

24 February, 1930.

Miss Mary L. Cox,  
P. O. Box 604,  
Plainview, Texas.

Dear Miss Cox:

Your letter of the 12th instant was duly received. I was glad to know about Col. Smyth and his effort to find the body of one of my men killed in the action with Quanah Parker at the mouth of Canon Blanco, Oct. 10, 1871. I was particularly interested in the fine views in and about Plainview which Col. Smyth has been so generous to furnish me and all literature concerning that section of the Plains country, as well as gratified. Such a wonderful transformation is little less than marvelous to me, who can only look back and remember it as the most desolate looking section we had traversed in our search for Indians at the headwaters of the Colorado, Trinity, Red and Brazos rivers with their many branches. Thank him most kindly for giving me the pleasure of looking over the scenes of our old time Indian expedition and seeing it now after so many wonderful changes.

I am afraid you are asking almost too much of me when you urge me to sit for a photo showing me sitting in my favorite chair and doing the things which occur in my every day life, etc. I have had no picture taken in recent years, the last being a most dismal failure of posing six times. I am, however, sending a sketch of my early and later life which I prepared some years ago, and from which you may be able to gather enough to make a feature story such as you suggest. Accompanying it I send a picture taken in 1862 when I was 16, on Broadway, N. Y., en route to join my regiment at the front during the Civil War. Another taken in 1909 in the uniform of the Spanish-American War period, just after completing a tour of recruiting duty at Birmingham, Ala. You can use this or the one you now have for reproduction. I am also furnishing you with all the source material covering my Indian campaigns from 1870 - 1875 in Texas, and necessary for your feature story, including the action in the Palo Duro Canon which resulted in the destruction of all the Indian villages, and killing of the ponies, - and their final abandonment of the entire Panhandle and Staked Plains country and surrender at the Fort Sill I. T. (now Oklahoma) reservation, - followed by the settlement of



Miss Mary L. Cox

24 February 1930.

your now prosperous cities and towns. You will, of course, have to condense this mass of source material, as it is mostly in the form of journals, itineraries and reports. It is, however, what I believe you want. I send it to you therefore on condition that you will return it to me when you are through with it, because I cannot replace it as all of my journals, diaries, etc. made at the time in pencil are now illegible. You can retain the pictures (all of them) because I have copies of them. The manuscript I send is my only copy.

You ask me about my habits of life, my reflections. They are like most aged men whose lives have been spent in campaigns and battles - a looking back always - living in the past. A crippled leg, arthritis in arms and hands, a little daily exercise, and what sleep I can get at night - no man at 85 looks far in the future. I have recovered full sight in my left eye, after four cataract operations on both eyes. So that I have resumed my reading after five years deprivation, and history, biography and autobiography are my favorite books. I seldom read novels.

With my thanks again to both Col. Smyth and yourself for the pleasure those pictures have given, I am, with best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

R. G. Carter,  
Captain, U. S. Army, retired,

P. S. You can keep the map and pictures, but please return all manuscript and letters in enclosures *including Gen-MacKenzie's - No charge* which I am sending under separate cover.

In your next letter please give me distance from Plainview to Spur; also distance from Plainview to the "Tex" Rogers ranch where the bones of the Comanche ponies now lie.

R.G.C.



Plainview, Texas, March 4, 1930

Capt. R. G. Carter,  
c/o Army & Navy Club,  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Captain Carter:

Your kind letter and also the manuscripts and photos reached me yesterday, for which I thank you most sincerely. Indeed I shall take the best of care of them and return them to you before long. While I have them I shall keep them in our safe at the office.

I showed this material to Colonel Smyth yesterday and he was delighted with it. I will endeavor to reciprocate for what you have done for me in furnishing this most valuable data. The photos will add so much to the interest, and I will write you again before long.

The town of Spur is 70 miles south and east of Plainview (in a direct southeasterly line). The Tule Canyon where the horses were killed is 20 miles northeast (more east than north) of Tulia, and Tulia is 28 miles directly north of Plainview.

Colonel Smyth and myself drove to this battleground a week ago last Sunday, and took a few snap shots, which I am enclosing for you. We drove through Mr. Rogers' pasture, and came to the canyon from the south, this putting us on the south side. The old wagon ruts of the Mackenzie trail are still there. (The early settlers traveling by this trail altogether). The ruts are cut so deep that they are not likely too be eradicated soon. The road goes down into the canyon at the spot that is shown in this picture and then goes out onto the other (north) side just to the left of the picture. That is probably the way the horses were taken out. Colonel Smyth says the horses were killed up on the plain back of the embankment shown in the kodak picture.

I stood and looked at this lonely spot and tried to imagine the Indians down in the valley and Mackenzie's army, but I couldn't picture it. It looks so calm and peaceful now, and rather lonely. The wind was blowing a Texas sandstorm and almost swept me over the embankment as I stood on the edge of it looking down into the valley. The grass was brown from the winter's storms and the wind, along with the sand, was cold.



I know how it must have pierced during those storms you endured so far from shelter. We had a stormy January this year, with weather seven below zero.

