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A NACOGDOCHES COMPANY IN THE CONFEDERATE ARMY OF NEW MEXICO

by Martin Hardwick Hall

One of the first mounted companies to be raised for Confederate service in Nacogdoches County was that of John F. F. Doherty. From the time of muster through the New Mexico campaign, this unit had three company commanders, the last of whom was a university president.

Captain Doherty, the son of James H. and Mary (Foster) Doherty, was born in Cumberland County, Kentucky, on December 21, 1820. When four years old, Doherty moved with his parents to Illinois, then to Missouri, and next to Tennessee. At twenty-one, Doherty migrated to Texas. He arrived in the Lone Star State on May 9, 1842, and made his home on a farm in Nacogdoches County. While visiting in Tennessee, he married Elizabeth J. Maxwell on October 22, 1844.¹ The Census of 1850 lists Doherty as a farmer residing in Nacogdoches County with his wife and two children. His real estate was valued at \$150. Ten years later the census lists Doherty as a farmer living near Briley, Nacogdoches County, with his wife and six children. His real estate had increased to \$1,200, and his personal property was cited as \$457.² He apparently owned no slaves. Doherty enrolled his company in Nacogdoches, Nacogdoches County, on September 12. The unit was mustered into Confederate service for "the war" at Camp Sibley, near San Antonio, as Company H, 4th Regiment Texas Mounted Volunteers on September 29, 1861.

On October 12, eleven days before the company left Camp Sibley for El Paso, Doherty, because of illness, resigned his commission and returned to his home. Private Benjamin Livingston Rusk, the eldest of seven children born to famed Thomas Jefferson and Mary F. "Polly" (Cleveland) Rusk was subsequently elected captain.³ Rusk was born in Clarksville, Habersham County, Georgia, on February 24, 1828. He arrived in Nacogdoches with his mother and two brothers about December 23, 1835, his father having preceded them that January. The Census of 1850 shows that Rusk was an unmarried farmer residing in the home of his parents near Nacogdoches. His real estate was valued at \$800. On August 25, 1850, he was initiated into Milam Lodge No. 2, A. F. & A. M. in Nacogdoches.⁴ Three years later on April 7, 1853, he married Rachel A. Crain. The Census of 1860 records that Rusk was a farmer living near Nacogdoches with his wife and four children. His real estate was assessed at \$15,000, and his personal property at \$8,500. He was the owner of eight slaves.

Possibly because he proved unpopular with his men, Rusk resigned on February 3, 1862, while in New Mexico, and left for Nacogdoches. William Lee Alexander, who had previously transferred to the Regimental Artillery as a corporal, was elected commanding officer. Alexander, the fourth of the six children of William Julius and E. Catherine (Wilson) Alexander, was born in North Carolina (probably Mecklenburg County) on May 21, 1833. Alexander's family was one of prominence: his grandfather was a graduate of Princeton and his father, after graduating from the University of North Carolina in 1816, became a lawyer and Jacksonian politician. The latter served in the House of Commons from Mecklenburg County from 1826 until 1830 when he became Solicitor. He returned to the House and served as speaker from 1833 to 1835. President James K. Polk appointed him Superintendent of the Branch Mint at Charlotte in March, 1847. Upon leaving this post in July, 1849, he took his family to McDowell County where he engaged in the practice of law. The Census of 1850 shows that nineteen year-old William Lee Alexander was a student residing in the home of his parents.

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Young Alexander enrolled in the University of North Carolina where his father was a trustee from 1827 to 1856. He was awarded the bachelor of arts degree in 1854, the highest of his class. After two years as an engineer with the Blue Ridge Rail Road of South Carolina, Alexander returned to his alma mater to fill the post of tutor of Latin.⁵ In February, 1860, he arrived in Nacogdoches, Texas to accept the post of president of Nacogdoches University (the term began February 10). For one week Alexander resided in a hotel, during which time the census taker reported that he was an unmarried "College President" with personal property valued at \$1,000. He temporarily moved into the home of Dr. James Harper Starr, a trustee, until suitable quarters were ready at the university building. With the outbreak of the war, Alexander resigned the presidency and joined Captain Doherty's company as a private.

As part of General Henry Hopkins Sibley's Army of New Mexico, Company H took part in the battles of Valverde and Glorieta and the skirmish of Peralta. Of the eighty-three men on this roll, two resigned, one deserted, eight were discharged, and two transferred to the Regimental Artillery prior to leaving San Antonio for the West. On the eve of the invasion of New Mexico, one resigned, and two transferred to—while another returned from—the artillery, leaving Company H with sixty-eight effectives. During the campaign five were killed or died of wounds (three at Valverde and two at Glorieta), eight were wounded (six at Valverde and two at Glorieta), and seventeen were taken prisoner, including three who had been wounded. One prisoner was exchanged and two others were sent to Camp Douglas, Illinois. One of the wounded later died of disease, as did one of the prisoners. In addition, one died of disease during and four died after the disastrous campaign. One man who was left behind sick at El Paso was taken prisoner. With the return of the three men from the artillery, Company H arrived in San Antonio with no more than forty-three men fit for duty. After a period of rest and recuperation, Company H was to see extensive action in the Louisiana theatre of operations.

