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Suggested Citation:

Linder, Jamie S. and William B. Eigelsbach. "To War with Mexico: A Diary of the Mexican-American War." *The Journal of East Tennessee History* 73 (2001): 74-100.

TO WAR WITH MEXICO:

A Diary of the Mexican-American War

Jamie S. Linder and William B. Eigelsbach*

The anonymous author of the following diary, detailing one soldier's experience at the Battle of Cerro Gordo during the Mexican-American War, was a member of the Knoxville Dragoons, a volunteer militia unit that could serve as either cavalry or infantry as needed. The unit had been formed in 1840, six years before the start of the war, and was under the command of Captain William R. Caswell, a planter and a district attorney general, and Lieutenant Samuel Bell, an alumnus of East Tennessee University.

On May 24, 1846, Tennessee governor Aaron Venable Brown issued a proclamation ordering the state's volunteer militias to report to their area's major generals for possible service in the recently declared war with Mexico.¹ East Tennessee units were to report to Major General William Brazleton of the 1st Division of Militia, whose headquarters would be in Knoxville. East Tennessee's quota was to supply "seven companies, four of which were to be infantry or riflemen, and three to be cavalry or mounted men."²

* Jamie S. Linder, formerly of The University of Tennessee, is a veteran journalist and editor. William B. Eigelsbach is manuscript archivist at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville campus.

¹ The literature on the Mexican-American War is extensive. Sanford H. Montaigne, *Blood Over Texas* (New Rochelle, 1976) provides an interesting analysis of the causes of the war and its various interpretations. A good general history of the war is Colonel John S. D. Eisenhower, *So Far From God: The U.S. War with Mexico, 1845-1848* (New York, 1989). A contemporary viewpoint from the Mexican side can be found in Ramon Alcaraz, *The Other Side; or, Notes for the History of the War Between Mexico and The United States* (New York, 1850). Santa Anna's own account, written after years in exile, is Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, *The Eagle; the Autobiography of Santa Anna*, edited by Ann Fears Crawford (Austin, 1967). Two contemporary American works that should be used to see how the American generals were viewed at the time are J. Frost, *The Mexican War and Its Warriors* (New Haven, 1848) and Robert T. Conrad, *General Scott and His Staff* (Philadelphia, 1848). The official records of the war were published as *Executive Documents Printed by Order of the Senate of the United States During the First Session of the Thirtieth Congress, Begun and Held at the City of Washington, December 6, 1847* (Washington, 1847-1848). A useful account of the war by a Tennessean serving in another unit is George C. Furber, *The Twelve Months Volunteer: a Journal of a Private, in the Tennessee Regiment of Cavalry, in the Campaign in Mexico* (Cincinnati, 1848). Knoxville newspapers in the time period had members of local units file reports from the war. *The Knoxville Standard's* principal correspondents were Captain Caswell and William A. Lindsay, a private in his company. For an excellent short history of the unit consult Neal O'Steen, "Honor if not Glory," *The Tennessee Alumnus* 67 (Fall 1987): 8-11. Captain Caswell's letters can be consulted in the original in the William R. Caswell Papers, McClung Historical Collection, Knox County Public Library, Knoxville, or in a typescript also available at the McClung Collection.

² Aaron V. Brown, *Speeches, Congressional and Political, and Other Writings* (Nashville, 1854), 390.

Due to the large number of volunteers, Captain Caswell's troops were assigned to the Knoxville Dragoons—their official designation. They were assigned to Company K of the Mounted Dragoons, which was on its way of Memphis.

Once in New Orleans, Lieutenant Bell. Here Caswell was Gideon Pillow. "The command of the company," Caswell wrote his stepfather, "I leave my company and act as a private in your company."³ Most likely to be sent along well with the troops.

The troops proceeded from New Orleans to the Northern command under General Pillow. It has been frustrating for the Knoxville Dragoons. Other Tennessee units were sent on endless marches, always moving forward. It was when Caswell, who had been in the army since 1846, led his men in an unsuccessful battle with the American army. As one of the most prominent mounted gunners in the army, he had homes earlier than any of the other units. From where they are winning.

Circumstances were to be the southern arena of war. General Scott. Scott was planning to capture Mexico, and capture the city.

On March 6, 1847, Scott's army then moved to the fortress of San Juan. Surrender was demanded. Scott started to bombard the city. His wife, Elizabeth, Captain Caswell's

I landed on the beach of the city, after several days. I had been in the flash, but could not put my foot on the beach for the first time.

³ William R. Caswell to Benjamin

⁴ Quoted in O'Steen, 9.

MEXICO:

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Linder and William B. Eigelsbach*

detailing one soldier's experience at the Mexican War, was a member of the unit that could serve as either cavalry or infantry. In 1840, six years before the start of the war, William R. Caswell, a planter and brother of Samuel Bell, an alumnus of East

Venable Brown issued a proclamation to their area's major generals for the Mexican War. East Tennessee units were assigned to the 1st Division of Militia, whose duty was to supply "seven companies of riflemen, and three to be cavalry or

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Sanford H. Montaigne, *Blood Over Texas* (1967), discusses the causes of the war and its various interpretations. D. Eisenhower, *So Far From God: The U.S. Viewpoint from the Mexican Side* (1967), offers a contrary viewpoint from the Mexican side. *History of the War Between Mexico and the United States*, written after years in exile, is Antonio Lopez de Letona, edited by Ann Fears Crawford (Austin, 1967). For how the American generals were viewed in Mexico, see Lewis J. Frazier, *How the American Generals Were Viewed in Mexico* (New Haven, 1848) and Robert T. Conrad, *Official Records of the War* (published as *United States During the First Session of the Senate, December 6, 1847* (Washington, 1847-48)). In another unit is George C. Furber, *The 1st Regiment of Cavalry, in the Campaign in Mexico* (1847). The period had members of local units file reports. Correspondents were Captain Caswell and others. For a short history of the unit consult Neal R. McMillen (1987): 8-11. Captain Caswell's letters can be found in the McClung Historical Collection, Knoxville, Tennessee, at the McClung Collection.

War Writings (Nashville, 1854), 390.

Due to the large number of volunteers, not all militia units were accepted for service. Captain Caswell's troops were among the favored few chosen. The Knoxville Dragoons—their official designation in the United States Army would be that of Company K of the Mounted Infantry—were ordered to proceed to New Orleans by way of Memphis.

Once in New Orleans, Captain Caswell temporarily seceded command to Lieutenant Bell. Here Caswell accepted the position of aide de camp to General Gideon Pillow. "The command of a captain is the prettiest command of the army," Caswell wrote his stepfather, Benjamin McCulloch, "but I have been persuaded to leave my company and act as aid to Gen. Pillow with the privilege of rejoining my company."³ Most likely to the surprise of all the Whigs, Caswell appears to have gotten along well with the temperamental Democrat general.

The troops proceeded from New Orleans to Texas and toward Mexico to join the Northern command under General Zachary Taylor. This theater of war must have been frustrating for the Knoxville soldiers. Battle always seemed to elude them. As other Tennessee units were winning glory, the Knoxville Dragoons were engaged in endless marches, always miles away from active war. The most action the unit saw was when Caswell, who had returned to command of the company in October of 1846, led his men in an unsuccessful chase of a Mexican cavalry unit shadowing the American army. As one of his troops wrote home, "Why is it that the Tennessee regiment of mounted gunmen are thus kept out from any show in the field? We left our homes earlier than any of the infantry, yet we are now resting on our arms 600 miles from where they are winning laurels."⁴

Circumstances were to change when Captain Caswell and his men were sent to the southern arena of war to serve under the overall command of General Winfield Scott. Scott was planning to seize the port of Vera Cruz, march into the interior of Mexico, and capture the capital, Mexico City.

On March 6, 1847, Scott landed 10,000 troops several miles south of Vera Cruz. His army then moved to invest the city. The Mexican army garrisoned 1,200 men in the fortress of San Juan de Ulua and a further 3,800 in the town proper. Surrender was demanded of the Mexicans; ultimately they refused. On March 22, Scott started to bombard the city and the fortress. Writing a few days later to his wife, Elizabeth, Captain Caswell described his part in the battle:

I landed on the day before yesterday in the midst of the storming of the city, after a long and tempestuous voyage of twenty five days. I had been in hearing of all the guns and within sight of flash, but could not land until day before yesterday. And when I put my foot upon the shore, I found my company upon the beach for the first time under arms. I drew off my coat, and hav-

³ William R. Caswell to Benjamin McCulloch, November 22, 1846, Caswell Papers.

⁴ Quoted in O'Steen, 9.

ing left my arms on board, I borrowed a carbine and led the company out into the interior of the country to attack a body of Mexicans who were fortified at a bridge. They were routed before we got there, but the march there and back (about 12 miles) made me so sore and tired that I haven't been able to walk about much until today.... It is considered one of the greatest victories ever achieved.⁵

Seven days after the start of the American bombardment, the city of Vera Cruz surrendered. The battle cost the Mexicans some 80 soldiers and 100 civilians. The American army lost 19 soldiers and 63 were wounded.

A surrender ceremony to mark the victory typified General Scott's love of military pomp. "Old Fuss and Feathers" lived up to the affectionate nickname given him by his troops by staging an event akin to a Roman triumph. Captain Caswell relived the ceremony in his next letter home:

The formal surrender of the city, Castle, arms, public stores and of the soldiers themselves as prisoners of war, (they were released however upon parole) took place today. Worth's and Pillow's Brigades were drawn up, on each side of an open plain in front of the city. The Mexicans marched out of the city into the plain. A white flag was placed in the center of the ground. At ten o'clock the Mexicans marched out between our ranks to the flag, at the head of the column came the women and children, and with them the Rancheros bearing heavy bundles of household goods, such as bedding &c. When I saw this my greatest sympathy was excited for their unfortunate situation, and the deaths among them we had been forced to occasion. After the women came the column of Mexican soldiers. They stacked their arms and lay down their flags and musical instruments, and dispersed in every direction. They made a poor show, compared with our army. With few exceptions they are miserable looking creatures—and I believe are mostly gratified at the termination of the battle.... After the Mexicans retired, we hoisted our flag upon the castle and forts of the town fired a national salute, and Gen. Worth's division marched into the town. I marched in also with a few of my men, being the only Tennesseans who entered the town.⁶

With Vera Cruz captured and the surrender ceremony finished, General Scott began to mobilize his men for their march into Mexico's interior. On April 9—the

⁵ Caswell to Elizabeth Caswell, March 27, 1847, Caswell Papers.

⁶ Ibid., March 29, 1847.

same date as our anonymous... their assignment for the next... ordered to carry messages... scouting missions, and to d...

As Scott and his 8,500... nation's capital, they found... 12,000 men. The enemy a... conqueror of the Alamo. S... a severely rugged terrain. J... fortifications were can be... battlefield:

The pass of Cerro... Immediately upon... winding its way... the left, it is flan... ing the hill of C... at the upper end... to the height of... shut in by height... had fortified his... Cerro Gordo; a... road—one at th... and another fa... fortifications o... breastworks, ar... the road—enfi... cession; so that... next in order r... front of these l... felled, and oth... ties.⁸

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⁸ Raphael Semmes, *The Can...*

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same date as our anonymous diarist's first entry—the Knoxville Dragoons received their assignment for the next stage of the campaign. Captain Caswell's company was ordered to carry messages between the American armies under Scott, to conduct scouting missions, and to do escort duty for any out-riding parties.

