

# **Bailing, Bigamy, Brother Love: The Family of Henry Parker and Nancy Black**

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by Debbie Parker Wayne, Certified Genealogist

Family research is difficult when some person may be trying to hide evidence of abandonment and bigamy. Throw in a courthouse fire to keep things interesting. Historians typically use race, class, and gender as categories of analysis, but often overlook kinship. Kinship is a structure of social relationships based on connections by blood, marriage, adoption, or social functions within a group. Using kinship theory with traditional historical and genealogical research methods, one can arrive at a deeper understanding of our ancestors.<sup>1</sup> These elements contribute to our understanding of the Henry Parker family.

Henry Parker was born in South Carolina probably in June 1823 or 1825; died 9 April 1902, in Hood County, Texas.<sup>2</sup> He married (1), Nancy Black, by 1850, probably in Milam County, Texas.<sup>3</sup> He “married” (2), Elizabeth (O’Neal) Kline Quarles, 5 May 1877, in Hood County.<sup>4</sup> Tales of other wives appear to be errors. No documentary evidence of a marriage between Henry and Virginia Eddings or any other woman has been located in any of the counties discussed in this narrative.<sup>5</sup> Henry was

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1 Carolyn Earle Billingsley, *Communities of Kinship: Antebellum Families and the Settlement of the Cotton Frontier* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2004), 1, 12.

2 1850 U.S. census, Milam County, Texas, population schedule, Milam and Williamson District, p. 1A (stamped), dwelling (dw.) 231, family (fam.) 243, Henry and Nancy Parker in Alexander Black household; National Archives (NARA) microfilm publication M432, roll 913; for birth place. For death see Affidavit of A. F. McCoy and T. J. Abercrombie, 4 September 1902, Elizabeth Parker, widow's pension application no. 16665 (Rejected) for service of Henry Parker (Pvt., Co. A, Yell's Regiment, Arkansas Volunteers, Mexican War); Case Files of Rejected Pension Applications, Mexican War; Records of the Bureau of Pensions and Its Predecessors, 1805–1935; Department of Veterans Affairs, Record Group (RG) 15; NARA, Washington, D.C.

3 Milam County marriages records were destroyed in a fire in 1874. Nancy is named as Henry's wife in Milam County, Texas, Commissioners Court Minutes A:7; County Clerk's Office, Cameron.

4 Hood County, Texas, Marriages A:167, Henry Parker and Mrs. Elizabeth Quarles, 1877; County Clerk's Office, Granbury.

5 The researcher naming Virginia Eddings as a wife now believes there was no such marriage. See e-mail, 11 January 2006, in Chuck Reed's WorldConnect database, reedstax, *RootsWeb.com* (<http://wc.rootsweb.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=reedstax&id=I1521> : accessed 16 August 2008). Copy in Wayne Research Files.

still living with Elizabeth at his death.<sup>6</sup>

Henry may have been born by 1821 as he first appears on a tax roll in 1843.<sup>7</sup> Arkansas law required all single men age twenty-one to fifty-five be assessed a poll tax.<sup>8</sup> The 1850 census lists Henry's age as twenty-three.<sup>9</sup> But if he wasn't born until 1827 he would not have owed taxes in 1843. In 1846, when he volunteered for military service, Henry gave his age as twenty-three.<sup>10</sup> Various documents in Henry's pension file indicate birth dates ranging from February 1823 to June 1824.

June 1823 fits with more of the documents where Henry was the informant. Henry may have wanted to seem older when he joined the army and he needed to use the same birth date later when he applied for his pension, naming 1823 as his birth year.<sup>11</sup> The 1860 census is an outlier, indicating a birth year as early as 1819 or 1820.<sup>12</sup> An argument for either June 1823 or June 1825 could be made. The 1900 census is the only document that lists a specific month and year of birth, June 1825.<sup>13</sup> That is supported by the earliest records, the 1830 and 1840 censuses.<sup>14</sup> June 1823 or 1825 is the most likely date of birth.

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6 Affidavit of McCoy and Abercrombie, Elizabeth Parker, widow's pension application no. 16665 (Rejected), Mexican War, RG 15, NARA, Washington, D.C.

7 Pope County, Arkansas, Tax Rolls, 1835-1859, unpaginated entries arranged alphabetically by first letter of surname; entry for Henry Parker Jr., (1843), "P," l. 30 Arkansas History Commission (AHC) microfilm roll 004039, Pope County roll 65; AHC, Little Rock.

