



# Incident at the Otterville Station: A Civil War Story of Slavery and Rescue

*John Christgau*

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While elated Northerners were celebrating victory at Gettysburg and toasting Abraham Lincoln as the Great Emancipator, Missourian Charles W. Walker was rousing his thirteen slaves in the dark of night. In defiance of a standing Union order prohibiting the transfer of slaves among states, he intended to ship his slaves by train to Kentucky, where they would be sold at auction. What ensued was one of the most gripping—and until now, mostly forgotten—events of the Civil War.

In *Incident at the Otterville Station*, John Christgau relates the true story of the rescue of Walker's thirteen slaves by soldiers of the Ninth Minnesota Regiment and the soldiers' subsequent arrest for mutiny. The controversial incident became national news, with President Lincoln ultimately sending Secretary of War Edward Stanton to investigate. Christgau's compelling narrative of the Otterville Station rescue and its aftermath illustrates the complex process of emancipation during the American Civil War, particularly in border states such as Missouri. The end of slavery was the product of many actors, from Union soldiers to the president and Congress to abolitionists and the enslaved themselves. This detailed account examines the critical role that individuals played in determining the outcome of emancipation and the war.

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