



COLLECTOR'S EDITION



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# Soldiers - Pioneers - Bakers

## From "One Pound Daily - Bakers of Fort Tejon"<sup>1</sup>

By George R. Stammerjohan

In the period of time following the occupation and annexation of upper California by the United States, the government sent a number of military units to guard and maintain the peace. The reasoning for this movement of soldiers was twofold. Initially, U.S. troops were to watch over the Hispanic population in the various small urban centers just in case they were not satisfied with the transfer of California from Mexico to the United States. There were many rumors that the Hispanic Californios would revolt and attempt to throw out the Americans. These rumors, which prevailed until the middle of the American Civil War, proved to be false. While there was dissatisfaction, often shown openly, there was no movement to oust the American government.

The second purpose, and the Army's main chore, soon came to be the control, protection and punishment of the "Wild Indians." These were the native people living apart from the influence of European-style civilization. These native people continued many of the practices common to them prior to the Mexican-American War. That is, they continued to raid the urban areas and ranchos, stealing livestock and occasionally killing a citizen. The small army units assigned to California attempted to blockade this raiding practice by establishing garrisons along the routes leading to the settled populace.

The Gold Rush, a thoroughly unplanned event, changed all this. Many areas where the Indians had lived secure from Hispanic or Anglo intrusion suddenly became the very area where hundreds of miners now wished to go and work without worrying about "Hostiles" behind their backs. The gold fever also brought other settlers who wanted the land for cattle or farming, where these Indians had once lived in reputed secured peace. To buffer and protect the Indians, the government dusted off the plans of the chief clerk of the Indian Bureau, Charles E. Mix, who had proposed military reservations for the Indians. The "wild Indians" would be gathered on plots of land, supervised by an agent and policed by the Army, who would also serve as their guardian from White incursions. At the same time, the agent would teach the natives the practical aspects of animal husbandry and agriculture; the crops grown by Indians would be sold to the Army, therefore feeding the troops who guarded them. The main issue was the expense of supplying these military outposts. The Army budget for transportation of supplies throughout the west after the Mexican War was larger than the combined War Department's expenses prior to the war.

The reservation plan was accepted by Congress; superintendents of geographical areas were appointed and agents and assistants were employed. That the plan never worked as envisioned is not the purpose of this article.

Historical Atlas of California by Beck & Haase



EARLY CALIFORNIA MILITARY CAMPS & FORTS

The Army deployed a number of different units to the west coast. Ultimately, by 1861, the following units had served or were still employed in the Department of the Pacific: Second, Fourth, Sixth, and Ninth U.S. Infantry; almost all of the 3rd Artillery; two companies of the 1st Artillery (soon withdrawn); an Engineer company; and elements of the 2nd Dragoons (for 10 months and then merged into the 1st Dragoons). All but two companies of the Regiment of the First Dragoons served along the Pacific rim.

A note about "Dragoons." The 1st U.S. Dragoons was established in 1833; it was a mounted unit, expected to ride to the point of battle and then fight on foot. They were, in fact if not in name, "cavalry." The term "cavalry" had a bad taste to republican citizens. Royal kingdoms used the Royal or Imperial "Cavalry" as the king's force of suppression, putting down unpopular movements by the people. To organize a mounted unit in the early 1830s and get it accepted by a sus-



picious Congress and populace, the U.S. Government designated the new regiment "dragoons." In 1836 a second regiment of dragoons was formed and as late as 1846, when a third horse regiment was authorized it was given the title "Regiment of Mounted Riflemen." It would not be until 1855 that the War Department could organize two more mounted units and give them the title of "Cavalry": the 1st and 2nd Regiments.

The forts mentioned in this article were all established to guard Indian Reserves or to control "Wild Hostiles." Fort Miller, on the upper San Joaquin River, northeast of modern day Fresno and now submerged by Millerton Lake, reputedly guarded the Fresno Reserve, known more commonly as the "Fresno Farm." Fort Miller was established in 1851. Fort Tejon, which was to replace obsolete Fort Miller, was founded at the Canada de las Uvas (Grapevine Canyon) in 1854. The garrison was to police the Sebastian Indian Reserve (more commonly, the Tejon Reserve) but was seventeen miles away from the reservation. Fort Crook (originally Camp Hollenbush), founded in 1857, was designed to protect settlers in eastern Shasta County and to guard the Oregon route to California and the northern California emigrant route across northern Nevada; the "Black Rock Desert" or "Lassen-Noble" Route. Fort Crook soon had duties east of the Sierra as settlers moved into Honey Lake Valley and Indian Valley in Lassen County.

Additional army posts were established at other points such as Fort Reading on Cow Creek in southern Shasta County. Located in a malarial swamp it was soon abandoned.

Fort Humboldt and Fort Bragg were established to guard proposed or established Indian Reserves along the northern California coast, while satellite camps branched out wherever needed. These included Fort Jones, Nome Lackee, Fort Gaston, Crescent City, Smith River, Fort Seward and Camp Far West. The same pattern also held true for the Oregon and Washington Territories as the Army tried to stay ahead of Anglo settlements. This process invariably failed. Feeling protected, the settlers flocked into the area around a military post and then soon pushed beyond. Shortly "the outreaches" would cry out to their Congressmen and Governors for Army protection and the process would continue, ever expanding east and north.

