


The Disposition of the Twin Sisters Cannon

The 1864-1865 Rio Grande Campaign


9/10/2021

Note 1st revision

Initial Issue 3/6/2020

Basis assessment refuting the claim that Col. John S. Ford and the light Battery of Capt. O. G. Jones was engaged in the latter Rio Grande campaign (Fall of 1864-May 1865) with the Twin Sisters cannon, and that these cannon were left on the battlefield and in the area of Palmito Ranch afterwards in May 1865.

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This assessment examines the relational, chronological, and supportive events and correspondence to render a basis of veracity that the Twin Sisters were never involved in the Rio Grande campaign, hence either:

- The January-July Campaign up to the Battle of Las Rucias
- The fall 1864 campaign through the Battle of Palmito Ranch in May 1865

The TSHA Twin Sisters On-Line Handbook entry denotes the following content:

The next report of the Twins was on November 30, 1863, when Maj. A. G. Dickinson, commander of the Confederate post at San Antonio, reported that they were in the rebel arsenal (?) at Austin, although in very poor condition. On February 8, 1864, Lt. Walter W. Blow wrote to Col. John S. (Rip) Ford, who was preparing an expedition to recapture the Rio Grande from invading federal troops, that he was preparing to send the Twins to San Antonio so that they could accompany Ford's command. Blow's February 1864 report is the last official and certain mention of the Twin Sisters. Ford took six cannons to Brownsville, including two 6-pounders that were likely the Twins. They were present at the last battle of the Civil War at Palmito Ranch, and abandoned in Fort Brown** after Ford learned of Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox Courthouse.*

**Hence Capt. O. G. Jones light battery*

*** Per Report of Field Artillery, Trans-Mississippi Department, June 1st, 1865. Capt. O. G. Jones 3rd Texas Battery was located at Weston, Texas, and consisted of 1-3.67 inch rifle, 1-3 inch rifle, 1-12 pounder field howitzer, and 3-6 pounder guns.*

1863-The Union Re-Occupation of the Rio Grande

It is critical to understand the environment and situational faced by the confederacy in 1863. The Union was clear in its intent to re-occupy the Rio Grande, and issued this proclamation via the New York Herald on March 28, 1863 and included a map of South Texas and how it could be affected in a full page expose'. [1] General Banks in 1863 decided to cut off the trade with Mexico, having occupied Brownsville in November, he began moving up the coast moving from port to port.

On November 17, Magruder issued confirming correspondence to General Bee at Fort Brown [2a]:

" The substance of your dispatches to the effect that the enemy is 12,000 strong, under Banks, that they threaten Corpus Christi, and that bands of Mexicans will attack our people on this side of the Rio Grande, is received. I also hear from Major Dickinson that San Antonio is in danger of a raid from the frontier, near Eagle Pass. Under these circumstances, I think you had better send the piece of artillery I understand you brought from Fort Brown (and send) to San Antonio, and a good company of Duff's regiment. ...

This one piece of artillery was important to Dickinson, as he had, at the time, *no artillery in San Antonio, light or heavy:*

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November 16, Lt. Col. A.G. Dickinson, Post Commander-San Antonio to Genl. Magruder [2b]:

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*I hope to be in receipt of orders from the major-general commanding, and, if instructed to defend this place, he will, of course, send me force with which to do it, including one or more batteries of artillery, **there not being a single piece of artillery, heavy or light, at this post.** The citizens and State soldiers have organized and placed themselves under my command; there are not half of them armed, very few have horses. The strength of my command present for duty is 129 men, and very badly armed. Weymans company, the best men that I have, have no gun at all, those which they have had having been condemned.*

Magruder, highly concerned with attacks on both Austin and San Antonio, issued separate orders to fortify both, and in regards to San Antonio specifically:

November 23 – Magruder (Houston) to Maj. A. G. Dickinson-Commanding-San Antonio [3]

MAJOR: I am instructed by the major general commanding to direct you to call upon Capt. Schleicher, of the Engineer Department, and order him to lay out forthwith the following works, which must be constructed without delay, viz:

- 1. A fort for 1000 men, on the hill where the old powder-house is, to be built forthwith*
- 2. A strong earthwork around the arsenal, with flank defenses*
- 3. A strong earthwork around the armory*
- 4. A fort to protect the Confederate States tannery, above San Antonio*

Capt. Schleicher will arrange the working parties, and superintend the same, under your command. You and he will consult freely with Col. P. Stockton, who is expected to lend you all the aid in his power and heartily co-operate with you.

Major Dickinson, on November 30th, [4] faced with only one mortar and no ammunition for the mortar, diminished manpower, and lacking the means to fortify as a defensive measure the Confederate assets in San Antonio, wrote to Major Fountaine in Houston of the general dire conditions, and noted as it appears, with some glimmer of hope of obtaining of at least some sort of light artillery, hence Twin Sisters:

San Antonio, November 30, 1863.

Major S. T. FONTAINE,

Chief of Artillery and Ordnance, Dist. Tex., N. Mex., and Ariz.:

MAJOR: Your communications of November 21, 22, and to hand. The requisition upon Colonel Stockton for 500 English muskets, 100 bridles, and 100 halters, approved by the major- general commanding, was signed and delivered. As soon as the bridles and halters are turned over to me, I will forward them. Colonel Stockton informs me that the 500 English muskets are in horrible order, and, in consequence of the scarcity of gunsmiths, will not be cleaned and ready for use in less than two weeks. I have already informed the major- general commanding that they would all be required by organized companies now under my command and ordered to report to them. The bridles and halters I will send forward as quickly as possible.

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Colonel Stockton knows nothing of the traveling forges mentioned in you communication of the 22d. I understand there is one or more at New Braunfels. I will ascertain, and, if so, will have it forwarded at once.

There is a very fine mortar here, which could be used admirably, as directed by the major-general commanding, but I am sorry to state that every shell has been forwarded to Houston; it is, therefore, perfectly useless unless you send shells for it. I would like very well to exchange it for a 12 pounder howitzer, I have to suggest that a few heavy pieces for Powder House Hill and Dignowitt's Hill will be necessary. **The Twin Sisters, I am informed, are at or in the vicinity of Austin. They are in a deplorable condition, and I am fearful could not be used. Colonel Ford, commandant of conscripts, can however, give all necessary information in regard to them.**

Colonel Ford, still located in Austin, was given immediate orders on December 22nd [5] to take command of all troops in San Antonio, with further orders to mitigate the threat at Corpus Christi and at the Rio Grande "front". In Austin at the time, Col. Ford would have had clear and direct knowledge of the artillery situation, including the Twin Sisters and their condition. What is not known from Dickinson's reference, if these were the gift guns from Cincinnati, hence known as the Cincinnati Twins, or the ones mounted and furnished by Louisiana in April 1861, hence the Louisiana Twins.

