

The Adventures of a Tenderfoot

By E. B. D'Hamel

History of 2nd Regt. Mounted Rifles and Co. G, 33 Regt. And Capt Coopwood's Spy Co. and 2nd Texas in Texas and New Mexico.

Early in the Fall of 1858, when I was about twenty-three years old, living with my brothers, John, Joseph and Fernando, for some reason or other, my head got too big for my hat, and I concluded, like a donkey, to leave Havana, Cuba, where we were residing, for New Orleans, La.

I sneaked on board of the American schooner "Salvador." Captain Hanson, and old friend, who was in command, collected from me regular fare. We made a quick run to New Orleans, four days from Havana.

On arriving at New Orleans I found my brother Louis in business for himself, and owning a very pretty house at 150 Barrack Street, with plenty of accommodations for his family and myself. He furnished me a room, and at night I would eat with the family, which gave me board and lodging free.

I found employment and earned a dollar and a quarter to a dollar and a half a day, according to the work.

My meal in the morning was very early, before six o'clock, which I took in the French Market. At 11 o'clock all the large hotels gave a free lunch, costing 15 cents. In that way I managed to pull through—in the way of meals. The money I earned was enough to clothe me and I made a good appearance.

In the spring of 1859, I found a better job, when the river opened, as a mud clerk on the New Orleans, St. Louis & St. Joseph Packet "Minnihaha," Captain Richard Woolfork; Chief Officer and Mate, Tom Henthorn; Mr. S. Hutchinson, chief clerk and part owner of the steamboat; Mr. James Degges, second clerk, and myself, very glad to be even a "mud clerk." I remained in that capacity until the end of April, 1860.

On the 14th of April, 1860, the day Henry Clay statue was unveiled on Canal Street, our steamboat was loaded with cargo for all landings between New Orleans and St. Louis and St. Joe; most of the cargo being sugar in hogsheads for St. Louis where we were several day discharging.

On board of the steamboat, I made the acquaintance of a young Englishman, Harry Malam by name, who had been a dry goods clerk. When we arrived in Cairo, Illinois, we took on two more passengers, young men; one Henry Hall, a saddler by trade, and John Baxter, the son of a rich capitalist residing in Pittsburgh, Pa. During the trip to St. Louis we became very chummy, and when we got there, we were struck with what was called the "Pikespeak gold fever" and concluded that when we got to St. Joe, Mo., we would work our way "Pikespeak or bust." Before leaving St. Louis, we put our few dollars together and bought some mining tools and provisions. We were not the only ones who had the gold fever. Sam Wright, the chief engineer of the "Minnihaha" and all the other employees were also affected. Captain Woolfork, Tom Henthorn, Mr. Hutchinson and the watchman were the only ones that remained aboard the boat.

After we finished discharging in St. Joe and Atchison we all went ashore and formed a camp. We were several days getting teams and wagons to cross the Plains from Atchison to Denver, something over 700 miles. After a long tramp we arrived at Denver on the 4th of July, 1860. We remained in Denver a day or two to get our bearings for the gold diggings in the mountains, having had favorable information that gold was plentiful in a gulch known then as Spanish Gulch, a hundred miles more or less from Denver, over the mountain trail, and it took us three days to tramp that distance, a mountaineer would have made the distance in less than two days. On arriving we fell into the hands of claim sharks, who sold us a claim which afterwards proved to be a salted one. We started to work, hiring a couple of experienced miners to teach us how to drift and tunnel under the mountain. Harry Malam and Frank Hall had become quite expert, but John Baxter and myself seemed only fitted to wheel dirt. The boys agreed that I being a very good cook, should do the cooking and wheel dirt. We all did our best, and from the 8th or 10th of July to the end of September we worked and then took stock, to find that all we had left were our tools. We sold the tools for less than half of what they cost, divided the money and separated. I tramped to Denver and on the first week of October, 1860, I became acquainted with Mr. W. A. Buffom, correspondent for the New York Herald and United States Consul at Smyrna, who was on a furlough traveling through the west in great style; he had a very fine ambulance with four fine mules and a pony, the outfit having cost something like \$2,500. Buffom was in want of a Spanish interpreter and gave me the job at \$15 a month to accompany him down the Rio Grande to Santa Fe, New Mexico. Our agreement did not last very long. The first day after traveling about 20 miles, we camped in a very pretty spot with plenty of grass and water.