8 David Yancy Thomas, "A History of Taxation in Arkansas," *Publications of the Arkansas Historical Association* Vol. 2, 1908 (Fayetteville, Ark.: Arkansas Historical Association, 1908).

9 1850 U.S. census, Milam Co., Texas, pop. sch., Milam and Williamson District, p. 1A (stamped), dw. 231, fam. 243, Alexander Black household.

10 Compiled military service record (CMSR), Henry Parker, Pvt., Co. A, Yell's Regiment, Arkansas Volunteers; Carded Records, Volunteer Organizations, Mexican War; Records of the Adjutant General's Office, RG 94; NARA, Washington, D.C.

11 Henry Parker (Pvt., Co. A, Yell's Regiment, Arkansas Volunteers), pension application no. S.C. 5022, Case Files of Approved Pension Applications, Mexican War; Records of the Bureau of Pensions and Its Predecessors, 1805-1935; Department of Veterans Affairs, RG 15; NARA, Washington, D.C.

12 1860 U.S. census, Milam County, Texas, pop. sch., p. 42A/B (stamped), dw./fam. 250, Henry Parker; NARA microfilm publication M653, roll 1301.

13 1900 U.S. census, Hood County, Texas, pop. sch., ED 91, p. 30A (stamped), dw./fam. 548, Henry Parker; NARA microfilm publication M623, roll 1645.

14 1830 U.S. census, Clinton County, Illinois, pop. sch., p. 106 (stamped), line 27, Henry Parker; NARA microfilm publication M19, roll 25. 1840 U.S. census, Pope County, Arkansas, p. 133 (stamped), line 17, Henry Parker; NARA microfilm publication M704, roll 17.

## ***The Mexican War***

In 1846 the United States and Mexico went to war. On 1 July 1846, Henry was mustered in to Company A of the Arkansas Volunteers. He appears on the muster rolls in July and August 1846.<sup>15</sup> The company arrived in hot, dusty San Antonio, Texas, in late August. There they drilled and waited for arms to arrive. Many men fell ill and many died during the wait. Late in October the regiment marched on, leaving behind their dead and ailing.<sup>16</sup> Henry was discharged on 23 September 1846, on a surgeon's certificate of disability.<sup>17</sup> Henry arrived in Milam County about 1849 or 1850.<sup>18</sup>

## ***Henry's First Family***

Nancy Black was born about 1835 in Alabama. Nancy and Henry lived with Alexander Black in 1850.<sup>19</sup> An Alex Black family with children of consistent age and sex as those in Texas in 1850 is found in Benton County in 1840.<sup>20</sup> Many of Nancy's children carry the names of those presumed siblings: William, Wade, John, and Elizabeth; and the names of Nancy's father and step-mother: Alexander and Jane.

Several researchers indicate Nancy's mother was Rachel McCulloch or McCullough, but no source is given for this statement. These researchers indicate that Rachel McCulloch married

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15 CMSR, Henry Parker, Pvt., Co. A, Yell's Regt., Ark. Vols., RG 94, NARA, Washington, D.C.

16 Silas M. Shinn, "Recollection of the War" dated 1913; published in Desmond Walls Allen, comp. *Arkansas' Mexican War Soldiers* (Conway: Arkansas Research, 1988), 32.

17 CMSR, Henry Parker, Pvt., Co. A, Yell's Regt., Ark. Vols., RG 94, NARA, Washington, D.C.

18 Milam County, Texas, 1867 Voter Registrations, no. 502, Henry Parker entry, 13 July 1867; TSLAC microfilm reel VR-9, Austin.

19 1850 U.S. census, Milam Co., Texas, Milam and Williamson District, p. 1A (stamped), dw. 231, fam. 243, Alexander Black household. 1860 U.S. census, Milam County, Texas, pop. sch., p. 42A/B (stamped), dw./fam. 250, Henry Parker. 1880 U.S. census, Travis County, Texas, pop. sch., State Lunatic Asylum, p. 41B (penned), dw. 337, fam. 341, line 46, Nancy Parker; NARA microfilm publication T9, roll 1329.

20 1840 U.S. census, Benton County, Alabama, Northern District, p. 251 (stamped), line 9, Alex Black; NARA microfilm publication M704, roll 3.

