

Culley



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THREE COFFEES
FROM TEXAS

RICH, HOLLAND &
JOHN TROUSDALE

1993

GENE BREWINGTON

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THREE COFFEES FROM TEXAS

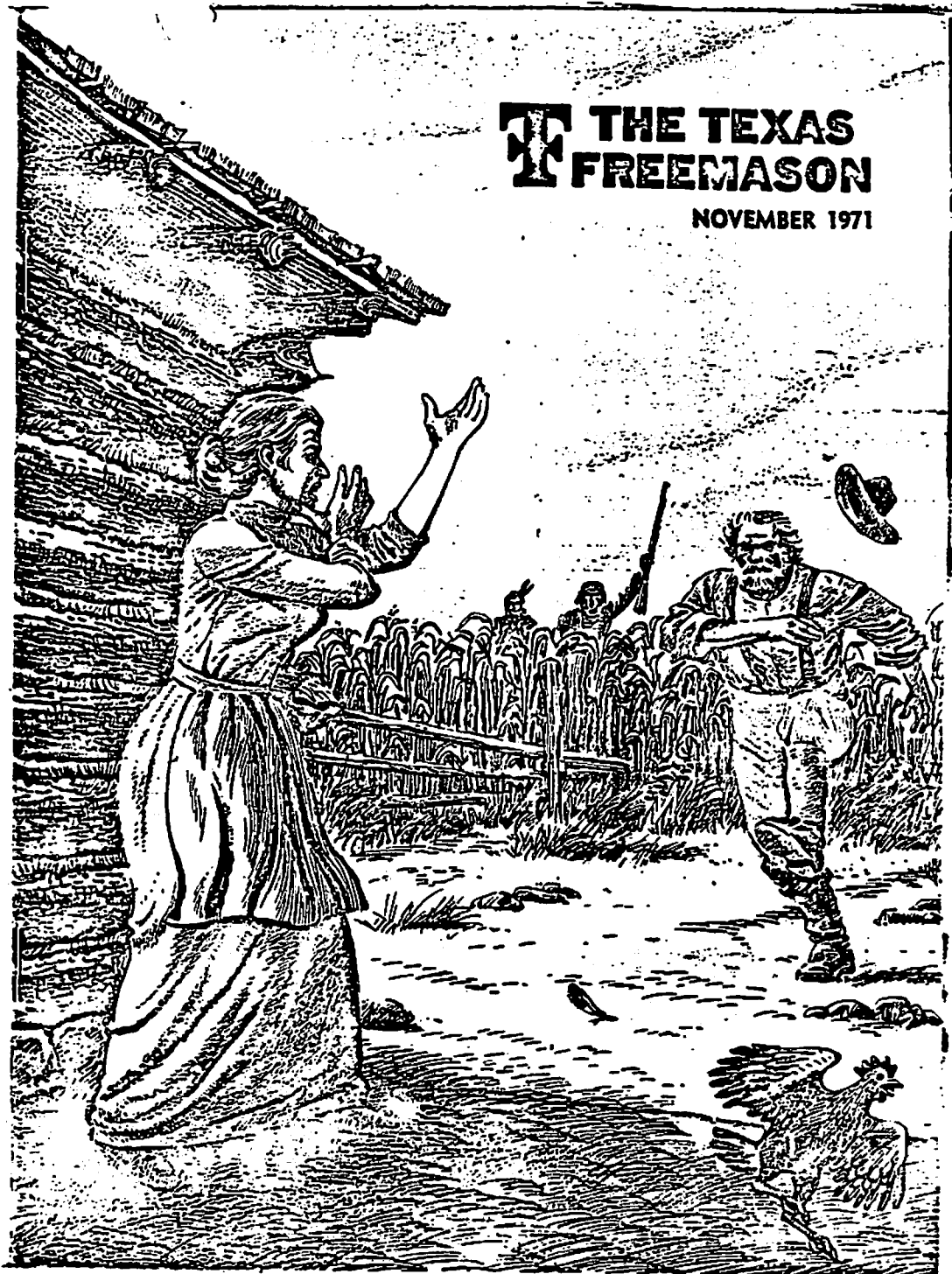
Rich, Holland and John Trousdale

Although they left their indelible footprints on Texas history, none of these three were native born Texans. All three were probably related through familial connections. It is fairly well documented that Holland and John Trousdale were definitely of the same family. As far as this researcher is concerned, the documentation that Rich is of the same family is very "iffy". The "correct" spelling of the name of each of these pioneers, is probably "Coffee". This too, is open to debate. It can be "proven" that either spelling is correct. There is no original research in this collection, nor are any arguments made as to the validity of any materials included. A full name Index including all family names, counties mentioned and city or village names is included.

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**T THE TEXAS
FREEMASON**

NOVEMBER 1971

Rich Coffey of the Concho

DONAVON DUNCAN TIDWELL

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Research of Texas Lodge of Research, A. F. & A. M.
Past Master of Brownwood Lodge No. 279, A. F. & A. M.*



Rich Coffey was the first permanent white settler of the lower Concho country of West Texas and many are the stories still related of him and his exploits. When old-timers of Coleman, Concho, McCulloch, Runnels, and Tom Green Counties gather and begin reminiscing, invariably the name of "Uncle Rich" Coffey will be mentioned and a number of stories will follow. Many of these are pure fabrications, and too often not representative of the kind of man Rich Coffey was. Others are exaggerated versions of actual events. All of these have helped to make Rich Coffey a legendary figure of the frontier and have aided in creating and perpetuating a false image of this famous old frontiersman. It is the intention of this paper to aid in rescuing the real Rich Coffey for posterity.

Rich Coffey was a strong man, not quite six feet tall but weighing more than two hundred pounds and with an unusually thick chest and shoulders. An exaggerated statement that he weighed "about 300 pounds" is

denied by his descendants. His dress during the period of the Civil War and just following was picturesque indeed with a buffalo robe and capé to pull over his head with the buffalo tail attached for decoration.

A small congregation in a little log church near Dublin, Texas in the early seventies was startled by the sudden appearance of a large man dressed in bearskins. His long uncut hair and his bearskin clothes made him look more like a bear than a human being. The church service was in progress and the stranger found a seat and listened intently to the sermon. As the message proceeded the visitor was visibly touched and tears flowed down his cheeks. Before the sermon was over his huge shoulders began to shake and finally he gave vent to audible sobs. Following the benediction the stranger made himself known to Rev. John R. Northcutt, the minister. It was Rich Coffey from the Concho, who as a boy in Georgia had known John R. Northcutt but had not seen or heard of him for many long years. While passing through the Dublin vicinity on his way to Weatherford he had heard of a Baptist minister named Northcutt and had turned aside to learn if this could be his old Georgia neighbor.

Richard Coffey was a native of Georgia, where he was born February 14, 1823. Here he grew to manhood and married Miss Sallie Greathouse on October 5, 1849. About 1855 they moved to Texas, settling in Parker County. Here their first son, John Wright Coffey, was born on June 21, 1856. Two daughters had already been born to them. Rich Coffey engaged in

cattle raising and also did some freighting. He served under Captain L. S. Ross as a citizen soldier and aided in the capture of Cynthia Ann Parker on December 18, 1860.

In 1862 Rich Coffey boldly moved his family and cattle out beyond the most remote settler to Elm Creek near the present site of Ballinger in Runnels County. He was accompanied to his frontier home by a number of cowboys in his employ, including W. A. and Jim Beddo, Bob and Nathaniel Guest, Bob and Henry Meeks, Billy Gordon, and Jack McCarthy. "There they built a picket fort, all the houses were joined together and all enclosed by pickets made from the poles they cut from the river bottom."

Indian raids became so numerous that the Coffeys "forted-up" with settlers at the Flat Top Ranch in southwestern Coleman County. A ranch home was eventually selected just below the confluence of the Concho and the Colorado and on the Coleman County side (though the home was actually in Concho County).

This frontier home became a welcome haven to many a weary traveler. "Many stories are told by the Rangers of the aid they never failed to receive from 'Uncle Rich' when in trouble." The customary greeting of Rich Coffey to a stranger who rode up to his ranch home was "Get down and go to staying." It has been well said of him that "his door was always open, his hand was ever ready, and the light in the window never grew dim." No one was ever turned away and many a guest went on his way with a warm glow inside because of the big-hearted hospitality of Uncle Rich and Aunt Sallie."

The constant danger of Indian raids made it necessary to be on the alert at all times, and especially during "the light of the moon" each month when the Comanches customarily made their invasions. Since the men were engaged in looking after the cattle the care and much of the protection of the ranch house was left to Mrs. Coffey and her daughters. In times of extreme danger "Aunt Sallie" kept a huge pot of lye soap boiling day and night to dash upon any Indian attempting to make an entrance to the frontier home.

Rich Coffey had many encounters with the Indians. A true frontiersman, he was always alert and adept at making the right decision quickly. Upon one occasion while walking along the bank of the Colorado River he was surprised by Indians. Quick as a flash he dived into the stream and swimming under water made his way to the opposite bank where beavers had built a shelter. He dived through the entrance and arose to the surface inside where he remained in safety until the Indians departed.

By 1871 Rich Coffey had acquired a sizeable herd of cattle. He usually preferred to sell his marketable cattle to neighboring ranchers such as Coggins and Parks or John Chisum, whose cattle with the Jingle Bob mark and the Long Rail brand ranged far and wide over the Coleman and Concho country. The cattle of Rich Coffey bore the brand of 318. On this occasion he decided to let his own cowboys take a herd of 1,020 cattle "up the trail" to New Mexico. Nathaniel Guest was placed in charge of the herd. John Coffey, the 15 year old eldest son, was a regular cowhand, while Bill, two years younger, wrangled the remuda of 54 horses. The herd was moved out on June 1, 1871. The trail boss had planned to "noon" at a large waterhole on a creek. Bill Coffey had already reached the stream, stripped off his clothing and was enjoying a swim. John was preparing to ride to the front of the herd to start the lead cattle down to water, when the herd stampeded as they were suddenly attacked by a band of ninety to one hundred Indians. John yelled, "Let's go to the creek!" He and Dan Arnold raced down the hillside hard-pressed by about twenty-five painted and scowling Indian warriors. With his rimfire Winchester rifle, John shot at a nearby half-naked Indian who was firing a pistol. In the excitement he missed. "As they reached the level of the creek, Dan was shot through the head and without a word his lifeless body toppled from his horse."

Bill Coffey, hearing the commotion, swam ashore to retrieve his clothing but discovered he was too late to secure his clothes and mount his horse. He quickly dived under a projecting ledge of rock, where there was just sufficient room for him to keep his head above the water while re-

remaining out of sight. Here he remained throughout the afternoon.

In the meantime the Indians closed in on John Coffey and seized his horse but he quickly sprang from the saddle into a willow grove. The Indians fearing his gun temporarily retired and John sought a hiding place along the creek. "In the shelter of the low bank he crept up the creek to a place where two trees grew on the bank and where water had cut away the dirt from their roots." Pulling some boulders around the roots for protection, he slipped behind the rocks and roots into the hollowed out hole in the bank. "During the ensuing hour John heard another cowboy up a fork of the creek, shooting and yelling like mad. The cowboy, Lapoleon Lemmons, was killed and scalped and his mutilated body was found later lying against a tree."

Eventually thirst drove John Coffey from his hiding place but the Indians quickly forced him back without the craved water. This continued throughout the afternoon.

When the attack occurred Nip Hammond fled to the ranch pursued by thirty warriors. He succeeded in reaching the Coffey ranch and late in the afternoon returned with assistance, expecting to find all of them dead. Fortunately all of the cowboys had escaped, save Dan Arnold and Lapoleon Lemmons, whose mutilated bodies were given burial. They were only eighteen years of age and had run away from their homes in Williamson County just three weeks before.

The Indians departed with the entire herd of cattle and all horses in the remuda save two. A few months later on Christmas Day, the Coffeys watched helplessly as the Indians rounded up the remaining cows and horses and drove them away. All that Rich Coffey had worked so hard for during nine difficult years was gone. Without a word of self-pity he set to work to recuperate his financial losses and while he never became a wealthy man, he was able to live his last years in comfort. His strength of character was demonstrated by the fact that "he was never despondent over any reverse that came to him." "In every turn of life, whether fraught with danger, seasoned with ad-

venture, burdened with sorrow, or tinged with joy; he never failed to meet the lights and shadows as they came."

In the early years on the frontier, Rich Coffey continued to do some freighting as a side business. With six or seven wagons pulled by teams of six to twelve oxen, he made the long, dangerous trek across the open plains to the salt lakes in present Crane County near the Pecos River. Here the wagons were loaded with salt and hauled back to barter with his neighbors. The remainder was disposed of as he and his family made their annual pilgrimage to Weatherford, where they customarily did the year's shopping. This trip usually occupied from four to six weeks. Bill Franks had a store on Mukewater Creek in southeastern Coleman County, which he later sold to John Chisum, where you could buy "bacon and beans, with perhaps a little coffee and sugar... tobacco and canned peaches..." Bill Franks had a reputation of "tricking" you and often sold a bottle of water for whiskey. This store was the beginning of Trickham, Texas.

Rich Coffey is said to have made as many as twenty-four trips to the salt lakes near the Pecos and one account states that on twenty-two of these trips he and his men buried one or more men slain by the Indians.

In June, 1866, Charles Goodnight and Oliver Loving drove their cattle across West Texas from the headwaters of the Concho to the Pecos, blazing the Goodnight Trail. After disposing of most of their herd in New Mexico to the U. S. Government for the Indian reservations, Goodnight and three cowboys set out on the return journey to gather another herd. They traveled down the Pecos at night and slept during the day to avoid the Indians. During a storm their packmule with the money and supplies ran away and all their food was lost but the twelve thousand dollars strapped on the animal was recovered. Left with no provisions, they filled their canteens at the Horsehead Crossing of the Pecos and set out on the long, dangerous ride across the West Texas plains. Since there was no place to hide, they kept riding when day arrived. When they were about twenty-five miles from

the Concho, they saw what appeared to be an Indian party in the distance.

"It was useless to turn back," said Goodnight; "It was useless to stop; we had to go on. The mass looked like about twenty Indians and the boys were frightened in the extreme." Goodnight had very keen sight and he concluded it was not Indians but the three cowboys were unconvinced. Preparations were made for a battle and Goodnight instructed the men carefully as to their plans. When they finally met the strange party imagine their surprise to find that it was Rich Coffey on his way to the salt lakes with "a wagonload of the biggest watermelons you 'most ever saw.'" For two or three hours they sat in the shade of one of Coffey's wagons and ate cold watermelon and long afterward Goodnight declared "that watermelons never tasted as good to me as that day."

Rich Coffey frequently met with Mexicans from Chihuahua at the salt lakes and was hauling the load of melons to barter with them. However, he failed to make connections with them on this occasion, so he buried his melons in the sand, and returned with his wagons loaded with salt.

In early February, 1867, a small party of gold-seekers, under the leadership of Jacob Schnively and William C. Dalrymple, was attacked by Indians in the Concho country. All of their horses were captured or killed, leaving the party stranded, some wounded and all without food. Two of the party pressed on ahead to seek relief at the Tankersley Ranch on Dove Creek "but when nearing the ranch they came upon old Rich Coffey and a party of men and wagons enroute to the salt lakes on the plains where they expected to procure supplies of salt."

Uncle Rich generously shared his supplies with them and thus rendered timely assistance to a group in dire need. Many a needy traveler, like the members of the ill-fated Schnively Expedition, experienced the generous hospitality of this rugged old Good Samaritan of the frontier.

In 1873 the *New York Clipper* ran a story concerning Rich Coffey as related by Colonel Lewis Ginger. Col. Ginger and his Pioneer Minstrels stopped at the Coffey Ranch on their way to Fort Concho. Uncle Rich invited them

to stay a few days and they accepted the invitation. The Colonel refers to the ranch buildings at the mouth of the Concho as "heavily stockaded on all sides." Uncle Rich and the Colonel walked up the Colorado River a short ways late one afternoon to fish for channel cat. They took along a demijohn of brandy as an "anti-snake-bite remedy." As darkness fell and a beautiful moon arose the channel catfish were biting nicely. However, the Colonel was much more interested in loosening Uncle Rich's tongue in regard to his frontier experiences. After some sampling of the brandy Uncle Rich began telling his frontier experiences. He was just telling of his first encounter with the Comanches when an owl hooted up the river on the side they were on and was answered by one on the opposite side. Uncle Rich said: "Son, did you hear them?" The Colonel replied, "Do you mean the owls?" "Son, them's no owls. They're Injuns. Let's ske-daddle." The Colonel wanted to get the fish staked to the bank but Uncle Rich said, "To H— with the fish. Come on, we'll get out o'here."

They set out for the ranch on the run. About a quarter of a mile from the ranch they had to pass through an open space where the moonlight made it almost as light as day. An arrow whizzed between Uncle Rich and the Colonel and they made the final sprint with a burst of speed, arriving safely at the ranch house.

On one occasion Rich Coffey was giving his corn the last plowing of the year. The mule he was driving suddenly caught the smell of Indians and ran away, leaving Uncle Rich in the corn field unaware of the presence of the Indians. His good wife saw the mule running to the house and caught sight of the Indians. About this time Uncle Rich discovered the presence of the Indians and set out on a dead run for the ranch. As he raced, pursued by the Indians, his wife shouted excitedly, "Run, Rich, run!" With a final burst of speed he reached the ranch ahead of the Comanches. When he had regained his breath sufficiently to speak he said to his wife, "Sweet, you didn't think I would lay down on a race like that, did you?"

In spite of his love for people and his big-hearted hospitality, Rich Coffey was a genuine fron-

tiersman and wanted plenty of elbow-room. The thought of near neighbors irked him. As he expressed it, he didn't want to hear his neighbor's rooster crow, especially to the west of him. He resided thirty miles from Coleman and while on his way there discovered that some nester had moved in about half way, set up his tent for living quarters and built stock pens. Vexed by the intrusion, as he considered it, Uncle Rich asked the County Judge what could be done to have the man moved off the range. The Judge informed him that no legal action could be taken and suggested he should be glad to have a neighbor. Uncle Rich grumblingly asserted that he liked neighbors but "not in his front yard."

Rich Coffey had a keen sense of humor and loved a good joke. A Texas new-comer in conversation with Uncle Rich for the first time commented that it looked like rain as it had been cloudy for two or three days. "That doesn't mean a thing," Uncle Rich drily replied, "I have seen it cloudy for six months and it didn't rain."

In the early 1890's interest in oil was aroused in connection with the oil discoveries at Brownwood. An oil promoter met with a group of Uncle Rich's neighbors at a school house, proposing that they group together and finance a test well. Uncle Rich was not satisfied and motioned for his good friend, Ol Gann, to follow him outside. After several questions in regard to the proposals Uncle Rich finally asked, "Ol, how deep does that feller plan to go?" "Oh, possibly as much as five or six hundred feet," Gann replied. "Shucks! He won't find no oil. I've seen cracks in the ground deeper than that in dry weather."

In his early years in the area, he was called for jury service at Brownwood, fifty miles away. He asked to be excused and the Judge inquired as to his reason. He replied that he wanted to be with his wife. The Judge, dissatisfied with the reply, pushed the inquiry further as to just why he wanted to be with his wife. Uncle Rich replied, "It's the light of the moon and we are expecting an Indian raid. I would just kinda like to be

with my wife when the Indians come." The Judge granted his request.

Rich Coffey was a member of the first grand jury in Coleman County. In his instructions to the grand jury, the Judge told them "to bill every gun-toter." After being in session two or three days two newcomers on the grand jury asked about the "gun-toters," stating they knew of many such cases. There was an ominous silence, since most of the citizens carried guns at that time. Finally, after considerable thought, Uncle Rich was equal to the occasion and said, "Gentlemen of the jury, I make a move that every man on this jury that has a gun under his coat or in his boot leg, come forward and stack-it on the table. Here is mine." This brought forth a hearty laugh and a count revealed the fact that half the grand jurymen were carrying guns. This settled the issue and there were no bills against "gun-toters."

Rich Coffey was one of the first county commissioners of Coleman County and for many years paid taxes in that County, only to finally discover that he actually resided in Concho County. A small corner of Concho County crosses the Colorado River and takes in a small triangle of land. Uncle Rich actually lived about a hundred yards west of the Coleman County line and about a mile south of the Runnels County line.

Rich Coffey was fifty years of age when he petitioned Brownwood Lodge No. 279 for the Masonic Degrees. The original petition is still preserved in the Lodge records and states that he had resided on the frontier of Texas for eighteen years. The village of Brownwood was just beginning to grow, after existing more than a dozen years and moving three times with only a small store, a blacksmith shop and an old weather-beaten log courthouse. Brownwood Lodge met in the second story of the courthouse, gaining access to the Lodge room by means of a crude ladder.

Rich Coffey received the First Degree on February 14, 1874, his fifty-first birthday. He was passed as a Fellowcraft on April 11th and raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason on May 9th of the same year. Although he resided

fifty miles from Brownwood, he was a regular attendant at the Lodge meetings. He often arrived early and customarily remained over for two or three days to visit with the Brethren.

In 1878 Rich Coffey, along with seven other Master Masons of Brownwood Lodge, became charter members of Coleman Lodge No. 496. Uncle Rich was a member of the committee that secured the first permanent hall for the Lodge meetings. In 1885 he became a charter member of Paint Rock Lodge No. 613, where he held membership until his death. His picture is on display in the Paint Rock Lodge room.

In 1881 Uncle Rich started a substantial stone house on a bluff overlooking the confluence of the Concho and the Colorado Rivers. The lumber was hauled from Waco with the exception of the last load, which was hauled from Baird.

A crossing on the Colorado River was often referred to as the Coffey Crossing and for a number of years a small postoffice serving that area was officially named Rich Coffee (sic), Texas.

Rich Coffey and his family are representative of the courageous pioneers who opened up the vast areas of West Texas to permanent settlement. The Coffey family consisted of three sons and three daughters. Penola, the oldest child, born July 15, 1850, married Nathaniel Guest. The second daughter, Helen, born April 29, 1852, married Anderson Gordon. The youngest daughter and fifth child, Belle, was born July 10, 1860 and married Bill McAulay.

The three sons were large men physically and expert cowmen. John Wright Coffey, born June 21, 1856, resided in Kimble County from 1886 until his death in 1934. He was a Master Mason of Junction City Lodge No. 548. Bill Coffey, born July 8, 1858, was an expert roper and a very strong man. It is said that he could grasp a horseshoe in his hands and bend it straight! In roping a horse his thumb and part of two fingers were torn off. Upon his return home, Uncle Rich, deeply moved, said, "Son, you never can be a Mason now."

Fogg Coffey, the youngest son, was born March 6, 1863, and became a famous cowman of Texas, noted for his clowning and rough humor. The extreme crudities and roughness of Fogg Coffey have doubtless contributed to the blurred caricature that so many have of Rich Coffey.

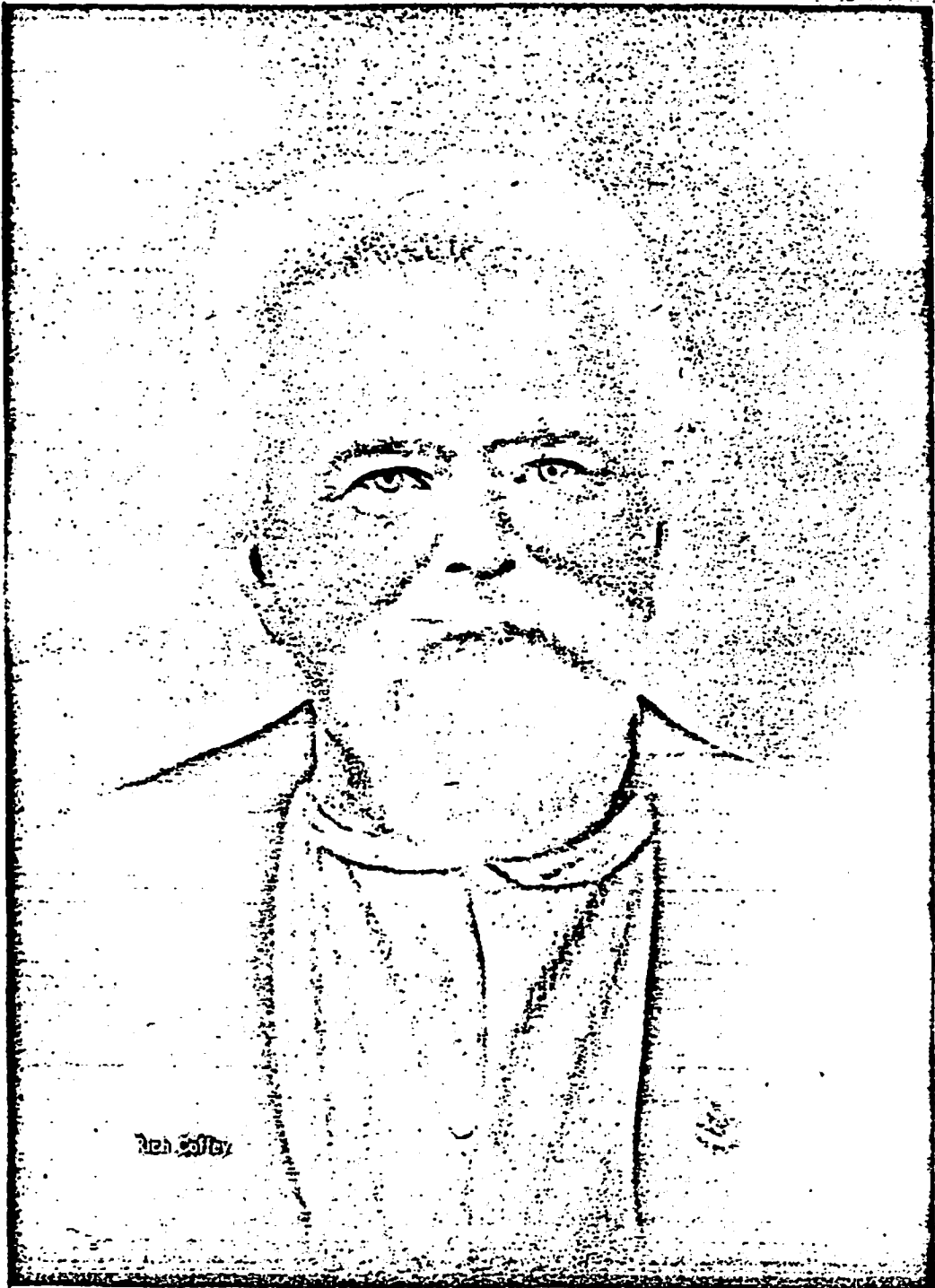
The legend of Rich Coffey has even gone into fiction and a recent western story, with a setting in the Concho country, uses Rich Coffey as a minor character. (*Born of the Sun*, by John H. Culp, published in 1959 by Ace Books, Inc.)

