



# TARRANT COUNTY

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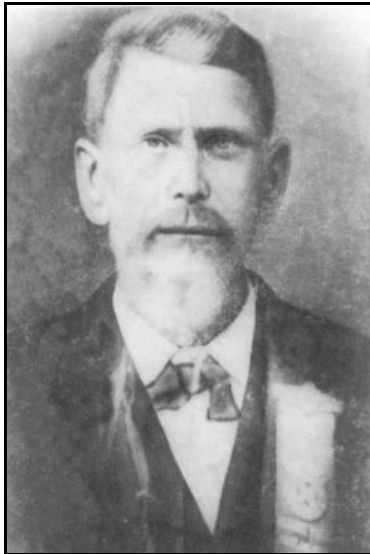
Barbara Knox and Rob Yoder, County Coordinators

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## Civil War Veterans of Northeast Tarrant County

### Thomas Allen Neace

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Thomas Allen Neace arrived in the Mount Gilead area as a small boy while it was still a part of Navarro County, prior to Tarrant County's formation. He was a well-known Confederate veteran here. Mr. Neace enjoyed writing about his life here when he was a boy, and his writings are some of the only firsthand reminiscences of life in northeast Tarrant County during the 1850's. The dates he sometimes gave for events differed from other records, and sometimes even from other times of his own retelling.

Thomas was born November 19, 1843 in Moniteau County, Missouri, a son of Tarrant County pioneers and Peters Colonists Iraneous Neace and his wife, Lucinda (Allen) Neace, both of whom lie buried in Mount Gilead Cemetery east of Keller. Iraneous Neace brought his family here in 1847 and settled along upper Big Bear Creek near where Mount Gilead Cemetery is now located.

Thomas, his parents and siblings, and many members of his extended family are shown in the 1850 census of Tarrant County. Thomas's maternal grandmother, Permelia Allen, came with the family to Texas in 1847. She was one of the few people who ever moved to Tarrant County who could remember the American Revolution. At the time the 1850 census was taken, Mrs. Allen owned two slaves, a man aged twenty-one and a female aged twenty-four. In that year, there were only nine slaves in the entire county... Susannah Foster of Grapevine also owned two, Isham Crowley of the Bear Creek neighborhood in present-day Euless owned one, and Walling Rogers, also of present-day Euless, owned the other four.

Mr. Neace wrote of his grandmother Allen, “...many times she has recited to me the depredations upon her people by Tarleton and his men...One of her uncles named Sisk was killed at the battle of King’s Mountain. Another uncle, Col. Linsy, had one of his hands cut off in a fight with Tarleton’s troops. She saw the republic of America firmly established, and lived to see the same country convulsed with one of the greatest civil wars of modern times, and died in 1866 at the ripe age of 96 years...” She lies buried at Mount Gilead.

Writing about his family’s arrival and first few years here, Mr. Neace said: “...With four other families, consisting of Daniel Barcroft, J. G. Allen, R. F. Allen, and my grandmother, Permelia Allen with her family, in all five families, we settled in the upper edge of the Cross Timbers, as they were then called, in a desolate wilderness entirely separated from all civilization with no settlements west of us from here to the Pacific slope. They settled down to begin life anew in a country filled with wild beasts and the savage Indians for neighbors. Without any protection but that afforded by the Texas Rangers, but relying upon God who holds the destiny of nations in his hand. Being without money they had to go into Collin county and trade some of their work horses for bread and depend on the game of the country for meat. Such was the situation when they began life a little north or east of where Keller now stands....

“The first post office that was ever established in this part of the country was called Placido, in honor of the chief of the Toncahuas and it was kept by James Joyce. I will say in this connection that the above named families were strong enough in about 1849 or 1850 that they built a log school house and established a school with but a few pupils, and afterwards, in 1851, organized what is now known as Mount Gilead Baptist church. I have been at school when Indians have come upon the play-ground, which belonged to the tribe known as Toncahuas. I will relate an incident that happened about this time. A party of Indians came in here on a hunting expedition and delayed their departure, which produced quite an excitement and all gathered together at one place and sent a runner to Johnson Station, about 18 miles, for the Rangers. On the next morning, the Rangers held a parley with the Indians and they agreed to leave, and did leave the settlers in peace, without doing violence to any one.

