

**The Ledger of
Samuel Coleman Lockett:
Texas Ranger Service Extract**

Transcribed by

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The Ledger of Samuel Coleman Lockett

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Samuel Coleman Lockett was born in Arkadelphia, Arkansas on April 4, 1853. In 1862 his family moved to Texas, locating near Austin. In September 1870, Lockett was mustered in as a member of Frontier Forces, Company "B" under the command of Captain A. H. Cox. He served in this company until being discharged at the end of May 1871.

The following document consists of two parts. 1 - The first part is a transcript of a handwritten memoir. This memoir included incidents of growing up, Ranger service and his life after he left the Rangers. It provides some interesting insight on life on the Texas frontier. The ledger itself, housed in the archives of the Texas Ranger Research Center in Waco, Texas, is in poor condition. In order to preserve the book and limit further damage, access is restricted and will be granted on a case by case basis. 2 - The second is a portion of a typescript autobiography and covers only the time of his service in the Texas Rangers. A copy of the complete typescript, which only covers his life until 1872, can be found in vertical files of the Texas Ranger Research Center. Both of these documents were originally written by Samuel Coleman Lockett.

The spelling, punctuation and grammar of the ledger are reproduced in the transcript. On a few occasions words cannot be made out and they are noted by a set of empty brackets []. On a few occasions the transcriber has added a word to help clarify meaning and those words appear in brackets as well. The normal practice of using [sic] to indicate a unique spelling of a word or unclear meaning has not been employed in this case.

A Texas Ranger

When I returned home after the last term of the school was out I was in poor health caused I think from being thrown from a wild horse while attending school, & I did not have much life in me. I wanted to go west again, but father advised me not to do so. Just about this time the Legislature decided to put in the field several companies of Rangers. I had a burning desire to go, but I felt sure that father & my brothers would oppose it. When the time came & Capt. Cox came down from Burnet County to be sworn into the Service, without telling anyone where I was going or what my purpose was, I went to Austin & enlisted in the service under Capt. Cox who was Captain of Company "B" & was soon on the march for Ft. Griffin in Shackelford County. Our company was composed largely of Burnet County boys so I was not with strangers. It would take several volumes if I should try to give in details all of our wanders & all of the interesting happening & incidents that occurred while I was out as a Texas Ranger. But I will mention some things in this connection that will doubtless interest those who may chance to read these lines.

Our Company was composed almost entirely of boys & young men. The Captains, the Lieutenant, Doctor & two privates were past thirty years of age, the others about 47 ranged from thirty down to seventeen years. As a rule our company was composed of honorable, honest boys & most of them were brave & could be trusted to stand on the firing line at any time. Yet we had one or two men who were cowards. One of these was discharged later on by his own request, but the Captain in filling out the blanks on his discharge for "remarks" said, "A good reliable soldier, always ready for duty, but rather inclined to fear wolves" & this was literally true of the man & he never ought to have been out as a Texas Ranger. We had one notorious thief in our company, the Captain had picked him up, I think, in Austin to make out the full number for his company, hence no one knew him. His name was Holmes, at least that was the name he had given when he was sworn into the service. He was a brave man, but he was a thief. He would not steal from any of our boys but would steal something every time he went to town. He was afterward kill in cold blood by Jack Singleton, who I think was the only real murdered in our Company. He was of course dismissed from the service & turned over to the Civil Authorities. On trial for his crime was acquitted because for some reason the witnesses who saw him commit his dastardly & cowardly crime were never called for as witnesses. His crime was a cool premeditated murder & according to the laws of the state his neck should have been broken to rid the state of a cowardly murderer.

Holmes and Singleton were bed fellows. Singleton was a high tempered overborne man & he & Holmes had had trouble several times on our trip from Austin to Ft. Griffin. These rows had culminated in a fight between the men the day before the killing & Holmes had given Singleton a whippin which he needed for the vile & abusive language he had used. In this fight Singleton had shown his cowardise. He could have shot Holmes at the time but he was too much of a coward to shoot when Holmes eyes were on him. He waited two days & then slipped up behind Holmes while he was sitting at the mess box eating his breakfast & shot him in the back, the ball taking effect in Holmes neck. Our mess was not over 20 yards from where the killing took place. I had just finished eating my breakfast & walked to the fire. The sound of the first shot aroused our camp. I turned my head & looked at the sound of the report of the gun & I saw Holmes jump to his feet & heard him cry "O Jack, God---- you Jack." He ran a few steps in the direction of our mess & Singleton ran around a [] & fired an other shot & poor Holmes felled to the earth a dead man & then Singleton shot him twice after he fell before any of us could reach him. Both of the last shots missed the body but hit Holmes hand in which he had a knife & a piece of bread of which he was eating when the coward fired the first shot. If any man was ever hung for murder I think Singleton deserved it.

Our company had marching order & everything was in readiness for moving when the tragedy occurred. But starting was delayed until Holmes could be buried. The grave was dug at the root of a mesquite. His blanket, arms, clothing, saddle and other things were placed in the grave & we wrapped a blanket about the cold lifeless body of Holmes & lowered into the grave & covered it with the dirt. It was a sad funeral because a life had been snuff out in a moment & the poor man went up to meet God with an oath on his lips. It was fortunate for Jack Singleton that Holmes did not have a personal friend in the company to avenge his death; for I am satisfied in my own

mind, had Singleton killed any other man in Company "B" in the cowardly way he killed Holmes that he would have been swung up to a mesquite tree before Holmes was buried. As it was there was talk of lynching among the boys. Our Lieutenant as brave & true man as ever lived, said openly that Singleton was not fit to live & ought to be hung.

In Winter Quarters

Just as soon as Holmes was buried our Company started on the march for Earth County where we were to be located for the winter. Singleton was under guard and it was my misfortune to guard one watch at night. He was in terror. I asked why he had killed Holmes in the way he did. His reply was "I was afraid of him" & that was the truth. The poor fellow did not sleep while I was on guard. He would cry like a baby. But his tears came too late. The deed had been done & he must go through life with the brand of Cain on him. If men would only stop & think before they act in such things there would never be any murders, but alas, men do not think, but give loose reins to their passions & these awful crimes are committed which curse the living more than the dead.

Our permanent camp, which was to be our headquarter while we remained in the service, was located in a valley on a small creek south of Stevensville about four miles on the road leading from Stevensville to Dublin. It was a splendid location, with nice flowing water at hand, plenty of ~~wood~~ for lumber for building our quarters & fine grass for our horses.

We went to work at once to build our winter quarters. These small one room houses were built out of split post oak logs & set up picket fashion for the walls. The top was made by placing split logs across from wall to wall & these were covered first with straw & then with dirt at least twelve inches thick & this made a good roof to keep out the rain & snow. The cracks were daubed with mud to keep out the wind & a dirt & stick chimney was built for each house. These houses proved to be very comfortable. Here we spent the winter. Of course scouts were out most all the time & some of us go as guards for the courts.

The captain sold our salt & pickle pork the State furnished & bought beef for us. I am not sure that he always paid for the beavers we killed but he was supposed to do so.

This brings to mind a bit of experience we had at Weatherford when we had several things happen which were both serious & exciting. Taking some of the things that occurred in the order they came.

As we were marching out of the town going west, a lady came hopping up the sidewalk. She seemed to have nothing on but a white Mother Hubbard dress. Few of any of our boys had ever seen a woman in a Mother Hubbard. The one this woman wore was snow white & look very much to a country boy like a night gown. It looked like it to me & it looked like it to Jimmie Odum the modest & youngest boy in our company. As the woman passed us Jimmie said, "that woman ought to put on her dress before she comes out in the street," & he said it loud enough for the woman to hear. While the woman did not say a word, yet her look show she was mad, & she

ran on up town & told her husband that she had been insulted by the Rangers. This was not true of any of the boys except Jimmie for that was not a man in that company who would not have defended any lady in Texas with his own life. It is true that the ranger boy should not have made that remark about the womans dress & it is also true that the woman coming out on the should have put on a street dress & not come out in the street in that great white gown to attract the gaze of men & invite just such remark as the boy had made.

Then when we went into camp some nine mile west of Weatherford for the night, the corporal for the day took four of us boys who were on duty for the day, out with him to kill a beef. This was the order of the captain with instructions that mark & brand of the beef we kill should be taken down & turned over to him & that he would pay for the beef out of the money he had received for the pork, & we always did. I think it doubtful whether beeves were all paid for. I know that some of them were. But be that as it may, we went out on this particular day & ~~find~~ found a nice young beef & the corporal shot & tool down the mark & brand. Then we proceed to dress it. While we were at work on the beef a nice gentlemanly man rode & spoke in a friendly to us all. He got down & assisted some in dressing the beef. When we were through & ready to start to the camp the man said "Well, boy I am glad to have met you. This beef you have just killed may be my property, but if it is you are perfectly welcome to it and to as many more as you need, for I have on this range more than 1500 head of cattle & many horses & your presence here if worth more to me that all the beeve you may eat."

The corporal explained our orders to him & said I have here the mark & brand of the beef we kill, if it is yours & you will go with us to camp, the captain will pay you for it. But the man said "No, I don't want to see the mark & brand for if it should be my beef I would not take a cents pay for it."

We bade him good day with an invitation for him to come around to the camp & see us, & we started for camp. About halfway to out camp we met an old man who lived down within a hundred yards of our camp. He was riding at high speed. As he came up to us he drew up his horse with a jerk & said in a very angry tone of voice, "What did you kill my beef for?"

Our corporal [said] "I do not know that we have killed your beef, but if we have done so & you will go with us to camp the captain will pay you for it."

