Please return when you are finished.
J. H. McCracklin
Box 64
Winnsboro

THE MIER EXPIDETION

Extract from

History of Fort Bend County

By

A. J. Sowell

Compliments of

THE UNION NATIONAL BANK

Houston, Texas

1929

THE MIER EXPEDITION

In giving this account of the Mier Expedition, I do so on account of the Fort Bend County men that participated in it. My readers will also bear in mind that in pronouncing Spanish names and words that i has the sound of e and e has the sound of a, etc. Mier pronounced Meer, Seco pronounces Saco, and so on.

The cause of the famous Mier Expedition, as it was called, on account of the Texans being captured at that town in Mexico, was in retaliation for the invasion of Texas by General Wall or Woll in 1842, when he captured San Antonio and carried quite a number of the citizens of that place prisoners to Mexico; and, although a force of Texans had hastily collected under General Caldwell and defeated the Mexicans at Salado Creek and drove them back to Mexico, still they were not satisfied and were anxious to invade the Mexican country and fight them there also.

An expedition was gotten up, sanctioned by President Houston, who ordered out two regiments of militia or volunteers, as we might say, for the invasion of Mexico. One of the regiments was to be raised in Montgomery County, which then embraced what now constitutes Grimes and Walker Counties, and the other was to come from Washington County. The first regiment was commanded by Colonel Joseph L. Bennett, who distinguished himself as a soldier at San Jacinto. The second regiment was commanded by Colonel Jesse H. McCrocklin, and the whole under General Alexander Somerville, also a veteran of San Jacinto. The raising of the different companies was not confined to the counties named, but were enlisted in various places, and among these volunteers were many who participated at San Jacinto, and others were noted Indian fighters from the west, and, take it all together, no better set of fighting men could have been enrolled in any country than those who marched with Somerville for the invasion of Mexico in the winter of 1842.

The starting point was from San Antonio, where a camp was located until all arrived and the captains reported for duty. Of these were Captain William Ryon, of Fort Bend County; Captain John O. Smith, of Houston (he was left sick at Gonzales, and the command devolved on Lieutenant Thomas S. Lubbock); Captain Bartlett Simms, of Bastrop; Captain William M. Eastland, of Fayette; Captain Ewing Cameron, of the "Cow Boys" frondown on the San Antonio River; Captain John G. Pierson, of Robertson County; Captain Clark L. Owen, of Jackson County; Captain Isaac N. Mitchell, of Lavaca County; Captain Shelby McNeil, of Brazoria County. Captains from toher places: Jerome B. Robertson, E. S. C. Robertson, Phillip Coe, Wm. S. Fisher, Samuel Bogart, Jack Hays (spy company), James R. Cook, Geo. T. Howard, David Murfree, P.H. Bell, afterwards Governor of Texas, and _____ Houghton.

On the 22nd day of November, 1842, the command left San Antonio for Mexico. There were 700 men, 200 pack-mules and 300 beeves for the use of the troops. The command embraced several preachers, many church members, and many young farmer boys from EastTexas. Flaco, the Lipan chief, and a few of his tribe, and one Apache Indian, accompanied the expedition. These were ahead with the spy company of Captain Jack Hays, nearly all of whom were old Texas Rangers. After crossing the swollen Nueces River, Flaco was sent back by Hays with a note to the commander, informing him that he had captured two Mexican scouts, who reported that

two companies of Mexican troops were at Laredo and might be captured. One of these Mexicans, however, made his escape and carried the neww of the approach of a body of Texans to the troops at Laredo and they made their escape.

The weather was very cold and the Texans suffered greatly and expected their commander to make a requisition on the town for provisions, blankets, etc. This was done, but very little was obtained, not more than enought to feed the men one day.

