

The road continues along the left bank of the river Guadalupe, varying in its distances from the river from a quarter of a mile to a mile and a half.

For the first twelve miles the road goes over a wet prairie, which had been washed by the water into holes, which gives the euphonious name of "hog-wallow" to the prairie. The road is miserable even in dry weather, and in wet weather is said to be impassable. From the soft nature of the soil, the slightest fall of rain makes it bad; and a long continued rain, one can easily imagine, would render the prairie fitter for navigation in boats than for travelling in wagons.

After crossing the prairie the country in the vicinity of the road is found to be thinly timbered with a growth of what is commonly called the post-oak. The road itself is good, being sandy, and the face of the country is level. This timber does not grow regularly, as in the woods of the north, but is scattered in clumps. The height of the tree seldom exceeds twenty feet. The road generally winds through parts where there is no timber. The soil seems to be fertile, but the country is very thinly settled. The distance from Victoria to Gonzales is sixty-three miles, and from the point at which timber commences, fifty-one miles from Gonzales. I noticed in the whole distance but one place where the timber was not post-oak. This was at a small creek eight miles from Gonzales, called McCoy's creek, the banks of which were well timbered with sycamore, oak, &c.

The country becomes more hilly as the road approaches Gonzales, but in no other respect did I notice a change.

Gonzales is a small place of but little interest, containing about 300 inhabitants. It is situated near the junction of the St. Mark's and Guadalupe rivers. The former is crossed by a ferry, the road still continuing along the left bank of the Guadalupe. In the vicinity of Gonzales the country is more thickly settled than I had yet found it.

After leaving Gonzales the soil became visibly more sandy. The hills increased in height, were stony, and the whole face of the country was unprepossessing. This appearance continues as far as a short distance from Seguin, in the vicinity of which place the country visibly improved, and the settlers became much more numerous.

Seguin is thirty-four miles from Gonzales. It is a small place, but little larger than Gonzales. Here, as well as along the whole route, the houses are built of logs. They are divided into three parts. The centre is merely a shed, the roof of the house being all that protects it from the weather. The other two parts are on each side of the centre shed, and are the kitchens, bedrooms, &c., of the establishment. They are rude but very comfortable dwellings, particularly so for so new a country.

About two miles from Seguin the road crosses the Guadalupe, by means of a wooden bridge. The banks of the river are here well timbered with a fine growth of oaks, of various kinds, sycamores, &c.

After leaving the Guadalupe, the road runs nearly west to San Antonio, a distance of thirty-two miles. The muskeet (a variety of the acacia) covers the whole face of the surrounding country. Here it is first seen on the route west, and it continues with little intermission as far as the centre division marched. A succession of parallel ridges, running nearly north and south, intersect the road, giving to the journey something which at first appears to be variety, but which soon proves to be an interminable sameness. The traveller looks forward to see San Antonio in the distance when he has arrived at the top of one of these hills, but he is

disappointed again and again, until he gives up in despair, and, without looking to the right or left, rides sluggishly on until the gray walls of the Alamo, immediately in front of him, give him the pleasing assurance that his journey is ended.

Half way between the Guadalupe and San Antonio the road crosses the Cibolo, a fine, clear stream, about thirty feet in width, very shallow, but with a fine gravelly bottom. Several smaller streams are crossed at intermediate distances, so that this part of the route is as well watered as the first part.

On the whole, this route from Victoria to San Antonio may be said to be a good natural road. With the exception of the first twelve miles the road is good in all weathers, and in all seasons of the year. The greatest obstacle is the St. Mark's river. At present the only means of crossing it is by a ferry, but in a few years the more thickly settled state of the country will render a bridge indispensable; and when this is constructed, there will be an uninterrupted communication from La Vaca to San Antonio.

There will never be any difficulty about supplies on this route, for as the country grows older the farming population will continually increase.

Respectfully submitted:

W. B. FRANKLIN,

Brevet 1st Lieut., U. S. Topographical Engineer.

To Major GEORGE W. HUGHES,

U. S. Topographical Engineer,

Chief of the Topographical Staff, Centre Division.