The Captain H. H. Christmas' Battery included Lt's. Walter W. Blow, C. B. Gardiner, and Charles I Evans, and was formed in the fall of 1863. Key dates and cannon content with regards to Col. Ford's orders in early 1864 are as follows, confirmed and recorded from the actual records of the War of the Rebellion:

- February 5, Ford notes in a correspondence to Magruder that "The *howitzers* at Austin will be here shortly, Lieut. Blow will also exchange Spanish muskets for Enfield rifles." [6]
- February 8, Lt. Walter W. Blow, writes to Ford from Austin, notifying that he was preparing to send the Twins to San Antonio *[no references, original not found]*
- February 10- Lt. Blow, in Austin, writes to Col. Ford in San Antonio that he cannot have the rifles, pistols or the cannon ammunition for the 12 pounder field howitzer until Gov. Murrah returns, and Col. Culbertson requires cash in hand prior to relinquishing the munitions. They will also not furnish him with harnesses; he has two horses for transportation per piece, but fears he will break down on the way to San Antonio, and asks if Capt. Christmas could send two teams of horses (4-5) for each piece and cash. He attaches a list of ammunition available for the 12 pounder mountain howitzer.[7] (Blow's letter is included in its entirety further below)
- February 12, Col. Ford notifies Captain Turner that Lt. Blow is in Austin, and that he will bring the pieces. [8]
- February 21, Col. Ford provides status to Magruder's adjutant that Lieutenants Blow and Gardiner are at Austin to procure and transport artillery ammunition, etc.[9]
- February 28, Col. Ford, from San Antonio notifies Magruder's Adjutant that he expects the pieces, ammunition, etc., from Austin tomorrow (March 1) [10]
- March 9, Col. Ford, still in San Antonio, notifies the Adjutant that he sees indications favorable to an early manning of Captain Christmas' battery. (This confirms that the artillery pieces and ammunition are on location) Capt. Jones has organized his company, has been mustered in, supplied. [11]

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- March 22, Ford is on the move and located at a camp near Banquette. He expects Jones battery to arrive from Goliad soon, and further that "We have two pieces here, and I have ordered Captain Christmas to move others to the front (hence Rio Grande) as soon as he can." [12]

Ford's southern Rio Grande thrust can be segregated into two major campaigns:

- The preparation and movement southward to the Rio Grande in the spring of 1864 culminating in the Battle of Las Rucias on the border in June which utilized the Christmas Light Battery single section.
- The campaign in the fall of 1864 continuing to the last battle of the Civil War at the Battle of Palmito Ranch on May 13, 1865, which incorporated the Jones Light Battery.

Ford continues south leaving the camp for the San Fernando River on March 25, is at Camp Patterson on the San Fernando on April 9, at Laredo on the border on April 17, on the march to Rio Grande City on April 23, at Rio Grande City (Ft. Ringgold) on May 5th, then onto Young's Ranch 40 miles above Brownsville in preparation to engage the Union forces (June 20).

Capt. Christmas sent Lt. Gardiner with one section of battery (two guns) with Ford, the arid south conditions which included sparse water and pasturage evidently took its toll on the battery's horses:

- On April 12th Magruder issued special orders to impress 40 horses for use of the battery [13].
- Capt. Christmas wrote to Major Willke (Houston), Chief of Artillery on May 18th, advising that he had received a letter from Lt. Gardiner that his fine American horses had died, and the battery was hauled by sorry mules. Further, that the battery was down to a few men, some having deserted, and others would desert rather than be induced by Col. Ford to serve the battery. Based on the severe lack of forage, Capt. Christmas that Lt. Gardiner move the battery to the Brazos and camp there to obtain adequate forage for the horses, and to impress others. Christmas also requests to be sent east to Louisiana and Arkansas to take active service in the battles and action taking place there.[14]
- On May 18th Willke scribes a short note to Magruder summarizing the request, on May 23rd, Magruder gives permission for Christmas to move his battery to the Brazos.[15]
- On May 29th. Capt. Christmas issues a letter and order for Lt. Gardiner to move without delay his battery to the Brazos at Moseley's ferry.[16]

This letter was evidently not received or possibly complied with by Ford, who retained Lt. Gardiner until the Battle of Las Rucias which was fought on June 25.

After the battle Ford gives credit for the gallantry of Lt. Gardiner, but, he is clearly frustrated with the situation on multiple fronts, and of the situation especially regarding the Christmas's Battery [17], hence:

"Why it is that Captain Christmas is allowed to go east after having been ordered west by me; also why I am deprived of the two pieces under Lieutenant Gardiner at a time I need them badly?"

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Lt. Gardiner returns to San Antonio [18] in July, however Captain Christmas is noted to be back in Austin, as he offers a reward in the July 13 Weekly State Gazette (Austin) for a stolen or strayed horse, for delivery to the quartermaster there. [18] Thus Lt. Gardiner was sent to the Rio Grande with one section of battery (two guns), returning then to San Antonio with the same. So far, only Lt.'s Blow and Gardiner actions have been noted in correspondence. It is unclear exactly which guns were involved in this action.

The Alex Dienst Published Twin Sisters Letters and Accounts – San Antonio Express-March 23, 1913

The most critical of accounts however originates from Lt. Charles I Evans, Capt. H. H. Christmas remaining Lieutenant, sent to Ben Stuart in 1909, and published in the San Antonio Express by Dienst in 1913. The full page Twin Sisters article by Dienst included much research by Dienst and correspondence from several, including Dr. H. N. Graves, S.T. Fountaine, Charles I Evans, M. A. Sweetman, and brothers F.A. & M. S. Parks. The dismal condition and forlorn outlook of The Twin Sisters was noted by Dienst at the conclusion of the full page article:

After searching nearly twenty years, I am convinced that the cannon will never be found. Periodically old cannon will be found, and some will suggest they are the long-lost Twin Sisters, and this suggestion will develop into a theory, satisfactory to the finders, but to the earnest searcher of truth and indisputable facts, it becomes clearer as the years are passing by that the real Twin Sisters are lost forever, and only their glorious memory remains to be forever cherished by Texans.

Lt. Charles I Evans provides a complete account of the account of the “Twin Sisters” cannons in the fall of 1863 through late summer of 1864, their movements from Austin to San Antonio, the subsequent marching of the full company with the Twins to Millican, then by rail to Houston, the final destination Camp Lubbock at Houston. Col. Fountaine was requested by Evans to assess the cannon while at Camp Lubbock, Fountaine’s response was that they were almost entirely worthless in modern warfare, then gave Lt. Evans two other guns in place of them. Lt. Evans returned to San Antonio in August of 1864, leaving the Twin Sisters and caissons on the parade ground at Camp Lubbock in Houston. The entire letter has been retyped from the 1913 newspaper article, and included below *verbatim* due to its criticality.

Washington D. C. November 23, 1909

Ben C. Stuart, Hitchcock, Tex.

Dear Sir:

I have read with much interest your article in the Dallas News of Friday, the 19th inst. [1] concerning the Twin Sisters. I have also read a number of other articles by various persons claiming that the guns were thrown into Galveston Bay [2] or Buffalo Bayou [3], but I coincide with you in the opinion that was not their fate. I should dearly love to see the State of Texas recover these guns and preserve them as historic relics. I am very much surprised at some of the statements in the letter of Mr. Sweetman to you [4] for they are at variance with some facts within my own knowledge. I can scarcely believe that the guns saw in the junkyard in Houston [5] with brass plates on them, engraved in commemoration of their presentation to the State of Texas by the State of Louisiana, were the Twin Sisters.

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The reason that I am of this opinion is that in the fall of and winter of 1863-1864, I was stationed at San Antonio as lieutenant in Capt. H. H. Christmas battery. The other lieutenants were Walter W. Blow and Charles H. Gardner. As the battery at that time had only two guns-small mountain howitzers [6] -Captain Christmas opened negotiations with Governor Pendelton Murrah to get two guns then at Austin and said by the State officials to be the real Twin Sisters [7], which were used at the battle of San Jacinto. This negotiation was successful [8], and in pursuance thereof, Lieut. Blow went to Austin the fall of 1863 [9] with a detail of men and horses and brought the two guns with caissons to San Antonio [10]. I remember distinctly how the guns looked. There were no brass plates with inscriptions on either of them. They were only short iron pieces, only five or six feet in length. They had originally been 4-pounders, but had recently been bored out to the size of 6-pounders [11], and very recently been remounted on regular United States Army size carriages for 6-pounder guns. I remember that the carriage were very much out of proportion in size to the size of the guns, being too large for them. [12]

On the trail of each piece was a small silver plate with the name "Twin Sisters" engraved in script. This was the only engraving or mark anywhere about them [13]. During the early part of 1864 I talked with several State officials and old residents of Austin about these guns, and no one ever expressed any doubts as to their being the identical guns that were at the Battle of San Jacinto, but it was always taken for granted that they were. I never heard how they got to Austin