Perhaps no better tribute can be paid this brave old frontiersman than to use the words of one of the early Texans, Creed Taylor, who says of him: "I often met Mr. Coffey along the border and gladly offer this humble tribute to his memory. He was one of the bravest of the brave and his hospitality was of that old Texas quality which knew no bounds. He was a devoted Freemason and a worthy member of the Baptist Church for many years prior to his death, which occurred at his home in Concho County, Feb. 7, 1897." The following day he was given a Masonic burial at Paint Rock. His Brethren paid tribute to him in a memorable Resolution of Respect, stating that in the dropping of his name from the roll of Paint Rock Lodge No. 613 it symbolized "a part of its history... The Indian and Buffalo have gone to the happy hunting grounds; and the lowing of the herds are in their stead. A city is now flourishing where once he hunted game and in all these changes of nearly half a century, he remained the same, with the originality born in him, with the wit and humor from a good heart and genial disposition—'A sturdy pioneer and an honored landmark.' He was like the rugged oak braving the fury of a thousand storms, but Time the grim destroyer which spares no living thing touched him and he fell. We have feasted at his table and listened with willing ears to rich and varied stories of his life. We have hailed him, within the portals wherein dwell peace and harmony. In his grave we cast the Evergreen and we shall cherish the memory of one who loved his fellow men."

Walter Gann, author of *The Tread of the Longhorn* and many other western writings, grew up as a neighbor of the Coffeys. He recalls that a framed certificate on the mantel piece over the fireplace of the Coffey home proclaimed the fact that Mrs. Sallie Coffey was the widow of a Master Mason. Mrs. Coffey, who was born December 22, 1825, in Decatur County, Georgia, died June 4, 1910. Regretfully this paper must close with the sad announcement that the remains of those noble pioneers, Richard and Sallie Coffey, rest in unmarked graves at Paint Rock, Texas.

(The above article is from Volume III of the *Transactions of Texas Lodge of Research* and is used by permission. The numerous source citations have been omitted.)

Sorry about the quality of the Picture. It is a Xerox copy of a Xerox copy. The original hangs in the Masonic Lodge, in Paint Rock, Texas. (Gene Brewington)



Source: Into The Setting Sun, History of Coleman County, Texas, by Beatrice Grady Gray, c. 1951, Pages 30-31

Rich Coffee

Down in the southwestern part of the county Rich Coffee settled in 1862, on Elm Creek. With Mr. Coffee from Parker County, came also Bob and Henry Meeks, Bob Guest, Uncle Billy Gordon, and Mack McCarty. A few years later they moved on into the valley of the Concho and established ranch headquarters near its junction with the Colorado. There they built a picket fort, all the houses were joined together and all enclosed by pickets made from the poles they cut from the river bottom. Many stories are told by the Rangers of the aid they never failed to receive from "Uncle Rich" when in trouble. Mr. Coffee had to keep enough men on the ranch at all times to guard the stock and houses. Mr. Coffee died in 1897, but his son, Fogg Coffee, still lives on the old ranch near the mouth of the Concho. He gives a few outstanding events in the early life of his father in Coleman County.

He tells how they had to go to the salt wells of West Texas to get salt for his cattle and made twenty-one trips over the trackless desert a distance of at least two hundred miles with ox teams and heavy wagons. On almost every trip some man of the party was killed by Indians and had to be buried in the desert sand.

Mrs. Coffee told how she remembered hearing Aunt Sallie, mother of Fogg, tell about how they had to be always on the lookout for Indians. She said that once when her husband had to be away for a few days she kept a pot of soap boiling for three days ready to throw on the Indians if they came.

In 1875 the Indians killed Eurl Brown, who lived on the head of Elm Creek. In 1871, Mr. Coffee lost 1020 head of cattle and 54 saddle horses, practically his entire herd, in an all day fight with the Indians. The herd was all rounded up and started to market. John, an older son, was in charge. They reached the crossing on the river about sunrise. (This river crossing is now known as the old "Trapp Crossing." The foundation of a building which was once the Trapp saloon is still there. Over the hill about a mile is the "Boot Hill Cemetery" where men who died with their boots on" were buried. Seventy-five men were "planted" there during the days when the saloon was flourishing on the old cattle trail), and had just gotten the cattle strung out to cross when up jumped a large band of Indians from the other side of the river and headed straight into them, yelling and shooting. Two of the cowboys, Napoleon Lemons and Dan Arnold from Bluffton, were killed. John Coffee jumped off his horse and ran and hid under a bluff in the bank and was kept there nearly all day. Finally, late in the afternoon, he managed to get up enough courage to come out and go on home. He met some of his family out hunting for him. The Indians got entirely away with the herd.

Source: San Angelo Standard Times newspaper, San Angelo, TX.
May 27, 1973.

Copied by: Gene Brewington, 4728 NW 59 Terr., Oklahoma City, OK.

RICH COFFEY MARKER DEDICATED

Area Masons Attend Ceremonies

By: Louise Flanagan, Standard-Times Special Correspondent

PAINT ROCK --- Saturday afternoon, a group of area Masons met with descendants of the pioneer Coffey family here, and others to dedicate the tombstone marking the grave of Rich Coffey, an early-day Mason. The crowd was estimated at 160-180.

Douglas Powell, senior warden, introduced the grand master of the Grand Lodge of Texas, Duncan Howard, who was in charge of the program. After the invocation, by the Rev. D. D. Tidwell, Howard said the Masons had gathered to pay tribute to the first white settler of Concho County.

He then introduced Bishop Powell, a candidate for the master Mason degree and great-great-grandson of Rich Coffey, and other Coffey descendants including Mr. and Mrs. Eskell Powell, and her mother, widow of John B. Coffey, grandson of Rich Coffey.

Other descendants were Mrs. Ted Bingham of Winters, Albert Whetstone of Midland, Charlie R. Walker of Fredericksburg, Clabe Walker of Junction, Hollon Walker of Harper, Charlie R. Coffey and his son, Chuck Coffey, both of Marlin, Emery Walker of Junction, Mrs. Myrtle Weaver of Junction, Mrs. Johnny Graham of Kerrville, and Mrs. J. F. Thornton of Lafayette, La., who leared her connection with the pioneer through Dr. Tidwell.

After the introduction, Thomas C. Yantis, grand junior warden of the State Lodge of Texas read the resolution formed by the Paint Rock lodge, which lauded Coffey for being a sturdy pioneer.

Frank Coker, senior deacon of Paint Rock, unveiled the tombstone, after which Mrs. Thornton thanked the Masons on behalf of the Coffey family for the tombstone and the dedication.

After the dedication, Bishop Powell was to receive his master Mason degree in a ceremony at the Coffey Ranch, all that is now left of Rich Coffey's original holdings, on the banks of the Colorado River at the Coleman-Concho county line. He is the son of Ballinger Police Chief and Mrs. Eskell Powell.

Saturday was a sort of convention day for the region's Masons, beginning with a regional conference in the morning for Masonic officers from local lodges in several surrounding districts at the Suez Temple in San Angelo.

The ceremony at Paint Rock followed a noon luncheon at Lowake.

The Masons had the idea to put a marker on Coffey's grave after a Texas Masonic publication published a story about his pioneering activities and his Masonic membership,, reporting that the grave was unmarked.

Coffey was born Feb. 14, 1823, in Georgia. He was married there in 1849 to "Aunt Sallie" and in 1855, brought his wife and two daughters to Parker County, where his eldest son, John Wright Coffey was born.

Bishop Powell said his commitment to becoming a master Mason was spurred by reading of his ancestor. He read that Rich Coffey was one of the first settlers in Runnels County when he and a number of cowboys moved to Elm Creek in 1862 and built Picketville, now the site of a historical marker. The place was so named because all the houses were joined together and enclosed by pickets made with poles cut from the river bottom.

From 1862 on, Coffey and his associates were instrumental in bringing civilization to the area now consisting of Runnels, Coleman, Brown and Concho counties. Indian raids were numerous, especially in the "light of the moon," a time the Comanches chose for pillaging. Aunt Sallie kept a huge pot of boiling lye soap to greet the Indians when they called without invitation.

"Uncle Rich's" customary greeting to his guests was "Get down and go to staying." All were welcomed at his home, stories say, even though he disliked having close neighbors. On one occasion some settlers chose to make their home about 20 miles from his Concho County home and Uncle Rich felt they had trespassed by moving into his "backyard."

In addition to ranching, his principal occupation after moving to Concho County, he had a side business as a freighter. He made 24 trips to Salt Lakes in Crane County for salt for personal use and for barter. On 22 of these trips, at least one of his men was killed by Indians. Part of his wares were watermelons, which he traded to friendly Indians. Once he fed the watermelons to members of the Goodnight and Loving cattle drive party.

He attempted a cattle drive himself and lost all his cattle and a good many of his horses, all the products of nine years labor, to the Indians. In addition, two of his cowboys, both 18 years of age, were killed and mutilated by the Indians. But he began again and became quite prosperous although never wealthy.

He assured one associate that there was no oil in the country because he had seen cracks in the ground at least 600 feet deep during droughts and found none.

He became a mason in Brownwood at the age of 50, earning three degrees in as many months. Although he lived 50 miles from Brownwood, he regularly attended the Brownwood meetings. In 1878 he and seven other master masons from that lodge became

charter members of Coleman Lodge 496 and later he became a charter member of Paint Rock Lodge 613, a membership he held until his death.

RICH COFFEY, Early Day Ranchman

Written for Frontier Times by Col. Lewis Ginger, Los Angeles, Calif.

In 1873, the New York Clipper had a story the Lew Ginger Minstrels at Fort Concho, in Western Texas, one of the military posts forming a line from Western Nebraska through Kansas, the Indian Territory (now Oklahoma), and through Texas to the Rio Grande, guarding the frontier settlements from the hostile Indians, in which it was estimated there was in the country adjacent to those posts over one hundred and fifty thousand warriors of the Cheyenne, Kiowas, Apaches, Comanches, Araphoes, and other less prominent tribes. As I am the man who organized the Pioneer Minstrels which made the tour of the posts playing to the soldiers over half a century ago, I will relate an incident of the remarkable trip. On our way to Fort Concho, which was a hundred and fifty miles beyond any civilization, we stopped at the Coffey Ranch, at the mouth of the Concho, where it entered the Rio Colorado. This was a cattle ranch which Richard Coffey, commonly known as "Uncle Rich", and four or five of his stalwart sons started several years before our advent into the country. They had many a brush with the savages, but always beat them off, as the ranch buildings were heavily stockaded on all sides. The Colorado on both sides was heavily wooded and abounded in game, such as deer, wild turkey, and occasionally panther and black bear. Uncle Rich invited us to stay a few days at the ranch and hunt and fish, which we were glad to do and we enjoyed it immensely.

Uncle Rich and I became great friends. One evening he said: "Son, sposen we take our fishing tackle and go up the river a little ways, where I know a fine place for channel cat. They bite fine when it's moonlight." From our supply of "anti-snake bite remedy," i. e. a demijohn of brandy, I took a half pint bottle and Uncle Rich cut from fresh beef several pieces to use as bait. About eight o'clock we started up the river, and had walked a half mile when Uncle Rich said, "Here Son, is a fine deep hole where we can git all we want in no time." Before commencing operations, Uncle Rich took a good pull from the bottle, then fixing the poles and lines and baiting the hooks, it was not long before we were landing some fine channel catfish. I was anxious to hear Uncle Rich tell of some of his skirmishes with the red men, and so prevailed upon him to sample the brandy again, which he did. He told me of his starting the ranch with a few hundred cattle, and with the aid of his sons, the herd soon doubled in numbers. He was in the midst of telling me of his first encounter with a raiding band of Comanches, when he stopped suddenly and listened. An owl hooted some little distance up the river on the same side we were on. It was answered by another on the opposite side. Uncle Rich said, "Son, did you hear them?" I said, "Do you mean the owls?" "Son, them's no owls. They're Injuns. Let's skedaddle." We had quite a string of fish staked to the bank and I said that I would get the fish. He said, "To H--- with the fish. Come on, we'll get out of here.

By this time there were more hoots on both sides of the river, but none below us on our side, but below on the opposite side we heard one or two. It was a bright moonlight night and we were making good time for the ranch, with Uncle Rich in the lead.

About a quarter of a mile from the ranch we had to run through an open space where there were no trees and the moon made it as light almost as day. The river here was not very wide and an arrow came whizzing through between Uncle Rich and I, and I saw it quiver in a tree within a few feet of us.

We soon reached the ranch and everybody got ready to give the redskins a reception. It was not long before some thirty Indians appeared at the mouth of the Concho on the opposite side of the Colorado from the ranch. They made no hostile demonstrations, but danced and shouted for a little while, then disappeared.

Uncle Rich said that it was only a little thieving party out for stealing horses. "All the same," said he, "if they had cotched us son, they would have made a nice bonfire to roast you and me in."

Uncle Rich Coffey was a typical western ranchman, honest and generous and was well known throughout that country. There may be one or more of his splendid sons yet living, though he would be in his eighties by now. If so and he should see this story, I wish he would write to me. My address is, Col. Lewis Ginger, Keswick Hotel, 312 South Flower St., Los Angeles, Calif.

Copied, March 1978, by Gene Brewington, 4728 NW 59 Terr., Oklahoma City, OK 73122

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 Compiled by HAZIE DAVIS LE FEVRE

PAINT ROCK CEMETERY

COFFEY, W.A. (m. Miss Mary M.
 Haley, who died suddenly).

b. 7-8-1858

d. 2-12-1928, son of Rich & Sallie
 Coffey. "Buried beside his wife
 in P.R. cemetery."

COFFEY, Mrs. W.A.

Nee Mary Haley

b.

d. Prior to 1928

COFFEY, Adah, inf. dau of W.A.
 & M.M. Coffey

b. 10-28-1884 (tombstone)

d. 11-19-1885

COFFEY, Richard

b. 1823, Ga.--see p. 37
 this book.)

d. 1897 (Picture, with dates,
 hangs in P.R. Masonic Hall--
 charter mem.) Came to County
 in 1862 from Parker Co., Tex..

COFFEY, Mrs. Rich

nee Sarah Greathouse

b. 1827 (see census) in Ga.

d. buried at P.R. cem;
 info., Mrs. Fogg Coffey, Sterling
 City, Tex. in 1957 when inter-
 viewed.

LITTLEFIELD, Mrs. Edgar

nee Penny Coffey, dau. of W.A.

& Mary Haley Coffey

b.

d. abt. 1925. (Funeral
 attended by her father, W.A.
 Coffey, and aged grandmother,
 Mrs. Hall.

The Millard Story

I was glad to see the reproduction of Fred Millard's memoirs in the Winter 1971 issue of OLD WEST. I missed the booklet when Mr. Hunter published it. I knew Fred Millard slightly. I saw him a few times around Eden, along about 1900 and 1901 when we were driving cattle back and forth. I also rode with him in a caboose on a cattle train one night in 1904.

We had loaded our last shipment of cattle for grazing in the Osage Nation at Coleman [Texas] on the Santa Fe. Fred had loaded a string of cattle at Brady. His unloading point was at Ponca City on the Santa Fe and his cattle were switched to the Santa Fe at Brownwood. The two shipments were joined at Brownwood. It was before the Santa Fe acquired ownership of the Frisco between Fort Worth and Brady and we had to go all the way around through Temple. We parted in Fort Worth next morning as our unloading point was on the M K & T at Nelogany near Pawhuska.

Millard told me about the injury he got in the railroad yard in Kansas. He also told me something that he did not tell in his memoirs. He sued the railroad company and was awarded a verdict of a thousand some-odd dollars. He said the jury consisted of poverty-stricken farmers mostly, who seemed to think that a thousand dollars was an adequate compensation for a person who had to go through life a cripple. He had a decided limp at that time and, of course, he never recovered. I think that was the last time I ever saw him.

I met Jim Rose at the Cattleman's Convention in El Paso in 1914. He told me a distressing story about himself. He said every dollar he had in the world was invested in two trainloads of cattle which were on their way to the border. Pancho Villa stopped the trains and took the rolling stock to help move his army. The cattle were unloaded on the Hearst Ranch—Phoebe Hearst's. Mrs. Hearst put her men to herding them, but one gang of bandits and another would come along and take what they wanted of them. Finally they all disappeared.

The "Tonk" Smith Fred spoke of was Tonkaway Smith—so named because he lived with the Tonkaway Indian tribe for a number of years. I sold Smith a bunch of about a hundred two-year-old steers in Coleman County in 1910. He shipped them to Ponca City which by that time was Oklahoma instead of the Osage Nation in Indian Territory. Mr. Smith had been a member of Mosby's Brigade in Jeb Stuart's Cavalry during the Civil War. It was after the war that he lived with the Tonkaways.

There is another incident which is trivial in a way, but still it might be worth telling. The Rich Coffey family lived across the Colorado from the mouth of the Concho about a half mile below it. Fogg Coffey told me that Fred Millard and another man whose name I have forgotten were at the Rich Coffey home the night floodwaters of the Concho washed away the town of Ben Ficklin in 1882, cresting at the junction of the Colorado.

A tenant farmer was living in the house where the Coffey family first lived while they constructed the larger

stone building some two hundred yards above on considerably higher ground. During the middle of the night the tenant, whose wife was critically ill, woke the Coffey family saying that the water from the river was up to his front porch and he wanted help to get his wife to safety. The water was rising rapidly.

Fogg and his brother Bill and Fred Millard and the other man ran outside in their night clothing—not even taking time to pull on their boots. There was a hack sitting in front of the Coffey house. They threw the seats out of the hack and ran it down to the tenant house by hand and backed it up to the front porch. Water was running into the house by that time. Each of the four men picked up the mattress at each corner and carried it outside with the woman and bed clothing still on it. By the time they got her into the hack the water was up to the hack bed. The current was so swift they had trouble standing in it. They pulled the hack to high ground and carried the woman and her bed into the Coffey house. In another hour the house from which they had moved her was gone. While they saved her from drowning, they could not save her life—she died the next day from the illness.

Something else which might be of interest—in his paper Fred Millard mentioned Bill McCauley. I think the name was McAuley—which is of little difference. Bill McAuley married one of Rich Coffey's daughters. He handled quite a few cattle in and around Coleman and Concho Counties. If I ever knew what became of him, I have forgotten. I never knew him myself but I never heard my dad or anyone else say anything bad about him. I can't say as much for some of the men he worked and had around him. Either in the late eighties or early nineties, he drove a string of cattle to the Osage Nation. He took some of those Concho County boys with him, including Fogg Coffey, Bob Littlefield, Buck Currie and Charlie Pierce. Fogg is the only one that I knew personally, but when a fellow knew Fogg, he knew about everything—everything, that is, that Fogg cared to tell. What he didn't want to tell—he didn't.

Fogg got into a fight one night in a dive in Ponca City and they almost killed him. He could whip any two or three of them, but he said that enough of them got around and on top of him until "they smothered me down." One cracked him over the head with a Winchester barrel which cooled him off for quite a spell. When he finally came to and was getting up, one of them said, "Hit that s-o-b—he's comin' alive again!"—and someone hit him. Fogg said the next time he came to he just lay there until he got a chance to crawl out the door to his horse and get away. If Bob Littlefield ever got mixed up in anything, Fogg didn't tell me about it. Knowing his reputation like I do—I'll bet if there was ever anything going on and he knew about it, he got there too.

Charlie Pierce joined up with the Bill Doolin gang of train and bank robbers and was killed in a fight with the U. S. marshals. He belonged to a respectable family in Concho County and little was said about how he met his death. If his family knew, they were closemouthed about it and few, if any, questions were asked. It wasn't until the time that I sold the bunch of steers to Tonkaway Smith that any of the old-timers in Texas who had known Charlie Pierce learned the details.

Buck Currie was a decided hunchback. He walked and rode all humped over. He stole a bunch of Indian ponies and took off for Texas with them. Fogg learned that the marshals were ready to follow his trail. He beat the marshals to Currie and made him turn the ponies loose before the marshals caught him with them. The marshals recovered the ponies but that was all. Fogg said that Buck Currie was the easiest man to follow that he ever saw. He said every man, woman and child along the trail remembered seeing a humpback man driving a bunch of paint horses. Currie continued on to Texas. He didn't exactly steal another horse on the way—he just swapped the tired one he was riding for a fresh one without the owner's knowledge. He rode that horse all the way into Paint Rock.—Walter Gann, 31662 Scenic Drive, South Laguna, California 92677

Old West

Summer, 1972

PAGE 67

The Passing of John Wright Coffey
By Mrs. A. T. Whetstone, Noxville, Texas

As the mid-day sun wended its way toward the western horizon on Thursday, August 30, 1934, the spirit of John Wright Coffey, after waiting at the gates for three weeks for the Master's summons to the summerland, took its flight to that mansion not made with hands, and was welcomed with that heaven bejeweled sentence, "Well done good and faithful servant."

John Coffey was born in Granbury, Hood county, Texas, June 21, 1856, the son of Rich Coffey and Sallie Greathouse Coffey. He came of a distinguished family and was himself distinguished. He came to Concho county with his parents when a small child. There his father established the famous Rich Coffey Ranch where John grew to young manhood. On December 31, 1874 at the age of 18 years, he was married to Miss Mary Brown. Seven children were born to this union, five of whom survive. They are Sam Coffey of Alpine, Charlie Coffey of Dripping Springs, Jesse Coffey of Little Devil's River, Mrs Nathan Walker of London, Mrs. D. H. Whetstone of Noxville, all of whom were present at his bedside when he passed away. One daughter, Mrs. Jesse Walker, died in 1919. His wife also died in 1919 and a son, Walter, died in 1931. He is survived by one brother, Fog Coffey of Leaday.

Mr. Coffey came to Kimble county in 1886 and settled on Little Devil's River where he lived until his death. All his life was spent on the western frontier and he experienced those hard conditions as they existed during those early days, participated in the grim contests of the wilderness. On November 30, 1933 he was married to Miss Libbie Rush of London. Although living only a short time in our midst her beautiful character and kindly disposition has endeared her to all with whom she has come in contact. It was she who through weary days and sleepless nights bent above his couch and ministered to his every want as his life ebbed slowly away. She, whose life was a benediction in his declining days.

Mr. Coffey was laid to rest with impressive ceremonies in the family plot at Old Noxville cemetery, August 31, 1934, and was followed to the grave by a very large cortege, including many ranchmen and friends from distant places. Religious services at the grave were conducted by Rev. Lewis Pearl of London, who is a life-long friend of the Coffey family and under whose preaching Mr. Coffey was converted many years ago. As emotion dimmed his eyes and caused his voice to break he delivered a touching eulogy to the life and character of the deceased. When Rev. Mr. Pearl concluded his remarks, Judge Weaver H. Baker, of Junction as spokesman for the Masonic Lodge of which Mr. Coffey was an honored member, in his masterful way pronounced a wonderful panegyric after which the Masons concluded with their beautiful and sublime ceremony and paid their last respects to their comrade and brother and we took our leave

of one of the noblest and kindest men of the Texas frontier. The pallbearers were six grandsons: John Van Coffey, Simon Walker, Lester Coffey, Clabe Walker, Albert Whetstone and Charlie Coffey.

John Coffey was as simple and unaffected as a child; he was the poor man's friend and the humble man's associate and little children loved him; he wronged no man; he coveted no man's riches; he envied no man's success. He walked through his seventy-eight years without guile, the broad and open highway of a noble, generous and useful life, and we are all richer and happier and better for having known him. His life was a revelation of the triumph of a clean and noble spirit over the common doom of death. Men of his character and attainments, abounding love, and the charity that would cover a multitude of sins; men who scatter sunshine along their ways and live for others rather than self; men who are examples of that radiant happiness which comes from doing good, and which shines through the windows of their souls; men who can be cheerful under all circumstances, and render their cheerfulness contagious; such men are far too few in this materialistic world. Mr. Coffey radiated sunshine wherever he appeared. He was active in all matters of public interest. He was in many Indian skirmishes, waged war on all disreputable characters, was generally elected to command any expedition against Indians and outlaws, hence his title as Colonel Coffey. He was severely wounded in a battle with Indians near Paint Rock while attempting to recover stolen stock and thereafter walked with a limp. Mr. Coffey rarely discussed his activities in battling outlaws and Indians but had a vast store of anecdotes and information about events of early days.

As rugged as the life that the man led is his wilderness grave that marks his crumbling bones, and as enduring as eternity is the example he left to his fellowmen.

Source: Frontier Times, November 1929, Page 86.
Copied by: Gene Brewington, 4728 NW 59 Terr., Oklahoma City, OK
Transcribed from a very poor Xerox copy, obtained Texas State
Library, Austin, Texas, in 1978.