Alexander Black in Alabama and the family lived in Benton County.<sup>21</sup> No marriage record is found for Alexander or Rachel in Benton County.<sup>22</sup> Prior to 1833, Benton County was under the jurisdiction of St. Clair County.<sup>23</sup> No marriage for Alexander and Rachel was found in St. Clair County.<sup>24</sup> But Nancy's age indicates she would be the child of Alexander's earlier wife as he married again in Texas to Jane Blackburn on 5 May 1847.<sup>25</sup>

Researchers may have confused Nancy's mother due to similar Parker names in records. In 1872 the list of heirs of Rachel Whitesides McCulloch include H. O. Parker of Milam County and his unnamed wife.<sup>26</sup> Other records reveal the name of H. O. Parker's wife was Sarah Jane McCulloch.<sup>27</sup> This proves H. O. Parker and Henry Parker are two different men, one married to Sara Jane McCulloch and one to Nancy Black. No other records have been found to link Nancy Black and her mother.

No marriage record exists for Henry Parker and Nancy Black in Milam County. Few records survived a courthouse fire in 1874.<sup>28</sup> But records of the commissioners' court prove Henry and Nancy were married.<sup>29</sup>

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21 Earl Jones, "Earl's Genealogy Site," (<http://www.earljones.net/pafg551.htm> : accessed 19 May 2009); Earl is a great-grandson of Henry Parker Jr.'s son Alexander William.

22 Catherine Cleek Mann, *Marriage Records, 1834 to 1850, Benton (Now Calhoun) County, Alabama* (Gadsden, Alabama: Northeast Alabama Genealogical Society, 1976). Variant spellings were also checked.

23 Jerry A. Daniel, comp., *Alabenton Genealogical Society Quarterly*, Vol. III, no. 3 (September 1986) (Anniston, Alabama: Alabenton Genealogical Society, 1986), 60.

24 Rubye Sisson, *St. Clair County Marriages, 1818–1899* (Cullman, Alabama: The Gregath Co., 1990).

25 Washington County, Texas, Marriages 1:10, Alexander Black and Jane Blackburn, 1847; County Clerk's Office, Brenham.

26 Milam County, Texas, Deeds B2:426, H. O. Parker, et al. to W. C. Greer, 19 September 1872; County Clerk's Office, Cameron.

27 Milam County, Texas, Deeds 17:253–256, Sarah J. Parker, et al. to B. J. Arnold, 4 October 1884, and 17:256–258, Heirs of J. H. McCulloch to G. J. McLerran, 16 March 1886; County Clerk's Office, Cameron. 1860 U.S. census, Grimes County, Texas, pop. sch., p. 260A (stamped), dw. 542, fam. 534, J. W. McCulloch; NARA microfilm publication M653, roll 1295.

28 Texas Historical Records Survey, compiler, *Inventory of the County Archives of Texas, No. 166, Milam County (Cameron)* (Milam County, Texas: Works Progress Administration, 1941), 9.

29 Milam County, Texas, Commissioners Court Minutes A:7.

By 1860, Henry owned 200 acres of land on Brushy waterway, near San Gabriel.<sup>30</sup> Children Alex age nine, Waid age seven, George age six, Anderson age four, and Elizabeth age two, had joined the household.<sup>31</sup> Henry's property included ten acres of improved land. Livestock consisted of one horse, five cows, two working oxen, twenty other cattle, and forty swine, all valued at \$310.<sup>32</sup> These may have been Henry's most prosperous years, but the numbers still place him in the lower echelons of those in Milam enumerated on the agricultural schedules.

Henry may have experienced financial problems soon afterward. In February 1863, he sold his land.<sup>33</sup> Texas land is described on deeds and tax rolls by naming the original grantee. That name can help correlate information found on different records. The land Henry sold was part of the Giddings survey located on Brushy Creek. No record of Henry's purchase of the land exists, but his ownership is supported by the tax records.<sup>34</sup>

No record of Civil War service has been found for Henry.<sup>35</sup> He was home for at least part of that time as he had children born during those years: John Wesley born in 1862 and Laura or "Lena" born in 1863.<sup>36</sup> Henry was not assessed taxes in Milam County in 1861 to 1864 or 1866 to 1869. He was assessed Milam County taxes in 1865 but owned no land.<sup>37</sup>

Henry likely squatted on vacant land after selling the Giddings property. In 1866, Texas passed

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30 Milam County, Texas, Tax Rolls, 1846–1883; all years read for all Parker entries and variant spellings; TSLAC microfilm reel 1166-01, Austin. DeLorme, *Texas Atlas & Gazetteer* (Yarmouth, Maine: DeLorme, 1995), 70.