As Scott and his 8,500 soldiers marched down Mexico's main highway to the nation's capital, they found waiting at Cerro Gordo a well-entrenched army of 12,000 men. The enemy army was under Mexican president General Santa Anna, conqueror of the Alamo. Supplementing the enemy's defensive entrenchments was a severely rugged terrain. Just how bad the terrain was and how strong the enemy fortifications were can be seen in Lieutenant Raphael Semmes' description of the battlefield:

The pass of Cerro Gordo is four miles from the Plan del Rio. Immediately upon leaving the "Plan," the road begins to ascend, winding its way through a narrow defile of the mountains. On the left, it is flanked and commanded for two miles, before reaching the hill of Cerro Gordo, which lies on the right of the road, at the upper end of the pass, by almost inaccessible ridge, rising to the height of eight hundred feet. On the right it is alternately shut in by heights, and skirted by a dense chapparal. The enemy had fortified himself on the ridge on the left, and on the hill of Cerro Gordo; and had beside, established two batteries across the road—one at the head of the pass, near the base of Cerro Gordo, and another farther up the road, in the direction of Jalapa. His fortifications on the height on the left, consisted of a series of breastworks, armed with cannon, and so arranged as to command the road—enfilading it in many places—and each other, in succession; so that in the event of the first battery's being taken, the next in order might be opened upon it; and so toties quoties. In front of these batteries, along the slope of the height, timber was felled, and other obstructions thrown in the way of storming parties.⁷

All this combined to make the Mexicans optimistic of victory. They were mistaken.

On April 17-18 the American army defeated the Mexican army in battle. The key to the American victory was the flanking movement. Acting on the advice of then-Captain Robert E. Lee, General David E. Twiggs swung wide from the American advance upon the Mexican's positions and fell upon them from a direction that caught the Mexican defenders with surprise. Twiggs' forces drove them from one of the battlefield's heights.

⁷ Semmes later served as a Rear Admiral in the Confederate navy.

⁸ Raphael Semmes, *The Campaign of General Scott in the Valley of Mexico* (Cincinnati, 1852), 63-64.

The next day Colonel William S. Harney launched a savage assault on the Mexican army's main defensive position. Santa Anna, seeing the battle as lost, began to withdraw his forces. Simultaneous with Harney's assault, General James Shields hit the far left flank of the Mexican army, turning an attempted retreat into a rout. Santa Anna and his army lost nearly 1,200 men, while the Americans lost 431. Future generals in the Civil War present at the battle, namely Lee and George McClellan, learned an enduring lesson about the efficacy of a surprise flanking movement.

The Knoxville Dragoon's role in the battle unfolds on the pages of the diary. The account can be usefully supplemented with another letter from Captain Caswell to his wife:

We alone of our regt., marched with the army and were in the battle. And from the time we left Vera Cruz up to our arrival here a few days since I was put upon constant duty with my few men, conveying dispatches to Gen. Twiggs in front, to Gen. Scott in the rear, and to the different corps of the army, riding night and day—guarding provender and provision trains, escorting Gen. Staff and Engineer officers upon reconnoitering & tours of survey, which was hazardous service.... In the battle of the 18th, I formed my men with the reserve of Gen. Pillow's Brigade, ready to dash upon the enemy whenever the storming party should have obtained possession of the enemy's breastworks.... With my men I was exposed to the fire of cannon and musketry, but all escaped unhurt.⁹

With this hard fought battle ended Scott and his army began to prepare the advance upon the Mexican capital, but war—for the Knoxville Dragoons—was over. While some, such as our diarist, thought the company would continue on to Mexico City, Captain Caswell had thought for some time that they would be sent home, since their twelve-month enlistment was soon to expire. Caswell was right. General Scott sent the Knoxville soldiers and other similarly circumstanced home. On June 15, 1847, the first of the returning troops reached Knoxville. A few weeks later a reception was held celebrating the Knoxville Dragoon's role in the war with Mexico and honoring their few losses—but most importantly, welcoming them home to East Tennessee.

April 9. A portion of the company consisting of the 22 mounted men with the

⁹ Caswell to Elizabeth Caswell, April 24, 1847, Caswell Papers.

Gideon J. Pillow, from
and His Staff (Philade
The

Capt¹⁰ and Lieut Bell¹¹
Gen Patterson's¹² Division
very much to leave our c

¹⁰ William Richard Caswell (1811-1880), of Tennessee, was a lawyer, planter, and politician. He served as attorney general of the 12th Tennessee Legislature. Lawson McClung reports that Caswell was elected to the 12th Tennessee Legislature and that if there was an election for the Regiment.¹¹ When Tennessee was a state's provision for the 12th Tennessee Legislature, Hugh Lawson McClung, Le... Tennessee Library, Knoxville.

¹¹ Samuel W. Bell enlisted June 1847. He wrote the above-mentioned letter to his wife. According to McClung, Bell, had a fine pair of whiskers and mou...

¹² Robert Patterson (1792-1868) served as a major-general of volunteers during the Civil War. Patterson was a member of the Aztec Club.

launched a savage assault on the Anna, seeing the battle as lost, began my assault, General James Shields making an attempted retreat into a rout. Then, while the Americans lost 431. The battle, namely Lee and George the efficacy of a surprise flanking folds on the pages of the diary. The other letter from Captain Caswell to

the army and were in the Cruz up to our arrival here at duty with my few men, in front, to Gen. Scott in the army, riding night and in trains, escorting Gen. noitering & tours of sur- the battle of the 18th, I n. Pillow's Brigade, ready e storming party should e breastworks.... With my n and musketry, but all

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Gideon J. Pillow, from Robert T. Conrad (Grigg, Elliot & Co., comp.), *General Scott and His Staff* (Philadelphia, 1848). Courtesy of the Special Collections Department, The University of Tennessee Library, Knoxville.

Capt¹⁰ and Lieut Bell¹¹ as pioneers of the Regt marched today advanced guard of Gen Patterson's¹² Division on the way to the Hall of the Montezumas. We regret very much to leave our dismounted comrades exposed to dangers of sickness always

¹⁰ William Richard Caswell (1809-1862), the grandson of a Revolutionary War governor of North Carolina, was a lawyer, planter, banker, and railroad entrepreneur. At the start of the war, Caswell resigned as attorney general of the 12th Judicial Circuit. In a letter to his wife written on November 4, 1846, Hugh Lawson McClung reports Samuel Bell as saying that Caswell was "the most popular man in the regiment and that if there was an election he would not loose one hundred votes out of the thousand composing the Regiment." When Tennessee seceded from the Union, Governor Isham Harris appointed Caswell a general in the state's provisional army. Caswell was murdered returning to his home at Caswell Station. Hugh Lawson McClung Letters, 1840-1858, Special Collections Department, The University of Tennessee Library, Knoxville.

¹¹ Samuel W. Bell enlisted June 10, 1846 as a First Lieutenant and mustered out May 31, 1847. In the above-mentioned letter to his wife, Hugh Lawson McClung described running into Bell in New Orleans. According to McClung, Bell, who was there arranging re-supply for the troops, had "the most formidable pair of whiskers and moustache you have ever seen." H. L. McClung Letters.

¹² Robert Patterson (1792-1881) was an Irish-born soldier and Pennsylvania industrialist. In the war, he served as a major-general of volunteers. Later Patterson was to serve again as a major-general in the early days of the Civil War. Patterson was long-time head of the Mexican-American War veterans' organization, the Aztec Club.

incident to stationary soldiers camps & especially in the environs of Vera Cruz¹³ so noted for its sickness at seasons of the year now approaching and near at hand. Scott,¹⁴ A Haukins,¹⁵ Suttle¹⁶ and Carnes¹⁷ were neither of them well when we left, but we hope that soon our horses and friends left at Tampico¹⁸ will arrive and the balance of the company will overtake us. Our route lay for several miles upon the beach, and the heavy march upon the deep sand of the long line of infantry which follow us cause us to rejoice that we are cavalry and we are particularly favored in being furnished with a baggage waggon for the transportation of our provisions whilst the infantry pack 4 days supply in their haversacks. When we applied on yesterday to Gen Patterson for transportation we told him if it could not be had without detriment to the service we could march without it. "I know" said the Genl. "you would do so[;] I know you would go in any way[;] your company has never given ... any trouble to me." We proceeded sufficiently far in advance to halt upon the beach, and take a delightful bathe in the salt surf of the gulf. We struck out upon the turnpike amid the sand hills with the hot sun beaming down almost perpendicularly upon us. At the distance of five miles we came to the village of Santa Fe¹⁹ which we found to be almost entirely depopulated. A small fort was erected upon a mound near the road and at a bridge we passed it was torn up and obstructions of large stones placed in the road all looked as if the Mexicans have contemplated disputing every step we might attempt to take towards their holy city. We passed within view on our right hand upon an eminence the private residence of Santa Anna²⁰

¹³ Vera Cruz was Mexico's principal city on the Gulf of Mexico.

¹⁴ Edward L. Scott enlisted June 10, 1846 in Knoxville as a private and was discharged from service in New Orleans May 31, 1847.

¹⁵ Absalom Haukins enlisted June 10, 1846 in Knoxville as a private and was discharged from service in New Orleans May 31, 1847.

¹⁶ Noah Suttle enlisted June 10, 1846 in Knoxville as a private and was discharged from service in New Orleans May 31, 1847.

¹⁷ William C. Carnes enlisted June 10, 1846 in Knoxville as a private and was discharged from service in New Orleans May 31, 1847.

¹⁸ Tampico is a seaport on the eastern coast of Mexico.

¹⁹ Santa Fe was a small town half way between Vera Cruz and Cerro Gordo.

²⁰ Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna (1794-1876) was one of Mexico's leading generals and several times president of the country. In America he is best known for his role in the Battle of the Alamo. In 1845, Santa Anna was forced into exile after having seized the country's presidency two years before. When the war with America broke out, Santa Anna convinced President Polk to arrange his return to Mexico to restore peace between the nations. Once back in the country, he took charge of the war against the Americans. His lack of success led once again to his banishment. He did not return from exile this time until a year or so before his death.

called Manga de Clavo.²¹ leagues on both sides the must derive an immense the farm the sum of \$650 you have advanced a short have his brand of A. L. T night was on the side of of stone and cement—we the deep shade of cocoar ing of the chaperal cocks much during the night. E our waggons did not arrive as Santa Annas beef affor

April 10th. On account the train, we only march er bridge of great length labor. Our mounted men of the Division, and ther our want of late. We we picket guard upon the r watch as sentinel in turn kets lay down beneath th

April 11th. At 1/2 past called into the saddle to from Gen Scott.²⁵ This

²¹ This hacienda was located 1

²² Jalapa was a sizable Mexican

²³ David Emanuel Twiggs (1794-1866) was a regular army brigadier, serving in the infantry and was made a regular army brigadier of Monterey. Transferred to that army in the march to Mexico, he was killed with a gold scabbard on his sword.

²⁴ The National Bridge was designed by the sculptor/architect Manuel Tol

²⁵ Winfield Scott (1786-1866) was a general in the Mexican War and the Civil War. In the Mexican War, he was instrumental in the capture of Vera Cruz. He ended the war. In 1852, Scott was head of the army in the South. His nick-name was Old Fuss and Feathers.

