



TARRANT COUNTY TXGENWEB

Barbara Knox and Rob Yoder, County Coordinators

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Civil War Veterans of Northeast Tarrant County

Thomas G. Berry

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Thomas G. Berry was a Confederate officer well known and loved in the Grapevine Prairie area. He was killed in service in 1864, and lies buried near where he fell in the fighting around Atlanta, Georgia.

Thomas G. Berry was born about 1829. He lived on Grapevine Prairie at the beginning of the War. He does not appear in the 1860 census of Dallas or Denton Counties, so it seems logical to speculate that he was probably living in Tarrant County at the time.

Thomas Berry first enlisted in William Quayle's Co., which subsequently became Co. A, 9th Texas Cavalry. He entered the 9th Texas Cavalry as Captain of Co. A on October 14, 1861 at Camp Reeves, Texas. He brought with him a horse worth \$140 and equipment worth \$25. He rode 150 miles to the regimental rendezvous. He was at Fort Gibson [Oklahoma] on December 31, 1861. He was promoted to Captain on May 15, 1862. With only incidental absences, he is present on all company muster rolls until his death in 1864. He signed one requisition at Cantonment Slidell, Arkansas on February 1, 1862. He left the regiment on a sick leave on June 2, from which he returned on June 28. He was reelected to his rank under the conscription act in the summer of 1862. On August 29, 1862 he was sent west of the Mississippi River to Mississippi for horses. He was gone on that duty through the end of October, and returned to the regiment at some time in November or December. On December 9, 1862 he presented a requisition for \$1,400 for a trip he made from Vicksburg, Mississippi to Fort Worth, Texas and back at the rate of ten cents per mile. He was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel on March 24, 1863 at Spring Hill, Tennessee, but it appears the commission was not confirmed until much later. His files in the National Archives, which are quite extensive, contain a number of original signed papers such as inspection reports, requisitions, receipts, etc. His name appears on an inspection report near Atlanta, Georgia on August 27, 1864.

Several mentions of Captain Thomas G. Berry are contained in an account of the War written by A. W. Sparks entitled Recollections of the Great War: The War Between the States As I Saw It...,

written in 1901 and published in Tyler, Texas. He was a member of Ross's Texas Brigade, which included the 9th Texas Cavalry. Some excerpts from it follow: "*Captain T. G. Berry commanded Co. A from Tarrant County. Sparks remembered: "...Lt. Col. Berry was killed in battle in the Georgia campaign, Jonesboro...Some of the officers never did appear to approve of my conduct...but Col. Tom Berry was kind enough to say in my hearing that I was not to be blamed..."*

The best account of the service of the 9th Texas Cavalry is Martha L. Crabb's, All Afire to Fight, published by Avon Books in 2000. Of Captain Thomas G. Berry, she says, "...Company A unanimously reelected Capt. Thomas G. Berry, who had earned the respect and admiration of his men by his bravery and his refusal of any luxury not available to all his men. He declared himself no better than his men, even refusing to take shelter at night in the worst storms unless there shelter for all. Berry was the only captain in the regiment to remain with his men [at the reorganization in April, 1862 after the Conscription Act was passed]. One captain in the ninth was under arrest, and the other eight resigned to go home..."

"*Captain Thomas Berry rode into the Ninth's muddy camp Monday, December 8, 1862. Behind him rode a column of mounted men, each leading four saddled horses...During the six-hundred-mile, ten-week trip, the returning veterans must have assailed them [the new recruits from Texas] with cavalry stories, likely of more fabrication than fact. And Berry surely began their training on the trip. The boys, having grown up on the frontier, knew how to ride and shoot, but they knew nothing of military rules and regulations...*

"*Four of Company A's seven men who had taken the horses home returned with Berry. The captain also bought four recruits from around Grapevine, including Jesse Rogers and his sixteen-year-old friend, David Cate. The boys had enlisted in Company A on September 26, when Berry was in northern Tarrant County hunting men to fill his company...*

"*Back in Texas, Berry ordered men from each company to gather the animals and meet him in a couple of weeks at Mount Pleasant... Meanwhile, Berry scoured North Texas and East Texas for recruits...*

"*Berry, with his recruits, the veterans, and the Texas mustangs, left Mount Pleasant in late September. The men had rigged the horses to be led by tying the reins or a halter rope of one horse to the tail of the next and stringing the animals out one behind the other. The rider looped the reins or rope of the lead horse around his saddle horn and held the end in his hand. If the string became unruly, the rider could release the guide rope to prevent the string from throwing his mount...*

