

Brown County Journal

December 15, 2013

Events:

Brown County Historical
Society Dinner Meeting
January 6

Brown County Genealogical
Society Annual Meeting
January 14

If you no longer wish to receive this
e-newsletter send an e-mail with the
word "unsubscribe" in the subject
heading to: [rhonda@
browncountyhistorycenter.org](mailto:rhonda@browncountyhistorycenter.org)

The material contained herein is
copyrighted.

Rhonda Dunn

The Brown County Blues & the Mexican War

Brown County was only ten years old when the war with Mexico broke out. It had also been only ten years since the Battle of the Alamo in 1836 when the war over Texas had begun. The United States had several more encounters with Mexico over boundaries along the new frontier to the south. In 1845 Texas was annexed by the U. S. as one of her new territories. When the dispute broke out with Mexico over the boundary of the new state of Texas, Congress voted men and money to go to settle the United States' claim that the southwest boundary of the new state was the Rio Grande River. On May 18, 1846 President James K. Polk called for troops to go to war with Mexico. As before in 1836 and also now in 1846 our army was going to face General Santa Anna and his Mexican army. As always men from Brown County responded to the call.

The county's involvement began when James Taggart, who had been an officer in the War of 1812, and Thomas M. Adams rallied Brown County's support. Joining them were others that stepped forward to raise a company of patriots were Patterson C. Parker, Williamson Wise, and Charles Bolt. A meeting was called at Georgetown with the purpose of enlisting volunteers. By the end of the rally they had plenty of supporters. It gave them hope that Brown County could raise a whole company. The next rally at Nashville gave them more than enough volunteers to fill an entire company. James Taggart was elected Captain, Thomas M. Adams was First Lieutenant, Patterson C. Parker was Second Lieutenant, and Williamson Wise was Third Lieutenant.

In June the formation of the company was reported to Governor James Whitcomb and they were assigned to the Third Indiana Regiment. The Brown County boys had already bought bright

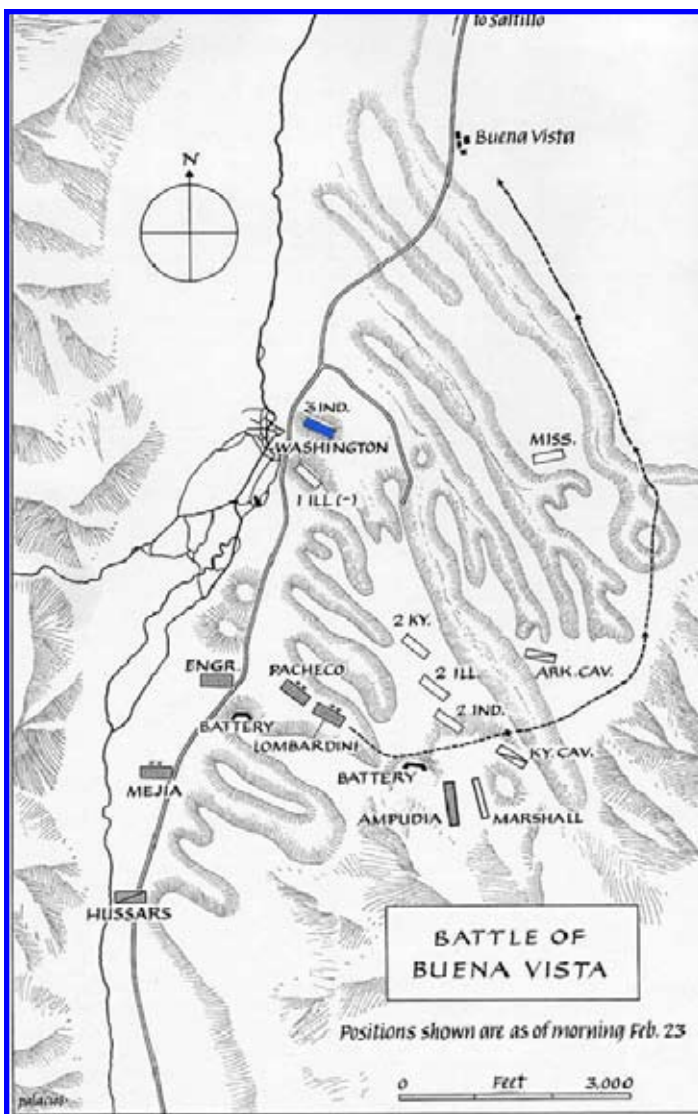
blue jeans for uniforms and the company was known as the “Brown County Blues” from that time and throughout the war. This company also became noted for being the tallest company in the whole army, because their average height was over 6 feet tall. The new company started out for New Albany and left amid a large crowd of family and friends. In New Albany they were put under the command of



