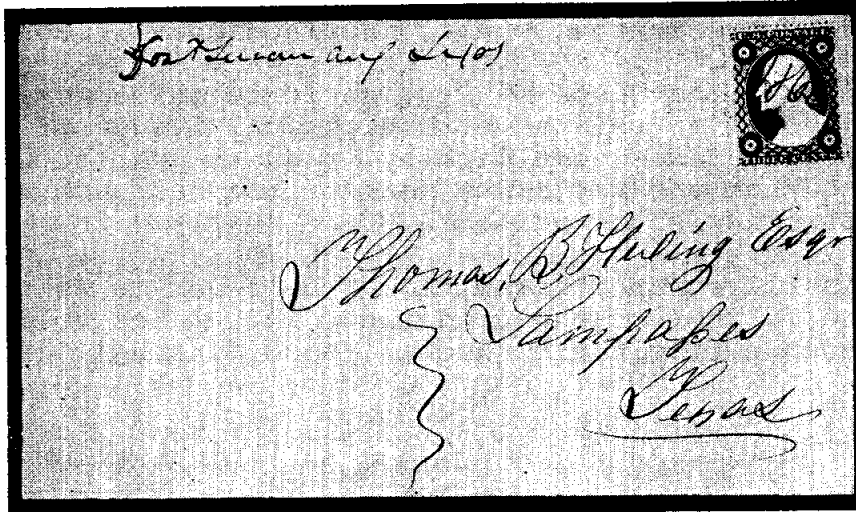


## FORT TURAN, TEXAS

By James W. Milgram, M.D.



When the writer found the illustrated cover with the three cent 1857 stamp cancelled "1861" and bearing the postmark "Fort Turan Ang. Texas," he recognized an unusual fort cancellation and filed it among a group of Texas postmarks. However, a review of this material about a year ago revealed that there was a filing notation "May 30 1861 Lewis Jordan Fort Teran Angelena Co Texas." This of course was Confederate dating, so the cover was postmarked on either May 30 or perhaps May 31, which was the last day of usage for United States stamps by any state which had joined the Confederate States of America.

But where was Fort Turan? It was not listed in the American Stampless Cover Catalog nor in ter Braake's monograph on Texas covers. A Directory of Post Offices published by J. Colton in 1863 lists "Fort Turan Angelina Texas." Research made available to the writer by the Texas Historical Commission describes an early Mexican settlement, Fort Teran:

FORT TERAN. Named in honor of General Manuel de Mier y Teran (1789-1832), Fort Teran was situated opposite the mouth of Shawnee Creek, three miles from present (1978) Rockland, Tyler County, Texas. The structures for the fortification were built under the command of Colonel Peter Ellis Bean (1783-1846). The purpose of this particular fort was to check Anglo-American immigration to Texas. It was one of a chain of military garrisons designed to Mexicanize Texas, pursuant to the Law of

April 6, 1830, designed to counter Anglo-American immigration by flooding Texas with Europeans. Fort Teran was garrisoned with Mexican troops hostile to the Anglo-American colonists of southeast Texas. Soon after the Battle of Nacogdoches on August 2, 1832, Colonel Bean was called to Nacogdoches and the garrison was withdrawn from Fort Teran, and soon was withdrawn from East Texas entirely. For many years the spot was known as a camping fort--that is, it seems to have been used in emergencies such as Indian raids or mustering of frontier forces designed to restore peace in cases of local troubles. The State of Texas erected an historical marker at the site in 1936, during the celebration of the centennial of Texas independence. The text of the marker reads (perhaps in error as to the date of the final withdrawal of Mexican troops):

SITE OF  
FORT TERAN

FIRST WHITE SETTLEMENT IN TYLER COUNTY. ESTABLISHED BY THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT IN 1830 TO PREVENT FURTHER ANGLO-AMERICAN COLONIZATION IN TEXAS. COMMANDED IN 1831 BY PETER ELLIS BEAN. NAMED IN HONOR OF GENERAL MANUEL MIER Y TERAN, COMMANDER OF THE MEXICAN FORCE IN TEXAS. ABANDONED BY MEXICAN TROOPS IN 1835.

A modern highway map shows that Fort Teran was located south of the Neches River and west of U.S. 69 in Tyler County. In Land of the Little Angel: The History of Angelina County, Texas (1976), local historians, familiar with the terrain, state that "Fort Teran's exact location and its purpose have never been firmly established...Although the fort and settlement are shown on some Texas maps, it was not much more than a river crossing...Some historians believe the Fort stood on the "Neches) River's south bank in what is now Tyler County. Others believe it stood across the river in what is now Angelina County..." Thomas B. Windham served as postmaster in this settlement from 1856 to 1866 when the office was discontinued. Mrs. Deo-lece Parmalee, Director of Research of the Texas Historical Commission, expresses the opinion "that Fort 'Turan' is simply a pioneer's rendering of the name as it was heard and misses being the accepted spelling for the Mexican general's name only because the pioneers did not use standardized spelling."

The addressee of the cover was also a rather well-known person in early Texas:

THOMAS BYERS HULING (1805-Nov. 2, 1865). A native of Pennsylvania, Thomas B. Huling settled in 1831 at old Zavala, in the Bevil municipality on East Texas. He was a steamboatman, transporting supplies for the army up the Neches River during the Texas War for Independence. In 1835-1836 he was elected justice of the peace, and in 1840-1841 served Jasper County as a member of the lower house of the Congress of the Republic of Texas.

In 1844 he served as postmaster in the town of Zavala. He and his wife, Elizabeth Bullock Smith Huling (1820-1906), became the parents of eleven children, five of whom lived to maturity.

Thomas B. Huling may have served with the Confederate forces in the Civil War. There was a soldier of his name enrolled as a private in Captain William P. M. Deane's company of Jasper Greys, Beat Number One, Jasper County, Second Brigade. This was a volunteer company, organized August 3, 1861. No age is given on the record, so it is hardly possible to determine whether Private Huling was the former Texas Congressman or a descendant.

In 1855, Thomas B. Huling and family had moved to Lampasas County, in Central Texas. Several structures built and occupied by the family are still extant in Lampasas or nearby.

Thomas B. Huling owned land in at least twenty-one Texas counties, and was a man of large fortune.

Among his papers are accounts of the suppression of a slave insurrection in Tyler County in 1860, and accounts of the mobilization at the outbreak of the Civil War, as well as some correspondence relating to Huling's associates in military service during the Civil War.

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