



TARRANT COUNTY TXGENWEB

Barbara Knox and Rob Yoder, County Coordinators

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Civil War Veterans of Northeast Tarrant County

William Joshua Borah

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William Joshua Borah was among the earliest settlers on Grapevine Prairie and the Bear Creek Community. He was a Confederate veteran.

An excellent biographical sketch of Mr. Borah's life appeared in the Lewis Publishing Company's Memorial & Biographical History of Dallas County, Texas, (1892): It said: "*WILLIAM J. BORAH, of Dallas county, is a son of Lee and Catherine (Render) Borah, and is of German extraction. His paternal great-grandfather was a native of that country, and came to America in Colonial times, settling in the Susquehanna valley of Pennsylvania, where his son, our subject's grandfather, was born. The latter at an early day came by way of Pittsburg, and down the Ohio river on flat-boats, and settled in Butler county, Kentucky, when that country was almost a wilderness. For many years he was engaged in rafting and flat-boating between points on the Ohio river and New Orleans, and died at an advanced age in the county of his adoption.*

"Our subject's father, Lee Borah, was born in Butler county, Kentucky, February 10, 1808, and passed his early years in flat-boating on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. He married Catherine Render, of Ohio county, Kentucky, a daughter of Joshua Render, a pioneer of western Kentucky.

"On account of his wife's health, Mr. Borah came to Texas in 1856, settling in Dallas county, where he purchased 320 acres of land lying on Grapevine prairie, which was then unimproved. He spent the remainder of his life on that farm, dying in 1877, at the age of sixty-nine years. His wife died at the same place, in 1851, and she and her husband are buried at the Bear creek cemetery, near by.

"They were both members of the Baptist Church, and were the parents of six children, all but one of whom reached maturity, viz.: Christopher C., who enlisted in the Confederate army at the opening of the war, and died from cold contracted on a forced march at Arkansas Post, during his term of service; the next child, a daughter, died in infancy; William J., the subject of this sketch;

Jane, the wife of A. H. Boyd, Tax Collector of Tarrant county; Martha A., wife of Thomas Powell of Grapevine prairie; Rosie A., wife of J. P. Terrill, of Elizabethtown, Denton county, Texas.

“William J. Borah, our subject, was born in Butler county, Kentucky, August 27, 1842, and was fourteen years of age when his parents came to Texas. His youth was passed on a farm, and in February, 1862, he enlisted in the Confederate army, in the First Texas Squadron, and saw his first service at Chattanooga, Tennessee. After that battle he was in Gano's command, and was with General John Morgan in his celebrated raid in Kentucky and Ohio, and participated in all the fights, marches, thrilling adventures and wild orgies which characterized that most wonderful military expedition.

“He was with Morgan at the time of his capture, and was near him when he was taken. He was captured with the remainder of the command, and after spending a short time at Indianapolis, Indiana, was taken to Camp Chase, Columbus, Ohio, shortly afterward to Camp Douglas, Chicago, after the expiration of twenty-one months was taken to City Point to be exchanged. They were then paroled under instructions not to go south of the north line of South Carolina, but Mr. Borah went over the line, and, being in the vicinity of his regiment, rejoined it, secured a furlough, and was on his way home at the time of the surrender.

“Mr. Borah tells some interesting recollections of the days when he served under Morgan, as well as of the days when he attempted to make his way back home to Texas without transportation or money. He reached home at the close of the war, wearing one shoe and with one foot tied up in a shirt, from the effects of a frost bite. He paid his last cent, \$16 in Confederate money, to get across the river at Shreveport, Louisiana.

“Again at home and the war over, he settled down to farming on the old homestead, where he has since resided. Mr. Borah has one of the richest and best improved farms on Grapevine prairie, and it is the same his father bought in 1856, and has been in the family since. Although it was divided at the death of the father Mr. Borah bought his sisters' interests and he now owns 292 acres of the original 320 acres, all of which is cultivated. He also owns other land in Tarrant county, adjoining, and is one of the most successful farmers in the community where he now resides.

“It is a notable fact that there has never been a failure on the Borah homestead since it was first settled in 1856. Mr. Borah has the reputation of being one of the most energetic men in the western part of Dallas county, and everything on his place shows that this reputation is well deserved. He is liberal-minded and a public-spirited citizen, and lends a helping hand to all deserving purposes.

“December 12, 1868, he married Miss Lou Terrill, a daughter of John Terrill, then residing at Grapevine, Tarrant county, but originally from Randolph county, Missouri, where Mrs. Borah was born, having come with her parents to Texas when a girl. The wife died August 6, 1878, leaving three children: Lee; May, now Mrs. C. L. Dillon of this county, and Susie.

