

THE ROAD TO GLORRIETA



**CAPTAIN
ISAAC ADAIR**



"Altogether, he was a good citizen, a brave soldier and died a patriot to the service of his country."
- Armistead Aldrich

During the Sibley Brigade's retreat from New Mexico, there was almost no communication between the Mounted Volunteers and their loved ones back in Texas. Consequently, Isaac Adair was laid to rest on Thursday April 10th, 1862, but word of his death didn't reach his family until sometime in June. His wife Augusta was surely devastated by the news. Her father was four hundred miles away fighting in Arkansas. Alone with two small children, she was managing the affairs of both their plantations.

Little family history remains from that period. There are no known Adair family papers, and no surviving Houston County newspapers. If Augusta Adair recorded her feelings, they have disappeared with time. Much of the public record is also missing, destroyed in 1865 when, Crockett's courthouse was engulfed in flames. "The alarm was given, and in a few minutes, the ground was full of citizens and soldiers, who went faithfully to work, but the flames had got so far underway that it was impossible to check them." The District Clerk's office, where Isaac Adair had once served, was gutted. "Not a paper was saved from the [...] office-everything was lost; nearly all the county records were lost. Probate minutes and a few old unimportant books were saved." (1)

John T. Smith was serving as the Captain of Company B, 13th Texas Cavalry, when he received word of his son-in-law's death. Immediately upon hearing the news, he made application for "a furlough for 60 days" to go comfort his daughter and attend to Isaac's estate. Colonel J.H. Burnett forwarded the request to Major General Theophilus Holmes, but, for one reason or another, Holmes turned it down. Forced to cope on her own, Augusta tried to maintain the family businesses. In September she applied for, and was granted, letters of administration for her

husband's estate. Since Captain Adair and his father-in-law held much of their property including: "Land & Negroes Horses & Cattle," in partnership, she could not provide the probate court with an accurate inventory. A few weeks later, the Adair's overseer left and the plantation's "Negroes - about 60 in number" were "left entirely to do as they please." With this turn of events, Captain Smith felt constrained to return home. Unable to obtain a furlough, he tendered his resignation. In a letter addressed to his commander, he wrote; "I feel compelled to resign for when all of a family is in the Army & one or more is killed in Battle & none of them permitted to return on furlough to secure the Effects of the Dead some one member of a family should remain at Home to attend to such matters." Captain Smith also pointed out, that he was forty-seven years old and was exempt from military service under then current law. When General Holmes received the resignation, he told Smith to take sixty days leave until Richmond could respond. Oddly, this was exactly what Captain Adair's father-in-law originally requested. Since Captain Smith didn't want to resign in the first place, he sought the advice of General H.E. McCullough. McCullough told him to take the leave as granted and not to forward the resignation. (2)

Following the General's advice, Captain Smith went home, and was eventually able to sort out his daughter's affairs. Afterwards he returned to his company, and served with Walker's Division at the battles of Pleasant Hill, Mansfield, and Jenkins Ferry. After the war, he was elected to the Texas State Legislature, and served during three sessions: 1866, 1873, and 1874. John Titus Smith died at Austin, Texas on February 16, 1874, while serving in the State Legislature. A delegation of Representatives escorted his remains to Crockett for burial. (3)

Even when the tide of the Confederacy turned, Augusta Adair remained hopeful. In late 1864 she demonstrated her continued confidence by accepting \$4000 in Confederate currency in exchange for two lots in Crockett. After the War she remained in Houston County, remarrying in about 1869. Her second husband was James M. Porter, himself a recent widower. Porter was Isaac Adair's sergeant and a friend, who had remained at the Captain's side when Company H was forced to withdraw from Santa Fe. Jim Porter died the 24th of December, 1902. Augusta Louise Smith Adair Porter died in 1916 at the age of seventy-nine. Both are buried in the Old Glenwood Cemetery in Crockett, Houston County Texas. Augusta's obituary, published in the Crockett Courier finishes with the words; "Mrs. Porter was one of the country's best women, and many deeds of neighborliness and charitableness are attributed to her." (4)

When Isaac Adair died of his wounds in 1862, his comrades carried him to what they believed was his final resting place. The Captain still had one march to complete. In 1895 it was decided to transfer a number of notable burials from Santa Fe's Old Masonic Cemetery to the City's recently re-designated National Cemetery. Adair's grave, along with forty-six others, was respectfully moved. Today he is buried next to other Confederates, who served and died in New Mexico. (5)

Footnotes

1. Ulrich, Crockett Newspapers, The Crockett Quid Nunc, Volume 2, Number 22, February 7, 1865, "Courthouse Fire".
2. Diary of Elizabeth Smith, p.44, John T. Smith to Hon. John H. Ragan, Camp Nelson Arkansas Nov. 21st, 1862; Diary of Elizabeth Smith, p.43, John T. Smith to Col. John H. Burnett, Camp Nelson Arkansas Nov. 17th, 1862.
3. Diary of Elizabeth Smith, pp. 36-40.
4. The community of Augusta, Texas is named after Augusta Louise Smith Adair Porter. The community of Porter Springs is named after James Macintosh Porter. The Crocket Courier, August 17, 1916, "Death of Mrs. A.L. Porter;" Houston County Deeds, Volume Q, p.434; Diary of Elizabeth Smith, p.51.
5. The graves of four more of Sibley's men were among those moved to the Military Cemetery. Besides Captain Adair, there was: Private Hugh Harris, also of Company H, 7th Texas Mounted Volunteers; Thomas Cator, one of Phillips Brigands; William Ogram, listed only as a Texas Ranger; and Jesse W. Jones, a private from Company H of the 4th Regiment. Captain Adair was survived by two of his children; John, who married Alice Walsh, and Emma, who married Alfred Brown. John's line died out, but, at the time of this writing, there are at least fifteen living descendants of Emma. Together they share a daring and spirited ancestor, and a unique heritage. Confederate Memorial Day Ceremony Program April 26, 1993; Aldrich, History of Houston County, p.121; Biograph of Augusta Louise Smith, Houston City. Hist. Commission.



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