

Miss T. You did not tell me about this quarrel between Houston and Rusk.

Mr. Giddings.-- I do not want anything of that kind published.

Miss T. --- You told me about going up and finding Houston at his house.

Mr. G.-- I arrived in Austin between twelve and one o'clock at night and went right to the governor's mansion. After I got into Texas I knew that Houston had been deposed. I went right to the mansion and found him packing to go home.

How long was that after he had been deposed?

Mr. G.--- I do not recollect that. I think he was deposed in the winter of 1864 and this was in the middle of March. He came to the door and said "Sonny-- he always called me Sonny-- you are welcome. Come in and tell me the news. We are going to have a war." I said, I guess not. After some little time had been passed in talking, I said, 'General, I have a very important message for you from Lincoln' and then I added, 'It is a secret message and after you have read it you will see the importance of it and it will be necessary for you to keep it secret or destroy it.' Then I told him what took place. He knew Lincoln and he said, "He is a funny old dog."

Miss T. --How did he know Lincoln?

Mr. Grow--- Well, when Lincoln was in Congress, you know.

Mr. Giddings---Yes, he knew Lincoln and he told me that he had correspondence with him and Lincoln told me so, too. The gaslight was turned on in full and Houston was dressed in a peculiar style, in his great big leopard skin coat and with a very odd Turkish smoking gown and cap. He stepped up under the gaslight and read over the message. It was written on what we used to call State House paper on lines about an inch apart in a very bold hand. He read it over and seemed to study for a minute and then he raised up his hand like this and brought it down two or three times and said, "Too late, too late." He repeated this several times and every time he repeated it he said it louder. "If I had had that authority before I could have taken a hand, but now it is too late, for every town in Texas is a qualified camp, with soldiers marching back and forth. I told him that I hoped there would be no war, but he insisted all the time that there would be; that nothing could prevent it. You recollect that I predicted that the result of the Kansas and Nebraska compromise would be that South Carolina would secede first and that every southern state would follow and the result would be a war such as the world never before saw. The south would be conquered and slavery would be abolished and that he feared that it would result in a dictator or an emperor, only he

had too much faith in the good sense of the American people.

(Objections were made to part of the following, and I lost the connection, if there was any.— Still.)

Mr. Giddings--- I had written him three or four letters during the session of Congress, and was at his room almost every night and did a great deal of writing for him, consequently I was at his room when Houston came in there and Rusk was at his desk and they commenced quarreling at once. He said General Rusk, you are beside yourself. There were four ex-governors and members of Congress there. Houston told them in my presence that this act would enable the abolitionists to elect a president. Every one of these men were the strongest kind of democrats who would support this bill and Houston was against them. Houston told these three governors that the effect of the Kansas and Nebraska Act would be that the Abolitionists would elect a president and if they elected a president and an Abolitionist Congress South Carolina would secede first, followed by all the slave holding states and that the North would have men and money enough to starve the South out, that slavery would be abolished and the South would be at their mercy, "and the only thing I am afraid of", he said, is that there will be a dictator". You know there was a paper published after the War called the Imperialist."

driving at? Finally he said, "Mr. Giddings, my object in seeing you is this. I have a very important secret message for you to take to Governor Houston in Texas. It is a great secret and I will swear you to secrecy; consider yourself sworn as a member of my cabinet. "Now," he continued, before I entrust this to you I want to read it to you".

It was written on quite a number of pages and on great big state house paper and signed with Mr. Lincoln's own signature.

I said, "Mr President, that is a very important document. Had you not better send that by some one who is a government official? "Oh, no", he said, "if they were caught down there, they would know them."

"But", I said, "they would know me, too."

"Well", said Mr. Lincoln, "I was in hopes that you would get that to him".