But the old man was mad & he commence to curse us all & the officer in particular. I could see the corporals blood was getting hot & know that an explosion would come & it did come, for when it came to cursing our corporal could beat the cusser from Cusserville. It is enough to say that the old man soon put that he had pressing business on some other part of the range. The conduct of the old man was soon known to all our boys & before the day closed he cam in for a liberal share talk & cursing by the boys. The captain had bought corn for our horses & it was piled up in abundance in our camp, but our boys had it in for the cross, cusing old ranchman, so after dark three of them slipped out of camp & got into the old man's corn field. It so happened that neither of them took a gun with them & they were in the field without arms, & it also so happened that the farmer was watching them armed with a double barrel shotgun & when one of

the boys happened to get off from the others the old man ran up & assaulted him. The other two came running into the camp & said that one of the boys had been arrested. I was on guard that night & just about the time I had passed the camp to go on my rounds about the horses I heard the commotion in the camp & saw a score or more of the boys running up the road with their guns in hand.

In the meantime the old man with his prisoner was march down the road to our camp. When he & our boys met, the boys took charge of the prisoner & arrested the old man & march him back to his house & told him not to show his head again that night. I think he obeyed the order for we heard no more from that night.

I was on guard with instructions not to let anyone enter or pass from the camp with the countersign. But I had a walk of more than three hundred yards around the camp & the horses staked out on the prairie. Of course as I would leave the camp first to go around the horses the boys would slip out & go up to the old man's potatoe patch & back into camp loaded with potatoes & these were roasted in the big fire around which a score or more of the boys gathered during my watch which was three hours. The boys did not forget me, for as I would pass them on my round they would hand me a well cooked potatoe & some barbecued meat. Of course I did not ask them where they got the potatoes. I did not see them go out not come in, neither did I see them get the potatoes, but I did eat the potatoes & beef with a relish. Of course I had an idea where those potatoes came from, but I asked no questions & had nothing to report when I was relieved after midnight. I do not try justify the boys in doing what they did, neither do I try to justify my own actions in the matter. We all did wrong.

Early the next morning the old man & two officers came riding into our camp. They were soon in conference with the Captain. Of course, none of the boys ever knew what passed between the captain and the men, but we have an idea, & were not surprised when the bugle sounded & calling us to fall into line. This we did in a few moments. We stood at attention facing the captain. The roll was called & all were present.

The Captain said, "Here are all my men." The civil officer said to the old man who had caused the trouble, "Pick out the men you want arrested & are wiling to file charges against." The old man showed that he did not know just what to do & he replied "I do not know one of the men from the other. It was dark & I could see when they arrested me." The officer [said] "I will you don't suppose I will arrest all these men." This ended the incident except a short speech the captain made to us. His speech as we could see was intended more for the benefit of the civil officer than for his men, for he was just about as deep into the mud as the others were in the mire. I may say here that this is the only time even had any trouble with any citizen.

During this winter time we did not do much scouting for the indians did not often come into that part of the state in the winter time. We [had] good quarters & plenty good food & all things considered we had a good time.

Made Rails & Chopped Wood

With Captains permission when the weather was good I went out to nearby ranches & made rails and cut posts for pasture fences. I made my spending money in that way. We did not receive a dollar from the state while we were out. At that time the state was low in her finances & her script sold at a discount. I think it was fortunate we did not receive our pay until we went out of the service, for if we had much of it would have been spent foolishly & possibly some of it would have been spent on liquor. As it was we had to study economy & when we come out we had all our money in a pile.

Our lieutenant was also named Cox & he was a fine man. He was past forty years of age, was as brave as a lion, never drank. While we did not have a religious man in our company yet I think that Lieutenant Cox lived as moral & upright life as most Christians do. He seemed to think a great deal of me. He often called me his boy & he was prone to advise me in all things as a father would have been. He kept me from many snares & pitfalls. I went with him on every scout whether it was after Indians or white desperadoes. I rode by his side when we were on a march & I was beside him when danger was near. I went with him several times when desperadoes were to be arrested & we all knew there was danger ahead sometimes it took all the courage I had to go with him into a house at night to make an arrest. But when the first word was spoken all fear left me & I could & would have followed him into the jaws of death. I owe much to this good & brave man & I shall never forget his kindness to me. I have lost sight of him & suppose he has gone the way of all the earth.

Gilbert Stewart was another good friend to me. He was perhaps the oldest man in the company. We called him "Congress head," because he had traveled all over the nation & was the best inform man in the company. He settled all of our disputes on history, geography, and literature. His discussion on these questions were final with us. If old Congress Head said a thing was so, it must be so, we thought. I was often with Gilbert in roaming over the prairies, resting under the shade of the trees when we were not on duty & often went him on scouts & be out for days. I had never played card in my life. After we were out in camp the boys persuaded me to join them in a game. I insisted that I did not know the game, but they said they would learn. I had played only two or three games – not enough to learn the names or value of the cards. One day I was out with Gilbert & we were sitting under a mesquite tree on a hill overlooking our camp. We had talk, or rather Gilbert had talked about many things. He appeared more serious than usual, & in all he said he had been leading to some advice which he thought I needed.

He said "Coley I have noticed you playing cards with the boys & want you to quit it."

But I said "Gilbert, I have never played cards only a few times & I would not think of betting on cards."

"That is the very reason I am advising you to give up card playing now," he replied, "For it will not be hard for you to give it up now as the habit has not been form." He then went on to tell me that how, when about my age he learn to play card, how the habit had grown on him, how through card playing he had become a gambler & how gambling had wrecked his life & made

him a wanderer over the world without home or friend. He talked long & earnestly to me, giving me in details much of his life. Then looking full in the face he said, "I warn you, my boy, there is danger in card playing. Won't you promise me that you will not play cards with the boys?" I promised there that I would never play another game of cards. That promise I have sacredly kept from that day to this although I have been often tempted by men & women in society, thank God I have always kept this promise & I think I am now too old to be tempted on this line.

As the years have come & gone I have from actual observation found out that all that Gilbert told me about the results of gambling is true. It would be a blessing to the boys of our nation is some "Old Congress head" would point out the dangers of gambling to them as Gilbert did to me. If anyone should ever read these lines I hope they will do as I have done "let cards alone forever."

Cotton Picking & a Dance

A farmer who lived near our camp & who frequently came to talk with the boy had much sickness in his family & was not able to gather his cotton. The boys talked among themselves in the camp. We saw that his field was white & that the cotton was all open & not a [lock] had been picked. Winter was coming on & the chances were that if bad weather should set in the farmer would loose of his crop. Some of the boys suggested that we all go down & give the farmer one days work. It was also suggested that the farmer might give us a party at his house if would pick out his cotton. This suggestion brought all of the boys into the plan.

After talking it over with captain & he agreed to give us all a day & night off for the cotton picking & dance, the matter was settled if the farmer would agree to our suggestion. Several of the boys went down & the offer to give him a days work & pick out his cotton if he would give our boys a party at his house. The farmer was pleased with what he called our "kind offer" & he said yes you can have the party & I will get all of the girls in community to come to the party & give you a good old country dinner & supper.

The day came doe the cotton picking & all our company, except a few who had to stay & keep the camp, about 45 in all, march down to the farm & staked out horses on good grass, & went into the cotton patch & with some of the neighbors, men, women, & girls, went to work picking the crop. We had some splendid pickers in our company & then we had some like me, who could not pick much but we all worked from the time we entered the field until the last [lock] was gathered. It was a rush, each one trying to do his or hers best, for we set in to finish that crop before night & we did to the joy of the farmer.

The farmer, true to his promise had prepared a splendid dinner for us. There was an abundance of turkeys, chicken, ham, eggs, cakes, pies & custards for all. Did we enjoy the dinner, I should say so, for we had not eaten a home cooked dinner since we left our homes early in the spring. There was plenty left over for supper & we insisted that the lady of the house should not cook supper.

After the supper came the dance. It was a treat to our boys to be in the company of ladies & girls for many of them had not spoken to a girl since leaving home. The dance it was understood was for the Ranger boys exclusively & the girls said they would dance with none but the ranger boys that night & they did not. However, late in the night a number of boys came out from Stevenville. I think they were drinking for they were very noisy and at times acted as if they wanted to ruin the party.

The man of the house went to them & requested them to be quiet & not to disturb the dance but this seemed to do no good. Then our Lieutenant [went] out & quieted them in short order. I do not know what he said to them, but I know that in ten minutes after there was not one of the town boys in the place.

The dance went on until wee small hours of the morning when we all went back to camp & was there at roll call.

Thus ended the only social recreation that I had while in the service.

An Indian in Camp

In the spring of 1870 some Comanchie Indians made a raid into Burnet County. The citizens gathered & give chase & overtook them on the waters of the Lampasas River. A fight followed & some of the Indians were killed & among the number was a squaw who was mortally wounded but the citizens thought she was dead. Her husband came back to the battlefield after citizens were gone. He found his wife alive & carried her some distance & hid with her in a thicket where she died a few days later. He buried with his own hands & then started to the north to join his tribe. But in the battle he had lost his bow & arrow & while watching with his wife had use all the ammunition for his pistol. On his journey northward he had to live on roots & such berries. He reach Doublin one morning & went up to a farm house & without speaking he went directly into the kitchen & to the cupboard where he proceed to satisfy hi hunger. There was no one at in the house when he entered it except two small children. They were not frightened for they took the Indian to be an old negro woman who lived near, but they run out of the house & hunted up their mother who was somewhere about the place & told her that the negro woman was in the kitchen eating out of the cupboard. The ladie ran to the house& you can imagine her surprise when she found a full grown Comanchie Indian in her kitchen. She at once gave the alarm & some of the neighbors came in an took charge of the Indian. He did not try to get away, but ate as long as there was any food left in the cupboard. He never uttered a word while he was eating & could not, or would not talk to the men who arrested him.

Our Captain was notified & he & the Lieutenant went over to Doublin & brought the Indian to our camp. We kept him for seven days in our camp. The captain gave him a pair of shoes & some sox, but he would not keep them on his feet but would carry them in his hand. He did not try to get away. But he would not talk to anyone but the captain. He was alway ready to speak to the captain in the Spanish language. He was finally turned over to the United States troops &

carried to Ft. Griffin. I learned later that this Indian never went back to his tribe but continued with the U. S. troops & became a useful guide to them.

At Mountain Pass

Early in the spring of 1870 the Indians made numerous raids to the settlements in the frontier of Texas & the rangers were kept quite busy chasing them out of the country.

