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**The Salt River Tigers:
Anderson County
and the Mexican War**

**Searching for
Indigenous
Ancestors**

**Baugh Families
of Logan County,
1817-1880**

The Salt River Tigers: Anderson County and the Mexican War

By John M. Trowbridge

Company C of the Second Regiment, Kentucky Foot Volunteers, which came to be known as the Salt River Tigers, distinguished itself during the Mexican War. The unit was made up of men from Lawrenceburg and Anderson County. The Second Regiment was commanded by Col. William R. McKee. Company C was led into battle by Capt. John H. McBrayer. The below narrative is taken from the Military History of Kentucky, published by the Kentucky Writers Project, Works Progress Administration, in 1939.

The acceptance of Texas into the United States in 1845, was viewed as an intolerable act by Mexico. The crisis led to war the following year. Although the federal government's allotment for Kentucky's portion of the war effort was 2,400 troops, approximately 13,000 Kentuckians answered the call.¹

Kentucky soldiers served in infantry and cavalry regiments, fighting in famous battles at Monterey, Cerro Gordo, and the capture and occupation of Mexico City. Kentuckians saw their heaviest combat at the Battle of Buena Vista, 22-23 February 1847, under command of Gen. Zachary Taylor.

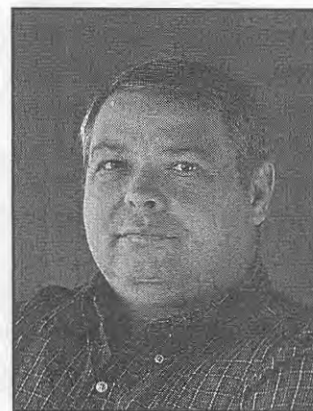
The Second Regiment of Foot, Kentucky Volunteers at the Battle of Buena Vista, Mexico 22-23 February 1847

"At a very critical point of the battle when it became necessary to sustain one of our columns, which was staggering under a charge made by the Mexicans, in overwhelming numbers, General Taylor dispatched Mr. Crittenden to order Colonel McKee, of the 2d Kentucky regiment, to bring his men into immediate action.

John M. Trowbridge, manager of the Kentucky Military History Museum, is an 18-year veteran of the U.S. Army with an associate degree Vincennes University. As a military historian, Trowbridge has chronicled the service of numerous important Kentuckians, from medal of honor winners to civil rights activists.

His monograph *Anna Mac Clarke, A Study in Military Leadership*, about the Kentucky native and Army officer who helped desegregate military posts during World War II, won the Historical Confederation of Kentucky's 1996 Achievement Award and the 1997 American Association for State and Local History's Certificate of Merit. His work also won Historical Confederation of Kentucky awards in 1998, 2003 and 2004. His *History of the Kentucky National Guard* won a Best Documentary Award from the U.S. Department of Defense in 2004.

Trowbridge is the author of *Heroes Unsung: Kentucky's Confederate Medal of Honor and Roll of Honor Recipients*, published in 2003. His work has also appeared in *The Encyclopedia of Kentucky*, *Kentucky Women*, *The Military History of the Bluegrass* and in various Kentucky newspapers. He is a member of Kentucky Military Heritage Commission and Kentucky Women Veterans' Program, Kentucky Department of Veterans' Affairs.

