

Sixth-plate ambrotype of Private Japhet Collins, Company D, "Bastrop County Rawhides," 12th Texas Cavalry, ca. 1861. *Courtesy Lawrence T. Jones III.*

“Rarin’ for a Fight”: Texans in the Confederate Army

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The outbreak of fighting at Fort Sumter in April 1861 caused great excitement in Texas. There was little difficulty in finding recruits for the Confederate army as men flocked to enlist. Within weeks military companies were formed in most Texas communities. Edward Clark, who had become governor after the secession convention declared the office vacant following Sam Houston’s refusal to take an oath to support the Confederacy, worked with Brigadier General Earl Van Dorn, the newly appointed Confederate military commander for Texas, in enrolling, equipping, and training troops for the defense of the state. By the end of the year twenty-five thousand Texans were in the Confederate army.

Ralph A. Wooster, professor of history at Lamar University, Beaumont, and Robert Wooster, professor of history at Texas A&M University, Corpus Christi, trace the experiences of Texas Confederates from initial enlistment to final defeat in 1865. Using letters, journals, and diaries of common soldiers, the authors show that Texans went off to war with a wide-eyed innocence that was soon tempered by the violence and brutality of war.

* Ralph A. Wooster and Robert Wooster, “Rarin’ for a Fight’: Texans in the Confederate Army,” *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, LXXXIV (Apr., 1981), 387–426.

In addition to the sources cited by the authors, including the pioneer study of Civil War soldiers by Bell I. Wiley, The Life of Johnny Reb: The Common Soldier of the Confederacy (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1943), see Wiley, The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1951); James I. Robertson Jr., Soldiers Blue and Gray (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988); Reid Mitchell, Civil War Soldiers (New York: Viking Press, 1988); and Larry J. Daniel, Soldiering in the Army of Tennessee (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

The firing on Ft. Sumter in April, 1861, released strong emotional feeling throughout the South. From the Potomac to the Rio Grande, thousands of young men volunteered for military service. In his study of the Confederate soldier in the Civil War, Bell I. Wiley notes that the man who was to become Johnny Reb was "rarin' for a fight." He cites a young volunteer from Arkansas who, feeling "like ten thousand pins were pricking me in every part of the body," left his community for the war front "a week in advance of his brothers."¹

Many young Texans were also "rarin' for a fight" in the spring of 1861. William A. Fletcher, of Beaumont, was working on the roof of a two-story house when informed of the firing on Ft. Sumter. The news made Fletcher "very nervous thinking the delay of completing the roof might cause me to miss a chance to enlist. . . ." Finding no local military units being formed, he boarded a flatcar heading toward Houston to find a way of enlisting. Once in Houston he again found no companies being organized. So impatient was he to enlist he went to Galveston the following day, but found conditions there similar to Houston. He took a steamboat to Liberty, and finally persuaded the commander of a company being formed there to allow him to enlist.²

Most Texans experienced less difficulty than Fletcher in joining military units. By late spring companies were being formed in almost every community. Often these units were organized by local political leaders or by professional men with little military knowledge or background. The lack of weapons, ammunition, and other equipment often bewildered even those with previous military experience.³

1. Bell Irvin Wiley, *The Life of Johnny Reb: The Common Soldier of the Confederacy* (1943; reprint ed., New York, 1952), 15.

2. William A. Fletcher, *Rebel Private, Front and Rear* (1908; reprint ed., Austin, 1954), 6 (quotation), 7.

3. Allen C. Ashcraft, "Texas, 1860-1866: The Lone Star State in the Civil War" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1960), 74-77.

During the first few weeks, the companies drilled, received new members, and attended an endless round of public ceremonies featuring patriotic addresses by local dignitaries and veterans of the Texas Revolution and Mexican War. Ordinarily the speakers praised the South's determination to resist northern aggression and predicted quick victory for southern arms, but occasionally a more somber note was sounded. Ralph J. Smith, a private in Company K of the Second Texas Infantry, reported that deposed governor Sam Houston, a foe of secession, warned members of his company that they did not know what they were doing. Smith reported Houston's caution that "the resources of the north were almost exhaustless." He concluded, however, that the words of the old hero of San Jacinto had no effect: "He might as well had been giving advice to the inmates of a lunatic asylum. We knew no such words as fail."⁴

Many of the recruits received their military instruction, such as it was, in their local communities. Others were trained in one of the military camps created by Governor Edward Clark. Many of these, such as Camp Berlin, located near Brenham; Camp Honey Springs, on the west bank of Honey Creek near Dallas; and Camp Roberts, in Smith County, were primarily mustering or rendezvous stations. Others, such as Camp Bosque, seven miles from Waco; Camp

It should be noted that most Texans were initially recruited or enrolled in a company of infantry, a troop of cavalry, or a battery of artillery. These units, consisting of approximately one hundred men, and commanded by a captain, were later formed into regiments commanded by a colonel. The authorized strength of a Civil War regiment was ten companies, or approximately one thousand men, but some regiments, such as the First Texas, had twelve companies. A varying number of regiments formed a brigade, usually commanded by a brigadier general. Two to five brigades formed a division, normally commanded in Confederate service by a major general. Two or more divisions were combined to form an army corps, commanded by a lieutenant general. Two or more corps made up an army, usually commanded by a full general.

Some artillery batteries and cavalry troops were also organized into battalions. Composed of three or four batteries or troops, battalions were usually commanded by lieutenant colonels.

Most larger military units in Confederate service were known by the name of their commanding officer; e.g., Hood's Brigade was named for John Bell Hood, one of its early commanders. Most, but not all, regiments were designated by a number, e.g., Second Texas Infantry. In this paper, reference to such names as the Second Texas Infantry implies a regimental designation. For more on Civil War military organization, see Mark Mayo Boatner, III, *The Civil War Dictionary* (New York, 1959), 610-613.

For organizational histories of various Texas units, see Harry McCory Henderson, *Texas in the Confederacy* (San Antonio, 1955), and Lester N. Fitzhugh, *Texas Batteries, Battalions, Regiments, Commanders and Field Officers, Confederate States Army, 1861-1865* (Midlothian, Tex., 1959).

4. Ralph J. Smith, *Reminiscences of the Civil War and Other Sketches* (reprint ed., Waco, Tex., 1962), 2.

Clark, on the San Marcos River; and Camp Van Dorn, on Buffalo Bayou near Harrisburg, were larger camps where military instruction was received.⁵

One of the highlights of early military life for most Texas volunteers was the presentation of either the Confederate or the unit flag by local townspeople. This ceremony, which usually occurred when the company left for training camp or for the eastern theater of military operations, was "the last act of the farewell drama" and often was "a solemn affair." Albert B. Blocker, youthful bugler of the Third Texas Cavalry, recalled that his company, known as the Texas Hunters, received its flag at Jonesville on May 1, 1861. Miss Eudora Perry presented the handsome flag, made by the ladies of Harrison County, to the company before hundreds of citizens who had come to view the festivities. Patriotic speeches, parades, and a barbecue made the day one that young Blocker would not forget.⁶

An equally enthusiastic flag presentation and send-off was given the Henderson Guards of the Fourth Texas Infantry. Before leaving for Camp Van Dorn, the Guards assembled at the town of Fincastle, in southern Henderson County. Here, before hundreds of onlookers, the company commander, Captain William K. ("Howdy") Martin, received a beautiful homemade Confederate flag presented by Miss Ann Tindel. The flag was hoisted to the top of a 120-foot pine pole while Martin, a noted stump speaker, delivered a powerful oration with a "voice like thunder" and with a look like "he was mad enough to eat a Yankee raw."⁷

The Texas soldiers who marched off to war in 1861 wore a wide variety of uniforms. Val C. Giles, of the Fourth Texas Infantry, noted that no two companies had uniforms alike when his regiment was organized in the spring of that year. "We were a motley-looking set, but as a rule comfortably dressed," he later wrote. "In my company we had about four different shades of gray, but the trimmings were all of black braid." Jim Turner, of the Sixth Texas Infantry,

5. Bill Winsor, *Texas in the Confederacy: Military Installations, Economy and People* (Hillsboro, Tex., 1978), 8-38; Harold B. Simpson, *Hood's Texas Brigade: Lee's Grenadier Guard* (Waco, Tex., 1970), 20-21, 34-35.

6. Simpson, *Hood's Texas Brigade: Lee's Grenadier Guard*, 27 (quotations); Max S. Lale, "The Boy-Bugler of the Third Texas Cavalry: The A. B. Blocker Narrative," *Military History of Texas and the Southwest*, XIV (No. 2), 73.

7. J. J. Faulk, *History of Henderson County, Texas* (Athens, Tex., 1929), 129. For other descriptions of flag ceremonies see Charles Spurlin (ed.), *West of the Mississippi with Waller's 13th Texas Cavalry Battalion, CSA* (Hillsboro, 1971), 28; *Texas Republican* (Marshall), Apr. 27, June 1, 1861; O. T. Hanks, "History of B. F. Benton's Company, or Account of Civil War Experiences," 2-3, O. T. Hanks, *Reminiscences, 1861-1862* (Archives, University of Texas Library, Austin); Jim Turner, "Jim Turner, Co. G, 6th Texas Infantry, C.S.A., From 1861 to 1865," *Texasana*, XII (No. 2, 1974), 150.

pointed out that in his regiment the uniforms were of "a dark pepper and salt grey color, and were trimmed with green." The First Texas Infantry wore dark uniforms with bright red stripes, while the men of Company E, Fourth Texas Infantry, sported uniforms of imported gray cloth trimmed in blue.⁸

A wide assortment of colors and materials was found among cavalry units recruited in Texas. Stephen B. Oates notes that trousers of the typical cavalryman were either gray woolen jeans or plaid woolen jeans, but that Captain Sam Richardson of the Walter P. Lane Rangers wore exotic leopard-skin pants. Coats were both single- and doublebreasted, with a variety of color and style. The hats of Texas soldiers, both infantry and cavalry, were generally wide-brimmed felt, or gray caps with visors. Many Texans, especially those from South Texas, preferred the Mexican sombrero.⁹

The weapons carried by Texas Confederates varied even more than their uniforms. Although regulations called for sabers and carbines, most cavalry units were equipped with shotguns, rifles, Bowie knives, and Colt revolvers. Theophilus Noel noted that when Henry H. Sibley's Brigade left San Antonio in 1861, the men were "armed with squirrel-guns, bear guns, sportman's-guns, shot-guns, both single and double barrels, in fact, guns of all sorts. . . ." The double-barreled shotgun was a weapon particularly favored by the Eighth Cavalry, a unit better known as Terry's Texas Rangers.¹⁰

Texas soldiers were given much freedom in choosing their weapons. O. T. Hanks, of the Fourth Infantry, recalled that:

evry fellow [was] equiped as he considered with the best Accountments of war. There Arms Consisting of Almost evry Conceivable Kind of Gun that Could be Colected in the Country. . . . Our Bayonets were Butcher Knives Made by our Black Smiths out of Old files[.] Some were about 12 Inches long [and] 1½ Inches wide[.] Others were 16 or 18 Inches long [and] abut 3 Inches wide. . . . Some Nice Jobs, others not, all owing to the taste of the person[.]¹¹

8. Mary Lasswell (comp. and ed.), *Rags and Hope: The Recollections of Val C. Giles, Four Years with Hood's Brigade, Fourth Texas Infantry* (New York, 1961), 23; Turner, "Co. G, 6th Texas Infantry," 150; Simpson, *Hood's Texas Brigade: Lee's Grenadier Guard*, 16-18.

