

embellishments; and to Major J. H. Eaton, to whom he is indebted for a few designs. From the nature of the forces employed during the war, it is a natural supposition that there are few persons who have not had some friend or relative engaged in the stirring scenes herein described. They may be assured the writer has endeavored to give a faithful history of the events connected with the war.

To the casual reader, it is hoped the subject will be of sufficient interest to fix his attention for a brief period. And if, to his brother officers, he has succeeded in recalling scenes upon which memory must fondly dwell, though tinged with melancholy hues, he will feel himself amply repaid.

THE AUTHOR.



## CAMPAIGN SKETCHES.

### CHAPTER I.

IN order to have a clear understanding of the causes which resulted in the formation of the original "Army of Observation," its concentration upon the Red River and at Fort Jesup, &c., and for the purpose of obtaining a starting-point for my journal, I deem it necessary to give the reader a synopsis of the events which immediately preceded these military movements; not presuming, however, that all are not conversant with them, but thinking it will afford an interesting introduction to the work, and bring more forcibly to recollection all the causes for the first military movements, which eventually resulted in the war with Mexico.

The intensely exciting period which preceded the annexation of Texas must be too well remembered to need any reference. It was generally believed this measure would be effected by President Tyler early in the spring of 1844. For this purpose he introduced a treaty, which was rejected by the Senate. From an understanding between our government and that of Texas (both calculating upon the certainty of the passage of the treaty), we were to concentrate upon the borders of Texas a force sufficient to prevent or repulse any attack which might be made by the Mexican government, which might reasonably be expected from their determined and expressed opposition to the annexation of the State of Texas to the United States,



the independence of which state they had never acknowledged, although eight years had elapsed since her existence as a separate and independent government.

In furtherance of this promise, the government selected (then Brevet Brigadier-general) Z. Taylor, colonel of the 6th Regiment of Infantry, as commanding officer for the forces about being concentrated at or near Fort Jesup, Louisiana. He received information to this effect in May, 1844, immediately resigned the command of Department No. 2, and repaired to Fort Jesup. This post was at the time garrisoned by seven companies of the 2d Regiment of Dragoons, commanded by Colonel D. E. Twiggs. In April, 1844, the eight companies of the 3d Regiment of Infantry, commanded by Lieutenant-colonel E. A. Hitchcock, stationed at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, received orders to repair immediately to Fort Jesup, Louisiana. On the 27th of April they embarked on transports, and arrived at Fort Jesup on the 10th of May. Their encampment, in close proximity with the above-named fort, was called Camp Wilkins, in honor of the then Secretary of War. In May, 1844, eight companies of the 4th Regiment of Infantry, then stationed at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, and commanded by Colonel Vose, received orders to repair to Red River. They took water transportation on the 7th, and arrived at Grand Ecore on the 13th of May, 1844. They selected a beautiful site for an encampment, about three miles from the river, which was called Camp Salubrity. Two companies of the 3d and two of the 4th Infantry were at that time detached; the former at Fort Leavenworth, the latter at Fort Scott, Missouri. General Taylor arrived at Fort Jesup about

the middle of June, and took command of the forces. He called them the "Army of Observation." On the 3d of April, 1845, the two companies of the 3d Infantry, stationed at Fort Leavenworth, started for Fort Jesup, and arrived there on the 23d of April. This movement concentrated the 3d Infantry. The original "Army of Observation," under command of General Taylor, consisted of seven companies of the 2d Dragoons, under the command of Colonel Twiggs; the 3d Infantry, commanded by Lieutenant-colonel Hitchcock; and eight companies of the 4th Infantry, under command of Colonel Vose. In February, 1845, the resolutions annexing Texas to the United States passed Congress. On the 28th of May, 1845, General Taylor received instructions from the War Department as follows: "So soon as the Texas Congress shall have given its consent to annexation, and a convention shall assemble and accept the terms offered in the resolution of Congress, Texas will then be regarded by the executive government here so far a part of the United States as to be entitled, from this government, to defense and protection from foreign invasion and Indian incursions. The troops under your command will be placed and kept in readiness to perform that duty." General Taylor deemed the position then occupied one which would enable him, under any emergency, to fulfill his orders; therefore no change was made. Active preparations were going on, with the expectation of a march through Texas, to the point designated for our occupancy, on the extreme southwestern borders of Texas, when, on the 15th of June, 1845, instructions were transmitted by Mr. Bancroft to General Taylor as follows: "On the 4th day of July the Convention of the people of Texas will probably ac-



cept the proposition of annexation, and, in anticipation of the event, he was to advance to some point on the Gulf of Mexico which he might deem convenient for the embarkation of his command to the western frontier of Texas." New Orleans was selected as this point. The 3d and 4th Infantry were immediately ordered there. It was decided that the Dragoons should march across the country. On the 2d of July the 4th Infantry embarked on steamers at Grand Ecure, and arrived at New Orleans on the 4th, and took position at the Barracks, about four miles below the city. The 3d Infantry left Fort Jesup on the 7th, and arrived at New Orleans on the 10th. Quarters were assigned them in the lower cotton-press. And here we have the Army of Observation ready for a start, the quarter-master's department busily employed in chartering transports, and the officers of the line making the most of their time by enjoying as many of the pleasures of that delightful city as the heat of the season and the fear of yellow fever would permit, previous to their banishment to parts unknown. Here we have a starting-point. From the date of our arrival in New Orleans the Journal commences, which I hope will be sufficiently interesting to induce those who have accompanied me thus far to peep into the following chapter.

