

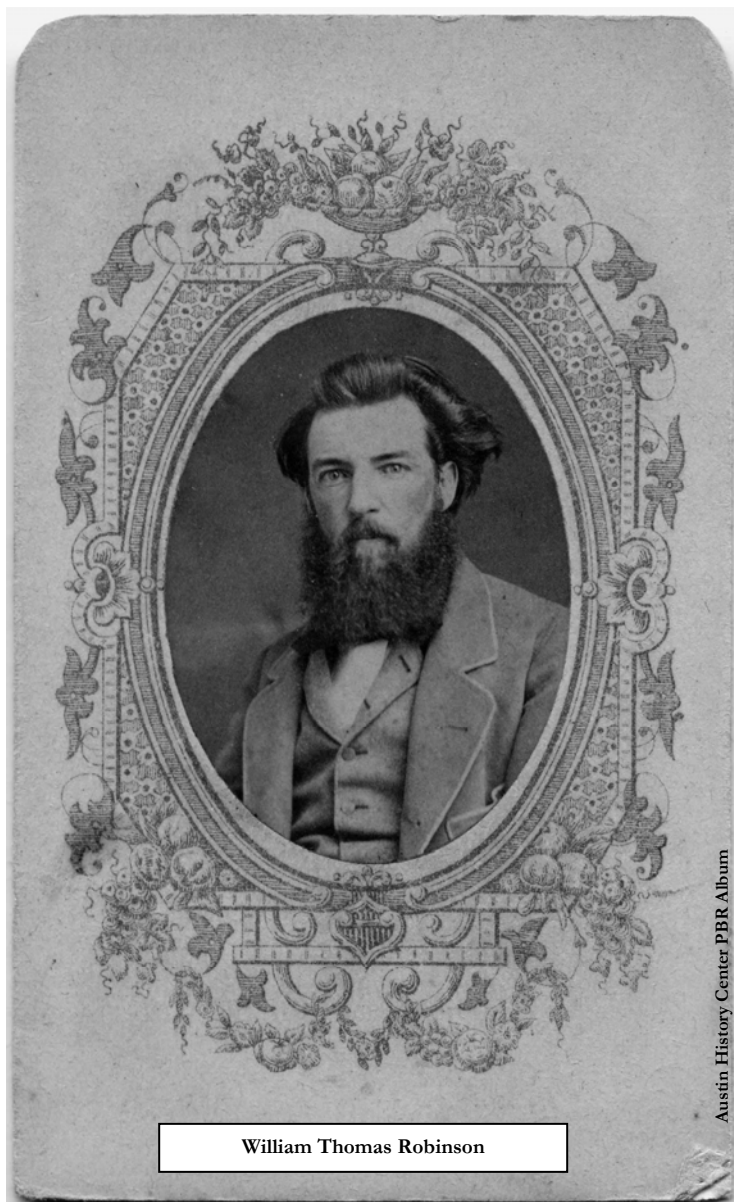
Second Generation

William Thomas Robinson 1837-1920

William Thomas Robinson, first child of John H. Robinson and Elizabeth Sheridan, was born 16 Jun 1837 in New Orleans, Louisiana.^{1 2 3} His birth day is recorded as 15 Jun 1837 in Pauline Bremond Robinson's family bible, but most records, including a family tree written by William's son,⁴ indicate the birth date as 16 June. As a young child, he moved with his family to Little Rock, Arkansas and then to Austin, Texas in 1855. When he was 15, he was sent to northern cities to attend school. He spent nine years at a boarding school in Cincinnati, Ohio⁵ and then went to New York City.⁶ He returned to Texas and in 1860 he worked with his father in the dry goods business in Austin. On 23 Jun 1862 William joined the ranks of the confederacy with the Thirteenth Texas Volunteers, Company C as a private. This regiment was known at Bates' Regiment. He joined on 23 Jun 1862 in Austin, Texas and was mustered in on 30 Jun 1862 in Velasco, Texas.⁷ William's two brothers, John H. and Alfred H. Robinson were in the same regiment.

In 1861, Col. Joseph Bates raised the 13th Texas Volunteer Regiment in Galveston and Brazoria County with headquarters in Velasco, Texas. The 13th Texas Volunteers included two companies of cavalry, two companies of artillery and six infantry companies. It was not unusual for Texas regiments, particularly those assigned to coastal defense, to include artillery and cavalry companies. The regiment was assigned coastal duty between Galveston and Matagorda during most of the war. From May to September 1863, the regiment was moved to Louisiana and served under Gen. Richard Taylor with headquarters in Bashear City, Louisiana.