Having taken Buffom's double-barreled shotgun without permission, I went scouting around and came back to camp with half a dozen fine quail, which I gave to the driver who was also a cook. When Buffom discovered that I had given the birds to the cook to prepare for supper, he became very angry and overbearing, and tried to treat me as a servant; then I became angry and sent him to the devil, so separated then and there. Next morning he started with his outfit to travel down the Rio Grande, and after he had been gone sometime, I started with all my belongings (the suit I stood in and my Bowie knife) to tramp to El Paso, Texas, a distance, as the roads ran then, of about eleven hundred miles, more or less. After tramping a few days, I was overtaken by Col. Kit Carson, the great American Scout, who led General Fremont across the mountains to the Pacific, and who there acquired the nickname of the "Pathfinder." Col. Carson was traveling in a wagon and insisted on my riding with him about forty miles to his ranch at Taos, where he was beautifully situated with rich lands and cattle, and looked upon by his Navajo Indians as a God. After remaining at Taos a few days, having rested well, I tramped to Santa Fé where I remained a few days; then on from Santa Fé to Albuquerque to Fort Craig which was one side of the river, and on the other was a small village of Mexicans and Indians called Valverde. This is the beginning of Dead Man's desert 90 miles from Valverde to Da Anna. The activity of the Indians made traveling dangerous. The country from Albuquerque was lined with frontier ranches, plenty of cattle, sheep and goats; all the ranchmen had their own adobe houses well white-washed and beautiful. Every night I was invited to enjoy their hospitality, a good supper, generally consisting of pig or kid roasted, tortillas, frijoles, asaderas, and a good woolen mattress to sleep on. In the morning they gave me breakfast, and if the distance I had to travel was very great, would put up a lunch for me to carry. Everyone was most kind and simpatico, and would never take a cent or allow me to do any work; on the contrary they seemed to be sorry for the forlorn Gringo. At Fort Craig, I fell in with a Mr. Ruís, a Mexican freighter with twelve large loaded wagons, having six and eight mules and horses for relays. Mr. Ruís invited me to join him and his caravan across Dead Man's desert, which was very dangerous on account of the Navajo and Apache Indians who continued following us in the hope of stampeding our stock. We therefore had to be very vigilant and stand guard like soldiers. It took several nights to cover the ninety miles across the desert; water was scarce as it seldom rained in that country, but as the dews at night were heavy and the grass very fine, the stock did not suffer. We got across to Da Anna without any great difficulty, with the exception of one night when the Indians raided us; we were about fifty and they did not bother us again. In Da Anna, I left Mr. Ruís and tramped to La Mesilla, the capitol of Arizona territory. From

Da Anna to La Mesilla were towns, villages and ranches, so I got along splendidly. At La Mesilla I fell in with two New Yorkers, Frank Deruther and George Putnam, who had charge of the stage and the United States mail agency. I found a job to look after the horses and harness, for which they gave me board and lodging. I rested there about a week or ten days and one morning just at six o'clock I tramped to El Paso, fifty-four miles. I tramped from six o'clock in the morning till 8 at night having had no food, with the exception of a light breakfast. Fortunately for me, in my exhausted state I brought up the day on the step of the house occupied by the only white man, his wife and daughter; this house was the only house within the radius of the great flour mills owned and run by Major Simon Hart, a contractor furnishing flour for the United States regular army on the frontier. The white man proved to be Mr. Hiram Cooper, head miller in charge of the Hart Mills. Mr. Cooper kindly took me in and gave me cold snack for supper, while his wife made me a cup of tea, and afterwards made me a shakedown where I slept like a log: That was my last day's traveling from the gold mines in the mountains of Denver, which started on the 1st of October and ended about the first week in December at Hart's Mills in 1860. If you take a map you will find that I tramped 1,100 miles without a cent in my pocket and never had any one to ask me for my keep. The day after my arrival at Hart's Mills, I begged Mr. Cooper for a job for my board. I worked without thinking that I was doing any shake; packing flour in hundred pound bags, my first work. I packed 125 bags and carried them from the mill to the warehouse, about a hundred yards from where I was working, to store them. Without knowing it, I was always the head of the flour bin. I worked along to the end of the week quite happy and contented to have work, plenty to eat and a place to sleep. On Saturdays, the mill shut down early in the afternoon when the men got paid, so I hurried to get thru before night. I sat of at a distance looking at the men getting paid and counting their money for their week's work, which was not much, for the able-bodied men only got 37 ½ cents a day and a peck of corn for a week. After paying off everyone and the work seemed finished for the afternoon, Mr. Cooper and Major Hart called me and handed me nine dollars in Mexican money, which looked to me like cartwheels. It was the first money I had seen since I had spent my last dollar in Denver. Mr. Hart and Mr. Cooper complimented me on my good work and Mr. Hart told me I could count on nine dollars a week until such time as I could improve my job. Mr. Hart had in his employ a very finely educated gentleman, a Mr. Ahern who, unfortunately was in the habit of getting drunk and would go off on sprees and be sick three or four days at a time. Towards the end of December (1860), Ahern got drunk and when he got over his illness, Major Hart was compelled to discharge him and sent him to New Orleans to join his family. Major Hart asked

