

10-1988

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Tate, Michael L. (1988) "A Johnny Reb in Sibley's New Mexico Campaign: Reminiscences of Pvt. Henry C. Wright, 1861-1862, Part III," *East Texas Historical Journal*: Vol. 26: Iss. 2, Article 9.

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**A JOHNNY REB IN SIBLEY'S NEW MEXICO CAMPAIGN:
REMINISCENCES OF PVT. HENRY C. WRIGHT, 1861-1862**

Part III

Edited by Michael L. Tate

Private Henry C. Wright's arrival in El Paso during July 1862 came several weeks too late. Confederate troops had withdrawn from the Trans-Pecos region of Texas and the town lay defenseless before the expected arrival of Union troops. Facing the possibility of recapture by these forces, Wright joined a small party of men attempting to reach San Antonio. This final portion of his reminiscences conveys the danger of that harrowing trip which almost cost the author his life. Here we follow Wright across the Apache-controlled desert lands of West Texas, to the hospitality of farm families of the Hill Country, and finally to his joyous reunion with family members at Moscow, Texas. This marked the end of his role in the New Mexico campaign and the beginning of his participation in the more glorious Louisiana campaign a year later.

* * * * *

At Mesilla I found only a small troop of men, forming the rear of our army, and they were preparing to leave at any time should the Federals advance. I remained there several days and then we all moved down to El Paso, some thirty miles below. At this place we found a disorderly lot of men, formed of sick and wounded from the hospital. Also many attendants who had waited on them, and a good many stragglers of one kind and another, but all anxious to get away, but with no means to cross the plains. The main body of troops had long since gone, and so had the ones who had come from the hospital in Santa Fe. For a while I did not know what to do. At last a gentleman told me he had just heard that a certain Judge Hart,⁴⁴ who had a mill on the river some few miles above the city, was preparing to flee from the approaching enemy and with a large train of well equipped wagons proposed to attempt to reach San Antonio over what was called the "Overland Stage Coach Route," now but little used on account of the number of Indians who infested that portion of the country. He, it seems, reasoned thusly: That the Indians would be watching along the lower route trying to pick off straggling men or stock, and he judged the grass would be much more plentiful as no stock had lately passed that way: while on the other, both water and grass was almost completely gone.⁴⁵ I hurried back to his place to see what I could do. He told me that he had all the help he needed with the exception of a trusty man to herd the mules. He intended to travel at night and camp in the day time. He said he would give me twenty dollars a month. I told

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him I wanted no wages, only my passage, but he refused to take me except on his own terms. So, of course, I gladly consented. Hasty preparations for departure were made, for the Federals were daily expected, and the Judge was aware should they capture him, his life would pay the forfeit, on account of some very shady transaction.

Many were the envious looks and remarks of the men I was leaving behind, at what they called my good luck at getting off. Had they only known it, the most of them were destined to reach their homes long in advance of me. We started in high hopes of getting through in two weeks. It took nearly six. The road at first was good though rough, but when we struck the sand hills, it was slow progress we made. Some of those sand dunes were strange and curious to me, they were hundreds of feet in height, and covered many acres of ground, and yet, perhaps in a few days would shift a mile away from their former position. The sand was so loose that one could not climb but a very few feet before becoming exhausted and slipping back to the hard earth. We only encountered two or three of them, but I was told they were quite numerous. One thing seemed strange to me, and that was that in drifting from place to place they did not fill up the numerous great ravines that intervened. Once I remember nearly all night we travelled, only to find that the camp of the day before was not over a thousand yards away, and yet, even an Indian could not get from one camp to the other save by the road we came.

The days were hot and sultry, but the nights were delightfully cool. We would start in the morning about two o'clock and drive until eight, then stop and turn out the mules to graze. It was my business to herd them. When breakfast was cooked, I would be called in to eat. Afterwards all hands would go to sleep except me and I would go back out in the hot sun to guard the mules. About 3 P.M. the cooks would get dinner ready, and about 4 o'clock we would hitch up and start, drive until about 11 and then camp. At 2 we would start again.

One night, the trail ran over a hard rocky road and plainly before us was the track of a four horse vehicle. We supposed it was some daring party who was pushing on to Texas regardless of danger, and we wondered greatly who they could be. We drove faster and faster that night, hoping to overtake them. The morning light disclosed to our guide that the track had been made by the last overland stage that passed that way two years before. No rain had fallen and the marks were as distinct as though made the day before we saw them.

