The Gonzales Ranging Company
of
Mounted Volunteers
Established February 23, 1836

A Presentation by:
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To:

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Sketch by: Jo Toland Sachtleben
Preface

This short article could not have been written or presented had it not been for the copious research done by many other people. While Webb's *The Texas Rangers* first presented a glimmer of an idea that a group of Rangers from Gonzales may have actually existed as early as 1835-36, I had ideas about this subject based upon stories, legends, and tales of local families. When I first found the Internet Web Site, *Sons of DeWitt's Colony*, I was searching for another topic, but it was here that I found the first threads I needed to continue with "The Gonzales Rangers." *Sons* has grown into a tremendous source of information on the men who were The Gonzales Ranging Company.

I have also tried to reach deep into our history — all of our history, concerning the beginnings of what would become Texas. Andrés Tijerina’s *Tejano & Texas under the Mexican Flag, 1821-1836* was a tremendous enlightenment. Far from being the wilderness of no rules so often portrayed, Texas already was a place of established laws, procedures, and politics well before Austin or DeWitt ever established the first home in what we now call TEXAS.

Pre-revolutionary history is a still evolving thing. What we know changes every day and matures as it changes. What I present here is neither the first or the last word on *The Gonzales Ranging Company of Mounted Volunteers*. It would almost be appropriate to add *Alamo Relief Force* to this title as the activities are one-in-the-same and inseparable.

The following are notes which were used in preparation for a presentation at the Texas Ranger 175th. Anniversary Symposium, Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum, Waco, Texas, August 22, 1998.
Rangers in Gonzales
or
The Gonzales Ranging Company
of
Mounted Volunteers

Predecessors and Origins

Mexican "Flying Companies"

The Mexican Govt. had used the compañía volante or "Flying companies" to great success. Originating in 1713 under Viceroy de Linares, when he ordered landowners on the frontera to organize flying companies. In 1772 the Regulations of Presidios, a more formal organization was formed. The units were composed of local volunteers, but trained by professional officers. They engaged in extensive campaigns throughout the frontera. The compañía volante was designed to maintain the offensive against intrudes as opposed to simply defending the home front. It is interesting to note that in this period the Compañía Volante of San Carlos de Parras instituted the Caballada principal, where about 10 extra remounts per man traveled with the Compañía allowing very swift movement in the arid plains of Northern Mexico. [Tejanos & Texas under the Mexican Flag, 1821-1836, Andrés Tijerina, page 79-80]

Alamo occupied

In 1803 the Compañía Volante of San Carlos de Parras was assigned to Béxar, where it became a permanent part of the Mission San Antonio de Velero. It was these men that renamed Mission Velero The Alamo after their hometown, near Parras. From the Alamo, they set out to patrol the countryside in all directions. [ibid.]

First Rangers for Austin

While there were numerous militias and six militia districts as set up by the Mexican Government. The term "Ranger" was not used in what we know as Texas until Stephen F. Austin first wrote of it probably as early as 1823. Little came of this, but this was the first time the term was used. [The Legend Begins, The Texas Rangers
1823-1845, Frederick Wilkins, page 7] The term Ranger was not an unfamiliar term, as it was used earlier in the U.S. (Rogers Rangers) [ibid.]

It is interesting to note how closely the subsequent "Ranging Companies" followed the lines of the earlier and often co-existing flying companies.

**Gonzales Ranging Company founding data.**

**May 17, 1835** Committee of Safety:


**Late September 1835**

Mexicans demand cannon from Gonzales....

After many communications and letters between various members of the Mexican military and the Gonzales leaders, the first shot of the Texas Revolution was fired on October 2, 1835. The column of Mexican troops under Lt. Castenada often called “lancers” or “dragoons” was in fact the *Compañía Volante of San Carlos de Parras*.

Subsequent to this there ensued the Battle of Conception and the First Battle of Béxar, which resulted in the ousting of General Cos.

**October 15**

Consultation called at Washington on the Brazos with representatives from all colonies present, but due to the urgency of the period, a "permanent council" was organized at San Felipe, which set from October 11 to 26, with president and secretary. It assumed the authority to conduct the revolution.

**October 17**

Daniel Parker offered a resolution creating a corps of Rangers, to patrol between the Brazos and Trinity rivers. Other corps were formed subsequent to this. [The Texas Rangers, Webb, page 22-23]
November 9

George W. Davis was commissioned to raise twenty men for the Ranger Service along the Guadalupe [Laws of Texas, Gammel, Vol. 1, page 526-27]

November 28

Captains were appointed;
Isaac W. Burton, William Arrington and John J. Tumlinson.