31 1860 U.S. census, Milam County, Texas, pop. sch., p. 42A/B (stamped), dw./fam. 250, Henry Parker.

32 1860 U.S. census, Milam County, Texas, agricultural sch., p. 7-8, line 22, Henry Parker; NARA microfilm publication T1134, roll 4.

33 Milam County, Texas, Deeds 19:402-404, Henry and Nancy Parker to Ceborn Stiles, 13 February 1863; County Clerk's Office, Cameron; citing Deeds 1:564. This 1863 deed was re-recorded in 1887, after the 1874 fire.

34 Milam County, Texas, Tax Rolls, 1846–1883; all years read for all Parker entries.

35 James E. Williams, *Milam County, Texas in the Civil War* (Cameron, Texas: self-published, 1993); Henry Parker is not named on the rosters although several of his known neighbors are named in infantry and cavalry units. National Park Service, "Soldiers," database, *Civil War Soldiers & Sailors System* (<http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss/>; accessed 23 August 2009) and *Index to Service Records of Confederate Soldiers from Texas, 1861–1865*, 15 rolls (Austin: TSLAC, n.d.), roll 11; all candidates found were eliminated.

36 Earl Jones, "Earl's Genealogy Site."

37 Milam County, Texas, Tax Rolls, 1846–1883.

an act allowing settlers to claim preemption lands.<sup>38</sup> Henry applied under this act for land he had settled by 15 October 1866 on the headwaters of Yegua Creek. The Texas General Land Office approved the patent in November 1871.<sup>39</sup> Henry sold the land only a few months later.<sup>40</sup>

The Parker family has not been found in 1870 census records.<sup>41</sup> This U.S. census is generally understood to be incomplete.<sup>42</sup> Henry was assessed taxes again in 1870 to 1873; he owned no land, but had small numbers of horses, cattle, and miscellaneous property.<sup>43</sup> Even though Henry was not found on the 1870 census it seems obvious he was in Milam County as he was assessed taxes for most of the years between 1850 and 1876 except the turbulent 1860s.

### ***Nancy's Lunacy***

By age thirty-five, Nancy displayed signs of insanity. Henry's financial condition may have made it difficult to provide for his ailing wife without help. Texas law required each county to provide support for indigent, lame, and blind persons unable to support themselves.<sup>44</sup> In May 1874, the commissioners' court placed Nancy on the indigent list and authorized payment of \$10.00 per

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38 H. P. N. Gammel, compiler, *The Laws of Texas, 1822-1897*, 10 vols. (Austin: Gammel Book Co., 1898), 5:1191, "An Act Donating One Hundred and Sixty Acres of Land to Actual Settlers Upon the Public Domain," 12 November 1866; digital images, University of North Texas, *The Portal to Texas History* (<http://texinfo.library.unt.edu/lawsoftexas/> : accessed 14 September 2005).

39 Henry Parker, Milam Land District, 3rd Class file no. 1954 /preemption, Texas General Land Office, Austin.

40 Milam County, Texas, Deeds 122:88-89, State of Texas to Henry Parker, 2 November 1871, and 122:89-90, Henry Parker to Claiborne Garner, 4 January 1872; County Clerk's Office, Cameron. Deed recorded 15 January 1914 otherwise it would also have been lost in the fire of 1874.

41 1870 U.S. census, Milam County, Texas, pop. sch.; NARA microfilm publication M653, roll 1598. All of the census pages are very legible. A page by page scan did not find the Parker family.

42 William Thorndale and William Dollarhide, *Map Guide to the U.S. Federal Censuses, 1790-1920* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1987), xviii. See also United Nations, Department of Economic Affairs, *Population Studies, No. 23, Manuals on Methods of Estimating Population, MANUAL II, Methods of Appraisal of Quality of Basic Data for Population Estimates*, digital image ([http://www.un.org/esa/population/pubsarchive/migration\\_publications/UN\\_1955\\_Manual2.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/population/pubsarchive/migration_publications/UN_1955_Manual2.pdf) : 5 May 2008), 11.

