REMINISCENCES OF THE CONFEDERACY.

Prison Life at Camp Morton.

S. O. Young, Adjutant General United Confederate Veterans, Galveston.

Austin, Texas, December 13.—Dear Sir and Comrade: Inclosed I send you a letter I received some time ago from James Giles, who was a prisoner in Camp Morton, Ind., at the time I was confined there. I met him on the streets of Louisville, Ky., in the spring of 1865, after my escape from Camp Morton. I shook hands with him and passed on, for I had not yet surrendered, and some of the Twenty-seventh Kentucky were patrolling the city looking for my sort. I have never met him since, and his letter was a pleasant surprise.

Val C. Giles.

J. C. Giles, Austin, Texas.

Amarillo, Texas, July 18, 1899.—Dear Sir and Comrade: Yours of the 4th instant to hand and read both with surprise and pleasure. How strange it seems that thirty-five years have passed since we were prisoners at Camp Morton, and most of the time we have both been citizens of Texas, and yet have never met nor heard of each other. I most willingly comply with your request to write some of my recollections of prison life, but as I kept no diary I can not be exact about dates. I enlisted in Missouri at the beginning of the war and served for awhile in the State guard under General Price. After we were driven to the southern part of the State we camped at Neosho. Governor Claiborne Jackson called a few of the legislature together and declared the State out of the Union. Then the State guards began to form Confederate regiments. Most of my service was in the Eleventh Missouri infantry.

In the fall of 1863 General Joe Shelby made a raid into Missouri from Arkansas. I went along, intending to help Colonel Jo C. Hunter recruit men who wanted to go to Dixie, but was betrayed by a fellow soldier—a Judas—before I had gone into the State. We were a short time in Springfield, then a few weeks at St. Louis, and finally reached Camp Morton in November, 1863. For the first time in my life my clothing was closely searched and everything of value, even a pencil and penknife, were taken from me. What money I possessed being Confederate, was of no value, and therefore let loose. At first we thought our confinement would be temporary and expected early exchange, but weeks grew into months and then came the news of no exchange. Immediately after this our rations were reduced to the point of starvation. One-half of a loaf of bread, called "duff" by the prisoners, and about six ounces of poor beef constituted a day's ration. Coffee and vegetables were cut off entirely and the sutler was forbidden to sell us anything of a substantial nature. It was claimed by the Federals that this was in retaliation for the starved condition of their soldiers in Southern prisons. The prisoners sympathized with the Northern prisoners, as we knew the South could not furnish regular rations to her own soldiers, as it was the policy of the Northern troops to devastate the South as a means of putting down the rebellion. That was successful, though a fearful policy, as shown by Sherman's march to the sea, with a torch in hand. When some one remonstrated with him for this he is said to have replied, "War is hell anyway." The effect of reduced rations on strong, healthy men was to render them frantic with hunger, while it did not harm others much.

Camp Morton was named in honor of Oliver P. Morton, war governor of Indiana. It was located a mile or two north of Indianapolis on a plat of ground embracing about twenty acres that had been used as a fair ground. The old stock sheds were used for barracks, and the grounds were inclosed with a box wall of fourteen-foot planks, stoutly framed. On the outside was a platform about four feet from the top of the wall, on which the guards were stationed. This enabled them to protect about half their bodies, and yet they could see all over the prison. The land inside the prison lay nearly level with the exception of a drain running through it from south to the north. This creek was used by the prisoners the Potomac. The barracks were built along the north and south walls of the prison, at a distance of about thirty feet from the walls. Some of the trees were enclosed, which gave good shade in summer.

Under these trees the prisoners met for various kinds of pastime. Some were set for worship, some for Masonic exercises, and still others for gambling purposes. The money used in gambling was officers' tickets, furnished in lieu of money to those who were fortunate enough to have friends inside the Federal lines. The gambling seemed to be a means of distributing the tickets among the prisoners. These tickets could be used at the sutler's. Sometimes the prisoners could get food from the outside through the friendly guards. All were scantily clothed, very few had sufficient bedding.

