A SESQUICENTENNIAL MOMENT

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FEBRUARY 8 – 14, 1863

A band of 34 guerrillas brutally murdered a Putnam County man on Feb. 8, 1863, in front of his wife and daughter, who was thrown into a fire but survived.

The *Gallipolis Journal* reported that "a scamp named Emmerson Chapman" fractured Calvary Gibson's skull before he was shot seven times, "blowing out every vestige of life, and mutilating the remains in a terrible and sickening manner."

The number of crimes meant to intimidate citizens increased as the referendum over West Virginia's statehood drew nearer. About the same time that Gibson was killed, a Putnam County deputy sheriff was kidnapped and "has not been heard of" since.

Such acts of terrorism prompted pleas for the Union to send

mounted infantry to help protect the region.

"The truth is, unless there is something like this done for this part of West Virginia, and that speedily too, we will hear of more blood being shed and more robberies being committed," according to a letter to the *Wheeling Intelligencer* signed only by the initials W.W.H.