43 Milam County, Texas, Tax Rolls, 1846-1883.

44 Gammel, *The Laws of Texas*, 1:1206, "An Act Organizing Justices' Courts, and Defining the Powers and Jurisdiction of the Same," 20 December 1836.

month to her husband for 1 July 1873 to 1 June 1874.<sup>45</sup> This money was paid to Henry.<sup>46</sup> In January 1876, G. E. Boles was paid for conveying Nancy to the Texas State Lunatic Asylum.<sup>47</sup> That supports the admission date of 1 January 1876 as stated on Nancy's asylum records.<sup>48</sup>

In 1880 Nancy was in the asylum as a public pay patient with chronic dementia. Nancy's first attack had occurred about 1870. She was secluded in her cell at night, but did not have to be otherwise restrained. She had been in the asylum for four and one-half years, confirming the January 1876 date.<sup>49</sup> Sadly, Nancy was still in the asylum twenty years later.<sup>50</sup> She died 29 April 1902.<sup>51</sup> She is probably buried at the State Hospital Cemetery, but is not in the list of known burials.<sup>52</sup>

### ***The Family Scatters***

Henry bailed. He disappears from Milam County records after 1876. He has not been found in 1880, and his children are scattered across Texas.

Two sons moved west then north to Indian Territory. In 1880 Alexander William Parker raised

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45 Milam County, Texas, Commissioners Court Minutes A:7.

46 Milam County, Texas, Commissioners Court Minutes A:29.

47 Milam County, Texas, Commissioners Court Minutes A:73.

48 Parker researcher (name withheld), to Debbie Parker Wayne, e-mail, 26 May 2009, "Henry Parker - Nancy Black," Wayne Research Files. This researcher received a typed list of information from another Parker researcher. That second researcher viewed Nancy's records at the Austin State Hospital in the 1980s-1990s. The researcher was not allowed to photocopy, but made notes on the file contents.

49 1880 U.S. census, Travis County, Texas, pop. sch., ED 124, State Lunatic Asylum, p. 2, line 45, Nancy Parker. 1880 U.S. census, Travis County, Texas, "Defective, Dependent, and Delinquent Classes," Insane Inhabitants, p. 41, l. 46, Nancy Parker; NARA microfilm publication T1134, roll 50.

50 1900 U.S. census, Travis County, Texas, pop. sch., ED 141, p. 107B (stamped), State Lunatic Asylum, line 75, Nancy Parker; NARA microfilm publication T623, roll 1673.

51 Since Nancy appears on the 1900 census, but is no longer found on the 1910 census, she probably died between those dates, allowing for the probability she died on the 29 April 1902 date stated in her asylum records.

52 Merrill Davis, compiler, Austin State Hospital Cemetery Records: 1884-1996; compiled from records obtained from the Texas Mental Health and Mental Retardation Department, 2001, Call number A 929.5097643 Au, Austin History Center, 810 Guadalupe Street, Austin, Texas.



hogs in Tom Green County.<sup>53</sup> His future wife lived next door. Alexander apparently followed the Gott family to Taylor County where he married Angelica.<sup>54</sup> They migrated to Indian Territory.<sup>55</sup> John Wesley Parker herded stock in Menard County in 1880. In the same household was his future wife “Annie” Short.<sup>56</sup> They moved to the same area of Indian Territory as Alexander.<sup>57</sup> Annie returned to Milam County after John’s death and married his brother Wade.<sup>58</sup>

Henry's other children stayed in Milam and nearby counties. Wade Franklin Parker worked for Samuel Anthony in 1880.<sup>59</sup> This was likely on Henry Parker's preemption grant. Two years later Samuel Anthony sold 120 acres of the land originally granted to Henry to Wade's brother George.<sup>60</sup> Wade married (1), Margaret (Maples) Elliott.<sup>61</sup> By 1900 Wade was widowed, raising his son Frank and his step-son, Robert Elliott.<sup>62</sup> Wade married (2), his brother's widow Annie.<sup>63</sup>

George and several siblings are in Lee and Milam along the border between the two counties. George and Wade bought the remaining acres of their father’s grant and some surrounding property.<sup>64</sup> George married (1), Cynthia Alice Lewis.<sup>65</sup> He married (2), Mary Maples.<sup>66</sup> He married

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53 1880 U.S. census, Tom Green County, Texas, pop. sch., ED 119, p. 401C (stamped), dw. 294, fam. 295, William Parker; NARA microfilm publication T9, roll 1328.

