Americans of every creed and culture, in times of conflict, have had their loyalties called into question — have had to prove to doubters, by word or deed, that they were on the “right” side. The American Civil War is a period famous in our history for divided loyalties: countryman fighting countryman, brother against brother, houses divided. North or South? Union or Confederacy?

Most Kansans by 1861 — the year the Civil War began in the East — had long chosen their loyalties, as a result of seven years of territorial warfare prior to the Confederate capture of Fort Sumter. Most Kansans in 1861 supported the Union and the anti-slavery movement. Those who did not, who had survived “Bleeding Kansas” days, had mostly left the state to live elsewhere, or kept quiet about their secessionist sympathies.

But neighboring Missouri was a more complex place to live — there the choices of which side to take, or of which government to support, grew more complicated in the early months of the Civil War.

Please Note: Regional historians have reviewed the source materials used, the script, and the list of citations for accuracy.

Pledging Allegiance Questions of Loyalty in Civil War Kansas and Missouri is part of the Shared Stories of the Civil War Reader’s Theater project, a partnership between the Freedom’s Frontier National Heritage Area and the Kansas Humanities Council.

FFNHA is a partnership of 41 counties in eastern Kansas and western Missouri dedicated to connecting the stories of settlement, the Border War and the Enduring Struggle for Freedom in this area. KHC is a non-profit organization promoting understanding of the history and ideas that shape our lives and strengthen our sense of community.

For More Information:
Freedom’s Frontier National Heritage Area www.freedomsfrontier.org
Kansas Humanities Council www.kansashumanities.org
Introduction

Instructions: The facilitator can either read the entire introduction out loud or summarize key points.

This introduction is intended to provide context to the reader’s theater script. It is not a comprehensive examination of events leading up to and including the Civil War. It has been developed to remind us to consider the violence and complexities of the time period as we commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Civil War in 2011.

Where are your loyalties? Whose side are you on?

Your answer to questions like these, if you lived in Civil War-era Kansas or Missouri, could save your life. Answer correctly, and you might not be fired from your job, or banished from your home. Give the wrong answer, and you might be arrested, imprisoned, or shot point-blank. Answer truthfully...and you risked everything.

Prove your loyalty. Are you loyal enough?

Americans of every creed and culture, in times of conflict, have had their loyalties called into question — have had to prove to doubters, by word or deed, that they were on the “right” side. The American Civil War is a period famous in our history for divided loyalties: countryman fighting countryman, brother against brother, houses divided. North or South? Union or Confederacy? The choices weren’t that simple for many Americans, especially in the state of Missouri.

Most Kansans by 1861 — the year the Civil War began in the East — had long chosen their loyalties, as a result of seven years of territorial warfare prior to the Confederate capture of Fort Sumter. Most Kansans in 1861 supported the Union and the anti-slavery movement. Those who did not, who had survived “Bleeding Kansas” days, had mostly left the state to live elsewhere, or kept quiet about their secessionist sympathies. But neighboring Missouri was a more complex place to live — there the choices of which side to take, or of which government to support, grew more complicated in the early months of the Civil War.

Missouri was the only state to hold a secession convention in 1861, and then vote to remain part of the United States. Its governor openly called for Missouri neutrality, but privately worked to bring the state into the Confederacy. Missouri had two state governments between July 1861 and the end of the Civil War — one a pro-Union, Provisional Government created by state convention, and the other an elected body which supported secession, but evacuated the capitol ahead of Union forces. The issue of slavery compounded the complexities of political loyalty in Missouri — many citizens who opposed secession nevertheless opposed abolition, as well. These Missourians wanted to remain loyal to the United States, and own slaves.

In such a place, it was difficult to know whose side one really supported. Even Missouri’s elected governor, Claiborne Jackson, had his own loyalties questioned as he proclaimed the state’s neutrality and cooperated with Union authorities, while he covertly courted the Confederacy. The Confederate president himself, Jefferson Davis, doubted Jackson’s true
loyalties, and would not provide material support to Missouri, so long as it remained in the Union. Union forces would not permit Jackson to keep his elected seat.

It wasn’t just the powerful who fell into trouble over their allegiances. The average Missourian, tending to his own affairs in town or country, frequently found his home and lands invaded, his property confiscated, no matter where his loyalties lay. Union soldiers, Confederate soldiers, and guerilla fighters of all stripes marched across Missouri, raiding farms of food, forage, and livestock. Troops lived off the land, no matter who owned the land, or which side she supported. Missouri women were frequently forced to feed soldiers by the dozens, praying that their houses wouldn’t be burned or their children attacked at the end of the meal. And stories were told, for decades afterward, of the homes burned, daughters stripped and sons buried, if the invading troops suspected the householder did not truly support their cause.

Who is loyal to our side? How do we know for sure? These are questions which have dogged Americans throughout every major moment of strife in our history—from colonial times, when Patriots and British Loyalists committed crimes against one another for suspected disloyal behavior, to the suspicion of German-speaking Americans during World Wars I and II; from the persecution and internment of Japanese-Americans after Pearl Harbor, to distrust of Arab-Americans today.

Questions of loyalty during the Civil War concerned many Kansans and Missourians. This is their story of pledging allegiances, in their own words.
Group Discussion Questions

Instructions: The facilitator should pose one or more of these questions in advance of the reading of the script. At the conclusion of the reading, participants will return to the questions for consideration.

1. Is it possible for someone who lives in a place torn apart by violence to remain neutral?

2. What does a person do, who sympathizes with one side of a conflict but lives in a place where the majority pledges an opposing loyalty? What options exist for an individual living deep “behind enemy lines” if his/her loyalties are with the other side?

3. Should a person lie to survive? What were the risks involved for men or women who took that chance in Civil War era Missouri and Kansas?

