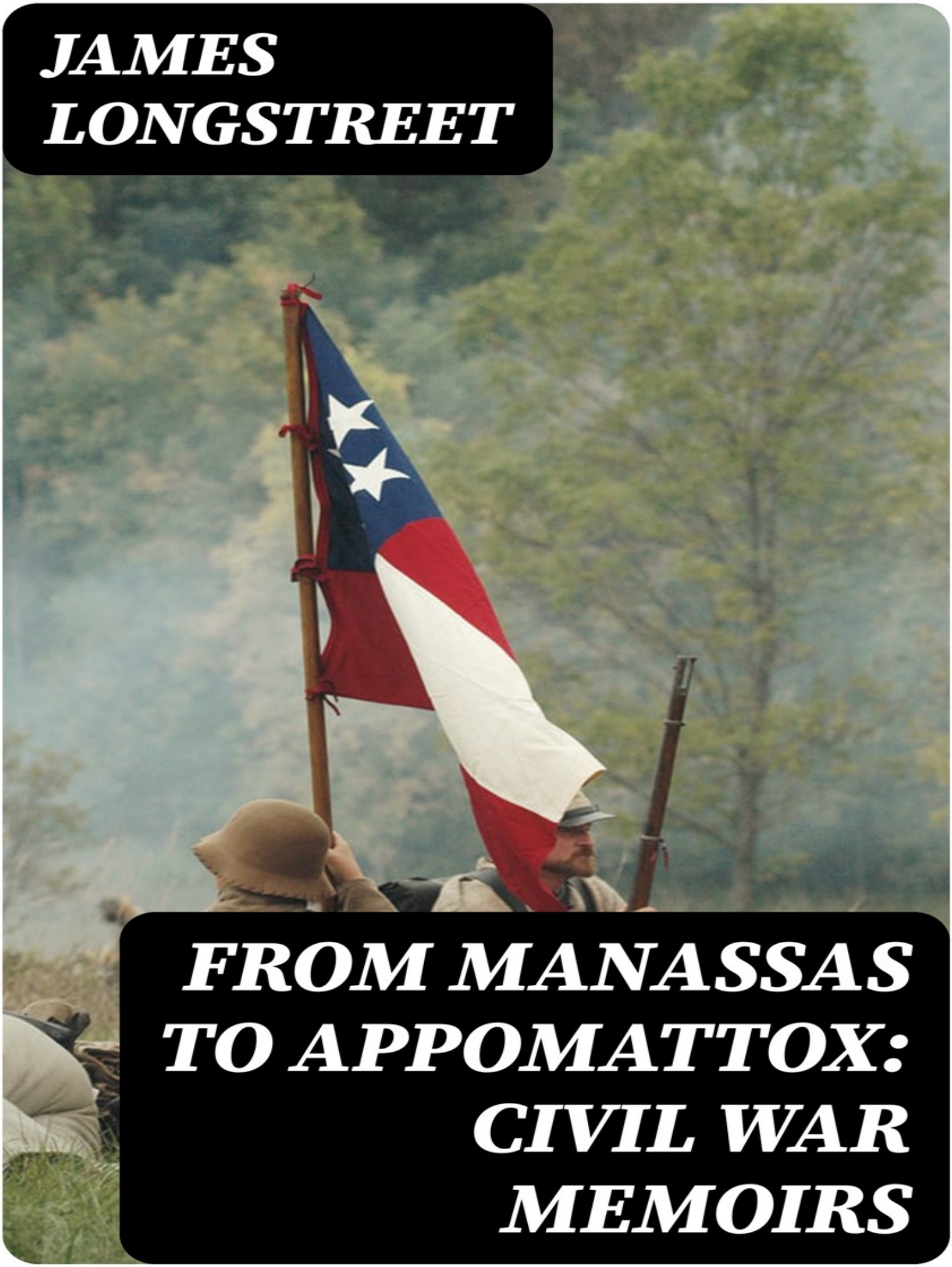


JAMES LONGSTREET

FROM MANASSAS TO APPOMATTOX: CIVIL WAR MEMOIRS

James Longstreet

From Manassas to Appomattox: Civil War Memoirs

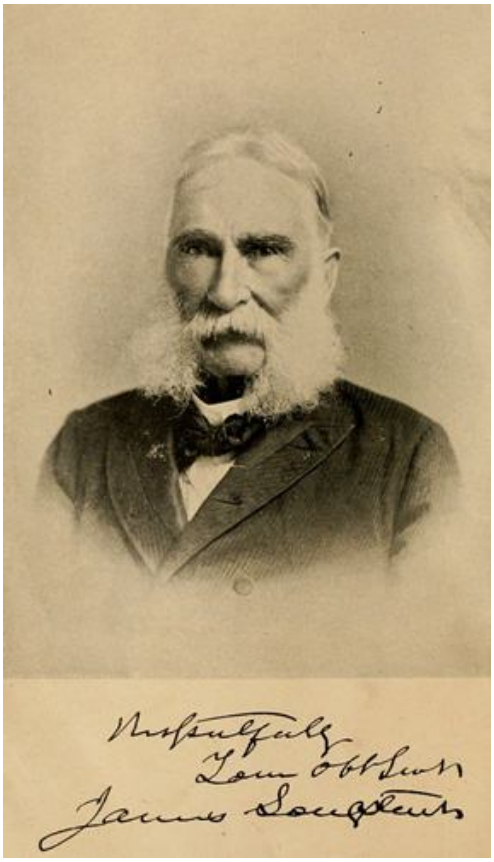
EAN 8596547393993

DigiCat, 2022
Contact: DigiCat@okpublishing.info

Table of Contents

Preface
Chapter I. The Ante-bellum Life of the Author
Chapter II. From New Mexico to Manassas
Chapter III. Battle of Manassas, or Bull Run
Chapter IV. The Confederates Hovering Around Washington
Chapter V. Round About Richmond
Chapter VI. The Battle of Williamsburg
Chapter VII. Seven Pines, or Fair Oaks
Chapter VIII. Sequelæ of Seven Pines
Chapter IX. Robert E. Lee in Command
Chapter X. Fighting Along the Chickahominy
Chapter XI. Battle of Malvern Hill
Chapter XII. Halleck and Pope in Federal Command
Chapter XIII. Making Ready for Manassas Again
Chapter XIV. Second Battle of Manassas (Bull Run)
Chapter XV. The Maryland Campaign
Chapter XVI. “The Lost Order”—South Mountain
Chapter XVII. Preliminaries of the Great Battle
Chapter XVIII. Battle of Sharpsburg, or Antietam
Chapter XIX. Battle of Sharpsburg, or Antietam (continued).
Chapter XX. Review of the Maryland Campaign
Chapter XXI. Reorganization and Rest for Both Armies
Chapter XXII. Battle of Fredericksburg
Chapter XXIII. Battle of Fredericksburg (continued)

Chapter XXIV. Preparing for the Spring of ’63
Chapter XXV. Invasion of Pennsylvania
Chapter XXVI. Gettysburg—First Day
Chapter XXVII. Gettysburg—Second Day
Chapter XXVIII. Gettysburg—Third Day
Chapter XXIX. The Wave Rolls Back
Chapter XXX. Longstreet Moves to Georgia
Chapter XXXI. Battle of Chickamauga
Chapter XXXII. Failure to Follow Success
Chapter XXXIII. The East Tennessee Campaign
Chapter XXXIV. Besieging Knoxville
Chapter XXXV. Cut Off From East and West
Chapter XXXVI. Strategic Importance of the Field
Chapter XXXVII. Last Days in Tennessee
Chapter XXXVIII. Battle of the Wilderness
Chapter XXXIX. Again in Front of Richmond
Chapter XL. Talk of Peace
Chapter XLI. Battle of Five Forks
Chapter XLII. Petersburg
Chapter XLIII. Appomattox
Chapter XLIV. Post-bellum Pendant
Appendix. Letters of General Robert E. Lee and General Longstreet


Respectfully
Your obt Servt
James Longstreet

Preface

Table of Contents

Immediately after the surrender of the Confederate armies engaged in the war between the States, General Lee undertook to write of the campaigns of the Army of Northern Virginia while under his command, and asked such assistance as I could give in supplying reports, despatches, and letters of his, the originals of which had been lost or destroyed. Under the impression that they could not be put to better use, such as were then in hand were packed and sent him. He gave up the work, and after a few years his death made it impossible that the world should ever receive the complete story of the Confederate campaigns in Virginia from the noble mind that projected and controlled them.