Colonel James H. Lane. After a few weeks training they left on the steamboat, James Hewitt, headed down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers bound for New Orleans. Camping outside of New Orleans they met their first enemy, disease, and the heat. It was at this first stop that they lost their first comrade, Caleb Bidwell, to measles.

From New Orleans they shipped out for Mexico heading for Brazos Island on the ocean steamer, Flavio. The intense heat, bad diets, and strange new tropical diseases took their toll before they even entered their first battle. On the ship they lost two more soldiers to disease. John Followell and Reese Brummett, also inflicted with measles, were buried at sea.

At Brazos Island they camped here for a while to do guard duty. General Zachary Taylor had established a supply depot and troop encampment site on the north end of the island. The island is a



desolate and treeless expanse and is just across from South Padre Island in Texas. Throughout 1846, several volunteer regiments were camped here, before moving on to camps along the Rio Grande and the new territory's boundary. The supply depot served the army throughout the Mexican War and for many years afterward. (from www.dmw.org – Historic Sites of the U.S.- Mexican War in Texas) Here our Brown County Blues lost several more to disease, one being Joshua Brummett. Captain Taggart also fell prey to disease and he was sent home to



recuperate. In the meanwhile his First Lieutenant, Thomas M. Adams, took command.

The troops occupied Matamoras, Marine, Saltillo, Nueva and other points for garrison duty. At last they were moved back to Buena Vista Pass to enter their first encounter with the Mexican Army and General Santa Anna. During this battle at Buena Vista the Brown County Blues lost their captain.

There's a story told down through the years of the death of Captain James Taggart on the battlefield. Captain Taggart

**Possibly Captain James Taggart
or one of his officers**



Benjamin R. Kelley

families, friends, and our county's people.

Benjamin Roten Kelley who served in the Mexican war kept a Day book in which he kept a daily diary of events during his tour of duty and a list of fatalities. He also kept a tally of accounts titled "His Accounts Against the Boys" in which he loaned money to his fellow soldiers. He named these additional soldiers in his Day Book that aren't listed on the roster of Company E: John Brummett, Abraham Lollar, Lawrence Robertson, John Surrey, Stephen Fore, and Charles Roatt. Names gleaned from other sources were: George W. Marshall (Co. G, 4th IN), John S. Kephart, and William Holland McCarty. (from Brown County Democrat article by Dale Kelley, Oct. 27, 2004)

received a mortal wound from a carbine ball. Stephen Kennedy who was near him carried his captain into a deep ravine and remained with him to hear his last words. "Tell my folks to meet me in the good world. Be a good soldier, Kennedy. Go on to your company." Captain Taggart lies buried on the battlefield where he died a soldier's death. (from "Taggarts of Brown County" by Susan McGee)

Now commanded by their new Captain, Thomas M. Adams their company saw more fighting. Our boys also fought in the battles of Palo Alto, Vera Cruz, and Chapultepec. By September 14, 1847 General Winfield Scott entered Mexico City and the war was at an end. Not only was the boundary settled, but we gained California, New Mexico and other parts of the southwest. No other war casualties occurred among our boys, but the dangers were not over. Many others succumbed later of tropical diseases before they could return home to Brown County. They reached home in July 1847 and were met with a warm welcome by their



Thomas M. Adams



Ann Jackson-McGuire

widow of Joshua Brummett, and her three children applied for and received a land grant based on her husband's service. Ren S. Brummett, his brother, was the assignee on the grant.