me if I could take Ahern's place. I told him that I had been a graduate of a commercial school and could keep books and write letters in English and Spanish, and believed I could handle the work to his satisfaction as bookkeeper and accountant. In that case, he said, I could commence on the 1st of January (1861), with a salary of a hundred dollars a month and the same treatment that Ahern had had. I proved satisfactory and was happy and contented until we got the news that war had been declared between the North and the South. I got the war fever, and nothing would do until I enlisted on the 1st of April, 1861. Mr. Hart tried to persuade me to hold my job and promised to give me a better position in the Army, but I was too headstrong to listen to the wise advice of an older man. On the 1st of April (1861), I went to El Paso, one mile below Hart's Mills and enlisted as Volunteer for one year with Captain Bethel Coopwood, an Independent Company, called the San Elisario Spies and Guides, as all the members of the company were Texas backwoodsmen, ranchers and cowboys who knew the country from San Antonio to Santa Fe, New Mexico, and from mountain to mountain on both sides of the Rio Grande River. Most of the men had been Indian fighters. A few days after I had joined the company, Captain Coopwood with half a dozen rich men and our First Sergeant, Coulter, who had served in the Regular United States Army, raided the stock, horses and mules of the 7th United States Infantry commanded by Major Lynds, who was in command of Fort Fillmore for the jurisdiction of Texas and Arizona. In the raid the Confederacy was richer by two hundred head of horses and mules which the company sold to the Confederate Quartermaster, taking in payment certificates for the value of each animal with the agreement, that the certificates would be paid when the Confederate Government was in a position to pay.

We camped, drilling and learning how to march should occasion require us to fight. We seemed to make very poor progress in this respect. I, especially, never could seem to reach the regulation 38-inch step instead of a 36. The drillmaster, Sergeant Dunn, who was also an ex-regular United States Army man, would get out of patience with me on account of my over-stepping; he would yell, "Hamel, keep step, Hamel (D—n your soul) get out of that." As I seemed a hopeless task, he decided to give me no more marching lessons, and I was only called to drill while in camp.

A couple of months after this, the 2nd Regiment, Texas Mounted Rifles, Colonel John R. Ford, Lieutenant Colonel John R. Baylor, Major Charles Pyron, six or seven companies made up for the district of Austin, Brownsville and around San Antonio, Texas was formed. Col. Ford entrusted the regiment to Lt. Col. John R. Baylor who had been appointed Governor of Arizona Territory, and was then en route for his capitol, La Mesilla,

54 miles by stage rout from El Paso to La Mesilla; he was influential and had authority to attach our regiment, and that was how I became a member of the 2nd Texas Mounted Rifles. As soon as we formed a part of this regiment, we lost our identity of The San Elisarios and were known as the "Spies and Guides of the 2nd Texas Mounted Rifles." As soon as Bailor got to Mesilla and took charge as Governor of the Territory, he turned the regiment over to Major Charles Pyron, who became acting Colonel, Colonel Ford remaining in Austin.