The horse bones are not there now. The Colonel and many of the earlier settlers have told me of seeing them as they passed along the old Mackenzie trail, and Colonel remembers having seen them being carried away. The earliest settlers used this as a means of livelihood and gathered and hauled the bones away to Colorado City, 250 miles from Plainview, and sold for \$20.00 per ton to buy food and provisions. This was the only means the pioneer settlers had of obtaining money with which to buy supplies. The bones were shipped out to be ground into bone meal for fertilizer. So the bones of the horses, the horses whose lives seemed to be wasted, meant food and clothing to the settlers some fifteen years later, and in addition, enriched the soil of the country for which you fought to make it a safe ~~for~~ civilization. Strange how some influences go on beyond human control, and play a much greater part in the great plan than can be imagined. And I am sure you can never realize the true significance of the work that you did here, nor what it will all amount to in the years to come.

The map you sent is most interesting, and so useful, too, in locating the route. The trail on which Mackenzie's army went out to New Mexico passed within a block of my home, and college is situated on this trail, the trail crossing the corner of the campus.

At the Rogers ranch, his house and barns are immediately south of the spot shown in the picture. Thrifty white-faced cattle roam about the pasture, and a large barn filled with feed proves that they are being well cared for. The ranch house, (an old one and a newer one) with an orchard, and a watch dog, farm machinery scattered about, and the "screaking windmill," mules and horses, are all there is on the ranch. A few miles from this runs the highway. Land along the highway is largely in crops and there is little "unbroken prairie"

At the Palo Duro Canyon they have camp grounds with cottages to rent for picnicking in the summer time. I have been there a number of times.

Thanking you again most sincerely for the material sent. Will write you again before long.

Sincerely yours,

*Mary R. Cox*



Plainview, Texas. Apr. 17, 1930

Captain R. G. Carter,  
c/o Army and Navy Club,  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Captain Carter:

This is to let you know that I have not forgotten you and the story of your service in MacKenzie's army.

I have had a serious illness and a death in my family since I wrote you last, but your valuable papers are still in my safe at the office and carefully preserved. I will get to work on them shortly and return them to you.

With best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

*Mary L. Cox*



15 January, 1931.

Miss Mary L. Coxé,  
Plainview,  
Texas.

My dear Miss Coxé:

Upon receiving the book - "Norfleet" - yesterday with your name upon the wrapper, and then upon finding it autographed by the author himself, it afforded me an added pleasure and a much deeper appreciation, but at the same time it afforded a puzzle as to who was the real sender and contributor to that pleasure. After finishing the most amazing story he told at one sitting, I wrote him a letter of grateful thanks, leaving to the near future a solution of the puzzle as to who was the real donor.

I am sending you a copy of this letter so that you may know how deeply gratified I was to receive it from any source. The story -- as I write him -- is most amazing, and could hardly bear the imprint of truth were it not for the numerous vouchers who are listed to testify to his veracity. My letter to him explains itself. So I need add nothing further except to express to you or "Norfleet" or to you both jointly my appreciation of such a thoughtful gift.

I always was a great lover of detective stories and, as you will see, I was once (during the Civil War at 17 years of age) a detective among the thugs, robbers and murderers of a great conscript camp.

Always my best wishes,

Most sincerely yours,

encl.

R. G. Carter,  
Captain, USA, Ret.



December 29th. 1930.

Captain Robert G. Carter,  
A & N. Club,  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Captain Carter:-

It was certainly kind and thoughtful in you to send me a Christmas Card. I feel honored in being remembered, at this happy Yuletide, by one who had much to do with ridding this section of the Comanches. When the Saga of this western country is written, I fear that many of the deeds of yourself and comrades will go unrecorded. To preserve the records of some of those deeds, I have for some time been keeping a scrap book, every news-paper article, referring to those times, that comes under my eye is saved and pasted in my book. These books will be filled with the Texas Panhandle Historical Society.

I am Texas born, had an Uncle with Fannin at Goliad, I have known what it was to huddle around a chip fire, out on these bald plains, as the cow-boy says, nothing between me and the north star except a barb wire fence, and that down. Thinking over my many experiences, as a land locator, far out on the frontier, I wonder if any of them was as harrowing as that experienced by you and your comrades during that cold stormy night, which overtook you in your chase of the Qua-ha-das, north west from Canyon Blanco.

During the Spanish-American war I was in command at Fort Clark, Texas, ( I commanded a Regiment during that war). One Sunday George the head man of the Negro-Seminole squatted himself upon the lawn in front of my quarters, for a talk. He said that he was General Mackenzie's chief scout. From his description of watering places he had been in this section.

In your article "Ridding West Texas of the Comanches", you make very favorable mention of the Tonks. We Texans never thought ~~xxx~~ much of them.

When I first saw these plains it was in truth a Terra incognita. In describing it I some times mention that in 1896 my friends wanted me to go to the State Legislature, this representative district was all the Counties of the Panhandle, 36 counties. I did not have any time to fool with elections, I was working for a large cattle company in the Canadian river valley building dams to store flood waters. Since the election in November we had seen no one out side of our party, at Christmas week we had heard nothing from the election when a messenger came for me to return and go to Austin and take my seat in the House. I asked the messenger who was elected President of the U.S., his answer was "d-m if I know." Four years ago sitting in the House and looking over the membership, I counted five members representing the same territory which was included in my district in 1896. That is an indication of the settlement of this Panhandle.

Did you ever think as you rode over these plains, that you would live to see the day, its agricultural wealth would be measured by three figures. I will give you some figures from Plainview



These figures were compiled by our Chamber of Commerce, they were taken from official records. In the matter of shipments they were from the railroads books, and are for car shipments only. Local shipments and shipments by Truck are excluded. These figures were compiled for filing with the Interstate Commerce Commission, in a fight one of the large railroad companies was making for entrance into this territory.