An asterisk (*) indicates a soldier who joined shortly after the first muster roll of September 29, 1861 was drawn up.

John F. F. Doherty, Captain, 41 (resigned because of illness October 12, 1861)

William H. Harris, First Lieutenant, 24 (resigned October 14, 1861)

Francis M. Rainbolt, Second Lieutenant, 26 (treated at Doña Ana Hospital January 5-20; in El Paso Hospital with rubeolae June 6-17, 1862)

Giles B. Crain, Second Lieutenant, 22 (reported sick at El Paso May 31, 1862 by Captain Alexander)

Albert A. Nelson, First Sergeant, 47 (wounded at Glorieta and taken prisoner at Santa Fe Hospital; sick at Fort Union; paroled at Santa Fe Hospital August 19, 1862 and sent to Texas)

John H. McKnight, Second Sergeant, 29 (killed at Glorieta)

William H. Yarborough, Third Sergeant, 24 (detached to General Sibley's escort, n.d.)

Jesse Lee, Fourth Sergeant, 30 (promoted second sergeant March 29, 1862)

William H. Jones, First Corporal, 39

Thomas J. Hill, Second Corporal, 22

William Poe, Third Corporal, 23 (entered El Paso Hospital with rubeolae May 20; died at San Felipe Springs July 11, 1862)

William L. Eddins, Fourth Corporal, 33 (left at Socorro Hospital; at Albuquerque Hospital May 11; paroled May 26 and sent to Mesilla May 29, 1862)

Robert B. Johnson, Bugler, 22 (died at Doña Ana May 13, 1862)

PRIVATES:

- Acrey, Abner, 21 (left at Socorro Hospital; at Albuquerque Hospital May 11; paroled May 26 and sent to Mesilla May 29, 1862)
- Alexander, William Lee, 28 (transferred to Regimental Artillery as corporal; elected captain February 4, 1862)
- Allen, Andrew Bennett, 20 (on extra duty as herder February 6-20; in El Paso Hospital with typhus and scorbutus May 4-June 1, 1862)
- Anderson, James M., 18 (discharged October, 1861)
- Basey, William, 19
- Boone, James R., 24
- Boykin, Henry B., 22
- Boykin, Thomas J., 24
- Brewer, William M., 22 (discharged October, 1861)
- Bruton, Rufus G., 17
- Burns, John R., 38 (transferred to Regimental Artillery as corporal February 4, 1862)
- Casey, Rufus M., 24 (left as attendant at Santa Fe Hospital and taken prisoner; paroled May 24, 1862 and sent to Mesilla)
- Castles, James R., 18 (wounded at Valverde)
- Cessna, Green K. Jr., 23 (left at Socorro Hospital and taken prisoner; paroled at Fort Craig April 23, 1862 and sent to Mesilla)
- Coats, Napoleon B., 23 (wounded at Valverde)
- Coon, Edwin F., 22
- Cooper, James G., 32 (taken prisoner; paroled from Santa Fe Hospital May 24, 1862 and sent to Mesilla)
- Dees, Andrew J., 34 (in El Paso Hospital with rubeolae May 15-23, June 6-21; in El Paso Hospital with diarrhea June 30-July 2, 1862)
- Eddins, Andrew B., 31 (left at Socorro Hospital; at Albuquerque Hospital May 11; paroled May 26 and sent to Mesilla May 29, 1862)
- Finley, Charles R., 30 (elected first lieutenant October 14, 1861; reported sick at El Paso on May 31, 1862 by Captain Alexander)
- Garrett, Charles R., 26 (died of disease at Fort Stockton June 29, 1862)
- Graham, Edward S., 18
- Graham, John G., 24
- Griffith, Alfred, 33
- Hardwick, William L., 25 (wounded at Valverde)
- Henson, William H., 18 (discharged October, 1861)
- Hotchkiss, Atanacio, 18 (deserted October, 1861)
- Johnson, John W., 22 (taken prisoner at Santa Fe and exchanged; entered El Paso Hospital with rubeolae May 22, 1862)
- Jones, Jesse W., 18 (died in Santa Fe April 7, 1862 of wounds received at Glorieta)
- McCustian, William S., 28
- McIntosh, John W., 19 (detailed as teamster November 15-December 31, 1861)
- Millard, John J., 19
- Moore, Henry H., 24 (in El Paso Hospital with rubeolae June 6-11, 1862)
- Moore, Rufus C., 22 (promoted fifth sergeant February 8, 1862)