Sometime in July (1861) Governor Bailor had the regiment concentrated at Mesilla, intending to surprise Major Lynd in command of Fort Fillmore with about nine hundred or more soldiers of the 7th United States Infantry and about a hundred or more troops of different squadrons of cavalry. Among them were Hart, of Captain Gibb's Company and the 2nd Dragoons in command of Lt. McNally, a brave soldier, who led their men to within fifty feet of a corral. This corral was enclosed by a three foot fence over which was another fence of thorny brush, making a fence about seven feet around the enclosure. Here Capt. Hardman, with his men, the C. A. 2nd Texas Mounted Rifles, were waiting. When close enough for all to get a sure shot the word to fire was given. The first volley emptied about twenty saddles; amongst these was their leader, Lt. McNally, whom we found to have two bullet holes in his chest, either of which would ordinarily kill a man. Both of these bullets passed out through the neck. As we had no hospital in Mesilla, we placed the brave Lieutenant with a private family, who did all they could for their patient; he soon got better, and finally after a long siege was entirely well. Before the end in April, 1865, he was Colonel of a regiment of United States Regulars.

When Major Lynd found he could not dislodge us or enter the town, he turned tail and returned to Fort Fillmore, at which place we captured him with all his officers and about 1,100 men, women and children and some stragglers. Fort Fillmore was set on fire by this commander, who tried to get to Fort Stanton about one hundred miles from Fort Fillmore. Our command soon got notice that Major Lynd had decided to take the risk of reaching Fort Stanton when he abandoned and set fire to Fort Fillmore and stores. Captain Coopwood with a few picked men, all volunteers, got over the mountain, over which Lynd had to travel to get to some springs of water, about eighteen miles from the Rio Grande, and the only water within eight or nine miles of Fort Stanton. Here Lynd with his following were made prisoners by Captain Coopwood. When the artillery arrived he succeeded in getting it as well, and was able to run the guns to the mouth of the Pass, where Captain Bailor and Major Pyron with the balance of the 2nd Regiment Mounted Rifles were herding the soldiers

and their families in the Pass, along the eighteen miles from Fort Fillmore to where Captain Coopwood had the officers corralled. Lynd ordered his men to surrender to save bloodshed. The men, most of them old soldiers, having served several enlistments obeyed orders, and as they came out into the open, were forced to deliver their arms, all of which were immediately loaded on their own wagons and taken to our camp, to be distributed as soon as possible among our men. This proved to be a Godsend as it gave us a number of the most modern rifles, which at that time were known as Springfield rifles. We also found plenty of ammunition among the stores captured. During that expedition, we captured and paroled about 1,100 soldiers and officers. Our own force good, bad and indifferent, consisted all told of about 280 long eared, ragged Texans. When Lynd's soldiers found that they had to surrender to a mob of ragged Texans, they were ready to mutiny and only the precaution we had taken to hold the artillery ready to fire on them made them submit. They were put into their wagons and driven about that night en route to St. Louis, Mo. We let the officers keep all their personal property, side arms and also gave them sufficient provisions to get them to their friends. We returned to Fort Fillmore, put out the fire and saved many stores, flour, bacon, sugar, coffee and tea, after which, our command returned to Mesilla to our old camp, where we enjoyed a well-earned rest and for the first time in six months had real coffee with sugar, etc. All this took place in the early part of July, 1861. So far as I know there was no record kept of the capture excepting the colonel's report to headquarters. On the 21st of August, I was in a raid with Captain Coopwood and about one hundred of our men, most of whom were "Guides and Spies." We came across a party of regulars and Jay hawkers who were trying to steal our stock; when close enough we opened fire, which they returned and I was the only of our party to get hurt. I got a spent Springfield rifle bullet in my left wrist, which went up my arm almost to the elbow, and was there about three months. When I was hurt I weighed about 160 pounds and when I was about to be buried (alive) I weighed only about 90 pounds. All that saved me from being interred, was the interference of one of my chums, who having heard that I was dead and to be buried that night, came to see me. He was half drunk and said that I was not dead and he would see to it that I was not buried until I stunk. It seems that I was in a sort of cataleptic state, and although my body was not cold, I showed no signs of life; my eyes seemed glazed and no moisture was left on a looking glass when put to my mouth. As my chum, Davis (alias Brighton Young) sat on the edge of my cot with his .45 Colt on his lap to see that I was not buried, the hospital steward and nurses concluded to wait until he fell asleep, which fortunately for me he did not do. Before he left, I moved and he called all hands; they soon found that although very weak, I was not a dead soldier by any

