

# TARRANT COUNTY TXGENWEB

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A. M. Hightower

# Alfred Madison Hightower

(January 8, 1824 - April 10, 1897)

Texas Historical Marker Application Essay Compiled by Texas History Honors Class, Smithfield Middle School Michael E. Patterson, teacher Copyright 1991. All rights reserved.

Texas is a fine state today because of the many hardworking settlers who chose to make it their home. Tarrant County pioneer Alfred Madison Hightower contributed much to the many communities where he lived. He served as a private and captain in the Confederate Army, worked as a farmer and stockman, and founded a family which has made important contributions to North Texas for more than one hundred thirty years.

Alfred Madison Hightower was born in Lincoln County, Tennessee,<sup>1</sup> on January 8, 1824.<sup>2</sup> His father was Hugh M. Hightower,<sup>3</sup> a native of North Carolina, a farmer, and a carpenter.<sup>4</sup> Alfred's mother was Delia (Hicks) Hightower, a native Tennessean.<sup>5</sup> When Alfred was about two years old, his father moved the family to Montgomery County, Illinois, where Alfred grew up with his nine brothers and sisters. At first, they lived in the town of Hillsborough, but later, about 1838, they moved to a farm in the same county.<sup>6</sup>

On July 19, 1846, in Montgomery County, Alfred was married to Sarah J. Grantham,<sup>7</sup> the daughter of James Grantham (1799-1845) and his wife, Frances (Sights) Grantham (1800-1877).<sup>8</sup> Rev. M. Shunk, a local minister, performed the marriage.<sup>9</sup> Sarah was born on August 27, 1824<sup>10</sup> in Kentucky.<sup>11</sup> About 1830, her father moved the family to Montgomery County, Illinois.<sup>12</sup> Sarah's grandparents also lived in the same county. Her paternal grandparents were John H. Grantham (1773-1835) and Elizabeth (Harrison) Grantham (1776-1846). Her maternal grandparents were Jacob Sights (born ca.1755) and his wife, Mary (Black) Sights. Sarah's grandfather, Jacob Sights, was a soldier in the American Revolutionary War. Sarah and her family were members of the Methodist Church; her grandfather, John H. Grantham, was a farmer and Methodist minister.<sup>13</sup>

Alfred and Sarah Hightower settled on a farm near their parents and began farming. They were the parents of seven children, though only six of them lived to adulthood. Their children were James Harrison, Daniel Hughmac, Sarah Jane, Melvina Ellen, Mary Elizabeth, Joseph Q., and Catherine Texana Hightower.<sup>14</sup>

James Harrison Hightower was born on April 16, 1847 in Illinois. In Tarrant County, at the age of sixteen, he enlisted in the Confederate Army.<sup>15</sup> He was married twice. He married his first wife, Elizabeth Calloway (1850-1882), in Tarrant County, Texas, on May 2, 1865. He and his second wife, Cynthia Boyd (1863-1927), were married in Tarrant County on June 15, 1884.<sup>16</sup> He served two terms as County Commissioner of Tarrant County, where he died on August 20, 1923. He was buried beside his two wives in Smithfield Cemetery.<sup>17</sup>

Daniel Hughmac Hightower was born in Illinois on June 21, 1848. He was married in Tarrant County, Texas, on December 29, 1867 to Mary S. Brown.<sup>18</sup> Daniel was a merchant in Keller and Ft. Worth, Texas, before becoming a farmer. He sometimes helped conduct public elections in Fort Worth. He died in Fort Worth on January 3, 1917,<sup>19</sup> and was buried in New Oakwood Cemetery in north Fort Worth.<sup>20</sup>

Sarah Jane Hightower was born in Illinois on March 25, 1850. She was married in 1868 in Tarrant County, Texas, to Eli Smith, for whom the town of Smithfield was named.<sup>21</sup> After he died in 1879, she married A. B. Clark in Tarrant County on April 10, 1881.<sup>22</sup> Sarah later lived in Clarendon, Texas, for a while,<sup>23</sup> and was living with her daughter in Grapevine, Texas, when she died on September 15, 1926. She was buried in Smithfield Cemetery.<sup>24</sup>

Melvina Ellen Hightower was born December 4,1854, in Illinois.<sup>25</sup> She was married to T. Harvey Wagoner(Wagner).<sup>26</sup> Mary Elizabeth Hightower was born March 18, 1857, in Missouri,<sup>27</sup> and was married to Sion Edward Thrower.<sup>28</sup> Mary and Sion Thrower were living in Shawnee, Indian Territory, in 1906.<sup>29</sup> Joseph Q. Hightower was born January 8, 1858; he died as an infant.<sup>30</sup>