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called Manga de Clavo.²¹ We are told that Santa Anna, owns all the land for 8 or 10 leagues on both sides the road, from Vera Cruz to Jalapa²² from the rent of which he must derive an immense revenue for one of his tenants told us he paid annually for the farm the sum of \$650.00 besides this the cattle which fill the whole woods (after you have advanced a short distance into the interior are all his private property and have his brand of A. L. The initials perhaps of Antonio Lopez.) Our camp for the night was on the side of one of the many long and excellent bridges which are built of stone and cement—we had selected the encampment for our little corps beneath the deep shade of cocoanut palm trees. but the insects below and the harsh croaking of the chaperal cocks & parrots in the trees above prevented us from sleeping much during the night. Besides these annoyances we made a march of 16 miles. and our waggons did not arrive until very late. so that we had no other supper than such as Santa Annas beef afforded.

April 10th. On account of the many soldiers breaking down and the late arrival of the train, we only march 7 1/2 miles today and halted at a stream over which another bridge of great length and superior masonry had been constructed with much labor. Our mounted men were stationed at head quarters apart from the main body of the Division, and thereby fell into the luck of some harder service than has been our want of late. We were required to divide the watches of the night and keep a picket guard upon the road and while some were thus employed (Lt. Bell taking a watch as sentinel in turn with the men) the others rolled themselves in their blankets lay down beneath the wide spreading limbs of an immense and beautiful forest.

April 11th. At 1/2 past 12 o'clock this morning Capt C[aswell] with ten men were called into the saddle to transmit to Genl Twigg²³ at the National Bridge²⁴ a dispatch from Gen Scott.²⁵ This detachment proceeded with much caution in the star light

²¹ This hacienda was located 15 miles from Vera Cruz and two miles from the National Road.

²² Jalapa was a sizable Mexican city for the time with close to 12,000 citizens.

²³ David Emanuel Twigg (1790-1862), the son of a Revolutionary War general, was a professional soldier, serving in the infantry and the dragoons. For his service at Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma, Twigg was made a regular army brigadier-general and was later made a major-general for bravery at the Battle of Monterey. Transferred to the Southern campaign under Winfield Scott, Twigg led the vanguard of that army in the march to Mexico City. For his services in the war, Congress presented him with a jeweled sword with a gold scabbard. Twigg served in the Civil War as the ranking general in the Confederate Army.

²⁴ The National Bridge was built by General Diego Garcia Conde according to the plans of sculptor/architect Manuel Tolsa. The bridge was considered an architectural marvel.

²⁵ Winfield Scott (1786-1866) held the rank of general in the War of 1812, the Mexican-American War, and the Civil War. In the Mexican War, Scott commanded the Southern campaign that commenced with the capture of Vera Cruz. Close to six months later Scott captured the Mexican capitol and effectively ended the war. In 1852, Scott was the unsuccessful Whig candidate for president. In the early part of the Civil War, Scott was head of the army and devised the strategy of defeating the Confederacy by dividing the South. His nick-name among his soldiers was "Old Fuss and Feathers," reflecting his love of military pomp.

of night moving in a body with two men from 50 to 100 yards in advance. Our horses feet clattered upon the paved turnpike as we marched amidst perfect stillness from all other sound. After marching some 3 miles one solitary light was visible in a large village (was Servaco) which as we approached exhibited to us a body of soldiers with muskets whose bayonets bristled between the light of our eye. They proved to be a body of straglers from Gen Twiggs Division. As we rode across the celebrated Perutia National,²⁶ the beautiful scene of a Division encampment with all their fires blazing, met our eyes. When we halted at Gen. Twiggs quarters, we found him ready to march tho only 3 o'clock. We delivered the dispatches, and were informed that the Mexicans had abandoned this position (which the Gen. declared could be maintained by 500 men against the world) several days before his arrival. The Genl said the Mexicans were fortified in the mountains 20 miles distant their force was variously estimated at from 2 to 15000 men. "I shall fight them" said he "tomorrow at 10 o'clock, and I shall whip them" I would like to have you with me, but I cannot wait. I shall bolt my train at Rio Blanco²⁷ to-night to-morrow I shall march out, whip them, and return to my camp!" Corporal Swan²⁸ privates Portis²⁹ Renfro³⁰ went back with a communication for Gen. Scott. Lt Bell came forward with the balance of the marching command at the head of the Division, whilst those who had come forward during the night guarded the village & bridge formerly called the King's bridge.³¹ Is superior to any work of the kind we have ever seen & said to be one of the best structures of the kind in the world. The Bridge is about 300 yards long of solid stone & cemented over—having seven arches spanning the main stream built in 1802 by the merchants of Vera Cruz & Mexico under the patronage of the Government in (?) having scarcely a crack or break upon it. The mountains which rise almost perpendicularly upon each side with crowning batteries upon their heights make it an impregnable position if defended with any spirit. This morning after delivering our dispatches to Genl Scott we made fast our horses to feed them, slept upon our blankets lay down around the roots of a large tree, whose branches held many nest of the jackdaw, and the serenade of these chattering birds was no interruption to the sound sleep of men who rode the night march which we had

²⁶ Another name for the National Bridge.

²⁷ Rio Blanco, or White River, was a river on the way to Cerro Gordo.

²⁸ Samuel G. Swan enlisted in Knoxville June 10, 1846 and was discharged from service at New Orleans on May 31, 1847 as a corporal.

²⁹ William F. Portis enlisted in Knoxville June 10, 1846 as a private and was discharged from service at New Orleans on May 31, 1847.

³⁰ James Renfro enlisted in Knoxville June 10, 1846 as a private and was discharged from service at New Orleans on May 31, 1847. In an accidental discharge of his own gun on April 18, 1847, Renfro shot off the third finger of his left hand and the end of the second finger.

³¹ Another name for the National Bridge.

made. We were awakened with fright to ask our prompt found eight of Gen. Twiggs but had contented themselves over which they were made inmates of the house from us vessels in which to come from the commissary of the

April 12th. The road over each side at an expense of a degenerate race of Mexican & keep it up. But excellent intense rays of the sun fired many of the Infantry to fire others thus left behind with and two privates of the Twiggs' Division at Rio Dragoon had overtaken us at Cierra Gorda³⁴ 4.5 miles the mountain heights where of the Mexicans were pursued who drew the fire of the Johnson³⁵ of the Topography. In this little skirmish the many. We selected a hut corraled our horses in the we might be ready for the Shippe³⁷ was sleeping up

³² A demijohn is a narrow-necked

³³ William Selby Harney (1800-1862) He was made a brigadier-general, despite pro-Southern sympathies.

³⁴ Cerro Gordo was about 45 miles from his army to resist the American advance.

³⁵ Joseph Eggleston Johnston (1807-1862) Seminole War. Trying to get in twice wounded. In the Civil War he was in the U.S. House of Representatives.

³⁶ Plan del Rio was located in

³⁷ Jackson Shippe enlisted June 10, 1846 at New Orleans May 31, 1847.

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own gun on April 18, 1847, Renfro shot off
nger.

made. We were awakened by a Mexican man and woman who came all trembling with fright to ask our protection from soldiers of our army. we went to their hut and found eight of Gen. Twigg's men who had searched thro their house in every corner but had contented themselves with taking only a large demijohn³² of "aqua diente" over which they were making merry. We sent them forward and relieved the poor inmates of the house from further terror for which they were grateful enough to lend us vessels in which to cook our breakfast the elements of which we had procured from the commissary of the first Division[.]

April 12th. The road over which we marched is graded paved & mostly walled on each side at an expense of labor which astonishes everyone who may see it but the degenerate race of Mexicans permit it to wear away without attempting to sustain & keep it up. But excellent as the road is, the long march without water and the intense rays of the sun from whose burning heat we could find no shelter caused many of the Infantry to fall exhausted by the way side, several of whom died—and others thus left behind were attacked by the Mexican scouts. One dragoon killed, and two privates of the Pennsylvania volunteers were wounded. We overtook Gen. Twigg's Division at Rio Blanco. At which place Col. Harney³³ with the U.S. Dragoon had overtaken the advanced guard of the Mexican Army now in a position at Cierra Gorda³⁴ 4.5 miles distant with fortifications and batteries of artillery upon the mountain heights which overlook the road on both sides. The advanced guard of the Mexicans were pursued and reconnoitering parties sent out with the engineers who drew the fire of the enemy's cannon and several volleys of musketry. Capt Johnson³⁵ of the Topographical Engineers and two or three privates were wounded. In this little skirmish the enemy has sustained some loss but we do not know how many. We selected a hut in the village of Plan Del Rio³⁶ for our head quarters and corraled our horses in the rear of the hut spread down our blankets to rest upon that we might be ready for the action which we expected to take place in a few hours.

Shipe³⁷ was sleeping upon his blanket on the floor of the hut & some soldier in

³² A demijohn is a narrow-necked bottle, normally encased in wicker.

³³ William Selby Harney (1800-1889), a native of Davidson County, was colonel of the 2nd Dragoons. He was made a brigadier-general for his service at Cerro Gordo. In the Civil War, he was a Union general, despite pro-Southern sympathies.

³⁴ Cerro Gordo was about 45 miles from Vera Cruz. In the mountain pass here Santa Anna entrenched his army to resist the American march to Mexico City.

³⁵ Joseph Eggleston Johnston (1807-1891) was a graduate of West Point and had previously served in the Seminole War. Trying to get information as to the Mexican positions at Cerro Gordo led to him being twice wounded. In the Civil War, Johnston was a Confederate general. After the war, he was to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives.

³⁶ Plan del Rio was located in a small valley near Cerro Gordo.

³⁷ Jackson Shipe enlisted June 10, 1846 in Knoxville as private and was discharged from service in New Orleans May 31, 1847.

wantonship had jerked a large iron grape shot which fell thro the thatched roof of the hut upon the floor near to Shipe. The noise of the fall waked him & jumping up he enquired where that came from. Looney³⁸ asked him if he had not heard the roar of the cannon. Shipe opened his eyes (Looney says) as large as billiard balls, and declared he had slept so sound and had heard so many cannon at Vera Cruz as well as this morning he did not awake until the shot fell near his head.

The citizens of this village have fled precipitately and left all the [?]furniture of their huts. There is a small cathedral with some rich and handsome ornaments—one image of the virgin as life dressed in a silk robe of blue & yellow with earrings & broaches of gold holding the image of an infant in her hand tho the most natural representation of a sacred illustration we have yet seen was that of our saviour in the Sepulchre which we saw in the grand church of Cruz. There is upon a mountain spur close to the bridge across the rio blanco a fort grey with age, the wooden works of which have rotted down or burned long since. It looks as if it had been in pas[t] times the castle of some feudal chief into which he could retire, raise his draw bridge, reconnoiter an enemy & fire upon them from the loop holes & embrasures of his castle perfectly secure against all the world, unless by investment with siege artillery which alone in time might batter down his thick stone walls. Swan Portis and Renfro reached camp this evening having travelled thro from Vera Cruz to-day with dispatches from Gen Scott to Gen. Patterson, a hazardous adventure which is plain from the fact that other dispatches with the same force have been cut off by the enemy. Swan reports our men at Vera Cruz as doing well.

