The Burroughs Creek Trail Project is being developed by Sunflower Republic, LLC, under the auspices of the Lawrence, Kansas, National Heritage Area, with in-kind assistance from the Hall Center for the Humanities at the University of Kansas.

Around 5 a.m. on August 21, 1863, some 400 pro-Confederate guerrillas on horseback led by William Clarke Quantrill passed near this point on their way to “burn every house and kill every man” in Lawrence.

Lawrence had long assumed the role of pro-slavery sympathizers. During the territorial period in the 1850s, the Kansas free-state crowd favored abolitionists and anti-slavery adherents who had been sacked once by Missouri-based “border ruffians” and threatened on several other occasions.

As such, when the Civil War began in 1861, Lawrence had much cause for alarm. Located little more than 40 miles from Kansas City, Lawrence was well within range of attack by the pro-Confederate territorial “bushwhackers” that were terrorizing settlers and their livestock.

Indeed, during fall of 1862, guerrillas under Quantrill’s command had raided two locations in Johnson County, Kansas, in the most brazen staging to the attack, Lawrence residents had begun to make defensive preparations, but these would prove inadequate.

Quantrill and his followers may have justified their methods on Lawrence as a measure of furthering Confederacy war aims. But there were other motivations as well, ranging from hunting and plunder to revenge for outrages perpetrated by Union forces against notorious-breeding Missourians.

Quantrill himself may have developed some personal animosity toward Lawrence during his short tenure in the city just prior to the outbreak of the war. Additionally, the accidental collapse of a Kansas City jail in mid-August 1865 that killed several women prisoners with familial and romantic ties to some of Quantrill’s men, may have further provoked a desire by Quantrill and his men to seek vengeance.

On August 18, 1863, approximately 200 of Quantrill’s men gathered north of Columbus, Missouri. This cadre grew to over 400 by the time the raiders reached the Kansas-Missouri border on the evening of August 20. Quantrill chose most of the Union posts and paroles in the area. The raiders took over a half-hour to ensure they would arrive as efficiently as possibly. Quantrill’s men would question local residents – and then kill them once they had supplied the necessary information.

Achieving complete surprise, Quantrill’s men approached Lawrence just before dawn. They passed at present-day South Park and then unleashed their assault. By the time they departed some four hours later, the raiders had reduced many of Lawrence’s buildings and from 150 to 250 men and boys, including a contingent of Army scouts who were largely unarmed and unarmed.

The incident ranks as one of the worst atrocities of the Civil War.

**Quantrill’s Crossing**

**Burroughs Creek Trail & Linear Park**

**19th Street**

**15th Street**

**23rd Street**

**11th Street**

**Learnard Avenue**

**Haskell Avenue**

**Two locations in Johnson County,**

**six of the Quantrill raid victims from Oread to Oak Hill. On May 30, 1895 –**

The Quantrill raid has been the subject of much cinematic and journalistic coverage over the years. A notable article by Vivian Gresham, “Quantrill’s Raid: The Man Behind the Myth,” appeared in the October 1970 issue of the Kansas Quarterly. The raid has been the subject of numerous books, including John R. Dabney’s 1967 study, *Quantrill’s Raid: A Contemporary Account*, and has been depicted in several films, including *The Tall Men* (1955) and *Dark Command* (1940).