4. Considering that women had very limited political power during this time period, why would they be punished so harshly for disloyal behaviors, like displaying an enemy flag? Why didn’t the military just take their flags away? Missouri historian Diane Mutti Burke wrote in her book, On Slavery’s Border: “Women, who before the war by and large were considered outside the realm of politics, were suddenly held accountable for their personal political views and activities and were occasionally harassed, fined or arrested.” Did women in Missouri and Kansas seem to have had greater opportunity to become involved in the war effort and wartime politics than peacetime provided them? Did Missouri women have greater freedom to outwardly display their disloyalty to the Union than Missouri men? When suspected of disloyalty, were women more often protected from physical harm, because of their gender, than men?

5. In wartime, should a government investigate or arrest citizens for speech or behavior considered disloyal?

6. How could you “prove” your loyalty to your convictions, to someone who doubted you?
Instructions: Each part will be read out loud by an assigned reader. Readers should stand and speak into a microphone when it’s their turn. The source of the quote should also be read out loud (this is the information bolded beneath each quote).

NARRATOR

How does an individual convince others of his loyalty? How does a person prove that for which she stands? During times of stress and strife in our nation, certain people find their loyalties called into question. Citizens may be regarded with suspicion, asked to choose a disputed side, to pledge allegiance convincingly, to fly the correct flag...or pay the consequences.

During the Civil War, paper and cloth were the materials by which fidelity was measured. In Kansas and Missouri, men and women were asked — sometimes forced — to sign oaths of loyalty to a particular side. Flags were flown, and torn down, when the banner raised was the “wrong” one. Citizens on any side of the dispute who could not show the “proper” loyalty, were harassed, robbed, imprisoned, banished, or murdered.

When eleven states seceded from the United States, and rebellion turned to war with a Confederate attack on Fort Sumter, South Carolina, Americans everywhere began to choose sides. Would they remain loyal to the Union? Would they sympathize with secessionists and become a “secesh”? Would they try to stay out of the conflict altogether? And what were their neighbors doing? Were they trustworthy allies, or siding with the enemy? In Missouri and Kansas, voices of conviction and confidence spoke aloud of loyalty.

READER 1

Sisters: Listen to the voice of South Carolina. We are standing here alone. Dangers crowd thick on every side. But we are not afraid....Our tall, grown-up brothers have become cold, and proud, and insolent. They would chastise us into obedience to their whims and caprices; but we will resist. We are strong in our love for each other—in our devotion to this lovely land, bequeathed to us by our patriotic fathers.

Secessionist rally, Plattsburg, Missouri, spring 1861.¹

READER 2

[N]owhere will you find citizens more loyal...than the citizens of Kansas....It was more than a bit of poetry when they said: “We pledge our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor.” The war meant everything to Kansas, and everything was in suspense till the final issue could be known. Nothing permanent could be done while the very existence of the commonwealth was in doubt....The people who had given her the shape and character she possessed could not remain if the South were...
victorious. Kansas would then become a slave state, and these people had staked their all on making her a free state.

Reverend Richard Cordley, Lawrence, Kansas.²

NARRATOR While some people confidently declared their loyalties, others were less vigorous and more critical.

READER 3 September, 1861: You seem to feel a great deal of enthusiasm in regard to the war — I don’t get very much excited except at the miserable guilty tardiness, (or what looks like that to me,) of the administration in accepting troops and forwarding them to such points as require them…Something seems to have awakened up the dull-heads at Washington and it is to be hoped something will be accomplished yet before it is too late. Hitherto their acts as seen by the public have been such as to excite in the minds of true loyal and earnest people, little more than doubt and shame. We will hope now however to see some of the great things done that have been for months past promised — that wonderful policy carried out that was to satisfy the most earnest supporters of anti-rebellion. Yours wearily,

Sarah Everett, Miami County, Kansas.³

READER 4 I am worn down in the mouth [more] than I have ever been as to the assaults of this wretched and hellish rebellion. Nothing can save this country [but] for the mass of the people to rise up in the night and sweep from the face of this earth those North and South who now rule. Treachery and corruption rule, and nothing can save us but that love of liberty which I still trust and believe remains in the breast of the common people. I believe that one third of our [Union] officers of the higher grade are traitors, one third are the embodiment of corruption, and with few exception the balance are inefficient and incapable of conducting the war to a quick successful termination.

John Mack, Springfield, Missouri.⁴

NARRATOR Some pacifists, who would not willingly take a side in warfare, changed their convictions for the love of family.

READER 5 Our neighbor, Mr. Hunt, was among the men in the ranks…with a rifle over his shoulder and a revolver stuck in his holster. Now Mr. Hunt in ordinary life was a non-resistant and, moreover, a fierce uncompromising one. I used often to hear him and my father arguing about the theory, and I remember how angry he used to get at my father’s very decidedly different views. “No one should take life on any account,” [Mr. Hunt] used to declare…and he seemed quite impervious to all the arguments
brought against his own opinions. Yet here he was in Company E. Theories went by the board when it came to leaving his wife and children in their home in danger of being burnt out by the enemy. If a rifle-ball well aimed by himself at a rebel could make that danger less imminent, he was ready to fire it.

**Adela Orpen, Mound City, Kansas.**

**NARRATOR**

*In Kansas and Missouri, as in other parts of the nation, families were sometimes divided in their loyalties. This was particularly true of families in Missouri, where loyalty politics was such a complicated matter during the Civil War years.*

**READER 1**

Cousin C...you said that you was Union and all the rest were Secesh. I am glad you are for the Union, but I’m sorry you are alone....You said you were all very much divided there. It is the same way here. However, we all get along peaceably together, just as we always did. We do not let differences in political views interfere with our friendship in any ways.