Captain GEORGE W. HUGHES, *Corps of Topographical Engineers*, will find, in the following memoranda, a hasty and imperfect account of the march of the Arkansas regiment of mounted volunteers to the general rendezvous, at San Antonio de Bexar, which I submit in obedience to his request, accompanied by a rough map of the route taken by the same. This notice must necessarily be very unsatisfactory, not only because I was absent from the command during a considerable portion of the march, but, as I now greatly regret, I took my notes with too little care during that part of our expedition. I then supposed (yet, I have since had reason to believe, very erroneously) that, as the interior of Texas had been so often traversed by tourists, we could find in print reliable and satisfactory information as to the geography of the country, &c. And as there are already extant some two or three maps, compiled, professedly, from *actual surveys*, any topographical notes, with the idea of correcting the current maps, seemed equally supererogatory; yet experience has convinced me that the latter are likewise remarkably imperfect. I should note, with regard to the map, that though I endeavored to keep an approximate estimate of distances, I paid very little attention to courses; and, what I still more regret, I was able to determine but very few latitudes, owing, in part, to ill-health, but more to a series of cloudy weather—excessive rains, in fact—during a large portion of the trip. I happen to have with me the diary of a tour through the interior of Texas in the year 1841; but my notes of courses and distances were kept in a separate memorandum-book, which I unfortunately

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left behind; yet as each day's journey (assisted by my memory) affords an approximation to the distances, I have marked this route, also, with plain dotted lines, however, while that of the Arkansas regiment is colored. The most important points in the intervals are filled up from published maps, or other information, to show their relations; yet I profess to be responsible for none, except those on the routes I have travelled. But, soliciting indulgence for this explanatory digression, I will proceed to the expedition.

The Arkansas regiment rendezvoused at the town of Washington, Hempstead county, Arkansas, in the last of June, and elected their "field officers" early in July. It certainly speaks well for the patriotism of this new State to know that about thirty companies of volunteers offered their services to the governor, and many others would have presented themselves had they not discovered they would be too late.

It seems that the route originally chalked out for this regiment (as well, indeed, as for most of this column) was to cross Red river at Fulton, Arkansas, and proceed thence southwestward, *via* Trinity colony and Austin city, to San Antonio; but on account of receiving supplies at Robbins's Ferry (Trinity river) it became necessary to turn the route in that direction. However, as the arms, equipage, &c., of the regiment, failed to reach Fulton, as was expected, Colonel Yell considered it expedient to come by Shreveport, Louisiana, hoping to meet his supplies there; in which, however, he failed.

I arrived early in July, from Missouri, at the rendezvous, and found the regiment preparing to march. I proceeded, soon after, to Shreveport, for the purpose (besides other business) of having some temporary tents, &c., provided—the troops being almost wholly without. On the 18th July the regiment marched from Washington, and on the seventh day reached Shreveport—a distance of about one hundred and ten miles. It should be noted, in justice to the energy and expedition with which the officers executed their duties, that on the 24th the regiment marched fifteen miles, and ferried Red river by ten o'clock the same evening—about eight hundred men and horses, with a train of forty wagons—in two or three very inferior boats. In fact, I may here remark, once for all, that the Sabine, Trinity, Brazos, Colorado and Guadalupe rivers were severally crossed, in addition to making a fair day's march, in one day.

On the 26th of July the regiment marched from Shreveport, and encamped near the village of Greenwood, (about four miles east of the Texas line,) making about sixteen miles over a gently undulating, but rather level country. Remaining behind, on business, I did not overtake the regiment till ten o'clock on the night of October 4th. I found it encamped about three miles east of Crockett, a village in Texas, about one hundred and fifty miles from Shreveport. The road throughout this distance is generally good; country alternately level and undulating; sometimes hilly, but by no means mountainous.

This region may generally be regarded as of rather thin soil; yet much of it of fertile character, producing Indian corn and most vegetables reasonably well, and cotton very finely. This latter should be regarded as the great staple of those regions. The timber is mostly post-oak, black-jack, black hickory, and in some places short-leaf pitch-pine. We also find sweet-gum, chinquopin, and many other growth, with great abundance of sassafras. I may here remark, that I observed no sassafras

west of the waters of Trinity river. As yet, we find no prairies on this route, except an occasional insignificant, timberless glade.

August 5th.—At Crockett the regiment was divided, one-half taking the road to a ferry three miles below Robbins's, while the balance kept the direct route to Robbins's ferry. I came with the latter division; made some fourteen miles; road tolerably good.

Thursday, 6th.—About twelve miles to Trinity river; ferried it, and pitched camp two or three miles to the west. The other division (under Colonel Roane) crossed at the lower ferry and reached same camp to-night.

The regiment had necessarily to remain here two or three days, to receive a lot of supplies which had been transported to Robbins's ferry on steamboats; but owing to bad weather, the delay was longer than had been contemplated. During our stay here it rained almost incessantly; in fact, it had been remarkably—very unusually—rainy for the last month or six weeks, where I have travelled. I think I might safely say, that in forty days I had at least thirty rains upon me.