I then said, "For the sake of granting your personal request, I will try." He said, "I am very much obliged to you". Then the talk went on and Lincoln told a great many funny stories. I stayed there till after midnight. After they had talked some little time,-- Mr. Bates has considerable to say, Bates of Missouri-- Mr. Seward sat at the left and I said to Mr. Seward, "You are aware that Congress has just passed an act increasing my overland route" and I added, "We

are going to have a war and it is not worth while for me to go on this service. He said, "Mr. Giddings, go on; we are not going to have war. I would rather give our Southern brethern the parchments and let them write their own constitution rather than to have a war.

I said, "I hope there will be no war, because a war will cost me several hundreds of thousands of dollars."

We talked there for a long time about a good many things. He said, "The probabilities are that there will be some offer to pay the South for their slaves. I replied, "The South will not do that, you know".

I went back to the hotel and the next evening left on the evening train for home. It then took eight or ten days to go; now you can go in three. We had no telegraph lines in those days only to New Orleans.

Mr. Grow---- That must have been the last of March?

Mr. Giddings-- Well, I left here the 18th day of March. I suppose I was about eight days in going there.

Mr. Grow-- (Well, they deposed "old Sam" about the last of February or first of March. They deposed him by Act of Legislature.

Mr. Grow--- No, they deposed him in a session of the Convention and Throckmorton was the only fellow in it. Lovett was one of the South Carolina nullifiers. Mr. Giddings, were

you born in Susquehanna County?

Mr. Giddings-- Yes; about twelve miles from where Mr. Grow lives.

Mr. Grow--- And he has two brothers oldre than he.

Mr. Giddings-- You were at my sister's wedding. She lives in New York in Buffalo now. Her son is in business there. The way I came to go to Texas, my brother Charles-- Andrew was the oldest in the family-- Charles went to Texas; left in 1834 and reached Texas in 1835, and became an emissary. That is, what we called an emissary grant was issued to American citizens and other foreigners by the Spanish Government by means of which they were given large territories on condition of their bringing in three hundred families. My brother had a contract to this effect. He got a tract of land in this way.

Charles was killed in one of the battles of the Mexican War. It was a cavalry charge and he was knocked off his horse. They buried him on the field and we could never find his grave.

I went to Texas in 1846 and my brother J. D. went with me. When I went to Texas, it was just turning from the old republic to a state and they wanted a mail route organized, for you had to go everywhere on horseback. I stopped at my brother's house. My brother and Houston used to be law partners. I read law in my brother's office and finally

he wanted some business attended to in northern Texas. I started out with Major Porter and James I. Smith. We left for the northern part of Texas and the night we got there the Indians came and killed nearly every one there. There were thirty-eight in our crowd and we pursued the Indians clear to the Wichita mountains. We took the trail and there were a couple of hundred Indians. The second day after we struck camp. Some men were untying their horses and were going to get them some water. We had staked out, that is, every man had a rope to his horse about forty feet long. We looked up and saw the Indians coming around the head of the ravine, a hundred or a hundred and fifty of them, like the wind. Major Porter gave one order, "Boys, take care of yourselves." The Indians went right through our camp and they hit one poor fellow by the name of Williams. He was bending down, dipping up some water and the arrows went straight through him. They took our horses and ran away like the wind. I was a green one from the States. I was a tender-foot, you know, and they called me a college boy. "You have got to be a surgeon", said Porter. "You must cut out that arrow." We stripped the poor fellow and laid him down on his face and cut the arrow out. He bled terribly. We took a prickly pear leaf and fixed him up the best we could with blankets and such things and Smith said, "We can't camp here;

we must go on." Three days after that there came a very cold rain. Williams was taken sick with a congestive chill and died before morning. He was the only man we lost. We followed the

Indians until we saw the mountains in Kansas. They had no idea that we were anywhere near them. We captured about forty or fifty squaws and some little Indians. We got a lot of ponies and some barrels of buffalo meat. We divided the ponies amongst us. We didn't even bury the Indians. When we got back to the Brazos, we found Captain Smith there. He was one of the old three hundred who had received orders from Co. Harney for protection against the Indians. Smith insisted that I should be first lieutenant. We used to take beef without paying any attention to it, but if we took sugar or corn or anything of that kind we had to pay for it.

