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Carolyn R. Ericson

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## PRELUDE TO SAN JACINTO: NACOGDOCHES 1836

by Carolyn Reeves Ericson

The week prior to San Jacinto Day, April 21st, was filled with rumors, fears and reports of Santa Anna's approaching army. The Runaway Scrape had left the state almost devoid of women and children and in an air of confusion.

The many Spanish inhabitants of Nacogdoches were apprehensive of their fate. Rumor reported they were to be killed just as if they were marching with Santa Anna. The situation was very tense and the Anglos remaining on guard in town realized something had to be done. The Committee of Vigilance and Safety for Nacogdoches gathered and five men were selected to meet with the local Mexican citizens who had armed themselves and had gathered at the edge of town. Henry Raguet, local merchant, was named chairman of this committee.<sup>1</sup>

Raguet, son of James Michael and Ann Wynkoop Raguet, was born February 11, 1796 in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. He served in the War of 1812 and soon after his discharge moved to Cincinnati, Ohio. He was in business for some time in Cincinnati and was elected a director of the Bank of the United States in 1827. Raguet failed in business in Cincinnati and began looking for a new location. Early in the year 1833 he made a trip to New Orleans, Louisiana, where he became acquainted with Sam Houston and John Durst who persuaded him to make a trip with them into Texas. They arrived in Nacogdoches in March, 1833 and Raguet accompanied Durst to his ranch home on the Angelina River.

After deciding to make his home in Texas, Raguet returned to Ohio by way of Vicksburg, Mississippi, where he met the struggling young merchant, William G. Logan. Raguet described Texas in such a way that he persuaded Logan to make a similar move. The Raguet and Logan families proceeded together to Texas where the firm of Logan and Raguet began its mercantile business in Nacogdoches in November, 1833. The partnership continued until Logan's death on April 23, 1836. Raguet continued in the mercantile business in Nacogdoches until his retirement in 1852.

Marcia Raguet and her six children<sup>2</sup> left Nacogdoches about the last of March 1836, as William G. Logan wrote Henry on April 2 from Natchitoches that he would not leave there "until the day after tomorrow or till your family gets off." On May 5 Condy Raguet wrote Henry that his family had arrived safely in Philadelphia. Much later, on November 3, Charles W. Micken wrote from Cincinnati to his friend Henry Raguet that the latter's family was about to leave for Texas. On December 31, 1836 Sam Houston wrote to Henry congratulating him "on the arrival of your family safe at home." Thus for the Raguet family the Runaway Scrape lasted eight or nine months. During the time Marcia was in Philadelphia Henry wrote to her telling of the situation in Nacogdoches. The following letter tells the story of that situation.

Letter No. 6

Nacogdoches April 17th 1836

Yesterday my Love was another day of great Moment here the largest proportion of the American Troops & citizens have considered the Native Mexicans here their enemies in the same light did Mexicans here consider the Troops here, and would you believe it Love that myself who have always been a friend of our Mexican neighbours here and have always advocated their rights and reprimanded those of our countrymen whose conduct towards them was improper should have been reported to them as their enemy while I have done all in my power to give them that justice which is their due. The Mexicans here have been embod[y]ing for several days & incamp in the woods all armed &

*Carolyn Reeves Ericson is Curator of the Old Stone Fort Museum, Nacogdoches.*

mounted till their force yesterday amounted to 200 Horsemen. The negotiations which our committee of five had been in with them yesterday drew to a close and I am happy to say, came to fortunate termination by agreement. The Committee and Capts of the Four Companies of volunteers stationed here for the last few days rode out of Town to meet the Comander of the Mexicans Cordaway & a few of his chief men. They met us a mile & ½ from Town on the Road you went out. When the Capt informed us that his men were stationed a mill off in the wood and were so zealous of us that they were afraid if he marched them into Town that it was to deliver them over to the Americans & that the feelings of some of them might increase of the least misbehaviour of any individual in our ranks bring furious & uncontrollable Consequences. We informed him that unless his men were willing to trust to ours all the officers & committee pledging themselves for the good conduct of our troops that although we were Satisfied of the good Intentions of his Troops that the want of confidence which their refusing to enter Town would lead our men to consider them as enemys. Capt. Cordaway said his men had armed & embodied themselves for the protection of their Property and were at the Command of the Committee and ready to obey their orders in any way we might direct them for the protection of our Property here and to defend the Town against the Indians but that they would not go against their Countrymen that the declaration of Independence was what most of them could not understand but that they would keep a look out & advise us of the aproch of an enemy & Capt Cordaway then agreed as it seemed the only way that would satisfy our Troops and as we expressed to him the only way that his men might be convinced of the friendship of ours that they should march into Town. On coming to this conclusion on this delicate Matter the Capts of our Companys rode into town to prepare their Companys and we of the Committee with Doct Irion<sup>4</sup> (who is acting in the absence of Genl Mason who has gone to Fort Jesup) as comandent of the Municipality rode out to the Camp of the Mexican Troops who received us very friendly. They were formed in two Ranks dismounted all holding their horses ready to mount or riding up to the wright. I was taken by the hand & by the same salutation pased to the extreme left of the front line. All these men were our neighbours, customers & they received me like a friend whom they had thought they had lost, so completely had they been seperated from us. Ever since you left here one of the Ebarboes<sup>5</sup> told Capt. Robless & afterwards told me that Pantalion<sup>6</sup> had informed him that I had taken an order to have him killed & every one of his Family to a child of such a highth (holding his hand two feet from the ground) he told me that when he saw an American he had been runing like a deer & that he never before was so glad in his life as now meeting me & finding how he had been deceived he was a brother of Ebarbo who was arrested & carried to Houstons Camp for Trial & whom I am happy to inform you was aquited & will reach home in a day or two . . .