April 13th. Our company were sent out to-day with four waggons for forage. We found some 600 bushels which the Mexicans were engaged (just before we arrived at the place) in transporting upon mules to the Mexican camp. Our waggons were loaded (& the quantity reported to the Qr. Master who paid them at the rates of about \$1.00 per bushel). Meanwhile we made our dinner upon parched corn—returned safe to camp not having seen a Mexican soldier in our route, tho we understood a body of 50 horsemen crossed the road one or two miles behind us. This evening orders were issued to the army with arms—2 days supply of provisions & water to be ready by 3 o'clock in the morning, for an attack upon the enemy by storming the heights. This order was countermanded by the Gen. Patterson. (who being very sick & confined to his bed the plan of attack had been designed by Genl. Twiggs & Pillow).³⁹ And the assault determined to be delayed until the arrival of Gen. Scott.

³⁸ Absalom Looney, a native of Hawkins County, was a very successful Knox County farmer. Looney enlisted June 10, 1846 in Knoxville as a private and was discharged from service May 31, 1847.

³⁹ Gideon Johnson Pillow (1806-1878) was a Tennessee lawyer and one-time law partner of James K. Polk, whom he helped secure the presidency in 1844. When war came President Polk rewarded Pillow with the rank of brigadier-general. Pillow fought at Vera Cruz, Cerro Gordo, Contreras, and Chapultepec. Pillow was twice wounded. In the Civil War, Pillow was once again a general. His service at Fort Donelson and elsewhere was questioned at the time and afterwards.

About 9 o'clock at night a volley of musketry was fired in the direction of the guard post. It was to do any mischief, or was this quite a bold venture? Some great battles ago the Mexicans moved from Mexico to the other side of the river. Alto⁴⁰ the Mexican Cavalry galloping down to win a square to receive the Genl. Vega⁴¹ was taken with some pride what made a charge. which by such a name. And Humphrey Marshall⁴²

April 14th. At day break to protect him, whilst coming to the saddle to bear company. Receiving the arms by the detachment fire arms proceeded towards the guard of Genl Scott's rode several times across of them alone rode turned, went back un-

⁴⁰ A battle won by Zachary Taylor.

⁴¹ Romulo Diaz de la Vega Taylor's army at the Battle of the Mexican troops paroled soldiers back into was once again offered pa-

⁴² Thomas Childs (1796-1861) Mexican War, Childs had Resaca de la Palma, Jalapa. Childs ended the

⁴³ Humphrey Marshall (1811-1861) the 1st Kentucky Cavalry he served in the U.S. House of Confederate House of Representatives in the Confederate army

which fell thro the thatched roof of of the fall waked him & jumping asked him if he had not heard the y says) as large as billiard balls. and many cannon at Vera Cruz as well fell near his head.

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r and one-time law partner of James K. ar came President Polk rewarded Pillow Cruz, Cerro Gordo, Contreras, and ow was once again a general. His service afterwards.

About 9 o'clock at night quite a stir was made in our camp by the Mexicans firing a volley of musketry upon our picket guard (Dragoons) or rather firing in the direction of the guard for the cowardly scamps were afraid to approach near enough to do any mischief, or even to draw the fire from our pickets. They may consider this quite a bold venture in their system of warfare for they fight (as they call it) some great battles against each other and sometimes from one side of the city of Mexico to the other for weeks without doing any mischief[.] It is said that at Palo Alto⁴⁰ the Mexican Cavalry were ordered to charge a part of our lines. They came galloping down to within about 2 1/2 miles and halted. Our men were drawn into a square to receive them, but never thought of firing up at such a distance. When Genl. Vega⁴¹ was taken prisoner in a conversation with Majr Bliss,⁴² he asked as if with some pride what the Majr thought of the charge. Bliss asked him if they had made a charge, which was as much as to say if we would not call such a movement by such a name. And indeed it is supposed they learned at Buene Vista from Col. Humphrey Marshall⁴³ what we would call a charge.

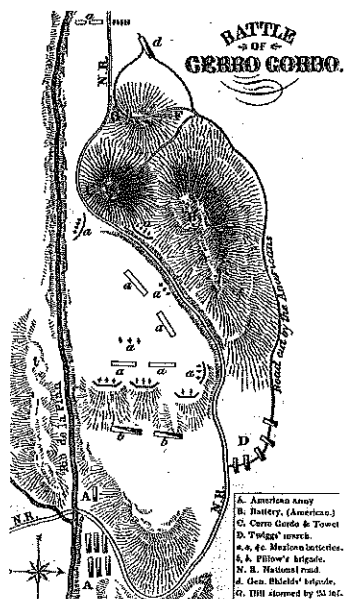
April 14th. At day light half the men were sent out with the beef contractor to protect him, whilst collecting beef for the army. At 9 o'clock the others were ordered to the saddle to bear dispatches to Gen. Scott & to take along with us the whole company. Receiving the dispatches we passed the beef range where we were joined by the detachment first sent out & without baggage or any encumbrance except our arms proceeded toward Vera Cruz. Near the National bridge we saw the Advance guard of Genl Scotts escort approaching. When they discovered us they halted and rode several times across the road as if watching us with much suspicion, then one of them alone rode forward about 100 yards, halted, and after looking awhile turned, went back under whip & spun and proceeded with his comrades to give an

⁴⁰ A battle won by Zachery Taylor on May 8, 1846 in the Northern campaign.

⁴¹ Romulo Diaz de la Vega was captured twice in the war. He was first captured by General Zachery Taylor's army at the Battle of Resaca de la Palma. Prior to his capture de la Vega had been acting commander of the Mexican troops at the battle. He had been released on parole, but Santa Anna ordered paroled soldiers back into service against the Americans. Captured again at the Battle of Cerro Gordo, he was once again offered parole. This time he refused to accept release from capture.

⁴² Thomas Childs (1796-1853) was a graduate of West Point and a professional soldier. Prior to the Mexican War, Childs had served in the War of 1812 and the Seminole War. For his services at Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma, he was made a colonel. From April to June 1847, Childs was military governor at Jalapa. Childs ended the war a brigadier-general.

⁴³ Humphrey Marshall (1812-1872) was a West Point graduate and Kentucky lawyer. He was colonel of the 1st Kentucky Cavalry. At the Battle of Buena Vista he made a series of brilliant cavalry charges. Later he served in the U.S. House of Representatives, as U.S. minister to China, and as a member of the Confederate House of Representatives. Prior to serving in the last office, Marshall was a brigadier-general in the Confederate army.



"Battle of Cerro Gordo," from Edward D. Mansfield, *The Mexican War: History of its Origin* (New York, 1849). Courtesy of the Special Collections Department, The University of Tennessee Library, Knoxville.

alarm of Mexicans approaching.⁴⁴ But we adopted means of undeceiving them. At the National Bridge we delivered our dispatches to Gen. Scott, who with his staff admired the celerity of our movements. We were supplied with forage, ordered to rest rested two hours & to follow the General which we did. At the first rancho we came to a company of Dragoons in guard of 20 waggons loading the corn found there. They had been without water & provisions during the day. We guarded the train until they watered their horses from a stream 1 1/2 miles distant. This delay detained us until in the night in getting into camp.

April 15th. Having performed hard service we were allowed to rest our horses to-day, and they need such rest, for by the hard ride on yesterday the backs of most of them were hurt, and we have but scanty rations of forage for them. We lay about during the day in the shade of the trees and of our hut, some of us bathing in a pool of water we found at no great distance from camp in a deep gleen overhung by trees, shrubbery & vines, into which the clear water

of the stream poured thro a channel in the rocky bed down a steep declivity. We have been considerably annoyed in the day by soldiers attempting to tear down our hut for fire wood and at night by their seeking lodgings in our already crowded room. One fellow came about bed time and enquired if there was a place where he could sleep. Some of us told him in jest he could find accommodations at Wolfingers tavern which was next door. He understood the joke, and we heard him enquire at the open shed adjoining for the landlord, he received an answer from several of the soldiers who were crowded under the shed. We ordered the ostler to take his horse, another directed the bar keeper to furnish him some refreshment. one told him he could sleep in the barn (a building not known in Mexico) at half price, another ordered a servant to show the gentlemen into No. 10, on the third floor. But the poor fellow finally slept in the road, perhaps to dream of the comfortable accommodations ordered by our neighbors to whom we had referred him.

April 16. We were mounted at 4 o'clock this morning to guard the beef contractor & butchers with about 8 or 10 infantry soldiers who went out to shoot the [?].

⁴⁴ There are legible deleted lines in the text: "The company halted and Cap. C. galloped forward and stoped there, enquiring if they could not distinguish us from the enemy. They said they could see we did not have the uniform of Dragoons & that the Captain had on a red jacket from all which they took us to be the enemy."

Halted at a Ranch 8 miles from the butchering commenced unarmd. They were suspected kindled a fire in the (upon) which was furnished with some of the fresh beef for a deep valley 1/4 miles distant. water we have yet had in the Lt. Bell & Thomas Snoddy broad cultivated valley below the path, a dark ugly Rancher ate aim at the Capt. who gun missed fired. Neither an attack upon armed Ar. Rancho was sustained by. loped up the hill to the corn waggons and went on to Cameron⁴⁸ and John McCall company of Dragoons with corn. The body of our com close to the door. Every Tipton and his three com were fired upon by a body in view from our position scaled the stock of his gun Cotners⁵¹ saddle. Our 4 m

⁴⁵ Thomas Snoddy had enlisted in New Orleans May 31, 1847.

⁴⁶ H. Tipton enlisted June 10, 1847.

⁴⁷ William Augustus Heard enlisted in New Orleans May 31, 1847.

⁴⁸ Alexander Cameron enlisted in New Orleans May 31, 1847.

⁴⁹ John McCall enlisted June 6, 1847.

⁵⁰ Archibald Fortner enlisted in New Orleans May 31, 1847.

⁵¹ Calvin Cotner enlisted June 10, 1847.

Mexicans approaching.⁴⁴ But we means of undeceiving them. At the Bridge we delivered our dispatches to [?], who with his staff admired the our movements. We were supplied [?], ordered to rest rested two hours & the General which we did. At the first [?] came to a company of Dragoons in 20 waggons loading the corn found [?] had been without water & providing the day. We guarded the train until [?] their horses from a stream 1 1/2 [?] ant. This delay detained us until in [?] getting into camp.