All, or nearly so, wanted to cross the river at once and have a battle, but instead the men were marched three miles below and encamped on a high bluff. Things went on in this way for several days, and, some of the men becoming much dissatisfied at the turn affairs were taking, finally 200 of them broke away and returned home. The remaining 500 bore down the country until they came to the mouth of the Salado River at Carizio village. This was a clear, cold day, the 14th of December. Here the Rio Grande River was crossed by means of flat boats. General Canales came in sight with about 700 men, but showed no disposition to attack the Texans. The command now moved upon the town of Guerrero, six miles distant, and made a demand for supplies. A very small amount was furnished; a cold wind blew from the mountains, and on the 15th, the command was moved back across the river, and on the 19th an order was read for the command to prepare to return home, as the expedition was off. Three hundred men refused to obey, but the others did break camp and move off. Those who remained organized again into companies under Captains Ewing Cameron, Wm. M. Eastland, J. G. Pierson, Wm. N. Ryon, Claudius Buster, John R. Baker, C. R. Reese and Wm. S. Fisher. It will be noticed that most of these were original captains, and many of their commands had remained with them. Jack Hays, the McCullochs, Tom Green and others of the Rangers remained a few days doing scout duty, and then returned to San Antonio, deeming the force which remained too small to accomplish anything.

After the separation of the command, those that remained continued their march down the river, and on the 21st of December encamped opposite the town of Mier. Ominous name! Then it had no significance. The town of Mier was six miles from the camp to the Texans, and on the following morning they crossed the Rio Grande marched to the town and made a requisition on the alcalde for provisions and clothing. He promised that the articles should be delivered next day at the river, but below the camp of the Texans.

The latter, however, when they returned to camp brought the alcalde along with them as security for the delivery of the goods. Onethe 23rd, they moved their camp opposite the place where the goods were to be delivered, but the day passed off, and the next, and still the articles did not come. The Texan spies who had been kept on the west side of the river on the morning of the 24th, captured a Mexican, who reported that General Ampudia had arrived in Mier with troops and prevented the fulfillment of the alcalde's promise. The Texans then determined to again cross the river and give them battle. By 4 o'clock in the evening all had crossed (except forty-one men who were left as camp guards) and were left on their march to the town. Captain Baker was in advance with a spy company, and first met the Mexicans who were coming out to fight the Texans. Ampudia, however, retreated, and at dark again entered the town. The texans advanced to the Alcantra Creek east of the town and halted for some time. This little stream ran very rapidly and it was difficult to find a crossing. They finally succeeded in getting over, but by the time a lively fight had commenced between Captain Baker and the Mexican cavalry, in which five of the Texans were cut off and captured. Among these were Sam Walker (famous Ranger under Hays), Dr. Sinnickson, Beasley and "Legs Lewis." Others had narrow escapes. It was a hard and a hand to hand fight, and the Texans who were cut off abandoned their horses and ran across fences and ditches. Wilker was caught by a powerful Mexican

and held down while others tied him. A man named McMullens was caught by the legs while getting over a fence, but his boots pulled off and he made his escape. The Texans had emptied their guns and pistols in the fight and had no time to reload. Big Foot Wallace advanced to the edge of the town, but seeing a large body of Mexican cavalry coming out, came galloping back, passed "Legs Lewis" and yelled out to him, "You had better run, the Mexicans will get you sure."

After the main body of the Texans had crossed the creek they advanced into the town, and passed down a street leading into the public square, where the Mexicans had planted cannon. They were now fired on, and a man named Jones was killed. He was a well dressed man, wore a great deal of jewelry, carried a gold watch, and the Mexicans made a rush to secure his body. Here a bloody fight took place, in which about twenty Mexicans were killed and they were forced back into the houses and cross streets.

When the Texans arrived at a point near the cannon, they received a discharge of grape-shot which swept the street and compelled them to take shelter behind the buildings. It was now dark, Christmas Eve, 1842. The only chance for the Texans to advance was to open passage-ways through the adobe buildings, and thus work their way to the cannon. Their horses had been left at the creek with a guard. All night they worked through the buildings, opening breaches with pick and crow-bar, and when daylight came they were within fifty yards of the cannon. While engaged in the work during the night, Big Foot Wallace found a Mexican baby which had been abandoned during the hasty exit of the occupants of the house on the approach of the Texans. Wallace told the writer that "The little devil squalled like a panther" when they dug into the room where it was, and Big Foot took it up and advancing to a wall which enclosed a yard, called out in Spanish for some one to come and get the muchacho, reached up and dropped it over. A woman's voice was heard on the outside, and no doubt it was taken care of.