Possibly, had I not expected our commander to write the history of those campaigns, I should have written it myself a decade or so earlier than I have done. But, personally, I am not sorry that I write of the war thirty years after its close, instead of ten or twenty.

While I am so constituted, temperamentally, that I could view then almost exactly as I do now the great struggle in which I bore a part, I do not know that others, in any considerable number, might have so regarded it at the earlier periods to which I refer.

I believe that now, more fully than then, the public is ready to receive, in the spirit in which it is written, the story which I present.

It is not my purpose to philosophize upon the war, but I cannot refrain from expressing my profound thankfulness that Providence has spared me to such time as I can see the

asperities of the great conflict softened, its passions entering upon the sleep of oblivion, only its nobler—if less immediate—results springing into virile and vast life. I believe there is to-day, *because of the war*, a broader and deeper patriotism in all Americans; that patriotism throbs the heart and pulses the being as ardently of the South Carolinian as of the Massachusetts Puritan; that the Liberty Bell, even now, as I write, on its Southern pilgrimage, will be as reverently received and as devotedly loved in Atlanta and Charleston as in Philadelphia and Boston. And to stimulate and evolve this noble sentiment all the more, what we need is the resumption of fraternity, the hearty restoration and cordial cultivation of neighborly, brotherly relations, faith in Jehovah, and respect for each other; and God grant that the happy vision that delighted the soul of the sweet singer of Israel may rest like a benediction upon the North and the South, upon the Blue and the Gray.

The spirit in which this work has been conceived, and in which I have conscientiously labored to carry it out, is one of sincerity and fairness. As an actor in, and an eyewitness of, the events of 1861-65, I have endeavored to perform my humble share of duty in passing the materials of history to those who may give them place in the records of the nation, —not of the South nor of the North,—but in the history of the United Nation. It is with such magnified view of the responsibility of saying the truth that I have written.