9. Stephen B. Oates, *Confederate Cavalry West of the River* (Austin, 1961), 60-61; Bruce Marshall, "Night Sentinel: Texas Confederate Cavalry," *Military History of Texas and the Southwest*, X (No. 3, 1972), 157-158; Bruce Marshall, "Border Confederate," *ibid.*, X (No. 4, 1972), 223-224.

10. Oates, *Confederate Cavalry*, 62-65; Marshall, "Confederate Cavalry," 157; Marshall, "Border Confederate," 223-224; Theo. Noel, *A Campaign from Santa Fe to the Mississippi* (Shreveport, 1865), 8; Leonidas B. Giles, *Terry's Texas Rangers* (Austin, 1911), 12-13; C. C. Jeffries, *Terry's Rangers* (New York, 1961), 19-20.

11. Hanks, "History of B. F. Benton's Company," 4-5.

When the Third Texas Cavalry was sent to Arkansas, one company was armed with rifles, two companies with shotguns, and one company with Minie carbines, while 110 men were supplied with Mississippi rifles and 150 with Sharps' rifles.¹²

Frequently Texans overburdened themselves with equipment and clothing as they rode or marched off to war. C. C. Cox took two saddle horses, two wagon horses, a wagon, side arms, medicines, bedding, camp utensils, and a black boy when he left his ranch near Indianola heading for the army.¹³ William W. Heartsill, of the Lane Rangers, recalled that when he embarked for war in April, 1861, his horse "Pet" was carrying the following:

myself, saddle, bridle, saddle-blanket, curry comb, horse brush, coffee pot, tin cup, 20 lbs ham, 200 biscuit, 5 lbs ground coffee, 5 lbs sugar, one large pound cake presented to me by Mrs C E Talley, 6 shirts, 6 prs socks, 3 prs drawers, 2 prs pants, 2 jackets, 1 pr heavy mud boots, one Colt's revolver, one small dirk, four blankets, sixty feet of rope, with a twelve inch iron pin attached; with all these, and divers and sundry little mementoes from friends.¹⁴

By the end of 1861 approximately 25,000 Texans were enrolled in the Confederate army. Fully two-thirds of these were in the cavalry, as Texans showed a decided preference for mounted service.¹⁵ Sixteen regiments, three battalions, and three independent companies of cavalry were raised in Texas the first year of the war. Four of the regiments recruited that year, the Second Mounted Rifles, the Fourth Cavalry, the Fifth Cavalry, and the Seventh Cavalry, took part in Henry H. Sibley's ill-fated invasion of New Mexico Territory in late 1861 and early

12. Galveston *Weekly News*, Sept. 3, 1861. Julius Giesecke noted that his unit, Company G, Fourth Texas Cavalry, was originally equipped with spears, which they exchanged for guns in December, 1861. See Oscar Haas (trans.), "The Diary of Julius Giesecke, 1861-1862," *Texas Military History*, III (Winter, 1963), 233.

13. "Reminiscences of C. C. Cox, II," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, VI (Jan., 1903), 217.

14. William W. Heartsill, *Fourteen Hundred and 91 Days in the Confederate Army; or, Camp Life, Day by Day, of the W. P. Lane Rangers from April 19, 1861, to May 20, 1865*, ed. Bell I. Wiley (1876; reprint ed., Jackson, Tenn., 1954), 5.

15. The British traveler Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Fremantle of the Coldstream Guards noted this affinity of Texans for the cavalry. "At the outbreak of the war," he observed, "it was found very difficult to raise infantry in Texas, as no Texan walks a yard if he can help it." Arthur James L. Fremantle, *The Fremantle Diary: Being the Journal of Lieutenant Colonel James Arthur Lyon Fremantle, Coldstream Guards, on His Three Months in the Southern States*, ed. Walter Lord (1863; reprint ed., Boston, 1954), 58. See also "Message of Edward Clark to the Texas Senate and House of Representatives," Nov. 1, 1861, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, D.C., 1880-1901), Series IV, Vol I, 716. (This work is cited hereafter as *Official Records*.)

1862. Wealthy sugar planter Benjamin F. Terry raised the most famous of all the mounted Texas units, the Eighth Cavalry, or Terry's Texas Rangers. The Rangers were originally scheduled for service in Virginia, but the need for additional troops in Kentucky resulted in the regiment being assigned to join Albert Sidney Johnston's command in that state.¹⁶

Even though Texans preferred cavalry service, seven regiments and four battalions of infantry were recruited in the Lone Star State in 1861. Three of these regiments, the First, Fourth, and Fifth, were ordered to Virginia in the fall of the year and there became part of the Texas Infantry Brigade, commanded first by Louis T. Wigfall and later by John Bell Hood. As Hood's Texas Brigade, the unit distinguished itself at Gaines' Mill, Second Manassas, Sharpsburg, and Gettysburg.¹⁷

The majority of Texans who enrolled in the Confederate army were in their early twenties. The median age of privates in Sibley's Brigade, for example, was 22 years at the time of enlistment. The three youngest privates of the brigade were J. D. Adams, B. F. Edens, and R. H. Horn, all age 16. R. J. Hill, age 59 years, was the oldest private in the brigade.¹⁸

16. Oates, *Confederate Cavalry*, 5-29; J. K. P. Blackburn, "Reminiscences of the Terry Rangers," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, XXII (July, 1918), 41-42; Oates, "Recruiting Confederate Cavalry in Texas," *ibid.*, LXIV (Apr., 1961), 463-477. For the story of Sibley's Brigade, see the following works by Martin Hardwick Hall: "The Formation of Sibley's Brigade and the March to New Mexico," *ibid.*, LXI (Jan., 1958), 383-405, *Sibley's New Mexico Campaign* (Austin, 1960); and *The Confederate Army of New Mexico* (Austin, 1978). An independent company was one that did not form part of an organized battalion.

17. The Eighteenth Georgia Infantry Regiment joined the three Texas regiments to form the brigade. J. B. Polley, *Hood's Texas Brigade: Its Marches, Its Battles, Its Achievements* (New York, 1910), 13. Polley, *Hood's Texas Brigade*, Mrs. A. V. Winkler, *The Confederate Capital and Hood's Texas Brigade* (Austin, 1894), and Donald E. Everett (ed.), *Chaplain Davis and Hood's Texas Brigade* (San Antonio, 1962), are the standard older accounts of the Texas brigade. The definitive modern work is the multivolume series by Colonel Harold B. Simpson: *Hood's Texas Brigade: Lee's Grenadier Guard; Hood's Texas Brigade in Poetry and Song* (Waco, Tex., 1968); *Hood's Texas Brigade in Reunion and Memory* (Waco, Tex., 1974); and *Hood's Texas Brigade: A Compendium* (Waco, Tex., 1977).

18. This information is based upon a study of ages in muster rolls of First, Fourth, and Fifth regiments as given in Hall, *Sibley's New Mexico Campaign*, 236-317.

The age breakdown for privates in the brigade was as follows:

Age	Number
Under 20	483
20-24	828
25-29	325
30-35	171
Over 35	77
	<hr/> 1,884

Noncommissioned and commissioned officers were slightly older. The median age for 240 noncommissioned officers in Sibley's Brigade was 26 years, while that for the commissioned officers was 27 years. The brigade's youngest noncommissioned officer was First Corporal Edward A. Leach, age 17, a member of K Company, Fifth Cavalry. Oldest noncommissioned officers were sergeants E. S. R. Patton and Charles Pate, both age 57. Joseph D. Sayers, age 19 years, staff officer in the Fifth Cavalry and future governor of Texas, was the youngest commissioned officer in the brigade. G. W. Eaton, second lieutenant, Seventh Texas Cavalry, age 56 years, was the oldest commissioned officer.¹⁹

Muster rolls indicate the majority of soldiers in other units were similar in age, if slightly older, to those in Sibley's Brigade. Median age for the 304 privates in Hood's Brigade whose ages were listed on muster rolls was 24 years. For 396 privates in Edward Waller's Thirteenth Texas Cavalry Battalion it was 25 years. Again, officers were generally older than privates.²⁰

In the early days of the war the army discharged many soldiers for being under or over the regulation age limits of eighteen and thirty-five. A. B. Blocker, who enlisted as a bugler in the Third Cavalry at the age of sixteen, reported that the army discharged him and two others in 1862 for being too young. A fourth man was discharged at the same time for being over thirty-five. Harold B. Simpson notes that the First Texas Infantry released sixty-three men, including fifteen men in K Company alone, in the summer and fall of 1862 for being under or over age.²¹

Probably 80 percent of the Confederate soldiers from Texas were of English, Welsh, and Scottish stock, the majority being born in the southern United States. Even so, many other nationalities were represented in the ranks of Texas

19. *Ibid.*

20. These figures and conclusions are based upon muster rolls given in Simpson, *Hood's Texas Brigade: A Compendium*, 10–250; Spurlin (ed.), *West of the Mississippi*, 66–92. The median enlistment ages here are similar to the 23-year median enlistment age for the post-Civil War army. See Don Rickey, Jr., *Forty Miles a Day on Beans and Hay: The Enlisted Soldier Fighting the Indian Wars* (Norman, 1963), 17. Median ages of 23–25 years were found for Texas Confederates in Captain J. Duff Brown's Company of Thomas X. Waul's Legion, Captain Augustus C. Allen's Company of Richard Waterhouse's Regiment, Captain Edward M. Alexander's Company of Henry E. McCulloch's Regiment, Captain William H. Christian's Company of Oran M. Roberts' Regiment, and Captain Hiram S. Childress's Company of Nicholas H. Darnell's Regiment. See the muster rolls for these companies in the Archives Division, Texas State Library, Austin. Jerry Don Thompson, *Vaqueros in Blue & Gray* (Austin, 1976), 7, reports that the average age for Mexican American soldiers in the Civil War was 28 years.

21. Lale, "A. B. Blocker Narrative," Part III, *Military History of Texas and the Southwest*, XV (No. 1), 22; Simpson, *Hood's Texas Brigade: A Compendium*, 549. As the war continued, the age limits were expanded by Confederate conscription acts to cover men age seventeen through fifty.

regiments. Harold Simpson estimates that 5.0 percent of the troops in Hood's Brigade were Germans, 4.4 percent were Irish, and 1.6 percent were French. He also notes that Jews, Mexicans, Dutch, Indians, and one Indian, Ike Batisse, served in Hood's regiments. Company F, First Texas Heavy Artillery Regiment, the unit that successfully defended Sabine Pass in 1863, was made up of Irishmen recruited in Houston. The Third Texas Infantry, mustered in South Texas, contained many Mexicans and Germans; its executive officer, Lieutenant Colonel Augustus Buchel, was a native of the Rhineland. A career soldier, Buchel had also served in the Mexican and Crimean wars. He was commanding the First Texas Cavalry when killed at Pleasant Hill, Louisiana, in April, 1864.²²

Although many Texas Germans opposed secession, large numbers of Germans served in Confederate units from Texas. Company G of the Fourth Texas Cavalry, Company B of the Seventh Texas Cavalry, and Company E of the First Texas Cavalry were almost entirely German. Waul's Legion, organized near Brenham in the summer of 1863 and commanded by Colonel Thomas N. Waul, had a sizeable number of Germans, as did also companies B and F of Terry's Rangers.²³

Many of the Silesians who formed the tiny Polish colony in Texas preferred not to become involved in America's civil conflict. None of them owned slaves, and many had left Europe to avoid military conscription. Even so, a company commanded by Captain Joseph Kyrisk and known as the Panna Maria Grays was mustered for Confederate service in Karnes County. Other Silesians served with the Sixth Texas Infantry and the Twenty-fourth Texas Cavalry in the unsuccessful defense of Arkansas Post in 1863.²⁴

Over 2,500 Mexican-Americans from Texas served in the Confederate army. Santos Benavides, former mayor of Laredo, was the best known of these Mexican Texans, or Tejanos, who wore the gray. Most of the men who served under Benavides, including his brothers Refugio and Christoval, were Tejanos

22. Simpson, *Hood's Texas Brigade: A Compendium*, 547; Ella Lonn, *Foreigners in the Confederacy* (Chapel Hill, 1940), 193-194, 500-501; Andrew Forest Muir, "Dick Dowling and the Battle of Sabine Pass," *Civil War History*, IV (Dec., 1958), 405-406, 417, 421-422.