At daylight port holes were opened in the various rooms where the captains had posted their men, and allively cracking of rifles commenced at the artillerymen in the square, and they were compelled to abondon them and stay away for it was death to go near them.

During the day three desperate attempts to storm and carry the position of the Texans were made, but each charge was repulsed with great loss to the enemy. The bravest of these assaulting parties were the "Presidio Ales" (town guards). They wore black hats with white bands around them, and nearly all of them were killed.

In one of the rooms occupied by a portion of the Texans a strong Mexican drink called "Aguadente" was found, and the men commenced drinking it to excess, even one of the officers imbibing so freely that he became intoxicated and fell to the floor, and while in that condition was hit by a bullet. The Mexicans were firing all the time, and very often a bullet would come through a port hole, and roof, or through some crack and strike a man down, either killing or severely wounding him. Big Foot Wallace, although he liked whiskey himself, saw what the end would be if the men dept on drinking, and promptly poured the balance of the "fire water," as the Indians call it, out on the floor. One of the men, Joe Berry, in coming into town the evening before, as it was getting dark, fell down an embankment and broke his leg. His brother, Bates Berry, and some others bore him to a vacant house in the outskirts of town, and remained there with him. During the battle on the following day they were

discovered by the Mexicans and attacked. They made a rush to reach the position of their comrades, but all were killed except Bates Berry, and he only left his crippled brother at the earnest request of the latter, who thought the Mexicans would spare him and take him prisoner. This, however, was not the case. A Mexican lieutenant named Algerette, who was in command of the assaulting party, killed Berry with his sword as he lay helpless on the floor. One of the men killed was a bugler named Austin.

The battle raged all day, the Mexicans occupying housetops and gutters, and shielding themselves as best they could from the deadly rifle fire of the Texans. Many of those killed were shot in the head. When it was no longer possible for them to go near their cannon, they attempted to rope them from around corners, and did succeed in dragging some of them away in this manner. The battle lasted through the night with constantly sounding bugles, and it was thought that Ampudia was being reinforced. The Texans, however, were undismayed, and continued to load the fire as opportunity offered, and repelled several more charges. Great confusion prevailed among the Mexicans. They uttered cries and curses of rage and pain, amidst a constant blast of bugles.

During the fight after daylight on the 26th, the small guard which had been left on the east side of the Alcantra Creek crossed and attacked about sixty of the Mexican cavalry and routed them, but seeing reinforcements coming, made a desperate attempt to reach their comrades in the town. Out of the nine men who made this attempt, two succeeded, four were killed, and three captured.

During the first close assault many were killed and wounded on both sides; Colonel Fisher himself, who had been elected to the command, was severly wounded, Captain Cameron had fortified himself and men in the rear of the building occupied by Colonel Fisher and the men with him, and had been exposed to a heavy fire, during which he had three men killed and seven wounded. After some slack in the firing the bugles began to sound another change, and Cameron hastily left his position and entered that of Fisher, and asked for reinforcements to help to defend his position. About this time, however, a white flag was brought out by Dr. Sinnickson, one of the Texans who had been captured, as before stated. He was ordered to do so by General Ampudia, and also to tell the Texans that he had 1700 troops in the town, and 300 more on the road from Monterey, and that it would be useless for them to continue to resist but if they surrendered would be treated as prisoners of war; if not, no quarter would be given them. The prospect for the Texans was gloomy, and although they had fought as men worthy of the mane of Texans, and had caused the streets of Mier to almost run with blood, yet they saw no chance to win. They were on foreign soil, hemmed in on all sides by their enemies, their number reduced, ammunition failing, and the men almost worn out.