Protecting Texas' ports was imperative to the Confederate economy, as the government depended on cotton sales to finance the War. Ports like Galveston and Velasco were crucial targets for the Union, whose generals were trying to stop the Southern cotton export trade. The 13th Infantry which was assigned to this region took part in three different skirmishes (all successful) along the coast including the Battle of San Luis Pass where they destroyed the Union commercial ship, the "Columbia," and two assaults at Velasco, 4 Jul and 11 Aug 1862.



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The following article about Bates' Regiment appeared in a Houston paper in 1862:

January 13, 1862, Tri-Weekly Telegraph, Houston, Texas
Velasco, Dec. 26th, 1861.

Editor Telegraph: The fortunes of war having brought me to this point, I have concluded to scribble off a few lines for the perusal of your readers. You are already aware that Col. Bates' Regiment is stationed in this region. Col. Bates is a whole-souled man, and enjoys the confidence of his command. Lieut. Col. Brown is also very popular. All the officers are beloved by their men, and when a regiment has confidence in their field officers, they can do deeds of valor on the battle field.

This is an important point. Here is the garden of our State. Here nature rewards the planter bounteously for his labor.

The men composing this regiment are nearly all native-born, and I would say that better material for an army cannot be found. They have furnished their own arms, and, as yet, have had no clothing found them by the Government. The troops here are reduced to the necessity of substituting corn for coffee. They have no tea. I trust those merchants who have such large stocks on hand will not forget the soldiers on this coast. . . .

Yours for the war,

Sioux.

In Nov 1862 William was given duty in the commissary and on 3 Jan 1863 was granted a sick furlough to Austin, Texas for 60 days. William was suffering from “phthisis pulmonalis” or what today would be called tuberculosis.⁸ He returned to his company following the furlough but was sent home again on 21 Sep 1863. It was apparent that he was unable to fulfill any field duty and his superiors recognized his experience as a merchant and assigned him to the Quarter Masters Department in Austin where he served from Jun 1864 until 19 Jan 1865. A letter dated 25 May 1864 certifies Robinson's medical condition:

Head Qrts 13th Tex _____

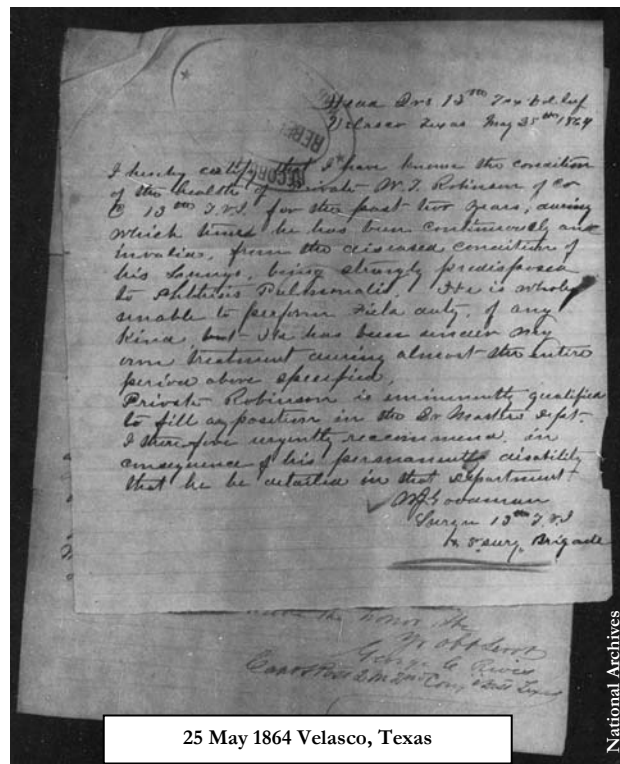
Velasco Texas May 25th 1864

I hereby certify that I have known the condition of the health of Private W. T. Robinson of Co C 13th TVI for the past two years, during which time he has been continuously an invalid, from the diseased condition of his lungs, being strongly predisposed to phthisis pulmonalis [a progressive wasting away of the body associated with cough, spitting of blood, fever;⁹ what we would today call tuberculosis] He is wholly unable to perform field duty, of any kind, but he has been under my own treatment during almost the entire period above specified.

