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Texas Ranger Ed Sieker.
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19th Century Shining Stars:

The Sieker Brothers: A Quartet of Texas Rangers

By Chuck Parsons

The marriage of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Armon Sieker Sr. was a solid one. Four of their sons became Texas Rangers, indicating the values of honesty, integrity, and good work that were instilled in

them from an early age. These sons, members of the Frontier Battalion, were Lamartine Pemberton, Frank E., Edward A. Jr., and Thomas.[1] The seven Sieker children were probably all born in Baltimore, Maryland, with the exception of Thomas. He was born in New York City while his father was practicing medicine there.

Of the Sieker quartet who served the Rangers, all in Company D, Frank was the only one who lost his life while in the line of duty. His birth date is uncertain. He first came to Texas with younger brother Albert B., and the two began seeking adventure, ending up in San Angelo. In 1879, they joined a party of buffalo hunters, and it was there, no doubt, that Frank improved his shooting skills. He later went to Menard, where his married sister lived.[2]

Frank Sieker, born about 1858, was the youngest of the brothers. On September 23, 1884, he joined Company D in Uvalde. His service record shows that his first pay period from September 23 to November 30 brought him only \$68.00. However, his next two pay periods, through May 31, 1885, were three months each at \$30 per month for a private. Frank was a private during this time, and his commanding officer was his brother, Captain L. P. Sieker, who had been in the service since 1874.[3]

At that time, Company D was stationed in Maverick County on the Rio Grande. The camp was probably close to where the three counties of Maverick, Dimmit, and Webb meet. This is north of Laredo and south of Eagle Pass, the respective seats of Webb and Maverick Counties.

Toward the end of May, a number of convicts escaped from a prison camp on

the Brazos River. Captain L. P. Sieker was notified of this break and was ordered to be on the alert for the escapees. When the captain was called to San Antonio on business, he left brother Frank in charge of the camp.

On the 31st of May, Sergeant Benjamin D. Lindsey took a squad of six Rangers scouting to the southeast part of Dimmit County.[4] Besides Lindsey, the Rangers were C. W. Griffin, Ben Reilly, Ira Aten, Frank Sieker, C. D. Grant and Oscar D. Baker. Near San Ambrosia Creek in Maverick County, they observed two Mexicans leading a horse and chose to investigate. Lindsey may have suspected the pair was among the escaped convicts or he may have suspected they had stolen the horse.

In any event, the Rangers advanced toward the two men and demanded their surrender. Ranger Reilly reached out to take one of the guns when “suddenly and without warning,” the man holding the weapon began firing. Frank Sieker, whose horse had bogged down but now had caught up with the others, rode up. As he did, one of the Winchester bullets found its mark and “killed him dead on the spot.”

A furious gun battle ensued, with the Rangers and the Mexicans shooting at each other at close range. In haste, the two Mexicans ran off to Rancho Losa nearby. Sergeant Lindsey followed them, arrested them, and placed them in the Laredo jail.

The gunfight concluded with the two Mexicans wounded. Three Rangers were also casualties: Frank Sieker, dead; Reilly, shot in the thigh; and Griffin, suffering from a broken collar bone and shoulder injury when his horse fell on him.[5]

That is the version as recorded by the Rangers. The two Mexicans, however, expressed what happened quite differently. A reporter for the *Galveston Daily News* visited the pair in the Laredo jail, and identified them as Apolonio Gonzales and his son Pedro. According to Gonzales, he and his son had left their ranch to round up a horse that had strayed. They had located the animal and were returning home with it when, about a mile from the Rancho Torro, Pedro called his attention to riders approaching. They “were about 600 yards to our left and all fully armed and advancing towards us.” At first, Pedro wanted to run to the ranch “where we would be safe,” but Gonzales told him no. The Rangers surrounded them and then demanded to know who they were. Gonzales claimed that he identified his son and himself, explaining that they were well known at Rancho Torro, where there were Americans who knew them and would verify that they were not horse thieves. However, the Rangers said they would take them to their own camp, some twelve miles up the river.

“I thought that they intended to murder us and told my son to make a dash for the Torro ranch,” explained Gonzales. “He started at a gallop and was instantly fired upon. He returned the fire with the result of killing one American and wounding another.”

At that point, Webb County Deputy Sheriff Prudencio Herrera rode up. He demanded that the two Mexicans be taken to Laredo instead of Carrizo Springs, where the Rangers had their camp.

The *News* correspondent was able to physically examine the two wounded Mexicans. The father had been shot through the fleshy part of the left shoulder, and the son’s injuries included wounds through the left hand and also in the left shoulder. Supposedly, the pair were relatives of Webb County

Sheriff Dario Gonzales. The wounded father was “one of the oldest and most highly respected Mexicans in this whole section of country.”