Catherine Texana Hightower was born in Tarrant County, Texas, on February 28, 1865.<sup>31</sup> She married William Calvin Meacham in Tarrant County on November 7, 1886.<sup>32</sup> She died April 1, 1948, and was buried in Smithfield Cemetery.<sup>33</sup>

About 1854, Alfred M. Hightower and his family decided to leave their home in Montgomery County, Illinois and move to Texas. After selling their farm, they started the long trip. When Alfred's wife became ill, they decided to stop for a time in Laclede County, Missouri, where they lived for about four years.<sup>34</sup> About 1858, they began their journey again and finally settled in Tarrant County, Texas, in Precinct 3 in present-day Smithfield.<sup>35</sup>

When the Hightower family settled in Tarrant County, Alfred soon began buying land, started a cattle herd, and became increasingly interested in the cattle business. By 1860, Alfred owned 125 acres of land and six horses.<sup>36</sup>

In 1860, Texans all over the state were discussing the idea of seceding from the United States. Alfred Hightower was strongly opposed to leaving the Union and voted against it.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, when the Civil War broke out he joined the Confederate Army. On August 19, 1861, in Tarrant County, Alfred enlisted as a private in Captain William Quayle's Company of Mounted Riflemen, in Col. William Sims' Regiment of Texas State Troops. When he enlisted, he agreed to use his own horse (valued at \$175), his saddle and bridle (valued at \$25), his guns (valued at \$25), and his pistols (valued at \$50). On August 20, this company was the first to leave Fort Worth to fight in the Civil War.<sup>38</sup>

By September 5, 1861, Alfred's company was stationed at Camp Reeves in Grayson County, Texas. On October 14, 1861, the company officially became part of the Confederate Army and was finally renamed Company A, 9th Texas Cavalry. His company did not present too good an appearance when it was inspected. Their military instruction was recorded as "fair," their military appearance was "not good, owing to inferior clothing," their arms and equipment were "not good," and they had no uniforms. At other times, this company and regiment were also known by other names. On November 9, 1861, when Alfred lost his pistol "in action," Company A was at Boggy Depot in the Indian Territory, and for several days was kept busy fighting the "civilized" Indians who did not choose to side with the Southern forces.<sup>39</sup>

On November 19, 1861, Company A fought and held the right at the Battle of Round Mountain Creek (also called the Battle of Red Fork), again fighting Indians. On December 9, they fought in the Battle of Bird Creek, Indian Territory.<sup>40</sup>

In January, 1862, the 9th Texas went into winter quarters with the other regiments in the brigade. They settled into camp on Horsehead Creek, seven miles from Clarksville in Johnson County, Arkansas. Spring came and brought with it more fighting. On March 4, Company A took part in a skirmish at Sugar Creek, Arkansas.<sup>41</sup>

On March 7 and 8, 1862, the 9th Texas Cavalry took part in the Battle of Elkhorn Tavern (Pea Ridge), Arkansas, one of the largest and most important battles fought west of the Mississippi River.<sup>42</sup> One week later, on March 25, 1862, Alfred was appointed wagonmaster of his company, but he soon became ill and was "left sick west of the Mississippi." On July 17, 1862, he received a written discharge from the service. On it, he is described as being six feet one inch tall, with a dark complexion, blue eyes, and brown hair. When he left the service, he received his final pay. It was made up of \$85.60 in pay (three months and seventeen days at \$24 per month), traveling expenses of \$16 (ten cents per mile for the 160 miles from Camp Henderson to Birdville, Texas), and a clothing allowance of \$12.50.<sup>43</sup>

Alfred returned home to get well, but he eventually decided to rejoin the Southern army. On August 11, 1863, in Tarrant County, he enlisted as a private in Company H, 2nd Cavalry, Texas State Troops. He enlisted for six months and was allowed \$457 for the use of his own horse.<sup>44</sup>

About 1894, Alfred was interviewed for a short biography which was printed in the History of Texas Together with a Biographical History of Tarrant and Parker Counties. In the biography, he gave further details of his later service. In his later years, he was generally known throughout Tarrant County as "Captain Hightower, in recognition of his military service."<sup>45</sup>

When the War came on he enlisted in the Sixth Texas Cavalry, which was consigned to the Trans-Mississippi Department. A year later his command was dismounted in Arkansas and ordered across the river to Corinth, in which battle he participated. He was also in the battle of Holly Springs, and continued in the Army of Tennessee about six months, after which he recrossed the Mississippi. Soon afterward, he was detailed as recruiting officer, and later raised a company, of which he was Captain, and with his company entered the Tenth Texas Regiment and remained on duty until the close of the war. At the time of the surrender he was at Dallas, and from there returned home. During all his service, he was neither wounded nor captured, but on one occasion had his horse killed under him.<sup>46</sup>

