



TARRANT COUNTY TXGENWEB

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Civil War Veterans of Northeast Tarrant County

Jefferson B. Karr

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Jefferson B. Karr was a native of Missouri who served the South in a Missouri regiment. This biographical sketch was rewritten in late 2014 using much new material supplied by his descendant, Colby R. Karr of Fort Worth, Texas. J. B. Karr lies buried in Smithfield Cemetery in North Richland Hills.

Jefferson B. Karr, whose full name was Thomas Jefferson Brown Karr, was born in Virginia on January 16, 1836, a son of James William Karr and Barthena (Smith) Karr. Census records suggest that the family moved from Virginia to Cole Co., Missouri in the late 1830's. Both the elder Karrs died in Cole County and were buried on their farm at Bravito, Missouri. Later when the farm was sold out of the family their bodies were moved to Hickory Hill Cemetery in the same county.

Jefferson appears in the 1850 census of Cole County, Missouri in his father's family. They were farming. Jefferson's father owned his own real estate. He was not a slaveowner. We have been unable to find Jefferson in the 1860 census, although his widowed mother is found in Cole County with a number of her younger children.

Jefferson B. Karr married Elizabeth Jane Trimble in Cole Co., Missouri on February 12, 1861. She was born November 17, 1840, and was a daughter of David Trimble and his wife, Catherine (Henley) Trimble. The Trimbles came to Texas in 1867 and settled in northeast Tarrant County. David and Catherine Trimble are buried in Smithfield Cemetery in North Richland Hills.

We are able to learn a few details of Mr. Karr's Confederate service through two affidavits he made for other Confederate veterans who were applying for pensions. He vouched for Robert Morrow's service in Morrow's Confederate pension application. In an affidavit Karr made supporting his neighbor Robert R. Riggins's pension application, Karr said he (Karr) had served nearly one year in Co. C, Hill's Regiment, Parson's Brigade of Missouri troops. He said he had known Riggins long before the war, and that he had been his neighbor in Tarrant County, Texas. Family tradition says

that Mr. Karr lost one of his eyes while he was in the Confederate service. The 1880 census notes that he had only one eye.

J. B. Karr appears as Thomas J. Karr in the 1870 census of Springfield Township, Henry County, Missouri. In that year he was farming on land he did not own. He had personal property worth five hundred dollars. The Karrs came from Missouri to Texas about 1873 and had settled in northeast Tarrant County by 1875. In that year he appears in the tax lists here; he did not yet own any real estate. He owned four horses worth twenty dollars each and other personal property.

The census taker in 1880 found the Karr family living in Tarrant County in the part of Precinct 3 which lay south of Big Bear Creek. It was recorded that Mr. Karr had only one eye. They had four children with them in that year: Indiana (age 13), James C. (age 11), Barthena C. (age 9), and Elizabeth (age 5).

Jefferson appears in the 1880 agricultural census of Tarrant County. He owned a farm which was made up of thirty-six acres of cultivated land and sixty-seven acres of woodland. He estimated that the total value of the farm, fences, and buildings was six hundred dollars. He estimated that his farming implements were worth twenty-five dollars and his livestock was worth 358 dollars. He estimated the value of all his farm production in the past year to have been 420 dollars. He owned three horses and two mules. He owned three milk cows and seven cattle of other classes. Three calves had been dropped on his farm in the past year and he had sold four head of living cattle. He estimated that the family had churned one hundred pounds of butter in the past year. He owned five hogs and thirty chickens. He estimated that he had gathered seventy-five dozen eggs from his chickens in the last year. He had twenty acres in Indian corn which had made three hundred bushels and sixteen acres in cotton which had made eight bales. He estimated that he had cut firewood worth twelve dollars off his place in the past year.

His home is shown on the 1895 map of Tarrant County drawn by Sam Street; in modern-day terms it sat just inside the eastern boundary of Hurst, north of Bedford-Eules Road and just west of Norwood Drive, about where Simpson Drive intersects Garden Oaks Drive. In 1899, Karr owned eighty acres of one of the W. W. Wallace surveys.

Jefferson Karr and his wife appear in the 1900 census of Precinct 3 in Tarrant Country. Mrs. Karr told the census taker she had given birth to five children, only three of whom were still living. None of their children were still with them, but a hired man named Buford F. Forbes was living and working there.