Word came to us that the Indians had raid the country east of us & had made good their escape carrying with them a hugh number of horses stolen from the settlements.

Two scouts of about 15 men each were at once sent out to head off the Indians in their flight to the northwest. One division was sent into Palo Pinto County & the other out toward the head of the Clear Fork of the Brazos River. Lieutenant Cox headed the scout which was to go out toward the head of the Clear Fork of the Brazos River & I was on his scout. We were out on this trip for several week, but the Indians had gone out to the northwest & the other scout which left camp at the same time we did had overtaken them killing five of their number & capturing all of their horses. We will occasion to mention this battle later. On our long trip to the west we had some exciting experiences, some of which I will briefly mention.

On this trip I saw the first live buffaloe I had ever seen. There were thousands of them west & northwest Texas at that time. This was late in the spring of the year & the buffaloes were exceedingly poor. As our supply of ammunition was limited the Lieutenant gave orders for us not to shoot the buffaloe only as he should give permission. This was a wise order because if it had been left to the boys they would have wasted all their ammunition & kill the bison without any purpose. Usually we killed once each day for our meat. Sometimes the meat was awfully tough & always coarse. I remember that one evening one of the boys roaped a yearling & two of them brought it into camp alive. It would fight its shadow, we had much sport with it. It was held by two roap & of course could not get to either of the boys who held the roaps, but some of the more venturesome boys would go out to tease the animal & as it would run at them the boys who held the roaps would give yearling roap & several times it nock the boys down & run over them to the sport of all.

Finally the boys decided to ride, but each one who tried found out that a buffaloe calf is hard to ride, for they all were tossed into the air & came to the ground. This was immense fun for those of us who felt safer at a distance.

Finally the brute was killed & we had a feast on its tender meat.

Sometimes the Lieutenant would give permission for three or four of the boys to dismount & kill a buffaloe. One day four of the boys dismounted to kill one of the largest bulls we had seen. As the boys dismounted the animal moved away from us & the boys had to leave their horses with us & go out some fifty yards away to get a good shot.

At the crack of the guns the great beast dropped in his tracks & we all thought he was dead. The boys who did the shooting thinking the beast was dead ran toward the body. But when they [were] about ten paces from the buffalo he came to his feet as if he had never been shot, & came with a rush toward them. Albert Jennings of Burnet Co. was one of the number. He was the largest man in our company & he was too fat to run fast. He turned & made a bee line for his horse & the buffalo was not far behind him, but the other boys as the bull came with his head stepped aside & shot the bull dead, but Albert never stopped nor looked back until he reached his horse. It was an exciting time & those of us who were on our horses made the air vocal with shouts & laughter at Alberts race. It was strange, indeed, that people will laugh & have their sport under such condition, but they will. It had always been so, & always will.

One night when we were camped on a hill overlooking a valley which stretched away to the west as far as the eye could see. Before the sun went down we could see thousands of buffalo feeding in the valley. We were all tired from the long ride that day & early wrapped ourselves in our blanket & pillowed our heads on our saddles & were soon in the land of nod.

It was about midnight, I suppose, when we were suddenly awakened [by] the mad rush of the buffaloes from the valley. They were on us before we knew it they must have stampeded. In a moment we were on our feet with guns in hand. Some of us thought the Indians were on us. As the wild brutes came rushing around, the Lieutenant ordered us to fire into them the firing of our guns turned the leaders & the vast herd followed them & passed around us.

It was fortunate for us that we were able to turn the wild herd from our camp, for if they had come on through our camp the chances that we would all have been trampled to death, of lost all of our horses & been left afoot more than 200 miles from camp.

The next day we started out a cross or up the long valley which was covered with small mesquite trees as high as our head as we sat on our horses. This was a dry country & water was very scarce. We did not find water all that day for ourselves & horses. Thos was the first time in my life that I had ever felt the pangs of thirst. We had no water at night, but rested out horses & waited until daylight. In the morning changed our course toward a range of mountains to the south. After riding all morning looking for water we came in sight of quite a lake which we could see for more than a mile we pressed our tired thirsty horses forward at a rapid gate for we all wanted water & here was a large beautiful lake full with clear water. We rushed up tp the lake letting our horses find their way into nice water. In a moment I was down on my hands & knees. But alas one mouthful was enough for it was as salty as brian. Then I look down & saw that the salt was at least an inch thick all around the lake. It was a sore disappointment to men & horses.

It was some five miles on to the mountain. When we came near the mountains, the order came for us to halt & a detail of five men with canteen were sent into the mountain to hunt for water. After more than an hour the scout returned with nice spring water. I never knew till then just how to prize good water. We move near the spring & camp until the next morning.

Late the next day we made the small U. S. fort at Mountain Pass. This fort is the pass through the mountain range which divides the waters of the Colorado & Brazos Rivers. The water which falls on the shed to the north of the mountain finds its way into the Brazos river & the water which falls on the south finds & [] in the Colorado River.

We were now at the head of the Clear Fork of the Brazos River some two hundred miles from any settlements. As we had found no trace of Indians & heard nothing at the US post of any Indians. On the second day after our arrival at the post we parted with the US troops & started to our camp in Erath County. In the afternoon five of our boys got permission & went up on the mountain to try to kill a bear & five more of them were to travel near the mountain while the remaining four were to stay with the Lieutenant. We parted with the understanding that we would meet at night at a designated point down the mountain range. The sun had gone down & we were just ready to turn towards the mountains to camp when there came dashing thru the mesquite a man or Indian on horseback about one hundred yards in advance of us. At the command of the Lieutenant we put spurs to our horses & dash toward the fleeing man. He was ordered to halt but he only ran the faster, then the order came to halt & fire. We did but he kept running.

We then turn & road to the place where we were to meet the other boys, but they were not there & it was after dark. We made a fire & left a note for the boys to meet us the next day at a given point. We then went east about a mile & then turned north & went two miles & camped for the night.

We never saw the other boys of our scout until we reach camp a week later. The day after our arrival at camp the scout which had gone to the northwest returned with their trophies of battle. The trail of the Indians some days after they left our camp & followed until they over took the Indians in the northwest corner of Palo Pinto Co. The Indians had many horses & could not travel as fast as our boy could. While there were more Indians than Rangers, yet the Indians tried to avoid a ~~fight~~ fight by flight, but our boys gave chase & were soon in a running fight which spread out over several miles. There were five Indians killed, among the number was a boy about seventeen years. He proved to be a white but he was painted & dressed as an Indians & it was not discovered that he was white until after one of the boys had scalped him. An examination proved that he was not an Indian. Regrets were express by all the boys that he had been killed. Possibly he was one of the many boys captured by the Indians in their raid into Texas & had been raised by them.

In this battle our boys captured 75 or 100 head of horses, saddles, blankets, shields, bows & arrows & some Indian trinkets.

On way home from the battle the came through Stephenvill & the people gave them a regular ovation & too much bad whiskey. When they reached camp they were feeling the effects of drink & they came into camp making more noise than a tribe of Indians could have made & with their spoils of battle displayed they marched round & round the camp amid the firing of guns, music

of the bugle & the shouts of all the boys. We were proud of the victory won without the loss of men.

It was reported Austin that some of our boys were wounded in the fight but I never saw a wounded man. True one man Bill Morrison had been hit in the back with a blunt arrow & Bill Hagood had a mashed finger & hereby hangs a tale told by Jimmie Addison of the fight.

Bill Morrison was considered coward in the camp. He was half witted & would never resent anything. He was considered a harmless man & all of us thought that if he ever had to go into battle he would be sure to run. He road a fleet horse. But when the battle was on Jimmie said old Bill fought in the lead & was often in danger of fire of our own guns as well as the arrows of the enemy. Near the close of the battle he was far in advance of the other boys & his gun would not work. As he run he tried to fix his gun but finding he could not shoot he took the barrel in his hand & rushed madly into a bunch of Indians using his gun as a club, & with it he knock right & left as his great horse rush through the Indians. As he passed beyond through the enemy he was hit in the back by a blunt arrow, of course it hurt & made a great black place where it hit him. Bill thought that he had been shot through & through, & then to add to his trouble his horse was shot with an arrow in the lower part of the neck & Bill could see the arrow sticking in his horses neck & the blood freely flowing from the wound. But the battle was over & Bill came back to the other boys who had dismounted & stood near two dying Indians who were lying in the grass. Bill was crying when he came up. He said, "Boys I have been shot & the red devils have killed my horse" & it is said that he raised his gun & shot the dying Indian & ended his dying struggles. The governor sent Bill Morrison a nickle plated gun as a reward for his bravery. This reward was well merited.

Bill Haygood was always boasting about his fighting. He vain, boastful & of an overbearing disposition. Up to this time we all thought that Hagood would fight when the time come, he road a fast horse, but Jimmie said I he was careful to say it where Hagood could hear. "Yes, Haygood was there but he was so far in the rear that he was in no danger from the Indian arrows." Haygood claimed that he was hit on the finger by an arrow & he was reported as one of the wounded. To this claim Jimmie said to Haygood, You know that is not true, Bill, for you was never near enough to the Indians for an arrow to reach you. Your finger was mashed on the horn or your saddle by your gun when you were pulling on the reigns to keep your horse in the rear. This was about the truth for from that day on Haygood never boasted a about fighting when Jimmie around.

As I have already said Jimmie Addison was the youngest boy in our company. He was the son of our doctor. He was a good boy of noble impulses, but at times reckless. He was liked by all the men & seemed to be a favorite of the officers. I only a little older & Jimmie & I were close friends & associates in the service.

Preached to the Boys

As far back as I can remember I wanted to preach. When a boy on Mr Goodman's farm I often preached to the negro children out in the great barn. We had some great meetings too.

On Christmas night in camp we were having a lively time as boys will have. The Lieutenant gave us all a dram or two of whiskey as a Christmas treat & we were feeling it some. We had been dancing for some time to musick made by Tom Thurman. When this was over the boys called on me for a speech.

