

ALSBURY, YOUNG PERRY. -- Born in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, in 1814 and came with his parents to Texas in 1823. Mr. Alsbury had seven brothers and three sisters: Horace Arlington, Henry, William Wirt, Hanson, Cenna Galt, \* Charles Granderson, Thomas Jefferson, Marion, Susan and Ann Granderson, four of whom -- Charles, Hanson, Horace and Thomas J.-- came to Texas in 1823 as members of the first colony of Stephen F. Austin.

Mr. Alsbury was a spy in the Cavalry Company of Captain Henry W. Karnes. He helped to destroy Vince's bridge on April 21, 1836, and later in the day participated in the battle of San Jacinto. On May 28, 1838, he was issued Donation Certificate No. 247 for 640 acres of land for having participated in the battle. He received Bounty Certificate No. 3599 for 320 acres of land for having served in the army from March 1 to May 28, 1836. On March 5, 1839, he was issued a headright certificate for one-third of a league of land by the Brazoria County Board.

The following is a copy of a portion of an affidavit made by Mr. Alsbury, April 12, 1860. The original is in the files of the Court of Claims, General Land Office, Austin:

I, Young Perry Alsbury, now a citizen of the County of Bexar and the State of Texas, was on the first day of March A.D. 1836 a citizen of the County of Brazos in the Republic of Texas, at which time he entered the army of the said

\* 8-9-77 Spelling of this name should be Charles Granderson, according to Mrs. Horace Alsbury of 243 Metz, San Antonio, Texas 78223

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Republic, and served in the Spy Company commanded by Captain Henry Karnes, commonly known as Deaf Smith's Spy Company, and was at the battle of San Jacinto; I continued in said company until the 1st day of June following when I was honorably discharged at Victoria, on the Guadalupe River and received an honorable discharge which I have lost. Between the 10th and 20th day of June of the same month and year, I joined Captain Bird Lockhart's Spy Company at Victoria, which place we left about the 1st day of July, 1836, under instructions from General Rusk to take possession of all property belonging to the Republic of Texas, remained in said service until about the first day of October following when I was honorably discharged at Colette by order of Genl. Rusk. In the following terms of service of three months and upwards each, this affiant served and acted both in the capacity of Spy and Interpreter, furnishing his own arms and horse, and subsiding himself and horse ...."

Mr. Alsbury served in the war between the United States and Mexico and was wounded in the battle of Palo Alto.

Mr. Alsbury was married to Mary Rodriguez. Mr. Alsbury died at his home on Salado Creek near San Antonio, November 17, 1877. Mrs. Alsbury died in 1880. A huge pecan tree marks the head of Mr. Alsbury's grave in the front yard of his former home. To the right lies the body of his wife, and to the left is that of his mother. His mother moved

from Brazoria County to Bexar County in 1849. The State of Texas had a monument erected at the graves of Mr. and Mrs. Alsbury in 1936.

Children of Mr. and Mrs. Young Perry Alsbury were (1) Lea Jane, (2) Thomas Jefferson, (3) Young Perry, Jr., and (4) Mary Ann Alsbury.

(1) Lea Jane Alsbury was born in 1849.

(2) Thomas Jefferson Alsbury was born in San Antonio December 8, 1851. He was married to Mary Bertha Edwards. Mr. Alsbury resides at 143 Anderson Street, San Antonio. A son of his, W. M. Alsbury, resides in San Antonio.

(3) Young Perry Alsbury was born in 1855.

(4) Mary Ann Alsbury was born in 1859.

Mrs. Hallie Martin, a descendant of Young Perry Alsbury, subject of this sketch, died in Houston, April 2, 1934. She was survived by her husband, Herbert Martin of Houston; A. A. Alsbury, brother, Los Angeles; Mrs. Fannie Beavers, Houston; and Miss Mary Alsbury, San Antonio.

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San Antonio, January 14, 1858.

Hon. Jesse Grimes:

Dear Sir: In compliance with the promise I made you when at Austin the other day, I shall endeavor to perform a task, to me extremely delicate, if not difficult. Delicate, because of the great diversity of opinion respecting the incident of burning the bridge over Vince's Bayou on the morning of the 21st of April, 1836, the day of the memorable victory of San Jacinto.

Although many years have rolled by since that event, the leading circumstances attending the incident are still fresh in my memory; and if I err in giving its details I feel assured that the error springs from the deficiency of my recollection but not from design.

On the morning of the 21st of April, 1836, Captain Carnes Cavalry Company, commonly called Deaf Smith's Spy Company, were drawn up in line on the edge of General Houston's position. As well as I recollect, we were between thirty and forty strong. The Mexican cavalry, whom we fought the evening before, at that moment were drawn up in line on the south of our position about six hundred yards distant. I think they were from sixty to eighty strong. They seemed to invite us again to combat; but prudence, in my humble opinion, dictated to our leaders a different course than to engage them at that moment. While sitting in

our saddles, John Coker, my left file-leader, made the following remark and the suggestions following:

"Boys, before many hours we will have one of the damndest, bloodiest fights that ever was fought and I believe it would be a good plan to go and burn that bridge so as not only to impede the advance of reinforcements of the enemy, but it will cut off all chance of retreat of either party. The proposition was seconded by the whole company, when Deaf Smith proposed to go and see the General and get his approval to the enterprise. Word for word of what passed between our leaders I am not able to repeat, except that Smith told us Houston asked him: "Can you do it without being cut to pieces by the Mexican cavalry?" Smith said that he replied to Houston: "Give me six men and I will try."

