1, 1864. As the Confederates were moving on Union, a force of approximately 2000 men was sent to destroy the railroad junction at Pacific, which was then known as Franklin. Confederate General William Cabell, commanding the troops at Pacific, sent part of his force east on the Franklin-St. Louis Road to burn a bridge on the Pacific Railroad that spanned the small stream a mile northeast of here. The bridge was burned, halting rail traffic from St. Louis. The Confederates also burned more substantial bridges that crossed the Meramec River, one just south of Pacific and the other at Moselle.

Union authorities in St. Louis were marshalling available troops as Price moved north from Ironton. A large force of veteran infantry commanded by Gen. Andrew Jackson Smith was diverted to St. Louis to meet Price's

threat, after having fought in the Red River Campaign in Louisiana. At Desoto, Smith was able to place his troops in position to block the direct route from Ironton to St. Louis. He then withdrew to Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis when the Confederate forces moved north through Washington County. Upon learning of the threat posed by Cabell's movement on Pacific, Smith put a brigade of infantry on railroad cars and rushed these troops towards Pacific. These were the 49th and 117th Illinois Infantry regiments, and the 52nd Indiana and 178th Regiment, New York Veteran Infantry.

The train from St. Louis reached the point of the burned bridge. The Union troops formed a line that straddled the railroad and the Franklin-St. Louis Road. They advanced on the town, confronting Cabell's advance guard in this area, pushing Confederate pickets back towards the main force in Pacific. The 178th New York remained near the destroyed bridge to guard the brigade's supplies. As the Union troops neared the town, Confederate artillery shells rained down from the heights above, inflicting several casualties. The Confederate cavalry retreated to Union following the action at Pacific.

As the action unfolded in Pacific, Gen. Smith consolidated his forces in Kirkwood. On October 3, 1864, he marched two infantry brigades out the Manchester Road (Highway 100). Price's Confederates moved in the direction of Jefferson City, pursued by Smith's infantry and Union cavalry. The threat to St. Louis was over.



Learn more at www.mocivilwar.org

A New York Regiment in Pacific

Captain (later Lt. Colonel) John Baptiste Gandolfo commanded the 178th New York Infantry at Pacific. Gandolfo was born in 1842 in Allasio on the Italian Riviera. He emigrated to New York as a child. Gandolfo enlisted in the 9th New York Infantry in May, 1861, and was wounded at the Battle of Antietam in 1862. Following the disbandment of the 9th regiment, Gandolfo joined the newly organized 178th New York in August, 1863. Stationed in Alabama when the war ended, he served with the 178th until 1866.



In 1870, Gandolfo moved to St. Louis. He formed the Gandolfo-Ghio Manufacturing Company in 1897, and engaged in the manufacture of spaghetti and macaroni, and other food products, on South 8th Street in St. Louis. His company, which changed its name to Checker Food Products Company, later entered the cereal business and grew to become a competitor to Ralston Purina. The company still exists, although now it manufactures food packaging products. Lt. Colonel Gandolfo died in 1922. He is buried at the Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery.

Mother Road

(continued)

(1862 and 1863), Springfield (1861 and 1863), Wilson's Creek (1861), Dug Spring (1861), Flat Creek (1862), Cassville (1862) and Keetsville (1862). In Arkansas, the old road witnessed battles at Pea Ridge (1862), Fayetteville (1863), Prairie Grove (1862) and Cane Hill (1862).

The road here, now Business Route 44, became part of Route 66 when the great highway was realigned in 1932. At the time of the Civil War, this was known as the Franklin Road, or alternatively the St. Louis Road.

Learn more about the Battle of Pacific at Pacific's Blackburn Park. The Park is located at the top of Walnut Street, just north of Old Highway 66, one mile west of this location.



Sources: Official Records of the War of the Rebellion, Series I, Vol. XLI, Part I, pp. 314-27, 461-64, Wolk, Gregory, Friend and Foe Alike: A Tour Guide to Missouri's Civil War (2010), Court Opinion, Checker Food Products Company v. Ralston Purina Company, 232 F.2d 477 (8th Cir. 1956).



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Made possible by a grant from Select Transport, Inc.

Yankee Noodle Dandy

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