23. Hall, *Sibley's New Mexico Campaign*, 240-243, 249-251, 285-287; Lonn, *Foreigners in the Confederacy*, 124-126, 500-501.

24. Lonn, *Foreigners in the Confederacy*, 128; T. Lindsay Baker, *The First Polish Americans: Silesian Settlements in Texas* (College Station, Tex., 1979), 64-77. Baker notes that information on the Silesian participation in the Civil War is limited and scattered. He points out that the muster rolls for the Panna Maria Grays list only four Silesians.

recruited along the Rio Grande. The Third and Eighth Texas Infantry had large numbers of Tejanos.²⁵

As noted above, at least one Indian, Ike Battise, was in Hood's Texas Brigade. Chief John Scott and nineteen Alabama braves served with the Twenty-fourth Texas Cavalry in Arkansas during 1862. Later in the war over one hundred Alabama Indians were organized into an unattached cavalry company; they operated flat-bottom boats transporting farm products on the Trinity River to Confederate forces stationed along the Gulf Coast.²⁶

Although most of the Texans who marched off to war were farmers or the sons of farmers, almost every occupation was represented in the ranks, which comprised laborers, planters, merchants, mechanics, students, clerks, carpenters, blacksmiths, teachers, brickmasons, painters, shoemakers, tailors, overseers, and shopkeepers. Numerous physicians enlisted, oftentimes as private soldiers.²⁷ One Civil War veteran was struck by the number of lawyers in his regiment, particularly by the number who were officers:

Of the ten original captains who went to Virginia with the Fourth Texas Regiment in 1861, six of them were lawyers. . . . Of the thirty lieutenants, nearly one-third were lawyers. . . . Lawyers in war are like lawyers in peace, they go for all that's in sight. They held the best places in the army and they hold the best places in civil life. It's a mighty cold day when a lawyer gets left if chicken pie is on the bill of fare.²⁸

With the passage of time, recruitment of soldiers became more difficult as the early enthusiasm for military service waned. Governor Edward Clark found meeting the repeated calls by Richmond authorities for additional troops to be a more serious problem each month. Passage of the first of several conscription laws by the Confederate Congress in April, 1862, momentarily gave impetus to volunteering, but, according to Bell Wiley, "it was of a spiritless sort, occasioned primarily by the desire of men subject to conscription to escape the odium attached to forced service." Clark's successors as governor, Francis R. Lubbock and Pendleton Murrah, found the task of enrolling soldiers even more difficult. Distaste for any form of military discipline and routine, the desire to remain at home with friends and loved ones, the possibility of obtaining occupational ex-

25. Thompson, *Vaqueros in Blue & Gray*, 5-6, 8, 17-23, 26-28, 45-49, 81; Thompson, "Mexican-Americans in the Civil War: The Battle of Valverde," *Texas*, X (No. 1, 1972), 1-19.

26. Howard N. Martin, "Texas Redskins in Confederate Gray," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, LXX (Apr., 1967), 586-592.

27. There were eleven physicians serving as privates in Hood's Brigade alone. Simpson, *Hood's Texas Brigade: A Compendium*, 552.

28. Lasswell (comp. and ed.), *Rags and Hope*, 48.

emption or hiring a substitute, and a growing dissatisfaction with policies of the Confederate government were all factors that contributed to the problem of enrolling troops.²⁹

Governor Francis R. Lubbock reported to the legislature in November, 1863, that the number of Texans who had shouldered arms for the Confederacy then numbered about ninety thousand. Because of duplications and errors in reporting, the exact number of Texans who served in the Confederate army is not likely to be ascertained. The 1860 federal census lists 92,145 white males between the ages of eighteen and forty-five years living in the state. In view of the fact that many Texans both younger and older than these ages served, and assuming a normal population growth during the next four years, Texas had a potential force of between 100,000 and 110,000 men to send to war.³⁰

Soldiers recruited early in the war anxiously awaited combat and became impatient with the delays in getting into action. Captain James P. Douglas, of the Third Cavalry, wrote to his girl friend in October, 1861, "we will in all probability have a fight soon. The boys are manifesting great joy at the prospect of an engagement, as I write (8 o'clock P.M.) they are talking and laughing merrily, and singing war songs around me." Another Texan, Ralph J. Smith of the Second Infantry, reported in March, 1862, that "after months of impatient waiting we were ordered to the front. At last a thousand hearts beat happily."³¹

Texans reacted to their first taste of battle in a variety of ways. George Lee Robertson, a corporal in Hood's Brigade, who participated in the Seven Days Battles around Richmond in the summer of 1862, was pleased that the fighting had not frightened him. "Well Ma," he wrote on July 12, "this is the third battle I have been in and have not yet been scared, which has surprised me very much." William A. Fletcher admitted that when he first went into battle he was suffering from diarrhea and "had quite a great fear that something disgraceful might happen . . . but to my surprise the excitement, or something else, had effected a cure." Ralph Smith remembered his first combat at Shiloh as being

29. Wiley, *Johnny Reb*, 124-125 (quotation); Fredericka Ann Meiners, "The Texas Governorship, 1861-1865: Biography of an Office" (Ph.D. diss., Rice University, 1975), 32-38, 45-47, 59-65, 104-105, 124-132, 135-138, 197-198, 226-230, 289-301.

30. Clement A. Evans (ed.), *Confederate Military History* (12 vols.; Atlanta, 1899), XI, 141; Stephen B. Oates, "Texas Under the Secessionists," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, LXVII (Oct., 1953), 187. Robert P. Felgar, "Texas in the War for Southern Independence, 1861-1865" (Ph.D. diss., University of Texas, 1935), 106, estimates that only fifty to sixty thousand Texans served in the Confederate army.

31. Lucia Rutherford Douglas (comp. and ed.), *Douglas's Texas Battery, CSA* (Tyler, Tex., 1966), 12 (first quotation); Smith, *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, 2 (second quotation).

very confusing. "In great battles with thousands on each side, especially privates, are like little screws in the wheel of a giant machine," he wrote. "All I remember for the first few minutes after was a terrible noise[,] great smoke, incessant rattling of small arms, infernal confusion and then I realized that the whole line of the enemy was in disorderly retreat."³²

The brutalities of war drew comment from some Texans. After the battle of Wilson's Creek in Missouri in August, 1861, John J. Good wrote his wife, "men ride over the Battlefield and laugh at what would once shock them. . . ." W. W. Heartsill, of the Lane Rangers, remembered that during maneuvers on the night following the first day of fighting at Chickamauga, the Confederates "literally walked on dead men all night," and that, while the camp fires flickered rays over the battlefield, "the scene [looked] horrible, hundreds of ghastly corpse[s] mangled and torn. . . ."³³

Val C. Giles of the Fourth Infantry confessed that he was frightened when called upon to perform picket duty following the battle of Gaines' Mill in 1862. The thought of the dead bodies of comrades who had fallen in the swamp that afternoon haunted Giles:

As I stood in the gloomy solitude of the Chickahominy swamp that night I spied the biggest ghost I had ever seen before. I saw it rise up slowly out of the sluggish marsh not larger than a two-months-old calf at first, but the thing gradually grew broader, taller and whiter, until it looked to me as big as a box-car and high as a telegraph pole.³⁴

Only later did he learn that the "ghost" that rose from the Chickahominy was the soft, pale light of phosphoric gases rising from the swamp.³⁵

Troops from Texas played major roles in all of the great battles in Virginia and Maryland during 1862. The Fourth Texas Infantry of Hood's Texas Brigade led the assault at Gaines' Mill in the Seven Days fighting around Richmond in June and July; the Fifth Texas Infantry overran the enemy flank at Second Manassas and forced John Pope's army to retreat toward Washington in late August; and the First Texas Infantry drove Union forces back through the cornfield at

32. Robertson to mother, July 12, 1862, George Lee Robertson Papers (Archives, University of Texas Library, Austin); Fletcher, *Rebel Private, Frons and Rear*, 16; Smith, *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, 3.

33. Lester Newton Fitzhugh (comp. and ed.), *Cannon Smoke: The Letters of Captain John J. Good, Good-Douglas Texas Battery, CSA* (Hillsboro, Tex., 1972), 58; Heartsill, *Fourteen Hundred and 91 Days*, 153.

34. Lasswell (comp. and ed.), *Rags and Hope*, 105-106 (quotation). For another Texan's description of the aftermath of Gaines' Mill see Andrew N. Erskine to his wife, June 26, 1862, Andrew Nelson Erskine Papers (Archives, University of Texas Library, Austin).

35. Lasswell (comp. and ed.), *Rags and Hope*, 106.

Sharpsburg on the morning of September 17, thus blunting the main Union assault. In the latter action, the First Texas sustained casualties of 82.3 percent, the highest of any regiment in a single day of the Civil War. The entire Texas Brigade suffered 516 casualties at Sharpsburg, a loss of over 60 percent.³⁶

For some Texas soldiers taken as prisoners of war, grim conditions made the months of imprisonment a nightmare. Captured soldiers complained of disease, cold, poor food, malnutrition, inadequate clothing, and harsh prison guards. Decimus et Ultimus Barziza, a captain in the Fourth Texas Infantry captured at Gettysburg, was confined on Johnson's Island in Sandusky Bay of Lake Erie. In his account of his experiences, Barziza described bad food at the camp:

Our rations were very scanty, and those who were so unfortunate as not to have friends and acquaintances in the North, often went to bed hungry. They pretended to issue us meat, sugar, coffee, rice, hominy, or peas, and candles; but this long array was only for appearance sake. . . . The hominy or rice they occasionally gave us was almost invariably musty and half-spoilt, while the apology for coffee was very unwholesome.³⁷

Captain Samuel T. Foster of the Twenty-fourth Texas Cavalry, while admitting that "we get plenty to eat," complained that prisoners at Camp Chase, at Columbus, Ohio, were "treated just like so many beasts—we are never spoken to except when a guard hollows out after 8 O'clock 'Lights Out'." Val Giles, captured near the Tennessee River in October, 1863, spent twelve months confinement at Camp Morton, Indiana. Giles remembered that prisoners who tried to escape or bribe a guard were either "bucked and gagged" or swung up by the thumbs. Failure to obey prison rules resulted in a ride on "Morgan's Mule," a narrow piece of oak lumber placed on a twelve-foot-high pole, or a forced march up and down in front of the guard house while carrying forty pounds of wood on one's shoulders.³⁸

36. Everett (ed.), *Chaplain Davis*, 82–83, 112] [John] Bell Hood, *Advance and Retreat: Personal Experiences in the United States and Confederate Armies* (New Orleans, 1880), 25–26, 34–36, 40–44; J. M. Polk, "Memories of a Lost Cause," *Texas Military History*, II (Feb., 1962), 23–27 "Report of Brig. Gen. John B. Hood. . .," *Official Records*, Series I, Vol. XI, Pt. 2, pp. 568–569; reports nos. 152–155, *ibid.*, Vol. XII, Pt. 2, pp. 611–622; "Report of Brig. Gen. John B. Hood . . .," *ibid.*, Vol. XIX, Pt. 1, pp. 922–925; reports nos. 249–255, *ibid.*, 925–937. The casualty figure of 516 is from the casualty report of the Army of Northern Virginia, *ibid.*, 811.

