



TARRANT COUNTY TXGENWEB

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Civil War Veterans of Northeast Tarrant County

Thomas Henry Fitch

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Thomas Henry Fitch was a native Tennessean who served in a Texas cavalry regiment. He returned to Tennessee after the War and lived in Arkansas and Mississippi before coming to northeast Tarrant County about 1878. He died in Bedford in 1922.

Luckily for Thomas Fitch's descendants a careful and dedicated family researcher has been working for several years to find and share facts relating to the Fitch family. Charles Ward has graciously allowed us to use some of his research in this account.

An old family Bible of Thomas' parents shows that Thomas was born December 5, 1837. County records show his parents were living in McMinn County, Tennessee when he was born. His headstone gives the date as December 6. He was the tenth of eleven children born to John Jacob Fitch (born in 1800) and his wife, Mary "Polly" Wood. Mary died in present-day Meigs County, Tennessee and lies buried in Mount Zion Cemetery in the Ten-Mile Community in Meigs County. Records suggest that John Jacob Fitch probably died in Roane County, Tennessee in or after 1880. Thomas's paternal grandfather, John Fitch, was a veteran of the American Revolution who settled in Sullivan County, Tennessee before it was a state; he died there in 1840.

John Jacob Fitch and his family moved from Sullivan County, Tennessee to McMinn County, Tennessee in the late 1820's. When the 1850 census was taken Thomas was recorded as an eleven-year-old boy in his father's family in the 212th subdivision of adjacent Meigs County, Tennessee. John Fitch was a farmer but he did not own any real estate in that year.

Thomas Henry Fitch married Mrs. Catherine McCollum Fitch, a daughter of Malcolm and Sarah (Jaquish) McCollum (and widow of Thomas's first cousin, John Fitch) on October 12, 1865 in Meigs County, Tennessee. Catherine brought two young sons, Isaac M. Fitch and John Fitch, to the marriage with her. Catherine McCollum was born in Roane County, Tennessee on September 10, 1840. Census data indicate they had children born in Tennessee in the period 1860-1867, in

Arkansas in 1868, and in Mississippi in the period 1872-1875. We have been unable to locate Thomas Fitch in the federal census records of 1860 and 1870.

When Mr. Fitch attended the 1884 meeting of Confederate veterans in Dallas, the printed record shows he was a lieutenant in the 24th Texas Infantry and was living at Bedford, Texas at the time of the meeting. The records in the National Archives indicate his service was actually in the 24th Texas Cavalry.

He enlisted January 6, 1862 at Hempstead, Texas, and was mustered in on March 27, 1862 at Camp Carter near Hempstead for the duration of the War. At the time of muster he was a 2nd Sergeant in Captain W. A. Taylor's Company, 2nd Regiment Texas Cavalry. He had ridden one hundred seventy-five miles to the rendezvous. He presented himself for service riding a horse worth one hundred fifty dollars and with equipment worth forty dollars. This company subsequently became Co. C, 24th Texas Cavalry. This regiment was also known at various times as the 2nd Regiment Texas Lancers and as the 2nd Regiment, Carter's Brigade, Texas Mounted Volunteers. It would be interesting to know how a young East Tennessee man came to be in central Texas at that time, but it is certain that he was because he gave his residence at Sweetwater, Tennessee.

On January 11, 1863 Thomas was one of several hundred Confederates captured in the fall of Fort Hindman, at Arkansas Post, Arkansas. On January 31, 1863 he was received at Camp Butler, Illinois. A short time later he signed a parole and was released, but the parole was not dated. A notation on the document says "Sent before for exchg."

On March 28, 1863 he was raised to the rank of First Sergeant. On a muster roll for the period April 30 through August 31, 1863, 1st Sergeant Thomas Fitch was shown on the roll with the notation: "For use gun 8 mo use horse 180 days @ 40 cents per day. Trans 150 mi."

On April 5, 1863, Sgt. Thomas Fitch appears on a list of men in the Confederate hospital at Petersburg, Virginia. The same record says he was "delivered" on May, 6, 1863. The record also contains the notation "Farmville."