The major part of the story of most Army posts on the Pacific frontier is not bloody battles, but the mundane life of the garrison. A fort must be built; it did not come in a box ready for unpacking. None of the frontier forts in California were ever finished, no matter how long they lasted. Often the troops lived several years in tents while the laborious job of post construction sputtered along. The companies were always under strength; they were always involved in a myriad of duties, both military and maintenance. Part of that mundane story is the role of the Commissary Department of the Army - the organization that supplied the troops with their daily ration (three meals = average cost 13-17 cents a day per soldier).

General Winfield Scott, Commander of the Army in the 1850s, set the tone in the mid-1840s, when he wrote: "Bread

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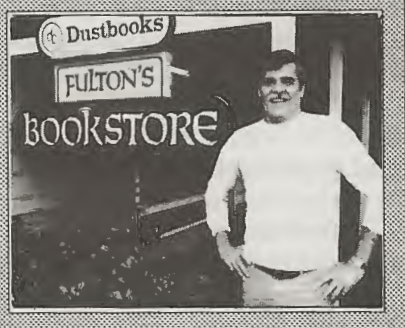
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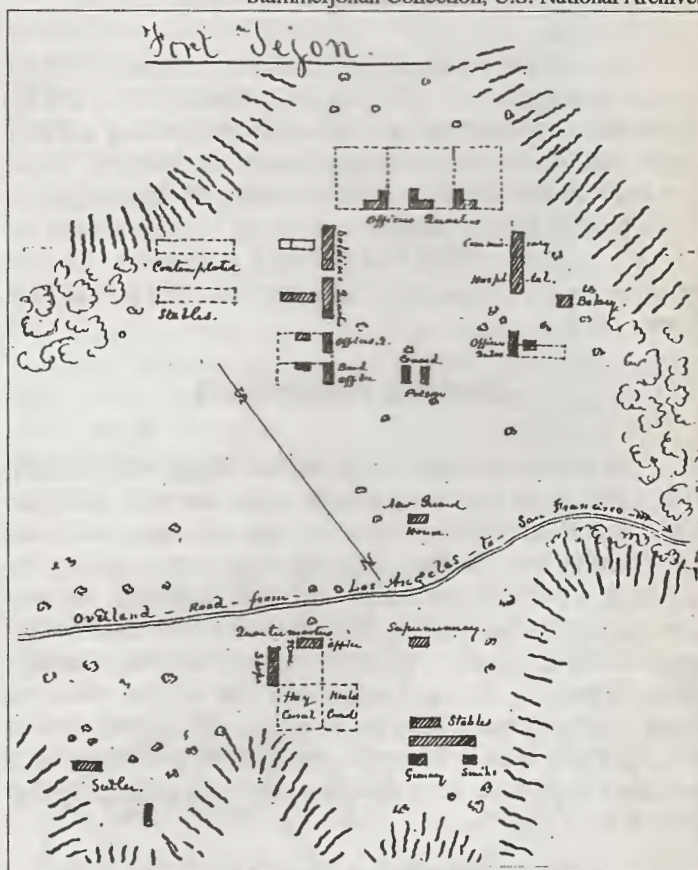
## Soldiers-Pioneers-Bakers From page 5

and soup are the great items of a soldier's diet in every situation."

The Army did not have a "Cooks and Bakers School" for special recruits. That institution would not come forth until late in the 19th Century. Every soldier was expected to know how to cook - for himself, for his squad or for the 50-80 man company. The trooper learned by doing. Some company officers sought out good cooks and put them on steady duty in the kitchen. The Army frowned on this practice. After ten days duty, assigned cooks were supposed to be paid extra duty wages of 15 to 35 cents a day. The routine was to assign two men to cook for nine days, whereupon two more men were then sent to the company messhall. The results were predictable: from excellent to awful.

The post bakery was another matter. Bakers were traditionally sought out by recruiting officers and were employed for long periods at a time. The Company Fund, usually, paid

Stammerjohan Collection, U.S. National Archives



The only known "aerial" sketch of Fort Tejon drawn by Colonel Joseph F.K. Mansfield, Inspector General for the west in March, 1859. The bakery at the Fort is in the upper middle right.

them a bonus. This article deals with two such soldier-bakers who were assigned to Company A, 1st Dragoons from 1854 and who garrisoned the newly established Army post of Fort Tejon in Grapevine Canyon, 35 miles south of modern day Bakersfield, along the current route of Highway I-5.

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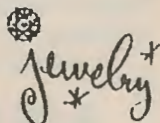
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During the period that Fort Tejon was occupied by Company A, 1st U.S. Dragoons, two soldiers, both recent recruits and both claiming civilian training as bakers, were detailed, one at a time, to the Post Bakery. The two men, both foreigners, seemed to perform their tasks without official displeasure. Both spent time in the guardhouse but for other reasons than dissatisfaction with the quality of their baking skills.

Each company baker was supervised by a number of other soldiers. The post doctor and the post hospital steward were assigned sanitary supervision to ensure that Army suggestions on cleanliness were adhered to. The bakers were also responsible to the post commissary officer who issued flour in bulk to the bakery. The company commander encouraged baking surplus bread which could be sold - either to the commissary officer as a reserve or to civilians around the post. Money earned went into the company fund which could buy luxury items like fresh vegetables, or additives like salt or hops, or property like brooms and bakery utensils. Bakers were expected to practice strict economy and still supply the soldiers with their rations. The bakers were responsible for making hard bread - i.e. hardtack, a two inch cracker which hardened with age - for field rations. These were stored in "cracker boxes" or barrels.

