



TARRANT COUNTY TXGENWEB

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Civil War Veterans of Northeast Tarrant County

Robert Bruce Merrell

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Robert Bruce Merrell was a veteran of a Texas cavalry regiment who moved to the Grapevine area about ten years before the War began. He spent the rest of his life in the Grapevine area, and was buried in Minter's Chapel Cemetery in 1891.

Robert B. Merrell's family was among the leading pioneers in Dallas County. His paternal grandfather, Eli Murrell, was born in North Carolina in 1792 and arrived in August of 1844 and settled on a Peters Colony grant in Dallas County, where he lived until his death in 1849. Eli was a veteran of the War of 1812.

Robert B. Merrell's father, Benjamin Merrell (1820-1864) was Eli Merrell's son in his first of three marriages. Robert B. Merrell's mother was Margaret Flemming (1821-1852). Both Robert's parents died in Dallas County.

Robert was born in Dallas County, Texas on March 26, 1845. When the 1850 census was taken, he and his parents and siblings were living in Dallas County. Robert's father, Ben Merrell, was one of the assistant marshals taking the census and signed the form on which his family appeared.

In 1860, Robert was fifteen years old and was living with his father's family in Dallas County. By this time, Robert had a step-mother and some step-sisters.

Robert B. Merrell served the Confederacy in Co. B, 19th Texas Cavalry. He enlisted Captain James Thomas's Company of Buford's Regiment of Texas Cavalry on April 10, 1862 at Breckenridge in Dallas County. He was mustered into the service the same day at Dallas. This company subsequently became Co. B of the 19th Texas regiment. Robert said he was seventeen years old, and was described as being five feet six and one-half inches tall, with blue eyes and light hair. He had traveled twelve miles to the rendezvous and muster.

Robert presented himself for service riding a horse worth one hundred forty-five dollars and with equipment worth twenty-two dollars. On May 24, 1862, Robert received an enlistment bounty of fifty dollars. No further records of his service have survived in the National Archives. Two of Mr. Merrell's paternal uncles, John M. Merrell and George C. Merrell, also served in Co. B, 19th Texas Cavalry in Parson's Brigade. While no official records of John's service have survived in the 19th Texas, George C. Merrell's records are present. Interestingly, both George C. and Robert B. Merrell are shown to have enlisted at Breckenridge, Texas. Breckenridge was once a small post office community about in Dallas County about three miles south of Richardson.

Mr. Merrell was married to Frances Caroline Cate, the daughter of Dallas and Tarrant County pioneers James Cate and his second wife, Elvira Minter. Frances's maternal grandparents were Green Washington Minter and his wife, Jane Large, for whom the Minter's Chapel church and community were named. Frances and her husband, her parents, and her Minter grandparents all lie buried in Minter's Chapel Cemetery.

Frances was born in Dallas County on March 23, 1850, and came to Tarrant County in 1852 with her father's family. An excellent sketch of her father's life appeared in 1895 in the Lewis Publishing Company's History of Texas, together with a Biographical History of Tarrant and Parker Counties...

By the time the 1870 census was taken, R. B. Merrell and his wife and two children were living in northeast Tarrant County in Precinct 2, probably in the Minter's Chapel/Bear Creek area judging from the names of their neighbors in the census.

When the 1884 Dallas Convention of Confederate veterans was held, Robert B. Merrell of Grapevine registered as a veteran of Parson's Brigade, of which the 19th Texas Cavalry was a part.

Mr. Merrell was active in the Methodist Church in this area. During the first quarterly conference of 1879, held at Zion (Smithfield...now North Richland Hills) on February 8, a committee of three men was named "...to take into consideration the moving of Sansom's Chappel [Methodist Church in Bedford] to a more eligible point---and was given discretionary power in the premises. Bros. D. W. Smith, R. B. Merrell, and A. M. Quayle were elected..." as the committee.

When the 1880 census was taken, R. B. Merrell and his family were living in Precinct 3 in Tarrant County north of Big Bear Creek. With him were his wife and five of his children: Benjamin, James, John B., Eugene V., and Arthur Merrell. Also with the family were three nieces and one nephew surnamed Lilly.

Robert B. Merrell died in Tarrant County on December 5, 1891. He was buried in Minter's Chapel Cemetery south of Grapevine, in the same cemetery with his wife's parents and grandparents.

In 1900 Mrs. F. C. Merrell was a widow operating a boarding house in Precinct 1 of Tarrant County. She said she had given birth to seven children, only five of whom were still living, but this seems to have been a mistake. One son, whose first initial was E., born about 1872; and one daughter, Myrtle, born about 1882, was living with her at that time.

Mrs. Frances C. Merrell survived until December 28, 1918 when she died of heart disease at Electra in Wichita County, Texas. Her body was brought back to Minter's Chapel for burial.

Robert Merrell's seven children were Benjamin Lee Merrell, James Merrell, John B. Merrell, Eugene Victor Merrell, Arthur Merrell, Myrtle Merrell, and Millie Merrell.

Benjamin Lee Merrell was born in 1866 and died in 1904. He lies buried in Minter's Chapel Cemetery.

James Merrell was born in 1870 and died in 1910. He lies buried in Minter's Chapel Cemetery. A short obituary for him appeared in the Grapevine Sun on February 19, 1910: ***"DIED. The remains of James Merrill, who died at the family residence, 300 Binkley Street, Fort Worth, last Monday morning, were shipped to Grapevine for interment Tuesday. Mr. Merrill, who was about 41 years of age, is survived by his wife and two children, his mother, two sisters and one brother, all of whom live at Polytechnic Heights, and to whom the Sun extends condolence."***

John B. Merrell was born May 28, 1871. He died October 14, 1927 at his home at 1228 Fairmount in Fort Worth, and was buried in West Oakwood Cemetery in Fort Worth.

Eugene Victor Merrell was born November 4, 1874. He died November 19, 1926 in Fort Worth at his home at 215 Commerce Street. His death certificate he was buried at Grapevine, but he was actually buried in Minter's Chapel Cemetery. An obituary appeared for him in the Grapevine Sun; it named no wife or children as survivors, only siblings.

Arthur Merrell was born about 1876. He was still alive in 1926 in "Dakota," according to the obituary of his brother, Victor, who died in that year.

Frances Myrtle Merrell was born March 6, 1882. She married B. Marvin Harding (1881-1940). She died May 9, 1956 at her home at 821 North Main in Electra, Wichita County, Texas. Her death certificate says she was buried in the New Electra Cemetery.

Mildred "Millie" Merrell was born December 14, 1887. She married Robert L. Seay. She died May 27, 1975 at the C. C. Young Health Center in Dallas. Her last permanent address was 4829 West Lawther Drive in Fort Worth. She lies buried in Restland Memorial Park in Dallas, Texas.