FOGG COFFEY, CLOWN OF WEST TEXAS COW CAMPS
by: Sam Ashburn in San Angelo Times

What Paul Bunyan is to the lumber camps of the northwest; what Carl Cromwell is to the oil fields of West Texas; what the works of Shakespeare are to the teachers of English literature; that is what Fogg Coffey is to the fun making of the cow camps of West Texas and to the citizens that live up and down the Conchos in these parts.

Fogg is still living but so much has been said of him that he has been expanded into a myth, something without form or flesh. It required him many years and many trips to Ballinger, Paint Rock and other towns to build up his collection of interesting anecdotes of this typical free hearted, breezy westerner, who loved fun, horses and his fellow man.

When he first came to this section, it was a raw land, with hiding Indians waiting for an unwary move by the incoming whites. He killed no Indians and is glad of it, because he wants no such memories. There are too many recollections of things enjoyable in the business of winning a new land to the sweet uses of prosperity. He chased many Indians but was always in the lead.

Fogg is the way he signs his checks and his voice has the quality, too, of the fog horn. It is a name and a nickname, too, and by it he is known all over the cow country.

"Do you know Fogg Coffey," one asks and the answer comes back, "Sure, everybody knows him, there he is over there." One looks and there is Noah Beery's double and how he kept out of the movies is answered only when it becomes known that the movies have never seen this giant man, six feet plus, and weight 250. He wears a Stetson hat, with a peak top, the front side crushed in about deep enough to permit the sleeping of a kitten there. He has lived on the "river" for 60 years and his fun making has kept the whole country shaking. Fogg is genial, a lover of conversation and the association of his fellow man. The side of the car creaks when he sits down and begins to roll a cigarette of canned tobacco.

Some one had told of the exploits of this hardy son of the west. He used to rope wild mules and horses tying the rope around his body as the wild ones thundered down the hill. He toosed the loop, caught them and then hung on -- he had to. He took no chances of failing -- he risked his own life rather than fail. "Well I had to catch them," he says "we needed them. The Indians stole the tame horses and we had to use the wild ones."

Fogg was born in Parker County in 1863 but at the age of three months came with his father, Rich Coffey, to the Concho river at Leaday, and there he has been since 1869. He used to work for the O. H. Triangle folks when Coggins and Parks of Brownwood owned it, and branded from 10,000 to 13,000 head of cattle a year. Now he has 1,000 acres of land, 150 in cultivation as well as some sheep and cattle. His father had cattle and horses.

"Nope, I ain't ever got rich, but I've had a good time," says Fogg.

It is hard to talk to Fogg in a gathering for there are a hundred people that want to chat with him. This yarn developed while Fogg listened.

"You remember that time, Fogg, that you were in Paint Rock and some fellow got hold of your horses bridle and started to lead you away to the courthouse as a witness. And you just slipped the bridle off the horse and left it in the hands of the law and rode your horse home without the bridle."

"Yea, I remember that, that was shore a fine horse. We don't have many good horses any more. That horse could do anything that any horse in the world could do and everything that humans do except talk and attend preaching."

Fogg felt that he was entitled to talk about the other boys a minute and told of the incident when Bush Still while working cattle fell with the horse, the horse breaking his neck. "That horse's name was Pack and Bush, damn but he was a good one, sat down and cried -- it was the first time I had seen him cry. Bush was a real cowhand, too, his horse was never tired -- he was a cowman who was always ready to go."

Fogg doesn't come to town very much but there was a plenty in his younger life to make the younger generation at this good natured masterly showman. There was one incident that he laughs at now but then it was deadly serious. One June 1, 1871, the Coffeys lost 1020 head of cattle and 54 saddle horses to the Indians. Once Fogg, riding a mule in the morning after some horses, saw more Indians, who began to shoot at him while he ran the twelve year old mule at top speed, the horses in front. "They shot at me twice, but missed me. That was the fastest mule that I ever saw. When I got to the house, I thought my father would be there to help me but he was chasing another bunch of Indians. Once two boys with our herd of cattle were killed by the Indians and my brother was shot, but it didn't hurt him -- they just "gut" shot him and made him run faster.

Fogg was about 12 years old when the chase occurred. He said, "I have chased a lot of Indians but I was always in the lead. But I have never heard anybody holler like a bunch of them. And that mule that saved my life, he never worked any more. We just let him loaf around until he died of old age. He had a gotched ear and when he ran he pointed this ear in the

direction we were travelling and leveled his tail out. There were five Indians in the group that chased me that morning."

Fogg then got to talking about horses, and he warmed up and put his arm around a friend as he got on the subject. He began: "You boys all remember old Figure 3, don't you, that little 300 pound horse. I'm telling you he would have been a tough one for a greener to ride."

Jack Stubblefield, prosperous rancher of Ballinger joined the group with a "Hello, Fogg" and Fogg said: "Glad you joined us, for these boys around here are telling this paper feller a lot of lies about me."

Mr. Stubblefield told about a horse he once owned. Once a man borrowed this horse to work some mules. He rode him for a few minutes but got down and led him after the horse began to do some real cow work with the mules. That horse was named Brownie.

Then the two men walked up with the story about the two brothers who found a saloon in Paint Rock crowded and to gain entrance to the bar threw a handful of cartridges in the stove. When the crowd came back in one of the brothers was drinking and the other acting as bartender.

There was another tale, too, of some brothers who after a good day in town left for home, part of them in a wagon and part horseback. "Let's play Indian," said one, and the older brother dropped back a mile and chased them home, shooting at them with a thirty-thirty. No one was hurt but there was only three wheels on the wagon when it arrived.

There was a tale, too, of the officers who failed to arrest a man he wanted for a misdemeanor when the man walked into the middle of a pond and sat down. The officer refused to follow.

Fogg then inquired of a friend to learn that the friend looks like a grasshopper sitting up in a corner of the fence; "there's nothing to him but running gear."

RICH COFFEE

By: JoAnn F. Hatch, P.O. Box 1123, Pinedale, AZ 85934, c. 1992.

COFFEE FAMILY NOTES

Time has not permitted a thorough or lengthy search on this family which married into the Beddoe family, but we will give a summary here of our findings so far as they go, in hopes it might be helpful to some future researcher of the Coffee family.

On June 10, 1841 Elizabeth Coffee married Joseph Warren Beddoe in Chattooga County Georgia. On the 1850 U.S. census of Chattooga County, Elizabeth Coffee Beddoe, along with her two sons who were 8 and 5 years old were living with the family of William B. Coffee and his wife Delia. Joseph Warren Beddoe did not appear on this census. The birthplace of Elizabeth and her two sons is given as Georgia.

Other records in Chattooga County Georgia show that on 5 October 1848 Richardson Coffee and Sarah Greathouse were married there. We believe this Richardson Coffee, who later appears in Texas with the Beddoes, was a brother of Elizabeth Coffee Beddoe. Richardson Coffee and Elizabeth Coffee Beddoe are of an age to be brother and sister, she is 24 and he 28 in the 1850 census. The older Coffee family that Elizabeth and her sons are living with are of an age to be the parents of Richard and Elizabeth. William B. Coffee was 50 years old and born in S.C. His wife Delia was 45 years old and also born in S.C. Others living in this household in 1850 were Jane Coffee, age 21, John Coffee, age 18 and Thursa M. Coffee, age 16. There is also a person named Pinckney Lingo, age 19.

Old William Coffee is on the 1840 U.S. Census of Chattooga County Georgia and the land records record him selling 320 A. for \$1600.00 in 1851. This was evidently about the time the Coffee family moved to Texas, because in 1860 they appear in the Parker County Texas U.S. census. They are the only Coffee family in Parker County. Elizabeth may have remarried, but I fail to find her or her two boys. The Coffee household in 1860 consists of Wm. Coffee, age 60, and his wife D. Coffee, aged 53, J. Coffee age 25.

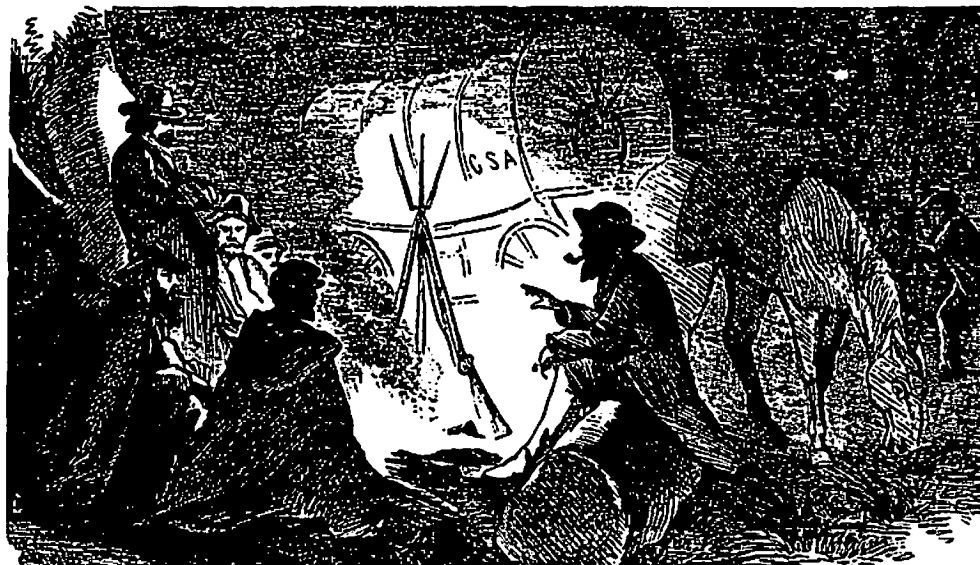
RICH COFFEE
by Hatch

In 1860 Richard (Richardson) Coffee and his family are shown in Brown County Texas, which is not far from Parker. In a history of Coleman County Texas we find information on Rich Coffee who it is stated came to Coleman County from Parker County in about 1862. In the 1870 U.S. Census of Coleman County Texas Richard and Sarah Coffee are enumerated with four children, all born in Texas: John age 15, William age 13, Bell age 11 and Richard age 6. Richard and Sarah Coffee are also enumerated in the 1880 Coleman County census.

We have found no further records of Elizabeth Coffee Beddoe, but her two sons appear in the 1870 U.S. Census of Coleman County and in the newspaper, The Concho Herald, dated 6 Oct 1911, a story was told by an old timer of Concho County, a Mr. Harrison, and we quote: "Mrs. Fogg Coffee told me that one of the Bedow boys, a nephew of Mr. Rich Coffee, was killed by the Indians and was buried at the old rock house in Coffee Settlement.". This reference to the Beddoe brothers being nephews of Rich Coffee gives further weight to our opinion that Richard (Richard or Rich) Coffee was a brother to Elizabeth Coffee Beddoe.

In 1976 we corresponded with Mrs. Ola Foster of Bountiful, Utah who is a direct descendant of Rich Coffee. She sent us several sheets of Coffee family history from the book The Coffee Family by Lawrence Coffee. One of the sheets shows Rich Coffee as being the son of James Coffee and Deliliah Ferguson. We believe this information came from Inez Cates Ward of San Angelo, Texas who is listed as the Coffee Genealogist.

In 1979 we corresponded with Inez Cates Ward. She said she was a descendant of Clominda Jane Coffee who was a sister to Rich Coffee. She also claimed the parents of Richard and Clominda were James and Deliliah Coffee, but had no proof to offer. She did not know if Elizabeth Coffee Beddoe was a sister to Rich and Clominda. Inez Ward says, "I've never found the family list (sisters & brothers) although have spent 20 years and much money doing research."



John Trousdale Coffee: Lawyer, Politician, Confederate

BY JOHN K. HULSTON AND JAMES W. GOODRICH*

Four months after his death in Texas on May 23, 1890, a Missouri weekly newspaper, the *Greenfield Dade County Advocate*, carried an obituary about John Trousdale Coffee. The obituary mentioned that "much of Col. Coffee's life was connected with this city . . . there are scarcely any here who do not know something of him personally or by reputation."¹ What the readers of the obituary remembered or knew concerned Coffee's years as a Mason, as an attorney, as a politician and as a leader of Confederate cavalry during the terrible years of the Civil War. Some Dade Countians also would have remembered Coffee as a hard-drinking and oft-married man noted for his "positive convictions" on many subjects. But the most vivid recollections of the people would pertain to Coffee's military exploits as a successful recruiter for the Confederate cause and for his troop of cavalry which rambled back and forth through Missouri and Arkansas. Coffee's men, during this perilous time, had caused Union sympathizers to fear for their lives and property and required Federal forces to constantly deploy against them.

John Trousdale Coffee was not a Missourian by birth. He had been born December 14, 1816, in Smith County, Tennessee, to Reverend Joshua M. and Jane "Jinny" Trousdale Coffee.² Besides preaching the gospel, Joshua Coffee owned property in Lancaster and Alexandria, Tennessee. He operated a store, known as "Joshua M. Coffee and Son," in Alexandria where he also served as postmaster for a time.³

Young Coffee read law until he believed himself ready to take the bar examination. He passed the exam while in his early twenties and also joined the Masons. Falling in love with a first cousin, he proposed to her. She declined to marry him because of their blood relationship. His marital plans were delayed only a short time, and in 1841, Coffee married Eliza Jewell Stone. A year later Eliza died and was buried in Cleveland, Tennessee, the community in which Coffee apparently practiced law. The grief-stricken

young widower received a further blow, in the fall of 1842, when his father died on October 2. The elder Coffee left a \$20,000 debt due to financial reverses.⁴

The deaths of his wife and father, plus his father's insolvency, probably prompted Coffee to emigrate to Missouri. Newly organized Greene County beckoned. There Coffee might succeed in both law and politics, as well as acquire good land at a reasonable price.

After his arrival in Springfield, the Greene County seat, Coffee sought to qualify as a licensed lawyer. He began an active practice as one of the thirty attorneys serving the Springfield area prior to the Civil War.⁵ On June 26, 1843, he expanded his practice when he registered on the roll of attorneys in Polk County.⁶



John Trousdale Coffee

Courtesy, Mrs. William Coffee

One recorded anecdote illustrated Coffee's thirst for hard liquor and his humor. In the early 1840s, he and a fellow lawyer from Bolivar, John T. Payne, had taken a case and received a horse as their payment. While socializing in a Springfield saloon, Coffee and Payne discussed their payment. After a few drinks, the two lawyers began arguing loudly on how to divide the fee. Tired of the heated discussion, Coffee finally unholstered his pistol and started to walk out of the saloon. Payne followed him and demanded to know what Coffee planned to do. Coffee replied: "I am going to shoot my part of that horse. You may do what you please with your part."⁷

On April 4, 1844, Coffee, who was dividing his time between his legal affairs in Springfield and Bolivar, married a Bolivar woman, Catherine Grace Hunt. Again misfortune visited the transplanted Tennessean. Two weeks after the birth of their only child, Catherine Coffee died. Coffee placed the child, named for her mother, in the care of her maternal grandmother, who resided in Bolivar.⁸

By September 1845, the young lawyer decided to marry a third time. He exchanged vows with sixteen-year-old Lavena Harriet Weir of Greenfield, in mid-September.⁹ The bride's father, Reverend Samuel Jackson Weir, was a prominent minister and

John Trousdale Coffee

farmer, who had helped establish Greenfield as the Dade County seat.¹⁰ Coffee and his new wife lived in Greenfield after their wedding.

During the late 1840s, Coffee continued to practice law in Southwest Missouri and occasionally assisted land speculators. He left the state, however, for a brief period, after he raised a regiment of Southwest Missourians to fight in the Mexican War. Coffee recruited the company very late in the war, and it had traveled as far as New Orleans when the war ended. Consequently, Coffee discharged his men and returned home, where he became Dade County's circuit attorney in 1849.¹¹

As an anti-Benton candidate, Coffee successfully campaigned for the Missouri senate in 1854 and represented the Twenty-fifth District composed of Polk and Dade counties.¹² On December 28, 1854, he received his committee assignments to "Ways and Means" and the "Deaf and Dumb Asylum."¹³ His political beliefs were personified by his nomination, before a joint session of the legislature, of the proslavery candidate David Rice Atchison for another term as United States Senator.¹⁴ Coffee sponsored a number of bills, including internal improvements for Southwest Missouri, the incorporation of the Carthage Female Academy, a prohibitory liquor law in Dade County, the incorporation of the town of Fremont in Cedar County and petitions for relief.¹⁵ However, he would not finish out his elected term.

Both branches of the legislature recommended Coffee for a captaincy in the First U. S. Army Cavalry Regiment. He accepted the commission in May 1855, and commenced recruiting in Southwest Missouri before reporting to his duty post at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He resigned his senate seat on August 24, 1855.¹⁶ Four months later on December 20, 1855, Coffee relinquished his military commission due to illness. He promptly returned to his Greenfield home, located on the town commons, which also served as his law office.

In 1856, the question of whether Kansas would be admitted into the Union as a slave or free state plagued Missouri and the rest of the nation. Coffee, by this time, had become one of the most influential men in Dade County and a recognized political leader in Southwest Missouri. A staunch states' righter and owner of at least one slave, Coffee adamantly opposed the abolitionist activities occurring in Kansas.

On the evening of August 26, 1856, a citizens meeting took place at the Dade County Courthouse. A committee of seven men from Dade and Lawrence counties, including Coffee, were appointed to draft resolutions expressing "the sense of the meeting." The drafted preamble and resolutions denounced "abolitionists and hired marauders . . . ravaging Kansas Territory, robbing the law and order citizens, burning down their houses. . . ." Immediate action was necessary and delay would prove:

fatal to Southern rights and the maintenance of law in Kansas, and that it is the duty of every pro-slavery man in our county to render such aid as he consistently can without serious injury to himself or family. . . .¹⁷

Coffee spoke afterwards to the crowd and proposed "squatter sovereignty" as a solution to the Kansas problem.¹⁸

In June 1857, Coffee and two other Dade Countians acquired the weekly Greenfield *American Standard*. Originally an anti-Benton paper, the former owners, in 1856, had begun to support the Know-Nothing party. The new owners changed the newspaper's

name to the *Greenfield Southwest*, dropped its Know-Nothing affiliation and published it as an "Independent in politics." In 1859, the *Southwest* ceased publication, but while it existed, it furthered Coffee's leadership as an independent Democrat after he withdrew from the national Democratic party.¹⁹

As an independent in 1858, Coffee offered himself as a Democratic candidate in the Seventeenth State Senate District.²⁰ He lost the nomination to the regular Democratic candidate, B. H. Cravens of Cedar County. Coffee then considered running in the general election as an independent candidate but reconsidered. He decided that his candidacy might prove injurious to the Democratic party. This decision foretold his forthcoming nomination as a candidate for representative of Dade County. Coffee won the election and immediately allied himself with pro-Southern leaders Sterling Price and Claiborne Fox Jackson. This alliance insured his election to the office of speaker of the house for the 20th General Assembly. Coffee received 97 of the 117 votes cast.²¹

During the 20th General Assembly, Coffee sponsored internal improvement bills for Southwest Missouri, just as he had done a few years earlier as a state senator. He also introduced bills to incorporate Masonic lodges, a new school district, the Dade County Agricultural and Mechanical Association, and bills to legalize land

In the early 1840s, Coffee represented clients in this Polk County Courthouse, Bolivar.

WPA Records, Jt. Coll. Univ. of Mo.
WHMC-Columbia & SHS of Mo. Mss.



transactions.²² He voted for a constitutional amendment to limit the state debt to \$30,000,000 and spoke in favor of postponing the vote on the state's revenue bill until after the legislators had discussed it with their constituents.²³

Throughout his term as speaker of the house, Coffee performed his important duties with dispatch. He presided over the sessions and followed the adopted rules of parliamentary procedure. Among his powers were committee and chairmanship appointments. He did not campaign for reelection the next term.

By 1860, his political ambitions appeared to center on securing the Democratic nomination for Missouri's secretary of state. In a mid-February meeting, Dade County's Democratic Committee met and instructed its delegates to the state convention to vote for Coffee.²⁴ Benjamin F. Massey, however, won the nomination.²⁵ For a brief period, Coffee returned to his law practice, worked his 800-acre farm and supervised his slave family.²⁶

When the Civil War erupted, Coffee, his beliefs in states' rights and slavery firm, raised a Confederate regiment in Dade

County and won election as its colonel. He also established recruiting camps in southern Missouri for General Thomas C. Hindman.²⁷ Official reports in *Records of the War of the Rebellion* scarcely mention Coffee until after Sterling Price's Confederate victory at Lexington, Missouri. After the Lexington battle, Price withdrew his Missourians to Springfield, thence to the southwest corner of the state, and finally to the security of the Boston Mountains of Arkansas.

On March 7, 1862, Generals Price and Ben McCulloch of Arkansas, fighting in the command of General Earl Van Dorn, were defeated in the Battle of Pea Ridge, Arkansas, by the Union forces of General Samuel R. Curtis. Again, Price withdrew his men to extreme Southwest Missouri and returned to the Boston Mountains. Following the Confederate defeat at Shiloh, Tennessee, Price took most of his army to Corinth, Mississippi. Soldiers who accompanied Price, joined the Confederate army for three years.²⁸ Confederate units, remaining in Missouri, continued as independent commands.

Coffee chose not to go with Price. Instead, he established a camp at Cowskin Prairie in the southwest corner of Missouri. On April 26, 1862, Coffee and some sixty Missourians under his command joined Colonel Stand Watie and his Cherokee troops in a skirmish with the First Missouri Cavalry. A Confederate victory ensued, but Watie, in his report, mentioned that he was forced to withdraw because Coffee did not supply expected support.²⁹ By mid-May, Coffee had made camp at Maysville, Arkansas. Four hundred Confederates had joined him. Union General Samuel R. Curtis described these men as "the most despicable, rough, ragged rascals ever congregated together."³⁰

At the end of the month, Coffee and some 200 of his motley cavalry joined contingents of Watie's troops to attack Union cavalry near Neosho. The rebels surprised their enemy and routed them. Watie reported that: "Colonel Coffee's cavalry, which had charged simultaneously with our infantry, kept up the pursuit for miles."³¹

In late July 1862, JO Shelby, recently returned from Tennessee, joined forces with S. D. Jackman and Coffee. The officers and their men rode through Neosho and traveled north with Jackson County as their destination. This force, joined by John T. Hughes, Gideon W. Thompson, Upton Hays, Vard Cockrell and their men, also actively recruited to swell its ranks.³²

Union General E. B. Brown became aware of the Confederates' plans and reacted accordingly. From his Springfield headquarters, he issued a circular on August 2, calling for the people of southern Missouri "to rise in a body and protect their homes and families." Brown was convinced that "Coffee and his band," in particular, would destroy the Union troops efforts to maintain "peace and security."³³

Coffee and his men led the Union troops on a merry chase. On August 5, Brown reported to General John M. Schofield that: "Coffee has doubled, and yesterday afternoon was going south near Mount Vernon, our troops in pursuit of him."³⁴ On the same day, Brown sent a dispatch to Colonel Frederick Salomon and stated that: "Coffee and [James S.] Rains made a recent raid into the State . . . but they move so rapidly I have but little hopes of coming up with them."³⁵

Brown's belief, that Coffee was near Mount Vernon on August 5, proved incorrect. On that day, he appeared in Montevallo, a small town located in Southeast Vernon County. Montevallo was not far from Coffee's camp on Horse Creek in the western part of

Cedar County. When Coffee camped at Horse Creek in early August, about 200 men comprised his force. Through successful recruiting, he quickly added over a hundred others to his ranks. In Cedar County, the lawyer-politician-Confederate officer had enjoyed great military success. His and other Confederate troops had so terrorized the county's pro-Union population, during the spring of 1862, that many had left the county for the protection of Union-held Springfield.³⁶

At Montevallo, a Union detachment of over a hundred men from Fort Scott, Kansas, surrounded some twenty pro-Southerners seeking to join Coffee's band. A skirmish ensued, and those Confederates that escaped made their way east to Coffee's headquarters. The commanding officer of the Union force, Colonel



Confederate Cavalry Raiders

William Barstow, and one of his sergeants purportedly boasted to the Montevallo townspeople that: "We will have Coffee for breakfast tomorrow morning and we will take him without cream and sugar."³⁷

Told of the Federal attack at Montevallo, Coffee set off to capture the Union detachment. He wanted to surprise his enemy, but a Union sentry discovered the approaching Confederates. The Union cavalry mounted their horses and speedily withdrew to the south. Coffee and his ill-clad followers charged through the town from the east and pursued the retreating Federals. In their haste to escape, the Federal force left two supply wagons and large quantities of arms and ammunition, which would be put to good use by Coffee's men.³⁸

By August 9, Schofield knew that Coffee had been recruiting near Osceola.³⁹ On August 14, Brown informed Schofield that Coffee and Rains, with a combined force of some 3,000, probably had formed a junction in Cedar or Barton counties. Schofield, in his St. Louis headquarters, sent a reply to Brown the same day. It illustrated the confusion created by Coffee, his troops and men like them in the Union defense of Southwest Missouri:

If Rains and Coffee are both west of you it must be a mistake about any very large force south of Forsyth. I apprehend it is a mere demonstration to facilitate the movements of Rains and Coffee. It may, however, be the reverse. The movements of Rains and Coffee may be intended to draw your troops away from Springfield. Do not let them deceive you.⁴⁰

Coffee may have deceived Brown, as Schofield suggested in an August 12 report to General Henry W. Halleck,⁴¹ but he had

not deceived Colonel Clark Wright or Major Samuel Montgomery of the Sixth Missouri Cavalry. Wright had ordered Montgomery to "cut Coffee off," and on August 7, the major's troops successfully carried out the order. His troops had attacked part of Coffee's cavalry from the rear, near Montevallo. The Confederate cavalry leader had split his force before the skirmish, sending half of his command to Osceola. Reporting the Wright-Coffee clash, Montgomery proudly stated that "we have the old rebel in a tight

place."⁴² On the ninth, Montgomery found Coffee's forces reunited near Stockton. The Fourth Missouri Militia and a company of artillery engaged the Confederates "just at daylight" on August 12, "and drove them handsomely. . . ."⁴³ Shelby learned that Coffee was being hard pressed along the Osage River. He rode to the aid of his fellow officer, but Coffee and his men had outridden and eluded the enemy. They appeared to be out of danger.⁴⁴

Subsequently, Coffee and Shelby joined forces and continued north from the Osage to the Grand River. Coffee then turned his column west and headed for Independence. Shelby started in the opposite direction for Lexington. Both recruited men for their ranks along the way.