54 Taylor County, Texas, Marriages 1:78, W. D. Parker and Annie G. Coats [*sic*]; County Clerk’s Office, Abilene. Connie Pickett, comp., *Taylor County, Texas, Marriage Records, 1878-1898* (St. Louis: Ingmire, 1985), this finding aid was checked to see if there were other possible marriages for a Gott woman marrying a Coats man. None were found. The names Coats and Gott or Gaut could be easily confused as they have similar sounds.

55 Don Hayes, England, to Debbie Parker Wayne, e-mail, 13–18 May 2009.

56 1880 U.S. Census, Menard County, Texas, pop. sch., ED 115, p. 137B (stamped), dw. 189, fam. 190, John Parker in G. W. Rolston household; NARA microfilm publication T9, roll 1319. Menard County, Texas, Marriages 1:22, John Parker to Felician Short, 1882; County Clerk's Office, Menard. Many researchers list this marriage date as 13 June 1882; that is the date the license was issued.

57 Earl Jones, "Earl's Genealogy Site." Confirmed by Don Hayes, England.

58 Milam County, Texas, Marriages 6:139, W. F. Parker and Mrs. M. A. Parker, 1903; County Clerk's Office, Cameron.

59 1880 U.S. Census, Milam County, Texas, pop. sch., ED 103, p. 245A (stamped),dw./fam. 219, Wade Parker in Samuel Anthony household; NARA microfilm publication T9, roll 1319.

60 Milam County, Texas, Deeds 14:103–105, S. N. Anthony to M. A. Moore and G. W. Parker, 26 September 1882; County Clerk's Office, Cameron.

61 Milam County, Texas, Marriages 6:139.

62 1900 U.S. Census, Milam County, Texas, pop. sch., ED 83, p. 130A (stamped), dw. 39, fam. 41, Wade F. Parker; NARA microfilm publication T623, roll 1659.

63 Milam County, Texas, Marriages 6:139.

64 Milam County, Texas, Deeds 14:103–105, S. N. Anthony to M. A. Moore and G. W. Parker, 16 September 1882, 17:2–3, E. C. Coffee to G. W. Parker, 8 September 1885, 25:201–202, Geo. W. and Mary Parker to James M. Lucky,

(3), Mary Gentry.<sup>67</sup> Anderson Parker lived in Milam County in 1880 and 1910.<sup>68</sup> In 1900 and 1920 he lived just across the county line in Lee County.<sup>69</sup> He married (1), Bettie Morrison.<sup>70</sup> He married (2), Tennessee Angeline Maples.<sup>71</sup> He married (3), Bertha Sparks.<sup>72</sup> Jade "J.D." Parker has not been found in 1880. He married Savannah Georgia Litchfield in Williamson County.<sup>73</sup>

In 1880 Elizabeth Jane "Bettie" Parker was in Burleson County keeping house for William Albright.<sup>74</sup> She married neighbor A. J. Young later that year.<sup>75</sup> By 1900 the Youngs had moved north to Falls County.<sup>76</sup> Other probable daughters of Henry and Nancy were Laura Alice "Lena" Parker born in 1863 and Mary Elizabeth Martha Ann "Mattie" Parker born in 1868.<sup>77</sup>

Descendants of George Washington Parker believe he took in his siblings after their mother was committed.<sup>78</sup> No records show George's siblings in his household, but they have close ties.