I yield to no one as a champion of the Southern soldier wherever he may have fought and in whatever army, and I do not think I shall be charged more now than in war-time with “underestimating the enemy.” Honor to all! If I speak with some particularity of the First Corps of the Army of Northern Virginia, it must be ascribed in part to the affection of a commander, and in part to my desire to relieve its

brave officers and men in the ranks from unjust aspersions. After General Lee's death, various writers on the Southern cause combined with one accord to hold the First Corps and its commander responsible for all adversity that befell the army. I being under the political ban, and the political passions and prejudices of the times running high, they had no difficulty in spreading their misrepresentations South and North until some people, through their mere reiteration, came to accept them as facts. I simply present the facts concerning the First Corps in all fulness and fairness, attested by indisputable authorities, that the public may judge between it and its detractors.

In the accounts of battles and movements, the official War Records supply in a measure the place of lost papers, and afford a great mass of most trustworthy statistics. I am under obligations to General E. P. Alexander, General G. M. Sorrel, Colonel Osman Latrobe, Colonel J. W. Fairfax, Colonel T. J. Goree, Colonel Erasmus Taylor, and Colonel J. C. Haskell for many interesting suggestions.

To Major George B. Davis and Mr. L. J. Perry, of the War Records office, I am under obligations for invaluable assistance; as also to Mr. Alfred Matthews, of Philadelphia, for material aid in revising the manuscript of these memoirs.

The Author.

Chapter I.
The Ante-bellum Life of the Author

Table of Contents

Birth—Ancestry—School-Boy Days—Appointment as Cadet at the United States Military Academy—Graduates of Historic Classes—Assignment as Brevet Lieutenant—Gay Life of Garrison at Jefferson Barracks—Lieutenant Grant's Courtship—Annexation of Texas—Army of Observation—Army of Occupation—Camp Life in Texas—March to the Rio Grande—Mexican War.

I was born in Edgefield District, South Carolina, on the 8th of January, 1821. On the paternal side the family was from New Jersey; on my mother's side, from Maryland. My earliest recollections were of the Georgia side of Savannah River, and my school-days were passed there, but the appointment to West Point Academy was from North Alabama. My father, James Longstreet, the oldest child of William Longstreet and Hannah Fitzrandolph, was born in New Jersey. Other children of the marriage, Rebecca, Gilbert, Augustus B., and William, were born in Augusta, Georgia, the adopted home. Richard Longstreet, who came to America in 1657 and settled in Monmouth County, New Jersey, was the progenitor of the name on this continent. It is difficult to determine whether the name sprang from France, Germany, or Holland. On the maternal side, Grandfather Marshall Dent was first cousin of John Marshall, of the Supreme Court. That branch claimed to trace their line back to the Conqueror. Marshall Dent married a

Magruder, when they migrated to Augusta, Georgia. Father married the eldest daughter, Mary Ann.

Grandfather William Longstreet first applied steam as a motive power, in 1787, to a small boat on the Savannah River at Augusta, and spent all of his private means upon that idea, asked aid of his friends in Augusta and elsewhere, had no encouragement, but, on the contrary, ridicule of his proposition to move a boat without a pulling or other external power, and especially did they ridicule the thought of expensive steam-boilers to be made of iron. To obviate costly outlay for this item, he built boilers of heavy oak timbers and strong iron bands, but the Augusta marines were incredulous, as the following from the city papers of the times will indicate:

> “Can you row the boat ashore,
> Billy boy, Billy boy;
> Can you row the boat ashore,
> Gentle Billy?
> Can you row the boat ashore,
> Without paddle or an oar,
> Billy boy?”

Full of confidence, the inventor thought to appeal to the governor, and his letter is still preserved in the State archives:

“Augusta, Georgia, September 26, 1790.

“Sir,—I make no doubt but you have often heard of my steamboat, and as often heard it laughed at, but in this I have only shared the fate of other projectors, for it has uniformly been the custom of every country to ridicule the greatest inventions until they had proved their utility. In not

reducing my scheme to active use it has been unfortunate for me, I confess, and perhaps the people in general; but, until very lately, I did not think that artists or material could be had in the place sufficient. However, necessity, that grand mother of invention, has furnished me with an idea of perfecting my plan almost entirely of wooden material, and by such workmen as may be had here; and, from a thorough confidence of its success, I have presumed to ask your assistance and patronage. Should it succeed agreeably to my expectations, I hope I shall discover that sense of duty which such favors always merit; and should it not succeed, your reward must lay with other unlucky adventures.

"For me to mention all of the advantages arising from such a machine would be tedious, and, indeed, quite unnecessary. Therefore I have taken the liberty to state, in this plain and humble manner, my wish and opinion, which I hope you will excuse, and I shall remain, either with or without your approbation,

"Your Excellency's most obedient and humble servant,

"Wm. Longstreet.
"Governor Telfair."

He failed to secure the necessary aid, and the discovery passed into the possession of certain New Yorkers, who found the means for practicable application, and now steam is the goddess that enlightens the world.

My father was a planter. From my early boyhood he conceived that he would send me to West Point for army service, but in my twelfth year he passed away during the cholera epidemic at Augusta. Mother moved to North Alabama with her children, whence in my sixteenth year I made application through a kinsman, Congressman Reuben Chapman, for appointment as cadet, received the coveted favor, and entered with the class that was admitted in 1838.

