



TARRANT COUNTY TXGENWEB

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Civil War Veterans of Northeast Tarrant County

Rufus Bolivar Sigler

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Rufus Bolivar Sigler was born in Alabama, and came to Texas with his family when Texas was still a part of Mexico. He settled at Birdville, practiced law there before the War, and joined a local Confederate cavalry unit. He lived in northeast Tarrant County at least as late as the 1870's.

In 1972 a descendant of Mr. Sigler's daughter, Florence Ellen (Sigler) Walker, placed some information in an issue of the Austin (Texas) Genealogical Society Quarterly. Her records seemed to be most complete and reasonable, and they have been used in this account in many cases. Their completeness seems to suggest the existence of a Sigler family Bible. The descendant was Mrs. Claud G. Sparks, 4213 Prickly Pear Drive, Austin, Texas 78703.

Rufus Bolivar Sigler was born February 9, 1826 in Perry County, Alabama. His father, William N. Sigler, was in Sabine County, Texas by 1834. A short article about William N. Sigler appeared in the Handbook of Texas Online: "*SIGLER, WILLIAM N. (1798-?). William N. Sigler, early Texas settler and public official, was born in North Carolina in 1798. He immigrated to Texas and applied for land at Bevil in the department of Nacogdoches on November 19, 1834. The census of 1835 listed him as a farmer and a married man. He represented San Augustine in the **Consultation** and in the **General Council** of 1835. In 1837 or 1838 he was a justice of the peace in San Augustine. In 1850 Sigler owned real property valued at \$4,000 and ten slaves. At that time his household included his wife, Julie Ann, and two children, a twenty-year-old son and a sixteen-year-old daughter, both born in Alabama.*"

Bolaver Sigler appears as a nine-year-old boy in the family of his parents, W. N. and Julian Sigler, in 1835 in the Sabine District of the Republic of Texas census. William N. Sigler, his wife, Julian Ann, and two of their children born in Alabama appear in the 1850 census of the Sabine District, Sabine County, Texas.

At some time during the 1840's, Rufus Sigler made his way to Smith County, Texas. After the incorporation of the City of Tyler in 1847, elections were held in 1848, and Rufus B. Sigler was elected one of the first four aldermen for the city.

An interesting note appeared in the Texas Union, published at San Augustine, Texas on July 15, 1848, within a column entitled "Volunteer Toasts." It said: "*By R. B. Sigler: Our Country—May her stars and stripes ever be the terror of her enemies, the protection of her friends, and the admiration of the world.*"

The 1850 census taker found him in Smith County, Texas, living in a hotel in a family headed by Hardy Holman, who was born about 1800 in North Carolina. Holman was a tavern keeper. Mr. Sigler was a twenty-two year old lawyer, born in Alabama, who owned real estate worth one thousand five hundred dollars. One of the Holman daughters, sixteen-year-old Martha A. Holman, would later become Mr. Sigler's wife.

In the 1850 household/hotel, another of the Holman children was a grocer. In addition to Mr. Sigler, there was another lawyer, one laborer, one land trader, another grocer, one physician, a dry goods clerk, and a trader in some other merchandise. Several of the Holman boys were farmers, including John and Hardy Holman, who later came to Tarrant County and are included on our memorial.

On March 9, 1852, Rufus B. Sigler and Martha Ann Holman were married. Descendants at ancestry.com say she was a daughter of Hardy Holman and his wife, Sarah (Stewart) Holman. The elder Holman died in 1856 in Travis County, Texas. Martha Ann Holman was born in Missouri about 1844.

In 1852, Mr. Sigler and a partner, Daniel J. McLemore, were practicing law in Tyler under the name of Sigler and McLemore, according to Livingstone's Law Register for 1852..., published in that year by the U. S. Law Magazine in New York City. By 1855 he had moved from Smith County to Tarrant County; he appears as a security in a probate paper filed in Tarrant County on December 31, 1855.

In 1854 Rufus B. Sigler was given the responsibility to maintain a portion of the public road in Van Zandt County, which he apparently neglected to do and a suit was brought against him. Sigler ultimately appealed the decision to the Texas Supreme Court. An account of the trial may be found online. Sigler lost his appeal, and was fined ten dollars.

