

## THE JETTS FROM WHITE COUNTY TENNESSEE

### *White County Jetts*

In the 1830's a group of Jetts emigrated to Texas from White County, Tennessee. Some of these Jetts would play a significant role in Texas history during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. In particular, a number of sons of John W. Jett, a sheriff in White County, Tennessee would come to Texas and serve as pioneers and Texas Rangers. In the Notes to this Chapter, I have set forth the parentage of John W. Jett. Also in the Notes is a list of the children of John and his wife Polly White Jett. This chapter will cover in brief the lives of five of the sons of John W. Jett. Those sons are James Madison Jett (1812-1845), Stephen Jett (1814-1842), William Glenn Jett (1821-1872), Ferdinand Jett (1823-1849) and Woodson Phillips Jett (1829-1865). Four of the five that we cover in this chapter, died violent deaths early in life. Texas was not a safe place even for tough pioneers such as these men.

James Madison Jett and Stephen Jett are famous for having been participants in the famous Texas battle known as the Battle of San Jacinto. Their names are listed as participants on the San Jacinto Monument. A photo of the San Jacinto Monument is set forth below:



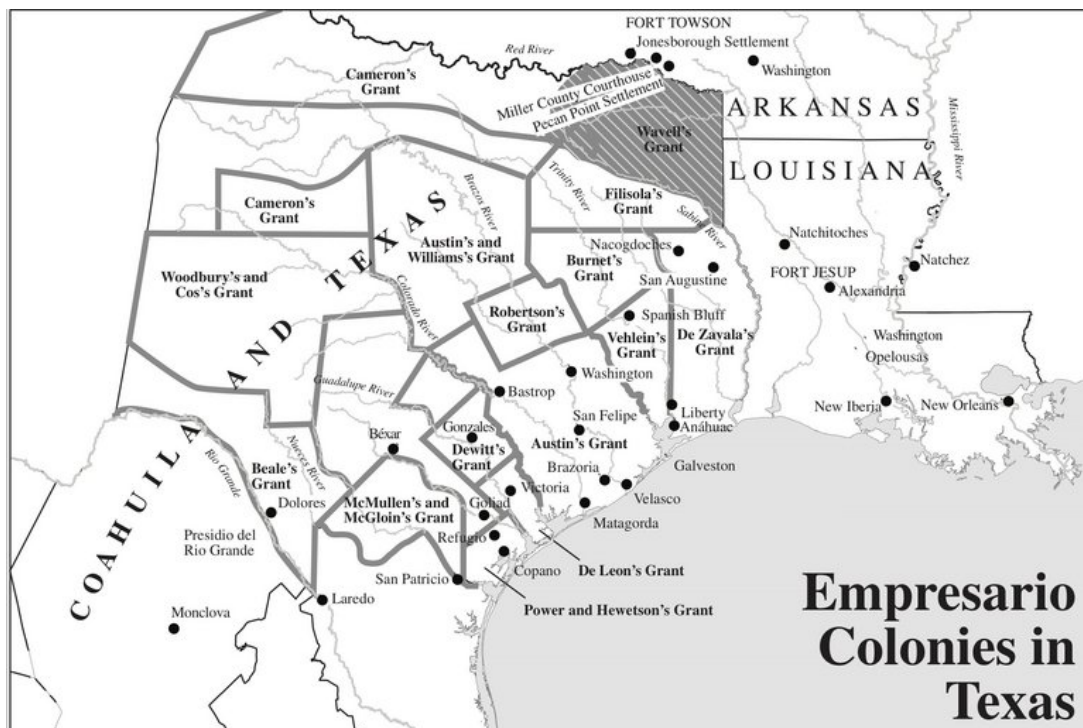
## *James M. Jett and Stephen Jett-Early Texas Rangers*

In this section I deal with some of the common experiences of James M. Jett and Stephen Jett. They both served in the same ranger companies and were close in age with James being born in 1812 and Stephen being born in 1814. The exact year of their births are somewhat clouded. Some family trees show the years as being 1811 (James) and 1813 (Stephen). The 1820 Census for White County, Tennessee is not helpful. That census shows that John Jett of White County had three sons who were under 10 years of age so either date could be supported by the census. At the time of the 1820 Census, James Matthew would have been about 8 and Stephen about 6 years old.

A Good Source for learning about the Battle of San Jacinto and those who participated in it are by searching under the names of James Jett and Stephen Jett in the Kemp Sketches of Veterans which is on the internet and was written by Louis W. Kemp. A link to those "Sketches" is located here: [https://www.sanjacinto-museum.org/Discover/The\\_Battle/Veteran\\_Bios/](https://www.sanjacinto-museum.org/Discover/The_Battle/Veteran_Bios/)

Later I will discuss the deaths of Stephen Jett and James M. Jett individually. One initial comment is that there is some question about what James middle name was. The wife of William Glenn Jett who was one of James' brothers claims that his middle name was "Madison." Ranger records show his name as being "Matthew." We cannot be absolutely certain of whether his middle name was "Madison" or "Matthew." We do know that James frequently went by "Matt" Jett while he was in Texas.

James and Stephen came to Texas from White County, Tennessee about 1835. We are not certain how they got here but many settlers were coming in on ships which docked at Velasco, Texas. Velasco later merged into Freeport, Texas and is on the coast south of Galveston. Below is a map showing the early Colonies of Texas and on it you can also see the Port of Velasco where many ships ported.



After James and Stephen came to Texas, they were enlisted in the Second Ranger Company established by the Provisional General Council which had been set up to govern Texas by 55 Municipalities of Texas after the massacre at Goliad. This early "Corps of Texas Rangers" was led by Daniel Ferrar. This group of Rangers was organized at the City of Viesca in Robertson's Colony. Within a couple of weeks after its formation of this company of rangers, the Kickapoo Indians went on the warpath in Robertson's Colony. Ferrar's rangers was formed on November 1, 1835 and one of its first members was James Matthew Jett. Stephen Jett joined shortly afterwards on November 19, 1835. The rangers from Captain Ferrar's company were discharged on February 1, 1836 and most of them, including James and Stephen Jett remained in the City of Milam which was the place of their discharge.

According to Kemp's Sketch, James Jett had to arrive in Texas sometime between May 2, 1835 and March 2, 1836 because if James had applied prior to May 2, 1835, note would have been made of that fact on the land certificate later issued to James. Further, according to Kemp's Sketch as well as my own research, on January 11, 1836, Stephen Jett had applied for a land grant in Robertson's Colony. That grant was not able to be completed probably because the War of Texas Independence was just beginning. Stephen showed his age was 22 on the date of his application for a land grant in Robertson's County. Robertson's Colony or Robertson's Grant is shown on the map above just above just above Stephen F. Austin's Grant.

According to Savage Frontier, Volume III by Stephen L. Moore (at page 183), Moore agrees that James and Stephen Jett had served in one of the earliest ranger groups in 1835 led by Daniel Boone Friar. As mentioned earlier, a committee of the General Council (which was provisionally running Texas) appointed Friar to appoint a company of twenty five rangers to help protect Texas between the Brazos and Colorado Rivers. The ranger company was headquartered near the Indian village of Ouchaco (present day Waco.).

According to Kemp, James M. Jett and Stephen Jett settled somewhere on the Brazos River until they joined Captain Richard Roman's Company on April 9, 1836. Apparently they joined Roman's Company for service for up to a year. Roman was in charge of Volunteer Infantry Company B. from the First Regiment. The Battle of San Jacinto was fought shortly after they joined the company on April 21, 1836.

Texas had begun its march toward independence from Mexico. On March 2, 1835 a year before San Jacinto the fight had begun with the citizens of Gonzales refusing to give up their small canon to Mexican soldiers and flying the now famous flag saying "Come and Take it!"



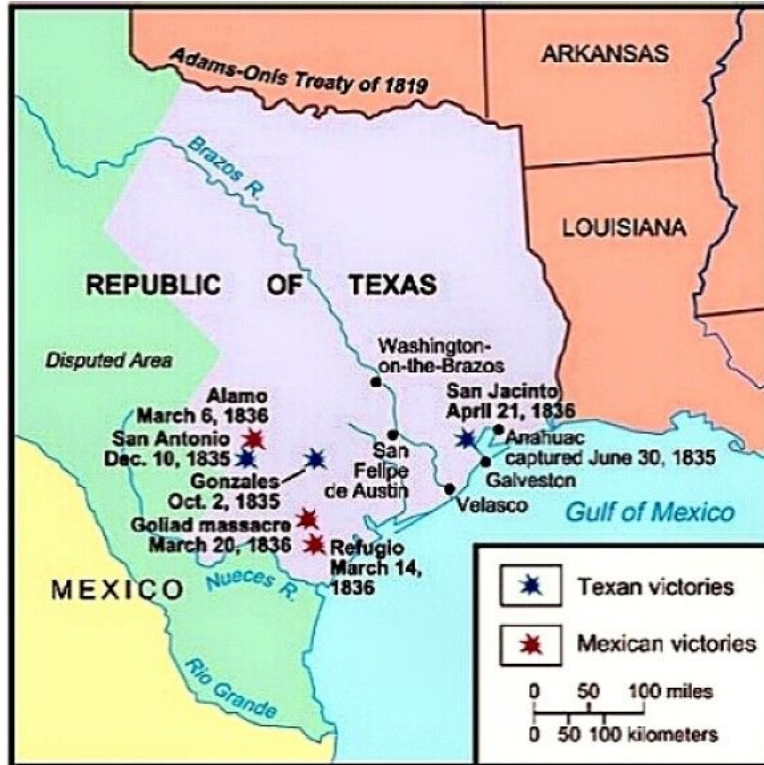
Gonzales Canon



**COME AND TAKE IT**

“Come and Take It” Flag

Below is a map showing the location of Gonzales and also the location of a number of early Texas battles.



Map showing Gonzales, Alamo, Goliad and San Jacinto

By March 6, the Alamo had fallen with its defenders being massacred. Between 200-250 Texans withstood a 13 day siege against 2000 soldiers under Santa Anna until the vast number of them were exterminated without quarter.



Alamo at Night

A number of well-known personalities died heroically at the Alamo including Col. William H. Travis the Commander, Jim Bowie, who was Co-Commander and well-known frontiersman Davy Crockett. Below is a well known painting of Davy Crockett.



Davy Crockett  
By William H. Huddle

On March 27, 1836, the Goliad Massacre had occurred and the Texas Army being led by General Houston were in retreat. At Goliad, the Texans had surrendered thinking that they would be treated as prisoners of war. Instead those who surrendered, 342 of them, were executed. Only 20 were spared who were doctors or assisting in the medical area.

The Texas Army was in retreat and Sam Houston was seeking an opportunity to attack Santa Anna on terms which would lead to a successful battle for the Texans.

It was in this adverse environment that the Jett brothers joined the Company of Captain Roman for one years service. It is interesting that Kemp who lists the members of Roman's Company leaves out the name of James and Stephen Jett when he lists the members of Roman's Company; but when he deals with James and Stephen individually he lists them as part of Roman's Company. At any rate, Kemp does show them as participating in the battle directly and their names are listed on the San Jacinto monument.

The history of Roman's Company is an interesting one. Roman, himself, had arrived at Velasco on January 28, 1836 after being recruited in New Orleans for the Texas Army by Captain Amasa Turner. On January 30, 1836 a Volunteer Company of soldiers was organized in Velasco with John Hart being the Captain, Richard Roman being the First Lieutenant and Nicholas Mosby Dawson being the Second Lieutenant. Richard Roman was about the same age as James Jett being born in 1811. Nicholas

Dawson was just slightly older than James Jett being form born in 1898. Interestingly Nicholas Dawson was also from White County, Tennessee and therefore James may have known him or his family.

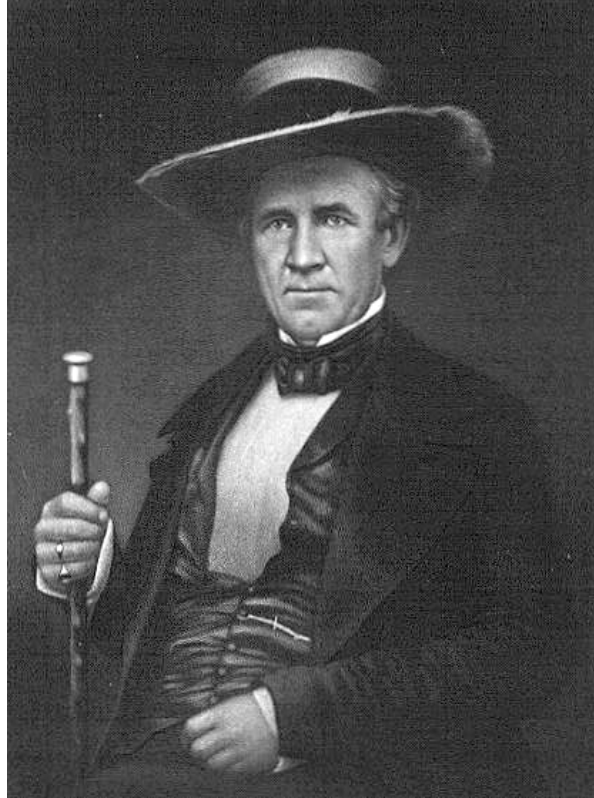
On February 13, 1836, Roman took over the Company moving from First Lieutenant to Captain. As mentioned previously, the Jett Brothers joined the Volunteer Company on April 9, 1836 and shortly after that on April 21 was the Battle of San Jacinto.

The Battle of San Jacinto was a short battle and an overwhelming success for General Sam Houston and the Texans and resulting in the surrender of Santa Anna.



Surrender of Santa Anna  
By William Henry Huddle

Houston is on the ground wounded. Santa Ann is in  
White Pants. Deaf Smith has his hand to ear.

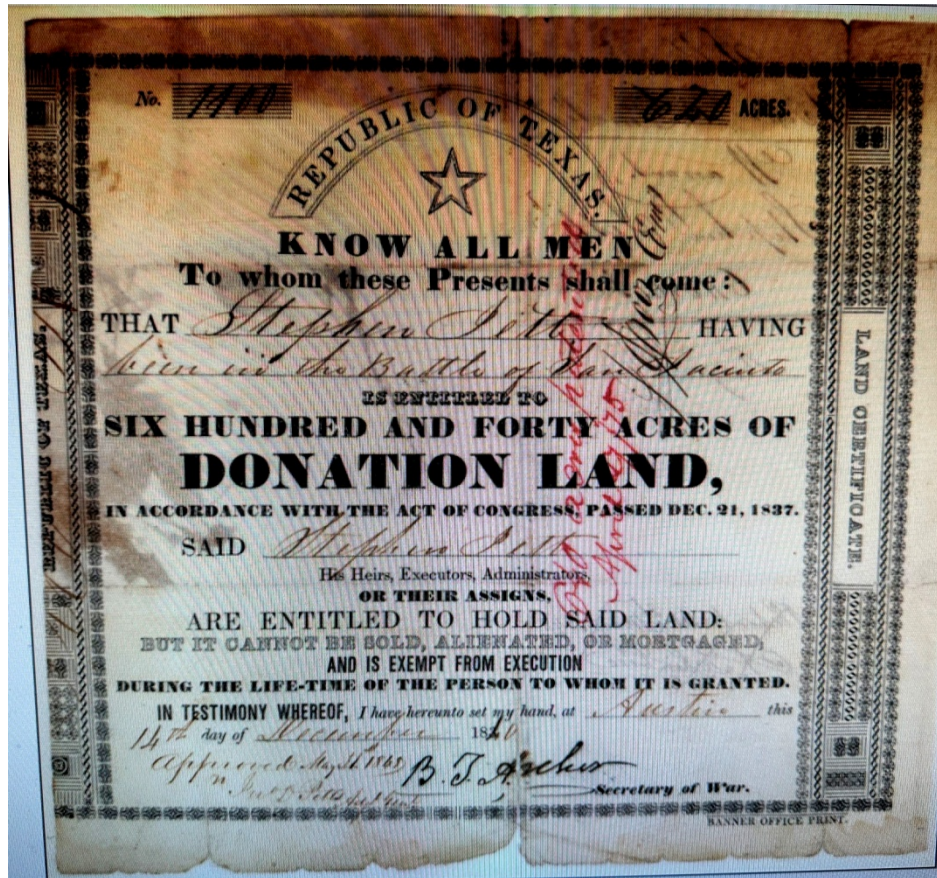


Sam Houston

### *Land Grants*

James Jett and Stephen Jett got land grants for participating in the Battle of San Jacinto. Both James and Stephen Jett got what are called "Donation Grants." Texas granted land due to a person participating in certain important battles. James M. Jett and Stephen Jett participated in the Battle of San Jacinto and because of their participation each got 640 acres each. Below is a copy of a donation certificate for Stephen Jett:





Republic of Texas  
Donation Certificate to Stephen Jett  
For 640 Acres

In addition, both James and Stephen Jett would have received First-class headrights because they came to Texas prior to signing the Texas Declaration of Independence on March 2, 1836. Single men received one-third a league of land or 1476 acres each. Married men, on the other hand, could receive one league and one labor of land which was 4605 acres. The Republic of Texas rewarded men who were married and brought their families with more land. James M. Jett discussed this matter in a letter to his family dated May 18, 1837. In that letter, he wrote the following: "A young man gets paid for marrying here. I think it would be a very good plan for me to marry. I would get 3130 more if I get married before the first of January next, which will be worth something worth marrying for." Although, this statement was not the most romantic statement from a 25 year old, it does illustrate the effectiveness of the Republic's program to promote settlement of families in an environment which was still very unsettled and very dangerous.

Stephen mentions in the same letter that he and his brother had about 1280 acres on the Medina River about 15 miles from San Antonio in 1836 and that they were getting ready to receive the Donation Grants from the Republic of Texas for their services at San Jacinto. Later the brothers would accumulate over around 4300 acres of property. Some of their accumulation of property, resulted from their service in the Texas Militia and as Texas Rangers. Grants of real estate called "Bounty Grants" were given to

soldiers who enlisted in the army before October 1, 1832. In addition, grants were given to those who acted as soldiers guarding the Texas frontier between 1838 to 1842. Stephen and James not only were soldiers who fell into this classification but both spent a considerable amount of time acting in Texas Ranger Companies which guarded the frontier and acted in conjunction with the army. Each three months of service qualified an individual for a grant of land for 320 acres with a maximum aggregation of 1280 acres for service of this type. Both brothers therefore had a number of Bounty Grants for their military service.

