

C.M. CHILDRESS

El Paso, Texas Newspaper 16 Apr 1919
Son of Leander L. Childress of Bangs, Texas.

Shot through the abdomen in a battle which he and Immigration inspector's L. D. Straw had with seven Mexican tequila smugglers at monument 9, near Copia Street on the international line, at 3 o'clock yesterday morning, Immigration Inspector Clarence "Charles" M. Childress stood up in spite of intense pain he was suffering and helped his brother officer beat back the outlaws. Then, his rifle and pistol empty, he walked four blocks to a house on Grammar Street to telephone the police while the blood gushed from the ugly wound, City Motorcycle Officer Smith, reached him a few minutes later at the house, said last night it was one of the nerviest acts they had ever seen. Childress was gasping for breath and very weak as he gave directions to Decker as to how he could find Straw.

Battle Continues

Decker reloaded the rifle and rushed down to help Straw. The latter, assisted by Childress, had driven the Mexicans away from five sacks of tequila which they had succeeded in bringing across the line, but the Mexicans were sniping away at long range from the Mexican side in the hope of driving the officers away and rescuing the bottled goods.

The Mexicans had every advantage when the fight opened, The moon was shining brightly, and they worked against a dark background of cottonwoods and mesquite. The officers were hidden behind brush, but when they jumped up and made a rush for the smugglers they were in plain view.

Two Mexicans held down the fence at the line and served as lookouts while the other five carried the liquor over the fence. It was one of these lookouts who opened fire and wounded Childress. The other six men fled to cover. The officers were not more than 15 to 20 steps from the gang when the firing began. The Mexicans are said to have fired first.

Drive Mexicans Back

The officers emptied their rifles and drove the Mexicans back over the line, an then Straw reloaded and pumped away at them while they sniped. While Smith took the wounded man to the police emergency hospital, Decker rushed down to help Straw. The two men kept the smugglers off until Acting Captain Wood, Motorcycle Officer Block and Patrol Driver Smith arrived. By that time, however, the Mexicans had stopped firing and disappeared. Five sacks containing about 175 quarts of tequila, were taken by customs officers.

Childress was later removed to Hospital Dieu, where yesterday morning he was operated upon by Doctors John A. Hardy and Irving McNeil. The bullet passed entirely through the abdomen, injuring internal organs so badly that a portion of them had to be removed. The condition of the patient was pronounced critical.

Childress has lived in El Paso for six years. He has been in the immigration service a year. With his wife and three year sons he has been a residing at 1301 Magoffin Avenue. His, father, L. L. Childress will arrive from Bangs, Texas, Today.

.1 CLARENCE M. CHILDRESS b 21 Jan 1877, Brown Co., TX.,

d 16 Apr 1919 El Paso, TX

m AGNES M. KELLY

He was an early day cowboy working on ranches in West Texas. He later became an Immigration Inspector along the Rio Grande River at El Paso, TX. While on patrol duty he and a companion surprised a gang of tequila smugglers. During the battle which occurred he was shot and died from his wounds. Buried Clear Creek Cemetery, Brown Co.,Tx. A commemorative plaque is mounted close to the site of the battle, honoring him.

This article submitted by Carl Langford, September 9, 2013.