Monday, 10th.—Marched from the Trinity camp to-day. Owing to the excessive rains, the roads had become not only very muddy, but miry; so that, though the horsemen made near fifteen miles, most of the "train" only came about ten—the wagons frequently bogging down, even on the high grounds, to the very axletrees. I should have noted that Major Bonneville's command of infantry and dragoons reached Trinity on Sunday last.

Tuesday, 11th.—Last night's camp was on a creek, called Cany, (a branch of the Bidais,) which the rains had swelled to swimming; therefore it was found necessary, this morning, to bridge it, which was completed before midday, and at one o'clock we marched, making about eight miles—crossing another branch or two of the Bidais—still leaving a portion of the train behind. Before this was got up, several hard showers of rain that intervened so flooded the brooks on the way, that it was necessary to bridge a couple more of them, wherefore all the train did not reach this camp till the 13th.

Friday, 14th.—Marched about twenty miles; camped nearly two miles to northeast of a little village known as Fanthorp's. Some handsome and fertile-looking upland prairies, interspersed with groves of black-jack, post-oak, &c. Water scarce during dry weather.

Saturday, 15th.—Some eighteen miles; country somewhat similar, yet fewer prairies, and consequently less rich land; for it may be observed that, in all this region, the prairies are the most fertile lands, except river bottoms, that are to be found. Camp at the edge of the Brazos bottom.

Sunday, 16th.—Four miles through the very boggy bottoms of Brazos river; ferried the river at Washington, immediately below the mouth of Navasoto river.

Monday, 17th.—Marched about twenty miles, and camped four or five miles west of the village of Independence. West of the Brazos river the country assumes a richer and more agreeable appearance. Though from a few miles beyond Trinity river we have had frequent detached prairies, yet they are neither so extensive nor so beautiful as those west of the Brazos. But these are not of the character of the broad, monotonous, and almost interminable plains found between our western frontier and the Rocky mountains; they are high and rolling, beautifully interspersed

with groves of live oak, hackberry, and occasionally pecan, romantically bespeckled almost everywhere with chance isolated trees of the same, the whole bordered by dense forests of post-oak, black-jack, black hickory, &c., with cedar, cottonwood, sycamore, &c., on the streams. These prairies are generally as fertile-looking as they are beautiful, producing all the vegetables exceedingly well, especially yams and sweet potatoes; while we were assured that the great staples of cotton, sugar, and even wheat, might be cultivated to great advantage, although here, at least on the road, we met with nothing but Indian corn on the farms. The crops of this showed quite fair for the climate, though not equal to those of the north.

Tuesday, 18th.—Made about twelve miles over a country quite similar to that of yesterday. Though in these regions we perceive little local indications of bilious disease, still I was informed that the inhabitants suffered from fever and ague to no small degree, especially in autumn. Speaking of the forest growth, I should have noted that live oak timber, though of a scrubby character, now became quite abundant in the highlands. An occasional scrubby *mezquite* tree also made its appearance; though, as yet, I had seen but one or two. I might here remark, also, that prior to this time, at least as far as the Brazos, the bottoms of the rivers and larger creeks were generally thickly set with that species of *cane* which so abounds in the lower Mississippi valley; yet, from this forward I observed no more of it. No sassafras nor pine west of Trinity waters on this route; yet the latter is quite abundant higher up on the Colorado.

Wednesday, 19th.—About sixteen miles; country similar to that of yesterday.

Thursday, 20th.—Six or seven miles to the village of Rutersville; contains scarcely over one hundred souls. Thence five or six miles to La Grange, a town of two or three hundred inhabitants, near the east bank of the Colorado river. I should have remarked that Major Bonneville's command passed us at Fanthorp's, beyond the Brazos, and was now a day ahead. Crossed the Colorado half a mile below La Grange without difficulty, and pitched a romantic camp on the bordering high bluff; a good spring hard by. This was my first convenient opportunity to take latitude; found the camp in $29^{\circ} 53'$ north.

Friday, 21st.—Marched some twelve miles, and camped on a high and romantically beautiful ridge, sparsely covered with live oak and pecan trees; broad prairie spreads out to southward, but country mostly timbered to the north and west. The timber about our camp resembled, for all the world, an old waste orchard of large apple trees. The route to-day led through a country variegated with handsome prairies and groves of live oak, pecan, post-oak, black-jack, black hickory, &c. The two first indicate the richest lands, growing generally most abundant about the prairies. Latitude of this camp $29^{\circ} 46\frac{1}{2}'$.

