

Texas Soldier Robert Henry

Born 5-7-1801. Died 10-29-1865. Married Elizabeth Downing 11-1820 in Londonderry, Ireland. Came to Texas 1832 settling in Robertson Colony. Served in the Army of the Republic from March 9 to June 8, 1836 as a Private, 6th Company, 2nd Regiment, Infantry, Texas Volunteers. Fought in the Battle of San Jacinto under General Sam Houston.

Prominent in civic and public affairs. Served as Justice of the Peace holding court under trees.

Was a staunch Presbyterian and held Church in his home while under Mexican rule with guards posted outside.

Note: This information came from personal papers as well as my lineage papers of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas. References: Page 408, "The Heroes of San Jacinto" by Sam Houston Dixon and Louis Wiltz Kemp. General Land Office, Austin, Texas, p 37, History of Texas, Vol. II by John Henry Brown.¹

Note: Wording on present headstone: Robert Henry Born March 7, 1801, Died October 29, 1865.

Robert Henry -- Service Record-Proven Records

Page 408 "The Heroes of San Jacinto" by Sam Houston Dixon and Louis Wiltz Kemp. Robert Henry: Emigrated to Texas in Nov 1834; Granted land in Robertson's Colony situated in the present county of Live Oak. Died October 29, 1865. According to Service Record #7421, Mr. Henry enlisted March 9 and served until June 8, 1836. He was granted a headright certificate for one-third (1/3) of a league of land by the Robertson County Board in 1838.

¹ Editor's Note: Author's name not known.

General Land Office, Austin, Texas: Robert Henry granted 640 acres of land in Hill County, Texas by certificate #607 for having been engaged in the Battle of San Jacinto, the date of this Certificate being November 17, 1838. Robert Henry granted 320 acres of land in Brazos County, Texas by certificate #2854 for having faithfully and honorably served in the Army of the Republic from March 9 until June 8, 1836 and having been honorably discharged, the date of this certificate being April 12, 1838.

Page 37 History of Texas, Vol. II, by John Henry Brown, Private, 6th Company, 2nd Regiment Infantry, Texas Volunteers.

* For months before Robert Henry and Elizabeth were married in Ireland, plans were made and passage secured to sail for the New World where opportunities were to be found. They sailed the day following their marriage, Nov. 1820, and came to South Carolina where they lived for several years, and where the oldest son, Hugh, was born. They moved into Alabama and remained several years. The records of Green County, Alabama show the transfer of property of Robert and Elizabeth Downing Henry in 1832 to John J. Friend for \$900.00. A short time after the sale of the property in Alabama, they came to Texas, settling in what is now Robertson County. He was the Justice of the Peace and held Court under the shade of trees.

In 1834 he was granted land, as the records of the Land Office in Austin, Texas show. When word came of the struggle of Texas for Independence, he took one of the three horses and joined the Army of Sam Houston, and remained in the service until after the surrender of Santa Anna in 1836. A short time after that, he was granted a league of land, and almost all of that acreage remained in the hands of his grandchildren and great grandchildren.

When he came from Alabama, he brought with him some rye seed, which was the first to be planted in this section and the Old Rye Field stands and is his burial place.

The U. S. Census of 1850 shows that he resided in dwelling #90 in Robertson County and his holdings were estimated at \$10,000.00 [sic]. He died on October 29, 1865 and his wife, Elizabeth, made her home with her daughters, Mary Henry and Bradford Seale and Elizaveth [sic] Henry and

Columbus Seale. The two oldest daughters, Elizabeth and Mary, married two brothers, Columbus C. and Bradford Thomas Seale. Through the gift of land from Robert Henry they established homes within a mile of each other and built a school, which was also used as a Presbyterian Church. The Seale Family Cemetery is also located at this spot.

Elizabeth Downing Henry was a Texas Heroine. She is given space in the "History of Pioneer Presbyterian Women of the South". Also some interesting newspaper articles have pictured her courage and heroism and shown her as the woman of her times who dedicated her life to service of the sick, helpless and poor.

At one time when Robert Henry was away in service, she was sitting in the open hall at her spinning wheel, when Indians approached from both sides. She signaled her son, Hugh, who hurriedly went to the barn and took her two horses to the woods. The music of the spinning wheel fascinated the Indians and they danced as she worked. Then they started to the barn. She went with them and going to the door of the corn crib, with the keys in her hand, stood with her back against the door, and pointing to her children and to the crib, indicating that it was all she had to feed her children. Finally the chief walked over to her and patting her on the shoulder said, "Heap Brave. Brave Squaw." Then all bowed politely and left. She always spoke kindly of the Indians and a deep respect for them but in the same spirit disliked the Mexicans.

At one time a rider came and told the settlers to flee as the Mexicans were coming. Along with other settlers, they went to the Navasota River, but found it on a terrible rampage. She had six children with her. She took the two horses and putting the oldest, Hugh, in the saddle, tied one child in front and another on the back. She placed the other three on the horse with her and tied the two horses together and plunged into the swollen waters, with her friends calling frantically to prevent her attempting to go across. She left them with the comment that she preferred death in the water rather than at the hands of the Mexicans. She succeeded in getting across. She went on to Nacogdoches, Texas and lived with her children until her husband, Robert Henry, came for her.

She was the center of many experiences during those years, living on wild game and with only wild onions and greens for vegetables, but she never referred to those years with any degree of pity for herself, but always

with gratitude for the safe return of Robert Henry and a Providence that allowed her to keep the home and children safe.

Children of Robert & Elizabeth Downing Henry: Hugh R. Henry, John Henry, William Henry, Sam Henry, Robert Henry, Jr., Cathering [sic] Henry, James Henry, Margaret (Peggy) Henry, Stafford Henry, Elizabeth Henry, Ann Jana Henry, Alexander Henry, Mary Henry.

* Note: This is a family history written for our D.R.T. papers. Mostly tales that have been told and handed down from one generation to another.²

² Editor's Note 2: Attached are: "The Heroes of San Jacinto," page 408; "Founders and Patriots of the Republic of Texas," pages 94, 328, 378.