In the early summer of the year 1864 Christmas battery was consolidated with Capt. O. G. Jones battery, and I was ordered to take these two guns, all the men horses and equipments of Christmas' battery, and proceed to Houston, Tex. This I did, and left San Antonio in July 1864 marching overland to Millican, the then terminus of the Houston & Texas Central Railroad. I loaded the command on the train at that point and carried it to Houston and went into camp at Camp Lubbock, as it was then called, or Camp Rice, as it was called in 1862, when I was camped there as a member of the Second Regiment of Texas Infantry. At all events it was some two or three miles above Houston, on the south side of Buffalo Bayou, near the residence of Mrs. A. McGowan. [14]

*A day or two after reaching Houston, I was informed by Col. S. T. Fountaine, chief of artillery of General Magruder's staff, that Captain Jones battery has been ordered to the Rio Grande to reinforce Col. John S. (Rip) Ford's expedition to recapture Brownsville; and that I must immediately return to San Antonio with my section, and join them there. Col. Fountaine, at my request, went out to look at these guns, and heartily agreed with me that **they were almost entirely worthless in modern warfare, and gave me two other guns in place of them.** [16]*

When I left Houston for San Antonio with my command in the early part of August 1864, I left the Twin Sisters, with their caissons, parked on the parade ground at the camp. I have never seen them since that time, but was told by some friends in Houston a short time after the war closed that these guns had been melted up to make other castings at the Iron foundry of Wiggins, Smith, & Simpson. My old friend and comrade, Dan Smith, member of that firm and former mayor of Houston [1886-1890], may be able to give you information about these historic guns [17], which will aide you in your laudable effort to trace out their ultimate fate.

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I would further suggest that Col. Sidney T. Fountaine, who is now practicing law in Galveston, ought to be able to tell you something about them, for he was chief of artillery on General Magruder's staff. I left the guns at Camp Lubbock by his order, and was under the impression at the time that I left them in his charge, and subject to his orders. .

If these facts, or any other information I can give you, will aide in the restoration of these relics to the State of Texas, or will assist in solving the mystery of their disappearance, I shall be happy to render you all the service in my power.

Your truly,

Charles I Evans.

(Note references in this letter are denoted in Appendix 1-Evans References)

The S.T. Fountaine Account

Galveston, Tex. February 23, 1911

Dr. Alex Dienst, Temple, Tex

Dear Sir:

I am in receipt of your favor of the 20th inst., making inquiry of me relative to the two cannon, 6-pounders, that were successfully used in the Battle of San Jacinto, and known as the Twin Sisters.

My friend, Charles J. Evans, secretary of the Trust Company, Washington, D. C., acting under the impression that I could give the necessary information about these guns, corresponded with me on the subject. I was chief of artillery and ordnance of the District of Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona, in 1863, and I am satisfied that the two guns at that date were not inventoried. I also remember seeing these guns in Galveston some time before the evacuation, the carriages were almost worthless, and I do not remember that they were ever fired. I have lost sight of them, and have had various inquiries from various people, who want to find out the history, etc., and I do not know whatever became of them and with that end have tried to discover their last resting place, but have so far been unsuccessful.

If I am able to discover in any possible manner anything that will throw light on the subject, I will be pleased to advise you. I beg to remain, yours truly,

S.T. Fountaine.

Formerly Lieutenant Colonel Light Artillery, District of Texas, New Mexico and Arizona.

The Lt. Walter W. Blow Correspondence, Feb. 10th, 1864

Lt. Blow issued correspondence from Austin to Col. Ford in San Antonio on Feb. 10, two days after the unreferenced Feb. 8th account notifying that he was "preparing to send the Twins to San Antonio."

Blow's ammunition list includes shot, canister, and shell amongst other items for a 12 pounder mountain howitzer, thus this appears to confirm that Major Dickinson's desire to exchange the mortar for a 12 pounder howitzer was in fact executed. The final accounting for Jones Battery on June 1st 1865 includes a 12 pound howitzer as noted previously.

Walter Blow's handwritten letter to Col. Ford has been replicated "verbatim" in its entirety.

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Austin, Texas Feb. 10th, 1864
Col. Jno. S. Ford
Comd'g Expeditionary Forces
San Antonio, Tx.

Sir:

Governor Murrah has not yet returned, and until he does I can get neither the pistols, the Enfield Rifles, nor the cannon ammunition. Col. Culberson says the latter cannot leave here until paid for; neither will he let the cartridges for the small arms go, without the cash in hand. I have been trying my best to get transportation for the artillery, but find it impossible. Capt. McKinney A.Q.M. will lend me some unbroken mules but has no harness. Capt. Walsh of the transcript bureau has harness, but will not under any consideration let me have it. Should I succeed in getting through with my mission before hearing from you I intend to start out with the transportation I have (two horses to a piece), but fear I will break down on the road. I would be glad if you would direct Capt. Christmas to send over [2nd page] at once two (four or six horse) teams and Artillery harness. These could be started Friday, and get there easily by Monday. Governor Murrah will not be here for two or three days yet, and for fear he too, will not let the ammunition go until paid for, I would be glad if you would send me money enough to pay for {} ninety eight rounds of mountain howitzer ammunition, the State authorities have not yet been able to find out the correct price and don't know what it will amount to. Capt. Samuels can I suppose inform you what the price ought to be. Also please send money for as much small arm ammunition as you want.

Awaiting your favor, I have the honor to remain:

Y. Obt. Svt.

Walter W. Blow

1st. Lieut. Artillery

Actg. Ord. Officer

Col. C. says I cannot have any caps.

[3rd page]

12 pdr Mountain Howitzer Ammunition in hand of Texas State authorities:

12 rounds of cannister fixed – good

24 “ “ shell “ – “

15 “ “ spher. case “ – “ no fuses

23 “ “ shell “ – “ not filled

13 “ “ “ strapped - no cartridges & not filled

13 “ “ spher. case “ no cartridges

13 “ “ “ “ not strapped “ “ & not filled

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Walter W. Blow

1st Lieut. Artillery

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Rarest of Twin Sisters “entries”

The rarest of Twin Sisters “entries” was provided by Capt. W. C. Day, who was Superintendent of Public Buildings and Grounds for the State of Texas in the early 1900’s. Capt. Day pursued the Twin Sisters for years, locating, recovering and returning the T. J Chamber guns back to Austin in 1910. His noted publication History of the San Jacinto Campaign, included a written review by C. R. Wharton in December of 1921. This writer has an original copy of the second edition of 1923. Included in this publication is a Chronological dated history of the Twin Sisters from 1835 to 1865. The rare entry (pg 24), follows the correspondence of Major Dickinson (Nov. 30, 1863) is included verbatim as follows:

Fall of 1864

Mr. Alexander, a druggist residing in Austin, stated to me in 1910 that a battery was organized at Austin just before the close of the Civil War, of which he was a member. Among the guns which composed it were two which were known as the “Twin Sisters”, and during their march from Austin to Houston people along the road would come out to see them.

“Mr. Alexander” was indeed Mr. N. J. Alexander, a druggist for 62 years in the City of Austin. (Obit)

During the Civil War Mr. Alexander served in Capt Jones battery of artillery, which was located on the Mexican border at Brownsville. Not until 2 months after hostilities had ceased did the news reach the camp. Mr. Alexander immediately returned to Austin, and with his father, Dr. J.T. Alexander, one of the four doctors then practicing in Travis County, established a drug store.

This is a very short account, but appears somewhat to support Lt. Evans account.

The Dienst Assessment

Dienst, armed with both the M. A. Sweetman and Charles Evans accounts, thought through and surmised a plausible scenario:

The letter that Charles Evans thought was at variance with the circumstances as he was acquainted with them is here given. The difference being that Charles Evans only noted an inscription in 1864 upon the trail of the carriages, a small silver plate with the inscription “Twin Sisters” engraved in script. Necessarily as the carriages were admittedly not the original ones, the original plates were not upon them; it may be some relic hunter removed the original plates while at Austin. Or possible to entirely reconcile the two statements that the original carriages abandoned at Austin were later sent to Houston with the inscriptions still upon them, and were the remains as viewed by M. A. Sweetman. These carriages in their turn may have been utilized after once being abandoned, and had guns placed upon them, possibly not as heavy as the original 6-pounders, therefore sufficiently strong to answer as a makeshift.

