

SONS OF DEWITT COLONY TEXAS

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Peter Ellis Bean 1783-1846 | Correspondence

Memoir of Colonel Ellis P. Bean

Written about the Year 1816

[Transcribed from A Comprehensive History of Texas 1685 to 1897 by Dudley G. Wooten, 1898. Unless otherwise indicated, editorial notes are those of Wooten. Headings and some notes are added by current editor-Wallace L. McKeehan (WLM)]

much edited out to get to this short portion concerning Joel J Pierce

I was returned to prison, and next morning orders came that I should not talk with any one. I then thought that my undertaking was at an end, inasmuch as I was forbidden to see or talk to any one. But, about twelve o'clock the next day, **they brought into my prison one of my companions, who**

was at the point of death. As I before remarked, my companions had gone to different towns. He was taken sick at a place some distance off, and requested that he might see me before he died. As the catholic religion obliges them to comply in such cases, he was brought to me. But my poor, unfortunate countryman did not expect to find me ironed and in close confinement. When the prison door was opened, he saw me, came in and sat down, and said to me, I never thought to see you in this place; but though it is a prison, I shall not leave you until I die, which I expect will be in a few days. Yet I shall die in the company of a countryman. He then laid himself down. The distress of my friend afflicted me more than ever, but I could not help either him or myself. I had yet a little money; with it I sent and got some wine; and, after a little while, a lady sent me some dinner and I got him up, and he ate some. This young man was named Joel Pearce from North Carolina. Sometime after, I asked him if he had not been told, before he came, that I was in prison. He said he knew nothing about it until he came to the town; and that the commandant told him I was a bad man, and

was going to ran away, for which reason I was put in prison. He said also that it was better for my companion to go to some house in the town, and not come to stay with me; for as he had done nothing, he could stay where he pleased. My companion said, "No, I will go and stay with him." I told him also it would be better to go to a house of some of my friends, where he would be well treated, and, I hoped, recover. He said, no, he would die there, for he had no hope of recovering. He continued with me for five or six days in this situation, and, I perceived, was daily growing weaker. During this time, I forgot my prison, and thought only of my sick friend. By this time he was able to converse with me but little. In the height of our affliction, the justice of the town, sent into our jail a big Indian, charged with murder. He brought with him a jew's harp, and played on it all the time. This so distracted the head of my poor countryman, that I requested him, in a friendly manner, not to make that noise. He answered me that the harp was his own, and he would play when he pleased. There was no great difference between us, for he had on one pair of irons, and I had two. I

went up to him and snatched the jew's harp from him, and broke the tongue out. He rose immediately, and we engaged; but in a few blows, I was conqueror, and he fell down very quiet. My sick companion, when we began, tried to rise, but was so weak, that he fell back on his mat. He was full of joy, however, when he saw I had gained the victory. **In three days after, he died, and was carried away to be buried.** Then I was more distressed in mind than ever, thinking it would soon be my time to suffer the same fate. In this situation I continued for three months, without any communication with the world. At the end of this time I was surprised to see my prison-door thrown open, my irons taken off, and myself turned loose to walk about the town as I before had done. I heard that my friend Thomas House, to whom I wrote the letter, was very ill. So I requested of the commandant permission to go to Chihuahua, here he was, to see him, which was granted. I saw that he was not in a situation to travel; and he told me to make my escape, as it was impossible that he should ever go.