

John Brown. It is rather amazing how the Brown Legend has not only set the Kansas writers into two hostile camps, but also how it has made and unmade politicians and even poked itself into the social circles.

Primarily the book is an historical criticism in which all biographies of Brown and articles about him, histories of Kansas, and the newspapers of the Brown period are taken up and analyzed. Needless to say that in arriving at the facts, Professor Malin has not made a hero of Brown.

*The Republic of the United States. A History. II.* By Jeannette P. Nichols and Roy F. Nichols. (The Century Historical Series, William E. Linglebach, Editor. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1942. Pp. xvii, 715. Illustrations.)

Volume two of this history of the United States is in part a reworking of material in the latter sections of *The Growth of American Democracy; Social, Economic, Political* published by the same authors in 1939. It is an admirable text for those who would emphasize the social aspects of modern American history, and its interpretation of the social approach to history is broad enough to include the political and military factors which produced the social responses here recorded and interpreted. The specialist in literature, the arts, or politics might find points on which to quibble, but the Nichols have brought together an overall picture which should be adequate for all normal classroom purposes.

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## The Georgia Historical Quarterly

VOLUME XXVII

DECEMBER, 1943

NUMBER 4

### THE FIRST REGIMENT OF GEORGIA VOLUNTEERS IN THE MEXICAN WAR

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The admission of Texas into the Union was the immediate and obvious cause of the war between the United States and Mexico, but a desire to extend the national boundaries was undoubtedly a factor which influenced the American people to welcome a fight with their hostile neighbors on the South. Furthermore, acts of cruelty credited to the Mexicans in the Texan war for independence, linked with the apparent lack of bravery and chivalry of the Mexican General Santa Anna, caused American opinion, according to editorial comment, to brand all Mexicans as persons of indescribable evil who should be wiped out.<sup>1</sup>

Though contrary opinion has been expressed for many years, President James K. Polk did not want the war with Mexico. In the first place, it is almost preposterous to place the responsibility of the war on a man who was both uninspiring and uninspired. He had neither the temperament nor genius to play the role of a brilliant villain, nor a daring and unscrupulous player upon the chess board of pan-American politics. He has been called Polk, The Mendacious, but in reality he should rather have been known as Polk, The Mediocre. All the President's confidential orders to the government, even the sealed orders to Commodore Sloat in the Pacific, were emphatically unwarlike in

1. Justin H. Smith, *War With Mexico* (2 vols., New York, 1919), I, 117-119, 123-125.

tone. When he sent John Slidell to Mexico to negotiate for the purchase of California and New Mexico, the basis of the President's instructions in dealing with the Mexican Government was that rather than precipitate a war for the sake of obtaining California, he was determined to drop the matter until a more propitious opportunity presented itself.<sup>2</sup>

While Polk was using every rational method to conciliate Mexico with the cooperation of the State Department, popular opinion, in favor of war, was working itself into a white heat. The expansionists wanted not only California but also New Mexico. These brass-throated proponents of Manifest Destiny embarrassed the Polk Administration on every hand, and the President was forced to abandon his policy of peace and appeasement when the situation developed into a crisis as a result of General Zachry Taylor's march across the Nueces River.<sup>3</sup>

There was a stretch of territory sixty miles wide between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande which both governments claimed. For more than a century the Nueces had been the boundary of Texas, but when Santa Anna consented to the independence of Texas he also agreed that the Rio Grande would henceforth be the boundary line between Texas and Mexico. This agreement was repudiated by the Mexican Government. After the annexation of Texas the United States Government considered the territory its own property. Early in 1846, General Zachry Taylor was ordered to take possession of the disputed area. In the eyes of the Mexicans this was an act of invasion. A Mexican military force crossed the Rio Grande and fell upon a reconnoitering party belonging to Taylor's command. All the Americans were either killed or captured. Here

2. Smith, *War With Mexico*, I, 128-134, note 22; George L. Rives, *United States and Mexico, 1821-1848* (2 vols., New York, 1913), II, 68-80.

3. Smith, *War With Mexico*, I, 138-155.

was the opportunity for war, quite seasoned with the sauce of plausibility, which the expansionists lost no time in using.<sup>4</sup>

On May 11, 1846, President Polk presented his message to Congress urging war with Mexico. He emphasized Mexican aggressions and declared that Mexico "has invaded our territory and has shed American blood on American soil," and that that government was forcing his hand. To justify his request for a declaration of war, he said:

As war exists, and notwithstanding all our efforts to avoid it, exists by the act of Mexico herself, we are called upon by every consideration of duty and patriotism to vindicate with decision and honor the rights and interests of our country . . . I invoke the prompt action of Congress to recognize the existence of war and to place at the disposal of the Executive the means of prosecuting the war with vigor and thus hastening the restoration of peace.<sup>5</sup>

The message was met with opposition in the Senate because a group led by John C. Calhoun refused to swallow the President's explanation that Mexico was the aggressor. But all efforts to delay consideration of the war issue, to allow for further investigation, were lost in the prompt and positive action of the House of Representatives. The House whipped a bill into shape almost immediately which proposed that Polk should be authorized to accept volunteers and repel invasion. The House passed the bill 174 to 14, and the Senate 40 to 2.<sup>6</sup> The rapidly growing war fever did not permit calm deliberation, and provisions were made for a first class war.