No charges were placed against the Gonzales men, at least immediately. Therefore, the sheriff released them, and they “were escorted through the streets by quite a crowd of friends.”[6]



Captain Dan W. Roberts' quarters. Captain Roberts and Sgt. L. P. Sieker standing by the ambulance. Photo by Ragsdale, 1878." ©2005 TRHFM. All Rights Reserved.

Many believed the entire affray was the result of a misunderstanding. Prior to Sieker’s company being sent to the area, it had been patrolled by Captain Joseph Shely. He had been there for some time and knew many of the inhabitants. According to the News correspondent, the “bloody work . . . [w]as caused by a frightful mistake, and from no malice on either side.”

In contrast to how the wounded Mexicans were treated, Rangers Lindsey, Grant, Aten, and Baker were jailed and charged with assault with intent to murder Apolonio Gonzales and his son Pedro! Ira Aten managed to obtain bail for himself and the others, and after several telegrams arrived from the adjutant general’s office, the Rangers were finally released.

When Captain L. P. Sieker learned of the shootout and its aftermath, he hurried to attend to his brother, who was buried in Eagle Pass. He also arranged for medical treatment for his wounded men.[7]



Brother Thomas Sieker was the only son born in New York, and he arrived on September 28, 1852. The family then moved to Baltimore, where Tom was raised into adulthood. He recalled that, in late 1876, “my brothers wrote me that if I would come to Texas they could find me a place with the rangers.” He made up his mind to do so.

Tom arrived in Austin without incident and “[w]ithout knowing in the least what ranger life was like.” He left Austin with a freighter named Dave DeLong, who was headed for Mason. From there, he found his way to Menard and met up with Captain Frank M. Moore’s Company D at Fort McKavett in Menard County.

He [Moore] was looking for me. He enlisted me, provided me with the ranger outfit, and told me to keep away from Fort McKavett until I had learned something of the ways of the frontier, since the soldiers there were rough in their treatment of tenderfeet.”[8]

The date was November 13, 1876. Tom served under Captain Moore until his discharge in Kimble County on November 30, 1877. He then served under Captain Daniel W. Roberts from September 1, 1878, until March 31, 1879. Apparently, his Ranger service was relatively uneventful, as the records fail to show he engaged in any major confrontations with Indians or outlaws. He certainly served well; his name was simply not singled out for any particular action.

Following his resignation from the Rangers, Tom went to West Texas and then to Arizona in 1885, searching for gold with his brother Albert. After about twelve months, they went to California for a year but returned to Texas in 1887. Tom then established residence in Dallas and worked as a bartender and was employed in the grocery business. Tom Sieker died in Dallas on January 19, 1935, and is buried in Forest Lawn Burial Park in Dallas.[9]



Edward Armon Sieker Jr. was born in Baltimore in 1853, but he was raised in Virginia. When Governor Richard Coke reorganized the Texas Rangers in 1874, Ed enlisted on the first day, May 25, under veteran Indian fighter and soldier, Captain Cicero R. Perry. Ed was a Ranger for a much longer period than brothers Tom or Frank. Through the six years and more that he served, he worked under Captains Perry, Roberts, and Moore. Although Ed may have resigned from the service for one pay period, he served nearly continuously from May 25, 1874, through November 30, 1880.[10]

As a private, Ed initially earned \$40.00 per month. He was mustered into Captain D. W. Roberts’s Company D on September 1 and served until November 30, 1874, earning \$120.00. However, he had some debts: \$1.00 to the state for sidelines and hobbles, \$13.70 to the firm of Todd and Mebus for an unidentified purchase, \$43.00 to James B. Gillett, \$10.45 to George T. Price, and \$11.15 to T. W. Weed. Thus his paycheck had been reduced by \$80.30, leaving him a mere \$40.70.[11]

In 1880, Sergeant Ed Sieker experienced his most dangerous scout. Due to the large number of robberies in the Fort Davis area, Ed and a small detachment were sent there. A scout was prepared and, on the night of July 1, the group started out. It was made up of Sergeant L. B. Caruthers, Ed Sieker, Samuel A. Henry, D. T. “Tom” Carson, R. R. “Dick” Russell, George R. “Red” Bingham, and Clato Herredia, a deputy sheriff who served as guide.

