



**Missouri's Confederate: Claiborne Fox Jackson  
and the Creation of Southern Identity in the  
Border West (MISSOURI BIOGRAPHY SERIES)**

*Christopher Phillips*

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Claiborne Fox Jackson (1806-1862) remains one of Missouri's most controversial historical figures. Elected Missouri's governor in 1860 after serving as a state legislator and Democratic party chief, Jackson was the force behind a movement for the neutral state's secession before a federal sortie exiled him from office. Although Jackson's administration was replaced by a temporary government that maintained allegiance to the Union, he led a rump assembly that drafted an ordinance of secession in October 1861 and spearheaded its acceptance by the Confederate Congress. Despite the fact that the majority of the state's populace refused to recognize the act, the Confederacy named Missouri its twelfth state the following month. A year later Jackson died in exile in Arkansas, an apparent footnote to the war that engulfed his region and that consumed him.

In this first full-length study of Claiborne Fox Jackson, Christopher Phillips offers much more than a traditional biography. His extensive analysis of Jackson's rise to power through the tangle that was Missouri's antebellum politics and of Jackson's complex actions in pursuit of his state's secession complete the deeper and broader story of regional identity--one that began with a growing defense of the institution of slavery and which crystallized during and after the bitter, internecine struggle in the neutral border state during the American Civil War. Placing slavery within the realm of western democratic expansion rather than of plantation agriculture in border slave states such as Missouri, Phillips argues that southern identity in the region was not born, but created. While most rural Missourians were proslavery, their "southernization" transcended such boundaries, with southern identity becoming a means by which residents sought to reestablish local jurisdiction in defiance of federal authority during and after the war. This identification, intrinsically political and thus ideological, centered—and still centers—upon the events surrounding the Civil War, whether in Missouri or elsewhere. By positioning personal and political struggles and triumphs within Missourians' shifting identity and the redefinition of their collective memory, Phillips reveals the complex process by which these once Missouri westerners became and remain Missouri southerners.

*Missouri's Confederate* not only provides a fascinating depiction of Jackson and his world but also offers the most complete scholarly analysis of Missouri's maturing antebellum identity. Anyone with an interest in the Civil War, the American West, or the American South will find this important new biography a powerful contribution to our understanding of nineteenth-century America and the origins—as well as the legacy—of the Civil War.

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