I myself, the past year, compiled similar figures for presentation to proper authorities in Washington, in asking for an appropriation for a post-office building. I secured \$152,500.00. Among the local shipments the railroads gave me was 16,000 ten gallon cans of cream, in the car load shipments was forty cars of butter. I now quote chamber of commerce figures:

Taxable valuations in Hale county 1929	\$15,500,000.00
Business houses built in the past five years	Value \$3,445,750.00
Bank resources Dec. 31st. 1929	\$4,676,211.44
Postal receipts 1929	\$73,188.14
Car shipments farm, ranch and mill products 1929	2,897
Bales of cotton, not counted in above shipments	19,348

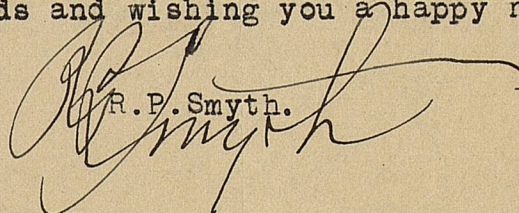
Out side of the county valuation, these figures are for Plainview only. Cars brought in here from near by stations, for grain inspection numbered 6,149. Plainview is only one and not the largest town on these plains.

With these figures before you it should be some recompense to you for the hardships and privations endured by you and your comrades in ridding this section of the Comanches. Multiply the above figures by the towns and villages on the plains and visualize what a great wealth has been added to this great country of ours.

Excuse me if I seem over enthused over what has been accomplished. Remember I picked up the work where you left off, I laid out nine of these flourishing towns. I mentioned being elected to the legislature in 1896. Previous to that time the policy of the State, was to legislate in favor of the ranches for west Texas in exclusion to the farming class. In that Legislature I introduced a bill to reverse the policy of the state. I had a nice fight, but succeeded in passing two bills which gave this section to the farmer. I have had to go back twice to protect our interest.

The world has done well by me, good health, a strong body, an active mind and a competency of worldly goods to carry me through old age.

With kindest regards and wishing you a happy new year I remain yours truly.

R. P. Smyth.  




## Harrison & Smyth Construction Co.

ROOM 7, VEIGEL BUILDING

Phone 370

Plainview, Texas March 9th. 1931.

Captain R.G. Carter,  
Washington, D.C.

My dear Captain:-

I inclose a sketch of the country over which you chased the Indians in 1871. I have surveyed all over this section. For many years I was the Surveyor for the old Spur Ranch, their ranch covered a large part of Dickens County. This was before it was sold to the Swinsons, the present owners, Mr. C.B. Jones Jr. I know very well. When I knew that country it was just as you left it. I some times pass through there, it does not look the same. It is cut up into farms and small ranches. A short time ago I was there and had to ask which was my road. When I worked there we did not have such a thing as roads, we just struck out across the country to where we were going.

On the sketch I have marked some points with numbers. On the sketch the dotted line indicates Mackenzie's Trail. In your article of Winning the West you speak of the first day from Duck Creek of ending up against the high plains. After riding about half the day you intended to turn N.W. in place of doing this you turned nearly north and rode into what we call Hades Gulch. That is the head of a little creek called Red Mud. You then bore west and a little south, rode around the foot of the plains and came onto the Fresh Water Fork of the Brazos.

When I first came into the country, at the place I have marked No. 2 there was a very distinctly marked camp site. It was located on the west side of the creek and on a bench above the water, on the west side of the camp reaching around the site was a line of Lunettes, they were about twenty steps apart and each was large enough to hold two men. The indications were that it was used as a permanent camp. From just below this point up to the point marked No. 3, the creek flows in a narrow gorge. I can not figure out just where your Stampede Camp was located. On your night ride from Duck Creek you reached Hades Gulch, that is a very fair ride at night for Cavalry. Next morning you turned west and five hours reached the Fresh Water creek, that is about the right distance. From where you first struck the Fresh Water to Mt. Blanco is about 25 miles with many arroyos to cross. At the point marked No. 3 the creek widens out to form a lake, about a half mile below this, the water drops into the gorge above mentioned. You did not ride up this gorge, no soldier would do that. At No. 3 the army had a permanent camp. The mens quarters were partly dugouts with stockade fronts, when the army moved out the Texas Rangers occupied the camp. Your Stampede camp must have been between No. 3 and the mouth of Crawfish draw. I can not call to mind a point that will fit your description of the terrene. It is nine miles from No. 3 to Mt. Blanco. Your camp must have been within about 3 miles of the mouth of Frawfish Draw. Your description of the fight fits the lay of the land around the mouth of Crawfish Draw. That was a long hard days ride from Hades Gulch to within 3 miles of Crawfish draw. After the fight when the Indians retreated across the plains, I take it they were making for the point I have marked Water in Hale County. For several miles there is running water in the Draw of the Fresh Water Fork. When night came on you I suppose you were a little to the S.W. of where Plainview is now located.

See the trail to the Tule Canyon the point I have marked No. 5 is where the Horses were shot. In Dickens County No. 6 represents the location of soldier mound.