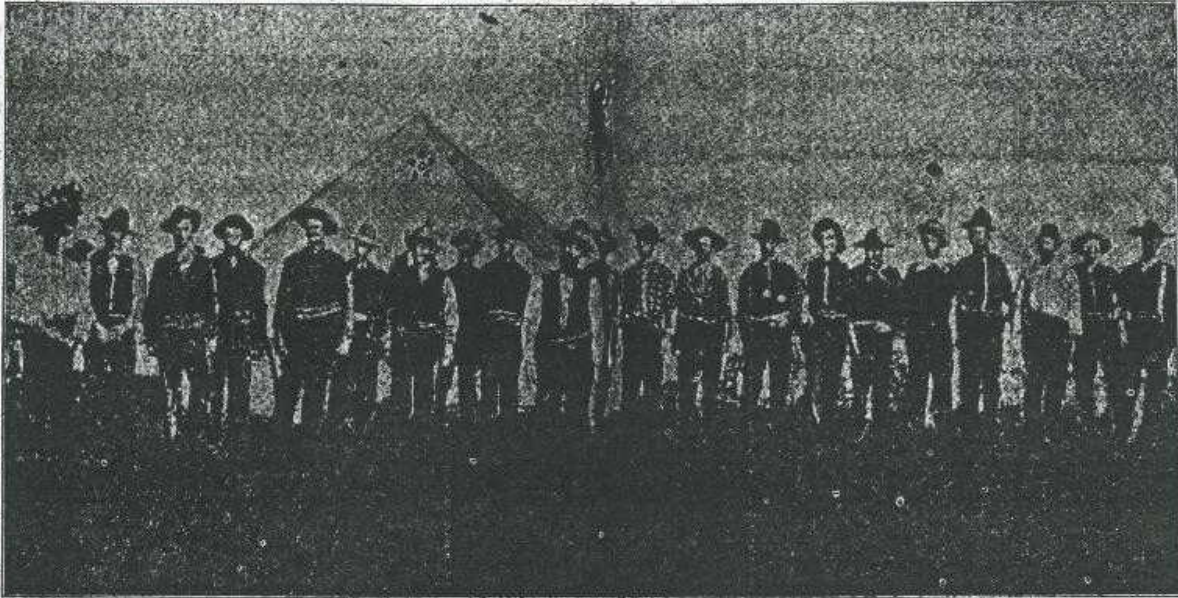
### *Descriptions of James M. Jett and Stephen Jett*

As mentioned previously, Richard Roman who had been a First Lieutenant of the Volunteers in Company B of the Texas Volunteers, was elected Captain of the Company on January 30, 1836, when its previous Captain, John Hart retired. The Company was also known as Company B, First Regiment, Mounted Gunmen, Texas Militia. The Second Lieutenant of the Company was Nicholas Mosby Dawson. James and Stephen Jett were privates in the Company. After Roman left the Volunteers, he had an interesting career where he served in the Republic of Texas House of Representatives and later in the Republic of Texas Senate. He also became the Mayor of Victoria Texas and went to California in 1849 during the Gold Rush and became the first California State Treasurer from 1849-1854. When Roman left Company B of the Texas Volunteers, the former Second Lieutenant of the Company, Nicholas Mosby Dawson took over.

From the Texas Archives, I obtained a copy of the Muster Roll for Captain Dawson's Volunteers. It shows that both James and Stephen had been recruited by Richard Roman and that the Jetts had been living at the Brazos River. James Matthew is described as being 24 and a blacksmith by trade. He was 5'11" in height, of fair complexion, had light hair and blue eyes. His enlistment period was for one year. Stephen was described as being 22 and a farmer by trade. He was 5'8" in height, of fair complexion, had light hair and blue eyes. Assuming, that the ages of the brothers were correct and that James was born in 1814 and Stephen in 1812, this would mean that Dawson took over for Captain Roman sometime in 1836 after the Battle of San Jacinto. According to "The Kemp Sketch" for Dawson, he too had an interesting life. Dawson would move to Bexar County where James and Stephen would reside which was in the San Antonio area. Among other things, Dawson would later join a group of Texas Volunteers under John Moore and was Captain of one of these companies which fought against Indians in West Texas. When Mexican General Adrian Woll (more about him later) captured San Antonio on September 11, 1842, Dawson recruited a group of volunteers who tried to keep Woll from moving toward Austin which was then the Capital of the Republic of Texas. Stephen Jett would die in connection with this Mexican invasion of Texas and the fight known as the Battle of Salado which will be discussed later.

Some family trees have purported to show photos of Stephen and the Texas Rangers. Below are some of the photos posted. I have not verified whether the claims are correct, but some of them are, I believe, incorrect.

**Frontier Times Vol 4 No. 5 Feb. 1927**  
**Article - Jack Hays, The Intrepid Texas**



*Major Jack Hays and his Company of Texas Rangers in 1844. Major Hays in white shirt.*

James M. Jett may be in this old Photo  
Stephen had died in 1842 and therefore  
Was not present.



Some believe that the Ranger seated  
On the Viewer's far right is Stephen.  
(However they are mistaken. This is an

1888 photo of Texas Rangers , Company D. It is way too late to be either Stephen or James Jett).



Some Claim that this is  
Stephen Jett  
(Again I do not believe this is one  
Of the Jett brothers. It is a photo  
Of the person sitting in the far right  
Of the 1888 Photo of Ranger Company D.)

*The Laredo Expedition with Deaf Smith*



Deaf Smith

Erastus "Deaf Smith" was one of the great heroes in early Texas History. He was born in New York on April 19, 1787 and when he was eleven, his family moved to Natchez, Mississippi. Deaf Smith was raised a Baptist. Deaf Smith came to Texas in 1817 but did not stay but returned to Texas again in 1821 to Bexar. In 1822, Smith married Guadalupe Rutz Duran, who was the widow of Vincente Duran and who had four children.

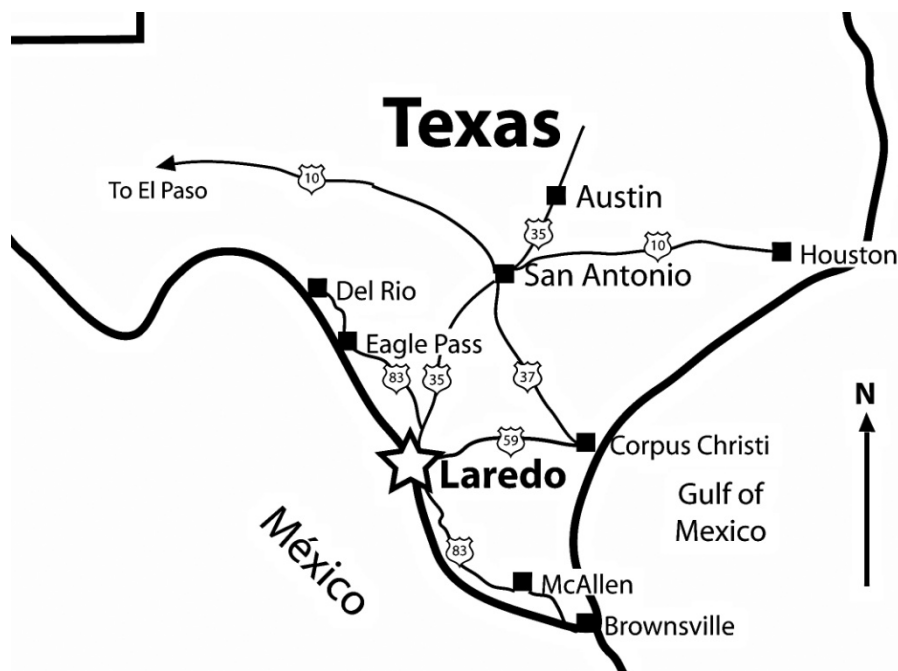
Smith had lost most of his hearing when he was a child due to a disease. I suspect that his loss of hearing was not total in that he was able to become very conversant in Spanish. In a prior picture in this chapter, you can see Deaf Smith seated in the foreground as Santa Anna surrenders to Sam Houston. Smith has his hand cupped to his ear. According to the "Matagorda Bulletin" of September 6, 1837, when asked whether he experienced inconvenience from his deafness, Smith responded: "'No, I sometimes think it is an advantage—I have learned to keep a sharper look out—and I am never disturbed by the whistling of a ball—I don't hear the bark, til I feel the bite.'"

At first, Smith seemed to be on the fence being quite happy being married and had good relations with Mexicans in the Bexar (San Antonio) area until Mexican soldiers came to San Antonio and prohibited him from returning home. Smith then joined the Texans at Gonzales and began to act as a scout. Due to his ability in hunting and shooting, knowing the area well, speaking Spanish and having good relations with other Mexicans, Smith excelled as a scout. After San Antonio had fallen under the control of the Mexican Army, Smith smuggled his family out and engaged in the fight to retake San Antonio.

Deaf Smith was responsible on February 16, 1836 for taking the famous letter from Travis at the Alamo to General Houston seeking reinforcements. Smith was then sent back to the Alamo to determine its status when he met one of the survivors of the fall of the Alamo, Susanna Dickinson (her husband died at the Alamo). The Alamo had fallen on March 6. Smith then returned to work with Houston and the Texas Army on scouting missions. Just prior to the Battle of San Jacinto, Smith and some of his men captured a Mexican courier who was carrying dispatches to Santa Anna. As a result of this capture, Sam Houston was able to determine the strength of Santa Anna's forces and how the Mexican army might be reinforced.

Houston instructed Smith and his men to destroy Vince's bridge, which would cut off any attempt at Santa Anna's forces to escape and also prevent additional Mexican forces from reinforcing Santa Anna's position. Smith and his men carried out this mission and then returned in time to fight at the battle of San Jacinto.

After leaving the army, Smith organized a group of Texas Rangers. According to The Kemp Sketch on James M. Jett, we learn that James was part of this ranger group that went with Deaf Smith on his Expedition to Laredo in February 1837. Both James M. Jett and Stephen Jett accompanied Deaf Smith on the Laredo Expedition. Erastus Smith was the Captain and Nicholas Mosby Dawson was the First Lieutenant. One of the privates along with James and Stephen Jett was John Coffee Hays. Smith and his rangers went to Laredo, according to Smith "to raise the flag of independence on the spire of the Catholic Church at Laredo." The Mexican soldiers garrisoned at Laredo had other ideas. On February 17, 1837, Smith with twenty men, engaged the Mexican soldiers. The Mexicans had a much larger force, however Smith and his ranger company killed ten of the soldiers and wounded a great many more with only two Texans being wounded and none being killed. In addition, the Rangers returned with a number of captured horses. Although the Rangers did not take Laredo, the engagement became widely known due to the fighting prowess of the Rangers. Laredo is located on the map below:



Below is a photo of the monument commemorating this battle.



A good description of Deaf Smith and his rangers comes from the article in the "Matagorda Bulletin" of September 6, 1837 which reads as follows:

*"Each was mounted on a mustang—Deaf Smith's horse bore evident marks of superior breeding—with a Mexican saddle, consisting of the bare tree with a blanket or great coat covered over it. Mexican spurs, the shank about from one to two or three inches long—bridle of ponderous and very rank bits—a Mexican gourd swung from the saddle bow—holsters—a pair of pistols and bowie knife in the belt, a rifle on the shoulder—a mackinaw blanket rolled up encroupe—a cabarras, or rope of hair around the horse's neck, with which the animal is hobbled while he grazes at night—a sumpter mule, either following, or driven ahead, laden with supplies of salt, sugar, liquor, a small camp equipage, cooking implements & etc. for the campaign."*

Deaf Smith who had provided such great services to Texas died not too long after the Laredo Expedition. He died on November 30, 1837 at a friend's house. He was fifty years old at the time of his death. Kemp in his Sketch on Deaf Smith incorrectly puts Smith's death at November 30, 1836 which is an obvious error because Kemp reports in the same Sketch that Deaf Smith led the Laredo operation on February 17, 1837. A picture of Deaf Smith was placed on the Republic of Texas 5\$ bill, a copy of which is below:



Picture of Deaf Smith  
On Republic of Texas 5 \$ Bill

*Texas And the Indian Wars (Indian Tribes, Weapons, Ranger Weapons; pistol development) Dates for the Indian Wars Differences between approach of Republic of Texas Houston and Lamar. Council House Massacre. 1840 Battle of Plum Creek; Indian Weapons vs Ranger Weapons*

The Jett boys would serve as Texas Rangers. James and Stephen were located in the County of Bexar on the Medina River just outside of San Antonio. In the 1830, two of the primary roles of the Rangers were to protect settlers from the Mexican Army and also to protect settlers from Indian invasions and what are called "depredations." The term "depredations" meant a raid and pillaging as a result of the raid. The reality was much worse than the word. In general it meant that the settler's family would be killed and scalped, the women raped, the house burnt down and the cattle and horses stolen. There were a number of Indian tribes involved including the Cherokees, Shawnees, Kickapoo and Comanches. The greatest threats came from the Comanches. The Indians in a raid generally outnumbered the settlers. The Comanches moved quickly, were skilled in guerilla warfare and were very excellent horsemen. On occasion, children and women captured in a raid might be enslaved and then perhaps sold back to settlers. On other occasions, they were tortured, killed or assimilated into the tribe. In fact one child captured, Cynthia Ann Parker, later became the mother to one of the greatest chiefs of the Comanches, Quannah Parker.

*Indian Policy in the Republic of Texas*



In 1839, there was evidence found which indicated that Mexico was trying to use some Indian attacks as a way to retake Texas for Mexico. In addition, some Indian tribes allied themselves with Mexico including for instance at the battle of Salado where Stephen Jett was killed.

The Republic of Texas also had Indian allies including the Lipan Apache, the Tonkawas and the Delawares. In fact there were Texas Ranger Companies that used Indian Scouts and even some Texas Ranger Companies which were made up of Indians. The Indians in these ranger companies were paid the same thing as the regular ranger. One of the early Indian ranger captains was named "Castro." Another was Castro's son who was named "Flacco." Ranger Captain Jack Hays and Flacco were good friends.

In short, there were Indians who worked with the Texans and who even acted as Texas Rangers as well as those Indians who were trying to wipe out the settlers.

To make things worse, the Indian Policy of Texas vacillated depending upon who was President of the Republic. Things became even more confused once Texas became a state and federal Indian agents became involved often with different goals than the goals of the State of Texas. The Indian Policy under Sam Houston's first term (1836-1838) and his second term (1841-1844) was one of fairness to the Indians and a desire for a negotiated peace. Prior to coming to Texas, Sam Houston had lived for several years with the Cherokees, had married a Cherokee woman, and spoke the language of the Cherokee. Houston was trusted by the Indians and by the Cherokees in particular. The peaceful policies of Houston were continued under the Presidency of Anson Jones (1844-1846).

In contrast, Mirabeau B. Lamar, who was President of Texas from 1838-1841, had an Indian policy diametrically opposed to that of Houston. Texas law did not allow Sam Houston to succeed himself so Lamar ran for the President's office supported strongly by the political enemies of Sam Houston. Lamar, along with many Texans, believed that there could be no rapprochement between the Indians and the settlers. He did not believe that the Indians would comply with any treaties. This assumption was buttressed by the fact that many Indian Tribes acted independently. Settlers, for their part, did not always distinguish between Indians who had made treaties and those who did not. Moreover, there was always a push to occupy Indian land by those who did not appreciate the need for having larger tracts of land for hunting as opposed to those who either tilled the land or those who ran cattle. Also there was a significant increase in the number of Anglos in Texas. Between the 1820's and 1830's there was an increase in the Anglo population of Texas by an estimated 30,000 (In 1820, there were about an estimated 30,000 Indians in Texas). By 1845 when Texas became a state, the Anglo population was about 160,000 persons and by the Civil War there would be about 600,000 people in Texas. Lamar's policy, especially in light of the many Indian attacks, was to either exterminate the Indians or drive them into reservations outside of Texas.

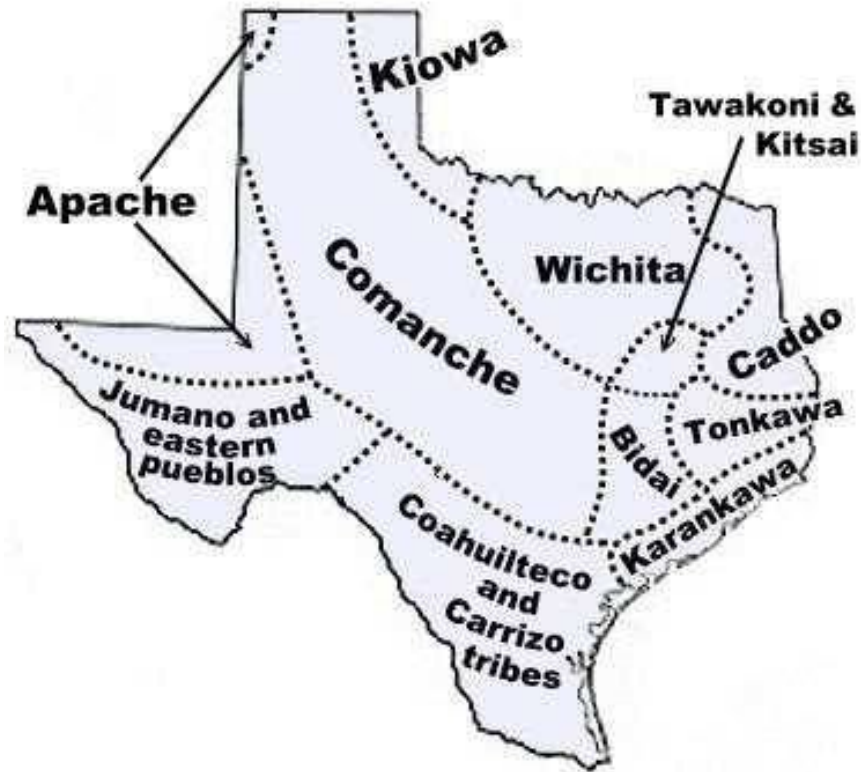
The conflicting policies of the Republic of Texas and then later the complications of the conflicts between the policies of the federal government (after the Texas became a state in 1845) and the State of Texas as one of the states comprising the United States, overlaid the Indian question with confusion and insecurity. Moreover, the Indian tribes in general faced both famine and disease which reduced their overall numbers significantly. The Indian issues in Texas would not be resolved in Texas until the 1870's with the result that Texas only ended up with a couple of very small reservations and most Indians were on reservations outside of the State.