Bakers were also expected to bake bread, store it on open shelves and not issue the bread until it had cooled 24 hours. In other words, bread baked today - 100 to 200 pounds - was to be shelved until issued one or two days hence. This prevented warm bread from being issued lest "it sour in the belly of the soldier." Without fully understanding the reality of yeast infection, the bakers were reputedly preventing an outbreak of L.S.D. (hallucinogenic drug) poisoning or addiction. The average Army baker was expected to be able to produce 250 pounds of bread daily. Not only did he feed his garrison's needs, but also all the civilians working on the post, plus the officers and their families.

There is one other point the author would like to mention at this time: Jailhouse punishment. I use the term "cooling their heels in the post guardhouse." This is relative to the condition of guard house time each prisoner spent. Some officers, Capt. John W.T. Gardiner (June 1855 - December 1856 at Fort Tejon) for example, were court martial happy. He was outraged that Lt. Col. B. L. Beall refused to call for General Court Martials for every little offense committed by the soldiers.

Lieut. Col. Beall, on the other hand, who liked his "jug" and often ordered enlisted men to share a drink with him, had a more reasonable approach for soldiers who tumbled too much. He was not against drinking, but losing sight of discipline. Beall's cure was simple. He had the soldier jailed and "balled" - meaning that during the man's imprisonment he wore a six foot chain and a six pound cannon ball riveted to an iron strap around his ankle. The prisoner worked all day around the post under guard, doing the "dirty jobs" - cleaning out latrines or

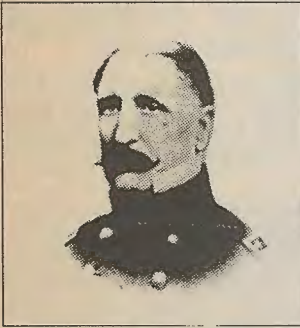
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**Soldiers-Pioneers-Bakers** From Page 26

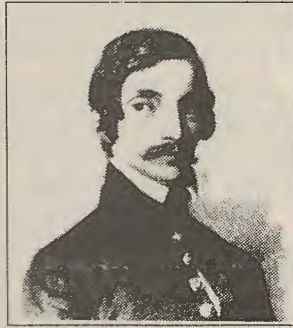
slop buckets, cutting firewood, cleaning up trash around the post, or working in the adobe pit making the thousands of mud bricks needed for building construction. At night he lived in a room that was cold and unheated, or stifling, depending on the weather, eating his meals out of a small bucket and sleeping on the hard oak floor without mattress or pillow and with only a single blanket to ward off the mountain chill.

California State Library



Lt. Col. Benjamin L. Beall

Stammerjohan Collection



Capt. John W.T. Gardiner

When Beall thought the man had suffered enough, he was released. The post blacksmith cut off the chain and ball and the man was returned to duty without jail time ("bad time") against his record. Beall's method seems to have been responsible for a low desertion rate when he was in charge of the post of Fort Tejon. On the other hand, a court martialing martinet like Captain Gardiner could drive soldiers to desert in droves.

**Frederick Halbleib**

Private Frederick Halbleib was the first assigned baker at Fort Tejon. His assignment to daily duty as Post Baker in June 1855 may give a positive date for the completion of the oven and the bakehouse.

Frederick Halbleib was born in Curhessen, Germany in 1827. He had grey eyes, light-colored hair and light-colored skin, and stood five feet eight and one-half inches in his stocking feet. When he enlisted in New York City on November 26, 1853, he listed his civilian trade as "Baker." Halbleib was earmarked for a detachment of dragoons slated to travel to California aboard the new ocean-going steamer *San Francisco* with the majority of the 3rd U.S. Artillery. An outbreak of smallpox among the dragoon recruits delayed their embarkation and the *San Francisco* sailed without them. It was the dragoon's good fortune, for the *San Francisco* was shattered by a terrible Atlantic storm off Cape Hatteras. Two hundred of those aboard were drowned.

Private Halbleib reached California in early February 1854 and was posted to the Benicia Barracks. On March 9, 1854 Halbleib deserted, but he surrendered himself on April 27, 1854. He joined Company A as of May 25, released from the post guardhouse by a pardon without the necessity of trial. He promised to make up the bad time. Private Halbleib was

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**Soldiers-Pioneers-Bakers** From page 31

part of Company A when it started its journey for Fort Miller, traveling by steamboat from Benicia to Stockton and then marching overland. Halblieb, without a horse, walked to Fort Miller, 135 miles away, across the sandy bottom land of the San Joaquin Valley.

Halblieb still had not gotten the hang of Army life, because on July 12, 1854 he deserted from Fort Miller. He was not gone long, for a civilian captured him the next day for the \$30 reward. When Brevet 2nd Lieutenant Alfred Latimer led his foot detachment of dragoons out of Fort Miller on August 10 southward toward the future Fort Tejon, Private Halblieb went along - in chains. Fort Tejon needed a post prison before the company arrived.