- Morgan, William H., 18
- Norvell, John E., 18
- Orton, Richard D. "Dick", 20
- Pitts, Thomas T., 28 (wounded at Valverde)
- Raguet, Charles Mansfield, 27 (promoted fifth sergeant n.d.; appointed acting second lieutenant of Regimental Artillery January 8, 1862)
- Rainbolt, Walter S., 22 (in El Paso Hospital with rheumatismus and bronchitis June 6-17, 1862)
- Richardson, Samuel T., — (discharged October, 1861)
- Rogers, Joseph C., 18 (wounded at Glorieta; left at Santa Fe Hospital and taken prisoner; paroled May 24, 1862 and sent to Mesilla)
- Rusk, Benjamin Livingston "Ben", 33 (elected captain October, 1861; resigned February 3, 1862 and immediately left for home)
- Rusk, Cicero, 26
- Russell, Marion, 25 (left at Socorro Hospital; at Albuquerque Hospital May 11; paroled at Santa Fe Hospital August 19, 1862 and sent to Texas)
- Russell, Moses W., 28 (lost an arm at Valverde and left at Socorro Hospital; at Albuquerque Hospital May 11; died of disease at Santa Fe Hospital June 17, 1862)
- Scoggin, James I., 32 (left as attendant at Socorro Hospital; at Albuquerque Hospital May 11; paroled May 26 and sent to Mesilla May 29, 1862)
- Scoggin, Toliver S., 19 (left at Socorro Hospital and died February 27, 1862)
- Scoggin, William J., 35 (promoted fourth sergeant March 29; in El Paso Hospital with rubeolae May 17-26; with diarrhea June 6-22, 1862)
- Sharp, Joseph H., 18 (left at Socorro Hospital; at Albuquerque Hospital May 11; paroled May 26 and sent to Mesilla May 29, 1862)
- Starr, James Franklin, 18 (detached to Regimental Artillery; promoted first sergeant on February 24 and detailed as clerk in Adjutant General's office February 24-May 25, 1862)
- Stone, Samuel H., 23 (discharged October, 1861)
- Stode, James A., 19 (entered El Paso Hospital with rubeolae May 15, 1862)
- Sutphen, David S., 23 (discharged October, 1861)
- Sutphen, George W., 21
- Tindall, Elisha J., 23 (wounded at Valverde and died at Socorro Hospital March 21, 1862)
- Tindall, William, 19 (entered El Paso Hospital with rubeolae and febris typhoides May 24, 1862)
- Wade, Henry H., 18 (discharged October, 1861)
- Walton, J. K. T., 20 (transferred from Company D, 5th Regiment September 10, 1861; killed at Valverde)
- Weatherly, Edward M., 26 (left at Santa Fe Hospital and died of pneumonia August 31 or September 15, 1862)
- Weatherly, Hiel, 23 (left at Santa Fe Hospital and taken prisoner April 15; paroled August 19; received at Gratiot Street Prison, St. Louis December 21, 1862; at Camp Douglas March 21, 1863; exchanged)
- Weaver, James A., 18

- Whitaker, Madison F., 19 (entered El Paso Hospital with rubeolae and ophthalmia May 22; with diarrhea June 6-22, 1862)
- White, Devreaux C., 25 (left at Socorro Hospital; taken prisoner at Albuquerque April 16; sent to Camp Douglas and exchanged at Vicksburg September 22, 1862)
- White, Hardy Nelson, 18 (wounded at Valverde and left at Socorro Hospital; taken prisoner; paroled at Fort Craig April 23, 1862 and sent to Mesilla)
- White, John T., 19 (left at Socorro Hospital; at Albuquerque Hospital May 11; paroled May 26 and sent to Mesilla May 29, 1862)
- Williams, James Thomas, 25 (killed at Valverde)
- Williamson, John, 30 (discharged October, 1861)
- Wisener, Richard P., 17 (admitted El Paso Hospital with typhoides erysipelas June 1 and died July 30, 1862)
- Wisener, William M., 18 (in El Paso Hospital with rubeolae May 22 and left behind; taken prisoner and paroled September 1, 1862)

NOTES

¹*A Memorial and Biographical History of McLennan, Falls, Bell and Coryell Counties, Texas* (Chicago, 1893), 533-34.

²The Census of 1860 erroneously lists Doherty's birthplace as Tennessee, rather than Kentucky.

³In the Confederate Army the men of each company elected their commissioned and non-commissioned officers.

⁴Biographical data courtesy of Mr. W. C. Tipton, former Secretary of Milam Lodge No. 2, A. F. & A. M., Nacogdoches.

⁵Biographical data courtesy of Dr. William S. Powell and Mrs. Carolyn A. Wallace, The University of North Carolina Library.

⁶Biographical data courtesy of Mr. Forrest E. Bradberry, Jr., Palestine, Texas.