The Texas Rangers were those entrusted in protecting the frontier and they followed the policies of the Republic of Texas and later the State of Texas which was often conflicting. When there was a conflict between federal Indian policies and those of the State of Texas, the rangers would follow the desires and policies of the State of Texas.

One final comment. Times change. The early settlers in Texas did not have the concept of the noble Indian. Instead, they experienced seeing their neighbors, scalped, killed, tortured and raped. Families attacked, homes burned and horses and cattle stolen were what they associated with hostile Indians and especially the Comanches in Texas. The picture of a noble Indian shedding a tear over the loss of his hunting grounds and the death of the buffalo was not within their imagination.

The early Texas Rangers had perhaps a wider appreciation of the native tribes than did the settlers. Many rangers commented upon the courage of the Indian Nations and especially the Comanches. The rangers had fought many battles against the Comanches and knew them as dangerous and courageous foes. Moreover, in the early days of Texas a number of Indians were allies of the early Texans and the rangers. Some of the tribes which worked closely with the Texans were foes of the Comanches including the Lipan Apachees, the Delawares and the Tonkewans. As early as 1824, there were treaties with various Indian tribes including the Tonkawans, Karankawas, Wacos and Tawakonis. Not only that, the Indians allied with Texas often served as guides and scouts for the Rangers. In fact there were even Ranger Companies which were made up entirely of Indians such as a Ranger group under the Indian Castro, who was Apache. Indians serving in Indian ranger companies were paid the same as Anglos. Later one of the greatest of the Ranger Captains, John Coffee Hays would have close friendships with Texas allied Indians such as Flacco the Elder who was a chief of the Lipan Apache and son of Castro. Moreover, on one occasion, Hays went trapping with the Delaware Indians and when they were attacked joined with them in fighting against the attacking Indian tribe.

Below is a drawing showing the location of some of the Indian Tribes in the Republic of Texas:



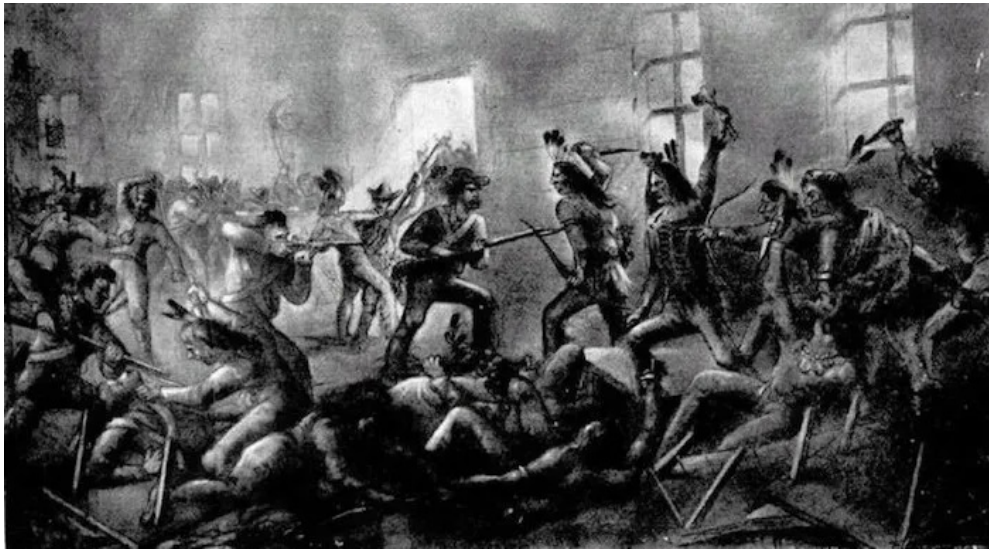
To make matters worse, Texans believed that hostile Indian attacks were perhaps a veiled attempt by Mexico to war against Texas and to place it back in subjection to Mexico. This possibility was actually evidenced by the capture of Manuel Flores by Colonel Burleson on an expedition in 1839. Flores had letters from General Valentin Canalizo of Mexico to the chiefs of the Seminoles, Caddos, Biloxies, Kickapoos and Cherokees encouraging them pursue a war against the Republic of Texas.

### *The Council House Fight*

In January 1840, Colonel Henry W. Karnes, who was Head of the San Antonio Ranger Post, wrote to the Texas Secretary of War, Albert Sidney Johnson, informing him that the Comanches wanted to make peace with Texas. Col. Karnes was a skilled ranger and soldier. He had worked with Deaf Smith and under Deaf Smith he had actually been the one who delivered to Sam Houston, the news that the Alamo had fallen. Under Houston, he had served as Secretary of War. During the Texas Revolution, he had also reported as a scout directly to Mirabeau B. Lamar, who had become President after Sam Houston. Karnes reported to the Secretary of War that the Comanches were willing to release all hostages, restore stolen property and punish any perpetrators for further attacks against the Anglos. Karnes recommended that a couple of Indian Commissioners be appointed to make peace with the Comanches and that there be a sufficient military force to take the Comanches hostage and hold them as hostages in return if they failed to bring and release their hostages. If the Indian prisoners were brought, there

would be no problem but if they were not brought, messengers to the Comanche Tribe would be sent to tell them that the chiefs would be held until the prisoners were released. The Texans expected about 13 Anglo Prisoners. Secretary of War, Johnson, agreed with these recommendations and ordered Col. William S. Fisher to San Antonio with three companies of soldiers to take the chiefs prisoner if they did not bring the captives. The Texans did not trust the Comanches to keep their word.

On March 19, 1840 a meeting was held at the Council House in San Antonio. A Comanche party of 65 men and children came to San Antonio led by a dozen chiefs. Several important chiefs did not attend the meeting and never agreed to make peace including several war chiefs: Buffalo Hump, Yellow Wolf and a chief named Santa Anna (Not to be confused with Mexican General Santa Anna).



Council House Fight in San Antonio

As the Texans expected the Comanches did not bring all of the hostages. Instead they brought only one who was Matilda Lockhart who was then 16 but had been captured at age 14. Matilda had been raped repeatedly by the Comanches and had burns all over her body where she had been stuck by the Comanches with burning sticks. Further, her nose had been burnt off to the bone. As one might expect, this further incensed the Texans. Also the Texans learned that there were another 15 or so hostages and that the Comanches were holding them back so that they could be released for further gifts and presents. The report on the condition of Matilda primarily comes from Mrs. Mary Maverick many years later who had helped take care of the girl. It seems to me unlikely that Mrs. Maverick would have made this up and that her account should be given credence.

Some of the remaining prisoners were Mrs. Dolly Wester (her children Brook and Patsy), Thomas Pierce, a child named Lyon and four Putnam children. Matilda had told the Texans about the remaining prisoners and the Texans asked the Comanches about them. Indian Chief Muguara responded that the other prisoners were held by other bands of Comanches (the Comanches had about 35 bands some of which acted independently). Muguara believed that the other hostages could be ransomed but stated that it would take a great deal of supplies, ammunition and blankets. Chief Muguara then responded: How do you like that answer." Obviously, the Texans did not like that answer. The Texas militia then entered the room to seize the Indians.

The translator who had previously been a Comanche prisoner was instructed to tell the chiefs that they would be held prisoner until the Anglo prisoners were released. The interpreter did not want to do so because he knew this response would result in a fight. Finally, the interpreter did so and then quickly fled from the room. The Indians upon hearing this response, attempted to fight their way out of the room using bows and knives. As they did so, the Texas militia began firing. The Indian women and children hearing the fight outside then also joined in the fighting to the extent that they could do so which included killing several of the Texans with their bows and arrows.

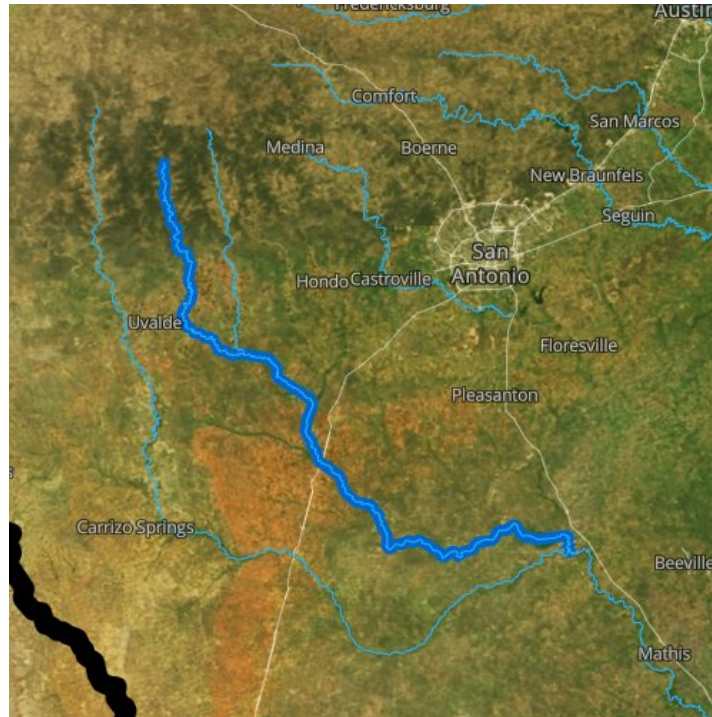
Ultimately of the Comanches, 35 were killed consisting of 30 male adults, three women and two children. 29 were taken prisoner (27 women and children and two old men). One got away. Seven Texans died and ten others were wounded.

The Texans sent back a Comanche woman to tell The Comanches that they had 12 days to release the hostages. The Comanches instead tortured the hostages to death including both skinning some and slow roasting others including Matilda Lockhart's six year old sister.

The Comanches were outraged that the truce had been broken by the Texans. The Texans were outraged that innocent civilians and children were tortured to death.

#### *Comanche Battle after the Council House Fight*

After the Council House Fight, one of the Ranger Groups patrolling the San Antonio area was Captain Cunningham's Bexar Volunteers. One of the members of this group was James M. Jett. Captain Cunningham's Volunteers consisted of 19 men accompanied by a Tonkawan Indian Guide named Antonio. Antonio spotted evidence of the Comanche's and incorrectly estimated them to be about twenty in number and having made camp near a stream. The Rangers initiated an attack on the Indians who returned fire with bows and arrows and rifles. In the initial charge one of the Indians killed Jett's horse, throwing Jett to the ground but leaving him otherwise unhurt. The Rangers ended up taking a number of the provisions of the Indians including a number of horses. After the battle the rangers continued their march to Rio Frio which was about eight miles from the battle site.



Rio Frio  
Southwest of San Antonio

Cunningham and his rangers returned to San Antonio on July 7, 1840 and he made a report of this battle on July 9, 1840 to Captain Clendenin who was in charge of Company A . The Records also indicate that James M. Jett continued to serve with the Bexar Volunteers from October 1, 1840 to November 11, 1840.

#### *The Great Comanche Raid of 1840*

The Comanche War Chief Buffalo Hump along with Chiefs Yellow Wolf and Santa Anna (none of whom had participated in the Council House fight) put together a large raiding party with about thousand warriors from every tribe of the Comanches. Below is a photo of Chief Buffalo Hump:



## Buffalo Hump

Part of this large raiding party consisting of about 600 Comanches who caught Victoria, Texas off guard on August 8, 1840. The Indians killed about a dozen citizens. Other citizens in Victoria held up in buildings and took pot shots at the Comanches. The Comanches looted what they could and then headed to Linnville, Texas which was the second largest port in the Republic of Texas. A map showing Victoria and Linnville is set forth below:



Linnville, Texas no longer exists but it was located about 3.5 miles from the current Port Lavaca. At Linnville, the Comanches killed the customs officer H.O. Watts and captured his wife Juliet and another woman and child.

The citizens of Linnville took refuge on small boats and a schooner knowing that the Comanches would not chase them out into the water. The Comanches plundered and burnt buildings. At the port were a number of goods in transit and the Indians found things such as cattle, horses, parasols, umbrellas, top hats, liquor, guns and linens. The goods at the port were worth about \$300,000 (quite a sum in those days) as well as silver bullion. After the Indians had looted the town they left with their goods loaded on to their pack mules on August 8, 1840.

The Indian incursion was the largest Indian raid in American history and ranged from West Texas to the coast of the Republic of Texas. Because of the sheer numbers of Comanches, the Texas Rangers put out calls to other ranger companies in Texas to join them in attacking the Indians. The Comanches because of the amount of their loot could not use their normal guerilla tactics of a fast strike and rapid retreat. Linnville was never rebuilt and most of the settlers after the Great Raid of 1840 moved from there to Port Lavaca which was three and one half miles southwest.

Below is a painting showing the Indians with their spoils of war:



### *The Battle of Plum Creek*

The battle took place on Plum Creek near Lockhart, Texas. The Texans were led by volunteers from Gonzales led by Matthew Caldwell and from Bastrop under well-known Indian fighter, Ed Burleson. Texas Rangers, the Texas Militia, volunteers, and Texas allied Indian tribes participated in this battle. Chief Placido and thirteen Indian Scouts from his Tonkawan Indian Tribe were able to locate the Comanches near Plum Creek about 27 miles South of Austin, Texas.

Due to the fact that the Comanches had a great deal of plunder and as a result could not move quickly some of the Comanches engaged in a prolonged delaying action allowing the majority to escape.

The Battle of Plum Creek was considered to be a victory for the Republic with only one on the Texian side killed and seven wounded. Texas claimed that 87 Comanches had been killed at Plum Creek but only 12 bodies of the Comanches were recovered. That being said, the Comanches often carried off the bodies of those of their tribe who were killed at war. Chief Buffalo Hump continued to raid Texas settlements from time to time until he negotiated peace in 1844.

### *Jack Hays*

One of the best known Captains in the history of the Texas Rangers was John Coffee “Jack” Hays. Hays is of particular interest to the study of the White County Jetts because three of the Jett brothers served in his Companies.

Hays was born in 1817 in Wilson County, Tennessee. He moved to Mississippi when he was 15 and learned surveying. Hays, after hearing about the Alamo, moved to Texas in 1836. By the time Hays arrived in Texas he had already saved a surveyor in Mississippi from an Indian attack and had killed a



person in a bar who had bullied the wrong person. Hays enlisted in a Ranger Company where he served under Deaf Smith and this may have been when he first came into contact with James and Stephen Jett.

In 1838, Hays was one of the twenty Rangers serving under W. H. Karnes when there was an attack of 100 Comanches against the Rangers at Arroyo Seco. In this encounter, Hays, who was a great shot, shot the Indian Chief. Ultimately, there were about twenty Indian fatalities and another twenty wounded and no fatalities of the Rangers were involved.

Hays was not just an Indian fighter, but he also had friendships among Indians. One of his close friends was Flacco who was a Lipan Apache Chief who frequently cooperated with the rangers. On another occasion in 1838, Hays went trapping with a number of Delaware Indians. When one of their party was killed by the Comanches, Hays joined the Delawares in taking revenge and attacking the Comanches with knives and tomahawks.

In 1840 Hays fought in the Battle of Plum Creek which we have discussed earlier. In 1841, Hays, at the request of Mirabeau B. Lamar, raised a Company of Rangers to fight against 200 Comanches who were stealing horses and mules from the San Antonio area. I believe the Jett brothers were in this Company. At another time, Hays and thirty five rangers along with Chief Flacco and several Lipan Apache Scouts located a number of Comanches who were camped out. Only one ranger was wounded but 16 Comanches were wounded in the ensuing battle. Flacco said the following about Hays: "Me and Red Wing (another scout) not afraid to go to hell together, Captain Jack heap brave, not afraid to go to hell by himself."

On another occasion, Hays accidentally rode through a group of Comanches. Chief Flacco thinking that Hays was doing it intentionally, followed him. After making it through and his return back again one brave tried to block him and Hays shot him dead. Flacco described Hays as "brave too much" which became the nickname of Jack Hays.

In 1841, Hays became in charge of a Ranger Company of twelve men. This was known as a "Spy Company" meaning that they generally acted both as rangers and scouts. Two of the men in this company were James Matthew Jett and Stephen Jett. Their initial terms were shown as began on January 10, 1841 and extended to May 10, 1841. Members of the Company generally supplied their own horses, equipment and arms. However, some of this group was supplied with the Colt-Patterson 34 ga., five shooter pistols that had been initially purchased for the Texas navy.

In March 1842, Hays along with fifteen Rangers and twenty-seven volunteers were in pursuit of a marauding band of Comanches and ran into a band of over 100 Comanches which Hays and his group fought off although several on the Texas side were wounded.

In 1842, Hays and his Rangers were involved in the fight against Mexican General Adrien Woll who was trying to retake Texas at the Battle of Salado. We will discuss this battle in more detail because it was in this battle that Stephen Jett was killed.

In 1843, there was no formal military force in Texas with the Army having been dismissed. Sam Houston authorized Jack Hays to set up a new group of rangers. Included in this company were James M. Jett and his brother, William. (Stephen had been killed in the Battle of Salado.) This group primarily confronted Mexican militia and bandits. On one occasion they fought 100 Mexican soldiers led by the bandit Agaton Quinones

In 1844, more than 200 Comanches fought Hays and fifteen Rangers at Nueces Canyon. Hays and his Rangers were involved in many battles with the Comanches some of which involved close up fighting including Texas Rangers who had to defend themselves with knives and tomahawks.

In the Spring of 1844, Hays organized a new ranger unit which was at that point the only one operating in the Republic of Texas. It was led by his Hays' lieutenant, Ben McCullough and included James M ("Matt") Jett and his brother William. It also included Samuel Hamilton Walker, who had been a survivor of the Mier Campaign and had escaped from the Mexican prison ("Walker Colt" fame).

Later Jack Hays and his Rangers would fight for Texas in the Mexican War

In 1849, Hays attracted by the Gold Rush in California, went to California along with his wife, Susan Calvert. There Hays distinguished himself much as he did in Texas. Hays became the first elected Sheriff of San Francisco. In 1860, Hays led a group of citizens against a Paiute uprising in Nevada. On June 2, 1860 Hays led three hundred men against eight hundred Indians suffering eleven casualties. In this battle thirty Indians were killed.