The bill of May 13th gave the President the authority to use the army, navy, the militia, and not more than 50,000 volunteers, who would serve twelve months

4. Smith, *War With Mexico*, I, 141-148, 145-160; Rives, *United States and Mexico, 1821-1848*, II, 118-127, 185-186.

5. J. D. Richardson, comp., *Messages and Papers of the Presidents* (10 vols., New York, 1897), VI, 2292-2298.

6. Smith, *War With Mexico*, I, 188; *Congressional Globe*, 29th Cong., 1st sess., 257, 912.

after reaching the rendezvous, "or to the end of the war unless sooner discharged," to expend not more than \$10,000,000 to put the navy on a war footing, and to order a general increase in the rank and file of the regular army.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, the President issued a proclamation in which he announced an appeal had been made to "the last resort of injured nations." The impression had been spread abroad that Taylor's army was in peril. This gave impetus to the rising enthusiasm in favor of the war. Also, the Mexicans were commonly regarded as cowardly and inefficient. Therefore, very few Americans counted on them holding out as long as they did. This was evidenced by the enlistment period described in the War Bill.

It was determined by the President and his Cabinet that the force of 50,000 volunteers to be called should be "assigned to each state and territory in the Union so as to make each feel an interest in the war."<sup>8</sup> Of this number 20,000 were to be called out for immediate service. These were taken "from the Western and Southwestern States," which included Texas, Arkansas, Illinois, Missouri, Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, and Georgia. The remaining 30,000 "to be organized in the other states and territories and held in readiness subject to the call of the Government."<sup>9</sup>

Instead of retaining control of the organization and officering of the regiments, the Government intrusted this work to the state, and, as a rule, the men chose their own officers. Generals were to be taken from the militia, although they would be under no obligation to serve more than three months and might withdraw in the midst of a campaign. And there were no pro-

7. Smith, *War With Mexico*, I, 190; *Congressional Globe*, 29th Cong., 1st sess., 912.

8. Allen Nevins, ed., *Polk: The Diary of a President, 1845-1849* (New York, 1929), 95. Hereinafter cited as *Polk, Diary*.

9. *Ibid.*, 93, 95.

visions for filling vacancies resulting from death or discharge. This system of army organization naturally weakened military morale, discipline, and integration. Such as it was, however, the system went promptly into effect. Another factor that helped matters very little was Polk's personal opinion of General Winfield Scott which was based upon prejudice and political jealousy. General Scott took the war with seriousness and wanted to make elaborate preparations, but Polk believed the war would be short and easy, and he did not seem to appreciate the time it required to outfit an army for field service.<sup>10</sup> Such dissension between the Army Command and the White House, and inadequate military organization gave no promise of the ultimate victory. Sheer force and strength of man power opposing a Mexican army, appallingly ignorant of tactics and the use of artillery, won the war for the United States, and not military discipline and civilian cooperation.

On May 15, 1846, William L. Marcy, Secretary of War, sent requisitions for volunteers to the governors of the eleven "Western and Southwestern States." In Kentucky the quota of the state was completed by May 26, and the governor of that state stopped the volunteering by proclamation. Tennessee called for 3,000 and 30,000 responded. As none would retire, selection was made by lot or ballot. In the Gulf States many feared that not enough citizens would remain at home to police the Negroes.<sup>11</sup> North Carolina offered more than three times her quota, and Ohio, which looked with disfavor on the annexation of Texas and the war with Mexico, regarding these as measures favorable to slavery, within two weeks after the requisition for volunteers arrived, had three thousand men under arms and marching to the rendezvous.

10. Smith, *War With Mexico*, II, 318; *Polk, Diary*, 99-102.

11. Smith, *War With Mexico*, I, 195.

On May 22, 1846, George W. Crawford, Governor of Georgia, addressed a letter to Secretary of War William L. Marcy from which the following is quoted:

I have had the honor to receive yours of the 16th inst. in which by the authority of the President of the United States, a requisition is made on this state for a regiment of infantry or riflemen composed of volunteers and designed for the war with Mexico. I had anticipated this requirement by issuing an order on the 14th inst. which has been promptly responded to by a number of volunteer companies sufficiently numerous to supply the present requisition. They were, however, composed of infantry, Cavalry, and rifle companies, and hence, I have called for a regiment of infantry and doubt not that the call will be promptly obeyed. Some delay will occur in consequence of organizing the companies according to the requirements of your Department. Without, therefore, designating the day when the regiment will be ready for service, I shall indulge the hope of being able to report fully in the course of ten days.<sup>12</sup>

This letter gives, in brief, the Governor's plan of organizing the Georgia troops for service in Mexico. On the same day that this letter was dispatched to Washington, Crawford caused to be published in the newspapers of Georgia a call for volunteers to meet the requisition order.<sup>13</sup> Carrying through with his program, he then ordered the Central of Georgia Railroad, the Georgia Railroad, and the Western and Atlantic Railroad to stand by in readiness to transport troops to the appointed rendezvous from points along the respective routes.<sup>14</sup> In his letter of May 22, to Secretary Marcy, the Governor agreed that Columbus should be "the place of rendezvous," because of its advantageous position for the routing of volunteers to Mexico.<sup>15</sup>

Between May 22 and June 10, the day set for all designated companies to meet in Columbus, many military organizations over the state offered them-

12. Governor George W. Crawford to William L. Marcy, May 22, 1846, in Governor's Letter Book, 1843-1846. (MS. in Georgia State Department of Archives and History, Atlanta), 707. Hereinafter cited as Letter Book.

