



TARRANT COUNTY TXGENWEB

Barbara Knox and Rob Yoder, County Coordinators

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Civil War Veterans of Northeast Tarrant County

William W. Corbin

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William W. Corbin was a native of Claiborne County, Tennessee who served in a Tennessee cavalry regiment before coming to the Grapevine area. His brother, George Cal Corbin, served with him in the same unit and is also one of the veterans on our memorial.

A lengthy biographical sketch of the William W. Corbin family, written by Bernice Harvin Corbin, appeared in the Grapevine Area History, compiled by the Grapevine Historical Society and published in 1979. It contains many interesting oral traditions of the family, and several excerpts from it will be included in this narrative. It will be cited as GAH.

William Corbin was born February 27, 1832. He was a son of Alfred Corbin, who died in 1857 in Claiborne County, and his wife, Elizabeth (Coleman) Corbin (1811-1887), who came to Texas with several of her family members and who lies buried in Grapevine Cemetery.

When the 1850 census taker found the family in District 7 of Claiborne County, William W. Corbin was eighteen and was the oldest of six children in his father's family. They farmed their own land, which was valued at five hundred dollars.

Mr. Corbin married Mary Jane Sanders in Claiborne County, Tennessee on October 10, 1855 in a ceremony performed by Rev. Hiram Hurst, the grandfather of the man for whom Hurst, Texas was named. She was a daughter of Wiley and Lucinda Sanders/Saunders, and was a sister of many of the pioneers of the Grapevine area. Mary Jane's mother and maternal grandmother also settled around Grapevine, and lie buried in Grapevine Cemetery.

In 1860, William W. Corbin and his wife, Mary, had one child with them, Sarah E. Corbin. They farmed land they owned worth five hundred dollars, and had personal property worth three hundred dollars. None of the Claiborne County Corbins were slaveowners.

William Corbin served the Confederacy as a private in Co. C, 12th Battalion Tennessee Cavalry. This regiment was also known as Day's Tennessee Cavalry. Mr. Corbin enlisted March 1, 1864 in Grainger County for a term of three years. He was paroled on April 28, 1865 at Cumberland Gap, Tennessee, and stated at that time he was a resident of Claiborne County, Tennessee. No other records specific to Mr. Corbin's service have survived in the National Archives.

Mrs. Corbin's 1926 obituary states that they made the move from Tennessee to Texas in 1868. The GAH includes several details about the trip: *"...The family came to Texas in covered wagons, just after the Civil War, along with his brother, George Corbin and family and several of the Sanders family who were Jane's brothers and sisters.*

On the way from Tennessee to Texas the travelers found a place to camp. Thomas was very small and could not talk plainly. The lady who lived where they were camping asked Thomas his name, and he said, 'Thom-th Jeffer-thon Thon-wall Jack-thon.' The lady started feeding the children roasted sweet potatoes and when Jane had supper ready the children were not hungry.

When the travelers were just west of Carrollton, Texas they stopped to make camp on the east side of the Trinity River. It was winter and mist was falling. They had to ford the river as there was no bridge. Uncle Burley Howell, a well-known farmer near Coppell, Texas came by on horseback. He stopped and talked and advised them to cross the river before camping. The west bank of the River was very steep and could be very slick by morning so they crossed over. He had a vacant house in the vicinity. Will and Jane moved into it and lived there until they could locate a place. Uncle Burley Howell and the Will Corbin family were friends for life. Will and Jane settled one-half mile north and one-half mile west of Coppell, raised their family, and lived there for their lifetime..."

The census taker in 1870 found William and his family living in Precinct 3 of Dallas County, Texas. They had six children with them in that year: Sarah E., Frances A., Thomas J., Lucy A., Wiley E., and George R. Corbin, who was born in Texas in July of 1869. Their next-door neighbors were the family of John Sherman Saunders, who had arrived from the same community in Tennessee at about the same time as the Corbins. Family traditions say the Corbins had a home established here by December 13, 1868, where Mrs. Saunders gave birth to one of her children on that date.