The two statements thus viewed are not necessarily at variance with each other. They both agree that at this time the cannon were at or near Houston, and they both agree, Charles Evans, by inference, that they became part and parcels of junk piles.

The Louisiana Twin Sisters-Plausability Scenario

Dienst had certainly arrived at the best approximation of the truth. The Cincinnati Twins had long disappeared as a recognizable entity which were exposed to only a close few during their

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history, no doubt covered in rust, and the plate adhered to the breech either obscured or not recognized by anyone to have meaning.

Someone reported to Dickinson in November 1863 that the Twins were in deplorable condition, such would have been the assessment of any Texas Revolution era cannon armament against modern Civil War equipment.. Those in the revolution would have probably looked at it with immediate acceptance, hence normal. In early 1861, the State of Louisiana applied lacquer to an existing carriage, the vintage not clarified. But dragging this over “hill and dale” through creeks and rocky terrain, would have worn this coating down quickly, two years of exposure rusting the barrels. Fountaine’s observation of the cannon barrels that they were almost entirely worthless in modern warfare may also have explained the “deplorable” condition, realize also that was Dickinson summation for whatever was reported, on whatever basis this is derived from.

With Governor Murrah finally capitulating due to the dire circumstances of the Union threat from the south and the severe lack of artillery in San Antonio, their “deplorable condition” would have been met rendering the cannon to as usable condition as possible, which certainly would have included remounting on standard US Army Carriages. This effort with high probability by State furnished personnel in recognition of what they believed to be the true Twin Sisters, thus marking the trailing edge of the remounted carriages as noted.

Fountaine, Chief of Artillery, would have had other uses for good cannon carriages, which would have been sized for at least a 12 pounder, Evans noting *the carriage were very much out of proportion in size to the size of the guns, being too large for them*. At some point, Fountaine may have ordered the barrels brought to the Kennedy Building yard lay down area, and notified the Governor that his Twin Sisters cannon barrels were of no use, maybe even asking the question as to his preference, hence to re-unite the barrels with original carriages in Houston or Austin, bringing the carriages to Houston much simpler. Dienst arrived at the same conclusion, although he surmised a different barrel may have been used.

As Evans left them in August 1864 at Camp Lubbock, and Sweetman saw them at the Kennedy building in July 1865, certainly the cannon and carriage re-union appears entirely possible if not plausible.

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Summary

From Lt. Charles Evans account, the Twin Sisters, which were noted in Austin to be in “deplorable” condition” Nov. 30, 1863 by Major Dickinson in San Antonio, had the two barrels remounted on regular U.S. Army carriages, with the nameplate in silver on the carriage trailer bearing the script inscription “Twin Sisters”. These cannonwetre then were transported by Walter W. Blow to San Antonio arriving by March 1st, 1864. In the early summer of the year 1864 Christmas battery was consolidated with Capt. O. G. Jones battery, Lt. Charles Evans under orders transported these Twin Sisters to Houston in July of 1864, where he left them on the parade ground of Camp Lubbock, and returned to San Antonio per orders in August of 1864. Two other cannon were provided to Lt. Evans by Chief of Artillery S. T. Fountaine, Fountaine having personally confirmed that the Twin Sisters cannon were almost entirely worthless in modern warfare .

There is more than a reasonable possibility that the cannon barrels were then removed from the U.S. Army regular carriages, and, were re-united in Houston with the original State of Louisiana provided carriages with mounted plaque shipped in from Austin by request. These Louisiana Twin Sisters cannon were discovered by M. A. Sweetman on July 30, 1865, in the lot behind the Kennedy building which was used as a Confederate arsenal, Sweetman recording the detailed description therein.

Conclusion

The “Twin Sisters” referenced by both Dickinson and Blow were not involved in Ford’s campaign on the Rio Grande either in 1864 or 1865, and were left at Camp Lubbock in Houston, during the month of August 1865.

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REFERENCES

- 1) Map Of Texas-The Proposed Reoccupation of the Rio Grande-Its Importance to Texas. The New York Herald. New York, Saturday, March 28, 1863 (See Map in Maps Section-Appendix)
- 2) (a) War of the Rebellion, Vol. 26, Pt. II, Page 423. Major-General Magruder, Headquarters District of Texas (Galveston) to Brig. Gen. H. P. Bee, Commanding Western Sub-District
- 2) (b) War of the Rebellion, Vol. 26, Pt. II, Pages 421-422. Lieut. Col. A. G. Dickinson Commanding Post, San Antonio, to Capt. Edmund P. Turner (Adjutant-Magruder)
- 3) War of the Rebellion, Vol. 26, Pt. II, Pages 440 Capt. Edmund P. Turner (Adjutant-Magruder) to Lieut. Col. A. G. Dickinson Commanding Post, San Antonio.
- 4) War of the Rebellion, Vol. 26, Pt. II, Pages 459 . A. G. Dickinson -Major, and Assistant Adjutant-General Commanding Post, San Antonio, to Major S. T. Fountaine, Chief of Artillery and Ordnance, Dist. Tex, N. Mex. And Ariz.
- 5) War of the Rebellion, Vol. 26, Pt. II, Pages xxx. Capt. Edmund P. Turner (Adjutant-Magruder), McNeel's Plantation, to Colonel [J. S. Ford], Austin, Tex.
- 6) War of the Rebellion, Vol. 34, Pt. II, Pages 946-947. Col. J. Ford, Col. Commanding. Headquarters Expeditionary Forces. San Antonio Feb. 5, 1864 to Capt. E. P. Turner-Adjutant-Maj. Genl. Magruder
- 7) Lt. Walter W. Blow, Feb. 10, 1864 (Austin Tex.) to Col. John S. Ford (San Antonio), 3 pages-handwritten-Copy of letter provided courtesy of Haley Memorial Library & Research Center, TCM94.1.9-Box 1.
- 8) War of the Rebellion, Vol. 34, Pt. II, Pages 961-962. Col. J. Ford, Col. Commanding. Headquarters Expeditionary Forces. San Antonio Feb. 12, 1864 to Capt. E. P. Turner-Adjutant-Maj. Genl. Magruder
- 9) War of the Rebellion, Vol. 34, Pt. II, Pages.979-980 Col. J. Ford, Col. Commanding. Headquarters Expeditionary Forces. San Antonio Feb. 21, 1864 to Capt. Theodore Heerman Adjutant-Maj. Genl. Magruder
- 10) War of the Rebellion, Vol. 34, Pt. II, Pages 1004-1005. Col. J. Ford, Col. Commanding. Headquarters Expeditionary Forces. San Antonio Feb. 28, 1864 to Capt. E. P. Turner-Adjutant-Maj. Genl. Magruder
- 11) War of the Rebellion, Vol. 34, Pt. II, Page 1033. Col. J. Ford, Col. Commanding. Headquarters Expeditionary Forces. San Antonio March 9, 1864 to Capt. E. P. Turner-Adjutant-Maj. Genl. Magruder
- 12) War of the Rebellion, Vol. 34, Pt. II, Page 1069. Col. J. Ford, Col. Commanding. Headquarters Expeditionary Forces. *Camp near Banquette*. March 22, 1864 to Capt. E. P. Turner-Adjutant-Maj. Genl. Magruder
- 13) L. G. Aldrich (Magruder Adjutant), Houston, April 12, 1864 to Capt. H. H. Christmas, Com. Of Lt. Battery, San Antonio, 1 page-handwritten-Copy of letter provided courtesy of Haley Memorial Library & Research Center, TCM94.1.38-Box 1.
- 14) Capt. H. H. Christmas, Head Qtrs, San Antonio, May 18th to Maj. H. Wilkie, Chief of Artillery, Houston, 3 pages-handwritten-Copy of letter provided courtesy of Haley Memorial Library & Research Center, TCM94.1.38-Box 1.
- 15) M L. G. Aldrich (Magruder Adjutant), Houston, April 12, 1864 to Capt. H. H. Christmas, Com. Of Lt. Battery, San Antonio, 1 page-handwritten-Copy of letter provided courtesy of Haley Memorial Library & Research Center, TCM94.1.38-Box 1.
- 16) Capt. H. H. Christmas, Com. Of Lt. Battery, San Antonio, 1 page-handwritten-Copy of letter provided courtesy of Haley Memorial Library & Research Center, TCM94.1.38-Box 1.