13. Crawford to J. R. Brooks, Major E. P. Howell, and John Wofford, in Letter Book, 718.

14. Crawford to R. R. Cuyler, *ibid.*, 710.

15. *Ibid.*, 707.

selves for service. The first ten companies to meet the War Department regulations were chosen. They were: the Canton Volunteers, of Cherokee County; the Richmond Blues, of Augusta, Georgia; the Macon Guards, of Macon, Georgia;<sup>16</sup> the Crawford Guards; the Colubus Guards; and the Georgia Light Infantry—all from Columbus, Georgia; the Fannin Avengers, of Pike County; the Kennesaw Invincibles (also called "Rangers"), of Cobb County; the Irish Jasper Greens, of Savannah, Georgia; and the Sumter Volunteers, of Americus, Georgia.<sup>17</sup> Each company was composed of between 64 and 80 men commanded by a captain elected by the company members.<sup>18</sup>

Continuous rains between June 7 and 14 prevented the gathering of the companies at Columbus on June 10, the designated date, but they were all eventually assembled in camp before June 20.<sup>19</sup>

The strength of the regiment, which was divided into two battalions of five companies each, was 910 men. This number filled the requirements of the requisition, though the newspapers voiced the opinion that more troops would be needed.<sup>20</sup>

Governor Crawford proceeded to Columbus "so that commissions may immediately issue to the officers of

16. John C. Butler, *Historical Record of Macon and Central Georgia* (Macon, 1879), 171.

17. *Southern Recorder* (Milledgeville, Georgia, 1825-1870), June 23, 1846, quoting from the *Columbus Democrat*.

18. Crawford to Marcy, June 1, 1846, in Letter Book, 714-715. The Company commands were: Richmond Blues, Capt. D. W. Dill (Augusta); Irish Jasper Greens, Capt. Henry Rootes (Savannah); Jackson (Savannah), Capt. Isaac Holmes (Macon, Bibb County); Fannin Avengers, Capt. H. J. Sargent (Griffin); Columbus Guards, Capt. P. T. Schley, Crawford Guards and Georgia Light Infantry, Capt. J. S. Calhoun (Muscogee County); Sumter Volunteers, Capt. W. H. Crawford (Americus); Kennesaw Rangers, Capt. Allison Nelson (Marietta); Canton Volunteers, Capt. Kennedy Gramling (Canton, Cherokee County)—Governor Crawford to officers in command of the First Regiment of Georgia Volunteers, June 3, 1846, *ibid.*, 712; Sarah B. G. Temple, *The First Hundred Years, A Short History of Cobb County* (Atlanta, 1935), 529-530; Lloyd G. Marlin, *History of Cherokee County* (Atlanta, 1932), Appendix; Charles C. Jones, Jr., *History of Augusta, Georgia* (New York, 1890), 175; Nancy Telfair, *A History of Columbus, Georgia, 1829-1928* (Columbus, 1929), 74-78, complete regimental roster; Charles C. Jones, Jr., *History of Savannah* (New York, 1890), 349-350; Allen D. Candler and Clement A. Evans, eds., *Cyclopedia of Georgia* (3 vols., Atlanta, 1906), II, 578.

19. Crawford to Marcy, June 20, 1846, in Letter Book, 741-743.

20. Crawford to Capt. J. W. Anderson, Savannah, June 3, 1846, *ibid.*, 717.

the line as soon as elected."<sup>21</sup> Those officers chosen by the men assembled at Columbus were: Henry Rootes Jackson of the Jasper Greens, Colonel of the Regiment;<sup>22</sup> Thomas Y. Redd, Lieutenant-Colonel; Charles J. Williams, Major; and John Forsyth, Adjutant.<sup>23</sup> The Governor addressed the Regiment, encouraging them to illustrate the name of Georgia in Mexico.<sup>24</sup>

In the absence of a United States officer at Columbus, Crawford appointed Col. J. B. Hoxey to inspect and muster in the ten companies for Mexican service. While Col. Hoxey was engaged in this duty, the Adjutant of the United States appointed Major R. D. A. Wade to carry out the same duty. Hoxey promptly gave way to Wade, but Crawford protested vigorously to Washington, and wrote Major Wade requesting him not to muster the troops and undo what Hoxey had already accomplished. He pointed out that this might lead to the dissolution of the regiment.<sup>25</sup> The government appointee remained at his post and completed the unfinished work of Hoxey. This was the first of many illustrations of friction between Georgia and the Federal Government on questions of recruiting and military organization that were to cover the entire period of the war.

In the meantime a body of men was organized in Bibb County for service in the regular Army of the United States. They left for Mexico on June 20 under the command of Lieut. Oliver Hillhouse Prince. But due to the illness and resignation of most of its officers, this company fought throughout the war under the command of Capt. Duncan L. Clinch.<sup>26</sup>

21. Crawford to Marcy, June 1, 1849, *ibid.*, 714-716.

22. Quotation from the *Savannah News*, June, 1916, in *Georgia Scrap Book*, No. 4 (Georgia State Department of Archives and History, Atlanta), 77.

23. Lucian L. Knight, *Georgia and Georgians* (6 vols., New York, 1917), II, 688.

24. *Southern Recorder*, June 23, 1846.

25. Crawford to Major R. D. A. Wade and Marcy, June 20, 1846, in *Letter Book*, 731-743. Volunteers in that day, organized in such state and local units, were not bound by or subject to rigid discipline.

