

SOME ROPERS IN TEXAS AND OKLAHOMA

By David L. Roper

Henry Franklin Roper's Offspring

Henry Franklin Roper:

Henry Franklin Roper was born about 1828 in South Carolina—probably in Pickens County, South Carolina—the oldest child of John and Tabitha Roper. When he was about ten, his family moved to Georgia—to Forsyth County.

June 1, 1845, he married Evaline Holbrook in Forsyth County. Like most of the men in his family, Henry did some farming, but he generally listed his occupation as blacksmith or wheelwright.

There is no way we can be sure we have a complete list of Henry's children, but here is a partial list (all born in Georgia):

- (1) George W. Roper - July 26, 1847, to December 15, 1883.
- (2) William H. Roper - September 6, 1849, to February 7, 1927.
- (3) Mary Josephine Roper - April 2, 1851, to October 15, 1860.
- (4) Thomas Floyd Roper - June 11, 1854, to November 8, 1860.
- (5) John C. Roper - about 1856 to ?
- (6) Henry Marcus Roper - July 1858 to 1922.
- (7) Sarah T. Roper - about 1864.
- (8) Martha Roper - about 1865.
- (9) Millie Savannah Roper - March 30, 1868, to April 11, 1868.

It has been often mentioned that the Ropers have a highly developed moving gene. Several of Henry's children had a double portion of this gene.

Son, George W. Roper, to Texas:

George W. Roper moved from Forsyth County, Georgia, to Marshall County, Tennessee, where he met the Hooten family, who were dedicated members of the Church of Christ. John Hooten was an elder in the church of Christ. Other members of the Hooten family were preachers and church leaders. April 29, 1869, George married one of John Hooten's daughters, a widow Susan A. Hooten Wilson, who had a small child. The service was performed by C. R. Darnell, a minister of the church of Christ.

George and Susan moved to Piney Fork, Sharp County, Arkansas. In the 1870 census, his occupation was "blacksmith" (like his father). When the 1880 census was taken, he and his family were back in Lewisburg, Marshall County, Tennessee. His occupation was "liveryman." They buried two young children in Marshall County.

Sometime between the time the 1880 census was taken and November 1881, George and his family moved to Decatur, Wise County, Texas, to join his younger brother Henry (see information on Henry below). George buried two small children in Wise County in November 1881 and sometime in 1882. While living in Decatur, Wise County, George owned and operated a wagon yard and blacksmith shop. County records show George involved in several land transactions:

- November 7, 1882, George W. bought land from W. J. Bennett.
- September 7, 1883, George W. sold land to Alfred Davidson.
- September 12, 1884, George W. bought land from the State of Texas (since George died in 1883, this was apparently a deal started by George but completed by his estate).

George died December 15, 1883, in Decatur—at the early age of 36. He was buried in the Oak Lawn Cemetery in Decatur. After his death, Susan moved to Gainesville, Cook County, Texas, where she operated a boardinghouse until her death in June 1887; she was only about 39. She was buried in the Bolivar Cemetery, Denton County, Texas. One child was still at home when she died: Edgar Edward. He was raised by his half-sister Emma Jane Wilson Koiner (Susan's daughter by her first marriage).

For details on known members of George's family, see L. David Roper's database on John Roper, Jr. (<http://www.roperld.com/roper.htm#roperjr>). One descendant, Becky (Robertson) Hugg, gg-granddaughter of George W., was a major help in providing information—as was the wife of a first cousin of Becky: Carin Green-Werner, avid genealogist.

Son, Henry Marcus Roper, to Texas

Henry evidently followed his older brother, George W., to Marshall County, Tennessee. There he made contact with the Sheppards and Hootens, who were members of the church of Christ. In the fall of 1878, several families in the area decided to leave Tennessee and move to Texas: the Lawrence B. Sheppards, the Henry Crawfords, the McKinseys, the John Hootens (parents of George W. Roper's wife), the John D. Richardsons, William D. Holt, , Henry, and possibly others.

