



TARRANT COUNTY TXGENWEB

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Civil War Veterans of Northeast Tarrant County

Robert Fondran

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Robert Fondran was a native of Mississippi who came to Texas with his widowed mother and siblings in the early 1850's. They moved west to the frontier in Young County by 1860. He served the Confederacy in two Texas infantry units, and settled in Tarrant County not long after the War. He probably died in the Keller area during the early 1870's, and lies buried there in an unmarked grave.

Robert Fondran was born about 1842 in Mississippi. He was a son of Whitman C. H. Fondran and his wife Melissa E. Powell, who were married in Rutherford County, North Carolina on May 10, 1835. Robert's father died before 1850 in Chickasaw County, Mississippi.

Robert's paternal grandparents and several other family members settled in Dallas County, Texas, and his grandfather died there during the 1850's. Several of Robert's paternal aunts and uncles also settled in the Parker County area.

When the 1850 census was taken, Robert Fondran, his widowed mother, and several of his siblings were living in Chickasaw County, Mississippi's Western District; they lived in a large mixed family headed by Robert's maternal grandfather, William Powell. This census indicates that Robert's parents moved to Mississippi from North Carolina only a year or two before his birth.

Robert's mother brought her children to Texas soon after 1850 and was married to Hardin Harris in Navarro County, Texas on July 21, 1852. Mr. Harris died February 15, 1855. At some time within the next five years she and her children moved west.

Robert Fondran was intimately familiar with the extreme frontier of Texas in 1860. Danger from raiding Comanches and Kiowas was a daily fear in Young County, Texas. Robert lived there in a family headed by his twice-widowed mother, Melissa Harris. He was eighteen years old. They

owned no real estate but had two hundred dollars worth of personal property. The family received their mail through the post office at Fort Belknap.

Melissa Powell Fondran Harris had one more marriage in her future. In Young County on January 9, 1861 she married David Allen (1802-1882). During the 1860's Mr. Allen moved back east away from the frontier, and settled at Keller in Tarrant County.

Robert Fondran served the Confederacy in two different Texas units. His service began as a private in Capt. Felix C. McReynolds' Company (Co. B), Griffin's Battalion Texas Infantry. He enlisted in Parker County on March 10, 1862. He was mustered into the service on March 31, 1862 in Houston; the record shows he traveled two hundred ten miles to the place of rendezvous. On August 2, 1862 he received a bounty payment of fifty dollars. On June 29, 1864 he was placed under arrest at Galveston, Texas for some unspecified offense, and was still in custody in August.

He ended his service in Co. G, 21st (Spaight's) Texas Infantry. This regiment was formed on November 20, 1864 by the consolidation of four companies of Griffin's Battalion Texas Infantry with six companies of the 11th Battalion Texas Infantry. On a regimental return prepared in November 1864, Mr. Fondran appears on detached service in charge of company baggage since November 21 at Sabine Pass, Texas. On January 5, 1865 he was granted sixty days leave to "NW Texas." No further records specific to his military service have survived.

On November 26, 1869 Robert Fondran registered to vote in Precinct 3 of Tarrant County. He said he was a native of Mississippi, had been in Texas eighteen years (since about 1851), and in his present county and precinct three years (since about 1866).

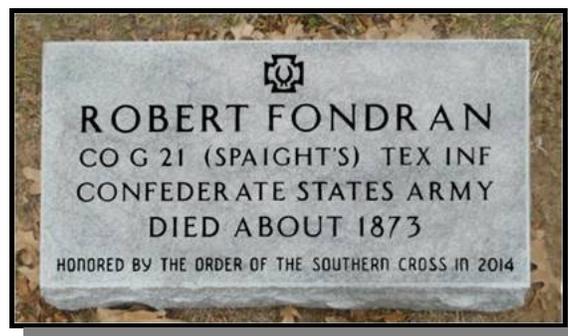
The census taker in 1870 found Robert Fondran living next-door to his step-father, David Allen, in Precinct 3 of Tarrant County. Robert's mother was not with Mr. Allen, and this suggests that she had probably died. Robert Fondran owned no real estate, but he had two hundred dollars worth of personal property. Robert's wife, Sallie, was born about 1845 in Illinois. This census suggests they were married about 1866. Their oldest child, Cornelia, was born about 1867 and was probably named for Robert's sister Cornelia. There was a second child, Thomas R. Fondran, who was born in November 1869.

Robert Fondran appears in the 1870 agricultural census of Tarrant County. He owned no real estate. He owned two horses and fifteen hogs, worth a total of one hundred fifty dollars. He had several bushels of spring wheat on hand, but its number is blurred by an ink blot in the original record. He also had two hundred bushels of Indian corn.

Mr. Fondran was recorded in the tax lists for 1871 and 1872. In the latter year he owned three horses worth one hundred dollars, two cows worth ten dollars, and ten dollars worth of personal property. We have been unable to locate him in any later tax lists, although some of those for the early 1870's are extremely difficult to read and may not be complete. The list for 1875 is quite legible, and Mr. Fondran is not found there. David Allen is found in Precinct 4 in that year. If Robert Fondran died here during the early 1870's, he probably lies buried in an unmarked grave in Mount Gilead Cemetery at Keller.

Neither Robert Fondran nor Sallie Fondran appear in the 1880 census. However, the census lists Thomas Fondran as an orphan in the 1880 census living with the family of J. C. Lemmons in the same general area of Precinct 4 where the Fondrens lived ten years earlier. He may be the Thomas R. Fondren who later lived with his family in Rainy Township, Washita County, Oklahoma and Grant Township, Custer County, Oklahoma.

Family researchers at ancestry.com say the Thomas R. Fondren of Oklahoma was Thomas Raiborn Fondren, who was born in Texas February 20, 1864 and died in February 13, 1949 at Monrovia, Los Angeles County, California. His wife was Claudell Olivia Tilley (1885-1946). They say Thomas R. Fondren was a son of E. S. Fondren and his wife, Sallie R. Raibourn/Raybourn, who was born about 1844 in Illinois. She was a daughter of Thomas S. Raibourn (1814-1887) who lived in southern Denton County not far north of the Mount Gilead/Keller area at the time Robert Fondran and his wife, Sallie, would have been married. No one named Sallie who was born in Illinois appears in the census of Young County, Texas in 1860. If further researcher could uncover evidence that E. S. Fondren was actually Robert Fondran, a strong case could be made for Sallie Raibourn having been the wife with him near Keller in 1870.



This was but one of five headstones for area veterans that were placed January 24, 2015 at Mount Gilead Cemetery. They were installed by the E. W. Taylor Camp 1777 SCV utilizing a grant made to us by the Order of the Southern Cross.