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The Border Boss: John R. Hughes

by Chuck Parsons

John R. Hughes

Although biographer Jack Martin spent considerable time with Hughes preparing his popular book, *Border Boss*, little is known of Hughes' early life.¹ As Hughes never married, he left no direct descendants, so there is very little in the way of documentation of those early years. The following is essentially based on Texas Ranger reports preserved in the Texas State Archives in Austin, contemporary newspaper articles, and other miscellaneous sources.

Virtually anyone with any interest in Texas history or the history of law enforcement has some awareness of John Reynolds Hughes, a man who started as a Texas Ranger private in the "horseback days" and continued in law enforcement well into the twentieth century. From forking a horse to pursuing a fugitive to revving up an automobile, Hughes was the man who could be depended on to "get his man."

Like many others who achieved fame or notoriety in Texas, Hughes was from a northern state. He was born in Illinois on February 11, 1855, to Thomas and Jane A. (Bond) Hughes, farmers originally from Ohio. Thomas Hughes had relocated in Illinois for unknown reasons. Perhaps it was simply the opportunity to achieve more by moving further west. If so, this was characteristic of many a pioneer family in the 19th century. It was here in Illinois that all five of the Hughes children were born.

In the middle of 1870, Thomas Hughes and his family were in Kansas, the father listed as a "hotel keeper" as well as farmer. He was obviously successful in that double operation as his real estate was valued at \$3,300 and his personal estate totaled \$2,000. Whereas most 19th century women gave their occupation as "House Keeper," Mrs. Hughes gave "Keeping Hotel" as her livelihood. Even more surprising is that she listed \$2,000 as the value of her personal estate.

John Hughes did not leave home at an early age to live with Indians,² as some sources state. On the contrary, when the census enumerator visited the

Hughes home at Mound City, Kansas, in 1870, the entire family unit was together. We do not know who provided the information to the census taker, but listed in the dwelling were the parents and their five children: Emery S., 18 and a printer; younger brothers John, 15; William, 13; Forester, 9; and daughter Nellie, also 9. The four younger children were shown to be "at

home," which certainly suggests that John still considered his parental hearth home. If he did take off to live with the Indians, that was in the future.³ According to Hughes' own recollections, he worked as a teenager for a man named Art Rivers in the Indian Territory, now Oklahoma. Here he became acquainted with members of various tribes and later credited this period as the time he learned how to track fugitives from the law.

Hughes also experienced violence for the first time when his boss and a disgruntled Choctaw fought over a trivial matter. When the Choctaw began to get the upper hand, Hughes entered the fray and almost lost his arm in the process--but he did save Rivers' life. Hughes was right-handed, but he was now forced to teach himself the use of his left hand and arm. He eventually became adept with that hand using either a pistol or a rifle.

How long Hughes remained in the Indian Territory is unknown. By the early 1880s, however, he was ranching in Williamson County, Texas, developing a horse herd which not only was the envy of his neighbors but of horse thieves as well.

Although not far from the state's capital and in a "civilized" portion of the state, his own as well as his neighbors' ranches became the targets of thieves. Hughes lost sixteen head, one being made up of especially prized stallions. He resolved to track down the thieves and recover his property. He also thought of his neighbors and their losses. He struck a deal that if they would look after his ranch during his absence, he would recover their horses as well.

John R. Hughes began the trek on May 4, 1886, some two weeks after the raid. He tracked his quarry for miles, entering into New Mexico Territory. He kept no diary along the way, so it is only through his recollections shared with Jack Martin that we know the results of his efforts.

Somewhere in the New Mexico Territory, Hughes found the Renald Brothers Ranch, a new establishment. He also discovered his prized stallion. Rather than taking on the thieves single-handedly, Hughes took along Sheriff Frank Swofford to make an early call at the ranch.

Hughes and Swofford arrived at the ranch and made the challenge. In the ensuing gun battle, four men were killed and several were captured. One of the thieves, Judd Roberts, was absent from the ranch at the time of the fight. When he discovered what had happened, he declared that he would track down Hughes and kill him.

It certainly wasn't hard to follow Hughes' trail home. He was herding not only his own horses but also those of his neighbors. Roberts failed in his efforts to ambush Hughes, however. In Williamson County, he shot at a man who he thought was Hughes. In reality, it was Texas Ranger Ira Aten! Hughes and Aten then killed Roberts when he refused to surrender.