## CHAPTER II.

NOTHING could exceed the heat of the weather during the few days we spent in New Orleans. All were anxious to hear of the action of the Texas Convention, and we found some little difficulty to restrain our impatience to be "off." General Taylor and staff did not accompany the troops on their departure from Fort Jesup. He remained behind to see that every thing was arranged for the departure of the Dragoons, and arrived in the city on the 15th. In the mean time, vessels had been engaged to transport the troops to the point which should be selected by General Taylor, and all was life and animation in getting the necessary stores on board. On the 4th of July the Texas Convention decided upon accepting the propositions of annexation (with one exception) by a unanimous vote. According to instructions, an immediate move became necessary, and that the general should *make choice* of the position he intended to occupy. He was, you may say, in utter ignorance of the country; but decided, after carefully weighing the advantages (as represented) of the different points upon the Gulf, to repair to Corpus Christi. The glowing descriptions which we received of the beauty of its location, and of the immense number of fish, oysters, deer, and every kind of game, gave us pleasurable anticipations.

On the 15th of July a gloom was thrown over us all by the sudden and unexpected demise of Colonel J. H. Vose of the 4th Infantry. This sad event occurred at New Orleans Barracks. He was on drill within a few moments of his death. He fell back on the porch of



his quarters in a fit, and died before medical aid could be of any avail. He died like a true soldier, with his sword and sash around him—literally “in harness.” On the 16th he was buried with funeral honors; the 3d Infantry formed his escort. We could not but be impressed with so melancholy a commencement of the campaign. Few of us will forget the melting heat we endured while marching from our quarters to the Barracks.

On the 19th Lieutenant Bragg arrived from Charleston with his company of the 3d Artillery, with orders to report to General Taylor for duty with the “Army of Observation.” A light battery, with the necessary horses, should have met him at New Orleans. Nothing of the kind made its appearance, and the company embarked without it, for the time being serving as infantry. The steam-ship Alabama was assigned to the 3d Infantry. The general and staff (Captain Bliss, acting adjutant-general, and Lieutenant Eaton, aid-de-camp), Captain Crossman, acting quartermaster, and Captain Waggaman (acting commissary of supplies) decided upon embarking in her. During the day and evening of the 22d the baggage and subsistence were placed on board. Ships were chartered for the 4th Infantry and Bragg’s battery, who were ordered to leave as soon as they could prepare themselves. The 3d Infantry, at eleven o’clock at night on the 22d of July, were formed in line in the street running between the yards of the Cotton Press, wheeled into column, and, to the soul-inspiring air of their regimental quick-step, marched through the streets, thence to their transport. Many curious heads were seen protruding from half-opened doors and windows, to know what all the fuss could be about; and many an old vet-

eran had the dormant feelings of the 8th of January rekindled by the “ear-piercing fife” and “spirit-stirring drum.” The moon was just rising as we marched out, gilding the domes and house-tops, and caused our bayonets to glisten in the mellow light. The deep shadows on one side of the street, the bright moonlight upon the other, the solemn quiet of a sleeping city, disturbed so harshly by the martial music of the column, formed a scene which touched one’s feelings, and will not easily be forgotten.

The Alabama left her moorings at three o’clock on the morning of the 23d, and by twelve M. had crossed the bar at the southwest pass, and was gallantly and rapidly cutting her way over the Gulf, barely ruffled by the soft breeze. At anchor outside lay the sloop-of-war St. Mary’s, commanded by that gallant and excellent seaman, Captain Saunders, ordered from Pensacola to convoy the troops. As we had steam, she remained to convoy the sail vessels. At twelve o’clock on the 25th, after a delightful run, we made Matagorda Island. It was the first glimpse of the promised land, the land of “the lone star” no longer.

Matagorda Island is properly St. Joseph’s; and the one put down on the maps as St. Joseph’s should be Espiritu Santo. We ran along the coast (about two miles distant) all the afternoon. Its white sand-beach and rolling sand-hills, from twenty to fifty feet high, covered with verdure, presented quite a bold and picturesque appearance. It resembles very much the Florida coast. You miss, however, the palmetto and pine; to the latter-named we have bidden a long farewell. The live-oak, of immense size, through whose thickly-interlaced leaves and limbs the sun’s rays never pierce, has taken their place. I regret to part with



the stately, long-leaf pine; it has been associated with my southern service, and its "music" has oft lulled me into happy reveries. A fierce band of Indians, the Caranchuas, formerly, and within a very late period, inhabited this island. They are cannibals, and proved a scourge to the early settlers of this portion of Texas. A small band of Texans gave them battle, and, after a fierce fight, whipped and drove them from the island. The spot on which the battle took place bears the name of "Battle Island." In the course of several fights they have nearly been exterminated. They are now reduced to a few warriors, and are located upon Padre Island. They are very brave and warlike, and celebrated for the accuracy of their shooting. An instance is related of a warrior lying down upon his back, using his feet to draw his bow, and driving an arrow, at the distance of 175 yards, through a man and six folds of buckskin.