The Troop immediately mounted & marched into Town the Committee riding at the head Hayden & Carter<sup>7</sup> at the Rear. I forgot to mention then before Hayden has acted as our negotiator. I felt as I rode in with them & presented them to our Troops who were formed on the Square in front of Roberts & Judge Quitmans Natchez Troop of Horse on the side of the Square next to Ruegs that this was a victory for to such extremety had this situation with them come that this trial had to cast the die wether for exterminating war or Peace and any thing so horable as a civil war with our neighbours was to me a cause of much greater anxiety than meeting 10 times our numbers of Soldiers of Santa Anna & I felt proud that to what I consider so happy an issue had come an understanding for which I had laboured so much.

We entered Town by the Street leading past all their Houses & coming to the Square wheeled to the left in front of the Stone House & thence to the left. The Mexican Troop covering two sides of the Square & the Americans the other two sides. After hauling a little while we rode in front of the Lines of the Americans who presented Arms as we

passed. We then seperated from the Troop & they galoped off & formed on the Street by the old Hospital till we gave them their order which was to return to their homes keeping up a few small partys to ride about the Country to prevent pillage of Merauding bands & to keep up a Town patrol.

Immedially afterwards Judge Whitcombs Troop took up the Line of March for the [part torn off here]

Two Red Land Companys ma  
evening & this morning the Nac  
Mounted leaving Leander  
Robert Allen Wright D.

& Capt Hotchkiss<sup>8</sup> While remarking to the Doct the  
Population left in our Town he  
to remember him to you. I reply  
here & hope you will do the Same

Replies had we not been there  
have been a cival war & our Troops would  
have been exterminated. Thank God we have averted [it]  
Mortimore<sup>9</sup> is to remain here for Thorns - -

have moved their goods to the U States. Douglas has done the same, Hoffman also  
Pecks doors are nailed up here he fled on foot the first day of the Alarm on foot Doug-  
lass who had gone on with his family below San Augustine met Peck beyond San Augus-  
tine Bare footed & a Coat of Mud up to his Breast a number fled in the Same way Mc-  
Neil Fled in such a hurry that he took the first horse he got hold of [five or 6 words torn  
out here] a certain Lieut of artillery Fled on foot leaving the Doors of the house he had  
the charge off [of] open There is but one white family residing between the Trinity & Sa-  
bine but we trust they will immedially commence moving back to the Farms. The Comit-  
tee recommend it as far west as the Angalina.

We received an express (litle Johnson) from Genl Houstons camp last evening  
bringing letters of the 13th from the genl three days from Camp. 400 of the Enemy had  
[Here he wrote around a missing corner of the paper] Just crossed the Brasos 50 miles  
below San Fillipe but the Genl wrote us part of the enemy have crossed but they are  
treading the soil upon when they are to be conquered.

[Written in left margin of third page:]

20 Men in number checked the force of the Enemy in crossing the Brasos at Fort  
Bend. The Genl writes me & says salute with great regard your Family & says dont get  
scared at Nacogdoches. Remember Old Hickory claims Naches as "Neutral Territory."

[At right end of cover page:]

The Southern division of the Mexican Army has not been heard off [of] since the  
dreadfull Slaughter of Fanning & his brave band and tis computed that the Enemy lost in  
Killed & wounded in that Battle from 1500 to 2000. This is a Prairie where our men  
consisting of 340 & had no water had it been in the wood. This Spartan Band must have  
anihiliated the whole Mexican Army that attacked them Mr. Love brother of our  
lamented Friend Love<sup>10</sup> was here yesterday he escaped after being taken prisoner with  
Grant<sup>11</sup> & Johnsons<sup>12</sup> partys at Refugio.