Ira Aten was so impressed with Hughes that he asked him to join up with the Texas Rangers. By enlisting in the Frontier Battalion, Hughes could track down fugitives and get paid for it at the same time. It didn't take long to make the decision. On August 10, 1887, Hughes signed on, mustered in by Adjutant General W. H. King at Georgetown, Williamson County. He intended to serve for only a few months.

Now in the Frontier Battalion, John Reynolds Hughes would hunt down murderers, smugglers, and sheep, cattle and horse thieves along the Rio Grande, recovering thousands of dollars of property. He would also have to kill in the line of duty on more than one occasion. It was dangerous work, but Hughes rose in the ranks from private to captain—partly due to his superior officers being killed in the line of duty!

During his many years as an officer, Hughes met up with some of the most noted and notorious men of the Southwest. Among these were Pat Garrett, John Selman, James B. "Killing Jim" Miller, Jefferson D. Milton, Catarina Garza, Captain Frank Jones, and Deputy U. S. Marshal George A. Scarborough.

The counties bordering on the Rio Grande represented perhaps the most dangerous sections of the country. Hughes worked in every one of them from El Paso to Brownsville. Remarkably, he was never wounded, never lost a prisoner to a mob, and never allowed one to escape.

Hughes did not always get his man, however. While serving under Captain Frank Jones of Company D, he and Ira Aten were assigned to hunt down train robbers John Barber and Bill Whitley, rumored to be somewhere in Central Texas. Although the pair failed in capturing either one of them, Hughes did gain valuable experience that would serve him in later years. The early monthly returns of Captain Jones record that Private Hughes was

frequently out on scouts that resulted in various arrests or attempts to arrest. Although he hadn't yet accomplished anything spectacular, Hughes was establishing himself as a dependable Ranger. One record shows that on January 10, 1888, Hughes and one other Ranger returned to camp in Duval County after having been out on a scout for 24 days. They had covered 550 miles.

A new crime which gained statewide attention in the 1880s was fence-cutting. The laws relating to fence-cutting were to be enforced throughout Texas, but much of the criminal activity occurred in the northern and central portions of the state. Hughes was assigned to work a case in Navarro County. When Hughes returned to camp on June 18, 1888, he had to admit failure. Captain Jones recorded on the monthly return that Hughes was "unsuccessful in locating fence cutters by the indiscretion of one of the stock men who gave the case away." Hughes had been gone from camp 34 days and had covered 1,000 miles.⁵ The fact that Hughes was acting alone shows the confidence his superior had in him despite his lack of success.

On August 19 of that same year, Hughes was successful in making an arrest. This time, it was a man of considerable notoriety, Catarina Garza. Garza had been educated in San Juan College in Matamoros, Mexico. He had worked as a clerk in Brownsville, Texas, and then traveled for a time as a Singer Sewing Machine Company salesman prior to becoming an officer at the Mexican Consulate in St. Louis, Missouri. In spite of this relatively modest background, Garza achieved recognition when he published an anti-Porfirio Diaz newspaper, *El Libre Pensador* (The Free Thinker), at Eagle Pass. Going one step beyond, he began plotting an overthrow of the Diaz dictatorship. Charges of criminal libel were levied on him.

Although Garza was surrounded by followers and men sympathetic to his cause, Hughes did not consider the man especially dangerous or exceptional. Once again by himself, he approached the revolutionary and demanded his surrender. The arrest was made at Realitos, Duval County, without incident.

Hughes simply reported for the record that the arrest was made. Of course, this incident only increased the reputation of John Hughes.

In a few years, the Garza forces were more powerful. In 1891, Garza invaded Mexico with an army in full revolt against the Mexican government. He was unsuccessful in his efforts and was killed in 1895, becoming a folk hero to many in South Texas.⁶

Now in charge of a scout with four other Rangers, Hughes was in pursuit of fugitives from September 5-20. They arrested Simon Cortez, A. Huerto, R.

Torres, and A. Flores for smuggling; M. Garza and R. Martinez for theft of horses, J. Alvarado for adultery, and Selzo Garza for attempt to kill.