## Harrison & Smyth Construction Co.

ROOM 7, VEIGEL BUILDING

Phone 370

### Plainview, Texas

I hope this summer you will be able to make us a visit, I would like very much to go over the country with you. In Dickens County you would not recognise it, all that section between Duck Creek and Red Mud is cut up into farms and small ranches. Every time I go down there I get disgusted with it. There is no use trying to travel by my old landmarks on the Caprock of the plains, there they are in plain sight, but what use are they to me, I must keep to the lanes between the farms. Over in Blanco Canyon it is different, very little change, a few ranch fences, many of them I located for the ranch forty-three years ago. In the mouth of Crawfish draw there is a farm, otherwise very little change, you will readily recognize the ground over which you rode in your fight with the Indians.

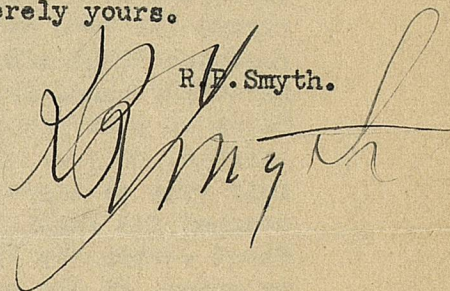
A state highway crosses the Canyon at the camp site marked No. 3. Riding down to the creek at this point you will receive a shock, at the Falls just below the highway parties have put in a dam and built a pavilion. Here in the summer time the people from Crosbyton and other near by points go for bathing and dancing.

Mt. Blanco is about 600 yards north of Crawfish and about the same distance west from the Fresh Water Fork, or White River as it is called at that point. The many names for this creek is liable to confuse one. The general name for it is The Fresh Fork of the Brazos, where you first struck it; it is known as Catfish, above the Falls; at No. 3 on my map, it is known as White River, some times The Blanco. Through Hale county and on to its head it is known as Runningwater Draw. It is the longest fork of the Salt Fork. It is thirty years since I was at the mouth of the Duck creek, there was no town there then. That was before the Swinsons bought out the old Spur ranch and brought in the settlers.

With my best wishes, and in hopes you will be able to make us a visit,  
I am,

Most sincerely yours.

R. P. Smyth.





# CITY OF PLAINVIEW

R. P. SMYTH, MAYOR - J. L. GALLAWAY, SEC'Y

PLAINVIEW, TEXAS

March, 10, 1933.

Captain R.G.Carter,  
Washington.D.C.

Dear Captain:

I have neglected writing and thanking you for the well wishes for the season sent to me last Christmas.

I enclose a letter received from Mr Sheffy. Mr. Sheffy is field secretary for The Panhandle Plains Historical Society located at Canyon, Texas. The town of Canyon is located at the head of the Paloduro Canyon not far from where General McKensie in seventy-four rounded up the Comanches. If I interpret the different statements of what took place that year the accident that happened to you in the Blanco Canyon prevented you from being in this fight in the Palodura. This letter from Mr. Sheffy is in answer to a suggestion that I made to him of securing a photograph from you and having it enlarged and placed in the Panhandle Plains Historical Society Museum.

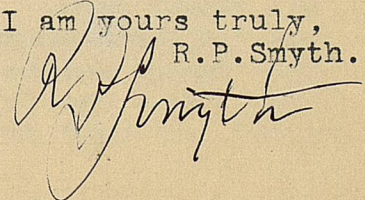
If you have a good photograph that we could use I would appreciate it if you would send it to me and I will have it enlarged and presented to the Museum.

The building is on the Campus of the West Texas State Teachers College at Canyon, Texas. It is a very beautiful building in which to house the relics of those times in which you took a prominent place. This building is built of "White Texas Marble" from the quarries near Austin, the state capitol. In panels round the entrance to the building are carved many of the prominent cow brands of the Panhandle, other decorations on the front of the building of a cow boy, an Indian, a buffalo, antelope, prairie dog, and coyote, also the yuca is prominent in the decorations.

In the ceremonies of this museum building I was honored by the society by being placed on the building committee and had much to do with the selecting of the plans and designs.

In the laying of the corner-stone by the Masons I was delegated by The Most Worshipful Grand Master to act as The Grand Junior Warden of the ceremony in laying the corner-stone. With the kindest and best wishes for your health,

I am yours truly,  
R. P. Smyth.





21 March, 1931.

Colonel R. P. Smyth,  
Room 7, Veigel Building,  
Plainview, Texas.

Dear Colonel Smyth:

Your letter of the 9th instant with sketch map of the Panhandle country was received and warmly appreciated, and the map proved to be not only accurate but very illuminating.

You refer to ~~the~~ <sup>our</sup> day march from Duck Creek in 1871. We made no day march. We reached that point -- a little lower down towards its mouth than you have indicated -- on October 8, from the Double Mt. Fork. Our scouts were sent out on the 9th to scout the country around the head of Duck Creek. I was also sent to the north and west with a detachment. I reached a point not far from "Soldiers Mound" ("Anderson's Fort") which was our supply camp from Sept. 1874 to Jan. 1875, and returned the same day without seeing any trails or running across our Ton-Ka-Way scouts.

Mackenzie, becoming impatient, determined to make a night march, without waiting for the return of the scouts, in the hope that he might surprise Quanah's village. We started at dark, leaving our fires burning and our wagons parked. At midnight we landed in that deep gulch on "Red Mud", which you call "Hades Gulch", our course being about as you have indicated, being sometimes west, then north by west, then nearly northwest. Finding that we could not get out, we bivouacked in column in the gulch on our trail with the pack train to wait for daylight. We had no maps; nothing but pocket compasses.