37. Decimus et Ultimus Barziza, *The Adventures of a Prisoner of War, 1863–1864*, ed. R. Henderson Shuffler (Austin, 1964), 77. Newton Keen complained that prisoners at Camp Douglas "were hardly half fed." Billingsley (ed.), "Confederate Memoirs of Newton Asbury Keen," 180.

38. Norman D. Brown (ed.), *One of Cleburne's Command: The Civil War Reminiscences and Diary of Capt. Samuel T. Foster, Granbury's Texas Brigade, CSA* (Austin, 1980), 30. Lasswell (comp. and ed.), *Rags and Hope*, 224–229. For another description of prison conditions and "Morgan's Mule," see William Clyde Billingsley (ed.), "Such is War: The Confederate Memoirs of Newton Asbury Keen," *Military History of Texas and the Southwest*, VII (Fall, 1968), 176–186.

Not all the memories that Texans had of prison camp were bad. Barziza noted that prisoners at Johnson's Island had debating societies, a band, daily religious exercises, and a "good" hospital. Writing, card-playing, and gambling were all favorite pastimes for the Johnson's Island prisoners. Lieutenant Robert J. Brailsford and his prison messmates of the Twenty-seventh Texas Cavalry organized a club at Camp Chase in which they had some "enlivening debates." Julius Giesecke, a Texas German taken prisoner in Louisiana, "met a really nice Yankee Doctor who fed us almost all night with crackers, butter, whiskey and his political views." Benjamin M. Seaton, one of the men imprisoned at Camp Douglas, noted that members of his regiment suffered a good deal but "wer treated tolerable well[;] about as well as we cold expect prisners of war to be treated." Henry C. Wright, taken during Sibley's retreat in New Mexico, was given almost total freedom and plentiful supplies, including coffee and sugar.³⁹

Many regiments from Texas lacked discipline. Officers frequently could do little to control the fierce individualism of their troops, especially those in the cavalry. Leonidas B. Giles admitted that discipline in Terry's Rangers was lax: "if there was any serious attempt to discipline [the regiment,] the effort was soon abandoned." "Volunteers we began," he noted, "volunteers we remained to the end. If any wished to evade duty, they found a way, and the punishment for evasion was light." On one occasion, Colonel John A. Wharton, who became regimental commander after the deaths of Colonel Terry and Colonel Thomas S. Lubbock, ordered an enlisted man to drive a team of mules. Even though the soldier had been chosen for the assignment by drawing lots, he refused to do so and informed Wharton, "you may punish me as much as you want to, but I am not going to drive that wagon." To resolve the impasse a volunteer was hired to do the work for fifty dollars a month.⁴⁰ On another occasion, Private Isaac Dunbar Affleck, son of wealthy Washington County planter and agricultural reformer Thomas Affleck, was assigned by his captain to chop wood but refused to do so, allowing his slave, Alex, to perform the task in his stead.⁴¹

39. Barziza, *The Adventures of a Prisoner of War*, 82-83, 98 (first quotation); Edna White, "Mess at Camp Chase," *East Texas Historical Journal*, VI (Oct., 1968), 126 (second quotation); Oscar Haas (trans.), "Diary of Julius Giesecke, 1863-1865," *Texas Military History*, IV (Spring, 1964), 29; Harold B. Simpson (ed.), *The Bugle Softly Blows: The Confederate Diary of Benjamin M. Seaton* (Waco, Tex., 1965), 32; H. C. Wright *Reminiscences*, 22-23 (Archives, University of Texas, Austin).

40. Giles, *Terry's Texas Rangers*, 100; Jeffries, *Terry's Rangers*, 56-57.

41. Affleck to Mrs. Thomas Affleck, Oct. 18, 1864, I. D. Affleck Papers, in possession of Mr. Thomas D. Affleck, Jr., of Galveston. Like a number of southern aristocrats, Affleck had the services of a slave throughout the war. Alex, mentioned here, was the successor to a slave named Henry, who had replaced an older slave named Perry. For other examples of Texas soldiers who had slave servants see Robert W. Glover (ed.), *Tyler to Sharpsburg: The War Letters of Robert H. and William*

Commanders could, however, mete out punishment if they believed the occasion demanded it. For striking an officer, a private in Sibley's Brigade was forced to walk behind the baggage train tied with heavy irons for a month. A soldier in the Third Texas Cavalry was punished by having his head shaved, the word "thief" posted on his back, and being marched through camp to the tune of the "Rogue's March."⁴²

Deserters received the most severe form of punishment, death by a firing squad. Although enthusiasm for the war had been high among Texans in the early part of the war, various factors, including dissatisfaction with military discipline, inadequate pay and rations, concern for families at home, increasing disillusionment over military failures, and sometimes cowardice, led to a steady increase in the number of soldiers who left the army. By the end of the war, 4,664 Texans were listed as deserters, many of them living in the woods and brush of North Texas.⁴³

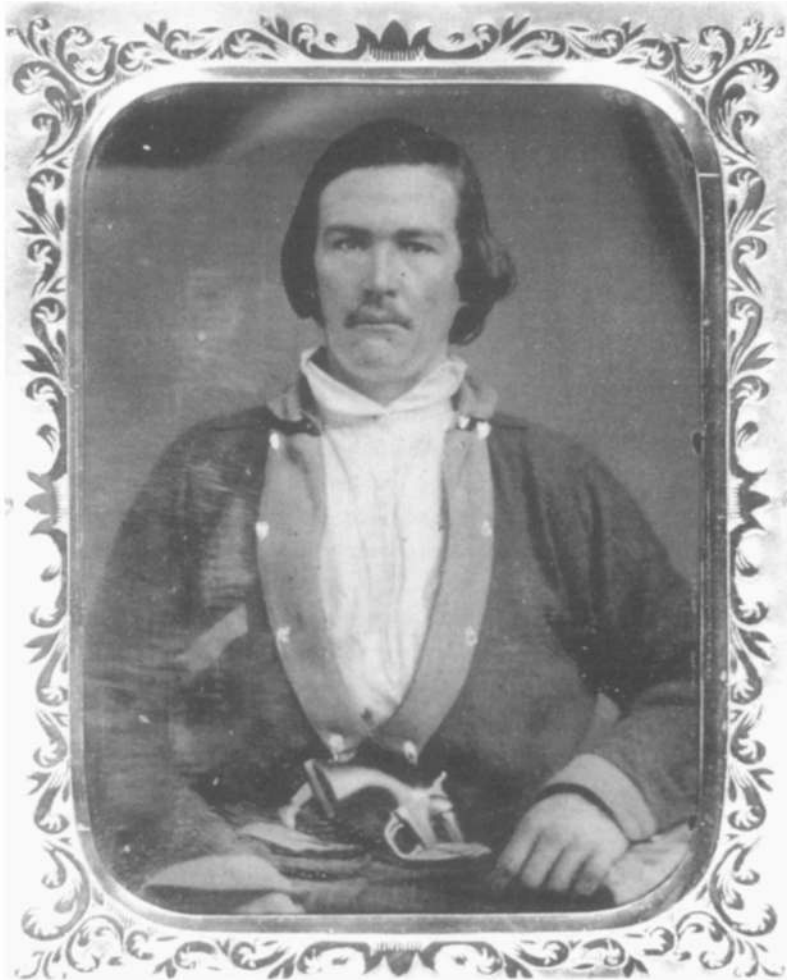
Military authorities believed the execution of captured deserters before their comrades in arms served as a warning to soldiers who might be inclined to leave their units. The soldiers themselves had mixed feelings, some believing the executions necessary, others considering them cruel and unjust. Benjamin Seaton, of the Tenth Infantry, described such a "sad occurrence [*sic*]" in August, 1862, when four men were executed before the entire brigade near Little Rock. Seaton believed that "it has to be done," but lamented that "it is hard fer a man to be marched out in an old field and [be] shot." Private Jim Turner, of the Sixth Infantry, found such an execution of a deserter near Dalton, Georgia, to be "a horrible sight and seemed to us like a terrible butchery." Newton A. Keen of the Sixth Cavalry refused to watch the execution of three deserters from his regiment and argued that there would be fewer desertions if the officers performed their duties better.⁴⁴

H. Gaston (Waco, Tex., 1960), 5; Simpson, *Hood's Texas Brigade: A Compendium*, 548; David B. Gracy, II, "With Danger and Honor," *Texana*, I (Spring, 1963), 124; and Bob Hill to sister, Dec. 8, 1862, John W. Hill Papers (Archives, University of Texas Library, Austin).

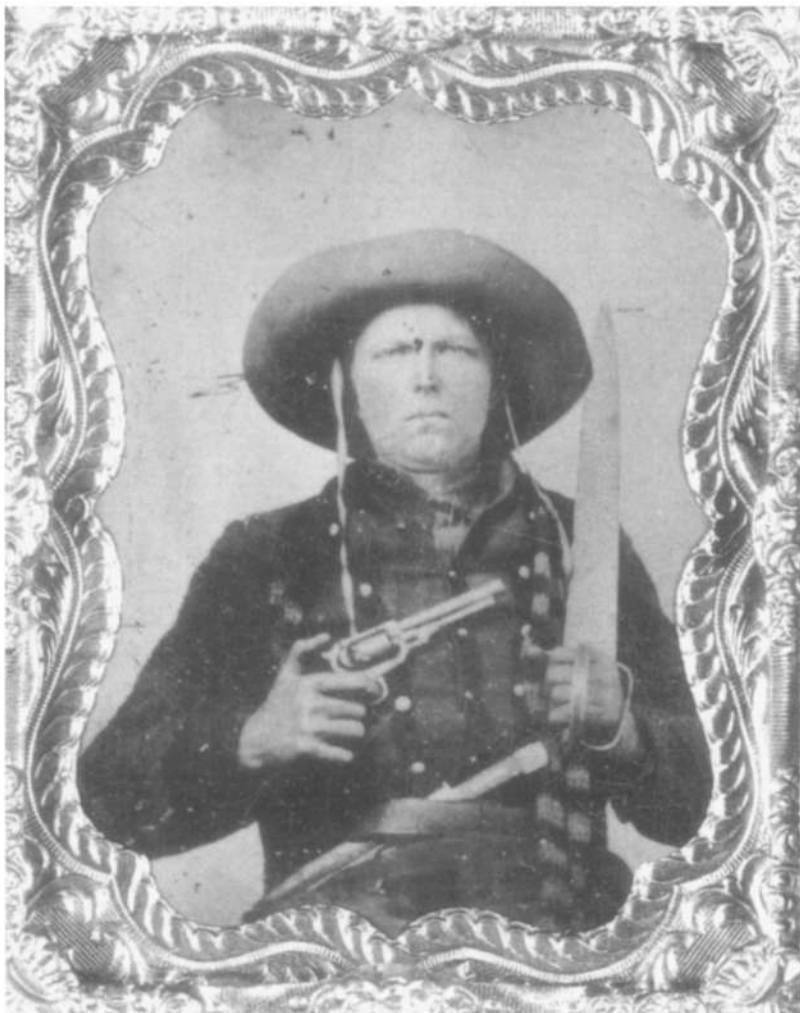
42. W. Randolph Howell diary, Nov. 18, 1861, W. Randolph Howell Papers (Archives, University of Texas, Austin); William A. Faulkner, "With Sibley in New Mexico: The Journal of William Henry Smith," *West Texas Historical Association Year Book*, XXVII (Oct., 1951), 116; Douglas (comp. and ed.), *Douglas's Texas Battery*, 10; Fitzhugh (ed.), *Cannon Smoke*, 84.