I was then doing a very foolish thing which resulted very seriously for me. They had furnished me with a good riding horse, it was a small mare that the mules were very fond of and would follow anywhere, so I very foolishly thought it incumbent on me when we were travelling to ride at the head of the train. Now that only gave me about 2 hours to sleep, for the camp never quieted down until after 11, and by 1 we were up and getting ready to start at 2. My place should have been to sleep

in one of the wagons while travelling, as I had to be up all the day, but no one spoke to me about it and I was so well and strong I did not think anything could hurt me. I did this for some two or three weeks, and then suddenly without any warning dropped off my horse with a sunstroke. I must have been delirious first for the men told me afterwards that I had been riding up and down the line with my gun looking for Judge Hart. That I was accusing him of wanting to leave me up there with the Indians, and I was determined to kill him. We were crossing the Pecos River and they said I fell off my horse into the water. (We had travelled until nearly noon that day to reach the river). They put me in a wagon, but I knew nothing of it. That night when we camped they said I seemed rational and made my pallet as usual under a tree, but in the morning when they roused to start I was gone. They searched the camp and its surroundings until daylight in vain. Then Judge Hart, who was a cold blooded old despot, ordered them to move on. He said he would be delayed no longer by a damn fool soldier, but there were some kinder hearts in that camp. A white man, a mexican and a negro — All honor to their memory — I never knew their names and, excepting the mexican, never met them. They declared they would find me alive or dead. Governor Baylor of Arizona⁴⁶ was sending a fine pair of horses down in care of that negro, and he retained the horses and buggy to carry me, should I be found. They hunted for me faithfully and about 9 A.M. found me about a mile and a half from the camp. I was up on the side of a mountain, standing bareheaded and barefooted, holding on to the trunk of a little tree. I greeted them with "Where are you going boys? Stop a little while and have some breakfast with me." They said I was too weak to walk, but they carried me down to the buggy and drove the fifteen miles to the next camp in a hurry, expecting I would die on the way. They had two canteens of water and I drank all that and wanted more. From that time I rode in the wagon until we reached Fort Mason,⁴⁷ but knew nothing of the occurrences on the way. They said afterwards that I ate nothing, refused to take any medicine and only craved water all the time.

When we reached Fort Mason, they made arrangements with a Judge Greenwood⁴⁸ to leave me at this house. They made up a purse of \$50.00 and left with him for me, and the train went on. There was a doctor there who came at once and pronounced it a bad attack of brain fever, but he could do nothing for me. I raved for 10 days and nights but would not touch a drop of medicine of any kind. At last the fever left me, but I was still delirious. Strange to say, I knew nothing of what really happened in all those weeks, but the vagaries of my mind, and the dreams and visions I saw were fresh and vigorous and I still remember them all. I will relate one or two of them to show how strange they were. The house where I was staying was a roomy building of logs and lumber, a very comfortable farm house. There was a wide passage through the center, and a wide gallery in front. My bed was on this porch, and I lay there and looked up at the bare rafters above day after day, and yet my mind was far away

in other regions. Now and then I would come back to realization of where I was, but always with a shock of surprise to find myself there, and a disappointed and saddened heart to know that all had been a dream. These lucid moments would last but a little while, and again I would be gone. Once I seemed to be in a great battle in Virginia. It seemed that our side was victorious and the enemy retreating. I was standing beside a large tree when a general officer in Federal uniform dashed up to me. (I heard afterwards that it was General McClennan).⁴⁹ I called to him to surrender, but he refused and fired point blank at me with his pistol, but missed me. I was armed with a shotgun and fired, killing both him and his horse. I took his sabre and pistol and then suddenly came at least partially to my senses. I lay there and pondered — Why here I am at Fort Mason, I never was in Virginia in my life, but still the feeling remained, and with the cunning of a half crazed mind I called to Mrs. Greenwood who was passing, "Oh Mrs. Greenwood, where is that pistol and sabre?" She replied "There is no sabre here, and no pistol only the Judge's and he has gone out on the range." "Oh!" I said, "I thought there was," and I lay back and went to sleep.