On the night of August 15, Coffee's cavalry, variously estimated at 800 to 1,500 mostly ill-clad, unarmed Missouri State Guard members, prepared to camp a mile south of Lone Jack in Jackson County. Other Confederate troops were in the area of Lone Jack including the commands of Upton Hays and Vard Cockrell who planned to attack Lexington. The latter had camped about six miles northwest of Lone Jack.⁴⁵ Union troops, however, also were nearby. Some 800 troops, under Major Emory S. Foster, had marched from Lexington and arrived at the northern edge of Lone Jack at about nine o'clock, the evening of the fifteenth. Shooting between Coffee's pickets and the Federal troops occurred immediately. Discovering that Coffee's main force had camped south of



the town, Foster prepared to attack them. The Union detachment, including artillery, had advanced some three-quarters of a mile when Coffee's poorly equipped cavalry charged. A volley from Union muskets dispersed the Confederates. At the same time, the Union artillery fired into Coffee's main camp. Coffee's troops withdrew hastily, and the Union force returned to Lone Jack.⁴⁶

Union cannon fire alerted the other Confederate officers in the area, who did not realize that enemy troops were nearby. Foster, however, knew about the Confederates. His troops had captured a sergeant from Coffee's command, who informed Foster that he was greatly outnumbered. Foster expected reinforcements and, therefore, the news did not disturb him.

Now aware of the Union occupation of Lone Jack, Hays, Cockrell, Hunter and Jackman decided to attack the town early

the morning of the nineteenth. As the Confederates approached from their positions toward the town, a musket discharged and the element of surprise vanished. Even so the Union forces virtually were surrounded. The Confederates attempted to capture the Union artillery more than once. They set fire to the Cave Hotel, a rallying point for the Federal troops. Noah Hunt, a Lone Jack resident, counted over 110 dead horses laying around the square. Vicious hand-to-hand combat accounted for piles of dead and wounded. The reinforcements, Foster expected, never materialized.

As the battle raged, Coffee busily rallied his troops that had been dispersed by the previous evening's engagement. Around 11 A.M., he was prepared to reinforce Cockrell. Foster had been shot, and Captain Milton Brawner had assumed command of the beleaguered Federals. As Coffee's troops entered the fray, Brawner, short on ammunition and vastly outnumbered, decided to withdraw his force and returned to Lexington.⁴⁷

The Confederates finally occupied Lone Jack around noon. The fighting had lasted less than five hours. One of the captured Federals, Lieutenant Levi Copeland, was placed under the charge of Coffee. Guerrilla leader William Quantrill arrived at Lone Jack late in the day and, finding that Copeland had been captured, demanded he be turned over to Quantrill's men. Coffee refused. Quantrill, incensed by this rebuff, ordered his men to mount and prepare to charge Coffee and his troops. He sent a note to Coffee explaining that Copeland "had dragged the father of two of Quantrill's men from his home and in front of the man's family, hung him and burned the house." Learning this, Coffee turned over Copeland, who was immediately shot by the two sons.⁴⁸

Coffee's reinforcement of Cockrell's troops proved to be his finest hour. Arriving where fighting was the heaviest, they caused the Federals to flee as their dwindling ammunition gave them no chance to successfully repel the superior force. Brawner acknowledged as much in his report of the battle, ". . . the force under Coffee . . . again appeared on our left flank, with the evident design of surrounding our worn-out troops and cutting off all retreat."⁴⁹ Because he had sustained minimal losses, had been in the right place at the right time, and ranked as the senior colonel in Price's army, Coffee believed he deserved the rank of brigadier general. For months, he and Shelby would vie for the brigadier's star.

The Confederate objective to occupy Lexington had been thwarted by Foster's desperate defensive action at Lone Jack. At the same time, Union forces, commanded by General James Blunt from Fort Scott, Kansas, and Colonel Clark Wright's cavalry, plus Iowa troops under the command of Colonel Fitz Henry Warren, had been ordered by James Totten to try and cut off the Confederate withdrawal. Coffee's hard-riding cavalry fled southward, avoided a confused Wright, crossed the Osage River near Clinton, and successfully escaped to the Arkansas line. Shelby followed at once.

All efforts to intercept Coffee and Shelby failed, despite General E. B. Brown's empty boast on August 17 to Schofield that Coffee's cavalry "are in a constant state of alarm, prepared to run and not to fight, and more afraid of the Feds than they are of the devil."⁵⁰ Theodore Gardner, a member of the First Kansas Battery, testified as to the frustration experienced by the Union pursuers attempting to capture Coffee's horsemen:

Before the day [August 17] was finished we had learned that we were headed for Loan Jack to run Colonel Coffee out of Missouri, and although we kept up the pace . . . for three days and four nights, the wily Confederate gave us the slip and returned to the Ozarks.⁵¹

William Quantrill



On the twenty-first, Colonel Wright reported to Brown of his chase of the Confederates: "Coffee, Cockrell . . . and all the rebel bands are together, heading for Dixie. They can outrun Jordan. . . . Their course has been direct, their speed high, and their exercise perpetual since I struck their trail."⁵² Once again the Union army controlled Missouri, but the Confederates would return.⁵³

Three weeks after the battle of Lone Jack and following hot pursuit by the Federals, three regiments of Confederate cavalry (one under Coffee's command) met in Northwest Arkansas. The regiments were attached to General Thomas C. Hindman, who had assumed command of the Trans-Mississippi Department. A reorganization of the Confederates under Hindman ensued. He approved the resignation of General James S. Rains and relieved him from duty because of drunkenness. At the same time, Hindman arrested Coffee on charges of drunkenness and ordered a court-martial.⁵⁴

On August 26, General Schofield confidently advised Totten, at Springfield, that "the enemy's forces in western Arkansas are not all that formidable. They will probably content themselves with raids like that of Coffee."⁵⁵ General Curtis, from his headquarters at Helena, Arkansas, told Schofield that "Raines and Coffee [apparently awaiting court-martial trials] at Fort Smith. . . . Price gone east. No invasion of Missouri."⁵⁶

In late July 1862, Hindman was relieved of his command of the Trans-Mississippi Department and replaced by General Theophilus H. Holmes. The latter had received much criticism for his "apathy" at Malvern Hill⁵⁷ and had been transferred to the Trans-Mississippi Department. One Civil War historian labeled this department, by 1863, as "the junkyard of the Confederate army [for generals from the eastern theatre]" until the arrival of Edmund Kirby Smith.⁵⁸ Hindman, before being replaced, had ordered all Missouri State Guards into the Confederate army.

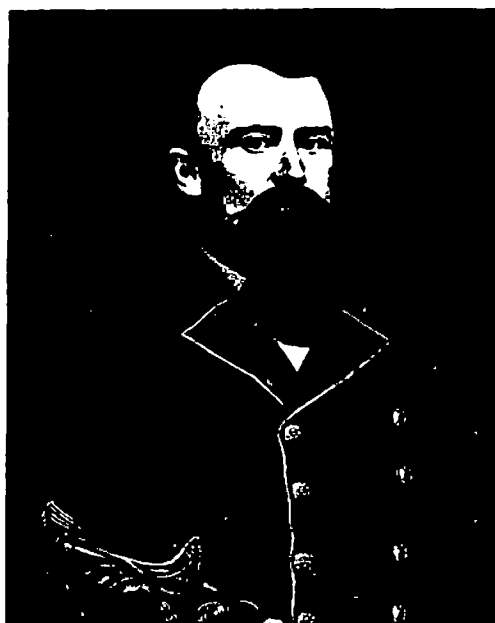
This action prompted General Sterling Price to advise the Confederate secretary of war, George Randolph, that thirty prominent Missourians, including Coffee, should be the men to organize Missouri troops for Confederate service.⁶⁰

Hindman had placed Shelby in command of a brigade comprised of three regiments of cavalry, his own and the regiments of Coffee and Upton Hays. Shelby called his command the "Iron Brigade." It went into bivouac south of Newtonia. The men were threadbare, on short rations and their horses were unshod.⁶⁰ Notwithstanding these privations, the Iron Brigade fought and won its first battle near the end of September. Engagements followed at Cross Hollow, Cane Hill and Prairie Grove. All the while, Coffee continued to be inactive, presumably awaiting the court-martial which convened and tried him in the spring of 1863. Coffee won acquittal of the charge of drunkenness and returned to recruiting for the Confederate cause in southern Missouri.⁶¹

From his camp near Diamond Grove in Southwest Missouri. Major T. R. Livingston, on May 28, 1863, sent a dispatch to Price which illustrated Coffee's importance to the Confederate cause:

Colonel Coffee has joined me with a small force of unorganized troops, and will co-operate with me. . . . It is currently reported here that Colonel Coffee will soon be restored to the command of his regiment; if such should be the case, we hope that he will be allowed to operate in this section of the country. His knowledge of the country, and the unbounded confidence of the people in him, demand that this should be the field of his operations.⁶²

Coffee continued recruiting throughout the summer, often leading raids designed to create havoc in southern Missouri. His forays caused Union Colonel Edwin C. Catherwood to move his troops from Springfield, chase Coffee's band and defeat him near Pineville, in McDonald County, on August 12. Catherwood won a decisive victory, killing 60 to 70 of Coffee's men.⁶³ This affair foretold the almost complete Confederate loss of control of Missouri except in the extreme southwest corner. Thus, a plan, designed by Shelby to draw Federals from their control of the Arkansas Valley and Central Missouri, won the approval of Missouri's Confederate governor, Thomas C. Reynolds.



A Portion of Gen. JO Shelby's Portrait, As Painted by George Caleb Bingham

Shelby planned a cavalry incursion into Missouri's heartland, perhaps even to the state capital in Jefferson City. Besides disrupting Union control, the raid would give the Confederates the opportunity to retaliate against Union General Franz Sigel's recent burning of Bentonville, Arkansas.⁶⁴ The raid called for more than a thousand cavalymen under Shelby to dash north toward the Missouri River. Coffee was to command a third of Shelby's force. Shelby started from Arkadelphia, Arkansas, on September 22, 1863; Coffee joined him at Crooked Prairie near Pineville. On October 4, at Neosho, Shelby and Coffee forced Union Captain C. B. McAfee to surrender his troops and sizable supply trains. Shelby paroled those captured, and took such supplies as his men could pack. Next the Confederates burned every house at Bowers Mill just north of Sarcoxie. Following a cold night's ride north to Greenfield, the advance Confederate units under Coffee's command arrived at the town at daylight on October 6. Here they surrounded and captured a garrison of fifty militia, seized all available supplies and fired the Dade County Courthouse, used as a federal garrison.⁶⁵

When Coffee joined his advance horsemen at his hometown, the courthouse was in flames.⁶⁶ He immediately ordered his men to take the county records from the burning building on the public square and place them in the residence of Judge Nelson McDowell. Despite his efforts to save the county records, Coffee learned following the war that his land records had been ripped from the county deed record book.⁶⁷

To see the courthouse, where he had practiced law, in flames no doubt saddened Coffee. But he was even more deeply saddened by another tragedy that had occurred while he was away from home. Less than two weeks before his return, his wife had died. Whether or not Coffee knew of this before his arrival remains unknown; and, history does not record what the bereaved Confederate cavalry officer did during his brief stay. Coffee, however, probably visited the grave of his wife and certainly looked after the disposition of the five children he had fathered.⁶⁸

The courthouse fire abated, the family business settled, Coffee and his men continued north with the rest of Shelby's brigade. The horsemen crossed the Sac River at Seybert Mill on the road to Melville (now Dadeville). On the morning of October 7, the Confederates began arriving at Stockton, twenty miles distant from Greenfield. There they burned the Cedar County Courthouse which had been turned into a Union fort. They then torched the Caplinger and Crow water mills nearby and rode on to Fair Play in Polk County. They continued on to Humansville, Warsaw, Cole Camp, Florence and Tipton, skirmishing with Union troops and capturing wagon trains. Some of the Confederate scouts came within sight of the night lights of Jefferson City, where General E. B. Brown's Union troops outnumbered Shelby's command more than three to one. Brown had left Jefferson City with 4,000 troops in pursuit of Shelby, Coffee and the Confederate force, which now had encamped near Boonville. General Schofield also had ordered General John McNeil to take 2,000 soldiers to intercept Shelby's brigade.

Shelby withdrew his forces, fighting a delaying action against his enemies. Breaking camp early on the morning of October 13, he headed for Marshall. Outside the Saline County town, Shelby, Coffee and Colonel David Hunter and their men engaged General Thomas Ewing, Jr., who commanded, according to Shelby, 4,000 Union troops. Five hours of fierce fighting ensued; dismounted

troops fought hand-to-hand combat. During the fourth hour, Coffee and Hunter had broken through Ewing's left wing and occupied Marshall. About this time, Brown and his men arrived in force. Shelby estimated his enemy to now number 9,000.

Toward the end of the fight, Brown's forces joined up with Ewing's. Shelby reported that "their combined forces, outnumbering us eight to one, looked absolutely frightful. While forming for a final, crushing charge, I determined to retreat, knowing it was madness to continue the unequal contest."⁶⁹ Shelby ordered his command to fight through an opening in the Federal right. The assault surprised the Union soldiers. The Confederates, including Coffee's command and the supply wagons, escaped.⁷⁰

In his official report of the Battle of Marshall, Shelby included Coffee among those officers who "handled their commands with great skill, and were ever where the fire was hottest and heaviest. . . ."⁷¹ Shelby led his force to Waverly, thence southward. Not out of danger until they crossed the Sac River at Seybert Mill. the Confederates made camp, October 17, at John Dunkle's farm on Rock Prairie (now Everton), twelve miles southeast of Greenfield. They reached Pineville, in McDonald County, the following night. Once again "under whips and spurs," Shelby's Iron Brigade had outridden, outfought and outmaneuvered the Federals, who outnumbered them more than six to one. They arrived in the Arkansas hill country four hours ahead of Brigadier General John McNeil's Union force.⁷²

Shelby wrote of the raid: "my command increased about 600. . . . fought five battles; had daily skirmishes; traveled 1,500 miles. . . . My men and horses are worn out, and must rest here [Washington, Arkansas] for a week or two."⁷³ Shelby had reached Washington forty-one days after starting the raid. His men traveled an average of thirty-six miles each day.⁷⁴ The "Great Missouri Raid" ended warfare of any importance in the state during 1863.⁷⁵

Shelby's aide, John N. Edwards, a few years after the war ended, wrote of his commander and the brigade's exploits. He facetiously portrayed Coffee, during the 1863 raid, as a "politicking" officer bent always on electioneering. Edwards recalled at Cole Camp, while the Confederates were dressed in Union garb, "Coffee electioneered for Congress and explained his position."⁷⁶ To Edwards, Coffee, at the drop of his cavalry hat, would orate to soldiers and civilians alike. Seemingly he exhibited this trait.

Confederate guerrillas and Union troops fight for supply train.

NARS



common of recruiters, throughout the war.

Shelby emerged from the raid a household name and a prime favorite of Governor Reynolds, if not Price. Surprisingly, following the raid, General Hindman relieved Shelby as commander of the Iron Brigade, at the same time General John S. Marmaduke took command of all the Price cavalry on October 22, 1863.

Because of bureaucratic haggling in the Confederate government at Richmond, Virginia, Shelby did not receive his brigadier's star until early 1864.⁷⁷ Coffee, a senior colonel in Price's army and a colonel when Shelby held a captain's rank, was passed over. Bitterness ensued among Coffee's supporters when Shelby received the star. Lewis Renfro, for example, commented later: "I don't know just how this happened, for Colonel Coffee was senior in rank, but by some hook or crook the plum went to Shelby."⁷⁸ Doubtless, those loyal to Coffee recalled his timely arrival to insure victory at Lone Jack with Shelby twenty miles away, his dramatic break through Ewing's encirclement outside Marshall and their day-to-day associations with him. The fact that Shelby's past military successes actually overshadowed Coffee's record apparently did not enter into their thinking.

Denied his general's star, Coffee left his regiment; and Gideon Thompson succeeded him as its commanding officer. Thompson's new command consisted of only three companies of cavalry and one company of infantry. After Coffee's resignation, official reports afford scant information about him until Sterling Price reorganized the army in the summer of 1864. Shelby received command of a division composed of his brigade and those of Jackman and Colonel Charles H. Tyler. Coffee, in turn, became the colonel of a "paper" regiment of Missouri cavalry, transferred from Jackman's brigade to Tyler's. Coffee's orders gave him until September 1 to fill his regiment's ranks.⁷⁹

Following Jefferson Davis's proclamation forgiving deserters, Coffee believed that hundreds of deserters, located in the northern



Gen. Sterling Price

tier of Arkansas counties, would return to the Confederate ranks. Coffee and Jackman and over fifty other officers were empowered to recruit.⁸⁰ Shelby thought that 3,000 men might come in, and, if this occurred, Coffee again would have a full regiment to command. However, the recruiting success did not materialize; and

when Shelby prepared to join Price in his 1864 raid into Missouri, the cavalry commander debated whether to leave Coffee at Batesville, Arkansas, to continue recruiting, or to take him along. He decided that leaving Coffee would only provide "a nucleus for the deserters to come back to." Since this was undesirable, he ordered Coffee to join Jackman's brigade in the expedition and allowed him to recruit to fill his regiment beyond the September 1 deadline.⁸¹ Coffee thus recruited as the expedition traveled to Fredericktown, Missouri; he hoped to fill his quota of men, but, by October 3, he had not done so. Shelby relieved Coffee from Jackman's brigade and ordered him to report to Price.

Shelby's lengthy "Report of Price's Missouri Expedition," written by Edwards in December 1864, did not mention Coffee. Nor was Coffee mentioned in any of the reports after the Battle of Pilot Knob, on September 27, until the war's end. Two Union officers, however, believed that Coffee may have been foraging for wheat in the Arkansas Fourche LeFave bottoms south of Dardanelle, early in 1865.⁸²

After the Battle of Westport, in late 1864 or early 1865, Coffee moved his family overland to Waco, Texas. A family history suggests that Coffee went to Waco at the invitation of friends of his brother, Franklin Brown Coffee, who had been a member of the Texas Rangers.⁸³ While the reason for this trip may never be known, his staying in Missouri could have been disastrous.

Sometime after the Confederate surrender at Appomattox, Coffee, *per sona non grata* among Union sympathizers, might have been physically harmed if he returned to Southwest Missouri. His derring-do throughout the war had made him one of the most feared of all Confederate officers operating in the war-ravaged area. The charred brick courthouse hulks at Greenfield and Stockton stood as mute testimony to his perfidy.

Passed over as senior colonel in Price's army, Coffee had lost the coveted brigadier's star. The Drake Constitution of 1865, adopted by the Missouri State Convention, debarred him from practicing law and holding political office in Missouri, both of which he had pursued as his peacetime livelihoods. Death had claimed his third wife in late 1863, leaving him to care for seven children, five of them under fifteen years of age. Discouraged, apprehensive and worn out from four years of fierce warfare, Coffee, with his children, joined scores of Missouri Confederates who decided to start life anew in Texas.

After the surrender of the Confederate Army of the Trans-Mississippi by General Edmund Kirby Smith, General Shelby, refusing to capitulate, moved to Eagle Pass, Texas. At this time, he

The Last Review



purportedly asked Coffee to join his force as a mercenary and fight under the flag of Emperor Maximilian of Mexico.⁸⁴ Coffee declined and instead surrendered himself in Austin, Texas, to General George A. Custer. The ex-Missouri Confederate signed a formal oath of allegiance to the United States on July 28, 1865.⁸⁵

The displaced parolee made a final move from Waco to Georgetown, Texas, the county seat of Williamson County. Within three months, he married his fourth wife, Eunice Amelia Allen Vontress. The native Texan, a twenty-seven-year-old widow and mother of a small daughter, had been the wife of Edward Hughes Vontress, a prominent Georgetown judge and Confederate wartime major. Vontress had died sixteen months earlier near Alexandria, Louisiana, when a bolt of lightning struck him. Coffee and his seven children moved into his bride's home. When three of the girls reached "courting age," two rooms were built on to the front of the house. His fourth wife bore him six more children.

The ex-Confederate operated a goat ranch nine miles west of Georgetown. For a third time, he qualified to practice law in a new state. The States' Rights Democrat also resumed participation in politics. During the 1870s, Coffee supported the establishment of Georgetown College and the Georgetown Railroad. Although he never returned to Missouri, Coffee unsuccessfully attempted to regain clear title to his Dade County property, which finally sold for delinquent taxes, in February 1879.

Coffee and his family maintained an active membership in the Georgetown Methodist Episcopal Church South. In 1882, the veterans of the Civil War, who lived in Williamson County, organized and elected Coffee as their first president. Eight years later, he died at Brownsville, Texas, on May 23.⁸⁶



The John T. Coffee House At Greenfield, As It Appeared In 1977

Probably most remembered for his wartime service to the Confederacy, Coffee should not be cast as a Confederate guerrilla in the mold of William C. Quantrill. But Coffee's mission, if not his tactics, appeared the same as all guerrilla leaders: to keep a maximum number of Union troops off balance and committed to protect loyal Union citizens. For instance, when Union General Benjamin F. Loan wrote President Abraham Lincoln in October 1863, that he needed more troops, Loan named Coffee as the arch-type guerrilla leader. Due to lack of Union protection, Coffee's forays, according to Loan, forced Missouri's pro-Union citizens to either go into exile or unite in armed defense of their homes.⁸⁷ According to one historian of the Civil War, Confederate military activity in Missouri "kept the Union military forces of the border, who overwhelmingly outnumbered them, mobilized, harassed and not available for utilization in other theatres where they were badly needed."⁸⁸ Coffee's leadership of Confederate forces, his ability to recruit effectively and the military tactics he employed greatly assisted in maintaining the tremendous imbalance in numbers.

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¹ Greenfield *Dade County Advocate*, September 18, 1980.

² Joshua M. Coffee Bible, in possession of Mrs. C. F. Coffee, Corona Del Mar, California; "Coffee Family History," in State Historical Society of Missouri, Columbia.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Jonathan Fairbanks and Clyde E. Tuck, *Past and Present of Greene County Missouri* (Indianapolis, 1915), I, 457.

⁶ *History of Hickory, Polk, Cedar, Dade and Barton Counties, Missouri* (Chicago, 1889), 296-297.

⁷ Fairbanks and Tuck, *Past and Present of Greene Co.*, I, 457.

⁸ Mrs. Howard W. Woodruff, comp., *Marriage Records Polk County Missouri, Book "A" 1836-1859* (n.p., n.d.), 13; Elizabeth Prather Ellsberry, comp., *1850 Federal Census for Polk County, Missouri* (n.p., n.d.), 23.

⁹ Woodruff, comp., *Marriage Records Polk Co.*, 16.

¹⁰ A. J. Young, ed., *History of Dade County and Her People* (Greenfield, Mo., 1917), I, 66.

¹¹ Greenfield *Dade County Advocate*, September 18, 1890; John T. Coffee to Abiel Leonard, February 7, 1856, Abiel Leonard Collection, Joint Collection, University of Missouri Western Historical Manuscript Collection-State Historical Society of Missouri Manuscripts-Columbia; Columbia *Weekly Missouri Statesman*, July 6, 1849.

¹² *Liberty Weekly Tribune*, October 20, 1854.

¹³ *Journal of the Senate, Mo. 18th General Assembly* (Jefferson City, 1855), 27, 28.

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¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 82, 118, 137, 161, 222, 299.

¹⁶ *Columbia Weekly Missouri Statesman*, May 4, August 24, 1855.

¹⁷ *Springfield Mirror*, September 4, 1856.

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²⁰ *Liberty Weekly Tribune*, May 28, 1858.

²¹ *Jefferson City Weekly Jefferson Inquirer*, January 1, 1859.

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²⁴ *Liberty Weekly Tribune*, February 17, 1860.

²⁵ John F. Snyder, "The Democratic State Convention in 1860," *MISSOURI HISTORICAL REVIEW*, II (January, 1908), 122.

²⁶ *U. S. Census, 8th Report, 1860, Products of Agriculture*, "Dade County, Missouri"; *ibid.*, *Slave Schedule*, "Dade County, Missouri."

²⁷ Young, ed., *History of Dade County*, I, 98.

²⁸ *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* (New York, 1888), IV, 281-287.

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³¹ *Ibid.*, 95.

³² John C. Moore, "Missouri," *Confederate Military History* (Atlanta, 1899), IX, 97-98.

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³⁶ Fairbanks and Tuck, *Past and Present of Greene Co.*, I, 339.

³⁷ Clayton Abbott, *Historical Sketches of Cedar County Missouri* (Greenfield, Mo., 1967), 83.

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⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 567.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 561.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 221.

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⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

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⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 3; *O. R.*, Ser. 1, Vol. XIII, 237.

⁴⁷ Parker, "Lone Jack, Invasion," 4-8; Richard S. Brownlee, *Gray Ghosts of the Confederacy* (Baton Rouge, La., 1958), 98.

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 77 Daniel O'Flaherty, *General Jo Shelby Undefeated Rebel* (Chapel Hill, 1954), 209.
 78 Young, ed., *Hist. Dade Co. & Her People*, 101.
 79 *O. R.*, Ser. 1, Vol. XLI, Pt. 1, 642.
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(The following copy was sent to me. Think the GAZETTE in which it was reprinted was at Georgetown, Texas.)

