



Full Transcription - Capt. J. A. Brooks notebook

Courtesy of the Armstrong Research Center

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[The pages of the notebook were numbered by the author, with the first page marked "2", leading us to believe that the first page is missing. The transcription begins with page "2".]

...of the place and time that the outlaws would operate, two fence cutters were killed, us rangers were hurt in the fight (?) to Ballinger then to San Angelo. While stationed in Runnels County Capt. Scott married Miss Georgia Lynch of Waelder, Gonzales County, during the summer of 1888. Capt. Scott resigned and his 1st Sergeant Brooks of old Co. 'F' succeeded him. Capt. Scott sent his resignation to Austin by Sergeant Brooks who also placed his resignation in the Governors hands, by reason of having disobeyed Governor Sull Ross' order (but obeyed his Captain's order and went into the Indian Country and recovered the school land & settlers stolen stock) and a few of Capt. Scott's enemies, making a howl about it. The final result was that when Sergeant Brooks was expecting a discharge that great and noble Governor of Texas had his Adjutant General King to place an envelope in his hand. The contents was a commission to Sergeant, making him Captain and Commander of his loved old Company. We go back to the early life of Capt. Scott when he was about 20 years of age, he looked after a camp or wagon yard when traveler cow boys, good men and bad men put up for the night when visiting Dallas/

Capt. Brooks will now give a little history of his early days, when he became an adopted son of this great and glorious state, Texas. January 1st, 1877 he arrived at his destination, McKinney, Collin County. After looking over this little western cow town, he wended his way out to the county home of his relatives, The Damells. During the summer of 1877, he was invited by Mr. Willett and Hickman to accompany them to Pilot Point, to attend the cow pony races. That was his first meeting of Sam Bass, the noted outlaw. Well Sam was the only one wearing a black hat, but he had the fastest pony, therefore carried off the dough. In 1878 he moved his small herd of cattle from Collin County to Wise County near Decatur, but like most young fellows he left unfinished business in Collin, and returned there for a short time. When he ~~+~~ was on his ~~my~~ way back to Wise County he ~~+~~ saw what I thought was a cow camp, a good place to spend the night. When he ~~+~~ was approaching the camp, a lot of men grabbed their carbine, and gave him ~~me~~ the greatest scare of his ~~my~~ life. It was the noted outlaw Sam Bass. Well he had a fast horse and /

Out rode the outlaw band. A few days later the Texan Rangers + Sheriff had a fight with the outlaw gang, but the outlaws Sam Bass and his gang got away and left Denton County. Like other travelers they stopped. With young Scott in his camp yard for the night, he heard them plotting and planning to rob the Round Rock bank. When he went home the next morning he told his father who at once notified Major Jones at Austin. Major Jones was Adjutant General at that time. Well to give young Scott full protection he was enlisted in Capt. Arrington's Company then stationed in the Panhandle of Texas. Young Scott could not get along with Capt. Arrington therefore was sent to Capt. Lee Hall's company stationed at San Diego, Duval County. He and Capt. Hall soon became fast friend and remained so throughout their lives. While at San Diego,

Capt. Hall and his Company of Rangers, the [Texas Mexican] R.R. was being constructed from Corpus Christi to Laredo, Texas and Capt. Hall secured a good job for Ranger Scott with the R.R./

He remained with them until they were about (100) one hundred miles south of the Texas border. There being a strike and young Scott and Henry Brooks having been cut off from their camp were compelled to kill several of the strikers. Well they escaped and got back to Laredo, Texas. Capt. Lee Hall was then manager of the Dull Bros big ranch. Capt. Hall secured a Lieut. Commission for young Scott and he was placed in command of the Eastern detachment of old Co. 'F' and was stationed at Cuero, DeWitt County, Texas. A Mr. Edwards of Grimes County was in charge but resigned and went back to his old home county. Parson Edwards as we called him was a splendid Christian man, he would never allow the young men serving under him to go in any dangerous places, and he was highly respected and loved by the men who served under him. And there is no doubt but what his last heritage will be the land of promise [...] / While stationed at Cuero, DeWitt County, the Cuero Starr became disgruntled and claimed that Ranger Edwards and the men serving under him were no good, laying around camp and saloons while the outlaws were robbing the ranch (?). Edwards answer the Starr is like the man shearing the hag, getting more squeal than wool. /