I replied, "Boy you know I cant make a speech, but I tell you what I can do, I can preach you a sermon." Then they all cried give us a sermon & I did. The boys frequently responded with loud "amen" & when I was through they all came around complemented me for the "sermon" as we called & gave me a good hand shaking all around. I did try to make fun for the boys, but I was very much in earnest & serious in all that I had to say, just as a sure enough preacher would have been. I don't think I was ever ore serious in my life then I was that night while talk to the boys. I do not remember all that I said to them, but I do remember, that I was personal & practical in my talk & pointed out to the boys the mistakes we were making in forsaking our Mother's religion & that we ought to remember our mother's advice & never do any thing that mother would grieve to know. I warned the boys of the danger to us in the habit of drinking, swearing & gambling. This talk cut deep into my own life & the boys knew & as I had told them in my talk. So I close by saying "Do not do as I do, but do as I have told you."

There was a spirit of serious followed my sermon. I was serious myself for my talk had up some of the memories of my sainted mother & the scenes of my childhood & I think it did the same thing for others. There was no more fooling & dancing that, but as the hours was late we soon were in our bunks & asleep.

Some of my Ranger mates have heard me preach often since I have been a preacher & they have frequently said to me "the best sermon you ever preached was the one you preached to us boys in camp that Christmas night."

That night a heavy snow fell & in the morning the ground was covered with more than two inched of snow. But the first I knew of the snow was when some of the boys raised the cover & dash a handful of snow on me as I was sleep in my bunk. Of course this aroused me from my dreams & I was out of bed in a moment & in my night clothes I chased my tormentor up & down the streets in the camp until I caught him & gave him a good rubing in the snow. My, it was cold but I enjoyed the sport.

Mothers Influence

As I have already said my mother died when I was a very small boy, but thank God she lived long enough to impress some lessons on my mind that have been a safe guard to me all the days of my life.

One day I had been over to Ft. Griffin with a number of the boys & in returning to camp in the evening I fell in with Holmes, the man, who a few days later was killed by Jack Singleton, & we rode on together to camp. As I have before said, Holmes was a thief & we all knew it, but was a smooth talker. He told on that ride of some of his life & the troubles he had been in. I did not have much to say. Holmes did most of the talking. Finally he said, "Coley," for that was the name I went by, "I know how we can make lots of money." Then he laid bare his plan for stealing some horses which were held by the Tonkaway Indians camp above the Fort in the river. This Indians had a large herd of horses which no doubt had been stolen from the settlement east of us. "You go over," he said, "& claim that certain horses in the herd were stolen from you & I will swear that the horses are yours, & then we can both take them & sell them."

While laying before me this diabolical plan for stealing the horses, the spirit of my mother seemed to come to me & her hand appeared to again rest on my head again as it did just before her death.

I turned in my saddle & faced Holmes & looking him [in] the eyes I said in an angry tone, for I was mad: "Holmes you are a thief. You do not know me, or you would not make such a proposition to me. I would not disgrace my parents by such a dishonorable act for all the horses in Texas." I thanked God that day for a Christian mother & father & I have cause many times since to thank God for their teaching which was helped me in temptation & battles of life.

But poor Holmes, his end was near when he must meet God & the record of his life. I have often wondered if he had a Christian mother, & if she knew how he had died. He died at a murderer's hand. If he had a friend on the world to drop a tear of sorrow on his grave I did not know it.

Going Home

When our term of service expired Company "B" was ordered to Austin & disbanded.

In our march to Austin it rained on us most of the way. We marched the Leon River & found the river past fording. We camped for the night out one mile from the river on what looked like a dry branch. Shortly after midnight a terrific storm came. The rain fell in torrents. I remember that I sat at the root of a tree on my saddle with my blankets wrapped about me for an hour & the rain poured until I was wet to my skin.

Then the creek rose & the water came ~~back~~ out over the banks & our camp was flooded & in the storm we had to move out to higher ground. We went out to a high place in the valley & spread out our blankets on the wet ground & then in our wet clothes turned to get some sleep.

It was warm weather & I soon got warm & fell asleep & I don't think I ever had a sweeter & more refreshing night's sleep in my life.

When I woke in the morning I found I had been sleeping in more than two inches of water, for the water covered the whole valley. It took all day to cross the Leon River. We had to swim our

horses in crossing for more than 100 yards & then raft our baggage over on logs. I was in the river all day & I came near losing my life. One of the horses I was taking over turned down the stream & I followed. The current was very swift & carried me under the branches of a tree, ~~The current~~ of a tree as I was swept under the branches my shirt caught on a limb & I could not get my head out of the water & my presence of mind saved my life. I unbuttoned my shirt at front & at my cuffs & then turned my body down the stream & let the current strip me of my shirt. I lost my shirt but saved my life. Some of the boys who saw me go down thought I was lost, & loud were their shouts when they saw me immerge from the water more than 20 feet below the tree. I was out of breath when I came up & God's pure air never smelled so sweet to me as at that moment.

Dead Drunk

Late in the evening we started on the march & soon reach the little town of Hamilton & camp for the night near the town. The Lieutenant out of the goodness of his heart for his men, thought we needed some whiskey, as we were wet to the skin & had been for 24 hours and he bought as much of the fiery stuff as he thought we needed. The canteens were passed around among the boys & all took some.

I took one mouthful swallowed some of it & spit the rest on the ground. It was the meanest whiskey I had ever tasted. To me it was like beyond fire & burned my mouth & throat. It was liquid poison & was composed of chemicals & tobasco juice.

After supper some of us boys walked down to the little town. We were still wet. We chanced to meet a doctor. He said you boys must have some good brandy. You need it boy, come into my office & I will give you some good apple brandy. We went to his office & he gave each of us a glass of brandy. It tasted good to me I drank what he gave me. I never once thought it would make me drunk, but it did. I remember leaving the Doctors office & that is the last thing that I remember until the next day about ten o'clock. The boys however cared for me & my old friend Gilbert Stewart took charge of me & cared for me as if I have been his own brother. When I came to myself I was sick & heartily ashamed of myself. But Gilbert spoke kindly to me & said you will be alright after a while.

At noon we stopped for dinner. A small beef had been killed but I was too sick to fix my dinner & I crawled under a tree & tried to go to sleep But I could not. At last coffee was made & the beef roasted and as I saw Gilbert take the large piece he had roasted from the fire I said to him "Gilbert give me a small piece of your meat." He looked at me a moment & said, "Coley, don't you ever ask me for any thing again." This was like a knife thrust coming as it did from Gilbert. After a moment pause, he added. "But if I ever have anything you want take it." I could not suppress the tears & Gilbert saw it said, "O don't do that, but come on and eat a good dinner & you will feel better."

I am glad that a few years later I had an opportunity to repay, in part at least the kindness shown me by this good & true friend. After we disbanded, Gilbert went to his people who live above

Austin. & a year later in some way got into serious trouble & shot a man, but did not kill him. For this act he was sent to the Penitentiary for two years. It was my privilege to help him get a pardon & he came back home & made an honest living as long as I kept up with him. He has before this no doubt, no doubt gone to his long home. I hope he became a Christian & I shall meet him again in heaven. In many ways he proved a friend to me & I shall always thank God that he gave me good advice when I needed it.

The last time I was ever under the influence of strong drink was the day we were mustered out of the Ranger service at Austin. My brother Willie who live just above Austin came to meet me & take me out to his home. We drank some beer as we passed around here & there over the town & as we were getting read to start out of town brother said lets go in get a glass of wine before we go. This I consented. I did not feel the effects of the beer & I had no thought of that a mild drink like wine would make drunk, but it did. No I did not get down like a hog as I had before but I was feeling the effect of the wine before we reached brother's home & was a pretty lively boy.

I was ashamed for Willie's wife to see me under the influence of drink & I did my best to keep her from finding out.

That night after midnight I awoke & and was perfectly sober, but very thirsty. I went to the water bucket, but found it empty. They used river which was considered the best water to be found. ~~The River was~~ It was about 150 yards to the river, but I was burning up with thirst & must have water. I walked down to the river got down on my hands & knees and drank my fill & then I rolled over in the sand & lay there looking up into heaven & the stars seemed to be looking at me. I thought of my mother & father & of their teachings & I said to my self, "What a fool I am to drink & get drunk this way," & then I vowed that I would never get drunk again & I never have from that night to this time been under the influence of strong drink & never expect to be again. I have never tasted of liquor but a few times since & have not ever used any for medicine but once in forty years. There has never been any of the poison my home. None of my children ever took any alcohol for medicine, & if any of them should ever drink, & none of them do now, they can't say that they learn the taste for it in the home.

Section II

Chapter I

Some Incidents in My Experience as a Texas Ranger

The Texas legislature, I think it was in 1869, provided for putting a force of Rangers in the field for the protection of the frontier from the raids of the Comanche Indians. I made up my mind to go. My father advised against it. He wanted me to continue in school. But I had made up my mind to go and I did go over the protest of my father. While in many respects I gained much by my experience in the service of the state, yet, I am now convinced that it would have been better for me to have taken father's advice and continued in school, but like many foolish boys, I thought I knew better than my father, and so I went to Austin and enlisted as a Texas Ranger.

Join Company "B"

Company "B" was made up by Capt. A. H. Cox, of Burnet County, and as I was acquainted with the boys in this company, I joined Company "B."

We were mustered into the service on September 8, 1870, and a few days later left Austin, going via Waco and Weatherford to Ft. Griffin on the Clear Fork of the Brazos River where we remained for a month or more.

Our company was composed of boys a few years older than I. There were only four or five men in our company over forty years of age. Among this number were Dr. Odom, the company's physician, Lieutenant Cox and Gilbert Stewart. I mention these men now as I shall have occasion to mention them again in these notes.

Most of the boys in Company "B" were from the best families of Burnet County. Some of them had been my schoolmates. With exception of only three or four, we had no really tough characters in our company, and these I shall speak of later.

It would take several volumes should I undertake to give in detail all of our wanderings and all of the interesting happenings and incidents which occurred while I was out as a Texas Ranger, but I will mention some things in this connection which will interest those who may chance to read these notes.