**Letter from “Alice,” Lebanon, Missouri, August 23, 1863.**

**READER 2**

Mag, I can’t be a Secesh. There is no use trying. I am further from it all the time, to see how they are killing our men, destroying our country. Who can claim them for their party?

I will love my children and be their true friend, as I have always been. Don’t think because we differ in opinion in war matters, that I ain’t your friend.

**Elizabeth Hunter to her daughter, Margaret, Jasper County, Missouri.**

**READER 3**

I had several talks with my young master, W.E. Perkinson, in 1862, on the subject of loyalty. He wanted to join Colonel Moberly’s company of [Union] State militia, and if left to his choice, would have done so, but he was so bitterly opposed by his father and uncle, that he finally went South and served to the day of surrender, came home penniless, and with health gone. I am satisfied that he has sincerely regretted his action ever since...

**Henry Clay Bruce, enslaved in Missouri.**

**NARRATOR**

*Many African-Americans living free in Kansas and enslaved in Missouri were more than ready to choose the Union side.*
Dear Wife, I have enlisted in the Army... Though great is the present national difficulties, yet I look forward to a brighter day when I shall have the opportunity of seeing you in the full enjoyment of freedom....Great is the outpouring of the colored people that is now rallying with the hearts of lions against that very curse that has separated you and me. Yet we shall meet again, and oh what a happy time that will be, when this ungodly rebellion shall be put down, and the curses of our land is trampled under our feet. I am a soldier now, and I shall use my utmost endeavor to strike at the rebellion and the heart of this system that so long has kept us in chains . . . I remain your own affectionate husband until death.

Private Samuel Cabble, formerly enslaved in Missouri.⁹

However, not every African-American was eager to go to war.

The enlistment of colored men for the army commenced in Chariton County, Missouri, early in December 1863, and any slave man who desired to be a soldier and fight for freedom, had an opportunity to do so. Certain men said to be recruiting officers from Iowa, came to Brunswick, [Missouri] to enlist colored men for the United States Army, who were to be accredited not to Missouri, but to certain townships in Iowa, in order to avoid a draft there....These colored men scoured the county in search of young men for soldiers, causing me to sleep out of nights and hide from them in the daytime. I was afraid to go to town while they were there, and greatly relieved when a company was filled out and left for some point in Iowa.

Henry Clay Bruce, enslaved in Missouri.¹⁰

For every man reluctant to join the fight, there remained others overzealous for violence in Kansas and Missouri. Guerilla bands held seemingly no loyalties at all, except to piracy and personal gain from either side. Groups of opportunistic Missouri bushwhackers and Kansas Jayhawkers had terrorized towns along the border since Kansas territorial days, beginning in 1854. “Banditry” continued to be “a serious problem” throughout the war and for some time afterward.¹¹

A secret organization has been formed for the purpose of plundering the people: ostensibly to operate against those who are reputed as lukewarm on the Union question, but really to rob every man of property.

E. S. Lowman, Olathe, Kansas.¹²
READER 2
The rebels are under no law, and the militia is bound down not to pester anything that belongs to a sworn Secesh....[W]e can’t keep nothing [because of] the bushwhacks, but the Secesh is let alone.

Elizabeth Hunter, Jasper County, Missouri.  

NARRATOR
In the uncertainties of civil war, survival for Missouri households raided by guerilla fighters and soldiers on both sides often meant adapting one’s loyalties to the moment.

READER 3
When the rebel soldiers come by our place, old mastuh had the table set for them, and treat them fine—‘cause he’s a rebel. Then when the Yankees come along, he give them the best he had, and treat them fine, ‘cause he’s a Yankee....In a way I guess old mastuh was right, for none of the soldiers never bother nothin’ on the place.

Wes Lee, enslaved in Missouri.  

NARRATOR
Given that any person could choose from multiple sides in the conflict, it was frequently hard to tell an individual’s loyalty with certainty. The Union sought to rectify this, declaring secession illegal and requiring loyal citizens in key public positions to pledge their allegiance to the United States in writing. Federal magistrates or notary publics began by administering Union loyalty oaths to elected and appointed officials. These sworn oaths were pledged under seal of the court. Those who objected to “swearing” had the option of “affirming” their loyalty to the Union. Loyalty oaths were not standardized, and soon different text was used by different federal agencies in different states. Most loyalty oaths required the undersigned to pledge before God to defend the Constitution of the United States and to offer no assistance to enemies who bore arms against the Union. Some oaths were mass printed on blank forms, ready for completion; other oaths were handwritten testimonies.

READER 4
I, A.B., do solemnly swear or affirm (as the case may be) that I will bear true allegiance to the United States of America, and that I will serve there honestly and faithfully against all their enemies or oppressors, whatsoever, and observe and obey the orders of the President of the United States, and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to the Rules and Articles for the government of the armies of the United State

From the papers of William Bishop, 1861, 7th Missouri Cavalry Regiment.
In Missouri, Union loyalty oaths were required for any public office. In a federal order issued for the state of Missouri on January 26, 1862, officers of the Mercantile Library Association and of the Chambers of Commerce were required to file a signed pledge in the office of the Provost-Marshal General within ten days, or be arrested and forced to resign. “The same order forbade the display of secession flags in the hands of women or on carriages in the vicinity of military prisons.” Violators were arrested and carriages confiscated. “On the 4th of February a similar order was issued to the presidents and directors of all railroads in the State, and to the president, professors, curators and other officers of the State University at Columbia, declaring in regard to the University that ‘this institution having been endowed by the government of the United States, its funds should not be used to teach treason or to instruct traitors.’ The same order required all clerks, agents, and civil employees in the service of the United States to take the oath…and recommended that all clergymen, …teachers, and all officers of public or private institutions for education or benevolence, and all engaged in business and trade, who were in favor of the perpetuation of the Union, voluntarily take the oath, in order that their patriotism might be known and recognized.”

