



MARGARET BEEMAN BRYAN

Margaret Beeman Bryan was born on September 19, 1825 to John Beeman (1799-1856) and Emily Manley Hunnicutt (1806-1882) in Greene County, Illinois. Her mother had been born in Greenville, South Carolina and had married John Beeman in 1823. Her father was born in Murfreesboro, North Carolina. John and Emily were the parents of at least about eleven children, of which Margaret was the second child born. The Beeman family came to Texas in the early 1840s, first settling in Bowie County. Around 1842 they came to what became known as Tarrant and Dallas counties. About one year later in 1843, when she was about seventeen, Margaret married John Neely Bryan (1810-1877), originally of Lincoln County, Tennessee, who had come to the area in 1839. He was roughly fifteen years her senior. The image at below is from a painting of John Neely Bryan and Margaret Beeman Bryan.

Bryan had established a trading post on the banks of the Trinity River, laid out the basic plat for a town and built a ferry. He called the town Dallas. There are various theories about the origin of the name, but none are confirmed. The couple had at least six children, four of whom lived to adulthood. The four were John Neely Bryan, Jr., Elizabeth Frances Bryan, Edward Tarrant Bryan and Alexander Luther Bryan. The two who died as infants were Holland Coffee Bryan and Thomas Pinckney (or Pinkney) Bryan.

The town of Dallas began to grow, but like many other individuals, John Neely Bryan was lured by the California Gold Rush and left Texas for several years. He was not thought to have been successful in this venture and returned to Dallas and his family a few years later. Ultimately, his health declined and he died in Austin, Texas in 1877 at the age of sixty-seven.

In Dallas, Margaret Beeman's parents had settled along White Rock Creek, somewhat northeast of the town in the spring of 1842. Suzanne Starling and M. C. Toyer have written an excellent history of the John Beeman family that was published in the Fall, 2020 issue of "Legacies, A History Journal for Dallas and North Central Texas," a publication of the Dallas Historical Society. In their interesting ten page article, they recount the story of how the Beeman family came to Texas. It also includes their experiences here, references to known current locations and is completed with more than a page and a half of footnotes and citations to other source documents.

Of the four surviving children of John and Margaret Beeman Bryan, John Neely Bryan, Jr. was the eldest. He was born in 1846 in Dallas and served in the Confederate Army while he was still a young man. In 1867, he married Sarah Jane "Sally" Thompson in Dallas, Texas. In the 1870 census, the couple was still living in Dallas and John was working as a farmer. By the time the 1880 census was taken,

they were living in Llano County, Texas. His job was shown to be a wagoner and the couple had three children. By the 1910 census, they had settled in the North East Thornberry neighborhood where John was working as a farmer. This neighborhood is located about midway between Burkburnet and Petrolia, in the very southern part of Clay County. John and Sally lived there for the rest of their lives. Margaret came to live with them in her senior years and was residing with them when she died in 1919. Her son John followed her in death in 1926 and his wife Sally died in 1935.

Elizabeth Frances "Lizzie" Bryan was born in Dallas in 1847. In 1872, she married William Nathan Dillon. William had served in the Union Army during the Civil War. During their married lives, they lived in Illinois. In 1880, his job was listed as being a farmer. He was also shown to be a farmer in the 1900 census and the couple listed two children. William died in 1923 and Elizabeth survived him another five years before she passed away in 1928.

Another son was named Edward Tarrant "Ned" Bryan. He was born in Dallas in 1849 and died at the age of 29 in Dallas in 1879. At this point, not much else is known about Ned.

The last son to live beyond infancy was Alexander Luther Bryan, born in 1854. He was also a farmer. He married his first wife, Fannie Green, in 1873. They had a number of children before Fannie died in 1880. About two years later, he married Della Parks. For many years, he resided in Dallas. However, in the 1930 census, he lists his job as laborer. He and Della had moved to Fort Sumner, De Baca County, New Mexico where a son named Tom also resided. Della died in Fort Sumner in 1932 and Luther died on January 1, 1933 in Baylor County, Texas.

Many of the dates of birth and death are believed to have been found in the Beeman and Bryan family Bibles.

Margaret Beeman came with her family to North Texas as a pioneer, remained in the area and raised her family there. She died in 1919 at the age of 93. Longtime family historian M. C. Toyer advises that Margaret was originally buried in the Thornberry Cemetery at Charlie in northern Clay County. She was reinterred in the large Bryan Family plot in the Riverside Cemetery in Wichita Falls after John Neely Bryan, Jr. died in 1926.

The Beeman family is related to many of the early Anglo settlers in Dallas County. A good number of relatives either came together with them or arrived about the same time, including the Hunnicutt and other families. Many of Margaret's relatives were also early members of the Dallas County Pioneer Association.



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