Brave Boys

I think it is safe to say that most of our boys were brave and could be trusted to stand on the firing line at any time or in anyplace. I never heard of but one of our boys flinching when tried. He was discharged in a few months and returned home.

The captain, in making out his discharge, made the following note, "A good reliable soldier, but rather inclined to fear wolves." This was absolutely true. If he was out at night and heard wolves howling, he would break for the camp and run as fast as he could until he was in the camp. I believe that he would rather have met a bunch of yelling Comanches than to have come up with a wolf. He ought never to have gone out as a Ranger.

A Notorious Thief

We had but one notorious thief in our company and he was not ashamed of it, but rather gloried in his ability to steal and never be caught. The captain had picked him up in Austin and he was a stranger to every one in the company. He was a brave, fearless fellow and kind hearted, but he was a thief. He would not steal from our boys, but he would steal something every time he went to town. He was killed in cold blood by Jack Singleton. Later I will give the incident of his murder.

A Lively Time at Weatherford

The state furnished us pickled pork for our meat. This, the captain sold and with the money bought beef for his men. He gave orders to the officers on duty each day, to go out and kill a beef, taking the mark and brand of the animal killed. The mark and brand was turned over to the captain and he was supposed to pay the owner for the beef. Whether he did so, or not, I cannot say. Some of the boys said he did not pay for all the beeves that were killed, but put the money in his own pocket. This may have been done. I have no proof that he did. Anyway, it was the duty of the men on duty each day, but the order of the captain, to kill beeves as they were needed. This reminds me of a very exciting time we had at Weatherford on our way out to Ft. Griffin. This grew out of a series of incidents which I will now mention.

(1) At that time but few, if any, of our boys had ever seen a woman wearing a Mother Hubbard dress. I never had, and I am sure that little Jim Odom, who figures in this incident, never had. Jimmie was the youngest boy in our company. He was liked by every one. As we marched down the street on the north side of Weatherford, a woman came out of the house and marched out on the sidewalk facing our company dressed in a snow white Mother Hubbard dress. She looked to me like she was dressed for bed and not for a street walk. Jimmie saw her. He had never before seen a woman on the streets dressed in that kind of garb, and he was amazed at the sight. Just like a thoughtless boy he said just as the woman passed up the walk not thirty feet from us, "I think that woman ought to put on her clothes before she comes out on the street." It is true that he ought not to have made this remark, but he did it, and the woman was very much offended and rushed on up the street as mad as a hornet, saying as she went, "I will inform my husband of this public insult," which I suppose she did as after developments proved.

(2) We camped for the night out about three miles west of Weatherford. It was early in the afternoon when we camped. I was on duty that day and the sergeant took me and another boy with him and went out to kill a beef as we were under orders to do. There were a great many fat cattle on the range, and we did not have to go far, nor hunt long for a fat beef. The sergeant killed it not over one mile from camp, and we proceeded to dress it. While we were skinning the beef, a nice looking gentleman rode up and spoke to us in a very kind way. His appearance showed him to be a stock man. He dismounted and came and helped us dress the beef. He said: "Boys, I have more than a thousand on this range. This may be one of mine we are dressing, but it is all right if it is, for the presence of the Rangers on this frontier will be worth more to me than all the cattle you may eat." The sergeant replied: "We are soldiers and under orders for the captain to do what we are doing. I have the mark and band of this beef, and if you will go down to camp, the captain will pay you for it if it is your beef." Here the officer produced the mark and brand, but the stock man would not look at the paper, but said, "That is all right, boys, if this is my beef, you are more than welcome to it." he helped us dress the beef and put it on our pack mule and bade us good-day.

On the way to camp an old man came dashing up to us on horseback. Jerking his horse to a standstill in front of the sergeant who was in the lead of our detail, he said in a very angry tone of

voice, "What are you doing here killing my cattle." He was very mad and profane. The sergeant in a very gentlemanly way explained our action to him and said, "I have the mark and brand of the beef we killed, and if it is your property, if you will return with us to camp, the captain will pay you for it." This seemed to make the man more furious and he cursed and swore like a cyclone. This aroused the fire of our officer, who was an expert at swearing himself, and he cursed the man in no gentle terms and soon convinced him that the best thing for him to do would be to "pull his freight," which he did in short but rapid order. As it afterwards was proven, the beef was not his, but belonged to the man who helped up dress it.

One of Our Boys Arrested

(3) When we reported this incident to the company, the boys were furious. I was on duty that night and the horses were picketed out on the prairie. It was my duty while on guard to make a circuit around the camp and horses every twenty minutes. The boys had built a log fire on the west line of the camp and I had to pass this fire each round I made. On one of the rounds as I was leaving the fire, I saw one of our boys coming in a run towards the camp and heard him say to the boys at the fire, "That old man (meaning the old man we had had trouble with about the beef) had one of our boys under arrest." As I walked away from the fire on my regular rounds, I saw the boys go for their guns and heard thirty or more guns clicking and saw the boys rushing up the path leading to the old man's house. Three of our boys had slipped out of camp and had gone into the old man's cornfield. They did not go after corn, for we had plenty in camp. I never did know just what took them into the old man's field, but they were there, and one of them had been arrested. The boys in the field were not armed, but the old man had a dangerous looking shotgun. So he had no trouble in arresting one of the boys and putting the other, who came into camp and reported one of the boys arrested, to flight.

Our boys armed with their guns met the old man with his prisoner about half-way from his house to our camp. They commanded him to halt and told him they would take charge of his prisoner and him too. The boy who had been under arrest, joined the others and then marched the old man back to his house and commanded him not to leave it again that night. I did not see them go or come in while I was on guard, but I know that some of them did go out and come and that they brought some nice potatoes in with them, for they gave roast beef and roasted potatoes more than once as I passed the fire on my rounds. Of course, this was all wrong and our boys should not have molested the old man's potatoes, but the old man was himself responsible for it. He had unnecessarily made the boys mad, and they were ready for almost anything to worry him.

(4) Holmes, our notorious thief, in passing through Weatherford had stolen a hat and some clothing for which he was severely reprimanded by the captain, but he kept the clothing and hat and wore them. In this, I then thought and now know that the captain did not do the right thing. The goods should have been returned to the owner and Holmes should have been punished. However, it was the general opinion among the boys that for some cause the captain was afraid of Holmes.

We Face a Civil Officer

Early the next morning we saw the old man and two officers from Weatherford come riding into camp. We had fully expected this and were not at all surprised when they came. The officers had had a private talk with the captain. Soon the bugle called us into line facing the officers and the captain. The roll was called and every man was present. The captain then turned to the officer and said: "Here are all of my men. You will pick out the one you want." The officers said to the old man, "Pick out the men you want us to arrest." The old man seemed very much confused and relied to the officer, "Sir, I cannot tell one from another." "Well," said the officer, "Surely you do not expect me to arrest all of this company of men when you cannot identify anyone who you say you caught in your field last night." This ended the matter as far as the officers and the old man were concerned, but the captain stepped out and made a little talk to the men who had been trespassing. Among other things he said, "If I could find out the guilty one, I would fine him \$100.00." But this was all buncombe, for the captain had no power to fine anyone and he knew it, but his talk served the purpose, and we were soon on the march. But the boys had it in for the old man who had caused the trouble, and as we marched out we had to pass around his garden, and some of the boys who were experts with the rope would rope cabbage heads and drag them up the road. This was pure and unadulterated meanness on the part of the boys, and I took no part in it. The cabbages were wasted and the act of destroying them could in no way profit the boys, except to gratify their spleen against the old man. These same boys would have given their lives in defense of the life or property of any man who would half-way treat them right.

We Reach Ft. Griffin

After being on the road for several weeks, we reached Ft. Griffin without any serious mishap. We camped in the valley just across the river from old Ft. Griffin which stood on a high hill south of the Clear Fork of the Brazos River. The river was up and we had to bring our supplies across the river from the fort in a raft. The weather was fair and warm and we had a good time resting here for over a week under the shadows of the old fort. After about a week, we moved our camp out on a creek some three miles from the fort where we remained until we were ordered to Stevensville which I think was about one month. There was some scouting done, but most of the time was spent in camp or hunting for game. We had some good deer hunters in our company and they generally kept us well supplied with venison. While I hunted some and occasionally shot a deer, yet I never killed a deer while I was in service, and the fact is I never killed a deer in all my life that I know of.

Holmes Killed By Singleton

On the morning we left this camp for Stevensville, a cowardly murder was committed which I will never forget. While I had seen men killed before, yet this was the first time I had ever seen man murdered in cold blood.

Holmes, to whom reference had already been made, was mess mate to Jack Singleton. They were bed fellows and they usually rode side by side when we were marching. Holmes was a thief, but a brave fearless man. Singleton was a coward, with an overbearing disposition. He and Holmes

had had numerous spats on their way our and Singleton had cursed Holmes. Just before we reached Ft. Griffin, Singleton had cursed Holmes for the third time. When he quieted down, Holmes said to him: "Jack, this is the third time you have cursed me, but it is the last time I will stand it. The next time you curse me I will whip you, so don't try it again."

After this they seemed to get along very well until two days before we were to move camp, when some dispute came up between them and Jack having forgotten Holmes' warning, proceeded to curse Holmes again and then Holmes proceeded to give Jack a good thrashing. In this conflict, Singleton never tried to defend himself, but took his beating like a cowardly cur. he had his pistol on at the time, and there might have been some little excuse for him if he had shot Holmes at the time of the difficulty. But he was too much of a coward to shoot Holmes while facing him. He waited two nights and days and then like the coward he was, he slipped to Holmes' back while he was eating his breakfast. Our mess joined them on the west and I had just finished eating and walked to the fire when I heard the sharp report of a gun, and turning, saw Holmes leap to his feet and Jack doing the same thing behind him. Holmes ran toward our mess for a few jumps and then turned toward the tree where his gun was hanging. Just as he turned, I could see Jack who was not twenty steps away from me with his gun pointed towards our mess and he fired again. At the crack of the gun poor Holmes dropped dead in his tracks. As Holmes leaped to his feet at the first shot he said, "Oh, Jack!" When the last shot was fired and as he was falling, said "God---damn you Jack." I have heard these awful words since that day. When Holmes fell and was dead, the cowardly murderer stood over his lifeless body and fired two more shots, but they did not hit the body. Both shots passed through his left hand which held a knife and a biscuit which he was eating at the time he was killed.