Kansans during the Civil War did not defy oath-taking or run afoul of Union loyalty documentation as often as Missourians. Kansans were, by virtue of the bloody, anti-slavery territorial years preceding the Civil War, more likely to side with the Union cause. But pledging an oath of loyalty to the Union presented a dilemma to many Missourians, where wartime side-taking was more complex. There were citizens loyal to the Union who wished to see slavery ended; there were slaveholding citizens loyal to the Union who wanted slavery preserved. There were Missourians who believed in secession and slavery, citizens who wanted secession without slavery, and still others who wished Missouri to remain neutral and mediate the dispute between North and South. President Abraham Lincoln himself acknowledged this complexity of loyalties, identifying four loyal Union viewpoints in Missouri, and suggesting as many rebel ones:

It thus becomes a question not of two sides merely, but of at least four sides, even among those who are for the Union, saying nothing of those who are against it. Thus: those who are for the Union with, but not without slavery; those for it without, but not with; those for it with or without, but prefer it with; and those for it with or without, but prefer it without. Among these again is a subdivision of those who are for gradual, but not for immediate [emancipation], and those who are for immediate, but not for gradual extinction of slavery.

It is easy to conceive that all these shades of opinion, and even more, may be sincerely entertained by honest and truthful men. Yet, all being for the Union, by reason of these differences, each will prefer a different way of sustaining the Union. At once, sincerity is questioned, and
motives assailed. Actual war coming, blood grows hot, and blood is spilled. Thought is forced from old channels into confusion. Deception breeds and thrives. Confidence dies, and universal suspicion reigns.

Abraham Lincoln, October 5, 1863.\textsuperscript{17}

NARRATOR

Even though the President could acknowledge the complexities of loyalty in Missouri, many residents would not. Citizens who acted suspiciously or would not take the oath were referred to the military court system and the provost marshal of their county or district. These Union military magistrates “were asked to preserve order among the civilian population…handling cases that would have been civil matters in peacetime… and [to] prosecute cases of disloyalty.”\textsuperscript{18} Union officials detained, arrested, and tried by military commission more civilians for disloyalty in Missouri than in any other state.\textsuperscript{19} Hundreds of others were investigated for activity not befitting a Union sympathizer, including these individuals:

READER 1

Respino Moore, Montgomery County, is reportedly a violent secesh who harbored rebels and rendered aid and comfort to rebels despite being under oath and bond. D.P. Cloyd, Holt, was tried for aiding and abetting the enemy when he went to a Rochester secesh camp to deliver clothes and food to his son in the army. A.N. Moore has been arrested and taken to Jefferson City for raising a secesh flag and tying secesh rags on his mules’ bridles. Robert Bagby and Jeremiah Nichols, Callaway County, were arrested for being musicians at a secesh party. Doctor John M. Baldrige, Cape Girardeau, is a dangerous man to the Union cause; he refused to take the oath, is strongly secesh, and would refuse to treat a Federal soldier.

Missouri Union Provost Marshal papers.\textsuperscript{20}

NARRATOR

As an added weapon in the Union military’s arsenal, loyalty oaths proved useful when troops confronted non-enlisted personnel in Kansas and Missouri. Officers could dispense with legal formalities and administer the oaths without the presence of any court official or authority other than a gun. Unfortunate citizens who were not Union loyal—or who wished not to take sides and wanted to remain neutral—suffered their choice in peril.

READER 5

Armed neutrality did not avail; protesting one’s desire to remain out of the contest did not always keep danger from the door.

Mary Harrison Clagett, central Missouri.\textsuperscript{21}
READER 2  Fort Sumter had been fired on, and the “war dogs” had already been turned loose…I had several reasons for not engaging at that early date in the conflict. I was somewhat conscientious about taking an oath that would place me under the command of wicked men who would be likely to lead me contrary to what I believed to be right, for I had confessed the name of Jesus Christ before men and accepted him as my leader. I had been reading the Bible, and was not sure that I would be doing right in going to war.

J. T. Palmer, Jackson County, Missouri.22

NARRATOR  Not long after the Civil War began, Mr. Palmer and a friend, Perry Rippetoe, were hauling freight along the Kansas-Missouri border and had just crossed into Kansas.

READER 2  Mr. Rippetoe, looking ahead, said, “Look yonder.” Looking, I saw a company of armed men on horseback coming over the prairie ridge in front. “Yes, they are Jayhawkers or Federals—see the flag.” Mr. Rippetoe said, “What had we best do—hide in the corn or take a mule each and run?” “Neither,” said I, “…if we attempt to run or hide they will kill us sure, for they will think we have done something wrong….” In the meantime, the Stars and Stripes were streaming past with the bright colors glittering in the sunbeams: Glorious, indeed, was the old flag in the hands of true men, but on that occasion it was calculated to inspire in our hearts anything but respect.

While we were thus held captive at the roadside, a few words were exchanged by those who held us captive…. “What is your politics?” came the horrid question, and I heard Mr. Rippetoe reply that he was a Union man, and always had been….My turn came next.

READER 3  What is your politics?

READER 2  I was born and raised in the south….

READER 4  Do you know any Secesh?

READER 2  Yes, sir.

READER 4  Where do they live?

READER 2  They have gone south, to the southern army.
Now he gives place to a tall man with a heavy double-barreled shotgun, who is my especial escort for awhile. I would rather he would turn his gun in some other direction.

Where are you taking us?