R.M. (Three-legged Willie) Williamson and James Kerr were nominated for major, with Williamson being elected. [The Texas Rangers, Dr. Stephen Harden, page 5.

Little else is known about the ranging company for the Gonzales area until February 1836.

Capt. Byrd Lockhart, Acting Commissioner and Aid-de-Camp to the Provisional President of the Republic of Texas, mustered 23 men into "The Gonzales Ranging Company of Mounted Volunteers" on February 23, 1836. This is the same day that the first of the "Travis Letters" was written. Letter arrived in Gonzales, carried by Lancelot Smithers on the 24th.

Lockhart had received a commission to organize this company on February 4, 1836. The company was attached immediately to Lt. Col. Travis's Command, within the provisional Republican Army. This attachment was as per the original outline of muster for the rangers. They were to operate as independent companies, but would be attached to the army as needed.

Muster Roll of the Gonzales Ranging Company of Mounted Volunteers as of February 23, 1836.

Lt. Colonel William B. Travis*
Captain Byrd Lockhart
Lieutenant George C. Kimble*
1st. Sgt. William A Irvin
John Ballard
John Davis*
Andrew Duvall *
Jacob Darst *
Frederick C. Elm
Galba Fuqua *
William Fishbaugh *
John Harris *
Andrew J. Kent *
David B. Kent
John D. King
Daniel McCoy
Jesse McCoy *
Prospect McCoy
Isaac Milsaps *
William Morrison
James Nash
Marcus L. Sewell *
William Summers *
Robert White *
(* died in Alamo)

The Gonzales Relief Force to the Alamo

Most of the men who joined the Gonzales Alamo Relief Force are considered to be members of the Gonzales Ranging Company though no actual muster roll is available of this group.

The Gonzales Relief Force to the Alamo departed Gonzales at 2 PM on February 27, consisting of:

Lt. George C. Kimball-33, Commanding The Gonzales Ranging Company of Mounted Volunteers
Isaac Baker-21
George Washington Cottle-25
Jacob C. Darst-42
John Davis
William Dearduff-25
William Fishbaugh-36
John Flanders-36
Dolphin Ward Floyd-32
Galba Fuqua-16
John E. Gaston-17
James George-34
Thomas J. Jackson
John B. Kellog II-19
Andrew Kent-44
William P. King-16
Jesse McCoy-32
Thomas R. Miller-40
Isaac Millsaps-41
George Neggan-28
William Summers-24
Claiborne Wright-26

The following were enrolled in the original Ranging Company Muster, but are not listed on the Immortal 32 monuments. They are however, listed as casualties at the Alamo.

Andrew Devalt-32
John Harris-23
Marcus E. Sewell-32

David B. Cummings-27, joined the column at Cibolo Creek.

The following members of the Gonzales Relief Force to the Alamo were in Gonzales on leave from the Alamo Garrison.

Capt. Albert Martin-28, Commanding the Regulars (Martin was an Alamo courier, returning through Gonzales.

John Cain, Private and artilleryman in Capt. Carey's Company.

Squire Damon-28, Private and artilleryman in Capt. Carey's Company.


Robert White-30, Captain of Béxar Guards.

Charles Despallier-24, Friend of Bowie and aid to Travis, in Gonzales as a courier.

**Byrd Lockhart**, Captain in the Texas Army, appointed commissioner along with Matthew Caldwell and William A. Mathews to establish the Gonzales Ranging Company on February 4, 1836. May have entered Alamo with the rangers on March 1st, but was not present at the fall of the Alamo. He along with Andrew Sowell were on a foraging detail when the Alamo fell and were outside it's walls at that time. They were trying to obtain cattle and supplies.

(names and personal data from Texas General Land Office, hand drawn muster rolls; reconstructed 1836-39)

The force was guided by John W. Smith a resident of Béxar and entered Alamo at 3 AM, March 1, 1836.

Members of the Gonzales Ranging Company of Mounted Volunteers who did not go to the Alamo, went on to be part of Texas History. Byrd Lockhart was involved with the rangers as late as 1837-38, commanding Lockhart's Spies. One of the members of this unit was B.D. McClure who would also be the first County Judge of Gonzales County. Rangers were stationed in Gonzales in an on-again-off-again nature well into the 20th Century. With a permanent station being there as late as 1976.