

The following excerpts were taken from *Gail Borden, Pioneer* by Clarence R. Wharton.

Safety (p. 102-103)

At this time there were thousands of people at the ferries on the Brazos, fugitives running away and the wildest excitement prevailed at San Felipe where General Santa Anna was daily expected.

Gail Borden had sent his family down to Ft. Bend or the Fort Settlement, to the home of his brother Thomas H. Borden, and Thomas H. went with them to look after the safety of both families, while Gail was to undertake to get away with the press and prevent its falling into the hands of the enemy.

All Texas was on the run and every home west of the Brazos was deserted and the fleeing families were making frantic efforts to reach the Louisiana border. Tom Borden reached home on the last day of March and took his and Gail's families down the river to Velasco where a week later they crossed over to Galveston Island.

Help! (p. 103)

San Felipe was deserted and then burned, and Gail Borden and Don Jose Baker were left alone with their printing press. In this emergency he addressed a letter to President Burnet and dispatched it to Harrisburg fifty miles away. "Our army has retreated from the Colorado and it is necessary for us to remove our press. I shall endeavor to put it over the river today. If the government can send a team for it we will set it up at Harrisburg (Houston). It will require a large wagon and team. I have none. I sent Mr. McGruder to inform you. If no team comes I must be in the bottom. Our army consists of upwards of a thousand men. Yours faithfully, Gail Borden, Jr."

Hard at Work (p. 103-108)

The last issue of the Telegraph and Register published at San Felipe was under the date of March 24, 1836. Sometime in the latter part of that week Gail Borden and Joseph Baker managed to get their press transferred across the river at the San Felipe ferry.

The river was overflowing on the east bank and the press had to be placed on a raft and carried three miles over an inundated river bottom where it was dumped on the edge of a prairie where the proprietors of the Telegraph and Register were left stranded and desolate. John P. Borden, who had helped load the press on the ferry-boat and the raft, was with Captain Baker's company camped under the cottonwood trees on the east bank

of the river within gun-shot of deserted San Felipe, and he found time from his military duties to seek out the marooned fugitives across the bottom who were keeping lonely vigil over their stranded outfit. President Burnet had not sent a wagon. Perhaps he had not gotten the message or more likely had no wagon to send. So John P. was sent all the way to Egypt on the Colorado for Eli Mercer's wagon and team and after a week of waiting it arrived and the precious press was loaded and they took off across the water-soaked prairies for Harrisburg at a pace of ten miles per day. The wagon was so heavily laden and the roads so bad that Borden and Baker had to walk all the way to lighten the load and almost hourly the vehicle would be bogged down and they would have to prize it out and put their tired shoulders to the wheel to aid the horses. After a long muddy week during which it alternately rained and a norther blew, they plodded on, reaching Harrisburg on April 12th. [There they set up the press in an abandoned house.] Gail Borden and his printer went to work to get out an edition of the paper under the dateline April 14th. After an apology for the non-appearance of the paper since March 24th, [he opened with the promise that has been supplied to the groups.] After this he gave the latest military news, including the account of the fall of the Alamo and such military orders as had been issued since the March 24th number.

Narrow Escape p. 108

While in the midst of the completion of the April 14th issue a runner warned that the Mexicans were approaching Harrisburg. Borden had but an hour in which to escape, and when General Santa Anna entered the town he found one of the printers still at the shop. The press was thrown into the river and the building was destroyed, but Borden carried away with him a few copies of the unfinished paper and some of them are still in existence. Thus ended for the time being the first efforts of the Bordens in journalism, and Texas was without a press for the next ninety days.