As the time of this murder, we had our horses saddled and most of the goods packed for our trip to Stevensville. This delayed our departure until in the afternoon. There was intense excitement among the boys. Some of them proposed hanging Singleton to a mesquite tree. If Holmes had one friend in the company to lead the crowd, I believe he would have been hung on the spot. But Holmes had no personal friends in the company.

We dug his grave under a mesquite tree and in it placed the body of Holmes with his saddle, gun, blanket and clothing and covered them up with dirt and turned away with sad hearts.

It is sad to die anywhere, but it is especially so to be murdered and buried in a coffinless grave in a strange land, without a friend to shed a tear over the lonely grave.

But Jack Singleton

But do you ask, what became of the murderer? Of course, he was dismissed from the service and turned over to the civil authorities. He was on trial and acquitted because none of the witnesses who saw the crime committed were ever called to swear. Why this was the case, I do not know, but it was hinted many times that the captain wanted Holmes killed and that he helped Singleton out of it. I do not know that there was any real foundation for this suspicion, yet, it remains to be

explained why the witnesses who saw the killing were not summons to be at the trial of Singleton.

I happened to be on duty that day and had to guard Singleton that night. He whimpered and cried all night. He was the most miserable man I ever saw. He had murdered a man in cold blood and in the most cowardly way. In a way that a man with any degree of self-respect would have been ashamed of. If Singleton had conscience it would have troubled him because of the heinousness of his crime, but I think he was troubled more over the penalty of the law which threatened him than over the awful crime he had committed. He had heard many of the boys say in the morning that he ought to be hung. He escaped the hangman's knot by some means, but his life was wrecked by his cowardly deed. In the night I asked him why he had killed Holmes in that cowardly way, and his reply was, "I was afraid of him." This was partly true, but there was another reason. I think he had heard the boys talk about the just flogging Holmes had given him and he was sore over this and wanted revenge. He got it, but at what cost? By this crime he lost the respect of every man in the company and was told to his face by some of the boys that he was a cowardly dog. Then he had to go through life with the mark of a murderer on him. I have met Jack several times since the deed was committed and he could never look me in the eyes. He has been a failure at everything he ever undertook. He must have had a miserable life, and no doubt he has seen visions of his murdered victim and heard the bitter condemnation of the dying man many times. I would rather be poor and in want all my life than to have such bitter memories haunting me by day and night through life. No man has the right to take the life of his fellow.

In Winter Quarters

On reaching Stevensville, a camp was selected about five miles south of the town on the road to Dublin. It was an ideal camping place with plenty of good pure water, splendid grass and plenty of timber for building our winter quarters and for firewood. As soon as we were on the ground, we commenced building quarters for ourselves and horses. This was done by cutting small post oak trees and splitting them in halves. These were set as picket in the ground and then covered with logs, grass and dirt. A chimney was built in one end of each camp out of sticks and mud, and then the cracks were daubed with mud to keep out the wind. These houses which were built in regular order on either side of a broad street with the officers quarters at the head of the street, proved to be very comfortable for us during the winter. We had but little to do during the winter months except to go occasionally as guard with the District Court, as the Indians did but little damage in the cold winter months. Some details were sent out to capture fugitives from justice, but with it all we had plenty of idle time. This time was spent by some in hunting, but I was not much of a hunter and so had to look to other things for my fun.

Made Rails and Cut Poles

I have all my life wanted to be doing something, even when I was a boy I wanted something to do. I do not remember to have ever been out of a job. If I could not get one thing to do, I would find another. If I could not get high wages, I would work for low wages. I have worked many

days at fifty cents a day and thought I was doing well. I always thought it was better to be doing something than to do nothing.

So during the winter when I was not on duty, I would go out and make rails and chop poles for the ranchmen. I would ride out in the morning four or five miles and make a dollar and fifty cents and get back to camp before night. I enjoyed the work and the money I made I used for the little expenses I had. The captain was always willing for me to go out and work. All the money I spent while in the service I made in this way. At this time the state was in debt and we did not receive a cent for the state while we were out, and the little money I earned by making rails helped me out wonderfully. It was a fortunate thing for me that the state did not pay me until we were out of the service, because it made me study economy, and then if I had received my pay monthly, I might have spent it foolishly and it was better to receive the money all in a "pile."

Lieutenant Cox

Lieutenant Cox, although of the same name, was in no way related to Captain Cox. He was a model man and a splendid officer. He was past forty years old. He did not drink, gamble nor swear. He was not officious and never boasted, but was as brave as a lion. He was true to every trust and lived an upright life. As far as I know, we did not have a religious man in our company, but Lieutenant Cox lived like one. He seemed to think a great deal of me and often called me his boy and he was free to advise me in all things as my father would have done. His advice kept me from many snares and pitfalls. I went with him on every scout, whether it was after Indians or white desperadoes. I always rode by his side when we were on the march and was beside him when danger was near. I went with him several times after criminals when we all knew there was danger ahead. On these occasions it took all the courage I had to go with him into a house at night after a criminal, but when the first word was spoken, all fears seemed to leave me and I would have followed him into the very jaws of death. I owe much to this brave officer. He was my friend and I shall never forget him. I have lost sight of him. I suppose he is dead.

Gilbert Stewart

Gilbert Stewart was another good and true friend I had in the company. He was also above forty years old. He was raised in Travis County, but had been a wanderer over the world for many years. He said that he had "Gone all the gaits," and had traveled all over the United States in early life. Often he would entertain me for hours by telling me of his ups and downs in his wanderings. He was regarded the best informed man in the company and for this reason he was called "Old Congress Head" by the boys. He always settled our disputes. What Gilbert said, was taken as the truth. He was a man of noble impulses. His advice to me was always good and he was free to advise me to shun evil.

He Advised Me Not to Play at Cards

I have never gambled in my life, but after we located our winter quarters, I did play a few games of cards, but not enough to know the game or to learn the names and value of the cards. Gilbert saw me playing one night, and in a few days we were out on duty together, and stopping on the hillside to let our horses rest and graze for a while and to rest ourselves under the shade of a tree, we talked about many things. Finally Gilbert turned to me and said: "Coley, I saw you playing cards with the boys the other night. Card playing ruined me and it will ruin you if you keep it up." Then he told me his experience as a gambler, how the habit had grown on him, from an innocent game of cards until he became a professional gambler in the State of California. Then he added, "My boy, you had better give up cards while you can, for it will grow on you until it becomes a passion with you." After he had finished, I turned to him and said, "Gilbert, I will never play another game of cards." He shook me by the hand and said, "That is a good resolution. Always keep it and you will make a man," I am glad to say that I have never played at cards from that day to this. I took the old gambler's advice, and now after all of these years I am mighty glad that I did so. I have often been tempted to play a social game, "just for fun," but my promise to Gilbert had been sacredly kept and I am now too old to ever begin the evil habit of card playing. If I could speak to all of the boys in the wide, wide world, I would give them the same advice that "Old Congress Head" Stewart gave me when I was a boy. "Don't play cards."

Cotton Picking and a Dance

A farmer who lived near our camp had much sickness during the fall and winter and was not able to gather his cotton which was wasting in the field. Our boys liked this farmer, for he had often been at our camp and some of the boys had been at his home. His cotton field was white and it was evident that if it was not gathered before the bad weather set in, he would lose most of his crop. Some of the boys suggested that we all go down and pick the crop out. This proposition met with general approval. The captain agreed that we all might go and give the man one day's work, Some of the boys went down and talked it all over with the farmer, and he agreed if we would come and give him a day's picking, that he would give an old-fashioned dinner and an all night dance at his house.

The day came for the cotton picking and all of our company except the detail for the day and a few to keep camp, about forty in all, marched down to the farmer's cotton field, staked out horses out on the prairie and at once made an attack on that field of cotton. The neighboring women and girls also come to help prepare the dinner, some to help pick cotton – in those days women worked in the field. The start was made, and from that moment until we finished in the afternoon there was something doing in that cotton field. The gathered cotton which was put in heaps in the field continued to grow as the hours went by. Some of our boys were splendid cotton pickers, while other, like myself, could not pick much, but we all did our very best and at noon hour most of the cotton had been picked.

At the noon hour dinner was served. It was a magnificent dinner. Our boys who had for four months been living on camp fare, did appreciate this good old-fashioned country dinner and they showed it by the amount they consumed. After dinner which consumed more than one hour, we again marshaled out men and made the second attack on the cotton patch. The battle that

followed was short but fierce, and complete victory was won over King Cotton in a two hour's engagement. With shouts of victory, we retired to the house singing, "We'll not go home 'til morning."

True to his promise, the farmer gave us a dance that night. There were a number of nice girls and women who joined us in the dance. It was a treat to our boys to be in the company of ladies again, for many of us had not spoken to a lady since we entered the service. Some of us at first, did not feel at ease in the ballroom in our coarse Ranger clothes, but the embarrassment soon passed away and we felt very much at home with the ladies. It must be understood that the Texas frontier ladies did not dress in the styles of this day and times, but they were all neatly dressed and could dance to perfection.

It was understood that the dance was for the Ranger's exclusively. The ladies had said that they would not dance with any but the Ranger boys that night, and they did not. However, late in the night a number of boys and men came out from Stevensville. I think they must have been drinking, for they were very noisy and at times acted as if they wanted to end the party. The man of the house went to them and requested them to be quiet and not to disturb the party. But this only seemed to make the town boys worse. Then our lieutenant went out to them and quieted them in short order. I do not know what he said to them, but I do know that in less than five minutes they were gone and did not return that night. The dance continued all night and in the early morning we all returned to camp and were present at roll call. Thus ended the first and only social recreation I had while in the service. Do you ask, "Did I dance?" Yes, the best I could. I loved to dance when I was a boy and continued to dance until I became a Christian. "Is it wrong to dance?" you may ask. I think that dancing is not only sinful, but very dangerous for girls.