The Disposition of the Twin Sisters Cannon

The 1864-65 Rio Grande Campaign

- 17) War of the Rebellion, Vol. 41, Pt. II, Page 989. Col. J. Ford, Col. Commanding. Headquarters Expeditionary Forces. *Ringgold Barracks*. July 2, 1864 to General Slaughter, Chief of Staff, Houston.
- 18) *A Comprehensive History of Texas, 1685-1897*, 2 Vols. Vol. 2 Pg. 597. Dudley G. Wooten, William G Scarff, Dallas. 1898

FOOTNOTES & REFERENCES-CHARLES I EVANS LETTER

- 1) Same published in the Galveston Daily News, Nov. 11th, "More Light on the Twin Sisters", noting a brief account published in the Cincinnati Enquirer on October 10th, which drew a response by M.A. Sweetman.
- 2) This reference is to F. A. and M. S. Parks, brothers, who were in Waul's Texas Legion east of the Mississippi river until after the fall of Vicksburg, released after the exchange and therefore had no knowledge of the guns in the early part of the war. (Most of the men who were paroled on July 6 were exchanged and received back into the Confederate Army on August 4, 1863, at Mobile Harbor, Alabama) They were the last to leave Galveston in May of 1865, and while leaving on Galveston on a train flatcar with other soldiers, discovered the two iron guns mounted near the drawbridge of the G.H. & H. bridge to the mainland, and with others, hastily threw these cannons over the bridge into the bay, believing they were the Twin Sisters. No inscriptions were noticed on the cannon. See appendices, 1909 & 1911. See also Cayuga reference-Part original accounts Galveston Daily News, July 13th and August 10th 1909.
- 3) Hence Dr. H. N. North and other confederate soldiers account of burying the cannon barrels at Harrisburg
- 4) M. A. Sweetman's July 30, 1865 eyewitness account
- 5) Interesting that he terms this "junkyard" vs. arsenal, or other
- 6) This then explains the need in Evans letter for ammunition for 12 pounder field howitzers. Ford noted in his correspondence of Feb. 5 that the howitzers would arrive in San Antonio shortly, so this must have been a successful negotiation and thus not part of Blows mission noted in his Feb. 10th correspondence.
- 7) This is the problem, no one is left by 1864 who was close enough to the real Twins, which certainly amounts to only a few, who would know the difference, certainly not Governor Murrah.
- 8) For Gov. Murrah would have only released the Twin Sisters to the confederacy in dire straits, which is exactly the current condition; San Antonio having little artillery, the Union controlling the Rio Grande and moving northward, orders to fortify, etc.
- 9) Probably late fall of 1863, Blows letters are noted in Feb. 1864, his return to San Antonio on or about March 1.
- 10) Thus Blow's letter of Feb. 10th referral to "two pieces" meant cannon and caissons, thus requiring two teams of horses, 4-6 each team.
- 11) Blow probably learned this from Gov. Murrah, and he from his predecessor Gov. Clark. Sherman wrote to Clark in May of 1861, and erroneously noted the same
- 12) Probably 6 pounders mounted on a standard 12 pounder carriage
- 13) Thus not the Cincinnati Twins, which have the inscription adhered to the cannon barrel breech. With the Louisiana Twin Sisters plaque amounted on the carriage, at least someone had the patriotic initiative to label the U.S. Army regular carriage in some identifying manner.
- 14) The A. McGowen residence was located just across from the H. & T.C. Depot, SS White Oak Bayou, NS Buffalo Bayou, thus Camp Lubbock was located in the "pocket" formed by both. See also Wood's 1869 Houston Map Section in Maps Appendix. It was known in 1886 as the McGowen Foundry, later Bayou City iron Works, residence located on Railroad between 2nd & 3rd st, NSBB.

The Disposition of the Twin Sisters Cannon

The 1864-65 Rio Grande Campaign

Reference-Jones Battery-Chronological References-War of the Rebellion

HEADQUARTERS ARMY IN THE FIELD,
Wharton, Tex., March 13, 1864.

Brig. Gen. J. E. SLAUGHTER, *Chief of Staff*:

SIR: Your dispatches of March 12 are just received. I consider it necessary to leave Colonel Duff's command at its present location; the Second Texas, Waul's Legion, and Jones' battery at the mouth of Caney; Colonel Bates' regiment, with Gibson's battery, at Velasco and mouth of the Bernard, with Brown's regiment of cavalry for scouting duty on the coast. This leaves for the march to Louisiana the following commands: Buchel's, Debray's, Gould's, Pyron's, Woods' regiments of cavalry, Lockett's regiment of infantry, Moseley's, Hughes', and McMahan's batteries of artillery.

Should this disposition of the troops not be in conformity with your views I request that the necessary orders issue direct to such troops as you may wish to include in the march. All of the regiments named by me are now on the march. Lockett's regiment, being ordered by way of Houston, will receive their orders more direct from your headquarters, although I have sent the necessary orders to him. So soon as the necessary arrangements may be made and the troops on the march I shall proceed to Livingston, Polk County.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

H. P. BEE,
Brigadier-General.

*Stations of light batteries in the District of Texas, New Mexico,
and Arizona, March 13, 1864.*

McMahan's battery will be in Houston to-night; Jones', at Wharton; Hughes', Columbia; Willke's, on the march to Galveston; Creuzbaur's, Sabine Pass; Nichols', on the march to Houston; Dege's, Galveston; Moseley's, on the march to Polk County, Tex.; Christmas', San Antonio; Gibson's, on the march to Polk County, Tex.; Valverde, Hempstead; Dashiell's, Camp Davenport, near Lavaca, Tex.

ARTY. HDQRS., DIST. OF TEX., N. MEX., AND ARIZ.,
Houston, March 30, 1864.

Capt. W. A. ALSTON,
Assistant Adjutant-General:

CAPTAIN: I have the honor to report the following as the stations of light batteries in this district:

First. Creuzbaur's battery, Sabine Pass.

Second. Dege's battery, Galveston, under command of Maj. H. Willke.

Third. Willke's battery, Galveston, under command of Maj. H. Willke.

Fourth. Hughes' battery, Camp Wharton and Velasco.

Fifth. Jones' battery, Cedar Lake.

Hughes' and Jones' batteries are under the command of Major Hart, Jones furnishing artillery for Caney and Hughes for Velasco. They are foraged from Perry's Landing, on the Brazos.

The Disposition of the Twin Sisters Cannon

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Sixth. Nichols' battery, Camp Lubbock.
 Seventh. Greer's rocket battery, organizing at Houston.
 Eighth. Christmas' battery, at San Antonio, organizing.
 Ninth. Dashiell's battery, near Texana.
 The following batteries are on the march to Louisiana: Valverde,
 Moseley's, Gibson's, and McMahan's.
 I am, captain, very respectfully, your obedient servant,
 WILLIAM R. JONES,
 Captain and Assistant Chief of Artillery.

800

LOUISIANA AND THE TRANS-MISSISSIPPI.

[CHAP. XLVI.]

Abstract from return of the District of Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona, Maj. Gen. J. B. Magruder commanding, for the month of April, 1864.

