



TARRANT COUNTY TXGENWEB

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Civil War Veterans of Northeast Tarrant County

John A. Berry

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John A. Berry, a native of East Tennessee, came to north-central Texas after the War and settled in Dallas County. He was the brother of another of our veterans, James W. Berry, under whom he served in a Tennessee Union infantry regiment. Both men lie buried in Grapevine Cemetery.

John A. Berry was born in Hawkins County, Tennessee about 1843. Family historians at Ancestry.com say he was a son of Rev. Jesse Day Berry (1819-1864) and his wife, Martha Jane "Patsy" Willis (1825-1875). An interesting story has come down in the oral history of the family concerning Rev. Berry's death: ***"In January 1864, during a church service at Rock Castle Baptist Church (Kyle's Ford, Tennessee) men burst into the church with guns leveled at the people there. They dragged Rev. Berry from his pulpit to the outside of the church. An older man, Mr. Gulley, tried to help Rev. Berry, and Gulley was severely injured and left for dead. He later recovered to tell this story, and told it to his death. One of Rev. Berry's sons, Thomas, who was eight years old, got the poker from the wood stove and tried to help his father fight the intruders. Rev. Berry was taken out of the church, a wire put around his neck, and he was dragged behind a mule until his body lodged between two rocks. The murderers left him there to die. Martha, her children, and the church members carried Jesse home. He was near death. A short time later, the murderers returned to make sure Jesse was dead. Finding him so near death, they started to leave. When one of them picked up Jesse's black hat, Martha jumped from beside her dying husband and hit him. The man said, 'I guess I wouldn't kill a woman.' Rev. Berry died later that day and was buried close to the church. His grave is unmarked at this time."*** He lies buried in Lawson Creek Cemetery at Kyle's Ford, Hawkins County, Tennessee.

In 1850 when the census was taken John was six years old and was living with his parents and siblings in District 2 of Hawkins County, Tennessee. The family farmed on land they owned which was worth two hundred and fifty dollars. John's father was a Baptist preacher.

When the 1860 census was taken, John was sixteen years old and was living with his parents and siblings, still in District 2 of Hawkins County, Tennessee. Their home was served by the post office at Lee Valley, Tennessee. John's father owned a considerable amount of land and personal property by that time.

John A. Berry enlisted in the Union army in Hawkins County, Tennessee on January 20, 1863 and became a private in Co. B, 8th East Tennessee Infantry, enlisting for a term of three years. His older brother, James, enlisted in the same regiment on the same day at the same place. He was at Camp Dick Robinson, Kentucky May 15, 1863. Camp Robinson was located in central Kentucky in Garrard County. This regiment's designation was slightly changed later to become the 8th Tennessee Infantry. On June 1, 1863, John was transferred to Company G.

By June 30, 1863 he had been promoted to 4th Corporal of the company. He was absent sick at some point in September or October, 1863. He was 1st Corporal of the company by November or December, 1863, at which time he was absent sick at home. On June 15, 1864 he was sick and in a hospital in Nashville, Tennessee, where he remained until some time in or after July or August. On a roll dated at Fortress Rosecrans, Tennessee a note appears in his file which says "Transferred to Regt. Aug. 18, 1864." On another roll the notation appears, "Absent sick since Nov 23 1864."

On November 30, 1864 he suffered a head concussion at the Battle of Franklin, Tennessee, by which time he was again a private. He remained in a hospital as shown on a muster roll for January and February, 1865. While in the hospital he received thirty six dollars pay for the period of November and December. He was mustered out of the service on June 30, 1865 at Company Shops, North Carolina. At the time of his discharge he was still owed one hundred dollars of bounty money.

At the time John entered the regiment, the 8th Tennessee Infantry was serving duty in Kentucky. They took part in Burnside's campaign in East Tennessee from August 16 through October 17, 1863. They took part in the battles of Rocky Faced Ridge, Resaca, Dallas, New Hope Church, Kennesaw, Peach Tree Creek, the Siege of Atlanta, and Jonesboro, Georgia. They were in action at Columbia and Franklin, Tennessee, where combat action may have ended for John A. Berry after his injury there. They were at the capture of Wilmington, North Carolina on February 22, 1865, and were present at the surrender of General Johnston and his army.

Mr. Berry appears in the 1870 census of Hawkins County's District 6 as "John S. Berry," heading a family which included his widowed mother and seven of his younger siblings. They were farmers, and appear in the census without any real estate or personal property. Two houses away in the census lived his older brother, James W. Berry, and his family.

Family sources say John A. Berry and his wife, Louisiana Sanders, were married in Dallas County, Texas on October 1, 1874. She was born in Claiborne County, Tennessee on January 4, 1851, and was a daughter of Wiley Saunders/Sanders and his wife, Lucinda Wallas. She was a sister of several other Grapevine-area pioneers, including John Sherman Saunders, one of our Confederate veterans. Louisiana and her mother and several other family members were still living in the Big Spring area of Claiborne County, Tennessee at the time the 1870 census was taken. Her mother and grandmother also came to Texas and lie buried in Grapevine Cemetery.

The family appears in the 1880 census in Precinct 8 in Dallas County, Texas, but John's age was mistakenly recorded as twenty-four years. He and his wife, "Lucy," had two children with them in that year: Cornelia and Eva, both born in Texas. John's sister, Martha, was also living with them. Their next-door neighbor was Amanda Standifer, the widow of another of our Union veterans, Job Standifer.

