



# TARRANT COUNTY TXGENWEB

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## Civil War Veterans of Northeast Tarrant County

### William H. Churchman

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William H. Churchman was a Tennessee infantryman who lived in the Grapevine-Southlake area for a time in the 1880's and 1890's. He met a violent death at the hands of robbers in 1895, and was buried at Lonesome Dove Cemetery in Southlake.

William H. Churchman was born in Jefferson County, Tennessee on August 18, 1838. Family researchers say he was a son of Rufus Jackson Churchman (1814-1880) and Rachel Kinder (1816-1883). Two of his descendants, Wayne and Vici Churchman, have an excellent family history and genealogy website from which much of the information in this biography was taken. It may be found at <http://www.churchman.org/default.asp>

In 1840, William's father, Rufus J. Churchman, appears in the federal census of the northern division of Jefferson County, Tennessee. Ten years later, in 1850, eleven-year-old William H. Churchman appears in his father's family in District 13 in Jefferson County, Tennessee.

By 1860 Rufus J. Churchman had moved with his family to District 12 in Coffee County, Tennessee. William was by then twenty-one years old and was still living in his father's family, working as a farm hand.

When William H. Churchman registered at the 1884 Confederate Veterans Reunion held in Dallas, Texas, he said he was a resident of Grapevine, Tarrant County, Texas and a veteran of Co. D, 17<sup>th</sup> Tennessee Infantry.

Mr. Churchman enlisted as a private in Co. D, 17<sup>th</sup> Tennessee Infantry, at Camp Harris, Tennessee on May 20, 1861 for a term of twelve months. Like most Confederate soldiers, his official records preserved in the National Archives are spotty and generally yield only a few specific details, rather than a broad sweep of battles, marches, etc. The records show him to have been absent for duty for a time beginning on March 7, 1862. He reenlisted when his initial term was over. He spent some

time in a hospital in September or October 1862, and he was sent to a hospital at Shelbyville, Tennessee on December 18, 1862. He was sent home to recover on that date. He was in the hospital at Tunnel Hill, Georgia for neuralgia from May 18 to June 1, 1863.

He was placed on detached service as a division teamster on the supply train on June 17, 1863 by special order no. 14 of Maj. General Stewart. He was paid sixty-six dollars pay for the period April 30 through October 31, 1863, and received the money on December 2 following. The last surviving records of his service show that he received an issue of clothing on January 8, 1864.

The 17<sup>th</sup> Tennessee Infantry was engaged in many of the major engagements of the War, including Perryville, Kentucky; Murfreesboro, Tennessee; and Chickamauga, Georgia. After being transferred to the Army of Northern Virginia it fought in Virginia at Drewry's Bluff, Petersburg, and Hatcher's Run. It was with General Lee's Army at the surrender at Appomattox Court House. Of over one thousand men who had served in the regiment, about seventy remained at the time of the surrender.

About 1868 Mr. Churchman and his wife, Anne E. Churchman, were married. She was born about 1851 in Tennessee. The death certificate of one of her sons says her name was Lizzie Roberts. Thus it seems possible that her name may have been Anne Elizabeth Roberts.

Interestingly, two girls named Ann E. Roberts appear in the 1860 census of Franklin County, Tennessee's District 9. One was born about 1848, and was a daughter of H. H. Roberts (born about 1822). The other was born about 1851 and was a daughter of Philip L. Roberts (born about 1829). We have found no evidence to suggest that either of these girls may have been the future wife of William H. Churchman.

