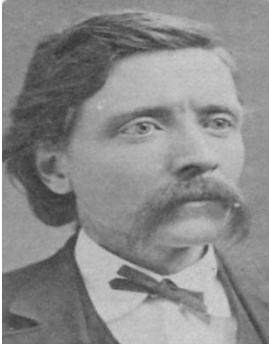


William Williston Heartsill, Sergeant 2nd Rgt, 1st Texas Mounted Rifles



William Williston Heartsill was born in Louisville, Tennessee, a little town on the Holston River near Knoxville, on October 17, 1839. He went to Nashville in 1856 at the age of 17 to become a traveling salesman. Heartsill got the “Texas Fever” in 1859 and moved to Marshall becoming a clerk in the Bradford & Talley store where he worked until joining the W. P. Lane Rangers.

On February 2, 1861, the Texas Secession Convention voted 171 for and 6 against to leave the Union. A statewide election was quickly held on March 2nd, 1861. The question of secession won by almost 32,000 votes. Only 18 Texas Counties voted against the movement.

Harrison County Sheriff A.W. Crawford received permission from the Governor to raise a Company of Rangers to serve for 1 year as a State Militia. On April 19th, 1861, 301 determined young men were sworn into the service of the State of Texas on the North side of the Harrison County Courthouse. W. W. Heartsill was among the volunteers. They chose the name the W. P. Lane Rangers.

The next day the Mounted Rifle Company led by Captain Samuel J. Richardson headed for Austin to draw equipment and to receive their assignment. They crossed the Sabine at Camden. (We still have a Shreve-Camden Rd.) The trip took 10 days. On May 4th, the company left for San Antonio to get their supplies. After spending 2 weeks in San Antonio, they were finally transferred and sworn into the Army of the Confederate States of America. And on May 23rd, 1861, the W. P. Lane Rangers became Company F, 2nd Regiment, of the 1st Texas Mounted Rifles.

The unit’s first assignment was as Frontier Guardians. On June 6th, 1861, they were sent to Ft. Wood 200 miles west of San Antonio. They protected the frontier for 10 months. However, on April 19, 1862, the company re-enlisted in the CSA Army for a period of whatever time it would take to win the War

On June 20, 1862, the Rangers were ordered to Little Rock Arkansas. But due to changes and missed information, they did not leave for Little Rock until the 3rd of November. By the time they reached Pine Bluff, their orders were to go to Arkansas Post/Ft. Hindman. Arriving on November 29th, they faced a serious problem. Mumps was spreading amongst the men. Heartsill contracted the disease. Many died but he survived.

On January 9th, the Battle of the Arkansas Post began with an estimated 70,000 total Union troops and navy attacking the Fort that only had 4,000 CSA troops. After 7 attempts, a surrender was issued on January 11th. Heartsill and many others were surprised as they thought they were holding on against the over whelming force. The next day, he and many other prisoners were placed on the Steamer *Sam Gatey* for a 17 day hard cold trip on the outside decks up the Mississippi to Alton, Illinois. It was snowing and raining for most of the trip. Next, they were put in train cars and sent to a prison camp at Camp Butler just east of Springfield, Illinois. arriving on Jan. 31, 1863. To try to keep up his strength and to stay away from the sickness in the camp, Heartsill walked 16 miles a day in the camp. By the 27th of February, 125 prisoners from Ft. Hindman had died. On April 7th 1863, they were moved by train to City Point Virginia and released on April 15th, 1863.

Heartsill received a furlough to go home to Tennessee to visit his family. His instructions were to report back to Tullahoma, Tennessee by May 26th to rejoin his Company and to be assigned back to the Trans-

Mississippi Army. When he returned, 80 of the Company had already left for Shreveport. Heartsill and 10 others were assigned to a combined non-mounted Brigade under General Churchill in General Bragg's Army of the Tennessee. The unit was called the Arkansas Post Brigade. This was a great insult to the men to be un-mounted. General Bragg moved the unit back and forth between Georgia and Tennessee like he could not make up his mind. On September 19th, the unit was involved in the Battle of Chickamauga. After the battle, they were again moving back and forth to Lookout Mt. and preparing to battle again at Chattanooga. Captain L.M. Nutt was promised his men from West of the Mississippi would be released. However, on the 3rd of November, the remaining members of the W. P. Lane Rangers were for the 6th time denied a release to return to the West along with troops from Shreveport. This period was the only time Heartsill was disappointed in his service as he wanted to rejoin his brothers in the W. P. Lane Rangers. Heartsill, Sgt. Thomas Elgin and 2 others left for Texas on November 7th, bound to get away from Gen Bragg. On December 20th, they crossed the Red River on a pontoon bridge arriving in Shreveport where they turned themselves in to the Provost General. They had traveled 736 miles on foot in 43 days. The men were released to report to Capt. Richardson in Marshall, Texas.

On December 22, 1863, the Rangers were assigned to Camp Ford near Tyler, Texas for service as prison guards. Heartsill & Sgt. Elgin arrived on Feb. 17th, 1864. By May 11th, Heartsill was appointed Sgt. Major of the Company at Camp Ford. After 201 days serving as Prison Guards, the Rangers were released to report back to Marshall. By this time, there were 90 men left of the W. P. Lane Rangers/1st Texas Mounted Rifles. During late 1864 and early 1865, they moved around at various posts in Louisiana, Arkansas and Texas. On April 19th, 1865, the unit celebrated 4 years as soldiers in the CSA. It was not until 4 days later that they learned of Lee's surrender which devastated them. The unit stayed together until word reached them that Johnston had surrendered and that General Smith was going to surrender the entire Army of the Trans-Mississippi. Colonel Parsons officially disbanded the unit on May 20, 1865. A grand total on Roll was 206, mustered out 121, deserted 7, died 28, discharged 12, transferred out 25, missing 2.

Heartsill entered at age 21 as a Private and was released as Sergeant of the Company. He was promoted to 2nd Sergeant on November 2, 1863, and then as Orderly Sergeant in January of 1864.

Between Dec. 9, 1874, and July 1, 1876, Heartsill printed 1 page at a time of his diary of events on his \$10 Octavo Novelty Press at his business. He put together 100 copies that included 61 pictures. Of the 100 copies, only 13 still exist at the Library of Congress, University of Texas, Texas State Library etc... Heartsill went on to be a successful businessman, Alderman and later Mayor of Marshall. He served for 42 years as the Secretary of the Marshall Masonic Lodge #22 and served for years as a Steward and Trustee for 1st Methodist Church. He also was the Commander of the W.P. Lane Rangers CVA Camp. Heartsill died on July 27, 1916, in Waco where his son Dr. Charles Heartsill had taken him for treatment of stomach problems. He was 76 years old.