As cadet I had more interest in the school of the soldier, horsemanship, sword exercise, and the outside game of foot-ball than in the academic courses. The studies were successfully passed, however, until the third year, when I failed in mechanics. When I came to the problem of the pulleys, it seemed to my mind that a soldier could not find use for such appliances, and the pulleys were passed by. At the January examination I was called to the blackboard and given the problem of the pulleys. The drawing from memory of recitation of classmates was good enough, but the demonstration failed to satisfy the sages of the Academic Board. It was the custom, however, to give those who failed in the general examination a second hearing, after all of the classes were examined. This gave me two days to “cram” mechanics, and particularly on pulleys. But the professors were too wily to introduce them a second time, and took me through a searching examination of the six months’ course. The bridge was safely passed, however, and mechanics left behind. At the June examination, the end of the academic year, I was called to demonstrate the pulleys. The professor thought that I had forgotten my old friend the enemy, but I smiled, for he had become dear to me,—in waking hours and in dreams,—and the cadet passed easily enough for a maximum mark.

The cadets had their small joys and sometimes little troubles. On one occasion a cadet officer reported me for disobedience of orders. As the report was not true, I denied it and sent up witnesses of the occasion. Dick Garnett, who fell in the assault of the 3d, at Gettysburg, was one witness, and Cadet Baker, so handsome and lovable that he was called Betsy, was the other. Upon overlooking the records I found the report still there, and went to ask the superintendent if other evidence was necessary to show

that the report was not true. He was satisfied of that, but said that the officer complained that I smiled contemptuously. As that could only be rated as a single demerit, I asked the benefit of the smile; but the report stands to this day, Disobedience of orders and *three* demerits. The cadet had his revenge, however, for the superintendent was afterwards known as *The Punster*.

There were sixty-two graduating members of the class of 1842, my number being sixty. I was assigned to the Fourth United States Infantry as brevet lieutenant, and found my company with seven others of the regiment at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, in the autumn of 1842.

Of the class graduating the year that we entered were G. T. Beauregard and Irvin McDowell, who, twenty-three years later, commanded the hostile armies on the plains of Manassas, in Virginia. Braxton Bragg and W. J. Hardee were of the same class.

The head man of the next class (1839) was I. I. Stevens, who resigned from the army, and, after being the first governor of Washington Territory, returned to military service, and fell on the sanguinary field of Chantilly on the 1st of September, 1862. Next on the class roll was Henry Wager Halleck, who was commander-in-chief of the United States armies from July, 1862, to March, 1864. W. T. Sherman and George H. Thomas, of the Union army, and R. S. Ewell, of the Confederate army, were of the same class (1840). The class of 1841 had the largest list of officers killed in action. Irons, Ayers, Ernst, Gantt, Morris, and Burbank were killed in the Mexican War. N. Lyon, R. S. Garnett, J. F. Reynolds, R. B. Garnett, A. W. Whipple, J. M. Jones, I. B. Richardson, and J. P. Garesché fell on the fields of the late war.

Of the class of 1842 few were killed in action, but several rose to distinguished positions,—Newton, Eustis, Rosecrans, Lovell, Van Dorn, Pope, Sykes, G. W. Smith, M. L. Smith, R. H. Anderson, L. McLaws, D. H. Hill, A. P. Stewart, B. S. Alexander, N. J. T. Dana, and others.

But the class next after us (1843) was destined to furnish the man who was to eclipse all,—to rise to the rank of general, an office made by Congress to honor his services; who became President of the United States, and for a second term; who received the salutations of all the powers of the world in his travels as a private citizen around the earth; of noble, generous heart, a lovable character, a valued friend,—Ulysses S. Grant.

I was fortunate in the assignment to Jefferson Barracks, for in those days the young officers were usually sent off among the Indians or as near the borders as they could find habitable places. In the autumn of 1842 I reported to the company commander, Captain Bradford R. Alden, a most exemplary man, who proved a lasting, valued friend. Eight companies of the Third Infantry were added to the garrison during the spring of 1843, which made garrison life and society gay for the young people and interesting for the older classes. All of the troops were recently from service in the swamps and Everglades of Florida, well prepared to enjoy the change from the war-dance of the braves to the hospitable city of St. Louis; and the graceful step of its charming belles became a joy forever.

Of the class of 1843, Ulysses S. Grant joined the Fourth Regiment as brevet lieutenant, and I had the pleasure to ride with him on our first visit to Mr. Frederick Dent’s home, a few miles from the garrison, where we first met Miss Julia Dent, the charming woman who, five years later, became Mrs. Grant. Miss Dent was a frequent visitor at the garrison

balls and hops, where Lieutenant Hoskins, who was something of a tease, would inquire of her if she could tell where he might find “the small lieutenant with the large epaulettes.”

In May, 1844, all of our pleasures were broken by orders sending both regiments to Louisiana, near Fort Jessup, where with other troops we were organized as “The Army of Observation,” under General Zachary Taylor.