Alfred McGuire who was one of the volunteers for the Mexican War also served in the Civil War as did many of the other men. Alfred named his son, Servalvo, for the Battle of Servalvo in which he took part in during the Mexican war. Alfred McGuire's wife, Ann, went above and beyond to help her family while her husband was gone. The family was almost out of food one time so she cooked enough for her children to eat for a day. She set out early the next morning to go to Edinburgh to get some meal ground, locking the children in the house. She reached home just before midnight with the newly ground corn to replenish their food stores.

The families had to learn to make due while their menfolk were gone from home. No one knew how long this war would last, but these hardy Brown County folk knew how to do it. Time after time Brown Countians have answered the call of patriotism. This was especially true in the early beginnings of our county. Our early pioneers not only had strong minds and bodies, but also were known for their strong convictions. This is evidenced in the political rallies during election time, their pulling together during hard times, and also during the call to defend their country. Why, they even named their newspaper the Democrat, relating to the political sentiment of our early pioneers.

Many of these men that survived the war with Mexico came back to become civic-minded citizens serving in county government and some went on to serve in state government. Thomas M. Adams went on to serve in county government covering various offices such as Justice, Clerk, Auditor, and Recorder. He even went on to become a State Senator.

William Hamblen came home from the war and took up his trade as a boot and shoe maker. He later became an ordained Minister of the United Brethren Church. Stephen Kennedy came back home and served as the County Sheriff for many years. He also volunteered to serve in the Civil War when that erupted. William Holland McCarty came home from the war and became a teacher in a one room school in Hamblen township. He also was the County Surveyor and as many of the others also served in the Civil War.

There are also stories of bravery and the overcoming of hardship by their families at home. Eliza Brummett, the

Roster of Company E ~ Officers.:

James Taggart Jr. - kia,
Thomas M. Adams,
Patterson C. Parker,
Williamson Wise,
Charles Bolt,
Aaron D. Hedge,
James Arwine,

Joshua Janklles,
Mason Watts,
Lazarus Robertson,
William S. Roberts,
Isaac Lamsel,
George Admire,
Elias Weddle,

John Calvin,
Benjamin Roten Kelley,
Joshua Brummett,
William Hamblen,
Thomas S. Calvin.

Roster of Company E ~ Privates

Joseph G. Arter (or Arthur) - w,
Charles Adams,
Joshua Brummet Jr.,
James Brown - w,
Reese Brummett - d,
Caleb Bidwell - d,
John Bolt,
Thomas I. Breedlove,
James Burns,
John Calvin,
George Comingore,
Benjamin Callahan,
Hanson Chase,
Harmonious Cooley,
George W. David (or Davis)
William Davis - d,
Stephen Debord,
Joseph Fox,
Cornelius Followell,
Stephen Fread (or Frad) - w,
Frederick Fleener,
John Followell - d,
Lewis Followell,
Richard Goforth,

Elijah Graham,
John Gibson,
Harrison Graham,
David Hamblen,
William G. Hatchet,
William Hoover,
Simeon Hubbard,
Levi Hatton,
Elisha Henley - d,
William Hughes,
Ephraim Hurley,
Joshua Jackson,
James Jackson,
Stephen Kennedy,
John H. Kennedy,
Daniel King,
Doherty Logston,
Abraham Lawless - d,
Richard Lucas,
Brackenridge Mason,
Robert Marshall,
Mathew Mathis - w,
Alfred McGuire,
George McKinney,

Silas Morety,
Martin Percifield,
Philip Pike,
Zachariah Polley,
Misinor Percifield,
Hiram Reynolds,
Joseph Robertson,
John Robertson,
William Robertson,
William H. Raper - d,
Alex Sturgeon,
John L. Sumana (or Summa),
Daniel Schrougham,
James Shelton,
'Squire' Stewart - w,
Henry Sipes,
Lewis Tull,
James W. Taggart (the 3rd)
Mathew Wise,
Theodore Whitney,
Lewis Waggoner - d,
William E. Weddle,
John Wilkins

d = died of disease, **kia** = killed in action, **w** = wounded