26. J. C. Butler, *Historical Record of Macon and Central Georgia*, 176.

All mustering and organization complete, the First Georgia Regiment was ordered to join the land forces operating against Mexico at Santiago, Brazos, and Point Isabel.<sup>27</sup> The men marched out of Columbus on foot and proceeded in this manner to Chehaw, Alabama, from which place they reached Montgomery by train. At Montgomery, the Regiment was put aboard a steamer for transport down the Alabama River to Mobile. At Mobile all of the men, who were not by this time either too ill or for other reasons unable to proceed with the regiment, embarked on the steamer *Joseph Day* which took them across the Gulf of Mexico to Brazos Island, near the mouth of the Rio Grande. After a two-weeks encampment, the Regiment, on foot, followed the Rio Grande to Camp Belknap, United States troop concentration center.<sup>28</sup> A few weeks were spent there in an effort to restore the health of the men which had become weakened by climate and bad living conditions. Thence the Georgia troops were ordered to Carmargo to await instructions. They proceeded up the river, some on foot and some by boat.<sup>29</sup>

Even before the Georgia Regiment set out for Mexico, misfortune and tragedy began to haunt the men. From Mobile Col. Jackson wrote Governor Crawford that many of the men had become so ill at Columbus that it was necessary to leave them behind when the Regiment marched out of town.<sup>30</sup> The Georgians, unable to adapt themselves to the hardships of the road, inadequate sanitation, and the change of climate,

27. Crawford to Marcy, June 20, 1846, in *Letter Book*, 741-743.

28. Rives, *United States and Mexico, 1821-1848*, II, 251-252: "With the exception of two regiments, one from Georgia and one from Alabama, and a battalion raised in and near Baltimore, the troops were all from the Mississippi Valley—Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Mississippi, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Louisiana."

29. Quotation from the *Macon Telegraph*, June 20, 1916, in *Georgia Scrap Book*, No. 4, p. 78; Butler, *Historical Record of Macon and Central Georgia*, 172; Rives, *United States and Mexico, 1821-1848*, II, 253: "On July 30, Taylor issued orders for the movement of such of the volunteers as were destined to join the advance, consisting of two Kentucky regiments, two Ohio regiments, two Tennessee regiments, and the Baltimore battalion. The rest of the volunteers were to remain near Matamoraa."

30. Crawford to Col. Henry R. Jackson, July 1, 1846, in *Letter Book*, 734.

fell ill in large numbers. Between July 28 and August 1 the number on the sick list jumped from 127 to 160.<sup>31</sup> Death by dysentery, continued illness due to lack of even the minimum medical supplies, and the miserable condition of the men were details that filled the pages of the letters which were received by the families of the soldiers, and which were published in the various local newspapers.<sup>32</sup> These letters revealed a bitter complaint that neither the Georgia authorities nor the War Department in Washington had equipped the men sufficiently to meet the exigencies of war conditions. As a consequence, the men began to die, and the mortality rate was extremely high considering that the Regiment was behind the lines and was never once to join battle with the enemy during its year of service in Mexico. Gun boxes were used as coffins as there were no other means of burial.<sup>33</sup> There was much sickness and death, not only at Camp Belknap, but also at Carmargo. The condition of the men slightly improved, however, when they were ordered to escort a \$200,000 money train to Monterey.<sup>34</sup>

General Taylor ordered the Volunteers from all of the states to concentrate at the mouth of the Rio Grande until at such time as he needed them for action against the Mexicans. The men were distributed over a series of camps which were set up in hot, swampy areas to which the general health of the men soon began to react unfavorably. These camps were at Point Isabel and at the north end of Brazos Island. On the opposite side of the river, and separated from it by a mile of swamp, lay Camp Belknap, "a spot fit only for snakes, tarantulas, centipedes, fleas, scorpions, and ants

31. Capt. J. S. Calhoun to the Columbus *Inquirer*, quoted in the *Southern Recorder*, August 25, 1846.

32. This was the usual source of information on the activities of the Georgia Regiment in Mexico. The Milledgeville *Southern Recorder* printed many of these letters in its columns.

33. *Macon Telegraph*, June 20, 1916, in *Georgia Scrap Book*, No. 4, p. 78.

34. *Ibid.*

that infested it." But the worst camp of all was at Carmargo, to which the Georgians were sent. It was a small place of about 5,000 inhabitants on the San Juan River which forks off the Rio Grande. By August of 1846 there were 15,000 men encamped under "acres and acres" of tents. The natives considered Carmargo the sickliest point in the region. The temperature often rose to 112 degrees and the men were stifled by the hot dust of the dried and pulverized mud. The water was bad and caused a considerable portion of the illness among the soldiers. A great number died of fever, presumably typhoid. In many of the volunteer regiments at least a third of the men were ill, and in some, one-half. "The three volleys at the graves became well-nigh a continuous roll; and the 'dead march' was played so often that, as one officer said, 'the very birds knew it.'" In the First Tennessee Regiment only 500 remained out of 1,040 men when that unit left Carmargo. One General exclaimed that Carmargo was "a yawning Grave Yard."<sup>35</sup>

Under the date of October 11, 1846, Major Charles J. Williams wrote from Monterey: "The ranks of our Regiment have been terribly thinned. We marched across the Chattahoochee River with 910 men and officers, and today, the Regiment numbers all told 600. Though we have discharged many for sickness and disability, still we have deposited nearly 70 beneath the chaparral all in the short space of four months. We have now arrived at a healthy place and health blooms in every cheek, though 7,000 [men] from every part of the United States are now encamped within a short space of two miles."<sup>36</sup> Captain Isaac Holmes of the Macon Guards died at Monterey, a victim of disease.<sup>37</sup>