Hays later became one of the founders of Oakland, California and settled his family on an 800 acre ranch, dying in 1883.

*James and Stephen Jett and William Glenn Jett as members of Jack Hays' Ranger Companies*

The Texas State Archives show that James and Stephen Jett were on the payroll of John C. Hays during March, April and May 1841. Keep in mind the payrolls maintained by the State Archives are not complete and there are a number of missing muster rolls and payrolls. John Hays signed these payroll sheets. These payroll sheets are caption "Hays Spies 1841." The 1841 list has the name of fourteen Rangers, of which two were Jetts.

Keep in mind that Stephen died in 1842 at the Battle of Salado. We also have a Muster Roll showing pay due to Rangers in John C. Hays' Ranger Company for the period June 27 through August 27. In the list of 41 Rangers is "Matt" ("James Matthew") Jett and another brother of James who was William Glenn Jett. Again, the roll is certified by John C. Hays. The Sergeant for this Group was the famous Texas hero Ben McCullough who went on to become a Major General in the Texas Army, a major during the Mexican War and a General during the Civil War.

A Partial List of Ranger Companies compiled by the Texas Ranger Center in Waco shows the following Ranger Companies for Captain John C. Hays:

Jan. 1841-Oct. 1841—Company of Spies Bexar County (Spy 41 Muster Roll)

Feb. 1843-Sept. 1843—Company of Spies Bexar County

Feb. 1844-Sept. 1845—Company of Rangers on Northwestern and Southwestern Frontier

*Battle of Salado (Adrian Wall Takes San Antonio) Captain Matthew Caldwell*

By Fall 1841, Santa Anna had returned to Mexico as its president. In an effort to retake Texas, he ordered his generals to harass the frontiers of the Republic of Texas. In January, 1842 General Mariano Arista in Monterrey stated that Mexico was going to invade Texas and those who did not resist would receive amnesty from Mexico. On March 5, 1842, 700 soldiers under General Rafael Vasquez seized San Antonio. The Anglos in San Antonio had notice of its seizure and vacated the city in advance of it being taken. After a couple of days in San Antonio, General Vasquez returned and crossed the Rio Grande back to Mexico. As the Mexicans departed they were harassed by a Texan force organized at the Manuel N. Flores ranch in Seguin, Texas. Flores had been one of the Ranger Captains with the Bexar Volunteers in 1841.

In June 1842 Colonel Antonio Canales Rosillo from Mexico had attacked several places in southern Texas and had been repulsed at an engagement West of Corpus Christi.

In September 1842, General Adrian Woll had invaded Texas with 900 infantry, 500 Cavalry and two hundred Cherokee Scouts along with a couple of pieces of artillery. Adrian Woll was A French Soldier of Fortune who served as a General in Mexico.



General don Adrián Woll

General Adrian Woll

On September 11, 1842, Woll took San Antonio and was instructed to hold it until he received reinforcements or until the middle of October 1842.

The Texans responded by raising a militia to fight against Woll. One of the leaders was Colonel Matthew Caldwell and another was Jack Hays. Matthew Caldwell was known as "Old Paint" because his hair and beard had splotches of grey and dark much like a Paint Horse. Caldwell had been captain of Company D of the ill-fated Texas Santa Fe Expedition in 1841. This expedition was part of President Lamar's efforts to expand the influence of Texas. A group of businessmen engaged in a trading expedition to New Mexico accompanied by a military escort of 320 men. One of these men was Colonel Matthew Caldwell.

The expedition lost its Mexican guide and was plagued by lack of supplies, lack of water and numerous Indian attacks. Instead of being welcomed as they expected when they arrived in New Mexico they were met by 1500 Mexican soldiers who had been dispatched by the Manuel Armijo who was governor of New Mexico. In negotiations the Texans were promised to be escorted to the border if they surrendered their arms. The Texans did so. The following day, the Mexican army bound the Texans and a vote was taken by the officers as whether to kill them or hold them as prisoners. By one vote, the Mexican Army decided not to kill the Texans. Instead they marched them two thousand miles from Santa Fe to Mexico City. They were then during the winter of 1841-42 held in the state of Veracruz at Perote Prison. The United States negotiated their release which happened on June 13, 1842. We know that 42 of them went on a vessel named the Henry Clay from Veracruz to Mexico City. Caldwell evidently made his way home from Mexico by going through Mexico and Texas.



The Santa Fe Expedition  
And March to Mexico City  
And to Perote Prison

Colonel Matthew Caldwell, who had just returned from being released from Perote Prison, put together a force of just over 200 men from San Antonio, Gonzales, Seguin and other settlements to fight against General Woll. Hays' Ranger Group had fled San Antonio on the arrival of Woll and met up with Caldwell at Salado Creek. Caldwell did not believe that he could fight Woll in San Antonio so he sent Hays' men and some others to draw Woll out from San Antonio to Salado Creek where an ambush was set up. On September 18, 1842, Hays and 34 others including William A.A. "Bigfoot" Wallace set up an ambush just outside of San Antonio. Hays and six or seven others then went into the City and challenged the Mexican cavalry to fight them. Instead of a small group of cavalry, 400-500 in the Mexican cavalry chased the Texans to Salado Creek. The chase was a fast one and the Texans almost did not make it. Some of the names mentioned in connection with this chase according to The Journal of James Wilson Nichols were " H.E. McCulloch, Kit Ackland, Stuart Foley, Creed Taylor, Andrew Sowell, Big Foot Wallace, Ad Gillespie, Sam Walker, Sam Luckey, and a man named Jett, who was killed in the battle

*which followed on the creek."* This person was probably Stephen Jett but Nichols may have gotten the two Jett brothers confused and it was more likely, at least in my opinion, to have James M. Jett.

The Texas ambush at Salado worked with the Mexican cavalry and the Mexican infantry losing about sixty men killed and many more wounded. The Texans lost one and nine to twelve were wounded. The lone Texan killed was Stephen Jett and his death will be described in more detail later.

#### The Dawson Massacre

Unfortunately, as Woll and his combined forces were attacking the Texans, a relief force led by Nicholas M. Dawson and consisting of fifty-three men mainly from Fayette County Texas, tried to join up with Colonel Caldwell and were intercepted by the Mexican cavalry which had two canons. Dawson and his men were overrun by the 500 Mexicans who used the artillery pieces to defeat this small Texas group of soldiers. The result was that thirty-six Texans died and fifteen Texans were taken prisoner. Two of the Texans escaped. The Texans who surrendered were later taken by Woll and his forces to Perote Prison. Out of the fifteen, nine would later survive and return to Texas. After the battle Caldwell's troops buried the victims of the Dawson massacre on the battlefield where they fell.

Below is a Marker showing the Dawson Massacre:



In the Battle of Salado, the Texans had inflicted heavy casualties upon the Mexican force and they retreated to Mexico.

#### *Death of Stephen Jett*

*The Importance of a good horse, chased by Woll soldiers to draw them out, Comanches and Horse, James Matthey letter on horses and their life span and use.*

Stephen Jett died at the Battle of Salado Creek in 1842.

The death of Stephen Jett at the Battle of Salado is recounted by the Memoirs of Ruth Clarinda (Kuykendall) Jett. Mrs. Jett was the wife of William Glenn Jett who was a brother of Stephen Jett, James Jett, Woodson Jett and Ferdinand Jett, all who served as rangers in Texas. I obtained a copy of these Memoirs from the Texas State Archives but they are also reproduced in [An Early History of Fayette](#)

County by Leonie Rummel Weyand and Houston Wade. The Memoirs were initially published in the "Southwest Farmer and Investor" (No. 226) in May 1929. They are also reproduced in Jett Trails West by Lois M. Jett and Ernest C. Jett (Lois is my aunt and Ernest is my father). Below is the description of what happened to Stephen Jett at the Battle of Salado as recounted by Mrs R.C. Jett:

*"A brother of my husband, Stephen Jett was killed at the close of the battle. At the time he was living on the Medina river in Bexar County, and had gone to San Antonio to attend District Court, having been summoned as a member of the Grand Jury. The Mexicans came suddenly into town, capturing the entire District Court. Stephen and most of the members of the court were put in jail. The Texians rapidly gathered near what is now Government Hill to attack the Mexicans and soon a considerable force had collected. The Mexicans decided to start the attack themselves, before additional reinforcements could reach the Texians, and in the bustle and confusion and excitement incident to their going out to battle Stephen and a companion succeeded in freeing themselves. They procured Mexican sombreros, and finding their horses rode out undetected with the Mexican troops. Reaching the battlefield, they staked their horses and slipped over to the Texian side. Both sent through the battle without a scratch."*

*"After the fighting had ceased Stephen started back for his horse. His companion refused to go with him, and tried to dissuade him, saying the Mexicans had no doubt discovered their horses and would be waylaying the place for the riders. Stephen replied that his horse had taken him out of many bad places (as a Ranger), and that he was going to him. On reaching his horse (which he would not abandon) he was confronted by a body of Mexicans. He drew his six-shooter and succeeded in killing six of them, two officers and four privates—one for each load in his pistol—before he himself was killed. When found his body had been badly beaten with guns by the Mexicans. He was buried on the battlefield in a grave dug with bayonets. His horse was taken by the Mexicans but got loose, and after several weeks came back to his place on the Medina."*

There are some questions at least in my mind regarding the accuracy of the report given by Ruth Jett. The first is that I am not sure that Stephen was using a six-shooter back in 1842. Many of the Texas Rangers provided their own weapons and horses and other equipment. In 1842, the Rangers would have been using a Colt Patterson which is a five shot revolver not a six shot revolver. The Colt Paterson was produced by Samuel Colt in Paterson, New Jersey. One of its disadvantages was that the user had to partially disassemble the pistol in order to reload it. Beginning in 1839, changes were made to allow you to reload without disassembly. Most Colts manufactured between 1836-1839, were probably modified. As one can imagine, during an Indian fight there was scarcely time to disassemble and reload your pistol. Some rangers also no doubt carried two pistols.

According to a Wikipedia article on the Colt Patterson, here are the steps required to reload one:

1. Draw the hammer to half cock to free the cylinder for removal and rotation,
2. Push the barrel wedge from right to left until it stops against a retaining screw,
3. Pull the barrel and then the cylinder off the central arbor,
4. Fill the individual chambers with powder leaving enough room to seat a lead ball,
5. Using a special lever tool or the arbor, seat balls beneath the chamber mounts,
6. Replace the barrel, cylinder and wedge and with the hammer at half cock, place percussion caps on each tube using the Colt designed capping tool. The revolvers came with spare cylinders and the practice of the day was to carry spare cylinders loaded and capped for fast reloading.

As you can see, if you were in an Indian fight you might want to have two pistols and extra preloaded cylinders. If you had just one pistol and no extra cylinders, after five shots, you were at a great disadvantage to a bow and arrows.

The U.S. Army ceased using the Colt Paterson because they found it to be unstable and malfunctioned. The Republic of Texas bought 180 of these pistols and a like number of revolving shotguns for the Texas Navy. In 1843, when the Navy was disbanded, these handguns were made available to the Texas Rangers. However, these surplus Colt Paterson pistols were not made available until 1843 which was after the Battle of Salado in 1842. It is likely that the Rangers fighting in that battle were using weapons of their own and that weapon was most likely earlier Colt Paterson pistols which had been modified for faster loading. Below is a photo of the Colt Paterson:



Colt Paterson

(Note: Trigger does not become visible until pistol is half cocked.)

Samuel Colt's company went bankrupt in 1842, when it lost the government contract for the Colt Paterson five shot revolver. In 1846, Samuel Colt wrote Ranger Captain Samuel Walker about some ideas for a new Colt pistol. Walker was enthusiastic because the Rangers had used the Colt Patersons in 1844 and 15 Rangers had defeated 80 Comanches killing and wounding half of them. William Glenn Jett and James M. Jett may have been part of this Ranger Company. We know for a fact that they were definitely serving under Jack Hays in 1841 (James and Stephen in Hays Company) and 1844 (James and William Glenn Jett serving in Hays' Company). The result of the collaboration between Colt and Walker was the very successful and resulted in a popular six-shooter called the Walker Colt. The Walker Colt was a 44 cal. Repeated six-shooter

Here is a photo of the Colt Walker:





Colt Walker Percussion Six-Shooter.

In summary, the recollection of Mrs. Ruth Jett may be slightly faulty. The Colt Walker would probably have been used by her husband who was fighting in the Mexican War but not by Stephen Jett who died at the Battle of Salado.

Mrs. Ruth Jett, however, is not the only person who described the death of Stephen Jett.

Before we proceed to the next account, I digress for a moment to discuss the participants making up Woll's Troops. We have already mentioned the fact that General Woll commanded about about 1400 soldiers of which about 400-500 were cavalry. In addition, Woll utilized about 200 Indian Scouts who were mainly, but not exclusively, Cherokees. In addition, there were some Spanish families in Texas who were sympathetic to Mexico, many of whom left with Woll when he retreated back to the South side of the Rio Grande. This number of sympathizers has been estimated at about 200 while those participating in the Battle of Salado are estimated to be about 100.

As mentioned previously, a number of Cherokees participated in the Battle of Salado with their allies the Mexican Army. The relationship between the Cherokees and the Republic was not good. Although Sam Houston had been sympathetic to the Cherokees, most of the Texans were not, including the then President of the Republic of Texas, Mirabeau B. Lamar. Texas and the Cherokees had initially tried to enter into a Treaty but that treaty, despite the support of Sam Houston that it be ratified, was instead tabled by the Texas Senate on December 29, 1836. There were miscellaneous raids by the Cherokees in 1838 and 1839 including by certain tribes allied with the Cherokees such as the Kickapoos. In 1838, Thomas Jefferson Rusk with 230 Troops fought with a group of Kickapoos and destroyed their village. Also the Cherokees had massacred a group of settlers who believed that the Cherokees had allowed them to reap some crops which they had planted on Cherokee lands. This was known as the Killough massacres which involved killing 18 Texas settlers.

Moreover, there appeared to be alliances between some of the Latino Texans (some of whom were loyal to Mexico) and the Cherokees. For instance, the rebellion against the Anglos by a former Mexican official, Vincent Cordova was supported by the Cherokees. At the Battle of Salado, Cordova acted in the capacity of Colonel for the Mexican Army and led a mixed group of Indians and Mexicans who were former Texans. Cordova was killed at the Battle of Salado and according to one account, the death clothes of Stephen Jett was clothing belonging to Vincent Cordova.

In Spring 1839, certain papers found on a Mexican Agent in the Red River area supported the fact that Mexico was working with the Cherokees and other Indian tribes to rebel against Texas in exchange for recognition of certain tribal lands. On May 17 and 18, 1839 there was a battle between a group of Rangers and a combined force of Mexicans and Cherokees on the North San Gabriel River. At that battle, documents were captured showing that Mexico had been in contact with the Vincent Cordova and Chief Bowl, who was a Cherokee Chief.

The result of the deterioration in relations with the Cherokees resulted in Texans demanding that they leave Texas. The Indians agreed to leave but refused to sign the Treaty which stated that they would be removed from Texas under armed escort.

Ultimately there was battle between the Texans and the Cherokees known as Battle of Neches which occurred a few miles from the present Tyler, Texas. As a result of this battle, more than 100 Cherokee and Delaware Indians were killed and wounded, including Chief Bowl. Most of the Cherokees left the State but others such as Chief Egg and the some of the Indians who had fought under Chief Bowl tried to reach Mexico but were were killed at another battle at the San Saba River on December 35, 1839. Thus the Cherokees had been pretty much removed from Texas with many joining the Cherokee nations in Oklahoma area and others joining the Cherokees in Northern Mexico. It is with this backdrop, that it is easy to understand why a number of Cherokees accompanied General Woll when he attempted to retake Texas for Mexico.

Another Indian Tribe represented at the Battle of Salado Creek along with the Cherokee were the Comecrudo, who were also known as the Carrizo people. They were a Coahuiltecan Tribe meaning that they lived in the Rio Grande River Valley and were located on both the Texas and Mexican side of the Rio Grande primarily in the Mexican province or state called Tamaulipas. A map of that state appears below:



## Mexican State of Tamaulipas-Home of Carrizo Indians

Interestingly, there are some other accounts of the death of Stephen Jett at the Battle of Salado by those who were present at the time. It is relatively clear to me that both Stephen and his brother James M. Jett were present at the Battle. The account heard by Ruth Jett (Wife of William Glenn Jett) probably came to her directly or indirectly from James Jett. Another alternative is that James told William and he passed on the information to Ruth.

However, there are some other accounts. One is by James Wilson Nichols (1820-1891). Nichols served with Mathew Caldwell and was also a member of the Texas Rangers from 1838-1842 and was present at the Battle of Salado. His account confirms part of the account given by Mrs. Ruth Jett that Mexican General Woll on September 11, 1842 captured the town and the "whole court, judge, lawyers and jurymen with a few of the most prominent citizens..." According to Nichols, Stephen Jett's friend William Hesskew retrieved his body for burial. Both William Hesskew and his brother Moses Hesskew participated in the earlier battles with General Vasquez who had taken San Antonio in the Spring of 1842 and also participated in the Battle of Salado. Both at various times had been part of Jack Hays' Company of Texas Rangers. In addition William Hesskew (spelled Phonetically in the Rolls as "Eskew.") had been a part of Jack Hay's Initial Spy Ranger Company in 1841 of twelve men including James Matthew Jett and Stephen Jett.

