

## PRISONERS

Many Missourians were imprisoned for crimes committed during the Civil War. Confederate soldiers who were captured were held by the military as prisoners of war, while many Union sympathizers were also put behind bars. Some Union soldiers were held after being convicted by military courts while loyal civilians were also held for a variety of crimes. Ironically, while most Confederate prisoners of war gained their freedom immediately after the war, 157 pro-Union civilians and soldiers remained in the Missouri State Penitentiary until the state government ordered them to be set free in December 1865—eight months after the war ended.

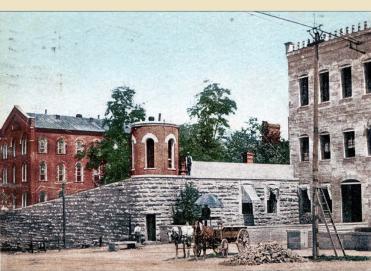


Missouri State Capitol, c. 1860.

## APPEALS FOR PARDON

In 1863, George Perkins, a member of the Enrolled Missouri Militia, tried to break up a disturbance in the town of Pacific, Missouri. The commotion had been caused by an intoxicated man named Peter Henry, who was cheering loudly in the street for the President of the Confederacy, Jefferson Davis. When Perkins attempted to arrest Henry, the drunken man tried to stab him with a knife. Fearing for his life, Perkins shot Henry, who survived. Perkins was convicted of assault with intent to kill and sentenced to four years in the State Penitentiary.

In one of the letters shown at the right, Perkins asks Missouri Governor Thomas Fletcher to pardon him. In the other letter, the victim's brother Edward tells Perkins that his brother was habitually intemperate and probably deserved to be shot. He offers to write a letter to the governor in Perkin's behalf.



Missouri State Penitentiary, 1908.

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January 19, 1865.

Above: Edward Henry to George Perkins, November 18, 1864. Below: George Perkins to Missouri Governor Thomas C. Fletcher,

"I believe [my brother] was in the fault, he had no business getting drunk, and if he had not got drunk he would not have cheered for Jeff Davis. Consequently you would not have shot him.

"I drew my revolver and ordered him to fall in before me and march to the provost marshal's office. He drew his knife and made a cut at me. I parried the blow and, deeming my life in danger I shot him, not with the intent to kill him however.'

When the war began in the summer of 1861, Michael Brennan joined a Union company from Clarksville, Missouri. Brennan had been unable to find a job and had hoped to be able to support his family by serving in the military. On the evening that Brennan's unit was to depart for St. Louis, his wife tried to prevent him from leaving the house. Attempting to walk out the door, Brennan shoved his wife out of the way. She fell off the front porch of the house and died of a ruptured blood vessel near her heart. Michael Brennan was convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to three years in the State Penitentiary. In this letter, B. P. Clifford appeals to the governor of Missouri to pardon Brennan.

"It is believed by all of his immediate neighbors and the Physician who attended the case that it was entirely accidental, without any intention on his part of injuring, much less producing the unfortunate result that it did. .

If consistent with your views, I would respectfully ask in the name of charity and justice, that he be relieved from serving the remainder of his sentence.

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B. P. Clifford to Missouri Governor Hamilton R. Gamble,