43. Ella Lonn, *Desertion During the Civil War* (1928; reprint ed., Gloucester, Mass., 1966), 71, 89, 231; Robert S. Weddle, *Plow-Horse Cavalry: The Caney Creek Boys of the Thirty-fourth Texas* (Austin, 1974), 97-100; Sam Farrow to wife Josephine, July 30, 1863, Sam W. Farrow Papers (Archives, University of Texas, Austin).

44. Simpson (ed.), *Bugle Softly Blows*, 18-19 (second, third, and fourth quotations); Turner, "Co. C, 6th Texas Infantry," 169; Billingsley (ed.), "Confederate Memoirs of Newton Asbury Keen," 50.



Ninth-plate ambrotype of Private William Burgess, Company D, 27th Texas Cavalry (Whitfield's Legion), ca. 1861. *Courtesy Lawrence T. Jones III.*



Ninth-plate tintype of unidentified Confederate soldier. *Courtesy Lawrence T. Jones III.*

The desertions, however, embarrassed some Texans. George L. Griscom, adjutant in the Ninth Texas Cavalry, wrote in his diary on September 5, 1863, that there was "a general depression of feeling in the reg't in regard to the late disgraceful doings of the boys that left us." In writing to his father, James Monroe Watson declared, "I never want you to feed a deserter nor a playout. . . . I think the citizens ought to drive all of the sulkers and playouts to the front."⁴⁵

Many of the soldiers criticized their officers. Robert H. Gaston, a member of the First Texas Infantry, wrote to his sister early in the war to report that the brigade commander, Louis T. Wigfall, "has one great fault. He loves whiskey too well. He has been drunk several times since we came here." Similarly, William Henry Smith, a private in Sibley's Brigade, complained that the field officers of the brigade were "drunk all the time, unfit for duty—incompetent to attend to their duty." Another member of the brigade, James Franklin Starr, noted that "among the soldiers I hear ridicule and curses heaped upon the head of our genl. They call him a coward, which appears very plausible too."⁴⁶

Newton Keen was critical of most of the officers in the Sixth Texas Cavalry. Of Captain J. S. Porter, Keen wrote, "He was an ignorant old goose not having sense enough to command pigs, much less soldiers." Robert Hodges, Jr., a sergeant in the Eighth Texas Cavalry, criticized his officers: "I think that Col. Terry is pursuing a very unwise course," Hodges reported, "in fact I think he has acted the saphead ever since he left home." When Terry was killed two weeks later at Woodsonville, Kentucky, however, Hodges referred to him as "our gallant and beloved leader Col. Terry."⁴⁷

Some officers were popular with their men. John Bell Hood, who commanded the Texas Brigade in its early days, was generally well regarded by the Texans who served with him in Virginia, although they often chided him. When Hood

45. Homer L. Kerr (ed.), *Fighting with Ross' Texas Cavalry Brigade, C.S.A.: The Diary of George L. Griscom, Adjutant, 9th Texas Cavalry Regiment* (Hillsboro, Tex., 1976), 81; Judy Watson McClure, *Confederate from East Texas: The Civil War Letters of James Monroe Watson* (Quanah, Tex., 1976), 31. Similarly, A. Lafayette Orr of the Twelfth Texas Cavalry complained in a letter to his brothers about girls at home showing favors to cowards and deserters. John Q. Anderson (ed.), *Campaigning with Parsons' Texas Cavalry Brigade, CSA: The War Journals and Letters of the Four Orr Brothers, 12th Texas Cavalry Regiment* (Hillsboro, Tex., 1967), 136.

46. Glover (ed.), "Tyler to Sharpsburg," 6 (first quotation); Faulkner, "With Sibley in New Mexico," 137 (second quotation); David B. Gracy, II (ed.), "New Mexico Campaign Letters of Frank Starr, 1861-1862," *Military History of Texas and the Southwest*, IV (Fall, 1964), 182.

47. Billingsley (ed.), "Confederate Memoirs of Newton Asbury Keen," 112; Maury Darst, "Robert Hodges, Jr., Confederate Soldier," *East Texas Historical Journal*, IX (Mar., 1971), 26 (second and third quotations), 28 (fourth quotation).

ordered one soldier, Bill Calhoun, to leave a warm fire and rejoin his unit, he told Calhoun, "I don't know why you are loitering here, so far behind your command." Calhoun replied: "Yes, and what you don't know, General Hood, would make a mighty damned big book."⁴⁸

Hood was not so well liked by Texans serving in the western armies. When he was appointed to replace the popular Joseph E. Johnston as commander of the Army of Tennessee, most Texans in that army were highly critical. Samuel Alonza Cooke declared that the appointment of Hood "threw a damper on our army and most of us felt it was a death stroke to our entire army." Another Texan, Newton Keen, believed that as long as Johnston was in command things went well, but "when the army was put under hood [*sic*] all things went wrong." Samuel T. Foster, of Hiram B. Granbury's Brigade, argued that "Genl Joe Johnson [*sic*] has more military sense in one day than Hood ever did or ever will have."⁴⁹

All Texas soldiers seemed to dislike Braxton Bragg. W. W. Heartsill believed, "if Genl [Joseph E.] Johnston (as reported) is in command; then we have no fears, if however Bragg is maneuvering; then we will not be surprised to wake up one of these September mornings and find the entire Army at or near Atlanta instead of Nashville as we all so much desired." Another Texan, Robert F. Bunting, claimed that Bragg was "universally cursed" and "out-generaled in every sense of the word."⁵⁰

Soldiers who spent the war in Texas had mixed reactions to their officers. Earl Van Dorn, who commanded the district of Texas in the early months of the war, was first viewed with suspicion but soon won his men's support. Texans regarded his replacement as district commander, Paul Octave Hébert, "as a man of no military force or practical genius. . . ." The loss of Galveston to a Union naval force in early October, 1862, assured his unpopularity with Confederate Texans, who demanded that he be replaced with a more aggressive commander. Hébert's successor, John Bankhead Magruder, was a Virginian with a better reputation. Most soldiers agreed with Colonel John S. ("Rip") Ford, himself a

48. Lasswell (comp. and ed.), *Rags and Hope*, 119, 120 (quotations).

49. Bill O'Neal (ed.), "The Civil War Memoirs of Samuel Alonza Cooke," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, LXXIV (Apr., 1971), 543; Billingsley (ed.), "Confederate Memoirs of Newton Asbury Keen," 104, 105 (second quotation), 112; Brown (ed.), *One of Cleburne's Command*, 159 (third quotation).

50. Heartsill, *Fourteen Hundred and 91 Days*, 147; Bunting to "Editor Telegraph," July 7, 1863, Robert Franklin Bunting Papers (typed transcript; Archives, University of Texas Library, Austin). This letter was published in the *Houston Tri-Weekly Telegraph* on Aug. 19, 1863.

highly respected officer, that "the advent of General Magruder was equal to the addition of 50,000 men to the forces of Texas."⁵¹

On occasion Texans admitted that their first impression of an officer was incorrect. When Camille Armand Jules Marie, Prince de Polignac, a French aristocrat, was appointed commander of a consolidated brigade of Texas infantry and dismounted cavalry in Louisiana, the Texans were furious. They protested to the district commander, General Richard Taylor, and threatened not to serve under Polignac. Taylor reminded the officers and men of their duty and promised that he would remove the Frenchman if the Texans remained dissatisfied after their first military action under his command. The troops were skeptical but agreed to give Polignac a try. In subsequent battles at Mansfield and Pleasant Hill he won their respect and admiration as a courageous soldier, whom they came to regard affectionately as their "Polecat."⁵²

While Texans might be divided in their attitudes toward commanding officers, their diaries and letters reflect close agreement in their contempt for the enemy. Decimus et Ultimus Barziza, who spent many months in a federal prison camp, characterized northerners as "a peculiar people," who "are extremely bigoted, and actually bloated with self-love." He considered them to be "agitators and schemers, braggarts and deceivers, swindlers and extortioners," who yet pretended to "godliness, truth, purity, and humanity." Nicholas A. Davis, a chaplain in Hood's Brigade, believed northerners to be "meddlesome, impudent, insolent, pompous, boastful, unkind, ungrateful, unjust, knavish, false, deceitful, cowardly, swindling, thieving, robbing, brutal and murderous." John Truss, a young soldier from Bastrop who served with the Twelfth Texas Cavalry, complained that Union soldiers in Arkansas "cannot stand up and fight us with even numbers like men of honor," but preferred to "lay in the bushes five times our number," and "if they by accident get the upperhand of one of our men . . . will then shoot him, murder him in cold blood." Truss concluded that enemy soldiers were "the lowest down men in the world. There is nothing to [*sic*] mean for them to do."⁵³

51. Thomas North, *Five Years in Texas; or, What You Did Not Hear during the War from January, 1861, to January, 1866* (Cincinnati, 1871), 105 (first quotation), 106; Oates, "Texas Under the Secessionists," 194-195; John Salmon Ford, *Rip Ford's Texas*, ed. Stephen B. Oates (Austin, 1963), 343 (third quotation).

52. Richard Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction: Personal Experiences of the Late War*, ed. Richard B. Harwell (1879; reprint ed., New York, 1955), 150-151; Alwyn Barr, *Polignac's Texas Brigade* (Houston, 1964), 29 (quotation), 30-54; "Incidents of Banks's Campaign: Mansfield and Pleasant Hill (April, 1864)," Augustus M. Hill Papers (Archives, University of Texas Library, Austin).