35. Smith, *War With Mexico*, I, 205-211, notes 7, 16, 17; Rives, *United States and Mexico*, II, 63-64.

36. Butler, *Historical Record of Macon and Central Georgia*, 173.

37. *Ibid.*

The Regiment remained at Monterey guarding money trains and supplies. Later it marched to Tampico and then to Vera Cruz, but never once did it come within shooting distance of the Mexican Army. It remained comparatively inactive until the service time of the men expired in June of 1847, at which time the straggling remains of the Regiment returned to Georgia. The shattered companies were wined and dined in their respective communities.<sup>38</sup> The men mustered out of service numbered 450; the number of deaths, 145; discharged, approximately 315.<sup>39</sup>

The general reaction in Georgia to the Regiment's inactive and somewhat inglorious record in Mexico was revealed in editorial comment over the state. One newspaper wrote:

While the people of Georgia are heartily rejoicing over the victory of Cerro Gordo, they cannot but regret the sad fate of the Georgia Regiment in not being able to reach the ground before the Mexicans. The brave Georgians have been peculiarly unfortunate. After having traversed one-half of Mexico, endured all the rigors of the climate, and obtained the reputation of being one of the best-drilled regiments in the service, it appears to be their luck to be always *hard by*, but never *in a fight*. When Taylor took Monterey, they were advancing from Carmargo. Owing to adverse winds, they were thrown into the second line at Vera Cruz, and only a hand-full of them had an opportunity to "smell powder."<sup>40</sup> Scott allowed them to march to Alvarado especially for a fight when the cowardly Mexicans ran away before a gun was fired. Returning to Vera Cruz, the command to which they were attached, was delayed by the landing of the horses of the Tennessee Cavalry, and they were again thrown into the rear, and probably did not reach Cerro Gordo until the fight was over. This is no fault of theirs, nor of their gallant officers, because a braver set of men, or men more anxious for distinction, are not to be found.<sup>41</sup>

38. Butler, *Historical Record of Macon and Central Georgia*, 176.

39. *Ibid.*

40. There are conflicting reports just how close the Georgia Regiment came to the Mexicans. The men may have had an opportunity to "smell powder," but hardly more than this.

41. Butler, *Historical Record of Macon and Central Georgia*, 175.

The Milledgeville *Southern Recorder* commented:

We notice the arrival of Colonel Jackson and about 100 men of the Georgia Regiment at New Orleans on last Sunday week, May 28. On the Monday following the vessels brought three other companies. We presume in the course of last week the whole Regiment had arrived at New Orleans where they were to be paid off and discharged. We may now look daily for our gallant fellow-citizens, who, although they have been prevented by circumstances beyond their control from participating in the brilliant battles of the day, they endured as much and have as ardently desired to be in the midst of the conflict as the soldiers of any other state. We cordially welcome them home again to repose after the arduous labors and grievous privations of the last twelve months.<sup>42</sup>

The history of the First Georgia Regiment, obscure and scattered as it is, indicates that its route to the Mexican front was strewn with episodes and events, which, though they had little to do with the Regiment's military objective, were more poignant, more humorous, and even more tragic than those which possibly occurred to the other units of United States soldiers actually engaged in front-line fighting. Two such episodes occurred on the Alabama River as the Regiment was being transported from Montgomery to Mobile. The first one involved Robert Bridges, a member of the Augusta Blues, who walked overboard one night in his sleep. After having been rescued from the river and delivered aboard, "Bridges sought the captain of the vessel and politely apologized for having delayed his boat on its important mission."<sup>43</sup> The other episode transpired when the pilot gave a great blast on the steam whistle as the boat passed the wharf at Selma, a sound which the Canton Volunteers of Cherokee County had never heard before. They instantly concluded that the boiler had exploded, and in their fright

42. *Southern Recorder*, June 1, 1847.

43. Quotation from the *Augusta Chronicle*, April 16, 1917, in *Georgia Scrap Book*, No. 4, p. 75.

a number jumped overboard, several of whom were drowned.<sup>44</sup>

But the incident which did more to discredit the service record of the Georgia Regiment than anything else occurred on the Rio Grande as several companies were being taken by boat from Camp Belknap to Carmargo.<sup>45</sup> The Irish Jasper Greens of Savannah "had a serious encounter with the Kennesaw Rangers in which the bayonet played a part."<sup>46</sup> There are several existing accounts of the episode which are rather garbled and which present conflicting evidence as to what actually happened. Shame and disgust may have influenced the participants not to preserve a complete and accurate record, but letters of explanation and justification from the members of the two companies found their way to Georgia and some of the letters were published in the newspapers. From this published correspondence a general conception of what transpired is possible.

Probably the best version of the bloody affair within the Regiment was in a letter which begins: "A cloud of impenetrable gloom has suddenly obscured the bright sky that has hitherto cheered and gladdened us. Our joy is changed into grief, our mirth into moaning."<sup>47</sup> This writer, whose name is not mentioned, presents the facts in some detail. According to him, the trouble between the Jasper Greens of Savannah and the Kennesaw Rangers of Cobb County began on August 30, 1846. Lieut. Col. Redd was in temporary

44. Butler, *Historical Record of Macon and Central Georgia*, 172.

45. Smith describes the reasons for the restlessness among the men encamped in Mexico: "The volunteers had come for glory and a good time and were having neither. They wanted to do something, and to do it at once or go home. . . . Wherever they were, they panted to be somewhere else. Having come to gamble, with their lives for a stake, they clamored to have the game begin. If there was no enemy to fight, they were ready to fight friends. . . ." Smith, *War With Mexico*, I, 207.