From May 8 through June 1, 1863, Thomas spent time in the Confederate General Hospital at Farmville, Virginia. He was being treated for "Debilitas." He was released for duty on June 1. His file contains an original signed copy of a document in which Thomas was paid \$3.75 for commutation of five days' rations.

On March 9, 1864, Thomas was elected from the rank of 1st Sergeant to the rank of 2nd Jr. Lieutenant of the company. On September 17, 1864 he was captured in Monroe County, Tennessee. Another record says his capture took place at Madisonville, Tennessee; Madisonville is the county seat of Monroe County. Five days later, on September 22, he was sent to Chattanooga, Tennessee. By October 20, 1864 he was in Federal custody at Nashville, Tennessee and on that day was forwarded to Louisville, Kentucky, where he arrived the next day. On October 23 he was sent to Johnson's Island. Johnson's Island was a Union prison for Confederate officers in Sandusky Bay along Lake Erie. The island was about 16.5 acres in extent.

Thomas's name appears on a roll of prisoners of war beginning on October 25, 1864 at Sandusky, Ohio. He remained in Union hands until he signed an oath of allegiance to the federal government and was released on June 16, 1865.

The oath Thomas Fitch signed identified him as a resident of Sweetwater, Tennessee. He was twenty-seven years old, had dark hair, eyes, and complexion, and stood six feet one inch tall.

As was true in so many instances in East Tennessee, the Fitch family was divided by the War. Two of Thomas Fitch's brothers, Isaac and George, served as Confederate soldiers. Another brother, Samuel, served the Union. Thomas's sister, Mary Ann, married Isaac Cundiff, a Union soldier.

The census taker in 1880 found the family living in Precinct 3 in Tarrant County, in the part of the precinct south of Big Bear Creek. Thomas and Catherine had eight children with them: Isaac and John from Catherine's first marriage, and six of their own: Charles, James, Mary, William, Barney, and Samuel.

Thomas Fitch also appears in the 1880 agricultural census of Tarrant County. He was working a rented farm of fifty-five acres of cultivated land. The farm was worth five hundred dollars. His farming implements were worth fifty dollars and his livestock was worth one hundred fifty. He estimated that during 1879 all his farm productions were worth one thousand and fifty dollars. He owned four horses, one mule, four milk cows, and four cattle of other classes. During the past year, three calves were dropped on his place, he purchased three, and sold three alive. He and his family churned sixty pounds of butter during the past year. He had twenty chickens, and estimated he had gathered fifty dozen eggs from them in the past year. He had ten acres in Indian corn which had made one hundred bushels. He put the other forty-five acres of his place in cotton and picked twenty bales in the past year.

Mr. Fitch's home appears on the 1895 Sam Street map of Tarrant County. It sat on the J. G. Cummings survey between Bedford and Euless, in present-day Bedford about one-quarter mile west of FM 157 along the south side of Harwood Road.

The 1900 census taker found the Fitches in Precinct 3 of Tarrant County. By that time Mr. Fitch owned his farm. Mrs. Fitch said she had given birth to ten children, all of whom were still living. Six of the younger children were still with them: Mary J., William R., Barney K., Samuel T., Maggie, and Thomas H. Fitch. William was working as a school teacher.

Ten years later Thomas and Catherine Fitch still lived in the same area. By that time, only three of the children were still at home: Barney K., Samuel T., and Maggie C. Fitch. None of the three ever married. Thomas confirmed to the census taker that he was a Confederate veteran. Mrs. Fitch said one of her ten children had died since the last census; other records confirm that it was John Fitch who had died in that interim.

Even though his headstone in Bedford Cemetery clearly says he died on April 19, 1923, a short notice of Mr. Fitch's death appeared in the Dallas Morning News on April 20, 1922: *"Bedford Resident Dies. Special to the News. Fort Worth, Texas. April 19-Tom Fitch, about 80 years old, of Bedford, died at 9 a.m. today. Mr. Fitch is one of the oldest residents of Tarrant County, having*

lived here more than fifty years. Surviving him are six sons, two daughters and his wife. One of his sons, Barney Fitch, is a Tarrant County jailer. Funeral services will be held Thursday afternoon at Bedford." Mrs. Fitch survived until July 22, 1923 and was buried beside her husband. Neither Thomas nor Catherine Fitch have death certificates on file in Texas.