Command.	Present for duty.		Aggregate present.	Aggregate present and absent.	Aggregate last return.	Pieces of artillery.		Headquarters.
	Officers.	Men.				Heavy.	Field.	
FIRST SUB-DISTRICT.								
Brig. Gen. JAMES M. HAWES.								
Staff	13	.....	13	14	.....	.....	.....
NORTHERN SUB-DISTRICT.								
Brig. Gen. HENRY E. McCULLOCH.								
2d Texas, Maj. George W. L. Fly.	18	190	251	382	364	.....	.....	Galveston Island.
8th Texas, Col. A. M. Hobby.....	19	348	395	559	557	.....	.....	Do.
20th Texas, Col. H. M. Elmore...	21	622	729	1,069	1,038	.....	.....	Do.
Timmons' regiment, Col. B. Timmons.	17	251	310	481	614	.....	.....	Do.
Brown's regiment cavalry, Capt. James L. Tompkins.	15	196	244	396	399	.....	.....	Do.
Battery light artillery, Capt. A. E. Dege.	1	44	55	100	100	....	4	Do.
Willke's battery light artillery, Lieut. S. W. Allen.	1	46	59	100	99	....	4	Do.
1st Regiment Heavy Artillery, Lieut. Col. John H. Manly.	23	462	669	898	872	31	.....	Do.
Engineer troops (one company), Capt. M. G. Howe.	1	40	47	104	107	.....	.....	Do.
Engineer troops (one company), Capt. N. H. Smith.	2	27	29	58	41	.....	.....	Do.
Cadet company, Lieut. W. M. Williamson.	3	24	31	58	58	.....	.....	Do.
13th Texas, Col. Joseph Bates...	18	334	410	555	473	.....	.....	Velasco.
Battery light artillery, Capt. O. G. Jones.	2	41	59	97	96	....	4	Cedar Lake.

The Disposition of the Twin Sisters Cannon

The 1864-65 Rio Grande Campaign

Abstract from field return of the Light Artillery of the District of Texas, Maj. Gen. John B. Magruder commanding, for the month of August, 1864.

Command.	Present for duty.		Aggregate present.	Aggregate present and absent.	Pieces of field artillery.	Headquarters.
	Officers.	Men.				
Dege's battery.....	3	95	118	210	8	Galveston.
Willke's battery.....	3	48	65	94	4	San Antonio.
O. G. Jones' battery.....	3	48	74	96	4	Cedar Lake.
R. J. Hughes' battery.....	1	23	55	91	4	Liberty.
C. Welhausen's battery.....	3	62	71	96	4	McKinney.
George R. Dashiell's battery.....	3	52	59	75	6	Dickinson Bayou.
W. H. Nichols' battery.....						
Total	16	328	442	662	30	

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LOUISIANA AND THE TRANS-MISSISSIPPI.

[CHAP. LIII.]

Abstract from field return of the Light Artillery, District of Texas, Maj. Gen. J. G. Walker commanding, for the month of September, 1864.

Command.	Present for duty.		Effective total present.	Aggregate present.	Aggregate present and absent.	Pieces of field artillery.
	Officers.	Men.				
Galveston:						
Dege's battery.....	1	43	43	49	102	4
Willke's battery.....		22	22	49	98	4
San Antonio:						
O. G. Jones' battery.....	3	51	58	65	112	6
Cedar Lake:						
R. J. Hughes' battery.....	2	50	60	78	98	4
Belleville:						
C. Welhausen's battery.....	2	35	38	66	94	4
W. H. Nichols' battery.....	2	52	52	60	75	4
McKinney:						
George R. Dashiell's battery.....	3	62	62	71	96	4
Total	13	315	335	438	675	30

The Disposition of the Twin Sisters Cannon

The 1864-65 Rio Grande Campaign

Appendix- Walter W. Blow February 10th, 1863 Handwritten Letter

The Disposition of the Twin Sisters Cannon

The 1864-65 Rio Grande Campaign

Austin, Texas.
Feb 10th 1864.

Col. Jno. I. Ford
Comdg Expeditionary Forces
San Antonio, Tx

Sir.

Governor Murrah has not yet returned, and until he does I can get neither the pistols, the Springfield Rifles, nor the cannon ammunition. Col. Culbertson says the latter cannot leave here until paid for, neither will he let the cartridges for the small arms go, without the cash in hand. I have been trying my best to get transportation for the Artillery, but find it impossible. Capt. McKimney offers will lend me some unbroken mules, but has no harness. Capt. Walsh, of the Conscript Bureau has harness, but will not under any considerations let me have it. Should I succeed in getting through with my mission before hearing from you I intend to start out with the transportation I have (two mules to a piece), but fear I will break down on the road. I would be glad if you would direct Capt. Christmas to send over

TCM94.1.0009

A + 6

The Disposition of the Twin Sisters Cannon

The 1864-65 Rio Grande Campaign

at once, two (four or six horses) teams and
Artillery harness. These could be started
Friday, and get here easily by Monday.
Governor Murrah will not be here for two or
three days yet, and for fear he too, will
not let the ammunition go until paid
for, I would be glad if you would send
me money enough to pay for (94) ninety
eight rounds of mountain howitzer ammuni-
tion, the State authorities have not yet
been able to find ^{out} the exact price and don't
know what it will amount to. Capt Samuels
can I suppose inform you what the price
ought to be. Also please send ^{money for} as much small
arm ammunition as you want.

Awaiting your funds I have
the honor to remain

Yr. Obedt. Servt.

Walter W. Ston.

1st Lieut Artillery.

Actg. Qr. Officer.

Col. C. says I cannot have any caps.

TCM94.1.0009

A+B

The Disposition of the Twin Sisters Cannon

The 1864-65 Rio Grande Campaign

8

12 per Mountain Howitzer Ammunition in hands
of Texas State authorities.

12	pounds of Canister fixed	—	Good
24	" " Shell	"	"
15	" " Spec. Case	"	not fixed
23	" " Shell	"	not filled
13	" " " Shrapnel	—	no cartridge & not filled
10	" " Spec. Case	"	"
1	" " " " not shapped	"	" not filled
<u>98</u>			

Walter M. Blount
1st Lieut Artillery.

TCM94.1.0009
A + B

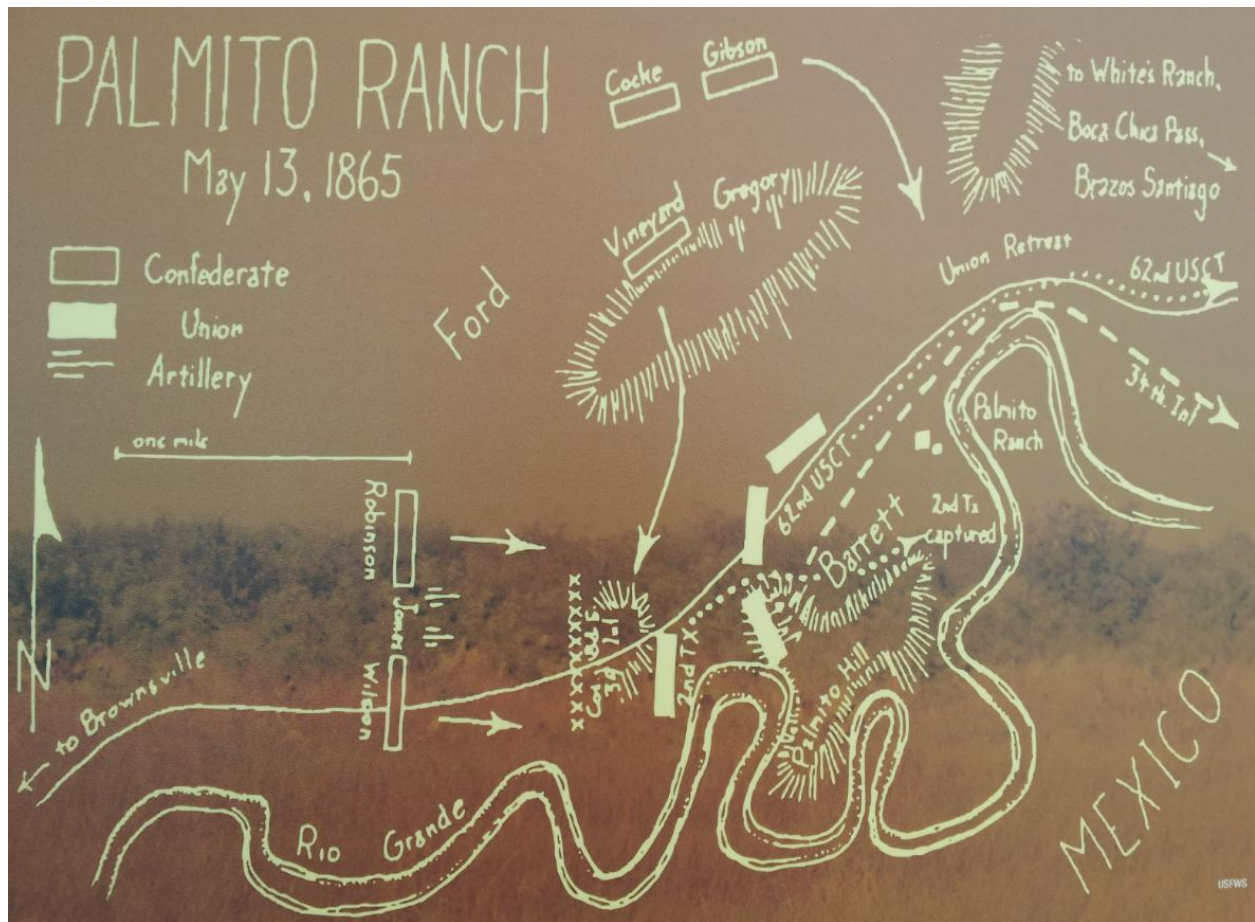
The Disposition of the Twin Sisters Cannon