On that night, the Rangers left Fort Davis, traveling in the direction of Presidio del Norte. When about eighteen miles from del Norte, “we discovered four men, with pack horse, going towards the rough mountains.” Ed explained what happened next:

We advanced on them, they commenced running & drew their guns & fired on us. We shot at them & a running fight lasted for 1-½ miles. When they run up on a large mountain, we followed. As soon as we were on top of the mtn., we soon discovered they were concealed behind a ledge of rocks, as a solid volley was fired at our little band. As there were but three of us up to that

time, before we dismounted, a shot cut Carson's hat brim, and another passed under his leg, cutting his stirrup leather & wounding his horse in the side. They shot volley after volley at us, at forty yards range in open view & they behind the rocks. Carson shot one of the party in the side, but he was determined to "sell out," & kept firing, around our heads, very closely. When I saw him stick his head out to shoot, I shot him between the eyes, coming out at the back of his head. Bingham was to my left, and about 35 yards to the rear, when he was shot through the heart. We charged the party and took their stronghold. Then we had the advantage, for the first time, and then they surrendered. Had I known Bingham was killed, at that time, I should have killed them all. But we had disarmed them before we knew it. They then prayed for mercy.

In this engagement, Caruthers did not participate because he was "riding a little pony," and Henry was not a part of the action as he "was on a packhorse." Bingham was killed in the first volley, Ed Sieker recalls "leaving Carson, Russell and myself to do the work." He commented that it was a very sad sight, as that night they were a mile and a half from the road, on top of a mountain.

To see the two bodies, covered with blankets[,] prisoners tied with ropes lying by a little brush fire [was a dreary sight] . . . [o]ur little squad showed [Bingham] all the respect we could. We formed and fired three volleys, over his grave, and with saddened hearts, we wound through mountain passes, to [Ft.] Davis, arriving safely with our prisoners.[12]

Following his Kimble County discharge, Ed Sieker settled in Menard. There, on February 14, 1883, he married Sarah J. Gay, the daughter of early settlers Colonel and Mrs. Thomas A. Gay. The couple gave three children to the world: May, Gay, and Lamar.[13] Ed was later elected justice of the peace, became a successful cattleman, and then was an oil inspector for the state of Texas. Edward Arman Sieker Jr. died on April 17, 1901, in Menard and is buried in the Pioneer Rest Cemetery there.[14]



Lamartine "Lamb" Sieker
possibly in a Texas
Volunteer Guard Uniform.
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Lamartine Pemberton Sieker, who served longer than any other man in the Texas Ranger service, was born in Baltimore, Maryland, on April 8, 1848. He had two desires in life: to conduct his affairs in a military manner, and to serve as a Texas Ranger. He achieved both goals in a



most impressive manner.

In 1900, L. P. filled out Circular No. 8 for the adjutant general's office and related his military background. He had



entered the Madison Military Institute in North Carolina in the "first part 1862" and then the Washington Military Academy in Virginia in the "latter part [of] 1862." He did not graduate. When giving his experience during the war, he states that he was a private in Parker's Battery, Hughes's Battalion, and Longstreet's Corps from July 1863, to April 9, 1865. The battles he participated in were Chickamauga, Lookout Mountain, Loudon, New Philadelphia, Campbell's Station, the Siege of Knoxville, Strawberry Plains, Bean Station, Wilderness, Spotsylvania Court House, North Anna River, South Anna River, Second Cold Harbor, Bermuda Hundreds, Sailors' Creek, "and numerous minor engagements."

Between the Civil War and his Ranger service, L. P. also served as a 1st lieutenant of Company A, 11th Regiment of the Texas Volunteer Guard from February 6 to July 15, 1873, when he was honorably mustered out. This group was known as the Wichita Colony Guards.

On the circular, Sieker identified his service as a Texas Ranger:

May 25, 1874: enlisted as a private, Company D, Frontier Battalion

September 1, 1876: promoted to corporal.

July 13, 1878: promoted to 2nd sergeant.

January 1879: promoted to 1st sergeant.

October 1, 1881: promoted to 1st lieutenant.

September 1, 1882: promoted to captain.

October 15, 1885-February 1, 1893: served both as quartermaster and as captain.

April 11, 1899: reappointed captain and quartermaster of the Frontier Battalion.

From October 15, 1885, to February 1, 1893, L. P. was also assistant chief of ordnance. He served as colonel and aide-de-camp on the staff of Governor John Ireland in the Galveston encampment on August 3, 1886, and was acting assistant general from April 11, 1899 to 1900.