In 1870 William H. Churchman, his wife, Anne E., and their daughter, Sarah T. Churchman, were living in Civil District 9 in Jefferson County, Tennessee. The Churchman family website says, ***“William H. Churchman's nickname was Bill. On February 26, 1870, he purchased an acre of land from Martha A. F. Peck for the sum of \$110, in Jefferson County, Tennessee. According to the deed, the property was located on the east side of the wagon road leading from New Market to Mossy Creek (now Jefferson City). In the 1870 Tennessee Census, William, his wife (Annie), and their daughter (Sarah) were listed in Jefferson County, Tennessee. It appears that his wife died between 1876 and 1880, perhaps in childbirth with their last child, Samuel (born in 1876). After her death, William and his four children moved to Franklin County, where they were listed in the 1880 census living with his mother. His father died in 1880, before the census.”***

By the time the 1880 census was taken, Mr. Churchman's wife had died and he was living in a mixed family with his parents, some of his siblings, and some of his children, in District 10 of Franklin County, Tennessee. Family sources report that Mr. Churchman brought his family to northeast Tarrant County about 1883 or 1884. He attended the Confederate veterans' reunion held at Dallas, Texas on August 6-9, 1884, and gave a Grapevine address when he registered.

The Tarrant County tax lists show that in 1885 William H. Churchman owned one-half acre of Ambrose Foster survey, which is in the area of the old downtown and residential district of Grapevine. He also owned fifteen hogs worth thirty dollars, and ten dollars in personal property.

William H. Churchman died November 6, 1895 and was buried at Lonesome Dove. Again from the Churchman website: *“Sometime between 1883 and 1884, probably following his mother's death in February, 1883, he and his children moved to Texas, following one or more of his brothers. He and his children settled near Lonesome Dove, in Denton County, Texas. On July 13, 1894, William H. Churchman was named the first postmaster of Dove, Tarrant County, Texas. In 1895, he was robbed and killed on his way back from taking cotton to a gin. Someone else was with him at the time and said Bill's last words were ‘For God's sake, take the money -- let me go!’ William H. is buried beside his brother, Thomas Calvin, in Lonesome Dove Cemetery in Grapevine, Texas.”*

The following article appeared in the Fort Worth Gazette on November 7, 1895: *“A PROBABLE MURDER. DEATH OF W. H. CHURCHMAN NEAR GRAPEVINE. The Old Farmer Who Was Found Under the Railroad Bridge. Robbery and Murder. W. H. Churchman, the old farmer who was found under the Fort Worth and Denver railroad bridge here last Friday night, died yesterday morning at his home near Grapevine. When found the man's head and face were badly crushed and his shoulders had been dislocated. He was in an insensible condition when removed to the city hall and never regained entire conscious. He was taken thence to the hospital and was afterwards removed to his home in the country, between Grapevine and Roanoke where he died. It was at first thought that he had fallen from the railroad bridge while attempting to cross it, and thus received his fatal injuries, but it has since developed that there are strong grounds to believe that he was robbed and murdered. The police made a thorough investigation of the locality where Churchman was found, and they think that it is highly improbable that he could have fallen through the bridge, or that he fell from it. The theory of the police is that the old man was decoyed by someone Friday night, robbed of considerable money he was known to have on him, and then murdered and thrown under the railroad bridge. The position of the body when found and other circumstances makes this theory very plausible. When the old man came to the city Friday he was seen to have a roll of bills in a small pocketbook. When found that night, only a nickel was to be found in his pocket. As he died without regaining consciousness, and was unable to tell where he had been that fatal night, or in whose company, it is now impossible to obtain any clew, and the affair will probably remain one of those mysterious tragedies to frequently found in the annals of crime.”*

The following accounts of Mr. Churchman's children have been compiled from public and private sources. They included Sarah Tennessee Churchman, John Blackman Churchman, Thomas B. Churchman, and Samuel Thomas Churchman.