The 1864-65 Rio Grande Campaign

MAPS SECTION

The Disposition of the Twin Sisters Cannon

The 1864-65 Rio Grande Campaign



May 1865 PALMITO RANCH BATTLEFIELD MAP

The Disposition of the Twin Sisters Cannon

The 1864-65 Rio Grande Campaign



PROGRESSIVE MILITARY MAP OF THE UNITED STATES
SOUTHERN DEPARTMENT

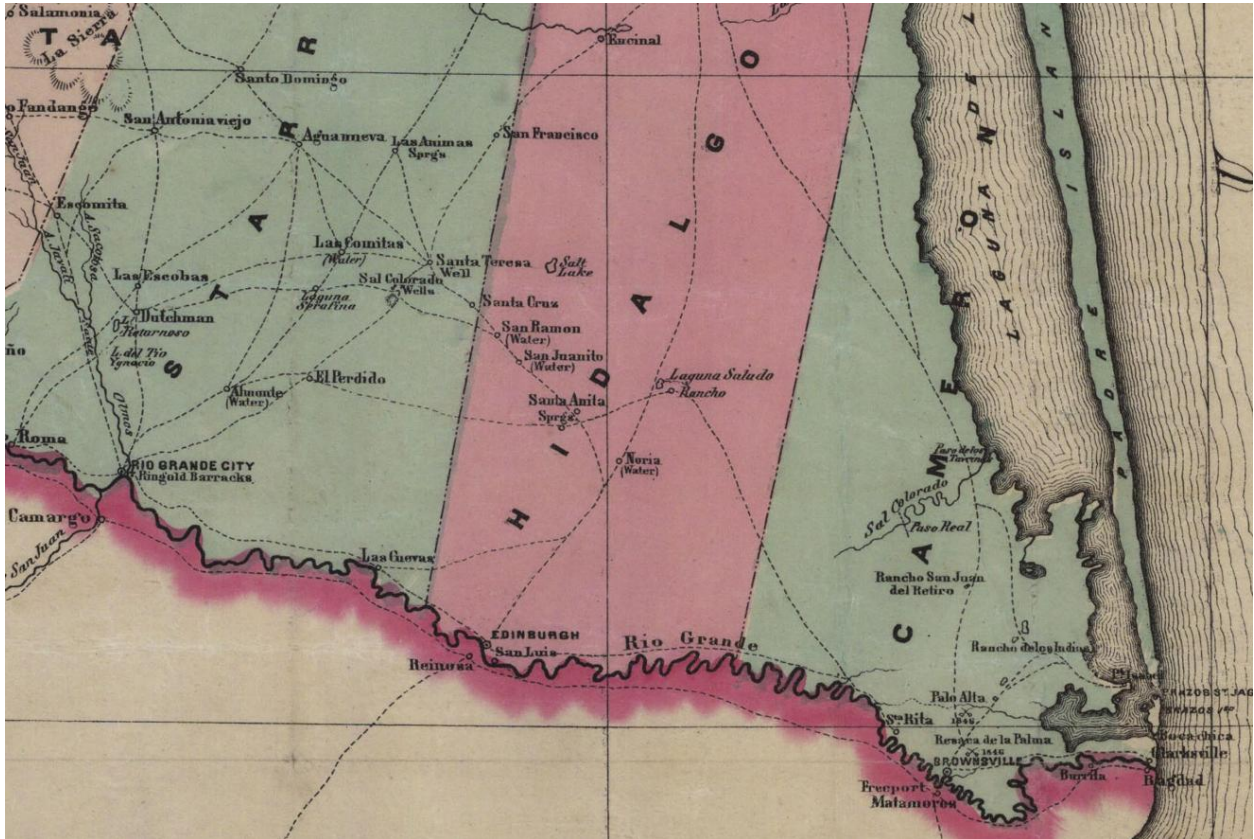
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Revised and reprinted Aug. 1916.