46. Mexican War recollections of James S. Silva in the *Savannah Press*, June 29, 1916, in *Georgia Scrap Book*, No. 4, p. 76. See also Thomas Gamble, "When Capt. McMahon of Jasper Greens Crossed Swords with Illinois Colonel," in *Savannah Morning News*, August 8, 1943.

47. *Savannah Republican*, September 7, 1846, quoted in the *Southern Recorder*, June 23, 1846.

command of four companies scheduled to make the trip up the river to Carmargo by boat.<sup>48</sup> They were: the Fannin Avengers commanded by Captain Sargent, the Canton Volunteers commanded by Captain Byrd, the Irish Jasper Greens commanded by Captain McMahon, and the Kennesaw Rangers commanded by Captain Nelson.

In the Jasper Greens there were two brothers.<sup>49</sup> In the course of a small altercation one of the brothers was knocked down. The other brother did not come to his aid, and because of this, was openly rebuked for his indifference by the members of the Rangers. A young Scotchman, of the Jasper Greens, defended the rebuked brother and whereupon "received a claret bottle on his head," and aspersions were cast upon his immediate ancestry. Captain McMahon attempted to restore order.<sup>50</sup> The next day, August 31, as the four companies were preparing to board the steamer *Corvette*, several of the Rangers deliberately provoked a quarrel by interrupting the Jasper Green Scot, who was engaged in carrying his baggage down to the dock, and calling him a "jackass, because he was loaded like one," and then again injustice was done his ancestry.<sup>51</sup> At this time, "forbearance ceased" and the Jasper Green offered to fight any one Ranger.<sup>52</sup> A non-commissioned officer intervened and later "warned the officers of both companies of impending bloodshed."<sup>53</sup> During the day the *Corvette* arrived, and the companies were ordered aboard. There were no further signs of ill-feeling between the Jasper Greens and the Rangers

48. Rives, *United States and Mexico, 1821-1848*, II, 253: "The heavy baggage with four companies of each regiment and two companies of the Baltimore battalion were to be sent forward by water. The remaining companies of each corps marched by land as soon as provided with wagons by the quartermaster's department, as did also the dragoons and horse artillery."

49. Roster published in the *Columbus Democrat* and quoted in the *Southern Recorder*, June 23, 1846; Telfair, *A History of Columbus, Georgia, 1829-1928*, pp. 74-78.

50. *Savannah Republican*, September 7, 1846.

51. *Ibid.*

52. *Ibid.*

53. *Ibid.*



until late that night when the boat was tied up at the river's bank. A cry of "Help!" was heard in the part of the vessel where men from both companies were quartered. The Jasper Greens and the Rangers sprang at each other, but were thrown back by sentries with the aid of Captain McMahon. At that moment a Colonel Baker of the 4th Regiment of Illinois Volunteers, who, with his command, were also being transported up river, was returning to the boat and saw the disturbance in the moonlight. He rushed aboard calling for some of his men to follow. Captain McMahon thought Col. Baker and his men were Rangers, and, hearing the command to charge, raised his sword to defend himself. In the dark he crossed blades with Col. Baker crying, "Damn you, measure swords with me!"<sup>54</sup> The ensuing struggle lasted but a few minutes. Four musket shots were fired. Sergeant Whalen of the Jasper Greens was killed, and both McMahon and Baker were wounded by the blind shooting of the Illinois men.<sup>55</sup>

In the opinion of the members of both companies, "no life would have been lost had it not been for the 'peacemakers' as both captains [McMahon and Nelson] would have restored order."<sup>56</sup> One account states that five of the Illinois men were killed besides Whalen.<sup>57</sup> But another reveals that both Col. Baker and Col. Jackson attempted to break up the riot, that the Georgians were disarmed and put under strong guard, and that three officers and thirty soldiers were wounded with the number dead between 8 and 10.<sup>58</sup> It was also reported that Col. Jackson, as the result of a court marshal, executed the ringleaders of the riot.<sup>59</sup> In the letters of Captain Nelson of the Rangers

54. *Savannah Republican*, September 7, 1846.

55. *Ibid.* Baker was shot in the neck. Smith, *War With Mexico*, I, 207.

56. *Savannah Republican*, September 7, 1846.

57. Butler, *Historical Record of Macon and Central Georgia*, 178.

58. *New Orleans Delta* quoted in the *Southern Recorder*, September 5, 1846.

59. *Ibid.*

and Captain McMahon of the Greens three points were offered in explanation of the affair: (1) Half of the men were drunk due to the sutler's disobedience in selling spirits; (2) the entire blame rested upon Col. Baker, who blindly charged the Georgians in the dark without first investigating; (3) and three died as a result of the shooting and sword play.<sup>60</sup> Col. Jackson staunchly defended the Jasper Greens in the fighting with Col. Baker and the Illinois men, using evidence brought forth in the court marshal. He reported only one man killed.<sup>61</sup> Jackson's report may be considered official as he was the responsible head of the Georgia Regiment and in as much as it was required of him to report all casualties.

