



JACOB BOLL, PIONEER NATURALIST

Jacob Boll was born May 28, 1828 in Würenlos, Bezirk Baden, Aargau, Switzerland to Henry Boll and Magdalena Peter Boll, one of several children born to the couple. Jacob was educated in Germany and his native Switzerland and was a naturalist. Around 1860, he accompanied his brother Henry Boll (1830 – 1904), and sisters Dorothea and Susan to come to Texas. All four siblings are listed as colonists in Dallas County's La Réunion community. Dorothea married Jacob Nussbaumer and Susan married Christophe Frichot, both spouses were colonists. Another brother named John Boll also came to Dallas County but is not listed among the La Réunion colonists. Jacob resided in Dallas County for a while after the community failed before relocating to Europe. Eventually Jacob returned to Texas after the death of his wife Henriette Humbel in 1873.

During his career, he worked with Phillipp Christoph Zeller, Louis Agassiz, Eduard Dämle, Edward Drinker Cope and was connected with various institutions as he collected and researched Texas animal and plant life. Boll is noted for having discovered thirty-two new species of Permian vertebrates, described as ancient animals of the Permian period characterized by having backbones. He found them while examining the areas sometimes called "red beds" in and around Texas rivers, primarily the Wichita and Red rivers. He also made an extensive collection of microlepidoptera (tiny butterflies and moths), as well as Texas reptiles, batrachia (tailless amphibians) and fish. Boll died at the age of 52 while working on an expedition in Wilbarger County on September 29, 1880. Usually his cause of death is not mentioned but at least one source suggests that it was from a snake bite while another suggests it was due to peritonitis.

Boll and his wife Henriette had at least three children, two daughters and a son. Jacob is interred at Greenwood Cemetery as are over a dozen other Boll family members.



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