READER 5  Into Kansas City
READER 2  We are going in the wrong direction for Kansas City.
READER 5  If we went down the line, we might run into a company of Secesh. Why are you not in the army fighting for your country? The southern men are trying to destroy the Union.
READER 2  I don’t look at it that way.
READER 5  They have taken Fort Sumter and are now in rebellion against the Union.
READER 2  This is not altogether a one-sided business.
READER 5  What do you mean, sir?
READER 2  I mean that the southern men could not get their constitutional rights in the Union; when their negroes were stolen they could not get them back.
READER 5  I don’t believe that the war is about the negroes. The southern men have violated the Constitution and want to break up the Union.
READER 2  [T]he war is carried on contrary to the Constitution today. Here we are taken up on the public highway and marched as prisoners although we did no wrong....

The small man with the sword and revolver who was the leader [was] again at my side....The captain spoke as if excited.

READER 4  You men have one or two things to do right here and now.
READER 2  Well, captain, what is that?
READER 4  Take the oath and return to your homes or die right here.
READER 2  That looks hard; but what is your oath?
READER 4  That you will support the Constitution of the United States, and not take up arms against the Government.
READER 2  
Captain, I have no objections to taking part of that oath. I am willing to swear that I will not take up arms against the Government. As I told you before, I do not want to fight; I could have been into it before now if I had chosen to do so, but to swear to support the Constitution, I can’t do that.

READER 4  
Then you shall suffer for it.

READER 2  
The Lord is my helper; I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

The captain now turned to Mr. Rippetoe, inquired if he would take the oath, and hastily swore him, then turned toward me, at the same time raising his revolver, which I plainly heard click. Click went the rifle in the hands of [another] man...At the same time, click, click, went the double-barreled shotgun, as the tall man raised it to his face....I could feel my body bracing itself to receive the shock.

My last earthly hope was gone, and I had but one request to make. I said, “Captain, give me a few minutes for prayer, please.” Without waiting for an answer, I knelt down. Mr. Rippetoe sank down, covering his face with both hands as he groaned out, “Oh, Lordy!”

...In a few broken sentences I acknowledged my dependence upon the great God that had made and taken care of me, confessed my sins and shortcomings, prayed the Lord to forgive all my sins and be with me, committed myself into his hands, offered up a short petition for those who were near and dear to me, and then said in my prayer: “Lord have mercy on our nation and country; may this war and bloodshed be stopped, and may the time soon come when war shall be no more...and these men, remember them in Thy great mercy; may they see the wickedness of their ways and turn before they go down to eternal ruin. Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

Here I thought I had finished my course, but as they did not fire, I continued praying in a few broken sentences, when the man with the rifle [spoke].

READER 3  
Captain, stop this foolishness.

READER 5  
Captain, I think you should let this man go; he don’t believe there is any Union.

READER 4  
I don’t like to kill him....Do you, sir, pretend to say that you are a better man than Washington and the men who made the Constitution and gave their lives for it, and all the great and good men of our day who swear to support it, and are ready to die for it?

READER 2  
No, I don’t say any such thing. Washington and the men who made the Constitution have done a great and good work, and all I have to say about the great and good men of our time who are swearing to support
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the Constitution is this, they think different from what I do or they would act different from what they do.

READER 4
Well, I guess that I will have to let you off. Will you take that part of the oath?

READER 2
I have no objections to swear that I will not take up arms against the United States.

READER 4
In case a company of southern soldiers were to come along, would you swear to support the Confederate states?

READER 2
I couldn’t do it if I had taken this oath.

READER 4
Then hold up your right hand and be sworn. Do you solemnly swear that you will not take up arms against this Government?

READER 2
Yes, I swear to that.

Mr. Rippetoe was soon at my side and the captain said:

READER 4
Now you can return to the place from whence you came.

READER 2
...All right, goodbye; and we shook hands with captain and started....[W]e could hardly keep from running, we felt so light and free.

J. T. Palmer, Jackson County, Missouri.23

NARRATOR
Among citizens who gave their loyalty to the Union from the beginning, most readily pledged an oath of allegiance when required. Others, particularly Confederate sympathizers, signed Union oaths of loyalty only under coercion, knowing that a failure to sign could result in imprisonment, or worse. In just one example, Federal troops surrounded a large encampment of Missouri State Militia outside of St. Louis on May 10, 1861, and took 1,100 men prisoner. The militiamen were offered parole if they signed an oath of loyalty to the Union. All but one of the captured men took the oath. The one holdout refused on the grounds that his actions had not called his loyalty into question.

READER 1
My Beloved Sister, I suppose you have heard of the ...refusal of myself (the only one out of eleven hundred) that would not sign the Parole of Honor. I have already sworn to defend the Flag and Constitution of my Country and I was not to be intimidated...The Citizens of St Louis without an exception are praising me for the position I have taken. I did so but thought it was right and just, for you know my dear Sister that I can be governed by the Eternal principles of justice ...The Federal Troops under [Frank] Blair and [Henry] Boernstein destroyed and
plundered me of everything I had in my camp. I got nothing but what is on my back. Not an officer in Camp Jackson saved anything but what they carried along with them to the Arsenal....I am held as a Prisoner of War...Write to me often and believe me, as ever, your fond but unfortunate Brother Em.

*Emmett MacDonald, May 20, 1861.*

**NARRATOR**

Eventually MacDonald was released. He joined the Missouri State Guard, siding against the Union, and was killed in battle in 1863. He apparently never signed a Union loyalty oath, but most prisoners with questionable loyalties learned that this was a prerequisite for parole, throughout the Civil War.

**READER 3**

We, the undersigned Loyal Citizens, would most respectfully represent that we have been intimately acquainted with William T. Dameron during the present Rebellion, and have during the time looked upon and believed him to have been a Loyal citizen, not knowing of any Disloyal act of his. And we further believe from all the facts that we can gather that he was conscripted and forced into the Rebellion. And we would respectfully ask of your Honor to release or parole said William T. Dameron, now a prisoner of war at Springfield, and permit him to return home.