Unfortunately, no details were recorded on how these arrests were made.⁷ Occasionally, companies of the Frontier Battalion joined forces in special situations. In October 1888, members of Companies D and F joined in a roundup. They arrested twenty-four men charged with conspiracy to murder and two others charged with assault to kill. Again, details are lacking in the record. While these arrests were being made, Private Charles Fusselman and one other Ranger were at Roma maintaining peace during the local elections. On October 27, Hughes and Private Marcellus Daniels went up the Rio Grande to investigate a recent stage robbery. On November 4, they returned with no results. Nine days later, Hughes resumed the hunt and was gone until December 11. He had uncovered clues to the robbery, followed the suspect into Central Texas, and made the arrest. The suspect proved to be the wrong man, however, and Hughes had to return to camp after an absence of 25 days and 570 miles on the scout.⁸

Although Hughes had developed an enviable reputation as a man hunter by now, he proved to have considerable detective skills as well. The opportunity to demonstrate those talents came in early 1889 when the bodies of four people were discovered in the waters of the Rio Grande near Eagle Pass, Maverick County. The skulls of the deceased had been crushed with a blunt instrument, and each had been tied with rocks weighing between forty and fifty pounds. The bodies had washed ashore on the American side of the Rio Grande. Ultimately, they were identified as members of one family, formerly of San Saba County: the mother, Mrs. Williamson; her widowed daughter, Mrs. Levonia Homes; her teenaged daughter, Beulah; and her son, Ben Williamson. Dick Duncan was ultimately arrested for the crime. At the trial, Hughes was called as a witness for the state. He testified that while at Camp Wood in Edwards County, on February 6, 1889, Duncan had come to the Ranger camp saying he was acquainted with one of the Company D Rangers, Bass L. Outlaw. Duncan claimed that he was going to Piedras Negras, Mexico, after his sister. He said that he and a family by the name of Jones were going to Eagle Pass. The next day, Duncan was seen riding in a new-looking, twohorse wagon containing three women and a man.

On March 1, Hughes and Ira Aten, now a sergeant, arrested Duncan, his companions, and Duncan's brother Tap on suspicion of smuggling. When the Rangers caught up with the group, they were traveling north and still had the same wagon with them that they had when first visiting Hughes in the Edwards County camp. Now, however, the three women and the young man were not with them. The Rangers suspected that Duncan and his men had

murdered them. Aten advised the outlaws that they were being arrested on suspicion of smuggling, and that anything they said would be used in evidence against them.

The details of how Hughes determined that Duncan was responsible for the murders have not been preserved, but at his trial, R. H. "Dick" Duncan was found guilty of that crime. When the verdict of death by hanging was announced, the defendant appealed. The 1891 Court of Appeal was "not disposed to interfere with the judgment, and therefore in all things affirmed."⁹ Duncan ultimately went to the gallows on September 4, 1891, thanks to the detective work of Rangers Hughes and Aten.

Aten had been responsible for Hughes' joining the Rangers and the two men had worked on many cases together. In May of 1889, however, Hughes was sent alone to Fort Bend County to put a stop to the violent feud between two parties called the "Jaybirds" and the "Woodpeckers." When Sheriff Thomas J. Garvey was assassinated on August 16, Aten was appointed to take his place five days later. Aten served until November 4, 1890, as county sheriff. During the time Aten was there, twenty-three men were arrested on various charges.¹⁰ Hughes was in Fort Bend for a short period and, by May, he was ready for new adventures. The superintendent of the Fronteriza Mines in Coahuila, Mexico, had contacted the adjutant general and requested three tough men to guard ore shipments leaving the mines. Just how the request reached Hughes is not known, but three men of Company D welcomed the challenge. Bass L. Outlaw resigned from the Rangers on May 16, with Hughes and fellow Ranger J. Walter Durbin following his example the next day. All now became mine guards in Mexico.

Hughes, Outlaw, and Durbin performed their duties admirably, and no robberies were committed. Outlaw was one of the toughest men on the Texas border, and Ranger Durbin later said of him, "of all the bad men I have knew [sic] he was one of the worst and most dangerous."¹¹

The three men eventually grew tired of guarding the mines, however, and they rejoined the Ranger company. Outlaw reenlisted on September 1 and Hughes on December 1, 1889. Durbin, however, left for Pearsall, where he eventually married and became sheriff in Frio County.