Col. John T. Coffee

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF A NOBLE AND USEFUL MAN

(The following is from the Dade County Advocate, published at Greenfield, Mo. the former home of the late Col. John T. Coffee, who died in this city a few months ago, and for an opportunity to publish this sketch, the GAZETTE is indebted to Messrs. Strickland & Strange)

John Trousdale Coffee was born in the year 1818, in Tennessee, in which state he was educated, grew to manhood, and married his first wife, a Miss Stone (other records say Miss Soule) who died without issue, leaving him a widower, while yet a young man. He was a near relative of Gen. John Coffee of the U.S. Army, who died in Alabama in 1834. In the early forties he enlisted a company for the war between the United States and Mexico, but by the time he reached New Orleans on his way to the front, the war had ended and he discharged his men and again turned his attention to civil duties. About 1852 he moved to Dade County, Missouri, and was engaged in the practice of law at Greenfield for a number of years, during which period he served as District Attorney one or more terms. He was married to his second wife, a Miss Hunt of Bolivar, Polk Co, Mo, who subsequently died, leaving one child, Catherine, now Catherine Snyder. In 1845 he was married to his third wife, Miss "Arriet Weir, who died at her home ~~place~~ near this place during the late rebellion. Several children were born of this marriage. About 1852 he was elected to the State Senate and served a portion of the term when he was recommended by both branches of the Legislature to a Captaincy in the regular army. The Appointment was made and accepted, and he returned to Greenfield, enlisted a company and went to Fort Leavenworth. In about a year from this time he resigned his commission on account of ill health and returned to Greenfield about the Holidays in 1856. Here again he engaged in the practice of law and also in farming. In 1858 he was elected to the lower house of the Legislature and was made Speaker of the House. He was succeeded in 1860 by W.K. Latham. At the outbreak of the late rebellion, he cast his lot with the South, raised a regiment for the Confederate Service and took an active part in the War until it ended. After the war he left Missouri and in 1865 settled in Georgetown, Texas, where he again engaged in the practice of law and farming. Oct. 26th, 1865, he was married to his fourth wife, Mrs Eunice Vontrees, of Georgetown, Texas (widow of Judge Vontrees) He lived with his family on his farm near Georgetown, and engaged in law and politics up to the time of his death, which occurred Friday, May 23rd, 1890.

Col. John T. Coffee was a man of positive convictions and strong in his friendships. He became a Mason at the age of twenty one, was a charter member of ~~Lodge~~ Washington Lodge No. 87, A.F.&A.M. chartered at Greenfield, Mo, in 1847. He was a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in which faith he died. He left surviving him a wife and eleven children.

It will be seen by the above that much of Col. Coffee's life was connected with this city, and all our older citizens know him personally, while there are scarcely any here who do not know something of him personally or by reputation.

John Trousdale Coffee b 14 Dec 1818, Smith Co, Tenn. Died 23 May 1890, Georgetown, Williamson Co, Texas. Bur. I.O.O.F. Cemetery.

Son of Joshua M. Coffee and Jane Trousdale

married 1st Eliza Stone- no iss. She buried in Cleveland (Bradley Co) Tennessee. Insc. reads: ELIZA COFFEE, wife of Col. John T. Coffee.

Died Dec. 14, 1841. Age 17 years.

Married 2nd Miss Hunt, in Missouri. Married 3rd Harriet L. Weir, Greenfield, Dade Co, Mo. She died during Civil War. Married 4th Mrs Eunice Allen Vontrees, Georgetown, Texas.

1. children: (2nd mar.) Catherine Jane b 7 Oct 1844 m John W. Snyder

2. (3rd mar) Charles Franklin 22 March 1847, Dade Co, Mo. Died Dec. 1935

Chadron, Nebraska. (Evidently another quite a "character." Was elected to Cowboy Hall of Fame in 1966. Veteran of the entire Civil War at age 18. Traded Cattle Texas-Wyoming for the Snyder Brothers. Then settled himself in Wyoming-Western Nebraska. Etc.

(with plenty of etc!) Married Virginia Ashland Toney. 3 ch.

3 Marietta b ca 1853, Mo. married Hi Webb

4 Arthur B B Feb 1850. Mo. Died 1880 in Chugwater, Wyoming, when accidentally shot by his own gun. Buried Cheyenne, Wyo.

5 Samuel Buffington b ca 1855 died Nebraska c 1907. Left sons- one, Harry Buffington, President of Omaha Stockyards, etc.

6 William F - ca 1857 died Louisiana 1944

7 Lula ca 1861 married Lum Bradford 4th marriage:

8 John Trousdale Jr 15 Sept 1866 died 6 June 1944. Had at least sons Rector Cope Coffee and James. Both buried I.O.O.F. Cem. Georgetown (Have had conversation with Ruth, widow of R.C. and got some of family data from her. James' widow was also still living last year----- never mind; I'm getting loused up. This James, whose widow was still living and who got the history of her illustrious forbear-in-law sort of, confused, shall we say, was the youngest son of Old John T himself)

9 Ella Josephine 3 Nov 1868-22 Jan 1950 married Frank Yearwood

10 Florence married R.T. Hanna

11 Tommye b 16 Aug 1871 died 16 March 1963 married 12 Sept 1894 William Francis Magee

12 James b 1877 died 1952

(All the children of the last marriage born in Georgetown.)

Re: Joshua M Coffee (Rev.)- he was the youngest son of William Coffee and Mary (somebody said was McAllister?). Brother of "my boy" David. J.M. was born in Buckingham Co, Va. William lived in Bedford Co, Va, then sold out, and the next records had him "William Coffee of Buckingham Co, Va." Hence, his last two children, born after the 1784 selling, and evident moving, must have been born in B. Co.

David Coffee and brother Pleasant B. Coffee married sisters, Sytha and Judith Meadows, respectively, in Prince Edward Co. About 1806 or 7 they, along with Joshua M. went to Smith Co, Tennessee. David and Pleasant B sold the land "which came to me from my father William Coffee by his will of May 1798", probably to finance the move, for they both got "money in hand" Then real quick, in Smith Co, David started buying land- the first was from the Trousdals. Joshua M didn't sell his Virginia land "from my father" until 1810, when his deed said he was of Smith Co, Tenn. Probably had something to do with his having married Jane T. in Jan of that year! His deed is no doubt recorded in the burned Buckingham Co records, but somehow a photocopy of the deed itself reposed in a file all by itself (indexed as Coffey, by the way) in the archives in Virginia.

In February 1822, David died, and left the estate-taking-care of "to my brother Joshua M. Coffee." Both David and Joshua M had become fairly solid citizens of the county, from the way they got into the records - county officers, on road committees, executors of wills of other solid citizens, and all the rest. J.M. did quite a bit of land selling and buying. Then at Alexandria he was a merchant, post master-- no mention of his having anything to do with any sort of preaching.

Then he moved to Warren County- where Ambrose Coffey's children had already esconsed themselves- Ambrose's son Jesse Coffee built the first brick house in McMinnville, son-in-law Jewell ran the big hotel- and all these Coffees signed things for each other, the way kinfolks did. Local history says Jesse and Joshua M from the same family, related, tho different branch. General John (also a Peter Coffee grandson) has in one of his diaries that he "laid the night with cousin Jesse in Warren County---- none of these kind folks give so much as a clue as to how the cousinship came about, if any. ^{WARREN, TENN}

In 1842 Joshua M. died, and the County records show that he left poor Jane owing in excess of \$28,000, a tidy sum for those days. Still no mention of his ministry. I'm crass enough to wonder whether he started his preaching before or after he lost his money. Somebody started putting Rev. before his name, and some descendants say he was a minister, some say Methodist. He may have been what they called a "local elder" and one of these days I'm checking into his ministerial background. If it were Methodist, the Theological Library over here at S.M.U. has a most beautiful line-up of conference reports that give even the Methodist Elders, who weren't ordained ministers. Maybe he was one of those.

Anyway, that's who Joshua M. was.

Their- his and Jane T's- son Franklin B, or Benjamin Franklin, was said to have been the first man killed in the Mexican War. Whether the first, he was killed-official record: 9-20-1846. Pvt. Co D Tenn.

Oldest son William joined the Federal army for the Civil War, and for some reason the intensely C.S.A. members of the family lost track of him.

James Earnest died of T.B. unmarried.

Thomas S went to Missouri - was in Dade Co awhile. Then is said to have gone to California.

Lucinda M married Andrew Jackson Wood and moved to Texas.

Mary Jane married Tennison J. Wilson

Nancy married Dr Charles Turner New of Cannon Co, Tenn. Their son, John Coffee New, graduated from West Point, and was a man of affairs in the county.

The rest of them I know not what happened to. Should like to.

Pages 145 - 162

Holland Coffee of Red River

AUDY J. AND GLENNA MIDDLEBROOKS

AS TIME APPROACHED FOR THE MEETING OF THE SECOND Congress of the Republic of Texas, Dr. Daniel Rowlett, a representative from Red River County, set out for the capital at Houston with a petition in his saddle bags. That instrument stated that the signers, most of whom lived between Bos D'Arc Creek and Coffee's Station, were asking for the privilege of forming a new county.

Soon after the opening of the session Dr. Rowlett and his fellow representatives from Red River County, Edward H. Tarrant and Collin McKinney, were named to a special committee to consider the request of the petitioners. It is no surprise that the committee reported favorably. That congress concurred is shown by the fact that the only debate stirred by the bill, read first on October 31, 1837, was over a name for the new county. The sponsors submitted the name Independence; Patrick C. Jack of Brazoria requested that their choice be struck from the measure and that the name Fannin, in honor of James Walker Fannin, be used instead. Over Dr. Rowlett's protest Jack's motion carried on the third reading, and the proposed political unit, with President Houston's endorsement, became a reality on December 14, 1837.

As its first representative the sparse population of Fannin County elected Holland Coffee, a merchant who, with Tennessee Silas Colville, operated a trading post on Red River approximately eleven miles northwest of present day Denison, Texas. Detractors and romanticists of recent years have used strongly contrasting colors in depicting the early Texas entrepreneur, and apparently both groups have some justification.

Holland Coffee, born on August 15, 1807,² to Ambrose and Mildred (Moore) Coffee, was descended from Edward and Ann (Powell) Coffee who lived in Essex County, Virginia, in the early eighteenth century.³ A grandson of Edward, Ambrose Coffee left Virginia with relatives and friends to live for a time in the western counties of North Carolina. Notable in this group besides the Coffees were the Moores and the Hayes—John Coffee (Jack) Hays, the noted Texas Ranger captain, was a relative of the Coffees. It cannot be proven that in moving west Ambrose lived in Warren County, Tennessee, but since several of his children were there,⁴ it seems that the McMinnville vicinity may have been home, at least briefly, for the restless pioneer. After Ambrose's death in 1818, Holland and Christopher Greenup, only surviving child of Ambrose's second marriage in 1812, probably went to McMinnville to live.

In traveling to the Arkansas-Texas area over a decade later Holland Coffee was associated with a group of Warren County

residents,⁶ a fact which indicates that he began his migration to Texas from that section rather than from Wayne and Pulaski counties in Kentucky where his father lived the last several years of his life. The exact date of the party's departure from Tennessee is not recorded. But George Strother Gaines, who in the fall of 1830 led a small company of Choctaws to the Indian Territory to choose lands for the relocation of the tribe west of the Mississippi, reported that while in camp on the south bank of the Arkansas River near Fort Smith, Arkansas, he purchased supplies from Coffee and Colville, traders." In 1833, at the head of a party of forty trappers, Coffee explored trade possibilities to the southwest and in rapid succession set up posts, the first of which was in present-day Tillman County, Oklahoma, while the other two were to the east near Red River in what are presently Love and Cotton counties.⁷

Another report on Holland Coffee in the Red River area came from James Bowie, who wrote:

Natches August 31d. 1835

Mr. Henry Rueg
Jefe Politico of Nacodoches District

Sir I have made my tour through the Indian villages and make this my report. The Shawnees were all in a drunken frolick which I learned before reaching them and did not call on them, I then went to Big Mushes village where I found him and all of his people drinking and dancing waited on them one day to get sober but they did not and I then proceded to Bows village which I found in good disposition he called his War chiefs and councilors together and after a consel with them agreed to go himself and all his men on the Proposed campaign, and immediately despatched his couriers to all the Cherokees and Shawnees to meet at his house in four days from today in order to march with me, it is necessary to state to you the information I received today which has caused me to change my former intended rout and ask your cooperation and aid. I learned from Matthew Sims who lives high up on the trinity river and has come direct from Robins ferry he states that the troops from Austins collony say two hundred and fifty has all marched and last Tusday united at the head of the Navasota which it is impossible for us to overtake by going that rout. Mr. Sims also informs me that one of the Chickasaw Indians who live with the Kichies come from Hall's Trading house with him to Robins ferry told him on the way that all the Wacoes Tewackanees and Towakees and some of the Comanches has assembled near Coffees trading house above the cross timbers on Red River, and Coffee has advised them to go to the interior and kill Mexicans and bring their horses and mules to him and he would give them a fair price for them and further states that a short time since a party of Towachanoes came to Coffees Trading house from a trip to Colorado and informed him that they killed and robbed some Americans Mr. Coffees answer was all well and to proceed with the business, he would protect them and give them market for their plunder and also stated that Coffee had for his protection at his house two hundred of that class of Indians and twenty-five white men, this is corroborated by a Chickasaw who was in the Battle when John Williams was killed. he came to Bows day before yesterday on a mission from the Keechies Wacoes Towocones and Comanches, proposing a treaty between them and the Cherokees which was not accepted by them. I wish you to take every step in your power to put a check to this abuse and recommend you to raise fifty or more men to join with the Cherokees and Shawnees and proceed immediately to Coffees neighborhood on Red River where we shall

find the enemy and probably fall in with the party of Americans that has gone out from the other Colonies. The Cherokees are anxious that you should send with them as many of the Mexicans that live in Nacogdoches as you can—for more of the particulars I refer you to Doctor Mitcherson who will bear this

Yours with Respect
James Bowie

A more direct report on Coffee's activities before he can be identified definitely with Red River-Fannin County history is found in a letter from his partner, Silas Colville. On July 21, 1837, from Walnut Bayou, Pawnee Nation, he wrote,

Mr. Coffee & myself have made a visit to the Indian Villages and found them very much alarmed. Some Quawpaw Indians had told them we were coming with a strong force to make war upon them on account of Some Texans they had killed and some Prisoners they had among them. We ransomed four American Prisoners, a Woman and child and two Boys taken from the Colorado in Texas. We gave them to understand that our business was to trade among them and live at peace But that we could not be quite Spectators to their outrages on Texas. To this they made no reply and I do not know what the result may be but I hope favorable. We hear of one other prisoner among them which we intend to have. We are about thirty strong and we think that a sufficient force to act either offensive or Defensive."

Two months later, Holland Coffee bought land in what is presently Grayson County, Texas. Because of subsequent events, a description of the tract is interesting.

Texas Red River, Sept. 28 1837

Know all men by these presents that I George Ivey of Red River District has bargained sold and delivered unto Holland Coffee all my right title interest and claim to an improvement lying on the south side of Red River near the junction of the Eau Washata on the Place (?) George Ivey now lives embracing the privileges of holding one league of land the right whereof I warrant and defend from the claim or claims of any person or persons in consideration of the sum of three hundred and fifty Dollars."

Also in 1837, John Hart and his partners, James S. Baker and William R. Baker, laid claim to land in the same vicinity. When a dispute rose, Hart insisted that he and the Bakers built three cabins on the land, cleared and cultivated four acres, then leased the place to John F. Moody, who abandoned the property without warning. Hart said that on Moody's departure Holland Coffee took possession. Also he claimed that he had Basil Cason survey the land but that Daniel Montague, the county surveyor, would not enter Cason's papers as being official. Hart brought suit against Coffee, and during the proceedings court and litigants adjourned to the site of the dispute, but the plaintiff lost. Later the argument was renewed when Hart met Silas Colville at Warren, and in the fight which ensued Hart was killed.¹¹ On October 20, 1841, Martin D. Hart, son of John Hart, filed suit again, claiming 1,014 acres of Coffee's land, but he, too, lost.

To his brother-in-law, Dr. John Steele Young, secretary of state for Tennessee, Silas Colville wrote from Shawneetown, Texas, on July 10, 1842:

The affair between Capt John Hart and myself took place about the first of May 41, in which I acted on the defensive and Hart fell, a Victim a misguided and overbearing disposition. The relatives of Hart in this Country are numerous and they partake a good deal of the disposition of the unfortunate Decd. They are a lawless Set and have always carried their points by violence. Since the affair between their leader and myself they have watched my path for an opportunity to assassinate me up to the time of my trial, since which time their anger has greatly subsided. Public opinion was so much in my favor that it seems to have cowed them.

My trial took place on the 1st Monday of May last. Judge Terrell, formerly a lawyer of Tennessee but a Native of S. Carolina, presided. The trial was short but created a great deal of excitement. The friends of both parties were on the Court yard Armed and equipt (not according to Law but according to custom). The Verdict of the Jury and the Judg of the Court and the warm congratulations of the Spectators who were anxiously awaiting the Issue proclaimed me Justifiable.

I am now on my little Farm attending to my pigs and poultry, in good Health with fine prospects of a plentiful crop. I shall close by adding that Holland Coffee, who was here since I commenced writing, sends his friendly regards to you.¹²

In 1840, Coffee and Colville divided the property which they held jointly, each taking an equal share.¹³ Since the division took place the year following Coffee's marriage, it is possible that the entrance of a third party affected the business relationship. It seems, however, that they remained friends, for while in Nacogdoches on January 10, 1843, Coffee appeared before Chief Justice Hart and designated Colville his legal attorney.¹⁴

The exact nature of Holland Coffee's relationship to the woman he married, Mrs. Sophia Aughinbaugh, prior to February, 1830, is still unknown. Sophia, the second child of William and Laura (Taylor) Suttentfield, had been born at recently re-established Fort Wayne, Indiana, about December 3, 1815. On July 14, 1833, before she reached her eighteenth birthday, she married Jesse Augustine Aughinbaugh, who headed the "County Seminary" that year.¹⁵ It seems, however, that he may have left teaching to enter business, for a year after his marriage the local newspaper carried an advertisement for "J. A. Aughinbaugh and Company, druggists."¹⁶ A receipt which Professor Aughinbaugh gave Patton Brackenridge for payment of tuition and "Stove rent, fuel &c" shows that the writer was a good penman, and spelled and ciphered correctly—attributes sometimes lacking in the frontier pedagogue.¹⁷

At Nacogdoches, Texas, on July 8, 1835, entry papers were made out to "Jesse Augustine Aughinbaugh" stating that he "is a man of good morals and customs, devoted to the constitution and the laws of peace, and of the Christian religion, of the state of matrimony and generally known as a good man."¹⁸ Eleven days later Jorge Antonio Nixon, land commissioner for the Mexican government, certified that the erstwhile professor-druggist from Fort Wayne had acquired one league of land in the grant of Joseph Vehlin.¹⁹ The land lay east of the Trinity River in what is presently Houston County. For nineteen years the title lay undisturbed. On May 17, 1854, it was sold by a grantor who stated that he was "late of San Patricio County" and made his X in the name Jose Augustine Aughinbaugh.²⁰

Apparently time and advertisy left Jesse Aughinbaugh without further note, but a bill of sale dated February 3, 1838, gives a clue to Sophia's whereabouts. It reads

Know all men by these presents, that I, John Rogers of Fort Smith, for and in consideration of the sum of eight hundred dollars to me in hand paid, the receipt of which I do hereby acknowledge to have received to my full satisfaction.

Have this day bargained, sold and delivered unto Sophia Coffee, late of Texas, a negro man named Lewis, aged about twenty years. I do hereby warrant same negro man to be slave for life, and sound in body and mind, and I do also warrant the title of said slave to the said Sophia Coffee, her heirs and assigns, against all legal claims whatsoever.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this the third day of February 1838.

John Rogers²¹

There has been much speculation as to how and when Sophia took the name Coffee. Perhaps, as she said, Jesse deserted her, and after awhile she assumed that he was dead or out-of her life permanently. In those days of fluid or non-existent marriage laws she and Coffee probably went through some kind of ceremony which they felt met the demands of society but was found later to have no legal standing. The arrangement was either unsatisfactory or Jesse reappeared, however, for on July 25, slightly more than five months after "Mrs. Sophia Coffee, late of Texas," had purchased a slave in Fort Smith, Arkansas, Sophia Aughinbaugh was back in Houston, Texas. There she appeared before Judge James W. Robinson of the District Court to start proceedings for a divorce with the following presentation.

Republic of Texas
County of Harris

Sophia Aughinbaugh
vs

Jesse A. Aughinbaugh

In Chambers, July 25, 1838

Whereas Sophia Aughinbaugh, the plaintiff in the above case, hath this day filed her petition before the Judge James W. Robinson, one of the judges of the District Court of the Republic of Texas; and she having shown to the satisfaction of the Judge aforesaid, that the defendant Jesse A. Aughinbaugh resides out of the jurisdiction of this court.

Therefore, it is ordered by the Judge, that the Clerk of the District Court for the County of Harris, make publication of this order, in some public newspaper printed in the city of Houston for six weeks previous to the next term of the District Court, to be holden in and for the county of Harris, at the court house thereof, in the City of Houston, on the 'fifth Monday after the fourth Monday in October next' ensuing; then and there to answer the petition of the said Sophia Aughinbaugh, there exhibited against him, or the matters and things therein contained, will be taken *pro confesso*, and the decree granted as prayed for.

Hon. J. W. Robinson²²

Holland Coffee was not with Sophia for the proceedings, however, for on the "2nd day of August, 1838," he "appeared before us the Board of Land Commissioners for the County of Harris and proved according to law that he arrived in this County on

Holland Coffee of Red River

vious to the declaration of independence and that he is a single man and entitled to one third of a League of Land."²³

The "matters and things" mentioned in Sophia's petition before Judge Robinson were not disposed of by that court. On November 29, 1838, she again requested a divorce from Jesse Aughinbaugh by petition to the Third Congress of the Republic of Texas, in which Holland Coffee represented the new County of Fannin.²⁴ The "select" committee to whom the plea was referred reported in favor of the petitioner. On the first reading A. B. Sweitzer of Gonzales moved for rejection and was supported by a vote of sixteen to fourteen.

The Texas Homestead Exemption law, unique of its kind and designed to serve generations of Texans, came up for consideration during the fight over the granting of the divorce, but it created slight interest as compared with the excitement over the issue of Sophia's freedom.²⁵ On January 15, 1839, however, nineteenth century liberalism and the personal influence of Congressman Coffee apparently shifted sentiment, and, with Aughinbaugh still absent and unprotesting, "the Senaté and House of Representatives of the Republic of Texas in Congress assembled" ruled that "Sophia Aughinbaugh and Jesse A. Aughinbaugh be, and they are hereby declared to be forever divorced, and each party is hereby declared to be free to act in everything as though they had never been married."²⁶

In support of that generous verdict Washington County marriage records show that Coffee purchased a license for himself and Sophia Suttentfield. But acknowledgment was omitted from the notice in the *Telegraph and Texas Register*, on February 20, 1839, which read: "MARRIED—In Washington county on the 19th ultimo, by ————— Lusk, Esq., the Hon. Holland Coffee, late member of congress from Red River, to Mrs. Sophia Aughinbaugh, late of Houston." It seems the groom's gift to his bride may have been land, for an instrument dated October 11, 1838, carried a notation by James Whiteside, acting for the estate of Peter Andre, "who was eligible for 1/3 league of land," that at "Independence, Febr. 1839—For value received I transfer this certificate to Mrs. Sophia Coffee the day and date above. James Whiteside. Attest: Holland Coffee."²⁷

Possibly James Whiteside was a cousin of Coffee. Elizabeth, one of the two sisters of Ambrose Coffee, married Robert Whiteside, and their first son was called James. Another son, Jonathan, had a son, James A., who was born in 1803, four years prior to Holland's birth. In addition, there are records that members of the family came to Texas—Jenkin Whiteside, United States Senator from Tennessee, 1809-1811, among them.²⁸

Immediately after their marriage Holland Coffee took Sophia by way of Nacogdoches to his trading station on "Texas Red River." The post, on the original Chihuahua Trail, was situated at the top of a hill east of Sand Springs.²⁹ Near by was Rock Bluff, crossing for the notorious "Whiskey Trail." The ford was popular because the cut through the steep bluff made a natural chute for herding animals into the river. Further prestige was given Coffee's home site when Colonel William G. Cooke laid out the military road in 1830 with a terminus on Red River just above

the trading house. That route became the Texas or Preston Road, which for several years served as a main artery for traffic moving north and south from Central Texas. In 1845, Coffee's Bend was the most populous section of present-day Grayson County; the town of Preston was laid off adjacent to the post; and "Regular boats were run up Red River as far as Fort Towson, and at times came up to Preston."³⁰ Thus Preston became head of navigation, though the service was uncertain because of the varying level of the river.

Holland and Sophia Coffee set up housekeeping in a ten-foot square clapboard house, which was protected by a high stockade, 100 feet square. The furnishings were scant and homemade, but in telling of her new home Sophia declared that she was "the happiest woman in Texas."³¹

With cheerful domesticity brightening what had been dull bachelor quarters, Coffee must have been tempted to remain at home. But just two months and ten days after his marriage, he turned his back on the felicitous and departed at the head of a troop of fifty men to try to effect peace with the Indians who had harrassed the settlers during his service in the Third Congress. There is no account of Sophia's objecting to her husband's early leave-taking, but the fact that he was away much of the time during their seven years, or more, of married life may have contributed to the less happy state which apparently developed in their later years together.

It seems that Coffee was uniquely suited to a career in trading with the red men of the Southwest. Reputedly he spoke seven Indian dialects and was an effective mediator between inhospitable natives and encroaching white men. Doubtless some members of the party under his leadership on April 29, 1839, would have preferred making a punitive expedition, but he brought the two groups to peaceful settlement.

