

# **WILLIAM HENRY (BILLY) JONES**

**Planter, Co. A, Terry's Texas Rangers, 8<sup>th</sup> Texas Cavalry**

WILLIAM HENRY (BILLY) JONES was born 13 August 1842, in Conecuh County, Alabama. He grew up near Evergreen, Alabama, living on the family plantation. When Billy Jones was 11 years old, his father, Churchill A. Jones, moved the entire family to the Falls County, Texas, property. By this time the Indians and the buffalo had moved west, Texas had been in the Union for eight years, and the fighting with Mexico was over. The family established the successful beginnings of a plantation to include a home for the Jones clan. According to the United States Census of 1860, Billy's father was one of the top five largest planters in Texas. Billy spent the next 5-6 years at home, then attended Texas Monumental and Military Institute (formerly Rutgersville College) in Fayette County, not far from LaGrange, Texas, until Spring, 1861.

With the fires of Secession spreading through Texas, nineteen-year-old Billy volunteered to fight for the Confederacy. He and his cousin, Austin Robinson, were recruited in Falls County for a cavalry company and on 25 September 1861, in Houston, he enlisted in Captain Thomas Harrison's Company A, Terry's Texas Rangers, 8th Texas Cavalry. Billy Jones was elected as 2nd Lieutenant. Billy brought along a servant with him for at least part of the war. Billy Jones was present at the Battle of Shiloh, April 1862. The Terry Rangers were under Nathan B. Forrest when he captured Murfreesboro in July, 1862. In the Fall, 1862, the Confederate forces under General Braxton Bragg invaded Kentucky. Austin Robinson was shot and captured there, later returning in a prisoner exchange. Billy was present at the Battle of Perryville, Kentucky. In January, 1863, he was involved at the Battle of Murfreesboro (Stones River), Tennessee. Throughout the summer of 1863 the Terry Rangers were fighting battles in Tennessee.

In a fight with Wisconsin Cavalry at Mossy Creek, Tennessee 12 January 1864, Billy was wounded and was carried to his Grandfather Tomlinson's in Evergreen, Alabama to recover from his wounds. Billy Jones was retired to the Invalid Corps under General R. Taylor, C.S.A., and paroled at Selma, Alabama June 6, 1865; William Henry Jones married Isadore Evaline Tomlinson, a daughter of Aaron Tomlinson and Ann Dafan, in Conecuh County, AL in 1864. She died in childbirth 25 October 1867 in Falls County. On 8 June 1870 Billy Jones married Octavia Ripley, from Craig County, Virginia. Octavia was born 15 February 1848, in Newcastle, Virginia. Billy was active in Falls County's Willis L. Lang Camp of Confederate Veterans and attended several reunions of Terry's Texas Rangers.

A family story adds that, many years later, the Minnie ball that had entered his shoulder came out of a sore on his back. Billy Jones died 9 September 1912 in St Louis, Missouri, after a heart attack on a train returning to Texas from Craig, County, Virginia. Octavia lived many more years, dying 9 February 1938 in Marlin. They are both buried in Calvary Cemetery, Marlin, Texas.

Sources:

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*William Henry Jones Federal Grave Marker*



*Martha at Billy Jones Grave*