The winter of 1863-64 was an unusually cold one. New Year's day, 1864, was the coldest day I ever saw. Several were frozen to death; others were so injured that they fell sick, and the "old gray horse" was kept busy hauling out the dead. The prisoners, having lost all hope of exchange, began to devise means of escape. Sam Metcalf of Kentucky organized a squad to break over the wall. We charged the wall at dusk, but only one of us succeeded in getting over and escaping. The others were caught and tied by the thumbs to a rack, and then, standing on tip-toes, were left standing as long as they could bear it. This was called "riding Morgan's mule" by the boys. After this they tried mining under the walls. A tunnel was started from a bunk and in the direction of the drain, the loose dirt being carried in our pocketts and emptied into the Potomac where it would not be noticed. Most of the tunnels were detected before completion. Finally a few men dug out in the east end of the barracks, and keeping it secret from their nearest friends, managed to get it beyond the walls and succeeded in escaping one day. They were never caught. Disaster came to some of their friends when they had told of the tunnel. They told their friends whom they had left behind that they would cover the mouth of the tunnel with a plank. The Federals discovered the tunnel and also kept quiet. At late hour, when all was quiet in and about the prison, a party led by a prisoner named James Barnhart, occupied the tunnel from foot in an endeavor to escape. As Barnhart raised the plank he was fired with bullets from the guns of the waiting guards. Such a scramble as followed from the prisoners in the tunnel never saw. All that could regained their barracks, and those who were not fortunate had to ride "Morgan's mule." The Federals had the prisoners dig a ditch outside the wall to prevent a further tunneling. A party headed by James Bowers and T. Norwood, both Texans, attacked the guards with sticks and stones, and by means of ladders which they had made secretly, succeeded in scaling the wall and escaping. Bowers was recaptured, and the Federals, admiring his bravery, did not punish him, but only required him to promise not to try to escape again. There were other escapes which I do not recall or have not time to give the details.

Among the 4000 prisoners in Camp Morton there were many of a high order of talent, who, though dressed in the ordinary prison garb, had been men of high order of culture at home. One of the most unassuming of these was Lieutenant James A. Corry of the Southern engineer corps. He was a native of Georgia. Plain, modest and unassuming, he preferred to pass as a common private, but little by little his comrades became aware of his talents and his Christian fortitude and upright conduct won the respect and warmest friendship of all his comrades. I have often wondered if his relatives knew of his death (by pneumonia) in this far-off prison home.

We had preachers among us, and under the shade trees of Camp Morton many sinners came to a knowledge of their Savior.

The guards were often unscrupulous and tyrannical men, and kept the prisoners in a constant state of fear by their threats. Lieutenant Markham would strike them with brass knucks, and Sergeant Baker shot three prisoners to death with scarcely a shadow of excuse. Yet many of the guards were gentlemen and did many kindly acts for the prisoners, as their opportunity offered. Colonel A. A. Stephens, the commandant, was pleasant and courteous to the prisoners. The prisoners were so pressed by hunger that when citizens allowed their dogs to follow them into the prison the dogs were often entrapped, killed and eaten. This constant hunger often drove some men to steal each other's rations. To stop this Colonel Stephens allowed us to organize a court to try the offenders and inflict punishment for theft. The usual punishment was forty lashes, save one, on their bare backs, the prisoner being bent over a barrel. The culprit had the advantage of witnesses and a fair trial by jury. The sentence was placed for execution several days ahead. A powerful South Carolinian stole a "duffer," and many of the prisoners thought he would never submit to the punishment without force, but after studying over the matter he said the punishment was just, and submitted. When hunger pinched many would commit petty acts of theft who would have been honest under other conditions.

Governor Morton and the legislature visited us in February, 1865. As they drove by in carriages and viewed the long line of prisoners called out for inspection the governor was heard to say: "What a fine looking body of men." We hardly knew whether he was in jest or earnest.

