HAMiLTON PRIOLEAU BEE

FREDERICA ANN MEINERS
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<tr>
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RICE UNIVERSITY

HAMILTON PRIOLEAU BEE

by

FREDERICKA ANN MEINERS

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

Thesis Director's signature:

[Signature]

Houston, Texas
April, 1972
This thesis is a study of Hamilton P. Bee and his role in the American Civil War. Bee was first a Texas brigadier general, in charge of a state militia district, and then a Confederate brigadier general, in command of the Western Sub-District of Texas. His duties included administration, diplomacy, and combat. As commander of the area from San Antonio to the Rio Grande, Bee had to cope with Unionist sentiment, regulation of trade -- especially the control and impressment of cotton -- border unrest, relations with Mexico and France, and Federal invasion of the Rio Grande border and occupation of the coast. He also took part in the Confederate action against Nathaniel Banks's Red River Campaign into Louisiana in 1864 and participated in the battles of Mansfield, Pleasant Hill, and Monett's Ferry.

Bee proved to be a competent administrator and an excellent diplomat, but no combat general. He ran his sub-district and the cotton trade about as well as anyone could have, and through his arrangements with the cotton owners was the only one who arrived at a viable method whereby the government obtained the needed cotton. His extradition agreement with the Mexicans and his dealings with them kept the peace on the border. But he had no
experience in combat, and, when the Union forces invaded Texas at Brownsville, he panicked and ran. His actions in the battles in Louisiana showed him to be courageous and level-headed in the heat of battle, but were still indicative of his inexperience. After Richard Taylor accused him of letting Banks escape and relieved him of duty, Bee could do little to regain public confidence even though he was not at fault. He spent the remainder of the conflict in Texas and at war's end fled to Mexico to escape Unionist wrath. Since Bee was involved in all the major issues of the Trans-Mississippi, a study of his career offers a key to understanding the problems and difficulties in Texas and the failure of the area to live up to its potential to aid the Confederate war effort.
HAMILTON PRIOLEAU BEE (1822-1897)
Promoted to BRIGADIER GENERAL by the Confederate Government on March 4, 1862.
This is dedicated
to
absolutely
no one
PREFACE

To most serious students of the American Civil War, the most insignificant part of the Confederate States of America has been the Trans-Mississippi area. Battles west of the river had little, if any, effect on the outcome of the war, and the region contributed little to the eastern war effort other than a few men. With its sense of self-sufficiency and feeling of independence, the region almost seems not to have been part of the Confederacy at all. Yet the region could have been very important as a source of supply, an exit for cotton and an entrance for vitally needed goods, and a link to a possible foreign ally. Instead the Trans-Mississippi failed to live up to its potential, and to understand the reasons for this failure, two things must be considered -- the situation and thinking in Richmond and the actual conditions existing in the Trans-Mississippi. The former is not hard to find; the latter must be pieced together from many sources. One key to understanding the problems inherent in the region is the military career of Hamilton P. Bee.

Bee was first state and then Confederate brigadier and was involved in almost every major issue that arose in Texas. As a state militia general at the beginning of the war, Bee faced problems with recruitment, supply, and expected invasion. When he was appointed brigadier general in the Confederate Army, his duties included administration, diplomacy, and combat. As commander of the area from San Antonio
to the Rio Grande, Bee had to cope with Unionist sentiment, regulation of trade -- especially the control and impressment of cotton -- border unrest, relations with Mexico and France, and Federal invasion of the Rio Grande border and occupation of the coast. Bee also took part in the Confederate action against Nathaniel Banks's Red River campaign into Louisiana in 1864 and participated in the battles of Mansfield, Pleasant Hill, and Monett's Ferry.

A study of Bee's attempts to solve his problems, the difficulties he met, and his successes and failures offers some answers to the questions of how the cotton trade was regulated, how the government responded to Unionist sentiment, how relations were maintained with Mexico and the French forces in Mexico, and how the Confederates stopped Banks in Louisiana. But the study raises other questions, which are not answered. How widespread was the corruption in the cotton trade? Who was involved? How much success did the Confederacy have in controlling trade and in obtaining what it needed through Mexico? How strong was Unionist, anti-war, and pro-Confederate feeling in Texas? Did the Unionists on the border really have any plans other than mere outlaw raids? What was the state government's part in the cotton trade?

Chapter I begins a basically chronological presentation of Bee's life with his arrival in Texas in 1837 and follows him through his early career to the start of the war in 1860. The next chapter discusses his duties as brigadier general of the Twenty-ninth Brigade of Texas State Troops and his problems and responsibilities as
Confederate brigadier in San Antonio. Chapter III is concerned with Bee's handling of the diplomatic situation and cotton regulations on the border to June 1863, and Chapter IV, with the attempted solution to the cotton problem by impressing the staple. The Federal invasion of the border and Bee's stay on the coast through the winter of 1863-1864 are next discussed, and the Red River campaign and the final year of the war are the subjects of Chapter VI. The study ends with Bee's stay in Mexico from 1865 to 1876 and his last years in Texas.

Sources used in this study include Hamilton Bee's letters in the Archives of the Texas History Center of the University of Texas at Austin, the Texas adjutant general's records and correspondence, governor's letters and executive records, collections of the papers of Barnard Bee, J. Y. Dashiell, Ashbel Smith, Edmund Kirby Smith, and Thomas W. Mechling, and the consular dispatches of the United States consul at Matamoros. The Galveston Tri-Weekly News, Houston Daily Telegraph, San Antonio Herald, and other newspapers were also consulted. Other primary sources include memoirs, reminiscences, and eye-witness accounts, as well as the Official Records. Secondary sources for Texas, the border situation, the cotton business, and the military circumstances are not overwhelming for this period or section, but some very useful monographs have been written and were helpful in pointing the way to information. The story of Texas in the Civil War still remains to be told, and if this thesis is any indication of the kind of work needed to be done, the tale will have to use every kind of source
available and will have to be put together like a jigsaw puzzle, but it is not impossible.

Some people were kind enough to help me in my trials and tribulations with this thesis, and I would like to express my most sincere thanks to them. The staffs at the Archives and Barker Texas History Center of the University of Texas, the Texas State Library, and the Fondren Library at Rice University were most helpful and understanding in my searches for information. Nothing would have been possible without them.

Marian Jordan, Caroline and Joe Reynolds, Tim and Jackie Donovan, Helen and Bob Mason, Grace Anne and Jay Baker, Billie Hamilton, and Nancy Bowen fed me, gave me a place to stay when I needed it, suggested other places to look, and, most of all, listened.

Everyone in the Jefferson Davis Association -- Jim, Lyn, Mary D., and Sylvia -- deserve extra thanks for putting up with me. And I could not have done without the help, especially that of a pecuniary nature, that my relatives gave me.

Special thanks are due to Dr. Sanford Higginbotham and Dr. Gale Stokes for their reading of the manuscript and constructive suggestions.

And finally, thanks to Dr. Frank E. Vandiver, but for what, I'm not exactly sure.
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CHAPTER I

A VERY BUSY BEE

1837 - 1860

In 1837 the Republic of Texas led a precarious existence. She had just fought a war and won her independence, her borders were still in danger from threatening Mexicans and hostile Indians, and much of her territory was untracked wilderness. To Hamilton Prioleau Bee, a young man of fifteen, the new country must have been an exciting place after the settled calm of Charleston.

An old South Carolina family, the Bees had long been prominent in both agriculture and politics. Hamilton's great-grandfather John was a rice planter before the American Revolution. Thomas Bee, Hamilton's grandfather, had been a member of the South Carolina House of Assembly from 1762 to 1775, on the Charleston Council of Safety during the Revolution, and a member of the Constitutional Convention in 1787. He was later appointed a judge of the United States Circuit Court by George Washington. Hamilton's father, Barnard, had studied law and served on the staff of his brother-in-law Governor James Hamilton. A quarrel over the tariff and nullification controversy in 1832 came between the two men, and after he lost much of his wealth advocating nullification, Barnard Bee left his native state.

Although he arrived in Texas too late to join in the fighting in 1836, Bee quickly made a name for himself. Sam
Houston appointed him to accompany Santa Anna to Washington in October 1836 and, on his return, made him Secretary of War. He served as Mirabeau B. Lamar’s Secretary of State and then as minister to the United States until he retired in 1841. Bee remained in Texas until the Republic was annexed and then returned to South Carolina where he died in 1853.  

Barnard had called his wife and elder son to come join him in Texas and start a new home. They came by sea from New Orleans and landed at Galveston not long after a hurricane had almost leveled the city. Hamilton was supposed to return to the United States to complete his education in either New Orleans or Pendleton Academy in South Carolina, but he managed to talk his parents out of that idea. For a while he read law under Judge James Webb, and in 1839 Hamilton obtained a position as sole clerk to the state comptroller, Francis R. Lubbock. The young Bee made friends easily and got to know many of the important men of the state. Lubbock, also a South Carolinian, was to become one of his close friends, as was another prominent Texan, Dr. Ashbel Smith, Surgeon General and later Secretary of State.

Hamilton’s next appointment was secretary to the commission led by Memucan Hunt to establish the Sabine-Red rivers boundary line between Texas and the United States from 1839 to 1841. Employment in this task did not stop him from causing some concern to his parents over such incompatible issues as love and Indians. He wrote his father in 1840 that he had “lost his heart” to a girl and
then went dashing off to take part in the battle of Plum Creek against a band of raiding Comanches. His parents' fears were laid to rest when Hamilton wrote, "You can imagine my mortification upon arriving at the battle ground a few hours after the fight," because he had no horse. Concerning the other matter, "I have entirely recovered, and shall avoid all such atmospheres until I am 25 for fear of another attack proving more fatal." He tried again to do battle in 1842 when he joined a company to help resist a Mexican raid on San Antonio, but once more got there after the trouble was over.

Indians, especially Comanches, continued to plague the Republic with their raids, so in 1843 President Houston sent a treaty commission under John Eldridge to make peace. Hamilton Bee went along to act as secretary and, according to his father, just to kill time. This eight-month, almost hair-raising expedition, complete with capture by a thousand Comanche warriors and rescue by a friendly chief, surely must have satisfied Hamilton's desire for adventure for a while.

In 1845, Bee spent some time in Washington, D. C., as an agent of the Texas Treasury Department and was back in Texas as secretary of the first state Senate in 1845. He resigned that post to take part in the Mexican War as a private in Ben McCulloch's company of cavalry and, after some fears of being left behind, finally fought in a battle. He was in the thick of the fight at Monterrey and wrote his father,

It is a sense of gratification -- for which I
wouldn't exchange anything that I participated in it -- and did my duty -- and you will add escaped -- very well -- but I confess it often occurr'd to me that I was in a position when I had all to lose and nothing to gain -- I had no incentive to do more than my duty -- and now again will be found a private soldier, unless my fireside is invaded -- indeed I am pretty well satisfied with war and have no fancy to hear the can[sic] roar -- but if the war continues and they give me a Commission, I shall willingly go through the fiery trial.

Shortly after the battle of Monterrey, General Zachary Taylor commissioned Mirabeau B. Lamar to recruit a company and take position at Laredo, a small town of about two thousand people on the Texas side of the Rio Grande. Lamar was soon joined by a new First Lieutenant, H. P. Bee. Lamar and Bee brought the territory surrounding Laredo under United States and Texas control and held an election for a county government in July 1847. Two justices of the peace, a constable, and a county commissioner were elected under poll manager Bee's careful eye. Lamar was pleased with his assistant's conduct and recommended him for public service as being "worthy of the highest confidence." Another election, however, did not go so smoothly. The election for the third lieutenancy of the company had three candidates, and no one got a majority on the first ballot, although a man named Paul had a plurality. Bee ordered a new ballot, and when candidate Davis received a majority of the votes, Bee declared him winner. Paul objected. Bee answered that an appeal would be sent on Paul's behalf to the colonel, in accordance with Bee's announcement prior to the election that such action could be taken. He reported that he had held the second election
and declared Davis winner because that course, in the absence of military laws, seemed to him "most equitable and just," and "best calculated to define the choice of the company." Bee was perfectly willing to take responsibility and initiative when rules were lacking and act in the way he thought the situation dictated.

Laredo became Bee's home for the next ten years, and he quickly established himself as a merchant, learned Spanish, and made friends on both sides of the border.

Webb County was created by the Legislature on January 28, 1848, and Bee was chosen as the first county clerk. The next year he was elected to the state House of Representatives and served his district from 1849 to 1858, rising to the Speaker's chair for the sixth session, 1855-1856. He was quite satisfied with himself when he wrote Ashbel Smith in 1850 that he had been "triumphantly elected to the Legislature. . . . I need not say how I have behaved myself since I have been here, as I have been reared in a particular school in Texas Politics and of course, as the 'twig is bent so inclines the Tree' - I am very seldom found voting in a minority."

Politics played a large part in his life in this period, and Bee was fairly prominent in his party. He was present in Austin at the organizational meeting and convention of the Democratic party in 1856 and served on the platform committee. The party endorsed a platform opposing all secret political societies (particularly the Know-Nothings), approving the Kansas-Nebraska Act, and supporting slavery in the territories and equality of the states. Bee
went to Cincinnati that year as delegate to the National Democratic Convention. 20

But politics palled for Bee after he discovered that the Speaker's chair brought with it political enemies and when his tentative feelers found no expression of public sentiment that could support a bid for Congress. He refused the Speakership for a second term. Although he thought he had "an enviable position" in the House, able to pass every measure he wished, and had even made at least one speech, "which is unusual for me," he did not run for election in 1858. 21

Instead Hamilton Bee chose to retire, both from the business world of the merchant and from the active political life. He did keep a hand in politics, attending the Texas Democratic Convention in Galveston in April 1860, but spent most of his time raising cotton and children. 22

That "disease" which he feared in 1840 had proved "fatal" in 1853. Bee met Mildred Tarver, who had recently come to Seguin from Alabama, and married her in 1854. 23 In 1857 he was extolling the benefits of married life and suggesting to his friends that they should get married and not be lonely. 24 By 1860 Hamilton had announced for the fourth time that "Mrs. Bee has another son." Life was certainly not lonely. With property, both real and personal, valued at almost $100,000, Bee had reason to think that life was also good and that he would be settled for some time at Woodstock, his plantation on the San Antonio River in Goliad County. 25
NOTES FOR CHAPTER I


3 According to the Handbook, Barnard Bee left Texas because he was opposed to annexation. The Handbook also says Bee died in 1853; Johnson claims 1855 for the date of his death. Handbook, I, 135; Johnson, Texas and Texans, V, 2087.

4 Francis R. Lubbock, "H. P. Bee," Texas State Historical Association Quarterly, II (July 1898), 55; Johnson, Texas and Texans, V, 2088.

5 B. E. Bee to Ashbel Smith, May 8, 1840, Barnard E. Bee Papers (Archives, Eugene C. Barker Texas History Center, University of Texas at Austin); William R. Hogan, The Texas Republic: A Social and Economic History (Norman, Oklahoma, 1946), 15.

6 H. P. Bee to Smith, August 16, 1840, Hamilton P. Bee Papers (Archives, Eugene C. Barker Texas History Center, University of Texas at Austin), his italics.

7 Lubbock, "Bee," 56.


9 Smith to B. E. Bee, April, 1845, B. E. Bee Papers; Texas Legislature, Members of the Legislature of the State of Texas from 1846 to 1939 (Austin, 1939), 5; Handbook, I, 135.

10 B. E. Bee to Smith, October 25, 1846, B. E. Bee Papers.

11 B. E. Bee to Smith, January 2, 1847, ibid.

12 The command was mustered out of the United States Army in September 1847 and re-enlisted as a Texas militia unit which served until June 1848. A. K. Christian, "Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XXIV (April 1921), 319.

13 John H. Brown, History of Texas from 1685 to 1892 (2 vols., St. Louis, 1893), II, 323; Seb. S. Wilcox, "Laredo
during the Texas Republic," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XLII (October 1938), 103-104.


15 H. P. Bee to Lamar, December 14, 1847, ibid., VI, 142-3.

16 U. S. Bureau of the Census, Seventh Census of the United States, Returns of Schedule No. 1, Free Inhabitants (microfilm, Rice University), 631.

17 Wilcox, "Laredo," 104, 106.

18 Members Texas Legislature, 10, 14, 18, 23, 28. No individual served in all six legislatures of the decade and only two, Jesse Grimes of Grimes County in the Senate and Bee of Webb County in the House, served in five legislatures. Ralph A. Wooster, "Membership in Early Texas Legislatures, 1850-1860," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, LXIX (October 1965), 173.

19 Bee to Smith, January 2, 1850, H. P. Bee Papers. Hereafter "Bee Papers" will refer only to the Hamilton P. Bee Papers unless specifically listed otherwise.

20 Francis R. Lubbock, Six Decades in Texas, or Memoirs of Francis Richard Lubbock, Governor of Texas in Wartime, 1861-1863, ed. by C. W. Raines (Austin, 1900), 199-203.

21 Bee to Smith, March 12, 1858; Bee to Smith, December 12, 1858, Bee Papers.

22 Lubbock, Six Decades, 262.

23 Johnson, Texas and Texans, V, 2089.

24 Bee to Smith, December 29, 1857, Bee Papers.

25 Bee to Smith, December 29, 1857; Bee to Smith, March 12, 1858, ibid; Bee to J. Y. Dashiell, January 31, 1862, Adjutant General Correspondence (Archives, Texas State Library); Lubbock, "Bee," 56. Bee's real property was valued at $30,000 and his personal property at $74,300. He owned 67 slaves. U. S. Bureau of the Census, Eighth Census of the United States, Returns of Schedule No. 1, Free Inhabitants, Schedule No. 2, Slave Inhabitants (microfilm, Rice University).
CHAPTER II

THE HIVE STARTS BUZZING

FEBRUARY 1861 - DECEMBER 1862

PART 1. GOLIAD

On February 1, 1861, the Texas convention voted overwhelmingly in favor of an ordinance of secession. A popular vote on February 23 approved it, and Texas joined the six other states of the lower South in voluntary separation from the Union. The convention was not slow in making changes and organizing the state under new leadership. When Sam Houston refused to take the oath of allegiance to the government at Montgomery, the office of governor was declared vacant, and Lieutenant Governor Edward Clark assumed the position. After a Texan show of force, Major General D. E. Twiggs surrendered the Federal troops in the state to Ben McCulloch, Henry E. McCulloch, and John S. Ford, military representatives of a Committee of Public Safety. Clark immediately issued calls for volunteers to serve both the state and the South. By September ten regiments were in service or almost ready, and the Confederate government had organized the state into a military department under Brigadier General Paul Octave Hébert in place of Earl Van Dorn who had been in charge of the district of Texas since April. Clark had also created militia districts, each commanded by a local brigadier, one of whom was Hamilton P. Bee.
Although he did not take active part in the events leading to secession, Bee must have been a good secession Democrat because Governor Clark appointed him a brigadier general of the Twenty-ninth Brigade of the Texas Militia in early June 1861. Bee was thirty-nine years old in 1861, tall, well proportioned and clean shaven, with wavy hair, thinning but long enough to cover his ears, large light-colored eyes, a straight nose, and thin lips. Although he could have easily obtained one, Bee did not seem to want a more active command in the East at this time. Possibly he did not wish to compete with his only brother Barnard, the professional military man of the family.

Barnard had not come to Texas with his mother and Hamilton, but had stayed in school in South Carolina and later West Point. Little exists to indicate the relations between the two brothers, except a few letters from Hamilton telling his friends how proud he was of Barnard's progress in the Mexican War and how happy the two were when they met accidentally on a troop ship. Barnard did not play an important role in Hamilton's life, and it is to Hamilton's credit that he did not try to capitalize on his brother's name. Barnard died on the field at First Manassas on July 22, Hamilton's birthday, and was one of the South's first heroes. But Hamilton used his brother's name only once, as a means of identifying himself in a letter to the Secretary of War in October 1861.

Brigadier General Hamilton Bee found much to keep him busy as he set about mustering his brigade at Goliad. He reported on July 8 that organization was progressing
rapidly and that, in the absence of any orders to the contrary, he was allowing his troops to muster and train as mounted infantry, in addition to drilling as ordinary infantry. For very practical reasons he suggested to Adjutant General William Byrd that this privilege be extended to those companies which wanted it. It would render the service more attractive and allow the troops to promptly meet an enemy invasion and then fight as infantry or cavalry, whichever the situation dictated. Besides, most of the men were skilled horsemen and unequaled in the use of pistol and rope from a pony's back. This bit of information was not news to the adjutant general, whose recruiting efforts for the Confederacy were plagued by the fact that Texans would much rather ride than walk and much preferred the glamor of the cavalry to the monotony of the infantry. Bee's suggestion was not an idle one, however. His district covered ten counties, and Bee was responsible for the defense of the coast from San Antonio Bay and Matagorda Island to the Nueces County line below Corpus Christi. He needed to move quickly to defend such a large area.

A report of a ship off the coast, supposed to be one of a Federal blockading squadron, resulted in another letter on July 24 from Bee to the adjutant general, this one requesting arms. Like so many other state units, Bee's troopers lacked rifles. Only half of the men had weapons, and Bee was certain that his undefended and sparsely settled stretch of coastline would be the place selected for invasion. With arms he was sure his brigade could keep the enemy from advancing "until the force shall be sufficient to drown them
To procure some of these badly needed arms, Governor Clark sent Bee to the Mexican border at Brownsville in August 1861. Clark instructed him to negotiate for purchase with payment based on state or United States bonds because Texas had no money for this purpose and Clark did not feel authorized to pledge cotton. Bee was to dispose of these United States bonds "at a reasonable discount in the event you can use them in no other way." Clark wanted to get rid of them if possible without material loss. He gave Bee permission to work with George Giddings, agent of the Confederate States government, as long as it was understood that all the arms and ammunition Bee obtained were to belong to Texas. Further instructions Clark thought unnecessary because of Bee's "ability and experience."

Bee succeeded in making contracts with Burchard and Company and Droege, Oetling and Company, but they stipulated, contrary to Clark's hopes, that the United States five-percent bonds would be sent to Europe and disposed of in advance of any arms purchase. Unfortunately, Bee had to suspend these contracts before fulfillment because the Union repudiated its bonds in the South's possession. Clark wrote that he could not endorse the bonds because he had not become governor until after secession and that the only chance was to get Sam Houston to sign them. At the moment, however, the former president and governor was "unavailable." Clark commended Bee for doing a good job and told him to get what he could and come home.

Business contracts were not the only agreements Bee
made on the border. He felt his position on the coast was
of great importance and danger, and the lack of arms for
his men worried him deeply. To procure the weapons, he
came to an informal understanding with Colonel Charles
Livenskiold, who was commanding the state troops at Browns-
ville. Livenskiold agreed to forward the arms from the
purchases to Austin by way of Goliad. Bee meant to retain
what he thought necessary for his troops and settle with the
governor later. What the reaction to this rather high-
handed maneuver would have been can well be imagined, but
there were no arms for sale at the border. After the contracts
were repudiated, the scheme was useless anyway, and Bee
came home empty handed.10

Bee returned from Brownsville convinced of that
city's importance to the Confederacy as an outlet for trade,
of the necessity for making friends of the Mexicans, and of
the imminent possibility of Federal invasion and reoccupation
of Fort Brown. He wrote the Secretary of War on October 12,
1861, to call these points to the government's attention.
Colonel John S. Ford had reported much the same ideas to
General Earl Van Dorn some months before, but nothing had
been done, and Bee wanted to add his own conclusions. In
his opinion, a strong force had to be sent to Brownsville
within two months, or the Rio Grande Valley would be lost.
Since the enemy would hardly land with less than ten thousand
men, the force sent, Bee implied, should be commensurate.
The man in command on the border must be one "who speaks the
Mexican language and understands the people," who is "wise
and watchful," and who "will keep the peace with Mexico and
Two months later Bee used almost those exact words to recommend himself for the job. His inactive position had become unsatisfactory, and he was worried that the "Lincoln government" would get possession of Brownsville and recruit the Mexicans to raid Texas. He applied to the president through his friends in the Texas congressional delegation for command at Brownsville. He felt that knowledge of the language and the people were perhaps a greater asset than a military education but wrote, "I am not much of a military man but was under fire at Monterrey and did not run. . . . I really believe I can do as much as any one to keep the Mexicans friendly, and can soon organize the military knowledge necessary." Nothing was heard for several months from Richmond, and Bee remained in the post of brigadier general, Twenty-ninth Brigade, Texas State Troops.

Francis R. Lubbock, who had been inaugurated governor in November 1861, reappointed Bee brigadier general in January 1862, and Bee found his time well occupied trying to organize and train his brigade. The call for volunteers to serve in the Confederate Army attracted men from the state brigades and meant constant recruiting and disorganization for the state commands. Furthermore, the militia law did not give the brigade commander authority to order training encampments. Bee, not one to let the absence of orders stand in his way, stated to Adjutant General J. Y. Dashiell that he intended to assume what powers he needed. He ordered an encampment for his brigade about the first of March.

Convinced that the enemy would attempt a landing on
the coast of Texas, Bee was careful to explain to Dashiell why his brigade should be exempt from a call for troops for general service. Unless kept intact for training, the brigade could not hope to become efficient enough to keep the enemy in check even if the Texans were better armed. The coastline was weak and exposed as it was; poorly trained troops just enfeebled it all the more. Bee also wanted something less quiet than coast patrol for himself and expressed the wish to Dashiell that "the Governor will give me an active command if in his power to do it."

February brought an opportunity for Bee to underline his opinions, requests, and suggestions. Texans had been expecting an invasion that winter, and, when a Federal ship shelled Aransas Pass and landed men on Mustang Island who burned a couple of houses, the Confederates thought they had one. In the coldest weather of the winter, Bee took the field with four hundred state troops and rushed to the coast. He arrived on February 14 and found nothing. The Federals had withdrawn their raiders and were again stationed off the pass. Bee, rather disappointed at missing another fight, wrote, "I am very cold and only write to say that there have been no invasion or landing, and the panic is over. . . . The country is quiet."

He reported more fully the next day, praising his men highly for their alacrity in responding to the call and applauding the war spirit of the country, "worthy of the old days of the Republic." He thought the alarm had been of great service in demonstrating the reliability of the state troops, but it also uncovered many weaknesses. Again Bee
found himself forced to act when he was unsure of his authority. It was only a small matter of ordering forage and charging it to the state, and characteristically he went ahead and incurred the expense without bothering Austin until the alarm was over. But the lack of clear-cut instructions about conduct in case of invasion worried him, and he requested official orders for these circumstances. "Although I will do what in my opinion is my whole duty in such case if left to my own judgment," he wrote, "yet [I] would prefer being backed up by your department." Finally, the want of arms and ammunition had been even more painfully apparent than usual, and Bee again requested weapons from the governor. Colonel Livenskiold had left fifty stand of arms at Laredo when he made the agreement with Bee, and the brigadier hoped to obtain them. Unfortunately, the weapons seemed to have disappeared in the intervening months.19

Threat of invasion, however, was no help in untangling the confusion and conflicts surrounding troop recruiting, organization, and place of service. On February 26, 1862, Governor Francis Lubbock issued a proclamation in accordance with a requisition from the Confederate War Department calling for fifteen regiments of infantry from Texas. Lubbock stated that a draft would be instituted if the required number of men was not forthcoming.20 The difficulties involved in the completion of this order only started with the fact that it was impossible to know exactly how many regiments were needed to fill the quota. Many troops had left the state without reporting to the adjutant general.21

Bee joined other brigade commanders in writing
Colonel Dashiell of his situation, which was pretty typical of them all. At first he was sure his men would volunteer, but needed to know the number required. His men, however, were cavalry -- evidently the adjutant general had not attempted to force the Twenty-ninth Brigade to be foot soldiers -- and the call was for infantry. Bee asked that his men be selected if cavalry were needed, but he was not enthusiastic about the chances for getting infantry volunteers. A week later he was offering his services in raising a cavalry regiment under the fifteen-regiment call, certain that he would have no trouble because "the war spirit prevails in this part of the state, but all want to go on horseback." 22 Finally Bee requested that his brigade be exempted all together from the draft, both because it had already sent at least six companies to Confederate service and because somebody was needed to protect the coast and take care of the families and stock. 23

Questions of legality further complicated conscription. The Militia Act of 1858, under which the volunteer companies had been organized and incorporated, stated that drafts would "never" be made from these companies. 24 The new act of 1861 attached the volunteer companies to the regiment of state troops within their respective brigades, but it did not amend that section of the 1858 law concerning drafts. 25 When General Order Number 8 stated that "under no circumstances will cavalry be received," Bee asked what the cavalry companies were to do. He thought it was "no fault of theirs that their services are not needed," and felt that they should be exempt from the draft and not
forced to change or dissolve.  

Much of the opposition to the call stemmed from the unwillingness of the men to serve outside Texas. Bee understood this attitude and agreed with his men, but he also saw conscription as a chance to rid the state of some anti-war elements. He thought it in the best interests of the country that a well-drilled and equipped company of Germans be allowed to remain at home, but suggested that a company of "Polanders" in Karnes County, who had furnished no men for war or had any intention of doing so, be remembered in a draft.  

Finally, as if lack of accurate information, legal questions, and opposition to infantry service were not enough, Confederate officers were actively recruiting for the cavalry. Bee found all his exertions paralyzed by the mere presence of these officers because his men naturally preferred to join with their first choice of service than take their chances with the state. The result was predictable; few answered the governor's call.  

In spite of all the headaches caused by the call for troops, March was a good month for Hamilton Bee. He was appointed brigadier general in the Confederate Army as of March 4. He first heard about it from the newspapers, but official word soon arrived. Bee resigned his state commission on April 2, 1862, and went to take over his newly organized command at San Antonio.
PART 2. SAN ANTONIO

Texas and the Trans-Mississippi area went through several organizations and reorganizations as the Confederate government attempted to find a method of controlling all its areas. The Trans-Mississippi had first been divided into several departments, of which Texas, with P. O. Hébert in command, was one. Then it was made into the Trans-Mississippi District of the Western Department in January 1862. Texas was further organized into Eastern and Western Sub-Districts, and Hébert was still in command of the state. It was not until May that the Trans-Mississippi Department was created, with two districts. The Texas District was made up of Texas and part of western Louisiana south of the Red River. The Arkansas District consisted of Missouri, northern Louisiana, and Arkansas. In July T. H. Holmes was in command of the Department and reorganized his territory into three districts: Louisiana, Arkansas and Indian Territory, and Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. In November John B. Magruder succeeded Hébert in command of Texas. The Department received its last commander in March 1863 in the person of Edmund Kirby Smith.31

Bee was assigned under the organization of January 1862 to command the Sub Military District of the Rio Grande, sometimes called the Western Sub-District, and retained that position through subsequent divisions of the Trans-Mississippi Department. His area of responsibility stretched from Victoria and the western edge of Matagorda Bay at Saluria on the east, to Brownsville on the south, up the Rio Grande to Eagle Pass, and then northeast to the area around Fredericks-
burg and Gillespie County, and back to San Antonio. He assumed command on April 24, 1862, making San Antonio his headquarters and calling on his fellow citizens to assist and sustain him in the discharge of his duties. He also stated, "Military discipline will be strictly enforced, and no obstacle allowed to encumber the progress of our country to independence." But obstacles already existed in opposition to the Confederate cause, and it had several origins and took a variety of forms. By the time that Bee took command, replacing H. E. McCulloch, the sub-district was the scene of heightening tensions brought about by an undercurrent of Unionism that was intensified by resistance to conscription. The area between San Antonio and Austin, where many Germans lived, and San Antonio itself had not been greatly in favor of secession, much less a war. The people there expressed their opinions freely. Many left the state, or attempted to do so, when war started. Those who stayed often openly celebrated Union victories by sending up balloons and firing guns, and they were not frightened by the secessionist burning of James P. Newcomb's Unionist paper, the Alamo Express. Some attempted to depreciate Confederate currency by refusing to accept it or by charging twice as much in paper as in specie. And rumor had it that some Germans were organizing and arming themselves to stage an uprising.

Conscription only made things worse. By April 1862 those who wanted to fight had joined Confederate or state troops, and the men left at home had no great desire to serve. Some felt they were needed to protect their families
and produce food and cotton so the country could survive. Some had no intention of serving a country whose principles they did not condone. All just wanted to be left alone. Both southern sympathizers and Unionists actively resisted the conscription officers, even to the extent of waylaying some and beating them up. The Confederates had to enforce conscription with armed parties of men and quickly assumed that resistance to the draft meant a Unionist conspiracy to take over Texas. It appeared to some that troops would be necessary to restore order to the “disaffected” areas, since civil law was ineffectual in stopping talk or action. 

H. E. McCulloch, in San Antonio before Bee, advocated martial law because there seemed to be no other way to reach the men "who were damaging the southern cause," and, if Texas were invaded, it would be necessary to keep these men from doing harm. He said he was prepared to declare martial law, "whenever I see there is a necessity for it," and would unless commanded "emphatically" that it must not be done. He would hesitate to alienate the governor by interfering with the operation of civil laws. Bee, now in McCulloch's place, saw the necessity and took the step.

On April 28, 1862, Brigadier General Hamilton P. Bee, acting on his own initiative and without orders from any superior, declared martial law for San Antonio and Bexar County. He soon extended it to the entire sub-district.

Bee read his proclamation in the Military Plaza in the presence of a number of citizens and a body of soldiers. At the close of the reading, he addressed the members of the army, telling them that he depended on them to carry out the
order and to set an example of their good conduct for the civilians. The provisions were simple. Every white male over the age of sixteen had to register with the provost marshal, all citizens had to take an oath of allegiance to the Confederacy, passports were required to leave the district, and depreciation of Confederate currency or refusal to accept it was a hostile act. His reasons for such a drastic step were that:

Our country requires the services, the cooperation, and the sympathy of all her sons, and while all these are being freely offered, we shall not allow disloyal persons amongst us, who are instigated either by the gold of the enemy, moved by malicious antipathy, or actuated by fanaticism, by suffering them, either by word or deed, to oppose that preparation, or thwart those measures, which are necessary to insure success to our cause.37

First reaction was favorable. Governor Lubbock most definitely did not regard martial law as interference, but wrote that he was delighted and suggested the same thing for Brownsville.38 Bee answered that he was honored by the governor's assurances and that Lubbock's approval and support would "strengthen my determination to do what my best judgment may dictate as necessary for the safety and honor of my Government."39 He reported that he had anticipated Lubbock's suggestion and already declared martial law for Brownsville and that San Antonio was quiet and orderly.