Saturday, 22d.—About fourteen miles to-day, and camped on a small stream, said to be the headmost branch of La Vaca river.

Sunday, 23d.—I left the regiment this morning in company with Major Borland and escort for San Antonio. Though yesterday's march was over a country similar to that of day before, that from here to Gonzales is of a poorer character, and mostly timbered with black jack, post oak, and some black hickory, also occasional live oak, &c. About sixteen miles

to Beach creek. Large *mezquite* timber now began to make its appearance. Ten miles further to the village of Gonzales, near northeast bank of Guadalupe river. Much complaint of bilious disease about here. Gonzales contains scarcely one hundred souls. Two miles, and ferried the San Marco river; only about fifty feet wide, but deep and sluggish. Six miles further, and bivouacked at King's. Old King afforded one of the most perfect samples of a "Texan Hoosier" that I had met with; emphatically "a jolly old soul," with no lack of "breath to blow his own trumpet of fame." He came to Texas, he said, thirty-four years ago; had reared a large family there—sons and daughters and sons-in-law settled all around him. Taking his own story for it, he had been in all the battles with every enemy, whether savage or Mexican, that had invaded the country, and had had a thousand "hair-breadth 'scapes." In the sequel, to prove his patriotism, he charged us double price for everything he furnished us.

Monday, 24th.—About twenty-five miles, and stayed to-night at the little village of Seguin—cutting our day's journey short on account of there being no settlement in reach ahead; in fact, none between this place and San Antonio. The truth is, this route is mostly very sparsely settled, especially west of the Colorado. The village of Seguin, though now containing less than one hundred souls, may yet become a flourishing town, as it is a healthy-looking site, near the northwestern bank of the Guadalupe river, and beautifully watered by several fine springs. It might become a manufacturing town, as two falls of the Guadalupe—one immediately below, the other above town—afford extensive water-power. It is also believed that the Guadalupe river may be made navigable to this vicinity, for small steamboats, during more than half the year. Likewise all the other important streams of Texas crossed by us afford flattering prospects of navigation for half the year. The Sabine has already been ascended to a considerable distance; the Trinity far above Robbins's ferry; the Brazos, also, above Washington, and the Colorado to La Grange. But the navigation of both Colorado and Brazos is considerably interrupted by rapids. On the latter, just below the crossing of the "old San Antonio road," near the mouth of Little Brazos, I saw a fall of at least five or six feet perpendicular in the distance of fifty yards. The Trinity, though a narrow stream, affords the best navigation, perhaps, of any river in Texas. As far as the Guadalupe river the *long gray moss* of the south is found particularly abundant in the low grounds, and frequently even in the highlands; but west of the Guadalupe bottoms I saw none at all, except about the head of the San Antonio river.*

Tuesday, 25th.—Crossed Guadalupe river this morning about a mile from Seguin; river here some thirty or forty yards wide—clear, deep, and sluggish. From Seguin to Cibolo creek about fifteen miles, thence to Salado creek fifteen miles, and five miles further to San Antonio de Bexar. The last two streams are of beautiful, clear water—nearly equal, being of small mill-power size. The country, after crossing Guadalupe river, as-

* I should have remarked, that up the course of the Guadalupe river there are some fine lands—in fact, some of the most fascinating farm sites I ever saw; literally "hills and dales" delightfully connected. On the one side we could have a rich, high prairie bottom of one thousand acres, or more; and on the other, gently elevated hills, beautifully shaded with live oak, &c., for residence sites. The alternation of prairie and timbered land suit continued.

sumes decidedly a new character—level, dry-looking plains, fertile-looking soil, being a dark vegetable loam; timber scarce, but no perfectly bare prairies, being sparsely set everywhere with scrubby *mezquite*, and occasional pecan, hackberry, live-oak, &c., altogether very similar to the lower plains about San Antonio.

The Arkansas regiment followed the same route, and arrived at San Antonio (or Camp Crockett) on the 28th of same month.

Captain Hughes desired some account of the history of San Antonio de Bexar. In this brief notice I shall aim to insert nothing that was apparent to every observer, as I could not have the presumption to relate what Captain Hughes was more capable of seeing for himself.