*Men of Randolph County, Missouri, January 10, 1865.*

**READER 5**

I surrendered at Springfield, Missouri, on or about the 10th day of December 1864...I had been conscripted by [Confederate] Captain Glinns sometime in October 1864, was at meeting when they came, five or six men, told me I had to go and that if I made any attempt to get away, they would kill me. Told me to report at Thomasville and the next morning I reported, riding my own horse. The nearest Union troops were at Allen, nineteen miles away. I never bore arms against the United States, and was unassigned to any Company. I was sworn into the Rebel service about the 15th day of October 1864, by Captain Glinn...I never took the oath of allegiance to the United States, but am willing to do so.

*William T. Dameron, prisoner, February 8, 1865.*

**NARRATOR**

We do not know if Dameron’s offer and petition were successful, but this method worked for other Union prisoners of war, male and female. Miss Sue Bryant was jailed in Missouri for displaying a Southern flag and refusing to swear an oath of loyalty to the Union. She remained in prison for several months in 1864, until she was persuaded by some of her father's friends to take the oath and accept release from jail, for the sake of her family.
I, Sue M. Bryant of Cooper County, State of Missouri, do hereby solemnly swear that I will bear true allegiance to the United States and support and sustain the Constitution and laws thereof; that I will maintain the national sovereignty paramount to that of all states, county or Confederate powers; that I will discourage, discouragement and forever oppose secession, rebellion and disintegration of the Federal Union; that I disclaim and denounce all faith and fellowship with the so-called Confederate armies, and pledge my honor, my property and my life to the sacred performance of this my solemn oath of allegiance to the Government of the United States of America.26

In her reminiscences published after the war, Sue Bryant Carson “assure[d] her friends and children that she is yet true to the principles of the glorious South that caused her to suffer for the Confederacy...”27 Another young Missouri woman wasn’t so fortunate. Union troops arrested nineteen year-old Mildred Elizabeth Powell of Palmyra in late September 1862, and held her as a prisoner of war. She was imprisoned several months, during which she kept a diary.

December 10, 1862. My imprisonment becomes almost unendurable. All health, appetite and energy seem to have forsaken me...[General McNeil] says if I will take the oath, I shall be released entirely. I promptly refused, telling him plainly I had rather die in prison than to perjure myself before God and man.

Mildred Elizabeth Powell.28

On January 21, 1863, she was surprised to recognize one of her new guards.

Was struck to recognize in him a friend of other days. Frank Jackson, a brother to one whom I once loved as devotedly as a sister. O war! With all thy attendant evils, what can be more maddening than to find former friends changed to deadly foes. How strange to see that slender boy dressed in the uniform I so much detest, standing guard over one whom he once professed to love and respect so kindly.

Sunday, January 25, 1863. ’Tis night. O heaven, how can I sleep upon this horrid bed of straw, these offensive, dirty, greasy quilts...

Monday, January 26, 1863. O, what a long, sleepless night I have passed. The guards, drunken and infuriated, made several ineffectual attempts to enter my room, and had it not been for a small bolt I had fastened over the lock, their efforts must have been effectual. Finding they were defeated, I could hear them heaping their curses upon me and
planning to come in through the window. I was almost speechless with fear…

*Mildred Elizabeth Powell.*

NARRATOR

Still refusing to sign a loyalty oath after five months’ captivity, Mildred Powell was banished from Missouri and sentenced to exile in Nevada Territory.

The Union reserved its harshest punishment for those who had pledged loyalty on paper but acted otherwise.

READER 3

Ten Rebel prisoners [faced] execution, at Macon, Missouri, on Friday, the 25th of September, 1862… on the triple charge of treason, perjury and murder… The ten retained had been condemned by General Lewis Merrill…to be “shot to death,” because, as it was claimed, “each one of them had for the third time been captured while engaged in the robbing and assassination of his own neighbors”… It was also charged, and we take it for granted established by competent proof, that “all of them had twice, some of them three, and others had four times made solemn oath to bear faithful allegiance to the Federal Government, to never take up arms in behalf of the Rebel cause, but in all respects to deport themselves as true and loyal citizens of the United States.” And it was further charged that “every man of them had perjured himself as often as he had subscribed to this oath, and at the same time his hands were red with repeated murders.”…

They confessed they had wronged the Government, wronged the State, wronged their neighbors and themselves, yet they declared they were not wholly responsible for their own acts. They had been led into evil—so they pleaded—through the influence of others.

The prisoners spent most of the night in prayer. Next morning…[t]he executioners were divided off into firing parties of six for each prisoner, leaving a reserve of six that were stationed a few paces in the rear….Each prisoner was marched out ten paces in front, and immediately south of his six executioners.

This order having been completed, the prisoners were severally blinded with bandages of white cloth, and were then required to kneel for the terrible doom that awaited them….At a signal from the commanding officer, Rev. Dr. Landis stepped forward to address the Throne of Grace. His prayer was…an earnest appeal for pardoning mercy for those who were about to step into the presence of God and Eternity. And then followed the closing scenes of this bloody drama. The prisoners remained kneeling, while sixty muskets were pointed at their palpitating hearts. The signal is given and the fatal volleys discharged, and the ten doomed men make a swift exit from time to eternity!

*Colonel W. F. Switzler.*
READER 4  
This is what the Federal government is doing now. Gentlemen of the highest social, and—a year ago—political position are hunted down and shot like dogs if they do not come forward and take the Oath to support these usurpations. A little moral courage in these days of terror is certain to bring ruin on a man.

Elvira Scott, Miami, Missouri.\(^\text{32}\)

NARRATOR  
Clearly, signing a loyalty oath did not necessarily affirm any loyalty at all. A more visible sign of one’s allegiance to a country or cause—and perhaps a truer gauge of fidelity—was a flag or banner. From the moment that the Confederate States of America pulled down the Stars and Stripes at Fort Sumter, Civil War flags served as wordless declarations of loyalty. Many Kansans did not tolerate a flag of a different stripe, and those who raised a rebel banner in the Free State invited trouble.

