

Finding Richard Knight

Son of Nahum and Thankful Knight

Compiled by Kathryn Packard

I just want to start my story by first saying that I was never looking for Richard Knight. I have been researching for some time to discover where Joseph Knight, the son of Nahum was during 15 years of his life that are unaccounted for. During the process of creating a life sketch of Joseph Knight however, I kept bumping into Richard Knight until I discovered where he lived and when and where he died.

My first encounter with Richard was in a book on settlers mainly from Kentucky who migrated to Texas. I found Joseph Knight and was able to verify through other facts that it was him, and noticed that there was a Richard Knight listed after an Obediah Knight. Richard is listed as single and that he migrated to Texas in 1848. No other information is given and I noticed a pattern that some of the single farmers do not give complete information. Joseph Knight is listed as being a farmer, age 31, birthplace of N.Y. , removal from MO, and had 3 children (Source A). Could this possibly be Joseph Knight's brother? Out of curiosity, I looked up Richard on family search. His birth year was 1828 and he was born in Colesville, NY, just like his brother. There are 3 sources attached. The first is the 1850 census where he is living in Washington, Buchanan, MO, with his parents and sister Mary. The second is an 1860 census where a Richard Knight is listed, born in 1828, living in Martinsburgh, Lewis, New York. Other members of the household are: Mary L. Knight (26), Elisebeth Knight (4), Alfred Brown (23), Cornelius Collins (67), and Evaline Collins (66). The third source is a military record for military service in 1861 as a Missouri Home Guard.

I continued my search for Joseph Knight and bumped into Richard again. There is a genealogy website called Texas Genealogy Trails that gives an index of land grants (Source B). Joseph and Richard were both listed in it. Now my interest in Richard Knight started to perk up. Did he migrate with his brother? Did he purchase land next to his brother's? So I did something that I like to call a "free fall". When I am researching someone new I like to dive in and just search anywhere and everywhere online for any information with their name. I did google searches as well as navigated around Ancestry. On Ancestry, I found:

Richard Knight in Lowville, N.Y. (a possibility)

His 1850 census in Missouri with his parents

Arkansas, Kentucky and a Mexican War pension record (nope, nope and nope).

The google search I did a search for Richard Knight found a historical marker application for Argyle, Texas (Source C). And Richard Knight is mentioned. "From 1850 to 1867, fourteen families came to what is now the Argyle Community. For protection, these early pioneers settled near one another. The families included: Daniel Cook, a farmer from Virginia; John H. Gibson of South Carolina, Jesse Gibson, a farmer from South Carolina; William H. Gibson, a farmer from Alabama; Spencer Graham from Tennessee; Frederick Hyatt, whose land was patented by his widow, Rody Roger Hyatt, Richard Knight of Missouri...(Jenkins pg.1). I couldn't believe it. There was Richard Knight the brother of Joseph. It goes on to say; "Of these original patents (the instrument by which public land is granted to a person) issued, six were patented by the heirs of Cook, Hyatt, Knight, Pritchett and two for B. Matthew Rogers and John Rogers (Jenkins pg. 1). So he DID come to Texas with his brother, bought land, had a family and probably died and was buried there.

I then found an 1879 land map but my searches to find their land were fruitless until I came across a book called "Flower Mound" written by Jimmy Ruth Hilliard Martin. The book mentions that Joseph Knight's land was off of Spinks Rd. (named after Joseph Knight's grandson). I followed Denton Creek which runs below Spinks Rd. and found Joseph and Richard's land. But further searches showed nothing else about Richard Knight or his family. I went back to my research on Joseph Knight (Source D). At the very bottom of the map to the right of the words Tarrant County you can see Denton Creek dip down. Their land is above that dip.

All of that changed on Saturday, March 2nd, 2019. I finally figured out where to look for Joseph Knight's land deeds. Thank you, Texas, for providing so much information on the GLO website (Source E). I currently live outside of Kansas City, but for 10 years prior, my young family and I lived in Dallas Proper, Carrollton, and Euless. Three of my kids were born in Texas and I consider them as having dual citizenship. Texas really is its own country. I was pretty excited to find Joseph Knight's signature. His "K" is unusually curly and I hope to find his signature on other documents to link him to where I believe he was during his unaccounted years. I saw Richard Knight's land deeds too. And that's when everything changed.

