

Mexican orphan

By Carolyn Cary (<http://thecitizen.com/author/Carolyn-Cary/>) on July 27, 2017 ·

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A bit of a history lesson before attaching it to Fayette County.

The Mexican-American War took place from April, 1846 to February, 1848 and is also known by four other names.

It seems to have begun when President James Polk, decided in 1845, to take what is now Texas from Mexico, who felt that territory was theirs, and call that same territory a part of the United States. A war to settle the matter ensued and we won. Also having to be settled was which river would determine the southern boundary of Texas. The Rio Grande was the winner.

I don't want to get political here, but it's interesting to note that among those who felt Polk overstepped his bounds and vociferously went about saying so was Henry David Thoreau and first term congressman, Abraham Lincoln.

Fayette County had a citizen in that war, 2nd. Lt. Henry Burroughs Holliday, father of "Doc" Holliday.

For a reason we will never know. Lt. Holliday snuck back to Fayette County at war's end, a 12 year old Mexican orphan, named Francisco Hidalgo. I'm guessing he had to hide him on a train for several thousand miles and did so successfully.

As I have recently written, Henry Burroughs married a girl from Butts County and they settled in Griffin. The 1850 census shows him, his wife, a daughter (who died at six months), and Francisco living in Griffin. John Henry was born two years later.

Francisco also married a girl from Butts County in 1854, Martha Freeman. They had four children by 1861 at which time the War Between The States began and he enlisted. Like thousands of other Confederate soldiers probably receiving only one uniform and having to sleep on the ground, often wet or cold, his lungs did not fare well. He got back home when the conflict was over in 1865.

Unfortunately by January, 1873, that Army life caught up with him and he died of consumption, today we would call it pulmonary tuberculosis. He and his wife are buried in Butts County.

I was privileged some 15 years ago to be invited to an annual reunion of his descendants. Those who know me well will not believe this, but I quietly sat off to one side and kept my mouth shut the whole time.

I was fascinated by it all, half of the descendants had dark hair and brown eyes and half had blond hair and bluish eyes.

I got amused at the comment of one of them however, when they said they would like to go to Mexico and see if they could find the family of Francisco Hidalgo. I thought to myself, however, that would be like going to New York to find an ancestor from 150 years ago named John Smith.

It seems that when Francisco became anglicized , he changed his name to Francis Edalgo.

I am often in touch with one of the descendants who maintains that spelling. He lives, oddly enough, in Fayetteville, North Carolina. This town is the first one so named.



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