53. Barziza, *The Adventures of a Prisoner of War*, 59 (first and second quotations), 60 (third and fourth quotations); Everett (ed.), *Chaplain Davis*, 147; Johnette Highsmith Ray (ed.), "Civil War

Some men were convinced that the enemy would go to any length to defeat the South. Samuel A. Cooke, captured at Arkansas Post, believed that Union authorities deliberately put together on the same transport boats captured Confederates and northern troops who had smallpox, in order to infect as many southerners as possible. Captain James Douglas, of the Third Cavalry, reported that three patients died in the Van Buren, Arkansas, hospital from poison quinine, which "was brought from Memphis, and I understand, smuggled in there from the North, which shows the cannibal spirit of our enemies who are willing to resort to savage means of destroying us with poison."⁵⁴

Texans resented the use of black troops by the Union government. Sergeant D. H. Hamilton, of the First Texas Infantry, reported that an attack by a black regiment determined the Texans to hold their position. In repulsing the enemy assault, the Texans, according to Hamilton, "killed in [their] front about a million dollars worth of niggers, at current prices." Many Texas soldiers believed that blacks should not be taken as prisoners of war. Dunbar Affleck declared that if Terry's Rangers came into contact with such troops, they intended "to hoist the black flag and give no quarter."⁵⁵ George W. Littlefield, also with the Rangers, stated that when he and his comrades learned they might be fighting black soldiers, "all of our command determined if we were put to a fight there to kill all we captured."⁵⁶

Texans who served in New Mexico or along the Rio Grande were often critical of the Mexican and Indian populations. James Franklin Starr, a member of the Fourth Texas Cavalry, believed the inhabitants of New Mexico were "universally a low, ignorant, degraded race." James H. Kuykendall, who served along

Letters from Parsons' Texas Cavalry Brigade," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, LXIX (Oct., 1965), 218 (sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth quotations).

54. O'Neal (ed.), "Civil War Memoirs of Samuel Alonza Cooke," 538; Douglas (comp. and ed.), *Douglas's Texas Battery*, 30. Northern soldiers apparently had a more ambivalent view of their southern foe. While some expressed hatred for the enemy, others admired the character of Confederate soldiers. See Bell Irvin Wiley, *The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union* (Indianapolis, 1952), 346-353.

55. D. H. Hamilton, *History of Company M, First Texas Volunteer Infantry, Hood's Brigade, Longstreet's Corps, Army of the Confederate States of America* (Waco, Tex., 1952), 61, 62 (quotation); Affleck to Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Affleck, Mar. 25, 1863, Affleck Letters.

56. Gracy, "With Danger and Honor," 139-140. Tacitus T. Clay, on the other hand, pitied the blacks who were serving in the Union army. Judy Winfield and Nath Winfield, *War Letters of Captain Tacitus T. Clay, C.S.A.* (Chappell Hill, Tex., 1968), 8. Another Texan, Major Maurice K. Simons, captured at Vicksburg, was shocked at the sight of white Union soldiers saluting black guards at Vicksburg. Walter H. Mays, "The Vicksburg Diary of M. K. Simons, 1863," *Texas Military History*, V (Spring, 1965), 36.

the Rio Grande, considered the Indians "simple, yet, barbarious, children of nature," but regarded the Mexican Texans as lazy, stupid, and ignorant. A classic example of nineteenth-century Texas racial prejudice was penned by George L. Robertson. Stationed in South Texas, Robertson complained to his sister that of "all the contemptable, despicable people on earth the greasers in my estimation are the lowest, meaner even than the Commanche [*sic*]." The Mexican Texans, he believed, "are ugly, thieving, rascally, in every way and to be educated only makes a greaser the grander rascal."⁵⁷

Food, clothing, and shelter were subjects of concern to all Civil War soldiers. Here again, Texan recollections and comments varied greatly. Andrew J. Fogle, a member of the Ninth Texas Infantry, complained bitterly about the lack of variety in his diet. "[W]e hafto live li[k]e dogs," he wrote in the fall of 1863. "[W]e get nothing but a litle beefe and corn [m]eal and that is [a] very unp[l]esent dish to me[.] I have [h]erd it sed that a man can get usto any thing but I never will get usto living on beef and corn bred." Another Texan, Private William M. Oden, expressed the age-old grievance of enlisted men that the officers were fed well while the troops received nothing. "I wish to god that evry officer in all the confederate states had to starve about five or six days then they would know how to fed the soldiers and I think they would know how we feal on the subject," Oden wrote his wife. James Melville Foster, a trooper in the Thirty-second Texas Cavalry, reported that his regiment was frequently near starvation while on patrol in Louisiana.⁵⁸

Other soldiers found food more plentiful. Harvey C. Medford, a private in Lane's Rangers, serving in Texas and Louisiana in 1864, listed beefsteak, bacon, pork, bread, molasses, coffee, cornbread, biscuits, corn fritters, and oysters as part of his camp fare, which he supplemented by eating in restaurants, hotels, and private homes. Dunbar Affleck, stationed in East Texas late in the war, reported that "we live high here, we are feasting all the time."⁵⁹

57. Gracy (ed.), "New Mexico Campaign Letters of Frank Starr," 184; James Kuykendall journal, 1862 (Book XII), 12–16, 92 (quotation), James H. Kuykendall Collection (Archives, University of Texas Library, Austin); Robertson to sister, Mar. 26, 1864, Robertson Papers.

58. Andrew J. Fogle to Miss Lou Harris, Oct. 18, 1863, Andrew J. Fogle Papers (Archives, University of Texas Library, Austin. The quotation is taken from the original letter rather than from the typed transcript, which contains some errors.); William M. Oden to wife, Oct. 6, 1862, William M. Oden Papers (Archives, University of Texas Library, Austin); Carl Duaine, *The Dead Men Wore Boots: An Account of the 32nd Texas Volunteer Cavalry, CSA, 1862–1865* (Austin, 1966), 90.

59. Rebecca W. Smith and Marion Mullins (eds.), "Diary of H. C. Medford, Confederate Soldier, 1864," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, XXXIV (Oct., 1930), 114–117, 119, 121–122, 129, 136–137; Affleck to Mrs. Thomas Affleck, Feb. 5, 1865, Affleck Letters. For other examples of the abundance of food see W. B. Hunter to sister Mary, Oct. 11, 1863, Mary J. Minor Letters (Archives, University

Many Texas soldiers supplemented their camp fare by dining with citizens who were willing to open their homes to boys in gray. During his two years' duty in Louisiana, H. C. Wright, a young soldier from Polk County, always found a welcome even though local residents frequently had little to spare. George W. O'Brien, of Beaumont, apparently intended to take half-a-dozen chickens from residents of Ville Platte, Louisiana, but, "having had paraded before our eyes the ghosts of poverty and dead husbands," settled for a dinner of eggs and yams, followed by a smoke, rum, and a game of billiards.⁶⁰

Most Texas Confederates proved better foragers than Captain O'Brien. Hogs and chickens were items particularly vulnerable to theft. Virgil S. Rabb explained the feeling of the soldiers: "the government tries to feed us Texians on Poor Beef, but there is too Dam many hogs here for that, these Arkansaw hoosiers ask from 25 to 30 cents a pound for there Pork, but the Boys generally get it a little cheaper than that[.] I reckon you understand how they get it."⁶¹

Members of Hood's Brigade had a special reputation as foragers. Even General Robert E Lee recognized these talents, remarking to the brigade commander that "when you Texans come about the chickens have to roost mighty high." Chicken houses, pigpens, corncribs, and beehives were all targets. In the Pennsylvania campaign of 1863 these were supplemented by loaves of bread, chunks of corned beef, hams, bacon, jellies, pickles, jams, fresh butter, and milk "appropriated" from local farms.⁶²

In their letters home, men frequently asked that some item of clothing be sent to them by whatever means available. Wiley F. Donathan wrote in October, 1863, that he needed socks, overshirts, pants, and a vest. Henry G. Orr, a member of the Twelfth Cavalry, wrote to his mother requesting heavy jeans, a

Texas Library, Austin); John Thomas Duncan (ed.), "Some Civil War Letters of D. Port Smythe," *West Texas Historical Association Year Book*, XXXVII (Oct., 1961), 157; and Elvis E. Fleming (ed.), "A Young Confederate Stationed in Texas: The Letters of Joseph David Wilson, 1864-1865," *Texana*, VIII (No. 4, 1970), 353-354.

60. H. C. Wright Reminiscences, 55-56; Cooper K. Ragan (ed.), "The Diary of Captain George W. O'Brien, 1863," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, LXVII (Jan., 1964), 414. Other examples of local hospitality are found in Duncan C. Carothers diary, May 30, 1863, pp. 23-24, Carothers Family Papers (Archives Division, Texas State Library, Austin); [Ephraim Shelby Dodd], *Diary of Ephraim Shelby Dodd, Member of Company D, Terry's Texas Rangers, December 4, 1862-January 1, 1864* (Austin, 1914), 6.

61. Rabb to brother, Jan. 4, 1863, Mary Rabb Family Papers (Archives, University of Texas Library, Austin).

62. Hood, *Advance and Retreat*, 51 (first quotation); Simpson, *Hood's Texas Brigade: Lee's Grenadier Guard*, 209, 210, 253-256, 259-261; Polley, *Hood's Texas Brigade*, 148; Hamilton, *History of Company M*, 45, 47-48, 51-52.

well-lined overcoat, linsey or cotton overshirt, pants, slippers, and a pair of socks. The following year he requested the following items, to be divided between himself and his brother: two coats, two pairs of pants, four cotton shirts, two pairs of drawers, two woolen overcoats, and four pairs of socks.⁶³

As the war continued, lack of suitable footwear became an increasingly serious concern for Texans, especially those serving in Tennessee and Virginia, where heavy snows and ice made conditions for men without adequate footwear nearly intolerable. The problem became especially acute for Texans in Hood's Brigade during the 1863–1864 winter campaign in East Tennessee. Many of the men, with no shoes at all, left bloody prints in the snow wherever they marched. Others were shod in "Longstreet moccasins," named for James Longstreet, the corps commander. Longstreet encouraged the men to make footwear by cutting green rawhide into the shape of a shoe and then tying it to the foot with a rawhide string. The moccasins were not comfortable because the rawhide shrunk when it dried, thus pinching the foot.⁶⁴

Some Texans took shoes and other items from dead Union soldiers. John Good reported that the troops in his command deliberately aimed at an enemy with the thought of securing his shoes or other clothes. William A. Fletcher frequently took needed supplies from dead Union soldiers. On one occasion he found several letters to the dead man from a sweetheart. Fletcher did not feel "one pang of regret for being a party to breaking up that match." "She wanted me whipped," he noted, "she got that; I wanted dead Yankees—I got that."⁶⁵

Soldiers stripping the dead of shoes and clothing sometimes received rude shocks. Jim Ferris, a soldier in the Fifth Texas Infantry, was attempting to remove the leggings from a fallen Union foe he assumed was dead. Suddenly the "dead man" said, "Great God alive, man! Don't rob me before I am dead, if you please!" Ferris stammered an apology, gave the wounded Yankee his canteen of water to keep, and proceeded to find another body—this time dead—from which he removed the desired leggings.⁶⁶

63. Donathan to "My Dear Sit," Oct. 30, 1863, Wiley F. Donathan Family Correspondence (Archives Division, Texas State Library, Austin); Anderson (ed.), *Campaigning with Parsons' Texas Cavalry Brigade*, 71, 118.