[?]th. Having performed hard service [?] allowed to rest our horses to-day, and [?] such rest, for by the hard ride on yesh-backs of most of them were hurt, and [?] but scanty rations of forage for them. [?] but during the day in the shade of the [?] of our hut, some of us bathing in a [?] water we found at no great distance [?] in a deep gleen overhung by trees, [?] & vines, into which the clear water [?] bed down a steep declivity. We have [?] ers attempting to tear down our hut [?] gings in our already crowded room. [?] if there was a place where he could [?] accommodations at Wolfingers tav- [?] ke, and we heard him enquire at the [?] ed an answer from several of the sol- [?] ordered the ostler to take his horse, [?] some refreshment. one told him he [?] n in Mexico) at half price, another [?] No. 10, on the third floor. But the [?] o dream of the comfortable accom- [?] we had referred him

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[?] halted and Cap. C. galloped forward and [?] n the enemy. They said they could see we did [?] on a red jacket from all which they took us

Halted at a Ranch 8 miles from camp where we found some cattle, and soon after, the butchering commenced, two Mexicans showed themselves in the road, unarmed. They were suspected as spies but being unarmed were not molested. We kindled a fire in the (upon the cement floor) large hall of a castle in the ranche, which was furnished with tables as if prepared for a banqueting hall, and cooked some of the fresh beef for our breakfast. After which 5 or 6 of us proceeded into a deep valley 1/4 miles distant to search for water, and found the coolest running water we have yet had in this country. After procuring a refreshing drink, Capt C. Lt. Bell & Thomas Snoddy,⁴⁵ road along the narrow & deep path which led to a broad cultivated valley below whilst the other men returned to camp. At a turn in the path, a dark ugly Ranchero presented himself and raising his escopet took deliberate aim at the Capt. who was in front with his red jacket on but fortunately the gun missed fired. Neither of us were prepared to return the fire and such a thing as an attack upon armed Americans being as uncommon it was supposed that the Ranchero was sustained by a strong party. The Capt Lt. & Snoddy turned and galloped up the hill to the company. Not finding beef enough, the butcher took two waggons and went on to the next Ranche upon the road. H. Tipton,⁴⁶ Heard,⁴⁷ Cameron⁴⁸ and John McCall⁴⁹ guarded these two waggons and soon after they left a company of Dragoons with a train of waggons passed on to the same ranche for corn. The body of our company remained at the castle, with the horses saddled and close to the door. Every thing being quiet we all by turns took a little sleep. As Tipton and his three comrades returned just in advance of the beef waggons they were fired upon by a body of Mexicans, who had way laid them upon the hill side in view from our position. Heard was slightly wounded in the elbow and a shot scaled the stock of his gun, a ball scared Fortners⁵⁰ horse and one was lodged in Cotners⁵¹ saddle. Our 4 men returned the fire & retreated, but Tipton's gun first

⁴⁵ Thomas Snoddy had enlisted June 10, 1846 in Knoxville as a private and was discharged from service in New Orleans May 31, 1847. On March 5, 1847, Snoddy became company bugler.

⁴⁶ H. Tipton enlisted June 10, 1846 in Knoxville as a corporal and was discharged in New Orleans May 31, 1847.

⁴⁷ William Augustus Heard enlisted June 6, 1846 in Knoxville as a private and was discharged from service in New Orleans May 31, 1847.

⁴⁸ Alexander Cameron enlisted June 6, 1846 in Knoxville as a private and was discharged from service in New Orleans May 31, 1847.

⁴⁹ John McCall enlisted June 6, 1846 in Knoxville as a private and was discharged from service in New Orleans May 31, 1847.

⁵⁰ Archibald Fortner enlisted June 6, 1846 in Knoxville as a private and was discharged from service in New Orleans May 31, 1847.

⁵¹ Calvin Cotner enlisted June 6, 1846 in Knoxville as a private and was discharged from service at New Orleans May 31, 1847.

snapped & he halted within 25 yards of them put on a fresh cap & knocked the powder into the tube and fired with as good aim as he could take. The beef contractor at the first alarm, dashed on in great precipitation leaving his hat & [?]. We heard the alarm and mounted in haste, the Mexicans had now showed a part of their force in the road and as we charged in full speed they fled into the thick chaparral. We dismounted except J. L. & R. B. Roberson⁵² and Day⁵³ and Portis who remained to protect the horses, the rest of us took the chaparral and proceeded cautiously parallel with the road, until we came to the place where the Mexicans had left the road. Not finding them we came into the road to remount, and just at this time the party with the horses were attacked. Jn. Roberson when sitting upon his horse had discovered a man in the chaparral but lest he might fire upon one of our own men (for it was precisely the place where McCarty⁵⁴ had first gone into the chaparral) dismounted and ... went upon a rise just outside the road. It was a Mexican who had concealed himself in the bushes and at this time shot Roberson thro the thigh with an ounce ball & put a shot into his hand. As soon as he fired R. B. Roberson stepped firmly forward and shot his carbine with good aim at the Mexican as he ran. Portis also had a shot either at him or his comrades. Report of the first gun was heard by the company and all ran to the rescue shouting for the men to hold their ground. The waggon by this time had passed the first place of attack and the beef shooters on foot coming up just at this time, discovered a part of the enemy near the road, fired upon them, and drove them back. We put Roberson into a waggon & bound up his wound he suffered very much at first the bone is fractured high up on the thigh, but he was brought in upon a litter, a bed spread upon the floor of our hut, and medical aid immediately at hand. he bears the pain with great fortitude. By the bye we brought our beef to camp tho we had some trouble to get our share of it from the commissary. Gen. Worth⁵⁵ with his Division arrived in camp during the night.

April 17th. Reconnoitering & working parties have been constantly moving around the enemies works. The Mexican flag has been hoisted this morning upon a foot on the right of their line of fortification on a height in view of our whole camp.

⁵² John L. Roberson joined as a private at the June 17, 1846 unit rendezvous at Sequatchie Valley. Rufus B. Roberson, his brother, joined at the same time at the same rank. John L. Roberson died of his wounds received in the skirmish being described; Rufus B. Roberson was discharged from service at New Orleans May 31, 1847.

⁵³ John Day enlisted at Knoxville June 10, 1846 as a private and was discharged at New Orleans May 31, 1847.

⁵⁴ Benjamin F. McCarty enlisted at Knoxville June 10, 1846 as second sergeant and was discharged from service May 31, 1847.

⁵⁵ William Jenkins Worth (1794-1849) was a New York state merchant when he joined the army at the start of the War of 1812. He served as aide-de-camp to General Winfield Scott. He stayed in the army and was commandant of West Point from 1820-1828. He served in the Seminole War. For his bravery at the Battle of Monterey, he was made a major-general and was awarded a sword by Congress. After joining the Southern army under Scott, Worth displayed his usual ability and courage. While in command of the Department of Texas, Worth died of cholera.

We were sent out this evening in view of the enemys line and individuals. They were all at the moment of an attack. Artillery Division has been cutting and succeeded in taking one height and assailing them in rear upon which carried the main mountain and compelled to retire for want of men. Infantry were sent out to destroy the same body of Rancheros and man and wounding two of them in their fortress.

Sunday April 18th. In the morning an early breakfast and fed the equipments all snugly fitted. The Brigade formed the line of the enemy who by reason of the many of our comrades were killed the day. We thought of the matter, and all resolved rather to march at the head of the column the ascent of the eminence to make the attack. There was a Lieutenant, of the whole column, at the rear of the column for might not notify the Mexicans. The Genl. Staff and field officers had thoughts, but with firmness of paths which traversed the country with their cases of instruments to their position, as they were however they soon retreated. A storming party (consisting of a reserve & 1st Pennsylvania) attained their respective positions. 17 Cannon bearing upon

⁵⁶ An escopet is a short rifle.

⁵⁷ William Turner Haskell (1811-1861) was a Tennessee Volunteer in the Mexican War. In the Mexican War he was a Representative in the year

them put on a fresh cap & knocked the
and aim as he could take. The beef con-
precipitation leaving his hat & [?]. We
Mexicans had now showed a part of their
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light fire upon one of our own men (for
had first gone into the chaparral) dis-
side the road. It was a Mexican who had
time shot Roberson thro the thigh with
soon as he fired R. B. Roberson stepped
and aim at the Mexican as he ran. Portis
s. Report of the first gun was heard by
ing for the men to hold their ground.
st place of attack and the beef shooters
red a part of the enemy near the road,
put Roberson into a waggon & bound
the bone is fractured high up on the
bed spread upon the floor of our hut,
rs the pain with great fortitude. By the
some trouble to get our share of it from
ion arrived in camp during the night.
parties have been constantly moving
has been hoisted this morning upon a
on a height in view of our whole camp.

346 unit rendezvous at Sequatchie Valley. Rufus
ame rank. John L. Roberson died of his wounds
son was discharged from service at New Orleans

te and was discharged at New Orleans May 31,

46 as second sergeant and was discharged from

state merchant when he joined the army at the
General Winfield Scott. He stayed in the army
served in the Seminole War. For his bravery at
was awarded a sword by Congress. After join-
usual ability and courage. While in command

We were sent out this evening with staff & Engineer officers as a guard, and had a view of the enemys line and position, being near enough to see the movements of individuals. They were all under arms, and appeared to be in expectation every moment of an attack. Around the other end of the line Genl. Twiggs with his Division has been cutting out a road fighting them all day, by spells, and has succeeded in taking one height which enable to pass their left flank and prepare for assailing them in rear upon the main road. At one time Majr Child with 18 men carried the main mountain heights, which had been left unguarded, but was compelled to retire for want of support. A company of Dragoons and a company of Infantry were sent out to-day as guard of our beef contractor. They were attacked by the same body of Rancheros, with whom we had a fight on yesterday, killing one man and wounding two others. They came off without returning their fire or assailing them in their fortress, leaving their dead man on the field & without their beef.

Sunday April 18th. In obedience to orders, we mounted at 6 o'clock having had an early breakfast and fed and watered our horses our arms were in order, our horse equipments all snugly fitted on. We formed our company as the ... several regiments of the Brigade formed their lines. We knew we were going into a battle with an enemy who by reason of their strong position must necessarily make a stand, and many of our comrades who were now standing under arms, would never live thro the day. We thought of the character of our State and country, of our individul character, and all resolved rather to die upon the field than discredit either. Our company marched at the head of the column, until we left the main road & commenced the ascent of the eminence upon which the enemy was in position where we were to make the attack. There were only twenty of us including the Captain & 1st Lieutenant, of the whole Brigade who were mounted. We were ordered to follow in the rear of the column from the foot of the hill that the clatter of our horses feet might not notify the Mexicans of the silent approach designed for the same reason the Genl. Staff and field officers all dismounted. Slowly, silently and with solemn thoughts, but with firmness and determination we moved along by one of the many paths which traversed the thick chaparral upon the declivity. The medical officers with their cases of instruments bandages & other implements & attendants took their position, as they supposed beyond the reach of the enemys shot, from which however they soon retreated. We followed on the rear of the column. Before the storming party (consisting of the 2nd Tennessee on the right with the 2nd Penn. as a reserve & 1st Pennsylvania Regimt. on the left with the 1st Ten as a reserve) had attained their respective positions in line of battle, the enemy opened their fire, with 17 Cannon bearing upon us and 1500 escopets⁵⁶ and muskets. Col. Haskells⁵⁷ Regt.

⁵⁶ An escopet is a short rifle.

⁵⁷ William Turner Haskell (1818-1859) was a lawyer, politician, and songwriter. He served in the Seminole War. In the Mexican War, Haskell was colonel of the 1st Brigade, 2nd Regiment of the Tennessee Volunteers. As soon as he returned home from the war, Haskell was elected to the U. S. House of Representatives. In the year of his death he made an unsuccessful campaign for the governorship.



"Battery No. 2, Charged by Second Tennessee Regiment," from George C. Furber, *The Twelve Months Volunteer* (Cincinnati, 1848). Courtesy of the Special Collections Department, The University of Tennessee Library, Knoxville.