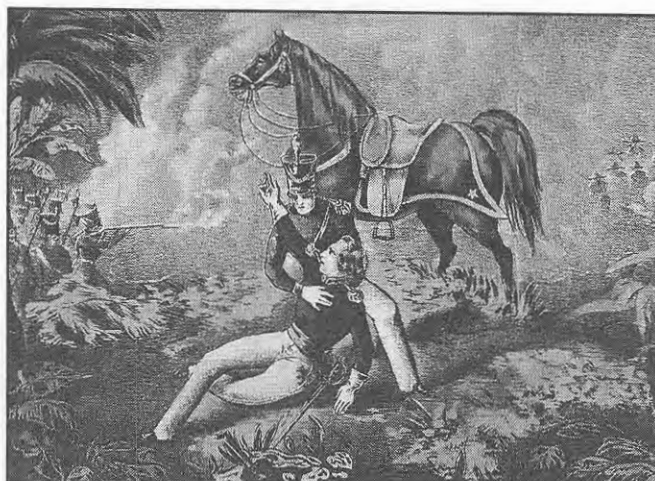


The Salt River Tigers, *continued*

Mr. Crittenden found the regiment, men and officers, eager for the fray, delivered the order and rode back to the general, by whose side it was his duty to keep. The Kentuckians moved forward in gallant style, led by McKee and Clay, both of whom, alas! fell in a subsequent part of the day. It so happened that before reaching a position from which they could deliver an effective fire, the regiment had to cross a valley which was broken up by ravines and masses of stone. Whilst crossing this valley the heads only of the men could be seen from the point which General Taylor and Mr. Crittenden occupied—and these were bobbing up and down and crosswise in such confusion as to impress both with the idea that the regiment had fallen into disorder. The Mexicans were annoying them at the same moment by a fire, which helped to confirm the opinion of the general that the Kentuckians were thrown into dismay.

It was one of these decisive crises, which occur in every contested field, when the issue of the day depended, for the time being, upon the gallantry of a particular corps.

General Taylor, who, as before said, could only see the heads of the troops, and misled by their motions in getting across gullies and going around rocks and other obstructions, into the belief that they were about to falter, turned to Mr. Crittenden, who was a Kentuckian, and with a countenance, indicating deep mortification—for the general was a resident in Kentucky too—and an eye fierce with emotion, exclaimed, *'Mr. Crittenden, this will not do—this is not the way for Kentuckians to behave themselves when called upon to make a good battle—it will not answer, sir:'* and with this he clenched his hands, and knit his brow, and set his teeth hard together. Mr. Crittenden, who was mistaken by the same indications that deceived the general, could scarcely make a reply from very chagrin and shame. In a few moments, however, the Kentuckians had crossed the uneven places, and were seen ascending the slope of the valley, shoulder to shoulder, and with the firm and regular step of veterans of a hundred fields. On they moved until they reached the crest of the hill, where they met the enemy before the flush of a temporary advantage had subsided. Here they delivered their fires with such regularity and deadly aim that the decimated phalanx of Mexico gave way and retreated precipitately. As the Kentuckians emerged from the valley the countenance of the old general, who was



1847 lithograph by Nathaniel Currier/KHS Collection

Lt. Col. Henry Clay Jr., son of Kentucky's celebrated U.S. senator and statesman, was second in command of the Second Regiment, Kentucky Foot (Infantry) when he was killed at the Battle of Buena Vista on 23 February 1847. Clay, an 1828 graduate of Transylvania University, graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1832. Refusing a commission on account of health, Clay returned to Lexington, where he became an attorney and served from 1835 to 1837 in the state legislature before the outbreak of the war. Clay (b. 10 April 1811, Lexington) married Maria Julia Prather on 10 October 1832. They were the parents of Henry III, Anne, Thomas Julian, Matilda, and Martha. Clay was buried with his Tigers comrades on the State Mound of Frankfort Cemetery.

regarding them with the intensest interest, gradually relaxed the bitterness of its expression. A glow of pride supplanted the deep mortification which fixed its muscles, and enthusiasm qualified the fierce glance of his eye. Forward they moved under his riveted gaze, whose feelings became more and more wrought up as they approached the scene of carnage. When they opened their fire the old general could no longer restrain his admiration, but broke forth with a loud huzza, — *'Hurrah for old Kentucky!'* he exclaimed, *talking to himself, and rising in his saddle; 'that's the way to do it; give it to them,'* and the tears of exultation rolled down his cheeks as he said it.

Officially 264 American soldiers were killed at the Battle of Buena Vista, (called the Battle of Angostura in Mexico). Of that number, 74 were Kentuckians, young men who served in the Second Regiment, Kentucky Foot Volunteers, and the First Regiment, Kentucky Cavalry Volunteers. These Kentucky soldiers came from Fayette, Franklin, Jefferson, Jessamine, Montgomery, and Anderson counties.²

The Salt River Tigers, *continued*

Anderson County's Monument to her Mexican War Dead.