means. I began to mend and although not strong I soon could help about the hospital where help was greatly needed. While I was here, General Sibley, the inventor of the Sibley tent, arrived at Dona Anna, with his brigade of three regiments, mostly Texans, enlisted from Houston, and San Antonio, in command of Colonels Scurry, Green and Hardiman with a Major Norton in charge of the artillery. The brigade was en route for Sante Fe, New Mexico. Owing to many mishaps, they did not arrive until the fall of 1861, at Valverde and fought that battle, with something like fifteen hundred to eighteen hundred men all told. From hearsay it was a second Bull Run, all the colonels, and Norton were killed, but they did not die until after the Yanks (Federals) were routed. Our loss was estimated at about two hundred dead, wounded and missing. The enemy's loss it was said was much greater, but this information is only hearsay, having come to me from some of our own men in the company. I was not there to my regret.

On General Sibley's staff was one Captain Ocheltree, a very well educated and intelligent young man, and I believe a reporter for one of the leading newspapers, "The Houston Post." Captain Ocheltree denounced General Sibley as a coward and a drunkard for not following up the victory of the Battle of Valverde and sleeping in Fort Craig that night. The next morning when the army advanced on the Fort they found that during the night's delay, Captain Kit Carson with 7,000 Mexican volunteers and Navajo Indians had taken advantage of this and slipped into the Fort during the night. Colonel Carson was satisfied to hold his position, and awaited attack, which, I repeat, according to hearsay, was never attempted and thereby caused the failure of the Sante Fe expedition. Sibley soon had to retreat and get back to Arizona and Texas, as about that time General Camby took charge of the Federal Army in New Mexico, from Santa Fe down to the Rio Grande, but while our army was there, never got below Fort Craig, during the winter of 1861. Several expeditions tried raiding Albuquerque and Santa Fe but none succeeded. General Camby was too wide awake. One or more of the raiding expeditions succeeded in fighting some of Camby's and Kit Carson's men, but always had to turn tail owing to scarcity of stores and rations, and always being opposed by about three to one, hence it was uphill work. Some of our men who were taken prisoners and wounded, never got tired of praising General Camby's wife for her kind attentions and treatment while they were in the hospital or in prison. It seems Mrs. Camby was a southern lady and sympathized with our soldiers, many of whom were boys under twenty years of age; some of the most daring were too young to know or realize the risks they took and would expose themselves recklessly and needlessly. During that winter Captain Coopwood with 114 picked volunteers started from our camp at

Dona Anna on a raid. I was one of the 114 and on that expedition was promoted to Corporal. We left camp at night and the next day rested in a small swamp well timbered. We started at night and before daybreak we were within fifty miles of Fort Craig, for which place we were bound intending to stampede the stock. Fortunately for us, we found a small Mexican town, in command of a Mexican Lieutenant with about forty men, guarding a train of 12 large army wagons loaded with supplies for Fort Craig. As we surprised the town, we were lucky enough to capture the whole outfit. We made the teamsters hitch up and turn the convoy for Dona Anna, placing our men as teamsters, parolling all the Mexicans excepting the Lieutenant whom we held prisoner, and succeeded in getting away with our booty. We traveled all that day and near night camped to rest for a few hours. Again we started on the run, knowing that as soon as General Camby and the garrison at Fort Craig got the news of our successful raid of their 12 wagons of supplies they would send a regiment of cavalry to overtake us. We traveled for two nights and a day and on the morning of the second day, we got to our old camp in the little swamp. We had hardly parked our wagons when our scouts came in helter-skelter on the run with the Federals close in pursuit. We had no time to get our animals in the pen. The Federals dismounted out of range of our guns, hid their horses behind the foot hills, scattered in Guerrilla order and opened fire; as they were too far from us in the swamp, we remained silent. After about an hour's firing, they found that they were wasting their ammunition, but in the meantime we discovered that about 30 head of our mules and horses had been wounded in the legs, hence we killed the poor beasts, and formed breast-works of their dead bodies and waited for the advance, but they did not make the charge we expected.

