



TARRANT COUNTY TXGENWEB

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Dr. Lilburn Howard Colley

Texas Historical Marker Application Essay
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One of the best known pioneer physicians in late-nineteenth century northeast Tarrant County, Dr. Lilburn Howard Colley, settled in the Bransford Community in 1885. For nearly forty years, he built a reputation of community service and dependability which is still remembered here by many of his now-aged patients. The growing northeast Tarrant County city of Colleyville today honors his dedication and hard work.

Lilburn Howard Colley was born September 5, 1843 on his father's farm at Colley Hollow, near Waynesville, Pulaski County, Missouri. He was one of ten children born to Cyrus Colley (1800-1876) and his wife, Elizabeth Howard Colley (b. 1805). The hollow where they made their home was named for the elder Colley, a prominent citizen who, in addition to being a farmer and carpenter, held the offices of County Judge and County Commissioner of Pulaski County.¹ Lilburn Colley and his brothers and sisters grew to maturity in Pulaski County.

During the Civil War, L. H. Colley served as a Union soldier. On July 30, 1864 at Waynesville, Missouri, he enlisted as a private in Company A, 48th Missouri Infantry. At the time of his enlistment, he was unable to write his name. On October 15, 1864 he was assigned daily duty as the company drummer, and held that duty until June 1, 1865 when he was designated principal musician of the Company. He was discharged on June 29, 1865 at Benton Barracks at St. Louis, Missouri. The U. S. government later granted him a pension (no. 1063576) for his services.²

After his discharge, L. H. Colley continued to live in Pulaski County, Missouri until June 1875 when he moved to Charlton County in the same state. At Salisbury, Charlton County, on May 29, 1879, he was married to Martha Sabrina Fowks. The marriage service was performed by the Rev. Cragg, a circuit-riding Methodist minister. Martha Fowks Colley was born September 2, 1860 in Missouri.³

Mr. and Mrs. Colley were the parents of four children: Ethel Janett Colley, (born March 9, 1882); Thaddeus Constantine Colley (born June 14, 1884); Darius Plutarch Colley (born December 12, 1890); and Cyrus Levi Colley (born January 22, 1894). Like his father, Thaddeus C. Colley became a prominent area physician and practiced at the same time and in the same places as his father. Old residents who recall both men refer to them as "Old Dr. Colley" and "Young Dr. Colley."⁴ Dr. L. H. Colley received his medical training prior to 1900, but no sources have been located to detail where or when.

On October 12, 1880, Colley and his wife left Missouri and moved to Parker County, Texas. For a short time the Colleys also lived in Wilbarger County, Texas, though when they lived there is uncertain.⁵

In October 1885 the Colleys arrived in northeast Tarrant County. Within a few years they settled near the west end of present-day Shelton Drive at its intersection with Bransford Road in the Bransford Community. Their house sat on a tract of 7-1/2 acres on the O. C. Sturm survey,⁶ and was occupied by the family for several years. After the turn of the century, the family moved to another house which sat on the T. J. Polson survey south of present-day Glade Road a short distance east of its intersection with Bransford Road. Mr. Colley bought and sold several tracts of land during the years he lived in Tarrant County.⁷

Dr. L. H. Colley's leadership abilities were highly valued by the citizens of his community. He was appointed at least twice to conduct the School Trustee elections for the Pleasant Run School District, once in 1889 and once in 1893.⁸ Most early families of the Colleyville area can relate at least one story about Dr. Colley's influence on their lives. One of Colley's neighbors, G. W. Couch, so admired him that he named two of his sons Lilburn and Thaddeus Couch after the two Colleys.⁹

The City of Colleyville got its start on a Sunday morning in October, 1914, when area native Walter G. Couch (b. 1892) went to Dr. Colley's home and asked if the Colleys might wish to sell a small two-room house they had recently built just west of their

own on the T. J. Polson survey. Mr. Couch told the Colleys he wished to open a grocery store in the community, and thought their building and its location would be ideal. The following morning Couch and Colley traveled to Grapevine and closed the deal. That same morning Couch ordered his opening stock of goods from Roy Stewart, a traveling salesman based in Fort Worth. Couch, his father, and his brothers transported the goods in three wagons fitted with cotton sideboards. Within a few days, the store was operating.¹⁰

Dr. Colley himself suggested the name "Colleyville" in a conversation with the Couches as they were stocking their shelves prior to starting business. The Colleyville of 1983 embraces all or parts of the earlier communities of Bransford, Pleasant Run, Old Union, Pleasant Glade, and Spring Garden. Some areas traditionally identified with the Bedford and Smithfield communities are also included.¹¹

Both Mr. and Mrs. Colley spent the rest of their lives in the growing community which bears their name. Mrs. Colley died of cancer on the morning of February 22, 1914, and was buried in Smithfield Cemetery. Dr. Colley continued to live in their home, but died while visiting his daughter, Ethel Kelly, in Wichita Falls, Texas on October 26, 1924. His body was returned for burial beside his wife. His funeral service was conducted by the members of the Smithfield Masonic Lodge to which he belonged; they were assisted by the members of the Grapevine and Keller Lodges.¹²

Narrative by:

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FOOTNOTES

- 1 Smithfield Cemetery, tombstone inscriptions; Goodspeed Publishing Co., History of Laclede,...and Dent Counties, Missouri, (Chicago, 1889), pp. 778-780.
- 2 U. S., General Services Administration, Compiled Military Service Records of Lilburn H. Colley, Co. A., 48th Missouri Infantry; U. S., Pension Records, Lilburn H. Colley, #1063576.
- 3 U. S. Pension Records, #1063576.
- 4 *ibid*; interview with Walter G. Couch at Keller, Texas, Oct. 9, 1975.
- 5 U. S. Pension Records, #1063576.
- 6 *ibid.*, Tarrant County, Texas Deed Records, Vol. 108, p. 418; Sam Street's Map of Tarrant County, Texas, 1895.
- 7 Walter G. Couch interview, 1975.
- 8 Tarrant County, Texas, Commissioners Minute Books 6, p. 151, and 7, p. 515.
- 9 Walter G. Couch interview, 1975. He was a son of G. W. Couch.
- 10 *ibid.* Tarrant County Deed Records, Vol. 505, p. 182 record the issuance of a Warranty Deed from L. H. Colley and his children to George W. Couch for this property on August 16, 1916. Walter G. Couch' s date of 1914 probably refers to the time a deed of trust was executed.
- 11 Walter G. Couch interview, 1975.
- 12 Smithfield Cemetery, tombstone inscriptions; The Grapevine Sun, Feb. 28, 1914, p. 1; Fort Worth Star-Telegram, October 27, 1924 (Evening), p. 4.

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Couch, Walter G. (born 1892). Interview with Patterson at Keller, Texas, October 9, 1975.

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Grapevine Sun. February 28, 1914.

Sam Street's Map of Tarrant County, Texas. 1895.

Smithfield Cemetery. Tombstone Inscriptions.

Tarrant County, Texas. Deed Records. Commissioners Minute Books.

United States. Compiled Military Service Records. Pension Records.