In the latter part of 1847, Captain John H. McBrayer and the citizens of Anderson County had a monument built on the grounds of the Anderson County Courthouse in Lawrenceburg to honor those members of the unit that had been wounded, died or were killed during the Mexican War.⁴

Front side (facing Main Street)

This monument
is erected by the
citizens of Anderson County
in honor of the valor and
sacrifice of the volunteers of
this county who served
in the War with Mexico
1846 – 1848

Monument erected circa 1847
Restored 1997

Right side

The Salt River Tigers
of Anderson County
under Capt. John H. McBrayer
Company C, 2nd Regiment
Kentucky Volunteer Infantry

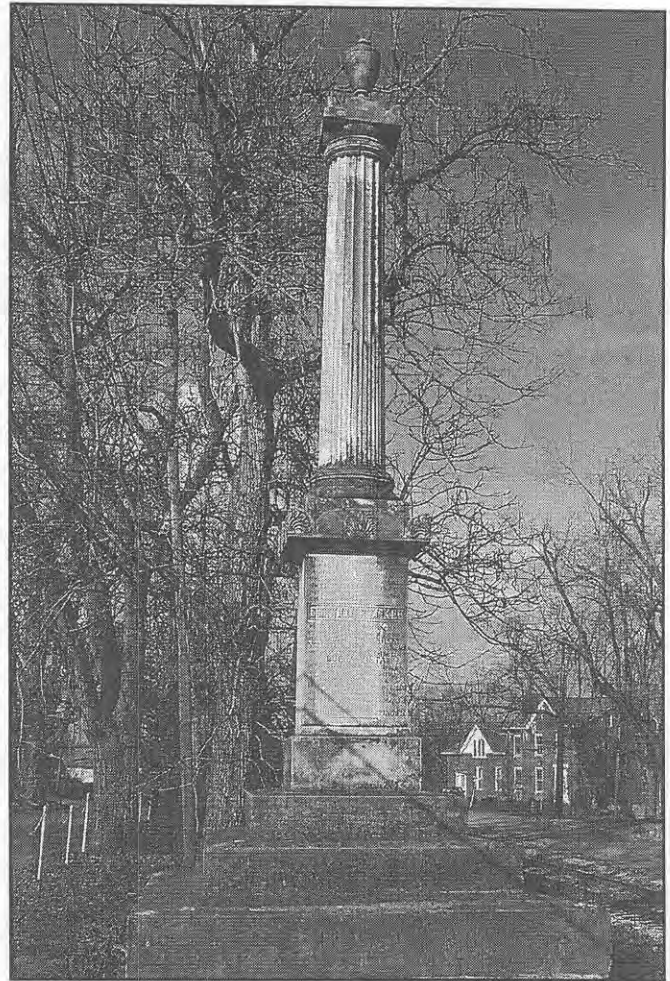
Killed at the
Battle of Buena Vista
Fought on February 22-23, 1847

William Board, David Davis
James Johnson, James Layten
Arthur Thacker, John Watson
William P. Reynolds

Left side

Wounded
William R. Howard, Berry Perry
Joseph Montgomery, George Read
George Searcy, William Warford
William W. Lillard

*The Laurels of Patriotism are
always green. Go, volunteers, to



This monument to Tigers Commanding Officer William Robertson McKee was placed by the citizens of Midway about 1847. Colonel McKee was killed in action at the Battle of Buena Vista and buried with his comrades on the State Mound at Frankfort Cemetery. The words on the monument are attributed to Theodore O'Hara, who was a McKee friend.

any portion of this Union and some
eye will beam with recognition,
some tongue will pronounce your
valor and proclaim you the war
torn soldiers who bravely fought
at the Battle of Buena Vista.

*This text was inscribed on the monument during
the 1997 refurbishment. The original text was as
follows:

They are gone –
Fathers and Mother and Friends
may weep for them and yet be proud
that the terrors of the battlefield neither

The Salt River Tigers, *continued*



sully their honor
nor their patriotism.

Rear side
Died
in the Nation's service

T. Levy Driskill, John Hoffman
Thomas Gudgel, Chesley Hamlet
Peyton Brown, Carter Bryant
Henderson Wise, James Petty
Mark L. Leathers

Departed and lamented patriots
there is something that whispers
that your spirits are in a land
of peace and at rest.