Halblieb remained in confinement, being the first occupant of the newly constructed wooden prison at the new camp. Possibly it was built in his honor. Along with the charge of desertion, Private Halblieb also owed the U.S. Government \$30 for the reward paid for his capture, as well as \$53 due for excessive amounts of clothing drawn from the company quartermaster. On March 28, 1855, Private Halblieb was once again pardoned without trial and restored to duty. In addition to the \$83, he now owed the government 53 days of "bad time" to be made up prior to discharge. On April 30, the Paymaster also adjusted his pay and collected for stoppages all but \$8.50 still owed from the \$30 capture fee. It was the last payday Private Halblieb would see for some time.

In June 1855, Private Halblieb was assigned to "daily duty as Post Baker." He held the position until very early November 1855, when he found himself once again occupying a cell in the post jail. He was replaced at the bakery by Private William Nery (Nary). It might be suspected that Halblieb had a fondness for strong spirits and found himself incarcerated for conditions the Army described as conduct contrary to good discipline.

By the end of December 1855, Private Halblieb was out of confinement and returned for duty. First Sergeant James Fitzgerald placed him on the detached quartermaster detail and Halblieb went out to the grazing camp as an "extra duty laborer," probably a horse-mule guard at 35 cents a day. On several more occasions, Halblieb's name appears for monthly duty as an "extra duty laborer" in the Quartermaster Department under the direction of Captain R. W. Kirkham. When Company A marched away from Fort Tejon in December 1856, Private Halblieb went with it.

Upon establishment of Camp Hollenbush, soon to be Fort Crook, in northern California, Private Halblieb was one of the men detailed to the quartermaster to help construct the post quarters. Halblieb worked on construction at extra duty pay until April 1858. Then, he went back to line duty, to soldier again. Soldiering meant short patrols out along the emigrant road, or north and south along the California-Oregon Trail.

The patrols, usually a sergeant and a half-dozen troopers, leisurely spent a week to a week and a half showing themselves along the route which led south, then eastward toward

Utah Territory (now western Nevada). The patrols were designed to show the Pit River Indians that U.S. Forces guarded the trail and to warn them off from feeling free to strike at California bound emigrants; and to ensure settlers a sense of security caused by the idea that troops were nearby. Then the patrol, having been free from the drudgery and confines of the post would return, report their progress and once again be assigned to post duties. It seemed to work, for the Indians rarely attacked the in-bound wagon columns. They did, however, attack isolated settlers, often killing them, burning their cabins and getting away with livestock and other property.

Some of these scouting expeditions took Company A men to the east flank of the Sierra to calm tensions in the Honey Lake Valley, Indian Valley, and along the Nevada foothills of the great mountain range.

The Shasti, Washoe and Paiute Indians resented the invasion of their homeland by white settlers. Cattle grazed on their meadows; hogs rooted in the oak groves; game was killed to feed the settlers or was driven away. These actions pushed the native people to the brink of starvation. They fought back. Cattle were stolen and eaten, horses disappeared, hogs were found bristling with arrows, cabins or barns were looted or torched and now and again, a settler was murdered. The Whites retaliated; they formed posses or militia detachments and hunted down any group or single Indian they could find to kill. And they cried out in writing to their Congressmen for protection. While the settlers did not mind an occasional pursuit, they knew that a full time defense would cost them the time needed to maintain their farms and fields. What did their tax money pay the soldiers at Fort Crook to do - lay around the fort and eat rations?

The politicians would rattle the Army's door and San Francisco Headquarters would issue authority for the post commanding officer to hire a guide-translator and civilian packers. If mules were not part of the post herd, they could be rented from local civilians to pack rations, tents, camp gear and ammunition along with the expedition. Horses were re-shod, extra horse shoes were prepared, maps were studied and Orderly Sergeants selected the men who would make up the detail. Orders were written and invariably the youngest second lieutenant on the post would be placed in charge. The preparation often took three to seven days and cost money not in the normal post budget. Going on campaign was expensive and post commanders were reluctant to incur these expenditures unless attached to approval by a higher headquarters, lest they be surprised with a demanding note from an auditor wanting to know why government funds were wasted. This letter could easily be followed by demands that the officers reimburse the government out of his own pocket or see his pay stopped until the differences were resolved.

In most cases the patrol went out, "showed the flag," sought out guilty Indians (the Indians were always considered to be at fault), seldom found anyone to fight or punish, and when the patrol's rations grew short, headed for home. Farmers, knowing the patrols could carry only a limited amount of forage for their American-bred horses, were always



willing to sell hay and grain or rent claimed grazing pasture at a nice profit. Since the Indians, usually forewarned of the patrol's coming, scattered, the dragoons would find no one and would leave for Fort Crook. Official reports would explain the actions taken, expenses caused, vouchers given, or coin paid out (settlers always sought coin over government vouchers) and the seeming peace of the area was now to be considered restored. It would not be long before the whole confrontational scenario would be played out once again. On occasion, settlers even faked these events to bring troops into the area, for the arrival of a unit meant sales of farm produce and gold coin in local pockets.<sup>2</sup>

Private William Nery baked bread for the company until early July 1858 when Private Halblieb replaced Nery at the Post Bakery. Halblieb worked in the bakery until early January 1859. On January 18, 1859, Private Halblieb took his discharge at Fort Crook and departed for the civilian life. A "Private Rohler" then took over the Post Bakery, but was later replaced by Private Augustus Striving.