More particular details of the Battle and the death of Stephen Jett were given by Miles S. Bennet who was also present at the Battle of Salado. Miles Bennet was the son of the Quartermaster of the Texas Army, Major Valentine Bennet. Miles Bennet also served with Jack Hays and was present and fought at the Battle of Salado. His account of the Battle was included in the Houston Post and Cuero Star dated 1898. (I have not seen the originals but have read excerpts published the Sons of DeWitt Colony, Texas). In Bennet's account, he refers to Stephen and James Jett as being Stephen and James "Jouett" but it is clear as to exactly to whom he is referring in that refers to their ranch (the "old stone ranch") in Medina and the fact that James was later murdered by Simeon Bateman. , Bennet was serving was in a battle position where he was able to count the number of persons involved in the attack by Colonel Cordova. He stated that there were "eighty five Cherokee Indians and renegade Nacodoches Mexicans." Bennet was one of the 15 men assigned to guard the Texas forces from an attack from that Col. Cordova's combined force of Indians and Mexicans (who in this instance were former Texans of Mexican descent).. Below is the account from Bennet:

*"While there and before the battle became very hot, two of our men, Steve Jouett, a San Jacinto soldier, now a noted settler from the "old stone ranch" near Medina and Simon Kocherell of Gonzales, passed the guard going down the creek. I was personally acquainted with them, and upon challenging them they said they were "going to shoot some of them Indians on their own account." Nothing more was thought of it at the time, as we all soon our attention fully occupied all along the front, but about the dusk of the evening Kockerell came in all wet and muddy with his arm broken. He stated that they found plenty of Indians in the brush below, some of whom chased Jouett in a westerly direction, while he himself, after receiving wounds, crawled into the creek under a leaning tree and narrowly escaped capture..."*

*During the discharge of the artillery, Captain Bird's order was "Lie low, boys, and be ready for the charge." The Mexican buglers well up in front sounded their clarines. Upon their approach Bird sprang up shouting, "Now, boys, let them have it," and the firing became general, compelling the foe to fall back to their canon leaving the ground strewn with their dead and wounded, their bugles and even their*

*muster rolls falling into our hands. These charges were repeated and the fighting on our right was severe, the enemy there being strengthened by a body of Carrizo Indians. A portion of them, however, were drawn off in the pursuit of Jouett and Kockerel....*

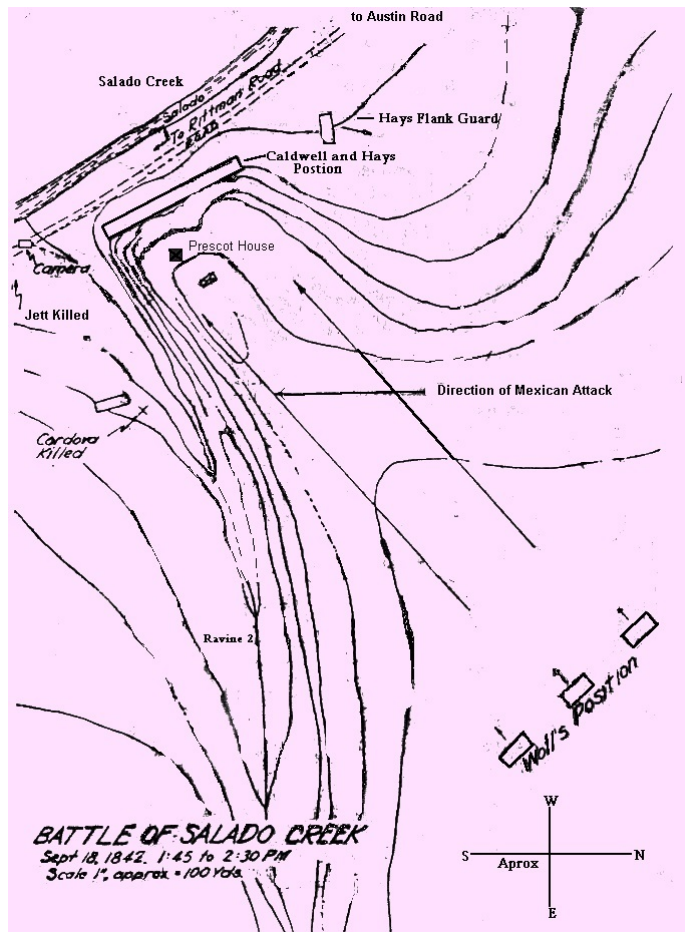
*Being almost certain of the death by Indians of Steve Jouett, his brother, Matt, and friends instituted a search for him and finding his poor mangled body stripped and scalped, brought it in, and taking garments for his grave clothes from dead chieftain Cordova, buried in on the bank of the Salado. These Jouett boys had been soldiers in the army of San Jacinto, and receiving land certificates for military service had located and established themselves near the Medina river, at that time unoccupied by white men. They were in constant danger from robber Mexicans and hostile Indians, and as early as 1838, they, with Arch Jones and William K. Hargis of Gonzales withstood a memorable attack of the Comanches, who harassed them for several days. Matt Jouett, with old Captain Simeon Bateman of Gonzales, was murdered several years later while traveling near Virginia Point."*

Other participants in the Battle of Salado gave varying accounts of the death of Stephen Jett. One of the participants in the Battle of Salado was Robert Hall, who was born in 1809, served with the Texas Rangers, and was present at the Battle of Salado. The story of his life was published in 1898 by "Brazos" who is believed to be a close relative of Hall. In the [Life of Robert Hall](#), the author states: "These Indians killed a young fellow named Jett who was trying to join us."

A similar account was taken by A.J. Sowell (1884) in the book [From Rangers and Pioneers of Texas](#). Sowell says, "Just before the fight commenced, one of Caldwell's scouts, named Jett, was cut off from the camp and killed by a small band of Indians, who were secreted in the brush down the creek

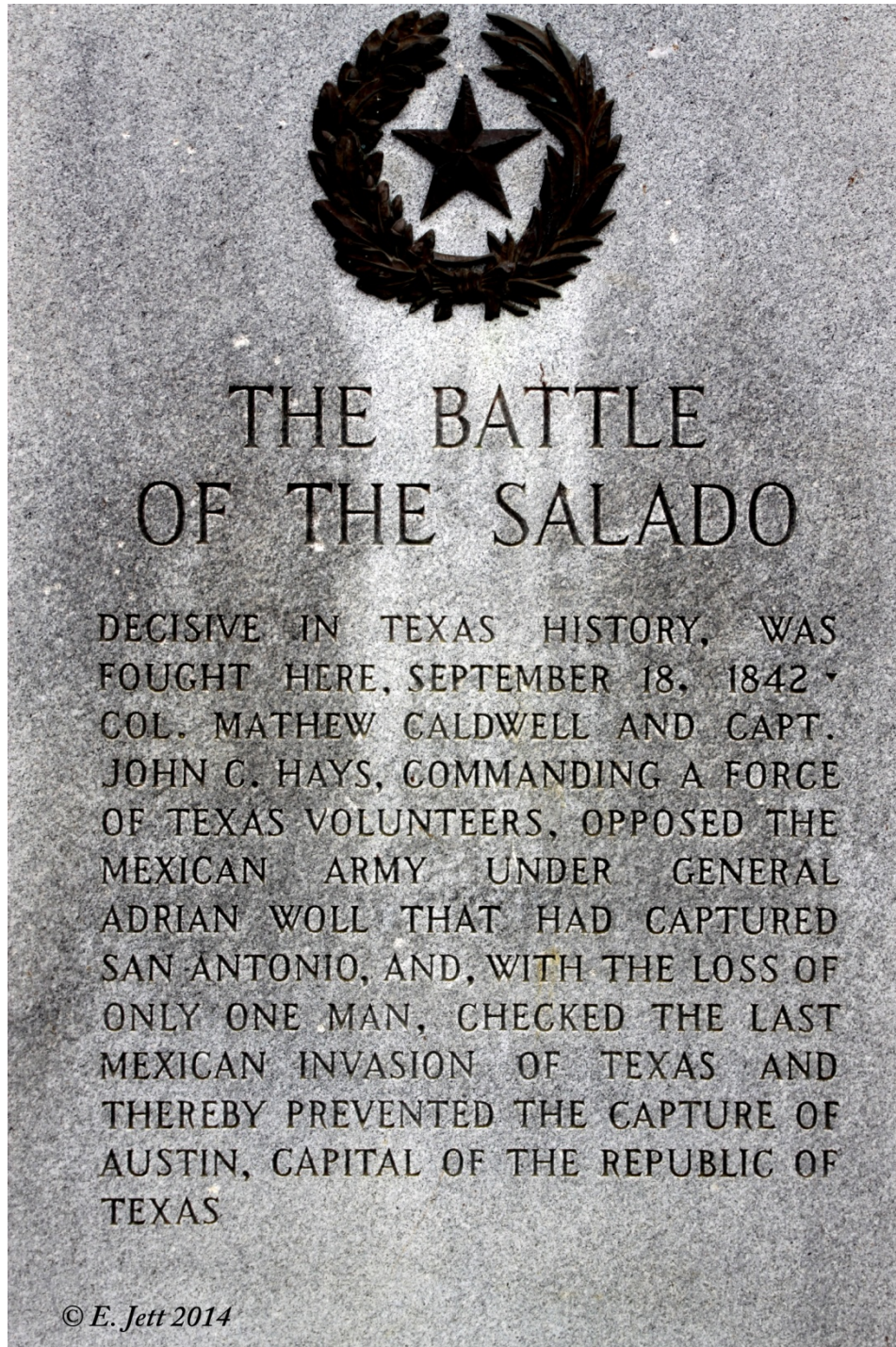
A somewhat divergent account of Stephen's death was given in an article entitled "Paul N. Spellman entitled "Santa Anna's Revived Invasion Plans Crushed at Salado Creek in San Antonio Express News of September 13, 1992. In that article he wrote: Only one Texan died along the Salado in the nearly five hours of the battle, Stephen Jett, a San Antonian, who had arrived late to the camp from town, tried to retrieve his horse during one of the onslaughts and failed, killing three Mexican soldiers before he fell. Ruth Jett said six and other contemporaries did not give numbers".

Below is a map of the Battle of Salado showing where it is thought that Stephen was killed:



This map shows that Stephen  
Was killed on the upper far left where it says  
"Jett killed."

Stephen Jett was the only fatality in the Battle of Salado Creek. Below is a photograph of a marker commemorating the battle which I photographed in San Antonio.



Marker of Battle of Salado Creek

Unfortunately, the “loss of only one man” was Stephen Jett and his name is not on the monument.

Later the Black Swan Inn was built on the grounds where the Battle of Salado occurred. Today, the Black Swan Inn is considered to be “haunted” because of past events there. Below is a fun write-up regarding a few of the ghostly events on this property as written by US Ghost Adventures:

*“On September 18<sup>th</sup>, 1842, General Adrian Woll, Sam Houston,, and his men massacred more than 60 Mexican soldiers during the Battle of Salado. These men were left where they fell. Only one Texan lost his life, Steven Jett, during the battle. One report tells of a supposed “re-enactment” witnessed by a guest who later discovered that no re-enactments were going on that day.”*

As a historian, I can assure you that Sam Houston was not at the Battle of Salado and as a Jett who has visited Black Swan Inn, I can also assure you that I did not see either Stephen Jett or his ghost there. Below is a photo of Black Swan Inn:



According to the account given by Ruth Jett, Stephen returned to get his horse which he had staked out on the Mexican side of the battle. When his friend tried to dissuade him “Stephen replied that his horse had taken him out of many bad places and that he was going to him.” Is this a likely statement? In light of Stephen’s job as a Texas Ranger, the time in which he lived and his personal predilections, I find this to be a very likely statement. A horse was a precious possession for a Texas Ranger. Both the Mexicans and the Indians had good, strong and fast horses. It was a good horse which kept you alive. In fact, it was fast horses which had kept the Rangers alive when they lured out the Mexican Cavalry. When the Rangers lured out Woll’s calvary, the race to Salado Creek was seven miles and the Texas Rangers were almost caught by Woll’s men. According to the Journal of James Wilson Nichols, Stephen Jett was involved in the chase by Woll’s calvary in pursuing the Rangers to Salado Creek.

In addition, Horses were often at a premium. Due to the theft of horses by the Mexicans and the Indians, keeping a good horse was difficult. In fact some soldiers could not get to the Battle of Salado due to the fact that they did not have horses. In one instance, two Texans got into a fight as to which would ride a horse to the Battle of Salado and both got so injured from the fight that neither could ride and another relative had to ride the horse to the Battle. Horses were in short supply—especially good ones.

As a Texas Ranger in the San Antonio area, you were expected to keep a good horse ready to ride on a moment’s notice. Jack Hays had organized a group of men to combat the Comanches who were called the “Minute Men.” These Texas volunteers were notified by the ringing of a Cathedral Bell and by the waving of a flag at the Court House. They were to be ready to ride within 15 minutes. In her Memoirs, Mrs. Maverick described the horse of her husband and the preparations that were made : “Every

volunteer kept a good horse, saddle, bridle and arms, and a supply of coffee, salt, sugar and other provisions ready at any time to start on fifteen minutes warning in pursuit of marauding Indians. At a certain signal given by the Cathedral bell, the men were off, in buckskin clothes and blankets responding to the call."

Stephen's brother, James, talked about the difficulty of keeping horses in a letter to their father, John Jett, on May 18, 1838 when he reports that probably 200-300 horses had been stolen from San Antonio and that both he and Stephen had at various times had their horses stolen. The value of a horse according to James was about \$100 to \$150 dollars. As a comparison, Rangers for a month's work got about \$90 per month or \$3.00 per day in pay. He further wrote: "If we can keep our horse here for four or five months, we think we are doing well."

To summarize, horses were a very important part of life in early Texas and were particularly important to Texas Rangers who either had to escape from hostile Indians and Mexicans or pursue marauding Indians and Mexicans. The horses of the enemy were often very good ones, and many enemies, especially the Comanches were outstanding riders. James M. Jett said in his letter to his father in his letter of May 18, 1838 the following regarding the Comanches: "They are as good riders as I ever saw in any country, and has fine horses as any people."

*1840 Texas-A Dangerous Place. Mexican Soldiers, Indian Raids and Depredations. Theft of animals. Banditos, Horse Thieves, fierce Indians. Letter of James Matthew. Story about James and having his house looted and being besieged several times. What James M. wrote in his letter about Texas not being quite safe yet.*

Texas, during the years of the Republic, was not a safe place. This was especially true of the San Antonio area and even more true on the Medina River area which was outside of San Antonio. At the time that the Jett brothers got their land on the Medina, they were the only Anglos living in the area. Moreover San Antonio was easy picking for Mexican soldiers invading including Vasques and Woll. Also there were bandits and Texas born Mexicans who had decided to be loyal to Mexico. As such it was not safe.

On one occasion the Jett brothers had been attacked by the Comanches. James also wrote about how he had gone to trade with the Comanches and had almost been taken prisoner. On another occasion, he and Stephen and some others had fought off Comanches for a couple of days on their property on the Medina River.

In one letter in 1838, James warned his family that things were still unsettled in Texas and that they expected the Mexicans to come back and try to recapture the territory. Between the risk from Mexican soldiers and Indian attacks, things remained dangerous.

Below is an account regarding James M. Jett who went by Matthew and on some Ranger musters is shown as "Matt." This is found in the Chapter entitled "Incidents in Southwest Texas" by J.W. Wilbarger's Indian Depredations in Texas:

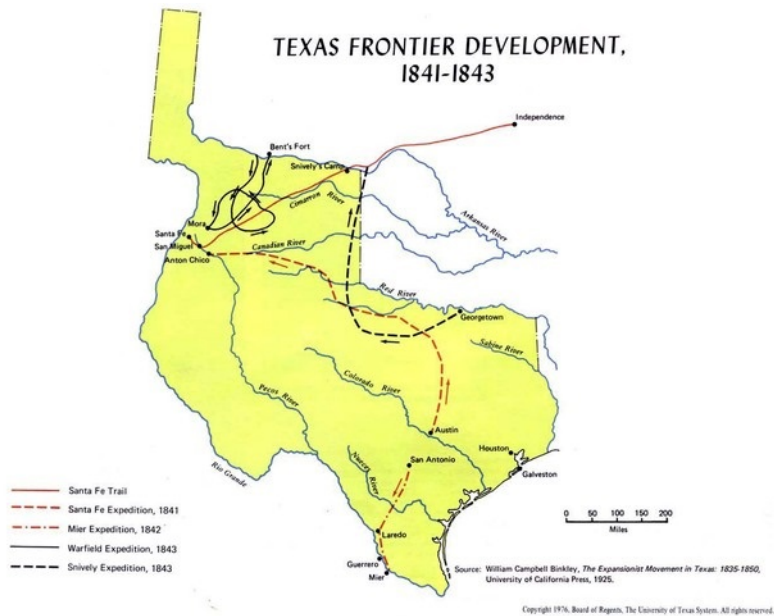
*"One day in 1842, Matthew Jett, who lived on the Medina river, in Bexar county, and was one of the early pioneers of that section, discovered three Indians approaching his house. He left the house and walked hastily away. The Indians entered it and began to plunder it at their leisure, supposing that they*



*had frightened Jett so badly that he would not venture to return—which proves conclusively they were not well posted as to the character of that gentleman. Whilst they were busily occupied in plundering the house Jett came back, stepped to the door and deliberately shot one of the Indians down. He then entered the house, knocked another over with the breech of his gun, and shot the third with a pistol as he endeavored to escape. In this way he succeed in killing the whole party. No man rendered more service to the country than did Mr. Jett while he lived.”*

### *Mier Expedition, Big Foot Wallace and Black Beans*

In late 1842, after the Battle of Salado, President Sam Houston (during his second term of office) sent General Alexander S. Somervell to make sure the Mexican Army had left Texas. The Texans with 700 men took the town of Laredo. Below is a map showing the location of Laredo.



Sam Houston had told General Somervell that he could invade Mexico if he thought the invasion would be successful. Somervell concluded that an invasion would be unsuccessful and ordered his men to return to Texas on December 19, 1842. Only about 189 of the 700 obeyed the order to return to Texas. The rest believing they would be successful and hoping for plunder moved ahead to invade Mexico. This group began what is now known as The Mier Expedition.

On December 20, 350 Texans under the leadership of William S. Fisher attacked Ciudad Mier. The Rangers serving under Ben McCullough ascertained that Mexican troops were in the area and advised against crossing the Rio Grande. The advice of the Rangers were ignored. Ultimately, there was a battle between the Texans and a newly arrived army from Mexico under General Ampudia. The Mexican Army outnumbered the 261 Texans ten to one. Ultimately Mexico won but there were 600 Mexicans killed and 200 wounded as opposed to 30 Texans killed and wounded; however the Texans ran out of

ammunition. Ultimately, the Texans were forced to surrender or they would be faced with “no quarter” and slaughtered similar to what happened at the Alamo. This was known as Deguello and is defined in the following manner by Wikipedia: “The *Degüello* is a bugle call, notable in the US for its use as a march by Mexican Army buglers during the 1836 Siege and Battle of the Alamo to signal that the defenders of the garrison would receive no quarter by the attacking Mexican Army under General Antonio López de Santa Anna”.

