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Photographs / Images: illustration depicting Hickok’s role in the fight at Rock Creek Station, Nebraska Territory, 1861 (Harper’s New Monthly Magazine, February 1867)
James Butler “Wild Bill” Hickok is familiar to many Nebraskans because of the so-called “McCanles Massacre” on July 12, 1861, when David McCanles and two others were killed in a fight over possession of Rock Creek Station, a road ranch (now a Nebraska State Historical Park) in present Jefferson County, Nebraska.

McCanles sold it to Russell, Majors, and Waddell for use as a Pony Express relay station for a down payment to be followed by monthly payments. When they went bankrupt, payments ceased.

After the incident Horace Wellman, the station-keeper, Hickok, and J. W. “Doc” Brink were charged with murder; but their plea of self-defense while defending company property was accepted. Hickok is credited with killing McCanles, but the evidence is not conclusive.


For information about Rock Creek Station State Historical Park call the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission or visit www.ngpc.state.ne.us.

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