And the detachment of old Co. 'F' were in DeWitt County Bill Thompson who killed a young cowboy at Rockport surrendered year before was tried and acquitted for murder when Thompson surrendered. Capt. Scott and several of their men took him to Rockport. When the case was called the District Judge transferred it to Cuero, DeWitt County. The Rangers took Thompson to Cuero and guarded him awaiting trial. Fence cutters there and other desperadoes was on a rampage in the western part of DeWitt and Karnes Counties and Corporal ~~Sergeant~~ Brooks was left at Cuero to assist the Sheriff, and to guard Thompson. Lieut. Scott and the rest of his men were absent until after the trial was over. Thompson could not be identified as the man who killed the young cowboy at Rockport, therefore was acquitted. While stationed at Cuero, Ranger Brooks made several important arrest. One an old Negro wanted for murder, Perry Cox accused of theft of horse. Wright and Brack wanted for robbing an old lady's store and her carriage and horses was/

Taken to haul the goods off while at Cuero. The murder case of the man indicted for killing Dr. Brazil was transferred to Seguin. All had been indicted and gave bond except for Joe Sitterle. Deputy Sheriff Add Kilgore and Ranger Brooks too Sitterle to Seguin. All the others had given bond at that time. The District Judge at Seguin transferred the other cases to Bexar County, San Antonio. [...] The cases were discussed, which ended all that trouble. The two men, Bill Brack and Bud Wright, who robbed the old woman at old Clinton pled guilty, and was given four years each in the Rusk Penitentiary. Captain Joe Shely succeeded Capt. Charles W. McKinney and Lieut. Rudd as Captain of old Co. 'F'. Captain Joe Shely's company headquarters was placed at Cotulla, LaSalle County. Lieut. Wm. Scott and his detachment was ordered to report to Capt. Shely at Cotulla. /

Capt. Joe Shely was commissioned and was put in charge of Old Co. 'F'. After Capt. Charles W. McKinney was elected Sheriff of LaSalle, in 1882 and 1883, Wm. Scott was Lieutenant of the Company, fence cutters being very active in Gonzales and adjoining Counties. Lieut. Scott was sent to Waelder, Gonzales County, with a detachment of Texas Rangers, while then Governor Ireland ordered Lieut. Scott to send a Ranger to Austin to report to Adjutant General King. 2nd Sergeant J.A. Brooks was selected. He was at once sent to the S(?) and Walton Ranch south of Austin. The ranch fences had then been cut the second time. Deputy Sheriff of Lee County Wm Scurry was also sent to Bastrop County to assist in locating the guilty parties. Ranger Brooks and Wm Scurry soon in a short time had the names of twenty eight of the fence cutters, who had not only cut the S(?) and Walton fence but the Driskoll and other ranch fences. It was only a misdemeanor and only a small fine could be given at that time. Therefore Governor John Ireland called the Legislature to meet at Austin, and it was made a felony to cut fences. /

That trouble having subsided, Lieut. Scott was ordered to report at the headquarter camp at Cotulla, LaSalle County, in 1883 & 1884. Ranger Brooks was 2nd Sergeant at that time, the early part of 1884. Capt. Si Hay of Dimmitt County, the Sheriff and many of the stockmen of Dimmitt County were having trouble with thieving Mexican smugglers south of the Rio Grande river. There the smugglers had their headquarters at Presidio, Mexico. Presidio was eight miles south of the River. Ex Capt. McKinney, Ex Capt. Lee Hall, Lieut. Scott and 2nd Sergeant Brooks with Capt. Joe Shely made a hurried night ride and joined Capt. Lam Seiker and his Company of Rangers at Camp (?) and went on the Rio Grande, at a point south of the county seat of Dimmitt, a number of stock men also joined the party at that point. At daylight (the ?) about (250) two hundred Mexicans appeared on the south side of the river. Capt. Shely sent a note across to them, effect a truce on an island in the middle of the Rio Grande. Capt. Shely, Lieut. Scott, Ex Capt. Lee Hall, Capt. Lam Seiker was the party to meet with them. Capt. Seiker suggested that 2nd Sergt. Brooks go along with him /

Which was one of the proudest moments of his ~~my~~ life. They ~~we~~ had a fine time being banqueted by the Citizens party, but the Federal Officers resent their not being invited to the banquet and ordered all arrest. We got word in time that ~~they~~ the Federal soldiers were coming and ~~we~~ outrode them and about dark ~~we~~ they crossed back to – (?), the trouble having subsided. Capt. Joe Shely and all of his party retired to Cotulla, Capt. Lam Seiker remained in Dimmitt County and Capt. Joe Shely and his company were ordered to report to Sheriff Baylor of Uvalde County. Capt. Shely and his company was stationed at old Camp Wood on the Nueces river, where fishing was fine, and the hills were full of men wanted for crimes committed far and wide. The first month the members of old Co. 'F' captured thirty – (?) criminals. Hon. John Garner of Uvalde County was County Attorney at that time. The Rangers brought the bad men in. The County Attorney did the rest while camped at Camp Wood, Uvalde County. Capt. Joe Shely resigned and Lieut. Scott succeeded him. The Company was ordered to Vernon Wilbarger Co, by way of San Angelo. /