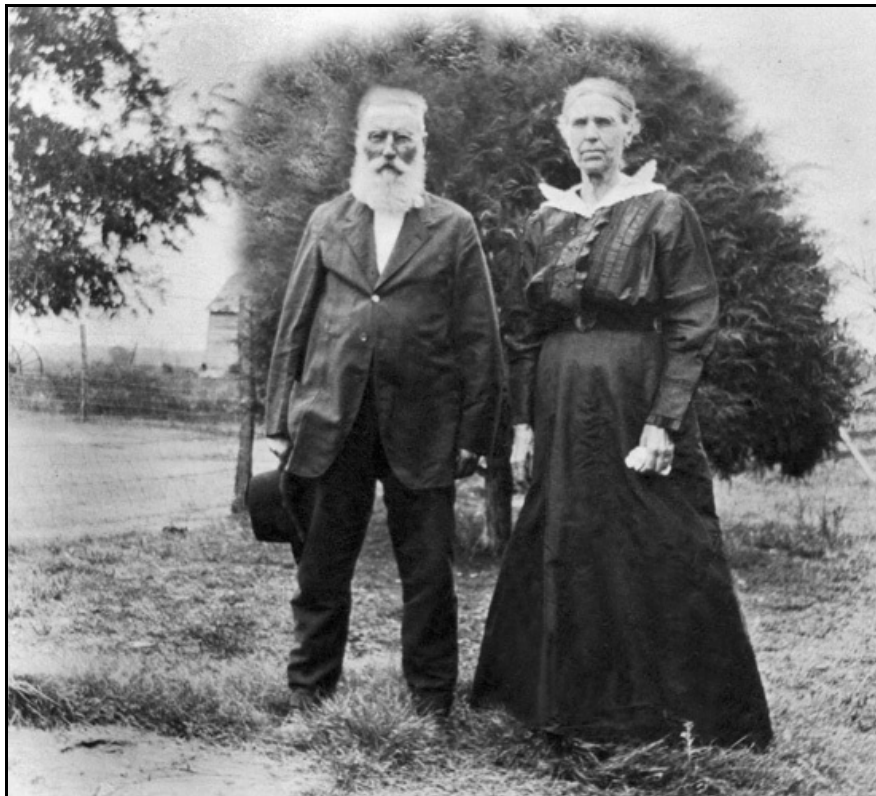
“Mr. Borah afterward married Miss Mary T. Bradley, a native also of Randolph county, Missouri, and a daughter of George W. Bradley, a resident of Taylor county, this State. To this union has been born five children, three of whom still survive, viz.: Jessie, Maud, and De Graff. Mr. and Mrs.

Borah are members of the Baptist Church, as were his parents before him, and he also takes an active interest in the moral and educational needs of his neighborhood."

Mr. Borah was a soldier in Co. A, Gano's Squadron. He enlisted March 6, 1862 at Witt's Mill in Dallas County when he was nineteen years old. The last roll extant for the company shows him present for duty on Feb. 27, 1863. He was captured at Salineville, Ohio on July 26, 1863 (his capture is also shown in other records as July 20, 1863 at Syracuse, Ohio). He was sent to Camp Douglas, Ohio, and was paroled March 2, 1865. He was received by Confederate agents at Boulware's and Cox's Wharves on the James River in Virginia between March 10 and 12, 1865, for exchange. He was ordered transferred to the 9th Texas Cavalry on May 13, 1865.

Four of Mr. Borah's young children are buried within the family group at Bear Creek: Johnnie Borah (April 1, 1869-March 24, 1873); Junius D. Borah (May 18, 1875-May 1, 1878); Willie Borah (January 28, 1881-December 29, 1883); and Louisa Borah (February 6, 1883-April 10, 1885).

William J. Borah died April 20, 1919, and he was buried beside his first wife in Bear Creek Cemetery. No copies of the issue of the Grapevine Sun in which Mr. Borah's obituary would have appeared have survived; indeed all of the issues from the year 1919 have been lost. Mary F. Borah, his widow, applied for a Confederate pension when she was 75 years old. She was born April 29, 1861, and had been in Dallas County for 68 years when she applied. She married Mr. Borah on January 25, 1880 in Dallas County. She died August 16, 1946, and was buried beside her husband in Bear Creek Cemetery.



William J. Borah and his sister, Matt Powell
Photo courtesy of descendant, Mike Borah.