Halblieb tried civilian life for just over a year and then, in early 1860, found himself in Portland, Oregon. He traveled over to Fort Vancouver in Washington Territory and enlisted in Company C, 1st U.S. Dragoons on January 20, 1860. Captain Andrew J. Smith, commanding Company C, took Halblieb back into the Army and assigned him to 2nd Lieutenant James Wheeler, Junior, for a refresher course on how to be a dragoon. One other officer was with the company, 1st Lieutenant William Dorsey Pender, who had just returned from a leave of absence with his new bride. In March, Captain Smith departed upriver for Fort Dalles to attend a court of inquiry; Pender took over the company until the captain returned on April 14.

The summer campaign season began on May 12, 1860 when Company C departed for eastern Oregon and patrol duty along the emigrant trail (the Oregon Trail). At the end of May, they camped along the banks of the Crooked River, Oregon Territory. In June, the company continued their south-eastward march and on June 23 were attacked by "a large war party of Snake Indians." The dragoons killed one Indian, wounded seven more, and captured horses and firearms. By the end of the month, they were at Cold Springs Slough where they camped.

Five days later, Company C had moved with Major Enoch Steen of the 1st Dragoons who was located on Silver Creek, roughly 30 miles north of Harney Lake, Oregon, with dragoons and infantry from Fort Walla Walla. The dragoons at "Camp Union," as Steen called his location (Someplace near Riley, Oregon, just south of the Ochoco National Forest), were from Company H, 1st Lieutenant Robert Johnston commanding. There was a joyous reunion between Lieutenant Pender of Company C and 2nd Lieutenant Robert McM. Gregg, who had been friends since their days at the U.S. Military Academy. Both men had recently traveled together on a leave of absence following the 1858 Spokane campaign and had returned together to Oregon from their separate stays in the east. The troops rested and patrolled from Camp Union

for the rest of the month.

In August, Steen moved his combined detachments and ended the month on "Duck Creek" in Oregon. The campaign ended in September and Company C started for Fort Dalles on the Columbia River. Halfway to the river, word reached Captain Andrew J. Smith to divert to Fort Walla Walla where they would winter. Company C reached Fort Walla Walla on September 13, 1860.

Private Halblieb served as an extra duty cook in the Quartermaster Department at Fort Walla Walla during the latter part of 1860. He was serving as a cook for civilian laborers - or for a quartermaster detachment of soldiers away from the fort. They could have been cutting hay, or wood, or lumber or firewood and were away from the post. At the end of the year, he was working as a carpenter in the same department. He continued as a carpenter until March 1861 when he took up cooking again. Then, in April, Company C was sent to the Nez Perce Reservation to block pending trouble between gold miners, merchants, and the Nez Perce. Company C operated out of a camp seven miles from the Lapwai Agency (Lapwai, Idaho) throughout the summer until September when they rejoined the post at Walla Walla.

Captain Smith, the only officer with the company, departed in September 1861, several days after they reached Fort Walla Walla. Smith had been promoted to the rank of major. Smith came to California to briefly command the California Volunteers then resigned and went east to seek a general commission in the Civil War. The company was without an officer until November when 1st Lieutenant Marcus A. Reno joined to lead it down the Columbia River. Attached to a battalion of dragoons formed of Companies I and E, and C, under the command of Captain William T. Magruder, the dragoons were bound to the eastern United States and the great war tearing at the Union. Ironically, Captain Magruder had just returned from the east, where he had commanded a squadron of federal cavalry during the Bull Run campaign.

The battalion departed Fort Walla Walla on November 16 and reached Fort Dalles on November 24, 1861. The next day, the 172 men and 170 horses were loaded aboard a steamboat and transported to Fort Vancouver, arriving that night. The battalion sailed from Fort Vancouver December 13 and

*Continued page 40*

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**Soldiers-Prisoners-Bakers** From page 33

reached Fort Alcatraz, San Francisco on December 19. Here they rested, isolated from the bright lights of San Francisco, until the 21st when they boarded the steamship *Sonora* for Panama. They reached New York City on January 14, 1862 and boarded railroad cars. The battalion climbed off the trains and marched to muddy, recently vacated Camp Sprague, Washington, D.C., on January 17, 1862 where they joined with the regiment. Recently promoted Captain James Wheeler, Junior, joined Company C the next day as their new commanding officer.

Private Halblieb remained with the company and regiment in the defense of Washington D.C. New recruits joined and in March 1862 the regiment, minus many of its officers, was assigned to the Army of the Potomac commanded by Major General George B. McClellan. They became part of the Cavalry Reserve Brigade. The 1st Cavalry (formerly 1st U.S. Dragoons) went to Virginia in April, and led the way on the left flank during much of the early stage of the Peninsula Campaign. When Private Halblieb departed the company is unknown, for at some point after March 1, 1862 he fell extremely ill. On May 31, 1862, Private Frederick Halblieb was discharged on a Surgeon's Certificate of Medical Disability from the General Hospital, Washington, D.C.