An advertisement for Mr. Sigler's law practice appeared in the Dallas Weekly Herald on May 24, 1856. It said: "*R. B. Sigler, ATTORNEY AND COUNSELOR AT LAW, Birdville; Tarrant County, Texas, Will give his prompt attention to all business entrusted to him, in the Courts of the 9th Judicial District, and in the Superior and Federal Courts at Tyler. Address, Birdville, Tarrant County, Texas.*"

In January of 1857 Mr. Sigler was in a law partnership in Tarrant County with a man named Boyle. He was still practicing here as late as March 1861. He is mentioned in a probate case in a filing made in September 1864.

An interesting note is found in the diary of Jonathan Hamilton Baker (1832-1918) dated Thursday, August 5, 1858. It said: *“Tolerably early this morning I set out and walked 5 miles to Birdville to witness the examination of the students of the high school at that place. About 9 A.M. the students formed a procession at the West end of town and marched down through Broad way to the Academy, and after some preliminary remarks by the Professor the opening oration was delivered by R. B. Sigler Esqr...”*

R.B. Sigler appears in the 1860 tax list of Tarrant County as the owner of some town lot property in Birdville worth two hundred dollars. He also owned one slave. His military records indicate he and his family may have moved to Denton County about 1861 or 1862.

Rufus B. Sigler served the Confederacy as a soldier in Co. H, 37th Texas Cavalry, enlisting for a period of three years at Denton on December 20, 1862. During the last few months of 1863 and the first part of 1864 he was away from the regiment on extra duty as a laborer in the quartermaster’s department.

In early March, 1864 while stationed at Galveston, Texas, Mr. Sigler applied for a furlough. On March 6 he received approval from his captain for a thirty-day furlough to go to Smith County to attend to the needs of his family. Sigler’s original statement said: *“He States than Since he Entered the Service on the 20th day of December 1862 he has not been absent from the command on furlough, without leave, or on Sick leave, or absent from duty, and further States that Since his absence his wife and four children, who are very young and Helpless, for better protection moved from Denton County to Smith, and that the place he had arranged for them to get in Tyler for a home had been let previous to their arrival, in consequence of which he has had to Board them at private families who now desire him to come home and make other arrangements for their maintenance and support, there fore ask for a furlough of thirty days in which to do so.”*

The handwritten furlough he received, signed by Capt. J. F. Warren, says: *“To all whom it may concern, The bearer hereof, Rufus B. Sigler a private in Capt. James F. Warren’s Company Terrell’s Regiment of Texas Cavalry, Age 36, Six feet high, light Dark [sic] eyes, and by profession a Lawyer, Born in the State of Alabama, Perry County, and enlisted at Denton in the County of Denton, Texas, on the 20th day of December Eighteen hundred & Sixty Two. [?] To Serve for the period of Three years, is hereby permitted to go to Tyler, Smith County, State of Texas. He having received a furlough from the 6th day of March To the 5th day of April at which period he will rejoin his Company or Regiment at this place, or wherever it may be, or be considered a deserter. He has not heretofore been furloughed, reported absent without leave, or on sick leave. There is present in the company for duty 55 men. There is none absent without leave.”*

The furlough was disapproved by Col. Alexander W. Terrell, Colonel of the 37th Texas. He forwarded it to Col. Alexis T. Rainey, who was in command of all the defenses at Galveston. Col. Rainey also disapproved it. No later record of Mr. Sigler’s service remains in his file in the archives in Washington, D. C.

Mr. Sigler and his family appear in the 1870 census Precinct 3 in Van Zandt County, in the area served by the post office at Canton, Texas. He was working as a lawyer. He had no real estate, but

owned personal property worth five hundred dollars. The children with the family that year were Emma, Ellie, Florence, Annie, John H., Ida, and Ada Sigler.

By 1873 Mr. Sigler had returned to northeast Tarrant County. The Fort Worth Democrat of August 2, 1873 reports a recent meeting of citizens in Precinct 3 of Tarrant County at the Spring Garden community in which R. B. Sigler was one of ten delegates elected to an upcoming Democratic convention. In the 1875 tax list of Precinct 3 of Tarrant County, he appears in the list without any real estate, but had one horse worth fifty dollars.

