



TARRANT COUNTY

TXGENWEB

Barbara Knox and Rob Yoder, County Coordinators

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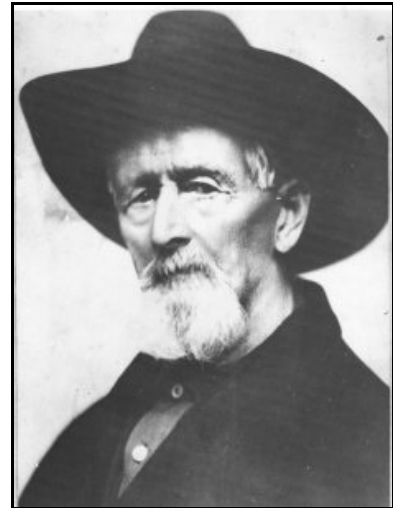
Civil War Veterans of Northeast Tarrant County

William Letchworth Hurst

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William Letchworth Hurst, born in Claiborne County, Tennessee on June 1, 1833, was one of at least thirteen children of Wiley Thompson Hurst and his wife, America (Plank) Hurst. The City of Hurst, Texas was named for him. Hurst married Mary Lynch (born October 15, 1835 in North Carolina) in March, 1856.

He was a private in Co. H, 61st Tennessee Mounted Infantry, having enlisted at Sycamore, Claiborne County, Tennessee on October 3, 1862. He was mustered into the Confederate service at Henderson Depot, Tennessee on November 10, 1862. On the regimental rolls for March and April, 1863, he is shown sick in a hospital at Jackson, Mississippi. He was captured at the fall of Vicksburg in 1863, and was paroled and released on July 8. His name appears on a receipt for clothing on September 26, 1863. In December, 1863 the regiment got horses and spent the rest of the war as mounted infantry. He was captured on December 12, 1863



near Tazewell, Tennessee, and spent the rest of the war in military prisons in Kentucky and Illinois. He was sent from the prison at Louisville, Kentucky on January 17, 1864, entered the prison at Rock Island, Illinois on January 20. On March 6 1865, he was paroled and released from Rock Island. Many oral traditions have survived among the Hurst descendants concerning the War years. Mrs. Hurst made two sets of uniforms for her children, and they showed themselves in the appropriate colors whenever soldiers were in the neighborhood. After Mary learned her husband had been captured, she and the children went to Missouri to stay with relatives until the War ended.

After Hurst was released, he rode horseback to Missouri to retrieve his family. When he joined the R. E. Lee Camp of United Confederate Veterans in Fort Worth, he wrote a note stating the battles

in which he fought. They included Big Black River, Mississippi and Chickamauga, Georgia. He also fought in the Atlanta Campaign.

In 1870, he and his wife and children joined other families who had migrated to eastern Tarrant County from Claiborne County, Tennessee. They first stopped on the “Widder Daniels” place near Eules, then lived for a time on Dr. W. C. Dobkins farm on the Barnard Survey. Later still they moved to the William O. Yantis survey in Bedford. In 1895 he lived in present-day Bedford on the M. W. Wilmuth survey, in the general area of Sierra Springs Drive southeast of Bedford Road. Many of the post oaks which stood around his home there are still alive.

In 1903 he granted a right-of-way across his property for the Rock Island rail line, and the stop there was named in his honor. By the time of his wife’s death on February 21, 1908 he had moved to present-day Hurst, and was living within the rectangle now bounded by Pipeline Road, Bellaire Drive, Pecan Street East, and Brown Trail. He lived there until the death of his daughter, Evie, in 1920. After that time he lived with his children in their homes.

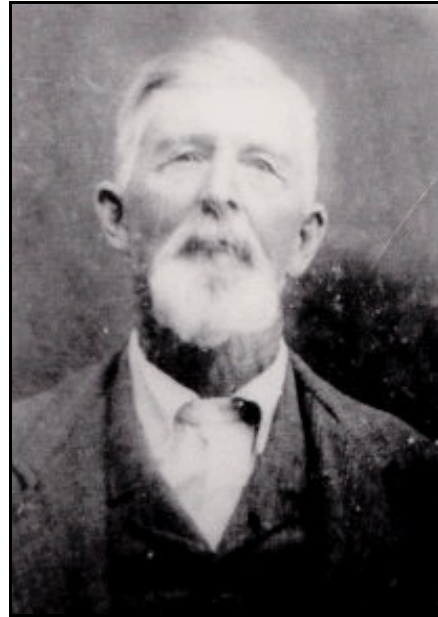
At the time of his death on June 26, 1922, he was living with the family of his son, Hous Hurst, in Hurst along present-day Highway 10 (on land now occupied by Hurst Lumber Company, at southeast side of the intersection of the Highway and Norwood Drive). Two or three days before his death he was able to jump into the air and click his heels. He lies buried with his wife and several of his children in Bedford Cemetery.

An obituary and photograph of Uncle Billy Hurst appeared in the Fort Worth Star-Telegram: *“HURST FUNERAL IS TO BE HELD WEDNESDAY. Funeral services for W. L. Hurst, 89, pioneer settler of Tarrant County, who died suddenly at his home in Hurst at 5 p.m. Monday, will be held from the Hurst Baptist Church at 3 p.m. Wednesday. Burial will be in the Hurst Cemetery. Hurst was born in Eastern Tennessee in 1833, and while a young man took Miss Mary Ann Lynch of Kentucky as his wife. In 1862 he enlisted in the Confederate army and served under General Vaughn in the battle of Gettysburg, where he was taken prisoner. In 1870 he and his family drove to Texas and Tarrant County in a covered wagon and settled within a mile of where he died. When the little town was founded near his farm, it was named Hurst after the old settler. For 20 years it was his custom to celebrate his birthday with a family reunion and community barbecue at his farm. During the World War, Hurst took an active part in raising Red Cross funds and selling Liberty bonds. He is survived by four sons, M. S. Hurst, J. H. Hurst, E. E. Hurst and W. C. Hurst, all of Hurst; two daughters, Mrs. Milton Souder of Hurst, and Mrs. M. Huffman of Farmer; two brothers, Jim Hurst and J. H. Hurst of Tennessee, and 100 grandchildren. Hurst’s death was unexpected. He died of heart failure while sleeping and only a few hours previous had apparently been in his usual good health.”*

He was the father of fourteen children and the grandfather of more than one hundred. Many of his descendants still live in the area today. His grandson, Bill Souder, was Mayor of Hurst for many years. An extensive oral history of his life was written in 1980 by Mike Patterson from interviews with his surviving grandchildren. Copies of his biography are available at the Hurst Public Library and the Bedford Public Library. Uncle Billy Hurst’s children were: Missouri Ann (Mrs. George Washington) Hoffman, Nathan Booneville Hurst, Mahlon Stableton Hurst, Melissa Frances “Frank” (Mrs. Benjamin M.) Brown, Jefferson D. Hurst, Sophia Jane “Soph” (Mrs. Alfred) Conner, Emerson

Ethridge Hurst, James Houston “Hous” Hurst, Evie Bell Hurst, Wiley Thomas Hurst, Hiram Sol Hurst, America Belle (Mrs. James H.) Souder, William Ceal D. Hurst, and a stillborn infant.

The following is an extensive oral history of Mr. Hurst’s life, written by this compiler during the 1970’s from interviews with his surviving grandchildren.



William L. Hurst



Photo courtesy of Allen Wheatley - <http://teafor2.com>