“My father had only one horse, and to save that, he had on certain occasions, during light nights, to lock it to a tree near the door of the cabin with lock and chain.

“After we had braved the dangers of frontier life, and Tarrant county to some extent had become settled up, and we had some better training facilities than that afforded by the traffic with the soldiers and Major Arnold at Fort Worth (for that was the only demand there was for anything) the great civil strife of 1861 came upon us and left many of the homes here desolate.”

In one of several articles Mr. Neace wrote for the Keller newspaper in the late 1890’s or early 1900’s, he mentioned this interesting event from the time in which Fort Worth was still a military post: “...Frank Jordan on one occasion, and when coming into Fort Worth and near to the village, encountered a bear, and bruin disputed the right-of-way, the result was a fight. Jordan with his pocket knife and heavy iron stirrup off of his saddle killed and cut off one of the bear’s feet and brought it into the Fort as proof of his victory...”

Mr. Neace wrote and submitted to The Farm News, printed at Keller, an account of the Battle of Prairie Grove, Arkansas. It contains few if any personal details of his part in the fighting there. He did mention that they used the Prairie Grove Church there as one of the hospitals.

One of Thomas Neace's many first cousins who grew up in this community was Thomas R. Allen, who moved to Wise County by the time the Civil War began. Still, his earliest memories were of Tarrant County and he, too, often recorded them: *"...When we came to Tarrant County, deer, antelope and wild turkey were plentiful and there were a few bear and buffalo, and from this source our larders were largely replenished in the early days of this country.*

*"One of our party, Hall Medlin, was gored by a buffalo near the north foot of Blue Mound, and his abdominal cavity was entered by the beast's horns. After remaining out all night he was found and carried in and my father, Richard F. Allen, cleansed and replaced his bowels and closed the wound, which was, perhaps, the first capital surgical operation ever made in Tarrant County. This was in the early winter of 1847, and Mr. Medlin recovered and went with the "Forty-Niners" to California.*

*"There were many Indians in this country then but they were not on the warpath. They camped at our spring and hunted for weeks at a time and did no mischief until they left. They they would sometimes steal a horse, but there were friendly Indians we could hire to follow them and bring the horse back. The writer has played many days with Indian children around their camp fires, when he was a child..."*

In a letter Mr. Allen wrote on December 22, 1922, he said: *"...A couple of weeks ago, I went over to our old home place in the edge of Tarrant County where our dear father died, and took a look at the old spring where we, when children, watched the wild deer and turkeys come in for water of evenings. There is no house there now, it being in a farm, but the spring is there just as it was when we were children..."*

Mr. Neace contributed an account of his war experiences to Mrs. Mamie Yeary's 1912 book, Reminiscences of the Boys in Gray, 1861-1865: In it, he wrote: *"T. A. NEACE. Keller, Texas--Born Nov. 19, 1843 near Jefferson City, Mo. Enlisted in the Confederate Army in March, 1862, at Trinity Mills, Dallas County, Tex., as Corporal in Company B, Darnell's Regiment, Albert Pike's Brigade. William Jackson, first Captain, and N. H. Darnell, first Colonel. We were the eleventh company in Darnell's Regiment, and by the order of Gen. Pike were taken from the regiment and formed Scantlin's Squadron. Was never captured or wounded. While at Fort Gibson we had a fight with the Pin Indians, in which Frank West of Tarrant County, Tex. was killed. Was in the battles of Fort Wayne, Cherokee Nation, Prairie Grove, Ark., and Honey Springs, I. T. I have lived in Tarrant County ever since November, 1847. While under Gen. Pike we were stationed at Camp McCulloch; from there we were ordered to report to Gen. Cooper, at Fort Davis, ten miles southwest of Fort Gibson. The Federal forces were then at Fort Gibson, three miles from the Arkansas River, on Grand River. Our squadron was stationed at the forks of the river, together with Capt. Howell's battery of artillery. After the Federals evacuated Fort Gibson in October, 1862, we, with Alexander's and Bass' Regiments of infantry from Texas, occupied Fort Gibson for awhile. In October we fought the Federals at old Fort Wayne, in the Cherokee Nation, in which we lost Howell's Battery. The Indian brigade fled at the first charge of the enemy. In November, 1862, we*