After a short rest, they deployed in two sections and we were caught in a triangle; before we had time to meet this new move some of our men were caught in a trap, which cost us eight killed and several wounded. Among the killed was Robert Lyons of Cleveland, Ohio and Mr. Wright; also the Mexican lieutenant prisoner, who was killed by accident. The poor fellow was tied with his back to a large Alamo, and as we thought out of range of rifle shot, but unfortunately a spent bullet hit him in the thigh and cut a large artery from which the poor man bled to death, there being no chance of getting a doctor within two hundred miles.

The Federals kept us corralled in the swamp until night when they quietly decamped having been all day in the hot sun among foot hills, with only the water in their canteens. We, in the swamp, dug wells, and only our animals suffered for water. We remained in the swamp for some time until re-enforcements arrived from our main camp about two hundred miles down the Rio Grande near Mesilla. That was my last raid, as we had to abandon raiding on the

Sante Fe campaign. We went to camp and did very little soldiering but simply chased Mexicans and Indian cattle thieves.

On the 1st of April, 1862, having served out our twelve months enlistment, we were paid off and told to rest for six months when we would be called on again to enlist for 3 years or during the war. I, with many others and a caravan of Mexican families were leaving, fearing the Federals, and Indian invasion. Our party consisted of Dr. Joaquim Acebedo, a rich Spanish freighter with several ambulances, extra animals and about thirty men in his employ, Dr. Samaniego and family with two or three ambulances, wagons, animals and with 1,000 more men, servants, herders, etc. Dr. Samaniego was one of the richest men of El Paso, owning rich silver mines, much land and cattle, horses, mules, etc. Abandoning all, he with several other families, made a strong force to travel from El Paso to San Antonio, Texas, via Chihuahua. They allowed us to join their caravan on condition that we were to stand guard and help take care of the stock. About twenty of us accepted and started with them across the three hundred miles of desert from El Paso to Chihuahua. It took us several weeks to make the journey. At Chihuahua a rich San Antonio merchant Mr. Lacoste joined our party with his outfit and men, thereby increasing our crowd to more than fifty able and first class soldiers; thus we traveled from El Paso via Chihuahua, Monterey, Monclova, Laredo to San Antonio in safety. Mr. Lacoste was a good friend and through him I became a citizen of San Antonio. In San Antonio I found quarters with a Mrs. Jacques, a very fine lady who kept a select boarding house for officers and their families. After a good rest I secured a position in a store owned by Messrs. Moke & Bros. I remained with them about six months, and in the early summer of 1863, we got together and formed Company G 33rd Regiment, Captain Joel Neson, 1st Lieut. E. B. D'Hamel, 2nd Lieut. Calvin Goodlaw and many of the boys of Coopwood's spies. Col. James Duff, Lieut. Col. Charles Pyron and Major Lily were the officers that raised the regiment and were known as Duff's 33rd Regiment of Texas Cavalry. Col. Duff at his own expense furnished our recruits with outfits. The regiment went into camp and was in detached service from Eagle Pass to Port Lavaca (Indianola) in those days. Capt. Weynan and Company G remained in camp outside of San Antonio. About that time General McGruder with his staff came from Virginia and took charge of all the troops in that District of Texas. Under order of General Kirby Smith, then Commander of all the troops west of the Mississippi River, General McGruder sent his chief of staff, Col. A. G. Dickinson, a very fine gentleman and a good soldier as commanding officer of the district of San Antonio. Col. Dickinson found as Post-Adjutant, a Mr. Elliot, a native of San Antonio, but a civilian. As Mr. Elliot although only 25 years of