64. All Confederates were affected by shortages of boots and shoes, but, as the Confederate troops most distant from their homes, Texans received fewer shoes and less clothing from their own state than did other Confederates. Simpson, *Hood's Texas Brigade: Lee's Grenadier Guard*, 184–185, 371–377; "Reports of Col. John C. Moore, Second Texas Infantry," Apr. 19, 1862, *Official Records*, Ser. 1, Vol. X, Part 1, 560–563; Muster Roll, Capt. C. N. Alexander, Co. A, 7th Texas Infantry (Archives Division, Texas State Library, Austin); Hamilton, *History of Company M*, 40–41.

65. Fitzhugh (ed.), *Cannon Smoke*, 58; Fletcher, *Rebel Private, Front and Rear*, 75.

66. J. B. Polley, *A Soldier's Letters to Charming Nellie* (New York, 1908), 78 (quotation), 79.

Texans registered fewer complaints about their living quarters than about food and clothing. In the field, soldiers slept under their blankets out in the open, or, if the weather was severe, in ditches or low places to avoid the cold winds. In more permanent camps, squad tents and wooden huts provided shelter. One Texas soldier described his winter abode in Virginia to his mother:

It is made [of] pickers chinked and dubbed with a tent fly for a roof. We have the best fire place and chimney in the company. The fire place is made of brick to above the Jam[b] and from there up mud and sticks. Our house is about 12 feet square . . . our guns are in racks on the walls; our utensils consist of one skillet[,] a stew kettle[,] a bread pan[,] a frying pan & a large kettle[.]⁶⁷

Many soldiers found the long hours of camp life quite dull. Robert Hodges believed camp life in Kentucky to be most unsatisfactory. "I myself am tired of lazing in camps and doing nothing," he wrote to a friend. "I'll tell you what's a fact. This soldiring [*sic*] is a poor business." A fellow Texan stationed near Galveston agreed. Noting the boredom, endless drills, and sickness in camp, he concluded he was "tired of the dull monotony of camp life."⁶⁸

In an effort to overcome their burden, the troops turned to various forms of entertainment. Men from Hood's Brigade built a log theater in which they could see plays and listen to concerts. Some of the performers were amateurs recruited for Hood's Minstrels, others were professional entertainers. Similar theatrical performances were staged in other areas where large groups of soldiers were encamped.⁶⁹

Sports flourished among the Texas troops. Townball (a form of baseball played with two rather than four bases), horse racing, footracing, wrestling, and jumping were all popular diversions. Snowball fighting was a new experience for many Texans. The first large encounter of this type for them occurred in Virginia shortly after the battle of Fredericksburg. A snowball battle began between two companies, then spread to the regimental, brigade, and division level. Soon, nearly ten thousand troops, including the Texans in Hood's Brigade, were in-

67. G. L. Robertson to his mother, Jan. 4, 1862, quoted by Wiley, *Johnny Reb*, 60-61. See also John Wesley Rabb to his mother, Jan. 11, 1865, Rabb Family Papers.

68. Darst, "Robert Hodges, Jr.," 23; Letter from "Amicus," *Bellville Countryman*, Dec. 18, 1861 (third quotation). A similar view was expressed by J. D. Garland, a courier with the Second Texas Brigade, who wrote "I am perfectly disgusted with army life. It is so monotonous, nothing animating about it at all." Garland to sister, Feb. 25, 1864, J. D. Garland Letters (Archives, University of Texas Library, Austin).

69. Lasswell (comp. and ed.), *Rags and Hope*, 53; Polley, *Hood's Texas Brigade*, 139-140; Virgil S. Rabb to sister, Mar. 18, 1863, Rabb Family Papers.

volved. Similar snowball engagements occurred in the Army of Tennessee in the winter of 1863–1864.⁷⁰

Reading was a source of relaxation for some Texas Confederates, although reading matter was sometimes difficult to obtain. James P. Douglas, an artillery captain in the Third Texas Cavalry, expressed a keen literary interest in his letters. While serving in the trenches around Atlanta during 1864, Douglas read works of Shakespeare and Sir Walter Scott. Douglas particularly enjoyed Scott's poetry, and, in a letter written to his wife while Sherman battered at the gates of Atlanta, suggested that she would "fall in love with Ellen Douglas of 'The Lady of the Lake' and Lucy of 'The Bridal of Triermain'."⁷¹

While some men like Douglas dabbled in Shakespeare, most Texans found newspapers more suitable. Early in the war the W. P. Lane Rangers even printed their own newspaper, first the *Camp Hudson Times* and later, when they moved to Fort Lancaster, *The Western Pioneer*.⁷² The vicissitudes of war and the lack of adequate facilities prevented most Texas units from duplicating this journalistic feat, however.

Many soldiers succumbed to the twin evils of gambling and excessive drinking. Diaries and letters of Civil War participants give numerous illustrations of Texas soldiers submitting to both temptations. Card playing was the most common form of gambling, but dice throwing and horse racing also proved popular. One Texas soldier, William ("Buck") Walton, related that Confederates even bet money on fights between lice which they had taken from their clothes and bodies.⁷³

A notorious gambler's den flourished near Fredericksburg, Virginia, during the winter of 1862–1863, where thousands of dollars changed hands. A similar

70. Desmond Pulaski Hopkins diary, Mar. 15, Apr. 1, 1862, Desmond Pulaski Hopkins Papers (Archives, University of Texas Library, Austin); Anderson (ed.), *Campaigning with Parsons' Cavalry Brigade*, 15; Fletcher, *Rebel Private, Front and Rear*, 52, 53; Polk, "Memories of a Lost Cause," 20; Lasswell (comp. and ed.), *Rags and Hope*, 167–172; Turner, "Co. G, 6th Texas Infantry," 170.

71. Douglas (comp. and ed.), *Douglas's Texas Battery*, 101. For other comments on reading habits see William H. Neblett to Lizzie, Apr. 9, 1863, and Jan. 17, 1864, Lizzie Scott Neblett Papers (Archives, University of Texas Library, Austin).

72. Heartsill, *Fourteen Hundred and 91 Days*, 56–74. Camp Hudson was located near Del Rio, Texas, on San Pedro Creek, near Devils River. Fort Lancaster, built by the United States government in the 1850s, was located on the Pecos River. Winsor, *Texas in the Confederacy*, 21, 23.

73. Buck Walton, *An Epitome of My Life: Civil War Reminiscences* (Austin, 1965), 73–74. For a description of "louse fighting," see Wiley, *Johnny Reb*, 38–39. Wiley also describes races between lice, but we have found no mention of this in diaries and letters of Texas soldiers. Texas Confederates did have many comments on the lice themselves, or "gray backs" as they called them. See Fletcher, *Rebel Private, Front and Rear*, 9–10, 12–18; Hamilton, *History of Company M*, 39–40, 75.

gambler's "paradise" was located at the foot of Missionary Ridge at Chattanooga in the fall of 1863. Here, in an area covering several acres, stood dozens of tents and brush arbors where soldiers congregated to engage in every imaginable form of chance.

Texans assigned to Bragg's army enjoyed the pleasures of this gamblers' haven until Grant's army overran the area in November of that year.⁷⁴

Excessive consumption of alcohol was often a more serious problem than gambling. In gambling the individual soldier was the victim, but the consequences of heavy drinking could sometimes be far-reaching. Some of Terry's Rangers were involved in an altercation in Nashville in 1861 when, under the influence of alcohol, they fired off their pistols, causing a riot. Two policemen were killed and another wounded before the disturbance could be brought under control.⁷⁵

Other Texans refused to be tempted by vice. Indeed, some men found the war a time of finding or renewing their spiritual faith. Religious revivals swept through the western Confederate armies in 1863 and 1864. R. F. Bunting, a minister in Terry's Rangers, noted that the revival movement was very strong in the camps of northern Georgia in 1863. Thirty-six men publicly professed their faith in Jesus, he reported, while many others renewed their religious vows. George W. Littlefield, serving in the western armies, at first remained skeptical of the revival movement, but by the end of summer, 1863, was himself involved and informed his wife that he intended to become a "changed man." Wiley Donathan, another Texan, reported that a great revival swept Joe Johnston's army in the spring of 1864. "I then solemnly resolved to seek the pardon of my sins and be a Christian," Donathan wrote.⁷⁶

74. Lasswell (comp. and ed.), *Rags and Hope*, 156-163; William Carothers to Mrs. S. Carothers, Mar. 6, 1863, Duncan C. Carothers Papers (Archives Division, Texas State Library, Austin); A. E. Rentfrow to sister, Feb. 11, 1862, A. Henry Moss Papers (Archives, University of Texas Library, Austin).

75. J[ames] K. P. Blackburn, *Reminiscences of the Terry Rangers* ([Austin], 1919), 10-11; Wiley, *Johnny Reb*, 50, notes that the "evil of illicit sexual indulgence, though admittedly common to every large army that history has known, is scantily treated in Confederate records." Although prostitution flourished in the larger cities of the Confederacy, especially Richmond, the authors have found no mention of the subject in diaries and letters of Texas Confederates.

76. Bunting to "Editor Telegraph," June 3, Aug. 23, 1863, Bunting Papers. (These letters were published in the *Houston Tri-Weekly Telegraph* on July 15 and Sept. 30, 1863, respectively.) Gracy, "With Danger and Honor," 134; Kerr (ed.), *Ross' Texas Cavalry Brigade*, 80; W. F. Donathan to brother and sister, Apr. 2, June 4, 1864, Donathan Family Correspondence. For another expression of faith see Colonel William P. Rogers to wife, June 5, 1862, William P. Rogers Papers (Archives, University of Texas Library, Austin).

For many Texans the war provided the first opportunity to see something of the world outside of their own localities. Many were overwhelmed by what they saw. Robert Gaston from Tyler found that the city of New Orleans “presents many strange and curious sights to me. . . . The fine buildings, hundreds of drays, carriages etc. continually running the streets & the eternal hum of busy hundreds strike the stranger with astonishment.”⁷⁷

The beautiful mountains of Virginia and Tennessee deeply impressed most Texans who saw them. O. T. Hanks believed the view of the Blue Ridge and Cumberland mountains was “worth a good part of a Mans Life.” Benjamin Seaton found the view from Lookout Mountain in Tennessee to surpass “in sublimity and grandeur anything we ever beheld.”⁷⁸

Not all Texas Confederates were impressed with the areas they saw, however. Lieutenant Flavius W. Perry, serving with the Seventeenth Cavalry near Arkansas Post, believed “this country was never made . . . for white people to live in, nothing but frogs and craw fish can live here long. . . .” Perry concluded, “I don’t think the Yankeys would have it if they could get it.”⁷⁹

Many Texas soldiers were more interested in the local girls and women than in the scenery. Private Henry Smith of Sibley’s Brigade was quite taken with the daughters of a local resident. “I have got to loving one of them, she is so pretty,” he wrote. “I believe I will marry her & take her back home with me and show her to the homefolks.”⁸⁰ While recovering from an injury, Stephen A. Bryan, member of a pioneer Texas family, was so impressed with the “beautiful & rich, accomplished & refined” young ladies of Rapides Parish, Louisiana, that he thought he might “return to this Parish to look for a fortune.”⁸¹ George W. Littlefield, in Tennessee, wrote to his fiancée back in Texas that he had found “the prettyst little woman here that is anywhere I know.” While promising his fiancée that he would not forget her, Littlefield admitted that if she were to

77. Glover (ed.), *Tyler to Sharpsburg*, 4.

78. Hanks, “History of B. F. Benton’s Company,” 12; Simpson (ed.), *Bugle Softly Blows*, 43 (second quotation).

79. Joe R. Wise (ed.), “Letters of Lt. Flavius W. Perry, 17th Texas Cavalry, 1862–1863,” *Military History of Texas and the Southwest*, XIII (No. 2), 27.