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- 15 October 1889, 26:266–268, Geo. W. and M. A. R. Hanks to G. W. and W. F. Parker, 1 October 1889, and 35:80, G. W. Hanks to G. W. and W. F. Parker, 1 December 1892; County Clerk's Office, Cameron.
- 65 Lee County, Texas, Marriages D:189, Geo. W. Parker and S. A. Lewis, license issued 16 January 1881, records filed 17 January 1881, but no date of marriage is entered on the record; County Clerk's Office, Giddings.
- 66 Lee County, Texas, Marriages 3:209, G. W. Parker and Mary Maples, 1889; County Clerk's Office, Giddings.
- 67 Milam County, Texas, Marriages 8:78, G. W. Parker and Mary Gentry, 1899; County Clerk's Office, Cameron.
- 68 Milam County, Texas, Tax Rolls, 1846–1910. Milam County, Texas, Marriages 2:142, P. A. Parker and Bettie Morrison, 1878; County Clerk's Office, Cameron. 1910 U.S. Census, Milam County, Texas, pop. sch., ED 60, p. 7A and 7B, dw. 135, fam. 138, P. A. Parker; NARA microfilm publication T624, roll 1578.
- 69 1900 U.S. Census, Lee County, Texas, pop. sch., ED 62, p. 124A (stamped), dw. 116, fam. 117, Perry A. Parker; NARA microfilm publication T623, roll 1654. 1920 U.S. Census, Lee County, Texas, pop. sch., ED 83, p. 259B/8B, dw. 200, fam. 208, Perry A. Parker; NARA microfilm publication T625, roll 1826.
- 70 Milam County, Texas, Marriages 2:142.
- 71 Lee County, Texas, Marriages D:1, P. A. Parker and Angeline T. Maples, 1891; County Clerk's Office, Giddings.
- 72 Milam County, Texas, Marriages 12:297, P. A. Parker and Bertha Sparks, 1910; County Clerk's Office, Cameron.
- 73 Williamson County, Texas, Marriages 5:332, J. D. Parker and Savannah Litchfield, 1883; County Clerk's Office, Georgetown.
- 74 1880 U.S. Census, Burleson County, Texas, pop. sch., ED 29, p. 23A (stamped), dw. /fam. 22, Bettie Parker in William Albright household; NARA microfilm publication T9, roll 1293.
- 75 Burleson County, Texas, Marriages 5:86, A. J. Young and Bettie Parker, 1880; County Clerk's Office, Caldwell.
- 76 1900 U.S. census, Falls County, Texas, pop. sch., ED 27, p. 314B/315A (stamped), dw./fam. 354, A. J. Young; NARA microfilm publication T623, roll 1632.
- 77 Earl Jones, "Earl's Genealogy Site." Little documentary evidence has been found on these daughters. Parker researcher (name withheld, descendant of Henry Parker Jr.'s son John Wesley), Texas, to Debbie Parker Wayne, interview, 19 May 2012; this researcher was told that Mattie was named after all the women in attendance when she was born so there is family lore naming the girls. More research is needed on the history of these daughters.
- 78 Parker researcher (name withheld, descendant of Henry Parker Jr.'s son George), Texas, to Debbie Parker Wayne, e-mail, 7 Mar 2006, Wayne Research Files.

George was assessed taxes in Milam County from 1877 through 1905 except for 1878 and 1880. Wade was assessed taxes there from 1877 through 1905 except for 1885 and 1889. Anderson was assessed taxes there in 1877, 1879 through 1881, 1886 through 1888, and 1892. J. D. was assessed taxes there in 1884, 1887, and 1888. Most years these brothers appear one immediately after the other on the tax rolls.<sup>79</sup> Because only George and Wade were land owners during these years the other siblings may have lived with them but left few records.

### ***The Myth of Henry in Menard County***

Some descendants believe Henry moved to Menard County after he committed Nancy and bailed on the family. One story indicates Henry was killed there by Nancy's brother who was upset that she had been committed. Another has Nancy's father giving Henry money and a horse to escape. A third has Henry murdered while walking home one evening with the cash receipts of his store in his pocket.<sup>80</sup>

No evidence places Henry in Menard County. He does not appear on the tax rolls there for any year between 1841 and 1889.<sup>81</sup> The murder story is not mentioned in *The Free State of Menard: A History of the County* where other infamous murder stories are noted.<sup>82</sup> A Menard connection conflicts with records in Hood County.

### ***Henry's Second Family***

After disappearing from Milam County, Henry entered into a bigamous marriage to Elizabeth

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79 Milam County, Texas, Tax Rolls, 1846–1910.

80 Parker researcher (name withheld, descendant of Henry Parker Jr.'s son George), Texas, to Debbie Parker Wayne, e-mail, 7 Mar 2006; citing Joe Carmichael (now deceased) who said that the information came from an 85 year old neighbor of Henry Parker in the 1930's.

81 Menard County, Texas, Tax Rolls 1841-1910; microfilm roll TSLAC reel 1; covers the years 1841-1910, missing years 1842-1866, 1869-1871, 1872, and 1875. Henry Parker was not found on the extant years.

82 N. H. Pierce, *The Free State of Menard: A History of the County* (1946, Menard, Texas: Western Advertising Co., rpt. 1966).