Palmito Ranch Section

The Disposition of the Twin Sisters Cannon

The 1864-65 Rio Grande Campaign

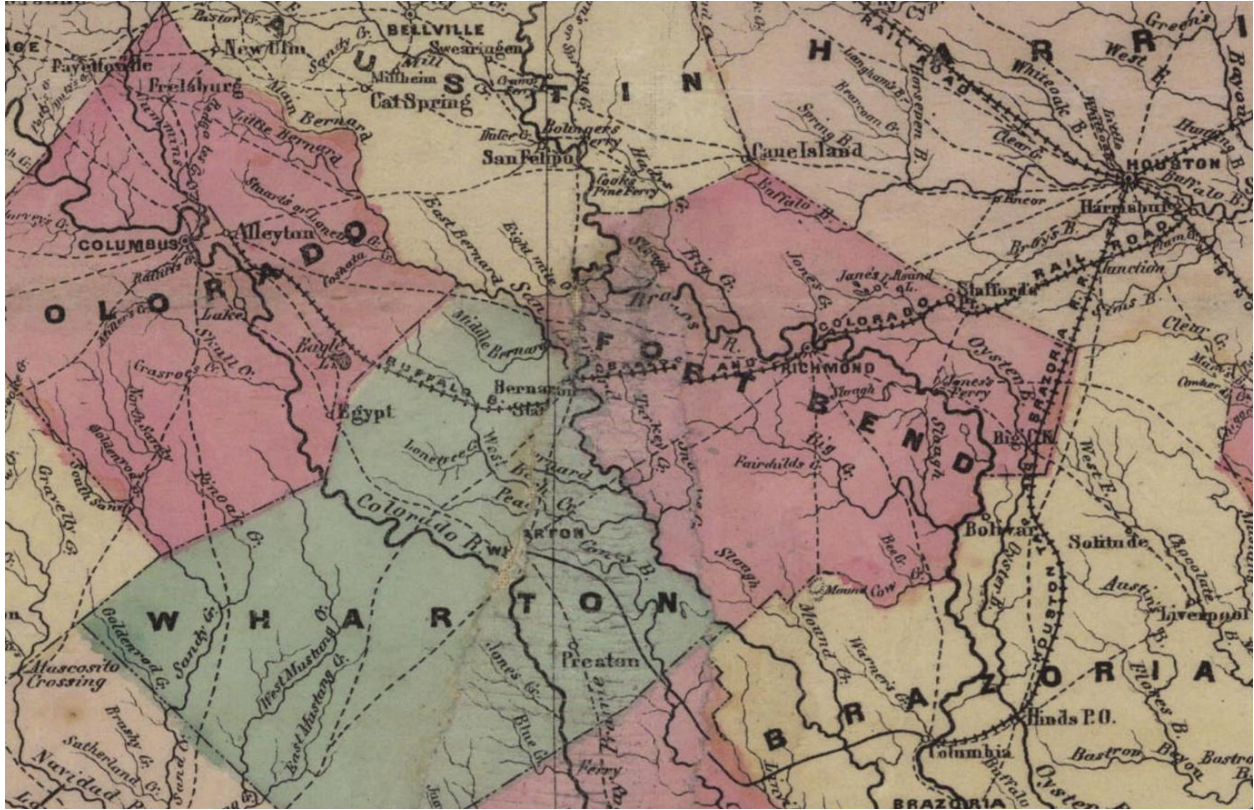


Rio Grande Section

1867 Map of Texas

The Disposition of the Twin Sisters Cannon

The 1864-65 Rio Grande Campaign

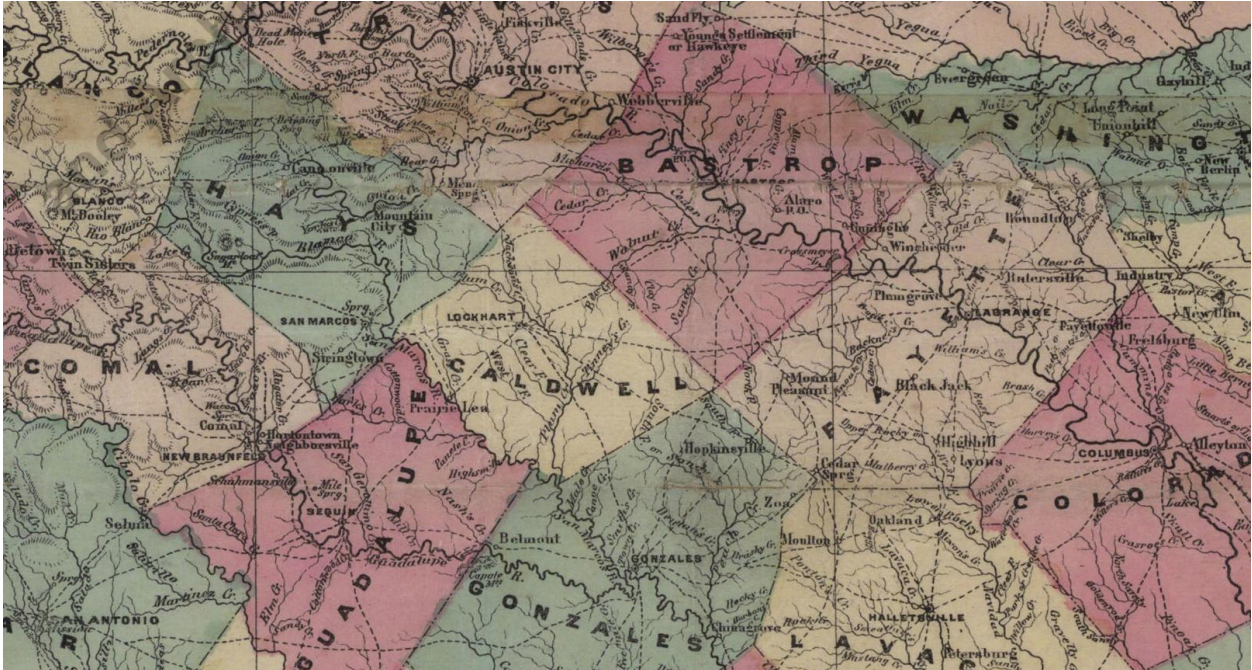


Alleyton to Harrisburg RR

1867 Map of Texas

The Disposition of the Twin Sisters Cannon

The 1864-65 Rio Grande Campaign



San Antonio, Austin, Alleyton

1867 Map of Texas

The Disposition of the Twin Sisters Cannon

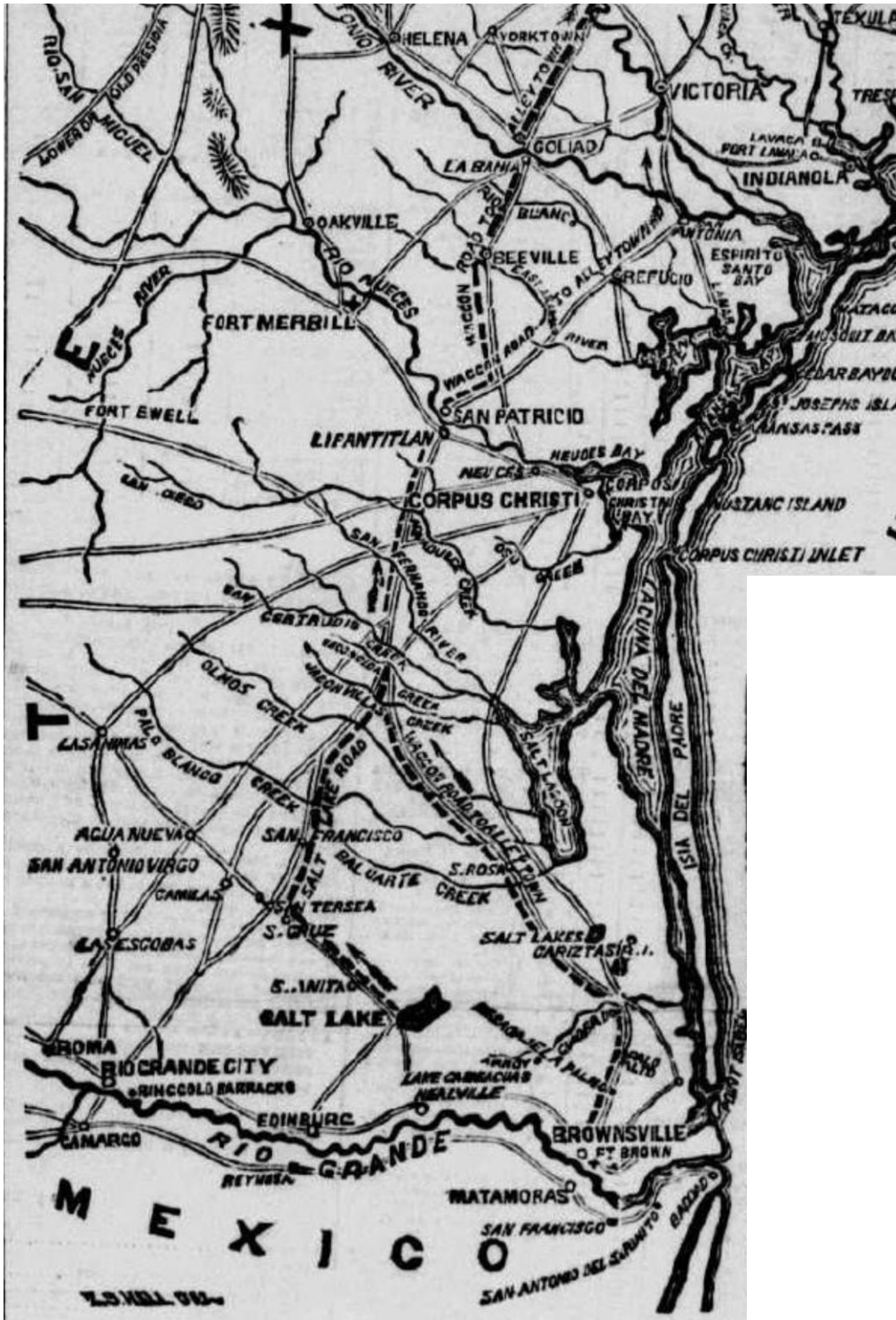
The 1864-65 Rio Grande Campaign



1863 Union Reoccupation of Texas Map

The Disposition of the Twin Sisters Cannon

The 1864-65 Rio Grande Campaign



Lower 1863 Rio Grande Section Map