

SACK THE BANKS AND BURN THE TOWN

THE RAID ON ST. ALBANS, 1864

At 3PM, Wednesday, October 19, 1864, the railroad town of St. Albans in Vermont was filled with rebel yells and gunfire as some 20 men, supporting the Confederate cause, entered three different banks in the centre of the town: St. Albans, Franklin County, and First National banks. The men were in four groups: three to carry out the actual robberies and one to remain in the main street for crowd control and to steal horses for their escape.

By Michael Leck

The Confederate raiders were under the command of Lieutenant Bennett H. Young. All the Southern veterans in the force had arrived incognito from Canada ten days before the robbery. The raiders scouted five banks in the town, as well as some banks in the nearby town of Swanton. The plan was to rob all in St. Albans, set the town alight, and then ride fast to Swanton to rob the banks there. Finally, they would cross

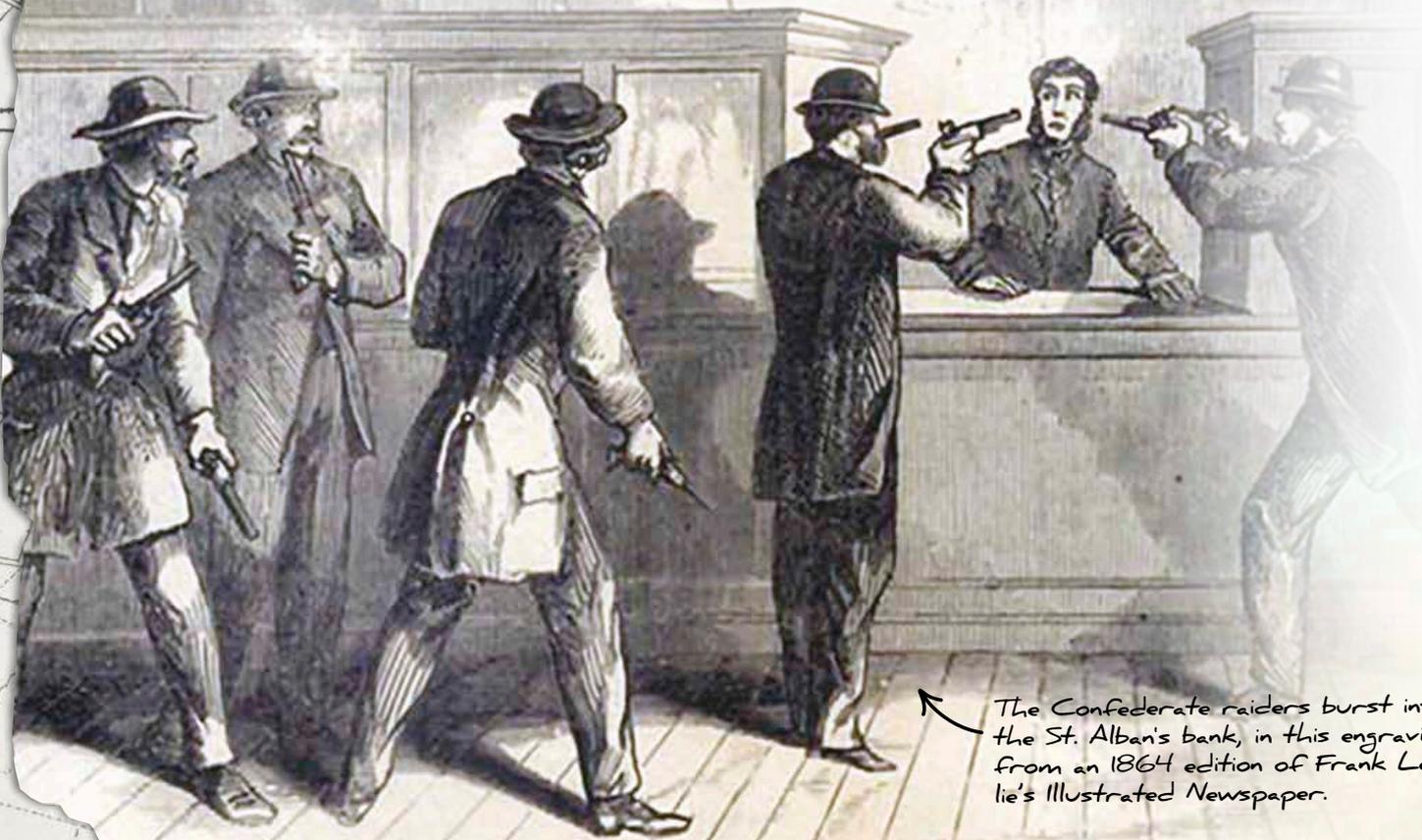
the border back into Canada. The main purpose was to strike fear in the Union so they would have to divert troops from the South to protect the Northern border. They also hoped to gain funds to support the Southern cause.

