



TARRANT COUNTY TXGENWEB

Barbara Knox and Rob Yoder, County Coordinators

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Civil War Veterans of Northeast Tarrant County

Jefferson Phelps

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Jefferson Phelps was a Confederate veteran of a Tennessee infantry regiment who spent the last years of his life in Birdville. He lies buried in Birdville Cemetery. One of his great-great granddaughters, Ruby Wallace, kindly shared her records with us and most of the material in this sketch was a result of her research.

Jefferson Phelps was born about 1830 in North Carolina, probably in Davidson County where his father appears in the 1830 census. He was a son of Aventon/Abington/Avington Phelps and his wife, Mary Hage. Mary (Hage) Phelps was still living with her descendants in Moore County, Tennessee in 1880. The surname Phelps was changed over the years from Felps. Just when the family began using the name of Phelps is not certain; however, Jefferson Phelps' father, Aventon, was married under the name Felps, on April 2, 1817 in Rowan County, North Carolina. The surname "Felps" has been spelled "Phelps" off and on for many years; however, it appears that the family at one time began to go by the name of "Phelps," probably around the 1830's. "Felps" was still used sometimes on the census records even after 1850. The family is now using the spelling "Phelps." Davidson County was formed from Rowan County; therefore, the family probably did not move from one county to another.

In the 1830 census of Davidson County, North Carolina, Jefferson's father appears the head of a family consisting of eight males and two females. He was not a slave owner. The census gives no hint about where in the county they lived.

By 1840 the family had moved to Tennessee and was living in Lincoln County's Sixth Civil District when the census was taken. By this time the family contained eight males and three females. Seven of the eight were engaged in agriculture. They owned no slaves.

In 1850 Jefferson Phelps was listed with his parents and siblings in the census of Bedford County, Tennessee's Civil District number 20. The birthplaces of his siblings would suggest the Phelps

family remained in North Carolina as late as 1835. Jefferson was twenty-one years old and was working that year as a laborer. The Phelps family did not own any real estate in that year.

Jefferson Phelps was married November 25, 1852 in Lincoln County, Tennessee to Sarah Ann Warren. She was born in Lincoln County, Tennessee about 1834, and was a daughter of Daniel Warren and Nancy Jackson Warren. She died in Moore County, Tennessee (created from Lincoln County) after 1885, and Jefferson moved to Tarrant County in or after 1886. They had nine children, all born in Lincoln County, Tennessee, the last one born in 1872.

Mr. Phelps and his family appear in the 1860 census of District 5 of Lincoln County, Tennessee. His next-door neighbors were the family of Daniel Warren, Jr. In that year, Jefferson was working as a farmer on land he owned worth two thousand dollars. He also owned personal property worth seven hundred fifteen dollars. His wife, Sarah Ann, was working as a weaver. They had five children with them in that year, Nancy and Mary, Sarah, Thomas, and Daniel.

Phelps served the Confederacy as a soldier in Co. A, 41st Tennessee Infantry. His official records say he enlisted at Lincoln, Tennessee on December 1, 1862 for a term of three years. He appears present on a muster roll for the regiment dated November 1, 1862 through February 10, 1863. They also say he deserted at Port Hudson, Louisiana on March 14, 1863. This was the date on which Union General Farragut attempted to run past the Port Hudson batteries and get on the side of them nearer to Vicksburg, Mississippi. It is more likely that Mr. Phelps may have been captured or separated and unable to return to his regiment on that day. Phelps soon returned to the regiment, and was captured by the federals on August 3, 1864 at Shelbyville, Tennessee. He was released after taking the oath of allegiance to the U. S. government. Nothing further is found in his official files in the National Archives.

Mr. Phelps and his family appear in the 1870 census of District 5, Lincoln County, Tennessee. They lived in the part of the county served by the post office at Lynchburg. Also appearing on the same page is a widow, Mary Phelps, born about 1796 in South Carolina, who may have been his mother. Many of the other persons who appear on that page and surrounding pages are members of the Warren family, Mrs. Jefferson Phelps' relatives. Mr. and Mrs. Phelps had eight children with them when the census taker arrived, and the record contains a notation that the second and third children were twins. In this year Mr. Phelps' real estate was worth seven hundred dollars and his personal property was worth one thousand two hundred dollars.

In 1880 Mr. Phelps and his family are listed in the census of Moore County, Tennessee in the 8th Civil District. There are six children listed in the family, and Mr. Phelps is shown as a farmer. It seems likely that they did not move from where they had been living, because Moore County was formed in 1871 from parts of Lincoln, Bedford, and Franklin Counties. From family history, we know that they lived around Lynchburg, Tennessee.

Sarah Ann Warren Phelps' death date is not known. She was still alive when the 1880 census was taken; however, since Jefferson Phelps married a Mrs. Maggie A. Jackson in Lincoln County, Tennessee on December 26, 1886, it is assumed that Sarah died prior to this date.

It is thought that Jefferson Phelps may have divorced Mrs. Maggie A. Jackson Phelps. He came to Tarrant County, Texas sometime after 1886, traveling by wagon train. He had only two children with him at that time; Frances Salina Carolina and Jesse J. Phelps. This information was told to this writer, Ruby Gray Wallace, by a daughter of Frances Salina Carolina Phelps Hukill. They settled in the Birdville area, where he died. The exact date of death is not known.