READER 5  
In the first flash of rebel excitement aroused by the firing upon Fort Sumter, when everything seemed to be drifting that way, a steamboat from St. Louis landed at Leavenworth [Kansas] flaunting the rebel flag. There was a rush to the levee, and before an immense and indignant crowd, which it was not safe to disobey, the captain was forced to haul down the emblem of treason and raise the flag of the Union.

Shalor Winchell Eldridge.\(^\text{33}\)

NARRATOR  
Both Union and Confederate supporters seized “enemy” flags in Kansas and Missouri.

READER 5  
The rebels [in Missouri] were equally energetic. On April 20 [1861,] they seized the United States arsenal at Liberty and with the arms, under command of Jeff Thompson, established a camp at St. Joseph. Rebel ensigns floated defiantly at Independence, Kansas City, Platte City, Weston and Iatan, under which were rapidly being enlisted soldiers for the Rebellion...Iatan was a little steamboat town on the Missouri on the opposite shore, a few miles above Fort Leavenworth, and noted for its intense southern sympathies. The emblem of rebellion that had been raised on the first news of the outbreak still floated while the First Kansas regiment was assembling at the fort awaiting their equipment and orders. Twelve of its members, impatient of restraint, slipped away from their camp, crossed the river on a barge, captured the flag and brought it back to Leavenworth. It was not won without resistance, as three of them returned with serious wounds, six shots having been received by them.

Shalor Winchell Eldridge.\(^\text{34}\)
READER 2

Sumter drew the lines for Kansas as it did for the nation at large, and while as the border was approached, some might be found who “sympathized,” and in other places there were those who were disloyal, our community was a unit on the great question of the inviolability of the Union....[T]he Stars and Stripes were kept flying night and day from the liberty pole in the public square. Our indignation can be imagined when one Sunday afternoon, a responsible traveler passing by reported that a Secession flag had been raised at Monticello [Kansas]. That Monticello was sixteen miles to the east, half way to the line, was nothing. That those who raised it would probably try to keep it raised by the aid...of rifles...was nothing. If half of Missouri were to support it, or if it floated over Kansas prairie half a hundred miles away, we felt then that it must come down....[A] Secession flag was never to be thought of in our region of Kansas while powder could express our feelings.

Alfred A. Woodhull, Douglas County, Kansas.  

NARRATOR

Woodhull gathered together approximately twenty men and headed eastward near dusk. They met up with “a squad bound on the same errand from the town of DeSoto...eight miles nearer to the obnoxious flag,” expanding the group to nearly forty riders.

READER 4

[D]ashing into...Monticello, we reined up in open order before the flagstaff. Surely enough, a flag was floating in the moon light, but unrecognizable in detail from the ground....[I]t was hauled down, and what it really was was a puzzle. It had three broad stripes, blue, white, and red, and a union of eleven stars....The stars corresponded in number with the States that had passed the ordinance of secession, and it floated in a suspicious atmosphere....The offender was the postmaster, and therefore, as an official, ought to be loyal...The poor fellow was terribly frightened, perhaps with reason on the face of things...

Our leader delivered him a lecture upon the construction of the Stars and Stripes and the wickedness and peril of blundering therein. He was cautioned that we should hear of no more such bunting, and was directed to fly a genuine flag without delay. Our justice of the peace then administered the oath of allegiance, which was just becoming the panacea for all political ailments, to the man and his wife, and we dismissed them....Bearing with us our trophy, we rode off in triumph, with, it must be confessed, a little regret that after our considerable effort we had not captured something having a more unequivocal mark of the devil.

Alfred A. Woodhull.  

READER 1

An exciting incident occurred this year [1861] at Wathena: One night the rebels raised a large pole and hung on it the Confederate flag. In the
morning the citizens, to their mortification, saw the rebel flag floating over their heads. Quite a company gathered around the pole, on which was written in large, legible letters, “Death to the man that takes down this flag.”...No one seemed willing to undertake the job, fearing they might be shot by some fiend in secret. [Reverend O.B.] Gardner remarked, with characteristic firmness: “I am unwilling to sit down under this degrading insult, and if there is no other man to do it, I will tear down that insulting rag.” He laid off his coat and boots, and deliberately ascended the pole, tore the flag from its position, and returned in triumph without harm, amid the shouts of applause that burst forth from the excited multitude.

Reverend James Shaw, Doniphan County, Kansas.\textsuperscript{37}

NARRATOR\textit{ Occasionally, commercial interests trumped sectional loyalties:} 

READER 3 One gloriously bright day in the spring of 1861, there gathered in the little town of Plattsburg, Missouri, a large and enthusiastic concourse of people...The occasion of the great gathering and the cause of the intense excitement and enthusiasm was the presentation of a Southern flag—the new “Stars and Bars”—by the Southern ladies of Plattsburg to the several companies of enlisted Southern sympathizers, then known as the “Missouri State Guard.”...The flag was formed of three wide bars, two of which were red and the center one of white satin. The field was a square of blue bearing seven bright silver stars. The stars were designed and painted on the blue field by a Union man, a Mr. Rogers, who was an expert workman, and Mrs. Turner gave him in exchange for the seven silver stars, five silver dollars.