The 243 Texans were taken prisoner and proceeded on a forced march to Mexico City. On February 11, 1843, 181 Texans escaped from their captors but 176 were recaptured. The escape angered President Santa Anna of Mexico who ordered that all of the captives be shot. The Governor of the Mexican State of Coahuila refused to carry out this order and after some diplomatic negotiations with the United States and Great Britain, Santa Anna revised his order where only one in 10 would be killed.

Those to be killed would be determined by a black bean drawing where the prisoners after being blindfolded would draw from a jar where there were 17 black beans and 159 white beans. Those drawing the black beans were to be executed. The 17 who drew the black beans were executed. Those who survived (which included Rangers, Samuel Walker and Big Foot Wallace) were forced to do road work around Mexico City and were later sent to the infamous Perote Prison in the Mexican State of Veracruz where they were imprisoned with the survivors of the Dawson Massacre and 35 others which General Woll had captured in San Antonio before the Battle of Salado. Most of these prisoners were released on September 16, 1844 and made their way back to Texas from Veracruz by ship or overland.

Below is a famous painting by Frederic Remington entitled “The Mier Expedition. The Drawing of the Black Bean.”



The Drawing of the Black Bean

To the best of my knowledge, none of the Jetts from White County were involved in the Mier Expedition.

### *Death of James Jett*

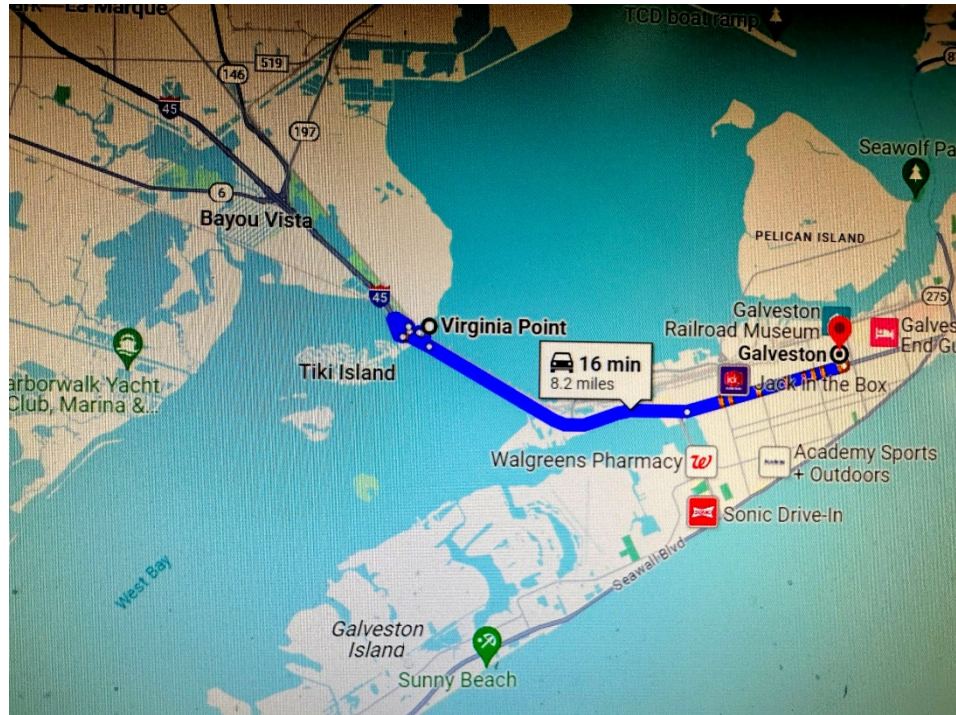
As we have mentioned earlier, Stephen Jett died on September 18, 1842 at the Battle of Salado Creek. His older brother, James, would die a little over three years later by being murdered as he made his way back to visit his family in White County, Tennessee.

Sometime in early January 1845, James M. Jett headed out to Galveston from Gonzales, Texas in the company of Simeon Bateman and John Schultz. Simeon Bateman was a very well-known Texan. He had been one of the famous Gonzales 18. These men held off 150 Mexican soldiers who had come to take the Gonzales canon. We have previous included a copy of the famous flag with the words "Come and Take It." This action allowed Texas to get enough volunteers together for the Battle of Gonzales, which was considered the opening shot of the Texas War of Independence. In addition, Simeon Bateman was very wealthy due to the fact that his family had 38 members when he came to Texas and he became one of the richest landowners in Texas. He had also been in various Texas battles and was a provider of beef to the Texas Army. Simeon Bateman was one of the few slaveholders in early Texas and on this trip he was heading to New Orleans with a great amount of money to buy slaves.

Accompanying Simeon Bateman was John Schultz. Schultz was German and had served in the Texas Army. Schultz worked with Bateman and accompanied Bateman and Jett to Galveston in order to bring their horses and mules back to Gonzales after Bateman and Jett had embarked upon the New York a steam paddlewheeler that made semi-monthly trips from Galveston to New Orleans. Schultz had not known Jett until the trip to Galveston.

James Jett was heading to see his mother and some of his other relatives who were living in Tennessee. James apparently had some possessions such as a watch from his brother Stephen. He also had on him about \$600 from his Ranger pay.

At the time that Bateman and Jett were heading to Galveston, Galveston was still an island and not connected to the mainland by a bridge. In order to get to Galveston, you had to go to Virginia Point and catch a ferry which sailed down Highland Bayou and across to West Bay to Eagle Grove on Galveston Island. Below is a modern day map showing Virginia Point and Galveston Island.



Jett, Bateman and Schultz camped outside not too far from Virginia Point. It was not surprising that the party camped outside. Witnesses later reported that Jett not only had been a ranger with Jack Hays, but that he had not slept inside during the previous three years. Bateman and Jett were killed early in the morning on January 10, 1845 about two hours before sunrise. Later, on January 10, Schultz rode to the Ferry House at Virginia Point. He asked the proprietor to watch his mule and proceeded to be taken by the Ferry to New Orleans. He later boarded the New York and headed for New Orleans and apparently later went to Mobile where he disappeared.

After the ferry had left with Schultz, a Dr. Martin, saw the bodies of Jett and Bateman but did not stop. Instead, he went to the ferry house and reported what he had seen. An investigation was then made. Jett was dead and Bateman was still alive. Two mules are still tethered to Jett by a lariat. Bateman was brought to the ferry house but died without saying a word.

Jett had been shot above the eye with a one barrel pistol. The pistol had been used to crush his skull and had broken in the process. In addition, his throat had been cut ear to ear. There had been some type of scuffle and Bateman had been shot with another gun.

At the scene of the crime was Jett's pistol also Jett had two silver watches in a buckskin bag which did not appear to be in working order. It was apparent that three people had slept there. In addition there were marks in the area evidencing the fight where Schultz had murdered Batemen. Of course pseeption had been riffled and there was no money.

Witnesses described Jett as being well muscled (not surprising because he had been a blacksmith prior to becoming a ranger).

Capture, Trial and Execution of Schultz

On May 1, 1845, a Grand Jury in Galveston issued two indictments against Schultz for murder. Galveston had a population at that time of about 4500 people. Officers tracked Schultz to New Orleans and then to Mobile, Alabama and then lost his trail. In the Spring of 1853, over eight years later, Judge Ballenger of Gonzales was travelling in South Carolina and learned that Schultz was living in Waterloo, South Carolina. Governor Peter Hansborough Bell of Texas requested that he be returned to Texas and Schultz was extradicted for trial. Two prominent Galveston attorneys were appointed to represent him. They first attempted to get Schultz declared incompetent; however, he was found to be competent. He was then tried by a court and found guilty and sentenced to death. His case was appealed to the Texas Supreme Court which held a session in Galveston in 1855. The Supreme Court concluded that the fact that the indictment had been issued by a Grand Jury under the Republic of Texas was not sufficient to reverse the trial. Further, the Supreme Court concluded that the circumstantial evidence was sufficient to justify his conviction and sentence.

On June 29, 1855, Schultz was placed on a wagon seated on his coffin and sent to the gallows where he was hanged.

Prior to his execution, Schultz confessed that he had also been responsible for the murder of Major Henry Teal at Camp Bowie which was located in Jackson County on the Navidad River. Schultz had been a soldier in the camp and during a rain storm had shot Teal through the tent in the middle of the storm.

Schultz is believed to have been a member of the outlaw band of John Murrell. Among other things, Murrell would kidnap slaves and sell them to other slave-holders. Below is a marker regarding the life of John Murrell.



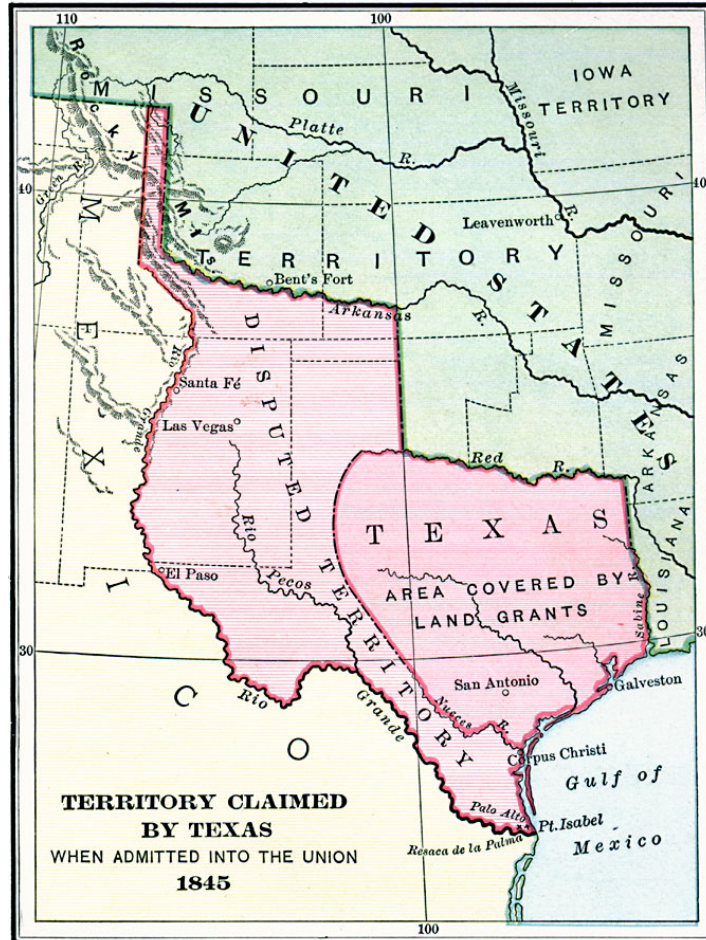
*Account of death of James Jett by Ruth Jett, Wife of William Glenn Jett*

Below is the account given of the death of James Matthew Jett given by Mrs. Ruth Jett, the wife of William Glenn Jett, who was one of the brothers of James and Stephen and who was a Texas Ranger.

*“James Matthew Jett and Simeon Bateman were assassinated by John G. Schultz, while asleep in their camp at Virginia Point, Galveston County, January 10, 1845. In January 1845 Mr. Jett left the ranger service with the intention of returning to Tennessee to visit his mother. In company with Mr. Bateman and Schultz, he left Gonzales for Galveston intending there to take a boat for New Orleans. He carried with him about \$600.00. Mr. Bateman had a large sum of money with him intending to buy some negroes at New Orleans. Schultz, a German, accompanied them for the purpose of returning their horses to Gonzales. While Jett and Bateman were asleep at Virginia Point, Schultz murdered and robbed them. Jett was shot in the head and instantly killed. Bateman was evidently left for dead by Schultz, but before dying he regained strength enough to write a note and give the name of his slayer. (Note: No mention of this mentioned in the court records which I reviewed.—ECJ) The two were found by Griff Jones, a brother of Enoch Jones. Schultz was not arrested for ten years. A young lady from Gonzales who had known Schultz was visiting in South Carolina and learned that he was there. She pointed him out to officers as the man who had murdered Jett and Bateman and he was arrested and returned to Galveston for trial. He was tried and given the death sentence. His case was appealed to the Supreme Court and was reported in Supreme Court Reports of Texas, Vol. 12 or 13, page 401. He was denied a new trial and before being hanged June 29, 1855, confessed that it was he who had assassinated Captain Henry Teal as he slept in his tent on a stormy night at Camp Bowie on the night of May 5, 1837.”*

#### *Texas becomes a State*

Texas was an independent Republic from 1836 to 1845. Mexico considered that Texas was a Mexican State in rebellion. Most Texans favored being a U.S. state in hopes that it would bring peace and cause the incursions from Mexico to cease. James K. Polk in running for the Presidency of the United States said that if elected he would annex Texas. John Tyler who was the outgoing President negotiated with Texas for statehood and on February 26, 1845 (just before Polk was to become President), the U.S. Congress agreed to annex Texas. In October 1845, Texas approved the annexation and Texas formally became a state on December 29, 1845. The annexation of Texas caused Mexico to break relations with Texas and ultimately led to the Mexican American War which continued to February 2, 1848 when Mexico surrendered its claims to Texas and the border between Texas and Mexico was set at the Rio Grande.



Texas in 1845  
When it became a State

### *Cholera Epidemic of 1849 and Death of Ferdinand Jett*

Ferdinand Jett was one of the brothers of James and Stephen Jett. He was born in 1823 and came to Texas probably in his early 20's. We have no record that indicates that Ferdinand served in the military. We do know from the accounts of Ruth Jett, wife of William Glenn Jett, that Ferdinand died of cholera in 1849. Here is the account given by Mrs. Jett:

*"The following year, 1849, we moved down on the San Antonio River in Bexar County near Mission San Jose, occupying the tract where Mission Burial Park now is. That year it rained incessantly, and there was a terrible outbreak of cholera. The man who turned the first furrow in our place died of it. His name is Broadaway, and I remember his wife came and got my father to go over to their house and wait on him. Father stayed there two days, when Broadaway died. Ferdinand Jett, a brother of my husband, died of it; and also Mr. Lackey and two of his children. At that time Mr. Lackey and his family lived in*

*Mission San Jose. They always tried to burn the bed-clothes after anyone died of the cholera, but it rained so much it was impossible to burn them, so they took to throwing them in the river. Where we lived there was a small dam and falls on the river, and every morning we could see bed clothes going over the falls.”*

In May of 1849, there were 500 deaths from cholera in the San Antonio area. In 1850, there were 3168 people living in San Antonio. In short, just over one person in six died of cholera in San Antonio in 1849.

*Life of William Glenn Jett (Photos of his rifle) Ranger, Civil War Col.*

William Glenn Jett was one of the brothers of James M. Jett and Stephen Jett and was from White County, Tennessee. He was born on April 5, 1821. By the time that he was twenty he had moved to Texas. We know that James M. Jett and Stephen Jett were serving as rangers under Jack Hays in 1841. There is an affidavit given by William A.A. (“Big Foot”) Wallace and John Young that William Jett was serving in Jack Hays between April 22, 1842 and August 31, 1842. William would have been 21 at the time.



Big Foot Wallace  
Ranger Captain and Texas Folk Hero

On September 18, 1842 Stephen was killed at the Battle of Salado. By 1844, William, who was 23, and his older brother James M. Jett were serving as rangers under Jack Hays. We also know that at various times during 1845, William served as a ranger under Jack Hays.

James M. Jett was murdered while he was on a trip back to see their mother and other family members on January 10, 1845. On April 28, 1846, William was appointed as administrators of the estates of Stephen Jett and James M. Jett.



On October 13, 1845, Texas became the twenty-eighth state of the Union. Shortly after that the United States and Mexico went to war which extended from 1846-1848. William, along with many other rangers and citizens of Texas participated in that war. At the beginning of the war Jack Hays had been made a colonel and worked closely with Zachary Taylor who was in charge of prosecuting the War against Mexico. With Jack Hays had come his Texas Mounted Volunteers, many of whom had served as Texas Rangers. William Jett began the war as part of this group under Hays known as Gillespie's Company Texas Mounted Rangers where he served as a private. By the first part of 1846, he had been promoted and was serving as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant of Conner's Company Texas Mounted Volunteers. Conner's Company of Texans are recorded as having fought bravely at the battle of Buena Vista. At that battle they were attached to Second Illinois Regiment.

At the Battle of Buena Vista, Santa Anna with 15,000 troops demanded the surrender of Zachary Taylor who only had 5,000 troops. Taylor responded to Santa Anna's demand by saying "Tell him to go to hell." Both sides claimed victory in the battle and Santa Anna withdrew his troops although the Americans expected another day of fighting. A significant part of the defense was led by Jefferson Davis and his Mississippi Riflemen. Davis would go on to become the U.S. Secretary of War under Franklin Pierce in 1853. Later Davis in 1861 would become president of the Confederacy. The United States ultimately prevailed against Mexico. Zachary Taylor would earn the nickname "Old Rough and Ready" as a result of this battle and would ultimately become President.

After the Mexican War, William was stationed in New Mexico for a while when he got dysentery. Later, he returned to the San Antonio area to recover.

When William Jett was 31 and after the Mexican American War, he married Ruth Clarinda Kuykendall on April 22, 1852. According to Ruth Jett, the wedding was a very large one with over 200 people being there and the wedding being held outside because of the number of people.

During the Civil War, William served in the Confederate Army. He enlisted in San Antonio on April 15, 1861 and served as a First Lieutenant in the Second Regiment of the Texas Mounted Volunteers under Col. John S. Ford in Company B. Later he was promoted to Captain and continued at that rank up to September 1862 and then to Major.

According to William's wife, William spent about a year in New Mexico in connection with the Sibley Campaign. This campaign was a very ambitious attempt by Brigadier General Henry Hopkins Sibley to occupy New Mexico, then move North to take the Colorado mines, then to march to Salt Lake City and then capture the seaports of Los Angeles and San Diego. Sibley began with 3200 men. He marched across Texas; however, Sibley greatly overestimated the amount of local support he would receive in his trek toward the West and the strength of the Union resistance. In addition, Sibley had a problem with alcohol and personally did not command any battles. He failed to take Fort Craig in New Mexico as he expected. Finally at the Battle of Glorietta Pass, although the Texans won the battle and controlled the Pass, the Union Forces destroyed the supply trains of the Confederates which resulted in them having to forage for supplies to stay alive and which further alienated the people of New Mexico. In short, the campaign turned into a disaster. Of the 3200 men, 500 were captured as prisoners and marched to Illinois. Another 500 died from the fighting and from disease. Sibley was considered by his soldiers to be drunk, incompetent and afraid to fight having not commanded any of the battles of the campaign and leaving one battle intoxicated.