According to the land deed that was created April 11, 1850, Richard never actually got to see his land. It says:

"Be it known, that on the 11th day of April A.D. 1850 came Joseph Knight, brother of Richard Knight deceased, and claimed three hundred and twenty acres of land for the Heirs of the said R. Knight, deceased, he having been a settler in the Colony granted to Peters and others. Whereupon the aforesaid J. Knight took and subscribed the following oath, viz: I, Joseph Knight Brother of Richard Knight deceased, do solemnly swear, that to the best of my knowledge and belief, the said Rich Knight never received any land from the State of Coalvila and Texas, nor from the Republic or State of Texas, and that he emigrated to Texas and entered the Colony which was granted to Peters and others, as a Colonist previous to July 1848 and he was at that time over 17 years of age and that he continued and remained a settler in said Colony to the time of his decease, and performed all the duties required of him as a good citizen. So help me God. Joseph Knight

Be it therefore known, the Heirs of Richard Knight, deceased, are entitled to 320 acres of land within the limits of said Colony, the said Richard Knight having emigrated to the Colony under the second contract. The deceased during his life, never selected his land. Therefore the Heirs and legal representatives of said Richard Knight decd. are entitled to select the aforesaid quantity of land from an unappropriated or vacant land within the limits of the Colony, and have the same surveyed by the County or District surveyor conditioned that this claim shall not be transferred."

Another document written on 21 April 1853 says the following:

"I, A.P. Lloya, county clerk of Denton County Texas do hereby certify that Joseph Knight was appointed by the Chief Justice of Denton County Administration of the estate of Richard Knight, deceased on the 28th day of April 185 and I do further certify that the said Joseph Knight is now the legal administrator of the estate of Richard Knight deceased."

So now I had some questions to answer. According to a family history law that I made up, "genealogy research answers 1 question and creates 5".

Was the Richard Knight in the book on Kentucky colonists, Joseph's brother?

Yes. But they probably determined the migration date from land deeds. According to Elizabeth Browning Knight's obituary (she is the wife of Joseph Knight), they came to Texas in June 1846.

Why is Richard Knight on the 1850 census living with his parents in Buchanan, Missouri?

The book "Finding Answers in the U.S. Census Records" by Loretts Szucs and Matthew Wright, says the following: "In most years, census instructions stated that all persons temporarily absent on a journey or visit were to be counted with the rest of their family in their usual abode (pg. 10). " I do not know if anyone will ever know why Richard is on that census, but I was prompted to check that book out from the library a week before finding the land deeds, and that page popped into my head when I wondered about the census.

Why is he mentioned in Argyle, Texas?

That historical marker application was researched and written by Yvonne Jenkins in 1981. If she had used land transactions for her research, she would have come to the conclusion that Richard Knight bought land that he lived on and passed to his heirs.

When and where did Richard Knight die?

I looked everywhere. Texas in general, Argyle and the Flower Mound Cemetery, where many of the Knights are buried. Zip. Zilch. Nada.

On Monday, March 4th, 2019, I went back to the Land deeds. Joseph Knight could not have claimed that land without proving that Richard Knight had died. Which meant he had to have a death certificate of some kind, which meant Richard's death information had to exist somewhere and if I had been led to all of his other information, then surely I was meant to find this too. The kids happened to go to bed on time that night, so I fired up my computer and scoured the land deed. It mentioned that he was deceased on April 28th 185, but that made no sense because the first paperwork is dated April 11th 1850. I transcribed the most important land documents and still found no clue about his death, and then my time ran out and it was time for me to go to bed. I believe I may have said out loud "Richard, where did you die?" And then Richard woke up my 2-year-old daughter. I had turned off my laptop and just as I closed it, I heard her wake up. I have some experiences during this Joseph Knight project I have been working on and that was the first time a Spirit messed with my family that felt like a friend rather than a foe. It wasn't until I started organizing all of my findings on Wednesday that I had a strong confirmation that it had been Richard.