Their story continues in the GAH: *"...In those days all children who were large enough had to work in the fields to help make a living for the family which was paying for a farm. One Saturday Will Corbin, as Jane called him (most relatives called him Uncle Bill), told the working children if they would do a certain amount of field work, they could quit for the day. Tom was working a jennet to a single plow cultivating some crop. The other children who were large enough to work were hoeing. Frances decided that Tom wasn't getting along fast enough with his plowing so had Tom take her hoe and she took the plow. A neighbor man came along and went home and told his wife that he saw a plow going in a field that had neither man, mule, nor horse to it. It was a woman plowing with a jennet.*

The copperhead snakes were bad on the Will Corbin farm. One day Will and Wylie, Wylie being just a big barefoot boy, were plowing. There was a log in the field so Will told Wylie to wait and they would turn the log over as there might be a copperhead under it. They turned it over and

killed eleven copperheads. The boys never dared come home after dark and get corn out of the crib to feed their horses as the snakes would get in the corn. There was a big dug well walled up with rock some distance from the house. They would pull the water out of the well with a pulley and rope and a bucket on each end of the rope. If anyone had to draw a bucket of water after dark he didn't take hold of the bucket of water until he had stooped and sky lighted the bucket as a copperhead quite often rode up on the bucket.

Will and Jane had a neighbor family named Stringfellow who had several boys. The boys grew up playing with the Corbin boys and doing other things with them as well. The Corbins had an orchard and had peaches in it but didn't have an Indian peach tree. Indian peaches were very red and almost blood red next to the seed. One Sunday afternoon the Corbin and Stringfellow boys decided to get some Indian peaches. The folks who owned the Indian peach tree were gone except for one boy whom they called Bubby. He saw the boys and told on them. Also he said they went into the house and got apples out of a band box. The boys denied it and Mr. Stringfellow believed his boys and did not punish them. But Will whipped his boys. After Bob Corbin was married, he told his wife Jennie that they did go in the orchard and get Indian peaches but did not go in the house. They made only one set of tracks going in and out as each boy stepped in the first one's tracks. They cautioned the smaller boys not to get any Indian peach juice as it would leave a dark stain.

The Corbin and Stringfellow boys would hunt skunks and possums together at night and have chicken roasts. There was a man named Hurst who went with them. He was very fond of chicken roasts. The boys would take a chicken from their own homes, but Mr. Hurst would never take them to his home for a chicken. The boys decided to play a trick on him one night; they left him with the camp fire and went to his place and got a chicken. When they came back, he looked at the chicken and said, 'That looks mighty like Ella's prize Plymouth Rock rooster.' Which it was.

People borrowed very little money in those days. They got by mostly on what they could manage for. But Will Corbin was in need of \$10.00. He started over to see a neighbor, Mr. Bullock, to see if he could borrow it. People, especially neighbors in the country, could trust each other in those days. Will met Mr. Bullock on the road. They talked and Will told him his business. Mr. Bullock said there was no one home at his place and he had to be in a certain place within a short time, but for Will to go on to his house. He told him where to find his money sack, to take out the \$10.00 and put the sack back in its hiding place..."

By 1880 the family lived in Precinct 8 of Dallas County...it seems more likely that the precincts had been redrawn at the end of Reconstruction, as they were in adjacent Tarrant County...than that the Corbins had moved any distance in that ten-year period. There were nine Corbin children at home in 1880: Frances, Thomas, Lucy, Wiley, Robert, Martha, Dorris, Rufus, and Mary Corbin.

William Corbin appears in the 1880 agricultural census of Dallas County. He owned a farm consisting of forty-five acres of cultivated ground, four acres of permanent pasture, thirty-four acres of woods, and thirty-one acres of other unimproved land. He estimated the value of his farm at one thousand dollars, of his farming implements at forty dollars, and of his livestock at three hundred ninety-five.