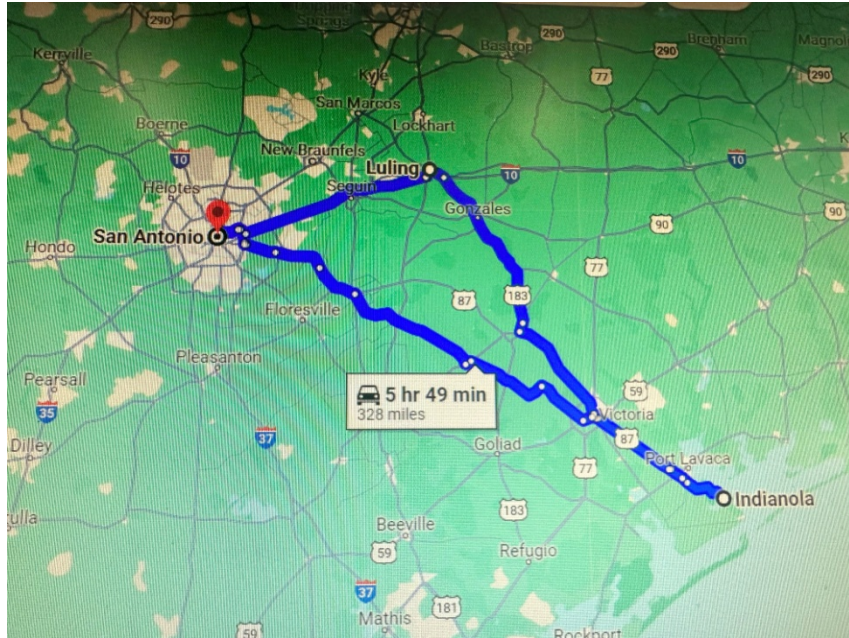
General Sibley



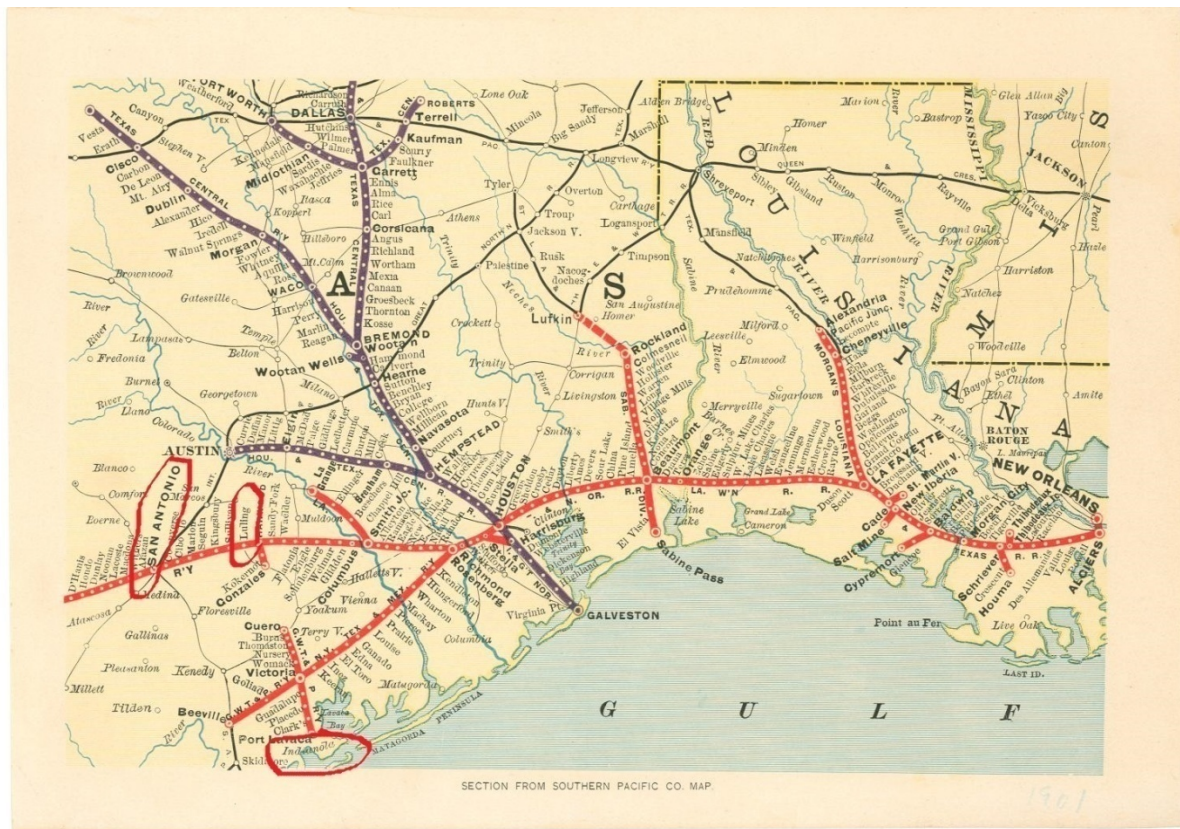
Map Showing Sibley Campaign

Upon William's return to Texas in 1863, one source indicates that William Jett was a Lieutenant Colonel for the Fifth Infantry Regiment of the Texas State Troops which was responsible for coastal defense in the areas of Galveston and Port Lavaca.

After the Civil War, William got involved in the freight hauling business. Immediately, after the Civil War, he ran a load of cotton to Brownsville, Texas. Later, William ran wagons between San Antonio and Indianola, Texas. He also ran freight from San Antonio to Luling, Texas where the Southern Pacific Railroad had a stop.



Below is a Southern Pacific Railroad Map where San Antonio, Luling and Indianola are marked in red.



William Jett died on December 24, 1872. In the Notes is a list of his children and other information.

### *Woodson Jett-Life and Death*

Woodson Phillips Jett was born in White County, Tennessee on March 11, 1829 and was one of the brothers of James, Stephen, William and Ferdinand all who had come to Texas. We do not know exactly when Woodson came to Texas or the exact date of his death. Although many genealogical sources report that Woodson died in 1851 it is clear that he died somewhat later, probably in 1865 or even later.

I believe that Woodson made his way to Texas by enlisting in the U.S. Army on July 6, 1847 at Nashville, Tennessee. He is shown as enlisting from Tennessee on June 26 by Captain Fulton. His age (he probably lied to get into the army) was 22. He was shown as 5'7 1/2" tall. He stated that he was a farmer. In short, instead of coming to Texas first and enlisting, I believe Woodson enlisted in Tennessee and then was sent to Texas and Mexico. Either during the Mexican War or immediately after it, he would have met up with William Glenn Jett and that probably got him employment as a Texas Ranger through him. Records show that after completing a year's service primarily in Mexico, Woodson was mustered out on July 26, 1848 in New Orleans, Louisiana. From there, he probably returned to Texas where he would have served in the Rangers with his brother, William Glenn Jett.

Woodson served in a number of Texas Ranger Companies. In 1849, Ranger Captain John Grumbles commanded a ranger station located on the Nueces River about 75 miles north of Corpus Christi.



Nueces River Area

Woodson was a member of Grumble's Texas Volunteers for at least 6 months in 1849. One of the primary purposes of this ranger company was to protect Texas against Indian attacks. We know that this company, according to a report from Captain Grumbles, was involved on one occasion chasing a

group of Indians who had killed some citizens. This particular pursuit involved a group of twenty-six rangers and continued for six days but the Indians finally escaped.

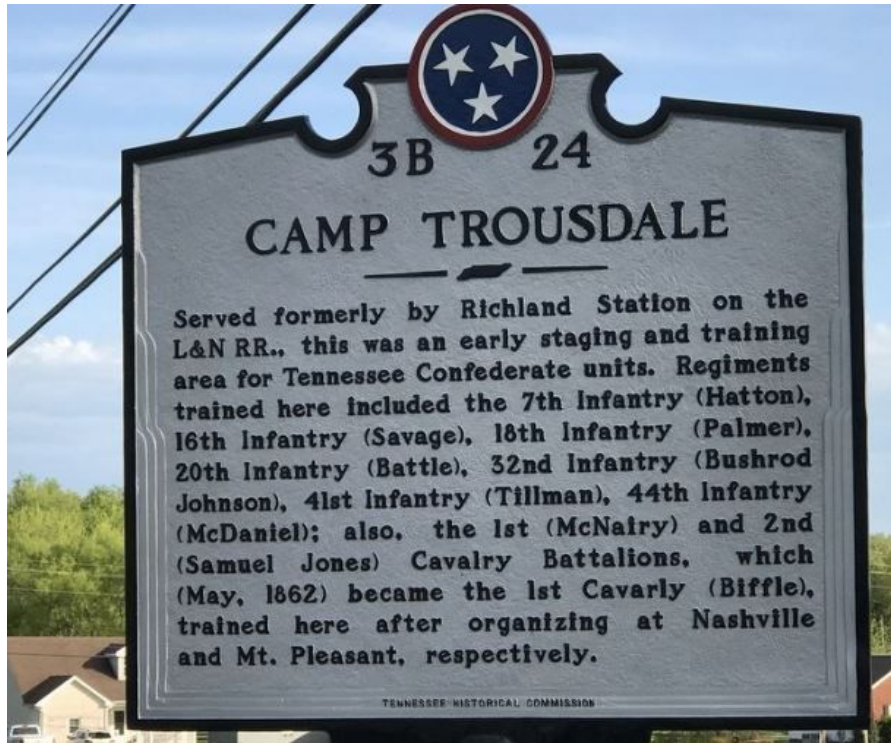
The First Lieutenant of Grumble's Company of Texas Rangers was James Bagby. When Grumbles' term of service came to an end, this company was then headed by James Bagby. Woodson Jett is shown as serving in Bagby's Company of Texas Mounted Volunteers for six months in 1850. He would have been 21 years old.

Woodson also served in William Gerard Tobin's Texas Rangers from October 12, 1855 through November 15, 1855. Tobin later completed his ranger term and became the Sheriff of San Antonio.

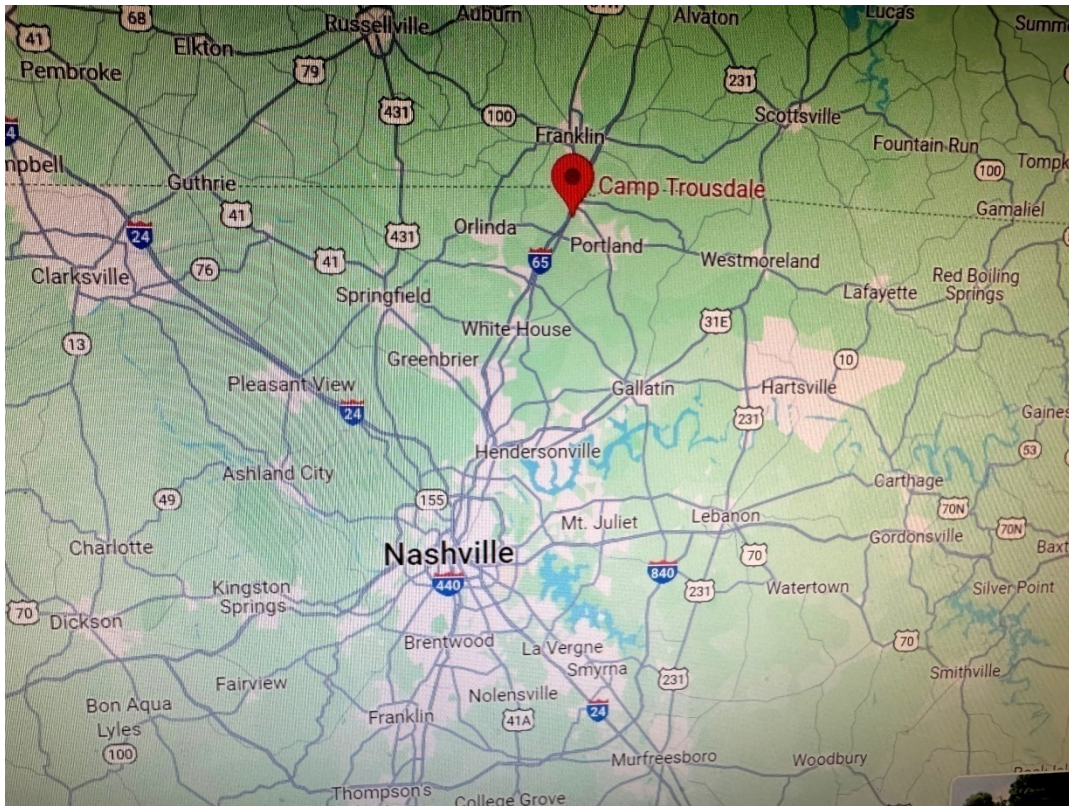
We know little else about Woodson Jett. Some genealogical sites report that he died by a fire when he was being held for drunkenness in a Texas calaboose (Spanish name for a jail). I have been unable to substantiate the exact time and manner of Woodson's death. However, I do not think these speculations are correct.

Instead, I believe that Woodson returned to his home in Tennessee. In the 1860 Census, Woodson P. Jett is shown as living in the household of Overton Jett (Archibald Overton Jett, the brother of Woodson, James, Stephen and Ferdinand). Woodson is shown as being 30 years old and his brother Overton is shown as being 32. Overton is shown on earlier records as being two years older than his brother Woodson. Further Woodson is on the tax rolls of White County, Tennessee in 1862. If one looks at the 1850 Census, Woodson does not show up in Tennessee because at that time he had gone to Texas.

It appears that Woodson enlisted in the Confederate Army at Camp Trousdale, Tennessee on June 21, 1861 as part of the Sixteenth Infantry. This camp was located at Portland, Tennessee not far from Nashville. It was used to train soldiers for the Army of Tennessee. The Sixteenth Infantry was led by Col. John H. Savage who had previously been a Lieutenant Colonel in the 11<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment of the United States before the Civil War. Also stationed at the Camp was the Second Cavalry.



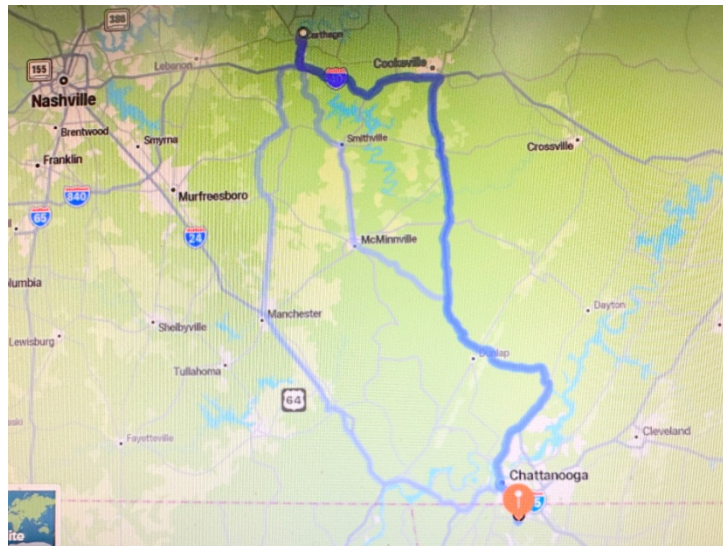
Marker for Camp Trousdale



Camp Trousdale, Tennessee  
(Near the Kentucky Border)

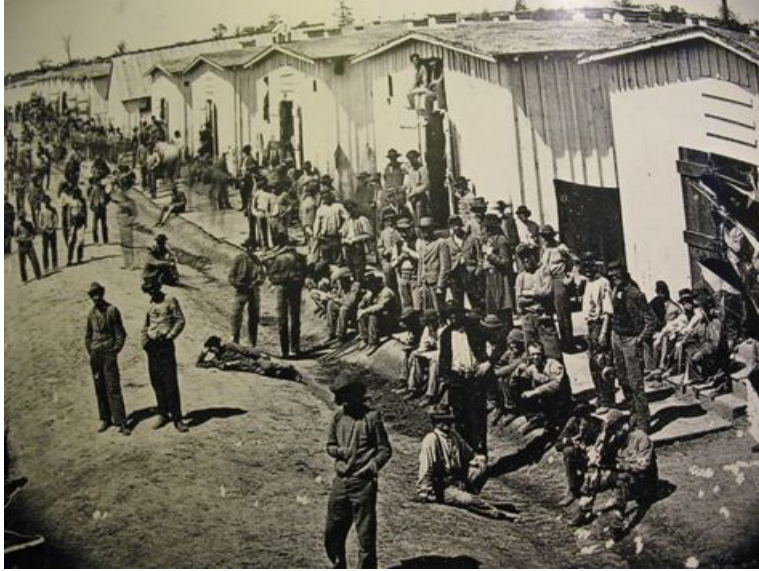
Sometime during the first part of the Civil War, Woodson transferred to the 2 Regiment, Tennessee Calvary (Confederate). At various times he served under Companies A and B known as Ashby's Calvary under Henry Marshall Ashby. There is another 2<sup>nd</sup> Confederate serving known as Barteau's Calvary. To make things even more confusing there is a Second Tennessee Calvary which is Union. Although, we are not covering Overton, Woodson's older brother, Archibald Overton served in 1863 with the Seventh (Bennett's Battalion) Calvary and with the Eighth Cavalry (Confederate) of Tennessee.

On September 1, 1863, Woodson was captured in Smith County, Tennessee. At this point the Second Calvary was part of the Confederate Army of Tennessee under General Braxton Bragg. The Union forces had won a couple of victories and had pushed the Confederate Army out of middle Tennessee. Woodson was caught in the Northern part of Tennessee which was then primarily under the control of the Union forces. Within a couple of weeks of Woodson's capture, the tide of battle would turn again with Bragg defeating Union forces at the battle of Chickamauga which was fought on September 18-20, 1863. The map below shows the North Smith County where Woodson was captured and the South at the Northern part of Georgia where the Battle of Chickamauga took place.

