Unusual Photograph Explained

Norman Rozeff

In the Our Heritage page of 12/11/03 an article ran on Harlingen's Anglin family. Accompanying it was an unusual photograph furnished by Vickie Ayers Gonzales, an Anglin descendent. The photograph showed four Texas lawmen, two of whom appeared in unusual headgear. An explanation of the photograph has come to light. In the April 1985 issue of *Fiesta*, a monthly magazine printed in McAllen at the time and directed at tourists, the same picture is reproduced and a short account of it is made.

The border law officers in the picture (left to right) are: V.C. Dow, deputy sheriff from El Paso; Marcus Hines, U.S. Customs Officer; Tom Mayfield of Donna; and E.W. Anglin police chief of Harlingen. The photo was courtesy of Lawson Anglin, one of E.W.'s sons and himself later a lawman as Cameron County motor patrolman.

Tom Mayfield, who once worked as a supervisor on John Closner's San Juan Plantation, became a Hidalgo County deputy sheriff and, as readers may recall, played a major role in uncovering the Plan of San Diego, an insurrectionist manifesto conceived in 1915.

Elmer William Anglin managed the properties and business ventures, including land clearing, of Hill. In this job he was closely connected to the growing young town which came into official being in April 1910. He served on the first cemetery committee as a trustee, served as a school trustee prior to 1920, and after 1910 he performed as police chief for 16 years. From 1939 through 1959 he was a justice of the peace.

Surprisingly the picture was not taken in Texas, but in Lansing, Michigan. This is how it came about. After serious border incidents began to occur along the U.S.-Mexico border and the turmoil related to the Mexican revolutionists added to unsettled conditions, the federal government sent army troops (nearly 50% of the total number in the ranks) to the border then had to supplement them even more with National Guard troops. Henry Ford, fearing the loss of some of his automobile factory workers to guard call up duty, voiced opposition to government plans. Opposing Ford was the equally vehement *Chicago Tribune*. When the newspaper labeled him "an anarchist", he found reason to sue it for a million dollars.

The border lawmen were called north to testify in the trial which ensued. They provided accounts of the border disorders and banditry. According to the *Fiesta* article Lawson Anglin recalls his father spending thirty-eight days in Michigan. The judgment ran against Ford; his claim was thrown out. It was after the trial that this group picture was taken. In a jovial mood Hines and Dow donned Mexican sombreros rather than their own usual hats, possibly Stetsons.

National Guard units did indeed come south. One of the largest encampments was Camp Llano Grande occupied in 1916-17. This was located near the present day Texas A & M Experiment Station at the intersection of FM 1015 and Business 83. Units from Indiana,
Nebraska, Minnesota, and North Dakota were stationed here on an area occupying over 200 acres. The camp included a headquarters building, commissary, and recreational facilities. Wither's lodging house was transformed into the camp hospital. South of the railroad tracks were parade grounds, tent encampments, and stock pens. Once U.S. involvement into the Great War was imminent, the camp was abandoned in March 1917, one month prior to U.S. entry into the war. The troops stationed there were then called to war service in France.

Over the period, there were stationed at the camp Indiana National Guard troops totaling 3,702 in an artillery battalion, field hospitals, infantry regiments, ambulance companies, sanitary company, and signal company. Nebraska troops numbered 2,153 who, in addition to the above units, had a machine gun company. Minnesota guardsmen numbered 5,117 and consisted of infantry and field artillery regiments. The North Dakota National Guard contingent numbering 1,007 members was also headquartered there though its camp was in Mercedes.

Soldiers of the 6th U.S. Cavalry, 26th Infantry and the 3rd Texas National Guard are stationed in Harlingen as part of efforts to quell border unrest. They even have several field hospitals for the minimum of 10 companies involved here. On 8/3/16 on the orders of Major A.R. Sholars, Companies K and L of the Third Texas Infantry are moved by truck from San Benito into Harlingen as the first step in consolidating all Texas troops into Harlingen. On August 6 the City Council orders a committee of three to consult with Texas State Adjutant General Hulen for plans of cooperation between the general and the City Council and the City Health Officer regarding the camp site. This month the city appoints a City Health Officer to overlook the soldiers. The city provides the camp with free water and lights. Various Robert Runyon photographs of the period show tent camps around Fourth Street, east of Harrison and also along the train tracks on Commerce near where it meets Madison. Runyon also portrays soldiers preparing to embark on a military train near the first depot in Harlingen.

As some troops in the Valley were sent home, some possibly to handle the impending nationwide railroad strike, the cost of maintaining troops on the border had added to the federal government’s budget deficit of $50 million. This was one of the reasons Congress had approved a federal income tax to take effect on 1/1/17. Unmarried people earning $3,000 or more would be taxed 2%, married above $4,000 the same, and those $20,000 or above on a graduated scale 1 to 13%. Corporations with a capital stock value of $75,000 or more would pay a 2% tax.