Where it remained for a short time then Capt. Scott and his company landed at Vernon, Wilbarger County before the winter set in with her cold weather. At that time Capt. McMurry with his Company were camped at old Harrell, the [terminus] of the Fort Worth and Denver R.R. & Capt. Hall was Indian Agent at that time at Anadarko. He was having trouble with the bad men of that section. General Cabell of Dallas Texas was the U.S. Marshall for the western part of the Indian Country. His son Ben Cabell was deputy U.S. Marshall at that time and he used Capt. Scott's Rangers for his posse while at Ft. Sill and the Anadarko section. Therefore Capt. Scott had the great pleasure of visiting the man who had done so much for him. Soon there was made a protest to Governor Sull Ross of Texas, the result was Capt. Scott got orders not to cross Red River in the future, but to notify the Federal Officer of the Indian Country and let them do the work if anything was needed. At this time the school lands of Wilbarger was put on the market for settlement. A crew of men from the Indian Country/

Came across Red River into Wilbarger County claiming to be cattle men after a [herd] of cattle but when they left there was eighteen head of horses and mules missing that were the property of the school land settlers. Capt. Scott ordered his Sergeant Brooks ~~me~~ to take Henry Putz and Coldwell with him ~~me~~ and follow the mule and horse wherever, showed Sergt. Brooks the Governor's telegram, but remarked, bring the stolen stock back. They were soon on the trail, the thieves were two days [ahead] of them when they crossed Red river into the Territory. They took the trail north for about fifty miles, then went to Indian Agents – (?) headquarters and requested assistance, which was given. Lieut. Thomas Knight of Captain Six – (?) went with them with a packet full of warrants for the thieves. Well we found the stolen horses and mules, they had been traded and sold to the farmer living in Pauk Valley. Saturday was – (?) day at Red Alexander supply store, he was postmaster also. Early Saturday morning the stolen stock was brought to that store, Putz and Caldwell took charge of them and led /

Them to shade trees. By that time a big crowd had gathered, Lieut. Knight and Sergt. Brooks mixed with the crowd trying to locate the leader of the thieves. One of the farmers remarked there goes the leader into the store. The tall long black haired man, Lieut. Knight took three warrants for his arrest and approached him, said Mr. when(?) I got papers for you, as quick as a flash out came the six gun of the leader. Well there was a lot of shooting and soon everyone was out of the store except Mr. Alexander's little son. Sergeant Brooks went to the door and called for a doctor but the doctor was not needed for the man was dead. Sergeant Brooks, Lieut. Knight, Putz and Coldwell, after arranging for the farmer to keep the stolen stock by paying a fair price for them. The officers left on their return to Texas, believing that they would be followed by the robber gang. They camped on a creek where there was a lot of large trees about midnight sixteen armed men crossed the creek they were on our trail. We were glad /

That they passed without discovering where we were. The four of us were not anxious for a fight when there was four to one against us. Early the next morning we arrived at the Pauk valley P.O. and supply store. The P.M. told his clerk to get his horse and guide us around that

waylaying desperate gang. We [reported] to the Indian Agent Mr. Owens, he told us the Rangers to go back home to Texas. The next day we rode into the Ranch of the Suggs Bros. where we took two days' rest. That same bunch of whiskey runners and robbers had been giving the Suggs Bros. ranch trouble, and they hoped that the robbers were still on our trail. Two days more we were again safe in Texas at Old Harold the t-(?) of the Fort Worth and Dallas R.R. We were not bothered as far as that -(?) trip was concerned until after the Conner fight in the Sabine County. Putz and Coldwell had both resigned. Deft(?) U.S. Marshall Ben Caball notified Capt. Scott to send me to Dallas, Texas where Putz was living and that he would take us to Fort Smith, Arkansas. Hon. J. C. Parker was/

Federal Judge at that time. Mr. Bill butler of Karnes County wired U.S. Marshall Carroll at Fort Smith to have ~~my~~ Sgt. Brooks' bail bond fixed and that he and other friends in Texas would sign it. † Young Brooks was staying with the Marshall therefore no bond was required. Ex Ranger Henry Putz of Dallas, Texas, and Lieut. Knight was also there at that time. Boudenot(?) a renowned attorney from Vi-(?), Indian Territory was at Fort Smith at the time. He was a full-blood Cherokee Indian but a good one. He offered his service to us without pay and we loved him for his magnanimity. The noted outlaw women Bell Starr, Cattle Annie, Little -(?) and other noted outlaw women were also at Fort Smith at that time. The summer of 1887, that was the year that hangman Muldoon dropped his sixtieth criminal from through the hangman's short, and died himself with a stroke just after. There was a lot of grumbling around the Federal Court room by reason of Sergt. Brooks and Lieut. Knight not being put in the Federal Jail like other prisoners. Judge J.C. Parker remarked if there were more like them in that land of blood, it would be a better county. /