Private Robinson is imminently qualified to fill any position in the Qr. Masters Dept. I therefore urgently recommend in consequence of his permanent disability that he be detailed in that Department.

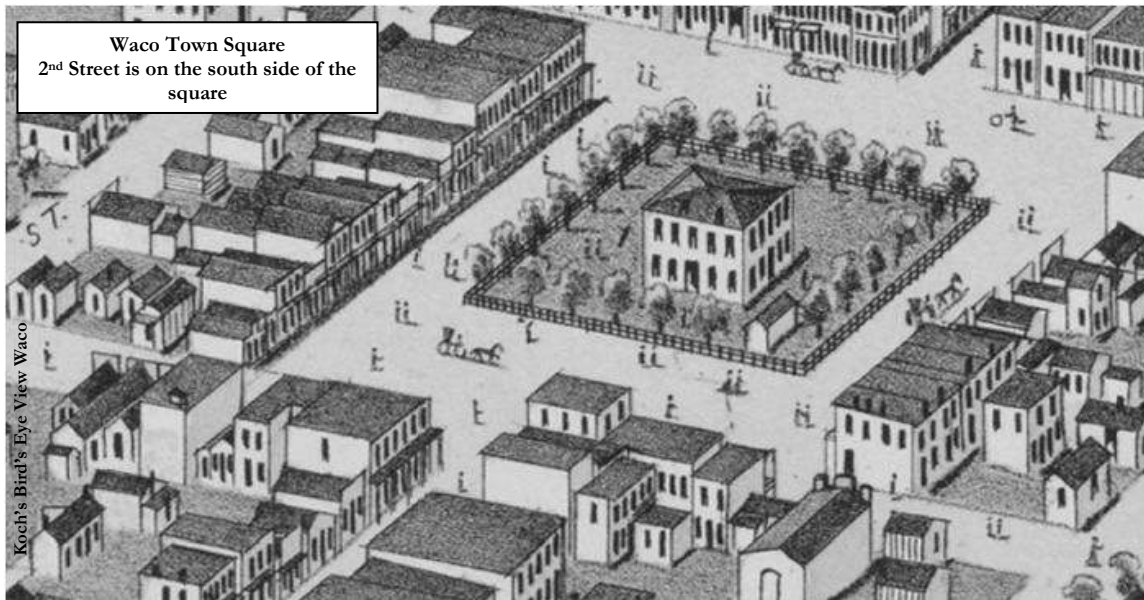
In Jan 1865 Robinson became ill again and did not return to his duties.

Following the war William returned to New York where he remained until 1867 when he moved to Waco, Texas and opened a dry goods store at the corner of Second Street and the square. He was one of the first in Waco to engage in the dry goods business. He married **Martha Charlotte “Zella” Gillean** on 3 Nov 1869 in Waco, McLennan County, Texas with Samuel A. King presiding.^{10 11} Zella



was born 20 Dec 1846 in New Orleans, Louisiana¹² to William Caldwell Gillean and Anne Catherine Felton.¹³ The following account of the wedding is provided by their son, William Herme Robinson, in a fragment of a letter to a cousin:

...a wedding gift from my father to my mother, and were ordered from New York by a Texas jeweler. My mother's two silk dresses, one blue and one black, were made to her order in New York City – for her wedding outfit – though she was married in a brown traveling costume, (Nov 3, 1869), father then being 32 while she was 22 years old. Married at 7 in the morning before a small gathering of intimate friends by the Presbyterian minister – in her father's 2 story brick home. All of their crowd then entered carriages and went to the home of Dr. Brown – where the same clergyman married Miss Clare Brown and J.S. Sears at 8 AM then all four newlyweds entered private carriages to drive down to Bremond, Texas to catch the railroad to Galveston – then to New Orleans.¹⁴



William and Zella lived in Waco until their deaths. The couple had two children, a daughter **Charlotte Robinson** and one son, **William Herme Robinson**. Charlotte was born 10 Sep 1870 and died the same day.¹⁵ William Herme Robinson was born in 1873.¹⁶ In 1880 the family lived at 1015 Austin Street in Waco.¹⁷

