

leges, are granted to individuals at very moderate rates. Any person discovering a new mine, or one that has been abandoned, may declare it; that is, may take a lease of it, on application to the proper authorities, and by complying with certain prerequisites, amongst which he is to work the mine a certain number of days each year on penalty of forfeiture. The inhabitants of Santa Rosa are generally federalists, and friendly to the United States. Our camp was continually crowded with men, women, and children, from early in the morning until retreat, and we were freely supplied "with all the delicacies of the season." Baskets of nice cakes, confectionary, and fruits were sent in as presents to the officers; and when our men visited the town, the people were watching at the doors to invite them into their houses to partake of their hospitality. It was quite amusing to see how soon they fraternized, and it was evident that the population hailed us as protectors and deliverers; and, in fact, more than one proposition was made to me to encourage a *pronunciamiento* against the Mexican government.

A very large and rich mine was formerly worked within two miles of the town by a company, at the head of which was the Spanish governor of the province, who held his court in Santa Rosa with much splendor. The mine was worked very skilfully, if we may judge by the large adits and mills, the ruins of which we saw. The mining was in successful operation (yielding vast quantities of silver, according to the popular account) when the revolution commenced, which soon drove the proprietors from the country, and with them all safety and enterprise. During the Spanish domination, despotic as it was, Mexico must have presented a prosperous and interesting appearance, for everywhere are seen the monuments of former greatness. At that time, too, the security of life and property (except for offences against the State) was perfect, and the revolution was the result rather of social than of political causes, in which, by-the-by, most revolutions of separation find their origin.

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CAMP NEAR MONCLOVA, MEXICO,
November 18, 1846.

SIR: In compliance with your instructions, I have the honor to submit the following journal of the route from Santa Rosa to this place.

The army marched from Santa Rosa to-day (Sunday, October 25.) The road runs along the foot of level plateaus of table land, extending from the base of the Santa Rosa mountains, in nearly an easterly direction, for eight and a half miles, when it turns southeasterly, through an opening in the plateaus, four miles to the "Arroyo Alamo," a shallow stream, with broad pebbly bed and low banks, upon which the army encamped. For the first eight miles the country is pretty well covered with the usual chaparral growth of musquette, Spanish bayonet, &c. We crossed also in this distance two small rivulets; one about three, and the other six miles from camp, and one or two dry beds of mountain streams—neither difficult for wagons. The rest of the road was across open rolling prairie.

Monday, October 26.—Our course to-day was S. 40° E. 7½ miles to the Carrecitos (little caves,) and one mile further to the Sans, both small beds, with the water standing in pools; the country open and rolling. From the Sans the road deflects gradually towards the mountains, to a

course about S. 5° W. 8½ miles to the Ahuza, (buzzard,) a fine running stream, two hundred and fifty feet across the bed, the stream being divided into several rivulets, by stony islands, the whole bed stony, and the banks low and firm.

Tuesday, 27th.—Three miles to the Guachapina, and four more to the Piletas—both small prairie streams. Five miles beyond crossed the Lampasos, a considerable stream, but the water is sulphurous, and is said to be poisonous for cattle. The country rolling and covered with small bushes, Spanish bayonets, and varieties of cacti. The maguey (agave Americana) begins here to make its appearance in considerable numbers. A short distance east of the Piletas a road turns off to the right towards a pass in the mountains. It had the appearance of having been recently travelled by wagons. Thirteen miles further on, we came to the "hacienda de Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe de los Hermanas," about a mile beyond which, upon a small stream, whose source is a hot spring with a temperature of 111° F., we encamped. This spring is walled in, and is a place of considerable resort by the fashionable of Monclova. This hacienda numbers one hundred and sixty peons, and has a large extent of ground, say one thousand acres, in cultivation. It is situated by three small knolls, called "Los Hermanas," (the sisters, from which it derives its name,) lying between the Guachapinas and the northern extremity of the Lampasos mountains—the two ranges being here not more than three miles apart. The latter range is said to extend to Monterrey. A cold, drizzling rain set in about four o'clock, as we commenced pitching our tents. The rear-guard and train did not arrive till after dark.

Wednesday, 28th.—Remained in camp.