By May 3, according to the San Antonio Herald, martial law was beginning to "feel quite natural and to be productive of much good," and by May 24, it was working "admirably." The editor praised Bee for being firm and determined, a man who did his duty faithfully whether popular or not.40 The measure had opponents, of course, but
not yet among the really influential, and Bee seems to have ignored carpers. Lubbock simply referred any protest to the Secretary of State of the Confederacy because it was a matter appertaining to that department and "cannot be taken cognizance of by the Executive of this State." 41

Fury over martial law really erupted after P. O. Hébert declared it for the whole state on May 30, 1862.42 Feeling against the law was probably heightened by the dislike of many Texans for Hébert personally. They considered him "incompetent," "by no means a fighting man," "a man of no military force or practical genius." His stay in Europe and affectation of continental military styles made him even less attractive to the rough Texans. Red-top boots, a greased rat-tail mustache, fine equipage, and a suit of waiters, combined with an arrogant, arbitrary attitude, did not endear him to the populace who suspected him of cowardice and knew he lacked good, practical common sense. 43

To the military and high civilian officials, however, martial law seemed necessary. Bee's first experience with the unrest involved rumors of a conspiracy of traitors. Lubbock sent Bee a prisoner, J. Witherel, whom the governor accused of having committed treason in Bee's district. The evidence consisted of letters to and from the accused with derogatory comments about the government and its leaders. The letters mentioned a couple of brothers named Ferguson from Fayette County, and Bee asked Lubbock to have them arrested and interrogated about a conspiracy. The governor thought arrest unnecessary, but had the Fergusons watched, "hoping new developments may be made." Since the evidence
against Witherel was only sufficient to convict him of being a bad citizen, Bee released him and had him watched also. Nothing happened; there had been no plot. This seemingly insignificant episode showed Bee in a not unfavorable light. He was not interested in a witch hunt to persecute the innocent, or in trying someone on flimsy evidence. But he was anxious to uncover and put an end to any treasonable activity.

Other happenings were not so inconsequential. The area around Fredericksburg and the hill country counties to the northwest of San Antonio contained large numbers of Germans and others not especially friendly to the Confederate cause. There were many reports of bands organized and armed to resist conscription, destroy property, and leave the country. At the end of May Bee sent a detachment of Partisan Rangers under Captain James Duff to Fredericksburg to proclaim and enforce martial law, restore order, end draft resistance, and obtain information on Unionist activity.

James Duff was, perhaps, the wrong man to send on such a mission. He was a Scotsman who had joined the United States Army and been later discharged under "disagreeable circumstances." In 1860 he was a merchant in San Antonio and was one of five incorporaters of the Texas Powder Company. In February 1862 he was appointed brigadier general of the Thirtieth Brigade of state troops and soon received a captain's commission in the Confederate Army. He was described as a strong secessionist with little understanding of Unionist views, an adventurer, a soulless soldier of fortune, and incapable of discipline of himself or others.
One of the men who served under him said he "resembled a bullfrog on foot, and on horseback Sancho Panza," but a foreign visitor to the Confederacy referred to Duff as "a fine-looking, handsome Scotchman." 46

In command in the hill country, Duff showed himself to have an element in his character that was ugly and cruel. He abused the power he had as provost marshal and employed unjustifiable tactics of arrest, incarceration, shooting, and hanging of the pro-Union Germans and destruction of their homes and crops. All the evidence he had in some cases was just unsubstantiated rumor, and often not even that. 47

Duff and his men returned to San Antonio from the hill country on June 21, 1862, but went to Fredericksburg again in July. A band of traitors and their families had been reported as having armed themselves and as preparing to leave the state. Bee had established and published regulations for provost marshals by this time, 48 but many Germans did not trust Duff after his previous actions. They did arm themselves and make a run for the border. Over sixty Unionists started for Mexico, apparently hoping to cross the river at Del Rio. Duff sent a detachment of one hundred men under Lieutenant C. D. McRae in pursuit. The soldiers caught up with the Germans at a bend in the Nueces River. Several Uninnists escaped, but of the remainder, about fifty, there were no survivors. McRae reported that the Germans offered a determined resistance, fighting "with desperation and asking no quarter whatever," and that no prisoners were taken. 49 Two other eye-witnesses, one a
Confederate and the other a German, stated that all who fell into the soldiers' hands were killed in cold blood after the fighting had stopped.  

To assess Bee's part in this episode is difficult. He was Duff's commanding officer, he must have known of Duff's actions and persecutions of suspected Union sympathizers, and his silence seems to indicate his consent to these methods. There is no evidence that he ordered a stop to them. Bee believed deeply in the Confederacy. He had a strict sense of duty and responsibility, and, due to his father's influence and belief in states rights, probably felt little loyalty to the Union after secession. His section and state were more important. His duties as commander of the sub-district included the keeping of order and the execution of the laws of the Confederacy. Although it does not excuse him in any way, it is possible that, under these circumstances, he might have had some difficulty in understanding how or why these people were "disaffected." From his point of view they were trying to evade their responsibilities and were letting their "country" down. They were traitors. Faced with the problem of reconciling duty with conscience and order with liberty, and under pressure from a war and from the prevailing attitudes of those in power, Bee could only see Unionist activity as "more proof of the necessity of military authorities being clothed with more than ordinary powers to enable them to discharge their duties to the government and the people."  

In July the San Antonio Herald praised him for what he had done about the disloyalty among citizens. And
summary "justice" continued to be handed out. According to one report, "when one [bushwhacker or traitor] chances to fall into the hands of the C. S. soldiers he is dealt pretty roughly with and generally makes his last speech with a rope around his neck. Hanging is getting to be as common as hunting."53

On the other hand, Bee was most interested in seeing that those arrested by Duff and the other provost marshals obtained a fair trial. Hebert established a military commission in San Antonio to hear cases arising under martial law. It was in session from July 2 to October 10, 1862, and ruled on at least fifteen cases. Guilty verdicts and sentences had to be approved by Bee, and he moderated some decisions after reviewing the evidence.54

To other authorities besides Bee, martial law was the easiest way to deal with all the disorder and unrest inherent in the unsettled conditions of war. They found the regulations useful to curb the activities not only of traitors, but also of those who just wanted to make a quick dollar, no matter at whose expense. Authorities were quick to put the rules into effect. Passports were used to regulate traveling around the state, and certificates of ownership were required to cross stock into Mexico. Anyone who refused to accept Confederate currency at par was not allowed to engage in any kind of business. But in spite of the regulations, food prices rose so that the Herald was complaining in September, and by December one dollar in specie was worth six in paper. And Governor Lubbock's attempt to save the health and morals of the people and
conserve grain by prohibiting the manufacture and sale of liquor failed miserably among the hard-drinking Texans. Martial law and its advocates were coming under greater attack by autumn. Williamson S. Oldham heard the protest in the Confederate Senate, and the editor of the San Antonio Herald, who had praised the measure at first, now wrote that it no longer worked or was necessary. The traitors had gone, drunkenness was worse than before Lubbock's proclamation, and robberies were more frequent. But it was not the opposition within the state that brought about the end of martial law. It was the order of the President and the Secretary of War. On September 12, 1862, General Hébert was notified that:

Your proclamation extending martial law over the State of Texas has been laid before the President, and is disapproved by him as an unwarrantable assumption of authority and as containing abuses against even a proper administration of martial law. . . . Your proclamation is annulled.

Hébert attempted to defend his actions by explaining the position of the state with the problem of disaffected citizens, the impossibility of preventing traitors or draft resisters from escaping, and the difficult defense of a long coast and frontier line. He claimed that no civil rights of persons arrested had been violated and no interference with the administration of civil law had occurred. Martial law was such "an absolute military necessity" that the "best citizens" had requested it, the governor had consented, and Bee had proclaimed it even before department headquarters had. Hébert, Lubbock, and Bee concurred that it was now more necessary than ever. But neither this plea nor one
from Lubbock succeeded, and although the governor thought of a scheme to get around the order, martial law remained a dead issue. 58

Brigadier Bee had other duties besides trying to keep order in his sub-district. There was always the declared enemy, and they were much in evidence off the coast. In 1862 the blockade in force came to Texas with its long coastline, shallow bays, and sand-bar islands. Defense was difficult and depended almost entirely on the initiative of whatever officer commanded the Department. There were many problems: too few troops spread over vast areas, lack of arms and ammunition, shortage of labor for building fortifications, and essential indefensibility of the flat coastal plain. 59

Attempts were made at constructing earthwork fortifications, and Fort Esperanza was built at Saluria on the entrance to Matagorda Bay in early 1862, but the United States Navy continued to raid the coast for water and provisions and to disrupt Confederate water transportation with impunity. 60 The situation was so grave that Bee, if Hébert consented, planned to dismantle all fortifications on the coast except Fort Brown and remove all material to the interior. He was not going to attempt to defend the coast, but seek to draw the enemy into the interior "far enough to destroy him when the Texas boys break loose on them [sic]." 61

In accordance with Bee's suggestion, Lubbock ordered all inhabitants of the islands from Saluria to the Rio Grande to evacuate with their families, Negroes, and all other property. The militia was authorized to use force if
necessary, but with discretion.\(^{62}\)

In July the Union navy took the pass at Aransas without any resistance and put a ship in Aransas Bay. Benjamin F. Neal, commanding on the coast, had no guns able to stand up to the gunboats and reported that the Federals had been able to land men easily. Bee ordered A. M. Hobby to take over at Corpus Christi as panic spread from that city to Matagorda. Hobby reported that the enemy had "great impudence," but he could not do much to stop them.\(^{63}\)

A day-long engagement between the blockading fleet and the shore batteries at Corpus Christi on August 16 and an attempt at a landing two days later, driven back to the boats by Hobby's men, sent Bee himself to the coast. When he arrived on August 20, things were quiet, and the fleet was again lying at its anchorage near the shell bank. Bee praised Hobby, his men, and the citizens of Corpus Christi, and immediately requested more guns and ammunition. He expected the enemy to return after a delay of a few days and was confident of the ability of his troops to repulse any attacks, even without the needed arms. Anxious for some action, Bee declared that he would not leave Corpus Christi, "as it is the post of danger as well as honor," without word from Hébert that he was needed in San Antonio. But there was no more excitement for a while, and the disappointed general had to return to his headquarters.\(^{64}\)

Throughout the fall the Union navy continued to harass the coast, but there were no engagements serious enough to bring Bee out of San Antonio. The only other major attempt to land came in October at Lavaca, and it was beaten off.
Fort Esperanza, Matagorda Island, and Indianola were abandoned, and Federal ships and foragers had free run of practically all of the Matagorda Bay area. The fall of Galveston set off frenzied attempts at the mouths of the rivers to put up obstacles to invasion, but the coast settled down as time passed and no invasion came. 65

Unionist activity and Federal landings were simple things, however, straightforward and easily understandable. That could not be said about the maze of personalities and regulations revolving around the cornerstone of the Confederate economy, King Cotton. Because of the demand for it on the world market, cotton was literally as good as gold for the Confederacy. Countries and merchants were more than willing to accept it as the medium of exchange for goods and services. The government at Richmond, however, hoped to use it in another way. By denying the product to the textile mills abroad, cotton became a weapon to force Britain and France to interfere in the war or grant recognition to the Confederate States. 66 To that end, in May 1861 trade was prohibited with the United States, and an embargo was placed on the exportation of cotton and other produce except through southern seaports. That would certainly force Britain to break the blockade, southern leaders thought. The exception to this rule of no trade across land frontiers was Mexico and the Rio Grande, and by the middle of 1862, Brownsville and Matamoros had all the appearances of the California gold rush of 1849. The whole area went through los Algodones, the cotton boom. 67

Entrepreneurs, speculators, agents, and brokers
flocked to the border area, and cotton began to move to the river towns -- Brownsville, Rio Grande City, Laredo, and Eagle Pass. Cotton that was bought for five to ten cents a pound in the interior could be sold for twice, three times, four times as much and more on the world market. The competition for the raw material was keen with private speculators, Confederate contractors, and state agents all after a limited total amount. The government quickly found itself if not in a losing position, certainly not in a winning one.

A Texas editor remarked in 1864, "The greatest mistake that has been made in our policy was the failure of the government from the beginning to acquire the control of the entire cotton crop in the Southern States."68 The cotton trade was in private hands, much of the amount exported ended up in Yankee mills, and too many non-essentials were being imported, instead of the materials of war the governments, both state and Confederate, needed. Attempts were made at regulation, but the cure at times was worse than the disease.

In May 1862 P. O. Hébert ordered prohibition of cotton exportation except according to such rules and regulations as the military authorities directed.69 He did not specify what the rules and regulations were to be, but left it up to the sub-district commanders. In San Antonio, Bee was at a loss to know the best way of carrying out this order when he did not know the direct object behind it. If the order was to control transportation for cotton, that was one thing. But if it were to control cotton, other
regulations must be formulated, and guidelines set up concerning categories of ownership. Although he did not feel satisfied with his actions, he published Hébert's order and stated that permits would be required to cross cotton over the border.

Bee immediately ran into trouble. He had declared that permits would be issued to those with contracts with the state or Confederate government and to those who would trade cotton for "articles of necessity for our government or people." None would be given to those who were "notoriously disloyal" or were trying to remove themselves and their property from the country. The difficulty came when Bee found himself inundated by all sorts of promises and assurances, "even by those whom I have reason to doubt." People were making pledges concerning future imports, claiming expenditures of large purchase sums for cotton, which, of course, benefited the country generally, and declaring large amounts of property and interests in Texas. Trying to decide who was entitled to permits had become an almost impossible job.

Bee's course of action must have been acceptable to Hébert, because the commander of the Department of Texas made no suggestions or alterations to any of his orders. Bee wanted an export tax on cotton as a controlling measure and as a source of badly needed revenue, particularly for his command. In June, Colonel P. N. Luckett at Brownsville ordered a special levy of five dollars a bale in specie, promising repayment in the future with Confederate currency. This was probably done at Bee's order, but the tax was
repealed on state cotton at the request of the Texas Military Board. The United States consul at Matamoros reported the rebel officers at Fort Brown seizing all cotton in exchange for Confederate paper at par, sending the bales across the river, and selling them for cash to buy provisions. The Confederates felt they had been forced to this action because it was the only way to obtain supplies. Matamoros merchants would not receive a Confederate note at any price, but would always accept cotton in exchange for goods or specie. 71

By October, more regulations had made the cotton trade a very complex business. Bee required a certificate of origin for the cotton, a declaration of type of purchase to be made with it, and a bond to prove no intent of speculation. On the fourteenth, Theophilus H. Holmes, now commanding the Trans-Mississippi Department, got into the act. 72

He wrote an order prohibiting exportation of cotton by anyone other than authorized agents of the Confederate government. Hébert repeated this announcement in November, and Bee again set up his regulations which he had just revoked in October. 73 In addition to the export controls, there were also rules governing transportation of cotton to the border. Teamsters hauling authorized government cotton were exempted from military service, but the ineffectual administration of this provision made violation easy, and there were many draft dodgers and exempted teamsters illegally carrying private cotton. The multitude of orders and regulations, all acting at cross purposes, coming from
Richmond, Little Rock, the Texas Military Board, and the District of Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona, only increased chances for confusion, corruption, and a little personal gain on the side. 74

To complicate matters further, Hébert was removed from command of the district. The office was to go to John B. Magruder, but Hébert was ordered to Little Rock without waiting to turn over the command. He placed Bee in charge and left. 75

Hamilton Bee was not one to let such an opportunity go to waste, and "to forward such information as seems interesting," he immediately wrote General Holmes. Reports had reached Bee that "Abolition consul" Leonard Pierce at Matamoros was enlisting Mexican and Texas renegade traitors to join an enemy landing and raid the settlements of western Texas. Pierce had even promised his allies all the country to the Nueces as a reward. Bee had deployed his cavalry "so as to crush out this movement as soon as it was made," and had warned the governors of the adjoining Mexican states of "the ill effects which would ensue from such a movement." The governors had assured him that such rumors were exaggerated and promised to use their "disposable forces" to prevent any such movement. Governor Santiago Vidaurre of Coahuila and Nuevo Leon had been recently re-elected by his people in defiance of a declaration of martial law on the states by the Juarez government in Mexico City.

Well aware of the high value of cotton and low value of Confederate currency, Bee attempted to impress Holmes with the necessity of dealing in the former. Supplies
coming to Texas were mostly grown or made in Mexico and not Europe because foreign traders preferred paying specie for cotton to exchanging goods. Bee felt sure that if the Confederate government would buy cotton and store it at San Antonio, "every article manufactured in Mexico in required quantity" would be brought to the border and exchanged for it at fifteen to twenty-five percent advance on costs and charges instead of the one hundred to one thousand percent when Confederate paper was used. Not only would trading in cotton bring in more supplies, it "will obtain for us every article that is desired; it will put our currency at par, and it will save the people and country from the extortion of the Jews and Gentiles who are preying on our vitals." Unfortunately, Bee's ideas went unheeded.76

Major General John Bankhead Magruder arrived to take over the District of Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona at the end of November 1862. "Prince John," as he was called because of his perfect uniform, full-blown dress parades, and lavish dinners, was welcomed by Texans who were glad to see a "real soldier, and a fighting man." He was a professional soldier, handsome and dashing, with a love of the theatrical. At his best when independently commanding no more troops than he could personally handle, Magruder was impatient and insistent with both superiors and subordinates. "An excited, overzealous desire to do all his work in person" made him want to know everything happening and to have his orders carried out quickly and with no argument. In Texas, however, he was burdened with administration as well as command. The distances to be covered meant communication
with his sub-district commanders could take days, and
information was often obsolete by the time it reached him.
Therefore he tended to let his subordinates run their areas
with more independence than he might otherwise have done if
stationed in a smaller district. He seemed more interested
in military glory than desk work anyway, and let no oppor-
tunity pass to call out troops and take the field. 

On January 6, 1863, Magruder sent his plan for
Texas defense to James Seddon, the Secretary of War. Texas
was in trouble, according to the alarmed general. She had
twelve thousand organized men, but only six thousand were
armed, and those indifferently. The extent of the country
was so great than an order was valueless when it got to its
destination, and confusion and disorganization reigned in
military administration because of the want of control by
officers who were too far away to command effectively. And
disaffection existed in much greater degree than he had
thought possible. He was therefore going to divide his
troops into brigades of three thousand each, and organize
the state into four districts. His plan concerning Bee
was "to hold the Rio Grande at all hazards. The command
there must be unsupported and self-sustaining. I would
assign it to General Bee, whose relations with the Mexican
authorities and personal qualifications make this arrangement
an excellent one. This I have already done, and I propose
to give him command as far northeast as the Nueces." 

Magruder had already sent Bee to the border with
troops. He had information that the enemy had gone west,
supposedly to Brownsville, with five thousand men to occupy
that place. Bee was to take the city back if held by the enemy; if not he was to fortify it and the mouth of the river. Magruder even gave him the authority to seize and impress any cotton, transportation, or supplies, "if the necessities of the case require it." The rumors of a planned landing persisted, and, for several weeks, Magruder sent orders to hurry down to the Valley. The invasion did not occur, but other events made Bee's presence on the Rio Grande all the more imperative.79

Unsettled conditions on the border had made Bee decide for himself to go there. Lieutenant Colonel A. Buchel, commanding Luckett's Third Texas Infantry on the lower Rio Grande, had reported two serious sources of contention between Texas and the governor of Tamaulipas, Albino Lopez -- raids across the river into Texas by renegades and the purchase of supplies in Mexico for importation into the Confederacy.

When the war started, many inhabitants of Texas left the state. Some went because they believed in the Union. Some were trying to escape conscription. Some, who had been conscripted, deserted. The nearest safe place for all was Mexico, and the Mexican border towns were soon packed with refugees. The river area had never been especially peaceful, and many of these "expatriates" joined bands of Mexican outlaws or organized groups of their own under self-proclaimed military designations. Both Mexican and American gangs, no matter what they called themselves, were no more than bandits, out for whatever they could get. Frequent raids kept the Confederate troops edgy and angry, with the result
that they sometimes crossed in pursuit of the raiders or made small excursions into Mexico to bring back deserters. This tended to upset the Mexican authorities. 80

In December 1862, after two raids on the same day, Buchel wrote Lopez complaining of the failure of the Tamaulipas government to remove these refugees and traitors from the border to the interior of the country, as was the custom "in all civilized countries" when the authorities of the country from which the traitors came demanded it. Non-compliance with the demand was regarded as an act of bad faith. Bee concurred with Buchel's opinion and ordered Colonel P. N. Luckett to demand the arrest and deliverance to him of the "perpetrators of the outrage," full indemnity for the property destroyed, and measures undertaken in Mexico to prevent a recurrence of such acts. 81

What had upset Buchel more than the raid, however, was the difficulty with a purchase of corn for the use of his troops. A. M. Sanders of Roma had obtained permission from Governor Vidaurri to buy five hundred cargas of corn in Nuevo Leon and export it to Texas. It was scheduled to cross the border at the town of Mier in Tamaulipas. Vidaurri was supposed to have controlling influence over that state as well as his own two, and no trouble was expected. But Lopez refused to grant passage across the land of his state, unless, that is, half of the corn was sold to the authorities of Tamaulipas. Buchel regarded this action as an outrage and a violation of common courtesy and customary usage between neighboring countries at peace with each other. 82

To lose half the corn was one thing, but Buchel
learned "verbally" that Lopez was going to keep it all. A "quiet and unassuming" little man who had nevertheless served in two other armies and two different wars and had participated in many affairs of honor, Buchel wrote Bee that this was plain highway robbery, and if Bee "will grant me permission I will cross over at Mier and either bring the corn or money or hostages sufficient to insure its safe arrival as soon as received." After that exchange of letters, Bee thought it important that he leave immediately for Brownsville and use his "best efforts" to keep the peace or take such measures to compel the Mexicans to "keep their turbulent population at home." He set off for Brownsville on Tuesday, January 13, 1863.\textsuperscript{83}
NOTES FOR CHAPTER II


2 Bee to William Byrd, June 13, 1861, Adjutant General Correspondence.

3 Bee to Lamar, September 20, 1847, Lamar Papers, IV, pt. 1, 182-3; B. E. Bee to Smith, February 24, 1847, B. E. Bee Papers.

4 Bee to Secretary of War, October 12, 1861, The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (70 vols. in 128, Washington, 1880-1901), Ser. 1, IV, 118; cited hereinafter as O.R. All references will be to Series I unless otherwise indicated.

5 Bee to Byrd, July 8, 1861, Adjutant General Correspondence.

6 H. P. N. Gammel, comp., The Laws of Texas: 1822-1897 (10 vols., Austin, 1898), V, 455.

7 Bee to Byrd, July 24, 1861, Adjutant General Correspondence. The report was one of Captain W. T. Townsend of the Rough and Ready Home Guards of St. Mary's. Soon after this incident Townsend's company attempted to disband itself and force the resignation of their captain. The company alleged that Townsend had organized the Guards for service in the Confederate Army, which the men most certainly did not want, and that he had taken them on a very inconsiderate, rash, and fruitless expedition against a Federal ship while he was drunk. Bee maintained that he could not accept the resignation and that no company could disband itself at will. He referred the matter to the Adjutant General's office. Report of the Rough and Ready Home Guards, Adjutant General Correspondence.

8 Edward Clark to Bee, August 15, 1861, Executive Records. (Archives, Texas State Library).

9 Clark to Bee, September 17, 1861, Executive Records.
10 Bee to Dashiell, February 15, 1862, Adjutant General Correspondence.

11 Bee to Secretary of War, October 12, 1861, O.R., IV, 118-119.


13 Bee to Dashiell, January 12, 1862, Adjutant General Correspondence.

14 Bee to Dashiell, January 31, 1862, ibid., The State Troop Act of December 25, 1861, gave the colonel the power to order an encampment of his regiment, but not the brigadier for his whole brigade. Gammel, Laws, V, 455-465.

15 Bee to Dashiell, January 31, 1862, Adjutant General Correspondence.

16 Clark to Jacob Waelder, October 17, 1861, Executive Records.


18 Bee to Dashiell, February 14, 1862, Adjutant General Correspondence.

19 Bee to Dashiell, February 15, 1862, ibid.

20 Proclamation of February 26, 1862, Broadside (Archives, Texas State Library). This occurred before the first Confederate conscription act in April 1862.


22 Bee to Dashiell, March 10, 1862; Bee to Dashiell, March 13, 1862, Adjutant General Correspondence.

23 Bee to Dashiell, March 13, 1862, ibid.

24 Gammel, Laws, IV, 1902-1904. If the number of troops in the common militia was inadequate, then the volunteer companies would be called on to serve, but as entire companies, under their own officers.

25 Gammel, Laws, V, 464. Common state troops could be drafted, but nothing was said specifically about volunteers.

26 Bee to Dashiell, March 21, 1862, Adjutant General Correspondence.

27 Bee to Dashiell, March 26, 1862; Bee to Dashiell, March 21, 1862, ibid.
28 Bee to Dashiell, March 26, 1862, ibid.

29 Bee to Lubbock, March 30, 1862, Alexander Dienst Collection (Archives, Eugene C. Barker Texas History Center, University of Texas at Austin); Personal Service Record, National Archives.

30 Bee to Adjutant General, April 2, 1862, Adjutant General Correspondence.


32 Fitzhugh, "Saluria," 77.

33 General Orders No. 3, April 24, 1862, O.R., IX, 708-709.

34 Claude Elliott, "Union Sentiment in Texas, 1861-1865," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, L (April 1947), 451; H. E. McCulloch to S. B. Davis, March 3, 1862, O.R., IX, 701-702; H. E. McCulloch to Lubbock, March 27, 1862, Governor F. R. Lubbock Correspondence (Archives, Texas State Library).


36 McCulloch to Davis, March 3, 1862, O.R., IX, 701-702; McCulloch to Lubbock, March 27, 1862, Lubbock Correspondence.

37 Extra, April 28, 1862, San Antonio Herald, in Lubbock Correspondence.

38 Lubbock to Bee, May 1, 1862, ibid.

39 Bee to Lubbock, May 5, 1862, ibid.

40 San Antonio Herald, May 3, 24, 1862.

41 Lubbock to F. Guilbeau, May 19, 1862, Executive Records.

42 O.R., IX, 716.

43 Thomas North, Five Years in Texas; or What You Did Not Hear During the War from January 1861 to January 1866 (Cincinnati, 1871), 105-6; R. H. Williams. With the Border Ruffians: Memories of the Far West, 1852-1868, ed. by E. W. Williams (New York, 1907), 268; Lubbock, Six Decades, 424.
Grounds for arrest and trial included planning to flee the country to avoid conscription, using seditious language against the Confederate States, keeping and circulating abolition books, being an "alien enemy," not accepting Confederate currency, and disseminating Black Republican opinions. Sentences ranged from imprisonment to banishment.

55 San Antonio Herald, August 16, 1862, Special Order No. 413; May 14, 1862, General Order No. 13; September 6, June 7, 1862; Williams, Border Ruffians, 271; Proclamation of May 28, 1862; Lubbock to Bee, October 1, 1862, Executive Records. Lubbock did not want to deprive the army of what was necessary for "medicinal purposes," but he did get a little upset when the provost marshals interfered with his orders and let too many distillers continue business.
56 San Antonio Herald, October 4, 1862.

57 Samuel Cooper to P. O. Hébert, September 12, 1862, O.R., IX, 735-6.

58 Hébert to Cooper, October 11, 1862; Lubbock to Hébert, September 26, 1862, O.R., LIII, 828-830; Lubbock to Bee, October 15, 1862, Executive Records. Lubbock thought martial law could be declared within all military lines, and, since the coast was occupied by military scouts, and military camps were established at the most important cities, he hoped something could be arranged. He also considered declaring martial law himself, but did not have the troops in the state militia to enforce it.


61 Bee to Lubbock, May 6, 1862, Lubbock Correspondence.

62 Special Order No. 47, May 12, 1862; O.R., LIII, 807.

63 Neal to Livenskiold, July 8, 1862, O.R., IX, 720-21; A. M. Hobby to Bee, July 19, 1862; ibid., 727; Hobby to Lubbock, September 11, 1862, Lubbock Correspondence; Fitzhugh, "Saluria," 78. Hobby was having as much trouble with the commander of the Refugio County Guard who considered Hobby's orders as "interference" with his troops, as he did with the Federals.

64 Hébert to Holmes, August 26, 1862, O.R., IX, 732; Reports of Hamilton P. Bee to the Department of Texas, August 21, August 26, August 28, 1862, ibid., 618-20; Bee to Mason, August 28, 1862, ibid., 732; Fitzhugh, "Saluria," 78; Barr, "Texas Coastal Defense," 11-12.

65 Fitzhugh, "Saluria," 79-80; Bee to S. B. Davis, November 15, 1862; Conklin to Gray, November 1, 1862, O.R., XV, 181.

66 For the best description of the foreign relations of the Confederacy, see Frank L. Owsley, King Cotton Diplomacy: Foreign Relations of the Confederate States of America (Chicago, 1931).


68 Coulter, Confederate States, 116-117.

69 San Antonio Herald, May 10, 1862, General Order No. 10.
70 Bee to Hébert, May 15, 1862, O.R., LIII, 809.

71 Special Order No. 390, July 24, 1862, James J. Lynch Papers (Archives, Eugene C. Barker Texas History Center, University of Texas at Austin); Charles W. Ramsdell, "The Texas State Military Board, 1862-1865," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XXVII (April 1924), 264; L. Pierce to Secretary of State, June 8, 1862, Matamoros Consular Dispatches, Vol. VII, January 1, 1858, to December 31, 1864, Microfilm Roll #4 (Archives, Eugene C. Barker Texas History Center, University of Texas at Austin).

72 San Antonio Herald, Special Order No. 447, October 8, 1862. Holmes was in his late fifties, a friend of the President and a representative of the "Old Army." Douglas S. Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants: A Study in Command (3 vols., New York, 1942), I, 581. W. S. Oldham was vitriolic in his description of Holmes. "It was scarcely possible for one to show himself less qualified to discharge the duties of a high and important position than did General Holmes. He was very deaf, but that was the least objectionable of his deficiencies. His intellectual weakness and indecision were conspicuously exhibited in all that he did. He had neither system or purpose. In fact he did not know what to do." Williamson S. Oldham, "Memoirs of W. S. Oldham, Confederate Senator, 1861-1865" (typescript, Archives, Eugene C. Barker Texas History Center, University of Texas at Austin), 382.

73 San Antonio Herald, November 1, 1862, Special Order No. 464; October 28; December 27, 1862, General Orders No. 8, November 21, 1862; Brown, History, II, 408; San Antonio Semi-Weekly News, December 1, 1862, General Order No. 25; November 21, 1862.

74 Ramsdell, "Texas Military Board," 263-4; Lea, King Ranch, 191-2.

75 Bee to Lubbock, November 15, 1862, Lubbock Correspondence. Bee also reported that "Mrs. Bee added a daughter to our little band." General Order No. 9, November 27, 1862, O.R., XV, 879.

76 Bee to Holmes, November 30, 1862, O.R., XV, 881-3.

77 Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, I, xxxiv, 15, 16, 162, 606-11, 659; Williams, Border Ruffians, 302-3; Oates, "Texas-Secessionists," 195-6, 201-3; North, Five Years, 107.

78 J. B. Magruder to J. A. Seddon, January 6, 1863, O.R., XV, 932-3.

79 Magruder to Bee, December 31, 1862, ibid., LIII, 841-2; Special Order No. 35, January 5, 1863, ibid., XV, 931; Bee to Magruder, January 6, 1863, ibid., 933; E. P. Turner to Bee, January 17, 1863, ibid., LIII, 844.
Pierce to Seward, April, 1862, Matamoros Consular Dispatches. Leonard Pierce was born in Maine, but had lived in Texas before the war and was well acquainted with the border area. *Ibid.*, August 30, 1861.


It is interesting to note that in all his statements to Lopez, Buchel acted as though Mexico had recognized the Confederacy and normal diplomatic relations existed.