[At left end of cover page -- very difficult to decipher]

April 19th Since the writing [of] this letter night of 17th Nothing of Importance has  
arrived here a few Troops pass through here yesterday for the Main Army Genl Mason  
has got back from Fort Jesup<sup>13</sup> when he arrived there with our Communications Genl  
Gains<sup>14</sup> had Not reached there they met crossing to Natchitoches—& he sent an im-  
mediate order for the U S Troops to march to the Sabine he Soon came up & marched

with them they [Here the tear is on the left so slashes indicate the beginnings of each line that remains] are now stationed on the Bank & making rafts / to cross when occasion requests (or requires) it. Genl Gains / has caled on the Gov of Louisiana Mississippi & Tennessee / to send to his assistance immediially. Five Thousand / Malitia to randavous at Thompsons Ferry on the Sabine [Last line illegible].

[Address area:]

Fort Jesup La.

23 April

Mrs. M. A. Raguet  
or Condy Raguet Esq.

Philadelphia

Pa

U S

[Across bottom of cover page:]

Beloved Children how thankfull I feel that you are safe from the dreadful alarms that agitated those who were not so fortunate as to leave so soon. [Sealing wax here] God bless you & often think of your Dear Dear Pa

Your affectionate Husband & Father

HRaguet

[Left margin of first page:]

A few Mexican Citizens showed themselves in Town today & in a few days I hope to see them mostly return when the Town will not have that deathly stillness that now prevades. We shall then at least hear the Fiddles. My Love the Body & Mental Labour that I have gone through the Last week as Chairman of the Committee you cannot judge of from what you have before seen day & night have I toiled for our bleeding Country

[Left margin of second page:]

Nacogdoches seems tonight as Silent as a wilderness the Trumpets which sounded the Mexican charge as we rode in Town yesterday its sounds have died away in the hills the Drums that Sounded from our Ranks are no more heard—the gay banners have been born away by the gallant bands that were [two words illegible] those men from Red River are ordered to depart & have camped out of Town on the March (?) & 9 Horsemen from the U States arrived who——— to night.



Marcia/Mercy Ann (Towers) Raquet



Col. Henry Raquet

## NOTES

1. On December 10, 1835 Raguet was appointed treasurer of the Committee of Vigilance and Safety for Nacogdoches and was later made chairman. On February 9, 1837 he was appointed postmaster of Nacogdoches. He continued to live there until 1873 when he moved to Marshall where he died on December 8, 1877. He was buried at Marshall.

2. The Raguet Family Bible in the archives of the Barker Texas History Center in Austin gives the wife of Henry Raguet as Mercy (Marcia) Ann Towers. *The Handbook of Texas* and various other sources give the wife's maiden name as Marcia Temple.

Eight children were born to this union:

1. Anna, born January 25, 1819 in Newton, Bucks County, Pennsylvania; married April 9, 1840 in Nacogdoches Dr. Robert Anderson Irion; died Nov. 7, 1883 at Overton, but buried in Greenwood Cemetery, Marshall, Texas.

2. Catherine, born Oct. 16, 1820, Steubenville, Ohio; died young.

3. James Condy, born May 17, 1822, Cincinnati, Ohio; married February 12, 1853 by Bennett Blake, Chief Justice, to Frances Ann Simpson at Nacogdoches; died December 5, 1868 near Warsaw, Kentucky. (Drowned in collision of Steamboats *United States and America*.)

4. Henry Wynkoop, born June 29, 1824, Cincinnati, Ohio; married December 18, 1860 Pamela O. Starr; died March 28, 1862 at Battle of Glorieta Pass, New Mexico.

5. Claudius Morton, born January 3, 1827, Cincinnati, Ohio; his first name for his father's uncle, Claudius Paul Raguet, and his second for his maternal grandmother's maiden name. He apparently died young.

6. Augusta Amelia (twin of above), she married February 8, 1858 Leonard Mortimer Thorn, and moved to New York City where she died December 18, 1902.

7. Mary Helen, born December 3, 1829, Cincinnati, Ohio; died December 5, 1868 with her brother James Condy.

8. Charles (no middle name in Bible record, but later seemed to use "M", possibly for Mansfield or McMicken) born September 11, 1832, Cincinnati; married April 24, 1870 Isabel (Belle) Edwards; died November 11, 1903, probably in Marshall.

3. Vicente Cordova

4. Robert Anderson Irion, who later married Anna Raguet

5. Ebarbo—Y'Barbo—one of the descendants of Gil Y'Barbo, the founder of Nacogdoches

6. Bernard Pantalion

7. Haden Edwards, George Carter

8. Archibald Hotchkiss

9. Leonard Mortimer Thorn, who later married Augusta Amelia Raguet

10. John H. and Hugh Love

11. Dr. James M. Grant, appointed Lt. Colonel

12. Francis W. Johnson

13. Fort Jesup, located a few miles northeast of present-day Many, Louisiana, was built in 1823 by the United States Army.

14. Edmund P. Gaines