(2nd Ten) dashing from the cover of the chaparral made the charge in the face of all this armament, thro' an open space in front of the breast works but covered with brush in many places waist deep, for the purpose of impeding a charge. The gallantry and the desperation of this attempt, with the immense loss in killed and wounded the military history of our country will record and fame display the names of those who fought and fell. Our company had gone beyond the point of prudence, tho we preferred going beyond rather than halting on this side. Balls fell thick around us and soldiers fell behind us as well as in our front but fortunately we escaped unhurt. Every moment amidst the roar of arms, we expected to receive notice that the enemy's works were carried, when we proposed to ride thro' and fall upon them with our sabers. But instead of receiving such notice our forces were compelled to retire from before a position which with the soldiers who manned it might have been maintained against 8000 men. Men all bloody from the wounds received came staggering along the path supported by their comrades, others actively disabled and dripping with blood were borne along toward the quarters of the Surgeons and shame to say some cowards came running in great havoc whom we tried to rally and many of them we did halt and return to their several companies, whilst others ran hastily past toward our camp but few of these we are proud to say were Tennesseans. Then we commenced our labors of the day. Carrying orders, despatches and intelligence from and between the officers and different corps and between each wing of the army, transporting the wounded to the hospital and conveying water to those who were almost famished for its want. In this service several of us were at different times misled by the numerous paths, and galloped suddenly within point blank musket shot of the enemy's lines—who could have easily cut us off, but they had suffered so severely by the attack of Genl. Twigg's Division that they had now proposed to hoist flags of truce to capitulate and the fight had every where ceased. When they made their proposition, Gen. Scott replied they must surrender uncon-

ditionally and that too within 15 miles. Upon receiving this intelligence, we immediately breast works in the road where we met a heap and broke and burned. Six Gen. La Vega, Gen. Jerrero." 6000 prisoners fled in great precipitation leaving his and his wooden leg. How many soldiers when we went into action is said to

When we returned to camp we found whom we had left this morning as with wounds, now evidently beyond the terrible pain, made no complaint and some man having received the wound of the battles of his country.⁶⁰

Genl. Twigg's Division commenced past seven o'clock, he opened a battery stormed the castle height with the height was so elevated that their cannon in ascending the hill. The two columns one half the face of the hill, which within about 30 yards of the enemy a moment. Then charged in order

⁵⁸ Actually the number was five: Pinson, Jarero

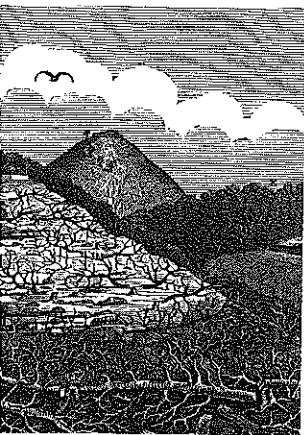
⁵⁹ Jose Maria Jarero y Ruiz (1801-1867) was as a soldier in the city infantry.

⁶⁰ On April 18, 1847 his brother wrote the

Alas! How should I tell you, I was badly wounded on the evening of 10 o'clock having suffered about 12 hours his recovery until a few hours ago, my fears, he received this in the remaining hours, we spent in the world. His hopes were placed in him. He was rational almost to the end all his brothers and sisters, and

I was near him when he fell, a soldier fighting in the service of my brother—He lies near me today, until his consignment, all that we might weep and

John L. Roberson Letters, Special Collections



Regiment," from George C. Furber, (1848). Courtesy of the Special Tennessee Library, Knoxville.

ral made the charge in the face of all of the breast works but covered with those of impeding a charge. The gall with the immense loss in killed and all record and fame display the names gone beyond the point of prudence, on this side. Balls fell thick around our front but fortunately we escaped. As we expected to receive notice that our forces were compelled to retreat, our soldiers who manned it might have been killed from the wounds received came to the quarters of the Surgeons and at having whom we tried to rally and several companies, whilst others ran. We are proud to say were Tennesseans. Trying orders, despatches and intelligent corps and between each wing of capital and conveying water to those in service several of us were at different points suddenly within point blank range. They had now proposed that they had now proposed that the fight had every where ceased. They replied they must surrender uncon-

ditionally and that too within 15 minutes, which they acceded to. And immediately upon receiving this intelligence, we escorted Genl. Pillow round the road to the breast works in the road where we met the prisoners whose arms were thrown into a heap and broke and burned. Six Genl. officers⁵⁸ taken prisoner among them Genl. La Vega, Gen. Jerrero.⁵⁹ 6000 prisoners of war were guarded into camp Santa Anna fled in great precipitation leaving his private carriage, 20,000 dollars in silver coin, and his wooden leg. How many soldiers escaped we do not know but their number when we went into action is said to have been 15000.

When we returned to camp we found our brother and comrade John L. Roberson, whom we had left this morning as we all supposed, in a fair way to recover from his wounds, now evidently beyond the hopes of recovery. He was calm, and in but little pain, made no complaint and soon and suddenly died, with the fortitude of a man having received the wound of which he died, fighting like a gallant soldier the battles of his country.⁶⁰

Genl. Twigg's Division commenced the action upon the enemy's left flank, 1/2 past seven o'clock, he opened a battery from the height he gained on yesterday, and stormed the castle height with the Rifle Regiment, the 2nd 3d & 7th Infantry. The height was so elevated that their cannon could not be made to bear upon our troops in ascending the hill. The two columns which stormed the heights covered about one half the face of the hill, which was almost a perfect cone. They marched up within about 30 yards of the enemy's breast works, formed in line of battle, breathed a moment. Then charged in order the enemy remained until the powder burned

⁵⁸ Actually the number was five: Pinson, Jarero, La Vega, Noreiga, and Obando.

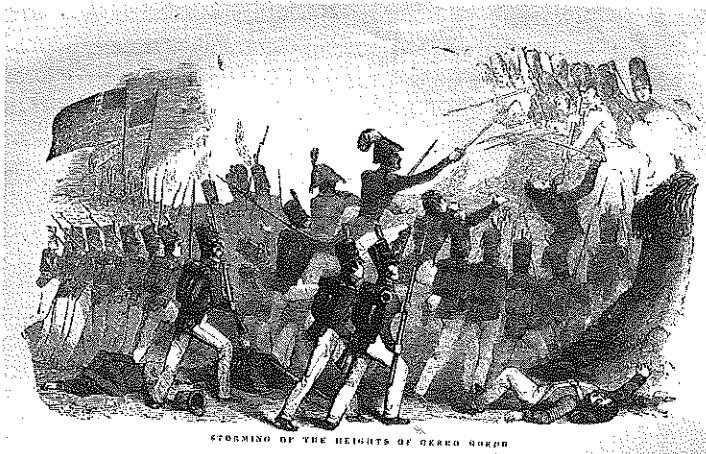
⁵⁹ Jose Maria Jarero y Ruiz (1801-1867) was a native of Jalapa, where he commenced his military career as a soldier in the city infantry.

⁶⁰ On April 18, 1847 his brother wrote their father the terrible news.

Alas! How should I tell you, but my dearest brother John is no more. He was badly wounded on the evening of the 16th and expired this evening about 6 o'clock having suffered about fifty hours. I entertained almost confident hopes of his recovery until a few hours before his decease. When I communicated to him my fears, he received this intelligence with utmost composure. And the few remaining hours, we spent in conversation in reference to his hopes in a future world. His hopes were placed alone in the savior of sinners. And he died tranquil. He was rational almost to the last moment of his life and sent his love to you and all his brothers and sisters, and hoped to meet you all in heaven.

I was near him when he fell, and ran immediately to his relief. He fell a brave soldier fighting in the service Oh how should I be able to bear it—my brother, o my brother—He lies near me cold in death—with numerous others who fell today, until his consignment to the tomb tomorrow. O that I could be with you all that we might weep and mourn together.

John L. Roberson Letters, Special Collections Library, The University of Tennessee.



"Storming of the Heights of Cerro Gordo," from Edward D. Mansfield, *The Mexican War: History of its Origin* (New York, 1849). Courtesy of the Special Collections Department, The University of Tennessee Library, Knoxville.

their faces as our soldiers fired. And Genl. Vasquez⁶¹ who was killed here had his face powder burned and fell by his cannon. Genl. Shields⁶² Brigade which acted in concert with that Genl. Twiggs marched to the right & rear of the castle hill took a battery of ... small cannon killing many ... & taking position up on the road intercepted the army and baggage train when they attempted to retreat. This they effected admirably for the Illinois troops soon routed the division that was sent to oppose them and formed immediately upon the road and so slaughtered the drivers & mules of the Mexican train that they stopped the whole of it. But just as they were doing this the Lancers that were retreating with Santa Anna formed & charged down upon them but they were being in the thick chaperal by road side & gave them such a tremendous fire that they... left and precipitately fled, and were not again seen upon the field of battle. By this time the enemy had surrendered and the Dragoons were ordered to follow those that had fled and they [pursued] the [enemy] so hotly that they overtook and killed about 20 of their number.⁶³ But just as Genl.

⁶¹ Ciriaco Vasquez died trying to rally the Mexican troops to defend their artillery emplacements from American assault. On the site of the battlefield a memorial has been raised to commemorate his bravery.

⁶² James Shields (1806-1879) was an Irishman who immigrated to Illinois in 1826. He entered into a legal career and became a Democratic politician. Politics led Shields to challenge the Whig Abraham Lincoln to a duel that failed to come off. With the coming of the Mexican War, Shields became a general in the Illinois Volunteers. Seriously wounded at Cerro Gordo, Shields was rewarded with brevet rank of major-general. After the war, Shields became a United States Senator. In the Civil War, he served as a brigadier-general.

⁶³ Several semi-legible lines are crossed out here that refer to the capture of one of Santa Anna's wooden legs that had been left behind among the abandoned material by the Mexican army.

Shields at the head of his to him assigned he was w his name will live while t the names of the good &

April 19th. To-day our Roberson. A rude coffin industry was procured in the coffin. At the appoin in the following order. 1 armed escort of soldiers Officers of the company deceased caparisoned with spurs of his late rider. 6 acquaintances generally of him in a grave at the foot customary military salute our military duties. Most our comrades lay thick i striped & robbed of all th had made the charge wit reached the walls, consequ who was killed by some Genl. Twiggs had charge to-day they were burying humanity than we woul dragging them down the the wounded of both ar the proviso that he shoul well as our enemies. And geons declared in amput

April 20th. Moved off the enemy's works, and l powerful and strong as t the base of the castle hill unburied and the dead during all the day we pas

⁶⁴ Robert C. Foster served as a wall at the Battle of Vera Cruz. Upon the secession of T provisional army appointed by



Edward D. Mansfield, *The Mexican*
 Courtesy of the Special Collections
 Tennessee Library, Knoxville.

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to the capture of one of Santa Anna's wooden
 rial by the Mexican army.

Shields at the head of his brigade had so effectually & gallantly completed the part to him assigned he was wounded (and supposed mortal) and fell, but should he die his name will live while the history of our country is extant for there are registered the names of the good & brave.