So, Richard woke my daughter up, and I sat in the rocking chair with her for 45 minutes before she was completely out and I could put her back to bed. I felt prompted to search again....but the land documents were on my laptop. I felt prompted to use my phone and let myself get a little lost in searching for possibilities for Richard's death place, when it hit me. Mexico. That random Mexican War pension record. It took me awhile to pull it back up on Ancestry because I couldn't remember the combination of information I had used to even stumble across it. I finally found it and it was a pension record for a Richard Knight who was a Private in the Mexican War in Taylor's Company, Chevallie's Texas Battalion of Mounted Volunteers (Source F). It also listed at the bottom that number of personal papers listed herein was 0. I tried googling the Company, the War, the Battalion...nothing. And I kept feeling to push to look at the pension record that had NOTHING. And then I realized it was a roll of records so I arrowed to the next one to see if maybe the next soldier was from the same area as Richard. And that was the moment I found page 2 of his 6 pages of pension records. I still didn't know if it was him though. He was 19 which would have put his birth year at 1828. And he enrolled in Collin City, Texas. I

looked it up because I wasn't familiar with that city, which doesn't exist. But Collin County does. And the Kentucky settlers book included Collin County and there was only a Richard Knight in Denton County. And Collin County was RIGHT next to Denton County.

So, Richard Knight, the son of Nahum Knight and brother of Joseph Knight, migrated to Texas with his brother in June of 1846. He received a certificate for 320 acres of land but never chose any. On February 2nd 1847 he enlisted in the Mexican War in Collin County, Texas. He had a clayback horse (chestnut colored) that was 15 hands high and missing its right eye. His horse was valued at \$80 and the value of the horse equipment was \$5. On April 4th 1847 while stationed at Camargo, Mexico, he fell sick. He died in Camargo, Mexico on April 18, 1847. I sat there in shock and completely humbled by this revelation. My question was "now what?" And it came to my mind that I have descendants of the Pecks and the Knights in my ward who I am very close friends with. I felt that I should present this information to them and get their input on how it should be presented on family search. I also felt that I needed to write out how it all unfolded and send it as well as all the documents I had found to Darrell Knight. And then I asked "You were born 191 years ago. Why now and why through me?" And the answer was, "This is for Trey Knight" who is one of my son's best friends and is also in my ward. It is not for me to know anything other than that.

I was surprised and humbled during my research to discover that I had been interwoven into this project long before I had started it. I realized when mapping out the Knight land that it was on or right next to Rock Ledge Park at Grapevine Lake. Part of Denton Creek was dammed in the 1950's to create Grapevine Lake and Rock Ledge Park is on the North East Shore. It was a special place for me. It is peaceful and a place I went to when I needed to escape. Sometimes you can see the wild turkeys running through the woods and the sunset at the lake is breathtaking. I know the land that the Knights lived on very well and I can see why they lived on it for so many generations. One of the Knight descendants (Mike Huggins) shared with me that the Knight land became a large part of DFW airport.

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With the assistance of:

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Source A:

https://books.google.com/books?id=c_oua35bJ_UC&pg=PA108&lpg=PA108&dq=joseph+knight+denton+texas&source=bl&ots=RVXJ3DUj62&sig=ACfU3U3aXY-yATwyqZFyr806vFoC-A0_cQ&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjGk6Per5fgAhUBG6wKHZu-BI0Q6AEwCHoECAAQAQ#v=onepage&q=joseph%20knight%20denton%20texas&f=false

Source B:

<http://genealogytrails.com/tex/prairieslakes/denton/landgrants2.html>

Source C:

<https://apps.dentoncounty.com/website/HistoricalMarkers/PDFs/ARGYLE.pdf>

Source D:

<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph187275/m1/1/zoom/?resolution=12&lat=5562.270244802661&lon=2555.7457520184007>

Source E:

<http://www.glo.texas.gov>

Source F:

<https://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?ti=0&indiv=try&db=ussoldiersmexicanwar&h=85404>