Some, however, were not in favor of a surrender, and thought they would make a fun from their barricaded positions and fight their way out of the town and back to their other men on the river. This would have been easy compared to what they did attempt later on without any guns at all. Many among Fisher's men and those of the other captain's were in favor of a surrender, and a consultation was held. Cameron now left the place, and, hurrying back, urged his men to continue to fight. The majority favored a surrender, and soon men were seen leaving and giving up their guns in the street. When Fisher's men commenced going out Big Foot Wallace, who had been with them, left and ran to the position of Cameron. Others now also left their commands and came to Cameron, until about fifty stood around him asking him

to take command and continue the battle, or make a rush and fight their way out.

At this time treat confusion prevailed; some were surrendering and others firing. Cameron held his position until all the balance had surrendered, and, seeing that all hope was gone, said,to his men who, with stern but anxious faces, stood around him: "Boys, it is no use for us to continue the fight; they are all gone but us." The men stood for a few moments looking through the port holes at the hordes of Mexicans who were now making a grand display, the cavalry charging up and down the streets and others carrying away the guns of the Texans, while some were entering the various rooms where they fought, and bringing out the dead and wounded. The captured Texans were herded together on the plaze, and the citizens of the town filled the streets, coming to look at them, and the cries of many women were heard lamenting the dead, while others cheered for victory. Thus were the closing scenes of the battle of Mier, when Cameron's men slowly filed out from their barricade in singal to their surrender. Thomas J. Green, a gallant soldier, broke his sword, as did also Cameron his rifle, instead of surrendering them. Wallas was opposed to a surrender up to the last moment. His brother, Samuel, and other relatives had met death after a surrender at Goliad, and he told the men that would be their fate as soon as they gave up their guns. The brave Cameron, however, wishing to save the lives of his men, took the lead and they followed.

In the streets they were met by a strong detachment of the enemy, and the painful task of handing over their rifles, pistols and knives was commenced.

As the captured Texans were marched to the plaza their shoes were stained with the blood of slaughtered Mexicans. The house tops and the gutters were also dripping with blood.

The Mexican loss in the battle, considering the numbers engaged, was fearful. Their own report was 500 killed out of 2,000. Their wounded probably was not half so many, as the Texans fired at close range and with diadly effect. Forty Mexican artillerymen were killed before they would abandon their guns. The Texans had 260 men in the town, 16 of whom were killed and 30 wounded.

The public in the square, when the prisoners were carried there and halted, they saw four rows of dead Mexicans reaching across it, and the priests of the town were among them saying mass for the repose of their souls. While this was being done the bodies of the slain Texans stripped of their clothing, were being dragged through the streets by the cavalry, and followed by yelling Mexicans of all sizes and ages.

During the last days of December Ampudia set out with his prisoners for the City of Mexico, leaving the wounded Texans at Mier in charge of Dr. Sinnickson.

On January the 10th, 1843, the captive Texans arrived at Matamoras, and on the 14th set out from the place for Monterey, guarded by a troop of cavalry. On the march it was one grand jubilee for the Mexicans. They starved the prisoners and made them travel on foot all the distance, until their shoes were worn out and they were thin and haggard.

The enemy made grand demonstrations in passing throughthe towns, their

approach being heralded by bugle blasts and charging cavalry.

The Texans were marched through the streets, followed by yelling mobs of men and boys. The Mexican women, with but few exceptions, pitied the half starved Americans, and when they arrived at Moneterey brought food and fed them.

They stayed here from the 18th to the 22nd and then started to Saltillo. At this place they found six of the Texans who had been captured at San Antonio in September of the year before when Wall captured that place.

At Saltillo Colonel Barragan took charge of the prisoners and proceeded with them to the village of Salado, 100 miles further on, where they arrived on the 10th of February, and were there placed in prison.