Although sudden gunfights between lawmen and outlaws have become the norm in the popular mind due to the media treatment of Old West lawmen, they were actually not all that common. Very few men cared to accept a challenge from a Ranger, preferring to surrender and hope to settle matters in court. Not the Odle brothers, however. The pair, William and Alvin, were

charged with murder in Edwards County. Hughes, two Rangers, a deputy sheriff, and several citizens went out in an effort to track them down and arrest them. The Odles refused to surrender and opened fire on the lawmen. They were both killed in the gunfight.¹² This event certainly increased Hughes' reputation as a hard man and one not to tangle with. He had gone up against murderers and emerged victorious, and he solved other murders and many lesser crimes.

But on occasion, a Ranger lost his life to outlaw gunfire. On April 17, 1890, Sergeant Charles H. Fusselman, who had joined the company on May 25, 1888, was killed while trailing horse thieves in the Franklin Mountains near El Paso. His friend Hughes was in El Paso at the time and was responsible for the recovery and burial of Fusselman's remains.¹³ Hughes vowed to avenge his friend's death by either killing or capturing the assassin, Geronimo Parra. The quest was to last for a decade.

Although he didn't forget the hunt for Fusselman's slayer, Hughes continued to enforce the law along the river during the remainder of 1890. The monthly returns show continuous arrests and also scouts looking for fugitives. Some sample entries reflect the variety of a lawman's work in the late nineteenth century:

May 14-17: Hughes and four others, while on scout, arrest A. Bustamente and C. Kell, charged with smuggling.

July 31: Hughes, now promoted to the rank of corporal, is gone from camp hunting smuggled horses.

August 11-22: Corporal Hughes and a deputy marshal search for stolen horses. They fail to locate them, but do find the trail of the murderers of a man named Will Landrum. They follow the trail but lose it after a hard ride.

September 10: Hughes returns to camp after scouting for stolen stock.

November 3-5: Hughes and another Ranger are responsible for keeping the peace during the election at Patterson's Ranch.

November 5: Hughes and one other Ranger are assigned to keep the peace during a U.S. criminal court case tried at Alpine.

November 10: Hughes and three other Rangers are stationed at Alpine to keep peace while new county officials are qualified.

November 25: Hughes arrests John Chambers, charged with bribery and smuggling.

December 13: Hughes and three others arrest Francisco Hernandez, charged with smuggling. They recover stolen horses, a mule, a saddle, and a gun.

December 25: Hughes arrests Juan Flores, charged with horse theft.¹⁴ Few incidents in Hughes' career stand out in the year 1891. His work reflected the continual hunt for thieves, smugglers, or murderers. There were many minor arrests and activities with little excitement. During the year, he arrested J. B. Humphries, charged with assault to murder at Presidio. He also escorted attached witnesses for court appearances and testified in more than one murder case. Some arrests were made of the drunk and disorderly. On April 13, he and Ranger Alonzo Von Oden arrested John Faver and Gamacinda Subia, charged with fornication. The pair were turned over to a deputy of Presidio County. The year ended with the arrests of various smugglers and the recovery of stolen property.¹⁵

On January 12, 1892, a big gun battle resulted in the deaths of three men. The monthly return does not indicate who was with Hughes: it merely states "& det [achment]." Hughes and his men attempted to arrest Matildo Carrasco, Jose Veleta, and Guinlino Chavez, charged with the theft of silver ore. The trio resisted arrest and all were killed. No additional details of this battle have been found.¹⁶

Although sheep were traditionally considered a lowly animal on the western plains, they played an important role. To some, they were worth stealing. On May 27, Hughes and Private James M. Putman arrested Jose Quintana, charged with theft of sheep. He had not acted alone. Three days later, Hughes and Putman scouted to Alimeda and arrested Bacilio Perez and Natividad Rojas, also charged with theft of sheep. The Rangers placed the trio in the Presidio County jail at Marfa.

