



My Eighty Years in Texas (Personal Narratives of the West)

William Physick Zuber

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Almost a century and a half went into the making of *My Eighty Years in Texas*. It began as a diary, kept by fifteen-year-old William Physick Zuber after he joined Sam Houston's Texas army in 1836, hoping he could emulate the heroism of American Revolutionary patriots. Although his hopes were never realized, Zuber recorded the privations, victories, and defeats of armies on the move during the Texas Revolution, the Indian campaigns, and, as he styled it, the Confederate War.

In 1910, at the age of ninety, Zuber began the enormous task of transcribing his diaries and his memories for publication. After his death in 1913, the handwritten manuscript, *Eighty Years in Texas: Reminiscences of a Texas Veteran from 1830 to 1910*, was placed in the Texas State Archives, where it was used as a reference source by students and scholars of Texas history. Over a half century after Zuber's death, Janis Boyle Mayfield finally brought his publication plans to fruition.

Zuber details his early zest for learning and his laborious methods of self-education. He tells of the trials of organizing and teaching schools in the sparsely populated plains. He recalls the day-by-day happenings of a private soldier in the Texas army of 1836, the Texas Militia, and the Confederate army—including the mishaps of army life and the encounters with enemies from San Jacinto to Cape Girardeau. After the Civil War, his interest turns to the politics of Reconstruction, the veterans' pension, and the founding of the Texas Veterans Association.

This is the story of and by an outspoken Texian, complete with his attitudes, principles, and moralizings, and the nineteenth-century style and flavor of his writing.

Included as an appendix is "An Escape from the Alamo," the account of Moses Rose for which Zuber, who was a prolific writer, was best known. A historiography of the Rose story, a bibliography of Zuber's published and unpublished writings, annotation, and an introduction are provided by Llerena Friend.

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