William retired from the dry goods business in 1882 and traveled in 1886 and 1887 for the firm of Leon and H. Blum, Galveston. He was also floor manager for Sanger Bros. in Waco in 1890 and 1891.^{18 19}

Zella was a life long member of the Presbyterian Church. She was an invalid for the last 20 years of her life and died 14 Jun 1919 of ulceration of the bowels²⁰ in Waco at her home, 609 North 12th Street. Zella's funeral was at the First Presbyterian Church, Rev. C. T. Caldwell officiated. She was a typical daughter of the south, a woman of deep spiritual impulses who believed that it was more blessed to give than receive.²¹

William died almost a year later in Waco, on 11 Mar 1920²² at his apartment in the old W. W. Seley place on the corner of Eighth and Columbus streets (224 N. 8th Street) in Waco.²³ Cause of death was apoplexy or in modern terms, a stroke. William and Zella are both buried in Oakwood Cemetery in Waco, Texas.²⁴

**MRS. ZELLA ROBINSON,
WACOAN FOR 50 YEARS,
DIED THIS MORNING**

Mrs. Zella Shannon Robinson, aged 72, passed away this morning at her home, 603 North Twelfth street. The body has been taken to the home of her nephew, Horace Smith, Jr., Sixteenth and Herring avenue, and the funeral will take place at 6 p. m. tomorrow from the First Presbyterian church, Rev. C. T. Caldwell officiating, interment to be made at Oakwood.

Mrs. Robinson had been an invalid for the last twenty years, and had been seriously ill for the last three months.

Born in New Orleans, Mrs. Robinson, with her husband, Wm. T. Robinson, one of the first here to engage in the dry goods business, came to Waco in 1869, immediately following their marriage, on November 3 of that year. She had lived here ever since, hence had been a resident of Waco for fifty years. Mrs. Robinson was a life-long member of the Presbyterian church, and though her physical condition, for the last two decades, prevented her from taking an active part in church work, she maintained her interest in it to the end. She was a typical daughter of the South, a woman of deep spiritual impulses, one who ever believed that it was more blessed to give than receive. She had hundreds of friends in this city, who will be saddened to learn of her death.

Besides her husband and one son, Wm. H. Robinson, she is survived by one sister, Mrs. Horace Smith, Sr., of Dallas, who was here when dissolution took place. The survivors have the condolence of many.

week and endeavor to get federal assistance in case the bond issue carries.

The plans submitted by County Engineer Mantos Hannah for the system of roads in Mart predict contemplate construction of roads as follows: From Mart to the Falls county line; Mart north to the county line; Mart to Riesel; Mart via Battle to Hallsburg, thence to the Marlin road and the improvement of the Marlin road to Riesel. The voting boxes are Mart, Battle, Hallsburg and Riesel.

LAST SUMMONS FOR PIONEER WHO LIVED IN WACO FOR 53 YEARS

Wm. Thos. Robinson, aged 82, died Thursday morning at 7 o'clock in his apartments in the old W. W. Seley place, corner Eighth and Columbus streets. The funeral will take place Friday afternoon at 3:30, from the First Presbyterian church, with the pastor, Rev. C. T. Caldwell, officiating. Interment will be made at Oakwood.

The active pall bearers are: Dr. J. H. Womack, B. H. Hill, Frank M. Miller, Jas. W. Short, M. P. Clinton, Waco; Jacob A. Bowers, Taylor.

Honorary: Judge Wm. M. Sleeper, Capt. C. H. Higginson, Dr. W. R. Clifton, L. Migel, John H. Horsfall, Sr., Luke Moore, Sr., Capt. Robert S. Ross, Col. A. Symes, William Lambdin, Tom Padgett, Wm. H. Hoffmann, A. A. Peoples, Henry Munnerlyn, T. W. Glass, E. Beckley, L. B. Black, Al E. Cowan, W. T. Abernathy, W. E. Darden, Dr. B. L. Scott, Dr. J. H. Boyette, Charles G. Dutton, James P. Anderson, John W. Baker, R. F. Gribble, Judge D. A. Kelley, J. F. Brinkerhoff, B. M. Wood, Judge John C. West, John Moore, Sam Orand, Ed J. Jersey, Edward W. Marshall, Alex. J. Beville, S. Hirschberg, Wm. Meade, Dr. R. L. Smith, Geo. W. Jones, Russell Kingsbury, A. R. Marks, Dr. Alex. Spencer, Henry Bell, Jas. H. Sturgis.