Preparations were made hurriedly so the wagon train could be ferried over the Mississippi River before it froze over. They traveled over dusty and muddy trails and rocky roads, and crossed rivers. There were many babes in arms in the wagon train. It was a hard and trying trip.

After days of travel, they arrived at Denton Creek, two miles south of Denton, Texas. Here the caravan disbanded. Families whose men folk were business people moved into neighboring towns: Denton, Decatur, Bridgeport, Chico, Rhome. Farming families bought or leased acreage in rural areas: Alvord, Willow Point, Boonesville, Poolville, Park Springs, Wilson Prairie, and Draco. The Sheppards and Hootens were involved in establishing churches of Christ in Wise County—in Bridgeport (1890s) and at Willow Point (early 1900s)

A few months after the group arrived in Texas, on January 16, 1879, Henry married a daughter of Lawrence and Nancy Evelyn (Hooten) Sheppard: Susan Elvira ("Sis") Sheppard. Henry's mother-in-law was a daughter of John Hooten. He thus married a niece of George W. Roper's wife. That made their children some kind of double cousins (I'll let someone else work that out).

Here are some of Henry M.'s land transactions over the next few years:

- November 10, 1887, Henry M. bought land from John Brown (the estate of Katie Brown).
- March 31, 1894, Henry M. and wife sold land to W. N. Sullins.
- August 3, 1894, Henry M. and Susan E. sold land to W. N. Sullins.
- July 29, 1910, Henry M. sold land to H. E. Smith.

In the 1910 and 1920 censuses, Henry was living in or near Bridgeport, Wise County, Texas. In the 1920 census, his occupation was listed as "blacksmith." He died in 1922 at about 64 years of age. Susan E. died in 1944; she was in her 80s at the time of her death.

For a list of Henry Marcus's known descendants, see L. David Roper's database on John Roper, Jr. (<http://www.roperld.com/roper.htm#roperjr>). Others who should be mentioned who helped with information on Henry F.'s descendants include Rod Roper and Robert L. Marks.

Peter Byrum Roper

Peter Byrum Roper (my gg-grandfather) was the first child of John and Tabitha Roper born in Georgia—about 1838—shortly after their move from Pickens County, South Carolina to Forsyth County, Georgia. (I can see Tabitha sitting in the wagon during that long trip, holding her swollen belly and saying to John, "Watch those bumps!"). Peter B. was evidently named after his maternal grandfather. As you might imagine, his middle name was generally misspelled as "Byron" or worse.

Volume 2 of *The Roper Book* will be the story of Peter and his descendants, but I will give a brief sketch of his life in this document.

Peter was listed as a statistic in the 1840 Federal census, as a statistic in the 1845 state census, and finally as a name in the 1850 Forsyth County census: "Peter B., 12, born in Georgia."

Peter's father, John, remarried the last of 1856. Peter, then age 18, probably left home about that time. When the 1860 census was taken, Peter (age 22) was in Winston County, Alabama, living next door to his married sister Matilda (Roper) Red. Peter's younger sister, Nancy (age 18), was living with him.

The Civil War was 1861—65. On January 15, 1862, Peter Byrum Roper enlisted in Captain Joseph Glenn's company of Georgia Militia, in Dalton, Georgia. He enlisted with his older brother James Hamilton Roper.

On February 16, 1862, in Forsyth County, Peter married Nancy Jane Cape. Nancy was a daughter of Merriman and Charlotte (Holbrook) Cape.

Peter's unit stayed in the general area until May. During that time, his first child was conceived. Nancy gave birth to their first son December 1, 1862, named after Peter's older brother: Hamilton Greenberry Roper. For most of his life, Hamilton G. was called "Hampy."

A complete history of Peter B.'s military career will appear in Volume Two. For the moment, I simply notice that on July 4, 1863, Lieutenant General Pemberton surrendered Vicksburg to Union Major General Ulysses S. Grant. Peter and brother James Hamilton were taken prisoner.