age was too stout to be useful excepting as a routine officer, he appointed me as Assistant Post Adjutant and Provost marshal for his command. Besides being under orders of Colonel Dickinson, I was under special private orders of General Kirby Smith and had to report direct to him if anything unusual occurred. Fortunately this was very seldom, as generally my report to Col. Dickinson was all that was required. Sometimes I was ordered to Houston, Texas and Galveston. In the absence of Major Hilistead, I served under Col. Dickinson until I got a furlough on the 1st of December, 1863, on which day I was married to Miss Theodora Navarro, daughter of Don Luciano Navarro, one of the best families in San Antonio. Col. Dickinson sent me his carriage to take us home the evening of the wedding, for which we were very thankful. Getting married did not give me a vacation. I was over-burdened with my work and all of which I was compelled to do myself, having no one to trust. I was kept so busy that time passed quickly. Besides being Asst. Post Adjutant and Provost marshal, I was collector in kind under special orders of Major Simon Hart, who had been appointed Commissary General of the Department of Texas. When any farmer arrived in San Antonio with cotton, corn, etc., I took ten per cent of this produce, which I turned over to the Commissary General and took his voucher for same. Cotton at that time was selling in Mexico, Cuba and other foreign countries from 75¢ gold to \$1.35 per lb., hence a 500 lb. Bale was worth from about \$400 a bale to over \$600. While in San Antonio the foreign merchants exchanged powder, lead, flour, bacon, sugar, coffee, rice, cloth, etc. for cotton at from 10¢ to 15¢ gold per lb. It seemed a shame to take the ten per cent tax from the poor farmer, who had to sacrifice what the government left him, but he was compelled to sell. When I found a poor man with only part of his produce, I would help him to find a purchaser and in that way was of great assistance in helping him dispose of what he had to sell at full market rates. In this I also made the brokerage from the purchaser and became acquainted with many Spanish and Mexican merchants. Amongst them were two brothers, Don Julian and Don Felipe Yaguno, very rich freighters and merchants who traveled in style with 20 freight cars and two fine ambulances, and over sixty employees, drivers, herders and a guard of drilled soldiers. Their trains when loaded were worth \$100,000 gold and they spared no expense taking care of their property.

About the 1st of December, 1864, when I had been married a year, these kind merchants offered me a free passage and accommodations to Matamoros, Mexico, 150 miles from San Antonio, of which I advised Col. Dickinson and begged for a furlough to proceed to Havana, Cuba, to visit my brothers whom I had left in 1858. Thru Mr. Dickinson's great friendship and his influence, General Kirby Smith, the Department Commander gave me a

special furlough for sixty days, for which I was very grateful, and when ready I joined the Yagunos who were encamped on the Salado a small stream four miles from San Antonio. We got away and in ten or twelve days were in Matamoros. In a few days I found a vessel sailing for Havana, the American Schooner "Andromeda," Captain Harvy. We had a quick run only six days from anchor to anchor arriving in Havana in time to enjoy Christmas (1864) with my brothers who were pleased to see me back in Havana. I remained in Havana until the 15th day of January, 1865, when I found on the British Brig Emma, and sailed for Matamoros. We had a long passage, over fifteen days, but I was back in Brownsville in plenty of time to cover my sixty days furlough. In fact, I had used up but two-thirds of my time. I reported to Gen. J. B. Slaughter Commanding the District of the Rio Grande, from Eagle Pass to Brownsville. General Slaughter, a fine soldier and a thorough gentleman, impressed me in his staff and ordered me to report as Assistant Provost Marshall to Major Grant, the Provost of the Rio Grande District. From Havana, I brought an invoice of what was then thought to be very saleable articles: powder, lead caps, sugar, shoes, candles, crockery, all of which would have netted me about \$3,000 American gold profit, but unfortunately, I was too late. News from Virginia had arrived that Lee and his army could not last until summer. This news came in February (1865), confidentially to the Jewish merchants who commenced to sell their goods at any price. All they seemed to want was money to get back to New York. Beautiful serge suits that had been selling for \$15, \$20 and \$25 were sacrificed in lots at \$5 a suit, and everything else went in the same way. Shoes that were selling at \$4 a pair were left in the warehouses to rot, the crockery which was the kind the poor Mexicans could buy, I abandoned to Mr. Louis Carvajal, a cousin of my wife's. Finally, we got news of the surrender of General Lee and the war was over. General Slaughter and Col. Santos Benavides whose troops had not been paid for many months, concluded to abandon Brownsville and proceeded to Fort Davis on the Texas side, and Camargo on the Mexican side. En route, we seized all the government cotton, which we shipped across into Camargo and was sold by General Slaughter and Col. Benavides to the Mexican merchants. The sale produced money sufficient for each one of us to receive \$20 American gold. After which General Slaughter told us to go home, as he was going to the city of Mexico to look after his mining interests. All of this happened during the early part of the year 1865. I arrived in San Antonio about the 16th of June and found great disorder in the city, and also found a fine baby girl four months old, it having been born on the 8th of March. My dear wife, God Bless her, had given up hope of my ever returning, owing to the great disorder caused by jay hawkers, burglars and thieves. As Provost Marshall I had made many