In May, 1841, after renewed hostilities, a company of about eighty men gathered at Choctaw Bayou, between Coffee's station and Warren, and marched westward in search of the mischievous Indians. The destination was the rumored site of villages on the west fork of the Trinity. Coffee and Colville, rode with the party for several days, but turned back before the Indians were contacted.³² In his twelve years along Red River, dealing with both friendly and wild red men, there is no account of Coffee sustaining personal harm from his primitive clientele. Nor were his premises molested except one time when a small party came about dawn and removed three pickets from the stockade then fled when a Negro servant began to grind coffee in preparation for breakfast. It was believed that theft was the objective.³³

Other evidence that Coffee trod the tight wire of frontier diplomacy successfully is revealed in his prosperity. In the years subsequent to his purchase of the league of land from George Ivey he acquired several other tracts, making him one of the major property owners in the area. In 1843, he built what was to be the show place of North Grayson County for many years.

The evolution of the house is so enshrouded by the mists of time that form and sequence are uncertain. Some claim that originally it was a single story, double log cabin style residence:

others insist that from the beginning it was two-story, exactly as many people in the area remember it, except that siding on the front rooms was added later, possibly when the brick dining room-kitchen wing with its wine cellar³⁴ was built. But whatever the order of change, it remained a place of distinguished appearance for more than fifty years. Its wide-spreading roof swept out front and back to shelter hospitable porches which ran the full length of the house, upstairs and down. The supporting posts were slender after the fashion of French colonial architecture, and between them across the front of the house there was white grille work trim which featured, in the angle of post and plate, the indigenous design of a catamount rampant. On the first floor a wide hall separated parlor and dining room; on the second floor a like passageway gave entrance to the blue, or guest bedroom, to the north and to the master bedroom to the south. Holland Coffee knew the pleasure of his handsome home for only three years, but Sophia lived there, through troublous and fair times, until her death in 1807. She added much to the beauty of the place by having fine furniture brought in by ox wagon from Jefferson, and by supervising luxurious planting on the spacious grounds.

But Coffee's prosperity was not without blemish; he was nagged by debt, possibly from over-extending himself in buying land and slaves. The following record seems to indicate such circumstances.

Jackson, Mississippi

October 27, 1845

I hereby agree to pay over to Thomas J. Coffee either in property or money one half I may collect from William McDaniel against whom I have instituted suit for twenty-one negroes in Nacogdoches, upon claims due the said Thomas J. Coffee while the said suit to be deducted from my half.

I further agree to pay the said Thos. J. Coffee the value of the three negroes I received from him in 1840, viz, Abram, I estimate is worth \$700, Isaac as \$750, and Dicy at \$450.

I further agree to pay the said Thomas J. Coffee fourteen hundred and fifty dollars with interest being paid for myself and Silas Colville. Febr. 1, 1837.

I further agree to pay him the sum of two hundred dollars with intrest he lent me in 1840. I further agree to hold for his own a tract of land purchased from James Perkins—which tract was received in liquidation of a debt on the said Thomas J. Coffee the date above written.

Given my hand and seal³⁵

On December 7, 1847, Sophia made two notes to Thomas J. Coffee, each for \$1,058. Since that is the first mention of her assuming responsibility for the indebtedness, it seems that Holland may have repaid the major portion before his death.

Information about Holland Coffee's political views is vague, but in the Republic of Texas opinion, for the greater part, took one of two directions: it was for Houston or against him. Indications are that Coffee was not of the Houston camp. On November 7, 1838, Representative Coffee offered a resolution requesting inquiry into Houston's authority in appointing a commission to run a boundary line setting aside certain sections of land for the Cherokees. The resolution was passed and Coffee was named to the commission.³⁶ On the following December 10, Coffee was among

the congressmen who voted against a motion to thank Houston for the able manner in which he had served as president.³⁷

In addition to carrying on trade with the Indians in his area, Coffee acted as provisioner and guide for various groups, the largest of which was Jacob M. Snively's expedition against the Mexican trade caravan in 1843.³⁸ With his usual caution Coffee accompanied this ill-advised band only part way to its goal, thus escaping the ignomy of capture and loss of arms which befell the bold adventurers.

Another expedition which Coffee serviced was that of Indian Agent Pierce Butler, a former governor of South Carolina. Butler, much concerned over rumors that white women and children were being held captive by Indians in Texas, crossed Red River on January 8, 1846, and camped at Coffee's station.³⁹ J. W. Washburne of the *Arkansas Intelligencer* reported that "Our company was a motley one—Governor, Colonel, Judges, Chiefs, one gentleman traveller, whites, Cherokees, Seminoles, Choctaws, Spaniards, et al., besides my humble self of Editing character. We were quite an agreeable crowd."⁴⁰ On February 20, they were at Comanche Peak, in present-day Hood County, and "Colonel Coffee, contractor to furnish supplies, arrived with word that messengers sent out to find Comanches to invite them to the peak had returned unsuccessful."⁴¹

James Bowie was not alone in reporting ill of Coffee. One of his contemporaries wrote that "Jonathan, with a Delaware colored man, Jack, passed Coffee's with 60 horses which he knew had been stolen by the Comanches."⁴² On November 1, 1837, the House Standing Committee on Indian Affairs recommended that "Coffee's trading house should be suppressed, or placed under the surveillance of this Government."⁴³ In the summer of 1842, someone disliked him enough to fire on him from a thicket as he rode near Dagley's Landing. The bullet went through both breasts of his coat without injuring him.⁴⁴

But there were others who had high regard for Trader Coffee. At the close of the Third Congress, Coffee returned to his post on Red River by way of Fort Warren in present-day Fannin County. In the two or three days he rested there he heard reports on harassment by the Indians and "promised to use all of his prestige with the savages in an effort to establish peace with them. No sooner had he reached his trading post than Coffee raised a party of men and set out to hold a series of peace parleys with the Indians. His negotiations proved entirely successful."⁴⁵ Later when white settlers along the western frontier were anxious to have capable, honest men establish trading stations among the Indians as a means of keeping peace, the traders most frequently mentioned as models in promoting good relations between the two races were the Torrey brothers on the Brazos and Holland Coffee on Red River.

On April 6, 1836, a small party of eleven men, two women, and three children was attacked by Indians on the San Patricio road in South Texas. Nine of the men were killed, including John Horn, husband of one of the women; and Mrs. Horn, her two small sons, Mrs. Harris, and her three-month-old daughter were carried off. After months of wandering, during which Mrs.

Harris' baby was killed, the little Horn boys were sent off with other Indians, and the women subjected to extremely cruel treatment, the party came in contact with some of Coffee's men who tried to ransom the women. The Indians refused. After assuring the captives that "if anyone could assist . . . he [Coffee] could and *would*," the men reported to Coffee. Of his efforts to free them Mrs. Horn said:

He expressed the deepest concern at his disappointment and wept over me as he gave me clothing and divided his scanty supply of flour with me and my children, which he took the pains to carry to them himself. It is, if possible with deeper interest that I record this tribute of gratitude to Capt. Coffee because, since my deliverance, I have been pained to learn that he has been charged with supineness and indifference on the subject, but I assure the reader that nothing can be more unjust. Mrs. Harris was equally the object of his solicitude. The meeting of this friend in the deep recesses of savage wilds was indeed like water to a thirsty soul.⁴⁸

To that tribute John Henry Brown added, "the noble-hearted gentleman thus embalmed in the pure heart of that daughter of sorrows, was Holland Coffee, the founder of Coffee's Trading House, on Red River, a few miles above Denison. He was a member of the Texian Congress in 1838, a valuable and courageous man on the frontier."⁴⁹

Twice the Texian congress voted to reimburse Coffee for expense incurred in ransoming white settlers from Indians. In November, 1837, for example, the Second Congress adopted a joint resolution to pay Holland Coffee \$691,⁴⁸ possibly for the four Americans whom Silas Colville mentioned in his letter of July 24, 1837. The Third Congress, on January 19, 1839, repeated the gesture by granting \$661 to Holland Coffee and Company.⁴⁹ That occurred four days after Sophia won her divorce from Jesse Aughinbaugh and exactly one month before she and Coffee were married at Independence, which, in view of her taste for elegant living, was a fitting time for him to recoup his finances.

Although wills were not common on the frontier during the westward migration of ebullient young America, Holland Coffee made a bequest early in his married life. That instrument, dated May 7, 1841, simply stated that all of his possessions, beyond any indebtedness he might have, were to go to his "beloved wife, Sophia," whom he named to serve as executrix without bond.⁵⁰

At Fort Washita on May 17, 1846, he made a codicil to this will, declaring that

being apprehensive that surrounding circumstances may soon terminate my life, and desirous of making this a part of my foregoing will and not having said testament now with me at this place require that my wife Sophia shall be the executrix of my above specific will and that she shall be qualified by court without being required to give any security or enter into any bond whatsoever.⁵¹

It seems, however, that the circumstances of which he was apprehensive did not develop immediately. It is impossible to say whether the threat lingered or whether fresh difficulty arose, but it was mid-autumn when Chickasaw agent Upshaw reported to his superior in Washington that "On . . . October first, at the store of James Galloway at Preston, Col. Holland Coffee engaged

in a fight with C. A. Galloway who killed Coffee with a bowie knife."⁵² A newspaper account of the incident, which appeared on October 10, recorded that

on the first inst., a recounter took place in Grayson County, between Colonel Holland Coffee, well known as one of the earliest traders with the Indians, on the waters of Red River, and Mr. Chas. A. Galloway, a merchant, resident of Washita Post. Col. Coffee is said to have received some stabs which proved mortal. We have not full particulars.

The deceased, was a man warmly esteemed by a large circle of friends, and noted for great frankness and natural nobleness of character. Though a long time resident upon the Indian border he was remarkable for the considerate kindness of feeling more ordinarily attendant upon refined society. He was a warm friend and true hearted gentleman, and fell in a matter nearly concerning his honor. His loss will be greatly lamented.⁵³

There is little mention of contact between Coffee and Galloway, including nothing that shows cause for friction between them. On March 20, 1846, Coffee sold lots 2 and 7 in Bonham to Galloway.⁵⁴ About that time or a little later Eugenia Coffee, daughter of Holland's brother, George Washington Coffee, of Jackson, Mississippi, arrived and on May 13, she and Galloway were married. An excerpt from a letter written several years later gives some detail of the event.

My mother Eugenia Elizabeth Coffee of Jackson, Mississippi—in-
vited to visit her uncle, General Holland Coffee and his wife Sophia
—met Charles Ashton Galloway on a visit . . . he and my mother
married after a short courtship. My mother was 14 and Mr. Gallo-
way was 28. They were the parents of three sons and one daughter
inside six years. Sons were: 1. George Washington Coffee Galloway
2. Charles Ashton Galloway 3. Alex David Galloway. Daughter was
Virginia Lee Galloway.⁵⁵

A final newspaper comment on the disastrous clash between these frontier citizens throws no light on the cause.

Grayson District Court—Mr. Charles A. Galloway, who was charged with the murder of Col. Coffee, has, we are informed been acquitted by public sentiment. It seems there were several witnesses of the act, and it was so clearly a case of self defense in the last extremity, that the grand jury could find no bill.

We are told that Mr. Galloway is universally considered blameless for his conduct throughout the difficulty, and in the final act which terminated so fatally and unfortunately. We are gratified to find that the case bears this character.⁵⁶

Thus it seems Coffee was the aggressor and justice was served in the release of Galloway. But there was a note of sadness in the report. Taken with the tribute paid Coffee in the obituary notice, it seems that the writer's chief feeling was one of regret that two good men had been caught up in a conflict that allowed no compromise.

¹Rex W. Strickland, "History of Fannin County, Texas, 1836-1843." *Southeastern Historical Quarterly*, XXXIII, 273, 274, 298.

²Jesse Coffee (brother) Family Bible.

³Among the five children mentioned in Edward's will, probated in 1716, was John who married Jane Graves. James, one of the nine children born of that union, took as his wife Elizabeth Cleveland, a daughter of Alexander Cleveland, whose relative (brother or uncle) married Martha Coffee, a sister of John Coffee. John and Martha (Coffee) Cleveland were the parents of Colonel Benjamin Cleveland, thus making Colonel Cleveland doubly related to Ambrose, son of James and Elizabeth and father of Holland Coffee. Holland's mother was a daughter of Jesse Moore of Virginia and North Carolina.

Of the nine children of Ambrose and Mildred, two besides Holland are known to have lived in Texas. After residing for a time in Hinds County, Mississippi, Thomas Jefferson Coffee, who married Malinda Graves Williams Haley, came to Brazoria County, Texas, where he operated a large plantation until his death in 1858. America, a sister of Holland and Thomas J., married Samuel Lusk of Buncombe County, North Carolina, and Warren County, Tennessee. The Lusks moved first to Alabama and then to Texas, where they settled in Austin's colony as early as 1835. Descendants of that family still live in Washington County.

Elizabeth Coffee, another sister of Holland, married George Washington Jewell, who built and operated the Indian Queen Hotel in McMinnville, Tennessee. Jewell raised a company and came to Texas to assist in the war against Mexico in 1836, but arrived after the battle of San Jacinto. Elizabeth died in Warren County, in 1843, and her husband died in North Texas in 1848. Apparently brought to Texas by her father, Mary Elizabeth Jewell made her home with Holland and Sophia Coffee and continued in the household after Sophia's marriage to Major George N. Butt.

Also the Ambrose Coffee family had at least one cousin in Texas. Mrs. Thomas J. Rusk was the former Mary (Polly) Cleveland, a granddaughter of "Mad" John Cleveland, son of Colonel Ben and Mary (Graves) Cleveland. Although they were not in Texas, other cousins of prominence were Mrs. C. J. McDonald, wife of a governor of Georgia, and Jesse Franklin, who fought through the North Carolina campaigns with his uncle, Colonel Ben Cleveland, then served in various lesser civil offices before he was elected governor of the state in 1820.

Genealogical data on the Coffee family collected by Don Ruth Coffee Merritt, Dallas, Texas; Lyman C. Draper, *Kings Mountain and Its Heroes* (Cincinnati, 1881), 425; *Northern Standard* (Clarksville), June 24, 1848; Lyon G. Tyler (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Virginia Biography* (5 vols.; New York, 1915), II, 347.

⁴Both America and Elizabeth Coffee were in Warren County, Tennessee. Myra, their sister, married William Edmondson and lived there until her death in 1837. Jesse Coffee, oldest of the children of Ambrose and Mildred, married Ann Hackett, and in 1825 built what is presently known as the Black home at 801 West Main Street, McMinnville, Tennessee. Elisabeth Wheeler Francis and Ethel Sibley Abbott, *Lost Links* (Nashville, 1945), 156; Jean Young Leonard, great-great niece of Holland Coffee's partner Silas Colville, to A.J.M. and G.M., February 5, 1902 (MS. in possession of the writers).

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶Grant Foreman, *Indian Removal* (Norman, 1932), 32.

⁷Strickland, "History of Fannin County, Texas, 1836-1843." *Southeastern Historical Quarterly*, XXXIII, 267-268.

⁸Texas Collection (Stephen F. Austin State College).

⁹Silas Check Colville to Jane Colville Young, July 24, 1837 (MS. in possession of Jean Young Leonard, New York, New York).

¹⁰Porter Estate Papers (Sherman Public Library, Sherman).

¹¹Paris News, June 17, 1921.

¹²Silas Colville to John Steele Young, July 10, 1842 (MS. in possession of Jean Y. Leonard, New York, New York).

¹³Fannin County Deed Records (MS., County Clerk's Office, Bonham), B, 1.

¹⁴Porter Estate Papers (Sherman Public Library, Sherman).

¹⁵Bert J. Griswold, *The Pictorial History of Fort Wayne* (Chicago, 1917), 307.

¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸Texas Collection (Stephen F. Austin State College).

¹⁹Conveyance (General Land Office, Austin).

²⁰Record at Houston County Abstract Office, Crockett.

- ²¹Mattie Davis Lucas and Mita Holsapple Hall, *A History of Grayson County, Texas* (Sherman, 1936), 37.
- ²²*Telegraph and Texas Register* (Houston), July 26, 1838.
- ²³Conveyance (General Land Office, Austin). The title was not cleared until 1842.
- ²⁴Strickland, "History of Fannin County, Texas, 1836-1843," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, XXXIII, 298.
- ²⁵Lena London, "The Initial Homestead Exemption in Texas," *ibid.*, LVII, 131.
- ²⁶H. P. N. Gammel, *The Laws of Texas, 1822-1897* (10 vols.; Austin, 1898), II, 45.
- ²⁷Porter Estate Papers (Sherman Public Library, Sherman).
- ²⁸Genealogical data on Whiteside family supplied by Harriet Reams, McMinnville, Tennessee.
- ²⁹*Dallas Morning News*, July 14, 1929.
- ³⁰Lucas and Hall, *A History of Grayson County, Texas*, 60.
- ³¹Bella F. Swisher (ed.), *The American Sketch Book*, V, 263-264.
- ³²Strickland, "History of Fannin County, Texas, 1836-1843," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, XXXIII, 41.
- ³³Elizabeth Lucas and Christine Wall, "Preston Bend's Paul Revere Was a Lady," *Dallas Morning News*, July 14, 1929.
- ³⁴*Ibid.* A favorite of the local stories concerning Sophia Collee is that during the Civil War she lured a troop of Federal scouts into the cellar, where they soon forgot their rebel-minded hostess. She mounted a mule, swam Red River, and warned Southern troops at Fort Washita in time for them to escape.
- ³⁵Porter Estate Papers (Sherman Public Library, Sherman). While the signature on this note has been torn off, probably in handling, other papers—such as the purchase of Abram, Isaac, and Dicy—indicate that it is a valid agreement by Holland Coffee.
- ³⁶*Journal of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Texas, Regular Session of Third Congress, Nov. 5, 1838* (Houston, 1839), 28.
- ³⁷*Ibid.*, 133.
- ³⁸Lucas and Hall, *A History of Grayson County, Texas*, 58.
- ³⁹Grant Foreman, *Advancing the Frontier* (Norman, 1933), 177.
- ⁴⁰*Ibid.*
- ⁴¹*Ibid.*
- ⁴²*Ibid.*, 158.
- ⁴³*Journal of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Texas, United Session of September 25, 1837* (Houston, 1838), 82.
- ⁴⁴*Northern Standard* (Clarksville), August 20, 1842.
- ⁴⁵Strickland, "History of Fannin County, Texas, 1836-1843," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, XXXIII, 298.
- ⁴⁶John Henry Brown, *Indian Wars and Pioneers of Texas* (Austin, [189-?]), 33.
- ⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 34.
- ⁴⁸Gammel, *Laws of Texas*, I, 1358.
- ⁴⁹*Ibid.*, II, 59.
- ⁵⁰Porter Estate Papers (Sherman Public Library, Sherman).
- ⁵¹*Ibid.*
- ⁵²Foreman, *Advancing the Frontier*, 177.
- ⁵³*Northern Standard* (Clarksville), October 10, 1846.
- ⁵⁴Fannin County Deed Records, MS., County Clerk's Office, Bonham, 31, 173.
- ⁵⁵Letter from Mrs. E. E. McLemore, Dyass Collection (Tennessee State Archives, Nashville).
- ⁵⁶*Northern Standard* (Clarksville), November 28, 1846.

Lost Links, by Elisabeth Wheeler Francis, 1945, various pages.

Page 65

ALABAMA AND TEXAS

Kyle, William Rufus, m.
Coffee, Ellen (1st. hus.), June 30, 1853

Tankersley, James, m.
Kyle, Ellen (Coffee), (2nd. hus.)

Ward, William, m.
Coffee, Roxanna, Jan., 1860

Coffey, Milton Sinkler, m. (1st. wife)
Ragland, Nancy, 1845, Jefferson, Texas (MARION COUNTY)

Coffey, Milton Sinkler, m. (2nd. wife)
Phillips, Elizabeth Cain, 1854

Coffey, Milton Sinkler, m. (3rd. wife)
Coffey, Mary I., Nov. 28, 1860

Page 99

John Church, of McKinney, Texas, and wife, Julia Edmonson Coffee,
had following children:

Church, Marion Somerville, b. March 1, 1884

Church, Thomas Arthur, b. Oct. 28, 1885

Church, Julia Morrow, married P. R. (?) Gilmer, Shreveport, La.

William Rufus Kyle, of Texas, and wife, Ellen Coffee, had follow-
ing children:

Kyle, William Jefferson, b. Nov. 29, 1854

Kyle, Cassie, b. Sept. 2, 1856

Kyle, Rufus Coffee, b. Sept. 1, 1858

David Haley, Knoxville, Tenn., b. 1760 (date computed from record
in Bible of Thomas Jefferson Coffee) and wife, Elizabeth -----?,
had dau.,

Haley, Malinda Graves Williams, b. Nov. 17, 1808, Knoxville,
Tenn.

Page 178

McKINNEY, TEXAS

Seay, Cassie (Kyle), d. April 8, 1882

Kyle, William Rufus, d. March 14, 1859

Ward, William, died 1862 in Battle at Shiloh, Tenn.

Page 178 MISSISSIPPI

Deaths of children of Aaron Coffee and wife, Mary Somerville
Smith:

Coffee, Roxanna, d. Oct. 16, 1862

Coffee, Cassie Kyle, d. Oct. 23, 1888

(MISSISSIPPI)

Page 98

Ambrose Coffee, b. Va., settled in N. C., thence to Tenn., m. (1st. wife) Mildred Moore, in Va. (dau of Jesse Moore, and wife, ----? Johnson, of lower part of Va.) and had following children (not in order of birth):

Coffee, Jesse

Coffee, George Washington

Coffee, Thomas Jefferson, b. Feb. 16, 1805, Burke Co., N. C.

Coffee, Holland (1st.), m. Sophia ----?; settled in Texas

Coffee, Hiram

Coffee, Alice, born in Burke Co., N. C.

Coffee, America, b. Burke Co., N. C., m. a Mr. Lusk; they had dau., who m. ----? Giddings

Coffee, Mildred, b. Burke Co., N. C.

Ambrose Coffee, and 2nd. wife, ----?, had following children.

-Coffee, Christopher Greenup

-Coffee, Emily

Page 156

PULASKI COUNTY, KENTUCKY

Coffee, Ambrose, d. 1818

Deaths of children of Ambrose Coffee and 1st. wife, Mildred Moore:

Coffee, Col. Holland, d. Oct. 5, 1846, in Texas

Coffee, James Madison, d. June 25, 1833, in Miss.

Coffee, Jesse, d. Feb. 11, 1835, in Tenn.

Coffee, Hiram, d. Jan. 29, 1836, in Miss.

Coffee, George Washington, d. March 17, 1840, in Jackson, Miss.

Edmondson, Myra (Coffee), d. Sept. 3, 1835, in Tenn.

Jewell, Elizabeth (Coffee), d. Jan., 1843, in Tenn.

Coffee, Gen. Thos. Jefferson, d. Nov. 2, 1858, in Texas

Deaths of children of Ambrose Coffee and 2nd. wife, ----?:

Coffee, Col. Christopher Greenup, d. April 29, 1861, in Jackson, Miss. Left dau. who died in childhood.

Coffee, Emily

Page 61

MARRIAGES

Coffee, Thomas Jefferson, m.

Halcy, Malinda G. W., July 17, 1827, Boone Co., Tenn.

Wilson, James Tennison, m.

Coffee, Mary Jane, 1849, Davidson Co., Tenn.

Page 98

Coffee, Thomas Holland, m. (1st. wife) Betty Lobdell, a cousin; m. (2nd. wife) Mrs. William Henry Kerr, nee Julia Gordon Law, of Memphis, Tenn., and by 2nd. wife had two daus., Virginia Coffee and Camille Coffee. Virginia Coffee, m. Paul Tietgens, Gainesville, Fla. Camille Coffee, m. Malcolm F. Ewen, Evanston, Ill.

Page 157

-Coffee, Malinda Graves Williams (Haley), d. Dec. 24, 1857, Oyster Creek, Brazoria Co., Texas

Lost Links, by Elisabeth Wheeler Francis, 1945, various pages.

Page 99

Aaron Coffee, of Texas, and wife, Mary Somerville Smith, had following children:

- Coffee, Roxanna, b. Jan. 17, 1862
- Coffee, Julia Edmondson, b. Dec. 8, 1864
- Coffee, Cassie Kyle, b. Jan. 7, 1878

Page 99

Thomas Jefferson Coffee, of Texas, and wife, Malinda Graves Williams Haley, had following children:

- Coffee, Louisa, b. Jan. 10, 1829
- Coffee, Minerva Lavinia, b. April 2, 1830
- Coffee, Aaron, b. Dec. 17, 1832
- Coffee, Ellen, b. June 17, 1835
- Coffee, Ambrose, b. March 7, 1838
- Coffee, Henry, b. Nov. 24, 1840
- Coffee, Roxanna, b. Oct. 28, 1842

Page 157

Deaths of children of Thos. Jefferson Coffee and wife, Malinda G. W. Haley:

- Coffee, Louisa, d. Jan. 29, 1829
- Lightfoot, Minerva Lavinia (Coffee) (Lobdell), d. 1907
- Coffee, Aaron (no death date)
- Tankersley, Ellen (Coffee), d. April 5, 1866
- Coffee, Ambrose, d. Aug. 2, 1859
- Coffee, Henry, d. Nov. 9, 1857
- Ward, Roxanna (Coffee), d. Aug. 22, 1860

Page 98

George Washington Coffee and wife, Mary Catherine Isler (dau. of Peter Isler, and wife, Mary Dromgoole, of Natchez, Miss.), had following children:

- Coffee, Camilla, m. Prof. Rohrer; no issue
- Coffee, Eugenia, b. Dec. 15, 1854, Jackson, Miss., m. Alexander Goodridge, Norfolk, Va. They had dau., Sarah Goodridge, who m. Ernest E. McLemore, Columbia, Tenn.

