

## CSA Headstone Dedication Text

HENRY KITE (August 20, 1834 - December 14, 1908)

Plot C-152-4

Private, Co. A, 12th Texas Infantry

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**Henry Kite** was born on August 20, 1834 in Fayette County, Georgia, the oldest of the 14 known children of David Caswell and Harriet Kite. He married the first time about 1852, but his wife is believed to have died young, leaving him with a baby daughter, Sarah Jahassey. On July 6, 1858, he married Margaret Winifred Williams at her father's home near Greenville, Butler County, Alabama. Sometime between March 1860 and March 1862, Henry and Margaret moved to Hallettsville, Texas. Henry and Margaret ultimately had nine children and 41 grandchildren. With us today from Amarillo, Texas is one of Henry's two living grandchildren, Lewis Thurman Kite, youngest son of Henry's youngest son, Joseph Denson Kite.

On March 3, 1862, at age 28, Henry enlisted at Hallettsville for one year as a private in Company A, 12th Texas Infantry, also called Young's Regiment. When his enlistment was up, his term of service was extended to three years, during which time he served in Arkansas and Louisiana. Notes in his Compiled Service Record in April 1863 and February 1864 indicate that he is owed \$70 in travel expenses for the 700 miles to Pine Bluff, Arkansas. He stated in his Confederate pension application that he served until the close of the war, so he was probably present with his unit during the Red River Campaign, including the battles of Pleasant Hill and Mansfield in April 1864. His brothers Stephen and Samuel Kite and brother-in-law James Williams served in the same regiment with Henry; his brother David also served in the Confederate Army.

After the war, Henry returned to Lavaca County for a few years, then moved to Blue Branch, Burleson County by 1870, and to Bowie County by 1880. He suffered from the emotional damage of the conflict - he was unable to "settle down" and could not concentrate on farming. His wife said of him only, "Henry became a wanderer and a vagabond and could no longer farm." When he applied for his pension in 1902, he was living alone in Raymond, Leon County, Texas. Margaret lived in Milam Co. TX in 1900, and by 1903 she was established in Hollis, Oklahoma on a homestead with all of her children and a plethora of grandchildren.

The 45-year search for Henry's final resting place is quite a story in itself. The family story was that he had died "in the winter of 1909 and was last seen leaving some of his family's farm in Milam County, on foot, old, sick and wearing a long white beard, his welcome worn out," but there were no details. Many times we thought he had died with his boots on somewhere searching for an old soldiers' home around Galveston. As a result of some newspaper articles found by accident while looking for something else, the story has been pieced together.

Late in 1908, Henry arrived in Houston, perhaps intending to visit his youngest brother, Leroy, who had lived here some years earlier. He died here, a stranger in town. A week later, the *Houston Chronicle* reported that "The body of Henry Kite, whose death occurred December 14, is still being held by the Settegast & Kopf Company and efforts to establish communication with relatives of the deceased, supposed to live in Hollis, Okla., have been unavailing. Hollis is far from the railroad and has no telegraph station." Exactly six months later, his body was interred here in Magnolia Cemetery - with his age mistakenly recorded as 14 instead of 74, to add to the confusion. A "bad ink day" for the cemetery scribe.