80. Faulkner, “With Sibley in New Mexico,” 140. Smith was not totally honest with his sweetheart back home, to whom he wrote at almost the same time: “Sweet girl I often think of you in these wild woods of New Mexico, where no friend is near, no kind female is near our camps to watch over us so tenderly as our girls did at Home.” *Ibid.*, 141.

81. Bryan to James P. Bryan, Mar. 5, 1863, James Perry Bryan Papers (Archives, University of Texas Library, Austin).

marry someone else, the Tennessee belle would be his next choice, for "I am almost tempted to love her."⁸²

Confederate soldiers from Texas frequently complained that they were not receiving letters from loved ones at home. William T. Gibbons, serving with the Fourteenth Cavalry, wrote to his wife that "sometimes I almost conclude that you have forgotten that there is such a being on earth as myself[,] having written [*sic*] & received no answers." In another letter to her he declared that he would pay fifty dollars for a letter from her at any time. Similarly, James M. Watson wrote to his father in August, 1863, that "it is disheartening to me to write for I haven't received but one letter from home since I left and it was dated May 2." "You don't know how bad I want to hear from home and to hear from the neighbors," he wrote.⁸³

A letter from home meant more to Texas Confederates than almost anything else. Bluford Alexander Cameron thanked his family for sending him a packet of clothes but lamented that no letter accompanied the clothing. "I opened the Sack and commenced Searching the Pockets of evry article and expected in evry pocket I Searched to find a Letter," he wrote, "but I Searched through and through but alas found no letter."⁸⁴

The mail service itself was often the reason soldiers did not hear from home as regularly as they wished. Colonel George W. Guess, with the Thirty-first Cavalry Regiment, expressed the soldier's view of the post office when he wrote, "I wish the cursed post office at Dallas with all the infernal meddlers with other peoples' business were sunk into the lowest depths of the bottomless pit, & you could get one that could be carried on properly & honestly."⁸⁵

The unreliability of government mail service caused many soldiers to depend upon couriers riding from army camps back to Texas. These couriers consisted of soldiers on leave, haulers of military supplies, tradesmen, ministers, and those

82. Gracy, "With Danger and Honor," 14. In January, 1863, while home on leave, Littlefield married his Texas fiancée, Alice P. Tiller. For other examples of Texans' interest in the opposite sex, see Smith and Mullins (eds.), "Diary of H. C. Medford," 140; Samuel B. Barron, *Lone Star Defenders: A Chronicle of the Third Texas Cavalry, Ross' Brigade* (New York, 1908), 31; and E. J. Oden to sister, May 29, 1863, Oden Papers.

83. William T. Gibbons to Mrs. A. A. Gibbons, Oct. 23 (first quotation), 30, 1863, W. T. Gibbons Letters (photostatic copies, Archives Division, Texas State Library, Austin); Watson, *Confederate from East Texas*, 17-18.

84. J. S. Duncan (ed.), "Alexander Cameron in the Louisiana Campaign, 1863-1865," *Military History of Texas and the Southwest*, XIII (No. 1), 46.

85. Guess to Sarah Horton Cockrell, Dec. 16, 1862, George W. Guess Letters (Archives, University of Texas Library, Austin).

traveling on government business. From the army posts they carried letters to friends and relatives at home, souvenirs of various kinds, and items that were difficult to secure at home such as writing paper and envelopes. From home they brought letters, food, clothing, and items that relatives and friends believed would be helpful to the men in gray.⁸⁶

The thought of going home was seldom out of the soldier's mind, but furloughs became increasingly difficult to obtain. "I thought I would get to come home before now," one Texas soldier wrote, "but a man has to be sick or a mighty good hand at possum to get furloughs." John E. Brown believed that he "had just as well try to fly to Virginia as to apply for a furlough. . . ."⁸⁷

Sick and wounded soldiers especially thought of home. "It is natural for all of [us] to want to be at Home Sweet Home," wrote one Texan. "A Soldier can put up with many hard things when health[y and] not murmer [*sic*] but let him get sick & then Home [Sweet] Home."⁸⁸

Disease swept through Confederate armies early in the war. A variety of illnesses, including measles, mumps, malaria, diarrhea, colds, pneumonia, and bronchitis, affected the troops from Texas. At one time only 25 of 800 men in the Fifth Texas Infantry, camped near Richmond, were fully fit for duty. About half of the Fourth Texas was also on sick call at the same time. The rate of disease, especially measles and mumps, also ran high among Texas cavalry units stationed in Arkansas. Texas units serving in Louisiana suffered from a high incidence of malaria. Some cases of yellow fever were reported in Texas units stationed on the Gulf Coast.⁸⁹

Medical care was poor in the early days of the Civil War. Most of the officers and men knew little of personal hygiene; camps were located in low, insect-in-

86. Weddle, *Plow-Horse Cavalry*, 129–137, provides an excellent description of the courier riders in Northeast Texas during this period.

87. Ray (ed.), "Civil War Letters from Parsons' Texas Cavalry Brigade," 219–220 (first and second quotations); John E. Brown to father and mother, Feb. 16, 1863, John E. Brown Letters (Archives, University of Texas Library, Austin). The men of the Fifth Texas Infantry even petitioned President Davis on the matter of additional furloughs, but to no avail. Elvis E. Fleming, "Some Hard Fighting: Letters of Private Robert T. Wilson, 5th Texas Infantry, Hood's Brigade, 1862–1864," *Texas Military History*, IX (No. 4, 1971), 297–298.

88. Carothers diary, 42.

89. Polley, *Hood's Texas Brigade*, 17; Barron, *Lone Star Defenders*, 59–60; John H. Harrison, "Texas' Tenth Cavalry, C.S.A." *Military History of Texas and the Southwest*, XII (No. 2, 1975), 96; William E. Sawyer and Neal Baker, Jr., "A Texan in the Civil War," *Texas Military History*, II (Nov., 1962), 275–278; Charleen Plumly Pollard (ed.), "Civil War Letters of George W. Allen," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, LXXXIII (July, 1979), 49; "Report of Lieut. Col. A. W. Spaight," *Official Records*, Ser. 1, Vol. XV, 145.

fested areas; food was not properly prepared or handled; and doctors and surgeons were inadequate in numbers and training. "There are about five [doctors] in our regiment," wrote one Texan, "& I am, this day, a better physician than either [sic] of them."⁹⁰

Even though the number of Confederate casualties increased markedly in 1863 and 1864, Texans continued to believe that the South would ultimately be victorious. The fall of Vicksburg and Lee's failure at Gettysburg dampened but did not destroy the confidence of Texas Confederates. The defeat of Nathaniel P. Banks's Red River expedition in the spring of 1864 was a source of great encouragement, particularly to those Texans on duty in the Trans-Mississippi West. These same western Confederates predicted that Lee would defeat Ulysses S. Grant in the campaigns in Virginia.⁹¹

Most Texas Confederates believed that William T. Sherman could not capture Atlanta. Captain James P. Douglas, whose battery was in the thick of the fighting around Atlanta, wrote to his wife in mid-August that "affairs are brightening here. People and army seem to be more sanguine of success." Even when Sherman forced the Confederates to evacuate the city, Douglas remained confident. In a letter he informed his wife that he "had to give up Atlanta," but predicted that "the nomination of McClellan and Pendleton will secure the defeat of Lincoln and possibly close the war." Another Texan in the Army of Tennessee, Wiley Donathan, was pleased when Hood withdrew from Georgia and took the offensive by heading for Tennessee. "Our prospects were never brighter," wrote Donathan, "for a great Change has been wrought within the last two weeks."⁹²

Hood's Tennessee campaign proved to be disastrous. After sustaining heavy casualties at Franklin in late November, Hood drove on to Nashville, where in mid-December superior Union forces destroyed most of his army. For the first time, many Texas Confederates expressed despair. Captain Douglas, in a letter he cautioned not to be shown "out of our own family," stated, "our country is

90. George W. Guess to Sarah Horton Cockrell, July 29, 1862, Guess Letters. John A. Templeton had an equally strong aversion to hospitals. "There is more danger in a hospital than in the field of battle," he wrote. "I never have been in a hospital, but if I ever do have to go to one on account of sickness I will make my will before starting." John A. Templeton to father, May 16, 1862, John A. Templeton Letters (Archives, University of Texas Library, Austin).

91. Anderson (ed.), *Campaigning with Parsons' Texas Cavalry Brigade*, 142-143; Fleming, "Letters of Private Robert T. Wilson," 295-296.

92. Douglas (comp. and ed.), *Douglas's Texas Battery*, 123 (first quotation), 127 (second quotation), 128 (third quotation); Donathan to sister, Oct. 18, 1864, Donathan Family Correspondence.

in much the worse condition it has ever been. If a great deed is not done this winter, the Yanks will close the war in the spring."⁹³

Other Texans remained defiant. Even after Lee's army surrendered in April, 1865, some Texas Confederates wanted to carry on the struggle. Captain Samuel T. Foster, with Granbury's brigade in North Carolina, admitted that Lee's surrender had had "a very demoralizing affect on the army," but still believed "we will whip this fight yet." George Lee Robertson, serving in South Texas, vowed to fight on. "If I can't have a confederacy I don't want anything else," he wrote. Even after he learned of Lee's surrender, W. W. Heartsill believed that if the southern people would unite as one, "the Trans-Mississippi could defy the combined powers of all Yankeedom."⁹⁴

Edmund Kirby Smith, commander of the Trans-Mississippi department, also believed the war should continue and urged his soldiers to remain at their posts. Most Texans in the department, however, agreed with Americus L. ("Lee") Nelms that "it would be folly in us to fight on this side of the river now." Thus, regiments and companies melted away in May as men headed home. There was little that Smith could do but sign the terms of surrender at Galveston on June 2.⁹⁵

Texas Confederates made their way to their homes as best as they could. The homeward journey posed few obstacles to Texans in the Trans-Mississippi, but for those Texans in Virginia and the Carolinas the trip sometimes took months. Most of them returned with little more than the clothes on their backs. Many found conditions at home quite changed. Relatives and loved ones had died or been killed in war, slaves were now free, money was scarce, and a Union army of occupation was moving into the state. Most Confederate Texans, however, felt no bitterness at their sacrifice, but pride that they had fought gallantly for a cause in which they deeply believed.⁹⁶

93. Douglas (comp. and ed.), *Douglas's Texas Battery*, 153.

94. Brown (ed.), *One of Cleburne's Command*, 163 (first and second quotations); Robertson to Julia, May 8, 1865, Robertson Papers; Heartsill, *Fourteen Hundred and 91 Days*, 239.

95. Weddle, *Plow-Horse Cavalry*, 158; Oates, "Texas Under the Secessionists," 212.

96. For accounts of the trip home see Hamilton, *History of Company M*, 69-71; Lasswell (comp. and ed.), *Rags and Hope*, 278-280; Fletcher, *Rebel Private, Front and Rear*, 145-158; Walton, *An Epitome of My Life*, 93-94; Brown (ed.), *One of Cleburne's Command*, 173-187; Weddle, *Plow-Horse Cavalry*, 162-163.