Mr. Grow-- Mr. Giddings, you will have to tell how old you are.

Mr. Giddings-- Well, I am over seventy years old; was born in Susquehanna County. To go back to my story, it was in the spring of the year when we got these orders and the Federal forces were there invading Texas. I made out the muster roll and was put on the muster roll as assistant quartermaster. We had petitions signed by the old company to be mustered into the service. We went up the valleys of the Brazos to Aus-

tin, a distance of one hundred or so of miles. At Austin I had some matters to attend to at my brother's house and there we got a letter from Gov. Horton and we started in the morning from Austin to San Antonio by the old road one hundred and ten miles. The Germans had just started a colony there and a company of German soldiers went with us and we left Austin early in the morning. About thirteen miles from there a spring breaks out of the hill and there is a great deal of timber and winding around these hills just as we came out of the timber we saw a lot of Indians. They had just murdered three families of German emigrants. We were all mounted on fine horses but they saw us and the whole of them ran for the ponies. We started off on a gallop and they followed us all. We stopped with the agent of the German Emigration Company that night. They fed our horses and gave us a nice dinner. We then rode on to San Antonio, which we did not reach until eleven o'clock that night. General left San Antonio for Mexico with five or six thousand men. The old army was left in command of San Antonio. I presented the petition and the letter from Gov. Horton. The petition was signed by every member of our company with the muster roll. He looked up. I had on an old flannel shirt and a hat that the miles had eaten off one side of the rim. He said,

"Come in here this afternoon at four o'clock and I will give you an answer."

I walked out and knocked about town -- it was a Spanish town and everything was new to me. At four o'clock I went back and stood before him some time. He was writing, but at last he looked up and said, "What do you want here?" I said, "I am the man who called here this morning with letters from Governor Horton and he then handed me a great big envelope, sealed up, and two envelopes. one directed to Captain Smith the other to Gen. Horton."

I said, "What conclusion have you come to in regard to my company?" I have come about five hundred miles and I want to know what is to be done."

He said, "I will have you put into the guard house." I went out and told Captain Crumb, who had stayed outside, what had transpired. He said, "Let us tear open that letter, and see what is in it."

Harney had left on the day following and we were ordered to San Antonio. Smith was promoted to be major and had a battalion. We had a hundred odd men and we used to make one hundred and fifty miles every twenty-four hours.

(Introduction)

I left the Mexican War in 1846 or 47 and it was in 1854 that I took the first contract that was let by the Government to run from Houston to San Antonio. It was only a weekly service at first; then they got it up to three times a week and they took agents. They bursted up and the route was transferred to me. I got an inkling of the business and we got it up to a daily service. Then an agent was sent down to San Antonio who represented that the man sending him was a person of wealth. He took hold of it, but made a failure and I had to take a transfer of the route to save myself.

Mr. Grow-- You were running through to Santa Fe when Congress passed the bill.

Mr. Giddings-- Yes; then came another route soon after; then the express and then the railroad. They wanted a route to beat the steamer. I got my mail through in about twenty-one days. My original contract was from San Antonio to Santiago. Then it was extended to New Orleans and by coach to San Pedro down about twnety-eight or thirty miles from Los Angeles.

Mr. Grow-- How many days did you beat the steamer?

The biggest time I ever made was from San Francisco to New Orleans in eighteen days and six hours. It was more rapid than the Royal East Indian Mail. I had a coach made and named the Milton S. Latham, in which Senator Latham crossed the

Continent. It was in use until the Indians burnt it up. This was about 1857. Mr. Latham was Senator about 1857 or 1858.

Mr. Crow--- Did you know Colfax?