CHAPTER III
THE BORDER BEEHIVE
JANUARY to JULY, 1863

A journey to the southern tip of Texas was not an easy trip, even in the best of times. It was a three-hundred mile trek from San Antonio to Brownsville, and half of the route took the traveler through the "Wild Horse Desert," a desolate, untenanted prairie. After the stop at King's ranch on the Santa Gertrudis, there was nothing to look forward to but dust, deep sand, chaparral, and mesquite. It was a dry road. Texas was in the midst of a drought that was to last most of 1863, and water was scarce. Sources on the road consisted of a few wells, which produced a salty substance containing a variety of minerals, and water holes along the creek beds. What little rain fell turned the dust to mud and the streams into torrents, but it did not last long enough to help the grass for the pack animals. As the year and the drought wore on, the number of watering places dwindled, the grasses withered, and dry camps offered little comfort to man or beast.¹

In spite of its unfriendly appearance, the trail was a much traveled one, and evidence could be easily seen of those who had gone before. The chaparral along the track was covered with bits of cotton torn from endless trains of wagons, and the ruts made by the wheels became so deep at times that it was necessary to pull over into the brush and start a new road.² A fast moving stagecoach or group of
horsemen often passed cotton trains drawn by ten- or twenty-mule teams and carrying ten or twelve bales on each wagon, all headed for the border, or government trains going the other way with supplies. According to one witness, the road was "two vast unending trains of wagons," spring, summer, and fall.\(^3\)

After a difficult trip of two weeks or longer, much longer if by wagon train, the weary traveler reached the "commercial mecca of the southwest," Brownsville, which was also considered by some who ought to have known as the "rowdiest town in Texas."\(^4\) The city was located some thirty miles from the coast on the northern bank of the Rio Grande. The streets were broad and straight, and many of the houses and buildings along them were brick, built by affluent merchants known as the "brick house crowd." The city market, a grand two-story affair which doubled as a public hall, was of the same material, and looked down on the main square. The plaza was a lively place, with booths selling things to eat and drink under the orange and china trees, gambling at side tables, and dancing in the center. And there were flowers blooming around the painted walls and iron grilles by the end of January. Spring comes early to the Valley.\(^5\)

Military construction could be seen both in and out of town, but offered little defense capability. Government barracks and offices occupied the other three sides of the square, and a couple of large army bakeries were nearby.\(^6\) Outside the city was Fort Brown, built during the Mexican War to command Matamoros across the river and resembling in
plan a "great snowflake." It afforded the city just about that amount of protection. It was an earthwork fortification in extremely sad condition in 1861, and despite efforts to repair its crumbling parapet and remove the dense undergrowth surrounding its walls, it was still of little use. A lagoon cut off retreat except by two narrow lanes and gave more protection to an attacking force than a defending one. High ground on the banks of the lagoon commanded the interior of the fort, and an enemy could easily occupy Brownsville without being brought under the guns of the fort at all. No other fortifications existed. 7

Settlements came in pairs along the Rio Grande, and the city opposite Brownsville was Matamoros, in the Mexican state of Tamaulipas. This was a larger and richer town than Brownsville, having been the market port for much of northern Mexico, and the lure of cotton and the possibility of making a quick fortune made it rapidly even larger and richer. Literally thousands were attracted to the border area because Matamoros was a neutral site for trade with the Confederacy. Merchants, speculators, refugees, laborers, soldiers, scoundrels, all flocked to the city. By March 1862 the United States consul was calling Matamoros "the great thoroughfare to the southern states," and the population had grown from nine thousand to over thirty thousand. The Mexican city boomed, and, as usual in a boom town, living expenses were high and growing higher daily, and only specie was everywhere the acceptable form of payment. 8

Although they created enough traffic to turn the roads to dust, the newcomers from foreign lands did not change
Matamoros completely. It was still a Mexican town, with its adobe walls, wide plazas, and bullet scars. Almost all visitors commented on the evidence of past battles that could be seen on many buildings. The border area, like much of Mexico, had not been particularly peaceful, especially in recent years. In addition to bandits like Juan Cortinas, who raided Texas before the American struggle began, there were political upheavals as Mexico suffered first through a civil war of its own and then an invasion by a foreign power. 9

By 1861, after three years of fighting, Benito Juarez claimed a Liberal victory over the Conservative forces and set up his government in Mexico City. He found himself courted by both the United States and the Confederacy, the Union trying to gain concessions and privileges or keep Mexico strictly neutral, and the South hoping for recognition and an alliance. But the Confederacy blundered in its choice of minister when it sent John T. Pickett, who lacked tact and dignity and raised old fears indiscreetly talking about an invasion of Mexico from Texas. 10 The North, on the other hand, sent Thomas Corwin, an outspoken champion of Mexico in the Mexican War and of Mexican rights opposing southern expansion. Corwin arrived in Mexico before Pickett and convinced Juarez of the friendship of the United States and the evil intentions of the Confederacy. Pickett was no match for this wily diplomat, who even induced Juarez to intercept Confederate dispatches and give them to him. 11

If the Mexican President had had only the rebuilding of his country and the upheaval in the giant to the north to
worry about, the Confederacy might have been in an extremely bad position. But the French invaded Mexico in 1862 in an attempt supposedly to recover debts owed them, and Juárez had little time for diplomatic niceties. Survival was going to take support and money, and both these commodities could be had from the north Mexican states, but not if the South were an enemy. There was a fortune to be made from the great trade passing through Mexico, and, if the door was closed, the leaders of Tamaulipas, Nuevo León, and Coahuila might withhold support and take power for themselves.

One of the governors, Santiago Vidaurri of Nuevo León and Coahuila, had just such a scheme, to create a "Sierra Madras Republic," and was already cooperating with the Confederacy. Vidaurri was immensely popular among his people, and his influence reached to the neighboring states of Chihuahua and Tamaulipas. He was also jealous of his independence and authority, and, while he professed loyalty to Juárez, this imperious ruler more often went his own way, ably assisted in choosing that way most advantageous for the Confederacy by its intelligent, adroit, and resourceful agent, Juan A. Quintero.12

In 1861 and 1862, Vidaurri had sufficient influence in Tamaulipas to determine that state's actions with regard to Confederate trade, but Tamaulipas was not the well-ordered Nuevo León and Coahuila. The frequency with which government changed hands in Matamoros did not lend itself to control over the inhabitants, traditional Texan haters, who provided bases for bandits raiding across the river. General Traconis, governor in the last half of 1862, had even
encouraged Texas refugees and Mexican outlaws in their endeavors, and the resulting raids were the cause of Bee’s journey to the border. 13

Bee arrived in Brownsville on January 29, 1863. He found matters quiet with a new governor, Albino Lopez, in Tamaulipas and was optimistic that a solution to the difficulties could be peaceable arranged. Colonel P. N. Luckett, who had been in command of the lower Rio Grande, had had an interview with the concerned governor and obtained authority to cross the border in pursuit and to punish the outlaws, but this power was still of an unofficial, unregularized nature. 14

Bee opened official correspondence with the Tamaulipas authorities on February 3, 1863, with a letter complaining of the two December raids on a government wagon train and a settlement. Because they were committed by a group of men styling themselves the "First Regiment of Union Troops," under the leadership of the bandit Octaviano Zapata, and claiming to be the representatives of the United States, Bee labeled the raids a violation of Mexican neutrality, instigated and organized by the United States consul at Matamoros, Leonard Pierce. He asked respectfully if it was the intention of the Mexican government to allow this sort of thing. Not so respectfully, he demanded full restoration and indemnity (according to the invoice of stolen property inclosed), the delivery to him of the citizens of Texas responsible, and the dispersal of all combinations hostile to the Confederate States. 15

Lopez did not reply until February 11. Stating that
it was to the interest of the Mexican authorities to preserve friendly relations with "those of the State of Texas," he countered Bee's argument and demands by calling for a look at the facts to "ascertain the reality of the situation."
The men responsible for the raids called themselves Texans as well as Mexicans and were, in any case, outside the law in both places, so Mexican neutrality had not been violated. Payment of an indemnity would be a precedent disadvantageous to Mexico, and one should not forget that the Mexican states were victims too. Therefore, the same should be required from Texas as from Mexico. Finally, Mexico could not deliver anyone to the Confederacy, since there was no extradition treaty with them as there was with the United States, but, because he wanted good relations, Lopez stated he would punish these outlaw Texans for past offenses.16

These two letters set the tone for future negotiations, Bee maintaining he was acting for a sovereign nation, Lopez claiming he was dealing only with the state of Texas, and both realizing the necessity of bringing some kind of order to the turbulent area. To discuss the situation and negotiate a settlement, the two men met, probably in Matamoros, because any journey by the Mexican governor to Texas would be too close to recognition for the central Mexican government to allow. Bee presented a basis for a convention, to which Lopez agreed generally and added some demands of his own.17

By February 25, an agreement was ready and signed by each official in his own city. First, Texas and Mexican troops would grant each other mutual aid in pursuit of
bandits and would notify the other if one had to cross the river after the outlaws. There would be troops stationed on both sides to guard the line. Second, passports would be necessary to cross the border, and any person conspiring to disturb the peace or hinder the authorities would be sent thirty leagues into the interior of the country. Third, livestock would need a permit to be crossed into the other country. If stolen, they would be returned to the authorities of the state of their origin and action taken against the person attempting to transport them. Fourth, Tamaulipas would try to recover all property stolen by Zapata's band, and Texas would try to do the same for the property taken from Mexico by forces under Jose-Maria Carrazal [Carvajal] during his raids at the beginning of 1862.18

Finally, and secretly, was the matter of extradition. The biggest obstacle to an agreement, secret or not, on this subject was that Mexico had not recognized the Confederacy. But Lopez had no objection to a private arrangement between himself and Bee, so long as there was reciprocity, and he soon found a way to proceed "in compliance with a law of the Republic." The law stated that:

every individual accused of embezzlement, theft, cattle or horse stealing, or petty larceny of goods or property worth $20 or more, if the crime is committed in the frontier States or Territories, shall be delivered to the authorities of the place in which the offense was committed when the fact of the commission of the crime shall be proved in such a manner that according to the laws of the country where the fugitive or accused may be found, he would be legally arrested and tried if he had committed the crime in the latter country.19

The skilful substitution of the word "State" in strategic locations made possible interpretation to allow extradition,
and this agreement was also accepted by both commanders.  

A signature on a piece of paper, however, was not enforcement of the agreement or an end to the troubles. As important to Bee as the agreement of border security were the problems of desertion and the activities of United States consul Pierce. Trying to play both sides of the river by not hindering Pierce and various refugees from Texas while attempting to satisfy Confederate authorities sufficiently so that they would do nothing rash, Lopez offered no help at all.

Desertion was one of Bee's biggest headaches during his command on the Rio Grande. It was just too easy for disgruntled conscripts to slip across the border to escape service, and, once across they found "aid and comfort" with Consul Pierce, whom Bee accused of "seducing" his men from their allegiance. The Confederate general was afraid his command would be demoralized unless he got back some of these men, but this appeared impossible. Complaints to the Mexican authorities elicited the answer that the consul was only extending aid to American citizens in distress, as was his function, and that he denied any enlistment for military purposes. Bee knew he could not force Tamaulipas to return the deserters and was all too aware of the great importance of keeping the trade route open, but for a while he considered actually crossing the river and taking the runaways back.  

Better judgment, the necessity of good relations with Mexico, and probably the orders of his superiors prevailed, and Bee had to content himself with complaining once more
to Governor Lopez. He could not even declare martial law on his own side of the Rio Grande in an attempt to bring some order there. Many Unionists were leaving Texas in spite of his patrols, and Bee thought the execution of civil law and his efforts to base it on responsibility to some authority were "thwarted by the pettifoggers who revel around the police courts." But Magruder could not give him the authority, doubtless because of the previous misunderstandings about martial law. Bee could only stay at his post, feeling frustrated and powerless, and watch the activities across the river, especially those activities concerning E. J. Davis.

Edmund J. Davis had come to Texas in 1838 and become prominent as a lawyer and a judge in the border area. Although he did not advocate the Confederate cause, he ran for election to the Texas secession convention, but was defeated. He left Texas and organized a regiment of Unionist cavalry in New Orleans, doing much of his recruiting in Matamoros. Texans considered him responsible for many of the raids by the Unionist bands of refugees. Bee's only dealings with Davis had been indirect, when he had forwarded a request to Hébert from the commander of the Federal fleet in Aransas Bay to remove the Davis family to New Orleans. Hébert must have refused permission, because the Davis family was in Matamoros in March 1863.

On March 11, Bee reported to Magruder that the Union transport Honduras had arrived, bringing Davis and the rumor of more vessels to follow. Bee did not expect a landing, but prepared for it by strengthening the pickets at the
mouth of the river and going there himself. He thought Davis was really there to collect his family and a group of refugees to serve in the Union army. These Unionists had reportedly been standing on the bank of the river and shouting insults and threats at the Rebels in Texas. Unfortunately for the refugees, the seas were too rough for the Honduras to load, and some of the hot-blooded Texans decided to put an end to their shenanigans.

A party, "composed of citizens and soldiers off duty," crossed near the mouth of the river the night of March 14-15, attacked Davis's camp, killed some of his men, and brought Davis, William Montgomery, and three other men back to Texas. Montgomery was hanged that night for the murder of a respected border resident, Isidro Vela, who was killed in one of the December raids.

Bee did not hear of the expedition until the next day and was understandably most upset. He immediately fired off a report to Magruder, stressing the point that "What has been done was done without my consent or knowledge and in positive violation of my orders." But Bee had been angered by the goings-on across the river also, and "whatever may be the consequences, it will be a consolation that the indignity cast upon us by the authorities of the United States has been avenged by the gallant sons of Texas." Communications were not long in arriving from Matamoros, and Bee found he had more to worry about than just the Davis affair. Bad things seem to come in threes, and Lopez had three "outrages" of Mexican territory with which to berate the Confederate general. First, a person named...
Maddock [Maddox] had been forcibly removed from a Mexican lighter on the river on March 13. Second, Captain Santos Benavides of the Thirty-third Texas Cavalry at Laredo had crossed the border because one of his men had been arrested for criminal disturbances and shot resisting arrest. Benavides had "trampled" on the civil and military authorities in so doing, and Lopez wanted the Confederate punished. Finally of course, was Davis, whom Lopez wanted returned.30

What followed was an exchange of letters that were really remarkably calm considering the temper of the moment. Matamoros streets were filled the night of the fifteenth with demonstrators shouting viva to Lincoln and death to the Confederates, while bands of music paraded and played. Bee heard the noise in his quarters in Brownsville.31 It was rumored that Lopez was hissed at the theater because he was afraid of the Confederates. The governor was considering a variety of reactions -- stopping trade, arresting all Confederate officers who came to Mexico, even attacking.32

Bee recognized the seriousness of the situation, and hastened to disavow the action against Davis and party and to declare no intent on the part of Confederate authority to insult the Mexican government. At the same time, however, he was careful to make no statement concerning either the Maddox problem or the Benavides situation until he had more facts. It later turned out that Maddox was a Confederate citizen, so he was released. He had been taken in the first place because the boat was in Confederate waters. Benavides's report was forwarded to Lopez also, but nothing more was said about the matter.33
Davis was the real problem, and Bee was not going to accept responsibility for a situation he felt he did not cause. While disavowing what had been done, he laid the blame for the incident on the United States consul's activities in recruiting soldiers in defiance of Mexico's neutrality. Bee could not resist an "I-told-you-so" when he reminded the governor of his warning of such a collision in a personal interview. He also absolved himself of any blame by explaining his own actions of going to the mouth of the river in hopes of preventing any problem. He had expressly prohibited any crossing of the river and urged his troops to bear calmly all the insults being sent across by the Unionists. He himself was at Point Isabel at the time of the occurrence and knew nothing about it until the next day. He did not know where the prisoners were, but would find out.34

Bee maintained to everyone that he had known nothing of the plans of those citizens and off-duty soldiers who captured Davis, and, in the absence of hard evidence to the contrary, it would be difficult to prove otherwise. But, it must be admitted also that his actions of the night of March 14-15 leave room for doubt. He went to the mouth of the river to be on hand if there were a landing, and then "matters of importance," which he did not explain to Magruder or Lopez, called him to Point Isabel. After he had gone, the river was crossed not far from where he had been, and Davis was captured. It would be easy to make a case for his complicity in the affair, but, considering his strong determination to keep Mexico open to trade, it would be
hard to believe.

There is little difficulty, however, in imagining how angry Bee must have become, and how hard it was for him to suppress his anger, when he received letters from Lopez which stated that the actions of the United States consul were only the protection of his fellow citizens and the fulfillment of his duty, and that the variety of opinions concerning Pierce, not founded on clear proofs and evidences, excused the governor from deciding anything. Lopez must not have had the same sources as Quintero, who reported that the consul was not only enlisting men, but that these men were being drilled "in open day" and marched to the coast as soldiers. 35

While the Mexican authorities were "using every means in their power to ferret out the reality" of Bee's charges against Davis and Pierce, Bee found Davis and the three other captives and returned them to Lopez as a "mark of personal regard" on March 18. The whole affair thereafter degenerated into a contest of who would have the last word. Bee informed Lopez of a report that the bandit Octaviano Zapata was on the Honduras and now on Mexican soil, with a number of men "destined for the use of the Zapata outlaws." Lopez replied that he ordered the detention of any such men and the arrest of Zapata, who was not at the mouth of the Rio Grande, but who would be arrested if he returned. 36

Then the Mexican governor found two things to complain about, the capture of a schooner, the C. C. Pinckney, and threats of Confederate troops at the mouth of the river to invade Mexico. Bee was extremely irritated with Lopez by
this time, especially since he felt he was doing all in
his power to keep the peace, while the Mexicans did nothing.
He carefully explained to Lopez that he had referred the
Pinckney case to the courts as a legal question since the
ship had been stranded on Confederate territory, but taken
possession of by a paroled Union prisoner. He then
restated his desire to maintain peaceful relations, reported
his withdrawal of most of the troops at Boca del Rio to
remove the danger of "unauthorized collisions," and took
the governor to task for not appreciating his actions and
sincerity. After all, when Mexican citizens invaded Texas
and murdered and plundered, no sounds of music or shouts
of "death to the Mexicans" from an infuriated Brownsville
populace "wafted" to Lopez's ears. Texas citizens and
soldiers waited the explanation of the authorities and
made allowance for the unsettled condition of affairs. Bee
expressed his pain at the "violent ebullitions" of feeling
against his country as shown by the people of Matamoros,
pain made deeper by the fact that no action was aimed at
the Mexican government or people. He concluded by stating:

I have a right to think and announce to Your
Excellency that it is Mexico which shows a hostile
attitude to my country, and that on her will rest
the responsibility of breaking the peaceable
relations which I do so much to foster. Conscious
that I have done my whole duty both to Mexico and
my Government, I dismiss the subject, with the
renewed assurance of my most distinguished respect
and esteem.\footnote{37}

Lopez replied with a conciliatory letter assuring
Bee that he did appreciate Bee's actions and difficulties.
His attempt to get the last word by calming Bee's indig-
nation about the demonstration the night of the fifteenth
(he simply could not stop it) and by explaining the alarm of most Mexicans at the invasion and further hostile declarations by Texans (the Mexicans thought the Texas authorities behind it), somehow falls a little flat, however, and seems to have been more for appearance's sake than anything else. 38

There the matter rested, and even the arrival of Major General Magruder, always looking for a fight, did not stir it up again. By the time he got there, the border was as quiet as it would ever be. 39 Neither he nor his troops were needed. Hamilton Bee had handled the situation well, and the Confederacy came out the winner. He now had an agreement about border traffic, bandits, and extradition. The Mexicans had been alerted to the fact that they could push the Confederates just so far and had also shown their unwillingness to start any kind of formal fight with the southerners. Bee's ability to attack with only three thousand men strung out along four hundred miles of river may be questioned, but the threat made both the Mexicans and the United States apprehensive because it suggested the possibility of a Confederate invasion as the first step toward a French alliance or intervention. 40

Bee had also shown his talent in the diplomatic field. He stated his arguments clearly, negotiated with an eye always to the main issue, and recognized a truly serious matter for what it was. He lived up to the prophecy of the Brownsville Flag, whose editor praised him on his arrival for "energy and directness of purpose" and claimed he would do much to allay apprehensions of future Mexican
By negotiating the border agreement, "with a happy combination of tact and vigor," and handling the Davis situation by giving Lopez no cause for retaliation, both with no supervision, Bee indicated his ability to act on his own in a semi-independent command where his duties were not strictly of a military nature. He had upheld the dignity and position of his country and preserved friendly relations along the border. He could now turn his full attention to the problems involving cotton.

Trade, with cotton as the chief medium of exchange, had accelerated rapidly during 1862, and, from all appearances, 1863 would be an even bigger year on the border. There were, however, certain difficulties inherent in the trade. To begin with, the trip down to the river towns was a long and arduous one on a dry trail. On reaching the river, the trader usually had to wait his turn at the ferry to cart his cotton across. There were no bridges, and the high bank cut by the Rio Grande made getting the cotton down to the water's edge impossible along much of it. Once on the Mexican side, the trader had to haul the bales down to Bagdad, a romantically named but dreary little village on the seashore. Bagdad, like Matamoros, had grown fantastically since the beginning of the war, but unlike Matamoros, it had no charm about it, being only a collection of wooden shanties surrounded by bales of cotton and inhabited by "acquisitive Yankee" types.

What made Bagdad was the bar across the mouth of the river. The Rio Grande was neither deep nor fast flowing. It deposited its burden of sand and silt in a bar whose
height varied according to the conditions of the river and of the Gulf of Mexico. Consequently, the depth of water over the bar fluctuated between two and five feet, and any deep-draft vessel could not pass it. Ocean-going ships were forced to anchor offshore and lighter their cargoes. It was a slow process; a trader might have to wait months before his cotton was shipped. The few vessels able to make the twelve to twenty-four hour trip up the tortuous windings of the river to Matamoros could hardly hold enough cotton to satisfy the demand for space on a ship. Goods, both incoming and outgoing, piled up on the beach at Bagdad, and ships, numbering sometimes in the hundreds, waited off the coast. From the open Gulf, all one saw were ships at anchor off a desolate shore on which sat endless bales of cotton and things that looked like "black hillocks" -- masses of merchandise covered with tarpaulins. What was not at Bagdād was stored in Matamoros, where some of the residents rented their homes for warehouses. 44

Although there was the possibility for enormous profit, the cotton trader had certain costs as well. He bought his bales in the interior of the state for five to six cents per pound in early 1863. He then had to transport his cotton to the border, and by the time he paid Confederate export and Mexican import duties and freight charges, he had to get a price of thirty to forty cents per pound to break even. 45 Many small-scale cotton entrepreneurs sold their cotton for gold on reaching the border and used the money to buy supplies for their families or the group the represented, or just took the specie home. During 1863 the going price
in Matamoros for cotton kept rising, finally to seventy, eighty, and even ninety cents per pound. Providing he could obtain transportation at a reasonable cost, the small trader could do pretty well for himself. If, however, he tried to export his cotton and did not have sufficient operating capital to wait out the delay in shipment, he might easily be bankrupted by duties and charges that far exceeded the value of the goods. Many small traders just abandoned the cotton or imports on the shore.\textsuperscript{46}

But the merchants who imported goods and the speculators made the big profits. Speculators who did not import goods usually brought cotton to the border to exchange for gold. A small amount of specie was worth more and more Confederate paper, which the speculators used to purchase more cotton to exchange for more gold. Those who exported cotton sent it to Europe or New York, where the prices were ever rising. These men considered a twenty-percent profit small, indeed.\textsuperscript{47}

Imports were of every description. From Mexico came coffee, cloth, niter, saltpeter, sugar, horses, and rope. From Europe came lead, boots, percussion caps, gunpowder, arms, horseshoes, blankets, iron bars, cotton bagging, brass buttons, paper, and medicines. From New York, where the Yankees cared less for the enemy than profit, came shoes, spades, cotton cards, axes, and shiploads of army wagons, all manufactured in the North. Bee reported he could even get carbines and Colt pistols shipped directly to Brownsville without trouble.\textsuperscript{48} The goods arrived in crates marked as containing completely harmless non-military
articles of commerce. Cases of Enfield rifles were labeled "hollow ware," gunpowder was branded "bean flour," percussion caps bore the legend "canned goods," and lead was listed as "bat metal." 49 A Union correspondent estimated in early 1863 that the Confederates were receiving four million dollars worth of supplies each month through Matamoros. 50 The United States could not afford to let this go on forever, and the merchants and traders soon had another risk to add to those of the weather and the Mexicans -- the United States Navy.

As the Union blockade tightened around the South, the far corner of the Confederacy grew in importance. With its major ports closed or restricted, the South, especially the Trans-Mississippi, found neutral Mexico indispensable as a source of supply and a communication route to Europe. Confederates and goods could come and go at will under the protection of the fiction of neutrality. These importations were a great factor in sustaining the strength of the Confederate States and were the lifeblood of the Trans-Mississippi. 51

Ironically, one of its own treaties made it difficult for the United States to stop trade with Matamoros. According to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo of 1848, free use of the Rio Grande was guaranteed to the citizens of both countries, and interruption of trade by either, without the consent of the other, was forbidden. Any attempt to halt trade coming to Mexico from Europe or the North constituted a violation, to which the avaricious Mexicans would somewhat self-righteously object. The French further complicated matters when they seized all Mexican ports except Matamoros.
The Union had to let trade go on with Mexico to supply Juarez's army. 52

Vessels on the open sea were still vulnerable, if it could be proved they were carrying Confederate goods, hence the euphemisms "bat metal" and "bean flour." The southerners had several methods of acknowledging Mexican neutrality. Merchants had "silent" partners in Matamoros business houses or set up their own companies in Mexico to which goods were consigned. Merchandise was landed on the Mexican side and then carried across the river. Some goods were addressed to persons in Mexico, but once carried through the blockade as though destined for Matamoros, they were landed on the Confederate side. Cotton went out with certificates of Mexican ownership. 53

It would appear from a glimpse at the situation concerning the cotton trade and supply for the Confederacy that all the southern government had to do was keep Mexico friendly and let the trade take care of itself. This, of course, was far from reality. Entrepreneurs in an open market do not waste their time on low profit articles, but deal in whatever brings the highest return. Traders imported either consumer items to sell or nothing at all, preferring to hoard their profit outside of the country. Few military supplies were brought in. The government could not afford to leave the situation alone, but the attempts of Holmes, Hébert, and Bee to control it by no means settled the confusion reigning in the cotton trade.

In November 1862 Bee had set up regulations to carry into effect Holmes's Order Number 25, prohibiting
exportation of cotton except by authorized agents of the
governments and "persons known to the commanding general to
be engaged through the medium of traffic in cotton, in
providing for the actual necessities of the people and the
army." Bee let three classes of persons export: those who
brought in supplies for the use of the army could export
for the value of the invoice; those who gave a bond with
security to introduce army supplies so they could pay for a
return cargo; planters who gave an affidavit that they only
wanted to purchase family supplies and necessities and not
to speculate. All had to have a license costing two dollars
in coin and to exchange for each bale five dollars in specie
for five dollars in Confederate notes.54

According to Magruder, these orders brought the
price of cotton down five cents per pound in the interior.
Because of the competition among Confederate agents, Texas
agents, district agents, and private contractors, however,
cotton was still expensive. Even with exorbitant trans-
portation fees, speculators could pay up to twenty-five
cents per pound because they had the cash. Major Simeon
Hart, Confederate War Department agent for the purchase of
supplies with cotton, did not have the funds to pay such
inflated prices, and neither did any other government
agent.55

To try to coordinate the actions of the flock of
government brokers, Magruder called a conference in December
1862 with Lubbock, Bee, the Confederate customs collector
at Brownsville, and Hart. The result was an order for the
agents to register, so that they might know, and therefore
not compete with each other. In the vain hope of halting the activities of dishonest speculators, Magruder also directed that every bale without Bee's permit be stopped at the border.56

Conferences were really useless. Luckett reported from Brownsville that there were numerous government agents on the frontier, "totally incompetent to transact properly the most ordinary commercial business. They are constantly bidding one against the other, causing the Government to pay excessive prices, and besides they throw a cloud of doubt over the transactions of useful and competent agents. Through them and others cotton permits are hawked about in Matamoros at the rate of a dollar a bale."57 There were also rumors that men purporting to buy for the government were actually selling for themselves and bringing in whatever goods would profit them most -- especially non-military, non-essential items.58 Such men simply disregarded any orders they did not like or maneuvered around those enforced.

Bee's permits and regulations were as much despised by some as the activities of the speculators. "The enemy has blockaded the Gulf ports and General Bee blockaded the Rio Grande," Senator Oldham declared. Honest planters who wanted to trade could not comply with the provision that they had to supply army stores when Matamoros dealers charged such high prices that there was no profit left to buy for their own needs. That left the trade open to "unpatriotic, unprincipled, and corrupt sharers and speculators from east of the Mississippi, foreigners, German Jews and Yankees, and some few Texans." Some suggested that Bee
himself had a hand in the corruption. R. H. Williams, a member of the Partisan Rangers who supposedly had a "high sense of well balanced justice," claimed that "General Wasp" and "his ring" only gave permits to his own "creatures," in return for adequate compensation, of course. He also accused Hart of using government money and teamsters for his own speculations.59

When he first arrived in Brownsville in January 1863, Bee had no time to worry about such slander. Diplomacy was his first order of business. He had to keep trade routes open. Not only was he concerned with the negotiations with Lopez, but also with the possibility that the northern governors might obey a Juarez decree stopping trade. (The Mexican leaders on the border ignored it.)60 It appears from his correspondence with Magruder that Bee did nothing to check into the charges against speculators or the permits business. It is possible that he gave orders to tighten control and assumed that they were being carried out. But there is no evidence either way.

While he was talking to Lopez, Bee was also engaging in some trading to get supplies, especially arms, for his district. He was acting on no authority from Magruder, but the deals fell into his lap, and Bee was too shrewd a businessman not to seize them. He first negotiated a contract for six thousand muskets and bayonets from Havana for the price of twelve dollars each. Payment was to be made in cotton at the going rate in Matamoros, and one-fifth of the number of arms were to be delivered to the custom house authorities of that city, "in consideration of the duties
and charges of said office and port." The parties involved also wanted to deliver one million pounds of powder, but Bee wanted approval from his superior before accepting that amount.

Even more important was a second bargain for arms. Bee was extremely pleased with his luck. The situation offered not only the chance to obtain weapons, but also the opportunity to disgrace the United States before the French. He had come into some information "which I could hardly have hoped to secure so soon after my arrival," concerning an arms shipment from New York destined for Mexico. One J. Bustamente had been sent to New York with letters from Thomas Corwin, United States minister to Mexico, where he ordered over forty thousand stands of arms, to be paid for on delivery. The purchase price was seven hundred thousand dollars, and the Mexican government had assessed each of its states for a quota of the amount. But Mexico had not been able to raise more than one-half of the total. Bee immediately stepped in and offered to take whatever the Mexicans could not pay for. The Mexican authorities were "much astonished" by his knowledge and his proposition, but agreed to let him have the arms.

Having got that far on his own, Bee asked Magruder, "Now, general, what shall I do, and how shall I do it?" He intended to obtain full documentation to place before the French so that "the Emperor Napoleon . . . may see what kind of friends he has in the Lincoln Government." He considered seizing the vessel and taking the arms "by a bold dash," but only as a last resort. The best way to get "our share"
would be to pay for it. What resource, other than cotton, was there? Was he to press every bale he could find, with the promise of paying it back? Magruder told him to pay any way he could, in coin or cotton, and wrote to Richmond for specie to make sure of the purchase. 64

Closer to home, supplies for the troops on the border were becoming more difficult to obtain. Prices were rising, and Mexican merchants were reluctant to accept Confederate currency, even at greatly depreciated values. The proceeds from the two-dollar license fee and the five-dollar exchange of notes for specie had been used, up to this time, to purchase supplies, but that was an unreliable source and would be insufficient since more troops were on their way to the border. 65

Magruder sought a solution to the problem in another regulation. General Order Number 28 set more rules on the export of cotton and import of supplies on the Mexican frontier. It was designed to increase the number of contracts bringing in government supplies, to eliminate some of the confusion resulting from competition among agents, honest contractors, and unscrupulous speculators, and to stop the use of conscript teamsters to carry out non-government cotton. Permits and passes were to be obtained from certain designated officials only, and Bee's rules that half the value of the cotton exported must be imported in government stores remained unchanged. Finally, the exchange of coin for paper on each bale was discontinued, and Bee was to enforce a strict compliance with the orders. 66

When the order reached Bee, and the extent to which
he put it into effect, are unknown. March was busy with
the E. J. Davis affair and a minor episode of an argument
over the ownership of the cargo of a Federal brig, the
Young Harry, wrecked off the coast. Bee wanted to claim the
prize of clothing, supplies, and some four hundred barrels
of flour for his men who saved it, but the Confederate
States receiver obtained an injunction and took possession.
The case was settled in a civil court in favor of the
receiver, and Bee was unhappy with the judgment. He did not
like feeling controlled by civil officials whose sole object,
he claimed, was the collection of fees.67

Magruder's order, in any case, did not have a long
life; indeed, it was dead at the time he wrote it. The
Confederate War Department had heard of Holmes's General
Order Number 25 prohibiting cotton exportation except under
Bee's rules, and Secretary Seddon objected. Such an order
was an assumption of Congressional power and a violation of
existing laws. Seddon told Holmes, in a letter dated
January 28, 1863, to countermand his order, revoke the
authority exercised by Bee, and instruct the general on
the border "to confine his action hereafter within the
limits of law and in submission to civil authority on
this subject."68

General Magruder did not learn of Seddon's order
until March 31, when he was in San Antonio on the way to
the border because of the Davis kidnapping. Thoroughly
alarmed, he wrote Adjutant General Cooper that he might have
to give up the Rio Grande to the enemy. He could not supply
the troops there unless the army could get cotton to pay for
provisions. The price of cotton had already gone up ten cents in Houston on the strength of rumors that the order had been revoked, and Magruder feared further depreciation of the currency as the prices continued to rise. Rather than fall back, Magruder said he would use the power of impressment to obtain cotton, although he knew it would create great dissatisfaction. He asked for one hundred thousand dollars in foreign exchange, therefore, so that he would not have to follow through on this threat.

What he really wanted was to carry his Order Number 28 into effect, and he tried to persuade Cooper that "its promulgation has given general satisfaction." Under the old regulations not more than five percent of the cotton exported had been imported in supplies. He neglected to state what percentage was coming in under his rules, but since his order had the same purpose as the Confederate law, to bring in supplies for the army, and since it injured no class, except speculators, Magruder could not understand why it was not permitted. As soon as he reached the border and learned the exact state of affairs, however, he would countermand his order and "substitute such other as demanded."69

While Magruder fumed at bureaucrats in far away Richmond, people who obviously did not know the true situation, would not listen, and were trying to run his district, Bee busied himself with his normal duties. The Davis affair still rankled, and the Mexicans remained noticeably cool toward the Texans. Bee's orderly was assaulted in Matamoros by a "renegado" with a six-shooter, but Bee made no move to
retaliate. He did not wish to start new trouble. By April 8, Bee felt he could accept an invitation to a ball given by the Matamoros authorities in honor of a defeat of the French. It was the first "civility" the Texans had received since the kidnapping, and Bee preferred to be cautious at this first visit. He and Luckett attended the ball "dressed in plain clothes, and [carrying] pistols concealed in case of accidents." 70

On one of his excursions to Boca del Rio to inspect his troops and the traffic on the river and the Gulf, Bee met a visitor who had just arrived from England. Lieutenant Colonel Arthur James Lyon Fremantle, H. M. Coldstream Guards, had come to observe the American war. A thoroughly charming man, Fremantle was interested in everything, and he and Bee got on famously. They met on the road, and, after Bee learned who the stranger was, Fremantle reported, "he thereupon descended from his ambulance and regaled me with beef and beer in the open. . . . We talked politics and fraternized very amicable [sic] for more than an hour." A few days later, the Confederate invited the Britisher to his quarters for talk and cocktails, "which were rather good, and required five or six different liquids to make them." Being on the border had advantages when it came to the availability of refreshments. 71

Fremantle had several other talks with Bee, who was glad to get news of the outside world, and breakfasted with him before setting out for San Antonio. On the way, the colonel met Mrs. Bee at King's ranch. She evidently did not make the long hard trip to Brownsville, but stopped there,
and the general came to her. Fremantle reported that Mrs. Bee was "a nice lively little woman, a red-hot Southerner, glorying in the facts that she had no Northern relations or friends, and that she is a member of the Church of England." 72

In addition to his responsibilities with the cotton trade and diplomatic relations, Bee was also charged with the defense of the area. Border citizens did not welcome the conscript law, which had the effect of driving them across the river to live. In the "exercise of my best judgment," Bee tried other means than force to enlist the sympathies and services of these people. He used Lubbock's proclamation calling out the militia and mustered the companies on the Rio Grande for four months' service. Three companies composed of "Mexican citizens" (it is unclear whether he meant Texas citizens of Mexican blood, or actual citizens of Mexico) were enrolled in Confederate service and performed well. Bee tried to follow a policy of protecting the Mexicans' rights and immunities to gain their support. He reported success at enrolling the Mexicans as an auxiliary force and thought they would be valuable if the enemy landed on the coast. He hoped to organize two companies to serve during the war and to take over the police duties of his troops and relieve three companies of cavalry at Ringgold Barracks at Rio Grande City for duty with their regiment. 73

Major General Magruder arrived in Brownsville on April 17 and was immediately honored with a parade and review of the troops. 74 Considering the variety of costume among the Texans, excepting the black felt hats that all
wore, the parade was not a spit-and-polish affair, but it was in its own way impressive, because the Texans were "all business" and looked it.75

Since Magruder had to revoke his regulations on border traffic and trade, no revenue came in to buy supplies for Bee's troops. Hart seemed unable to deliver any bales to the border for Confederate provisions also. In order to obtain some reliable source of stores, and the cotton to pay for them, Major Charles Russell, Bee's quartermaster, with Magruder's approval, contracted on April 28 with Richard King, Mifflin Kenedy, and Charles Stillman, of Mifflin Kenedy & Company, to supply stores for six months. The price for the supplies was to be five hundred bales of cotton per month of the contract, and the company would receive the cotton in the interior, not on the border.76

After the restrictions were removed, the government was even less able to obtain cotton. Prices rose even in remote districts, and owners refused to accept paper for payment. On the border, Bee and Magruder were concerned about the declining strength of government credit when no cotton arrived from Hart to pay the bills. There were many instances of missed opportunities to obtain supplies,77 but there had somehow been no crisis yet. This state of affairs could not go on forever, but no one seemed to want to take any action on his own authority, not even Bee. Everyone, Bee, Hart, Russell, Magruder, complained about the situation and suggested remedies, but did nothing.78

Bee may have felt cautious after two reprimands from Richmond, one for martial law and the other for his regula-
tions. Also, his superior officer was there, and if Magruder did not act, then Bee could not. He was getting tired of trying to do his duty to the best of his ability and then finding all his work was for naught when Richmond reversed his orders. He found too that, in just trying to do his job, he had made, if not enemies, then at least few friends. Bee had heard the rumors slandering his good name, and he was not happy. It took the chance for military operations to revive his spirit.