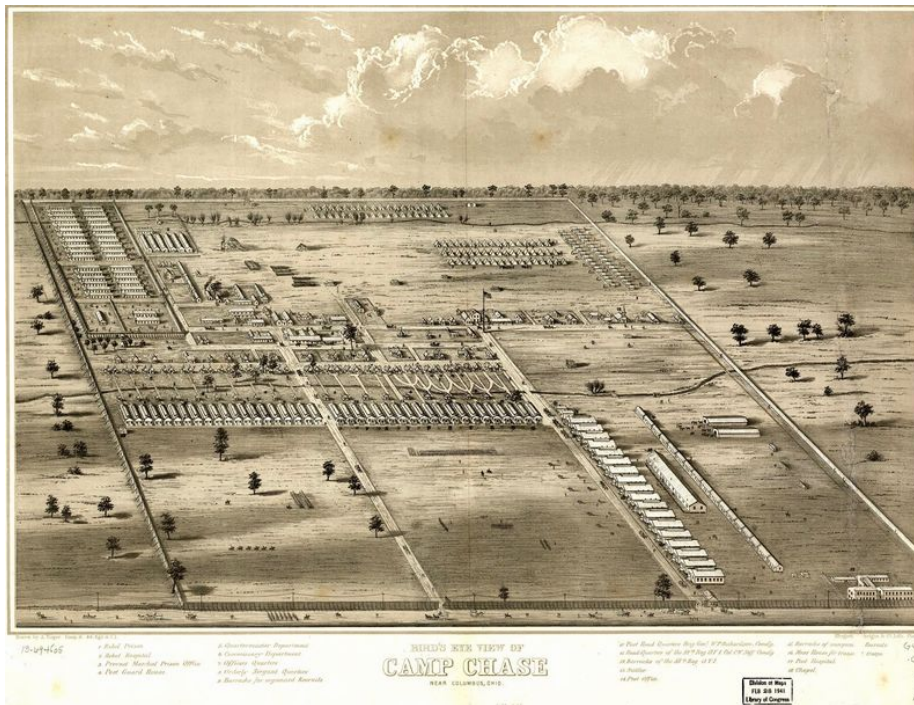


Smith County on the North  
Chattanooga and Chickamauga on the South

Woodson was caught by the Union Forces in September and record was made that he arrived at a P.O.W. called Camp Chase located in Columbus, Ohio on September 10, 1863. Camp Chase had been established in 1861 and had a large Union prison area for captured Confederates. From 1861-1865 approximately 25,000 prisoners were processed here. In 1865, 9400 men were held at this camp and over 2,200 Confederates are buried at the Camp Chase cemetery. Conditions at Camp Chase were difficult. Food was limited simply because the supply of food was lacking and union soldiers were fed before Confederate prisoners. In 1863, the year when Woodson was there, Camp Chase had 8000 prisoners. Because of crowded living conditions, there were constant outbreaks of small pox and other diseases with hundreds of Confederate Prisoners dying in the winter of 1863-1864.

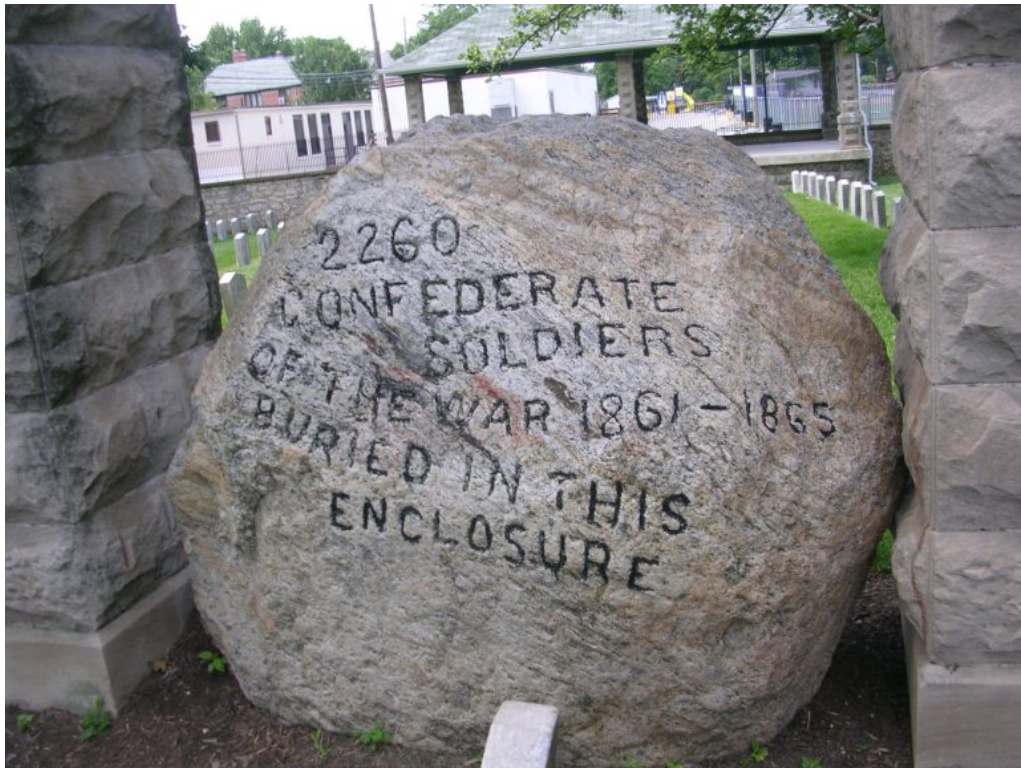


Camp Chase  
Columbus, Ohio



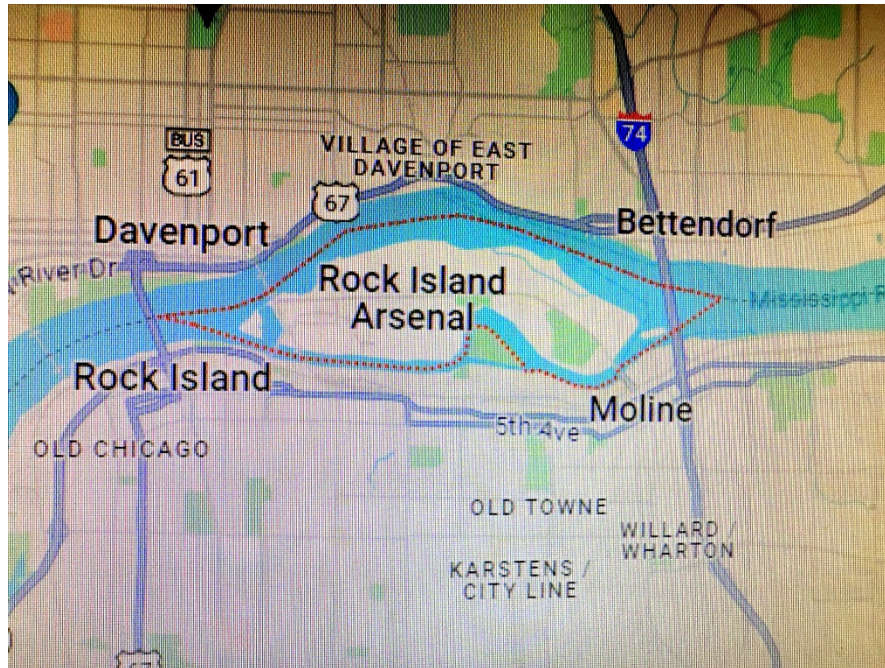
Drawing of Camp Chase





Camp Chase Cemetery

On January 4, 1864, Woodson Jett was transferred to the Rock Island Prisoner of War Camp which was located on an Island in the Mississippi, River near Davenport, Illinois. Below is a contemporary map showing the location of the Rock Island Arsenal where the P.O.W. camp was located.



The camp was made of 84 barracks. Each barrack was 100 feet long and twenty feet wide. Each barrack had sixty double bunks and would sleep 120 prisoners. In December 1863, 5000 Confederate Prisoners got there and the temperature at that time was 32 degrees BELOW zero. In addition, a small pox outbreak happened and killed 600 Prisoners within 3 months. Many of the first prisoners there were Battle of Lookout Mountain. The prison was designed to hold up to 10,000 prisoners at one time.

In 1864, rations were reduced and each prisoner got 10 days rations every 10 days. Living conditions were so poor that some newspapers compared the Rock Island Prison to be comparable to the infamous Andersonville Prison for Union soldiers in the South. Rock Island's poor reputation caused it to be used by Margaret Mitchell in *Gone with the Wind* as the place where Scarlett's love Ashley Wilkes was imprisoned.

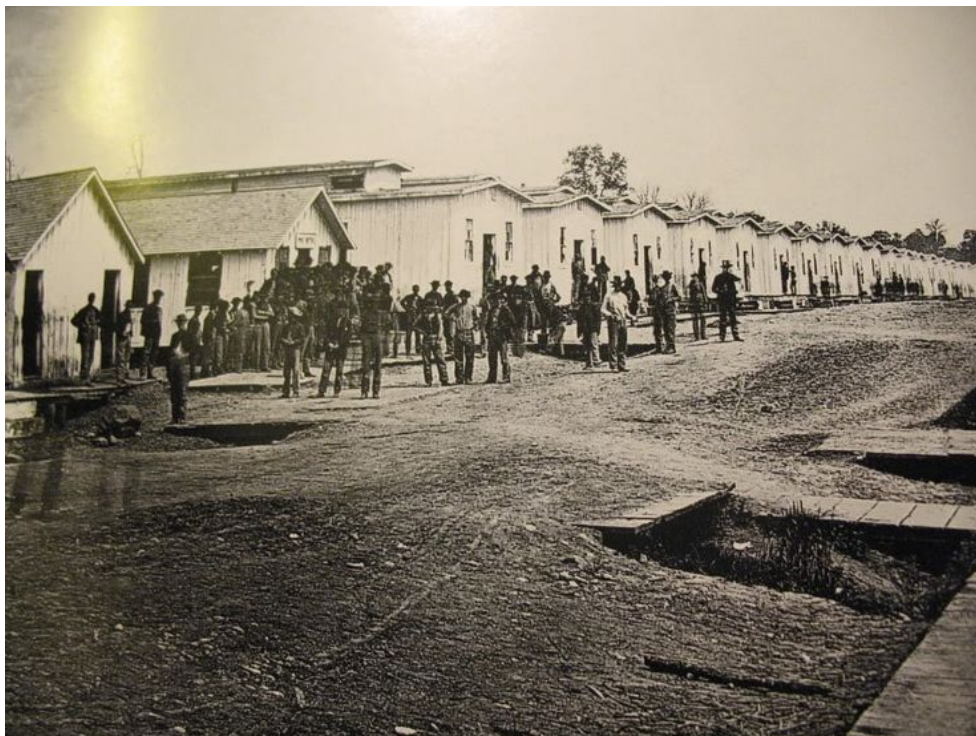
In March 1865, prisoners began to be exchanged and released. During the 20 months that the Rock Island Camp operated there were 12,400 men confined and during that period 1964 Prisoners and 171 guards died from disease. I have checked the Rock Island Cemetery lists and do not find that Woodson Jett died at the Camp.

More interestingly, out of the 12,192 Confederate prisoners of war, 5,581 volunteered to join the Union forces. These were contemptuously called by the South, "Galvanized Yankees." Most of the prisoners of war at Rock Island were from Tennessee and Tennessee had people who supported both the South and North. There were various reasons for the prisoners to join the Northern Forces. The most obvious reason was to avoid the horrendous conditions of being a P.O.W. at Rock Island. However, there were other reasons. Many Confederates had signed up only for one year of service and the Confederacy began to conscript new recruits for three years and extend the terms of those who had signed up for one year to an additional two years. Many of the those who joined the Union Army (but not all of them) were assured that they would not have to fight against their former comrades. Practically speaking, many of those who joined the army were sent out west. Keep in mind also that Woodson had already served in the U.S. Army during the Mexican War in 1847-1848. We find that Woodson P. Jett (also

spelled Gett) served in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of the US Volunteer Infantry. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment was made up entirely of Confederates who had decided to serve with the Union forces and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment came entirely out of the Confederate P.O.W.'s imprisoned at the Rock Island P.O.W. Camp where Woodson was imprisoned. In addition, many Confederates had no question as to the outcome of the war. The South had lost at Gettysburg. Some members of the US Volunteer Infantry also used joining as a way of deserting from the North while escaping from the Prison Camps and returning home.

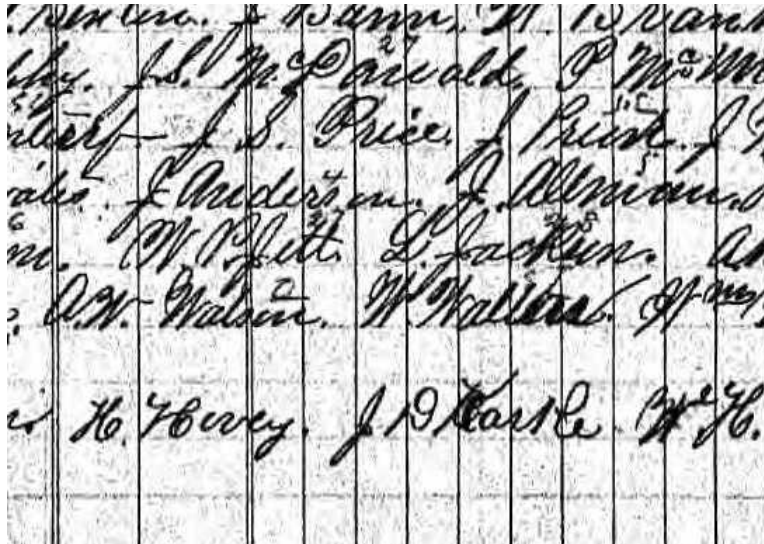


Rock Island P.O.W. Camp

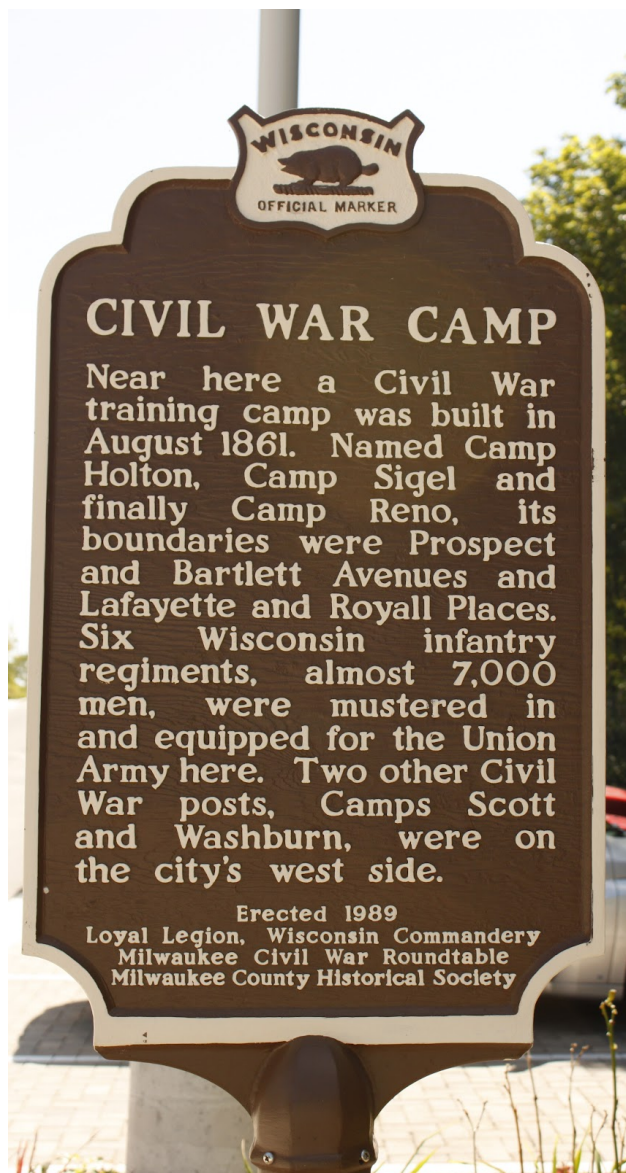


Another View of the Rock Island P.O.W. Camp

After Woodson joined the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment, I believe he was sent to be a Union Enlisted Man at a Camp in Milwaukee, Wisconsin which had been built in 1861 and went under various names including Camp Holton, Camp Sigel and Camp Reno. The Camp was run was Lieutenant Charles Freudenberg, who had been serious wounded at Gettysburg. Shown in the names of the enlisted men for this Camp is W.P. Jett in March 1865.



Partial List of Men at Camp Reno  
In Milwaukee, Wisconsin



Woodson was assigned to Company D. of the Third Regiment of Volunteers. Members of Company D also served as Union Soldiers at Cottonwood, Colorado which was a fort at a pass in the very Northern part of Colorado. I have not found any records indicating that Woodson made it to Colorado and the last records I have been able to find show him at Fort Reno in Milwaukee. The Third Regiment of Volunteers were mustered out on November 29, 1865. The Regiment served with distinction and had a low desertion rate. In 1866, Fort Reno was closed down and auctioned off.

As indicated above, I have no records of Woodson Jett after 1865. He would have been about 36 years old, saw service with the U.S. Army in Mexico, lived in Texas and saw service with the Texas Rangers, been in the Confederate Cavalry, spent time in two very harsh prison camps and served as a Union Soldier and "Galvanized Yankee" in the 3 Regiment of Volunteers. As a "Galvanized Yankee", he may not have felt comfortable returning home to Tennessee.

## Conclusion

The White County Jetts played a great role in early Texas History; however Texas was a frontier and a very dangerous place. Texas exerted a heavy price upon the sons of John and Mary Jett who came here for adventure and land. The sons who came to Texas were generally Texas Rangers and were actively involved in fights and battles to make Texas a safe place for settlers. Stephen Jett died in the Battle of Salado in 1842. James M. Jett was murdered as he was returning home to Tennessee for a visit in December 1844. Ferdinand died from cholera. William Glenn Jett died after serving as Texas Ranger and as officer in the Civil War at age 51. Woodson returned to Tennessee and embarked for a military life serving on both sides of the Civil War and then disappearing from history. The secret of growing old in the Jett family generally meant that you did not come to Texas and you certainly should not serve as a Texas Ranger. All Jetts can be proud of the services of the White County Jetts to the State of Texas and look with pride when they see their names listed on such monuments as the San Jacinto Monument helping make this great State a Republic and then a state of the United States.