The day of the raid was cloudy and all did not go as planned. They only managed to rob three of the banks and, even then, they weren't able to get all the money, gold, and bonds in

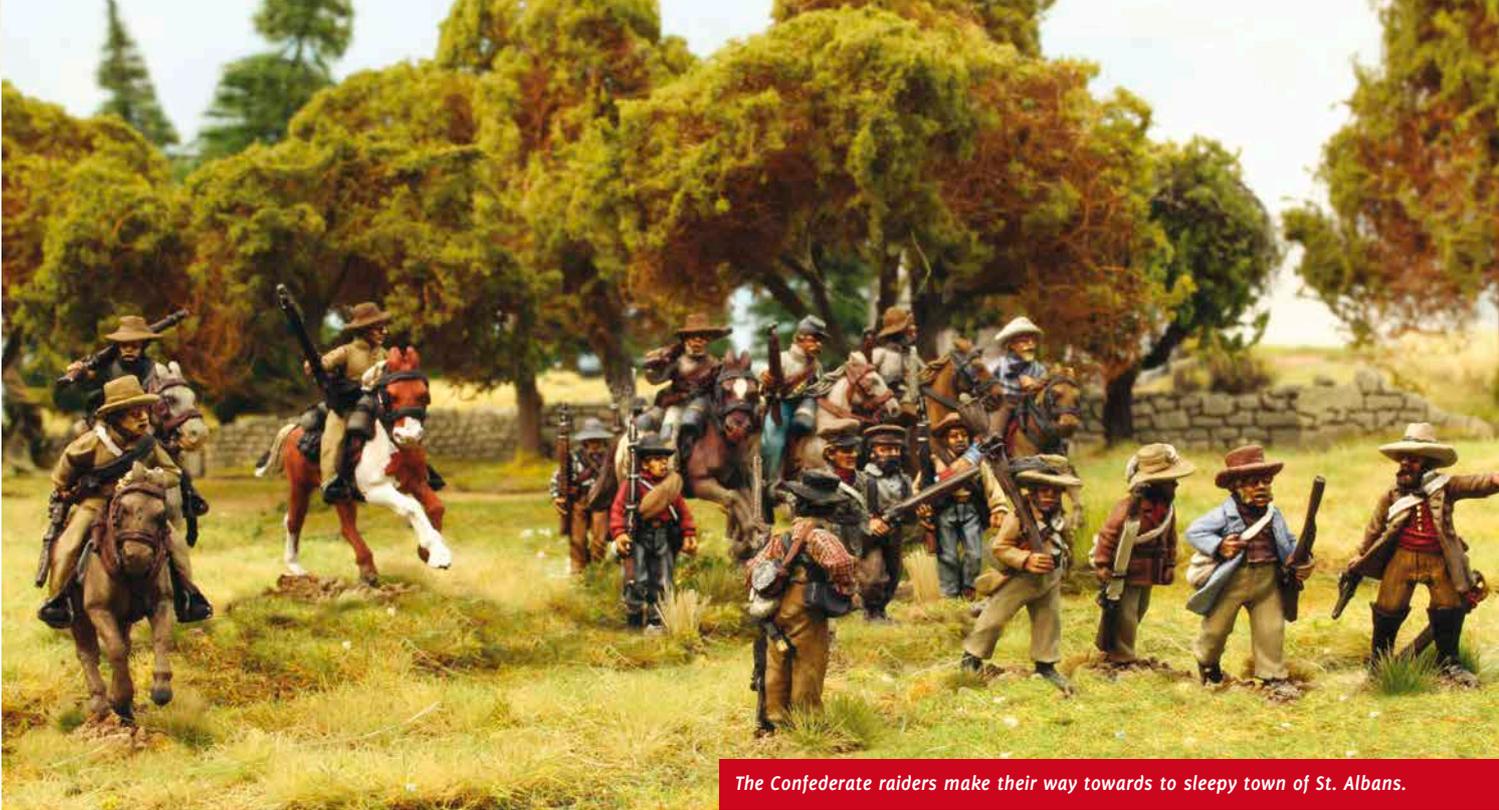
each of them. The estimated amount of the take was \$208,000. As the raiders drew attention with gunfire and yelling, the townsfolk started to arrive to see what the commotion was all about. Several of them were herded to the village green at Taylor Park, but others brought arms and started to open fire at the raiders. Several of the townsfolk and at least one of the raiders were hurt during the shootout. As the raiders left, they gathered horses from two stables but failed to set any houses on fire. Leaving along the main street of the town towards the North, they headed for Canada, before more of the town's inhabitants took up the fight.