In March, 1845, I was assigned as lieutenant in the Eighth Regiment, and joined my company at St. Augustine, Florida. The soldier’s life of those days was not encouraging to those of active aspirations; but influences were then at work that were beginning to brighten the horizon a little. The new republic of Texas was seeking annexation with the United States, which would endanger the peace between them and the republic of Mexico. Annexation of Texas became the supreme question of the canvass of 1844. James K. Polk was the nominee of the Democratic and annexation party, and Henry Clay was on the other side as the Whig nominee. Polk was elected, and his party prepared to signalize its triumph by annexation as soon as it came into power; but in the last days of President Tyler’s administration, through skilful management of Secretary of State John C. Calhoun, joint resolutions of annexation were passed by both houses of Congress, subject to concurrence of the Congress of the new republic. Strange as it may seem, the resolutions that added to the territory of the United States more than the New England and Middle States combined, and which eventually led to extension to the Pacific coast and hundreds of miles north, only passed the lower house by twenty-two majority, and the Senate by a majority of two.

When the resolution was passed, the minister from Mexico to our government, General Almonte, demanded his

passports, and diplomatic relations between the governments ceased. On July 4, 1845, the Texas Congress accepted and ratified the resolutions of annexation by unanimous vote, and Texas was a State of the Union.

General Taylor’s little army of observation was ordered to Corpus Christi, Texas, and became “The Army of Occupation.” All other available forces were ordered to join him, including General Worth and his forces in Florida. At the time there were in the line of the army eight regiments of infantry, four of artillery, and two of dragoons, stationed along the northern frontier from Fort Kent in the northeast of Maine to the west end of Lake Superior, and along the western frontier from Fort Snelling to Fort Leavenworth, and southward to Fort Jessup in Louisiana.

By the middle of October, 1846, three thousand eight hundred and sixty men of all arms had concentrated at Corpus Christi. Seven companies of the Second Dragoons had marched from Fort Jessup to San Patricio on the Nueces River, about twenty-eight miles up from Corpus Christi; the other three companies were halted at San Antonio, Texas. Near our camps were extensive plains well adapted to military manœuvres, which were put to prompt use for drill and professional instruction. There were many advantages too in the way of amusement, game on the wild prairies and fish in the broad gulf were plentiful, and there was the salt water for bathing. On one occasion during the winter a violent north wind forced the waters over the beach, in some places far enough to disturb our camps, and when they receded, quantities of fish were found in the little puddles left behind, and turtles more than enough to supply the army.

The officers built a theatre, depending upon their own efforts to reimburse them. As there was no one outside the

army except two rancheros within a hundred miles, our dramatic company was organized from among the officers, who took both male and female characters. In farce and comedy we did well enough, and soon collected funds to pay for the building and incidental expenses. The house was filled every night. General Worth always encouraging us, General Taylor sometimes, and General Twiggs occasionally, we found ourselves in funds sufficient to send over to New Orleans for costumes, and concluded to try tragedy. The "Moor of Venice" was chosen, Lieutenant Theoderic Porter[1] to be the Moor, and Lieutenant U. S. Grant to be the daughter of Brabantio. But after rehearsal Porter protested that male heroines could not support the character nor give sentiment to the hero, so we sent over to New Orleans and secured Mrs. Hart, who was popular with the garrisons in Florida. Then all went well, and life through the winter was gay.

Formal diplomatic relations between the republics were suspended, but quasi negotiations were continued, seeking a course by which war might be averted. The authorities of Mexico were not averse to the settlement according to the claims of Texas,—the Rio Grande frontier,—but the political affairs of the country were such that they could not agree. Excitement in the United States increased as the suspense continued. But the authorities, having confidence in their negotiations or wishing to precipitate matters, ordered General Taylor to march across to the Rio Grande at Matamoras in the spring of 1846. The execution of the order precipitated war.

The move from Corpus Christi to the Rio Grande made necessary a change of base from St. Joseph's Island to Point Isabel and Brazos Santiago, near the mouth of the Rio Grande. Supplies were sent by sea, under charge of Major

Munroe, with a siege train and field battery, and the army took up its march on the 9th of March, 1846, the advance under General Twiggs, consisting of the dragoons and Ringgold's field battery. The army was well instructed, under good discipline, and fully prepared for field work, the weather was fine, and the firm turf of the undulating prairies made the march easy. Wild horses and cattle, and deer and antelope, were often seen in the distance as they scampered away to hide themselves. On the 19th the head of the column approached Arroyo Colorado, one hundred and thirty miles from Corpus Christi. The arroyo was about three feet deep, of salt water. Mexican lancers were on the southern side, and gave notice that they had orders to resist our further advance. On the 21st the army was up and deployed along the high banks of the arroyo, the field batteries in position. General Worth was ordered to make the crossing, and rode at the head of the column. We looked with confidence for a fight and the flow of blood down the salt water before we could cross, but the Mexicans had no artillery, and could not expose their cavalry to the fire of our batteries; they made their formal protest, however, that the crossing would be regarded as a declaration of war.

On the 24th of March the column reached the road leading from Point Isabel to Matamoras. General Taylor ordered Worth to march the greater part of the army towards Matamoras and halt at the first good camping-ground, and rode towards Point Isabel to meet the detachment ordered there under Major Munroe. He found them already landed, and the Mexicans fired their little hamlets and fled. After ordering construction of protection for his supplies and defensive works for the troops, General Taylor returned to the army, and rode with General Worth towards the Rio Grande. As the army approached the river

the Mexicans on the Matamoras side made some display of forces, manned their works on that side, and prepared to resist us, under the impression that we would cross at once. General Worth was sent over, and was met by General La Vega, on the part of General Mejia, commanding on that side. He was told that Mexico had not declared war, that the American consul was in the exercise of his functions; but Worth's request to see the consul was refused, which was denounced as a belligerent act, and he cautioned General La Vega against passing Mexicans to the north side of the river.