While scouting in the vicinity of the San Antonio County a month later, Hughes, Putman, and Von Oden came upon Florencio Corasco and two companions on June 20. They had been charged with wearing pistols and disturbing the peace, and Corasco was also wanted on a horse-theft charge. The men resisted and Corasco was killed. His companion, Desedario Duran, was captured and jailed in Marfa. Apparently, the third man managed to escape.¹⁷

In contrast to this violent encounter that resulted in the deaths of two men, on

May 8, Hughes and Putman arrested three men: Jose Saltana, Luz Guerrero, and Clemente Ochea. They were brought in for disturbing public worship at Shafter, Presidio County.¹⁸

On September 18, 1892, Ranger Bass Outlaw was discharged, and Ranger Hughes was promoted to 1st sergeant. The record now reflects a relatively quiet period of Hughes' career for almost a year.

This period ended in 1893. As is true for any law officer working in any time and place, a seemingly easy arrest can explode into violence. On June 29, while Hughes was stationed at Alpine with a small detachment, Captain Frank Jones and five other Rangers went on a scout to Pirate Island near El Paso with writs to arrest Jesus and Serverino Olguin. They were part of a large clan with the reputation of being murderers and thieves. Jones was accompanied by R. E. Bryant; J. Wood Saunders; Ed Aten, younger brother of Ira Aten; T. F. Tucker; and Carl Kirchner. On that day, they rounded up the Olguin house but found it empty. The next day, they met two riders:

who wheeled and ran. . . . Capt. Jones not knowing he was across the line ran them into Tres Jacales Mexico and they entered first house on right [side] of the road. [The] Mexicans opened fire. Capt. Jones halted and dismounted in front of the house and was shot through the leg and fell. He sat up & fired two or three shots and received another shot in the breast and fell back dying instantly.

Tucker, who was within a few feet of Jones, said Jones spoke only enough to say, "Boys I'm shot all to pieces. I am killed. "

Due to increasing fire from the Olguins and their friends, the Rangers had to retreat, leaving the body of their captain. Through the efforts of El Paso County Sheriff Frank B. Simmons and members of the Masonic Order of Juarez, Mexico, however, the body of Captain Jones was recovered. Also, Hughes was able to get back the rifle, spurs, watch, and money.

With the death of Jones, Sergeant John R. Hughes became captain, receiving the promotion on July 4. Special Order Number 105, dated July 4, reads simply:

First Sergeant Jno. R. Hughes, Co D frt Batt, is hereby appointed Captain in Front Batt & placed in command of Co D. He will be obeyed & respected accordingly[.]

By order of the Governor.

W. H. Mabry, Adjutant General.¹⁹

Hughes now vowed to avenge the death of Captain Jones. Ernest St. Leon, a Ranger who infiltrated the Mexican community along the border, eventually determined the names of some twenty men involved in the gang that killed Jones. He provided a "death list" to Hughes and his men. The story persists that between eighteen and twenty-one members of the Olguin family and the Pirate Island gang were eventually killed. Some were shot and some lynched. Although the number of Olguinites killed is open to debate, at least some were killed without trial for being involved in the murder of Captain Jones.

The year 1895 proved to be a sensational one in the wild town of El Paso, one of the last wide open frontier towns in the country. During that year, more hard cases were attracted to the "Sin City" than were present in the combined towns of Dodge City; Abilene, Kansas; Deadwood, Dakota Territory; and Tombstone, Arizona Territory during their wildest days. On the hard-case side were such desperate men as John Wesley Hardin, Martin Mrose, Vic Queen, James B. Miller, and Mannen Clements Jr. Lawmen who found reason to be there included George Scarborough, Jeff D. Milton, John Selman, and George Herold. The biggest event of the wild period was the killing of John Wesley Hardin by Selman in August 1895. Selman himself was killed a year later by Scarborough.

In 1896, the great news among the sporting crowd, which included gamblers and prize-fight aficionados from all over the West, was the scheduled prize fight between Robert Fitzsimmons and Peter Maher. Although boxing was popular, Governor C. A. Culberson resolved to enforce the law prohibiting prize fighting. Only years before, communities had found it difficult to get the help of Rangers to protect them from Indian raids. Now, however, El Paso experienced what was certainly a first in Ranger history: the entire Frontier Battalion descended upon the town to prevent a fight between two men wearing five-ounce gloves! Adjutant General Woodford Haywood Mabry also arrived to carry out the governor's orders.