Page 159

Goodridge, Eugenia (Coffee), d. Nov. 13, 1901, in Miss. (wife of Alexander Goodridge, of Norfolk, Va.)

Edmondson, James, d. Oct. 17, 1872, in Texas

Page 157

Deaths of children of David Haley and wife, Elizabeth ----?:

- Haley, Elijah, d. April 1, 1810
- Haley, William B., d. 1825
- Haley, Burrus, d. Sept., 1843
- Haley, David W., d. Oct. 9, 1857
- Haley, Sarah, d. Sept. 22, 1837
- Coffee, Malinda G. W. (Haley), d. Dec. 24, 1857

Austin Colony Pioneers, Washington County (TX), by Worth S. Ray, published by author, Austin, TX, 1949, pages 28-29.

First Settlers of Brenham

Prominent among the first settlers of the town of Brenham were the Lusks, who came out from Tennessee, with Major Sam Lusk as the head of the family. His son Patrick H. Lusk joined the Somerville Expedition, was captured with other prisoners, luckily drew one of the white beans, and through the intervention of his father's old friend ANDREW JACKSON effected his ultimate release and his return to Brenham. Pat Lusk is buried in the old Masonic Cemetery about a mile from the business part of town, with his father Major Sam Lusk and other members of the family.

By the Spring of the year 1844 the town of Brenham began to take on signs of real life when the second building in the town, a handsome home for that period, was erected by one of the town Commissioners, Asa K. Lewis' Mrs. Robert A. Hasskarl, the town's real historian (1933) declares that Mr. Lewis's home was equipped with glass windows, something new at the time, and which no other home could then boast.

Other important personages who made Brenham their home were the two enterprising Giddings brothers, J. D. and Hon. D. C.; the latter, Dewit Clinton Giddings, who afterwards was elected to Congress from the Washington District and served with distinction and honor. D. C. Giddings was himself a great personality, like his brother, J. D., and the two worked together during the remainder of their lives to bring Brenham to the front. D. C. Giddings further solidified himself with the people of Brenham, who were older in point of residence by his marriage to MALINDA, the fair daughter of Major Sam Lusk and his wife America Coffey. Their stately mansion on the outskirts of Brenham, reflected the social life of the community, and there Malinda (Lusk) Giddings reigned like a queen, to the day of her demise on June 19, 1869. Malinda Lusk and her sisters, Kyra and Beersheba, according to Mrs. Pennington, the delightful chronicler of those far flung days, were the belles of the fast growing town and no social assemblage was considered complete either in Brenham, Washington or Independence, without their presence. As the firm of GIDDINGS & GIDDINGS, Bankers, and business men, the two brothers stood at the forefront in the building of Brenham. The steam whistle of the "J. D. GIDDINGS" in a few years woke up the people of Brenham to the fact that the "iron horse" had arrived on the scene and the town was no longer isolated from the rest of the world.

Austin Colony Pioneers, Washington County (TX), by Worth S. Ray,
published by author, Austin, TX, 1949, Page 82.

HON. WILLIAM LUSK, venerable Legislator, Mayor, and citizen of Erath, is a grandson of **AMERICA COFFEY**, the wife of the early Austin Colonist and pioneer, Col. Sam Lusk, and several years ago gave the writer a copy of the following letter, dealing with the history of the Coffey family, written by **RICE COFFEY**, of Shelbyville, Tennessee, to a Jefferson Coffey, brother of America (Coffey) Lusk:

"I remember to have seen my paternal grandfather. His name was **JOHN COFFEY**. He was raised in one of the lower counties of Va. and died in Albemarle. My grandmother's maiden name was **JANE GRAVES**, and my father's name was **JAMES COFFEY**. He also was raised in the lower part of Virginia & from thence removed to **ESSEX** co. and from there to Albemarle, where your father, **AMERSON COFFEY** was born in the year 1862. From this county my father removed to **AMHERST** County and here his children grew up to manhood. My mother's maiden name was **Elizabeth CLEVELAND**. My maternal gr. father was **ALEXANDER CLEVELAND**. My father was born in 1729 and died in 1786, and his children were nine sons and two daughters. My brothers were **JOHN, ARCHIBALD, JAMES, REUBEN, AMERSON, ELI, JOEL AND LEWIS**. They are all dead save Eli and Lewis, the first of whom resides in Missouri and the other in Kentucky. I became acquainted with your maternal gr. father, **JESSE MOORE** about the end of the revolutionary war. He then lived in Burke County, N. C. where you were born. He was born in Va. and many of his descendants live in Kentucky. I am still living at the old home place where you last saw me, but cannot expect in the course of nature to remain much longer. I am now in my 80th year. May God bless you. **RICE COFFEY**."

Page 247

JAMES A. WILKINS assisted **E. D. LITTLE** in the taking of the first United States Census of Washington County, in 1850. He married Miss **Bersheba Lusk**, one of the daughters of **MAJ. SAM LUSK** and his wife **AMERICA COFFEY**. After the death of **JAMES WILKINS** his widow married second, **DR. HENRY LEE GRAVES**, who had been President of **BAYLOR UNIVERSITY**, who at that time had retired and had accumulated nothing much in the way of this world's goods, while his wife **BERSHEBA WILKINS** was a very wealthy woman.

JEFFERSON COFFEY to whom the letter was written was brother to **AMERICA COFFEY** wife of **SAM LUSK**. **RICE COFFEY**, the writer of the letter was brother of **AMERSON COFFEY**, who was the father of **AMERICA (COFFEY) LUSK**.

HOLLAND COFFEE

HOLLAND COFFEE was an old Indian fighter, and lived at his trading post on Red River County, but when an army officer left a lone widow, **Sophia Suttentfield**, in Washington County, he rode all the way down from North Texas to make her his wife. This was on January 29, 1839. **Holland Coffee** was a relative of the **Lusk** family, as the wife of Col. **Sam Lusk** was **America Coffee**. "**Coffee's Trading Post**" was on Red River in what is now Red River County and its site, I am told, has now been inundated by the modern Red River dam. **Holland Coffee** was a brother of **Gen. John Coffee**, who lived in Williamson County, Texas, near Georgetown, and **Holland** was on the Indian Campaign in which the celebrated **JOHN B. DENTON** was killed, but happened not to be present at that particular time. Aunt "**Sophia**" **Coffee** outlived her husband, who was killed and was buried at the trading post on Red River.

NOTE: The name **COFFEY** or **COFFEY** was spelled both ways on the old records in both Tennessee and Texas, and having spent some time in a study of this family, the writer is of the opinion that they were the same clan.

Page 220

SUTTONFIELD FAMILY

It is not likely there was a **SUTTONFIELD FAMILY** in Washington Co., Texas, as the only one of which there is a record is **SOPHIA SUTTONFIELD**, the young widow, who was married to the celebrated **HOLLAND COFFEY**, who came all the way from Red River down there to marry her. She and her second husband **HOLLAND COFFEY** ran a trading post of Red River for a long time thereafter, and she was known all over that part of Texas, as "**Aunt Sophia**". Her husband was a relative of **MAJ. SAM LUSK**, who had married **AMERICA COFFEY** in Tennessee before coming to Texas and Washington County.

From: South Carolina Pension Abstracts of the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, and Indian Wars, Vol. V.; by Annie Walker Burns, pub. date unknown, Xeroxed 1972, Okla. Hist. Soc. Library.
Page 87 ---

SOUTH CAROLINA AND VIRGINIA SERVICE OF DAVID HALEY R 4451 -- and moved freight to the country and settled 12 miles out of the settlement at the mouth of Richland Creek where I lived 20 years. In 1785 I removed to Richland Creek, the two years before I lived up in the settlements. Pretty soon after I moved to Richland Creek the people began to settle in. In 1786 or 1787 I was elected Captain by the people and was commissioned by the Government of North Carolina. After I had been there about 2 1/2 years the Cherokee Indians broke out war against us and we had to fort nearly 3 years until the Territorial government took place. I petitioned the Government of North Carolina and got my men all under pay. There those that had horses under Horse man pay and those that had none under foot pay. About this time General Joseph Martin of Virginia came out and raised a company of 450 horse men. I went with my company with him and we had a hard fight with the Indians at the end of Lookout Mountain where several valuable men were killed. In the battle Capt. Buller and Capt. Hardin were killed. After this myself and 43 men went into the nation at the Hanging Maws Village and killed 12 fellows one morning before breakfast.

SIGNED DAVID HALEY to
David W. Haley

A letter from D.W. Haley, from Madison Co., Mississippi 1854, April 10, mentions his father married to my mother Elizabeth Graves? of Va. 12-15-1783, that he died 20 Sept. 1839 in Roane County, Tennessee, and he was born Oct. 5, 1760. My mother was born May 7, 1767 and died March 16, 1815. I am now living in Tusculumbia, Ala. & brothers Robert K. Haley, or was alive some months since. I have a sister living in Tex., Malinda G. Coffee, wife of Gen. Thomas J. Coffee. This bro & sis are all the surviving children of my father David Haley and my mother Elizabeth Haley.

Copied by--- Gene Brewington
4728 NW 59 Terr.
Oklahoma City, OK
73122-7512

Tel. # (405) 721-1141

Well Preserved Coffee Home Over 100 Years Old

By RUMELLE BAKER
SUN Reporting Staff

Sam Houston is said to have spent the night en route to Belton, in Georgetown, where a messenger brought him Lincoln's offer of aid if Houston would hold Texas in the Union. He stayed in the home of Colonel J. T. Coffee. This statement, under a picture of the Coffee home, is found in the book "Sam Houston's Texas", by Sue Flanagan.

Mrs. Jim Coffee said Colonel Coffee, a colonel in the Confederate Army, was a good friend of Sam Houston, and it was not at all unusual for him to visit.

Mrs. Coffee, Col. Coffee's daughter-in-law, still lives in the Coffee home in Georgetown, on James Street, at the base of the water tower in the east part of town. Mrs. Coffee graciously entertained a Sun reporter last week with a tour of her home showing the beautiful old furnishings which are still standing with dignity and charm.

The house was built of hard pine and cedar. The walls, floors and doors remain of the original construction. The four remaining fire places are in excellent operation, built of large pieces of solid rock with the inside concrete plastered. The fireplace mantle in the parlor is the place of honor for Colonel Coffee's Civil War sword and pistol. Both these weapons are perfectly preserved and battle worthy.

The Coffees had three daughters and two sons, whose descendants still live in the Georgetown area. Tomye Coffee married W. F. Magee; their son, W. T. Magee lives in Houston, and daughter Mrs. Gordon (Lois) Nave and granddaughter Mrs. Jackie Kregler both live in Georgetown. Josephine Coffee married J. F. Yearwood. Their children are Miss Eunice Yearwood, Frank Yearwood, Jr., Robert F. Yearwood, Mrs. Florence Wray, Miss Ruth Yearwood, and Mrs. Donald Irvin, Sr. all of Georgetown. Florence Coffee married Tom Hanna;

they had no children. The children of John T. Coffee, Jr. are all deceased. The younger son Jim's wife, Mrs. Beatrice Coffee, a retired teacher, now lives in the family home. Their son, Francis, lives in Austin and comes to Georgetown every Saturday to help his mother with chores and errands. Mrs. Coffee keeps her daughter's room ready for her frequent visits. Miss Eunice Coffee lives in Temple where she works in medical research.

Other Coffee grandchildren known in our community are Dewey Bradford, Mrs. Carlton Card, Mrs. Gladys Whitcomb, Mrs. Lenora Wright, Frank Coffee, Mrs. Edna Cook, Harry Coffee, Rex Coffee, and Guy Coffee.

When the three Coffee daughters reached the "courtin'" age, Colonel Coffee built the two front rooms on to the front of the house. These were parlors for the daughters to entertain their beaux.

On the walls of all the rooms hang beautiful paintings done by Tomye Coffee Magee, who was the family artist. Much of the elegant solid walnut furniture remains in the house -- a pink marble topped table, white marble topped dressers, chests with dovetailed construction, tall heavy walnut beds, and a wash stand complete with the original bowl and pitcher -- just to mention a few. The dressers all have little lamp shelves on each side of the mirror. The piano, an upright model of solid walnut with ebony finish, is over one hundred years old. It is beautifully preserved -- the ivories sparkle, the red cloth behind the carved cutwork on the front is still bright, and the deep, rich tone is the answer to a pianist's prayer. In the kitchen, with all of Mrs. Coffee's modern conveniences, is the old family safe. It is not the combination lock money safe, as we think of safes today. This safe has several shelves in the upper cabinet part, which are screen doored, several drawers, and solid door compartments at the bot-

tom. The screen doors kept the insects from the prepared food kept there from one meal to the next, before the days of refrigeration.

In the back yard, Mrs. Coffee explained that "Mother Coffee" had slave quarters there, and that she was very good to her slaves, providing them with adequate homes and food and treating them with kindness. Some of the old buildings still stand. The rock and concrete cistern, where the rain water was stored, is closed and boarded up, but furnishes a good place for Mrs. Coffee to set her flowers. The cedar post and plank fence remains to enclose the back yard, part of which is covered with concord grape vines and rose bushes. Mrs. Coffee said one rose, the Pink Kilarney, still blooms, and is the same bush that furnished her wedding bouquet.

Mrs. Coffee is glad the huge old mesquite tree in the side yard did not die as a result of being water-logged this past year, splitting in half. This tree looks as though it was made for climbing and swinging, and could tell many a tale of good times of the Coffee children and grandchildren.

See Don Ruth Merritt's
comments on this
material.

Comments of Don Ruth Merritt, Dallas, Texas. She was one of the finest Coffee/ey researchers I have ever been associated with. (Gene Brewington).

This choice bit is a good example of a "Grandma said." The lady is the surviving (or may be she died recently - I haven't heard) widow of Col. John T.'s youngest son - she plain doesn't know her dates! Maybe Col. John T. & Sam Houston were friends but Col. Coffee did not live in Texas until after the Civil War. "Had 3 daugh & 2 sons" - that was the last marriage. Others in marriage 2 & 3. And "Mother Coffee" did not own slaves - there were no slaves by the time she was Mrs. Coffee. I think maybe this house was hers anyhow, tho before she m. Coffee, when she was Mrs. Vontrees - not sure, tho.

This choice bit is a good example of a "Grandma Said". The lady is the surviving (or may be she's died recently -- I haven't heard) widow of Col. John T.'s youngest son. She plain doesn't know her dates: Maybe Col. John T. & Sam Houston were friends but Col Coffee did not live in Texas until after the Civil war. "Had three daughs & 2 sons" --- that was the last marriage. Others in marriages 2 & 3. And, "Mother Coffee" did not slaves -- there was no slaves by the time she was Mrs. Coffee. I think maybe this house was hers anyhow, tho before she m. Coffee, when she was Mrs. Vontrees -- not sure tho.

OWN

TOLBERT'S TEXAS

Coffee's Killer Congratulated

By FRANK X. TOLBERT

TWO REAL ESTATE developers have a petition before the state board of morticians to move off their Grayson County property the body of an ornery old Indian trader and Republic of Texas congressman, Col. Holland Coffee. The Coffee remains, removed once before when Lake Texoma was inundated, are now in an ancient brick mausoleum near the Preston Point shore of the big lake.

The disagreeable Colonel Coffee was shot to death in 1846 while having a difficulty with one Charles A. Galloway. And Mr. Galloway was congratulated for this by a Clarksville, Texas, newspaper. The Standard: "Galloway was acquitted by public sentiment . . . it was so clearly a case of self defense in the last extremity that the grand jury could not find a bill."

★
COFFEE WAS ONE of the first settlers of the country around Sherman. He was there by 1833, and probably some years earlier. He was said to speak seven Indian dialects, and to have a pacifying influence on the Kiowas, Comanches, and other big and ugly-acting Indians of the Red River Valley.

Certainly he was the master of ceremonies at a number of pow wows between the settlers and the redmen. And his widow claimed, probably erroneously, that he arranged a treaty meeting at Pike's Peak in Colorado. Coffee was popular enough in 1829 to get himself elected to the Texas congress. And the legislation he sponsored was very favorable to the Indian traders' lobby.

The colonel acquired a lot of land and slaves. But there was a nasty rumor that his real business was exchanging whiskey and guns to the Indians for livestock.

★
IN 1839, COFFEE became the second husband of Sophia Intontfield Aughinbaugh, one of the Republic of Texas' most colorful women. Sophia was lady of great beauty, zest, and imagination. Graham Landrum, in his admirably researched Illustrated History of Grayson County, says that Sophia was probably a prostitute while she was following the Republic of Texas Army in 1836.

Grayson County gossip, perhaps untrue, was that Coffee and Galloway were quarreling over Sophia when the husband was shot.

Sophia's spouses did have tough luck, though.

★
HER THIRD hubby, Maj. George N. Butt, went to Sherman in 1863 to sell his cotton, and was ambushed and slain on his way home with the money. Her fourth and final husband, Judge James Porter, died in 1882 of disabilities going back to his service as a Confederate soldier. Sophia, who lived in one of the grandest mansions on the Red River, Glen Eden, built the mausoleum for Colonel Coffee while her other husbands found more humble burial places.

Now, that mausoleum and its contents have to go to make room for a sleek, modern housing development for the big lake.

COLONEL COFFEE

Pioneer Reburied Beside His Wife

By FRANK X. TOLBERT
News Staff Writer

POTTSDORO, Grayson Co., Texas—After 114 years, the bones of Col. Holland Coffee, one of the first Indian traders on the upper Red River, found a resting place Wednesday beside the grave of his glamorous wife, Sophia. While a high chill wind made spooky noises through the trees on Lake Texoma's beautiful Preston Point, the remains of Col. Coffee were removed from a brick mausoleum near the lake shore and reburied about a half mile away in the Preston Bend Cemetery.

Col. Coffee and his 5-times married spouse, Sophia, had their differences in life. In death they are still separated by a rusting iron fence. Inside the fence are tall stone markers to Sophia and her last husband, Judge James Porter, with this carved on the judge's memorial: "He Always Made Home Happy."

Holland Coffee was one of the great men of the Republic of Texas. Wednesday he was just a few bones to be removed from the path of a real estate development on the great lake, the development called Glen Eden Estates.

Glen Eden was the name of Col. Coffee's mansion, the showplace of Grayson County. It was built in 1845, and was still in good shape in 1942 when the old Coffee plantation was included in land condemned for the Red River dam which created Lake Texoma. Glen Eden was dismantled, its bones and boards numbered so it could be re-assembled. Only this re-assembling project was forgotten after some workmen used part of the ancient timbers for firewood on a cold day.

Real estate developers E. B. Chapman of Sherman and George DeArmond of Denison got an order from the state board of morticians which enabled them to move Coffee's grave. The colonel was killed in 1846 in a gun duel with a fellow named Charles A. Galloway. The beautiful Sophia was something of a flirt. And the old story is that the fight was over Mrs. Coffee. Holland Coffee

was one of the Red River Valley's leading citizens and he had been a Republic of Texas congressman. Still, the verdict of the grand jury on the killing of Coffee was that Galloway acted only in self defense.

There's a thick, almost 29-foot-high growth of crape myrtle in and around Sophia's grave plot. In Wednesday's powerful winds, these crape myrtle limbs would rub together and make a screeching noise, somewhat like the soprano cry of a woman. Col. Coffee was a big man, judging by his leg bones. At his re-burial Wednesday, though, what was left of him was put in a small square pine box and laid to rest just outside of the iron fence. A bronze marker will be placed on the grave later.

His wife, who is said to have spoken to Coffee that "I would rather be married to a dead hero than a live coward" before his gun fight with Galloway, has only "Sophia, wife of James Porter, born Fort Wayne, Indiana, Dec. 3, 1813, died August 27, 1877, Pioneer of Texas since 1833" on her gravestone. No mention of her four other husbands.

Before the Civil War, she is said to have entertained such personages as U. S. Grant, Robert E. Lee, Albert Sidney Johnston, Sam Houston, and numerous Indian chiefs, at Glen Eden.

Lure and Lore of Limestone County, AL, Chris Edwards and Faye Axiord, 1978. Copy at Fort Wayne, IN, 1987. Pages 162 - 163.

SAMUEL EASTER (ca. 1845)

Mary Louise (Easter) Coffee read the letter again. It bore the signature of General Joseph Wheeler and was dated Mar. 4, 1903. The letter stated:

"I cannot express in words the grief felt by my family and my self to see the notice in today's paper of Col. Coffee's death. He was a brave and good soldier and a fine good man. We all loved him and his death is a loss to Alabama which cannot be replaced. My daughters and myself extend to you our deepest sympathy."

Mary Louise thought back to that hot July day in 1863 when she had first seen both Gen. Wheeler and Col. Coffee clad in their gray uniforms and mounted on excellent horses. They passed by the Samuel Easter house on their way north, having crossed the Tennessee River at Lock A after checking an enemy advance south of the river. Mary Louise had smiled and waved at them as only a pretty, seven-year-old girl can do. She may have reminded Joshua Coffee of sweetheart roses on that day, as she did others in her later life, for she was the personification of that fragile beauty which one wishes to protect against the realities of a prosaic world.

After the war Joshua Coffee resumed his duties as a planter in Lauderdale County, and relished the pleasure of looking after his wife and child. His wife died, however, about 1875; and Joshua's thoughts returned to the little girl who had waved at him in front of the Samuel Easter house. He returned to the house and found that the little girl was a lovely and mature young lady. They were married on Oct. 9, 1877, and had:

- I. Telecly, "Lecie," (1879-1949) md. John Blackwood Tanner (see *Tanner-Sherrill House*).
- II. Sadie (Aug. 18, 1881-Dec. 1, 1903) md. a Wells, n/c.
- III. Richard Easter md. Mary Sue Graves and had (1) Louise md. Charles Morris of Decatur and had Mary Louise, Charles, Joe, and Barbara. (2) Helen md. Ira Jones and had Jack, Mary Kate, Kay and Fay (twins), and another daughter. They live in Columbia, S. C. (3) Richard Easter Jr. md. first Betty Beck of Union City, Tenn., and had Mary Linda. He then md. Nora Virginia Strength of Marshall, Texas, and had Richard Easter III and John Peyton.
- IV. Mary (Oct. 14, 1885-1976) md. Dr. Archie Lawson of Greensboro, Ala. and had: (1) Mary Archer md. William Baxter Booth and had (A) William Baxter, Jr. md. Mary Catherine Rolfe and had Mary Catherine and Beebe Rolfe, (B) Mary Elizabeth md. Cleo Ellison Medders and had Molly and William Bryant, (C) Archie Lawson md. June Alfrey and had Gary Todd and Cindy Lee, (D) Richard Warren, and (E) Debra Jane. (2) Sadie Coffee md. Augustus F. Tuck of Nashville, Tenn., and had Augustus, Jr. and Edward Lawson.

This house was built by Samuel Walker Easter (June 25, 1825-Aug. 12, 1889) soon after his marriage to Telecly Coffman (Feb. 20, 1830-Mar. 27, 1858) on Aug. 28, 1845. Their first child, Marcum (Dec. 1, 1848-June 22, 1926) inherited the house and lived here with his wife, Lydia



(Kennemer) Easter, after their marriage on Dec. 23, 1869. Lydia left this house on June 4, 1888, to visit her friend Sallie (Nixon) Batts (see *Nixon-Batts House*). As she was going down the hill past the Poplar Creek Church Lydia met a fellow traveler going in the opposite direction. Her horse shied and the buggy in which she rode turned over, killing her instantly. Marcum later married Emily (Gilbert) Easter (see *Fletcher Easter House*).

Another son of Samuel and Telecly was Fletcher (Nov. 20, 1857-June 25, 1920).

After the death of Telecly Coffman, Samuel married Mary P. Friend, n/c.

The house is now owned by William Smith.

Joshua Coffee was a grandson of Joshua Coffee who came with his brother Peter from Ireland about 1749, and settled in Prince Edward County, Va. Joshua and Peter Coffee each had a son named John who attained the rank of general. Peter's son John lived in Georgia and Coffee County in that state was named for him. Joshua's son John was the able and faithful friend and fellow soldier of General Andrew Jackson. He settled in Lauderdale County, Ala., helped to found the city of Florence, and lived on his plantation "Hickory Hill" nearby. Thomas Graves Coffee, elder brother of John and father of the younger Joshua Coffee, also settled in Lauderdale County.

**THREE COFFEES FROM TEXAS
INDEX**

All proper names are shown in this index. They are listed exactly as shown in the documents. No attempt has been made to correct any spelling, or to correlate different spellings. When searching for a particular name, be CERTAIN that all possible spellings are searched. Especially between "Coffee" and "Coffey". These are used almost inter-changeably, so check both. The spelling of other names is similar. Any name shown may appear more than once on the listed page.

