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## COMPANY C, FRONTIER BATTALION, AT FORT GRIFFIN IN 1878 A PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD

by H. Robert Powell and Gerald R. Powell<sup>1</sup>

In the fall of 1878 Company C of the Frontier Battalion located its headquarters camp in Throckmorton County, six miles north of Fort Griffin, overlooking the valley of the Clear Fork of the Brazos. The commanding officer, Lieutenant George W. Arrington, dubbed it “Camp Loma Vista,” or “hill view.” From this camp on high ground, Company C conducted scouts into the Clear Fork country and beyond, to suppress vigilante activity, cattle and horse theft, and Indian depredations, as well as other law enforcement activity.

Important new information about Company C at Ft. Griffin has come to light from the Richard Bachman Collection at the Texas State Archives. This collection, donated by the Bachman family in 2011, includes papers, ephemera, photographs and other materials<sup>2</sup> concerning a group of Texas families related by marriage: Elmore, Miller, Obenchain, Wall, Rugeley, Bachman, Hawkins and Guinn. Of particular interest are several photos which apparently belonged to John Archer Elmore (1856-1915), who was a private in Company C of the Frontier Battalion, and who was present with Company C at Ft. Griffin in 1878. It is likely that he gave these photographs to family members.

The first picture below shows Lieutenant Arrington and the assembled company in front of the commanders’ tent. While this photo has been published before, it is sometimes erroneously identified as another company<sup>3</sup> and never properly identified being Company C *at Ft. Griffin*. The other photographs in this article have never to our knowledge been published before.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Great-grandsons of John Archer Elmore.

<sup>2</sup> See: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/taro/tslac/90008/tsl-90008.html> (last accessed by the authors on 11/2/2016)

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g.: John L. Davis, *The Texas Rangers: Images and Incidents*, p. 54, (University of Texas Institute of Texan Cultures 1991) (“A Ranger group – perhaps in 1874, maybe Company B.”). The photo has been correctly identified as Company C by Chuck Persons and Frederick Wilkins. See: Chuck Parsons, *Images of America: The Texas Rangers*, p. 57 (Arcadia Publishing 2011) (“The individuals in this photograph have frequently been identified as Capt. Jack Hays and his men, but that is erroneous”); and Frederick Wilkins, *The Law Comes to Texas; The Texas Rangers 1970-1901*, p. 182 (State House Press 1999).

<sup>4</sup> See: Jerry Sinise, *George Washington Arrington: Civil War Spy, Texas Ranger, Sheriff and Rancher*, p. 16 (Jerry Sinise 1979). (Showing the group image in front of Arrington’s tent.



*Photograph courtesy Texas State Archives.*

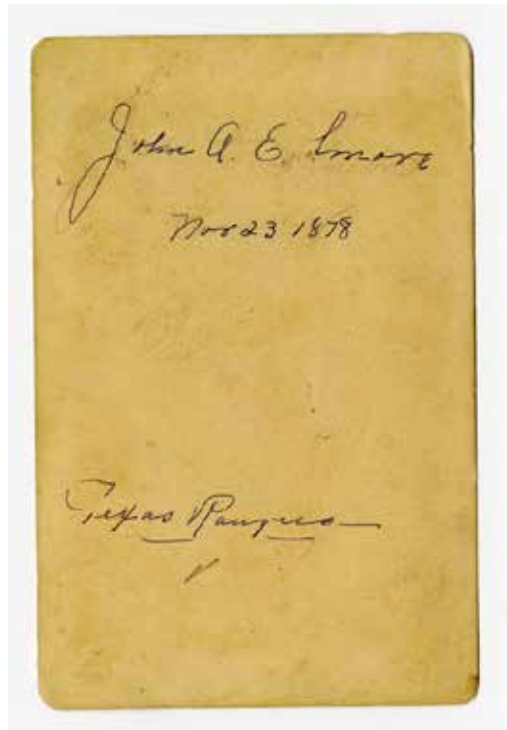
Close examination of the peak of the tent will reveal the letter “C” contained within a five-pointed star.



*Photograph courtesy Texas State Archives.*

This photograph proves not only that the image was of Lt. Arrington and of Company C, but also when it was taken. The image below is of the reverse side and shows the date of the photo, November 23, 1878.

According to Jerry Sinise, *George Washington Arrington: Civil War Spy, Texas Ranger, Sheriff and Rancher*, this is the only known image of G. W. (Cap) Arrington and his company of Texas Ranges.



Photograph courtesy Texas State Archives.

It shows the name of Private Elmore, a member of Company C. As established by the *Monthly Return* of Company C for the month ending on November 30<sup>th</sup> of 1878, on that date the company was encamped at Camp Loma Vista.

Below are enlargements of portions of the photograph showing Lieutenant Arrington on the left and two of the members of the company on the right.



Photograph courtesy Texas State Archives.

The next image is a wider view of the camp and men. Close examination will reveal the men of the company relaxing about the camp, the company's tents, cooking fire, skinning rack, blacksmith forge, wagons, horses and mules.



*Photograph courtesy Texas State Archives.*

In the foregoing picture, Lieutenant Arrington is seated just to the right of the wall tent located at the left of the image, as shown by this enlarged portion of the photograph. He wears the same dark vest and light shirt as in the first photo.



*Photograph courtesy Texas State Archives.*

The next photograph is of six mounted rangers. They appear to be posing in front of a building, with a dog faintly visible behind them. It is not known which of the riders is Elmore, and whether Arrington is also pictured here. The building was presumably in the town below the hill at Fort Griffin, known as "The Flat," and appears to be of two stories. This photograph is likewise labeled on the reverse with the date of November 23, 1878, the name "John A. Elmore," and "Texas Rangers."



*Photograph courtesy Texas State Archives.*

A final image shows Ranger Private John Archer Elmore of Company C. It is not known when and where this image was taken since there is no inscription on the reverse side.

Company C, with the westward advancing frontier, moved its headquarters camp in September, 1979 to Crosby County in the Texas panhandle.