Camps were pitched in range of the Mexican works about Matamoras, grounds staked for constructing defensive works, and large details put out to work on them. The Mexican forces at this time were three thousand, and they were soon joined by two thousand more.

Political affairs with them were confused. President Herrera was thought to favor the claims of Texas to the Rio Grande border. General Paredes made pronunciamento, overthrew the president's government, and had authority as war president. He sent General Ampudia to the frontier to take charge, but the appointment was not satisfactory on the border, and General Arista was assigned. There was discord over there between the authorities and the generals, while General Taylor was too far from his government to be bothered. His army was all that he could wish, except in numbers.

Marauding parties came over occasionally and made trouble about the ranches on the American side. One party killed Colonel Cross, our chief quartermaster, on the 10th of April. Scouting parties were sent out to look for the intruders. Lieutenant Theoderic Porter, in command of one party, and one of his men were caught in ambush and killed.

Captain Walker, of the Texan Rangers, while out on a scout lost his camp guard of five men, surprised and killed, and later Captains Thornton and Hardee, of the dragoons, were met at Rancho Carricitos by a large cavalry force and some infantry under General Torrijon, who took captive or killed the entire party. Captains Thornton and Hardee and Lieutenant Kane were made prisoners. The other commissioned officer of the command, George T. Mason, of my class, refused to surrender; being a superior swordsman, he tried to cut his way out, and was killed. This affair was taken as open war, and General Taylor called on the governors of Texas and Louisiana—under his authority from Washington—for volunteers of infantry and cavalry.

The capture of Thornton and Hardee created great excitement with the people at home. Fanning's massacre and the Alamo at San Antonio were remembered, and it was reported of General Ampudia, who on a recent occasion had captured a general in Yucatan, that he boiled his head in oil. So it was thought he would give no quarter; but in a day or two we heard from the officers that they received great kindness from their captors, and that General Ampudia had ordered that his government should allow them their full pay and every liberty consistent with their safe-keeping. They declined, however, to accept pay, and were held as the guests of Generals Arista and Ampudia.

On the 1st of May our tents were struck, wagons parked, assembly sounded, and the troops were under arms at three A.M., marched at four o'clock, and bivouacked within ten miles of Point Isabel. No one was advised of the cause of movements, but all knew that our general understood his business. He had been informed that General Arista, with his movable forces, had marched to Rancho de Longoreno, some leagues below us on the river, intending to cross and

cut us off from the base at Point Isabel. Major Jacob Brown was left in charge of the works opposite Matamoras with the Seventh Regiment of Infantry, Captain Sands's company of artillery, and Bragg's field battery.

By some accident provision was not made complete for Arista to make prompt crossing of the river, and that gave General Taylor time to reach his base, reinforce it, and draw sufficient supplies. Advised of our move by General Mejia, at Matamoras, General Arista was thrown into doubt as to whether our move was intended for Matamoras, and sent back part of his forces for its defence. Finding, however, that Taylor had gone to Point Isabel, Arista crossed the river and put his line athwart our return march at Palo Alto. To hasten Taylor's return, he ordered General Mejia, at Matamoras, to open his batteries on our troops at Fort Brown, and make serious demonstrations against them.

General Taylor started on his return on the 7th of May. We had heard the artillery-fire upon comrades left at the forts, and were anxiously looking for the order. It was received with cheers, and a good march was made, but the night was awful. The mosquitoes seemed as thick as the blades of grass on the prairie, and swarmed and buzzed in clouds, and packs of half-famished wolves prowled and howled about us. There was no need for the sound of reveille. The wolves and mosquitoes, and perhaps some solemn thoughts, kept us on the *qui vive*. Arista's army was known to be in line of battle only a few miles off. About one o'clock we halted to fill the canteens, and marched to meet the enemy. The columns were deployed,—Fifth Infantry on the right, Ringgold's battery, Third Infantry, a two-gun battery of eighteen-pounders, the Fourth Infantry, battalion of artillery acting as infantry, Duncan's field battery and Eighth Infantry, Captains Charles May and Croghan Ker, with

squadrons of dragoons, looking to the trains; the Third and Fourth Infantry, the Third Brigade, under Colonel John Garland. That brigade, with the Fifth Regiment, the heavy guns, and Ringgold's, were of the right wing, General Twiggs commanding. Other forces of the left were under Colonel William G. Belknap, Eighth Infantry, and Duncan's Battery.

As the lines deployed, Lieutenant J. E. Blake, of the Topographical Engineers, dashed forward alone, made a close inspection of the enemy's line with such lightning speed that his work was accomplished before the enemy could comprehend his purpose, rode back and reported to the commanding general. He was one of the heroes of the day, but his laurels were enjoyed only a few hours. As he took his pistol off at night he threw it upon the ground, and an accidental explosion of one of the charges gave him a mortal wound.