During the month of July 1887 Sergt. Brooks joined, or we will say returned to active service at Brownwood, Brown County, Texas. The next move of old Co. 'F' was to Ballinger, the terminus of the rail road at that time, Sergeant Brooks and John Fermault sheriff of Runnels County were soon good friends and accomplished some good work. The stage coach from Ballinger had been robbed several times by a lone robber. Well the robber Jim Person(?) made the mistake of his life when he flashed a \$100 dollar bill in front of a friend of Sergt. Brooks. The night after the robbery, the sheriff and ranger Brooks was soon on the trail of that marked \$100 bill. Sewsom(?) and his partner had bought a [herd] of horses. The sheriff was notified, he and Ranger Brooks located the horses about 35 thirty five miles south of Ballinger. Sewson and his partner were at Coleman, Texas waiting for his Sewsom partner to go to trial for horse theft. Sheriff Fermault and Sergt. Brooks arrived at Coleman late at night, went to the hotel and requested that (we) they be put on a pallet in the room of the robber. When we entered room, we cornered the robber /

With our six guns and arrested them. Jim Sewsom weakened and said that he would plead guilty. The final result a (99) ninety nine year sentence in the Federal penitentiary. When Sergeant Brooks received his Commission as Captain of old Co. 'F' he was soon ordered to

Leakey, Texas. After Dist. Court had adjourned his next move was to Cotulla, LaSalle County, he was again in the County where he had enlisted as private. (?) Five years gone by or to be accurate it was when Catarino Garza organized to attempt to overthrow the President Hine administration in Old Mexico. Well there is a long story to follow. During the year 1882, the year Private Brooks enlisted in Old Co. 'F' was the year that fence cutting had begun. Eight miles of the Cannon fence eight miles east of Pearsall, Frio County was cut at each fence post. Sergt. Brack Morris with Brooks, Edwards, and Long Dillard arrested the men who cut the Cannon fence and were proud of it when arrested at a wedding and dance. They were proud of what they had done, said that their -- (?) fought Indians bled and died /

For that land and no -(?) can come -(?) and fence their stock from the water holes and lakes. Those old Texans were proud of what they had done during the month of February. Private Edwards and Brooks was ordered to join Lieut. Rudd at Yorktown, DeWitt County. A few days after Ranger Brooks arrived at Yorktown, Lieut. Rudd was notified that a Mr. Van Ham had been wounded during a fight with the Dixon over a property line. While investigating that case Lieut. Rudd and Ranger Brooks went to the Dixon ranch or home and asked for Bill Dixon who with his party had wounded Van Ham. Dixon's father, -(?) he is up in the loft go after him, well what could Ranger Brooks do but start to climb the ladder. The old man smiled and said to his son come down. Next the complaints were made in Gonzales County where they were all tried by the District Court, well that another being settle. Lieut. Rudd and Private Brooks returned to York Town. The following day Lieut. Rudd ordered Private Brooks to go /

To Cuero, Texas and then see Jeff White the cattle inspector and Captain the (?) if possible who robbed the old lady at old Clinton across the River from Cuero. Well Private Brooks made good on that account. He landed Brack and Wright in jail at Cuero, Texas. That was Ranger Brooks' first scout to make alone and young Brooks was proud of the good work well done, for Brack and Wright got four years each in the Penitentiary. His next important capture while on that scout was an old Negro who had been on the hideout for some years. In the meantime Lt. Rudd had married Miss Dina Hopper and resigned, leaving Parson Edwards in charge of the Eastern detachment. Mr. Edwards, Parson some us called him for he practiced what he preached, and was not an Excellent (?) but a man you could depend on in any emergency. Ranger Edwards returned to his home in Grimes County, may kind providence bless him for all time, that dreadful but pleasant word forever and forever. While Lieut. Wm Scott was in charge of the eastern detachment of old Co. 'F' was stationed in DeWitt County. Lieut. Scott encouraged young Ranger Brooks to be a real worthwhile Texas Ranger, under all circumstances. /

Capt. J. A. Brooks owes much of his success not only as a Texas Ranger but in other vocations while passing through along life's successes. Hon. W. R. Peckim, Preswell, Jim Gibson, Charlie DeRoss, and many others of Jim Wells County have given Capt. Brooks encouragement which has assisted him in making a success through his long and turbulent life. Capt. Brooks is now living with his only son John Morgan Brooks in Falfurrias, Brooks County, Texas. He spends most

of his time living over the long past, contented and satisfied, hoping that his last heritage will be in the land of promise where he hopes to meet all his old friends someday.