He estimated the value of all his farm production in the year 1879 to be six hundred eighty-five dollars. He owned a number of horses...either five or eight...the microfilm copy is not legible. He owned eight milk cows and twelve cattle of other classes. Eight calves were dropped on his farm in 1879. He estimated the family produced two hundred twenty-five pounds of butter in the past year. He owned ten hogs and twenty chickens. He had twenty-two acres in Indian corn which had produced two hundred fifty bushels in the past year. He had made one hundred fifty bushels of oats on four acres, and thirty-five bushels of wheat on five acres. He had sixteen acres in cotton, from which he picked seven bales. He had one acre in sorghum, from which he made eighty gallons of molasses. He had a sweet potato patch of one-eighth acre, which made ten bushels. He had cut twenty cords of wood from his place in the past year.

Mr. Corbin died January 28, 1897, probably in Dallas County. He was buried in Grapevine Cemetery. He died before Confederate veterans pensions were available in Texas. No obituary for him appeared in the Dallas newspaper, and the Grapevine Sun had not yet been established when he died.

Mrs. Corbin appears in the 1900 census of Precinct 8 in Dallas County. Three of her children were with her: Mattie, Rufus, and Mollie Corbin. Mrs. Corbin's home appears on the 1900 Sam Street Map of Dallas County. It is about one-half mile northwest of Coppell, in the center of the west line of the J. F. Vest survey.

In 1910 in Dallas County's Precinct 2, Mary J. Corbin appears in the census. The only two persons in the household were Mrs. Corbin and her son, R. A. Corbin.

When the 1920 census was taken, Mary J. Corbin was living in Precinct 8 of Dallas County with her son, Rufus A. Corbin, his wife, Maggie (Vines) Corbin, and Maggie's mother, Martha Vines.

Mrs. Mary Jane Corbin died August 20, 1926 at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Harvin, near Durant, Oklahoma, where she had been for about two months. She did not apply to the State for Confederate a widow's pension. An obituary for her appeared on the front page of the Grapevine Sun on August 26, 1926: ***"MRS. CORBIN DIES. Mrs. Mary Jane Corbin, daughter of Wiley and Lucinda Saunders, died at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Harvin near Durant, Okla., Friday, August 20th. She had been there only about two months having lived at Coppell. Funeral services were held at the Coppell Methodist Church, Rev. Atchley of Lewisville conducting the services. Burial was made in the Grapevine cemetery.***

Mrs. Corbin was born in Claiborne County, Tennessee, near Springdale, June 14, 1838, and grew to womanhood in that community, and was married to Mr. William Corbin, Oct. 11, 1855. To this union was born twelve children, seven girls and five boys, four girls having preceded her across the river, two died in infancy, and two after they came to maturity. Her husband also preceded her to the grave some twenty-eight or thirty years. She is survived by three daughters, Mrs. John Pruitt of Coppell, Mrs. Harvin of Oklahoma, Mrs. Ed Hunley of Claude, five sons, Mr. Tom Corbin of Oklahoma, Dorris Corbin of Little Rock, Ark., Wiley Corbin of Muenster, Rufus Corbin of Arlington, Robert Corbin of Coppell; one sister Mrs. T. J. Harrison of Coppell; two brothers Messrs. P. H. and W. N. Sanders of Grapevine.

She with her family came to Texas in 1868, and she has resided in this community ever since. She professed faith in Christ and joined the Methodist Church more than half a century ago, and has lived a devoted Christian life for all this time.

Aunt Jane as she was commonly called, will be missed not only by her children and grandchildren but by a host of relatives and friends, to know her was to love her, she was a devoted, true, and faithful wife, mother, friend, and neighbor, always having the welfare of her family and friends at heart....”

The following list of William Corbin’s children is believed to be complete with the exception of one daughter who died young and whose name we have not discovered. She is one of the two infants mentioned in her mother’s obituary.

