



TARRANT COUNTY TXGENWEB

Barbara Knox and Rob Yoder, County Coordinators

Copyright © 2008-2012. All rights reserved.

Civil War Veterans of Northeast Tarrant County

Benjamin Jackson Foster

Compiled by Michael Patterson
Copyright 2008-2012. All rights reserved.

Benjamin Jackson Foster came to Grapevine with his parents and siblings when the area was still a part of Navarro County. A son of Grapevine pioneer Ambrose Foster, Benjamin and his family were among the first permanent white settlers in what is now Tarrant County. Benjamin was a Confederate veteran.

Benjamin was born in Marion County, Alabama on March 18, 1830. His parents were Ambrose Foster (c1794-1847) and his wife, Susannah (Medlin) Foster (1796-1889). Ambrose was one of the few veterans of the War of 1812 to ever settle in Tarrant County.

When Benjamin was about one year old, his father moved the family to Cole County, Missouri. From there they moved to Platte County, Missouri. Ambrose and his family arrived in what is now Grapevine by November, 1845. The Foster's cabin stood where the older Grapevine water tower now stands, about a block west of Main Street. The Fosters brought two slaves with them to Texas.

“Jackson” Foster was baptized by the Rev. John Allen Freeman in July, 1846, and Foster remained a member of the Lonesome Dove Baptist Church until his death fifty-five years later. Throughout those years he was constantly in places of leadership and labor.

In 1850, Benjamin Foster married Mary Ann Allen, a daughter of Jesse and Elizabeth Allen. After her death, he married Malvina, a daughter of Urias Martin, Sr.; Urias died in present-day Southlake in 1855 and is buried in Hood Cemetery there.

Like many other men in northeast Tarrant County, B. F. Foster was a soldier in Co. A, 34th Texas Cavalry. His surviving records in the National Archives are scant. He enlisted in Grapevine on February 15, 1862 under Captain M. W. Deavenport for a term of twelve months. He had traveled one hundred ten miles to the regimental rendezvous. His name appears on a muster roll for February 28 through June 30, 1863, and on another for January and February, 1864.

Benjamin Foster devoted a great deal of time to the work of the Lonesome Dove Baptist Church. He was licensed to preach, and served as a deacon there for decades. He was a member of the Robert E. Lee Camp of United Confederate Veterans in Fort Worth.

Benjamin applied for a pension in 1899, stating that his post office was Dove, Tarrant County. He said he was 69 years old, and had lived in Texas since January 1845. He was a soldier in Co. A, 34th Texas Cavalry, and had served from March 1862 until the end of the war. In his application, he listed assets including eighty acres of "sandy cross timbers land" worth \$400, one horse and buggy worth \$30, four stock cattle worth \$50, seven hogs worth \$15, and indebtedness on that property of \$175.00.

B. J. Foster's home appears on the 1895 Sam Street Map of Tarrant County, Texas, on the J. L. Foster survey west-northwest of the Lonesome Dove Church. In modern-day terms, it west of Carroll Road, on the north side of Quail Run, a short distance east of where Quail Creek Court enters Quail Run.

Benjamin Jackson Foster died in Grapevine on February 15, 1901, and was buried in Lonesome Dove Cemetery in present-day Southlake, near where dozens of his family members now lie, and beside the church he served so faithfully for so long.

In his first marriage, with Mary Ann Allen, Mr. Foster had the following children: Susan P. Foster (who joined the Lonesome Dove Church in 1863); Archie Foster (who died young); Mary Elizabeth Foster (May 13, 1856-August 11, 1873, buried at Lonesome Dove); and B. J. "Benny" Foster (August 16, 1863-July 23, 1884, buried at Lonesome Dove after his horse stepped in a gopher hole and fell on him, killing him).

In his second marriage, to Melvina Martin, Mr. Foster had the following children; Dora Jane Foster (May 20, 1865-April 29, 1955, married James B. Bone, buried at Era in Cooke County, Texas); Josephine "Josie" Foster (May 25, 1869-July 9, 1940, married Robert E. Dwiggin, buried at Lonesome Dove); Nancy E. Foster (February 22, 1872-August 11, 1872, buried at Lonesome Dove); Wade H. Foster (April 15, 1877-November 23, 1887, killed after he walked up behind a horse and put his hand on its hip...it kicked him in the stomach, causing his death, buried at Lonesome Dove); and William J. Foster (March 31-1880-February 26, 1881).

His widow, Mrs. M. M. Foster, applied for a Confederate pension in 1903, stating that she was 62 years old. At the time she lived in Fort Worth in Room 31 of the Powell Building. She said she had lived in Tarrant County from childhood, and that she married Benjamin J. Foster in Tarrant County on February 13, 1861 [this date may be in error]. He died in Tarrant County on February 15, 1901 and is buried at Lonesome Dove. She said he enlisted in Tarrant County in March, 1862, and served until the end of the war in Co. A, Capt. Mat Davenport's Texas Cavalry, which was afterwards dismantled. She stated that her total income per year was \$26 from notes she held.

An obituary for Mrs. Foster appeared in the Grapevine Sun on May 20, 1926: *"In Memory of Mrs. Malvina Foster. Mrs. Malvina Foster was born in Union County, Illinois, February 22, 1840. God saw fit in His infinite wisdom to call her from our midst on May 17, 1926, at the age of 86 years, 2*

months, and 23 days. She came to Texas in 1850. She professed faith in Christ at the age of 28 years and joined the Baptist Church. Was baptized by Rev. A. J. Hallford. She married B. J. Foster in February of 1860. To this union was born five boys and three girls. Her husband and six children have preceded her to their heavenly home. She is survived by two children, Mrs. Dora Labors of Era, Texas, and Mrs. R. E. Dwiggin, also 9 grand children and 23 great grand children. Funeral services were conducted by Rev. W. H. Day, assisted by Rev. J. L. Dwight and Rev. E. L. Jones, at the Lonesome Dove Church, Tuesday afternoon at 2:00 o'clock. Interment was in the Dove Cemetery."

Much of the information in this sketch, as well as many others on the Foster and related families, were the work of the late Pearl Foster O'Donnell, who contributed much to the Grapevine Area History. She was a personal friend of this compiler for many years.