Tradition says that the present site of this town was originally a *Pueblo* of Indians, called the *Texas*, whence the name of the province. Judge Morgan (of San Antonio) informed me that according to the archives, a presidio, or garrison, was established there in 1715, and that a colony of families immigrated to the place from the Canary Islands in 1732. Nevertheless, it will be perceived from the following passage in "Los Tres Siglos de Mexico," p. 78 of vol. 2, that attempts at least were made at a much earlier period. After speaking of the settlement of Monclova, the author relates that in the year 1691, "in the neighboring province of *Asinais*, or, as called by the Spaniards, *Texas*, (perhaps the most pacifically-inclined nation on the continent,) the governor of Coahuila was ordered to select a site for a *presidio*; and it was provided that fourteen *padres Franciscans* should labor in that ministry. The *presidio* and missions were actually located during this period; yet a long drought having supervened after the lapse of two or three years, which caused the death of the cattle that had been taken there, the loss of the crops, and the ill will of the Indians towards the Spaniards on account of the vexations occasioned them by the latter, nearly all the missions were abandoned."

Yet, by the two following passages from the same history, pp. 113 and 130, we will perceive that Judge Morgan's information was virtually correct, or nearly so: "1715. At the close of this year the *presidio* of Texas was already established, and the *padres Franciscans* employed themselves in reducing those savages and forming *pueblos*." "1731. In this year the Marquis de Casafuerte sent a colony of Canarians, who settled in the town which he caused to be built, the plan of which was laid off by Don Antonio de Villaseñor."

According to tradition, the original *presidio* was located west of San Pedro creek, two or three hundred yards from the *Plaza Militar*. But upon the immigration of the Canarians (or *Isleños*, Islanders, as more frequently termed by the people,) the Indians, I suppose, having been pretty well rooted out, the former located themselves just east of the present church, forming what is still termed the *Plaza de los Isleños*. The church is said to have been founded about 1740, and the *Plaza Militar*, immediately back of the church, was doubtless established between this period and the immigration of the Canarians.

Of those old missions in the vicinity of San Antonio I need only say a word concerning their foundation. The most important are said to have been built under the direction of a famous monk called Padre Margil. The mission of La Concepcion, as tradition says, is the oldest, which is confirmed by the date, over the door, of 1754; while that of the Alamo is

1758. I could find no date about either of the other ruins except on the steeple of San José, which I think is not to be depended upon, being 1781.

I can now think of nothing else that would be likely to interest Captain Hughes, of which he might not have obtained information himself more satisfactory than I could presume to give him. I will merely add that, by various observations, I determined the latitude of the public square of San Antonio to be $29^{\circ} 25' 30''$; longitude, by eclipses of Jupiter's satellites, about $98^{\circ} 52'$ west from Greenwich.

Owing to the very hasty manner in which the foregoing paragraphs were written, I find, upon glancing over them, so much monotony, repetition—indeed, confusion and ambiguity, I fear—that I could not offer them to Captain Hughes in their present condition, had I time to re-write them; but I must trust to his indulgence for an apology.

Very respectfully,

JOSIAH GREGG.

PARRAS, December 7, 1846.

Memoir of a reconnaissance of a route from Monclova, Mexico, to Monterey, Mexico, made in November, 1846.

SIR: On the 14th of November, 1846, I left Monclova, under orders from Brigadier General Wool, to proceed to Monterey with all possible despatch, and to report to Major General Taylor for despatches. Incidentally I was to make a reconnaissance of the route between the two places, but the first object was speed. An escort of six men of the Arkansas regiment, commanded by Lieutenant Desha of that regiment, accompanied me, as did also Captain Webb of the Illinois volunteers, and Mr. Dannoy of New Orleans, a commissary agent. Both of the latter were on their way to the United States.

Having no guide, I was obliged to depend for my knowledge of the road on such information as I could pick up about it in Monclova on the morning of the start.

I left the town about 7 a. m., and after travelling for about two hours in a direction east of south, arrived at a small village called Castaña. Here was a fine stream of good water, and a very good camping ground. The village is small, not containing more than two or three hundred inhabitants. They are supported by the cultivation of the land in the vicinity, which produces fine crops of corn. Twenty-three miles farther is Bajan. This is a deserted rancho, and the ground in the vicinity gives evidence of having once been in a high state of cultivation. There is a small stream of good water here, and a pool formed by an embankment. In the immediate vicinity of the pool the ground is marshy, and there is a fine growth of grass upon it. Here I encamped for the night. At Castaña I was joined by a Mexican, who, finding out that I was going to Monterey, requested permission to travel with me. As he said he had been over the road frequently, I was very glad to grant him the permission, and found him very serviceable as a guide throughout the whole route.

From Monclova to Bajan the road is nearly straight. Between Monclova and Castaña it is rough, but from the latter place to Bajan it runs