The line advanced until the puff of smoke from one of the enemy's guns rose, and the ball bounded over the prairie, passed over our heads, and wounded a teamster far in our rear. Our infantry was ordered down and our artillery into practice. It was an artillery combat more than a battle, and held until night. The Mexican cavalry made a charge against the Fifth Regiment, and finding our front of square too strong repeated on another front, but were repulsed. Presently the grass took fire, and the winds so far favored us as to sweep the smoke in the enemy's faces, and when it passed we found the Mexican line had been drawn back a little. May's squadron was sent there, and General Taylor advanced the right of his line, but night closed in before decisive work could be done. The armies were near enough during the night to hear the moans of the wounded. Major Ringgold was mortally wounded, also Captain John Page, of

the Fourth Infantry, but less than fifty of our troops were lost.

Early the next morning a few of the Mexican troops could be seen, but when the sun rose to light the field it was found vacant. A careful reconnoissance revealed that the enemy was in retreat, and the dragoons reported them in march towards our comrades at Fort Brown.

General Taylor remained on the field a few hours to have the killed and wounded of both sides cared for, but sent the dragoons, light infantry, and Ringgold's battery in pursuit, the latter under Lieutenant Randolph Ridgely. The light infantry was of two battalions, under Captain George A. McCall and Captain C. F. Smith. The route of march was through a dense chaparral on both sides of the road, the infantry finding their way as best they could through the chaparral, the dragoons and Texas Rangers moving on the road, and far off from our flanks, wherever they could find ways of passage. The company to which I was attached was of Smith's battalion, on the right of the road. After a considerable march the battalion came to the body of a young Mexican woman. She had ceased to breathe, but blood heat was still in her body, and her expression life-like. A profusion of black hair covered her shoulders and person, the only covering to her waist. This sad spectacle, so unlike our thoughts of battle, unnerved us a little, but the crush through the thorny bushes soon brought us back to thoughts of heavy work, and then came reports of several guns and of grapeshot flying over our heads and tearing through the wood. A reconnoissance found General Arista's army on the south bank of a stream, Resaca de la Palma, which at this season had dried into lagoons with intervening passes. The road crossed at a wide gap between two extensive lagoons. The most of the enemy's artillery was

near the road, the infantry behind the lagoons, with improvised breast defences of pack-saddles and other articles that could be found to stop musket-balls. The lagoons were about a hundred feet wide and from two to three feet deep.

The position was so strong that General Arista thought it would not be attacked. He left General La Vega in command at the road, and made his head-quarters some distance in rear, holding his cavalry in hand to look for any flank move, unpacked his mule-train, and turned the animals out to graze. General Taylor received reports of our adventures and reconnoissance when he rode up, deployed his army for battle, and ordered it forward. In the dense chaparral it was not possible to hold the regiments to their lines, and in places the companies were obliged to break files to get along. All of the enemy's artillery opened, and soon his musketry. The lines closed in to short work, even to bayonet work at places. Lieutenant-Colonel McIntosh had a bayonet thrust through his mouth and neck.[2] Lieutenant R. M. Cochran, Fourth Regiment, and T. L. Chadbourne, of the Eighth, were killed; C. R. Gates and C. D. Jordan, of the Eighth, were severely wounded. The latter, a classmate, was overpowered and about to be slaughtered when rescued by Lieutenant George Lincoln, of the Eighth, who slew with his sword one of the assailants.

Finding the enemy's strong fight, in defence, by his artillery, General Taylor ordered Captain May to charge and capture the principal battery. The squadron was of his own and S. P. Graham's troops. The road was only wide enough to form the dragoons in column of fours. When in the act of springing to their work, Ridgely called, "Hold on, Charlie, till I draw their fire," and loosed his six guns upon the battery at the road.

The return was prompt, but General Taylor, not noting the cause of delay, repeated the order. Ridgely's work, however, was done, and May's spurs pressing his horses had them on the leap before the order reached his ears. In a minute he was at the guns sabring the gunners, and wheeling right and left got possession of the batteries. General La Vega was found at one of his batteries trying to defend it with his sword against one of May's dragoons, but was forced to get in between the wheels of his guns to avoid the horse's heels as they pressed him, when his rank was recognized and he was called to surrender.

As May made his dash the infantry on our right was wading the lagoon. A pause was made to dip our cups for water, which gave a moment for other thoughts; mine went back to her whom I had left behind. I drew her daguerreotype from my breast-pocket, had a glint of her charming smile, and with quickened spirit mounted the bank in time to send some of the mixed infantry troops to relieve May of his charge of the captive knight.

As a dragoon and soldier May was splendid. He stood six feet four without boots, wore his beard full and flowing, his dark-brown locks falling well over his shoulders. His appearance as he sat on his black horse Tom, his heavy sabre over General La Vega, was grand and picturesque. He was amiable of disposition, lovable and genial in character.

Not so grand of stature, or beard, or flowing locks, Randolph Ridgely was as accomplished a soldier and as charming a companion,—a fitting counterpart in spirit and dash.

I have gone thus far into the Mexican War for the opportunity to mention two valued friends, whose memory returning refreshes itself. Many gallant, courageous deeds have since been witnessed, but none more interesting than

Ridgely’s call for the privilege to draw upon himself the fire that was waiting for May.