I had now been in prison about eighteen months, and the meager fare and privations were making serious inroads on my health. I wrote to an uncle—Green Paxton—in Louisville that I did not think I could live much longer in prison. Through his friends he succeeded in getting a release for me from President Lincoln on condition that I should remain a noncombatant till exchanged. Ano her man, whose name I have forgotten, was released with me. He was from Louisiana but his father lived in Indiana. We walked down to the city, and this man, having a few dimes, we enjoyed our first meal for many months. Through my friend's father we met a member of the Indiana legislature, who provided us with tickets to Louisville, which we reached next morning. This member was very kind to us, asking us many questions about our prison life and expressing sympathy for us. I am sorry to have forgotten his name.

Arriving at Louisville my companion took the train for his home out in Indiana and I hunted up my uncle. My uncle received me cordially, took me to a barber shop, where I enjoyed a good bath and shave, also gave me the nicest suit of clothes I ever had and took me to his home to rest and recuperate from my eighteen months' imprisonment. All this time I was in a state of bewilderment and could scarcely realize what was passing. I had suffered from confinement, hunger and was poorly clad in prison and could scarcely realize that I was free to go at will, and was respectably clothed and had plenty of wholesome food. Passing into the parlor of my uncle's house I caught the reflection of myself in a mirror and though there was something familiar about the image, I actually did not know myself, but thought it was an older brother, but by degrees the idea dawned upon me that it was myself.

As I came to realize the great change in my life and thoughts of mother, home and loved ones came into my mind, I dropped into a chair and shed tears. My aunt, observing that I often stopped before a mirror, asked me if I thought myself pretty. I told her no, that I was trying to renew acquaintance with myself.

Some few weeks after my release General Lee surrendered and the war came to a close. A little while before this I met you for the last time in front of the Louisville hotel. You recognized me and told me some of your plans about surrendering, but I never saw you afterward. I came to Texas in 1866, married and settled in Fannin county; remained there until 1891, when I removed to my present location in Jones county, near Anson, which is my postoffice. I have met the following Camp Morton prisoners since coming to Texas: John W. Thomson, James Haley, W. J. Brown and Jacob H. Rockwell, all from Missouri, except Brown, who is a Texan.

James Haley was drowned many years ago in Timber creek, north of Bonham, in Fannin county. J. H. Rockwell lives near Panhandle City, in Carson county, where I accidentally found him quite lately, and have had the pleasure of a visit to his ranch. His memory is unimpaired and I enjoyed my visit very much. He served in the First Missouri cavalry under General Joe Shelby. This in brief dear comrade, is a few of my memories of Camp Morton and my experiences after leaving them. It is a dismal page in my life's history and I refer to it only when some circumstance like your communication to the News calls them up. Beyond the fact that I was in a Northern prison my children knew nothing of my experiences then till a short time ago. I have a moderate competence and hope to be able to spend the balance of my days with children and friends about my own house. I shall always enjoy meeting and hearing from my Camp Morton commander. Your friend and comrade,

James Paxton.

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Another Correction.

Forney, Texas, December 18.—Dear Sir: I take the liberty to correct Comrade Ed L. Jones of Waul's Legion relative to the battle of Thompson Station, Tenn. He states that only Whitfield's Legion of Texans participated in said fight, except a battery of Missourians, and that at no time was Ross' brigade of cavalry under the command of General Joe Wheeler. The captain of my company, L. E. Hill, of Saunders' battalion, was killed in said fight. The battalion was composed of two companies from Mississippi, and Major Saunders' old company from Memphis, Tenn., commanded by Captain Flournoy. Will also state that General Ross' brigade of cavalry was under the command of General Joe Wheeler through the whole Georgia campaign, from Rome to Jonesboro, especially at Lovejoy Station, where they were run over by Kilpatrick's cavalry.

T. M. Daniel,
Saunders' Battalion.

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A Question Answered.