Mabry, four captains, and at least twenty-seven Rangers all managed to arrange themselves on the steps of the courthouse to have their images preserved for history. Mabry struck a pose that would have made Napoleon envious. Alongside him on the front steps stood Captain Hughes, Captain John A. Brooks, Captain William McDonald, and Captain John H. Rogers. The group all felt the need to have their Winchesters with them.

Although they had all sworn to uphold the law, most were anxious to see the fight—somehow or other. Ultimately, Judge Roy Bean, the so-called "law west

of the Pecos," erected a ring on an island in the middle of the Rio Grande. Most if not all the Rangers and another 500 spectators managed to find a post high enough on the riverbanks to witness at no cost what proved to be a major disappointment. Fitzsimmons won the fight after about 100 seconds of swinging those five ounce gloves.²⁰ Everyone was certainly dissatisfied in the brevity of the fight after such a buildup, but thanks to Judge Bean, all were able to deal with their disappointment in the Jersey Lilly Saloon.

By February 23, Hughes was back in his office in Ysleta. On September 24, 1896, Hughes, Rangers R. E. Bryant and Thalix T. Cook, Brewster County Deputy Sheriff Jim Pool, and two civilians named Coombs and McMaster acted on a tip from former Ranger James B. Gillett and started on a scout to Alpine. They had information that a band of thieves were in the Glass Mountains planning to rob a train of the Galveston Houston & San Antonio Railroad. Hughes later wrote in his return:

We struck their trail in Glass Mountains and trailed them about 80 miles and found them in the Star pasture in the Davis mountains. They would not surrender but fired on us. When we charged on them and returned the fire killing two of them. The third man escaped.²¹

The dead, would be train robbers proved to be brothers Jube and Arthur Frier. Besides destroying the train-robbing gang, the Rangers recovered five stolen horses.

In 1899, New Mexico Sheriff Pat Garrett, the slayer of Billy the Kid, arrested Geronimo Parra, the man who had killed Charles Fusselman years before. Hughes learned of the arrest and wanted to make a deal with Garrett so he could have Parra in custody of Texas authorities. Garrett was agreeable, but before he would surrender Parra, he wanted Hughes to capture a fugitive from his territory. one Pat Agnew. Hughes finally corralled Agnew and the two lawmen traded prisoners. On January 6, 1900, Geronimo Parra was legally hanged for the slaying of Texas Ranger Charles H. Fusselman.²²

In 1914, Zane Grey's novel, *The Lone Star Ranger*, was published and dedicated to John R. Hughes and the Texas Rangers. By this time, Hughes was getting up in years and the Wild West was ebbing away, so he chose to leave the service. His initial enlistment, intended for only a few months, had lasted from August 1887 until his retirement on January 15, 1915. He had spent nearly three decades as a Texas Ranger.

Hughes became a prominent businessman in Austin, becoming chairman of the board of the Citizen's Industrial Bank and then chairman of the Motor and

Industrial Finance Corporation. During his retirement years, he frequently visited his old friend Ira Aten, driving himself by car from Texas to California, where Aten was then living. John R. Hughes had become an institution in Texas, and he rode horseback in many parades and was awarded many honors. On May 21, 1947, the House of Representatives and the Senate of Texas honored him as a special guest of their respective houses.

On May 12, 1938, the state of Texas erected a monument to the memory of Captain Frank Jones. Hughes, now 83, attended. With him were Ed Aten, 68; Ira Aten, 75; and R. E. Bryant, 74. Bryant and Ed Aten were the only two surviving members of the company that engaged in the fight where Captain Frank Jones lost his life.

J. Marvin Hunter, founder of the popular Frontier Times magazine, had the pleasure of meeting Hughes in July 1927. He had "a very delightful conversation with him. He is one of those genial, kindly characters whose magnetic personality at once impresses you and makes you feel that he will be your friend for life."²⁵

All the honors and awards were not enough for Hughes to allow himself to ride quietly into the Texas sunset, however. On June 3, 1947, feeling despondent and in failing health, Hughes took his pearl handled Colt .45 and committed suicide in his Austin home.²³ At the time, he was the oldest living former Texas Ranger captain.