Late in March 1863, General Nathaniel P. Banks led a Union army into Louisiana up Bayou Teche. The expedition reached Alexandria in May before it withdrew to support Grant's operations on the Mississippi. The Confederates retreated before this invasion, and Kirby Smith was forced to move his headquarters to Shreveport from Alexandria. Alarmed at Federal progress, he directed Magruder on April 16 to move all "disposable forces" toward Louisiana as quickly as possible, but the order did not reach the border until the first days of May.

In order to conceal troop movements "from our neighbors, as well as from our declared enemies," Magruder indulged in some theatrics and published an order for the soldiers near the river to move to positions of "greater health" in the vicinity. In reality, Bee was to put two thousand of his men on the road to east Texas and leave only one regiment of cavalry, one battery of light artillery, and six siege guns on the frontier. Colonel James Duff's Thirty-third Texas Cavalry was to remain, with Duff in command of the Rio Grande area. An excited Magruder almost
overwhelmed Bee with detailed instructions of how to make the march: break up the groups and spread them a day apart on the trail to allow for lack of water; establish depots of supplies; more grass and water had been found than expected, so a day's interval was unnecessary; send the troops forward rapidly, hurry, hurry, hurry.81

Impatient, the major general left Brownsville around the tenth of May and continued to send Bee orders for the march. H. H. Bell, United States consul, recorded in his diary that the Mexicans said the last Texan soldier had left Brownsville on the morning of the twenty-ninth for parts unknown, so Magruder had managed to bring off part of his charade, although the destination of the troops could not have been difficult to imagine.82

Bee sent his troops on, but did not leave the city until June 7. A British steamer, the Sea Queen, had arrived with a quantity of arms for the Confederacy, but there was no cotton to pay for the weapons. Hoping to obtain the cargo, Bee remained in Brownsville until the matter was taken out of his hands by the French. A French ship arrived to blockade Matamoros, and the captain refused to allow any goods landed from the Sea Queen on Mexican soil. Bee felt that landing the cargo in Texas would compromise the neutrality of the ship, and when he could not persuade the French captain to permit unloading in Mexico, he followed his troops.83

While Bee was on the road, Magruder learned that the situation in Louisiana had changed. Banks had turned back from Alexandria, and Texas troops were no longer needed.
Magruder therefore ordered Bee's two cavalry regiments, Buchel's and Woods's, to camp near King's ranch, and Luckett's infantry to continue east to Navasota. Thinking that Bee was still on the Rio Grande, he told him in several dispatches to stay there and "under no circumstances leave that frontier until further orders... These orders are final and will not be changed unless the circumstances require it." But Bee was already on the way, and his reports indicated to Magruder that he was continuing east in disobedience of orders.

Magruder fired off another letter to his "straying" subordinate, stating that he was "astonished" that Bee had evidently not received his orders. He told Bee to "come no farther east, but... remain at King's ranch, unless you have advanced beyond that place. If so, and are near Goliad, you will remain at Goliad." The major general also wished him to state why he had not complied with orders to remain on the Rio Grande.

Bee was somewhat insulted by this "implied charge of disobedience of orders." He carefully explained from Goliad that he had followed instructions to move his brigade east, and after the delay, of which he had informed Magruder, he hastened to overtake his command. He did not receive any orders to stay until he reached Medio Creek, some twenty miles west of Goliad. His command was scattered from Fort Brown to Columbus by this time, and to rest the teams and collect his troops, he intended to stay at Goliad until able to return. Trusting "that this explanation will be satisfactory to the general commanding," he stated that
he was ready to go back alone to carry out Magruder's wishes. 87

This communication prompted a very conciliatory letter from the "general commanding." No charge of disobedience or any reflection of any kind was intended. The express line carrying the dispatches was at fault, and Magruder had asked why his orders had not been obeyed merely to ascertain the reliability of the carrier. On the contrary:

The major-general commanding, entertaining as he does for you the kindest feelings as well as the highest appreciation of your soldierly qualities, and as also of your promptness and alacrity in the discharge of your duties, would be the last one to intentionally say anything which would imply a disobedience of orders by you; far from it, I assure you, general. 88

But the general with all those sterling qualities did not immediately leave for the border. Because he did not intend to stay in Brownsville forever, he wanted to form a camp of instruction in Bee County to drill and train troops. Bee had anticipated a chance to do battle in Louisiana, and he was fully aware of his inexperience when he requested to be allowed to command this camp on completion of his duties on the Rio Grande. He wanted to familiarize "the troops to their commander and the commander to his troops, a position I have never occupied since I have been in the army." 89

While Bee procrastinated, Magruder vacillated. He had rashly said earlier that Bee could establish his headquarters at Corpus Christi if that were preferable to Brownsville, and that he wanted Bee close to Corpus Christi to be able to move east swiftly if necessary. Then as the
procurement of arms and ammunition became a critical problem that Bee would have to supervise personally, Magruder directed him to establish himself "at some point where you will be able to fully superintend this business." The next day, July 3, "upon mature reflection," and with Kirby Smith's agreement, he decided that Bee's presence was "absolutely necessary at or near Brownsville. . . . Your knowledge of the Mexican character and affairs renders your presence of the greatest advantage." 90

At this point, compliments could not make that service more palatable to Bee. He replied on July 9 that he would not lose a moment in going to the border, but he was not happy.

I go forward to obey the orders of my general, but I must be permitted to place on record my regret that this disagreeable duty had not been assigned to an officer of less rank, who could have discharged it equally as well. I have been so unfortunate as to have been required to carry out all previous orders about cotton, and have not failed to receive my portion of slander and abuse, and I had hoped that I was in future clear of it. I anticipate great difficulties in accomplishing the wishes of Lieutenant General Smith, but will secure the arms, if they come, at all hazards, and will keep you advised regularly of what transpires. 91

There was one factor about his assignment that could have led him to hope that he might be able to bring some order out of confusion on his return. By the middle of 1863, authorities were desperate for arms and supplies, and Bee went back armed with the ultimate weapon of the government in the cotton trade -- the power of impressment.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER III

1 Lea, King Ranch, 195-6; Lord, Fremantle, 11, 23. Fremantle reported in April 1863 that there had been no real rain for eleven months in the Valley.


3 There was a daily stage line between Brownsville and Austin, via San Antonio, that cost ten cents a mile in gold and allowed only twenty-five pounds of luggage per passenger. For the best description of the trip, see Lord, Fremantle, 25-6. John W. Hunter, "The Fall of Brownsville on the Rio Grande, November 1863," (typescript, Biographical File, Eugene C. Barker Texas History Center, University of Texas at Austin), 6-7; Lea, King Ranch, 195-6.

4 Hunter, "Fall," 5; Lord, Fremantle, 17.

5 The streets were in a grid pattern at right angles to each other, thanks to a sheriff who had destroyed any houses out of line by a certain date. Paul Horgan, Great River, The Rio Grande in North American History (2 vols., New York, 1954), II, 788; Lea, King Ranch, 68; Benjamin F. McIntyre, Federals on the Frontier: The Diary of Benjamin F. McIntyre, 1862-1864, ed. by Nannie M. Tilley (Austin, 1963), 260; Williams, Border Ruffians, 279.

6 McIntyre, Federals, 260-61.

7 Horgan, Great River, II, 662-3. The reports of officers well versed in military engineering who inspected the fort in 1861 made clear how dismal the picture really was. Three months constant labor for five hundred men was the estimate of what was required to put the fort in order, but the other factors still made it militarily unsound and indefensible. Allen C. Ashcraft, "Fort Brown, Texas, in 1861," Texas Military History (Winter 1963), 243-247.

8 Pierce to Seward, March 1, 1862, Matamoros Consular Dispatches; Robert W. Delaney, "Matamoros, Port for Texas during the Civil War," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, LVIII (April 1955), 474.

9 William Watson, The Adventures of a Blockade Runner; or Trade in Times of War (London, 1892), 24-5; Lord, Fremantle, 10; Williams, Border Ruffians, 280; Lea, King Ranch, 158-67, 178-79.

10 Owsley, King Cotton, 92-109; J. Fred Rippy, The United States and Mexico (New York, 1931), 232-4.

11 Owsley, King Cotton, 109-119; Ralph Roeder, Juarez and His Mexico (2 vols., New York, 1947), II, 350-1.

Owsley, King Cotton, 132-3.

Bee to Magruder, January 30, 1863, O.R., XV, 964-5; Luckett to Magruder, January 26, 1863, ibid., 960-1. Lopez had no Mexican force in the area, the troops were at Tampico fighting the French, and he probably realized that the Texans would not stop at the river anyway. Also, the Mexican government, having read in American newspapers of the raids under the United States flag and protected by Mexican authority, was displeased. They assumed the accounts were false, having heard nothing from Lopez, but felt publication of such information was bad for Mexico. Lopez was instructed to proclaim these articles falsehoods, if in fact they were. But whether true or false, Lopez was to state that the government disapproved of criminal expeditions and he was to prevent or disperse them. Mexicans participating in such expeditions were to lose the protection of Mexico when in Texas. According to Quintero, this was not done by Lopez. O.R., XXVI, pt. 2, 49, 52-3.


Lopez to Bee, February 11, 1863, ibid., 975.

Bee to Lopez, February 18, 1863, ibid., 992-4;

Lopez to Bee, February 22, 1863, ibid., 994-5.

Ibid., 997-8.

Lopez to Bee, February 23, 1863, ibid., 996.

Bee to Lopez, February 26, 1863, ibid., 998.

Bee to Magruder, February 25, 1863, ibid., 991-2.

Bee to Lopez, March 10, 1863, ibid., 1127-8.

Bee to Magruder, March 7, 1863, ibid., 1006.

Handbook, I, 469; Owsley, King Cotton, 124;
Thompson, Confederate Purchasing Operations, 121; Bee to Magruder, March 15, 1863, O.R., XV, 1016-17.

Bee to Hébert, September 24, 1862, O.R., IX, 624-5; Bee to Magruder, March 11, 1863, ibid., XV, 1013-4.

Bee to Magruder, March 11, 1863, ibid., XV, 1013-4.

28 Bee to Magruder, March 15, 1863, Q.R., XV, 1016-17. For an eye-witness account, see Williams, Border Ruffians, 293-8. Williams was part of the raid and felt that it was foolish to upset Mexico just to break up a group of Unionists and that his major in charge of the expedition had orders from somewhere. He also maintained that "General Wasp" (Bee) wanted to hang Davis but was afraid of the consequences. Fremantle later saw Montgomery's body, or what was left of it, when he passed through the area in April. "[Montgomery] had been slightly buried, but his head and arms were above the ground, his arms tied together, the rope still round his neck, but part of it still dangling from quite a small mesquite tree." Lord, Fremantle, 8; Lea, King Ranch, 20-3.


30 Lopez to Bee, March 15, 1863, ibid., 1128-9.


32 Lopez to Minister of State and Foreign Relations, March 15, 1863, ibid., XXVI, pt. 2, 49-51. The Minister did not reply until April 1, when it was too late, but told Lopez that if Bee's answer was not satisfactory, to inform Bee that Mexico would seize all Confederate officers. Lopez was further instructed to treat all invaders as bandits, to authorize no invasion of Texas, and not to interrupt commerce or order interruption without orders from the government. Juan Quintero reported to Vidaurre in Monterrey, where there had been no excitement, and this governor had a rather cynical but realistic view of the situation. "He [Vidaurre] told me he was not surprised to hear of it; he expected it as a natural consequence of the favors shown by the Mexican authorities to the United States consul at Matamoros, and the vagabonds he recruited to join the United States Army. He believes this affair to be a good offset to the Zapata raid on Texas. He says that some of the authorities in Tamaulipas are, like those at the capital of Mexico, controlled by an unprovoked hostility to the Confederacy, thinking themselves capable not only to cope with France but with the Southern States. He laughs at their conceit and ignorance." Quintero to Benjamin, March 21, 1863, ibid., 67-9.

33 Bee to Lopez, March 22, 1863, ibid., XV, 1135.

34 Bee to Lopez, March 16, 1863, ibid., 1129-30.


37 Bee to Lopez, March 22, 1863, *ibid.*, XV, 1134-5.


39 Magruder to Kirby Smith, May 7, 1863, *ibid.*, 1078-9; Bee to Magruder, March 26, 1863, *ibid.*, 1024.


41 Reprinted in *San Antonio Herald*, February 28, 1863.

42 Rippy, *United States and Mexico*, 240.

43 Raphael Semmes, *Memoirs of Service Afloat, during the War Between the States* (Baltimore, 1869), 791-2. Semmes saw Yankee influence everywhere in the fight for money in Bagdad. There was money to be made in the village -- a common laborer could make $5 to $6 a day, specie, and if he had a lighter, $20 to $40. Hotels and saloons housed in shanties were big business also. Ashcraft, "Texas," 155-6.

44 Watson, *Blockade Runner*, 16-26. The turns in the Rio Grande were so sharp that the shallow-draft steamers had to bump up against the banks, back and forth, to maneuver around the corners. J. P. Newcomb, *Sketch of Secession Times in Texas and Journal of Travel from Texas through Mexico and California* (San Francisco, 1863), 4; Pierce, *Brief History*, 54-5; Lea, *King Ranch*, 183; Semmes, *Memoirs*, 791-2; Lord, *Fremantle*, 6.

45 At one time in 1863, the trader had to pay 75¢ per bale Confederate export tax, a Mexican tariff of $1.50 per hundred pounds, and if he shipped his cotton to Europe, from $5 to $7.50 per bale lighterage fee. Ashcraft, "Texas," 156. The Mexicans were very adept at levying duties, and at times raised them in retaliation for Confederate action. Watson said the Mexican tax on imports or exports was twelve and one-half percent. Watson, *Blockade Runner*, 20-21; Owsley, *King Cotton*, 131.


47 Lea, *King Ranch*, 192. Cotton delivered at Matamoros was 36¢ in April 1863. During the year, the price fluctuated between 20¢ and 70¢. In November it moved up to 80¢ to 90¢. The price went up in the interior of the state as well, due to competition for cotton, but it appears that the farmer could not really dictate his price. It was a buyer's market.


49 Hunter, "Fall," 7.


52 Hanna, "Incidents - Blockade," 223-6; Delaney, "Matamoros," 474, 478. Trade was so great that regular packet lines were started between Matamoros and Havana, Belize, London, and New Orleans.


55 Hart, appointed in late 1862, was reportedly prominent on the border and a friend of many merchants in Mexico. Owsley, King Cotton, 127.

56 Magruder to Holmes, December 15, 1862, Q.R., XV, 900.

57 Luckett to Magruder, January 26, 1863, ibid., 960-1.


59 Oldham, "Memoirs," 360-1; Don H. Biggers, German Pioneers in Texas (Fredericksburg, Texas, 1925), 61; Williams, Border Ruffians, 284-5.

60 Bee to Magruder, February 10, 1863, Q.R., XV, 973-4.
61 Personal Service Record, National Archives.


63 Bee says 65,000; Quintero, 40,000. Quintero to Benjamin, March 1, 1863, ibid., Ser. II, V, 842.

64 Bee to Magruder, February 15, 1863, ibid., XV, 979-81; Magruder to Cooper, March 3, 1863, ibid., 1004. There is no evidence that the contracts were fulfilled, but it is doubtful that the second one was, because Bee did not impress any cotton at this early date, and no mention of the deal with the Mexican authorities was made again.

65 Magruder to Cooper, March 31, 1863, ibid., XV, 1030-32.

66 General Order No. 28, February 22, 1863, ibid., 986-8; Lord, Fremantle, 28.


68 Seddon to Holmes, January 28, 1863, ibid., LIII, 845-6.

69 Magruder to Cooper, March 31, 1863, ibid., XV, 1030-32. Magruder also implied in his letter that he was handling the border situation all by himself.

70 Lord, Fremantle, 8, 15, 16.

71 Ibid., 8, 13.

72 Ibid., 34, 21, 22.

73 Bee to Magruder, April 27, 1863, O.R., XV, 1056-7. Only part of the problem with regard to Mexicans had to do with the conscription law as it applied to the Mexicans. Mexican teamsters, who carried much of the cotton and supplies between Mexican cities and interior Texas ones, were much harassed and abused by Texans who wanted to drive them out of business and then become teamsters themselves. Teamsters were exempt from the draft. These actions might not have worried Texans much, except that the Mexican teamsters worked for men of wealth and influence across the border — men who were in a position to hurt the Confederacy by ceasing to do business across the river. Some Texans saw the danger caused by ill-treatment of the Mexican teamsters, but it appears that no one did anything to stop it. Webb to Magruder, March 18, 1863, ibid., 1017-18.

74 San Antonio Herald, May 2, 1863.

75 Lord, Fremantle, 7, 9.
Charles Russell to H. C. McNeill, May 4, 1863, O.R., XV, 1073-4; Lea, King Ranch, 199-201. It was a curious contract in that King had to round up the cotton to pay himself. But Lea estimated that each partner would make a clear profit of at least $60,000. The three thousand bales were worth about $900,000 in gold at the time. The supplies came in on schedule.

Tyler, "Cotton-Border," 468.

For complaints and suggestions, see Chapter IV.


Belton to Magruder, April 16, 1863, O.R., XV, 1043.

Magruder to Kirby Smith, May 7, 1863, ibid., 1078-9; Magruder to Bee, May 5, 1863, ibid., 1077-8; Turner to Bee, May 9, 1863, The Eldridge Collection, Box 39 (Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California); S. Yancey to Bee, May 14, 1863, ibid.; Magruder to Bee, May 15, 1863, O.R., XXVI, pt. 2, 6.


Turner to Bee, June 9, 1863, O.R., XXVI, pt. 2, 42; Magruder to Bee, June 5, 1863, ibid., 37-8. Four companies of Woods's regiment were detached -- two to Corpus Christi and two to Lavaca.

Magruder to Bee, June 4, 1863, ibid., 323; Magruder to Bee, June 17, 1863, ibid., 71-2; Bee to Magruder, June 22, 1863, ibid., 76-7.

Magruder to Bee, June 17, 1863, ibid., 71-2.

Bee to Magruder, June 22, 1863, ibid., 76-7.

Turner to Bee, June 25, 1863, ibid., 83.

Bee to Magruder, June 23, 1863, ibid., 79-80.

Yancey to Bee, June 22, 1863, ibid., 75-6; Turner to Bee, June 30, 1863, Eldridge Collection; Magruder to Bee, July 2, 1863, O.R., XXVI, pt. 2, 100-101; Yancey to Bee, July 3, 1863, ibid., 102.

CHAPTER IV

IMPRESSMENT -- OR HOW TO HAVE A BOLL

JUNE to OCTOBER, 1863

Impressment of private property was not a popular policy, but the army had used the method from almost the beginning of the war to obtain what it needed. Although abuses of the system were widespread, Congress did not attempt to regulate it legally until 1863. "An Act to Regulate Impressments" passed on March 26, and the public accepted it with little opposition. The measure was clearly necessary to keep the armies in the field. The law might also bring some order to the practice and make reimbursement at a fairer price a little more certain for property taken.

In Texas, however, people had real difficulty seeing any necessity for impressment. The war was far away. What need did the army have to take their goods? There was no military emergency. And to impress cotton would cause resentment and opposition, and Confederate officials knew it. Many Texans had been indifferent to the war from the beginning, and to make active enemies of them would be stupid. There would be protest from high places as well, for many of the wealthiest and most influential men in the state were engaged in the cotton trade.

Nevertheless, by June the officers engaged in trying to supply the army decided impressment of cotton was the only solution to their problems. Since Secretary Seddon had removed the restrictions on the trade, cotton prices had
risen, even in remote districts, to forty and fifty cents a pound. No government agent had the money to pay that price, even if specie-mad owners could be induced to accept paper. Speculators were buying up cotton and shipping it out of the country as quickly as they could, but returning no goods in its place. Finally, contracts made for arms from Europe were being delivered, and government credit had to be upheld.

Major Simeon Hart, who was responsible directly to Richmond, was the first to ask for authority to impress cotton. He had no funds to purchase any, and Magruder and Kirby Smith refused him even a temporary loan. Furthermore, he could not transport what cotton he had because wagons were so scarce. Bee was not enforcing the regulations on conscript teamsters as he should, Hart claimed, and much private cotton was being illegally carried by government teams. Hart wanted power to take all cotton in the state and to control all transportation to the Rio Grande. "It is a question of supply or no supply," he stated. Impression was the only way out of these difficulties, and there was not a moment to be lost.1

While Hart was complaining of the activities of others, they were complaining about him. Charles Russell saw the major problem to be in the organization of Hart's activities and did not recommend impression as a solution. He suggested consolidating all the government trade and transportation under one roof to coordinate activities, establish a line of responsibility, and divide the labor. One man just could not do everything, and centralization
would protect the government and the people against fraud. As proof for the need for a new policy, Russell offered the fact that since the beginning of the year Hart had only been able to deliver forty bales of cotton to the Rio Grande. That was in May. By the middle of the next month Russell was greatly worried about the state of government credit on the border. Hart had "utterly failed to accomplish anything."  

General Magruder was also upset with Hart. From his point of view, the good general had afforded Hart every facility in his power to enable the major to carry out his duties. In spite of the steamboats and conscript teams at his command, Hart had failed. Magruder thought the quartermaster had shown "a great want of energy, a great want of foresight, and a great want of ability in the management of his department." He regretted recommending Hart for the job and especially regretted having so overrated his abilities. He would not give Hart authority to impress cotton and transportation, as the major requested, but said he would support him if he (Hart) decided to do it on his own. Magruder's opinion on impressment was subject to change, however, as Bee discovered.

Arrival of the Sea Queen at the end of May 1863 with a valuable cargo of Enfield rifles precipitated the movement for impressment. Bee would have been happy to receive the cargo, but had no cotton. He too was quite perturbed with Hart for telling no one of the deal and then for not honoring the payment for his contracts. He understood the major to have claimed -- but not in writing -- to have twenty-five hundred bales of cotton "on wheels,"

but where were they? Bee fumed that if all Hart could produce after five months' work was sixty bales of cotton, and that was to be the limit of his ability, then he should be replaced, before he ruined government credit completely.

To obtain the Sea Queen cargo, Bee requested authorization from Magruder to press cotton, but he intended to do that on his own if necessary. He could justify his actions under Magruder's instructions giving him that power to pay for arms sent by Magruder's agent in Cuba. The intervention of the French made impressment unnecessary, however, and Bee left Brownsville to join his troops.5

A couple of days later another English steamer loaded with army supplies arrived at the mouth of the river and brought news of two more to follow. Russell, whom Bee had left to handle the situation, decided to impress cotton, "and hope to be sustained."6

Magruder settled the question by ordering Bee on June 4, and Russell on June 7, to impress the cotton "in the hands of the speculators" to procure these goods and whatever else Hart's London agent, Nelson Clements, was able to deliver. Bee was to discriminate in favor of those with contracts with the chiefs of the disbursing department and not to interfere with cotton of supply associations or county organizations for the relief of soldiers' families. Magruder also offered a plan for the ships to land the cargoes at Brazos Santiago, load cotton, and then clear through Matamoros as a way to get through both the French and Union blockades.7

Within a few days, however, the major general began
to have second thoughts. He did not mention to Adjutant General Cooper in a report on June 8, 1863, that he had ordered impressment. He did state that he would support Hart in any impressments the quartermaster might make, but he thought resort to that measure would create "much dissatisfaction, if not serious trouble." On June 13, Kirby Smith gave him power to impress under the Congressional act "whenever you may deem it necessary and indispensable for carrying on the operations of the government," but this statement was not explicit enough for Magruder. The order did not specifically say "impress cotton." So Magruder wrote again to Kirby Smith, saying this time that he had a "great doubt" as to the right of impressing cotton under the impressment bill, and he therefore declined to give anyone authority to do so without instructions from department headquarters. He did not want to take the responsibility on himself.

While Magruder was ordering impressment and then changing his mind, Bee had been on the road to Goliad, so that when he received Magruder's first orders to impress cotton, he had not been in the position to do so. He may have instructed Russell to make impressments, but it appears that his quartermaster on the border did little, if anything, to secure payment for the cargoes. Since he thought he was going to be out of the cotton business while in Louisiana, Bee did send Magruder some proposals to enable Hart to obtain both cotton and transportation, but his suggestions did not mention impressment.

He must have been surprised and somewhat exasperated
to receive Magruder's following communications referring the matter to Kirby Smith and revoking all authority given in May and June to impress cotton. Any already taken was to be returned to its owners. On the other hand, if Bee decided to take any cotton, any impressments made were to be made according to the law, which gave authority to impress articles necessary to the support of an army. The arms were necessary, and cotton was the only possible method of payment, but until instructions of "explicit character" came from Kirby Smith, each officer "must exercise his own judgment as to what is absolutely necessary for the army or for the procuring of articles necessary to an army" and must "exercise the authority according to his judgment and interpretation [of the law] on his own responsibility."12

If Bee had been on the Rio Grande, he probably would have gone ahead with impressment. He had never shown any disinclination to act on his own. But he must have wondered what Magruder had in mind giving him such independence while questioning his obedience of orders on the movement from Brownsville. He was supposed to obey orders he did not receive, but not carry out orders he had, unless he wanted to. And there was really little he could do at all in Goliad.

Magruder continued to ask Kirby Smith for written authority to impress cotton, even using Bee as unsuspecting support for his hesitancy by claiming that Bee also doubted the legality of impressment.13 Although he stressed his doubt, that was not the real reason for Magruder's unwillingness to take responsibility for impressment. He knew the
odium that would be attached to the measure, and to him as its instigator. And Kirby Smith knew that he knew. The commander of the Trans-Mississippi Department, however, was willing to take the blame, and to act without waiting for word from Richmond.\textsuperscript{14}

Kirby Smith came to the conclusion that impressment of cotton was a military necessity for a variety of reasons. The Sea Queen and other ships were arriving with supplies under contract with the Secretary of War. Payment for their cargoes must be ready in cotton in order to save government credit. Hart had failed to meet the necessity. An absolute want of army supplies existed in the department. And finally, the interruption of communications across the Mississippi made the Rio Grande the only channel by which they could be received. Trade must be kept moving. He therefore ordered Magruder and Bee to impress, in his name, the cotton and transportation necessary to meet the wants of the department and to keep up the credit of the government. Exempted from impressment were those who had contracted with the government, had been approved, and had goods on the frontier waiting for their cotton, those persons importing machinery or transporting cotton for the public good, if possible, and L. S. James, general railroad agent, importing goods to keep up the military lines of communication. Every effort should be made to obtain cotton on or near the border in exchange for cotton in the interior or for cotton certificates. "Impressment is always the last resort on the part of the authorities."\textsuperscript{15}

This was all Magruder needed. He told Bee on June 26
to impress cotton for the *Sea Queen* cargo and broadened his directions on July 2. Use "every possible exertion" to procure arms and get them "regardless of the consequences," he told Bee, but impress according to the instructions from Kirby Smith and the law. Take the cotton of speculators and government contractors first, but not that of planters, the state of Texas, or county associations for soldiers' families. He did not define the difference between "speculators" and "planters." 16

Russell was supposed to handle the actual business end of impressment, while Bee was to oversee the transactions and Russell. The two men had their work cut out for them. To pay for the cargoes of five ships, it was estimated, would require fourteen thousand bales of cotton. They might find it necessary to go as far as Alleyton to find that many. In addition, they had to collect a tax of eight percent on all cotton, no matter who owned it. And they had to follow the orders of their commander, who, being Magruder, added his own exemptions to those of Kirby Smith, told them it was "believed better" to resort to impressment first, payment later, and gave them explicit instructions that seemed to cover every one of the fourteen thousand bales. 17

He also attempted to persuade a very disgruntled Bee that he did understand, but Bee must go back to the border. The paramount reason why Bee should superintend this business, Magruder stated, was "the fact of your being the commanding officer of the sub-district where the cotton trade is being principally carried on." This matter of vital interest required the attention of those best
acquainted with it, and "though the major-general commanding would with pleasure relieve you from what he knows is an unpleasant duty, he cannot intrust it to any officer under your rank." 

When Bee arrived in Brownsville on July 15, 1863, he found the city little changed from the way he left it, in spite of its temporary occupation in June by a renegade Mexican general, Juan-Maria Cobos. This "full-time bandit and occasional partiot" had taken possession of the city and used it as a base of operation against Matamoros, claiming he had "liberated" and "unified" the two. He was quickly removed by his one-time ally, Juan Cortinas. While this was happening, Governor Lopez was replaced by Don Manuel Ruiz, who ignored or rescinded all treaties and agreements made by his predecessor with the Confederates. But trade was not disrupted.

Due to the lack of specie, however, the market for cotton was slightly depressed, although bales continued to arrive daily. The wait at the ferry was interminable, and freight costs were exorbitant, as usual. The Brownsville Flag reported everyone hoarding specie and expressed wonderment that so few bales coming to the border had the government ownership stamp on them. The editor expected the next two months to be dull.

Bee's arrival created an uproar. He prohibited cotton export at once, called on the owners and agents to report what they had on hand, and immediately discovered problems everywhere. First of all, of course, nobody wanted his cotton impressed. Hart would not agree to turn over
his cotton to Bee, even if he had any in Brownsville, in exchange for cotton in the interior. Then the parties who were to receive the cotton payment indicated they would not accept impressed cotton, "as it is asserted that such as is owned in Mexico will, if impressed, be retaken by the owners as soon as crossed, and also that, it being universally known as Confederate cotton, it will be captured on the high seas by the enemy."

Also, only about eleven thousand bales of cotton were in Brownsville, and after exemptions only a little over seven thousand would be left to use. Of that, half belonged to foreigners. If that were exempted, then all the government would have was thirty-five hundred bales to pay a debt requiring fourteen thousand bales of cotton. And the debt was mounting. Three vessels, the Sea Queen, the William Peel, and the Gladiator, were at the mouth of the Rio Grande with cargoes, and more were expected. Bee did think that the French would release the Sea Queen, but anticipated difficulty getting her cargo across the border, since the notoriety over the transaction had thoroughly awakened the United States consul at Matamoros, who was sure to protest. 21

Magruder decided immediately upon hearing this, that the obstacles placed in Bee's way resulted "from a combination of merchants, mercantile and consular agents on both sides of the river, to render inoperative the impressment act." He could understand why some would refuse to accept impressed cotton belonging to foreigners, but not why they did not want cotton of Confederate citizens, whose own government had impressed it. At any rate, he thought there
was enough cotton available to fill the ships, even if not to pay the bills in full, and told Bee to dispatch them with return cargoes as quickly as possible. The major general was most worried about preserving government credit abroad, and, although Bee said he could buy many of the imported goods in Matamoros at twenty-five instead of one hundred percent on cost price, he must honor the foreign contracts first, even if the transactions were not "beneficial."

As usual, Magruder gave detailed orders on what to do. Bee was to keep the impressed cotton, both foreign and domestic, in his hands. If the merchants agreed to advance enough of what was on hand to load the ships with return cargoes, Bee was to release the rest, excepting the tax of eight percent now levied on exports. He was also to inform the British consul and foreign owners that the question of impressment of their cotton was under advisement by Kirby Smith, and their cotton would be held until the matter was settled. What Magruder really wanted was to hold the threat of impressment over the heads of the merchants, impressing every bale of cotton in sight, even state cotton, (with the exception of his and Kirby Smith's exemptions) until they agreed to "advance" the cotton needed to pay the bills. He did not get exactly what he wanted.

General Magruder somehow failed to understand two things. The first was the time factor. It took at least three weeks, often four or five, for Bee to write a report, send it to Magruder, and get a reply in Brownsville. By that time, whatever Magruder ordered was usually out of date and obsolete. The situation had so changed that his orders
meant nothing in the new circumstances.

What was worse was that Magruder did not understand Hamilton Bee. Bee was perfectly capable and willing to act on his own, suiting his actions to the circumstances and doing what seemed necessary to accomplish the larger purposes of his orders. He had confidence in his own ability to do so. He did not need, and probably did not like, to be told how to do everything. Magruder kept sending him detailed orders, but at the same time told him to use his own judgment. Then the major general was surprised when Bee did.