Sarah E. Corbin was born March 22, 1857. She married George A. Pearson (1853-1905). She died October 12, 1883 and was buried in Grapevine Cemetery. Mr. Pearson remarried and lies between his two wives in Grapevine Cemetery. From the GAH: ***“Sarah (Corbin) Pearson, a daughter of Will and Jane, died quite young leaving four children and a tiny baby boy. Will and Jane raised the baby as their own. His name was William Rufus, but since there was already a Will and a Rufus in the family, he was called Boss...”***

Frances Armenia Corbin was born October 18, 1861, according to her death certificate. Family sources say she was born October 27, 1860. She married James H. Branham (1857-1920) about 1881. She died at 1 a.m. on August 19, 1921 at her residence at 1210 Arlington Street in Fort Worth, Texas. She was buried in Greenwood Cemetery beside her husband.

Thomas Jefferson Corbin was born October 3, 1862. He married Ida Bell Snow (1866-1952) about 1891. By 1910 they had moved to Bryan County, Oklahoma. He died June 1, 1952 in Durant, Bryan County, Oklahoma.

Lucy Adeline Corbin was born March 19, 1864 according to her death certificate. Her headstone says the year was 1865. She married John W. Pruitt (1858-1932) about 1887. She died January 28, 1937 at Lewisville in Denton County and was buried beside her husband in Grapevine Cemetery.

On February 4, 1937 an obituary for her appeared in the Grapevine Sun.

Wiley Ellison Corbin was born February 19, 1867 in Tennessee. His headstone says his middle name was Ellis. He married Vassie M. Taylor (1872-1930) in Tarrant County on November 17, 1891. He died at 3:15 p.m. on October 11, 1944 at the Medical and Surgical Hospital in Gainesville, Cooke County, Texas. His last permanent address was on R.F.D. 2, Muenster, Cooke County. He and his wife lie buried in Fairview Cemetery in Gainesville.

George Robert Corbin was born in Texas on July 25, 1869. He married Jennie Drew Power (1870-1954). He died at 11 a.m. on December 7, 1957 of a heart attack at the corner of Third Street and Highway 77 in Carrollton, Dallas County. His last permanent address was Route 1, Carrollton. They lie buried in Grapevine Cemetery.

Martha E. "Mattie" Corbin was born in July 1872. About 1901 she married Andrew W. "Bud" Harvin, and they lived in Dallas County as late as 1910. By 1920 they had moved to Bryan County, Oklahoma, where they remained. Family sources say she died in March 1949 at Achille in Bryan County.

William Dorris "Dock" Corbin was born in 1874. He married Charlsie Houston (1877-1941). He died November 24, 1941. Both are buried in Grapevine Cemetery.

Rufus Alexander Corbin was born March 1, 1878, according to his death certificate. He married Mary Magdeline "Maggie" Vines (1880-1968). He died at 12:20 a.m. on December 23, 1962 at the Dalton and Johnson Rest Home in Grapevine. His last permanent address was 13207 Denton Drive in Farmer's Branch, Dallas County. He was buried in Hilltop Memorial Park in Carrollton, Dallas County. An obituary for him appeared in the Grapevine Sun on December 27, 1962.

Mary Adilade "Mollie" Corbin was born July 13, 1878. She married William Edward Hundley (1865-1947). By 1910 they had moved to Carson County, Texas; by 1920 they were living in Armstrong County. Her last permanent address was 700 Trice Street in Claude, Texas. She died in the Palo Duro Convalescent Home in Claude, Armstrong County, Texas at 8:30 a.m. on January 12, 1971. The Hundleys lie buried in Claude Cemetery at Claude, Texas.

Lydia May Corbin was born April 30, 1882. She died at eighteen months of age in about the month of September, 1883. If she ever had a headstone in Grapevine Cemetery it is now unreadable.



Standing l-r: Mollie, Rufus and Mattie
Seated: William W., Dorris and Mary Jane.
Little boy is grandson, W. R. Pearson.