At daylight we headed around and out of the gulch, finally marching nearly due north until we struck the Fresh Fork, as you have shown; here we unsaddled and got breakfast. This was about 9 A.M., and soon after sent out two companies to scout towards the north and later our "Tonk" scouts came in and reported that the Comanches had sighted our column from the bluffs, which we could see but not the mouth of the canon from that point. We then crossed the Fresh Fork. I was in charge of the pack train, about 100 mules -- and the rear guard -- following the stream which we crossed twice. Some packs became bogged and we were delayed quite awhile. Hearing some shots and fearing that a company which we had left behind as a blind, or that my rear guard had been attacked, Mackenzie hastily



countermanded the command, but upon finding that it was a false alarm -- some men having accidentally fired their carbines -- the column turned and shortly after went into camp, this camp being close to the stream in a rather narrow pocket valley, with low foothills on one side, the Fresh Fork on the other.

My recollection is that the Fresh Fork, where we first struck it, after our morning march from "Hades Gulch" took quite a turn down stream to the East before it emptied into the Salt Fork. Your sketch shows it taking at that point almost a southerly course. We had not yet seen the mouth of the canon. If my memory is correct our "Stampede Camp" of that night was several miles, perhaps two or three, to the east or southeast from where you place your No. 2, and would place it ("Stampede Camp") on this north side of this turn, and next to the foothills, but only a few miles from the mouth of Blanco Canyon.

It was from this camp that Mackenzie, saddling up hurriedly in the darkness, came with a rush and by a short cut over the foothills to my rescue at the butte in the wide mouth of the Canyon as you have sketched, where I had gone before daybreak by another short cut in pursuit of the Indians who had circled out our stampeded horses and were driving them off.

Now, if a more or less prominent butte with rocky faces and broken by a ravine -- evidently caused by an erosion many years ago or a cloudburst -- can be found about 3 miles southwest of where you have indicated one of our old camps by No. 2 -- or, at the mouth of the Canon as you have sketched it -- that is where I had my fight with Quanah on the morning of Oct. 10, 1871 and where Gregg was killed and was buried low down on its (the butte) southeast foot. The cap rock of this butte showed plainly that it had originally been a part of the plains. It sloped down gently to the west and there was a wide, roomy valley on that side clear to the west bluffs; also from its easterly face to the Fresh Fork.

The Indians retreated, some over the bluff at that point and then headed north; some up the Canon,-- while we followed the stream up the Canon.

We used No. 2 as a temporary camp in 1871 and more or less as a permanent camp in 1872 when we went up to McClellan's Creek and the North Fork of Red River; destroyed Mow-wis (Comanche)



#3.

village, Sept. 28, 1872, captured 130 squaws and children; held them as prisoners at Fort Concho (San Angelo) from October 1872 until June 1873, when they were sent to Fort Sill under guard, by order of the War Department, and returned to their tribe.

The permanent camp of 1872 may have been at the point No. 3, or a temporary camp in 1874 during very bad weather, although, as stated, our main supply camp was near Spur at "Anderson's Fort".

I remember the lake but no gorge, although the canyon was cut up by innumerable gulches and arroyas. When we found Quanah's abandoned camp in 1871 somewhere between Nos. 2 and 3, we went up over the bluffs on the west side to the plains and skirted the Canyon, our scouts following the trail along the stream below. We moved so fast that I never saw anything that resembled "Crawfish Draw" or "Mt. Blanco". I don't think we marched 25 miles from the crossing of the Fresh Fork, but upon our scouts discovering that the trail was doubling back and then going across and out over the east bluffs we went down into the canon again, crossed over from west to east above No. 3, but turning down this side of Mr. Blanco and striking a broad stock and travois trail we headed north-west until the Norther struck us, although we had been getting a raw taste of it all day.

I should say that circle bivouac that night in the rain, hail and sleet, was pretty near to Plainview, either southwest or southeast.

I take it that your No. 4 marks Mt. Blanco, although you do not state so -- because you give its distance from Crawfish Draw as about 600 yards and an equal distance from "White River" (Fresh Fork). You give our trail, however, as going out of the canon to the east ~~at~~ about that point, whereas we went out to the south of it and then on before dark towards Plainview.

In conclusion I do not now believe -- after carefully studying your sketch -- which nearly agrees with my recollection of the terrain, that my fight with Quanah on October 10, 1871 (and where Gregg was killed, Melville and Downey wounded; where my horse was shot in the high fore shoulder and fell on me, crushing and lacerating my leg which was placed in splints and when I rode from the 10th to the 15th in that condition) took place at or near Crawfish Draw, but down near the mouth of the Canon, as you have sketched it or several miles (perhaps three, you give no scale) southwest of the point marked No. 2. The butte and terrain I have already described. There was a pony or buffalo trail



#4.

leading up its southeast side. We piled heavy rocks for 10 feet about Gregg's grave to protect it from wolves. Our 1871 trail did not run so close to the "Soldiers Mount", but more to the south. Beginning at the point where we followed Quanah across and to the east or northeast side, then out on the Plains to the northwest towards Plainview, were there then, or are there now, two lagoons or fresh water lakes where the Indians and our command watered,-- shortly after which we closed up and threw out skirmishers and flankers, expecting a fight any moment, just before the storm struck us, and as the Indians began crowding in towards us to draw us off the main stock trail where all the women and children were. A charge just then before the storm shut them from view, would have secured the entire outfit.