If Bee needed permission for his handling of the cotton situation on the border, he had it twice from his commander. Magruder stated on July 15, after explaining Russell's duties, "You will see that the instructions to Major Russell are carried out, with such modifications as the circumstances of the case may render necessary or advisable." Then, again on July 31, while Magruder was moving troops around for better defense because Vicksburg had fallen, he told Bee "to adhere rigidly to the orders in regard to stationing troops, and that whenever latitude or discretion is intended, it will always be given you in the order. In regard to matters touching the affairs on the Rio Grande [I wish] you to exercise your full discretion, always however acting in such manner as to secure the end proposed."23

Bee found himself at an impasse when he tried to impress the cotton to meet the government's obligations. Almost all the cotton on the border belonged to planters,
and could not be impressed under Magruder's orders. To solve this dilemma, he called a meeting of the owners and their agents to explain the situation. He told them that the government had a large stock of cotton on its way to the Rio Grande, but it would not reach the frontier for at least sixty days. Since the government needed cotton immediately to send to Europe, Bee decided to borrow twenty percent of all that was in the vicinity of the crossing in exchange for Confederate notes. The traders submitted to this "loan" without too much grumbling. They still had eighty percent of their cotton to export and knew that if they did not agree, Bee would impress it, whether it belonged to planters or not. Furthermore, Bee allowed exemptions to persons to whom the government owed money for past contracts.  

"I cannot approve of you exempting cotton from impressment because of the indebtedness of the Government to the owners thereof," Magruder stated angrily. This was not in accordance with Kirby Smith's orders or his own. Impressment had been ordered to provide for certain debts only, not for all. He and Kirby Smith had spelled out the exemptions, and as far as the planters were concerned, their cotton was to be exempt "only so far as may be necessary to purchase a reasonable amount of supplies. All over that small amount brings the planter in the category of Speculators and should be impressed. This is clear." Neither was cotton belonging to foreigners exempted. Magruder quoted the "Law of Nations" to Bee on that subject and told him to ignore the British consular agent at Matamoros, who was evidently involved in the "mercantile combination" to nullify
the impressment act.

What was really important was to maintain Confederate credit abroad by supplying cotton in fulfillment of the contracts. If the companies refused to accept payment in impressed cotton, that was not the Confederacy's fault, and they could not accuse the South of bad faith. But if the cotton was not supplied in payment of contracts made by the highest authority of the government, the President and the Secretary of War, it would mean the death of credit abroad, evidence of Confederate dishonesty, disgrace, and ruin. Individual hardships on the Rio Grande just did not count in the larger game. "How can you fail to see and appreciate the difference?" Magruder asked Bee and then ordered him "positively" to impress all the cotton, exempting only on his previous instructions, and to offer the cotton to the proper Sea Queen agents, getting any refusal of payment in writing. "Do not yield an inch to anybody."25

Bee did fail to see and appreciate the difference because he had another view from the Rio Grande. And it must be said that he probably did not understand his commander any more than his commander understood him, but then, who could understand Magruder? To Bee, credit was credit, and he attempted to explain and defend his actions in a report on August 27, 1863. Debts owed to someone in England or France had no greater worth than debts owed to the South's own citizens. Taking cotton from one set of creditors to pay another with claims of equal weight did not "shield and foster the public credit," according to the way he saw it. Bee regretted his action did not meet Magruder's approval.
but he believed "that it was but simple justice" and "in entire accord with my sense of justice, right, and policy." To uphold government credit with merchants on the border, he had intended, and still did intend, to claim an extension of ninety days on domestic debts, in consideration, not expressed, of the creditors being allowed to export their cotton then on the border. No harm was done to "the great objects sought to be obtained here," since he had enough cotton to pay for the Sea Queen's cargo, "and we have retained the good feelings and friendship of those who had proved themselves to be willing to aid us and to be worthy of it." In fact, although made by the Secretary of War, even the Sea Queen contract was not much of a matter of public credit to Bee, since Bellot, De Mermes & Company owed thousands to the Confederacy's own citizens and appeared to be a spurious business house anyway, from what proof Bee had seen.

His loan idea was working well, and Major Russell thought the cotton proceeds would answer present problems with no difficulty. Released by the French, the Sea Queen had departed with a private cargo before the Confederates could arrange otherwise, but when she returned, Russell would take care of the contract.

Discussion of the loan brought up the problems of exemptions, and Bee was more than a little put out with his commanding officer over this. Magruder had ordered: "You will not under any circumstances impress the cotton of planters." But almost all the cotton there belonged to planters, "or rather affidavits were filed to that effect."
In these circumstances Bee was glad to turn to the twenty-percent loan. He obtained the cotton he needed and did not have to make a distinction between the planter and stock-raiser or mechanic. Bee saw what Magruder did not. Impression under Magruder's orders "rankled the sore spot of our revolution; it made distinctions against the poor man in favor of the rich." Bee knew that dissatisfaction with the government was growing ominously. "The soldiers' wives talk about their husbands being taken from their homes and their families left to starve, or to charity, in order that the planter can keep his negroes," he states. "It is re-echoed by the disloyal and the demagogues until the population west of the Colorado is dangerously luke-warm on the subject of the war." Bee, a planter himself, thought the authorities needed to do something about this feeling by making distinctions against the planter, even taking his Negroes for public use and putting his whole means at the disposal of the government.

As if that were not enough, Magruder had told him to exempt the cotton of three agents, including Nelson Clements, contractor for the Sea Queen cargo, on the grounds that they had imported goods. But Bee had to pay for the goods in cotton as soon as they arrived, and at enormous prices -- at least fifty percent more than the going rate in the Mexican market. Why could not companies such as Droege, Oetling & Company, Marks & Company, and others, who had advanced their goods months ago and who were ready to advance more, have the same privilege, he wondered. Magruder was undermining and discrediting Bee's actions by
his exceptions, and Bee feared for the effect on the public faith of the government.

Bee knew that Magruder would not accept such a report and argument unless he included some sort of statement intended to soothe his commander's anger and displeasure, but even there he could not resist complaining of his situation.

I have no right [he said] to criticise the orders of my superiors, nor do I seek to do so, but surely when I am ordered to discharge an onerous and intensely disagreeable duty, and one not appertaining to my official rank, I may be allowed to discuss the effects of the carrying out of those orders in all its phases, and that when I construe them in the broad sense of all its bearings on our present and future position, I will not be considered as wanting in respect.26

Either Magruder realized that he could not arbitrarily order Bee around without knowing the situation more fully, or he just gave up trying to dictate to his independent-minded subordinate, or he realized Bee was at least partly right. At any rate, he seems to have accepted Bee's actions and the loan. He even revoked some of his exemptions to make cotton liable to the twenty-percent system and asked what Bee wanted done with the cotton impressed in San Antonio for Russell.27

During August Bee and Russell accumulated cotton and were able to report by the seventeenth that they had enough to pay for the cargoes of the Sea Queen and the Gladiator. The Sea Queen had departed for Liverpool with private freight, but her cargo and the Gladiator's were landed and ready for delivery. In addition, Russell had been purchasing as much as he could in the Mexican market and sent some sixty wagon loads of stores to Alleyton the
previous week. Confidence in the ability of the Confederate government to pay its bills had been restored.28

Unfortunately for the Confederate supply situation, the blockading ships of the Union navy chose this time to "exercise their power with a high hand." They seized the British brig Atlantic after it left Matamoros loaded with cotton and put a prize crew on the schooner Scudd, also partly loaded with cotton. Scudd had, according to the Federals, run the blockade in the past under another name. Bee expected this sort of thing, but when naval officers landed in Mexico to survey the mouth of the Rio Grande, "with a view to hostile movements," he protested to the new Tamaulipas governor, Don Manuel Ruiz. Ruiz had earlier expressed his assurances of wanting to foster trade and promote harmony on the border, but he did nothing about this new activity.29

On August 14, the Union squadron commander demanded that Ruiz force the Gladiator, Celt, and William Peel, all British ships, to leave the anchorage and put to sea in forty-eight hours, or the United States Navy would seize them, since they had brought in cargoes for the Confederates. Bee was not optimistic about this development. Ruiz denied the Federals' right to do such a thing, but Bee did not doubt they would capture the ships out of Matamoros, if not in port. There was, however, one good result. Bee thought the high-handed measures of the Yankees could not help but increase the "prevailing dissatisfaction in England," and that would aid the Confederate cause. Also, with the arrival of the other ships, there were more goods in
Matamoros than Bee had cotton to pay for, so even if the Union navy did act, Bee did not think they would do much injury to Confederate supply lines. The Federals apparently did nothing until September 14, but on that date they seized the William Peel in Mexican waters, claiming that it had brought supplies for the Rebels, and that the Confederates were going to use the ship as a privateer.30

With the blockade tightening, France's position in Mexico became more and more important to the southerners. In December 1862, Bee had sent A. Supervièlle to communicate with French naval officials at Tampico to urge upon them the advantages to be gained by taking Matamoros. Bee was more of a messenger than a planner in this venture, but Supervièlle reported to him. The agent, after much traveling and many delays, talked to the French and offered to help an invasion in both commercial and military ways. They were receptive to his ideas, and he returned to Brownsville in July 1863 with good news. The French expressed friendship and assurance that they would soon occupy Matamoros. They seized all the Mexican ports except that city, which they blockaded. But they did not invade the Rio Grande because of scarcity of troops and hesitancy about getting so near to Union forces. The Confederates expected them daily, and heard constant rumors of their coming, but finally got tired of waiting in September. Kirby Smith sent Supervièlle first to Mexico and then to Paris to appeal to the French, who were to come finally, but too late.31

In the meantime, a puzzled and highly frustrated Hamilton Bee sat in Brownsville through August and September.
He was hopeful of being "able to be of some service to my country, compensating me for my sojourn here," and asked for instructions for his conduct when the French arrived. Magruder had apparently forgiven him for "disobeying" the impressment orders and left his course of action "entirely to that discretion and wisdom which have heretofore characterized General Bee's conduct, both toward [France] and the Mexicans." But the French did not come. Instead, French blockaders captured ships bringing goods to the Confederacy. Juarez and his army had retreated north from Mexico City, and his only route of outside supply lay through Matamoros. The French captains were under orders to let no arms be landed that could be destined for the Mexicans, and they would not deviate from those instructions.

In early July 1863, the Caroline Goodyear, with seven thousand Enfield rifles and 2,840 muskets, was seized off Matamoros. Bee sent a letter to the French minister in Mexico to release the ship, and he expected to get it and its cargo as soon as the French moved on Matamoros. To forestall such an action, Magruder suggested that Bee communicate with the French blockade commander "through a Secret Agent," to inform him of expected arrivals and assure him of their Confederate destination.

But nothing seemed to work. Even the elements were against Bee and the Confederacy. On September 21, 1863, the Love Bird appeared off the bar with 10,000 Enfield rifles, 156 revolvers, 2,000,000 cartridges, and 5,000,000 caps in her hold under a Nelson Clements contract. Bee did not learn of the arrival until the twenty-third, but
he was unable to do anything because a gale came up. No boat could get across the bar for several days. Finally the sea calmed enough for lighters to reach the Love Bird and remove three loads, equal to 4,200 rifles, to Point Isabel on the twenty-sixth. That night a French frigate captured the ship and the next morning left for Vera Cruz with the prize. Bee had no chance to communicate with the frigate because, when it arrived, the Mexicans embargoed all shipping. Even though he offered Mexican officials one thousand dollars, he could not get permission to take out a boat.35

All Bee could do to recover the ship then was to write letters. He first wrote John Slidell in Paris to interpose with the French government to get the cargo returned.36 He wrote to Captain Duval of the French frigate Magellan asking him to restore the vessel to its former anchorage because its cargo was Confederate. To convince the Frenchman of his veracity, he offered proof in the way of certification by the French vice-consul in Matamoros that Bee had informed him of the expected arrival of the arms, that they were truly Confederate property, and that they had been landed at Point Isabel in Texas, never touching Mexican soil.37

Then a difficulty arose over the cargo which had been landed. Bee thought that he and the Love Bird's captain had a "perfect understanding" that the captain would move his ship to the Brazos Santiago bar for unloading. But the captain had refused to move. The lighters had to unload what they could in Mexican waters and then take the
cargo to Point Isabel. The captain, however, had entered the ship at the custom house at Matamoros, and that meant both neutrality and revenue laws were violated by taking the rifles to the Texas side of the border. The Mexicans arrested the crews of the lighters and threw them in jail in Matamoros. Bee was afraid for a while that the latent hostility always existing on the border would flare up again. He immediately communicated with Governor Ruiz and opened a negotiation "remarkable for the pertinacity with which they claimed that money could not atone for the outrage and the facility with which it was finally settled."

The result was payment by Bee of duty on the arms, the value of the three lighters, and a fine of one thousand dollars on each of the fifteen prisoners, making a grand total of twenty-six thousand dollars. Bee felt he had no choice in the matter but to assist his people and keep the peace. 38

Bee blamed the supercargo and especially the captain of the Love Bird for the whole situation, and he angrily wrote to Nelson Clements, who sent out the ship from England, to complain about the matter. By this time Bee was thoroughly disgusted, even furious with everyone connected with the affair. The supercargo, "a young man of not the slightest conception of what was expected of him or of what was his duty," had refused to give up the bills of lading unless he saw the cotton to pay for the cargo. This delayed unloading considerably. Then the captain, who did "everything which ignorance and his entire unfitness for his position could induce him to do to thwart and embarrass me," broke his word, did not move his vessel, and entered it
at the Matamoros custom house.

Because the captain, by so doing had caused the arrest of the lighter crews and the necessity of payment of an enormous fine, and by failing to notify Bee of his arrival had caused delay which resulted in loss of the cargo, the Confederate general demanded that Clements return the twenty-six thousand dollars to the government and pay damages. The London agent had not only chosen the incompetent captain, who should have known better than to expect the Yankees to honor a neutral flag, but he had also failed to obtain papers of authentication from the French government, by which all this could have been avoided. Bee had little patience for stupidity.39

To discover after all his efforts that Magruder blamed him for the loss of the weapons was almost too much. The major general knew the arms were coming, and, before news of the loss reached him, he ordered them sent immediately to Houston.40 He was therefore somewhat "surprised" to learn the situation. Since Magruder considered the transaction extremely important and saw the failure to secure the arms "of such a serious and grave character to the whole country," he did not wait for details from Bee, but wrote his subordinate that an investigation by a court would be required "unless a full and complete report of the whole matter is made by [him]."41

While he was waiting for an explanation, Magruder sent several letters to Bee, ordering him to send what arms had been saved to Houston, as quickly as possible. Those arms were not intended for any of Bee's men, but for the
seven thousand men without arms who were needed to defend Texas from the expected invasion. The major general also continued to express his displeasure with Bee's actions, telling him again that "the responsibility for the failure to get the arms ashore, and particularly any failure to send them with all possible rapidity to Houston," would rest upon him. And incidentally, "the slowness with which the teams loaded with Government stores come from the Rio Grande is disgraceful."43

Bee, however, was not going to accept censure when he felt he did not deserve it. This was the third time Magruder had scolded him without giving him a chance to explain. The first time his leaving Brownsville in June was the reason. The second was caused by his exempting government creditors from impressment. And now this. So he wrote Magruder a careful letter to explain and to fix the blame where it properly lay. That the arms were lost was really the fault of the "self-opinionated, ignorant captain, who supposed his duty accomplished when he came to anchor in a neutral port." But if the commanding general wanted someone to chew on, Bee had another candidate. Magruder had ordered Charles Russell on July 3 to expect the arms and to place a secret agent at the mouth of the river to notify the quartermaster immediately of their arrival. He was also to have a steamer ready to take on the cargoes.44 Russell had done neither. So Bee wrote:

I do not seek to shield myself from all proper responsibility by the fact that the orders of the general commanding, dated July 3, 1863, were addressed to my subordinate, and that on him might fall the responsibility, for I am conscious
of realizing to the fullest extent the great necessity of obtaining arms wherewith to save my State from invasion and ruin. With every motive on earth -- love of country, life, family, and interest -- I needed no inducement to do all that was possible to obtain the arms; that I did all that was in my power I feel satisfied, and respectfully request that the matter be inquired into, that I may have the opportunity to reestablish myself in the confidence of the general commanding.45

In an attempt to insure that Magruder understood the true situation in the future, Bee forwarded to the major general his recent communications with Captain Duval of the French Navy. He had informed the captain on October 13 of the expected arrival of another shipment of arms from Clements on the Nancy Dawson. Duval replied that he regretted "infinitely" having received the information, but that he was under orders. He told Bee that he could not take cognizance of any letters with references to vessels laden with arms and requested him to endorse on any communications in the future that they did not relate to that matter. Bee offered this to Magruder "as the best evidence that we have nothing to expect from anyone, and that, between the French, Yankee, and Mexican, no arms will be received here for the Confederacy."46

Expressions of disapproval from his commander were one thing to Bee; he could defend himself against accusations in those circumstances. The vituperation and abuse he received from his connection with the cotton business was another. Since he was in charge at the focal point where all problems of the situation visibly came together, he was a natural target for anyone unhappy with the state of affairs. And it was not difficult to find something to dislike about
Impressment, of course, was unpopular. No sooner had Bee issued a call for cotton than the LaGrange Patriot opposed the action for threatening "a great and fundamental principle of human liberty." Newspapers kept up their attacks on one phase or another of the cotton business through the rest of the year.

Bee's "borrowing" of twenty percent of the cotton on the border and his system of exemption also drew criticism. Some felt he had compromised with the speculators and was "trifling with men who have already carried out of the country millions of its resources, ... bringing scarcely anything back." According to Senator Oldham, this twenty-percent tariff stopped at once the export of cotton by the planters and deprived the people of all supplies except at the price of speculators who had a monopoly of the trade. Oldham did not spare Bee for his exemption practice either. As he saw it, a chosen few obtained contracts for military supplies, with the privilege of purchasing and exporting cotton, and in so doing acquired a monopoly of the trade. "General Bee of course had the dispensing power and could by special orders exempt whomsoever he pleased from the operation of the contribution [of twenty percent] -- and of course he exempted all his 'contractors' who had previously received his 'permits' to export cotton under the past orders."

What started on the border had repercussions in the interior. Men claiming to be Bee's government contractors and agents, and so able to purchase cotton at lower prices,
defrauded many planters. Although they tried to stop these swindlers, Bee and Magruder were accused of being associated with them. Some genuine agents as well were involved in shady transactions, and the two generals were linked with them all.51

One area of the cotton business seemed to make more enemies for Bee and the government than any other -- the transportation of cotton to the border by conscript teamsters. Government teams were supposed to haul government cotton. Everyone understood this and had no objections. But "Presto! Chango!" as the Brownsville Flag put it. When the cotton reached the border, it no longer belonged to the government, but to speculators. And it was said that permits with the privilege of employing conscript teamsters could be purchased easily. Planters were double victims of this scheme. If they sold cotton to government agents at lower prices, had they been swindled by speculators? And what happened to their cotton? If they wanted to take their own cotton to the border to buy supplies (or engage in a little speculation themselves), how were they to get it there when the government had a monopoly on available transportation? Some blamed Hart, some blamed Bee, but there appeared to be nothing that could be done to stop it.52

Everyone knew there was a fortune to be made in cotton, and many did not doubt that the soldiers were helping themselves to the "spoils of war." The Galveston Tri-Weekly News did not expect much from public or military officials and implied it was difficult, if not impossible,
to find disinterested men beyond the reach of improper influences in troubled times. Some men indiscriminately threw names around of those supposedly involved in the corruption. Thomas F. McKinney wrote to William Pitt Ballinger that "there is not one doubt in the minds of those who know and were eyewitnessesthat Major Russell has engaged in a measure of that sort. That Bee, Lacoste, Duff, Sweet & Co. are all engaged in it." Senator Oldham qualified some of his earlier statements and probably expressed something closer to the truth when he wrote:

Notwithstanding General Smith had assumed control of the subject, Magruder and Bee continued to run their machines, and to issue their "permits." Bee sat at the gate of the Rio Grande, and Magruder at those of the ports of the Gulf. What a field for corruption! What a price the speculators who had a monopoly of the cotton trade of the state, could pay for those "permits." I have no idea, that those officers ever sold or thought of selling their "permits." What a field for corruption of subordinate and staff officers, who might have been supposed to have the influence to procure them: It is not to be wondered at, that staff officers, quartermasters, commissaries, and agents employed in the cotton business, lived like lords upon salaries amounting to less than $5 per month in specie and that though poor at the beginning of the war were rich when it ended. Bee tried to regulate the cotton situation, but had failed each time to make a lasting impression. There were several possible reasons for his failure.

So much corruption riddled the business that it might have been just too great for one man to change. Men in high office appear to have been connected with the graft; they would certainly discourage reform, and their henchmen would work against it behind the scenes. If Bee's subordinates were involved, as Oldham suggested, they would do
all they could secretly to thwart his efforts. Russell, who was really in charge of handling the cotton business, was the most prominent name mentioned in this regard. Bee's quartermaster contracted for army supplies on the Rio Grande to be paid for in cotton and brought there by government teams. When none of his own cotton was available to pay for these contracts, Russell confiscated cotton belonging to Hart, not impressed cotton of individuals, to pay for his purchases. Hart resented this interference with his operations, and his complaints resulted in an order from the Confederate quartermaster general to Russell to stop his dealings in the market, but the confusion of ownership persisted. It appears that Bee knew nothing of Russell's activities. 56

Since Bee disliked his situation so much, he might not have tried as hard as he thought he did, preferring to use his time more for diplomatic and military matters. Or perhaps he had too much to do, being responsible for the military, domestic, foreign, and defense activities on the border, to check up on his efforts in that direction.

Government policy had certainly not helped him. It had vacillated from one extreme to another over the years, and Richmond had neither paid attention to actual circumstances or observers on the border nor allowed its officers there to act on their own. The cotton business had become so complex, with so many regulations, and so many competitors, that there was no possible way for anyone to organize it. All kinds of remedies had been tried, mostly too late. Kirby Smith set up the Cotton Bureau in August
1863 to coordinate activities, but that office competed with the Texas Military Board, the government agents of lesser commands, speculators, and everyone else. The result was chaos which baffled description, comprehension, and solution. The answer to why Bee was not successful in reforming at least his end of the business probably lies in all of these circumstances.

It is extremely doubtful that Bee was really a party to the shady dealings in the cotton business. His sense of duty to his country was too strong, and his diligence in trying to do his job too great. He cared about the Confederacy and wanted to do his best to help win the war. More than anything else, his desire to get out of the cotton business because he felt powerless to do anything of value reinforces the chances of his honesty. He cared too much.

Hamilton Bee really hated command at Brownsville. He felt useless there, but he had gone back in July with Magruder's promise to relieve him as soon as the job of securing arms was done. The thought of serving somewhere else, in some other capacity, hopefully in a battle zone, probably helped him get through July and most of August. When discussing the expected French invasion in late August, he had to remind Magruder of his hopes for command in the field, as if to make sure his commander had not forgotten his promise. If they did not come, Bee could see no necessity for his staying on the border, "as the cotton business is now systematically arranged by Major Russell."57

Then in September it appeared he would get his wish. Magruder reported "what will doubtless be a pleasant fact,"
that Brigadier General J. L. Slaughter had been ordered to
the Rio Grande to relieve Bee. Slaughter arrived from
Havana on September 9, 1863, and Bee declared himself
"prepared for any service, but most respectfully and
earnestly ask that I may be instantly relieved from all
connection with the cotton business." 

Negotiations with the French foiled his plans.
Since the Confederates had heard nothing from their hoped-
for "ally," Kirby Smith wrote to Slidell in Paris to find
out why there had been no invasion, and Supervielle was to
carry the message. Bee was to instruct the agent and receive
his reports. Magruder complimented the disappointed bri-
gadier on the "valuable services you have already rendered
and are still rendering the country, which are highly
appreciated," and told him to continue in command until
the diplomatic plans and arrangements, "which have been
conducted in a manner entirely satisfactory and as you
alone can conduct them," were "brought to a successful
issue." 

By the time Bee received those orders, the Love
Bird had been captured, and Bee was thoroughly sick of
the whole business. His letter of October 11 clearly
expressed his whole attitude.

While I hear with personal regret the decision
of the major general commanding as to my remaining
on the Rio Grande, I am grateful to him for this
renewed mark of his confidence. It is an official
indorsement of my course while in command here which
will go far to hush the voice of slander against me.
I trust that I will immediately be relieved
from all charge of the cotton business, and
respectfully request it. I am willing to serve
my country in any position; I am willing to remain
on the Rio Grande in command of a battalion of
troops, but I am not willing to be placed in a position where I have no power but to execute orders that I may receive, yet am subjected to the mortification of having my good name bandied about by the slanderous and disloyal.

I have clean hands and a clear conscience on this cotton business, have been indorsed by the people of Brownsville and the major-general commanding, and feel that it is now due me that I should be entirely relieved from all connection with it. I feel, indeed, so sensitive on the subject that I would prefer to return my commission to the President and fight for my country in the ranks, as I have done before, than further subject my reputation to this ordeal. Colonel Broadwell is, I understand, in charge of the cotton bureau. I presume he is competent and that it is not necessary for me to serve under him.

I am willing to assume full charge of the cotton business, provided I have full authority, untrammeled, and held directly responsible. I feel satisfied, from my intimate knowledge of the business, which no other officer but Major Russell in Texas possesses, that if I had had the full charge given to me last April, I could have carried out the wishes and supplied the wants of the army. It is probably now too late, as the enemy may soon cut off the trade, nor do I now propose to take it, but only mention it as in connection with my present respectful but firm request to be relieved from all connection with the cotton business.

Bee was just about to give up when he received new orders from Magruder again instructing him to turn over command to Slaughter and establish headquarters at Goliad. But his happiness lasted only three days, because on October 15, "after mature reflection and with deep regret," Magruder decided that Bee must remain on the Rio Grande. He even offered to let Bee stay at home in Goliad for a few days, if he had reached there already, but Bee had not had time to leave Brownsville. Magruder promised to urge the Cotton Bureau to send an agent to take control of the cotton business, so as "to relieve you from the irksome and disagreeable duty of which you speak, and thus have the
advantages of your services both in a diplomatic and military capacity." He had "the greatest confidence in your patriotism and ability to conduct with foreign powers the important business instructed to your care." Magruder was not trying to be cruel. He had a very good reason for wanting Bee to stay on the Rio Grande. He expected an invasion, not by the French, but by the Yankees.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER IV

1 Hart to Magruder, May 27, 1863, O.R., XXVI, pt. 2, 18-19; Hart to Seddon, May 16, 1863, ibid., LIII, 867-70; Hart to Magruder, May 19, 1863, ibid., 883; Hart to Myers, June 8, 1863, ibid., 882-3. The indorsements on the May 16 letter are revealing of some of the difficulties in Richmond, and of some of the thinking that worried officials in both the East and the Trans-Mississippi. C. G. Memminger, Secretary of the Treasury, thought impressment should only be resorted to in the case of dire military necessity. Cotton to be used to build fortifications was one thing; cotton turned into money to buy supplies was another. He thought the military was taking too much power into their own hands by doing this and was against it. Hart's desire to set prices through impressment was a violation of the law. J. A. Seddon, Secretary of War, saw things differently. This impressment would be for the good of the service and that was the necessity. And there would be "little occasion to resort to [Hart's solution] or any other extraordinary mode of purchase, provided the honorable Secretary of the Treasury can manage to keep his notes at some fair relation or approximation to specie, which is the competing currency; even to obtain his notes in sufficient quantities and in due time is found impracticable. He at least should not complain of the earnest efforts of Major Hart to overcome those difficulties." Kirby Smith to Cooper, June 16, 1863, ibid., XXVI, pt. 2, 55-6.


3 Magruder to Cooper, June 8, 1863, ibid., XXVI, pt. 2, 57-65; Magruder to Boggs, June 25, 1863, ibid., 92.

4 Hart to Magruder, May 19, 1863, ibid., LIII, 883.

5 Bee to Magruder, May 22, 1863, ibid., LIII, 870-1; Bee to Turner, May 26, 1863, ibid., 872; Yancey to Bee, May 14, 1863, ibid., XXVI, pt. 2, 4.


7 Magruder to Bee, June 4, 1863, ibid., XXVI, pt. 2, 33; Magruder to Bee, June 5, 1863, ibid., 37-8. In the latter letter, Magruder also ordered Bee to employ two men to act as spies in New York City, one to stay in the northern city and the other to run between New York and Matamoros. They were to keep Magruder posted on Federal intentions in regard to Texas. No evidence seems to exist that Bee was successful in obtaining two men to act as agents. Magruder probably took this action when he learned from Bee that rumor stated an expedition of 20,000 men was fitting out in New York to take the Rio Grande. Bee to Magruder, May 22, 1863, ibid., LIII, 870-1.
8 Magruder to Cooper, June 8, 1863, ibid., XXVI, pt. 2, 56-7.
9 Anderson to Magruder, June 13, 1863, ibid., LIII, 874.
10 Magruder to Anderson, June 17, 1863, ibid., XXVI, pt. 2, 89.
11 Magruder to Boggs, June 22, 1863, ibid., 89-90.
12 Yancey to Bee, June 19, 1863, Eldridge Collection; Yancey to Bee, June 22, 1863, O.R., XXVI, pt 2, 75-6.
13 Magruder to Boggs, June 16, 1863, O.R., XXVI, pt. 2, 77; Magruder to Boggs, June 22, 1863, ibid., 88-89.
14 If Kirby Smith had waited, it is doubtful that approval would have come. Hart wrote Seddon on June 20, asking for impressment power. The Secretary indorsed it that he recognized the importance and necessity of controlling cotton export in Texas, but was "reluctant to resort to the extraordinary means which can alone effect it." President Davis wrote "I have never been willing to employ such means except as a last resort." Hart to Seddon, June 20, 1863, ibid., LIII, 873-4.
15 Kirby Smith to Magruder, June 23, 1863, ibid., XXVI, pt. 2, 78; Kirby Smith to Magruder, June 27, 1863, ibid., 95-6. The first letter gave permission to impress only to secure the Sea Queen's cargo, but the second expanded permission for all purposes.
16 Yancey to Bee, July 2, 1863, ibid., XXVI, pt. 2, 100-101; Yancey to Bee, July 3, 1863, ibid., 102; Turner to Magruder, June 26, 1863, Eldridge Collection.
18 Yancey to Bee, July 20, 1863, O.R., XXVI, pt. 2, 118.
19 Owsley, King Cotton, 125; Larios, "Confederate Lifeline," 82-3.
20 Extracts from letters of J. A. Sauters, William Pitt Ballinger Papers. (Archives, Eugene C. Barker Texas History Center, University of Texas at Austin); Brownsville Flag of July 9, 1863, reprinted in Galveston Tri-Weekly News, July 23, 1863, and of July 10 reprinted in July 27, 1863.
22 Turner to Bee, July 29, 1863, ibid., 122-5.

23 Pendleton to Bee, July 15, 1863, Eldridge Collection; Turner to Bee, July 31, 1863, ibid.


25 Magruder to Bee, August 3[4], 1863, ibid., 137-9; Turner to Bee, August 7, 1863, Eldridge Collection. By August 7, Magruder was stating that a suggestion to Bee that cotton could not be impressed except for purposes of defense was "too trifling to be noticed."


27 Alston to Bee, September 14, 1863, Eldridge Collection; Alston to Bee, September 14, 1863, ibid.; Campton to Bee, October 10, 1863, ibid.

28 Bee to Turner, August 17, 1863, O.R., LI, 892; Russell to Turner, August 21, 1863, ibid., XXVI, pt. 2, 176-7.

29 Bee to Ruiz, August 14, 1863, ibid., XXVI, pt. 2, 167-8; Bee to Turner, August 15, 1863, ibid., 169-70; Bee to Turner, August 10, 1863, ibid., 157-8.

30 Bee to Turner, August 15, 1863, ibid., 169-70; Bee to Turner, September 14, 1863, ibid., 228-9; Bee to Turner, September 18, 1863, ibid., 237. Bee later reported that the British sent a ship of war with the necessary papers to prove the Peel was English, and it was supposed that the Federals would give her up at New Orleans. The Confederates had been contemplating purchase of a vessel for the reason the Federals thought, but it was not the Peel. They wanted the Gladiator. Magruder to Boggs, June 23, 1863, ibid., 191-2; Kirby Smith to Magruder, June 27, 1863, ibid., 94-5; Kirby Smith to Magruder, June 28, 1863, ibid., 96. The Yankees claimed they had proof of the proposed transaction, and Bee thought that entirely possible. He thought a letter from Kirby Smith ordering an examination of the ship might have been surreptitiously sent to Union agents in Matamoros, "as it is known that important letters from your [Magruder's] office are now in the possession of those in Matamoros, who will use them to our detriment." This communication, of course, sent Magruder on a spy hunt. Turner to Bee, October 7, 1863, Eldridge Collection. Bee did commission H. S. Bell and Frank Brown to take out the schooner Santiago as a privateer a few days after the seizure of the Peel. It appears this is the only time he attempted to do something actively about the blockade. Bee to Bell and Brown, September 18, 1863, O.R., XXVI, pt. 2, 237.

31 Bee to Turner, August 6, 1863, O.R., XXVI, pt. 2, 140; Supervièele to Bee, July 31, 1863, ibid., 140-51;
33 Bee to Turner, August 24, 1863, ibid., 181-2.
34 G. A. Magruder to Bee, August 19, 1863, Eldridge Collection.
36 Bee to Slidell, September 29, 1863, ibid., 272-3.
37 Bee to Duval, September 30, 1863, ibid., 273-4.
38 Bee to Turner, October 3, 1863, ibid., 287-8.
39 Bee to Clements, October 3, 1863, ibid., 286-7; Clements to W. D. Miller, ibid., Ser. IV, III, 572-4. Clements later billed the Confederacy for the arms that were saved.
40 Turner to Bee, October 6, 1863, ibid., XXVI, pt. 2, 289-90.
41 Turner to Bee, October 9, 1863, ibid., 298.
42 G. A. Magruder to Bee, October 8, 1863, Eldridge Collection; G. A. Magruder to Bee, October 10, 1863, ibid.; Turner to Bee, October 14, 1863, O.R., XXVI, pt. 2, 316; Carrington to Bee, October 18, 1863, Eldridge Collection; Carrington to Bee, October 18, 1863, ibid.
43 Turner to G. A. Magruder, October 14, 1863, O.R., XXVI, pt. 2, 316-17; Turner to Bee, October 14, 1863, ibid., 316.
44 Alston to Russell, July 3, 1863, Eldridge Collection.
46 Duval to Bee, October 13, 1863, ibid., 309-10; Duval to Bee, October 21, 1863, ibid., 310; Bee to Magruder, November 2, 1863, ibid., 310.
47 James L. Nichols, Confederate Quartermaster Operations in the Trans-Mississippi Department (Austin, 1964), 57.
48 Alethea W. Shaver, "The Cotton Bureau in the Trans-Mississippi Department" (typescript, Archives, Eugene C.
Kirby Smith had requested Slaughter for duty on the Rio Grande in June, but did not state why he wanted to relieve Bee. Kirby Smith to Cooper, June 10, 1863, ibid., 43. Parks in Kirby Smith implies that Kirby Smith wanted to relieve Bee because he was annoyed over Bee's losing of the Love Bird cargo, but the order for Slaughter was written long before that. The Love Bird incident may have been responsible for Slaughter's appearance so quickly, however. Parks, Kirby Smith, 302.