There are many unanswered questions about Mr. Sigler's later life. Some descendants have posted at ancestry.com that he died in Fort Worth, Texas. The 1880 census of Wise County, Texas [adjacent to Tarrant County] lists an R. B. Sigler, born about 1828 to a North Carolinian father and a Virginian mother. At that time he was a prisoner in the Wise County jail awaiting trial. All these facts fit "our" R. B. Sigler exactly. Neither his wife nor any of his children appear in the Wise County census in that year. One of his eleven-year-old daughters is listed as an orphan living with a family in the Birdville area in Tarrant County; his son, William, was living with a married sister and her family in Jack County at that time; and his son, John, was living with another married sister's family in Birdville.

We have been unable to account for Mrs. Sigler and her daughter, Ada, in the census of 1880. It seems unlikely she would have left taking only one of the children...especially one of a set of twins...with her, but that may be what happened, based upon a record filed in Tarrant County in 1886.

An article appeared in the Dallas Morning News on August 12, 1886, dated on August 11 at Fort Worth, which said in part, "*R. B. Sigler filed a suit against his wife, M. M. Sigler this morning, asking for a divorce on the ground of abandonment.*"

An R. B. Sigler and Mrs. E. M. McQuatters were married in Ellis County, Texas on February 17, 1888 by Jesse Smith, a minister. We have been unable to find any later records of them. Mrs. Sparks' records suggest that R. B. Sigler married a second time after his marriage to Martha Ann Holman, but no name of a second wife was given.

Mrs. Sparks reported that Rufus Bolivar Sigler died at Vernon, Wilbarger County, Texas on September 2, 1890. We have been unable to find any records of Mrs. Martha A. (Holman) Sigler after the mention of the divorce in 1886. There is a marriage record in Tarrant County for one Mattie Sigler who married Wilson Rankin in 1892; this was not Mrs. R. B. Sigler. The Mattie Sigler who married Mr. Rankin lived from 1870 until 1946 and was buried beside her husband in the old Arlington Cemetery.

We have been able to identify the names of ten of Rufus B. Sigler's children. The four he mentioned in 1864 in his attempt to gain a furlough were Emma, Ella, Florence, and Annie Sigler. Two, Alice and William, must have died before 1864. There were three more by the time the 1870 census was taken. It appears that two of them, Ida and Ada, were twins. There are no readable headstones in any northeast Tarrant County cemetery for any of R. B. Sigler's children.

One good family source reports a daughter named Alice S. Sigler, who must have been born in late 1852 or early 1853. She must have been dead by 1864, based upon the statement her father made in that year.

Emma S. Sigler was born in March 1854. She married William H. Turner in Tarrant County on June 27, 1876, and by 1880 they were living in Jack County, Texas. Her younger brother, William, was with the family, but her mother was not. In 1900 the Turners were in Hill County, Texas, and by 1910 had moved to Roosevelt County, New Mexico. She died December 17, 1919 at 8 p.m. at Bowie, Montague County, Texas. Her death certificate does not show a date of birth, but says she was sixty-six years old. She lies buried in Bowie's Elmwood Cemetery in a marked grave.

Ella A. Sigler was born April 29, 1857. She married W. E. Warren, who survived her. She died at 9:30 p.m. on January 26, 1918 at her home at 803 Exposition Street in Dallas, Dallas County, Texas. She was buried two days later in Oakland Cemetery in Dallas. An obituary appeared for her in the Dallas Morning News on January 28, 1918. She had a daughter named Bessie Tiner who lived at Saginaw in 1918.

Florence Ellen Sigler was born in May 1859. She married John G. Walker (according to marriage records in Tarrant County) on June 27, 1876, and they lived at Birdville in Tarrant County when the 1880 census was taken. Other sources say she married Albert G. Walker, Jr. In 1900 she and her husband, Albert, and her family lived in Oklahoma County, Oklahoma next-door to the family of her married sister, Annie Capshaw. In 1910 Mr. and Mrs. Walker lived alone at Melrose, Curry County, New Mexico. By 1920 Florence was a widow living with the family of her married son, John R. Walker (1882-1952), at Redondo, Los Angeles County, California. At least two of her married daughters died and are buried in Tarrant County.