Alexandria, LA	39	Blunt,	
Alexandria, TN	25	James, Gen.	32
Alfrey,		Bois D'Arc Creek, Texas ...	45
June	67	Bolivar, MO	26, 42
Alpine, Texas	18	Bonham, Texas	55
<u>American Standard</u>	27	Boonville, MO	35
Andre,		Boot Hill Cemetery	10
Peter.....	50	Booth,	
Arkadelphia, AR	35	Archie Lawson.....	67
Arnold,		Cindy Lee	67
Dan, death of	3, 10	Debra Jane	67
Ashburn,		Gary Todd	67
Sam	20	Mary Elizabeth	67
Atchinson,		Richard Warren	67
David Rice	27	William Baxter	67
Aughinbaugh,		William Baxter, Jr.	67
J.A., and Co.	48	<u>Born of the Sun</u>	7
Jesse	49, 50, 54	Boston Mountains, AR	29
Jesse Augustine	48	Bountiful, Utah	24
Aughinbaugh,		Bower's Mill	35
Sophia	48, 49, 50, 66	Bowie,	
Austin, Texas	39	James	46, 47, 53
Austin's colony	56	Bradford,	
Baker,		Dewey	64
James S.	47	Lum	43
Weaver H., Judge	18	Bradley County, TN	43
William R.	47	Brawner,	
Ballinger, Texas ..	3, 11, 20, 22	Milton, Capt.	32
Barrs,		Brazoria County, Texas .	56, 59
Sally Nixon	67	Brazoria, Texas	45
Barstow,		Brazos River	53
William, Col.	30	Brenham, Texas	61
Barton County, MO	30	Brown,	
B		Burl, death of	10
Beck,		Brown County, Texas	12, 24
Betty	67	Brown,	
Beddo,		E.B., Gen.	29, 32, 35
Bob	3	John Henry	54, 57
W.A.	3	Mary	18
Beddoe brothers	24	Brownlee,	
Beddoe,		Richard S.	41
Elizabeth Coffee	23, 24	Brownsville, Texas	39
Joseph Warren	23	Brownwood, Texas ..	6, 7, 12, 17
Bedford County, VA	43	Brownwood, Texas	21
Ben Ficklen, Texas	17	Buckingham County, VA	43
Bentonville, AR	35	Buller,	
Berry,		Capt., death of	63
Noah	20	Buncombe County, NC	56
Bingham,		Bunyan,	
George Caleb	3	Paul	20
Ted, Mrs.	11	Burke County, NC	59, 62
Bluffton, Texas	10		

Butler,		Coffee,	
Pierce	53	Clominda Jane	24
Butt,		Col.	25,29,32,34,37,53
George M., Maj.	66	Col. J.T.	64
Canan,		D.	23
Howard V.	41	David	43,44
Cane Hill,		Delia	23
Battle of	34	Deliliah	24
Cannon County, TN	44	drunkenness	33
Caplinger water mill	35	Edward	45
Card,		Elizabeth	23,50
Carlton, Mrs.	64	Ella Josephine	43
Carthage Female Academy ...	27	Ellen	58,60
Cason,		Emily	59
Basil	47	Eugenia	55,60
Castel,		Eugenia Elizabeth	55
Albert	41	Eunice	64
Catherwood,		Coffee Family History	40
Edwin C., Col.	34	<u>Coffee Family, The</u>	24
Cave Hotel	32	Coffee,	
Cedar County, MO . 27,28,30,35		Florence	43,64
Chapman,		Fogg	10
E.B.	66	Fogg, Mrs.	24
Chatooga County, GA	23	Francis	64
Cheyenne, Wyoming	43	Frank	64
Chihuahua Trail	50	Franklin Brown	38
Chisum,		George Washington ..	55,59,
John	3	60	
Choctaw Bayou	51	Guy	64
Chugwater, Wyoming	43	Helen	67
Church,		Henry	60
John	58	Henry Buffington	43
Julia Morrow	58	Hiram	59
Marion Summerville	58	Holland ...	45,46,47,48,49,
Thomas Arthur	58	50,51,52,54,55,56,57,59,	
Clarksville, Texas	66	57,62,66	
Cleveland,		Coffee Home	64
Alexander	56,62	Coffee,	
Ben, Colonel	56	J.	23
Benjamin	56	James	24,43
Elizabeth	56,62	James Earnest	44
"Mad" John	56	James Madison	59
Mary "Polly"	56	Jane	23
Cleveland, TN	25,43	Jesse	44,56,59
Clinton, MO	32	Jim, Mrs.	64
Cockrell,		Jinny Trousdale	25
Vard	29,31	John	10,23,24,56,67
Coffee,		John, Gen.	42,44,62
Aaron	58,60	John Peyton	67
Alice	59	John T.	39,40,42,43
Ambrose	45,50,56,59,60	John T., Jr.	64
America	56,59	John T., picture	26
Ann	45	John T. surrender of ...	39
Arthur B.	43	John Trousdale ..	25,28,42,
Beatrice	64	43	
Bell	24	John Trousdale, Jr.	43
Benjamin Franklin	44	Joshua	67
C.F., Mrs.	40	Joshua M.	40,43,44
Camilla	60	Joshua, Rev.	25
Capt.	54	Julia Edmondson	58,60
Cassie Kyle	60	Lawrence	24
Catherine	26,43	Lois	64
Charles Franklin	41,43	Louisa	60
Christopher Greenup .	45,59	Louise	67
		Lucinda M.	44

Coffee		Coffey and Colville	46
Lula	43	Coffey,	
Malinda G.W.	60	Archelaus	62
Malinda J.	63	Aunt Sallie	3,12
Marietta	43	Belle	3
Martha	56	Bill	3,7,17
Mary	67	Charles R.	11
Mary Jane	44,59	Charlie	18,19
Mary Linda	67	Chuck	11
Mary Louise	67	Coffey Crossing	7
Mary Somerville	58	Coffey,	
Mildred	45,59	Eli	62
Minerva Lavinia	60	Fog	18
Mother	64	Fogg	7,17,20,21,22
Mr.	47	Fogg, Mrs.	16
Mrs.	10	Helen	7
Myra	56	James	62
Nancy	44	Jefferson	62
Peter	44,67	Jesse	18
Pleasant B.	43	Joel	62
Rector Cope	43	John	3,4,18,19,62
Representative	52	John B.	11
Rex	64	John Van	19
Rich	1,10,24	John Wright	2,7,12,18
Richard	2,24	Lester	19
Richard Easter	67	Lewis	62
Richard Easter III	67	M.M.	16
Richard Easter, Jr.	67	Mary Haley	16
Richardson	23	Mary I.	58
Roxanna	58,59,60	Milton Sinkler	58
Sadie	67	Mrs.	3
Samuel Buffington	43	Penny	16
Sarah		Penola	7
24		Coffey Ranch	14
Coffee Settlement	24	Coffey,	
Sophia	49,50,51,52,54,55,57,59	Reuben	62
Teley "Lecie"	67	Rice	62
Thomas Graves	67	Rich	2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,11,12,14,16,17,18,21
Thomas Holland	59	Rich, Mrs.	16
Thomas J.	52,63	Richard	14,16
Thomas Jefferson	56,58,59,60	Sallie	16
Thomas S.	44	Sallie Greathouse	18
Thursa M.	23	Sallie, Mrs.	8
Tommye	43	Sam	18
Tomye	64	Uncle Rich	3,7,14,15
Trader	53	W.A.	16
Uncle Rich	2,10	W.A., Mrs.	16
Virginia	59	Walter	18
William	24,43,44	Coffie,	
William B.	23	Aunt Sophie	62
William F.	43	Coffman,	
Wm.	23	Teley	67
Coffee's Bend	51	Coggins and Parks	21
Coffee's regiment	37	Coggins Ranchers	3
Coffee's Station	45,51	Coker,	
Coffee's Trading House	46,53,54	Frank	11
Coffee's Trading Post	62	Cole Camp, MO	35,36
Coffey,		Coleman County, Texas	2,3,4,12,17,24
Adah	16	Coleman, Texas	6,13,17
Ambrose	44,62	Colorado River	3,7,11,15
America	62	Columbia, TN	60
		Colville	51

Colville,		Easter,	
Silas	45,47,52,54,56	Emily	67
Silas Cheek	56	Fletcher	67
Comanche Peak	53	Lydia	67
Concho County, Texas ..	2,3,6,	Marcum	67
12,17,18		Mary Louise	67
<u>Concho Herald, The</u>	24	Samuel	67
Concho River .	3,5,7,10,14,15,	Samuel Walker	67
17,20		Edmondson,	
Cook,		James	60
Edna, Mrs.	64	Myra Coffee	59
Cooke,		William	56
William G.	50	Edwards,	
Copeland,		John N.	36
Levi, Lt.	32	El Paso, Texas	17
Corinth, Mississippi	29	Ellsberry,	
Cotton County, OK	46	Elizabeth P.	40
Cowskin Prarie, MO	29	Elm Creek	10,12
Crane County, Texas	4,12	Evanston, IL	59
Cravens,		Everton, MO	36
B.H.	28	Ewen,	
Crooked Prarie	35	Malcolm P.	59
Cross Hollow,		Ewing, Thomas, Jr., Gen. ..	35
Battle of	34	Fair Play, MO	35
Culp,		Fairbanks,	
John H.	7	Jonathan	40
Currie,		Fannin County, Texas ..	45,47,
Buck	17	49,50,53,56	
Curtis,		Fannin,	
Gen.	33	James Walker	45
Samuel R., Gen.	29	Ferguson,	
George A., Gen.	39	Deliliah	24
<u>Dade County Advocate</u> ..	25,40,	First Kansas Battery	32
42		First U.S. Army Cavalry ...	27
Dade County, MO .	27,28,35,39,	Flanagan,	
42,43,44		Louise	11
Dadeville, MO	35	Flat Top Ranch	3
Dagley's Landing	53	Florence, AL	67
Dalrymple,		Florence, MO	35
William C.	5	Foreman,	
Davis,		Grant	56
Jefferson	37	Forsyth, MO	30
DeArmond,		Fort Concho, Texas	5,14
George	66	Fort Leavenworth, KS ...	27,42
Decatur County, GA	8	Fort Scott, KS	30,32
Denison, Texas	45,54	Fort Smith, AR	46,49
Denton,		Fort Towson	51
John B., death of	62	Fort Warren, Texas	53
Diamond Grove, MO	34	Fort Washita	54
Doolin,		Fort Wayne, IN	48,66
Bill	17	Fort Worth, Texas	17
Dove Creek	5	Foster,	
Drake Constitution	38	Emory S., Major	31
Draper,		Ola	24
Lyman C.	56	Fourche LeFave, AR	38
Dripping Springs, Texas ...	18	Fourth Missouri Militia ...	31
Dromgoole,		Francis,	
Mary	60	Elizabeth Wheeler	56
Dublin, Texas	2	Franklin,	
Dunle,		Jesse	56
John	36	Franks,	
Eagle Pass, Texas	38	Bill	4
		Fredericksburg, Texas	11

Fredericktown, MO	38	Greathouse,	
Fremont, MO	27	Sallie	2
Friend,		Sarah	16,23
Mary P.	67	Greene County, MO	26
Gaines,		Greenfield, MO ..	25,26,27,35,
George Strother	46	36,38,42,43	
Gainesville, FL	59	Greenfield <u>Southwest</u>	28
Galloway,		Grover,	
Alex David	55	George S.	41
C.A.	55	Guest,	
Charles A.	66	Bob	3,10
Charles Ashton	55	Nathaniel	3,7
Chas. A.	55	Hackett,	
George Washington	55	Ann	56
James	54	Haley,	
Virginia Lee	55	Burrus	60
Gann,		David	58,63
Ol	6	David W.	60
Walter	8,17	Elijah	60
Gardner,		Malinda G.W.	59,60
Theodore	32,40	Malinda Graves ...	56,58,60
Georgetown College	39	Mary M.	16
Georgetown, Texas ..	39,42,43,	Robert K.	63
64		Sarah	60
Giddings,		William B.	60
D.C.	61	Hall,	
Dewitt Clinton	61	Mita Holsapple	57
J.D.	61	Mrs.	16
Gilbert		Hall's trading house	46
Emily	67	Halleck,	
Gilmer,		Henry W., Gen.	30
P.R.	58	Hamond,	
Ginger,		Nip	4
Lewis, Col.	5,15	Hanging Maws Village	63
Glen Eden	66	Hanna,	
Gonzales, Texas	50	R.T.	43
Goodnight Cattle Drive	12	Tom	64
Goodnight,		Hardin,	
Charles	4	Capt., death of	63
Goodnight Trail	4	Harper, Texas	11
Goodrich,		Harris,	
James W.	25,40	Mrs.	53,54
Goodridge,		Harrison,	
Alexander	60	Mr.	24
Sarah	60	Hart,	
Gordon,		John	47
Anderson	7	John, Capt.	48
Billy	3	John, death of	47
Gordon,		Martin D.	47
Uncle Billy	10	Hasskarl,	
Graham,		Robert A., Mrs.	61
Johnny, Mrs.	11	Hatch,	
Granbury, Texas	18	JoAnn	23
Grand River	31	Hays,	
Graves,		John Coffee "Jack"	45
Elizabeth	63	Upton	29,31,34
Henry Lee, Dr.	62	Hearst,	
Jane	56,62	Phoebe	17
Mary	56	Hearst Ranch	17
Mary Sue	67	Helena, AR	33
Grayson County, Texas ..	47,51,	Hickory Hill	67
55,66		Hindman,	
Great Missouri Raid	36	Gen.	34,37

Hindman, Thomas C., Gen.	29,33	Kennemer, Lydia	67
Hinds County, Mississippi .	56	Kerr, William Henry, Mrs.	59
Holmes, Theophilus H., Gen.	33	Kerrville, Texas	11
Hood County, Texas	18,53	Kimble County, Texas ...	7,18
Horn, John, death of	53	Knoxville, TN	58
Horn, Mrs.	54	Kreger, Jackie	64
Horse Creek, MO	29,30	Kyle, Cassie	58
Horsehead Crossing	4	Ellen	58
Houston County, Texas	48	Rufus Coffee	58
Houston, Pres., of Texas	45	William Jefferson	58
Houston, Sam	65	William Rufus	58
Houston, Texas	49	Lafayette, LA	11
Howard, Duncan	11	Lancaster, TN	25
John T.	29	Landrum, Graham	66
Hulston, John K.	24,40	Lathum, W.K.	42
Humansville, MO	35	Lauderdale County, AL	67
Hunt, Catherine Grace	26	Law, Julia Gordon	59
Miss	42,43	Lawson, Archie, Dr.	67
Noah	32	Mary Archer	67
Hunter, David, Col.	35	Leaday, Texas	18
Independence County, Texas	45	Lee, Robert E.	66
Independence, MO	31	LeFevre, Hazie Davis	16
Iron Brigade	34,37	Lemmons, Lapoleon, death of	4
Irvine, Donald	64	Lemons, Napolean, death of	10
Isler, Mary Catherine	60	Leonard, Abiel	40
Peter	60	Jean Young	56
Ivey, George	47,51	Lew Ginger Minstrels	14
Jack, Patrick C.	45	Lewis, Asa M.	61
Jackman, S.D.	29	Lexington, MO	29,31,32
Jackman's Brigade	37,38	Lightfoot, Minerva Lavinia	60
Jackson, Andrew	61	Lincoln, Abraham, Pres.	39
Andrew, Gen.	67	Lingo, Pinckney	23
Claiborne Fox	28	Little Devil's River	18
Jackson County, MO	29,31	Little, E.D.	62
Jackson, Mississippi	55	Littlefield, Bob	17
Jefferson City, MO	35	Edgar, Mrs.	16
Jewell, Elizabeth Coffee	59	Livingston, T.R., Maj.	34
Mary Elizabeth	56	Loan, Benjamin F., Gen.	39
Jingle Bob Brand	3	Loan Jack, MO	32
Jones, Fay	67	Lobdell, Betty	59
Ira	67	Minerva Lavinia	60
Jack	67	London, Texas	18
Kay	67		
Mary Kate	67		
Junction City, Texas	7		
Junction, Texas	11		

THREE COFFEES FROM TEXAS

Lone Jack,		McKinney, Texas	58
Battle of	33, 40	McLemore,	
Lone Jack, MO	31, 32, 37	E.E., Mrs.	57
Long Rail Brand	3	Ernest E.	60
Lookout Mountain, TN	63	McMinnville, TN	44, 45, 56
Love County, OK	46	McNeil,	
Loving Cattle Drive	12	John, Gen.	35
Loving,		John, Brig. Gen.	36
Oliver	4	Meadows,	
Lowake, Texas	11	Judith	43
Lucas,		Sytha	43
Elizabeth	57	Medders,	
Mattie Davis	57	Cleo Ellison	67
Lusk,		Molly	67
Barsheba	62	William Bryant	67
Beersheba	61	Meeks,	
Malinda	61	Bob	3, 10
Mr.	59	Henry	3, 10
Myra	61	Melville, MO	35
Patrick H.	61	Memphis, TN	59
Sam, Col.	62	Merritt,	
Sam, Major	61, 62	Don Ruth	56, 65
Samuel	56	Middlebrooks,	
William	62	Audy J.	45
Madison County, Mississippi	63	Glenna	45
Magee,		Midland, Texas	11
Tomye Coffee	64	Millard,	
W.F.	64	Fred	17
W.T.	64	Missouri River	35
Magee,		Missouri State Guard	31, 33
William Francis	43	Mitcherson,	
Malvern Hill	33	Dr.	47
Marlin, Texas	11	Montague,	
Marmaduke,		Daniel	47
John S., Gen.	37	Montevallo, MO	29, 30, 31
Marshal, Texas	67	Montgomery,	
Marshall,		Samuel, Major	31
Battle of	36	Moody,	
Marshall, MO	35, 36, 37	John F.	47
Martin,		Moore,	
Joseph, Gen.	63	Ethel Sively	56
Massey,		Jesse	59, 62
Benjamin F.	28	John C.	40
Maximillian,		Mildred	59
Emperor	39	Moris,	
Maysville, AR	29	Barbara	67
McAfee,		Morris,	
C.B., Capt.	35	Charles	67
McAllister?,		Decatur	67
Mary	43	Joe	67
McAulay,		Mosby's Brigade	17
Bill	7, 17	Mount Vernon, MO	29
McCarthy,		Mukewater Creek	4
Jack	3	Nacogdoches, Texas	48
Mack	10	Natchez, Mississippi	60
McCulloch,		Nave,	
Ben, General	29	Gordon	64
McCulloch County, Texas	2	Neosho, MO	29, 35
McDonald,		New,	
C.J., Mrs.	56	Charles Turner, Dr.	44
McDonald County, MO	34, 36	John Coffee	44
McDowell,		New Orleans, LA	27, 42
Nelson, Judge	35	<u>New York Clipper</u>	5, 14
McKinney,			
Collin	45		

Nixon, Jorge Antonio	48	Randolph, George	34
Norfolk, VA	60	Reams, Harriet	57
Northcutt, John R., Rev.	2	Red River . 45,46,50,51,53,54, 55,62,66	
Noxville, Texas	18	Red River County, Texas ..	45,
Noxville, Texas cemetery ..	18	47,62	
O.H. Triangle Ranch	21	Red River District	47
Organ, Minnie	40	Renfro, Lewis	37
Osage River	31,32	Reynolds, Governor, of MO	37
Osceola, MO	30,31	Reynolds, Thomas C., Gov.	34
Oyster Creek, Texas	59	Rich Coffee, Texas	7
Paint Rock, Texas . 7,8,11,13, 20,22		Richland Creek	63
Parker County, Texas ...	2,10, 12,21,23,24	Richmond, VA	37
Parks Ranchers	3	Rio Colorado	14
Payne, John T.	26	Roane County, TN	63
Pea Ridge, AR	29	Robins, ferry	46
Pearl, Lewis, Rev.	18	Robinson, J.W., Hon.	49
Pecos River	4	James W., Judge	49
Perkins, James	52	Rock Bluff Crossing	50
Phillips, Elizabeth Cain	58	Rock Prarie, MO	36
Picketville, Texas	12	Rogers, John	49
Pierce, Charlie	17	Rohrer, Prof.	60
Pilot Knob, Battle of	38,41	Rolfe, Beebe	67
Pineville, MO	34,36	Mary Catherine	67
Pioneer Minstrels	5	Rose, Jim	17
Polk County, MO . 26,27,28,35, 42		Ross, L.S., Capt.	3
Ponca City, OK	17	Rowlett, Daniel, Dr.	45
Poplar Creek Church	67	Rueg, Henry	46
Porter, James, Judge	66	Runnels County, Texas ..	2,3, 6,12
Pottsboro, Texas	66	Rush, Libbie	18
Powell, Ann	45	Rusk, Thomas J.	56
Bishop	11,12	Sac River	35,36
Douglas	11	Saline County, MO	35
Eskell	11	Saloman, Frederick, Col.	29
Prairie Grove, Battle of ..	34	San Angelo, Texas	11,24
Preston Road	51	<u>San Angelo Times</u>	20
Price, General	29	San Patricio County, Texas	48
Sterling	28,29,37	San Patricio Road	53
Sterling, Gen.	34,37	Sand Springs, Texas	50
Price's Cavalry	37	Schofield, Gen.	33,35
Price's Missouri Expedition	38	John M., Gen.	29
Prince Edward County, VA .	43, 67	Seay, Cassie (Kyle)	58
Pulaski County, KY.....	46	Seybert Mill, MO	35,36
Quantrill, William	32,33,39	Shawneetown, Texas	47
Ragland, Nancy	58		
Rains, James S.	29,33		

Shelby,		Tankersley,	
Gen.	37, 38	Ellen	60
Shelby,		James	58
JO, Gen. (picture)	3	Tankersly Ranch	5
JO	29	Tanner,	
Shelby Raid, The	41	John Blackwood	67
Shelby's Brigade	35	Tarrant,	
Shelby's Iron Brigade	36	Edward H.	45
Shiloh, TN	29	Creed	7
Shnively,		Taylor,	
Jacob	5	Laura	48
Shoemaker,		Temple, Texas	17
Floyd C.	41	Tennessee River	67
Shrevesport, LA	58	Terrell,	
Sigel,		Judge	48
Franz, Gen.	35	Texas Rangers	38
Sims,		Texas Red River	50
Matthew	46	Texas Road	51
Sixth Missouri Cavalry	31	Thompson,	
Smith County, TN	25, 43	Gideon	37
Smith,		Gideon W.	29
Edmund Kirby	33, 38	Thornton,	
Mary Somerville	60	J.F., Mrs.	11
Tonk	17	Tidwell,	
William	67	D.D., Rev.	11
Snively,		Donavon Duncan	1
Jacob M.	53	Dr.	11
Snively's expedition	53	Tietgens,	
Snyder,		Paul	59
John F.	40	Tillman County, OK	46
Somerville Expedition	61	Tolbert,	
Soule, Miss	42	Frank X.	66
Springfield, MO . 26, 29, 30, 34,		Tom Green County, Texas ...	2
40		Toney,	
St Louis, MO	30	Virginia Ashley	43
Sterling City, Texas	16	Torrey brothers	53
Still,		Totten,	
Bush	21	James	32
Stockton, MO	31, 35, 38	Trapp Crossing	10
Stone,		Trapp saloon	10
Eliza	43	<u>Tread of the Longhorn</u>	8
Elizabeth Jewell	25	Trickham, Texas	4
Miss	42	Trinity River	46, 48, 51
Strange,		Trousdale,	
Mr.	42	Jane	43
Strength,		Tuck,	
Nora Virginia	67	Augustus F.	67
Strickland,		Augustus F., Jr.	67
Mr.	42	Clyde E.	40
Rex W.	56	Edward Lawson	67
Stuart,		Tuscumbia, AL	63
Jeb, Cavalry	17	Tyler,	
Stubblefield,		Charles H.	37
Jack	22	Upshaw,	
Suttenfield,		Chickasaw agent	54
Laura	48	Van Dorn,	
Sophia	50, 62	Earl, General	29
William	48	Vehlin,	
Suttonfield,		Joseph	48
Sophia	62	Vernon County, MO	29
Sweitzer,		Villa, Pancho	17
A.B.	50		

Vontress,			
Edward Hughes	.....	39	
Eunice	.....	42	
Eunice Allen	.....	43	
Eunice Amelia	.....	39	
Judge	.....	42	
Maj.	.....	39	
Mrs.	.....	65	
Waco, Texas	.....	38	
Walker,			
Charles R.	.....	11	
Clabe	.....	11, 19	
Emery	.....	11	
Hollon	.....	11	
Jesse, Mrs.	.....	18	
Nathan, Mrs.	.....	18	
Wall,			
Christine	.....	57	
Ward,			
Inez Cates	.....	24	
Roxanna	.....	60	
William	.....	58	
Warner,			
Ezra J.	.....	41	
Warren County, TN	...	44, 45, 56	
Warren,			
Fitz Henry, Col.	.....	32	
Warren, Texas	.....	51	
Warsaw, MO	.....	35	
Washington, AR	.....	36	
Washington County, Texas	..	50, 56, 62	
Washita Post	.....	55	
Watie,			
Stand, Colonel	.....	29	
Waverly, MO	.....	36	
Wayne County, KY	.....	46	
Weatherford, Texas	.....	2, 4	
Weaver,			
Myrtle, Mrs.	.....	11	
Webb,			
Hi	.....	43	
Weir,			
Harriet	.....	42	
Harriet L.	.....	43	
James Jackson, Rev.	....	26	
Lavena Harriet	.....	26	
Westport,			
Battle of	.....	38	
Wheeler,			
Joseph, Gen.	.....	67	
Whetstone,			
A.T., Mrs.	.....	18	
Albert	.....	11, 19	
D.H., Mrs.	.....	18	
Whiskey Trail	.....	50	
Whitcomb,			
Gladys	.....	64	
Whiteside,			
James	.....	50	
Jenkin	.....	50	
Jonathan	.....	50	
Robert	.....	50	
Wilkins,			
James A.	.....	62	
Williams,			
John, death of	.....	46	
Malinda Graves	.....	58	
Williamson County, Texas	..	4, 39, 43, 62	
Wilson,			
James Tennison	.....	59	
Tennison J.	.....	44	
Winters, Texas	.....	11	
Wood,			
Jackson	.....	44	
Woodruff,			
Howard W., Mrs.	.....	40	
Wright,			
Clark, Col.	.....	31, 32	
Col.	.....	33	
Lenora, Mrs.	.....	64	
Yantis,			
Thomas C.	.....	11	
Yearwood,			
Eunice	.....	64	
Florence	.....	64	
Frank	.....	43, 64	
J.F.	.....	64	
Robert F.	.....	64	
Ruth	.....	64	
Young,			
A.J.	.....	40	
Jane Colville	.....	56	
John Steele, Dr.	.....	47	