\* \* \*

The expense of equipping and organizing a regiment of volunteers, though incurred by the State of Georgia, was to be settled in full by the War Department in Washington out of the Congressional appropriation for the war. Immediately upon the return of Governor Crawford to Milledgeville from Columbus, where he had seen the Georgia Regiment off to war, he forwarded the following letter and statement of account to Secretary of War Marcy:

I have the honor of submitting herewith an account of money expended in organizing a regiment of volunteers of infantry in compliance with the requisition of the President of the United States. The account was made before I received your circular of the 15th ultimo and the accompanying statement from the Paymaster General which is dated the 19th ultimo.<sup>62</sup> I, however, flatter myself that you will regard the expenditures as within the scope of the rules which have been adopted by the War Department.

The aggregate of expenses, you will preceive, amounts to the sum of \$2,798.50, the larger portion of which is charged on the

60. *Southern Recorder*, December 1, 1846.

61. *Ibid.*, December 8, 1846.

62. A Circular was directed to the state governments that the War Department could not be responsible for transportation costs of getting volunteers to the place of rendezvous without the consent of each soldier permitting such commutation. This Circular is described in a letter written by Governor Crawford to Robert Toombs, February 8, 1847, in Letter Book (1847-1861), 19.

muster rolls in commutation of transportation, subsistence or clothing. Beyond these, the incidental expenses amount to \$328.44 which were proper to be incurred, and the payments were exclusively and economically made for the public service then undertaken.

It is to be noticed that as yet the accounts for transportation on the three railroads have not been settled. The state is bound for their payment, and will pay them whenever applied to. These accounts are about 35 per cent less than the customary rates on these roads.

I must take the liberty of explaining that the sum expended, as above, was drawn from the contingent fund which is legally limited in amount, and that the drafts on it for this service have scarcely left a remainder adequate to meet the current demands which are almost daily chargeable upon it. Indeed, I was reluctantly compelled to interpose this objection to a late application of Col. Jackson, commanding the Regiment of Georgia Volunteers, that funds might be advanced by this state for the medical attention and transportation of the sick which were necessarily left in Columbus [probably owing to the want of proper camp equipage and who would rejoin the regiment at Mobile or New Orleans]. Hence, I request your early attention to the claims of this state.<sup>63</sup>

No satisfactory answer to Governor Crawford's communication appeared to be forthcoming. Courteously pressed by the railroads for payment of transportation costs, Crawford wrote R. R. Cuyler of Savannah, President of the Central of Georgia Railroad, promising that the state would bear the responsibility of the account since the Federal Government did not appear inclined to settle the matter any time soon. "After one or two gentle squints," he wrote, "as modesty forbade that I should demand with the insolence of a creditor, I finally called his [Marcy's] attention to them. The explanation given was that the Honorable Secretary had put his bureaucratic agents to the examination of the *old* account of Georgia when I was intent only on the *new* accounts. The sign is ominous; and the presage is that the new bill will become old and the old older."<sup>64</sup>

63. Crawford to Marcy, July 2, 1846, in Letter Book (1843-1846), 736-737.

64. Crawford to R. R. Cuyler, October 19, 1846, *ibid.*, 776-777.

*The State of Georgia in account with the United States for expenses in raising one regiment of Volunteers under the Requisition of the President of the United States.*<sup>65</sup>

June	No	
For amount paid to Columbus Guards,		
clothing .....	1	\$200.00
Sumter Volunteers, clothing.....	2	200.00
Canton Volunteers, subsistence and transportation .....	3	200.00
Kennesaw Rangers, subsistence and transportation .....	4	200.00
Irish Jasper Greens, subsistence and transportation .....	5	200.00
Macon Guards, subsistence and transportation .....	6	200.00
Georgia Light Infantry, subsistence and transportation .....	7	200.00
Crawford Guards, subsistence, cloth- ing and transportation.....	8&9	285.33
Wm. Brown, transporting soldiers from Talbotton to Columbus.....	10	26.50
F. S. Owen express to Capt. Horne.....	11	10.00
Columbus <i>Inquirer</i> , printing muster rolls .....	12	15.00
E. J. Harden, quartering of troops.....	13	50.90
Col. J. B. Hoxey, inspecting and musterling .....	14	100.00
J. W. Horne, expenses to summon regiment to rendezvous.....	15	87.62
Central R. R., transporting Jasper Greens .....	16	460.00
Georgia R. R., transporting Richmond Blues .....	17	314.73
W. & A. R. R., transporting Kennesaw Rangers .....	18	48.42
		\$2798.50

As events proved, the sign *was* ominous. The "bureaucratical agents," after much delay, proceeded to investigate the old Georgia claims. These old claims, which had never been satisfied, dated back to 1835

65. Crawford to Marcy, July 2, 1846, in Letter Book (1843-1846), 738.

when Georgia had taken military action against the Indians to remove them from the state.<sup>66</sup>

Several questions were raised by the Secretary about these latest claims. He recognized only \$163.00 as being owed the state by the War Department. He further pointed out that the Government could not be responsible for the cost of transporting the troops to the rendezvous on the three Georgia railroads. He suggested that the soldiers themselves reimburse the state for their transportation to Columbus.<sup>67</sup>

But Crawford replied that this should not be the case "as the money expended was due to military expedience; viz. to get the soldiers to the rendezvous as soon as possible." August and Savannah being 250 and 300 miles respectively from Columbus, the distance was covered by rail in 22 hours; whereas by route it would have taken longer.<sup>68</sup>

