

# The Baldwin Brothers

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Henry Lyman and Andrew Seymour Baldwin were born in Harwinton, Connecticut, sons of Joseph and Polly Smith Baldwin. They were two of the ten children who made the decision to come to Kansas to help exterminate the system of slavery. Henry Lyman Baldwin wrote in his memoirs:

The Kansas–Nebraska Bill opened up those states to the introduction of slavery, or “Squatter Sovereignty” as it was called, by which when they should be admitted as states, a vote of the actual settlers should be taken to decide whether they should be slave or free. An effort was being made in the north and south to colonize enough to outvote the opposite party.

After procuring a new wagon, harness, plows, etc., they drove to Peru, Illinois, and caught the steamboat on the Illinois River to St. Louis. They met opposition in Missouri while trying to secure passage to Kansas City. They were quickly recognized as “Yankees” because of their dress, speech, horses and wagons. The Missourians were tripling the price of transportation, advising them that all land 150 miles to the west had been claimed, and alleging the Baldwin’s’ money was counterfeit!

Henry Lyman Baldwin settled on the “Old California Road” – his claim in 1856 had been previously preempted and the former occupant had built a two-story log house. With logs all trimmed of their bark, the chinking of plaster, and a coat of whitewash, the house boasted an upstairs, doors front and back, and an underneath cellar. It was to this home that Henry brought his bride, Ann Eliza Cosley on March 8, 1859, his 31<sup>st</sup> birthday. Their son, Harry Lewis Baldwin, was born the next year. The following is an excerpt from the latter’s autobiography.

Lawrence was the nearest town to the east of their cabin, approximately six miles and to the west about five miles was Lecompton, the headquarters of the pro-slavery men who were trying to make a slave state of the territory.

The cabin was robbed several times and once set on fire during my father’s absence, and he was shot at by a marauding band of bushwhackers once, but his life probably was saved by his god horse, Major, whose fleetness I dimly remember. . .

During the war many slaves ran away from their masters. As a rule, Canada was their destination, for once there they could not be returned. Many a slave was hidden by my father during the daytime and sent on his way again at night to the next station of the “Underground Railway”. . . My father had some stirring times and did his part as a “conductor” on the “underground railroad” and for several years after the war rendered assistance to the Negroes in establishing them on a self-training basis.

In the earlier days, just after the Civil War had closed and the Underground Railway was still operating, many [blacks] with their families came from nearby Missouri and would rent on shares a small acreage and do other work as farmhands. We had several of these at various times, one especially about the time I was three years old. The boys, of whom there were several who were quite adept at swearing . . . thought it great sport to teach me. Ma heard me one day, and after listening carefully came up and said, “What is that you are saying?”

“Dod dam, Dod dam.” I remember her getting a little switch about six inches long and then mixing up a little soap suds to make sure my mouth was clean. They say it worked, and I am sure it did for quite a good many years at least.

There were a number of Wakarusa Valley settlers who took part in the chase of Quantrill after his August 1863 raid on Lawrence. Descendants of William Jessee, Andrew White, Ira T. Steele, Andrew S. Baldwin, Dr. Eliab Macy, and John Metsker were among the many grandchildren and great-grandchildren who recounted stories handed down to them after the raid. These stories were given to us orally, by tape and by written statement.

Information received from the great-granddaughter of Henry L. Baldwin has reinforced the belief that many, many settlers, upon learning of the destruction of Lawrence, immediately left their homes, rode to the aid of Lawrence, and joined in the pursuit of Quantrill and his gang.

With the permission of Ruth Moriarity, great-granddaughter of Henry Baldwin, the following excerpts of testimony are revealed for the first time:

On August 20[21], 1863, I arose from my bed of pleasant dreams. I noticed a dense smoke rising in the East, thinking it must be I. C. Baldwin's haystacks which I had assisted in putting up the day before. I went up to the chamber window to ascertain what was burning and discovered a man coming over the hill from the East riding a horse bare-back, with a long switch in his hand, hitting the horse first on one side, then on the other, and shouting at the top of his voice, "Quantrill is in Lawrence killing everybody as fast as they are in sight!" I hurried down, called my wife from her bed as the man came up the hill, realizing that what had so long been dreaded in Lawrence was happening. I hastily called up Major, saddled and bridled him. After hastily eating a cold breakfast I started down the road for Lawrence; soon overtook some of the neighbors who also had received the warning from the man riding horseback, and we hastily proceeded towards the rising smoke, which we soon became convinced was (Lawrence) on fire. Down about three miles some twenty had joined the hastily formed procession, and a halt was called, after having heard of reports from Lawrence, to consult of the best way to proceed. Soon my neighbor, Mr. (Ezekiel) Colman, came up in horse and buggy, all the others being mounted on horses. On learning that we were consulting about some organization before we proceeded, he informed us it was a very poor time to stop and organize when our friends were being massacred in Lawrence, whipped his horse and led us all to follow in the rear. Without coming to any organization we soon proceeded, all giving orders, but none obeying. Some two miles further on we found Mr. Colman and came to a halt, having discovered smoke rising some mile and a half down a ravine, and he informed us it might be very unsafe to rush into Lawrence when an enemy might be in the rear. We left him investigating the cause of the small smoke he saw, which I then and still believe was only some innocent camper who had camped there during the night and knew nothing of what was being enacted in Lawrence.

Hastily passing on we soon came to the brow of the hill overlooking Lawrence, from all parts of which flames and smoke were rising. I hurried on and soon was on Massachusetts Street. Discovering a building burning I dismounted and hauled some three or four buggies and carriages from under the shed adjoining it into the street that they might not be consumed. Massachusetts for three blocks at least was impassable for horse and rider on account of the flames on either side. Dead men were to be seen lying in all directions and in almost all positions . . .

In a few minutes after arriving in town some eight or ten men with horses had assembled on the corner of the street and thought best to pursue Quantrill and his band who were at that time retreating south across the Wakarusa bottoms. I joined the party, and passing near Aunt Tilley Blood's [*Thomas Barber's widow, now married to N. C. Blood*] residence I rode aside from the party two blocks to see how she and family had escaped the raid; found them at the front door alive but very much frightened. I hastily rode on to overtake the party I had left. We hastily followed them out to the Santa Fe road some ten miles south of Lawrence, they fleeing from us as fast as we advanced. At this point we discovered men approaching us . . . which we soon knew must be friends of our party who had hastily joined in the chase, some armed with rifles, shotguns, pitchforks, swords and mowing scythes.

Cordley corroborates Baldwin's account of men from the countryside pursuing Quantrill:

As soon as Quantrill began to move off, the men in town began to come in from their hiding places, and *country* people began to come in from outside. Many of these last were mounted and had guns of one kind or another . . . Jim Lane came dashing down Henry Street shouting, "Let us follow them boys, let us follow them." A small company of these mounted farmers soon gathered about him, and they proceeded by the road Quantrill had taken.

Henry Baldwin states that he became thirsty, so he entered a cornfield and busted open a watermelon with the butt of his gun – "The sweetest, the coolest, and the best melon I ever tasted." The group met up with Jim Lane, who asked if there was anyone present who knew the way to Baldwin City. Henry obliged that he knew the way, and would gladly take a message to the people to Baldwin. En route there, Henry came upon approaching the one nearest to him; Henry inquired whose men these were. They were identified as Colonel Plumb from Kansas City in command of about 300 U. S. troops.

I said, "Show me the Colonel," to whom I said, "I am from Lawrence. Quantrill has been in the city and as was supposed when I left killed 300 men, fired and robbed the town." Col. Plumb soon had his men mounted and started towards Baldwin City and in pursuit of Quantrill . . . "

Henry started toward home about 5 o'clock in the afternoon, arriving about half past ten, but first stopped at the home of his father-in-law, George W. Cosley, to inquire of his safety, only to learn that Chester Hay, his brother-in-law, was among those killed in the raid. Chester had risen early and been to market, was returning home and was shot down on the street. This incident was witnessed by a neighbor who saw the man shoot him deliberately. The raider then removed Chester's new boots and, after taking his own off, put the boots on. There was a short service at the Hay home; Chester's remains were then taken and placed alongside the others in a large trench that had been dug. Into this rude trench 181 were placed, many of them the most prominent persons of the city.

Henry L. Baldwin died on April 13, 1910 and is buried in Denver, Colorado alongside his wife, Ann Eliza Cosley, who died on July 21, 1921.

Henry's writings and those of his son, Harry Lewis Baldwin, are of great historical significance, adding largely to the body of knowledge contained in history books of early Kansas, and offering us the opportunity to give an immense measure of gratitude to those who played an integral part in those early years, for their inordinate display of courage and determination.