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## THE PASSAGE OF SCOTLAND'S FOUR/ EL PASAJE DE LOS CUATRO DE ESCOCIA

by Consuelo L. Samarripa



*De lejos, muy lejos de aquí*, far from the land of the Gaelic accent, came the vessels across the challenging waters of the Atlantic to America's different ports of entry. The vessels carried immigrants whose uncharted destinies would be remembered for many generations *en la tierra de el nopa, de el mesquite*, and mammoth trees draped with Spanish moss. We, *Tejanos*, just like them, have had our own fight for freedom and liberty. We will remember the passage of Scotland's four, *el pasaje de los cuatro de Escocia*.

*Pues quiza algunos Tejanos le llamaban Valentine*. Most often he was called Richard W. Ballentine (1814–1836).<sup>1</sup> The surname Ballantyne is from Sept of the Clan Campbell; their Argyll motto is “*Ne obliviscaris*,” Roman Latin meaning “Forget not.” Ballentine was a twenty-two-year-old Scottish lad whose family had established residency in Marengo County, Alabama. He was recruited to serve with “The Mobile Greys” for Texas.<sup>2</sup> Some Greys traveled by land and others by sea. In December 1835, the schooner named *Santiago* left the port of New Orleans, Louisiana.<sup>3</sup> It carried fifteen recruits on her manifest; among them was Richard W. Ballentine. On his journey, he befriended a young aristocrat named Cleveland K. Simmons (1815–1836) from Charleston, South Carolina—born and raised. On December 9, 1835, they drafted, dated, declared, and documented they would defend Texas at the expense of their lives, liberties, and fortunes.<sup>4</sup> So, the journey brought Ballentine, a rifleman, to San Antonio de Bexar.

David L. Wilson (1807–1836) was also born in Scotland. His surname is a Sept of the Gunn Clan; their motto is “*Aut pax aut bellum*,” Roman Latin meaning “Either peace or war,” *paz o guerra*. He had established residency in Nacogdoches, Texas. He was the son of James and Susanna Wesley Wilson and his wife's

name was Ophelia. It has been speculated that David L. Wilson was perhaps a volunteer recruited by Captain Philip Dimmitt (1801–1841).<sup>5</sup> While Dimmitt's travels included journeys to San Antonio de Bexar, it appears his travels did not include Nacogdoches.<sup>6</sup> Thomas J. Rusk (1803–1857) lived in Nacogdoches, where David L. Wilson resided. Rusk organized volunteers in Nacogdoches, then traveled to assist Stephen F. Austin at Gonzales. Rusk then led the army of volunteers to San Antonio de Bexar. The volunteers remained at their new duty station, while Rusk returned to Nacogdoches. I believe that David L. Wilson was a member of the militia organized by Thomas J. Rusk. Thus, I believe Wilson came to San Antonio de Bexar.<sup>7</sup>

Isaac Robinson (1808–1836), like David L. Wilson, came from the Sept of the Gunn Clan. He arrived at the port of New Orleans, Louisiana, and was immediately recruited for service. He didn't have time to establish residency; he was sent to the battlefield at San Antonio de Bexar. After the battle at Bexar, he had earned the rank of Fourth Sergeant and 640 acres. Robinson served in NCO Company of Captain William R. Carey's (1806–1836) artillery company. It would be in NCO Company that the fourth Scotsman would be found.

The fourth Scotland native was a bagpiper. He had established residency in Nacogdoches, which is currently known as one of the oldest historic towns in Texas. But, back then it was known as a hometown of smugglers, gamblers, and other characters lacking angelic natures, just the kind of town for the jaunty Scotsman called John McGregor, Tartan from the Gregor Clan, the clan also known as "The Children of the Mist." He had earned the rank of Second Sergeant after the battle at San Antonio de Bexar. The Scotsman was very dedicated to his bagpipes. Epics written speak that even at ten paces, the cat gut groans from the fiddle of the Tennessee politician called Davy Crockett (1786–1836) were no match for the melodic moans from John McGregor's bagpipes of Scotland. If there were any references to "Scottie," I dare say it probably would have been John McGregor.

The four Scotsmen's journeys had brought them to the Texas Revolution. They, like the rest of the men behind the walls of the old Spanish mission at San Antonio de Bexar, had already seen *la bandera roja*, hoisted to the top of *la Iglesia de San Fernando*. The flag was the Mexican symbol meaning "No quarter, no surrender, no mercy." The thunderous response came from the old Spanish mission. Colonel William Barret Travis (1809–1836) had ordered the firing of the cannon called the 18-pounder. The shot sailed more than eight hundred years away and missed its target, but defiantly made its point! So, the men had time to think twice with regard to their beliefs and their destinies. On the predawn hours of March 6, 1836, Generalissimo Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna ordered the bugler to trumpet the blood curdling "*El Deguello.*" *Paso por paso*, step by step, the Mexican soldiers marched to their orders.