After being paroled, Peter probably returned to Forsyth County, Georgia. But his unit was again deployed—and participated in the Battle of Chattanooga in the Fall of 1863 and later the Atlanta Campaign. In 1864, the Union Army marched through the area where Peter's family lived.

In 1864, during the hostilities, the Forsyth County Relief Fund was established. In a listing of those who received help from this fund, Peter does not seem to be at home; he is not listed as a discharged soldier. Listed as

receiving help in his family are "1 soldier's wife" and "1 child of a soldier." The child would have been Hamilton Greenberry.

After the war, Peter returned to his family in Forsyth County.

Peter and Nancy's second child, Andrew, was born in Georgia, September 18, 1868. Peter and his family moved to Arkansas shortly after Andrew's birth.

According to family memory, Peter and his family spent some time in Alabama on the way to Arkansas. He probably had friends there and maybe even family members.

They did not spend much time in Alabama but moved on to Arkansas. They must have reached there by the latter part of 1868, because Nancy was a charter member of the Gassville Baptist Church which was organized in 1868.

Peter and his family are listed in the 1870 Arkansas census, in Whiteville Township, Marion County (later part of Baxter County).

In Arkansas, Peter and Nancy had three children: Henry J., born about 1870; John Walter, born November 5, 1874; and Lillie Day, born November 5, 1877. Here is the listing from the 1880 Whiteville Township, Baxter County, Arkansas, census:

Peter B. Roper, 46, farmer, born in Georgia (father born in South Carolina, mother born in South Carolina)
Nancy J. Roper, 41, born in Georgia (mother born in Georgia)
Hamilton, 17, born in Georgia
Andrew W., 13, born in Georgia
Henry J., 10, born in Arkansas
John W., 6, born in Arkansas
Lillie D., 3, born in Arkansas

March 21, 1883, Hamilton Roper (my g-grandfather) married Martha Ada, daughter of Clayton B. Mooney, in Gassville in Baxter County. According to the history of Baxter County (written by a cousin and a descendant of Clayton Mooney), Ada's father opposed the union.

The 1890 census records were lost, but the 1891 personal property tax list is available for Baxter County, Arkansas. It lists P. B. (Peter Byrum) Roper and H. G. (Hamilton Greenberry) Roper.

1892 was a turning point regarding the Ropers in Baxter County. On June 15, 1892, a cousin of Hampy, named Jesse B. Roper, killed the first sheriff of Baxter County. Jesse escaped but tensions ran high in the area. Hampy's father-in-law, Clayton Mooney, was the leader of those intent on revenging Jesse's deed.

Peter's daughter Lilly D. Roper married Joseph T. Combs in Baxter County, January 1, 1893. But not long after that, the family got ready to move. October 14, 1893, Peter and Nancy sold their land. Around the end of 1893 or early 1894, Peter, Hamilton, and others in the family moved to Wise County, Texas—where two of Peter's nephews lived (George and Henry Marcus Roper).

In 1896, after a few years in Wise County, Peter and Nancy and son Andrew moved north into Indian Territory, to what is now McClain County. Hamilton, Ada, and their family followed Peter and Nancy to Indian Territory around 1897–1899, to the Stratford area. Lillie Day (Roper) Combs and her family moved to the Territory about the same time to the same general area.

John Walter Roper and his family stayed in Wise County a few more years before moving to Oklahoma in 1915.

Peter evidently died in Indian Territory in late 1899 or early 1900. When the 1900 Indian Territory census was taken, Nancy J. Roper, a widow, was living in the Chickasaw Nation on a farm in McClain County (not far from Stratford, now Oklahoma) with her son Andrew. Nancy died between 1900 and 1907.

I have not been able to find the graves of Peter B. and Nancy, but there are a number of unmarked graves in the Roper plot in the old McGee Cemetery just north of Stratford, Oklahoma.

For a list of known descendants of Peter B. Roper, see the L. David Roper database on John Roper, Jr. (<http://www.roperld.com/roper.htm#roperjr>).