Elgin, Texas, December 25.—Dear Sir: I saw a notice in this column asking if you could give the names of two ex-Confederates of company F, Seventeenth Texas infantry. I can give you two or more who live here. The question is asked from The Grove, Texas, by R. H. Galloway. The names of two ex-Confederates are Dave Fisher and Ed Owens, and there are others of the same company and regiment.

R. P. Jones,
Of Company B, Seventeenth Texas Infantry.

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Gave Up the Dog.

Dr. S. O. Young, Adjutant General United Confederate Veterans, Galveston, Texas.

Corsicana, Texas, November 26.—When General Hood retreated from Tennessee his men were scattered from place to place, and when they could get a beef, mutton, goat or any other kind of meat Bates and his provost guard would take it away from them and eat it themselves. So one day the boys killed a dog and took it in and begged very pitifully to keep their meat, but no, Mr. Bates and his provost guard must have him; so they gave it up and what a time they had eating their "kid," and the next day when Bates and his men passed us everybody was howling and barking and asking the general and guard how they liked their kid.

W. W. Davis,
Company B, Ninth Mississippi, Perllian Sharp's Brigade.

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Can You Help Him?

Will some comrade of William R. Redding, whose widow, Mrs. M. J. Redding, does not remember the captain or regiment that her husband served in in Louisiana and Texas in the late war, and in cavalry service, write to me and give the desired information, so that Mrs. M. J. Redding can get a Texas Confederate pension? William R. Redding lived near Saltillo postoffice, Hopkins county, Texas, when he enlisted in 1863. Address J. A. Coppedge, justice of the peace, Evans Point postoffice, Hopkins county, Texas.

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A Brave Soldier.

Bolivar, Texas, December 18.—Recent associations have called to my mind incidents of the days of civil strife that are deserving of a place in the archives of our Sunny South, but which have been passed by unrecorded because of the private and unostentatious character of the actors. One incident I feel in duty bound to record as a part of the unwritten history of the civil war.

In the spring of 1862 Lieutenant Colonel E. C. Walthall of the Fifteenth Mississippi regiment was promoted for his bravery in the Fishing creek fight to the rank of colonel, with authority to raise a regiment. Just at this time Rev. J. M. Hampton, an itinerant Methodist preacher, raised a company of volunteers in Calhoun county, Mississippi, and was elected captain. At the organization of the company at Pittsboro on March 18 Colonel Walthall was present, and the company voted by a large majority to go under his command—a vote that was never regretted by the company. We followed him as colonel, as brigadier and as major general to the close of the civil strife. A braver man, a truer man, to his command never wore the honors of colonel or general than the late lamented Senator E. C. Walthall of Mississippi. As an illustration of his true character: After the war was over, when he would meet with any of his old regiment, he would say to them: "You boys served me faithfully during the war, and in return if any of you ever need the services of an attorney, I am yours to command without charge." Such a character has true greatness and Mississippi did but her duty in placing him in charge of her National interests as senator in the National assembly.

But this is incidental to the story I wish to record. Among those composing the company above referred to was a young man by the name of Sam Moss, a Tennessean, who had only been in Mississippi for a year or so. Sam was a genial, social companion, always full of droll fun, but quiet and unobtrusive. No duty was too hard for him to perform, and no privation too hard for him to endure without murmur or complaint. On the battlefield he was as cool and self-possessed as he was on dress parade. The characteristics here given were fully illustrated in the battle of Murfreesboro. At one time in the fight there was confusion in the ranks on both sides and a general entanglement of troops of different commands. Sam Moss got separated from his company, and being near Duck river, he went to the river for water, but when he reached the bank he saw six Federal soldiers down at the water filling their canteens, while their guns were lying at his feet. He at once presented his gun and ordered them to march out. Seeing he had the drop on them, they meekly obeyed. But just as they reached the top of the bank and fell in line to march before him a Federal colonel rode up and commenced cursing them for surrendering to that "D—d little rebel." Sam turned his gun on him and ordered him to dismount at once and fall into line or he would take him down. The colonel soon decided that "discretion was the better part of valor" and promptly obeyed. So, headed by their colonel leading his horse, Sam marched them into the Confederate lines and surrendered them to Colonel Walthall. For this act of bravery he was given a position among the sharpshooters—a small meed of praise for such a daring act. But even that was more than he asked for or seemed to expect. From then on only occasionally did we have the pleasure of seeing him. Later on he asked to be transferred to a Tennessee regiment, where his brother (who is now my neighbor) was serving. He continued in that command to the close of the war, and was severely wounded in the battle of Franklin, Tenn., shot through the body, but he recovered from his wound and after the war came to Texas, and was killed about two years ago by being thrown from a mule and dragged to death, a rope having fastened around his waist. He never married. And, true to his original characteristics, he never told his brother or sister of his daring exploit on Duck river.