### **William Nery: The Second Post Baker**

William Nary from Mayo County, Ireland, claimed he was 24 years old when he approached Lieutenant May at the Baltimore recruiting office to enlist for five years. The Army did two things to Private Nary. They assigned him (and his wife, Eliza) to the dragoons and they changed his name. At first he was Private Neary - a compromise between the way it sounded and the way it was spelled? But ultimately the Army's phonetic spelling dominated and Private Nary was forgotten, for the Army and its opinionated clerks had changed him to Private William Nery.

William Nary (henceforth Nery) enlisted on November 4, 1853 for the U.S. Army. He was five feet six inches tall with a sallow complexion, grey eyes, and black hair. Nery gave his civilian occupation as "Baker." He was sent to New York City and assigned to Fort Columbus, detailed to a dragoon recruit detachment. One of his fellow recruits was a German, two years older and slightly taller, with a name that sounded like Halblade: Frederick Halblieb. The careers of these two soldiers closely parallel in many instances except that Nery was married to a company laundress, spent less time in jail, and was discharged five years to the day from the date of his enlistment. When Nery married is still an unanswered question. The Army did not encourage married soldiers to enlist, unless it needed laundresses. It may be that Private Nery found himself a bride after he enlisted but prior to his detachment's

departure from New York City for California. There may have been a need for laundresses for the recruits and Nery saw an opportunity to marry and secure a financial advancement for himself. Whatever the case, Private Nery came to California a married soldier.

Nery's case is not unique, but not commonly encountered and hard to document. Cooks, matrons, and laundresses were needed, and some soldiers needed female companions for the future journey. It may have been love or sexual attraction or common sense pragmatism on the part of two mutually attracted persons. The marriages were often successful and lasting. While only a little is known about the Nery marriage after he departed the service, a case can be made concerning a soldier who married at the same time as Nery.

First Sergeant James McKenzie of Company K, 3rd Artillery was a young, handsome, wiry Irishman, a veteran of the war with Mexico and entering his second tour of duty with the red-legged infantry. After re-enlisting at Fort Columbus, bound for California, and with his company commander's permission, he found a wife in 18 year-old Mary, a young lass right off the boat from Ireland. He took her aboard the ill-fated *San Francisco* as his wife, but officially as a laundress of Company K. They were destined to survive the disaster that befell the *San Francisco* and the near wreck of the second vessel that finally transported the 3rd Artillery to Panama in 1854; to live at Fort Miller and to return to the Millerton area after James was discharged in Washington Territory in late 1858. They lived on a small ranch south of what is now Millerton Lake State Recreation Area. After James' death, Mary married "Judge" Charles Hart, making Mary an emerging socialite in Fresno County society and the mother of sons who would become leaders in Fresno County's future political and economic history. When Mary McKenzie Hart died in the mid-1920s, the former Irish washerwoman was one of the grandams of Fresno, California, surrounded by a wealthy, influential, and loving family.

Coincidentally, the Nery family would have known the McKenzies of Fort Miller. The Nerys were at Benicia Barracks when Company K, 3rd Artillery finally arrived from their sea voyage from New York via the Isthmus of Panama. It had been somewhat harrowing and the women must have gathered socially to relive the experiences. Both Eliza Nery and Mary McKenzie had similar histories: both were not yet nineteen, both were from Ireland, they had been married less than a year, and as yet neither were pregnant (that we know of).

Company A of the Dragoons departed Benicia Barracks in early June 1854; Company K of the Artillery on July 1st. They traveled to Stockton, up the San Joaquin River by steamboat and from Stockton both ladies, being company laundresses, were entitled to certain quartermaster supplied amenities. They would have had the benefit of a wagon for their limited household effects, their washing tubs, and stoves (if any). After traversing across the nearly deserted sandy plains of San Joaquin Valley, they would have skirted the foothills of the Sierra past the Mariposa cut-off to the southern



diggings, and been ferried by civilian toll ferry operators across the many deep, rapid rivers, which cut across this barren, seemingly desolate land. The McKenzies would have again met the Nerys at Fort Miller, an isolated Army post of crude pine logs, rough-sawn pine planks, and mud brick structures.

The summer heat would have been terrible, for Fort Miller, deep in a natural bowl cut by the San Joaquin River where it plunged out of the great canyons of the Sierra Nevada, was blocked from the evening relief of the delta breeze which blew down the valley from the Bay of San Francisco. They shared nearly a month together at Fort Miller before the Nerys marched away with the Dragoons of Company A's second detachment into the fiery furnace of valley heat on August 10, 1854.

When Company A, 1st Dragoons departed Fort Tejon in late December 1856, it marched back northward along the Stockton Road and spent New Year's Eve and the first day of 1857 at Fort Miller before continuing its march toward Benicia Barracks. It must be assumed that the enlisted wives would have certainly organized some sort of festivities for their companions of the washtubs for travelers and guests of common status, loaded with news, gossips, and fresh, different experiences would not have been an occasion to ignore nor waste in the backwater that illuminated the dreary commonality of Fort Miller. Then, the Nerys and McKenzies would have parted; doubtful it is that they ever met again. They may have shared future dreams, for both men became successful ranchers in their own way. Nery would live a long life, but apparently childless; McKenzie, with children of aggressive promise, died early in 1863, long before he could witness the opportunities carved out of the valley economy by his two sons and only daughter.