L. P. also noted on the form that, besides the battles he participated in during the Civil War, he had been in several Indian fights. He stated that, since 1882, he had been sent by different governors to scenes of various riots and disturbances such as the Fort Worth Railroad Strike and also those in Laredo, Wharton, Richmond, Angelina County, Bastrop, and others.[15]

L. P. Sieker resigned in 1895 and tried his hand at ranching, but he returned to administration in 1900, hence the necessity of completing Circular No. 8. He resigned for good in 1905 and went to Brazoria, where he operated a hotel.

In his personal life, Sieker married Nannie K. Dill on September 12, 1887. The old Ranger died in Houston on November 13, 1914, and is buried in Glenwood Cemetery.[16]



Notes

1. E. A. Sieker Sr. and his wife Anna R. gave at least seven children to the world: Emma, L. P., E. A. Jr., Thomas, Albert, Frank, and Florence. Traditionally, the father is described as a doctor, but the 1850 census shows his occupation as a merchant. The 1860 and 1870 censuses both show him as a teacher.
2. A brief sketch of Frank L. Sieker is found in Robert W. Stephens's *Texas Ranger Sketches* (privately printed, 1972), 143-44. Hereafter cited as Stephens, *Sketches*.
3. Sieker's Texas Ranger service record is found in the Texas State Archives, Austin.
4. Stephens, *Sketches*, 83-86.
5. This version of the gun battle is from the report appearing in the *Galveston Daily News*, June 2, 1885, reporting news from Eagle Pass dated June 1. Also from Captain Sieker's monthly return dated June 30 and from Ira Aten's memoirs, *Six and One Half Years in the Ranger Service Fifty Years Ago*, 1-8. (Typescript copy in the Center for American History, University of Texas, Austin.) Several writers dealing with Texas Ranger-Mexican American difficulties might be surprised that, in this instance, the Rangers, who easily could have overpowered the pair, did not shoot them down and later claim that the prisoners had been killed "while attempting to escape."
6. *Galveston Daily News*, June 3, 1885, citing a special report to the News from Laredo, dated June 2.
7. *Galveston Daily News*, June 4 and 7, 1885.
8. J. Marvin Hunter, "A Tenderfoot Joins the Texas Rangers," *Frontier Times*, August 1942, 19:11, 399-401. The main portion of this article was originally printed in the Dallas News in 1929, apparently related by Thomas Sieker to reporter W. S. Adair. Reprinted later as "A Texas Ranger's Story" in *Frontier Times*, 24:1, October 1946, 261-63.
9. Thomas Sieker's service record is found in the Texas State Archives, Austin. A brief sketch of Sieker is found in Stephens, *Sketches*, 146-47.
10. Stephens, *Sketches*, 142-43.
11. Edward A. Sieker's service record is found in the Texas State Archives, Austin.
12. This description is from Sieker's report to Captain D. W. Roberts, who then sent it on to Major John B. Jones on July 12, 1880. This engagement with the Jesse Evans gang of outlaws is thoroughly discussed in Ed Bartholomew's *Jesse Evans: A Texas Hide-Burner* (Houston: The Frontier Press of Texas, 1955), 47-56.
13. "Serg't. Ed. A. Sieker." No author given. *Frontier Times*, 4:11, August 1927,

4.

14. Stephens, *Sketches*, 142-43.

15. Completed Circular No. 8 found in Sieker's service record, Texas State Archives, Austin. This is a printed form of four pages, which Sieker or a secretary typed. At the time, his office was in the Capitol building. Sieker completed this form on November 10, 1900, signing it "Capt & Actg Asst Adjt Genl."

16. Stephens, *Sketches*, 144-46.

For Further Reading

Bartholomew, Ed. Jesse Evans: *A Texas Hide-Burner*. Houston: The Frontier Press of Texas, 1955.

"Colonel Lamartine P. Sieker, Texas Ranger." No author given. *Frontier Times*, November 1927, 5:2, 56.

"Last Buffalo Hunt Held in the Lone Star State." No author given. *Frontier Times*, January 1928, 5:4, 177-80. This article originally appeared in the *Dallas Morning News*, August 9, 1925, and was sent to Frontier Times editor, J. Marvin Hunter, by the Sieker brothers' sister, Mrs. Emma Sieker Mears of Menard.

"Mother Mears of Menard." No author given. *Frontier Times*, November 1927, 5:2, 94-95. This is a brief sketch of Mrs. Emma Sieker Mears, sister to the Sieker brothers and wife of J. W. Mears. She was involved in law enforcement work, as her husband was Menard County sheriff from November 4, 1884, to November 2, 1886.

Utley, Robert M. *Lone Star Justice: The First Century of the Texas Rangers*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Wilkins, Frederick. *The Law Comes to Texas: The Texas Rangers, 1870-1901*. Austin: State House Press, 1999.

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