Thursday, 29th.—Two miles to the Nadadores, or Arroyo de Carmil, which we crossed by a bridge. It contains brackish water, running between steep clay banks. Between the Nadadores and the Monclova river, half a mile further on, is an old hacienda (del Tapado) occupied only by peons, but with considerable cultivation in its vicinity. The road from here continues along the left bank of the Monclova, five and a half miles to the hacienda de los Ajuntas, a village of some five hundred souls, near which the army encamped.

Friday, 30th.—Marched fourteen miles, and encamped near Estancia de Arriba, a small hamlet of some twenty houses. Passed several ranchos, and a good deal of corn and cotton. The road continues near the Monclova to near Estancia, where it makes a bend to the east about a mile or two from the road, which it meets again at Monclova.

The vicinity of the road, where not in cultivation, is covered with bushes, cacti, &c. General course from "Los Hermanas" to Monclova S. 20° W.

Saturday, 31st, and November 1 and 2.—In camp.

Tuesday, November 3.—Marched to Monclova, four miles, all the way through cultivated fields, and encamped on the east side of the river, opposite to the Alameda.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

L. SITGREAVES,

1st Lieut. Topographical Engineers.

To Captain GEORGE W. HUGHES,

Chief Topographical Engineers,

Centre Division, Army of Mexico.

The main army, under the immediate command of General Wool, reached the vicinity of the town of Monclova on the 30th of October, and on the 3d of November the camp was moved to a position opposite the Alameda, on the east side of the river, and close to the town, where it remained, in consequence of the Monterey armistice, until the 23d of November, having in the mean time been joined by the troops left behind to guard the passage of the Rio Grande, and to escort the wagon train. During this long halt the topographical engineers were engaged in making surveys of the surrounding country, and astronomical observations, reconnaissances for long distances from the camp in different directions, drawing maps, and reducing the previous observations.

Advantage was taken of this detention to improve the discipline and drill of the troops, to collect supplies from the surrounding country, and to establish depôts and a hospital in Monclova. The commanding general, looking to the long line of communication with San Antonio and Lavaca, had determined to abandon that line of communication, and to form a new base of operation resting on Monclova, which is the heart and centre of a wide and fertile region, abounding with all necessary supplies. When the army moved, Major Warren, a gallant and efficient officer of the 1st Illinois regiment, with four companies of volunteers, were left behind to guard the magazines and to control the population, which was known to be extremely hostile, and in our approach to the city to have organized a force of 2,500 to oppose us. They were, however, disbanded by Colonel Blanco before our arrival. This same force was afterwards led by Colonel Blanco to the gorges of the mountains in the rear of Saltillo during the battle of Buena Vista, to complete the anticipated victory by the indiscriminate massacre of our men after they had been defeated by Santa Anna.

On the 21st of November, Lieutenant Franklin was sent to Monterey and Saltillo to communicate with General Taylor. He was instructed to reconnoitre the roads over which he passed in going and returning. He rejoined us at the camp of Benedito on the 27th. His report will be found in the appendix.

Monclova, a city of about 8,000 inhabitants, and under the Spanish domination, the capital of the province of Coahuila, is pleasantly situated on the Rio Monclova, a small and beautiful stream of pure water rising about ten miles to the south of the town, near the hamlet of Castana. The city of Monclova is a fine and rather cleanly town. The houses are well built, (the better class of stone,) and the principal church is a very large and imposing structure. There is here also an extensive and once comfortable hospital (now abandoned to the bats) erected by the Spanish government, and large quarters for troops. The introduction of running water through all the streets, and its numerous alamedas, (skirted with long avenues of trees,) and its numerous well irrigated gardens, impart to Monclova, particularly to persons who have recently traversed the dry and uncultivated plains of Coahuila, a most agreeable and charming aspect. It wears, nevertheless, that melancholy appearance of decay and of premature old age so common to Mexican towns.

The Rio Monclova is a tributary to the Salado,* and its valley is extremely well cultivated for nearly its whole extent, especially in the vicin-

* Vide memoirs of a reconnaissance from Monclova to Quatro Cinegas.

ty of the town, where it expands to a width of five or six miles. Immediately above the city are large reservoirs of water, and extensive water-power, an inconsiderable portion of which is expended on three grist mills. The principal productions of this district are corn, cotton, sugar, beans, and figs—the first greatly predominating, and constituting the main staple. Very little wheat is grown, and the larger portion of flour consumed is brought from Cienegas. Although this region is well adapted to manufactures, from its mild climate, its vast water-power, the cheapness of subsistence, common labor, and wool, and the peculiar capability of the surrounding country for the production of cotton, it furnishes nothing but a few domestic fabrics of the simplest character, and but few mechanics of any description, the most skilful of whom are foreigners.