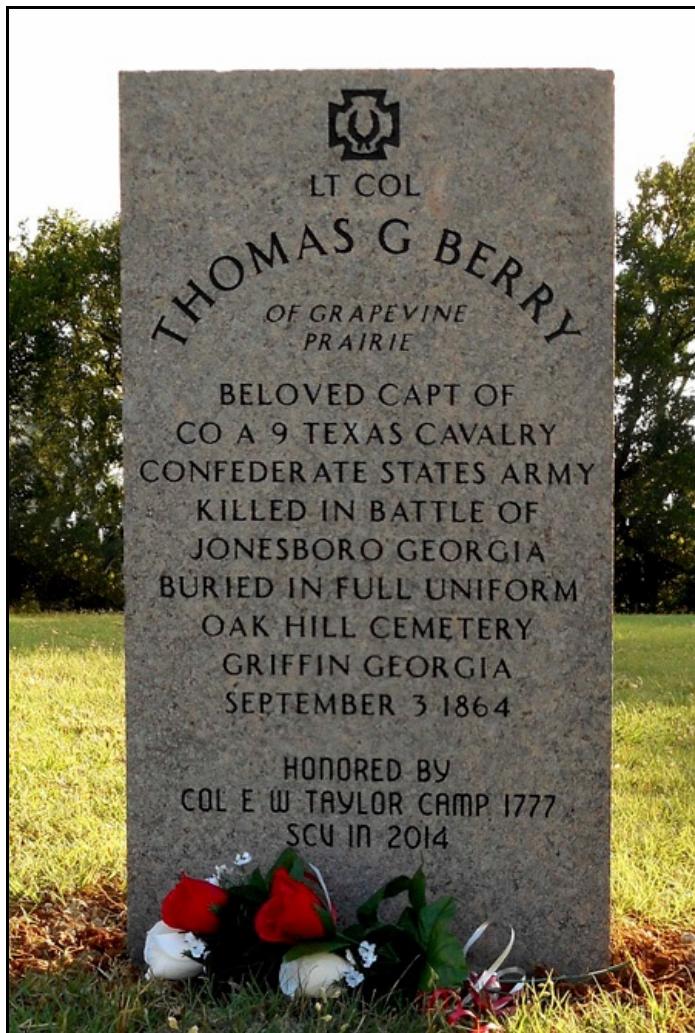
"*Berry and his men reached Shreveport, then rode on to Monroe and east toward Vicksburg. A few miles west of thee river city a Yankee patrol was reported. The column hurried toward the protection of Vicksburg's cannon, 'each man urging his four broncos to a quick time march.' As the riders struggled to control their charges, a mortar shell ten to twelve inches in diameter struck nearby and rolled along the ground. The men passed 'perilously close to these huge iron monsters,' but the shells sailed overhead and crashed into the trees. When the column reached the Mississippi River opposite Vicksburg, a steam ferry took them across...Three days later they reached the regiment...*

“[During the Atlanta Campaign in 1864] Fighting erupted all along the railroad. By noon September 1, the Confederate army was routed and fled the field, leaving their dead and wounded. Jackson posted the Texans four miles out on the Jonesboro and McDonough Road with firm orders to hold the position. They tried. Late in the evening, Colonel Berry, trying to rally his men, yelled, ‘Hold on!’ At that moment, he was struck and thrown from his horse. When Berry went down, the men panicked...”

“John Dunn and the other pickets met the regiment a few hundred yards from their reserve. “I found the men in a panic, he wrote, and was ‘mad more at our own men than the Yanks for they were so badly scared’ that they were shooting at the enemy through their own ranks. Gris [George Lewis Griscomb] rallied enough men, ‘under a most galling fire,’ to reach Berry and bring him out...”

“Gris treasured his friendship with Berry beyond his relationship with any man in the regiment. He and three other men placed Tom Berry on a blanket and carried him five miles to an ambulance. Gris went with the ambulance carrying Berry to Surgeon Robertson’s field infirmary several miles south, near Griffin...”

“Gris stayed at the field infirmary with Tom Berry, his ‘true friend’ and ‘one of the noblest specimens of God’s handiwork.’ Robertson, who had served with Berry since the regiment was organized, did everything in his power to save the colonel. That night, when Berry realized he was dying, he expressed no fear of death but told Gris, ‘I am not prepared to die, I have not accomplished all I want to & yet if necessary I can die as well as anyone else but I want to do more before I go.’ Stunned and profoundly saddened by the loss of his friend he loved, this ‘upright man and fearless soldier,’ Gris told his diary, ‘All who knew him loved him and mourn his death most sincerely. Surely such men are not unrewarded in the spirit land.’ September 3, 1864, Lt. Col. Thomas G. Berry, aged thirty-five, was buried in full uniform in the cemetery at Griffin, [Spalding County] Georgia with several other Texans. He was mourned by every man of the Ninth Texas Cavalry.”



Cenotaph made by E. W. Taylor Camp 1777 SCV and installed in Grapevine Cemetery on May 30, 2014.