Turner to Bee, September 17, 1863, ibid., 234-5; Turner to Bee, September 27, 1863, ibid., 262-3.

Bee to Turner, October 11, 1863, ibid., 302.

Turner to Bee, October 12, 1863, Eldridge Collection.

Yancey to Bee, October 15, 1863, O.R., XXVI, pt. 2, 324-5; Alston to Bee, October 26, 1863, ibid., 358; Turner to Bee, October 26, 1863, ibid., 359.
About the time the Yankees made their first foray up the Red River in Louisiana in June 1863, and troops in Texas moved east to help hold them off, Kirby Smith and Magruder reorganized the District of Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. The general commanding the Trans-Mississippi Department wanted another sub-district in north Texas established to protect the wheat crops against Union raids from Kansas and Arkansas. Accordingly, Magruder organized the Northern, Eastern, and Western Sub-Districts on June 23. He kept Hamilton Bee in command of the Western Sub-District, thereby giving him control of the whole western half of the state. The line separating that district from the other two ran jaggedly from Matagorda Bay on the south to the western side of Travis County to the Brazos River south of Waco, up the Brazos about one hundred miles, and then due north to the Red River. But Magruder's troop dispositions in the new organizations crossed sub-district lines.

Bee's command was designated the "First Division." He had two brigades. He placed Colonel P. C. Woods in charge of the First Brigade, headquartered in Brownsville and consisting of Woods's, Buchel's, and Duff's regiments of cavalry, A. M. Hobby's regiment of infantry, H. Willke's battalion of artillery, and some assorted Texas State Troops, amounting to a total of about twenty-four hundred
officers and men. Bee's Second Brigade, under Acting Brigadier General S. P. Bankhead, however, was nowhere near his sub-district. It was in Bonham in the Northern Sub-District. Naturally enough, Bee had some difficulty in understanding this arrangement and brought it to Magruder's attention. As a result, Bankhead remained nominally under Bee's command, but reported directly to District headquarters. In the subsequent reorganizations and troop movements, even that control was removed, so that Bee was finally responsible for just his own sub-district. With Woods's brigade, he had to hold only some three hundred miles of coast and the line of the Rio Grande in the face of the twenty thousand Federals supposed to be on their way to Texas.

Texans had been hearing rumors of an invasion and expecting to see hordes of Yankees descending on their state since the beginning of the war, and they should have been used to it by 1863. But the rumors of that summer had much more foundation than those in the past, because the Union army was operating on the Mississippi and in Louisiana and because the spring offensive Banks had attempted alerted the state to its vulnerability. Magruder was extremely worried. Considering he had only six thousand men in his district effective for duty, he had every right to be. Consequently, he began shifting troops around to concentrate them where he thought they would do the most good. That meant most of them moved to the eastern part of the state, because Magruder thought invasion would come from that direction. The enemy would most
likely land between the Sabine River and Saluria, the entrance to Matagorda Bay. The real danger point was the coast in the vicinity of the Brazos River, since the enemy would try to flank heavily fortified Galveston and the bulk of Magruder's forces. If the Yankees did land in earnest elsewhere between Saluria and the Rio Grande, their goal would be to capture San Antonio to sever the cotton trade lines. Magruder felt that Confederate concentration in the east would therefore facilitate movement against the enemy coming from the west. The Texans would be operating from their own base against the Federals, who would be forced back into very inhospitable country.  

As information came in July and August of expeditions outfitting in both New York and Louisiana with designs on Texas, Magruder stripped troops from the Rio Grande and brought them east. By September Magruder was convinced attack would come in his vicinity, and the attempted landing on September 8 at Sabine Pass, repulsed by Dick Dowling's tiny force, erased any doubts. To him, the Rio Grande was expendable, and by the end of September, he had reduced Bee's command there to little more than four hundred men.  

But just in case, and being Magruder, the major general gave his subordinate orders what to do if the Yankees arrived. No matter where the invasion came, the troops in Texas would need all the supplies they could get, and a central location for better disbursement was necessary, so in the middle of August, Magruder ordered all military stores at Brownsville sent east. If the enemy did attack
in force, or made an effort to establish himself on the
mainland at Point Isabel, Bee was "to use every effort to
repulse him, and prevent his advance in every way possible
for a small force to resist a large one." If it was
necessary to evacuate, he should save everything possible
and "retire up the river . . . to Roma, . . . always keeping
as near the enemy as the safety of your stores will permit.
. . . You will be very careful not to allow any property to
fall into the enemy's hands. Should there be cotton or
other property exposed, without any chance of removing or
saving it, you will cause it to be destroyed. Allow
nothing to fall into the enemy's hands." 7

On October 15, 1863, Magruder promised Bee a command
in the field if he were forced to leave Brownsville, but
the major general did not feel the Rio Grande was threatened
at that time. 8 He repeated his August instructions on
October 26 in a confidential circular to troop commanders
along the coast. He told Bee to move cotton and other goods
difficult to transport across the river to Mexico, take
everything portable, destroy what might fall to the enemy,
and fall back up river. Cotton was to be rerouted through
towns out of reach of the Federals. If Bee were forced to
leave the river, he should make his way to Magruder. 9
Determined to make sure the Yankees got nothing to aid them,
Magruder instructed Bee positively, in the face of a large
enemy force, to "burn all public buildings at the post of
Fort Brown," and to obey this order "without fail." 10

Down on the border, Bee was hearing rumors of his
own. In August, reliable sources from New Orleans said that
an invasion would take place as soon as the "sickly season" was over. The enemy planned to occupy the coast, but to reduce Galveston by a land attack from the Sabine River through Houston. Then Federal navy deserters claimed an attack on Galveston was scheduled for the first of September. Bee also saw a letter from the Mexican consul at New Orleans in September that said some thirty thousand Union troops were headed for Texas, twenty thousand by land to Galveston and ten thousand by sea to Brownsville; but nothing happened, and he assumed they went elsewhere. This may have been a garbled report of the Sabine expedition. To Bee, an attack on Brownsville was illogical. The cotton trade alone made his post important, but seizure of the city would not help the enemy much. A small force of Yankees could never hold four hundred miles of river. If they really wanted to cut off trade, the Federals should take San Antonio, and Bee expected them to land at Saluria or Lavaca if that were their purpose. It was the only viable solution to their problem.11

While he waited for the enemy, Bee sent as much as he could to Magruder in spite of difficulties with transportation. His problems here were twofold. Since conscript teamsters persisted in deserting when they reached the border, wagon drivers to move goods to the interior were scarce. The lure of making five to ten dollars a day in specie attracted many when they compared it to government service. In addition, Bee had trouble getting someone to break the 250 wild mules he had acquired. He had detailed men to train them to harness, but there was only one result
to that undertaking -- the mules got away.\textsuperscript{12}

There were, however, other, more immediate problems of a military nature to upset the brigadier. Bee was disturbed in late summer by the condition of his troops. He had so few, and the "sickly season" had taken its toll. At one point sixty out of two hundred men were down, and every staff officer, clerk, and orderly, either sick or convalescing, even the surgeon. The troops were beginning to panic, morale was a distinct problem, and Bee did not feel too well himself.\textsuperscript{13}

Bee was also worried about the defense of his position against a raid by the renegades across the border. More and more deserters, refugees, and the like were reporting daily to the United States consul at Matamoros, and the presence of prisoners of war sent by Kirby Smith for exportation only aggravated the situation. There were also the "normal" disturbances along the border that were fed by hate and rumor and occasionally erupted into shooting.\textsuperscript{14}

To help defend the city, Bee called on the citizens of Brownsville. On October 24 he asked Mayor George Dye to enroll every man capable of bearing arms, and organize them into companies, listing what arms and ammunition they had. These companies were to hold themselves in readiness "to respond to any call which circumstances may require." It came faster than anyone expected.\textsuperscript{15}

On October 26, in response to Magruder's orders,\textsuperscript{16} Duff sent three companies out of his five to Houston. That left Bee with only a few companies, Duff's two and some state troops, spread out between the mouth of the Rio Grande.
and Brownsville. Bee therefore ordered Captain Adrian I. Vidal's company of Mexican citizens to return to the city from Boca del Rio, leaving only pickets for observation. Vidal did not come in, so Bee sent privates Dashiell and Litteral with renewed orders in the late afternoon of the twenty-seventh. That evening someone told him "confidentially" that Vidal's company, along with some renegades and deserters, were planning to attack Brownsville that night. Half an hour later Litteral, shot through the face, staggered into headquarters with a tale of deception and murder.

The private and his companion had met Vidal on the road to Brownsville about fourteen miles below the city, delivered their orders, and countermarched with the company. When they stopped for supper two miles out, the Mexicans opened fire on the two men with no warning and killed Dashiell.

Bee immediately began to organize his men to defend the town. He sent out ten pickets to "ascertain the truth" of Litteral's statement, and they were quickly driven in to within one mile of the city. Bee found he had only nineteen men of Company "A", an unreliable volunteer company of citizens under Captain Franklin Cummings, General Slaughter, Colonel Duff, and a few assorted members of their and his staffs, for a military defense, but the townspeople helped. They got the two heavy siege guns into a favorable position, sent couriers to recall the Thirty-third, which had been delayed at Palo Alto Prairie, and spent the night with every available man Bee could arm standing in battle line. The combined force of army and citizens numbered about one hundred. Vidal heard that the defenders were ready for him, so he
did not attack. Instead he and his band passed by the city and continued up river, murdering and pillaging as they went. Bee sent what force he could after the renegades and asked Ruiz in Matamoros for help. The Mexicans caught over twenty of the "Vidalistas," who crossed the river, but Vidal escaped.

This episode served to heighten Bee's apprehension. He did not see it as just another bandit attempt to get a little plunder, but as part of a wider conspiracy among the hundreds of renegades and disaffected on both sides of the river to slaughter the garrison and cut off trade. Only Vidal's impetuosity in moving too fast before the Confederate troopers were gone had frustrated the plan. "Information" that two parties of Americans connected with the United States consul had left Matamoros to join Vidal, and then news on the twenty-ninth that the Yankee sympathizers in Matamoros were organizing to attack, strengthened his belief. He informed Magruder that he was keeping all of the Thirty-third in Brownsville on his own responsibility and offered his own estimate of the "critical condition of things here."

When the troops were gone from the vicinity of Brownsville, trade should also be removed, Bee thought. There was no way that he could see it could continue because of the danger to transportation on bandit-infested roads. Do not wait for more trouble. Prohibit absolutely crossing cotton anywhere below Laredo, make Eagle Pass the point of delivery for goods, have nothing to do with Matamoros, and defend the upper line that allowed passage through Governor
Vidaurri's safer territory. Bee knew he could defend Brownsville against the combination of internal and external enemies that plagued him at the moment, but "when the Yankees are added," his men would find "an enemy in every thicket," and this greater alliance would destroy them. Therefore, he felt, "the sooner they get away, the better, as it is not in the power of the general to defend all of the state."\(^\text{17}\)

Bee was not alone in his beliefs. Duff agreed, and so did many others. When news of an impending attack on the twenty-ninth reached Brownsville, over three hundred citizens volunteered to stand off the Yankee sympathizers and stayed under arms until November 1. Duff claimed that the Matamoros authorities prevented the "crossing of the horde," and that the citizens were "eager for the fray." The Brownsville Flag joined in the opinion that the whole thing was a plot hatched among the deserters, renegades, and Yankees and praised the townspeople for their conduct. The editor was also extremely complimentary to Bee, expressing every man's confidence in him, and stating that "the universality of the response arose in a great measure from the personal influence of the commanding general."\(^\text{18}\)

But the commanding general had no chance to put his ideas into action. The appearance of a fleet of Yankee ships off the bar on November 1 changed all plans.

Major General Nathaniel P. Banks, commanding the Department of the Gulf, led the expedition, designed to restore the flag of the United States to Texas for other than purely military reasons. The French had become more
than an irritant to the Union with their invasion of Mexico and dealings with the Confederacy. French annexation of Texas was even discussed. By July 1863, Federal leaders thought it necessary to establish some kind of force in Texas to point out to the French the Union's power and its disapproval of any contemplated recognition of the Confederacy. The point of occupation did not matter much, but when an attempt at landing failed at Sabine Pass in September, Banks decided to make Brownsville his object. Although it was far from New Orleans and Banks would have preferred Galveston, if that city had not been so heavily fortified and the invasion expected, the Rio Grande was still a good choice. The lower Texas coast was virtually undefended, no point was better situated to impress the French, and occupation would greatly hinder the trade pouring in and out of Texas through Mexico.  

Banks set out with his fleet and soldiers from New Orleans on October 26 and arrived off the Rio Grande bar on November 1. On November 2, he could report, "The flag of the Union floated over Texas today at meridian precisely. Our enterprise had been a complete success." Consisted of Brazos Santiago Island, little better than a sand bar. The Federal troops met no resistance and took a couple of days to land and organize before they moved on Brownsville. By the time they arrived in the city on November 6, the Confederates were gone.

Bee received the news of the Yankee arrival at three-thirty in the morning on November 2. He immediately ordered everything of value taken up river, sent a detach-
ment to turn back all cotton wagons coming to Brownsville, gave preparatory orders to evacuate, and dispatched two groups of men to the mouth of the Rio Grande and to Point Isabel to report on enemy movements. At noon, Duff sent some civilians under an army officer to find a reported guerrilla band and a supply train rumored to be loaded with arms for the Yankees and on the Mexican side. The civilians found nothing. Duff also impressed every kind of means of transportation he could find and started loading supplies and making trains, which he sent off at intervals as they were ready.

By three o'clock in the afternoon, word had come that more vessels had arrived, bringing the total to fifteen, then twenty-six, but Bee did not anticipate a landing until the third. Because he only had one hundred and fifty very tired cavalrymen, road conditions were so bad going up river, and his trains were so long, Bee ordered the wagons to head out the main road for King's ranch. With so few men, he did not think he could hold the enemy for long, but in the open country, the train could travel faster and had a better chance for escape.

Before nightfall he had reports that the enemy had landed cavalry in force on Brazos Santiago and Padre islands. He also knew he was going to get little help from the townspeople. Duff reported that not more than thirty Brownsville citizens would bear arms. This information strengthened Bee's conviction that "the whole country will be against me," and reinforced his decision to send the supplies north.

Loading stores and dispatching wagons, a process
which had gone on all night, took up the morning of the third. The last train left the city at noon carrying in its forty-five wagons ammunition, camp and garrison equipage, and rations for thirty days. The eight-inch howitzer was sent with it. That left only the twenty-four pound cannon for Bee's artillery, and after a few men had been detailed to guard the wagons, all Bee had left in the city itself were seventy-nine men.

When word came from Captain Richard Taylor, who had been sent to watch the enemy, that the Federals had crossed a large number of horses over the ford at Boca Chica onto the mainland, Bee determined to try to divert the Yankees by attacking, stampeding, and perhaps capturing the animals. He wanted to draw attention away from the main road and the wagon train. At three o'clock, just as Bee was preparing to leave, a courier arrived from Taylor with startling news. Taylor had met two hundred enemy cavalry "in full charge" on the Palo Alto Prairie, and if Bee intended to evacuate Brownsville, no time was to be lost. The enemy was almost in his rear with superior numbers.

Bee believed Taylor. He had no reason not to, because Taylor had been a "valuable officer" up to this time. But he did not send anyone to corroborate the captain's findings. Instead he panicked. Bee saw "all around" him "the elements of danger." He had no men. The civilians refused to help, and that morning Cummings's six-month volunteer company had dissolved when asked to fight. He expected an uprising all along the border by deserters and renegades and felt he did not have a chance trying to fight
both Yankees and Yankee sympathizers. The Vidal mutiny taught him he could not trust anyone; the whole country was disaffected and filled with hundreds of his most bitter enemies. He had to get out. So Bee prepared to carry out his orders regarding evacuation.

As Magruder had instructed, Bee ordered the government buildings to be fired, and whatever cotton could not be got across the river to be burned. There seems to have been some arrangement for a steamer to remove some of the public property at four o'clock, but it did not arrive. Several hundred bales were thrown into the river and floated across. Bee superintended "in person" the burning of the cotton, most of which was located at Freeport, a depot upstream from the city at a ferry landing. He and his men left Brownsville at five in the afternoon, without any attempt at resisting the Federal invasion.

What he left behind was a totally demoralized city. Rumors had been flying all day. Fifty thousand Yankees were at the mouth of the river. Four thousand cavalrmen were approaching. Ten thousand drunken Negro troops were coming, led by E. J. Davis, who wanted to put the city to the sword in retaliation for Montgomery's hanging. The artillerymen had been seen rolling the guns into the river. The cotton yard had been fired by Federal cavalry who were already up river. Where was the army? Why did they not put up some show of resistance or at least secure favorable terms for the civilians?

When the fires started and the soldiers left, the people saw their only hope in escape to Matamoros, and a
fighting scramble began at the ferry close to the government buildings. But the buildings were already on fire, and one of them held eight thousand pounds of condemned gunpowder. The explosion flung burning timbers in all directions (one even crushed the roof of the Mexican custom house across the river) and spread the fire to private buildings and the goods piled high at the nearby ferry. Only the action of some citizens who still had their wits about them saved the town. That night there was much looting and disorder, most of it blamed on Bee's troops. The Yankees who marched in on the morning of the sixth found a Mexican, General Jose Maria Cobos, in charge of the town at the invitation of the Brownsville authorities. The Texans had asked for aid in "resisting the depredations of the rebels" and extinguishing the flames. Cobos had helped Brownsville on the fourth and himself on the fifth, when he took over Matamoros also.21

Bee was roundly criticized for his actions in evacuating Brownsville without even an attempt at resistance. R. Fitzpatrick, Confederate purchasing agent in Matamoros, called the surrender of Brownsville "one of the most cowardly and scandalous affairs which has happened in any country." R. H. Williams, in a bitter denunciation, agreed with him, and both thought the fire an excellent method of covering up fraud in the cotton business, although Williams blamed Bee and Fitzpatrick blamed Russell. Williams and William Neale claimed Bee and his officers went on a drunken spree at Miller's Hotel the afternoon of the third, but there is some reason to doubt this. Neither man cared at
all for Bee, and neither saw the general that afternoon.22

What may be the most telling criticism was the much calmer one of John Warren Hunter. Bee could have caused the complete destruction of Banks's army, Hunter claimed, if he "had displayed any qualities of generalship."23 This appears to have some validity. Bee's major failing in this episode was lack of boldness. He could not have completely stopped or destroyed the Yankees; they could have landed anywhere on the coast. But he could have made it very difficult for them. The Federals arrived off the bar at the end of a storm. In the crowded transports they must have been in poor shape. Even assuming the men were in good condition, Bee, after his months on the border watching the loading and unloading of ships, should have known the difficulty the troops would have in landing by lighter. Often the cotton trade was completely halted by rough water. Inexperienced soldiers would certainly be in trouble, and they were. Troops struggled through the surf onto the island without any sense of order. Even when they reached the shore, they could have done little because all the ammunition got wet. To disembark the horses, the navy tumbled them overboard, and few reached land.24 Banks considered himself very lucky and rightly felt "a sense of deliverance" when his men had landed.25

But General Bee did nothing to stop them, or even to find out for himself what the enemy looked like. True, the Confederate cavalry was tired after chasing Vidal up and down the river, but they would be fighting on home ground where they knew every rock, and the Texans were not soft
men. They had an eight-inch howitzer, which, even if it
did not score a hit, could have been used to good advantage
to throw a scare into the Yankees and raise the spirits of
the Confederates. True, Bee did not get much encouragement
to push his men. From his report, Duff seems to have felt
much the same way Bee did, but he may have been telling Bee
what the general wanted to hear.

Bee was all too ready to believe tales of thousands
of Yankees infesting the beaches and descending on the city.
All Banks had were about four thousand effectives, but
the notion fit so well with the other stories of conspiracy
and with Bee's own conviction that the whole border was about
to erupt into flame. His state of mind regarding the cotton
business must also be taken into account. Bee was fed up
with the border. Therefore, he did nothing to calm the
citizenry who did not volunteer to help, but left them to
what he might have considered their well-deserved fate. It
could be claimed that Bee's lack of military experience was
partly to blame for his reaction, but that is still no
excuse. He could and should have done something. But
instead he got frightened, the shreds of his common sense
deserted him, the wagon train became the most important
thing to him, and, when he received word that enemy cavalry
were almost between him and the supplies, or between him
and escape, he panicked.

What may have been his first report, although there
is neither address nor date, was a hastily-scrawled message,
signed only "Bee."
My Dear General, [he wrote]

I must move my family from the San Antonio River if you cannot defend the line of the desert -- therefore advise me. I should have been murdered if Duff's command had not been close by. We cannot hold the line of the Rio Grande, and it is not worth holding. Eagle Pass is four hundred miles from Brownsville, and easy of access to the cotton gins of Texas. The horses of this region will furnish the enemy with the means of destroying the ranchos. Without them they cannot do a great deal of harm. Therefore we must look to them.

I had a trying time towards the last in Brownsville as I could not know who to trust. All did well during the Vidal scare, but the Yankee raid was too much. There was very little cotton destroyed. All the Govt. Cotton at Brownsville had crossed over. On the road I burned but little Govt. Cotton on the road [sic]. A full account will be sent when the officers all come up.

"Strange to say," Duff reported, "the enemy did not attempt to intercept us, although in our retreat we passed almost in sight of his legions, and were, as we now know, surrounded at all hours, day and night, by a hostile and ruthless foe numbering probably ten times our number." With the enemy close behind, time was precious. Following Magruder's orders, Bee and Duff intercepted all the trains they met going to the border with cotton and turned them back. To enable the heavily laden wagons to move more quickly, the Confederates lightened the loads by burning "a sufficient number of bales to enable the teams to cross the sand with the balance." Duff thought he had covered all the roads, but some of the wily teamsters hid in the dense chaparral and later made their way to Laredo to sell their cotton. Some of those whom Bee's soldiers did meet were private citizens, groups of neighbors, on their way to the border for supplies. Hunter related a pathetic
incident where overanxious soldiers completely burned out a train from Arkansas whose farmer owners had invested their whole life savings in the venture. As with the flight from Brownsville, Bee was criticized for his actions on the road, for there was no pursuit by the Federals. Bee, of course, did not know that at the time.29

Bee and company reached King's ranch on the Santa Gertrudis on November 8. There he collected himself and reported more fully to Magruder. Scattered through his letters of November 8 to 16 were his reasons for leaving the border. He would have been "sacrificed" if he had attempted to hold Roma or any of the river with just one company after Duff left. Since the whole country was against him and the Confederate cause, his presence at Roma would only invite attack from both sides. He had relied on the report of "one of my must valuable officers," and felt he had to save the supply train, worth over one million dollars, from the "elements of danger" all around him. With so few men, he was powerless to do otherwise. He did regret that the fire in Brownsville had got out of hand, but the explosion of the powder, although it added "greatly to the terror and distress of the people, was of no loss to the Government." Bee was particularly horrified to hear that people claimed he left soldiers behind to be sure Brownsville was burned to the ground, and he vehemently denied the charge. Neither Magruder nor Kirby Smith censured him for his conduct, however, and criticism finally died down in December.

If there was one bright spot in the Yankee invasion
for Bee, it was in the fact that he was at last away from the job he hated most -- administering the cotton trade. For the next months all he would have to worry about was protecting the wagon trains to the cities on the upper river. He wrote to friends on both sides, asking them to see that trade went smoothly, and thought the Confederates could rely on Vidaurri's protection in Mexico, asking Quintero to check on it. To halt some of the practices of the business with which he had been plagued, Bee suggested closing exportation all together to private activities, allowing only the government to deal in the commodity.

South Texas, while good for little else, was excellent country for raising cattle and horses, and Bee was worried about the use the enemy would try to make of the livestock, both as food and as transportation. If Magruder did not intend to defend the section actively, then Bee proposed taking all the horses east of the Nueces River. Magruder agreed readily to this suggestion; remounts were precious to the Confederates also.

Word soon came from the border about the happenings there, and Bee passed it on. Cobos had taken Brownsville and then Matamoros, but had been shot by Juan Cortinas, who was now in charge of the Mexican city. A state of complete anarchy reigned in Tamaulipas, and bandits roamed both sides of the river, doing all the damage they could. In Brownsville, many of the leading citizens, including Mayor George Dye,\textsuperscript{30} one of the most vociferous Confederate supporters, had quietly taken the oath of allegiance to the Union, thus strengthening Bee's case that the people were against him.
First estimates placed the Union forces at twelve thousand, but highly disorganized. The Federals had sustained heavy losses in landing; it appeared it would be some time before they could move again. Frank Gildart, a refugee from Texas who returned with the expedition and then deserted, claiming he was really a southerner at heart, brought more exact news. Banks had only six thousand men, half of whom were black, and had lost all but one hundred of his horses. All the Union ammunition was wet. E. J. Davis was back, hoping to enlist troops among the Mexicans and Negroes for a march through Texas. Gildart did not think any danger of invasion along the coast existed because Banks had "neither troops nor boats." Perhaps the situation was not as black as it seemed.

Bee had begun to regain his belligerency about the time he arrived at Santa Gertrudis. He asked Magruder on the eighth for one thousand cavalrymen, and, if he got them, he promised Santos Benavides in Laredo, "I shall be with you, and, together, we will sweep from the earth the traitors who have disgraced us, and prove to the enemy that there still exist men who will fight for their country, and hold it, too." Time "to contemplate our position" and Gildart's information connoted the possibility of successful action, and Bee claimed grandiosely that he could annihilate Banks if Magruder would send him two thousand men. 31

Whether he got the troops or not, and in spite of his small force, Bee was determined to redeem himself, and he decided on November 12 to march for Rio Grande City. He thought a demonstration on the river essential to show that
the Confederates did not intend to abandon that line, to encourage the South's friends, and to punish, "or at most keep quiet," its enemies. Bee was bitter about the lack of cooperation he had received from the border inhabitants. He had already told Benavides to say in his name that "we will remember those who may now turn against us." As if to make up for losing Brownsville and to show its citizens that he did not need them, he now promised to hold his position on the Rio Grande until forced away.32

Bee's attitude toward action at this time was rather ambivalent, and his logic somewhat curious. After the bold statement of the twelfth, the brigadier complained to Magruder on the fifteenth that he did not know the stations of his troops or their orders, and was unwilling to issue any, "fearing that they may conflict with the plan of campaign adopted by the commanding general." He was also angry with his commander for not sending him more men than the six companies of state troops, half of whom were not armed, and for telling him to remain in the neighborhood of Goliad and San Patricio. He did not think he should be expected to hold the Rio Grande above Brownsville with so few men, wanted to be spared "the necessity of falling back before the enemy" with such a force, and asked to be relieved from command of the "division," claiming "in a word, . . . a command suited to my rank." 33

Then, on the next day, he announced that he decided not to go to the border after all with the three hundred men he had, but proposed a holding action on the Rio Grande and, if necessary, a planned retreat to prepared lines of defense --
first to a line from Eagle Pass to Saluria, then to the Colorado. Cities might fall to the enemy, but not much cotton or supplies. He asked that his old command, Buchel's and Woods's regiments, be returned and enough troops added to justify an advance. Bee still thought Banks would try a march into the heart of Texas from the border, but was now confident of his ability to stop the Federals, and "by a prompt and vigorous effort," annihilate them.  

General Banks had another idea than a long, hard march through Texas. He wanted to complete his plan, foiled by Dick Dowling at Sabine Pass, and to take Galveston, but this time from the coast below instead of above. Once in control of the entire coast, he would completely shut down enemy trade, have a good base from which to operate against the interior, pin down enemy troops destined for Louisiana, and free the blockading squadron to pursue pirates. But first he had to plug the passes through the offshore islands before he could attack the Confederate works at the mouth of the Brazos or Galveston.  

On the night of November 16, Banks's fleet of former Mexican steamers, loaded with all the troops he could spare from the Rio Grande, arrived at Aransas Pass, the entrance to Corpus Christi Bay. Fifteen hundred troops disembarked, no mean feat in the dark early hours of the morning, and marched up the island, completely surprising the Confederate forces at the pass. They quickly captured the defenders, who only had about one hundred men, and the fleet moved north against Fort Esperanza.  

Magruder, unlike Bee, had been looking to the coast
for the next attack, but his order to go there, although written November 13, came too late. Bee was already in Corpus Christi when he received it. He had hurried to the coast with his 355 men as soon as he heard of the enemy appearance, but there was little he could do against the Federals. He had no transportation to carry his troops to the island. But the enemy could not move against him either, since their ships could not cross the bar.

Bee estimated Union strength at three thousand and was annoyed that he did not have the men to attack them. He complained again that it was "bitterly mortifying to me to be running through the country with hardly a bodyguard around me," but Magruder could not expect him to sacrifice his men in a fight, knowing they were outnumbered ten to one. Bee's bluster raises the question of what he would have done if Magruder had had the men to give him, but at the same time it leaves the impression that no matter how many troops he had, he would still have been hesitant to make a fight.

Magruder ordered him to remove all stores and cotton from the city and try to repulse and defeat the enemy if he came "in manageable force." When Magruder told him to move back, Bee had already decided he would have to leave Corpus Christi anyway, because there was no forage in the vicinity. He took everything he could and moved eastward, trying to discover at which point the Federals would next attack.

Fort Esperanza, at Saluria or Pass Cavallo, the entrance to Matagorda Bay, was the enemy's next port of
call. The commander there thought the fort untenable against the forces threatening it and evacuated on November 29. Bee arrived at Indianola too late to be of any help or to prevent the enemy takeover.

Firmly established at all the outlets to the Gulf from Brownsville to Velasco, the Federals effectively closed the coast. Texas awaited another invasion, but the enemy did nothing of any consequence for the rest of the winter of 1863-1864, because Banks could obtain no more troops from General-in-Chief Halleck, who wanted the next attack in Louisiana. So Federal commanders on the offshore islands were left to worry about their men, lack of supplies, and the Texans through a miserable winter. Those at Saluria managed to cross to the mainland and take Indianola, but it did them little good. Union troops everywhere on the coast suffered from the scarcity of food, water, firewood, and warmth.

It was not an easy season for the Confederates watching the Yankees either. Magruder expected an invasion the whole time, and the Federals kept up just enough activity to fire the general's imagination. Each Union raid for supplies or gunboat visit to the mouth of a creek resulted in detailed orders marching and countermarching troops from Corpus Christi to Velasco. Magruder had Bee supervise the building of fortifications at the mouth of Caney Creek at the northern end of Matagorda Peninsula and gave him elaborate instructions for his actions when the enemy came. Bee diligently sent his men tramping along the coast, but at the end of February was beginning to get
a little tired of no action. He requested permission to make an attack on Indianola since most of the Yankees had pulled back from the mainland to Fort Esperanza and an easy victory would raise the spirits of his men. Magruder vetoed the idea because supplies were scarce. 43

Bee did have enough men by January 1864 to support a small action since Magruder had scoured the state for troops to protect the coast. The brigadier had a combination of state and Confederate troops in his Western Sub-District, with nine regiments of cavalry, four of infantry, seven artillery batteries, and a battalion of Texas Cadets, totaling about six thousand effectives. 44 Bee soon found that his personal duties and cares for the border area and the cotton traffic were minimal. Benavides could hold the upper river with no trouble. Bee's real problems came with what troops he had, because six thousand were still not enough to hold the area, scattered as they were along the coast and back to San Antonio. But even that number was unreliable. According to his rolls, Bee should have had ten thousand in his command. He was not alone in not having as many men as he could have used.

Manpower, sheer non-existence of men, was one inescapable fact in the Trans-Mississippi Department and throughout the South. In accordance with the presidential proclamation, Kirby Smith in August 1863 had announced a general pardon and amnesty to all absent without leave who came back to the army by September 30. In December Magruder asked for reports listing all men absent and the reason for their absence. He told commanders to adopt such
measures as they thought advisable to return those men to their commands. By February Bee was ordering brigade commanders to requisition the Labor Bureau for Negro teamsters to relieve the soldiers from driving wagons.46

If there were not enough men, there were too many horses. Forage was soon impossible to find near any locality close to the coast where the cavalry had to patrol. Winter weather made the situation worse as the roads deteriorated and it became necessary to travel farther and farther to obtain food for the animals. By March the situation was critical. Teams were unable to haul the amount required to feed the command from seventy-five miles away, since the wagon horses consumed all they could carry. There never seemed to be enough forage available to establish depots.47

Supplying the soldiers was not quite so difficult, but the amount received was still inadequate, and the quality poor almost all of the time. It was seldom that an event occurred such as the grounding of a schooner, the Frederick the Great, with a cargo of lead, powder, caps, rope, soap, foodstuffs, and liquor, but the Confederates took advantage of all they could. Bee immediately confiscated the cargo, or what was left of it after the Second Texas Infantry "tested" some of the contents and could not remember the next day where they buried the rest.48

Most serious were the problems of morale and "disloyalty." On almost constant patrol duty and exposed to the harsh weather, many soldiers became ill. With the poor rations, healthy men suffered, and the sick found it hard to rebuild their strength. Exhausted troops were also
easy prey to epidemic diseases, and measles were prevalent in the camps. These conditions, combined with anxiety for their families and no real action, helped foster low morale and discontent with the army.

Expressions of "disloyalty" were heard more often as the winter progressed and greatly worried Bee and Magruder. From the Confederate standpoint, Texans had long had a somewhat peculiar view of, and opinion about, the war. It was not popular in some regions of the state, as the protests against conscription had shown. But at the same time, Texans eagerly volunteered for service and happily went off to fight in the east. By late 1863, however, those who wanted to go had gone, and those men left in the state had little desire to leave even the vicinity of their homes, much less go to east Texas or any farther. This feeling first manifested itself to Bee in November when the officers of the state troops around Corpus Christi informed him that the men would not leave their families and pull back with Bee if the Yankees invaded. Many soldiers in the Confederate service felt the same way; they too were close to home.