An Indian in Camp

In the spring of 1871, some Comanche Indians had made a raid into Burnet and Lampasas Counties. They had stolen many horses from the settlers in both of these counties and were making their way out with them when they were overtaken by citizens down near the Lampasas River. A battle followed. The Indians were defeated and several Indians killed. Among the number was a squaw who was mortally wounded and hid in the brakes. Her husband knowing she had been shot, but was not dead, returned to her and remained with her until she died. In the fight he had lost his bow and arrows. his pistol was useless as he was without amunition. He started to go to his tribe, but when he reached Dublin he was almost starved. He went to a farmhouse and rushed into the kitchen where he found food and he went to eating without saying anything to anyone. As if happened, the man of the house was away from home, and his wife was out about the place and did not see the Indian enter the house. Some small children were about the house and they thought that the Indian was an old Negro woman who lived in the community. They ran to their mother and told her the Negro was in the house eating. The mother went into the house and to her amazement in place of the Negro woman, she found a wild Indian standing at the cupboard helping himself to all of the food in sight. He paid no attention to the woman who became frightened and gave the alarm. The Indian was arrested, and word was sent over to our camp. The captain and two of the boys went over to Dublin and brought the Indian to

our camp. We kept the Indian in our camp for several days and finally turned him over to Lieutenant Bean of the U. S. Army, and he was taken to Ft. Griffin. While we had him in our camp he never once spoke to anyone but the captain. To him he would talk freely, but not a word would he speak to anyone else. One night I had to guard him and I tried in every way to get him to talk to me, but he not so much as grunt when I would punch him with my gun. He slept wrapped in a blanket, coiled up like a dog and never once moved all of the time I was on guard. His devotion to his wife and the sacrifice he made for her had gained for him a degree of respect from all of the boys.

Christmas in Camp

The Christmastide of 1870, I spent in camp. Old Santa did not come. But we had a very food time all the same and celebrated the occasion in various ways. One thing, the ice was thick and we had lots of fun on the ice. The lieutenant, out of the goodness of his heart, sent over to Stebensville and bought some whiskey and treated the boys. I did not take but one drink, but the others took man and got drunk. This caused one boy to get a good beating in a drunken row. Then we had music and what was called a “Stag Dance.” That is a dance with only men.

One Death in the Camp

While we were in the service there was only one death from natural cause. This was a man by the name of Goodlet. I think he came from Burnet County. He was a weakly man, but a splendid fellow. From some exposure he took pneumonia and died after a few days illness. I think he was buried in Stebensville, but am not sure, as I was out on duty at the time of his death. It was a sad day in our camp when he died, for all of the boys liked Goodlet. Holmes was killed by Singleton. These were the only two we lost by death during our term of service. One man deserted and has never been heard from as far as I know. Only a few were discharged, so most of the men who entered the service were mustered out of the service at the same time.

On the Scout

Early in the spring of 1871, the Indians made many raids into the settlement along the frontier, and we were kept quite busy chasing them out of our territory. Word came to us about the first of April that the Indians had raided the country east of us. Two scouts of fifteen men each were sent out, one to the north and the other to the west to try and head off the Indians on their return to the northwest. One of he scouts went north to Palo Pinto County and the other went west to the head of the Clear Fork of the Brazos River. It was my good fortune to go with Lieutenant Cox to the west. Both scouts started at the same time. Jimmie Odom, who was with the scouts going north, called to me as we marched out of camp and said, “Coley, if you kill an Indian, be sure and bring me his scalp and if I kill one, I will bring you a scalp.” “All right,” I answered back.

It was the aim of our lieutenant to get in ahead of the Indians. With this purpose in view, we traveled very fast for the first three days, then we felt sure that we were ahead of the Indians if they should come to the west, and so we were in no hurry, but took our time and watched for

them. We learned later that the Indians had gone north, but this we could not know then, but continued west until we reached Mountain Pass on the headwater of the Clear Fork of the Brazos River. It was a long trip and we had some exciting experiences on the way, both going and coming.

Many Buffaloes to be Seen

The first real live buffalo I ever saw was on this trip. There were thousands of them to be seen. As this was in the early spring, the buffaloes were very poor and it was only occasionally that we found one fat enough to eat. Our supply of amunition was limited and we were more than 200 miles from the settlements and in danger of running into the Indians any day. Our lieutenant wisely ordered us not to waste amunition on any kind of game except when he gave permission for us to do so. But for this order, I am sure that we would have wasted most of our amunition on the buffaloes.

Lieutenant Cox gave us all privilege to take part in killing a buffalo on our return trip to camp. Usually one was killed each day for food, but most of them were so poor, the meat was not good. I remember one day one of the boys roped a yearling buffalo and two of them brought it into camp alive. We had great sport with it. It was held by two ropes and, of course, could not reach the boys who held the ropes. Some of the more venturesome would go out to tease the yearling, and when it would turn to fight the boys, those holding the ropes would give it rope and it would go rushing after the teasers and several times it ran over to them much to the amusement of the crowd. Some tried to ride the yearling, but it did not take them long to find out that it was easier to ride a bucking bronco than it was to ride a yearling buffalo.

A Buffalo Chases Albert

One day we came to a large herd of buffalo. In the herd was one very large bull, the largest I think I ever saw. The lieutenant gave his permission for four of the boys to kill the bull. The four boys dismounted and advanced on foot some fifty yard towards the bull. They had to do this in order to get a good shot. At the crack of the guns the bull dropped in his tracks and we all thought he was dead. The boys who did the shooting rushed up to the beast, but when they were in a few yards of the body, the buffalo, to their great surprise, leaped to its feet and started after them in a mad rush. Three of the boys stepped to one side, but Albert Jennings made a bee line for his horse which was held by the other scouts. With the mad bull just behind him, and but for the fact that the boys who had stepped aside as the bull came at them, shot him again as he passed them, the bull would no doubt have caught Albert, for he was right at his heels when he was shot.

In Want of Water

This was a dry country and but little water was to be found anywhere. Fortunately, we had all filled our canteens in the morning and this water lasted us until dinner time. But we made our start after dinner with empty canteens and our poor horses had had no water since morning.

Before night both men and horses were longing for water. Late in the afternoon we came in sight of a beautiful lake of water. We all rushed down to the lake, and leaping from our horses we were all down on our hands and knees to slake our thirst. But alas, it was a lake of salt water, and one swallow was more than anyone of us wanted. The little we did swallow only intensified our thirst. We left the lake in disgust and turned towards the south to a range of mountains, but still found no water. It was decided to camp for the night and send out some of the boys into the mountains to seek water. The horses would not eat the grass and the men could not eat their food without water. Water was desired above everything else. We waited long for the return of our boys from the mountains. Hours passed and still we waited.

This was the first and only time in my life when I suffered for the want of water. I had read about others who had died of thirst, but I did not know anything about real thirst until that night.

It must have been after midnight when we heard the boys coming. They did not leave us long in doubt as to the success of their hunt for water, for their shouts and laughter told us they had found water. They came running into camp with the best water I ever drank. In the morning we all moved out to the mountain spring and rested for one day.

After the rest which we all enjoyed, we again started out and the following day reached Mountain Pass. This was a U. S. fort at that time between Ft. Griffin and Concho. There were only about fifteen soldiers at Mountain Pass, but they gave us a warm welcome and we spent a few days with them before starting back to our camp. The hunters in our scout killed some game and we fared sumptuously while at Mountain Pass.

On Our Way Back We Shoot at a Man

We started out from Mountain Pass early one morning on our way back to camp in Erath County. In the afternoon of the first day some of the boys asked the lieutenant for permission to go into the mountains and hunt for game. This request was granted and all of the boys except four went out on the hunt. Four of us remained with the lieutenant. It was understood that we were all to come together at night at a certain point down the mountain range. Late in the evening as we were nearing the place agreed on as a camping place, a man crossed our path just as fast as his horse could run. We could not tell whether the man was an Indian or a white man. If he was an Indian we wanted to get him, and if he was a white man the chances were that he was a fugitive from justice, and if he was a fugitive we wanted him. Headed by our lieutenant, we dashed off after him. He was commanded to halt, but he only went the faster. Then came the order to fire and we all fired at the fleeing man, but did not follow home as it was almost dark and we did not know but what he was an Indian and was trying to lead us into ambush. This was the first and only time I ever fired a gun at a man. I am sure we did not hit the man. I congratulate myself that in all of my life I never shed human blood. We were then in the Indian's country and had to be careful, so we went to the place where we were to meet our other boys. They were not there. We built a fire and left a note directing the boys where to meet us the next day and warning them to watch for Indians. We then turned to the north and found us a camp some four miles from the

river. This change in course was made to throw the Indians off our trail if they should be following us.

Other Scouts Has a Fight With Indians

The day after we reached camp, the scout which had gone to the north returned. They had a fight with the Indians over in Palo Pinto County and killed five Indians. In coming through Stevensville with the spoils of the battle, the people of the town gave them a great ovation and some mighty bad whiskey. Some of the boys were feeling it too, when they came at full speed into camp. They were yelling like a band of Indians, and the cheering of the boys in camp made some noise in our camp that day.

This scout struck the trail of the Indians a few days after they left camp and followed it until they overtook the Indians in the northern part of Palo Pinto County. The Indians had many horses and could not travel as fast as our boys. The fight which followed was a running fight. While the Indians outnumbered our boys two to one, yet they fled before our brave boys. Our boys gave chase and the fight spread over several miles.