Chapter II.
From New Mexico to Manassas

Table of Contents

The War-Cloud—The Journey Northward—Appointed Brigadier-General—Report to General Beauregard—Assigned to Command at the Scene of the First Conflict—Personnel of the Confronting Forces—Description of the Field of Manassas, or Bull Run—Beauregard and McDowell of the same West Point Class—Battle of Blackburn's Ford—Early's Mistake—Under Fire of Friend and Foe.

I was stationed at Albuquerque, New Mexico, as paymaster in the United States army when the war-cloud appeared in the East. Officers of the Northern and Southern States were anxious to see the portending storm pass by or disperse, and on many occasions we, too, were assured, by those who claimed to look into the future, that the statesman would yet show himself equal to the occasion, and restore confidence among the people. Our mails were due semi-monthly, but during winter seasons we were glad to have them once a month, and occasionally had to be content with once in six weeks. When mail-day came the officers usually assembled on the flat roof of the quartermaster's office to look for the dust that in that arid climate announced the coming mail-wagon when five or ten miles away; but affairs continued to grow gloomy, and eventually came information of the attack upon and capture of Fort Sumter by the Confederate forces, which put down speculation and drew the long-dreaded line.

A number of officers of the post called to persuade me to remain in the Union service. Captain Gibbs, of the Mounted Rifles, was the principal talker, and after a long but pleasant discussion, I asked him what course he would pursue if his State should pass ordinances of secession and call him to its defence. He confessed that he would obey the call.

It was a sad day when we took leave of lifetime comrades and gave up a service of twenty years. Neither Union officers nor their families made efforts to conceal feelings of deepest regret. When we drove out from the post, a number of officers rode with us, which only made the last farewell more trying.

Passing Fort Craig, on the opposite side of the Rio Grande, we pitched our camp for the night. A sergeant of the Mounted Rifle Regiment came over to see me, and stated that he was from Virginia, and thought that he could go with us to his native State, and at the same time asked that several other soldiers who wished to return to their States might go as my escort. I explained that private soldiers could not go without authority from the War Department; that it was different with commissioned officers, in that the latter could resign their commissions, and when the resignations were accepted they were independent of military authority, and could, as other citizens, take such action as they might choose, but that he and his comrades had enlisted for a specified term of years, and by their oaths were bound to the term of enlistment; that I could not entertain the proposition.

We stayed overnight at Fort Fillmore, in pleasant meeting with old comrades, saddened by the reflection that it was the last, and a prelude to occurrences that must compel the ignoring of former friendships with the acceptance of opposing service.

Speaking of the impending struggle, I was asked as to the length of the war, and said, “At least three years, and if it holds for five you may begin to look for a dictator,” at which Lieutenant Ryan, of the Seventh Infantry, said, “If we are to have a dictator, I hope that you may be the man.”

My mind was relieved by information that my resignation was accepted, to take effect on the 1st of June. In our travel next day we crossed the line into the State of Texas. From the gloomy forebodings of old friends, it seemed at El Paso that we had entered into a different world. All was enthusiasm and excitement, and songs of “Dixie and the South” were borne upon the balmy air. But the Texas girl did not ascend to a state of incandescent charm until the sound of the first notes of “The Bonny Blue Flag” reached her ear. Then her feet rose in gleeful springs, her limbs danced, her hands patted, her eyes glowed, her lips moved, though she did not care to speak, or listen to any one. She seemed lifted in the air, thrilled and afloat, holding to the “Single Star” in joyful hope of Southern rights.

Friends at El Paso persuaded me to leave my family with them to go by a train that was to start in a few days for San Antonio, and to take the faster route by stage for myself.

Our travelling companions were two young men, returning to their Northern homes. The ride of our party of four (including the driver) through the Indian country was attended with some risk, and required vigilance, to be assured against surprise. The constant watchfulness and possible danger over a five-hundred-miles travel drew us near together, and in closer communion as to our identity and future movements, and suggested to the young men that it would be best to put themselves under my care, trusting that I would see them safely through the Confederate lines. They were of the laboring class, and had

gone South to find employment. They were advised to be careful, and talk but little when among strangers. Nothing occurred to cause apprehension until we reached Richmond, Texas, where, at supper, I asked for a glass of milk, and was told there was none.

“What!” said one of my companions, “haven’t the keows come up?”

Signal was telegraphed under the table to be on guard. The *nom de plume* of the Texas bovine escaped attention, and it passed as an enjoyable *lapsus linguæ*.

At Galveston we took a small inland sailing-craft, but were a little apprehensive, as United States ships were reported cruising outside in search of all vessels not flying the Stars and Stripes. Our vessel, however, was only boarded once, and that by a large Spanish mackerel that made a misleap, fell amidships, and served our little company with a pleasant dinner. Aboard this little vessel I first met T. J. Goree, an intelligent, clever Texan, who afterwards joined me at Richmond, and served in faithful duty as my aide-de-camp from Bull Run to Appomattox Court-House.

At New Orleans, my companions found safe-conduct to their Northern lines, and I journeyed on to Richmond. Relatives along the route, who heard of my approach, met me at the stations, though none suggested a stop overnight, or for the next train, but after affectionate salutations waved me on to join “Jeff Davis, for Dixie and for Southern rights.”

At every station old men, women, and children assembled, clapping hands and waving handkerchiefs to cheer the passengers on to Richmond. On crossing the Virginia line, the feeling seemed to culminate. The windows and doors of every farm-house and hamlet were occupied,