For some time the Texans had contemplated making an attempt to excape, and had formulated a plan at Monterey; but the plot was discovered by the Mexicans, and they bided their time for another opportunity. It was now set on foot again, and, without detection, carried out. There had been an addition to the Mier prisoners by a few of the Santa Fe prisoners, among whom was Dr. Richard Brenham and Patrick Lyons, both of whom were anxious to make the attempt to escape. The plan was, that when the prison door was opened early in the morning, Cameron was to give the signal, by throwing up his hat, and a rush was to be made on the guards stationed there, disarm them, and then charge the main body in the enclosed yard, where the guns and ammunition were dept.

When all was ready and the prison door swung back, in order to pass in the scant meal for the captives, Cameron gave the signal, and he Lyons, Brenham and Samuel H. Walker, led the charge and succeeded in disarming the guards there, and then, still leading the way, charged the main body, followed by the Texans who swarmed from the prison house and bravely followed their fearless leaders. This was at sunrise on the 11th day of February, 1843. As soon as the first charge was made and the guards disarmed at the prison door, the Texans rushed into the outer court of the building, where 150 infantrymen were guarding the arms and cartidge boxes. Without hesitating an instant they rushed upon the Mexican soldiers, with their naked hands, and a most desperate struggle commenced for the possession of the guns and ammunition. Where, in all the world's history, will we find deeds recorded of braver men than those who, on that February morning, in the prison yard of Salado rushed, empty-handed, on regular soldiers, faced the leveled muskets with unflinching eye, received their fire, and then closed in with them, grappling bayonets and wrenching guns from their hands. This body of infantry were soon put to fight, many of them being disarmed and captured; but the Texans were not yet masters of the situation. Another company of infantry was stationed at the gate, and a force of cavalry outside. Again, without hesitating the desperate men rushed on these at the gate. Lieutenant Barragan, a brave young officer and son of the commander, held this position, and a most desperate fight ensued. Most of the Texans at this time had guns with bayonets on them, but the soldiers here under Barragan fought better than the others. In vain however, they tried to keep the Texans from going through the gate which would give them their liberty. The noise and confusion was fearful. The Mexicans uttered yells, curses, screams of terror and suprise, mingled with clashing bayonets, sabres and musket shots.

Big Foot Wallace charged a Mexican and tried to secure his gun in the first fight, but the fellow made a vicious thrust at the big Texan with his bayonet, which Wallace caught, and a struggle commenced for the mastery, and finally the bayonet came off in the hand of Big Foot, and at this time another Texan who had no gun came behind the Mexican, and seized the gun by the breech and pulled it away from him. The Mexican the fell of his knees, threw up his hands, and in

Spanish asked for mercy, which was granted him.

The cavalry outside became terror stricken and fled, and the infantry at the gate began to throw down their arms and call for quarter, but for a while no stop could be put to the slaughter. Finally the voice of Cameron was heard among them, pleading for the lives of the disarmed guards, and the maddened Texans desisted, for all loved the brave, unselfish Cameron.

Many Mexicans lay dead and wounded on every side, some moaning with broken heads and gunshot wounds. Lieutenant Barragan displayed great bravery, and when his men were defeated and himself hemmed, with his back to a wall successfully parried several bayonet thrusts with his sabre, and refused to surrender except to an officer. Some one called for a loaded gun to shoot him, but Big Foot Wallace said, "No, a brave man like him deserves to live." Barragan now in his dire distress called for Captain Cameron, who soon came, and the sword was delivered to him. Colonel Barragan had run away with the cavalry and left his son to fight the battle at the gate. Some of the Mexican prisoners said the lieutenant did not get his bravery from his father, but the mother, and that he looked like her.

Five Texans lay dead and many more were wounded. Among the dead were the gallant Lyons and Brenham, who helped to lead the charge at the prison door. The town of Brenham, Texas, was named for the brave young doctor, who lost his life on this occasion.

At the time of the fight some of the Texans who were sick were confined to themselves in an outhouse under guard, but when the battle commenced these guards ran away. One of the sick men was a Fort Bend County man named Benjamin Boone. He heard the fight, and was satisfied his comrades were making a break for liberty, and awaited anxiously further developments. Soon Captain Baker came into the room bleeding profusely from a bayonet wound, and lay down by the side of Boone and told him the prisoners had gained their liberty and were preparing to start for Texas. Although sick and weak, Mr. Boone, determined to go with them, and bidding Captain Baker farewell, who was too badly hurt to travel, he left the house and joined the others. The Texans now being masters of the situation, dictated terms to the Mexicans, one of which was that their wounded should be taken care of.