Family sources report a son named William M. Sigler, who must have been born about 1861. He was apparently dead by 1864.

Annie Belle Sigler was born June 19, 1863. She married Enoch Monroe Capshaw (1852-1920) on April 18, 1880. He and Mrs. Capshaw were '89'ers in Oklahoma. Mr. Capshaw was for many years the county and city jailer in Oklahoma City. She died December 12, 1938 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. She lies buried there in Rose Hill Burial Park.

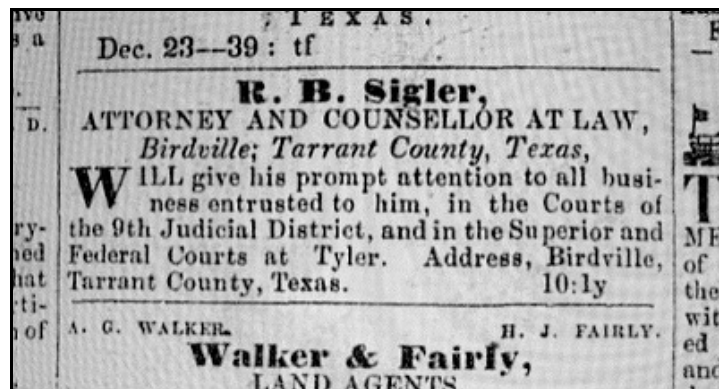
John Howard Sigler was born in July 1866, according to his death certificate. In 1880 he lived at Birdville with his married sister, Florence Walker, and her family. He was a lifelong bachelor, and spent much of his life in Palo Pinto County, Texas. He began as a ranch laborer and later became an insurance salesman. He died in Graford, Palo Pinto County, Texas on September 3, 1934 and was buried in Graford Cemetery.

Ida Sigler was born in April 1869. In 1880 she was an "orphan" living with the family of James C. Garrett in Precinct 4 of Tarrant County. This census makes no mention of her having any physical infirmities. *Some internet sources say this Ida Sigler married Richard D. Murphy. There was an Ida N. Sigler who was a deaf mute, and who married Richard D. Murphy, also a deaf mute, in a unique silent ceremony in Denton, Texas on January 3, 1887. A story about the ceremony appeared*

in the Dallas Morning News on January 4, 1887. It seems more likely, to this researcher at least, that the lady Richard D. Murphy married was the Ida N. Sigler who was living in 1880 in Travis County, Texas in the Texas Institute for the Education of the Deaf and Dumb. She was eighteen at the time, and her regular residence was at Deep Creek in Callahan County, Texas. The marriage announcement said Miss Sigler lived at Abilene.

Ada Sigler was born in April 1869. She married Wesley R. Green (1854-1930) in Tarrant County on September 30, 1885 and by 1900 was living in the Chickasaw Nation in the Indian Territory. In 1918 Mr. Green operated a wagon yard in the town of Comanche. By 1920 she and her family were living at Comanche in Stephens County, Oklahoma. In 1930 she lived as a widow in the town of Comanche, Oklahoma, and headed a family made up of several of her children and grandchildren.

William Hardy Sigler was born about 1871. In 1880 he lived with his married sister, Emma Taylor, in Jack County, Texas.



On January 15, 2013 we received the following note from Charles Hoagland, a descendant of Peter K. Matthews. We are posting it here for any descendants who might be interested.

“You had listed for Rufus Sigler that he had submitted for a divorce from a M. M. Sigler in 1886 and also stated that he was in jail on the 1880 census. Well, this may seem circumstantial, but it may be that M. M. Sigler was the widow of Peter K. Matthews.

The wife of Peter was Martha Missouri Lile-Matthews. After Peter passed away, she moved and is listed on the 1870 census in Ft. Worth. The 1880 census she is living in Cooke County and is listed as M. M. Sigler. Three of her children are living with her. 1900 and 1910 census she was living in Oklahoma and using Matthews as her last name again.

Like I said, circumstantial. Thought I would send this to you in case you wanted to look into it. Coincidence? Who knows? Your choice completely.”