Mr. Giddings--- Oh yes; Colfax was a great friend of mine. He was always delighted to see me and said, "How do you get along with those "cusses"? Why didn'tt you come North? I told him that after I saw the thing was up, I went into the Confederacy and fought it out. He asked me to go into his committee room and we talked an hour or so, and he said "You did perfectly right. You had to do it and I admire you for it." He knew I was opposed to war. Everybody was obliged to fight for his own interest.

(Here came the little scrap of conversation about "The Last Battle of the War." There was nothing intelligible to get hold of. I went to see Mr. Giddings about it, but he said he could tell nothing about it that could be depended upon for accuracy. I believe he informed you about this also. --- A. W. -Stenographer.)

I didn't go into the last war until the latter part of '68. I was contractor to furnish supplies. I went to San Antonio-- I had made the contract here in Washington, and we moved them under the Salt Lake route. I had made a contract to meet them at Fort Stockton on certain days and I went there to receive this stock I had purchased. I got up the Butterfield route, which was the terminus from Little Rock to Memphis and San Francisco. My route there from New Orleans was further south and New Orleans wanted a terminus to the railroad; so I made a contract with them for such of their stock as I needed. I met their agent, a fellow by the name of Cutler at Fort Stockton -- ^{They} had several hundred head of stock, and my contract was made with the head of the Company, Wells, Fargo & Co. were the main owners.

I was to take just what I wanted at appraisalment and we went on up to El Paso and by and by-- to go back a little-- my brother James had been sick and I went up on the road. Cutler was behind time and I took my brother James up, left him and came back to Stockton to meet Cutler. I had several hundred head of stock and some coaches. We got into El Paso. There the news of the firing on Fort Sumter came to us and he got up in a public meeting and demanded that the citizens should take this property from these men. I said, "No, you shan't take their stock." And I bought more than I really

needed and we had agreed on everything with the exception of the Overland Hotel at El Paso. I had all the stations there that I wanted, a great big coach chop, harness shop, etc. Nobody knew there was going to be war. That I said I didn't want. Finally we left it to arbitrators. They assessed the value of it at \$5000. The city had given a whole block for that building. We were both dissatisfied with the price set on it and called the arbitrators again. The next arbitration came down to \$4500. He said "I will take \$6000. I said, "Let's toss heads and tails" and got it for \$5000. I said to him, "You go and get a lot of my boys here." And we formed a line and guarded their property out of the town.

I remained at El Paso until the war broke out there and they killed my brother and forty odd men there in less than a week. This is my business here (in Washington) now in the Court of Claims. I brought down Gen. Longstreet-- he had resigned from the Federal Army -- and Jones, and they wanted me to come to Washington to get the money that was due me. But we did not know how to get through the lines. So we knocked about Galveston until at last we met a man who had a boat.

He said, "I will run you through if you will hug close to shore and if you will put up the full value of the boat,

that I may not be the loser in case the boat is captured.

We went right down to the bank and put up the money. Then we went to the wharf. It was a great big wharf, over half a mile long. We walked down to the end of the wharf where the boat lay and looked her over.

The Captain said, "I want to go out before the moon rises. You had better see John Burns and get him to see to getting the "grub" for you. There were five of us and Longstreet said to Burns, "You are an old caterer. How much will you take to see to this for us."

"Give me \$20 apiece and I will get you anything you want. We agreed to this and the Captain told him to be sure to be exactly on time, for, said he, "If we don't get off before the moon rises we can't go at all, for we will be captured. It was in June, hotter than blazes; but at the hour named we went down to the wharf and waited and waited for Burns. But no Burns appeared. At last the Captain became very impatient and was about to leave, when Burns came in sight.