*saw hard service under Gen. Marmaduke. From Fort Smith and Van Buren, Ark., we were the rear guard of Gen. Hindman's Army as we marched on the enemy at Prairie Grove, where we fought them on the 7th day of November, 1862, and where we left many of our brave boys dead. In the summer of 1863 we fought at Honey Springs and again at Perryville, in the Choctaw Nation."*

An undated manuscript in Mr. Neace's handwriting gives a few more details of his life which do not appear in his other writings: *"T. A. Neace husband of Sarah J. Neace was born in Moniteau County Mo near Jefferson City on the nineteenth of November 1843, his father Iraneous Neace came to Texas from Mo in 1847 and settled in Tarrant County same year among the Indians as neighbors without the mark of an ax or plow or road in this country at that time The Toncahuas Cadoes the Delaware Indians was all the neighbors we had all the education I got was in the Mt Gilead log hut used as a church and school house I attended one session of school under a brush harbor on Henrietta Creek and two or three sessions in a log hut with dirt floor quit school and went in to the Confederate army at the age of 18 years in March 1862 served going four years was in the battle of \_\_\_ Wain I. T. on the 7 day of December 1862 was in the battle of Prairy Grove Ark. Came out of the army in May 1865 and went to school a while same fall. But quite school in Nov and was married to Sarah J. Hill the one woman I loved better than life with whom I lived 47 years and death taken her from he Jan the 20th 1912 Oh how dark seems the way of life without companionship How true no darkness so great as that of the home when its light goes out. I was first elected Justice of the Peace in Nov \_\_\_ and served..."*

Some time after the death of his wife, Neace wrote a letter to the Keller newspaper in which he added a few details, and copied a long poem in tribute to his wife: *"I take the liberty of writing The News once more in this life. I am a Confederate ex-soldier. I think you have been kind and liberal to those who wore the gray in the 60's. I stood by the colors of the South for four long years of the great carnage as ever witnessed on the continent of America of any other country. I am now 62 years old. When the war was over I returned to my home in Tarrant County, Texas, and on December 5, 1865, I married to Sarah J. Hill. We lived together for forty-seven years and a few months and she died Jan. 27, 1913, leaving me with a ruined home. It is a true saying that there is no darkness so great as that of a home when its light goes out. I send you some lines of a poem that was given me by my wife, Sarah J. Neace, when she was married, which was sent to her when the Confederate Army was around Chattanooga in 1862 which I ask you to republish in The News.....She did all she could for the distressed soul in the '60's. She died as she had lived, true to the church and to God; true to her country, true to her husband, and true to her children; gifted with that love which only true mothers know..."*

Neace's wife, Sarah J. (Hill) Neace, was born October 16, 1843 in Tippah County, Mississippi and died January 20, 1913 near Keller. She and Mr. Neace were married at Elizabethtown, Denton County, on May 23, 1865. She was a daughter of John Thomas Hill (1806-1880) and his wife, Nancy (McCain) Hill (1805-1860). She lies buried at Mount Gilead. A history of her life in Mr. Neace's own handwriting is as follows:

*"Sarah J. Hill Neace, wife of T. A. Neace, was born in Tipah County Mississippi on the 10th day of October 1843. Her father John T. Hill moved from Miss to Titus County near Daingerfield from there he moved to Grason County Texas and settled near Kentucky Town with his family where they*