Deploring his horrible death, I lay this humble tribute to his real worth on his grave. The true hero often hides behind the bulwark of reticence from the shafts of human adulation.

J. M. Dunn,
Company F, Twenty-fourth Mississippi Regiment.

News from the Front.

St. Paul Globe.

All signs indicate that Mr. Quay, in his assault upon the senate, has met with what the war news censors call a serious reverse.

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ATHLETIC CLUB BALL.

A Brilliant Social Event at Brenham Wednesday Night.

Brenham, Texas, December 28.—The Athletic club gave its annual Christmas ball last night. The large club rooms were a blaze of light from one end to the other, and in the various apartments, all decorated in the tastefully elegant manner characteristic of the events given by this select organization, were to be seen the city's most fashionable people.

Nearly 200 dancers thronged the floors, and without carriages lined Main street, the thoroughfare on which the club rooms are situated, between the confines of West and Douglass streets.

Those present represented some of the most beautiful ladies of Texas, now visiting the city, and a large constituency of the local beauties.

Carriages began to arrive a little after 9 o'clock and were driven up to the porte cochere, where the occupants alighted. The scene presented by the main hall of the second floor was one not soon to be forgotten. The decorations of gold and cerise harmonized perfectly with the light colorings of the room. The curtains, of a rich and deep red, were festooned with smilax, and the chandeliers were draped with the same plant in luxuriant festoons. The paintings and pictures in the reception parlors were overtopped with sprays of wild smilax. In the bay window alcoves in opposite corners punch was served from two huge bowls.

Cohn's orchestra was situated on the elevated stage amid a profusion of green, consisting of various potted plants and palms. Passing out from the main hall the dancers promenaded into a tete-a-tete room which also carried out the main color scheme of the club house, with frescoes and tapestries in cerise and gold. All of the decorations were particularly striking. In the wide door dividing the main hall from the reception rooms portieres of exquisite design were draped in three folds.

The affair was by far the most distinguished social event of the season. The membership has on its enrollment a large number of local ultra society, and the occasion was, moreover, graced by more than one visiting young lady who has won for herself a greater than provincial place in the fashionable monde.

It was generally acknowledged to have been the most brilliant entertainment ever given by the Athletic club, and was planned and carried out by the following committees:

Arrangement—T. A. Holland, chairman; C. L. Wilkins, S. Rouse and Lee Curry.

Invitation.—Lee Curry, chairman; C. B. Gillespie, J. S. Harrison, M. J. Amsler, D. C. Williams, S. C. Lusk and C. H. Carlisle, Jr.

Reception.—Mr. and Mrs. E. P. Curry, Mr. and Mrs. T. A. Low, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Lusk, Mr. and Mrs. B. B. Minor, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Wehmeyer, Mr. and Mrs. J. B. York, Mr. and Mrs. W. Cather, Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Eilers, Mrs. and Mrs. John Watson.

Floor.—Wm. Lusk, chairman; T. A. Holland, C. L. Wilkins, B. H. Bassett and A. A. Hacker.

Among the young ladies of the city who were present, Miss Ruby Gardner wore one of the loveliest costumes in the ray assemblage. It was of red satin, ruffled with taffeta, jetted net overskirt, waist covered with black mousseline de soie; large picture hat; American Beauty roses.