"Hurry up, hurry up", said the Captain. "Hurry up and get on board. He had a little "nigger" cheese with him and a five pound box of ice and a big lot of sugar, but nothing to eat. He says, "A man that can't live on lemons, ice and whiskey isn't fit to be a Confederate soldier. We ran right onto a sand bar. There was a spanking breeze and the Captain

couldn't get the boat off and we were five days on the sand and nearly starved to death . The we struck a little breeze and then we lay dead on the water. The Captain had a little hard tack which was all we had to eat. When we got into the Bay the sun was so hot that we were burnt as if we had been in a furnace. We couldn't live in the hold, it was so hot and we had to sleep on deck.

We went into an old restaurant when we landed , and the keeper of it said he didn't know what we were made of. The next morning we took the train for New Orleans. From there there was no train until the next morning.

We took rooms at St. Charles Hotel but it was terribly hot. Longstreet and I had adjoining rooms and at last I said, "Let us go down to the lake and take a bath"and we jumped right up and drove down to Ponchartrain. There was a nice hotel there and we took our bath and got an elegant supper. The ext night we came into town and took the train for Washington. We got into Richmond and wanted to get through the lines.

I want to see Mr. Davis to get a pass through the lines. I could telegraph to St. Louis, but I couldn't get there. Davis said, "Giddings, "They will capture every person that attempts to get through the lines and we can't afford to lose you. I shall not let you go.

I knocked about Richmond for some time, trying to get

through and finally the Battle of Bull Run came on and the Secretary of War came with a pass for me as a doctor. He said, "We cannot allow anybody to go down unless he is a surgeon."

Mr. Grow-- Well, you remember you were a surgeon in Mexico.

Mr. Giddings-- Well, I helped to cut off several legs and arms and it didn't affect me at all. We got horses and rode around on the battle field. The next day we went back to Richmond.

I knocked about Richmond for several days and finally on one occasion I was in Jeff Davis's room(we boarded in the same house) and we got to talking about Mexico. I had been all through Mexico for nine years I used to take a big stock of goods. The next day he asked me a great many questions. He asked me, "What do you find in Mexico? "

I told him where there was a mountain of lead where they were working silver mines and the lead was not considered worth transportation. I said it could be bought for a cent and a half per pound.

"What else can you get there?"

"Anything else you want. "

I got up and bade him good night, but he said, "Mr Giddings, write down just what you have been telling me. 61

Give me the particulars, all about the transportation, what kind of country it is to get through and what can be got there."

I went out and got several sheets of foolscap. He said "Come here any time; come right to my room and knock."

I wrote it out and took it to his room. He read it over and said, "that is all right; come to my room at ten o'clock to-morrow".

I did so and he said, "I want you to go to Mexico and buy anything that man or horse can eat, or use in any way.

The next morning I went down to the Secretary of War. He sent everybody out of the room except his clerk and sent for an ordnance officer and the Quartermaster General and by twelve o'clock he had what he called an open contract written which, if I could fill out, would cost them several million dollars.

It was to the effect that the Confederate Government would receive any or all of the following described articles, to be delivered to any order of the Confederate Government or to any part of the United States. The articles were of every description that I can recollect. There was powder and shot and shell and caps and everything that one could think of; he got it through and signed it by the order of the President.

Davis had told me to come right to his room as soon as the matter was settled. When I saw him he said, "You can do

a good deal and I said, "I can."

The contract wound up by stating that I was to be allowed 33 1/3 per cent over and above all cost of charges. I took it to Mr. Davis and he read it over and said, "You want the right to examine every military service in handling employees and then he added, "How are you going to pay for things?" I said, "That is your business". In the first place you cannot use Confederate money-- Here is where that Texas bond business comes in-- He said, "I tell you what I will do.

He went out and got together every member of the Texas delegation and said to them, "I want you to join me in a letter asking the exchange of the United States Indemnity bonds to Texas.

Mr. Grow-- These bonds were given to Texas by the Government in the compromise of 1850.

Mr. Giddings--- Well, they all came and joined in a request for that Lovett should exchange those eight per cent Confederate bonds and deliver them to me to buy supplies. That was all done within an hour or so.

Then he said to me, "You better have some money beside this. Now how much money do you think you had better have? How much can you use?