Family tradition says Jefferson Phelps was a schoolteacher for a part of his life. Descendants say he was still in Tennessee in 1886, and had come to Tarrant County, Texas by 1891 when one of his daughters was married here. He was buried in the Birdville Cemetery with no marker.

Jefferson Phelps was the father of several children, including Nancy E. Phelps, Mary J. and Sarah A. Phelps (twins); Thomas Jefferson Phelps, Daniel A. Phelps, Arah E. Phelps, William David Phelps, Frances Salina Carolina Phelps, and Jesse James Phelps.

Nancy E. Phelps was born February 2, 1854. She married Julius B. Williams (1851-1919) on December 1, 1874 in Moore County, Tennessee. She died November 3, 1935 in Moore County, Tennessee, and was buried there the next day in the Warren Cemetery. One online descendant says her middle name was "Eglyntine." Her death certificate says she was a daughter of Jefferson Phelps and a Miss Warren.

Mary J. Phelps was born January 22, 1855. She married Nicholas Warren (1853-1903) in Moore County, Tennessee on September 15, 1873. She died August 5, 1929 in Giles County, Tennessee, and was buried the next day in Bradshaw-Center Point Cemetery near the town of Frankewing. Her death certificate names her parents as Jefferson Phelps and Sallie Warren.

Sarah Ann Phelps was born January 22, 1855. She married John Bartlett in Moore County, Tennessee on September 5, 1889. He died before her. She died of heart trouble on January 12, 1940 at Petersburg, Moore County, Tennessee. Her father's name is mistakenly given on her death certificate as William Phelps, but her mother's name is shown as Sarah Warren, and J. J. Warren was the informant for the death certificate. The birth date on her death certificate matches that of her twin sister, Mary J. Phelps. She was buried in Raby Cemetery in Moore County on January 13. Mr. and Mrs. Bartlett's graves appear to be unmarked.

Thomas Jefferson Phelps was born about 1859. As "Thos. J. Felps" he married Sidney J. Marler in Moore County, Tennessee on January 8, 1879. He appears as "Thomas Felps" on the same page with his father in the 1880 census. At that time, Thomas had a wife named Sidney J. Felps, who was born about 1861, and a one-month-old son named Oliver. When the 1930 census was taken, Thomas was living in Hopkins County, Texas with the family of his married daughter, Lessie Wilson. Thomas died in Giles County, Tennessee on February 17, 1951. His death certificate says he was divorced at the time of his death, and gives his birth date as 1851, as does his headstone. The certificate names his parents as William Jefferson Phelps and Sarah Phelps. He was buried in Maplewood Cemetery in Pulaski, Giles County, Tennessee.

Daniel Arrington Phelps was born in Tennessee on July 6, 1859. He married Lillie (Lillian) Ann Poston (1868-1949) in Giles County, Tennessee on November 3, 1887. He died in Giles County,

Tennessee on April 27, 1940 and was buried in Maplewood Cemetery in Pulaski, Giles County, Tennessee. His death certificate names his parents as Jefferson Phelps and Sarah Warren.

Ary (Arah) Elizabeth Phelps was born April 11, 1861. She married W. B. Richardson in Moore County, Tennessee on August 18, 1883. By 1900 Mr. Richardson had died and Ary E. Richardson appeared in the census of Bedford County as a widow. When the 1930 census was taken she was living in the home of her son, William B. Richardson, in Bedford County. In 1940 she lived in the home of her grandson-in-law, Woodward Brown, in Bedford County. Between 1940 and her death, Ary married a man surnamed Hammons or Hammonds. She died October 5, 1949 in Shelbyville, Bedford County, and was buried in Pleasant Grove Cemetery in Lincoln County, Tennessee.

William David Phelps was born June 20, 1865 in Lincoln County, Tennessee. He married Mary Ann Elizabeth Bartlett in Moore County, Tennessee on September 18, 1884. He died at Kristenstad in Hood County, Texas on November 7, 1937 and was buried in Erath County, Texas in Pilot Knob Cemetery.

Frances Salina Carolina "Fannie" Phelps was born September 1, 1870 in Tennessee. She married John Wallace Hukill (1869-1937) in Tarrant County, Texas on September 10, 1891. She died of pneumonia at 9:15 p.m. on June 5, 1958 at her home one mile northwest of Colfax in Van Zandt County, and was buried in Salem Cemetery in Van Zandt County, Texas on June 7. She was Mrs. Wallace's great-grandmother.

Jesse James Phelps was born March 9, 1869, according to his death certificate. He is not among the children listed with the family in the 1870 census. The 1880 lists his age as eight. He appears in the 1910 census aged forty years. It seems more likely his birth date was about 1872. He married Tishie Hatfield (1869-1933) in Giles County on January 13, 1895. The family left Tennessee for a time and in 1910 was living at Gilbertsboro, Limestone County, Alabama, where he and his family farmed on rented land. He returned to Giles County, Tennessee by 1920, and lived in Moore County by 1930. He died at Shelbyville, Bedford County, Tennessee on July 14, 1950. His last permanent residence was Petersburg, Moore County, Tennessee. His death certificate names his parents as Jefferson Phelps and Sarah Warren. Mrs. Morris Snell of Shelbyville was the informant. He was buried the next day in the Raby Cemetery in Moore County, Tennessee.



New stone installed by
E. W. Taylor Camp, Sons of
Confederate Veterans
March 16, 2013