The following list of ten Fitch children includes the two Catherine had in her first marriage. We have discovered firm death dates and burial places for all but the second one, John Fitch. There is no readable headstone for him in any northeast Tarrant County cemetery.

Isaac M. Fitch was born November 9, 1859. He married Mary S. Bates (1864-1936). Mr. Fitch died October 22, 1933 in Tarrant County. He and his wife lie buried in Calloway Cemetery in Euless, Tarrant County, Texas.

John Fitch was born in April 1862. When the 1900 census was taken he lived in northeast Tarrant County with his wife, Mollie (1868-_), whom he married about 1887. He was dead by the time the 1910 census was taken.

Charles E. Fitch was born July 19, 1866. In 1900 he lived in Precinct 3 of Tarrant County with his wife, Virginia "Jennie" Cromer (1867-1951), whom he married about 1890. She was the daughter of a Union veteran, Louis Clark Cromer. By the time the 1910 census was taken they were living in Lindsay Ward 2, Garvin County, Oklahoma. Virginia's mother, Nancy Cromer, lived with them. Charles died June 11, 1938. Charles and Virginia Fitch lie buried in Greenhill Cemetery at Lindsay, Oklahoma.

James Barney Fitch was born August 27, 1868. In 1900 he lived in Tarrant County and worked as a guard. By 1910 he had moved to Lindsay, Garvin County, Oklahoma where he was still single and working as a hardware and grocery merchant. In 1920 he and his wife, Edna, and their son were still living at Lindsay. In 1930 they were still there and he was working in the hardware and grocery business. His last permanent home was in Bedford. He died in a hospital in Richland Hills, Tarrant County, on July 15, 1953. His headstone says he died on July 18. He was buried on July 17 in Bedford Cemetery. He was divorced at the time of his death.

Mary Jane Fitch was born April 4, 1871. She married a Mr. Newman, who died before her. Her last permanent home was at Mansfield in Tarrant County. She died at 5:00 a.m. on December 24, 1951 in Wichita Falls, Wichita County, Texas. She was buried in Bedford Cemetery.

William Reece Fitch was born May 23, 1873. He married Nora Bobo (1881-1959) and they worked for many years as retail merchants. His last home was at Bedford. He died at 9:15 p.m. on February 1, 1959 in Fort Worth's St. Joseph's Hospital. He was buried on February 3 in Bedford Cemetery a few yards south of his father.

Barney King Fitch was born September 23, 1875. He was never married. His last home was on Route 1, Grapevine, Texas. He died in the city-county hospital in Fort Worth at 10:55 p.m. on February 26, 1944 and was buried in Bedford Cemetery on February 28.

Samuel Taylor Fitch was born January 15, 1878. He was never married, and was a farmer for most of his life. His last permanent home was on Route 2, Grapevine, Texas. He died in Fort Worth's Harris Hospital on July 15, 1945, and was buried on July 17 in Bedford Cemetery.

Thomas Henry Fitch was born March 9, 1885. His wife was Effie Lanore Hardy (1884-1945). His death certificate says he was Thomas Henry Fitch, Jr. He died in Wise County, Texas on February 9, 1983. His headstone in Bedford Cemetery does not have his date of death inscribed.

Margaret Catherine "Maggie" Fitch was born January 19, 1882 (her headstone says 1882, her death certificate says 1883). She was never married. She died at 12:45 a.m. on January 1, 1968 in the Ladora Lodge Nursing Home in Bedford. She was buried in Bedford Cemetery the next day. Her death certificate says her father's middle initial was "H."



[FORM 18.]

The Confederate States,

To *Thomas Hitch, 24 Tex C.C.* DR.

June 1 For 5 day commutation ration # *3 1/5*
1863

3.75

I certify that the above account is correct; that the commutation was made by my order, and was necessary for the public service, it being impracticable to take rations in kind.

H. D. Cuiagins
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RECEIVED at *Starnville, Virginia* 1863, from *Cpt. R. H. Vaughan U.S.*
Three dollars and *seventy five* cents, in full of the above account.

T. Hitch

NOTE.—In every case commutation must be paid only on the certificate and order of the commanding officer.