April 19th. To-day our first duty was the burial of our deceased friend, Jn. L. Roberson. A rude coffin (which can seldom be obtained on such occasions) by much industry was procured in which his body was placed. The company flag spread over the coffin. At the appointed time our funeral procession moved from our quarters in the following order. 1st. Pennsylvania band (music, the dead march). 2nd An armed escort of soldiers under command of Capt. Foster.⁶⁴ 3rd The corpse. 4th Officers of the company with the brother of the deceased. 5th. The horse of the deceased caparisoned with the usual equipments and bearing the arms boots and spurs of his late rider. 6th The members of the company. 7th The friends and acquaintances generally of the deceased among the Ten. Volunteers. We deposited him in a grave at the foot of the hill below the cathedral, and over him we fired the customary military salute, shed our heart felt tears in silent sorrow and returned to our military duties. Most of us visited the battle field to-day. The mangled bodies of our comrades lay thick in front of the breast works and within their nearest forts, striped & robbed of all that was of any value about them. The 2nd Tennessee Regt. had made the charge without firing a gun intending to reserve their fire until they reached the walls, consequently there were none of the enemy killed (except one man who was killed by some one who fired against orders. But upon the heights where Genl. Twiggs had charge the dead bodies of the Mexicans lay thick and in piles. And to-day they were burying their dead whom they treated with less of the feelings of humanity than we would have done a butchered hog, tying them by the feet and dragging them down the fill. A French surgeon was seen at very skillful work among the wounded of both armies. We were told he had joined the Mexican army with the proviso that he should be allowed to attend the sick or wounded of our Army as well as our enemies. And had performed several "handsome operations" as our surgeons declared in amputating the limbs of some of our wounded soldiers.

April 20th. Moved off at the head of the Brigade at an early hour. Marched passed the enemy's works, and having a full view of their strength, which struck us as being powerful and strong as nature and the art of engineers could conceive as we passed the base of the castle hill. And for several miles the stench of the dead Mexicans still unburied and the dead mules shot down, was almost intolerable; and occasionally during all the day we passed dead Mexican men and horses. Our camp for the night

⁶⁴ Robert C. Foster served as a captain in Company L of the 1st Infantry. Foster was the first man on the wall at the Battle of Vera Cruz. He was discharged from service on April 8, 1847 on a surgeon's certificate. Upon the secession of Tennessee from the Union, Foster was one of the generals of the Tennessee provisional army appointed by Governor Isham Harris.

was at Santa Anna's favorite hacienda En El Cienna.⁶⁵ A fine mansion situated in the mountains in a yard containing a mile square of cleared grass land, commanding a most beautiful view of mountain and valley, but destitute of the cultivated fields or surrounding forests. The doors were opened and the company visited the various apartments elegantly furnished with marble tables with soft sofas, large and bright mirrors, with rich paintings, and carpeted floors. We gratified our curiosity by examining all, even the tastefully furnished wardrobe supplied mostly with the military dress of the warrior owner of these halls. We found that Gen. Scott had posted upon the walls, and upon the door of the cathedral, his "Safeguard," making it an offence punishable by death to do violence or injury to the property the persons not soldiers of family (but not including Santa Anna himself) of the hacienda. We took our quarters at the porters lodge near the great gate leading thro the stone wall by a paved and serpentine walk to the Mansion. (16 miles)

April 21st. We were late getting our breakfast ready out of the materials on hand especially in preparing our flour. And were hurried off by observing the column in motion. The duty assigned as of acting as front guard was quite troublesome in checking the straggling soldiers who were eager to press forward. We marched under arms in order with music tho the city of Jalapa, And here we have met with the greatest and richest city yet seen by us the prettiest women, and the most beautiful mountain scenery whose declivity is dotted with cultivated fields. Our hearts were glad to see for the first time in many months some of the growth of our country, the Sycamore the peach tree, the elder and the blackberry, and we looked more at an old log cabin though it did not have the "garments and [?]ment skins" of our human cabins in the suburbs of the city than we did at the palace and castles of the city. We made no halt in the city, but march out upon the road to Mexico about 4 miles beyond and entered upon a grassy field, took our quarters under a clump of trees upon the margin of a cemented aqueduct, thro which the cold water runs rapidly to a cotton manufactory just below; made fast our horses, made our supper out of the remnants of our breakfast, the supplies of our Brigade being exhausted. We rolled up in our blankets and slept, but the night air was cold and chilly, and we have not yet found that climate where it is never either too warm or too cold for comfort, as this is said to be; unless a man has an imagination of such vigor that in the heat of the day he might cool himself by looking to the peaks of Orizaba⁶⁶ or the Cofre de Perote,⁶⁷ both of which we have seen to day and have been so near their base as to raise our heads & look into the clouds to see their lofty peaks.

22nd. No other duty assigned us than to send out 3 men to assist in arresting the

⁶⁵ El Encero was the correct spelling of this hacienda. Others, such as future Tennessee governor William B. Campbell and future Confederate Admiral Raphael Semmes, were also impressed with the grandeur of the estate.

⁶⁶ Pico de Orizaba, a dormant volcano, is the highest peak in Mexico and the third highest in North America.

⁶⁷ Cofre de Perote is another smaller dormant volcano.



"Orizaba, From
Months Volun
Depart

soldiers who contrary to account. Some of us visited father⁶⁸ of Santa Anna. is not of the late improved by an American at Perote, where he made the 50 cannon⁷⁰ in

23d. Some of us visited of our quarters. Two co

24th. By turns we visited about Jalapa. We found of a superior order to cast very much like the is a still lower class of copper complexion, a prancing thro' the street caparisoned with a saddle covering the horse's [

⁶⁸ Don Garcia.

⁶⁹ Colonel Velasquez of the

⁷⁰ The real number was 54

⁷¹ William A. Lacy was fir

⁷² Milton A. Haynes served was a Lt. Colonel of McC

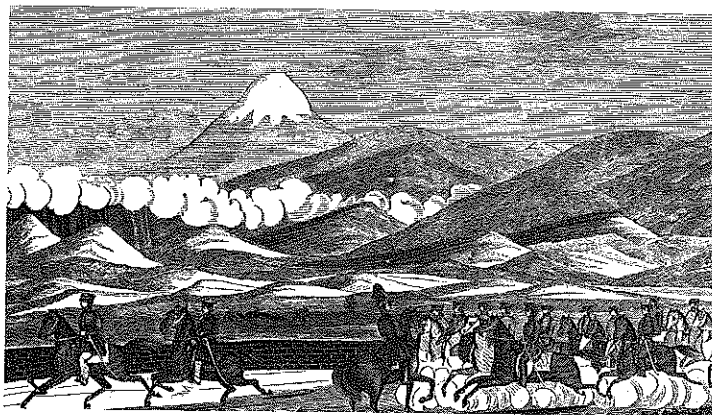
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...r to press forward. We marched under
...pa. And here we have met with the
...ttiest women, and the most beautiful
...ith cultivated fields. Our hearts were
...me of the growth of our country, the
...kberry, and we looked more at an old
...ts and [?]ment skins" of our human
...the palace and castles of the city. We
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...k in Mexico and the third highest in North



"Orizaba, From a Height above Jalapa," from George C. Furber, *The Twelve Months Volunteer* (Cincinnati, 1848). Courtesy of the Special Collections Department, The University of Tennessee Library, Knoxville.

soldiers who contrary to orders have been hunting and killing beef upon their own account. Some of us visited the cotton factory near us owned it is said by the God father⁶⁸ of Santa Anna. The buildings are excellent, and extensive but the machinery is not of the late improvement. It was made at Patterson New Jersey and is superintended by an American. We have received news to-day that Gen Worth has arrived at Perote, where he met a Lieut. Col. of the Mexican Army⁶⁹ who formally surrender the 50 cannon⁷⁰ in the castle with all its other munitions of war.

23d. Some of us visited the city to-day, while others reclined upon the green turf of our quarters. Two companies of our Regiment (Lacy's⁷¹ & Hayne's⁷²) arrived today.

24th. By turns we visit the town. There appear to be several races of people in & about Jalapa. We find some who in their appearance, manners & dress seem to be of a superior order to be the mass of Mexicans of the North. There is too a middle cast very much like those we have generally seen upon our march. And again, there is a still lower class of a degraded race, who resemble our savage Indians in their dark copper complexion, and scanty dress. We saw a Spanish looking gentleman to-day, prancing thro' the streets of the city, upon a ... handsome grey mustang poney caparisoned with a saddle almost covered with massive silver with embossed leather covering the horse's [?] down to his hocks, and fringed around with gingling metal.

⁶⁸ Don Gartia.

⁶⁹ Colonel Velasquez of the Artillery.

⁷⁰ The real number was 54.

⁷¹ William A. Lacy was first lieutenant in Company A of the 1st Mounted Infantry.

⁷² Milton A. Haynes served as captain of Company E of the 1st Infantry. During the Civil War, Haynes was a Lt. Colonel of McGowan's artillery.

25th. The Mexicans are bringing to our camps a plentiful supply of vegetables poultry and choice fruits, for most of these things they ask enormous price. Turkeys \$3, Chickens 75¢, Eggs 2 1/2¢, Pine Apples 12 1/2 to 25¢ & most excellent they are, Oranges 2 1/2¢, Banana's 2¢, Plantains 1¢. Those who have money enjoy these things especially the fruits, but it has been so long since our last pay day that we are not only getting scarce of money but our clothes are pretty well worn out. And we do not now deny that we are ragged volunteers[.] The prices asked for clothing are about three times the amount of those at home. And being beyond the proportion of our pay. Some are like the fox who was curtailed by a trap have in jest proposed that each man should tear his clothes in uniform with the rent in his own indispensable, but the weather is getting rather to cool especially by night, otherwise the temperature is as pleasant as could be desired.

26th. We are getting no forage for our horses and they are entirely dependant upon the pasturage of the field in which we are encamped for their support, but it is an excellent pasture. Large quantities of corn is being brought in by the Mexicans & purchased by our forage masters. Gen. Scott designs this supply for his march to the city of Mexico. On account of our horses we remain generally at our quarters. The diligence⁷³ from Mexico came to-day and brings intelligence that there are no troops either at the city or upon the route. Our officers say that according to a late report of the Mexican Secretary of War compared with the result of our invasion we have captured all the ordinance of the nation except six canon. They must be pretty well wound up in the further persecution of a warlike resistance to our advance upon their capitol.

27th. No military duty, and we spend our time beneath the shadow of the trees above our "stakes." We have no tents having surrendered the few with which we started to the wounded of Col Haskell's (2nd Regt.) and have never stretched one since we left Vera Cruz. But last night we felt the need and use of a comfortable tent; for during the night, a steady rain commenced and continued until nearly day. All of us were rolled up in our several blankets, which before the rain ceased were thoroughly soaked, & those of us were almost afloat who occupied positions from which the water would not run off. About 30 steps from our quarters, there is a precipice, from the ravine at the bottom grown tall trees, whose tops just peer above the brow. This has been a fatal place to sundry jacks⁷⁴ and jennets⁷⁵ which have infested our camps by stealing the provender from our horses and even making encroachments upon our unguarded provisions. One company of the 1st Ten Regt. were so unfortunate a few nights past, as to have not only their barrel of crackers destroyed but all their sugar eaten up and their coffee trampled in the dirt by these animals, which have been mostly imported within our lines, by the wearied soldiers on the marches,

⁷³ A diligence was a public stagecoach. The usage is French.

⁷⁴ A male donkey.