On these conditions the Mexican prisoners were turned loose, and those of the Texans who were able to do so prepared for instant flight. This was their only chance for safety, for they knew that soon a strong force would be upon them. One thing which was going to be sadly against them in traversing this strange country was the unfortunate and sorrowful fact that two of the men who knew the country, were killed in the battle.

Some of the Mexican cavalrymen who were not mounted at the time of the fight ran off and left their horses, and they fell into the hands of the Texans. With these and others found in the town, all were mounted and ready to leave by 10 o'clock a.m., and they hastily departed toward the Rio Grande.

Now, kind reader, if you have tears to shed, prepare to shed them now. Ere long we will see these gallant men back again, starved, emaciated, and in chains, drawing beans for their lives.

By midnight the Texans were fifty miles from the scene of their battle, and a short halt was made, and the horses fed. Twelve miles more were made, and they halted again and slept two hours, and early next morning they left the main

road so as to go around the city of Saltillo. On the 13th they struck the road leading from Saltillo to Monclova, but on the next night abandoned it and took to the mountains on the left. This was a fatal mistake, as events which followed will show. The hardships which these brave men had now to undergo were almost beyond human endurance. When too late they saw the mistake which they had made. The Country was a barren waste of of mountains, without water or anything which they could utilize for food. Six days were spent in trying to get through. The men were perishing with thirst and starvation. Horses were killed and eaten, their blood drank by the famishing Texans.

Big Foot Wallace had taken a fat dun pacing mule which belonged to Captain Aroyo at Salado, and he now killed him and he and others ate of the meat and drank the blood, quaffing capsful of the red fluid with an apparent relish, as if drinking to one another's health.

People sitting around their pleasant firesides, surrounded by home conforts, when they read this can hardly realize the gravity and horror of the situation, and mayhap turn from it with disgust and loathing. But can you imagine and picture the scene in its true light? The dry and lonely canyon where the horses were killed and eaten, and their blood drank to sustain human life; this bloody feast akin to savage orgies? Think of the days of hunger and thirst, coupled with toilsome, anxious flight. The dry, parched skin and sunken eyes denoting hunger and thirst. All moisture disappearing from the body, and the stomach consuming itself. Under these conditions men will eat anything, drink anything. None but those who have passed through it can realize all that it means.

The Texans could not long remain in this place, where a portion of the horses were killed. Mexican cavalry were on their trail with pack-mules carrying food and water. Leaving the remains of the slaughtered horses for the buzzards and coyotes to finish, the Texans once more plunged into the dark mountains in the vain endeavor to reach the Rio Grande, many of them on foot, and all of them soon, for the poor horses also failed and died of thirst. They were hoplessly lost, and soon again thirst begain to torment them. They could no longer keep together as a body entire. Some became delirious and wandered away to die in some lonely canyon or amid the rocks of the mountain side. Many would drop down with their heads on their chests and their feet pointing the way they wished to go. Guns were dropped and abandoned here and there.

We can hardly begin to tell all that they suffered, but will say that finally the Mexican cavalry who were on their trail began to come upon those who had fallen by the wayside, and to capture them. The main body, who still had some guns when they were overtaken refused to surrender unless they could do so as prisoners of war. It was a strange sight, this small force of half dead men, with hollow eyes and sunken cheeks, boldly facing their well fed enemies, demanding of them an honorable capitulation, saying they would fight if it was not granted. The Mexican officer in command promised all of these things, and the surrender was made.

The Mexicans gave the Texans water in small quantities, fearing to let them have much in their present famished condition, and then made a camp while diligent search was made and all others brought in that could be found. Of the 193 who made their escape, 176 were recaptured, as near as we can determine from all statements that have been made by survivors of the unfortunate expedition. Some think that more than the number given were recaptured, two or three of whom died from drinking too much water afterwards. However, be that as it may, 176 drew the beans.