Sarah Tennessee “Tennie” Churchman was born October 10, 1868. She married Joseph Azar Bone. She died in the Gainesville Sanitarium in Cooke County, Texas on July 3, 1937. She lies buried in the Masonic Cemetery at Valley View in Cooke County. Her last permanent address was 311 East Pecan Street in Gainesville, Texas. The Churchman family website gives the following information about her: *“Sarah's nickname was Tennie. Tennie was Joseph A. Bone's third wife. He married two sisters previously, and both had died. Joseph was quite a bit older than Tennie. Joseph and Tennie's first child was Walter William Bone. According to Stephe Bone, Walter caught pneumonia after fighting a prairie fire and died at the early age of 22. One story about Joseph is that one day, in order to beat a rival to his girl friend's house, he put his clothes on his head*

*and swam across the White River at Batesville, Arkansas. Joseph had one son from a previous marriage, named Edgar Walter Bone, born October, 1880. Edgar died of typhoid fever."*

John Blackman Churchman was (according to his death certificate) born in Grainger County, Tennessee on January 3, 1870. Family records say he was born in Jefferson County, Tennessee on January 3, 1875. He died at the home of his daughter, Ruby McClure, home at Bogata, Red River County, Texas on April 26, 1949. He was buried in Bogata Cemetery. The Churchman family website gives the following information: *"In the 1910 Texas Census, John, his wife Vinnie, and their first three children were living in Franklin County, Texas. This county is located south of Red River County, in northeast Texas. John was a farmer by trade. We have no proof that he actually owned any land; he and his family worked as share-croppers in the cotton fields in the Franklin - Red River County area. His granddaughter, Nyle Loreen Morgan, recalls that the family was extremely poor. During the Great Depression the girls would get two dresses a year. The family called John Blackburn Churchman "Papa John". Another granddaughter, Betty Ann Craddock, recalls that his wife would sometimes call him a "Black Dutchman" when she was angry with him. Later in his life, after his wife's death in 1943, he was confined to a wheelchair, and lived with various family members, including his daughters Ruby, Lula Mae, and his son Elmer, until his death in 1949."*

Thomas B. Churchman was born in Alabama in 1872. He died in Coal County, Oklahoma between 1911 and 1920. The Churchman website records: *"Thomas married Elizabeth "Lizzie" Roberts just after the turn of the century. Lizzie was a full-blood Chickasaw Indian and daughter of Lansen and Kellesy Roberts. Previously, she was married to Reid Bond (b. ca 1861 into the Choctaw Tribe). Reid and Lizzie had a daughter, Unice Bond. Unice died in October, 1899. Lizzie and Reid were divorced sometime before 1901. In an affidavit to the Department of the Interior - Commission to the Five Civilized Tribes, it states that Tennie Churchman (Thomas' older sister) was the midwife at the birth of his daughter, Mertie May. In the 1910 Oklahoma Census, it states that Thomas, Lizzie, and Mertie were living in Coal County, Oklahoma near McAlester. In the 1920 Oklahoma Census, it lists Lizzie Churchman as a widow with her son, Henry, and her married daughter, Mertie Benton, plus Mertie's daughter, Pearl Benton (born in Oklahoma)."*

Samuel Thomas Churchman was born in 1876 in Dyer County, Tennessee and died after 1950 in DeQueen, Arkansas. He lies buried in Redmen Cemetery in DeQueen, Arkansas. The Churchman website records: *"Samuel was quite young when he married. It appears that his wife, Mary Frances (Frannie), had been married once before. In the "www.familysearch.org" Mary Pool married a William Young in Mississippi in 1880. Then the marriage records in Lamar County, Texas, shows a marriage record for Samuel T. Churchman and Fannie Young on January 5, 1891. In 1950 Mary F. Churchman's obituary lists her survivors to be her husband, S.T. Churchman; two daughters, Mrs. John Everite and Mrs. Grover Parker both of De Queen; two son, I.C. Churchman of Texarkana, and Ed Churchman of DeQueen; 12 grandchildren, and 10 great-grandchildren. There are several members of the Churchman family buried in the Redmen Cemetery. Sam and Mary Frances lie in unmarked graves beside their youngest son, Willie. Willie burned to death after a customer in his gasoline service station (in Louisiana) struck a match to check the gas tank in the car he was filling. The grave marker reads "Our Loved One Willie Churchman 1904 - 1933".*



W. H.  
CHURCHMAN  
BORN  
April 18, 1838.  
DIED  
Nov. 6, 1895.