It is customary for armies to rally behind a flag. Legends have it that several flags were flown within the walls of the Alamo. There was the flag made of *verde, blanco, y colorado*, a green, white and red flag with the year 1824 on its center strip; some men rallied behind the flag of the Mexican Constitution of 1824. There was another flag, of the same colors: *verde, blanco, y colorado*, and on the middle white stripe there were two golden stars, *duos estrellas de oro*. *Una estrella representa el estado de Coahuila, el estado de donde mis abuelos nacieron*. One star represented the State of Coahuila, the state where my grandparents were born. The second star represented *Tejas*; that is where I was born. But the legendary flag, whose presence was archived, was an azure blue with gold fringe. Bold black letters spelled "First Company of Texan" at the top; at the bottom the phrase continues with "Volunteers! From New Orleans." The center of the flag had a flying eagle; in his beak was a ribbon that carried the words "God & Liberty," also in black letters.

The New Orleans Greys were sometimes referred to as the "Invincibles." It was their banner that was hoisted to the top of the long barracks where the artillerymen were quartered. The Invincibles' banner snapped in the March wind as the Mexican *soldados*

stormed the Alamo. Several hours later more than one hundred eighty men lay silenced beneath a fight for liberty. The Invincibles' banner also lay in the rubble. *La familia* de Jose Gregorio Esparza claimed his body and buried him nearby at *Campo Santo*. But the remaining *Tejanos'* bodies were indiscriminately tossed with their *compadres* in the fires that burned after the battle. We, as *Tejanos*, will remember that—*de lejos, muy lejos de aqui*, far from the land of the Gaelic accent came the vessels that brought *nuestros compadres*. We will remember: Private Richard W. Ballentine, Rifleman; Private David L. Wilson, Rifleman; Fourth Sergeant Isaac Robinson, Artilleryman; and Second Sergeant John McGregor, Artilleryman, and also known as the Bagpiper. By some genealogy origins, the meaning of the McGregor name is “a storyteller.”

Thus, we will remember the passage of Scotland's four, *el pasaje de los cuatro de Escocia*.

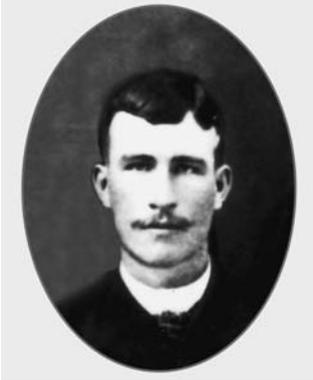
#### ENDNOTES

1. In most references, R. W. Ballentine's name has been spelled with the letter “i” instead of the letter “y,” generally spelled Ballantyne. The Sept of the Clan Campbell is one of the oldest surnames in the Highlands.
2. James Butler Bonham (2/20/1807–3/6/1836) is credited for helping organize volunteers for service in Texas at Mobile, Alabama. The color of their uniforms was reflected in the name, “Mobile Greys.” The other volunteers from Alabama were referenced as the Red Rovers. Captain [Dr.] Jack Shackelford's Company of Red Rovers from Alabama would be massacred at Goliad on March 27, 1836.
3. Walter Lord. *A Time to Stand*, (University of Lincoln and London Press, 1978), 55. “The little group that boarded the *Santiago* on December 7 was typical.” Lord lists December 7, 1935 as the date of departure. Dates of departure conflict.
4. Bill Groneman. *Alamo Defenders, A Genealogy: The People and Their Works* (Austin, Tx: Eakin Press, 1990). “Richard W. Ballentine embarked for Texas on 12/9/1835 aboard the schooner *Santiago*, as did Alamo Defender Cleveland K. Simmons. His name is sometimes listed as ‘R. W. Valentine.’” 11. Confusion over the name is perhaps due to a typographical error in the statement, “He traveled to Texas in January 1836 aboard the schooner *Santiago*, along with defender Richard W. Ballentine.” 100. Groneman's *Notes Part II: Their Words* includes documented contents and is noted as, “Richard W. Ballen-

- tine, Cleveland K. Simmons et al. on board the *Santiago*, 12/09/1835.” 135. Regarding the dates and events conflict, I resolved that these two defenders departed New Orleans in December and the documented pledge was drafted while on board on December 9, 1935.
5. Captain Philip Dimmitt's name has also been spelled as Philip Dimitt.
  6. I have made this statement, based on the resources of this paper's bibliography.
  7. “Rusk, Thomas Jefferson.” *The Handbook of Texas Online*. <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/view/RR/fru16.html> [Accessed Sat Nov 24 1:00:56 US/Central 2001]. “He organized volunteers from Nacogdoches and hastened to Gonzales, where his men joined Stephen F. Austin's army in preventing the Mexicans from seizing their cannon. They proceeded to San Antonio, but Rusk left the army before the siege of Bexar. “I have for the first time documented my analogy, which does, indeed, challenge previous speculations, and now may add to another debated issue in history.”

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**(Row 1) George T. McCannon**

**(Row 2) Ernest P. Mollenauer**

**(Row 3) George Elmer McCannon**

**Alice Jane McCannon**

**Julia E. Mollenauer**

**Mary Louise McCannon**