Again at another time I had a delightful and interesting vision. I seemed to be lying on my bed, when a beautiful pair of iron grey horses drawing a very fine carriage, drove up to the gate. A lady stepped out, said something to the colored driver, and then came on up the walk to the house. "Are you the sick soldier who is staying here?" she said. "Yes mam" I replied. "Where are the folks?" she continued. "Are you here all alone?" "Yes mam" I said, "I don't know where they are." "Well, well, that is too bad, they are neglecting you shamefully, you should be over at my house, I would take better care of you. Suppose you go home with me any how. I will leave a note to Mrs. Greenwood, and I don't suppose they would care much any how." "Oh!" I said, "I would be delighted to go with you." So she wrote a note and left it pinned to the pillow. Then she helped me walk down to the carriage. We drove, it seemed to me, about a mile directly down the road and came to a beautiful great white house that loomed up like a palace. A broad flight of stone steps led up the main entrance, and there we were met and greeted by a lovely little girl ten or twelve years old. "Oh! Mama" she said, "Have you brought the sick soldier home to stay, and may I nurse him?" "Yes" her mama said "You may if you will be very good and attentive to him." "I surely will" the child replied and, taking my hand "Come with me and I will show you your room." We walked through a long hall and out on a gallery to what formed an L to the building. She opened a door into a lovely room where a large bed with snow white sheets and pillows looked very inviting, and out of a wide open window I could see a wonderful garden. It seemed to me that fruit from every clime on earth was growing in that one space of about an acre. Apples, pears, peaches, plums, oranges, lemons, pineapples and bananas and many other kinds were all growing side by side. I lay down on the bed. "Oh! the beautiful fruit"

I exclaimed, "I want some of it all." "You shall have all you want" my little nurse cried, and she ran out to the garden but soon returned with her apron full of the most delicious peaches, pears and grapes. Now I thought I must put them out of sight from the lady of the house, because she might not think it best for me to eat them, so I turned down one of the bed sheets and put all the fruit in between the sheets to hide them, and thinking I heard her coming I closed my eyes and pretended I was asleep. When I opened my eyes again I was looking up at the old rafters at Judge Greenwood's house. Oh! I thought, how did I get back here. Is it possible I have been dreaming again? I could not realize it, so I lay there until Mrs. Greenwood came by. "Mrs. Greenwood" I asked, "Who lives in that large white house just over the hill about a mile from here?" She looked up astonished. "Why there is no house in that direction for a hundred miles" she said, "And no painted house anywhere in this country. What put such a notion in your head?" "I don't know" I muttered, "I just thought there was," and I lay down again to think and think and think.

I remained at Judge Greenwood's nearly, or quite, a month. My appetite had failed entirely during my sickness; in fact, I was told that for ten or more days I did not eat a bite of anything. After that a few spoonfuls of coffee and part of a biscuit satisfied me. But soon I began eating more and after a couple of weeks I was able to stagger to the table. Very soon my appetite became so ravenous that I could not eat enough to appease it. I longed for meal time to come, and though there were a lot of hearty wheat threshers at the table, yet they would all be through and gone before I would quit and then I quit for very shame. Mrs. Greenwood set a bountiful table, and among other things always had broiled cheese. Seeing I enjoyed it so much, one day she asked me if I liked uncooked cheese. I said, "Indeed I do." Then she replied, "On the beams over your head are several cheeses. If you feel like it between meals just help yourself." As soon as I left the table I reached up and found three cheeses. They were about 10 inches long, 8 wide, and 2 thick. I ate all three of them before I left there except part of the last one, and that was packed with a lunch I carried with me. I left those good people with a heart full of gratitude for their kindness. I was still so weak I could hardly walk, but they furnished me with a horse and a companion who was to bring him back. It was 40 miles to Fredericksburg⁵⁰ and took us two days to make the journey as I was very weak. We stayed all night at a German's house who treated us kindly, but refused to charge us for our lodging. At Fredericksburg the hotel keeper did the same; also the driver of the coach to San Antonio gave me a free ride. It was in the month of August, yet the hotel cook served up a dish of fresh pork of which I ate very heartily both night and morning. The consequence was I had a terrible attack of diarrhea and I feared I would not be able to travel. Fortunately there was no other passenger and the driver was very considerate and kind. I kept getting worse all the time and we had to stop every mile

