



TARRANT COUNTY TXGENWEB

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Civil War Veterans of Northeast Tarrant County

Ryan Harrington

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Ryan Harrington, a twin brother of Bryant Harrington, was born in Hardin County, Kentucky on April 29, 1829. A son of David Harrington, he moved to Grundy Co., Missouri with his parents about 1843. After his father died about 1846, his mother took the family back to Kentucky for one year, after which they moved back to Missouri.

Ryan and Bryant, along with three of their brothers, went to California to try their luck in the gold fields, leaving their home in Missouri on their twentieth birthday, April 29, 1849. They reached Sacramento, California after five months, sold their teams, paired off, and Bryant and Ryan began mining. After a time of unsuccessful work, they took passage from San Francisco down the Pacific coast to Central America, and crossed the Isthmus of Panama. They returned to their old home farm in Hardin County, Kentucky, where they farmed and attended school for one year.

In December, 1855, they decided to move to Texas. They first stopped at Dallas, where they bought a frame building and began taking tintype photographs. Before long, they sold their shop and moved further west to Palo Pinto County, Texas, where they already had a brother and married sister ranching. Beginning about 1859, they went to work for the Butterfield-Crocker Company, taking turns driving and guarding stage coaches from Old Boggie, Oklahoma through Texas to El Paso and to Monterrey, Mexico. In February 1860 Ryan and Bryant started on foot with one pack pony to Mexico to buy stock for the Palo Pinto County land. Since the Indians were becoming so troublesome, they later decided to sell their stock and move east of the frontier line.

Family oral history records several details of his service during the Civil War, fighting both Union soldiers and Indians. Ryan settled in Tarrant County in 1865, and in 1866 married Mary Lousetta Witten, the daughter of Samuel Cecil Holiday Witten, one of Colleyville's earliest pioneers.

By 1870 both he and his brother were living in the Pleasant Glade Community. Ryan was a Justice of the Peace for several years. He died of stomach cancer on August 19, 1884 and was buried in

Witten Cemetery on present-day Jackson Drive in Colleyville. Mary died about 1890 and was buried beside him.

Ryan and Mary were the parents of seven children: Mary Jenetta, Susannah, Paulina, Ryan W., Bryant, William, and Archibald. His and his wife's graves were finally marked by Andrew Sylvester, an Eagle Scout who lived beside the cemetery, in 2004.



Twin brothers, Ryan (right) and Bryant Harrington

