



Remember the Alamo!: The Runaway Scrape Diary of Belle Wood, Austin's Colony, 1835-1836 (Lone Star Journals)

Lisa Waller Rogers

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After a two-month siege by Texian volunteers in late 1835, the Mexican Army surrendered San Antonio and retreated across the Rio Grande. Texas colonists, including fictive young diarist Belle Wood, rejoiced. No one expected more trouble from Mexico. Belle wasn't even worried when, in late January 1836, her brother, Mac, followed Colonel Travis to the Alamo. The troop build-up was "just a precautionary measure." Just three weeks later, Mexican General Santa Anna arrived in San Antonio with thousands of troops, taking the 150 Alamo men by surprise. When the Alamo fell, "the news came upon me like a clap of thunder," Belle wrote. "My brother, Mac, is dead." As the colonists learned that Santa Anna was continuing his march eastward, panic ensued. All over Texas, people either joined the fight for independence or fled for safety in the mass exodus known as the Runaway Scrape. Belle's diary tells how her family joins the throng heading east for the U.S. border, walking or riding in every kind of vehicle imaginable. Theirs is a miserable, month-long journey. Belle endures rain, cold, and mud-drenched prairies. Danger and death are ever present. "Today," Belle mourns, "we watched a woman bury her baby girl. Her limp little body stayed down in the soggy grave for scarcely a moment before it bobbed back up again and floated to the top." Extensive primary-source research forms the foundation of Belle's authentic diary account. Its historical appendix, complete with photos and map, will be useful to young readers and teachers alike.

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