The recruit detachment of dragoons with which Nery and his wife traveled, under Brevet Second Lieutenant Alfred Latimer, 4th U.S. Infantry, arrived in California in early February 1854. They were assigned to Benicia Barracks prior to being attached to their various companies. Some of them were soon off to Oregon; the remainder stayed at the Barracks and soon proved themselves an ill-disciplined, rowdy lot. Shortly after his arrival, Private Nery managed to get himself into trouble, possibly on a charge of drunk and disorderly conduct. He was sentenced to forfeit \$3.00 of a month's pay by order of

a garrison court-martial.

Private Nery, unlike Halblieb, joined the depleted Company A on April 7, 1854 at Benicia Barracks, and was part of the company which steamed to Stockton and walked to Fort Miller and then walked to future Fort Tejon, arriving on August 15, 1854. The walk was too much for Nery; he was sick in the hospital at the end of August and missed the first muster roll conducted at the new post.

Within two months of arriving at Fort Tejon, Nery got into trouble again and joined his traveling companion, Frederick Halblieb, in cooling his heels in the recently constructed wooden jail. Nery was released in early November 1854, and restored to duty. By early January 1855, Nery was assigned to daily duty to cook for the officers at the post. Apparently all the officers assigned at the fort took their meals in a common mess, including Lieutenant and Mrs. Thomas F (Mary) Castor. Brevet Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin L. Beall was married, but there is no evidence currently available that his wife had accompanied him to California for duty in late 1854. Lieutenants Latimer and John Pegram were bachelors.

Private Nery, relieved from cooking for the officers, was assigned to detached duty in May 1855 and was sent off to the grazing camp located toward Mount Pinos to herd and guard company, and possibly the quartermaster, horses, and mules. In the meantime, Nery had lost his sabre knot (a leather strap attached to the handle of a calvary sword) for which he owed the government thirty cents and had drawn extra uniform clothing worth \$14.82. In July, he returned to the post and was marked for duty. Private Nery then was detailed to two months of duty at the Tejon Reservation as part of the reserve police force and guard detail. This was fairly easy duty under the control of a sergeant or corporal away from the officious gaze of officers; it was like being an easygoing policeman on the beat, a long comfortable stretch of camp life.

When Nery returned to Fort Tejon around the first or second of November, he found 1st Sergeant James Fitzgerald questioning him about his reputed civilian trade. Yes, he was a baker in civilian life. Fitzgerald posted him to the bakery and Nery became the "Post Baker". He was assigned to the Post Bakery during the remaining time Company A occupied Fort Tejon (November 1855 to December 1856). It must be as-

*Continued page 54*



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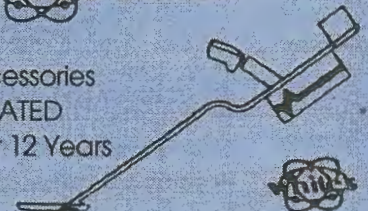
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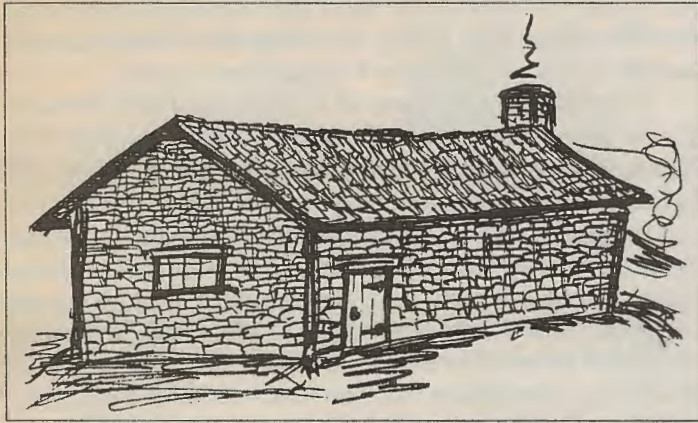




**Soldiers-Pioneers-Bakers** From page 41

sumed that the Nerys moved into the bakery to live, while Eliza continued the washing of clothes for the company. She was paid \$2.00 a month per soldier and brought in the lion's share of the income.<sup>3</sup>

State Historian, Joe Hood, California Park Service



ARTIST CONCEPTION OF THE ADOBE BRICK,  
PINE SHINGLED BAKERY AT FORT TEJON

Private Nery marched with his company back toward Benicia Barracks on December 23, 1856 when Company A was transferred from Fort Tejon. While the company was at Benicia, Private Nery was detailed to be an Orderly for one of the Assistant Adjutant Generals of the Department of the Pacific. He served as Orderly through the months of February and March 1857 and returned to the company in April. By early May 1857, Company A had marched north and re-occupied Fort Reading at the far north end of the Sacramento Valley.

Private Nery opened up the old bakery, fired up the oven, and was soon delivering fresh bread for the garrison. He was Post Baker at Fort Reading until June 24, 1857; the next day the company marched for the Pit River. By the end of June, Company A had established Camp Hollenbush, soon to be known as Fort Crook, near the banks of Fall River.