A rumor that Magruder intended to abandon the land west of the Colorado did much to reinforce the unrest. The general tried to allay the fears by announcing his resolution to defend all of Texas and to point out that the best protection the soldiers could give their families was defeating the enemy. He had little success. Troops did not believe him when all they saw were orders to move east. In December Hobby's regiment of Eighth Texas Infantry
"expressed a determination not to come east," when instructed to report to P. N. Luckett near Velasco, two hundred miles from their post at Corpus Christi. Magruder told Bee on December 6 to calm the men down, assuring them that they would be well cared for. But the next day, when he thought the Federals were marching up Matagorda Peninsula and had not yet heard of the regiment's movement, the impatient general told Bee to use the troops which were faithful, "and fire upon such as refuse to march forward." The regiment marched, but "lost" many on the way.

Hobby's men were not alone in voicing their discontent. Other men in other regiments expressed "disloyal sentiments," and officers gave their implied agreement by not punishing the offenders and by granting furloughs in direct violation of orders. Desertion was the logical outcome of such feeling, and Magruder soon informed Kirby Smith that the problem had gotten out of hand. Bee reported that the seven hundred men of P. C. Woods's regiment, the Thirty-second Texas Cavalry, already upset at being dismounted, had held a meeting to decide about going west to their families against orders. Magruder captured some who did leave and informed Bee that he would "exterminate any regiment or regiments who attempted to march without orders."

Bee's attempts to carry out his orders on eastward movement and to keep the troops in line may have been the cause of an incident at his home in Goliad in early January. The Goliad Messenger reported that his cotton gin was set on fire and lost, along with twelve bales of cotton and a large amount of hay. The newspaper also told of other fires
Desertions continued, in spite of all the commanders could do. One hundred fifty-seven men of Woods's regiment left at the beginning of February, taking their arms with them and earning for their commander a reprimand from Bee. Woods managed to bring the men back, but the escapade caused the generals to write new orders designed to curb such activity. No troops were permitted on furlough with Confederate arms in their possession, and conscripts could not take even their private arms home. Camp limits were defined and written passes required to leave.

But nothing really helped. Confederate troops were still angry that state troops were furloughed home and they were not; living conditions did not improve; the wild goose chases after the enemy did not give the men enough to do, but only increased worry for the safety of their families.

Bee had hoped his requested attack on Indianola would do something to relieve this situation, but did not get the chance to try it. Before he could think up an alternative, the Yankees provided an opportunity that would yield much the same result. The clear threat of Banks's invasion of the Red River country seems to have lessened the unrest among the soldiers, because when the orders came to leave for Louisiana, there was little trouble. More opposition to the troops departing the state came from the Texas civilians, who did not want the army to leave while there was still one Yankee in the state.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER V

1 Magruder to Cooper, June 8, 1863, Q.R., XXVI, pt. 2, 57-65. Magruder wanted to establish four sub-districts, the one in north Texas and three along the coast -- Rio Grande to Nueces, Nueces to Colorado, and Colorado to Sabine -- but this did not come about.

2 General Order No. 97, June 23, 1863, ibid., 80.

3 Woods had the Thirty-second Texas Cavalry, Buchel the First Texas Mounted Rifles, Duff the Thirty-third Texas Cavalry, and Hobby the Eighth Texas Infantry. General Order No. 100, June 25, 1863, ibid., 84; Turner to Bee, July 12, 1863, ibid., 110.

4 Ibid., 98.

5 Magruder to Boggs, September 4, 1863, ibid., 203-5; Yancey to Bee, September 1, 1863, ibid., 196-7; Magruder to Kirby Smith, September 26, 1863, ibid., 260-2.

6 Troop returns, ibid., 280-2, 376. Bee still had control of the coast and had men at Corpus Christi, the Saluria area, and San Antonio, besides the line of the Rio Grande, but these far-off units would be no help in an emergency. The grand total for his whole sub-district was 89 officers and 1,123 men present for duty, at the end of October. The October returns list no artillery on the border.

7 Turner to Bee, August 13, 1863, ibid., 164-5.

8 Yancey to Bee, October 15, 1863, ibid., 324-5.

9 Circular, October 26, 1863, ibid., 357-8.

10 Turner to Bee, October 27, 1863, ibid., 361. Magruder's italics.

11 Bee to Turner, August 14, 1863, ibid., 166-7; Bee to Turner, August 24, 1863, ibid., 180-1; Bee to Turner, September 14, 1863, ibid., 228-9.

12 Bee to Turner, August 24, 1863, ibid., 180-1. Magruder's remedy for this was to suggest Bee prefer charges and court-martial any soldier who refused to break the mules. He could not understand how it was that soldiers could not break mules. His solution did not take inexperience into consideration. Turner to Bee, September 27, 1863, ibid., 262-3.

13 Bee to Turner, August 15, 1863, ibid., 169.

14 Bee to Turner, October 26, 1863, ibid., 358; Bee to Ruiz, September 12, 1863, ibid., 222; Bee to Ruiz, October 18, 1863, ibid., 337-8.
15 Bee to George Dye, October 24, 1863, *ibid.*, 350.
16 Turner to Bee, September 27, 1863, *ibid.*, 262-3.

N. J. T. Dana to C. P. Stone, December 2, 1863, *ibid.*, 830-1; McIntyre, *Federals*, 349n.


22 Fitzpatrick to Benjamin, November 17, 1863, *O.R.*, XXXIV, pt. 2, 828; Fitzpatrick to Benjamin, March 8, 1864, *ibid.*, 1031-33; Williams, *Border Ruffians*, 286-7; Chatfield, *Twin Cities*, 12, 13, 15. Williams always referred to Bee as "General Wasp" in his book, but never told specifically why he disliked Bee so, except that he considered him dishonest. Neale had enlisted in a Home Guard unit which "dissolved itself" when told it would be mustered into Confederate service. Neale was ordered to report to Bee who made him a cotton inspector and enrolling and passport officer, not recognizing what Neale thought was a discharge. Neale took his family to Matamoros on November 3 and it is unclear just when he came back to Texas, but it was soon, probably in late November. Both give a very graphic account of the evacuation.

23 Hunter, "Fall," 18.
24 McIntyre, Federals, 251; Lea, King Ranch, 205-6.

25 Harrington, Banks, 131.

26 Some said that Banks had 6,998 men in his force. This figure is the number given in the Official Records return sent by Banks to Halleck under the column "Aggregate Present and Absent." "Present for duty" lists 203 officers and 3,551 men, and Banks himself, in the accompanying letter, stated his force as "numbering in all about 4,000 men." He asked for more. Banks to Halleck, November 4, 1863, O.R., XXVI, pt. 1, 397-8; Lea, King Ranch, 205; Joseph C. Sides, Fort Brown Historical (San Antonio, 1942), 111; Ashcraft, Texas, 21. Some have also said that Bee had 1,200 men for defense. Pierce, Brief History, 42. If the coast defenses around Corpus Christi, Buchel's and Woods's regiments, the detachments lining the Rio Grande, and the men in Brownsville and San Antonio are all counted, then he did have that number present for duty. But even the troops on the river at Rio Grande City, and Laredo could hardly have been able to get to Brownsville in time to help in any meaningful way. Returns, O.R., XXVI, pt. 2, 376.

27 Bee to "My Dear General," no date, Personal Service Record, National Archives.


30 Dye was a merchant, besides being mayor of Brownsville, and took an active role in the Brownsville Lyceum. McIntyre, a Union soldier, said his wife and daughters were "Secesh," but Dye took the oath to the United States. Dye supposedly took the oath because of his disgust over the burning of the city and the cotton. McIntyre, Federals, 33607.

31 Bee's Report, November 8, 1863, O.R., XXVI, pt. 1, 434-5; Bee to Turner, November 8, 1863, ibid., pt. 2, 395-6; Bee to Benavides, November 9, 1863, ibid., 398-9; Bee to Quintero, November 9, 1863, ibid., 399-400; Bee to Turner, November 11, 1863, ibid., 405-7; Bee to Dickinson, November 13, 1863, ibid., 413; Bee to Turner, November 14, 1863, ibid., LIII, 910-11; Bee to Turner, November 15, 1863, ibid., XXVI, pt. 2, 414-15; Bee to Vidaurri, November 22, 1863, ibid., pt. 1, 438-9; Bee to Turner, November 30, 1863, ibid., LIII, 917; Bee to Kirby Smith, December 4, 1863, ibid., XXVI, pt. 2, 478-9.

32 Bee to Benavides, November 9, 1863, ibid., XXVI, pt. 2, 398-9; Bee to Turner, November 12, 1863, 408-9.

33 Magruder to Bee, November 10, 1863, ibid., 403-4; Bee to Turner, November 15, 1863, ibid., LIII, 911.
34 Bee to Turner, November 16, 1863, ibid., XXVI, pt. 2, 419-20.


36 Banks to Halleck, November 18, 1863, ibid., 409-10.

37 Turner to Bee, November 13, 1863, ibid., XXVI, pt. 2, 412.

38 Bee to Turner, November 21, 1863, ibid., 434.

39 Magruder to Bee, November 17, 1863, ibid., 423-4; Bee to Turner, November 21, 1863, ibid., pt. 1, 437-8; Bee to Turner, November 24, 1863, ibid., pt. 2, 442-4.


41 Turner to Bee, November 26, 1863, O.R., XXVI, pt. 2, 444-6; Special Order No. 323, November 27, 1863, ibid., 453.


43 The orders and correspondence related to the travels of Bee and his men, Magruder's notions and instructions, and response to Union raids, are as follows:

Magruder to Bee, November 28, 1863, O.R., XXVI, pt. 2, 454; Turner to Bee, November 30, 1863, ibid., 460; Turner to Bee, December 4, 1863, Eldridge Collection; Turner to Bee, December 7, 1863, O.R., XXVI, pt. 2, 492; Turner to Bee, December 8, 1863, Eldridge Collection; Yancey to Bee, December 27, 1863, ibid.; Turner to Bee, December 30, 1863, ibid., Alston to Bee, January 5, 1864, O.R., XXXIV, pt. 2, 827; Bee to Turner, January 8, 1864, ibid., 839-41; Bee to Turner, January 11, 1864, ibid., 854; Galveston Tri-Weekly News, January 17, 1864; Bee to Turner, January 18, 1864, O.R., LIII, 931; W. Mechling to Smith, January 20, 1864, Ashbel Smith Papers; Magruder to Bee, January 21, 1864, O.R., XXXIV, pt. 2, 904; Bee to Turner, January 22, 1864, ibid., 906; Bee to Turner, January 23, 1864, ibid., 908; Yancey to Bee, January 22, 1864, ibid., 907; Heerman to Yancey, January 25, 1864, ibid., 914-6; Duff to Mechling, January 25, 1864, ibid., 917; Mechling to Smith, January 28, 1864, Ashbel Smith Papers; Chief Engineer to Smith, January 28, 1864, ibid.; Turner to Bee, February 28, 1864, ibid.; Bee to Turner, February 7, 1864, O.R., XXXIV, pt. 1, 129; Bee to Slaughter, February 24, 1864, ibid., pt. 2, 987-8; Special Order No. 69, March 9, 1864, ibid., 1033; Bee to Hébert, March 16, 1864, ibid., 1048; Bee to Slaughter,
February 28, 1864, ibid., 1003-4; Bee to Slaughter, March 1, 1864, ibid., 1011-12; Yancey to Bee, February 29, 1864, ibid., 1006.


45 Tarver to Rogers, November 20, 1863, O.R., LIII, 914-5.

46 General Order No. 38, August 26, 1863, O.R., XXVI, pt. 2, 588; Magruder to Bee, December 21, 1863, Eldridge Collection; Special Order No. 41, February 11, 1863, Bee Papers.

47 Bee to Turner, June 2, 1863, O.R., XXXIV, pt. 2, 816-17; Bee to Turner, January 8, 1864, ibid., 839-41; Turner to Alston, January 9, 1864, ibid., 849-50; Green to Slaughter, February 26, 1864, ibid., 993-4; Bee to Slaughter, March 2, 1864, ibid., 1013.

48 Bee to Turner, February 3, 1864, O.R., LIII, 961; Mechling to Smith, February 3, 1864, Ashbel Smith Papers; Mechling to Smith, February 6, 1864, ibid.; B. P. Gallaway, ed., The Dark Corner of the Confederacy: Accounts of Civil War Texas as Told by Contemporaries (Dubuque, Iowa, 1968), 141-2. Bee remarked that the affair reflected some discredit on the "gallant Second Texas," but the soldiers were angry that he had taken "their property," especially the coffee, away. None of the "soothing syrup" was left.


51 Magruder to the Citizens of Western Texas, November 27, 1863, ibid., 452-3.

52 Turner to Bee, December 6, 1863, ibid., 485-6; Turner to Bee, December 7, 1863, ibid., 490-1.

53 Bankhead to Bee, December 14, 1863, Eldridge Collection.

54 The Thirty-second Texas is sometimes called the Thirty-sixth. Magruder said he was "surrounded by traitors." The dismounting of the cavalry was necessary because of the forage situation, but the Texans disliked it all the same. No self-respecting Texan of their breed liked to walk. Magruder to Kirby Smith, December 24, 1863, O.R., XXVI, pt. 2, 529-30.


57 Yancey to A. Smith, February 10, 1864, Ashbel Smith Papers; Alston to Bee, February 10, 1864, *ibid*.

58 Special Order No. 48, February 18, 1864, Bee Papers.
CHAPTER VI

HOSTILE SWARMS IN LOUISIANA
MARCH 1864 - JUNE 1865

General Nathaniel Banks's Brownsville expedition of 1863 had shown the flag to the French, but expanded operations in Texas had not followed. The administration in Washington seemed satisfied with what had been done, even if trade had not been halted, and did not give Banks any men to continue the campaign. Action in the Trans-Mississippi Department, however, did not come to an end. General-in-Chief Henry W. Halleck was determined to mount an offensive up the Red River to take Shreveport as the best line of defense for Louisiana and Arkansas and as a base of operations against Texas. Other considerations also offered reasons for a campaign. A vast storehouse of southern supplies would be eliminated; Union strength would be further demonstrated to the French; large quantities of cotton would be made available for northern use. Preferring the more militarily desirable object of Mobile, Banks objected at first, but he yielded in February to Halleck's plan.¹

It was an involved scheme calling for combined movements in Arkansas and Louisiana with naval cooperation. Frederick Steele was to march on Shreveport from Little Rock as one arm of a pincer movement. Banks, with his men and ten thousand on loan from W. T. Sherman's Army of the Tennessee, was to make his way up the Red with aid from Commodore D. D. Porter's river gunboats. The two were to
meet at the Trans-Mississippi Department's headquarters.

On March 12 the expedition started up the Red River. The long lines of soldiers stayed close to the river and the comforting presence of the transports and gunboats, and the Confederates under Richard Taylor fell back before them. Taylor had no choice but to retreat. The Yankees numbered about thirty thousand, and he had only about seven thousand, with no cavalry.

More troops were on the way from Texas. Kirby Smith and Taylor had been watching the enemy concentration closely, and it was not difficult to determine that the large Yankee army was meant for a drive on the Red River. On March 5, Kirby Smith ordered Magruder to send Tom Green's Texas cavalry to Alexandria. A few days later he ordered all troops possible to Louisiana. Bee's command was part of this exodus to stop the enemy.

Bee received Magruder's order to proceed to Alexandria on March 12. He reported that he had to leave some of his command in position on the coast, but had six regiments on the march. Magruder first told him to take all his transport with him, but to move with the least amount of baggage possible. By March 23, the major general had reduced the number of wagons allowed a cavalry regiment to fifteen, since all wagons were being stripped from the state as the troops moved east. This created some difficulty, and Taylor complained to Kirby Smith. Troops had to bring their own provisions and forage because those items and wagons were scarce in Louisiana.

By April 1, Bee was at Sabinetown in Louisiana.
command had been separated on the road, and the general did not know the whereabouts of some of his regiments, but thought he had enough men to "cut" his way to General Taylor if the enemy came between them.6 Bee reported to Taylor at Mansfield on the fifth with Debray's, Buchel's, and Terrell's regiments. He was given a division in General Tom Green's Cavalry Corps consisting of two brigades under Debray and Buchel.

Taylor had steadily fallen back before the enemy, but he was tired of retreating. Now that reinforcements were arriving, he thought of giving battle, even though still seriously outnumbered. The fresh troops would bring his forces to only nine thousand. Enemy occupation of Mansfield, however, would put Banks at the junctions of three roads to Shreveport and a number of ways west to Texas, and Taylor had to prevent that.

Banks was at Natchitoches, having occupied that city on April 1. The Union general did not expect Taylor to make a stand yet, and this assumption led him to blunder. From Natchitoches and Grand Ecore, there were two ways to Shreveport -- one by the river and the other to the west through Pleasant Hill and Mansfield. Banks did not know of a road along the water route and did not look for one. Instead, he chose the road to the west away from the river and naval protection.7

From Natchitoches to Mansfield, the land changed character markedly. No longer were there rich plantations, but smaller places surrounded by dense pine thickets on sandy hills. Water was very scarce, and the rain that fell
on the seventh only served to turn the red clay and sand road to mud, rather than to quench the thirst. The road Banks picked was narrow and, at times, sunken, and wandered over the hills and through ravines, offering a dismal view of a dreary countryside.

By now, Union strength had been somewhat reduced, as detachments were left behind to occupy Alexandria and other points. At Natchitoches, Banks sent twenty-five hundred more away from the main force to go up river with the navy. After that assignment, he still had about nineteen thousand, more than enough to crush any Rebel opposition. On the sixth of April, the Federals marched out of Natchitoches for Shreveport with their inexperienced cavalry in the van. They met the Confederates at Pleasant Hill on the seventh.

A portion of Green's cavalry was waiting for the Yankees and put up a brisk fight, finally halting the Union advance at Carroll's Mill, some eight miles on the road to Mansfield. Bee was ordered up in reserve with Debray's, Buchel's, and Terrell's regiments and put his forces into line of battle, where they remained for the night.

At daylight, Green returned to Mansfield with James P. Major's Division and all of the artillery, leaving Bee to contest the enemy advance. This Bee did by forming the regiments in "successive lines of battle," at intervals of five hundred yards, holding each line as long as possible, and then retiring to the next. In the heavily wooded country the Confederate cavalry was able to consume seven hours in its retreat of seven miles to Taylor's waiting
position.

While Bee was delaying the Federal advance, Taylor had prepared his battle lines about three miles outside of Mansfield. His men occupied the northern side of a large clearing, eight hundred yards across by twelve hundred from east to west, straddling the road. A hill ran down the middle parallel to the long sides of the clearing, and the enemy following Bee took the crest as the skirmishers fell back. Discovery of the Confederate line of battle led to hurried attempts to bring forces to the front.

Banks had committed an error in choosing the Mansfield road, but that in itself was not a fatal mistake. His order of march was, however, because immediately following the cavalry was its train of 320 to 350 wagons, which stretched out for almost three miles. In spite of the pleas of the cavalry commander, Albert L. Lee, neither Banks nor William B. Franklin, leading the Nineteenth Corps, would change the designated order or give him much infantry assistance. Therefore, when Lee found the Rebels and drew what forces he had into line, all he could muster on the field by three-thirty in the afternoon was about forty-eight hundred effectives, half of whom were dismounted cavalry.

Bee, on arriving at the position about noon, was ordered by Taylor to the extreme right flank, next to John G. Walker's Infantry Division. Debray's regiment was placed in reserve, but then brought up into line, and Taylor ordered Terrell's to help reinforce the left, thinking the enemy was massing on that side.
At four o'clock, Taylor ordered the attack opened on the left. When the action was well underway, he sent the right into motion. Walker was to move forward and turn the enemy's left while Bee swept around and gained the rear. The cavalry, however, had to make its way through the dense timber at the end of the clearing, and its progress was slow. While the infantry drove the enemy before them, Bee and his men fought trees and swamps. Before Bee managed to disentangle his command from the undergrowth, the Yankee lines had broken. The battle turned into a rout, causing one Rebel soldier to remark that the Federals were making "Bull Run time," as they fled, leaving all their equipment and the wagon train to the exultant Confederates.

When Bee and his men finally met the enemy, just before nightfall, it was at a place called Pleasant Grove, a small clearing with a fenced farm and a creek. The Yankees were no longer running. General William H. Emory's First Division of the Nineteenth Corps had hurried to the front and was drawn up to halt the Confederate advance and avert a complete Federal disaster. The southerners were disorganized after the long two-mile pursuit, but they attacked immediately.

Their charge ran into intense rifle fire at point blank range. Neither side had artillery; it had been left behind in the rush. Bee's men tried to turn the Federal left after an attack on the enemy right had failed, but the Yankee lines there held also. Confederate pressure in the twenty-minute action was sufficient, however, to force the Union men back some four hundred yards and give the
Rebels possession of the creek, the only source of water on the battlefield. Bee and his men slept that night on their final positions. The enemy retreated. 9

At dawn on the ninth, a bright spring day, Taylor ordered the cavalry in pursuit of the retreating enemy. Bee followed George T. Madison's and George W. Baylor's regiments of James P. Major's Division along a road strewn with burnt-out wagons, abandoned arms, and dead or wounded men. The Confederates captured many stragglers, whom they quickly sent to the rear. At nine o'clock that morning, the leading detachments encountered the enemy drawn up in line a mile outside of Pleasant Hill.

Since he was the ranking general in the advance, Bee assumed command and put his men into position with Buchel on his left and other regiments, as they arrived, to the right. A reconnaissance informed him that the enemy line was long, extending for a mile between two patches of timber. Bee had assumed that he was chasing a routed and retreating enemy, and "this extraordinary show of force on the part of the enemy" surprised him. He quickly concluded that his "irregular cavalry would have no business to charge such a line of battle." General Green soon arrived and took command, and the cavalry, except for some skirmishing, made no moves against the enemy. While they waited for the rest of the army to come up, the Confederates studied the position.

Pleasant Hill was a large clearing on the top of a slight plateau containing a number of buildings which made up a summer resort. Surrounding the hill were tracts of pine
woods and thickets, and a number of roads, to Mansfield, the Sabine, Fort Jesup, and Blair's Landing ran through the battlefield. The Federal line extended in a shallow "U" in front of the village between the woodlands and across the roads to Mansfield and the Sabine.

Action did not begin until three in the afternoon because Taylor wanted to give his tired infantry a couple of hours rest after their long march from Mansfield. Cavalry was posted on the right flank to cover Thomas J. Churchill's infantry divisions. Walker was placed to left of center, with Bee on his left on the Mansfield road. The far side of the line consisted of Major's Division, dismounted, with Camille de Polignac's Infantry Division in reserve behind Bee. Taylor planned to open with Churchill in a flanking movement trying to roll up the Federal left. Walker was to attack when he heard the sound of Churchill's guns, pulling the battle to the left. When the attack on the right "disordered" the enemy, Bee, with Buchel's and Debray's cavalry, was to charge straight up the road and through the village on the top of the hill, while Major took possession of the road to the Red River.

At three, Churchill started his men moving, but he did not swing far enough right to flank the enemy, and his attack was stalled for a short time. Walker, hearing the battle on his right, put his own brigades into action. When Green saw this and heard Churchill's guns, he supposed the enemy to be in retreat as planned and ordered Bee's cavalry to make their charge. It was about four-thirty in the afternoon.
Bee and his troopers rode out toward the Yankee lines in columns of fours, Debray's regiment in the lead. Bee intended to deploy and charge when closer to the enemy, but before he could give the order, the Federals opened fire from an ambush fifty yards away. The Twenty-fourth Iowa had concealed itself in a deep gully filled with a thick growth of young pine trees which was behind a fence parallel to Bee's line of march. They waited until the Rebels came within point blank range and then hit them broadside from the left.

This unexpected volley wreaked havoc in the cavalry columns. Men and horses went down, falling in all directions. Frightened animals reared and ran, some dragging their wounded riders by the stirrup. Men screamed, some in agony, others trying to give directions. Those who could picked themselves up and made for cover in some pine ravines close by, which offered a haven of sorts from the fire now coming from the front as well.

Buchel managed to pull his regiment back in time to avoid the ambush and, dismounting, quickly led his men behind the fence and attacked the Federal rear, driving them back to their own lines. In so doing, the Prussian was wounded fatally. Bee had two horses shot from under him, but rallied his men and brought them back to their own lines, receiving praise from Taylor for withdrawing his men "with coolness and pluck" and retiring last himself.

Fighting, by now, extended to the extreme end of the line, and Bee dismounted the remainder of his men and joined forces with Major to continue the battle. He led
Buchel's men into action himself. In the attacks on the Federal entrenchments, Bee received two slight wounds in the face, but continued to take part until darkness brought an end to the battle. With no artillery, the Confederates on the left had been unable to force the enemy works.

Pleasant Hill was not a victory for the South. While Bee and his companions had been holding the left, the Confederate force on the right had been attacked by the enemy reserve. The Union advance which followed drove Churchill's men back to the woods past their positions at the beginning of the battle. The Confederate withdrawal could have been turned into a rout, but, due to darkness, heavy losses, and unfamiliar terrain, the Federals did not pursue.

In order to obtain water, since there was none on the field, Taylor ordered his troops to fall back to the nearest source some six miles away. He left Bee with two companies of Buchel's and two companies of Debray's regiments to keep contact with the enemy. Bee set up his camp some eight hundred yards from the village and entertained important visitors. Taylor had remained with him, and about eight o'clock, Kirby Smith arrived from Shreveport. The three men had coffee at Bee's campfire and listened to the sounds of wagons and movement that testified to enemy departure. Before he left at ten, Taylor told Bee to return to the battlefield and picket up to the enemy lines. This Bee did, with some of Buchel's men, and quickly established that the enemy had not moved yet from his forward lines. Picket fire soon died down, and after midnight, all there
was to hear was the groans and cries of the wounded still on the field.\(^10\)

Hamilton Bee probably felt pretty pleased with himself that night. He had met the enemy in open combat and acquitted himself gallantly. He had received praise from the commander of the army, Richard Taylor. He had been privy to the highest councils when Kirby Smith visited his camp. His excitement showed in his reports, which are considerably more "eloquent" than his letters from Brownsville. Bee was generous with his praise for his men and modest in his accounts of his own actions.

But Bee did not escape criticism. J. G. Walker, commanding the infantry division which Bee's cavalry was to support at Mansfield, did not consider him fit for command of a large body of troops because of his conduct. At that battle, Bee had failed to accomplish his designated purpose when his men became entangled in the woods and unable to attack the enemy rear. This failure and Bee's "general want of appreciation of the necessities of the moment" were the reasons why the Confederates had not captured Banks's entire transportation and artillery, according to Walker. The infantry commander claimed that Bee had "failed on the eighth to take any share in the engagement, or in any manner to contribute to the success of the day." And as if that were not enough, Bee had not been "eager to retrieve his mistakes on the following day." When ordered to be in line of battle before daylight, he was not ready until a half hour after sunup, by which time others were already in pursuit of the enemy.\(^11\)
It must be pointed out that Walker was wounded in the last stages of the battle at Pleasant Hill and knew nothing of Bee's activities that day. Although that certainly would not erase any previous mistakes, it might have influenced Walker to be a little more lenient. Whether anyone could have brought cavalry through the dense pine woods on time is impossible to determine, but the general does not seem to have taken the terrain into account in his criticism. The infantry had a clear field. Bee was at Pleasant Grove and did take part in the fighting there, but there was much confusion in the disorganized commands, and Bee, who usually mentioned the generals he met, did not indicate even seeing Walker on the field.

Bee gave no indication that he received an order from Walker to be in line of battle before daylight, but just that at dawn he was ordered to pursue the enemy. If Bee did receive an order from Walker, it could easily have been a vague one as to time. "Dawn" or "daylight" mean different things to different people. Bee had no idea, at least in his reports, that he had not followed this order or that Walker was displeased about his actions that morning or the previous day. Walker was also writing after the action at Monett's Ferry and may have been influenced by Bee's conduct there. With no real evidence to the contrary, Walker's judgment that an important command for Bee would be a "public calamity," based on his actions on the eighth and morning of the ninth, seems harsher than necessary. If nothing else, Bee's tardiness could be blamed on inexperience, not non-aggressiveness. Bee wanted to fight.
In February Bee had been appraised in an inspection report as an excellent man, but one with "but little service." 12 The battles of Mansfield and Pleasant Hill were his first real face to face encounters with the enemy since the Mexican War -- he had not stayed long enough at Brownsville -- and his reports indicated a certain naive attitude toward the enemy. His surprise at the "extraordinary show of force" by the Yankees drawn up before Pleasant Hill was too great. He was too willing to assume from the remnants of retreat and rout that the enemy was incapable of battle. He also seemed to make assumptions too quickly that the enemy would do what he wanted him to do. But Bee was not the only one with these tendencies. Taylor too had thought the enemy more demoralized than he really was. The test for Bee would come when he was on his own again.

Hamilton Bee, on the field at Pleasant Hill, did not hear any criticism or consider his own shortcomings. He was convinced both battles had been victories and all had behaved gallantly. He and his men remained at their forward posts through the cold night of the ninth of April, and at dawn when they advanced, they learned that the enemy had indeed retreated from the field, and without taking their wounded with them. Bee moved into the village with his men and went to the house which Banks had occupied the night before, according to the "kind lady" who owned it. He sent word of the retreat back to Taylor and dispatched his cavalry in pursuit of the enemy, who were retreating to Grand Ecore. The troopers, under W. O. Yager in place of the fallen Buchel, followed for twenty
miles without firing a shot before coming on the Federal rear guard.

Bee stayed in Pleasant Hill, where he was soon visited by a number of Union surgeons who had been left behind to care for the wounded of their army. The general did not consider them prisoners of war, but offered them what assistance he could, "in the scope of our limited ability." General Green arrived and took command, and the rest of the day was spent caring for the wounded and burying the dead.\(^{13}\)

On the eleventh, Bee and his command, consisting of several brigades from his and Major's divisions, were sent out to keep a close eye on the Yankee and to apply constant pressure to enemy lines. For a week, the cavalry was in front of Grand Ecore constantly skirmishing. During this time, General Tom Green was killed at Blair's Landing contesting the passage of a Union ship trying to make Grand Ecore. Command of the Cavalry Corps passed to Bee for a few days until John A. Wharton arrived and took over.\(^{14}\)

Bee, reinforced by the remainder of Major's Division and Debray with two regiments, continued to harass the enemy until April 20,\(^{15}\) when he turned over command of the position in front of Grand Ecore to William Steele and moved south.

Just below Grand Ecore, Cane River, originally the main channel of the Red, leaves the larger stream, parallels it on the south, and rejoins it about thirty straight-line miles down stream. The road downriver to Alexandria goes through the island formed by the two rivers, crossing the Cane at Grand Ecore on the north end and at Monett's Ferry
on the south. Steep, pine-clad hills arise from the water on the south side of the ferry, offering a good view of the other side, which is low and relatively flat.

Bee, with five regiments and one battery, moved into this area from Natchitoches, ordered to place guns on the Red River to operate against Union transports and gunboats carrying supplies. The command camped that night on the Cane, and the next day, the twenty-first, they crossed the Twenty-four Mile Ferry onto the island and marched to a point a mile or so below Cloutierville. The village was the only settlement on the island, about two-thirds of the way to Monett's Ferry. Engineers scouted the Red and found a place for the battery, but it was too late to establish the guns. The men were tired after being in constant service since Mansfield and settled down that night for a much needed rest. Word that M. M. Parson's brigade before Natchitoches had been driven back to Double Bridges, twenty miles southeast of Pleasant Hill, worried Bee. He posted pickets six miles from camp up the island on the Natchitoches road, but he did not expect trouble.

At two o'clock the next morning the pickets were driven in by a large Union cavalry detachment. The tired men were awakened and formed into line, but the enemy did not appear until sometime after daylight. Bee had already sent his train to Monett's Ferry, some six miles away, and when he saw that the Federals were in force, he followed, skirmishing as he went. There he met General Major in position on the hills on the south side of the river with his small group of men and three batteries. The two
generals prepared to defend the crossing from what Bee thought was a force sent down to prevent his taking position on the Red River. It was not until the next day, the twenty-third, that he looked down from the hill and realized "that Banks's whole army was upon me."

General Banks had decided on April 18 to retreat from Grand Ecore, Alexandria, and the Red River. The river was falling, and Admiral Porter's boats could no longer operate in the shallow water. U. S. Grant wanted Sherman's troops back which he had loaned Banks. Under the circumstances, with no naval protection and depletion of his forces, and with no word from Arkansas that Steele was advancing on Shreveport, Banks ordered withdrawal. He did not know that Kirby Smith had taken most of Taylor's force away from him to combat the northern threat, but thought the Confederates had twenty-five thousand men. All Taylor actually had left were some two thousand infantrymen under Polignac and about three thousand cavalry under Wharton. Banks had seventeen to twenty thousand, and he could have pushed forward to Shreveport without too much trouble, if he had had the nerve to try.17

On April 19, A. J. Smith led the way to Natchitoches, and then on the twenty-first the Union army set off on the way to Cloutierville and Monett's Ferry. A report came in that the Confederates were also heading for the ferry to cut off the retreat, and the march was quickened to an exhausting pace which left many stragglers. Leading units camped three miles south of Cloutierville the night of the twenty-second, and advanced on the ferry before dawn on the
twenty-third. They found Bee already in possession of the ford. 18

When he arrived on the twenty-second, Bee had positioned his men, or rather deferred to Major’s suggestions, since Major had been there longer and had a better knowledge of the ground. Most of Bee’s troops were put into line, the majority on the right of the ferry, but Terrell’s and Yager’s regiments were sent back to Beasley’s Plantation to guard the depot of supplies and Bee’s train that were there. Beasley’s was thought to be open to attack from Cloutierville. A. P. Bagby’s brigade, reinforced by Debray’s regiment under Captain J. L. Lane, held the right side of the line, and Major and the artillery, with P. C. Woods’s regiment were in the center covering the ferry. On the left, under Debray at first, was W. P. Lane’s brigade, under the command of Colonel George W. Baylor and consisting of Baylor’s, Isham Chisum’s, Lane’s, and Madison’s regiments and the First Battalion of Louisiana State Troops, from the center to the left.

Although Bee’s total complement amounted to only two thousand men, he had one good advantage. It was a naturally strong position. The steep hills on the right looked out over a low, swampy area that had trees only on the river banks. Open fields led to the crossing and offered no cover for an attack. To the left on Bee’s side stretched timbered hills protected by more swamps, lakes, streams, and ravines that appeared impassable. The river itself was supposed to be fordable only at the ferry, and, expecting the attack there, Bee massed his strength, what
there was of it, at that point.