The census taker in 1910 found Mr. Karr and his family living in Precinct 3 of Tarrant County along the Fort Worth and Bedford Road. By this time Mr. and Mrs. Karr had no children living at home with them. Mrs. Karr again said she had given birth to five children, but only three of them were still living. Mr. Karr told the census taker he was a Confederate veteran.

Jefferson B. Karr died of senile debility on January 24, 1915 in Fort Worth at 1917 Crump Street. This address is now part of the highway interchange at downtown Fort Worth. It is a few hundred yards northwest of the "mixmaster" where I35W and I30 cross. At the time of his death he was living with his daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. A. M. Redford. His body was taken to

Smithfield Cemetery for burial. A short obituary for Mr. Karr appeared in the Fort Worth Star-Telegram on January 15, 1915. As is often the case, it contains a few mistakes: *"Karr-J. C. Karr, 80, died Sunday at 4 p.m. at the residence of his daughter, Mrs. A. M. Redford, 1917 Crump Street. He is survived by his wife and two daughters, Mrs. Redford and Mrs. D. J. Smiley. Mrs. Smiley also resides in Fort Worth. Funeral services were held at Mrs. Redford's residence Monday at noon. The interment was made at the Smithfield cemetery."*

His wife, Elizabeth (Trimble) Karr, survived until January 25, 1918 and was buried beside him. There was also an obituary printed for in the same newspaper on January 26, 1918: *"WOMAN WHO SETTLED HERE IN 1867 DIES. Mrs. Elizabeth Karr, 77, died Friday night at the residence of her daughter, Mrs. A. M. Redford, 1917 Crump street. Surviving beside Mrs. Redford is a daughter, Mrs. Lizzie Snelly of Smithfield and a son, J. C. Karr of Bedford; also three brothers, W. D. Trimble of Fort Worth, T. P. Trimble of Bedford, and F. M. Trimble of Shamrock."*

Mrs. Karr was one of the pioneer residents of Tarrant county, coming here in 1867. Funeral services will be held at 1 p.m. Sunday at the residence of Mrs. Redford, Rev. J. W. Scott officiating. Interment will be in the Smithfield cemetery. The remains will be taken overland to Smithfield by the Gause Undertaking Company."

The Karrs had five children. The following short paragraphs give a few details of their lives.

Armintia "Mintie" Karr was born December 1, 1861 in Missouri. She appears in the 1870 census as Artemesia Karr. Along with her Trimble grandparents, she was among the charter members of Pleasant Run Baptist Church in Colleyville in 1877; her name is recorded on an old roll there as "Mittie Carr." By 1880 she had married Aaron Marion Redford (1860-1932). At the time the census was taken in 1910 she and her husband were living on Crump Street in Fort Worth. She died at 11:30 a.m. on December 3, 1933 in Fort Worth at her home at 1912 Olive Street, and was buried beside her husband the next day in Greenwood Cemetery there.

Indiana Karr was born about 1867 in Missouri. She appears in the 1870 census aged six, thus she may have been born as early as about 1864. She was alive with her father's family when the 1880 census was taken, but had died by the time of the 1900 census. There is no readable headstone for her in any northeast Tarrant County cemetery.

James Commodore Karr was born April 1, 1868 in Missouri. He married Sarah F. Randolph (1878-1934). He died at 6 p.m. on December 30, 1944 at his home on Route 3 in Arlington, Tarrant County, Texas, and was buried beside his wife in Smithfield Cemetery in North Richland Hills on the last day of the year.

Barthenia C. Karr was born in May 1870 in Missouri. She appears as Parthenia C. Karr in the 1870 census. She was still alive with her father's family when the 1880 census was taken, but had died by the time of the 1900 census. There is no readable headstone for her in any northeast Tarrant County cemetery.

Margaret Elizabeth Karr was born in Texas on January 3, 1876. About 1892 she married David Jackson Smelley (1863-1949). Her last permanent address was 3820 Maurice Street in Fort Worth.

She died in All Saints Hospital in Fort Worth at 8:35 p.m. on May 11, 1965. She was buried beside her husband two days later in Mount Olivet Cemetery in Fort Worth. Their grandson, R. J. Smelley, founded the Smelley Dairy and other enterprises in the Fort Worth area.

J. B. Karr