(O'Neal) Kline Quarles on 5 May 1877, in Hood County.<sup>83</sup> Elizabeth possibly had no idea that her marriage to Henry was not legal until her widow's pension was denied.<sup>84</sup> In practical terms, Henry had no viable wife after Nancy's commitment. Marriage was a legal contract with strict grounds for divorce. In Texas those grounds were impotence at the time of the marriage, adultery or abandonment, and cruel treatment.<sup>85</sup> Lunacy is not grounds. Many Americans handled their marital status in "practical, personal ways, outside of court-rooms ... husbands and wives forged—or found themselves forced into—alternative forms of family and household." Married people living away from their spouses might remarry after representing themselves as widowed or single.<sup>86</sup> Henry and Elizabeth had one child. Frank Parker was born 4 July 1875 or 1879; died 1 April 1942, in Hood County.<sup>87</sup>

Henry applied for and received a Mexican War pension.<sup>88</sup> In March 1894, Henry requested a pension increase stating he had lived in Parker County since December 1893. Two witnesses confirmed they had known Henry since 1 December 1893.<sup>89</sup> By 1900 the Parkers moved back to Hood County.<sup>90</sup> No residence is stated for years prior to 1893.

The chronology of the known facts of Henry in all these locations is consistent with representing the history of one man. The only contradictions are in unproven oral histories passed down in the family.

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83 Hood County, Texas, Marriages A:167.

84 Elizabeth Parker, widow's pension application no. 16665 (Rejected), Mexican War, RG 15, NARA, Washington, D.C.

85 Gammel, *The Laws of Texas, 1822-1897*, 2:483, "An Act Concerning Divorce and Alimony," 6 January 1841.

86 Beverly Schwartzberg, "Lots of Them Did That: Desertion, Bigamy, and Marital Fluidity in Late-nineteenth-century America," *Journal of Social History* (Spring 2004); online archives, *FindArticles.com* ([http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m2005/is\\_3\\_37/ai\\_n6076485](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2005/is_3_37/ai_n6076485) : accessed 6 May 2008), 1.

87 Texas Department of Health, death certificate no. 17910 (1942), Frank Parker, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Austin. 1900 U.S. census, Hood County, Texas, pop. sch., precinct 1, ED 91, p. 30A (stamped), dw./fam. 548, Henry Parker; NARA microfilm publication M623, roll 1645.

88 "Declaration for Pension of Officer, Soldier or Sailor of Mexican War," 9 February 1887, Henry Parker Mexican War pension no. S.C. 5022, RG 15, NARA, Washington, D.C.

89 "General Affidavit" of Henry Parker, 27 March 1894, Henry Parker Mexican War pension no. S.C. 5022, RG 15, NARA, Washington, D.C.

90 Hood County, Texas, Chattel Mortgages 1:226, R. R. Daniel to Henry Parker, entry no. 1213, and 1:258, W. S. Walker to Henry Parker, entry no. 1429; Granbury Depot Archive, Granbury.

## *Death*

Henry died 9 April 1902, in Hood County in severe pain from a fracture of the “neck of Femur” —the ball joint that mates the thigh bone to the hip socket.<sup>91</sup> No probate was found.<sup>92</sup> Elizabeth spent the next months trying to prove she was Henry's legal wife, but never received a pension. She died by 3 October 1903.<sup>93</sup> All three principals in this bigamous triangle died within eighteen months.

## *Conclusion*

The Henry Parker family story demonstrates elements of kinship theory. Nancy named her children after her father and siblings. Henry's children married siblings. Henry made his own rules on marriage no matter the law. Application of the kinship theory framework has added significantly to the understanding of this family. The story uncovered illustrates a family torn apart by a mother's lunacy and a father's abandonment. But the ties of kinship are strong, bringing the family back together and forming strong bonds that carry them into the future.

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91 “Affidavit” of J. M. McCuan, M. D., undated, Henry Parker Mexican War pension no. S.C. 5022, RG 15, NARA, Washington, D.C.

92 Hood County, Texas, Index to Probate, Vol. 1, 1875-1936; TSLAC microfilm reel 1034520. Hood County, Texas, Index to Deeds, Vol. 1 & 2, 1856-1901; TSLAC microfilm reel 1034515. Milam County, Texas, Probate Minute Index, 1874–1934; TSLAC microfilm reel 981412.

93 Jacket summary, Elizabeth Parker, widow's pension application no. 16665 (Rejected), Mexican War, RG 15, NARA, Washington, D.C.