A light rain fell that morning of the twenty-third about daylight and cleaned the air of dust so that Bee had a clear view of the enemy from a hill about two miles on the left of the ferry. More and more Federals appeared, and Bee estimated that there were fully fifteen thousand opposite his center by ten o'clock. The Union generals had obviously decided not to attack the ferry for a time, because Bee could see detachments being sent off to feel for other approaches to or around his position. A cavalry column was sent down river to the Confederate right, and some infantry regiments up river to the Confederate left. Bee could do nothing but watch. He did not have the men to assume anything more than a defensive posture, and, if the river lived up to its reputation of being unfordable, then he was in a good place to inflict much damage on the Union army.

Unfortunately, as the Red River had dropped, so had the Cane, and the enemy infantry was able to find a ford about two miles from the ferry. Low water in the rivers also meant a semi-dry condition in land that was usually marsh. Federal forces were able to make their way through the wooded country to the position held by Baylor's brigade on the hills.

When scouts brought report of the enemy crossing, Baylor was sent a section of artillery, two rifled guns, from M. V. McMahan's Battery, and when the enemy appeared, the guns opened up with some effect and soon drew the fire of Union artillery across the river. As it became clear that the Federals were moving in force there, Major gave Baylor
command of the left wing, leaving his regiment in position at the ferry. The colonel immediately asked for reinforcements. Woods's regiment was pulled out of the center and sent to him. In spite of all Madison's, Lane's, and Woods's regiments and the Louisianians could do, they could not hold their first positions and fell back to a line of fences and thick undergrowth.

To mask the crossing and movement up river, the Union forces had started an artillery duel at the ferry, but neither side hurt the other much as they blazed away. Bee had watched this carefully for signs of impending attack, but as more reports arrived from the left, he became uneasy about that end of the line. When it appeared that there would be no danger of immediate attack, Bee pulled Baylor's and Chisum's regiments out of line at the ferry and went with them to reinforce Baylor. They arrived just after the retreat to the second line, and Baylor put the regiments in on his right. His line was anchored on the river and extended over the hills, but was in the air at the left end. He did not have enough men to reach Mill Lake, a body of water several miles in length that would have secured the position. Before he could ask Bee for more troops, however, the general had gone back to the center at a request from Major.

When Bee arrived at the ferry, he was informed that a report had been received from Captain Lane of Debray's regiment on the extreme right that he was being pushed from the position by an enemy force of some numbers. Word had come to Bee earlier of a rumored landing from transports
on the Red River below the mouth of the Cane, but it had been discounted or disregarded. Now it appeared to be true. Baylor's message that his flanks would be turned unless he filled the gap between his left and the lake, where some enemy were already, combined with Lane's report, convinced Bee that both his flanks were about to be turned, and "the critical moment had come." He could expect an immense frontal attack at any minute and was persuaded of one's imminence by another barrage from the enemy artillery at the ferry. With his few troops he could not expect to hold and determined to abandon the position. He sent word to Baylor to "get out of there the best way" he could and started his men on the road to Beasley's. He had lost about fifty men.

Bee went to Beasley's to pick up supplies, since the troops were without rations. He expected the enemy to take a day to cross the river, during which time he could reprovision and return to harass their progress. But Beasley's turned out to be thirty miles away, and by the time the Confederates arrived there, early in the morning of the twenty-fourth, they were exhausted. Bee stayed at Beasley's until two in the afternoon and then marched out again. He did not make contact with the enemy that day.

On the twenty-fifth, his forces again began to skirmish with the Federals on the Rapide near McNutt's Hill. They had caught up with the rear guard, but for some reason he did not know, Bee's order to Debray to hurry his men up into line was not carried out, he did not receive the reinforcements he requested, and he was unable even
to slow down the Union rear units.

From the first of May to the eighth, Bee and his division pursued the Yankees to Alexandria and were engaged almost constantly in some kind of small fight. They were then ordered to Marksville for the same kind of work against the Federal forces in that vicinity. On May 14, Bee was relieved of his command and ordered to report to headquarters at Shreveport by Major General Taylor.

Richard Taylor was furious and censured Bee strongly for his conduct at Monett's Ferry. Taylor had had big plans for the Union army. Wharton and the remainder of the cavalry not at the ferry had followed Banks onto the island between the Cane and the Red and were applying constant pressure on the rear guard. Polignac with the infantry was opposite Cloutierville and ready to give battle if Banks should try to escape in that direction. The Union army was in a demoralized state and ready to panic, Taylor thought; it would not take much to push them over the edge. But Bee had let them go -- at small cost to the enemy and none to himself -- after both Taylor and Wharton had impressed upon Bee "the importance of holding the position to the last extremity." Taylor had advised Bee on the twenty-first of the enemy's imminent advance, but Bee had let himself be outmaneuvered. The major general went so far as to enumerate his subordinate's failings:

Bee's errors were, first, in sending back Terrell's entire brigade to Beasley's to look after a subsistence train, for the safety of which I had amply provided; second, in taking no steps to increase artificially the strength of his position; third, in massing his troops in the center, naturally the strongest part of
his position and where the enemy were certain not to make any decided effort, instead of toward the lakes on which his two flanks rested; fourth, in this, that when he was forced back he retired his whole force thirty miles to Beasley's, instead of attacking vigorously the enemy's column . . . marching through a dense pine woods, encumbered with trains and artillery and utterly demoralized by the vigorous attacks of Wharton in the rear. He displayed great personal gallantry, but no generalship. 20

For his part, Bee thought he had acted only as he could have in the circumstances. Although he stated once that he had been impressed "with the importance of the position at Monett's Ferry," it appears from later reports that he thought he had been sent to the island to blockade the Red River. He had had no warning that the Union army was on its way to his location, but thought the skirmishing of the twenty-second caused by a small Federal scouting force. Not until he saw Banks's whole force did he realize his predicament and the importance of holding his place. He had no time to prepare to meet such a horde, and even if he had, his position was not as strong as it first seemed, due to the state of the river. Furthermore, the Union army was by no means demoralized. It was "a splendid army spread over the valley of the Cane River as far as the eye could reach," "marching in solid columns with the compactness of self-reliance and conscious strength." "Success was impossible." There were just too many Yankees. When reports had arrived that both flanks had been turned, Bee and his officers, particularly Major and Bagby, had all agreed that the important thing was to save the command. They had fallen back to Beasley's, which they thought only twenty
miles away, because it was the sole place to get rations and some of the men had been without food for over forty-eight hours. 21

While Bee can most certainly not escape criticism, Taylor's objections to his actions should perhaps not have been quite so strong. Taylor's plan of encirclement and destruction of the Union army was audacious, but almost too much so. He just did not have enough men to bring it off. The enemy was not so demoralized as the general wanted to believe. Taylor also seemed to be operating on the misapprehension that Bee had several days to examine and prepare his ground, which he did not. Taylor did not realize the speed of the Federal advance, and although he mentioned several times the difficulty of communicating with Bee over the distance of fifty-six miles, he assumed that Bee received all his messages and knew Banks was coming.

Bee was correct; the Yankees were going to get by him sooner or later. The low river and great numbers of Federals precluded stopping them for any significant length of time. He did not know Taylor's plan, the location of the rest of the army, that Beasley's was already guarded, or that Banks was on his way. He arrived at Monett's Ferry on the twenty-second and did not realize what threatened him until the next day, so he had no time to make much preparation that morning. There is little sense in sacrificing a command when it cannot inflict great damage.

All things considered, the blame for the things that Bee did do wrong must be laid at the feet of inexperience -- both his and the Texas troops. Evidently no
real reconnaissance was made of the river conditions to
the left of the ferry that would have foretold the need for
some kind of fortifications on that side of the line. The
Yankees started searching for a ford immediately. The
Confederates seem to have assumed they would not find one.
Also, Bee had had little chance to fight any kind of
defensive engagement. At both Mansfield and Pleasant Hill
he had been in the attacking force. He was greatly impressed
with the immensity and panoply of the Union army. Therefore,
he massed his strength in the center, assuming the attack
would come there because the river was supposed to be
unfordable and the enemy had massed his forces opposite
that point. It was not established whom Lane on the extreme
right was fighting; it may have been some wandering Union
cavalry looking for a ford. But, as at Brownsville, Bee,
influenced by numbers and earlier reports, believed the
first information he received. He should have checked on
the distance to Beasley's, but he could not have been
expected to know the country as Taylor did, and why he did
not send back for help is a mystery to which he did not offer
an answer. It is to his credit that he did not try to put
some of the criticism on Major, who, Bee said in his first
report, was the one who ordered Terrell's brigade to
Beasley's.

Bee wrote Kirby Smith in August to request a court
of inquiry to investigate the facts surrounding Monett's
Ferry. He did not like reports in circulation "prejudicial
to his character as an officer" and wanted vindication.
Kirby Smith told him that a court was unnecessary because
he agreed with Bee that a longer defense would have led
to loss of artillery and perhaps the command. From other
friends, Wharton, Bagby, and Major, came assurance that
they were willing to make a statement for publication that
Bee had remained in position much longer than they would
have. This approval by superiors of his judgment, however,
did not come immediately, and even when it was given, "talk"
continued.

After he was relieved, Bee went back to Texas and
spent most of his time in Seguin, probably with his family.
He found himself a target for criticism after reports of
Monett's Ferry were published in the newspapers. One
correspondent who had been with his forces had talked to
a Yankee major captured a few days later and reported that
the enemy felt they would have been crushed between Wharton
and Bee within four hours if Bee had not given way. Bee
quite naturally became very tender on the subject. He was
quick to take offense and slow to forget those who criticized
him. Even as late as April 1865 he still felt the hurt and
humiliation. He was willing to endorse Captain William G.
Moseley's conduct at Monett's Ferry, he said, in spite of
the fact that Moseley had harshly judged Bee's actions
there. Bee told Moseley of his disappointment in the captain,
whom he had considered a friend, and took Moseley to task
for yielding to "an unjust clamor" and deciding against Bee,
even though he (Moseley) could not have known the whole
story from his position in line. He would testify to
Moseley's gallantry and efficiency as an officer, he said,
because it was his duty, "and personal considerations cannot
induce me to withhold justice from others, although it may have been denied to me."25

No matter how much sympathy or endorsement he received from his friends, Bee still could not get his old command back. From exile he wrote to Kirby Smith requesting reassignment, but none was forthcoming. General Walker censured him for his conduct at Mansfield as previously stated, and this disapprobation seems to have squashed any chance for active command until December.26

In December 1864 Kirby Smith suggested Bee as leader of a brigade under the control of Samuel Maxey, commanding in Indian Territory. Bee and Maxey were old friends, and Maxey was happy to approve of Bee's assignment.27 On January 23, 1865, Bee and his brigade were ordered to Rusk, Texas, to report to Wharton's Cavalry Corps.28 For the next months until the end of the war, Bee was stationed in Texas, mostly in the vicinity of Hempstead, while his command underwent several reorganizations and transformations and did essentially nothing. Much of the cavalry was dismounted, and Bee became an infantry officer. There was some dispute in January and February as to just who was to give Bee orders, Magruder (then commanding the District of Arkansas) or Maxey, but Kirby Smith settled the matter by assigning Bee to Wharton under Maxey. Finally in May, Kirby Smith assigned him to take over command of the cavalry from Walker, who reportedly refused to give it up but stated no reason for his resistance. By that time it really did not matter, because the war was over before any action could be taken.29

Conditions in Texas and the Trans-Mississippi had
deteriorated badly in April and May as news of Lee's surrender in Virginia spread. Many soldiers talked of mutiny and desertion and paid little attention to the calls from generals to stand fast and fight to the end. In April Bee's command was sent out after some cavalzrymen in Cooke County who were looting and committing other outrages on the civilian population. On May 15 the Galveston garrison tried to mutiny. Other commands quickly disintegrated. The civilian population was almost as demoralized as the military. An appeal by Governor Murrah made no impression at all.

Bee reported to Guy Bryan on May 15 that there was "not much fight in the Army, and less in the people." He intended to fight to the end, but expected to be sacrificed doing so. A last effort would save honor and dignity, but Bee felt that the people were not interested in such things, only in their own self-preservation. Rather unrealistically, Bee subscribed to the notion that if Texas could call a convention, repeal the ordinance of secession, and go back into the Union, then they could keep their slaves, and it would take a constitutional amendment to "divest us legally" of the institution. He dreaded invasion, but did not expect the Yankees to put out the money if they could get Texas back without one. He seemed to feel they would even accept slavery in the state to avoid more fighting. He wanted the army to stand firm and explain this situation and possibility to the people because he thought it was their only chance.

But more troops mutinied, or just went home, taking what government stores they could carry. Disorder quickly
spread over the state, and where men had only taken public property to which they felt entitled, they now resorted to violence and ceased to respect private property. All governments disappeared, and lawlessness increased greatly. No one could do anything except wait for the Yankee. "All was anarchy."32

Rumors flew through the state of the punishments the enemy had in store for those who had led the rebellion. Lee himself had been arrested. The Yankees were going to try everyone for treason and confiscate all property. Many Confederate government and army officers feared for their lives or refused to live under northern rule, and made preparations to leave the country for Mexico. Bee was one of them. About the middle of June, he started for the border, his military career at an end.33

Hamilton Bee's life as a Confederate general had involved several fields -- administration, diplomacy, and combat -- and several very different areas -- San Antonio, the border, the coast, and Louisiana. The combinations of fields and areas had changed his responsibilities at each post, and his performance in each was related to his previous experience, his own personality, and the situation into which he was thrust.

San Antonio was primarily an administrative post, and Bee had to organize and efficiently run his sub-district. His major problems were the population, some of whom were not enthusiastically pro-Confederate, and the cotton business, which was already extremely complicated. Although his measures of martial law and cotton regulations were
unpopular, both in Richmond and in Texas, order was established -- somewhat too harshly at times -- and a beginning was made at necessary trade control. Bee did about as well as he could have, supported by many military and civilian officials, who agreed with his methods. As cotton and the diplomatic situation became more important, however, there was really little Bee could do from San Antonio, and he had to go to Brownsville.

On the border, Bee was at his best and his worst. His extradition agreement with Lopez was the highlight of his career. Bee made an excellent diplomat, and it is difficult to suggest anyone who could have done better. He understood the area, the people, the political situation, and the language, and had many friends on both sides of the river. He dealt with the Mexicans on equal terms. There was no hint of condescension on his part in his relations with them. It would have been very easy to stir up trouble in the explosive atmosphere where Unionist, Confederate, Mexican bandit, cotton speculator, and all other types mingled, but Bee was determined to keep the border as peaceful as he could, and he succeeded.

Administration of the area involved cotton and trade regulations and impressment, and no one could have straightened out that situation completely. The government should have stepped in to control the trade from the beginning, but that was politically impossible, and Richmond's reluctance to accept measures applied by Texas officials only complicated things further. Bee was under a multiple handicap here. He received orders not only from Richmond,
but also from Hébert, Magruder, and Kirby Smith. The point of controlling the cotton trade was to obtain supplies for the government and the army, and Bee, by his arrangement of the twenty-percent cotton "loan," seems to have been the only one who arrived at a method which got the government the cotton to pay for its needs. He might have been able to do more if given the chance earlier, but whether Magruder could have let Bee act on his own authority as he (Bee) wanted to do is questionable.

On the other hand, Bee appears to have done very little with what authority he had to curb some of the illegal practices in the trade, such as the use of conscript teamsters to haul private cotton. Why he did not do more is a mystery. Perhaps there was a conflict of jurisdictions, and he thought Simeon Hart was responsible. Perhaps he delegated that job to one of his subordinates who, for one reason or another, did not carry out the order. Bee's sense of duty, which led him to take unpopular action when he thought it necessary, makes it doubtful that opposition would have stopped him or that he could have been involved in any of the corruption of the business.

Militarily, the border was a disaster for Bee. His flight from the Yankees, with no attempt at resistance, put him in a very bad light. Bee was no combat general. He had no experience in fighting or commanding troops, even in maneuvers and training, and was simply out of his depth when confronted by an invasion. If given the chance, he might have developed more aptitude for command in a combat situation, but unfortunately, he had neither time nor
opportunity. By late 1863, when he finally got the chance to take part in "real" warfare, the stakes were too high to permit errors or poor judgment, whatever the excuse. With so few men trying to do so much, mistakes were appallingly obvious. His stay on the coast was a session in limbo; he had essentially nothing to do there, even if he had had the men to do it.

Louisiana gave him the chance to prove himself and erase any blot left on his name from Brownsville. He proved to be courageous and level-headed in the heat of battle, but his inexperience showed again in his actions at Mansfield and Monett's Ferry. He cannot really be blamed for letting Banks escape; he simply did not have the men to hold the Yankees, a situation distressingly familiar all over the South. But Taylor was furious, and so relieved Bee. In spite of the support he received from Kirby Smith, Wharton, Bagby, and Major, Bee could do little to regain public approval since operations of any importance in the department ceased, and it hurt him deeply.

Overall, Bee was a competent administrator and an excellent diplomat, but his "generalship" did leave something to be desired. The South needed men with all three qualities, and it was perhaps the tragedy of Bee's career that he was weak in the field which received the most public attention and strong in that which earned the least approval and the most opposition. Some could forgive mistakes in battle, but few were willing to accept regulations that affected their business dealings. In the aftermath of the war, however, it appears that defeat healed most of the
wounds inflicted by criticism. No ex-Confederate would criticize another ex-Confederate; they had to stand together against the Yankee.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER VI


3 Special Order No. 72, March 12, 1864, ibid., pt. 2, 1037-38; Bee to Magruder, March 13, 1864, ibid., 1040.

4 Magruder to Bee, March 23, 1864, ibid., 1075.

5 Taylor to Boggs, April 2, 1864, ibid., pt. 1, 518.

6 Bee to Slaughter, April 1, 1864, ibid., pt. 3, 722-23.

7 For a complete discussion of Banks's decision, see Johnson, Red River Campaign, 113-4.

8 Green to Bee, April 8, 1864, William T. Meechling Sub-Collection, Jeremiah Y. Dashiell Papers (Archives, Eugene C. Barker Texas History Center, University of Texas at Austin).


12 Inspection Report, February 16, 1864, ibid., XXII, pt. 2, 1131.

13 Bee, "Error," 184-6; Barr, "Mechling Journal," 368; Taylor, Destruction and Reconstruction, 206; Bee to Lubbock, May 9, 1864, Mechling Sub-Collection.

14 When Bee took over from Green, Harvey C. Medford, a private in Lane's Texas Cavalry, Major's Division, wrote, "I am sorry he is in command too, for I do not believe that General Bee has the ingenuity or the military skill to effect anything against the enemy. Brig. Gen. Major surpasses him in every particular, and all of the characteristics incident to a military man. It is a pity that rank should supercede knowledge, experience, and known abilities." Smith and Mullins, "Medford Diary," 229. General Order No. 1, April 15, 1864, Houston Daily Telegraph, April 22, 1864.

15 Bee to Lubbock, May 9, 1864, Mechling Sub-Collection; Barr, "Mechling Journal," 369-71; Taylor, Destruction and Reconstruction, 214-5; Winters, Civil War in Louisiana, 357-51.

16 Taylor, Destruction and Reconstruction, 219; Xavier B. Debray, A Sketch of the History of Debray's Twenty-sixth Regiment of Texas Cavalry (Austin, 1884), 21; Johnson, Red River Campaign, 222.


19 Bee's report, O.R., XXXIV, pt. 1, 606-10; Bee to Lubbock, May 9, 1864, Mechling Sub-Collection. This letter covers the events from April 10 to May 9 and contains much information which has apparently never been published. In it, Bee referred to the report of a Yankee landing on the Red that figured so prominently in his decision to abandon the ferry. According to Alwyn Barr, who edited the journal of W. T. Mechling, Bee's Adjutant General, for this period, Mechling confirms a "previously unsupported statement" by Theo. Noel that Bee had received such a report. Barr also states that Bee probably omitted any mention of the report from his own account through "a sense of chagrin" because the report had been false. Yet, a correspondent for the Houston Tri-Weekly Telegraph calling himself "Sioux" who was with Bee's forces at Monett's Ferry reported in the paper that they fell back because another Yankee column was coming from the Red River. This letter to Lubbock was a report made to the Assistant Adjutant General, Lubbock, of Wharton's Cavalry Corps; Wharton was Bee's direct commander at that time. Bee may have omitted the information in his report to Taylor from chagrin, as Barr claims. But that report was written on the fourteenth, after Bee had been relieved, and he might have thought either that Taylor had seen his letter of the ninth, or that it would do no good to include the information. The general was too angry to listen. As Barr states, Johnson's Red River Campaign does not use the Noel or Mechling account. Neither uses the Bee to Lubbock letter. Baylor's report, O.R., XXXIV, pt. 1, 616-25; Debray, Sketch, 21-22; Theo. Noel, A Campaign from Santa Fe to the Mississippi, Being a History of the Old Sibley Brigade, ed. by Martin H. Hall and Edwin A. Davis (Houston, 1961), 124-6; Barr, "Mechling Journal," 373-9; Johnson, Red River Campaign, 206-41; Winters, Civil War in Louisiana, 361-3; Houston Tri-Weekly Telegraph, May 2, 1864; Report of Col. O. P. Gooding, Thirty-first Massachusetts Mounted Infantry, commanding Fifteenth Cavalry Brigade, O.R., XXXIV, pt. 1, 496; Taylor to Anderson, April 27, 1864, ibid., 583; Taylor to Anderson, May 6, 1864, ibid., 587; Lubbock, Six Decades, 540; John Dimitry, Louisiana, Vol. X in Confederate Military History, ed. by Clement A. Evans (New York, London, Toronto, 1962), 153-4; Wooten, Comprehensive History, II, 732-3; Taylor to Anderson, May 10, 1864, O.R., XXXIV, pt. 1, 590.
20 Taylor, Destruction and Reconstruction, 219-20; Taylor to Boggs, June 1, 1864, Edmund Kirby Smith Papers (microfilm in Ransdell Collection, Archives, Eugene C. Barker Texas History Center, University of Texas at Austin), roll 209; Taylor to Anderson, April 24, 1864, O.R., XXXIV, pt. 1, 579-80; Taylor to Anderson, April 24, 1864, ibid., 580-1.

21 Bee to Lubbock, May 9, 1864, Machin's Sub-Collection; Bee to Weems, May 14, 1864, O.R., XXXIV, pt. 1, 610-12; Bee to Boggs, August 17, 1864, ibid., 612-14.


23 Wharton to Bee, June 30, 1864, ibid., 615.

24 Houston Daily Telegraph, May 9, 1864.

25 Bee to Moseley, April 20, 1865, Bee Papers.


27 Maxey to Kirby Smith, December 2, 1864, ibid., LIII, 1029.

28 Boggs to Maxey, January 23, 1865, ibid., XLVIII, pt. 1, 1340.

29 L. W. Horton, "Samuel Bell Maxey; A Biography" (unpublished manuscript, 1970), 113-14, 144-52; L. W. Horton, "General Sam Bell Maxey: His Defense of North Texas and the Indian Territory," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, LXXIV (April 1971), 520-1; Chester A. Barr, Polkann's Texas Brigade (Houston, 1964), 55-6; Boggs to Maxey, January 23, 1865, O.R., XLVIII, pt. 1, 1340; Boggs to Magruder, January 25, 1865, ibid., 1345; Kirby Smith to Wharton, January 30, 1865, ibid., 1351-2; Anderson to Maxey, February 6, 1865, ibid., 1369; Boggs to Bee, February 8, 1865, ibid., 1372; Boggs to Wharton, February 17, 1865, ibid., 1392; Belton to Buckner, March 9, 1865, ibid., 1417; Thomson to Bee, March 15, 1865, ibid., 1426; Organization of Wharton's Cavalry Corps, ibid., 1458; Special Order No. 97, April 24, 1865, ibid., pt. 2, 1285; Special Order No. 115, April 25, 1865, ibid., 1286; Special Order No. ---, May 12, 1865, ibid., 1300; Special Order No. 133, May 15, 1865, ibid., 1302-3; Carrington to Maxey, May 14, 1865, ibid., 1303; Magruder to Kirby Smith, May 16, 1865, ibid., 1509; Kirby Smith to Magruder, May 17, 1865, ibid., LIII, 1048.

30 Jack to Magruder, April 14, 1865, O.R., XLVIII, pt. 2, 1279; Jack to Bee, April 14, 1865, ibid., 1281; Magruder to Boggs, April 8, 1865, ibid., 1271.

31 Bee to Guy Bryan, May 15, 1865, Bee Papers.

CHAPTER VII

A BEE WITHOUT A HIVE

1865 - 1897

Bee arrived in Mexico at the end of June. He and others had traveled day and night to reach the border before the Yankees could mount any kind of action to keep them within the state. Monterrey became the gathering place for the Confederate exiles, among whom were Kirby Smith, Magruder, Edward Clark, H. W. Allen, Sterling Price, J. O. Shelby, and Pendleton Murrah.

On the fourth of July, the French commander of the garrison there invited some of the army men to dine with him. The banquet began rather stiffly because the host did not speak English, and none of the guests spoke French, but Bee, who spoke a fluent Spanish, relieved the situation greatly, and the dinner was a success.

Bee had occasion very soon after the banquet to see the French commander again. On his way to Monterrey, Bee had picked up a French zouave who had fallen out of ranks to sleep off the effects of too much liquor. As Bee and Alexander Terrell were sitting on the porch of the Paschal Hotel in Monterrey one day, the death cart passed taking a prisoner to the place of execution. The condemned man was Bee's zouave, who stood up and bowed when he recognized Bee. "My God, they are murdering that poor fellow!" Bee cried and rushed to French headquarters to try to save him. His efforts were in vain, however, for French discipline was strict and
rigid, and the penalty for straggling in enemy country was death.³

For a while the former Confederates rested in Monterrey and acted generally like tourists, seeing the sights of the city. The Mexican War veterans, including Bee, had their day showing the others where the action took place in 1846 and reliving the days of their youth. All too soon, the men had to begin to think of what they were now going to do with their lives. Many of their families had joined them, as Bee's wife and children had.

Some formed Confederate colonies, Carlota being the most famous, and turned to growing cotton. Bee attempted to start a plantation near Orizaba, or so it appears from the evidence, but it is unclear whether he actually joined the colony.⁴ He did not stay long at this job, however, for in April 1866, the Mexican Times, a newspaper published by former Governor Allen of Louisiana for the exiles, reported him in Havana, employed as a ship broker. Cuba, like Mexico, had become a haven for those trying to escape defeat.⁵

When the venture in Cuba failed, as so many of Bee's subsequent attempts to make a living would, he returned to Mexico and settled near Parras, Coahuila. He and Doctor D. Knight, who had been practicing medicine at Saltillo since the close of the war, became partners in an agricultural enterprise in 1868. They tried a little of everything, agrarian experiments, paper manufacture, vineyards, brandy distilling, and admitted a partner named Luis Montmollin from Georgia to the enterprise a little later in the year.⁶
By 1869, most of the ex-Confederates had returned home. They were homesick, Mexicans were inhospitable, the colonies had failed, and the political chaos and battles between the French and Juarez drove many north. Bee had stayed, but he decided in January that he had to return to Texas, even at the risk of persecution by the Radicals—especially his old enemy E. J. Davis. Montmollin had turned out to be a "liar and a thief," who left Bee in the lurch without a word. Dr. Knight having also gone home, Bee was alone, and although he had a fine crop of cotton growing, was unable to get an advance from Mexican bankers. He used up all his funds in 1868 so as not to go into debt, and had nothing left at the beginning of 1869. He wrote a friend, J. F. Crosby in Houston, of his plight. He had a wife and six children, and the situation was desperate. "I assure you I seldom have enough to eat." He asked Crosby to raise some money from his (Bee's) friends so that he could bring his family home. If Davis hanged him, well, "it will be a better fate than to starve in Mexico."

Bee had been keeping up with political events in the United States and told Crosby he found it somewhat strange that he heard cries about states rights and violations of the Constitution coming from southern orators again. He considered himself a subject of the conqueror and would shun politics when he came back. He had got used to living under a despotic government in Mexico and did not anticipate difficulty in adjusting to Texas. He was not too worried that the Negro had the vote; he expected that the whites could control the black voter just as the owner of the
Mexican hacienda controlled the vote of his workers. 7

Eighteen seventy-three found Bee still in Mexico and still in financial straits, when he wrote to his old friend Ashbel Smith, asking for a loan to pay for his son Barnard's tuition at a military school in Austin. He had not stayed there from fear; he was no longer afraid of Davis, although he still disliked the man intensely. "The only thing I did [on the border in the Davis kidnapping affair] was to save his miserable life," Bee said. He had remained partly from necessity. A partner had died without leaving a will, and the Mexican government had confiscated the property which Bee and the man owned together. Bee went through a long expensive legal battle to recover the property, but lost. An appeal for help to the United States minister to Mexico, which Bee felt something of a presumption on his own part, gained him nothing. He reported to Smith that he had not a dollar left, but he did not owe anyone either.

He had hopes of acquiring some land along the Rio Nasas which, according to Bee, was a "miniature Nile." He pictured the area as almost a paradise for raising cotton and claimed that he did not want to return to Texas as long as opportunity was open to him in Mexico. All he asked for in this world was enough to educate his children (he and his wife had eight now), and Mexico held the promise of the moment. 8

In May 1876 Bee returned to Texas for good, "perfectly cured of my illusions about Mexico." The constant revolutions had destroyed all his hopes for the future. He had no protection under the law there, and nothing he tried seemed
to earn a profit. "I have not prospered for even a day in Mexico," Bee said, and he decided to go back home even though he was without means. He had lost the sight in his right eye, and was worried about the other one, but felt healthy enough and capable of making a living, although he was not sure what he wanted to do.9

His friends did not forget him, however, and by December he had a position on the board of Texas Agricultural and Mechanical College outside of Bryan. He and his family lived there comfortably, and Bee was enthusiastic about the school and its faculty and students, rating all of them "above the average." As he said he would, Bee shunned politics, intending not to work in any party actively, but that did not stop him from expressing an opinion. The 1876 election seemed to him to be a case of either "Hayes or revolution." The "Government of our Fathers" was gone, and all power rested in the executive, according to Bee. He supposed that the new government would "work as well for us as an unrestrained democracy, which means in Texas, to call you to your door, kill you, and ride away to the Magistrate, bail, trial, acquitted -- there is no protection to life or property in Texas ... west of the Guadalupe." He did not expect much from Washington.10

Bee did not stay long in Bryan, however, and returned to San Antonio in 1879. In 1880 he described himself as "so reduced in my means - that being out of any sort of employment, I feel anxious about the bread and meat question." No friends of his seemed to have any money, or none to loan him, at any rate, and he asked Ashbel Smith to
help him raise enough to send his son Tarver to school.11

As a former Confederate general, Bee had social status, of course, and when U. S. Grant came to Texas that year, Bee went with others to receive the Union commander in Galveston. He said he did it with pleasure since he appreciated the course Grant took in his surrender terms when "our chiefs submitted to the stern logic of the strongest battalions."12

In spite of the passage of so many years, the war was not a dead issue for Bee. When Richard Taylor's memoirs had come out in 1879, Bee had written to Kirby Smith to assure him that Taylor had not told the truth about the battles of Mansfield and Pleasant Hill. Taylor brought up Bee's conduct at Monett's Ferry, and Bee was still angry about it. He offered to put his knowledge of the battles at Kirby Smith's disposal, if the general should decide to reply to Taylor. Kirby Smith let the issue pass.13

As far as the campaign in which he had participated was concerned, Bee would let no slur on the Confederate Army go unanswered. In 1880 he wrote "Battle of Pleasant Hill - An Error Corrected" for the Southern Historical Society Papers refuting a claim in a northern newspaper by a member of A. J. Smith's staff that the Rebels had been driven off the field and forced to ask the Union commanders' permission to bury their dead under a flag of truce. He had been there to receive the Yankee surgeons left behind by the retreating enemy.14

For two years during the administration of Governor John Ireland, Bee served as Commissioner of Insurance, Statistics, and History, a department created in 1876
which made the Texas State Library the depository for state archives and the office of record for all reports and papers issued by the state. In 1890 as a member of the Alamo Monument Association, he was involved in a small controversy over the exact place of burial of the heroes of the Alamo when John N. Seguin, who supposedly saw the funeral, wrote contradictory letters. Seguin described three different places; the controversy was never settled.  

As commissioner, and for a few years after, Bee lived in Austin, but when he retired, he moved back to San Antonio. He was reported in 1892 to be "at three score and ten, still vigorous in intellect." His daughter Anne lived with Bee and his wife, and they took in a boarder from time to time to help pay the bills. Carlos Bee, born when his parents were in Mexico, became a lawyer and also resided in the city. Other children lived in Texas and California.  

On the night of October 2, 1897, Bee talked with his family on the front porch of his home for a while and went to bed early because he had been in feeble health for some time. He became sick about midnight, but before the boarder could bring the doctor, Bee died. He was seventy-five. At his request the Confederate flag presented to him by the ladies of San Antonio at the beginning of the war was wrapped around the casket and buried with him.
NOTES FOR CHAPTER VII

1 "Confederates in Mexico," newspaper clipping, no date, John Henry Brown Collection (Archives, Eugene C. Barker Texas History Center, University of Texas at Austin).

2 Alexander W. Terrell, From Texas to Mexico and the Court of Maximilian in 1865 (Dallas, 1933), 18-23.

3 Ibid., 23-4.


5 Mexican Times, April 7, 1866; Eliza McRatton Ripley, From Flag to Flag (New York, 1889), 124-5, 132; George D. Harmon, "Confederate Migration to Mexico," Hispanic American Historical Review, XVII (August 1937), 47in.


7 Bee to J. F. Crosby, January 4, 1869, Bee Papers.

8 Bee to Smith, June 13, 1873, ibid.

9 Bee to Smith, June 14, 1876, ibid.

10 Bee to Smith, December 7, 1876, ibid.

11 Bee to Smith, March 23, 1880, ibid.

12 Ibid.

13 Parks, Kirby Smith, 506-7.


15 Marilyn M. Sibley, "The Burial Place of the Alamo Heroes," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, LXX (October 1966), 272-4; Bee to W. W. Fontaine, April 14, 1890, John S. Moore Collection (Archives, Eugene C. Barker Texas History Center, University of Texas at Austin); Lubbock, "Bee," 57.


17 San Antonio Daily Express, October 3, 1897; San Antonio Daily Light, October 3, 1897; Roberts, Texas, 226.
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