I said, "I think I will need a million of dollars."

He thereupon wrote on a card an order for one million of dollars of Confederate money to be given me.

This I took to the Secretary. He said to me, "We have not got that much money now, but we are making it as fast as we can."

So I went back to tell Davis and I said, "I don't care to take that much money with me. Let them give me drafts on the sub-treasury in New Orleans-- you see I knew all the arrangements so well-- and he gave orders for me to have the drafts."

I was given a draft for \$250,000 and another for \$750,000, but I was told that I would have to furnish bonds.

I said, "I cannot give bonds for a million of dollars; the President has said nothing to me about bonds."

"Well", he said, "I will have to see the President."

"All right", I said; "I can give you the ordinary bonds of the Confederate officers very easily, but I knew Benjamin here in Washington in Congress very well, , and I said "Mr. Secretary, even a \$20,000 bond would not be worth a cent, but a million or two of dollars would not cause me to do anything to disgrace my family."

I saw Davis and he said, "go out as fast as you can."

Well, I bought a boat for \$108,000 in Confederate money that cost \$300,000 and the next day I had her loaded with cotton, and started her and she ran right through and I sold the cotton and delivered the cargo, a tremendous big cargo,

and went right at it again. She made four trips, but she finally blew up.

Well, I went on to New Orleans and bought supplies with this money. I then went to Houston and made a contract there, leaving \$150,000, and went on to Austin, reaching there in the night. I found out that the Legislature was going to adjourn the next day at twelve o'clock. So I went right up to Lovett's house and woke him up and handed the letter to him from Davis and from the whole Texas delegation in Richmond.

He said that they had placed these bonds in the school fund by act of legislature in in constitutional convention, the legislature had acted upon it, and they could not be used for any other purpose whatever.

But he called his servant and sent out to a committee to have them prepare a bill known as the Military Port Bill. They were authorized to use any securities which the State of Texas might have for public defense; The bill was prepared and they sat up the balance of the night. I did not go to bed till daylight. Lovett sent out and managed to call the House into secret session and took me with him.

The correspondence was ready and they passed that right through and then they passed a law repealing the act that was passed when Texas got these bonds; that is, that the bonds would not be available unless signed by the then acting gov-

Governor of the State. That was to guard against their being stolen in transportation, as the law stated they had to be signed by the Governor of the State before they could be used.

They repealed that act and adjourned at twelve o'clock that day and they counted out the bonds and delivered them to me.

I said, "I do not want to take all these bonds, and so I took 100,000 of them. They would not agree that I should take them to Europe, but I was told that I might take them to Metamoras. I took them to San Antonio and went down to Metamoras and bought a lot gray cloth for \$34,000 from a Jew and went right to Richmond and took a written contract from them.

I had met Paschall and he knew that I had been a Union man, and he told me afterwards that he had advised the United States, telling them what had been done with those bonds.

After I had gotten the 100,000 bonds I went over to see Houston at Independence, which was his home and close to where J. D. lived. I said, "Lovett, Houston is actually Governor of Texas, and if we can get Houston to sign these bonds it will be all right, but without any signature, it will be very difficult to use them.

So he told me to go and see Houston and try to get him to sign them. We went in and had a talk with him and finally

I told him what we wanted and showed him the bonds I had with me. I said, "I do not want to bribe you, but I have an enormous contract, and I will see that your family are taken care of."

He exclaimed, "They are a set of thieves, and I know they will steal these bonds; they will rob the children of Texas of their heritage and their rights and I will see the traitors dead before I will sign one of these bonds."

Well", said I, "General, you are right; I don't blame you."

They had all been signed by the Governor and I had to take a copy of the act repealing the former act. The fool to whom I sent the bonds to buy supplies with sent them to New York and they were attached. There were some coupons to be collected which caused an inquiry as to where the bonds were and an officer was sent who took every one of them. I lost the \$34,000.