Mr. Berry appears in the Precinct 8 agricultural census. He owned a farm consisting of forty-two acres of tilled land and ten acres of pasture. He estimated the value of the farm at one thousand dollars. He owned farm implements worth thirty dollars and livestock worth one hundred ninety-five. He estimated the value of 1879 farm production at five hundred forty-five dollars. He owned three horses, one milk cow, and two other cattle. One calf was dropped on his land in 1879. He had purchased one, and sold one living. He estimated he made one hundred pounds of butter in 1879. He had two hogs and twenty-six chickens. He estimated his hens had laid one hundred fifty dozen eggs in the past year. He had sixteen acres in Indian corn which made one hundred eighty bushels. He made nine bales of cotton on eighteen acres. He had cut ten cords of wood, worth two dollars per cord.

John A. Berry applied for a Union veteran's pension on June 4, 1883 and it was granted.

His widow applied for a widow's pension on March 5, but the year of her application is not legible in the microfilm copy available.

Mr. Berry died December 18, 1889, probably at his home in far-western Dallas County. He was buried near his brother in Grapevine Cemetery. His wife was apparently unsure of his birth date, because his headstone records that was about forty-six years old. Oddly, his death occurred less than one month after the death of his older brother, James W. Berry, under whom he had served in the Union army.

Mrs. Berry appears in the 1890 Union veterans pension for Precinct 8 of Dallas County. The census records that he was wounded in the head and was deceased at the time the record was made. His widow was not receiving a pension at that time. Their post office was Grapevine, Tarrant County.

When the 1900 census was taken, Mrs. Louisiana Berry was living in Precinct 8 of Dallas County, a short distance outside the Tarrant County line. She said she had given birth to five children, four of whom were still living. She had two children with her, Josie [Jessie] and Carrie Berry. Also with the family were her son-in-law, a Mr. Tuck, and his wife and daughter.

Mrs. Berry's home appears on Sam Street's Map of Dallas County in 1900. It sat in the northwest corner of the J. Wilson survey, about one-quarter mile inside Dallas County, and about one and one-quarter mile southwest of the center of the old Coppell community. It sat very near to, and possibly within the highway right-of-way, just northeast of the intersection of present-day Highway 114/Highway 121/International Parkway at the north end of the DFW Airport... east of Highway 121 and south of the DART rail line. If not actually on the highway property, it is within restricted land owned by the airport board.

Mrs. Louisiana Berry died August 14, 1903...according to her death certificate in Tarrant County on a farm three miles east of Grapevine. She was buried beside her husband in Grapevine Cemetery. A notice of her death appeared in the Grapevine Sun...long on sentiment and short on facts...under the heading of “Cottonwood Cullings” on August 22, 1903. Cottonwood was a small community in the area of present-day Coppell in far-northwest Dallas County, within easy walking distance of Grapevine and tied to Grapevine by a rail line. The obituary said, in part: ***“A SAD DEATH. It is our painful duty to chronicle another visit of that dread messenger, death, in our midst. On the morning of August 14th, Mrs. L. S. Berry fell asleep in Jesus, after months of patient suffering caused by rheumatism and consumption. She has gone, but the influence of her life will remain with us, and the fruits of her Christian life will follow her. To the bereaved and motherless children, and a number of brothers and sisters, together with a host of other relatives and friends, let us try to imitate the noble example of patient self-denial and sacrifice furnished us by the life of this dear departed mother and sister.*”**

The funeral services were held at the Baptist church by her former pastor, Rev. E. Newton, where many friends met with love and sympathy, and to get a last look at this departed saint....”

According to Mrs. Berry’s statement, she was the mother of five children. The following list, which appears to be complete, was compiled from census records, state vital statistics files, Grapevine Sun back issues, and headstone records.

Martha Cornelia Berry was born May 19, 1876...in Dallas County, Texas according to her death certificate. She married Moses Camuel Tuck (1870-1955). She died at 5:45 a.m. in the Brookhollow Manor Nursing Home in Grapevine on January 3, 1968, where she had lived for about eighteen months. Her last permanent home was nearby at Coppell in rural precinct 8 in Dallas County. She was buried in Grapevine Cemetery.

Eva “Evy” Berry was born January 1, 1879. On September 24 (some sources say September 22), 1899 in Tarrant County she was married to her first cousin, William E. Berry (1875-1956), the son of her father’s brother, James W. Berry. Evy Berry died August 4, 1956 at Grapevine, and was buried in Grapevine Cemetery. Her death certificate says she died August 4; her headstone says she died May 8.

Jesse Franklin Berry was born September 26, 1881. When the 1930 census was taken he was boarding at the Central [Baker] Hotel in Grapevine and was working as a barber, which occupation he followed for many years. He died of chronic nephritis and influenza at the home of his sister, Martha Tuck, on Route 2, Grapevine, at 2:55 a.m. on February 4, 1943. He was buried in Grapevine Cemetery. His death certificate says he was born at Grapevine. His grave is unmarked.

Carrie Berry was born in December 1886. She was living with her mother when the 1900 census was taken. Family sources at Ancestry.com say she died in 1964 but do not say anything about whom she married or where she died. She is mentioned as a survivor in the obituary of her brother in 1943. At that time, she was living in New Orleans and was married to a man named [possibly] Krain or Kram or Kiam...the microfilm is not legible. She is not mentioned as a survivor in the obituary of her sister, Martha Tuck, in 1968.

John W. Berry was born April 11, 1889. He died September 25, 1889 and was buried in Grapevine Cemetery.