Am crippled with rheumatism which may prevent my going to Texas and renewing those scenes of 60 years ago. Thanking you for your most interesting letter, I am

Most sincerely yours,

R. G. Carter,  
Captain, U. S. A., retired.



6 January, 1931.

R. P. Smyth,  
City Engineer,  
Plainview, Texas.

My dear Colonel Smyth:

Your very interesting letter was received and read with very great pleasure, figures and all, and was most warmly appreciated.

I believe I am becoming more and more interested in the Panhandle and I might say, more proud, in the achievements of men like you who, following in upon our trail, made it possible for that vast region to settle up and progress to a state where you can point with just pride to so many thriving towns which, with their varied interests, enables you to give me from statistical records the almost incredible figures you now quote.

That such a development could ever take place in that once desolate, Indian infested region seems to me, in looking back to the many years since I last saw it, almost like reading again that enchanting old book, The Arabian Nights Tales.

The fine photos, which you were so kind to send me through Miss Mary L. Coxe, of Plainview; Tule Canon and the scene of our slaughter of Quannah Parker's ponies on the Rogers Ranch at its head, gave me a pretty good idea of the marvelous growth of your town, especially the fine view looking north on Broadway from our trail, and when Miss Coxe added "it (the trail) passes over the corner of my campus and is within a short block of my home", then I felt sure that that trail was ours, and the town was simply the amazing product of the finest lot of pioneers since the days of Daniel Boone, and that is saying a great deal.

I have had a frequent correspondence with C. B. Jones and his son of Spur Ranch, and have given them much information, both before and after the bronze plate was placed in "Spur Inn", commemorating the principal events of the Fourth Cavalry in 1871-2 and 1874-5 in and about that region, Duck Creek,



#2.

Soldiers Mound, and Canon Blanco, with a list of our actions with the Indians, including those at Tule and Palo Duro, and you will perhaps realize with me the bitter disappointment I experienced when my doctors warned me against taking such a long trip at my advanced age to that country for the pleasure it would give me to meet and greet all the people, - cowpunchers, ranchers and farmers of that Panhandle and Staked Plains country after an absence of 60 years. Mr. C. B. Jones, jr., in a recent letter when declaring their own regret at not meeting me on the occasion of the unveiling of this memorial to our gallant officers and men, says: "We feel that you are really one of us so closely are you identified with the events which took place all about the Spur Ranch during those days of danger, hardships and sacrifices".

And, my dear Colonel Symth, that is the way I myself feel about it -- a true attachment and real affection for the noble pioneers who made all our hard work of practical value to all who were willing to do, as you did, go into that "Terra Incognita" and take up that work just where we left off. I am certainly proud to feel that I was even an humble instrument in the advancement of that entire region and although I am now in my 86th year and was so badly crippled in my fight with Quanah that I have never recovered from it yet, it is my ardent wish to take that trip some day and travel along the entire line of my early days' Indian activities, and see the ruins of the old forts where my children were born.

Now I come to a question which I have wanted to ask you for some time, assuming, as I do, that you know the country and streams adjacent to Plainview and the Blanco Canon region. I note that in one of the recent West Texas Historical Society's year books you refer to the "Crawfish Draw" near the mouth of Blanco Canon. I note on the map the town of Luzon at the mouth of Duck Creek. A man wrote me several years ago from that town that he or his sons had found a saddle - or what was left of it - also a saber which he believed belonged to our command. He was not able to definitely describe the spot. About half way up from the mouth of Duck Creek we made a temporary camp in 1871. From there over to the Freshwater Fork of the Brazos we tried to make a night march, but it being dark we got tangled up in the breaks and had to wait until daybreak. From there we made a short march to what we called "Stampede Camp", where Quanah stampeded our horses at midnight Oct. 9, 1871, getting about 65 of our best horses (see "Winning West Texas from the Comanches"). We called this stream alongside our camp (small foothills on one side) the Freshwater Fork of the Brazos.



#3.

It was from this camp that I started out shortly before dawn, to again post my pickets, and when I joined the two detachments who were trying to find and round up the stray horses, and after riding down a valley and over the hills for two or three miles and into and out of some very deep breaks or arroyos, I ran into the main Comanche band which was bunched up near the butte, which nearly surrounded me. It was from that camp that Mackenzie came with the entire command, which had saddled up in the darkness, to my rescue. We carried no sabers and the saddles of the stampeded horses were cached in some ravines full of chaparral. Have you ever been over that route from Duck Creek - which I describe - and is there any part of that Mackenzie Trail still visible to the "Stampede Camp", and to what I call the Mouth of Blanco Canon, and where, as I once told you, a rather prominent butte stands out, which cannot be very far from the Crawfish Draw and where one of my men -- Gregg -- was killed, two others being wounded and my horse shot? I have understood that you did not succeed in finding that butte at the S. E. foot of which we buried Gregg. It cannot be far from where Catfish Creek -- which we called the Fresh Fork -- widens out into quite a stream (on some maps it is called "White River".)