Monclova is not defensible, inasmuch as it is commanded from several directions by high hills, the possession of which by a considerable force would determine the fate of the town.

General Wool having decided to march on Parras, an important strategic point from which he might move either on Chihuahua or Durango, concentrate with General Taylor on either San Luis Potosi or Zacatecas, or, if necessary, unite with General Worth at Saltillo, I was directed to leave the camp (on the right bank of the Monclova river) near the town, and select a position for the army in the vicinity of the small hamlet of Castana. Under this order, on the 23d of November I chose a camp on the Saltillo road, about one mile south of the village, near the headwaters of the river—the Arkansas cavalry and Beall's squadron of 2d dragoons having already occupied adjacent ground.

The distance from Monclova to our new camp was 10 miles, the road good, and confined to a narrow valley between mountain ranges, some of whose jagged peaks rise to the height of nearly 4,000 feet. The formation is volcanic, intersected with *trap dikes*, in which *loadstones* or *natural magnets* are found. There is neither water nor cultivation in this march, and the country is almost destitute of vegetation.

Castana is a collection of mean ranchos built of the *adobe* or unburnt brick, the common building material of the country: wood is too scarce, stone too expensive, and bricks cannot be burnt, owing to the calcareous nature of the soil. The adobe takes mortar well, and when plastered with *stucco*, (and there is none better than the Mexican,) will last a very long time, resisting the heaviest rains; but when not so protected, they are washed away in a few years. Nearly all the houses in Coahuila are constructed with flat roofs, and are almost universally one story high. The roofs of the better kind are formed by placing on the walls, which are thick and high, joists about eighteen inches apart, over which are arranged diagonally a covering of shingles, and over all is deposited a thick coating of dirt and cement. The houses have often extensive court yards, in which flowers are planted; and they are provided with large reservoirs, kept full of running water, sometimes spouting into jets high in the air. Fireplaces and chimneys are rarely seen in Mexico.

At Castana the valley opens to a width of nearly eight miles, and is well irrigated and cultivated, its principal productions being corn and cattle. All the land in this district of country belongs to a few wealthy proprietors; and nearly the whole laboring population are *serfs*, called *peons*, (slaves sold for debt,) who are transferred with the estates like so many "villians of the glebe." No portion of northern Mexico can be cultivated

except where running-water is at command for purposes of irrigation; so that the arable land is very limited in proportion to that which may be regarded as absolutely sterile.

Taking Monclova as a centre, the district described by a radius of twenty miles probably produces annually about three hundred thousand bushels of maize, a good deal of sugar and cotton, and large herds of cattle, sheep, and goats, for the rearing of which two latter classes of animals the whole country would be admirably adapted but for the ravages of the Indians, who render even the suburbs of the towns unsafe.

From Castana there is a mule-track to Cinegas, through the mountain passes, by the way of Pozuelos, mentioned in another memoir.

On the 24th, the whole army encamped on the ground which had been previously selected for that purpose. It was well supplied with those essentials to an army—abundance of good water, grass, and fuel; which latter article was soon wanted, as a *severe norther* set in soon after the tents had been pitched. The weather changed suddenly from extreme heat to a temperature below the freezing point, and the wind blew a perfect gale, covering the camp with a cloud of dust, through which it was almost impossible to distinguish a single object. The whole surface of the soil appeared to be in motion; and it was, indeed, but one heap of sand, there having been no rain for nearly four months. Early in the morning of the 23d the thermometer stood at 24° Fahrenheit, and before 4 o'clock of the same day rose to 95°. This statement will convey a pretty good idea of the vicissitudes of this changeable climate.