enemies who threatened to hang me. The citizens formed themselves into a Vigilance Committee and every night a patrol named for guard and protection. After a few days I was ordered to report at roll call. Some friends, who had received favors while I was Provost Marshall under Col. Dickinson advised me to get the Sergeant to put a man in my place, which cost \$2.00 each time and to report sick. I stood this blackmail until the 26th of June, when I was told that if I did not answer to the roll call I would be lynched that night. So at six o'clock in the morning of the 26th of June I left San Antonio apparently to go hunting. En route, my father-in-law, Don Luciano Navarro and some friends had ready for me a horse in good condition. All that day and until 10 P. M. I rode seventy miles to the ranch of my wife's uncle Don Antonio Navarro, who kept me hidden a few days and then I started for Mexico. Along the route Don Antonio had many friends to whose care I was committed: the first one Sam Stewart kept me over one night, and at day-break the next morning gave me a guide costing \$15 to go across the country to the Rio Grande, where I arrived that same night at Col. Santos Benavides' ranch. It was not safe to be seen by any of the ranchmen so I was kept hidden in the bushes until Col. Benavides could get one of his confidential men to take me across the Rio Grande. About ten miles above Laredo, Texas, my guide made a raft of dry driftwood which he gathered from the bank of the river, placed my saddle, clothes and arms on it and leading my horse, swam to the Mexican shore: then he returned to help me over. He found a long dry pole, and we, he on one end and I on the other, swam the river in good style. I was now in Mexico, safe from the jay hawkers; but not from Mexican bandits. After drying my horse and myself I mounted and in about two hours I was in New Laredo, where I found an old friend Henry McComb keeping a small store. Mr. McComb was a freighter and owned a train of wagons. When I was in el Paso, Mr. McComb brought wheat from Chihuahua to Hart's Mills where we became acquainted. I was able to do him some favors, which he grandly repaid on my arrival in New Laredo. He, having received word that I was in danger of being kidnaped by the Pelados, hid me under the counter of the store. I had hardly gotten settled, when the chief of Pelados came in and told McComb, "I have been offered \$100 to get the confederate that has just arrived, but if he is your friend I will not undertake the job." You had better not try, was the reply, he is a dead shot, y mas es el que llaman el Gato Pelado (and more, he is he that is called the skinned panther) así si ariesgas tu pellejo metete con el (so if you want to risk your skin, go for him). That night when the pelados were asleep, Mr. McComb gave me a guide to get to Mier, Mexico, where I arrived about 8 A. M. the next morning. I found an old friend, Don Narciso Leal, who kept me hidden in his house until night when he gave me a guide to get to Camargo, where I arrived

safely and where I found many friends, merchants whom I had favored at different times. They kept me in Camargo a few days, when they secured a pass from the governor Don Jose M. Cortina, brother of the then bandit Chano Cortina, who was at war with the Diaz faction. George Cortina gave me an escort of ten men with salvo conducto (to conduct safely) to Matamoros where I arrived in due time and where my soldiers troubles ended. On arrival at Matamoros, I was fortunate to get passage on a small American schooner, with accommodations only for the captain and his crew. When we got away from the anchorage and out to sea, I found there were forty passengers and we had to lie around the deck like so many animals. Luckily we had a good cook and plenty of provisions and after fifteen days we arrived at quarantine seventy miles below New Orleans, where they kept us fifteen days on shore in some large warehouse, after which they allowed us to depart. I arrived at New Orleans all right and found my sisters Liz and Milly in one of Phil Phillips' houses on Jackson Street between Carondelet and Baronne Street. I remained there until the 4th of September, when I managed to get aboard the American Schooner Pinky, Captain Sisno, bound for Havana, we had a quick run arriving in Havana on the 8th of September, where I found my brothers prosperous and delighted to see me back with them. They gave me employment and I was soon a new man. My wife all this while having remained in San Antonio, I wrote her to sell out and join me in Cuba where we had a happy home and so ended the ups and downs of this old Confederate soldier.

September, 1914

ENRIQUE B. D'HAMEL.