I made many years ago a rather rough drawing of the butte which I will send you sometime if you wish. When we returned down Blanco Canon from our chase out on the plains after Quanah, the wagon train was brought over from that camp on Duck Creek some distance up from its mouth, or Luzon, and a temporary supply camp was made not far from where the fight took place. That wagon trail must have been pretty plain after the rain and hail storm.

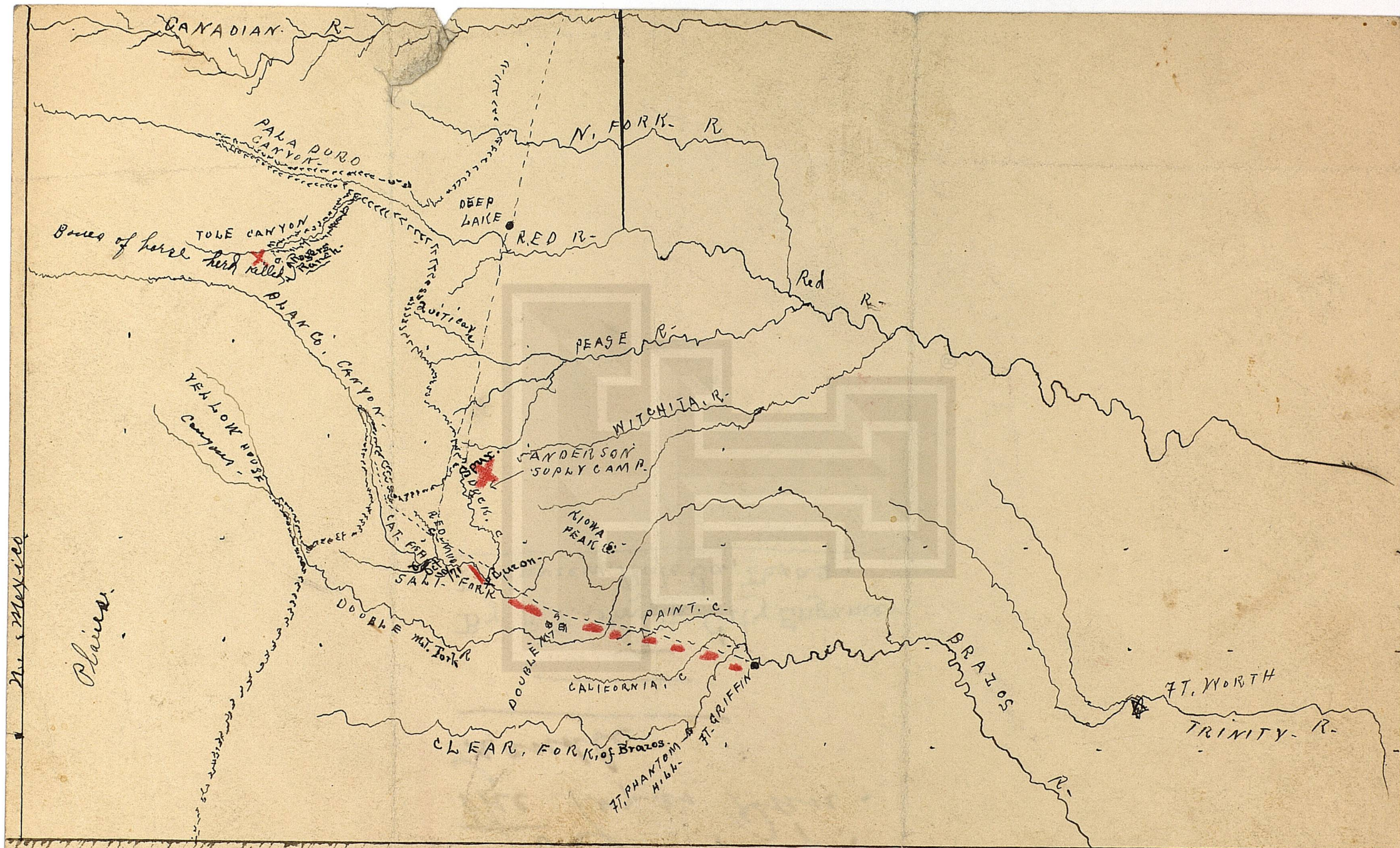
Does Catfish Creek or White River empty into the Salt Fork of Red River near the mouth of Blanco Canon? It is possible that we were mistaken about our "Stampede Camp" being on the Fresh Fork of the Brazos on the night I refer to, for we had no maps in 1871 and I am unable at present to gain access to the survey maps of our Engineer officers in 1872 and 1874-5.

With my best wishes and most cordial greetings for the coming year, believe me

Most sincerely yours,

R. G. Carter,  
Captain, U.S.A., Ret.





DOTTERD LINES INDICATE McKenzie Trail from Griffin to Blanco Canyon and other leading north from it presumably to Ft. Wheeler as shown on the ground 15 yrs after the campaign ended.



Sketch Map of  
The Texas Run.  
Handle

XX

By R. P. Smyth, City Engineer  
Plainview, Hale Co., Texas.







Rough Sketch  
of region about  
Compton Bluffs,  
in the Texas Pan-  
handle showing  
a portion of the  
McAlester Trail  
of 1871 - by R. P. Smyth  
P.E. &c.



# THE PANHANDLE-PLAINS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ORGANIZED 1921

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AND PALEONTOLOGY

## CANYON, TEXAS

December 30, 1932.