or two. I was growing weaker rapidly and the driver told me afterwards that he was afraid I would die before reaching San Antonio. We came to the Guadalupe river, a beautiful, clear running stream, and the driver said, "I always take a bath here when I have no lady passengers, and I believe a bath would help you." I crawled out more dead than alive, and got into the water. Never before or since have I had a more pleasant experience. I lay in the water laved by the current and all care, sickness, and fears passed away from me. I think I stayed in there at least half an hour until the driver insisted on my coming out. It was like a miracle! I was well! My bowels did not move again until I reached the city. I learned a lesson then of the virtues of water that has helped me through a long life and saved me from pain, sickness, and expense. In San Antonio I met my old Colonel, now promoted to be Brigadier General, Hardaman.⁵¹ He greeted me warmly and offered to take me to his ranch some thirty miles away to stay until I was fully recovered; but I was anxious to reach home and see my mother. True, I had written to her from Fort Mason and she knew I was out of the hands of the Yankees, but the mails were very irregular, and I did not know if she had heard from me or not. Telling Col. Hardaman of this, he managed to procure me a little mule from the Quartermaster, and mounted on this animal, I started for home. I had no saddle, but ten miles from the city camped on Cibulo.⁵² I expected to find a company of boys from Huntsville, and thought they would help me out — and so they did. They gave me an old saddle, a pair of blankets, a canteen, a haversack, and a pair of spurs; also a hearty welcome and a cheery good bye. Leaving these good friends I mounted my mule and started for home. I had company coming out from San Antonio to the camp, and Mr. Mule traveled very well; but, alas, I found that going by himself he was the worst stiff legged nuisance I ever bestrode. Spur and whip as I would, he moved like a snail; and it was long after noon before I reached the place where the McGees lived whom I had visited with my friend, John Clark. It was so long since I had met with any white ladies that I was homesick and lonesome. True, I had been treated very kindly, but everywhere were strangers, and I longed to see some whom I had met before. At last worn and weary I rode up to the gate of the McGee [house] and called, "Halloa!" Mrs. Mc came to the door followed by a lot of children. "Can I stay here tonight?" I asked, although it was but a little after noon. "Who are you?" she asked. "A sick soldier" I answered. "Well, come in" she coldly replied. I climbed slowly off my donkey and staggered toward the house. "Who is it mamma?" I heard the children say. "I don't know," was the reply, and weak and worn as I was I felt heart-sick to feel I was not welcome. I had nearly reached the door when suddenly her face lighted up. "Oh!" she said, "I believe it is Mr. Wright." She sprang forward and grasped both my hands, "O, I am so glad to see you." The children all joined in with their shouts of welcome, and led me into the house where their father was. "Mr. Wright's come, Mr. Wright's come." Mr. McGee gave me a warm welcome, and my heart

felt as light as a feather. They told me that John Clark had reached home in safety, but they had heard that I was dead. These kind friends tried to keep me a few days, but I was anxious to see my mother and the kindness I met here gave me strength to go on. I had an army canteen that held exactly a quart and a gill. Mrs. McGee filled this with sweet milk for me when I started. The little old mule was so slow and stubborn and I was so weak that about 10 miles was about all I could manage by the middle of the day, and then some kind man or woman where I stopped for dinner would insist on my remaining until the next morning, which I would gladly do. Now it seems almost incredible but it is true that one day in going those ten miles I stopped 5 times at various places and had my canteen filled with sweet milk besides having it full when I started in the morning. Lumps of butter as large as the end of my thumb would form with the jolting of the milk, but it was all good to me, and I would drink and drink and crave more all the time. Of late days I have read much of the wonderful cures made by drinking sweet milk in great quantities, and can realize now why it was the enormous quantity I drank did not injure me, but, on the contrary, I grew stronger day by day. At Gonzales⁵⁸ as we went out I had made the acquaintance of some young ladies who were very nice to the soldier boys, and now I was looking forward to meeting them again. The last day before reaching that place a hack passed me on the road, and I spurred after it, for the mule traveled well in company with anything. He would have loped for hours to keep up with a companion. So for some 15 miles I rode along merrily and reached the town about dark. But, Oh! it was a job to get that donkey the few blocks from where the hack stopped to where my friends lived. There I found a royal welcome, and had it not been for my mother at home I might have been there yet. But I pulled myself away the next morning, and about a mile from town came to a fork in the road where a lot of Mexican carts with their drivers had stopped. A very fine looking man, the leader of the train met me. "Senor" he said, "Which is the road to La Grange?"⁵⁴ I told him the left hand one, and that I was going that way. All at once he cried out, "Senor, don't you know me? I am the man that found you lost in the mountains when you wandered away from the train. He grasped my hands and seemed delighted to see me, and I surely was to see him. He then invited me to ride in one of the carts as far as La Grange some forty or fifty miles. But I had an idea that would be beneath my dignity so bade him farewell and spurred on. But spur as I would, every rising hill showed me those carts with their quick stepping little oxen only a short distance behind, and at last when quite exhausted I stopped, tied the mule to graze and lay down under the shade of a tree. It was not ten minutes before they also were there. "Well, Senor," said my friend, "Here we stay for dinner. You have some coffee with us." After a hearty dinner with real coffee he said to me, "I make you a nice bed in my wagon and take good care of your mule if you ride with me." I gladly consented and from there to La Grange was treated like a king. Tho we never met again,