Florence May Porter, Plattsburg, Missouri.\textsuperscript{38}

NARRATOR\textit{ Many of the flags to which Missourians and Kansans pledged their loyalty, however, were handmade by women and men for loved ones who would fight beneath it. For many men and women, as the Civil War ground on, the flag they saluted became more than a symbol. It became a cause, as the blood of comrades and loved ones spilled beneath it.} 

READER 5 [T]he long lines dwindled steadily and fatefuly. Regiments that once mustered a thousand men were reduced to two or three hundred...But as their long columns shrank, and each soldier's place in the line drew nearer and nearer to the faded and tattered flag in the center, it seemed to grow dearer and more precious to their hearts. They followed it, upheld it, loved it with an earnestness and devotion without parallel....The flag represented the Republic; to serve it was a soldier’s duty; to die for it was a soldier’s fate.

John Martin, Kansas.\textsuperscript{39}
NARRATOR A flag, to many, meant more than an oath signed on paper. A flag displayed declared an intensely-held, personal loyalty.

The flag remains central to our discussions of loyalty today.

Instructions: The facilitator will now return to the questions found on page 3 for consideration by the group.

At the conclusion of the event:

• The local coordinator will indicate whether the scripts need to be returned.
• The page titled Citations is intended to be a take-home handout for participants.

The words spoken by Readers in this script are the exact words of historical participants in Kansas and Missouri, 1861-1865, taken from first-hand accounts. For ease of reading, spelling and punctuation have been modernized in the script passages. You can read these accounts as they were recorded, and more, in the following sources:

Footnotes:

1 Quoted in Florence May Porter, “Our First Flag,” Reminiscences of the Women of Missouri During the Sixties (Missouri Division, United Daughters of the Confederacy, undated), 12-13.

2 Reverend Richard Cordley, Pioneer Days in Kansas (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1903), 256-257, 274.


8 Henry Clay Bruce, The New Man: Twenty-nine Years a Slave, Twenty-nine Years a Free Man (York, PA: P. Anstadt, 1895; reprinted by the University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 105.

10 Henry Clay Bruce, *The New Man: Twenty-nine Years a Slave, Twenty-nine Years a Free Man* (York, PA: P. Anstaidt, 1895; reprinted by the University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 107.


16 Colonel W.F. Switzler, *Switzler’s Illustrated History of Missouri, From 1541 to 1877* (St. Louis: C.R. Barns, editor and publisher, 1879), 410-411, digital copy at University of Missouri Digital Library, [http://digital.library.umsystem.edu/cgi/t/text/pageviewer-idx?sid=40f5d388e998ef0be6b01588fa0c5647&idno=umlr000004&xc=1&c=umlib&cc=umlib&q1=missouri+civil+war&seq=446&view=text](http://digital.library.umsystem.edu/cgi/t/text/pageviewer-idx?sid=40f5d388e998ef0be6b01588fa0c5647&idno=umlr000004&xc=1&c=umlib&cc=umlib&q1=missouri+civil+war&seq=446&view=text) (Accessed 27 December 2010).

17 Quoted in Colonel W.F. Switzler, *Switzler’s Illustrated History of Missouri, From 1541 to 1877* (St. Louis: C.R. Barns, editor and publisher, 1879), 449, digital copy at University of Missouri Digital Library, [http://digital.library.umsystem.edu/cgi/t/text/pageviewer-idx?sid=40f5d388e998ef0be6b01588fa0c5647&idno=umlr000004&xc=1&c=umlib&cc=umlib&q1=missouri+civil+war&seq=446&view=text](http://digital.library.umsystem.edu/cgi/t/text/pageviewer-idx?sid=40f5d388e998ef0be6b01588fa0c5647&idno=umlr000004&xc=1&c=umlib&cc=umlib&q1=missouri+civil+war&seq=446&view=text) (Accessed 27 December 2010).


20 Missouri Digital Heritage provides summary descriptions of 101 complaints (some of individuals, others of groups) brought before the Missouri State Provost Marshal between 1861-1866 with the word “secesh” in the complaint, and 621 cases with the word “Confederate”: Missouri Union Provost Marshal papers, 1861-1866, [http://www.sos.mo.gov/mdh/](http://www.sos.mo.gov/mdh/) (Accessed 27 December 2010).

21 Mary Harrison Clagett, *Reminiscences of the Women of Missouri During the Sixties* (Missouri Division, United Daughters of the Confederacy, undated), 128.


23 J.T. Palmer, “A Reminiscence,” *Reminiscences of the Women of Missouri During the Sixties* (Missouri Division, United Daughters of the Confederacy, undated), 115-123.


26 Sue M. Bryant Carson, “Copy of the Oath of Allegiance,” Reminiscences of the Women of Missouri During the Sixties (Missouri Division, United Daughters of the Confederacy, undated), 189-190.

27 Sue M. Bryant Carson, “Copy of the Oath of Allegiance,” Reminiscences of the Women of Missouri During the Sixties (Missouri Division, United Daughters of the Confederacy, undated), 190.

28 Mary Stella Hereford Ball, “Journal of Mildred Elizabeth Powell,” Reminiscences of the Women of Missouri During the Sixties (Missouri Division, United Daughters of the Confederacy, undated), 153, 166-167.

29 Mary Stella Hereford Ball, “Journal of Mildred Elizabeth Powell,” Reminiscences of the Women of Missouri During the Sixties (Missouri Division, United Daughters of the Confederacy, undated), 171, 177.


31 Colonel W.F. Switzler, Switzler’s Illustrated History of Missouri, From 1541 to 1877 (St. Louis: C.R. Barns, editor and publisher, 1879), 417-419, digital copy at University of Missouri Digital Library, http://digital.library.umsystem.edu/cgi/t/text/pageviewer-idx?sid=40f5d388e998ef0be6b01588fa0e5647&idno=umlr000004&xc=1&c=umlib&cc=umlib&q1=missouri+civil+war&seq=446&view=text (Accessed 27 December 2010).


38 Florence May Porter, “Our First Flag,” Reminiscences of the Women of Missouri During the Sixties (Missouri Division, United Daughters of the Confederacy, undated), 10-11.