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Col. R. P. Smythe,  
Plainview, Texas.  
Dear Col. Smythe:

I received your very interesting letter of December 23d and also your very delightful Christmas letter. I prize this Christmas letter very highly and I appreciated getting it. There is no group of people in the world whose friendship I esteem so highly as the old timers, and especially those who have been my friends and neighbors from childhood. I want to put the last part of this letter first and wish for you the very best in every way during the New Year. I hope you live to be a hundred and fifty years old and continue to be as hale and hearty and as active and useful as you are now. I have appreciated your friendship and your help through the years a great deal more than I can tell you.

With reference to the photo of Capt. Carter I think it would be a fine thing to have and I hope you can secure one for our museum collection. I wonder if it would be possible for us to get a copy of Capt. Carter's book, Ridding Texas of the Comanches. I have never seen this book and would like very much to read it myself and have it in our museum library. If you know where I can get a copy of it I would appreciate it if you would let me know about it. I think you are right about getting as many photos of officers of this section as we can. I would also like to have a brief sketch of the life of each of them to go with the photo. We can also keep a record of each as you suggested. I am returning the circular which you sent me as you requested. I hope you can find the old bell of Seth Ward College.

I am also enclosing a copy of a proposed resolution to Col. Goodnight which is self-explanatory. Would like to know what you think about this also.

Thanking you for your letter and with every good wish for the New Year, I remain,

Very sincerely yours,

*L. F. Sheffy.*



15 January, 1931.

Mr. J. Frank Norfleet,  
Hale Center,  
Texas.

Dear Sir:

In yesterday's mail I received a book, on the wrapper of which was the name, "Mary L. Coxe", who is the Secretary of the Womens Business Club of Plainview, Texas, and with whom I have had for several years an occasional correspondence with regard to the operations of my regiment, the Fourth U. S. Cavalry, during a period of several years -- 1870-1875 -- in the Texas Panhandle and across the Staked Plains from Duck Creek and Spur to Forts Sumner and Bascum, N.M., including Blanco, Tule, Yellow House and the Palo Duro Canyons.

Upon opening up the package, however, I found it was autographed by the author of "Norfleet". If you sent it, I want to express my warmest appreciation and gratitude for affording me the privilege of reading one of the most fascinating books I have read since my young days when I lost myself in the mysteries of Conan Doule's "Sherlock Holmes", or the great French writer Flammarin in his startling pictures of crimes in Paris and their strange solving. It proved to be of most absorbing interest and I read it from cover to cover at one sitting.

From boyhood I was always interested in detective stories and even now at my age -- 86th year -- they still exercise a most wonderful hypnotic effect over me. Wilkie Collin's "The Moonstone", I read at least once a year. For fiction I never had any love and I cannot write it, since I lack the necessary imagination to create characters. When I first started to read "Norfleet", I leaned back in my chair, puffed at my cigar, and ripped out - almost aloud - "This Texas rancher is hoo-doo-ing the public with the richest pack of lies ever invented by the human brain", and "No one man would or could follow such a trail for four years without lying down and quitting." As I went on, however, I began to see a new light and the truth of your statements coming to the front with the Burns Company, Bureau of Justice and many others as vouchers. Then I went over my own adventurous life when as a boy of 16 I entered the Union Army



to help preserve the Union, and, as the youngest of four brothers, participated in all the principal battles of the Army of the Potomac from the bloody battle of Antietam to the Siege of Petersburg.

At the age of 17, directly after the battle of Gettysburg (1863) I was detached for a period of several months and placed in a great conscript camp, full of substitutes and "bounty jumpers" who had come from the great cities of Europe to secure the large bounties then offered by the Federal government -- averaging \$1500 to \$2000 per head as substitutes for wealthy men who had been drafted but who could pay any price to keep out of battle and save their hides. Among them were deserters from every army and navy in the world. They were not confidence men, but the worst class of thugs, thieves, cutthroats, murderers and bad hombres ever gathered together in this country. I was selected as a detective to search them, stay among them, and ferret out their daily and nightly crimes, and we were under a Provost Marshal, Major Tremlett, who, as mate of a clipper ship had, prior to the 60s, sailed to China, Japan, India, and the Philippines, and knew all the "ins and outs" of bad men. He was, later, mortally wounded at Petersburg, Va. Once we caught a gang deserting. We caught 4 out of 5. I personally captured the ringleader and he and one other were executed (shot) in front of my eyes on my testimony. So I learned to know bad men of every class.

When, later, I served all over your country I came in contact with Indians, horse thieves, cow rustlers, desperadoes, etc., and handled them in hardboiled fashion. I had more experience of a different nature and I did a lot of detective work. But, "Norfleet", I take off my hat to you. I don't think there is anything on record that will begin to compare with the four years of trailing you undertook and under such a discouraging beginning.

I correspond with Col. Smyth of Plainview, with C. B. Jones of Spur and others at San Angelo, Lubbock, Comanche, Jacksboro -- where I was stationed for two years -- and at Breckinridge near old Fort Griffin, etc., but I should like to meet a man like you; they are few and far between, and should you ever come this way don't fail to come and see the only surviving officer of that command who made the Mackenzie Trail, and who likes to honor the pioneers who followed in after us.

Again my grateful thanks for that wonderful book, and with all best wishes, believe me to be

Most sincerely yours,

*R. B. Carter*  
Capt U.S. Army, Retd