the memory of that man's kindness makes me feel better toward all his race. Camped near La Grange a hack passed us containing an old gentleman, a large, fat driver, and a sick soldier. They questioned me as to where I was going. The old gentleman, a Mr. Armstrong, told me he was taking his sick son home, and tho he had no room for me in the hack, he would carry my luggage, and as my mule would travel well in company, I would go with them to his home, some ten miles from Brenham,⁵⁵ and there remain as long as I wished. This suited me, so bidding my Mexican friend a grateful farewell, we started, and camping out one night the next day reached Mr. Armstrong's home where we were gladly welcomed. I was pretty nearly fagged out by this time and was perfectly willing to rest a while. I remained with those good people a full week and can never forget their kindness. After the war was over, I wrote to them, but never got a reply. A young man named Patrick stopped over night the day before I left and finding he was on his [way] to Huntsville which was my next objective point, I decided to go with him. Bidding the Armstrongs good bye with mutual expressions of good will, we started on our way. I had by this time so far recovered my strength that it did not worry me to ride, and my mule trotted along easily by my companion's horse. Nothing of importance occurred on our way. I think it was a three days ride. At last we reached Huntsville, and I went right up to Col. Grant's where I was certain of a welcome. Mr. Patrick went with me and was made to feel like an old friend. There were three young ladies there, who were dear friends to me and mine. One of them afterwards agreed to go with me through life's journey, and for fifty-six years we have traveled side by side. But at that time we had no thought of such a thing, and they were all equally dear friends. I am told at that time my appearance was far from prepossessing. Emaciated in body, my hair which had been closely shorn and nor almost all had come out must have made me indeed look odd. But my spirits were not at all depressed, and I felt that I was still worth many dead men. After a day or two resting, I started on the home stretch for Moscow, some 50 miles away. Patrick still accompanied me, and I will here say that he remained in Polk County until he had an opportunity of joining our Company when he enlisted and made a good soldier until the close of the war. We reached Moscow the evening of the second day. My friends greeted me with enthusiasm, but I could not tarry with them but hastened out to the little home where my dear ones were longing for but not expected to see me. What a meeting that was when clasped in my mother's arms and surrounded by the rest of the family I felt that all was well. We knelt in prayer and my father's voice rose in fervid thanks to the giver of all good that He had brought us all together in peace. After the first congratulations were over, I started to walk out around the yard to see how things looked after a year of absence. Mother called to me to be careful for I had left a young bull dog at home when I left, and she said he had become very fierce and was dangerous. Of course she thought he had forgotten me. I had a peculiar whistle with which I

always called him, so I stepped to the back door and gave it. In a moment I heard him coming, and almost delirious with joy he rushed around the house and overwhelmed me with his caress. I could hardly get away from him, and as long as I remained at home he dogged my footsteps everywhere. And now commenced a couple of months of almost unbroken pleasure, ended at last by the sickness of my father who had long been an invalid, but now rapidly failed, and at last passed away to be with the Savior he had so long faithfully served. J. T. Poe had reached home nearly two months ahead of me, and pretty well recovered from the effects of his wound had made good use of his time, and persuaded my younger sister to cast in her lot with him in spite of the war. Only a few months of happiness were granted them, and then the summons came for us to join our commands, as we had been exchanged. So, mounted again on good horses, with recovered health and spirits, again we left our home and loved ones for the thrilling scenes of war. This time we had no foolish notions that the war was only a frolic and would soon be ended. We now comprehended its seriousness and knew that many of us would never return again to our homes.