The Governor was quite provoked by Marcy's criticism of the account rendered. "If Georgia has to pay this and other accounts of like character," he wrote, "so far as she is concerned the Mexican War will be a Benjamin blessing . . . left handed."<sup>69</sup> To irritate him further was a claim of \$55.00 made by one H. C. Brewer for services rendered in taking care of a stand of arms from Columbus to Mobile. It appeared that Brewer had confiscated the arms belonging to the state and would not release them until the account had been settled. Crawford, more angered at Secretary Marcy than at Brewer's presumption, thundered back that the guns belonged to Georgia and in no circumstance were they to be used in Mexico, but were to be retained in Mobile for drill purposes and for guard duty.<sup>70</sup>

66. The amount was \$248,309.00, of which sum \$180,697.38 had been paid to January 26, 1846. Crawford to Marcy, October 20, 1846, *ibid.*, 777-780.

67. *Ibid.* On the previous August 8th Congress passed a resolution disallowing transportation costs for volunteers without consent.

68. *Ibid.* Marcy also questioned Vouchers 10 and 14.

69. Crawford to F. C. Arms of Augusta, Ga., October 22, 1846, *ibid.*, 783.

70. Crawford to F. C. Arms of Augusta, Ga., November 1846, *ibid.*, 790; Crawford to Lieutenant John Forsyth, *ibid.* (1847-1861), 1.

Realizing that an apparent impasse had been reached with the Secretary of War, Governor Crawford directed his appeal to President Polk and reviewed the situation to him. The Governor protested the Congressional Resolution of the previous August 8 in which "expenses for transportation were disallowed, suspended and rejected." He pointed out that the Georgia Regiment "had been organized 45 days at the passage of the resolution, and the statement sent to the War Department by the last of the month." And he insisted that "the application of the resolution in this case is one irreconcilable with justice."<sup>71</sup>

On December 11, the Governor addressed a joint letter to the two Georgia senators in Washington, James McPherson Berrien and Alfred G. Colquett, in which he related at length his difficulties in arriving at a satisfactory solution of the problem of settling the Mexican War military claims as well as those dating from 1835. He wrote: "the old accounts were lying easily and neglected in Washington for years when, indeed, I thought they had been sent to the Tomb of the Capulets and never to be awakened unless by the quickening influence of the Congressional touch." The policy pursued, he observed, seemed to have been a "periodical dealing out of stinted justice . . . mere crumbs of comfort that would satisfy present necessity." He proposed to the senators that a man be employed to investigate the claims.<sup>72</sup>

The Governor, by this time, thoroughly aroused, was demanding a settlement of the account "with the insolence of a creditor."<sup>73</sup> He turned to Robert Toombs, a Georgia Representative in Congress, and authorized him "to receive and receipt any money due Georgia on account of the advance made" to organize the Geor-

71. Crawford to President James K. Polk, December 3, 1846, in Letter Book (1843-1846), 808-804.

72. Crawford to Berrien and Colquett, December 11, 1846, *ibid.*, 808-811.

73. Crawford to Marcy, January 5, 1847, in Letter Book (1847-1861), 4.

gia Regiment. "Georgia has been outraged," stormed the Governor, "because of the ex post facto act of Congress to the effect that commutation for transportation cannot be charged without the consent of the soldier."<sup>74</sup> Crawford was not deceived into believing that the state would be repaid for transportation by the soldiers. Over six months had passed and many of the men in the Regiment were dead of disease and exposure. And he would not allow the state to be burdened by a debt incurred by the War Department and not by Georgia. His concluding remarks to Toombs, tinged with sarcasm, were, "Georgia rejoices in the receipt of \$163.32 of the \$2,798.50 of the 'new claims'.<sup>75</sup> Openly distrustful of the Polk Administration, he requested Toombs to get what he could as soon as possible.<sup>76</sup>

Crawford abided his time impatiently until March 27, 1847 on which day he again wrote to Marcy and recounted the entire history of the Georgia claims, new and old. In this letter he placed emphasis upon the interpretation of the War Department Circular of June 15, 1846. His argument was that the Circular had authorized the state to advance the funds to organize the Regiment of Volunteers, and that the Congressional Resolution of August 8, 1846 was merely a restatement of the Circular "with a capricious interpolation on the part of the Paymaster General [as to what] was the difference between subsistence and transportation [about which the latter] he stated that a soldier's consent had first to be gained."<sup>77</sup>

Pressure was put on the War Department by the Georgia members of Congress, and the untiring and endless appeals by Governor Crawford of a final settlement of the account were the paramount factors

74. Crawford to Robert Toombs, January, 1847, *ibid.*, 19.

75. *Ibid.*

76. *Ibid.*

77. Crawford to Marcy, March 27, 1847, *ibid.*, 84.

which persuaded Secretary Marcy to remit the entire account. Marcy wrote that he would clear up the new claims with promptness and dispatch.<sup>78</sup> And on April 21, the Governor acknowledged the receipt of \$603.06.<sup>79</sup> By the following October all the "new" military claims against the War Department were satisfied. This was four months after the second requisition of Georgia volunteers had marched to Mexico.<sup>80</sup>

78. Crawford to Marcy, April 13, 1847, *ibid.*, 47.

79. Crawford to Marcy, April 21, 1847, *ibid.*, 55.

80. Crawford to Lieutenant A. O. Adams, Georgia Light Infantry, Columbus, Ga., October 26, 1847, *ibid.*, 127.