At least two different posses of about 40-50 men each were organized and took up the pursuit of the raiders, but they did not manage to catch them before they crossed the border to Canada. The raiders thought they were safe. However, a Canadian sheriff had been alerted; he and his posse managed to capture at least fourteen of the raiders within 24 hours. The Canadian authorities also responded quickly by sending out the militia to guard the border and prevent more Confederate supporters carrying out raids in the US, and to prevent enraged Union Americans from trying to capture the Confederate raiders.

Only \$85,000 of the take was ever found and only five of the raiders faced



The Confederate raiders burst into the St. Alban's bank, in this engraving from an 1864 edition of Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper.



The Confederate raiders make their way towards to sleepy town of St. Albans.

charges in Canada. They were all set free, as the judges found that the raiders had acted as combatants of war.

SCENARIO – THE CONFEDERATE "INVASION" OF VERMONT

Like in the 1954 movie *The Raid*, this scenario is inspired by the St. Albans Raid. I have chosen to play fast and loose with the facts to get a good gaming experience. I used the Osprey rules, *The Men That Would Be Kings* (by Dan Mersey), during our play test, but I'm sure that you will be able to use your rules of preference without any problems.

Set-up

The scenario takes place in the centre of St. Albans and terrain is set-up according to the map on a 120cm x 120cm table (4' x 4'). It can be expanded to a full size 4' x 6' table.

The Raiders set up as follows:

- Group 1: in the centre of the gaming table.
- Group 2: In the St. Albans Bank
- Group 3: In the Franklin County Bank.
- Group 4: In the First National Bank of St. Albans.

The citizens set up as follows:

- Group 1: Bank Street, one mini must touch the board edge

- Group 2: Kingman Street, one mini must touch the board edge
- Group 3: Southern part of Main Street, one mini must touch the board edge.
- Group 4: Fairfield Street, one mini must touch the board edge
- Group 5: All groups arrive as reinforcements with a move action from Lake Street in the turn designated in the OOB below.
- Group 6: Set up a group of five to ten civilians on the Village Green that have been herded there by the Raiders; they are too scared to make any resistance but will be in the way for any shooting.

In both Field and Fuller stables there are twelve horses. There should also be three wagons (each can carry six men) in the streets that the Raiders might steal to be able to get away.