* * * * *

Epilogue

After a brief respite during the summer and fall of 1862, the 4th Regiment Texas Mounted Volunteers resumed active duty, first along the southeast Texas coast and later in Louisiana. Wright spent part of the following year as a special courier which allowed him to avoid the dull routine of camp life and to share good food and even personal servants with the officers. He also participated in a series of skirmishes along a line through southern Louisiana from Carencro to Franklin, but he had been temporarily at home in January 1863 when his regiment assisted in the celebrated capture of the Union revenue cutter, *Harriet Lane*, in Galveston Harbor.⁵⁶

Of greater significance was Wright's participation in blunting the spring offensive of General Nathaniel P. Banks in 1864. Union strategy directed 25,000 well-trained and well-equipped soldiers to move up the Red River from Alexandria, Louisiana, and capture as much of northern Louisiana, southern Arkansas, and eastern Texas as possible. Texas district commander General John B. Magruder assembled virtually every unit available to him, including the 4th Regiment and other veterans of the New Mexico campaign. On April 8, 1864 the outnumbered Confederates defeated Banks at the Battle of Mansfield (Louisiana), and in the process captured 2,500 prisoners, twenty-two cannons, and 150 supply wagons. On the following day they again engaged in retreating Union force at the Battle of Pleasant Hill. Once more the rebels could claim victory as Banks was forced to end all invasion plans for Texas. The costs were high; the Confederates lost almost 2,500 men, including the 4th Regiment's popular officer, Brigadier General Tom Green, who was killed at Blair's Landing, Louisiana, on April 12.⁵⁷

Although the 4th Regiment Texas Mounted Volunteers subsequently were ordered to assist General Sterling Price in Arkansas, Wright spent only a short time there and engaged in no major battles.⁵⁸ Instead, he was transferred to General John A. Wharton's provost guard and followed it to East Texas after the Confederate withdrawal from Arkansas. He spent the final months of the war as a courier and saw first-hand the plight of East Texas families coping with total economic collapse and with entire military units deserting to rejoin their desperate kinsmen. Wright remained in service even after General Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox. He agreed with the efforts of General E. Kirby Smith to delay final surrender of the Trans-Mississippi West Department until the Union offered concessions. Yet Wright also recognized the futility of further military resistance and he mustered out of service upon General Smith's formal surrender on June 2, 1865.⁵⁹ Few Civil War soldiers had served so long a term of service as Henry C. Wright and even fewer Texas veterans had survived the entire travail from the headwaters of the Rio Grande to the banks of the Mississippi River.

Wright's subsequent life never achieved the same level of danger that he had faced in the Civil War, but his next eight decades were exciting and worthy of public attention. Despite his personal philosophy that each young man should find a single vocation and stick with it through a lifetime, Wright held numerous jobs of an unrelated nature. He frequently changed residences during the 1870s and 1880s as he sought to improve his economic and social status. Carpentry provided the mainstay of his income for those years, but he also worked as a land agent, an occupation which carried him by horseback into all sections of Texas.

Even with the numerous relocations and job changes, Wright maintained an apparently happy domestic life throughout this period. In 1866 he married Phoebe Jane Brown of Huntsville and together they raised three daughters and a son. One of the daughters later became a chiropractor in San Antonio, a second became a faculty member at the state institute for the blind in Austin, the third moved to New York City, and the son taught school in the Philippine Islands before returning to Texas and purchasing a farm near Falfurrias. Phoebe Wright's interest in professional singing was aided by the family's move to Austin in 1898 where she could secure voice training and appreciative audiences. Her local fame spread to such an extent that in 1924 she was invited to perform at Carnegie and Wannamaker halls in New York City, an offer which she willingly accepted.

Life in Austin also provided the sense of permanence that had eluded the family in earlier years. Wright built his own home and maintained that residence until his death. He took an active role in the Hyde Park Christian Church, and during the 1920s worked as a night watchman at the capitol grounds despite his advanced age. Summers were often reserved for vacation travel, and the mountain locale of Alpine, Texas, became

one of their favorite spots until Mrs. Wright's death in 1936.

The last newspaper interview with Henry C. Wright appeared in the *Austin American Statesman*, on June 9, 1940, which celebrated his attainment of the century mark. Reporter Truman McMahan remarked that Wright's health seemed exemplary for a one hundred year old man. Despite a slight problem with rheumatism and the need for reading glasses, he maintained an active life and the posture of a man half his age. Wright attributed his longevity to the avoidance of alcohol, tobacco, and modern medicines, plus a commitment to what he termed "the true Christian way of life." McMahan further noted that Wright still evidenced an interest in reading and story telling, as well as a more recently cultivated fascination with baseball and football.