*lived. She became a member of the Pilot Grove Baptist Church in about 1850. Said church afterwards was known as Kentucky Town Baptist Church. The Pilot Grove church was the first and oldest church in Grason County. Her father moved from Grason to Denton County 1859 and settled near Elizabeth Town. She was married December the 5<sup>th</sup> 1865 at her home near Elizabethtown by Rev. A. J. Halford lived with her husband 47 years and one month and 15 days and died Jan the 20<sup>th</sup> 1913 at the age of 69 years and three months at her home in Tarrant County, Texas was buried at Mt. Gilead Symetery by Wm. Sims officiating. By her husband she had born to her eight children one died in infancy John H. Neace at the age of one year, James E. Neace, Thomas I. Neace and Ethan A. Neace lives in Tarrant County Tex her three daughters Roxie L. McCall, Effie Pearson, and Edna Cornelius lives in Okla She at one time was a member of Elizabeth Town Baptist Church and she joined Mt. Gilead Church in 1871 and remained a member of that church til her death. Her last words in life was I will lye down and see if I can get over this sick spell. She lay down and the door of life was shut. And the gates of Heaven was opened to receive her sainted soul. Life had fled from her body.”*

Thomas Neace's home is shown on the 1895 Sam Street Map of Tarrant County, Texas. In modern-day terms, it sat east of old downtown Keller, north of Keller Parkway and south of Johnson Road, east of Rufe Snow Drive at about the western end of Dripping Springs Drive.

Thomas A. Neace filed an application for a Confederate pension in 1921, but it was denied because he owned too much property. He said he was born in Moniteau County, Missouri, and said he he had lived in Tarrant County since 1847. His address at the time he filed was Rt. 1, Box 75, Roanoke, Tarrant County. He said he was a member of Co. B, Well's Battalion Cavalry. The command was organized in "Arkansas Indian Territory." He was transferred from Scantling's Squadron to Well's Battalion, and was detailed to haul supplies for the army. His brother, C. C. Neace, made an affidavit for him in which he said they served together and both surrendered at Warren, Texas on the Red River. T. A. Neace said he surrendered in May, 1865. Neace's official records in the National Archives, which are very scant, say he was in Co. B, Well's Regiment Texas Cavalry. A return for April 1865 shows him detailed as a teamster in the Choctaw Nation under General Cooper on May 14, 1864.

Thomas Neace's death certificate says he was born near Jefferson City, Missouri. He died January 28, 1929 at 9 p.m. of influenza and bronchial pneumonia. The informant was S. F. McCall of Keller.

Mr. Neace outlived his wife and seven of his eight children. An obituary for Mr. Neace appeared in the Grapevine Sun on January 31, 1929: "*THOMAS ALLEN NEACE. Thomas Allen Neace of near Keller died Monday, January 28th and was buried January 29th. He was 85 years of age. Funeral services were conducted at 3:30 p.m. January 29 by Rev. W. H. Day of Rice. Interment was in Mt. Gilead Cemetery. He is survived by one daughter, Mrs. F. F. McCall and several grand children.*"

A complete list of Thomas and Sarah's children, with data gathered from several sources, is as follows: One child who died in infancy, date and sex not known; Roxie Ann Neace (January 18, 1868-August 12, 1931, married Samuel B. McCall); James Eli Neace (January 18, 1869-August 29, 1919, married Fannie Susan Benton); Thomas Iraneous Neace (February 2, 1872-August 2, 1923,

married Ora M. Weaver); Ethan Allen Neace (July 23, 1874-May 20, 1921, married Minnie Lee Stone); Effie Neace (October 23, 1876-March 28, 1913 in Hobart, Kiowa County, Oklahoma, married William Riley Pearson); John H. Neace (September 10, 1880-July 15, 1881); and Edna E. Neace (June 23, 1881-1922 in Hobart, Kiowa County, Oklahoma, married Vandiver A. Cornelius).

Many of Thomas A. Neace's descendants are active genealogists and have placed much family information at [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com).



Thomas A. Neace

(All photos on this page courtesy of Mary E. Carver.)



Sarah Jane Hill

(wife of Thomas A. Neace)



Thomas A. Neace home and family near Keller, 1904