I left the camp at Castana before 6 a. m. on the morning of the 25th, in advance of the army, which soon followed. It consisted of one squadron of 1st dragoons, one squadron of 2d dragoons, one battery of eight guns, field artillery, the Arkansas regiment of mounted men, a battalion of 6th infantry, including one company of Kentucky volunteers, and the 1st and 2d Illinois volunteers—a detachment of one squadron of Arkansas and four companies of Illinois volunteers having been left as a garrison at Monclova. The command numbered about two thousand healthy and able-bodied men, inured to the climate, and familiar with privation, well appointed, and anxious to meet the enemy.

It may be proper here to remark, (for the purpose of avoiding repetitions) that in addition to my other duties, I was charged with the service of selecting and laying out encampments, and of assigning the troops to their ground. It therefore became necessary for me to precede the advance-guard of the army in every march, by several hours. On the evening of the 25th, the army encamped at a reservoir called *Bajan*, having marched twenty miles. We here found good water, plenty of fuel, and tolerable grazing. The road was good, passing over a wild and uncultivated country, with high mountains on either side. Our course was southwesterly. As we approached Bajan the ground became *marly*, the dust from which was very distressing to the men, who presented the appearance of having been sprinkled with dirty flour. As far as Bajan the roads to Monterey and Saltillo are common, but at this point they diverge. At Bajan is a large stone reservoir, filled with sweet water from a copious spring, and was formerly supplied with large stone troughs, for the accommodation of the muleteers; now in ruins.

On the 26th, the camp was broken up before day-light, the army following the Saltillo road, which generally passes over an uncultivated and

uninviting country, similar to that of yesterday's march. The men still complain of the effects of the calcareous marl, which injures their feet and eyes. We encamped at *La Joya*, or *Agua Nueva*, a fine large spring, where we also found a sufficiency of wood and grazing; the weather was oppressively hot. The direction of our march to-day was WSW.—distance fourteen miles.

On the 27th we reached the *Venadito*, and encamped on one of its numerous branches, after a most fatiguing march of thirty miles over a dusty road, and exposed to the intolerable heat of the sun. For the whole of this distance there is not a single drop of water, except a little in the Tanque San Fillipe, which was so putrescent that even the mules refused it. The infantry suffered greatly in this march, and came up in small squads. At the Tanque, about fifteen miles from the last camp, we left the main road, and changed our course more to the west, through an easy mountain pass. We were now fairly on the road to Parras.

The *Venadito* is a small stream rising near Patos, (see the map,) falls into the San Juan,* which, flowing past Monterey, discharges into the Rio Grande at Camargo.

There are several plantations near our camp, on which large quantities of maize are grown. The country also produces numerous herds of goats and cattle.

Between Castana and the Benedito, a distance of 66 miles, there is no settlement; we saw a few ruined ranchos, which had been destroyed by the Indians.

November 28.—Owing to the sufferings yesterday of the men and beasts, the general determined to remain on the Venedito, where we are comfortably encamped, with an abundant supply of water, fuel, forage, and grass.

It was observed quite early in the day that the stream was rapidly and mysteriously diminishing, and by noon there was scarcely any of it remaining. The General directed me to ascertain, if possible, the cause of this sudden disappearance. After consulting with several Mexicans at the hacienda, who all protested that they knew nothing about the matter, and suggested that the water had probably been drawn off, some 16 miles up the river, for the purpose of irrigating the wheat-fields, I proceeded up the stream about 2½ miles, when I discovered that the supply branch on which we were encamped had been dammed up, and a breach cut by which the water was diverted into another channel. I immediately destroyed the temporary dam, partially stopped the breach, and turned the stream back into its former bed, and then directed a gang of peons to complete the work; a guard was afterwards posted to prevent a recurrence of the mischief. There can be no doubt, judging from all the circumstances of the case, that the act was done with a malicious design.

About four miles south of Bajan, a road diverges from the main road, and again unites with it near the hacienda of Benedito, passing through the "Boca de los Treize Rios," and is about 15 miles shorter than our line of march, but is represented to be very rough and rocky.

November 29.—Left Benedito at daybreak, and marched to *Sanceda*,

* The drainage of the San Juan is very extensive; and its sources being high up in the Sierra Madre, the downfall-water is discharged into it from the mountain sheds with great rapidity, in consequence of which it often overflows its banks near the Rio Grande, inundating the town of Camargo in the rainy season. The country from Bajan, twenty miles beyond Parras, from Castanuela, Patos, and Agua Nueva, drains into the San Juan.