We made Aransas Bay, latitude  $27^{\circ} 45'$ , early on the morning of the 26th of July. Lieutenant C. landed at nine o'clock, and on the top of one of the loftiest sand-hills erected a pole, from the top of which was unfurled the star-spangled banner. It floats over a rich acquisition, the most precious Uncle Sam has yet added to his crown.

"Long may it wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave."

The company I commanded had the honor of landing first. The vessel, drawing too much water, could not cross the bar; it therefore became necessary for us to land in small boats. Seventy-five yards distant from the shore the men had to jump overboard into the roaring surf. They made a real frolic of it. Some old veteran camp-women took to the element as if they were

born in it; while others, more delicately-nerved, preferred a *man's back, and rode on shore*. This island (St. Joseph's) is a curiosity, in many respects. If you dig a well four feet deep any where, even on the sea-shore, you obtain *fresh* water. Into these wells a barrel is usually sunk, to prevent their caving in. My company was encamped near a fresh-water pond; within a few paces there was another pond, of precisely similar *appearance*, but salt as brine. No one was aware of this fact until we saw one of the men, who was very thirsty, rushing to it, flattering himself he was about having a refreshing drink, spitting out the first swallow, with strong symptoms of disgust. I can not satisfactorily account for the water in some places being fresh and in other's salt. The most plausible theory is, the water of the ocean, filtrating through the sand, loses its saline property. Every thing goes to prove this. If you dig a little lower in the same well, after reaching fresh, you will strike salt water. The fresh water, at best, has a most unpleasant taste. There are three or four families residing upon this island, who depend upon this water for their drinking. The fishing here can not be surpassed; sheep-head, drum, mullet, red-fish, and many others too numerous to mention, abound; the water is literally alive with them. The red-fish are most prized; the men caught great quantities of them; they bait with fiddlers, wade out into the surf, and as fast as they throw in their lines are sure to have a bite; not so sure, however, to catch the fish, for they often strike such large ones they snap their hooks like pipe-stems. As soon as you have fastened one, you throw the line over your shoulder and put for the shore "double quick;" often, by this means, *landing* the largest fish without any difficulty; for they



swim along with you, and find themselves caught before they know it. A sergeant of my company hooked such a monster that he could not budge him; the fish darted between him and a comrade standing by his side; as he passed they laid violent hands upon him, unhooked him, and started for shore. They had not proceeded ten paces, when he flapped his tail and threw them both on their backs, and escaped.

The hunting here is unsurpassed. Deer abound. If you are in *want of meat*, you have but to station yourself behind some of the innumerable sand-hills, near ponds of fresh water. Here may be seen the deer for half a mile, when feeding or coming to water. There you can quietly sit, and the deer will walk within thirty yards of you; or, if you prefer it, mount your horse, dash over the island, and you can have the excitement of shooting them under full run. An officer of our regiment jumped on a horse, rode to the shooting-grounds, and in twenty minutes from the time of dismounting killed three fine, fat fellows. Teal and mallard duck were found in the ponds with their young; also jack-snipe. This is somewhat astonishing, as it is the general impression they migrate to the north to breed.

The soil of the island is peculiarly adapted to the cultivation of sea-island cotton. Potatoes and melons flourish luxuriantly. It is a light soil, quite sandy, mixed with a great deal of shell; and no matter how much time elapses between rains, the moisture from the soil (water being found so near the surface), combined with the heavy dews, affords sufficient nourishment for the plant.

The landing of the troops' supplies was effected with great difficulty. On the 29th, two companies of

the 3d, one of which was mine, embarked on the steamer Undine for Corpus Christi. Aransas and Corpus Christi Bays are separated by a long flat of land. It was discovered that the Undine drew too much water to pass over it. We were forced to leave the steamboat, and cross the bay, *a very rough one*, in small boats. We landed on the main shore on the 31st of July. On the 14th of July Captain Tompkins's company of the 3d Artillery sailed from New York in the United States store-ship Lexington, for the mouth of the Columbia River. He carried with him a battery of artillery, besides heavy guns, and every material requisite for the erection of a permanent fortification.

### CHAPTER III.

THE village of Corpus Christi, or "*Kinney's Ranch*," as it is generally called, is situated on the western shore of Corpus Christi Bay. The town consists of some twenty or thirty houses, partly situated on a shelf of land, elevated some six or eight feet above the water, about two hundred yards broad, and on a bluff which rises from the plain to the height of one hundred feet. The bay at this point is in the shape of a crescent, extending in a southeast direction to Padre Island, and northwest to the mouth of the Nueces. The bluff presents a beautiful aspect, the rise being sufficiently gentle to deprive it of all appearance of abruptness, clad with the mesquite-grass, and evergreen bushes scattered in clumps hither and yon in graceful confusion, looking, in its gentle undulations, as if its pleasing irregularities had been fashioned by the hand of man.