After the war, Alfred returned to his home on the J. H. Barlough survey in presentday North Richland Hills. His home was just northwest of the old intersection of Watauga and Smithfield Roads. Like all the other ex-Confederate soldiers, he accepted the results of the war and set about to rebuild his life and fortune. Many of his cattle and horses had been killed or taken during the war, and he soon decided to become a cattleman in a new home. In 1870, he moved his family to Kansas, taking a herd of 600 cattle with him.<sup>47</sup>

On September 27, 1878, his wife, Sarah J. Hightower, died.<sup>48</sup> He later remarried in Kansas; his second wife was Pomelia V. Ridgeway, the daughter of C. W. Ridgeway.<sup>49</sup> She was born in 1848.<sup>50</sup> Her father was a merchant in Lebanon, Ohio before he moved to Dexter, Kansas. Mr. Ridgeway continued to operate his store in Kansas from about 1870 until about 1874, when he moved to a farm.<sup>51</sup>

About 1880, Alfred decided to return to his home in Tarrant County, Texas, bringing his new wife with him. Alfred and Pomelia had three children: Alfred Ernest, Frank Gilbert, and Pomelia Virginia Hightower, all born in Tarrant County.<sup>52</sup>

Alfred Ernest Hightower was born on March 22, 1883, and married Lena Mae Perkins. Frank Gilbert Hightower was born on May 16, 1886, and married Mary M. Johnson. Pomelia Virginia Hightower was born April 23, 1889, married Charley Hopkins and was alive in California as late as 1966.<sup>53</sup>

In his later years, Alfred was known and respected in northeast Tarrant County. A tall man who weighed over two hundred pounds and wore size thirteen shoes, he spoke with a heavy Scottish or Irish brogue. He brought one of the first breech loading shotguns into Tarrant County.<sup>54</sup> The firearm is today owned by his great-grandson,

Billy Meacham, of Fort Worth. One of the gun's hammers has been missing since it fell off the gun during the hunt for an escaped convict in a field south of the Hightower home.<sup>55</sup>

Alfred Hightower and his wife were members of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.<sup>56</sup> In his last years, he was a prosperous farmer and raised horses, cattle, and sheep.<sup>57</sup> Alfred Hightower joined the Grand Prairie Masonic Lodge #455 (now known as the Smithfield Lodge) on December 19, 1885. Two of his sons, James H. Hightower and Daniel H. Hightower, were also prominent in the lodge's early history.<sup>58</sup>

In 1894, Alfred's second wife, Pomelia, died and was buried in Smithfield Cemetery. Alfred lived until April 10, 1897, and was buried beside his wife.<sup>59</sup> His home continued to stand for many years, and, after many additions, was the home of his grandson, Guy Meacham. When the house was finally razed in the 1980's, several of the original hand-hewn oak timbers of the house's nucleus remained.<sup>60</sup>

Alfred's death did not end his family's influence here. Hightower Street in North Richland Hills honors his family. W. A. Meacham Middle School in Fort Worth was named for one of his grandsons. They have been leaders in elected government, education, and business here for nearly one hundred years.

Captain Alfred Madison Hightower was one of the brave, hardworking settlers who built the Tarrant County and the Texas of today. His willingness to take chances to help his family, his willingness to risk his life for his state, and his determination should be examples to all of us. As a settler, pioneer, founder, and soldier, he is well worthy of a Texas Historical Marker.

## Alfred Madison Hightower Project Honors Texas History Class Smithfield Middle School

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[Signatures accompanied all names above.]

This marker application is a cooperative project of the seventh-grade Texas history/language arts honors class at Smithfield Middle School, 8400 Main Street, Fort Worth, Texas 76180. The teacher is Michael E. Patterson.

### NOTES

Virtually every event in the life of A. M. Hightower is, represented in surviving records with conflicting data. In all cases, the record most likely to be correct has been cited first, and the text reflects the data which were chosen as most reliable. Additional notes concerning alternate dates/events will be included in these notes.

