

## CSA Headstone Dedication Text

**FREDERICK BONEWITZ (June 16, 1837 – February 9, 1889)**

**Plot B-034**

Artificer, Kellersberg's Corps of Sappers and Miners

---

**Frederick Bonewitz** was born on June 16, 1837 in the Kingdom of Hanover. He immigrated to Texas in 1852 with his mother, Henrietta, and several siblings, and joined the German Methodist Church (now Bering Memorial Methodist Church) in 1856. He became a U.S. citizen in Harris County on June 15, 1860.

On May 28, 1862, Frederick married Fredericke Beneke in Harris County. On the very same day, he traveled to Galveston and enlisted for the duration of the War as an Artificer [*ar-TI-fi-cer*], or Blacksmith, in Major Julius Kellersberg's Corps of Sappers and Miners, an engineering organization responsible for building tunnels ("saps") and forts and handling explosives ("mines"). Major Kellersberg, a brilliant civil engineer, personally designed both Fort Griffin at Sabine Pass and the fortifications on Galveston Island. The efficiently built Fort Griffin played a key role in Dick Dowling's victory at Sabine Pass on September 8, 1863, which prevented the invasion of Texas.

Frederick Bonewitz has one of the more extensive Compiled Service Records of the seven Confederate Veterans we are honoring today. While he served with the same unit throughout the War, the unit itself changed name several times, also being known at various times as

Captain Milton G. Howe's Company of Heavy Artillery;  
Company E, 1st Battalion, Confederate Engineer Troops;  
and Company E, 4th Regiment, Confederate Engineer Troops; among others.

The final card in his service record, which is dated March 1865, noted that he had been detailed on engineering duty in Houston since July 2, 1864. He thus most likely ended his war career in Houston.

Returning to civilian life, he and Fredericke resided on Robin Street near Brazos, just a few blocks from here. They had a family of about 13 children, seven of whom lived to adulthood. He worked for the Houston and Texas Central Railroad for 20 years, first as a carpenter, ultimately rising to foreman in the car repair shops. After his death on February 9, 1889, the *Houston Post* reported, "In honor of his memory, all of the shops of Central Railroad were closed. A baggage car and three coaches with Engine No. 18 were draped in mourning, in which the remains, members of the family and many sorrowing friends were taken to the cemetery across Buffalo Bayou on the tracks of Southern Pacific Railroad."

Magnolia Cemetery was actually started by the Bonewitz family. As noted on the new Historic Cemetery marker, the first person buried here was J. F. W. Steiner, who was the first husband of Frederick Bonewitz's eldest daughter, Henrietta Bonewitz Steiner Semler. An early published set of Bylaws for Magnolia Cemetery shows that Frederick Bonewitz served on the governing board of Magnolia Cemetery.

Other members of the Bonewitz family buried in Magnolia Cemetery include Frederick's mother, Henrietta, his wife Fredericke, and at least five of their children.