Miss Selkirk of Galveston wore pale blue mousseline de soie, with ruffled corsage, an illusion yoke and sleeves; Marechal Neil roses.

Miss Rachel Gross Selkirk of Galveston wore pink mousseline de soie applique, with ruchings of same; white roses.

Miss Edna Dwyer Ross wore shrimp pink peau de soie with Vandyke overskirt, white chantilly lace, crystal fringe corsage, La France roses.

Miss Mary Healy was particularly handsome, in an elegantly simple gown of white taffeta, silver fringe and embroidered mousseline de soie.

Miss Grace Gardner was costumed in pink satin, trimmed in Venise points, with chantilly inserting.

Miss Ada Becker was becomingly gowned in yellow satin, trimmed in violets and royal purple velvet.

Miss Bertha Becker wore one of her becoming gowns of mousseline de soie over taffeta, en traine, with both waist and skirt trimmed profusely in lace.

Miss Mollie White Harrison was attired in a handsome robe of white cerise, with black velvet trimmings.

Miss Lula Thornhill wore white organdie, with love knots of valenciennes lace. She carried La France roses.

Miss Elsie Tristram was very handsome in white mousseline de soie over white taffeta. She carried a cluster bouquet of pink carnations.

Miss Mary Stone was dressed elegantly in peau de soie silk, with silk fringe and point applique, simple and elegantly made without lavish garniture.

Miss Sadie McIntyre's dress was of white organdie, with white satin trimmings and real lace.

Miss Hattie Wilkins also wore white organdie, with trimmings of white satin and real lace. She carried La France roses.

Miss Edna Rouse wore an artistic creation of white brocaded satin, trimmed in light green and with black velvet ribbons.

Miss Hewell of Navasota was costumed in light blue crepe de chine, with lace, diamonds and pink carnations.

Miss Irma Chinski of Navasota wore white organdie, cut en traine, decollette; black velvet trimmings and picture hat of same.

Mrs. Harry Fisher-Baxter of Austin wore an exquisite embroidered liberty silk over purple taffeta.

Miss Kittie Hill of Hempstead was attired in a gown of white organdie with pink velvet trimmings.

Mrs. W. A. John of Hempstead wore a costume of yellow satin with ruby velvet trimmings.

Miss Queen Barnett of Waco wore white organdie over white satin and carried American Beauty roses.

Miss Jessamai Callaway of Galveston wore a white organdie costume, made with tunic skirt and trimmings of white satin ribbon. Her flowers were violets.

Miss Bell Edney wore white organdie over white taffeta with knots of ruby velvet over the shoulders.

Miss Hester Abbott wore white organdie with valienciennes inserting and violet trimmings.

Mrs. J. C. Fischer was costumed in white organdie, with white tulle inserted in lace, en traine. Her corsage bouquet was natural flowers and she carried violets.

Prominent among the attendants from other cities were the following: Hempstead, Mr. and Mrs. Ed F. John, Misses Kate and Elma Hill, Messrs. John Young, Lewis Farquhar, Dixon Weston, Henry Rankin, Rhea Russell; Houston, Messrs. John Compton, Fulton Terver and Drs. Hopkins and Ingelhardt; San Antonio, Edgar Engelke; Independence, Messrs. Shepard and Finney Clay, Miss Blue and the Misses Clay; Chappell Hill, Messrs. King Felder, Norfolk Foster, Temple Lide; Somerville, William Gaddy, W. L. Reynolds, Terrell Adams; Caldwell, Messrs. P. D. Olliver, Glenn Heslep and Charles Lackey; Navasota, Messrs. R. A. Poutout, Frank Ethridge, Misses Stella Howell, Irma Chinski and Marie Ketchum; Galveston, Misses Lutie and Rachel Selkirk and Mr. Redmond; Bellville, Mr. and Mrs. Leo Meyer; Austin, Dr. and Mrs. Harry Baxter; Waco, Miss Queen Barnett.

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