At newly established Fort Crook, a field bakery was soon constructed of logs with a shingled roof, and Private William Nery became the first baker. Nery continued to produce bread and hardtack (hard bread) in his adobe oven for the company, and the company of the 4th Infantry that joined the post under 2nd Lieutenant George Crook. At the end of June 1858, Nery was returned to line duty, but kept at Fort Crook. He did not see field service. Private William Nery completed his tour of duty on November 4, 1858 and received his discharge and final statement. At that point, William Nery, free of army clerks and army obstinacy, reverted to the correct spelling of his name and joined Shasta County's developing civilian population as William Nary. He and Eliza settled near the fort, and he no doubt sought work at the government post as a civilian employee while establishing his roots. Government employment receded as the Civil War began, and the post only employed a civilian doctor and a guide-interpreter during the tenure of Company C, 2nd Cavalry, California Volunteers during the first years of the Civil War era.

During this period, Nary probably made an exemption claim, under the Public Act of Congress of April 24, 1820, claiming a 106-acre parcel on "The Island," a tract of land between Little Tule and Fall River, in the area today known as "Island School," three miles north of Glenburn, California.

Nary took up farming, probably with the hope of gaining a secure cash market at the army post's Commissary of Subsistence Office. In 1874, Nary filed for a patent with the U.S. Government and received legal title on May 1. He sold this property in November 1876 to a George L. Carman, and five days later, bought Carman's farm of 153 acres which was situated next door to the east of Nary's farm. In other words, Nary traded his 106 acres for Carman's 153 acres. In November 1885, Nary purchased the "Old George Buckner Farm" in Township 37 (North, Range 4 east) from Mrs. Anna McArthur. The 160-acre farm, located two and one-half air miles northwest of Fall River Mills, cost \$2,000 in gold. This gave Nary 313 acres of farmland plus that same year, in September, Nary and a N. Scholfield of Fall River Mills bought a lot on Block Number One, fronting Main Street of Fall River Mills. Nary however was noted as continuing to live on one of his farms.

William Nary became a citizen of the United States on June 3, 1859 and registered to vote, officially for the first time on August 19, 1869. He apparently took his citizenship seriously for he regularly participated in public elections. His wife died in the mid-1880s and was laid to rest at the Pine Grove Cemetery just east of the community of McArthur. There seems to have been no surviving children from the union of Eliza and William, though there may have been a foster son who the Narys took in during the early 1870s. Following Eliza's death, Nary farmed during the summer months but during the winters he would move to Redding where he would reside at the home of L.M. Dennis, "a warm personal friend" of 30 years. On the evening of May 30, 1911, in failing health, 85 year old William Nary - a "pioneer soldier" of the county - died "due to a general break down incident to old age" at Fall River Mills. He was buried at the Pine Grove Cemetery near McArthur "where his wife was buried over a quarter of a century ago."

Footnote #1. This article was developed from the author's manuscript concerning the enlisted post bakers of Fort Tejon. In the first draft, issued to the volunteers at Fort Tejon State Historic Park, the manuscript was titled rather dryly "The Post Bakery and Its Bakers," Fort Tejon Reader, Number Two, May 1990. The second draft, currently under revision, will be called "One Pound Daily" with a sub-title, "The Fort Tejon Bakery and its Bakers." This manuscript (Reader No. Two) is part of a seven part series on the various aspects of garrisoning Fort Tejon, California from 1854 until 1861. The "one pound daily" refers to the common issue to each soldier of 16-18 ounces of bread each day.

Footnote #2. Short field campaigns were not the easily organized pursuits found in movies or popular western fiction.



Even a simple patrol was an additional financial burden on the post quartermaster officer and he had to have good reasonable assurances that his expenditures would be approved. Here we enter the realm of what often is displayed as Army stupidity or insanity by popular writers. At a small Army post, a single officer might be the only man of rank present. He performed all duties of garrison expenses and he must consider all economy measures that each of the departments - Quartermaster, Commissary, Ordnance - demanded. For example, he could not approve training without justifying the cost of expended ammunition. As commanding officer he might approve ten rounds of carbine ammunition for target practice, but as ordnance officer, knowing the frugal attitude of the ordnance officer at Benicia Arsenal, he might have to reject the request for replacement ammunition, and as quartermaster officer he would know that the Quartermaster Department must be paid for transporting new ammunition to the fort. Therefore, it was not uncommon for one and the same officer to write a series of letters to himself, requesting expenditure of government funds and at the same time denying himself the right to that expenditure. Many "pop-writers" have made fun of Captain Braxton Bragg reputedly arguing with himself as post commanding officer, quartermaster and commissary officer while in Oklahoma (then known as "Indian Territory"). Bragg was not being silly, or actively contentious with himself (he was a contentious person); Captain Bragg was covering his personal financial tailfeathers from the wrath of the government auditors. One will find these types of request-denial letters often in government correspondence.

Footnote #3. The sum of \$2.00 a month per soldier was extremely high for the cost of a laundress in the mid-1850s. However, this was an established price at Fort Tejon. This amount was determined by a company board and taken from payroll deductions, called "stoppages" in period literature. The soldiers, with payday four or five months apart, first had to pay off their sutler (post store) and laundress bills before receiving their entitled pay. Suters and laundry women were right at the pay table to collect when the Army paymaster finally arrived. Why Fort Tejon's laundry rate for soldiers was so high remains a mystery. Usually soldiers were charged from 75 cents to \$1.50 a month for their laundry. And Fort Tejon had several enlisted wives serving as laundresses at all times.

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