Henry Clay Wright died on October of 1941 at the age of 101. The *Austin American Statesman* printed a fairly brief obituary, but titled it with a large type, readily perceivable headline to catch the eye of even the most casual reader. Family members from across Texas assembled at Austin's Oakwood Cemetery and paid final tribute not only to a blood relative but to a legacy of history — a man whose life spanned the time from the Civil War to World War II.⁶⁰

NOTES

⁴⁰Simeon Hart, a New Yorker who was raised in St. Louis, settled at El Paso in 1848 following service in the Mexican War. Marrying into a prominent Mexican family and establishing a flour mill which supplied much of the Southwest, he quickly grew in wealth and social position. Hart furnished goods to Sibley's army and was forced to retreat following Union occupation of El Paso. He subsequently joined the Confederate Army as a major and oversaw the crucial Texas cotton trade with Matamoros, Mexico, for badly needed war materials. After the war he returned to economic and social prominence in El Paso until his death in 1874. Sonnichsen, *Pass of the North*, pp. 154-158, 170-172.

⁴¹Although Wright is not specific on the exact route taken by his party across West Texas, it generally followed the primitive road used by various mail service companies running between San Antonio, Texas, and San Diego, California, during the 1850s. First utilized by Henry Skillman at the beginning of the decade to transport mail to Santa Fe via El Paso, the unimproved road was taken over in 1857 by James Birth who received an annual federal subsidy of \$149,000 to make semi-monthly mail deliveries to San Diego. This so-called "Jackass Mail" route followed a series of primitive relay stations across West Texas which were constructed near military posts along a line through Forts Clark, Hudson, Lancaster, Davis, and Bliss. Robert Thonhoff, *San Antonio Stage Lines, 1847-1881*. Southwestern Studies Monograph No. 29 (El Paso, 1971), pp. 14-17.

⁴²John Robert Baylor (1822-1894) migrated to Texas in 1839 from his home in Kentucky. He joined several campaigns against Comanches during the following decade and was elected to the Texas legislature in 1853. Subsequently appointed as agent to the Brazos Indian Reservation in Young County, he became involved in a controversy with Indian Superintendent Robert S. Neighbors which led to Baylor's dismissal. Because of his participation in the state secession convention and his proven experience as a soldier, he was commissioned as lieutenant colonel of the Second Regiment Texas Mounted Rifles. By mid-July 1861 his troops had taken control of the federal military posts throughout West Texas, including Fort Bliss at El Paso. On August 1, 1861 he declared himself governor of the Territory of Arizona (south of the thirty-fourth parallel), and seven months later dispatched a force under Captain Sherod Hunter to seize Tucson. Continued conflicts with Sibley, failure of the Arizona

campaign, and official criticism of his harsh Indian policy led to the Confederate government's revocation of his appointment as Arizona territorial governor. Baylor served as a member of the Confederate Congress from 1863 to the end of the war. Robert Lee Kerby, *The Confederate Invasion of New Mexico and Arizona, 1861-1862* (Los Angeles, 1958), pp. 42-64, 130; *Handbook of Texas*, I, p. 124.

⁴⁷Fort Mason was established on July 6, 1851 by elements of the 2nd U.S. Dragoons and named for one of the regimental officers, 2nd Lt. George T. Mason, who had been killed at the beginning of the Mexican War. Situated near the confluence of Comanche Creek and the Llano River in present Mason County, it served the dual purpose of protecting the German settlers of the area and mail coaches along the San Antonio-El Paso road. Among the officers who served at Fort Mason during the 1850s and later gained fame in the Civil War were Robert E. Lee, Albert Sidney Johnston, George Thomas, and Earl Van Dorn. Occupied by the Confederacy at the beginning of the Civil War, the post was mainly utilized by mobile ranger groups who were pursuing Indians. Reoccupied by federal troops after the war, it was permanently abandoned in March 1869, but the nearby town of Mason survived its abandonment. Frazer, *Forts of the West*, p. 155; *Handbook of Texas*, I, p. 629.

⁴⁸This is probably William Greenwood who served on the first County Board of Commissioners for Mason County upon its organization in 1858. Both as a town founder and successful rancher, Greenwood possessed a favorable reputation throughout the area and his home ("the Block House") was both a hospitable refuge for weary travelers and panicked settlers who fled to its secure walls during Indian troubles. Margaret Bierschwale, "Mason County Texas, 1845-1870," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, LII (April, 1949), pp. 391-393.

⁴⁹Wright is probably referring to General George B. McClellan who during May and June, 1862 was involved in the Peninsula Campaign to capture the Confederate capital at Richmond, Virginia, by attacking through the "backdoor" from the southeast. A costly series of battles resulted in high casualties for both armies, and McClellan was eventually forced from the Peninsula as the South found new heroes in Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, and J.E.B. Stuart. T. Harry Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals* (New York, 1952), pp. 87-115.