- United States, National Archives, <u>Compiled Military Service Records of</u> <u>Confederate Soldiers</u>. Microfilm at Dallas Public Library. Service record abstracts of A. M. Hightower. Hightower's discharge from the Confederate Army, dated July 17, 1862. W. A. Meacham, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Fort Worth School District, letter dated March 26, 1957 to Walter A. Walker of Atlanta, Georgia. Copy in possession of William R. Meacham of Fort Worth, Texas.
- 2. Lewis Publishing Co., ed., <u>History of Texas Together with a Biographical History of Tarrant and Parker Counties</u>, (Chicago, Illinois: Lewis Publishing Co., 1895), p. 248. Copy at Fort Worth Public Library. This birth date, obtained from a interview with Mr. Hightower about 1894, is in agreement with others obtained through computations based upon his stated age at certain times during his Confederate service. His gravestone in Smithfield Cemetery records his birth date as January 8, 1825; a date of 1825 is also computed from his stated age during the 1850 census. The gravestone (which also includes inscriptions for both his wives and his infant son, Joseph) indicates that Mr. Hightower was one year younger than his wife. In the 1850 census of Montgomery County, Illinois, she is also shown as one year his senior.
- 3. ibid., W. A. Walker, letters dated February 1, 1951, March 21, 1957, and April 28, 1957 at Atlanta, Georgia, to W. A. Meacham of Fort Worth, Texas. Copies in possession of William R. Meacham of Fort Worth.
- 4. Lewis Pub. Co., ed., <u>History of Texas</u> ..., p. 249. U. S. Federal Census, Montgomery Co., Illinois, Oct. 7, 1850; Dist. 22, page 158.
- 5. ibid., also Walker.
- 6. Lewis Pub. Co., ed., <u>History of Texas</u> ..., pp. 248-249.

- 7. Margaret Simpson Rambo et al, comp., <u>Montgomery County, Illinois Marriage</u> <u>Records 1821-1850</u>, (Litchfield, Illinois: Montgomery County Genealogical Society, 1980), p. 12. Copy at Fort Worth Public Library.
- 8. Montgomery County Genealogical Society, <u>Montgomery County Genealogica1</u> <u>Society Quarterly</u> (Litchfield, Illinois: private printing), Vol. 4, No.3 (January 1982), pp. 48, 90. Copies at Fort Worth Public Library.
- 9. Margaret Simpson Rambo, p. 12.
- 10. Smithfield Cemetery gravestones.
- 11. <u>Montgomery County Genealogical Society Quarterly</u>, Vol. 4, No. 3 (January 1982), p. 90.
- 12. ibid.
- 13. <u>Montgomery County Genealogical Society Quarterly</u> Vol. 4, No.3 (January 1982), pp. 48, 90; Vol. 6, No. 3 (January 1984), p. 109. Lewis Pub. Co., p. 249.
- 14. Lewis Pub. Co., ed., <u>History of Texas</u> ..., pp. 248-249. William R. Meacham, interview with Michael E. Patterson at Fort Worth, Texas, September 16, 1990. Family records, apparently a typescript of a family Bible record of the James Harrison Hightower family; copy in Mr. Meacham's files.
- Joseph B. Bandor, comp., <u>Memoirs of Tarrant County Confederate Veterans and others of the Post-War Period</u>, (Fort Worth, Texas: private printing, 1960), p. 49. Copy at Fort Worth Public Library. B. B. Paddock, Capt., ed., <u>A Twentieth Century History and Biographical Record of North and West Texas</u>, (Chicago, Illinois: Lewis Publishing Co., 1906), p. 211. Copy at Fort Worth Public Library.
- 16. William R. Meacham personal files. Smithfield Cemetery gravestones. Tarrant County, Texas, Marriage Records, Vol. 3, p. 277. Paddock, p. 211.
- 17. Smithfield Masonic Lodge Records. Copies at Tarrant County Archives, Fort Worth, Texas. Smithfield Cemetery gravestones.
- 18. William R. Meacham personal files.

- 19. Hugh Alfred Hightower, (b. Dec. 12, 1899), interview with Michael E. Patterson at Fort Worth, Texas, September 10, 1990. Smithfield Masonic Lodge Records.
- 20. Hugh Alfred Hightower interview.
- William R. Meacham personal files. United States, Federal Census, Montgomery County, Illinois, 1850, District 22, p. 158. Michael E. Patterson et al, "Eli Smith," application for Texas Historical Marker, 1983. Copy in Tarrant County Archives, Fort Worth, Texas. [The] Grapevine Sun, September 23, 1926, p. 1. Microfilm at Tarrant County Junior College, Hurst, Texas.
- 22. Smithfield Cemetery gravestones. Tarrant County Texas Marriage Records, Book 2, p. 248.
- 23. Paddock, p. 211.
- 24. [The] Grapevine Sun, September 23, 1926, p. 1.
- 25. William R. Meacham personal files. United States, Federal Census, Tarrant County, Texas, 1870, precinct 3, page 3.
- 26. Lewis Pub. Co., ed., <u>History of Texas</u> ..., p. 249. B. B. Paddock, p. 211
- 27. William R. Meacham personal files. U. S. Federal Census, Tarrant County, Texas, 1870, precinct 3, page 3.
- 28. ibid. B. B. Paddock, p. 211.
- 29. B. B. Paddock, p. 211.
- 30. William R. Meacham personal files. Smithfield Cemetery gravestones.
- 31. ibid.
- 32. ibid., Tarrant County, Texas, Marriage Records, Vol. 4, p. 230.
- 33. Smithfield Cemetery gravestones.