Anderson County was not the only Kentucky county to honor her Mexican War dead with a monument. Located in Battlegrove Cemetery, in Cynthiana, Kentucky, is a monument honoring

KHS Collection

Attorney and journalist Theodore O'Hara (b. 11 February 1820, Danville, Ky., d. 6 June 1867, Guerrytown, Ala.) served as assistant quartermaster of Kentucky volunteers during the Mexican War. His poem *Bivouac of the Dead* was written in honor of the Kentuckians killed at the Battle of Buena Vista, many of whom had been his friends. The second portion of the poem's first stanza was a popular epitaph on soldiers' tombstones and appears at the entry gate to Arlington National Cemetery. It reads: "On Fame's eternal camping-ground; Their silent tents are spread; And Glory guards with solemn round; The bivouac of the dead."

Harrison County's Mexican War soldiers. The Bourbon County Mexican War monument is located in the Paris Cemetery. In 1847, the citizens of Midway, Woodford County, placed a monument near the railroad tracks in downtown Midway, in honor of Colonel William R. McKee, commander of the Second Regiment, who was killed during the Battle of Buena Vista. The Commonwealth established the State War Memorial and burial mound (1847-50) to honor all Kentucky soldiers from all wars. Originally the remains of 29 Kentucky soldiers, casualties of the Mexican War, were returned to Kentucky and buried on the State Mound in the Frankfort Cemetery in 1847.⁵

JOURNAL OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, Commonwealth of Kentucky. Thursday, January 27, 1848⁶

Not all of Kentucky's casualties of the Mexican War were returned to the Commonwealth, many lie in unmarked graves known only to God.

The Salt River Tigers, *continued*

Salt River Tigers Casualty List⁷

Died, other than Killed in Action (KIA) (Listed Chronologically):

<i>Name/Rank:</i>	<i>Date of Death:</i>	<i>Cause:</i>	<i>Burial Location:</i>
Private Peyton Brown	10 August 1846 Camp Belknap, Texas	Unknown	Unknown
Private Thomas L. Driskell	13 August 1846 Camp Belknap, Texas	Unknown	Unknown
Private Mark Leathers	03 September 1846 Hospital, Matamoras, Mexico	Unknown	Unknown
Private John Huffman	28 September 1846 Camp opposite, Camargo, Mexico	Unknown	Unknown
Private Henderson Wise	19 November 1846 Camp opposite, Camargo, Mexico	Unknown	Unknown
Private James P. Petty	02 December 1846 Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Private Thomas Gudgell	04 April 1847 General Hospital, Saltillo, Mexico	Unknown	Unknown
Private Carter Bryant	08 May 1847 Buena Vista, Mexico	Unknown	Unknown

Killed in Action (KIA) (All KIAs sustained by Company C, were related to Battle at Buena Vista, Mexico, 23 February 1847. Burial locations are unknown):

Private William Board (listed as W. Bord, in KMD)	23 February 1847 Buena Vista, Mexico	Private James Layten (should be Layton)	23 February 1847 Buena Vista, Mexico
Private David Davis (listed as D. Davis, in KMD)	23 February 1847 Buena Vista, Mexico	Private William P. Reynolds	23 February 1847 Buena Vista, Mexico
Private Chesley Hamlet ⁸	23 February 1847 Buena Vista, Mexico	Private Arthur Thacker (listed as Thucker, in KMD)	23 February 1847 Buena Vista, Mexico
Private James Johnson (listed as J. Johnston, in KMD)	23 February 1847 Buena Vista, Mexico	Private John W. Watson	23 February 1847 Buena Vista, Mexico

The Salt River Tigers, *continued*

“McKee-Clay Flag” Battle Flag of the Second Regiment of Foot, Kentucky Volunteers

This flag was made by the young ladies of Frankfort and presented to Captain Frank Chambers when his Franklin County Company of Infantry left here June 5, 1846, on the steamer, *Blue Wing*. The presentation was made by Mrs. Eliza Shannon Harlan, mother of Justice John M. Harlan, in behalf of those who made it.

