



## Lawrence Sullivan "Sul" Ross

(September 27, 1838 – January 3, 1898) Lawrence Sullivan Ross was a Texas Ranger, County Sheriff, State Senator, the 19th Governor of Texas, a Confederate General and President of Texas A & M University



His family settled in the Republic of Texas within a year of his birth, and much of his childhood was spent on the frontier. His family later founded the town of Waco. As a teenager, Ross attended Baylor University and Florence Wesleyan University. After graduation Ross became a Texas Ranger, and in 1860 led troops in the Battle of Pease River, where he rescued Cynthia Ann Parker, who had been captured by the Comanches as a child. When Texas joined the Confederacy, Ross joined the Confederate States Army. He participated in 135 battles and skirmishes and became one of the youngest Confederate generals.

In early 1861, Ross's brother Peter resigned from the Texas Rangers and returned to Waco "to raise a company for war service in the Confederate Army. Ross enlisted in his brother's company as a private. On May 15, 1861, Governor Edward Clark asked Ross to proceed immediately to Indian Territory to negotiate with the reservation Indians. Clark hoped that Ross could sign treaties with the Five Civilized Tribes so that they would not help the Union Army. One week after his May 28 wedding to Lizzie Tinsley, Ross set out for Indian Territory. Upon reaching the Washita Agency, he discovered that Confederate commissioners had already signed a preliminary treaty with the tribes, so he returned home.

Sul Ross in uniform Ross left for Missouri in the middle of August, leaving his wife with her parents. On September 7, his group became Company G of Stone's Regiment, later known as the Sixth Texas Cavalry. The other men elected Ross the major for the regiment. Twice in November 1861 Ross was chosen by General McCulloch, whom he had served alongside in the Texas Rangers, to lead a scouting force near Springfield, Missouri. Both times, Ross successfully slipped behind the Union Army lines, gathered information, and retreated before being caught. After completing the missions, he was granted a 60-day leave and returned home to visit his wife.

In early 1862, Ross returned to duty. By late February, he and 500 other troops were assigned to raid the Union Army. He led the group 70 miles behind the enemy lines, where they gathered intelligence, destroyed several wagonloads of commissary supplies, captured 60 horses and mules, and took 11 prisoners. The following month, the regiment was assigned to Earl van Dorn, now a Major General, whom Ross had served with during the battle at the Wichita village. Over Ross's protests, the men of the Sixth Regiment elected him colonel in 1862. Ross's actions impressed other officers, and several times during the summer of 1862 he was nominated for promotion to brigadier general.

At the Battle of Corinth, his Texans twice captured the enemy guns at Battery Robinett. They were forced to retreat from their position each time as reinforcements failed to arrive. During the battle, Ross, who had acquired a horse, was bucked off, leading his men to believe he had been killed. He was actually unharmed. The Confederate Army was forced to retreat from the battle, and found themselves facing more Union troops at Hatchie's Bridge. Ross led 700 rifleman to engage the Union troops. For three hours, his men held off 7,000 Union troops, repulsing three major enemy assaults. Several months later, he and his men participated in the Battle of Thompson's Station. He was promoted to brigadier general in 1864, becoming the ninth-youngest general officer of the Confederate Army.

Beginning in May 1864, the brigade endured 112 consecutive days of skirmishes, comprising 86 separate clashes with the enemy. Ross was captured in late July at the Battle of Brown's Mill, but was quickly rescued by a successful Confederate cavalry counterattack.

Their last major military campaign was the Franklin-Nashville Campaign of November and December 1864. Ross

and his men led the Confederate advance into Tennessee. Between the beginning of November and December 27, his men captured 550 prisoners, several hundred horses, and enough overcoats and blankets to survive the winter chill. Only 12 of Ross's men were killed, with 70 wounded and 5 captured.

By the time Ross began a 90-day furlough on March 13, 1865, he had participated in 135 engagements with the enemy and his horse had been shot out from under him five times. With his leave approved, Ross hurried home to Texas to visit the wife he had not seen in two years. While he was home, the Confederate Army began its surrender. He had not rejoined his regiment when it surrendered in Jackson, Mississippi on May 14, 1865.[54] Because he was not present at the surrender, Ross did not receive a parole protecting him from arrest. As a Confederate Army officer over the rank of colonel, Ross was also exempted from President Andrew Johnson's amnesty proclamation of May 29, 1865. In order to prevent his arrest and the confiscation of his property, Ross had to apply for a special pardon for his treason against the United States. Ross did not receive and formally accept the pardon until July 1867.

The wartime period undermined Ross's health, and he spent the eight years of Reconstruction farming near Waco with his wife and growing family. Eventually nine children were born to the Rosses, although only six lived to maturity. In 1873 the citizens of McLennan County elected Ross sheriff. In his two years in office he ended a reign of terror and helped form the Sheriffs' Association of Texas. He urged needed reforms and helped write the document that governs Texas today, the Constitution of 1876. Service as a constitutional delegate gave him experience in public office and a reputation for honesty and ability. During the next four years Ross did not seek political office on his own, despite the willingness of his comrades to support him in a bid for the office of governor on the Democratic ticket. He did agree, however, to become a compromise candidate for the state Senate from the Twenty-Second District in the election of 1880. As senator, Ross made a record of solid achievement, but a reapportionment bill reduced his four-year term and he declined to run for reelection. Nevertheless, from the Senate it was an easy step to the governorship; by 1886 Ross's friends and supporters had persuaded him to enter politics on the state level, and he won easily on his first attempt. During his two terms (he was reelected in 1888 and served until 1891) the new Capitol was completed, the state attained new heights of industrial, agricultural and commercial growth.

When he left the statehouse, he stepped immediately into the presidency of the seriously troubled Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas (now Texas A&M University), a position in which he rendered his greatest public services. Under his presidency the number of students grew, many new buildings were built and public faith in the institution returned.



In 1893 he was elected commander of the Texas Division of the United Confederate Veterans, and two years later he turned down an appointment to the Railroad Commission that would have taken him away from A&M. It was a blow to the university when President Ross died suddenly at his home in College Station on Jan. 3, 1898. He is buried in Oakwood Cemetery, Waco, Texas. Sul Ross State University, in Alpine, is named in his honor.