⁵⁰Established in May, 1846 by John O. Meusebach and 120 settlers from New Braunfels, Fredericksburg stood on the northernmost frontier of the German settlements in Texas. Meusebach's successful negotiations with Comanche leaders and bountiful harvests aided the town's growth so that by 1860 it had a population of 1,200. Strong Unionist sentiment among German colonists of the region resulted in bloody Confederate reprisals during the Civil War, including the Battle of the Nueces which occurred a hundred miles to the southwest during the very time that Wright was in the town — August of 1862. *Handbook of Texas*, I, pp. 643, 684-685, and II, p. 290; Robert W. Shook, "The Battle of the Nueces, August 10, 1862," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, LXVI (July, 1962), pp. 31-42.

⁵¹William Polk "Gotch" Hardeman (1816-1898) migrated to Matagorda County from his Tennessee home in 1835 and immediately joined the revolutionary activities against Mexico. During the era of the Republic of Texas he participated in frontier service against various Indians and joined Captain Ben McCulloch's Texas Mounted Volunteers during the Mexican War. In January 1861 he represented Guadalupe County in the Texas Secession Convention and subsequently received command of Co. A, Fourth Regiment Texas Mounted Volunteers. Slightly wounded in the Battle of Valverde and twice promoted during the New Mexico campaign, he held the rank of lieutenant colonel at the time Wright met him in San Antonio, but he also held the rank of brigadier general. After the Civil War Hardeman worked as a surveyor in Mexico and later was appointed to various state offices in Texas. Hall, *Confederate Army of New Mexico*, pp. 61-63; *Handbook of Texas*, I, p. 767.

⁵²Cibolo Creek cuts across portions of Bexar, Comal, Guadalupe, and Wilson counties just east of San Antonio. A small town by the same name still exists along the Creek in Guadalupe County. *Handbook of Texas*, I, p. 347.

⁵³Established in 1925 as capital of Green DeWitt's Colony and named for Rafael Gonzales, governor of Coahuila and Texas, this town suffered several major Indian attacks

during its early history. The first battle for Texas independence was fought there in October 1835 when the colonists refused to surrender their protective cannon to Mexican authorities. General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna burned the town during early 1836, but by the time of the Civil War it had reestablished itself as county seat of Gonzales County. *Handbook of Texas*, I, pp. 706-707.

⁵⁴Although its origins extend back to 1819 when Aylett C. Buckner established a nearby trading post, LaGrange was not platted and surveyed until 1837. Located along the Colorado River and the La Bahia Road, it grew up as a minor trading and agricultural center prior to the Civil War. Arrival of the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railroad after the Civil War helped assure it the role of county seat of Fayette County. *Handbook of Texas*, II, p. 6.

⁵⁵Brenham was established as the county seat of Washington County in 1844 and named for Richard Fox Brenham who had died a year earlier in a Mexican prison after being captured in the unsuccessful Mier Expedition. By the beginning of the Civil War, the town was a lively trade center, promoting a newspaper, several churches, and a commercial district. Federal troops occupying the town during Reconstruction faced continued opposition from the citizens until military rule was ended in 1869. *Handbook of Texas*, I, pp. 213-214.

⁵⁶Alwyn Barr, "Texas Coastal Defense, 1861-1865," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, LXV (July, 1961), pp. 13-19.

⁵⁷Theophilus Noel, *A Campaign from Santa Fe to the Mississippi* (Houston, 1961; reprint of 1865 edition), pp. 115-124; John D. Withers, *The Civil War in Louisiana* (Baton Rouge, 1963), pp. 340-355.

⁵⁸Robert E. Shalhope, *Sterling Price: Portrait of a Southerner* (Columbia, 1971), pp. 263-279.

⁵⁹Robert L. Kerby, *Kirby Smith's South: The Trans-Mississippi South, 1863-1865* (New York, 1972), pp. 413-427.

⁶⁰All information on Wright's later life is taken from the following four articles of the *Austin American-Statesman*: "Aged Austin Veteran 'Proud' of Wife, 80, Who Thrills Audience of New York with Songs of South," (February 17, 1924); "Celebrates 94th Birthday with Long Trip," (June 8, 1934); "100-Year-Old Austin Man Can't Believe He's Really Lived for Full Century" (June 9, 1940); "Confederate Veteran Henry Clay Wright, One of Austin's oldest Residents, Dies at 101," (October 19, 1941). All articles provided by Austin-Travis Collection of the Austin Public Library.