

## CIVIL WAR

The war between the states not only divided the north from the south but it also divided Texan from Texan. And the people of the Coupland area were as deeply and bitterly divided by the conflict as any other area in the state.

Williamson County had by this time become settled by a number of European immigrants who had come to this country to escape such repressive policies in their homelands; so they wanted no part of either institution, slavery or war. It is instructive to note that Williamson County was one of the very few counties in the state that responded to Sam Houston's urgent

appeal by voting against secession 480 to 349. The state as a whole, however, voted overwhelmingly for secession which paved the way for Texas' entrance into the war.

When the war finally came, many who believed in it, and some whose consciences were troubled by serious questions about it, went off together to fight as a matter of duty. Frederick Wade, a Sunday school teacher at Lawrence Chapel, became the convening officer to organize the troops from this area. They gathered at the traditional public picnic area, Post Oak Island, east of Coupland, to listen to eloquent speeches by sweaty orators exalting the Confederacy. With the sound of this patriotic appeal still ringing in their ears the men were led off to combat by Lieutenant Wade.

There were many young men in the area, though, who refused to go along with the war. Some of them went into exile in the backwoods of Texas or across the border into Mexico rather than to serve in a cause they thought was wrong. Still others escaped from the area and joined the Union forces to fight on the other side. On a number of occasions groups of men suspected of leaving the country for that purpose were caught and massacred.

One anti-Confederate resister who managed to successfully escape the country was Theodore Van Buren Coupland, for whom the village of Coupland is named. He was born in 1836 in Alabama. Moving to Texas a few years before the Civil War, he settled in Austin where he became deputy sheriff of Travis County. When the war came he and his uncle, A. J. (Jack) Hamilton, stole away to Mexico and then made their way by ship to New Orleans where they offered their services to the Union Army. Coupland was commissioned an officer, a major, to serve in the first Texas Cavalry of the Union Army.

When the war ended in 1865 Major Coupland was mustered out of the Union in San Antonio and returned to New Orleans, where he served in United States government appointments. He was collector of the port of New Orleans for a number of years and then became deputy clerk of the U.S. Court.