

Scurlock, William ^[1]

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by R. H. Detrick, 1994

22 Oct. 1807–31 Jan. 1885

William Scurlock, Texas military officer, was born in Chatham County ^[2], the fourth of five children born to Joseph and Martha Jones Glosglow Scurlock. In 1826 his family migrated to Tennessee and later to Mississippi. In 1834 William and his brother Mial ^[3] moved to Texas, entering the territory by way of Gaines Ferry which was situated in the northeastern portion of Texas on the Sabine River. William settled in San Augustine ^[4]. On 17 Oct. 1835 he enlisted as a private in a Texas military unit commanded by Henry W. Augustine ^[5]. At this time the unit was en route to the Mexican-held town of San Antonio de Béxar.

On 26 November Augustine's contingent came under the command of James Bowie and participated in an attack on a Mexican foraging party that was returning to San Antonio. The engagement, known as the Grass Fight, cost the Mexicans fifty men. In January 1836 Scurlock joined a force, commanded by Dr. James Grant, that was on its way to participate in the Matamoros campaign. Grant's unit, consisting of twenty-three Americans and three Mexicans, was surprised and attacked by a superior Mexican force on 2 March. In the ensuing engagement of Aqua Dulce Creek, the Mexicans triumphed. Only six Americans escaped. One was William Scurlock, who fled to Goliad ^[6] and joined Colonel James W. Fannin's force.

Promoted to captain, he fought in the Battle of Coleto ^[7], which began on 19 Mar. 1836. For a second time Scurlock found himself facing a superior Mexican force. On 20 March, after suffering six killed and sixty wounded, the Texans surrendered. His captors detailed Scurlock to tend the Texas wounded, and the assignment probably saved his life. Most of the other prisoners were taken to Goliad and executed on 27 March.

Scurlock escaped from his Mexican captors in May and returned to San Augustine, where he became a captain in the San Augustine volunteers. He served with the unit from 4 July to 4 Oct. 1836.

About the time he left the Texas army, Scurlock married Frances Thompson and moved to Red River County, Tex. In 1839 and 1840 he represented the county in the Texas legislature, and at the end of his term he returned to San Augustine. He was a member of the Texas Veterans Association.

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Additional Resources:

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