

Comrades in Battle

J.E.B. Stuart, later a famed Confederate cavalry officer, crossed paths with John Brown twice in the 1850s.

Born in 1833 in Virginia, Stuart graduated from West Point and was assigned to the western frontier. While stationed at Fort Leavenworth in 1856, he was among Federal troops sent to Black Jack to order the release of Pate and others captured in the battle. Here Stuart first laid eyes on “Old John Brown.”

While in Washington D.C. in 1859, Stuart traveled with Lt. Col. Robert E. Lee to put down a reported antislavery rebellion at Harpers Ferry, Virginia. Stuart immediately recognized the ringleader, “Mr. Smith,” as the famous abolitionist John Brown.

After the outbreak of civil war, Stuart joined the Confederate army. He died from wounds suffered at the Battle of Yellow Tavern in May, 1864.

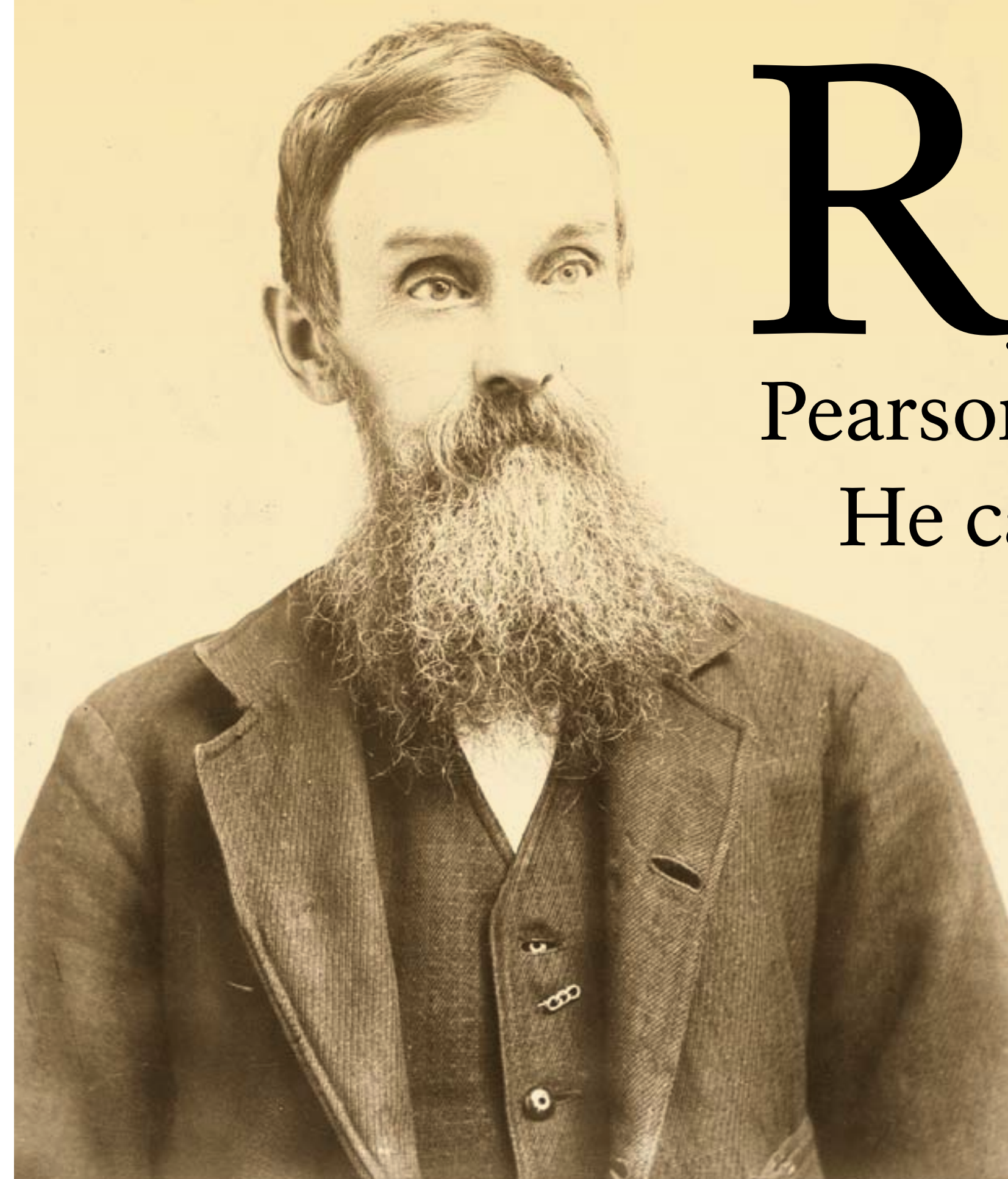
The Pearson farmstead, including a frame house built around 1890, still stands on a rise overlooking the battlefield.



August Bondi, a Jewish immigrant from Vienna, Austria, fought beside Brown at Black Jack. As a young student in Vienna, Bondi had joined a student movement backing democratic revolution. He fled to the United States with his family in 1848.

In 1855, Bondi read of the troubles in Kansas and moved to the Territory to join the Free-State cause. He soon joined with Brown’s men to fight the Pro-Slavery militias.

During the Civil War, Bondi served in the Union army. He then returned to Kansas and a career as a successful businessman.



Robert Hall Pearson fought beside John Brown at Black Jack. Born in England, Pearson grew up in Pennsylvania. He came to Kansas in 1854 as a settler and antislavery advocate.

In 1860, Pearson bought land that included the Black Jack battlefield site. Pearson lived on this land till his death in 1906, raising a family and carving out a prosperous farm on the prairie. His farm produced orchard crops, grain and livestock as well as specialty items including maple sugar.