Shortly after the group reached Louisville and was mustered in as Company “B” Second Kentucky Foot Volunteers, Colonel William R. McKee adopted the flag as the Regimental Flag “and ever after it occupied its appropriate place in the centre of the Regiment, borne by Sergeant William F. Gaines of Georgetown.”

The flag was riddled by gun fire at the Battle of Buena Vista, February 23, 1847, when both Colonel McKee and Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Clay Jr., lost their lives and practically every field officer of the Regiment was killed. It was twice recaptured from the enemy at this battle.

At the close of the campaign it was returned to Kentucky and presented to the General Assembly with appropriate ceremonies on January 27, 1848. The principle address was made by General Leslie Combs, member from Fayette County, on behalf of Major C.H. Fry and the surviving men of the Regiment.

The number of stars indicates that this flag was made after July 4, 1818, and before July 4, 1819. Had it been made just prior to the presentation in 1846 it should have had 28 stars (the star for Texas, having not been added until July 4, 1846.)

This flag was restored in the name of the Kentucky Society, Sons of the American Revolution, by Mr. R.C. Ballard Thruston. A reproduction flag was also made by Mr. Thruston.⁹

JOURNAL OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, Commonwealth of Kentucky. Thursday, January 27, 1848

Mr. Wintersmith moved the following resolution, viz:

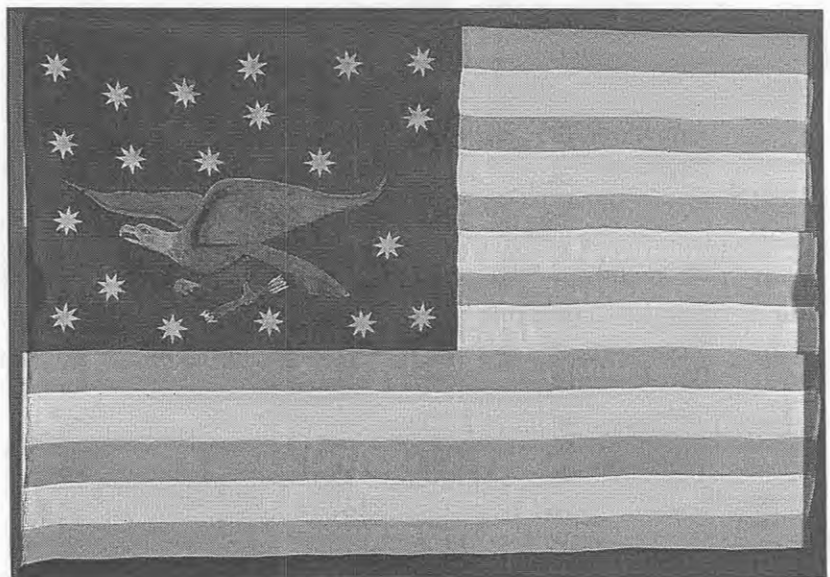
Whereas, it has been communicated to this House, that on this day at 12 o'clock, M., the survivors of the 2nd Regiment of Kentucky Volunteers will present to the General Assembly of Kentucky, the flag of said Regiment, under which they fought and conquered at the memorable action of the 22d and 23d of February, 1847, at Buena Vista. Therefore,

Resolved, That a committee be appointed to wait upon and invite the Senate to participate in the reception of said flag.

Which was adopted.

Whereupon, Messrs. Wintersmith, Pratt and Smith, were appointed to committee in pursuance of said resolution.

The Second Kentucky's colors were made by women of Frankfort and originally presented to one of the regiment's units. Both the original flag—acquired in 1939—and a reproduction (shown) are in the KHS collection



The Salt River Tigers, *continued*

A message was received from the Senate by Mr. J. Speed Smith, announcing that the Senate would, at 12 o'clock, M., accept the invitation by this House in being present at the presentation of the flag of the 2d Regiment of Kentucky Volunteer Infantry.¹⁰

¹*Military History of Kentucky* (Kentucky Writer's Project, Works Progress Administration, 1939), pp. 121-149. Kentucky Adjutant General. Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Kentucky: Mexican War Veterans (TAGKy Report Mexican War Veterans).