Special rules

- The Raiders have the initiative and start each turn.
- Three groups of Raiders start the game in the banks and may exit them on turn 1, as they now have sacked them. But for each additional turn they spend in the bank they might get more loot. Roll 1D6 for each extra turn spent in a bank.

On a roll of 6 they gain one extra Victory point.

- No one may engage Raiders in a bank and the Raiders in a bank may not shoot out on the street, but they may engage any enemies in close combat as they leave the bank.
- To steal horses or wagons, at least one mini in a group must move into contact with it. One group can control up to twelve horses or one wagon with up to six spare horses attached to it.
- The Raiders can use the 'Greek fire' to set buildings ablaze by using a Fire Action. The 'Greek fire' has a range of 6", roll 1D6 on a 6 the Building catching fire.
- If you want to add an extra dimension to the scenario, roll for a random trait for each of the Group Leaders.

Ending the scenario

Keep playing until all the Attackers are either captured, gunned down, or have escaped from the gaming table via the northern table edge.

Victory conditions

The Attacker gains Victory points as follows:

- 1 Point for each Raider that manages to escape by the northern board edge and also has a

means of transport (this might be a horse or wagon that he has or that another Raider has managed to cross the board edge with); a horse can transport one man and a wagon six men.

- No points for Raiders that leave the table from any other edge of the gaming board.
- 1 Point for each building they manage to set ablaze.
- Bonus points may be gained if the bank robbing raiders stay in the banks for longer to search for hidden money.

The Defender gains Victory points as follows:

- 2 Points for each of the Raiders that are captured or gunned down.
- 1 Point for each Raider that leaves the table from any edge and doesn't have transport.
- 1 Point for each Citizen killed.



ORDER OF BATTLE

Raiders (Attackers)

The Confederate Raiders comprised around 20 men, so I decided to use the "Skirmish Kings" option in the rules and represent them with four groups of six minis, and use the Regular Infantry troop type as a base, but with some minor changes. Each Raider had two revolvers and some of them also bottles of "Greek fire" to set the town ablaze; each of the four groups in the scenario have one bottle of "Greek fire".

- **1st Group:** Lieutenant Bennett H. Young (Leadership Value: 5+) and five men
- **2nd Group:** Thomas B. Collins (Leadership Value: 5+) and five men
- **3rd Group:** William H. Huntley (Leadership Value: 6+) and five men
- **4th Group:** Alamand P. Bruce (Leadership Value: 6+) and five men

CONFEDERATE RAIDERS				Points: 6
Speed	Firing	Fighting	Discipline	
6"	5+	5+	+1	

Weapons

Two Revolvers (count as foot bows); two dice per Raider may also be used in fighting.

Special Rules

If they get horses or wagons for the entire group they may mount up and be considered as Mounted Infantry for the rest of the game. (This will affect their shooting as they now count as mounted bow with two dice per Raider.)

St. Albans Citizens (Defenders)

The citizens of St. Albans did make some sporadic resistance but I chose to level it up a bit in my scenario. I used the Irregular Infantry troop type as a starting point for them, they can be armed with different weapons but they all count as Obsolete Rifles in this scenario.

- **1st Group:** Elinus Morrison (Leadership Value: 7+) and five men
- **2nd Group:** Wilder Gilson (Leadership Value: 6+) and five men
- **3rd Group:** Former Captain G. Conger (Leadership Value: 5+) and five men
- **4th Group:** St. Albans Police (Leadership Value: 6+) six men
- **5th Group (Reinforcements):** railroad workers and mechanics from the St. Albans Foundry Company (Leadership Value: 6+) 2 x six men in turn 3, and 3 x six men in turn 5
- **6th Group (unarmed):** This is the group of civilians herded by the raiders (see above).

ST ALBANS CITIZENS				Points: 4
Speed	Firing	Fighting	Discipline	
6"	5+	6	0	

Weapons

Different weapons, count as Obsolete Rifle

Special Rules

None