Those taken were now tied together with ropes and started to Saltillo, and on the 27th arrived there. Here an order met the commanding officer from Santa Anna, who was again President of Mexico, to have the Texans shot. The officer refused to comply, saying he would resign and throw up his commission first. There was one prisoner, James C. Wilson, who was a British subject, and the British consul at Saltillo finding it out, offered to release him, saying if it was necessary he would wrap the British flag aroung him and dare a Mexican to shoot a hole through it. Wilson however, would not accept this protection, saying to all intents and purpose he was a Texan; he had fought with them, starved with them, and if necessary he would die with them. He lived to get back to Texas, and Wilson County was named for him.

The prisoners were now all ironed and marched back to Salado, the scene of their fight for liberty. It was now the 24th day of March. What a sad return--half dead and in "irons." Here another order was received from Santa Anna, which was to shoot every tenth man. The irons were kept on them and the guards doubled.

In decimating the prisoners it was decided among the Mexican officers to let them draw lots, so that each man would have a chance for his life. The lots were to be determined by drawing black and white beans--the white, life; the black, death. An earthen jar somewhat in the shape of a nine-pin was produced, and the beans placed therein corresponding to the number of men.

When all was ready the Texans were marched out of prison and formed in line. An officer now approached bearing the fatal jar in which were 159 white beans and 17 blacks. Few men in this life are called upon to pass throught such a fearful ordeal as did the men who drew beans for their lives at Salado. For a few moments the men stood in silence, and then the drawing commenced. No more severe test could be made of men's nerves than in this occasion. Soldiers will rush to almost certain death with far less chances in their favor, but this is in the excitement of battle, amid crashing of cannon and musketry; but to calmly stand and decide their fate in a moment's time by the drawing of a bean was worse than charging the mouth of a blazing cannon. The Mexican officers were anxious to kill Captain Cameron, and were in hopes that he would draw a black bean, and to make this almost sure put the black beans to the top, and made him draw first. William F. Wilson, who stood near, suspicioned that this had been done, and when Cameron stepped up to place his hand in the jar, said to him in a low tone, "Dig deep, Captain." He acted on this suggestion, ran his fingers through the beans, and picked up one from the bottom, and it was a white one. A look of satisfaction passed over the faces of the Texans, but the Mexicans scowled. The drawing now went on rapidly. "All dipped deep," and it was some time before a black bean was drawn, the drawing now being done alphabetically.

Although the men knew that seventeen of their number weredoomed, and that in time the fatal beans would come forth, still they could not help showing satisfaction when friend after friend held the bean which gave him life. The jar was held high, so that no one could see inside of it. The sorrow of the men was also expressed in their faces when a black bean was brought to light, held by some dear comrade who had stood beside them in the midst of battle, or suffered with them in the desolate mountains, and at last compelled to die--shot like a dog.

Most of the men displayed the utmost coolness, scarcely a tremor passing over their faces as the drawing went on. One noted gambler from

Austin, when his time came to draw, stepped up with a smile, and said, "Boys, this is the largest stake I ever played for." When he drew forth his had a black bean between his thumb and forefinger. Without changing the smile on his face, he took his place in the death line, only remarking, "Just my luck."

The prisoners were chained together in couples, and as fast as the black beans were deawn the unfortunate holder was placed in the death line. If two chained together both drew black beans, they were not separated, but moved together to the fatal line. If "one was taken and the other left," the chains were taken off and the condemned fastened to one of his companions in distress. Young Robert Beard was sick, and was not able to stand in line to draw and the jar or pitcher, as some call it, had to be carried to where he lay on a blanket, guarded by soldier. Before his turn came to draw he told him brother Charley that if he (himself) drew a white bean, and his brother a black one, he would exchange with him, and be shot in his stead. The brother refused, however, to entertain such a propostion, and both drew white beans.