Hughes was buried in the State Cemetery in Austin. He had summed up his life in a few words, which first appeared in the January 1915 issue of a Fort Worth publication, *The Cattleman*:

*I have always been a horse back ranger and have worked in every county on the Rio Grande from El Paso to Brownsville. . . . I have never lost a battle that I was in personally, and never let a prisoner escape. . . . I got my promotion all the way from private to captain by my superior officers being killed by bandits.*²⁴

Additional Reading

Border Boss, Captain John R. Hughes, Texas Ranger, by Jack Martin (reprint State House Press, Austin, Texas, 1990)

A Pair of Texas Rangers: Bill McDonald and John Hughes, by Virgil E. Baugh (Washington: Potomac Corral, *The Westerners*, 1970)

Lone Star Man: Ira Aten, Last of the Old Texas Rangers, by Harold Preece
(New York: Hastings House, 1960)

Texas Ranger Sketches by Robert W. Stephens, (privately printed, Dallas,
Texas, 1972)

The Law Comes to Texas: The Texas Rangers. 1870-1901, by Frederick
Wilkins (Austin: State House Press, 1999)

Of Additional Interest

One can enjoy a great sense of history by visiting the Texas State Archives in Austin at 1201 Brazos Street, directly east of the capital building. Here one can read the original monthly returns of Captains Frank Jones and John R. Hughes as well as many other documents pertaining to the Texas Rangers from the earliest days of the state to the modern period.

From the State Archives building, one can easily visit the State Cemetery and visit the grave of Hughes as well as other Texas heroes. The monument erected to the memory of Frank Jones can be seen at Ysleta, El Paso County. It is on U. S. Highway 80.

Notes

1 Jack Martin. *Border Boss, Captain John R. Hughes, Texas Ranger*. San Antonio: The Naylor Company (1942). Reprint edition by State House Press, Austin, 1990.

2 The Austin Statesman, 4 June 1947 states that Hughes "left home at 14 and lived with the Choctaws and Osage Indians for four years." This lengthy "obituary" also stated he was born in Mound City, Kansas which is demonstrably incorrect. Possibly Hughes left home in the early 1870s and experienced life with Indian tribes.

3 Population Schedule of the Ninth Census of the United States, Linn County, Kansas, June 1870, 64.

4 The Austin Statesman, 4 June 1947.

5 Operations of Front[ier] Battalion and Report of special Rangers From December 1, 1885 To November 30, 1892 (hereafter cited as Operations). Original ledger 401-1084, 98, Texas State Archives.

6 Ibid., 99. Jerry Thompson. *A Wild and Vivid Land: An Illustrated History of the South Texas Border*. Austin: The Texas State Historical Association (1997), 131-33.

7 Operations, 100.

8 Ibid., 102-104.

9 Texas Court of Appeals Reports. Austin Term, 1891, Vol. 30. "Dick Duncan v. The State." 1-41.

10 Operations, 108. For a detailed treatment of the feud, see C. L. Sonnichsen's *I'll Die Before I'll Run: The Story of the Great Feuds of Texas*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951. See chapter "Old Southern Style: The Jaybird-Woodpecker Feud," 186-226.

11 Robert W. Stephens. *Walter Durbin Texas Ranger and Sheriff*. Clarendon, Texas: Clarendon, Texas, 1970. 78.

12 Operations, 110.

13 Ibid., 119. Fusselman was later reburied in the cemetery near the small community of Lagarto in Live Oak County. His grave is well marked although the obelisk stone has been cracked and moderately repaired.

14 Operations, 120-23,

15 Ibid., 126 30.

16 Ibid., 130.

17 Ibid., 132. See also Hughes' Monthly Return of 20 June 1892.

18 Monthly Return of Hughes, 8 July 1892. 19 The details are from the July Monthly Return prepared by Captain Hughes at Ysleta, El Paso County. See also Robert W. Stephens, *Texas Ranger Sketches*, privately printed, 1972, 18. S.O. # 105 is found in Ledger 401 1012, Special Orders A. G. C [Adjutant General Correspondence] Augt 1870 to April 2 1897, 315.

19 The most complete version of the entire episode is Leo N. Miletich's *Dan Stuart's Fistic Carnival*, published by Texas A & M College Station, 1994.

