Both sides are confused

By Jim Bradshaw

On the morning of October 11, 1863, Confederate General Alfred Mouton ate breakfast at Ile Carencro, the rambling, Acadian-style home of his cousin Thelismar Guidry on the north bank of Bayou Carencro — the narrow little stream that divides Lafayette and St. Landry parishes.

Thelismar, like Mouton, had been wounded at the Battle of Shiloh, and they were friends. Both veterans — as well as all of the Confederate commanders — had expected Union General Nathaniel Banks to send his army west, across the southwest Louisiana prairies to the Sabine River, on his way to invade Texas.

General Banks still planned to invade Texas. But he had had second thoughts about sending slow-moving foot soldiers and lumbering supply wagons onto the open prairie, where they would be easy targets for hit-and-run attacks from Confederate cavalry.

Instead of crossing the prairie, he wanted to try to attack Texas from the sea, with a landing near the Ile Carencro area, so that Yankee hands would get to the Confederates before they had the chance to maneuver. But now, as then, there was confusion about Yankee plans — and about what the Yankee plans might be. But, that evening, they got lucky.

Near nightfall of Oct. 13, Colonel William Vincent and the 2nd Louisiana Regiment were moving from Vermilionville toward Grand Coteau when they spotted a Yankee signalman waving a white flag from the top of a house near the junction of Pont des Mouton Road and the Vermilionville-Ogleslaus Road. The Yankees were waiting in ambush just out of Yankee range, pulling back to the north side of Bayou Bourbeaux. The only damage done was to Yankee nerves.

The Confederate commanders still had no real idea of what the Yankee plans might be. But, that evening, they got lucky.

Four governors of Texas were among the leaders who fought at Ile Carencro during the two Yankee invasions of 1863. Three of them fought for the Confederacy, one for the Union.

Confederate First Texas Governor Edward Clark was lieutenant governor at the beginning of the Civil War. He became governor after Sam Houston resigned rather than lead the state out of the Union. After a short term in office, Clark joined the Confederate cavalry as a colonel.

The Texas Yankee Col. Edmund Jackson, a West Point graduate, who commanded the Union's first Texas regiment (there was also a

But they never did. The Rebel horsemen would halt their charge just out of Yankee range, pull back, and, after an hour, then make another sham attack. This went on most of the afternoon. The Rebels would ride out. The Yankees would charge against them. The cavalry would make a sham attack, but never actually come within range.

The Rebels ended the cat-and-mouse game about mid-afternoon, pulling back to the north side of Bayou Bourbeaux. The only damage done was to Yankee nerves.

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