It is told and believed by some that Big Foot Wallace drew two beans at Salado; that one of his comrades, a young man, expressed such great fear that he would get a black bean that Wallace, who drew first and got a white one, gave it away to this young fellow, saying he would take anohter chance. On one occasion the writer asked Captain Wallace if this was the case, and he said that it was not; that he never drew but one, and had no thought of giving it away. He said also that he could not have done so is he had wished, for he heard an officer say that there would be no exchanging of beans allowed when the Beard brothers were tal ing of doing so.

One young man, almost a youth, drew a black bean, and giving one appealing look at his more fortunate compairions, asked them to avenge his death.

"Talking Bill Moore," when it came his turn to draw, said, "B oys I had rather draw for a Spanish horse and lose him." He was a lively fellow, and helped to keep up the spirits of the others. Fortune favored him and he drew a white bean. While the drawing was in progress some of the petty Mexican officers did all they could to annoy the prisoners. When one drew a white bean they said nothing, but when one drew a black bean they expressed great sorrow, hypocirtically, of course, and would say, "Poor fellow, cheer up; better luck next time," when they knew thatthis was the last chance the unfortunate captive would have.

Big Foot Wallace was chained to a man named Sesinbaugh, and often said if there ever was a Christian, it was that man. His turn came before Wallace, and as he reached for a bean he prayed for himself and Big Foot Wallace. He drew a white bean, and afterwards, in the dark dungeon of Perote, chained to the floor at the mid-night hour, he sang and prayed and Thanked God that it was well with him as it was.

As the drawing proceeded the chances for Wallace grew less, his letter (W) coming at the bottom of the list. The boys had "Dipped" until nearly all of the white beans had been "dipped" out. When his time came his hand was so large he had some difficulty in getting it down to the beans, and they were so scare he scooped two to the side of the vessel, and taking

them between his fingers carefully felt of them. Wallace was a close observer, and he imagined that the black beans as he saw them come out were a little larger that the white ones. An officer now told him to hurry up, and if he pulled two beans out and one of them was black, he had to take that one. Big Foot paid no attention to him, for life was now at stake. He finally dropped one bean, and pulled forth the other one; it was white. Hewas satisfied the one he let go was black. The next two men to draw, Wing and Whaling, both drew black beans. The black ones were now all out, and the last three men on the list did not draw. An officer turned up the jar and three white beans fell to the ground. W. C. Wing, the last man to draw a black bean, was visibly affected. He was young, and when at home very religious, but had gone sadly astray, and this fact seemed to trouble him very much, and he referred to it repeatedly during the short time he had before the execution.

When the drawing was over and the condemned men stood in the death rank, their roll stood as follows: L.L. Cash, J. D. Cocke, Robert Durham, Capt. William N. Eastland, Edward Este, Robert Harris, S. L. Jones, Patrick Mahan, James Ogden, Charles Roberts, William Rowen, J. L. Shepard, J. M. N. Thompson, James N. Torrey, James Turnbull, Henry Whaling, and W. C. Wing.

Eastland was the only one of the six captains who drew a black bean.

During the few minutes before the execution the decimated men stood in silence, intently watching their captors, not a movement escaping their notice. When the firing squad was detailed and counted off some little sign of emotion was seen in the faces of some; nervous twitching about the mouth, bosoms heaving breath coming quick and short. Others stood as calmly as if on parade. The irons were not taken off and they were led away to execution, bidding their more fortunate comrades farewell as they marched off. Many tears were seen running down the cheeks of those who responded to this last good-bye. A volley was soon heard, and the gallant men were not more. The bodies were then stripped and buried in a ditch which had been dug for the purpose. The remains of these unfortunate Texans were brought waay during the Mexican war of 1846 by General Walter P. Lane and deposited on a tomb near LaGrange, in Fayette County.

The other prisoners were marched away to the City of Mexico, but before reaching that place Captain Ewing Cameron was shot by order of Santa Anna. We cannot go into all the details of what befell the others. Many died, some escaped, and others were liberated, but not all until 1844.