⁷⁵ A female donkey.

who packed them with the
Two or three of the men
deprived of their breakfast
over this precipice and from
retaliation was continued a
jennets, thus destroyed. In
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more fortunate than the j
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28th. The rain contin
menced, wherein we are t
sit around our camp fire
the rain and ever and arro
tle, which is constantly be
men to the Surgeon for a
ers require the use of qui
this high and healthy regi
and that soon we shall al

29th. Our Regt. is calle
back for Vera Cruz today
presented to the Colon
because we decidedly pr
Cruz, and for the ben
(Marshall,⁷⁶ Newman,⁷⁷
orders to return immedi
and of our Regiment, w
rife as to the time of our
The prospect is that we
enlistment; whereas we
homes before the expira
of June? Can we reach th
as whether we shall figh

April 30th. This bein

⁷⁶ John W. Marshall was captai

⁷⁷ L. D. Newman was captai

a plentiful supply of vegetables they ask enormous price. Turkeys 2 to 25¢ & most excellent they those who have money enjoy these since our last pay day that we are are pretty well worn out. And we The prices asked for clothing are and being beyond the proportion l by a trap have in jest proposed with the rent in his own inde- especially by night, otherwise the

and they are entirely dependant camped for their support, but it being brought in by the Mexicans signs this supply for his march to remain generally at our quarters. gets intelligence that there are no officers say that according to a late with the result of our invasion we at six canon. They must be pret- warlike resistance to our advance

beneath the shadow of the trees rendered the few with which we .) and have never stretched one and use of a comfortable tent; continued until nearly day. All before the rain ceased were thor- occupied positions from which our quarters, there is a precipice, se tops just peer above the brow. jennets⁷⁵ which have infested our and even making encroachments the 1st Ten Regt. were so unfor- rel of crackers destroyed but all he dirt by these animals, which wearied soldiers on the marches,

who packed them with their knapsacks guns & in some instances by riding them. Two or three of the men of this company who were so encroached upon and deprived of their breakfast commenced retaliation upon the animals by casting them over this precipice and from the fall none of them escaped a sudden death. This retaliation was continued and now in this gloomy hollow there is a heap of jacks and jennets, thus destroyed. In the late hours of last night, we heard the shout of some one in distress down deep in this ravine, he said had fallen over the precipice, and more fortunate than the jacks had escaped with life, but had received several bruises. He refused to tell his name and was there upon thrown a burning brand to light his way and unfeelingly recommended to ride up one of the jacks below. He found his way down the glen and back to camp and at the morning dress parade an officer of our neighbours The 1st Pennsylvania Regt. had his arm in a sling and thus disclosed the person who in the night had taken either a lovers leap or who had missed the step in his dark & perhaps necessitous perambulations

28th. The rain continues, and we are apprehensive that the season has commenced, wherein we are told the sun does not appear for many weeks together. We sit around our camp fire, with our blankets over our shoulders to protect us from the rain and ever and arrow, fork out a piece of boiled beef from our large camp kettle, which is constantly boiling upon the fire. This indulgence has sent several of our men to the Surgeon for a dose of laudanum and camphor, whilst two or three others require the use of quinine to check the chills which we are surprised to find in this high and healthy region. It is however hoped they will have but short endurance; and that soon we shall all be stout and hearty.

29th. Our Regt. is called upon for a force of 100 men to guard a train which starts back for Vera Cruz today. We were apprehensive of being sent upon this service and presented to the Colonel many reasons in a long argument why we should not, because we decidedly preferred to remain here, to avoid the sickness we fear of Vera Cruz, and for the benefit of our horses. Three other companies of the Regt. (Marshall,⁷⁶ Newman,⁷⁷ & Lacys) were selected and sent back with the train with orders to return immediately, and with them we expect the balance of our company and of our Regiment, who are at Vera Cruz. Now speculations and conjectures are rife as to the time of our discharge, and how we shall in the mean time be employed. The prospect is that we shall be retained until the full expiration of our term of enlistment; whereas we had thought we would be allowed time to return to our homes before the expiration of our term. But how far can we march before the tenth of June? Can we reach the halls of the Montezumas? are questions often asked as well as whether we shall fight again or not.

April 30th. This being the muster day prescribed by general regulations. A mus-

⁷⁶ John W. Marshall was captain of Company B of the Mounted Infantry.

⁷⁷ L. D. Newman was captain of Company D of the 1st Mounted Infantry.

tering officer (Lt. Rains⁷⁸) attended and entered upon the duties supposed to have been assigned him. The Col.⁷⁹ and Majr.⁸⁰ were both sick and unable for duty. The command of the Regt. turned over to Capt. Caswell, who appointed Charles Stone⁸¹ acting Adjutant.⁸² By reference to an order issued from General headquarters, it was ascertained that Lt. Hammonds,⁸³ was the proper mustering officer; being late in the day, wet and rainy & the horses out on pasture, the muster was deferred until tomorrow morning 9 O'clock.

May 1st. The muster kept us engaged pretty much during the day. We presented 2 officers—4 non commissioned officers 2 musicians and 15 privates (one of whom Cobb⁸⁴ kept in quarters to avoid a chill). All passed muster with their arms, and horses. By some attention full rations of corn was obtained for our horses. Lt. Donnelly⁸⁵ was appointed Quarter Master for the Regt. temporarily.

May 2nd. We are notified to be in readiness to march towards the city of Mexico in a few days; what opposition we shall encounter is entirely a mystery. As yet we have heard of no organized force, but that Gurilla bands are being prepared to harass our front & rear. Already several attacks have been made upon our trains and dispatch bearers between this place and Vera Cruz, and to-day a volunteer of the Illinois Regiment was killed near camp. The rain falls every day, and there can be no doubt but that the rainy season has commenced. Generally in the morning the peak of Perote and the bright top of Orizaba laughs in the brightness & splendor of a bright beaming sun, over the wide landscape between us over the city, villages, and cultivated fields, which remind us of the accounts given of Alpine vineyards; in the afternoon clouds gather and darken the sky above, and then a shower like the gentle showers which bring forth and refreshen the spring vegetation of our own coun-

⁷⁸ George Washington Rains was a first lieutenant in the 4th Artillery and served as an aide-de-camp to Pillow. Previously he had been a chemistry professor at West Point. In the Civil War, Rains was in the Confederate army. After the war, he became a major-general in the United States Army.

⁷⁹ Jonas Erwin Thomas (1802-1856) was on July 8, 1846 elected the colonel of the Regiment of the Tennessee Mounted Volunteers. Previously he had been Speaker of the Tennessee House of Representatives. During his time in Mexico, Thomas was also a member of the Tennessee Senate.

⁸⁰ Richard Waterhouse (1805-1863), a Knox County native, had served in the Tennessee state Senate. A veteran of the Seminole War, Waterhouse was initially a captain in the Mexican War; on July 6, 1846 he was elected major and November 8, 1847 elected colonel of the regiment. In 1863, he was murdered in Texas.

⁸¹ Charles K. Stone enlisted in Knoxville as a private and was discharged in New Orleans.

⁸² Adjutant Nimrod R. Porter had died on April 21, 1847.

⁸³ R. P. Hammonds of the 3rd Artillery was acting assistant adjutant.

⁸⁴ Pharoah Cobb enlisted in Knoxville June 10, 1846 as a private and was discharged at New Orleans May 31, 1847.

⁸⁵ B. Donnelly had been promoted from sergeant to second lieutenant in Company D.

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to see again our friends
our faces set and our

May 3rd. A heavy rain.
Some person had sold
him. And to establish
and forwards thro' the
Cavalry march to-mor-
that Squadron, and
rations & forage. The
of the men have rigg
is however of such co
for over the ground o

May 4th. A hasty
Our blankets gather
transport our cooking
"The Halls of the M
with the order came
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Incidents

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refused to surrender
Monterey. Genl. Wo
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try. And oh! in the listless, dreary hours of our present life, how ardently do we desire
to see again our friends and homes. The time has arrived when we expected to have
our faces set and our daily marches leading us in that direction.

May 3rd. A heavy rain in the afternoon, to which some of us were fully exposed.
Some person had sold Fortners horse to a Tn. Master for the Dragoons who claimed
him. And to establish Fortners right of property keep several of us riding backwards
and forwards thro' the rain. Again an order was received for a Squadron of the Ten.
Cavalry march to-morrow towards Puebla.⁸⁶ We were selected to compose a part of
that Squadron, and late in the evening commenced preparations in procuring
rations & forage. There was a distribution of the captured Mexican clothing. Many
of the men have rigged themselves out in motley & fantastic ill fitting uniforms, it
is however of such coarse & inferior quality that much of it lies scattered uncared
for over the ground of the encampment.

May 4th. A hasty and an early breakfast was dispatched our saddlebags packed.
Our blankets gathered up. Our horses all saddled. A waggoner reported himself to
transport our cooking utensils And all were ready to take up the line of march for
"The Halls of the Montezumas," when the order to march was countermanded and
with the order came the information that we would march no farther but return
home from this place.

Incidents

At the capitulation which preceded the surrender of the Mexican army at Cerro
Gordo, a Captain of the Mexican Navy, who commanded one of the front batteries
refused to surrender unless allowed to march out with the honors of war, allowed at
Monterey. Genl. Worth patting his foot with impatience and without waiting for the
General in Chief to reply, told him he admired his spirits and to go back to his bat-
tery. "Let him go back" said he to Genl. Scott, "by G__ I have 2200 fresh men & I
will whip him in five minutes"—but the Navy Capt. thought better of it & soon
came to terms.

On the 17th Col. Child of the Artillery, with a portion of the Rifle Regt. and sev-
eral small detachments of different corps, had advanced half way up the Castle hill
of Cerro Gordo, his perilous position his small force being unsupported was
observed and he was recalled by a bugle signal of the Rifles. In his eagerness to
advance the signal was not regarded. It was sounded again. Not understanding the
sound, he appealed to Lt. Gibbs⁸⁷ of the Rifle corps, to tell him what it meant. I do
not know said Gibbs. Col. Child told him he certainly must know the signals of his
own corps. "Col." said he "I never learned the signal for a recall."

When the 2nd Tennessee Regt. charged the Mexican breast works on the 18th one
man came hobbling to the reserve, with his hand upon the fleshy part of his back
and in reply to numerous enquiries relative to his hurts, answered as he passed on to

⁸⁶ Puebla was a manufacturing city on the way to Mexico City.

⁸⁷ Alfred Gibbs (1823-1868) was a West Point graduate. Gibbs was promoted to brevet captain and
wounded before Cerro Gordo. In the Civil War, Gibbs was a Union major-general.

the Surgeons. "Oh! I am killed. My wound is considerable bad. I believe I shall die." but he was soon assured that he would only suffer an inconvenience in sitting down for a few days.

A Pennsylvanian who was among the first to run at Cerro Gordo came to our camp fire, and complained bitterly of the exposures & privations of a soldier, and stated that he had been thoroughly wet by rains for several days in succession. Dripping wet ourselves, we felt the truth of his observations, but in better spirits, we offered him the mock comfort of an assurance that he would become entirely accustomed to such moist weather so as not to mind water by the time the rainy season commenced. He went away in despair of escaping death both from the enemy and the climate.

BOOK

Myra Inman: A Life
(Macon: Mercer)

On January 1, 1862, Myra Inman's diary. For the next year, she lived in the town of Macon, Georgia, a fascinating blend of life in the town and the army, concerning local and national events.

While such a diary is not unusual for many reasons. It is a record of the Civil War that existed in the South and their loyal soldiers. The war of its own accord, a passionate Confederate soldier, Tennessee fell to the Union. A Northern soldier, we can see the whip them ... secessionist party. Only recently, W. Todd Groves, a world of a young man, reports of battles, reports of battles, reports of war and the

The existence of the script is part of the Carolina at the Bradley County, Georgia, by the readership.

Professor ... introduction to her family, but unfortunately on events, but those unfamiliar

This chronicle published by the Rebel. Elle's ardent secessionist valuable p