² Carleton, James Henry, *The Battle of Buena Vista*, with the operations of the Army, 30th Congress, 1st Session,

Executive Document No. 8: Message from the President of the United States.

TAGKy Report Mexican War Veterans.

³ TAGKy Report Mexican War Veterans.

⁴ McKee, Lewis W., *History of Anderson County*, pp. 82-83.

⁵ Johnson, L. F., *History of the Frankfort Cemetery*.

⁶ A.G. Morgan was reburied in his family plot in the Lexington Cemetery ca. 1852.

⁷ TAGKy Report Mexican War Veterans. Peterson, Clarence S., *Known Military Dead During the Mexican War 1846-48*. Baltimore, MD., 1957. (KMD) This publication lists only those casualties occurring in battle for this unit, it does not list non-battle related casualties. In addition to the misspellings of

Continued on page 50



John Trowbridge

The Salt River Tigers monument is on the lawn of the Anderson County Courthouse in Lawrenceburg. It includes a list of the members who were killed in action during the Battle of Buena Vista or died shortly thereafter.

Abstracts from the *Lexington Intelligencer*, continued

where." In addition, "GUTTER AND HOUSE PIPE [could be] made and put up at the shortest notice." All transactions would be on "terms to suit the times." The store also carried "carpenters tools of every description," "locks of every description," scythes, and knives and forks.

W. K. Higgins & Co. advertised that it had "just received from New Orleans a large stock of GROCERIES," including Rio Coffee, sugar, molasses, SPANISH CIGARS "of various brands," almonds, "raisins," pecans, prunes, "and a variety of articles too tedious to mention." The firm also had for sale "200 BUSHELS of good clean HEMP SEED."

H.L. Bodley, commissioner, published several legal notices in this issue.

First, by decree of the Fayette Circuit Court in the case of Alfred Warner vs. Elisha Allen's devisees, Bodley would be selling a house and lot on Upper Street formerly occupied by the late Elisha Allen. Second, by decree of the Fayette Circuit Court in the case of Thomas Hughes vs. Samuel Peel and others, Bodley would sell on September 10 the house and lot on Water Street "formerly occupied by said Peel, and afterwards by H.W. Hampton, and adjoining the property now occupied by James Reilley." Third, by order of the Fayette Circuit Court in the case of

Samuel Shy vs. William J. Shy's heirs and creditors, Bodley requested all of William Shy's creditors to come forward by September 10 to have their claims adjudicated. Finally, by virtue of a decree of the Fayette Circuit Court in the case of McGregor & Co. and Boswell against J.G. McKinney and others, Bodley announced he would be selling "blooded stock" on September 20 in front of John Brennan's Hotel.

This issue of the *Intelligencer* carried a number of legal announcements from the United States, Kentucky District, Court in Bankruptcy. The following cases were listed, each bearing the names of James R. Sloan, commissioner, and Combs & Shy, attorneys. The five persons "seeking the benefit of the Bankrupt Law" were Louis Richardson of Fayette County; William Sparks, "merchant of Fayette County," whose creditor was John Sidener of Fayette County; Ephraim Hogue; John Liter of Fayette County; and Erasmus Benton of Fayette County. Another half-dozen cases were listed bearing the names of James R. Sloan, commissioner, and Richard Pindell, assignee. The six persons, all of Fayette County, declared bankrupt were Orlando Alden, Sanford B. Vanpelt, John F. Thompson, David Laudeman, John Barton, and Samuel Beach.

The Salt River Tigers, continued

Continued from page 9

names as indicated above, the unit is listed as Company "K", Second Kentucky Volunteers. According to the Kentucky Adjutant General's Report of the Mexican War, there was no Company "K" organized in the Second Regiment of Foot, Kentucky Volunteers.

8 Private Chesley Hamlet is not listed in the AG's Report as a member of the unit, he is listed on the monument in

Lawrenceburg and in KMD.

9 Both the original and reproduction of the battle flag of the Second Regiment, Kentucky Foot Volunteers are currently in the collections of the Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort, Kentucky.

10 JOURNAL OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, Commonwealth of Kentucky. Thursday, January 27, 1848