On Smith's return to our little party he stopped about the center, facing us, and in the saddle some questions were asked him, as: "What did the General say?" He made no answer then; but, after surveying us from right to left with an iron-like countenance, he said: "I want six men. I am going to burn the bridge. I want six men who are willing to follow me through, or perish in the attempt." There was silence for several moments, as six of us dropped out of the little line and volunteered to follow our favorite chief. But let me here do justice to the remainder of our companions-

in-arms by saying and believing what I say, that there were scarcely a man of our spy company who would not have volunteered to follow Deaf Smith, had each and all been well-mounted. I will here mention the names of all who joined Deaf Smith in the enterprise; yet, before doing so, beg leave to state that I differ from the opinion of my old friend, "Uncle Jack Coker," as we called him, as to the name of one of the party, but, having the most implicit confidence in "Uncle Jack's" honesty I am willing to risk his statement and give the names as he has set them down: Deaf Smith, Denmore Rives, John Coker, Y. P. Alsbury, Rainwater, John Garner, Lapham, seven in all. We were compelled to pass within gunshot of the extreme left of the Mexican cavalry, who were drawn out, as stated, with their left wing reaching within gunshot of Buffalo Bayou, up which we had to go to reach the bridge, situated some eight or nine miles on the road leading to the Brazos.

It being understood that we would maneuver so as to pass the Mexican horse, if possible, without a fight, the remainder of our company followed slowly, under a soldier's pledge, that, were we attacked by the cavalry, they would come to our assistance. Our main body maneuvered, with the feint of an engagement, so that we passed to the rear unmolested, some distance; when our comrades regained the camp, leaving the enemy to enjoy the belief that we were too

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cowardly to fight.

We moved rapidly, till reaching the mouth of the lane, on the north side of which was situated the double log-house before occupied by Mr. Vince, we filed off to the left so as to avoid an ambushade, should the enemy be concealed within the dwelling. We threw down the fence where it joined Vince's Bayou, over which the bridge was built. One hundred and fifty yards more and we were at the bridge, over which Deaf Smith and myself passed, with the view of reconnoitering, leaving the remainder of our party to "strike fire," and make the necessary preparations for burning the bridge on our return. We had gone about half a mile when we noticed in the sandy soil the track of a carriage wheel. Smith, with a countenance of mixed rage and disappointment, exclaimed: "Santa Anna has made his escape! Here is his carriage track, going back, pulled by mules in a great hurry!" I proposed to him that we should gallop on, about one mile, to a difficult crossing of another bayou where we might get the honor of helping him to cross. He replied: "My orders are to burn the bridge and return as quick as possible." In a few minutes we were at the bridge, where we found our comrades prepared with fire and plenty of dry rails and wood. In a few minutes the bridge was in flames. If I recollect aright, it was built of cedar. Nothing of interest occurred till we reached the first deep, dry hollow, half or three-

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quarters of a mile above our camp, when an incident happened which goes to illustrate strongly the extraordinary sagacity of that masterly man, Deaf Smith. After ordering a halt, he observed: "I will ride up the high ground next to camp far enough to see whether any of the Mexican horsemen are near, so that we may avoid them." Our eyes were bent on our leader, as we suddenly saw him drop down on the mane of his horse and turn toward us. When up to us, the question was asked: "What news?" When, with an eye and a countenance I shall never forget, he said: "The prairie is filled with Mexican horse. I can not see how, or where they got their reinforcements from." Eyeing every man with the eye of a tiger, he asked: "What shall we do?" We told him: "You are our leader and we shall follow you, let your course be forward or back." "My orders are to return to camp; I will do it or die; but," eyeing every one of us with a scrutiny even painful, he said, "If there is one or more of you prefers making your escape, I now give you leave." We loved our leader almost as we did our country and replied to him again: "Lead on, we follow!" A change, I thought, then came over his countenance as I discovered his terrible eye moisten with a tear. He asked: "Are your arms all right?" He then added, "We will go down the dry hollow to where it joins the bayou, and then, in Indian file, run to the level above, which will bring us in about one hundred yards of the enemy's extreme



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left. When discovered by them we will raise the Texan yell and charge at full speed through their lines. They will, no doubt, kill me, my boys, but by God, I will make an opening for the rest of you to pass." Such was the plan understood, and sir, I have heard men say that they could meet such scenes with cool indifference; but, sir, they are braver than I profess to be. Although I must say, and when I say it, do so with candor and truth, that not one of Smith's men but would have preferred the risk of death, rather than an ignominious, disgraceful desertion of the leader we all loved. But to conclude: When fairly on the level which commanded a partial view of both armies, we saw no Mexican cavalry; but knew, from the hearty laugh of our leader, that he had, as he boastingly said, put our fidelity to the test. For my part, I felt well satisfied that I had saved my credit for courage without having the work to do; and doubt not but my companions felt as I did.

I have thus in obedience to your wish and in accordance with my promise given you a plain, candid and continuous narrative of the facts and leading incidents attending the enterprise of burning the bridge; also, the testimony of Mr. John Coker, of Bexar county, authenticating the correctness of my account of the chief incident herein narrated. Mr. Coker is a man who, in the estimation of his acquaintances, is second to none in honesty of purpose, valor and patriotism.

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As what I have repeated to you, concerning this affair, is dictated at least by a clear conscience, if not a clear mind, I feel no reluctance in letting the world see it, if it suits your pleasure. If I have committed an error, or made a blunder in my detail of the chief incident that is believed to have insured the capture of Santa Anna, it will afford me great pleasure to correct either one or the other. Lest the belief just expressed may appear presumptuous I may state that the undersigned was one of the thirteen who followed the distinguished Santa Anna and the remnant of his staff cavalry back to the site of the bridge I had left in flames some three hours before.

Respectfully and truly yours,

Y. P. Alsbury

I, John Coker, of the county of Bexar, State of Texas, have no hesitation in stating, that the material facts in the preceding narrative are correct. Signed this seventeenth day of January, 1858.

John Coker