A White Boy Killed

In this fight a boy who was supposed to be an Indian was killed. As the time he was killed, the Rangers were chasing the Indians down a hill. The boy had either been thrown from his horse, or had dismounted with the hope of surrendering. He was behind the loose horses and seemed to be driving them. Two of our boys who were running and firing side by side, fired at the boy, putting two balls through his body on the right side within two inches of each other. He fell at the crack of the guns and the boys pressed on in the fight. The boy was scalped with the other Indians and then it was discovered that the boy was a white boy. The boys said that when they shot, he was crying, "Comanch, Comanch," but we were all sure he was saying, "No Comanch." However, he was large and his hair was long and of course he was painted. It is probable that he had been stolen when a small child and raised by the Indians. The boys who killed him often said, "We wish we had taken him a prisoner, for he might have been a Texas boy captured when a child."

In this fight our boys captured some fifty horses which the Indians had stolen from the settlers east of us. Among other spoils of this battle were blankets, saddles, bows and arrows, shields, and other Indian trinkets.

Bill Morrison's Bravery

Bill Morrison was called a coward in camp. No one could insult him or make him fight, for he was not a fighting man. He was not considered bright. We all thought that Bill would run in the first fight. But in this we had all been thinking wrong. When the showdown came old Bill was "Johnnie on the spot," and led the boys in the fight. He was riding a fine horse and he rushed into

the fight like a mad man and was soon rushing past the other boys. It was not long until he was right in among the Indians shooting right and left among them. Finally his gun got out of fix and would not fire. Then he took the barrel of the gun in his hand and used it as a club and with it knocked several off of their horses. As he passed through the bunch of Indians, a blunt arrow struck him on the shoulder and his horse was hit in the neck with an arrow. Bill thought he was seriously wounded and that his horse was killed. When the fight was over, he came back to the other boys. He was crying and said to them, "Boys, I am shot and my horse is killed." In the fight, Bill broke the stock off of his gun and the governor made him a present of a nice nickel plated gun for his bravery. He merited it.

A Bully, But Not So Brave

Bill Haygood, who was always boasting about his fighting qualities, was also in this fight, but the boys said that Bill was far in the rear while the battle raged and never came in range of the Indian's horses. I mention this to show that it is not always the barking dog that is dangerous. I have noticed that the boaster is not to be feared. Their bark is louder than their bite. Haygood never again boasted of his bravery.

Jimmie Odum

As I have already said, Jimmie was the youngest boy in our company. He was the son of our doctor, and a boy of noble impulses, but at times rather reckless. He was liked by all of the boys and was favored by the officers. He and I were great chums. He was in the fight and fought like an old soldier. He was in the front and was praised by the officers for his bravery. True to his promise, he brought me an Indian's scalp, which I kept until I was mustered out of the service at Austin in May, 1871, when I gave it to one of the state officials.

I Preach to the Boys

As far back as I can remember I wanted to preach. When I was quite a small boy, I used to gather the little Negroes in the large barn on Mr. Goodrum's place and preach to them on Sundays while the older people were at church. We had great meeting. I had once been with father in meetings and I tried to follow his methods. On these Sundays I would stand in the barn door while the little Negroes were lined up on either side of the hallway. I preached to them, called mourners, took them into the church and baptized them just like father did at the camp meetings. I may also add that in these meetings I was just as much in earnest as I have ever been since I became a preacher.

On Christmas we were having a lively time in camp as boys usually do. In the midst of our fun some of the boys called on me for a speech. I replied, "Boys, I can't make a speech, but if you all want me to do so, I can preach you a sermon." They all cried out, "Give us a sermon." "All right," I said, "If you will all sit down and keep quiet until I am through, I will give you the best I have." I mounted a bench and talked to them for about thirty minutes. I was never more serious in my life. I gave them some good advice and warned them of the dangers of evil doing. The

boys were very quiet and attentive while I talked. Occasionally, one of them would say, "Amen," just like people did at church. There was no fun making while I talked, for there was no fun in what I was saying to them. The longer I talked, the more in earnest I became. When I closed, we were all serious. The fun making spirit was gone. The boys came around me and gave me their hands and complimented me just like they do at meetings.

I do not remember all that I said that night, but I do remember telling them we were all making a great mistake in rejecting or neglecting the God of our mothers. Many of my Ranger mates have heard me preach often since I have been a preacher, and they have said to me, "The best sermon you ever preached was in camp on that Christmas night."

Heavy Snow Falls

That Christmas night a heavy snow fell. The first I knew of the snow was in the morning when one of the boys raised the cover and dashed a hand full of snow in on me. This brought me out in short order and I had a chase after the disturber of my rest all over the camp. When I caught him we had it up and down in the snow.

My Mother's Influence

As I have already said, my mother dies when I was a very small boy, but thank God she lived long enough to impress some lessons on my mind which have been a safeguard to me all of the days of my life. One day I had been over to Ft. Griffith with a number of the other boys, and in returning to the camp in the evening I fell in with Homes, the man who afterwards was murdered by Jack Singleton. We rode on to camp together. As I have already said, Holmes was a thief and we all knew it, but he was a smooth talker. On this ride he told me of his life and the troubles he had been in and how easily he had gotten out of most of his troubles. I had but little to say to him. Holmes did most of the talking. Finally he said to me, "Coley," for that was the name I went by in the company, "I know how we can make lots of money, if you will go with me." Then he laid bare his plans for stealing some horses which were held by the Tancagua Indians who were camped a few miles west of us on the river. These Indians had a large number of horses which had been stolen from settlers along the Texas frontier. "You go," said he, "and claim the horses and I will swear to you claim, and then we can take them off and sell them and divide the money.

While he was laying before me this diabolical plan for stealing these horses, the spirit of my sainted mother cam before me and her hand seemed to rest again on my head as it did just before her death. I turned in my saddle and faced Holmes. Looking into his eyes, I said with some warmth, "Holmes, you are a thief and some day will reap a reward as such. you do not know me or you would never have made such a proposition to me. I would not for all of the horses in Texas do a dishonorable act to disgrace my sainted mother and noble father." I thank God for a Christian father and mother. I have had cause many times to thank God for their teachings which have many times helped me in times of temptation and in the battles of life.

But poor Holmes, his end was near when he had to meet God and the record he had made in life. Only a few days after this incident, he was killed by Jack Singleton. I have often wondered if Holmes had a Christian mother and if she ever knew how he died. He died at a murderer's hand and with an oath on his lips, without a friend to drop a tear of sympathy and love on his grave.

Going Home

When our term of service was out, Company "B" was ordered to Austin to be mustered out of service. In our march to Austin it rained on us most of the way. When we reached the Leon River it was past fording. We camped back from the river on what we supposed was a dry creek. Soon after nightfall a terrific storm came up. The rain fell in torrents and soon our "dry creek" was a roaring river and the water from the creek and river flooded the valley, and in the midst of the storm, we had to move our camp out to the highest point in the valley. Before an hour, the water was six inches deep all over camp. I slept in water half side deep that night. We spent the following day in swimming our horses, pack mules and baggage over the Leon River. We were in the water all day. I came near losing my life in the river that day. One of the horses I was swimming across the river was carried down the river in the swift current. In going under the limbs of an overhanging tree, my shirt caught on a hidden limb and I was dragged from the horse and carried under the water. But for my presence of mind, I would have lost my life there.

Dead Drunk

It took us all day to cross the Leon River. We had been wet to the skin for twenty-four hours, but the weather was warm and we did not suffer from the exposure. When we reached the little town of Hamilton a few miles from the river, our big-hearted lieutenant thought that we needed some whiskey after being in the water all day, and he bought several canteens of the fiery beverage. The whiskey he bought was from a barrel and it was the meanest whiskey I ever tasted. I did not drink more than a large spoon full of the stuff, for it was so fiery that it burned my throat. The boys called it "bust head whiskey" and from my experience, they named it right. We camped for the night on the edge of the little town, and after supper, in company with two of the boys, I went down in town. As we were walking up the street, a doctor called to us and invited us into his office, saying as we entered. "You boys have been in water all day and you need some stimulants. I have some good brandy here and you must take it." The doctor's heart was in the right place, but he had mighty poor judgment. We all took a glass of his brandy. It was pleasant to the taste and was what drinkers call "good liquor." We soon started back to camp feeling the effects of our mixed drinks. The fact is, I do not remember anything after we left the doctor's office. I was beastly drunk before I knew anything.

This is one incident in my life of which I am ashamed, and only mention it in this connection to warn others, especially my own boys, not to do as I did. I did not then know the evils of the cup and the awful danger there is in strong drink. When I accepted these drinks, I never once thought about getting drunk, but I did. While in this state, the boys cared for me as if I had been a brother, and I shall always kindly remember them.

A Mighty Good Friend

My old friend Gilbert Stewart, took care of me and when I came to myself he spoke kindly to me and said, "You will be all right after a while." My, how my head did ache, and then I felt condemned in my own heart for making a fool of myself and really felt that I did not have a friend in the world. When we stopped for dinner, I was too sick to cook my dinner. The boys had killed a young beef and Gilbert had barbecued a large piece before the campfire. I did not know then that he had intended a part of what he cooked for me.

When the beef was cooked and dinner was ready, I said to Gilbert, "Gilbert, won't you give me a small piece of your meat." He did not reply at once, but turned his large eyes on me for a moment and then said, "Coley, don't you ever ask for anything again." Here he paused with his eyes still fixed on me. Oh! the horror of that moment to me. I was already self-condemned and then the thought that my best friend had gone back on me was crushing, indeed. When he had let the words sink in, he added, "Hereafter, if I have anything you want just take it." Tears of gratitude came into my eyes. I said, "Thank you, Gilbert, I will never forget you and your kindness to me." As he saw my tears he said, "Oh, don't do that, but come and eat some dinner and you will feel better."

Mustered Out of Service

May 31, 1871, we reached Austin and were mustered out of service. This ended my experience as a Texas Ranger. I am not sorry I had this experience. I came out of the service strong and healthy, besides in the service I learned much about the disposition of men which I perhaps never would have known without it. Then some ties of friendship were formed in the service which have never been broken. I have lost track of most of the boys who served with me. Most of them have gone to their long Home, and I am hastening to it. I only know of five of the boys who are now living.