- 34. Lewis Pub. Co., ed., History of Texas ..., p. 248. B. B. Paddock, p. 211.
- Lewis Pub. Co., ed., <u>History of Texas</u> ..., p. 248. Betty Coburn Winchester, comp., "A List of Registered Voters of Tarrant County, Texas for the Year 1867," published in Fort Worth Genealogical Society, <u>Footprints</u>, (May 1971), Vol. 14, No. 2, p. 72
- 36. Tarrant County, Texas, Tax Records, 1860. Microfilm copies at the University of North Texas, Denton, Texas.
- 37. Lewis Pub. Co., ed., p. 249.
- <u>Compiled Military Service Records</u> of A. M. Hightower. Texas State Archives, <u>Texas Confederate Index</u>, card abstract of records of A. M. Hightower. Bandor, p. 18.
- 39. ibid. Homer L. Kerr, ed., <u>Fighting With Ross' Texas Cavalry Brigade C.S.A.: The</u> <u>Diary of George L. Griscom. Adjutant, 9th Texas Cavalry Regiment</u>, (Hillsboro, Texas: Hill Jr. College Press, 1976), pp. 3-5.
- 40. Kerr, pp. 5-6.
- 41. ibid., pp. 5-13
- 42. ibid., pp. 14-15.
- 43. <u>Compiled Military Service Records</u> of A. M. Hightower.
- 44. ibid.
- 45. Lewis Pub. Co., ed., pp. 249-250. Smithfield Masonic Lodge Records, B. B. Paddock, p. 211.
- 46. Lewis Pub. Co., ed., pp. 248-250.
- 47. Tarrant County Tax Records. Lewis Pub. Co., ed., p. 249. "<u>Sam Street's Map of</u> <u>Tarrant County, Texas Dec. 1895</u>," (Fort Worth, Texas: Texas Map Publishing Co., 1895). Copy at Tarrant County Archives, Fort Worth, Texas.

- 48. Smithfield Cemetery gravestones. Because most records indicate that A. M. Hightower and his family were living in Kansas at the time of Mrs. Hightower's death in 1878, it is probable that her names was added to the gravestone in Smithfield Cemetery as a memorial only, and that her body was probably buried in Kansas. The single gravestone contains the names and dates of A. M. Hightower, Sarah J. Hightower, Pomelia V. Ridgeway, and Joseph Hightower. The marker is of mid-twentieth century manufacture, and was almost certainly placed many years after A. M. Hightower's death.
- 49. Lewis Pub. Co., ed., p. 250.
- 50. Smithfield Cemetery gravestones.
- 51. Lewis Pub. Co., ed., p. 250.
- 52. ibid., pp. 249-250. William R. Meacham personal files.
- 53. William R. Meacham personal files.
- 54. William R. Meacham interview. Julia Kathryn Garrett, <u>Fort Worth: A Frontier</u> <u>Triumph</u>, (Austin, Texas: Encino Press, 1972), p. 202. Hugh Alfred Hightower interview.
- 55. ibid.
- 56. Lewis Pub. Co., ed., p. 250.
- 57. ibid., p. 248. Tarrant County, Texas, Tax Records.
- 58. Smithfield Masonic Lodge Records. Masonic Grand Lodge of Texas Records.
- 59. ibid. Smithfield Cemetery gravestones. Grand Lodge of Texas, letter dated August 3, 1990, at Waco, Texas, to Michael E. Patterson. The Smithfield Lodge records contemporary with Hightower's death, and the related reports filed with the Grand Lodge of Texas at the end of the year, record the death date of A. M. Hightower as April 10, 1897. His death date is recorded on his gravestone as April 9, 1897.
- 60. William R. Meacham interview.

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Smithfield Cemetery. Tombstone Inscriptions.

- Smithfield Masonic Lodge. Lodge Records. Photocopies in Tarrant County Archives, Fort Worth, Texas.
- Tarrant County, Texas. Marriage Records.
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Texas Archives. <u>Texas Confederate Index</u>. Microfilm at Fort Worth Public Library.

United States. <u>Compiled Military Service Records of Confederate Veterans</u>. Microfilm at Dallas Public Library.

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