Mr. Robinson had not been able to leave his room for the last three weeks, and his constitution had become enfeebled by reason of advanced age.

Mr. Robinson was born in New Orleans, June 16, 1837. At the age of 15, he was sent to northern cities, where he attended school, nine years being spent in Cincinnati and later in New York City. In 1861 he returned south and joined the Confederate army. When the civil war ended, he returned to New York, where he remained until 1867, when he came to Waco and opened a dry goods store at the corner of Second street and the square. He was one of

the first in Waco to engage in the dry goods business. Mr. Robinson had been a resident of Waco for 53 years. He retired from business in 1892, and traveled for a while for the firm of Leon and H. Blum, Galveston. He was also floor manager for Sanger Bros. here for several years. In 1869 Mr. Robinson was married to Miss Zella Gillean, also of New Orleans, who died here on June 14, 1919.

Besides the one son here, Wm. H. Robinson, three brothers and one sister survive. Alonso, Eugene and John H. Robinson of Austin; Mrs. James D. Sheeks of New York.

THE YOUNG



A woman's fondest hope is to stay young, so-called "Beauty Doctors" in the Others wear girlish dresses, thinking the age. But no one is deceived. The more is shown.

There is but one thing that holds sickness and weakness bring old age. Prescription is a building-up medicine for and strong when they suffer from women young by keeping them well. It is a delicate and those who are nervous, old, dragging-down pains. Some women too and well ever since. Dr. Pierce's Favorite. It is safe to take, and has been in century. Try it now. Liquid or tablets.

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS.—"For a long time that was brought on by over-work and run-down and extremely nervous. I had least exertion I would be all in. I was a Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription, and I have health and strength, and I was so much that I feel I can safely recommend it to 1115 Soanes Vista Street.

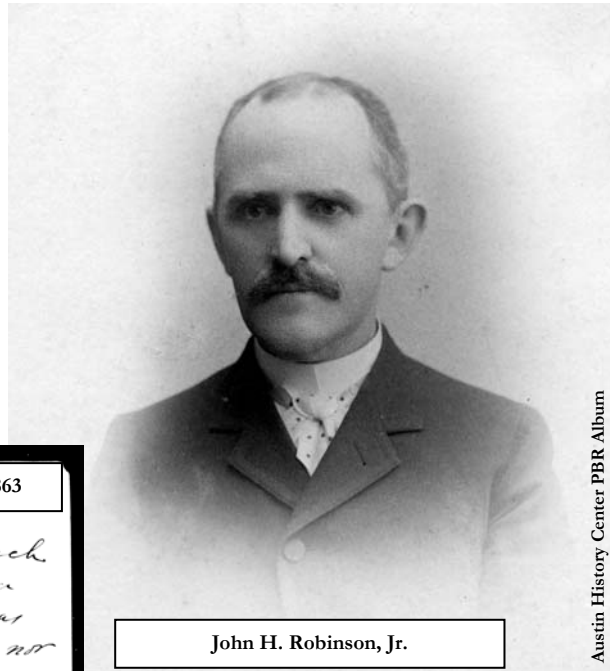
John Hermey Robinson Jr. 1839-1934

John H. Robinson Jr., the second child of John Hermey Robinson and Elizabeth Sheridan, was a merchant, a banker, and a financier.²⁵ Robinson, known affectionately to all of Austin as "Judge" because of his great knowledge of real estate law and practice and because he had a judicial manner,²⁶ was born 15²⁷ or 16 Jul 1839 in Little Rock, Pulaski County, Arkansas. He moved with his family to Austin, Texas in 1855 in a covered wagon. He received the usual practical education of that day, attending the schools of Little Rock and Austin.²⁸

John H. Jr. worked for his father in the general mercantile store until the beginning of the Civil War. He signed a petition in 1861 along with his father and brothers, Alfred and William, opposing secession.²⁹ In spite of his union sentiments, on 4 Nov 1861 in Velasco, Texas Robinson joined the ranks of the Confederacy as a private with the 13th Texas Infantry known as Bates Regiment. The regiment was a family affair since three Robinson brothers (William, John H. Jr. and Alfred) all served in the Thirteenth Texas Volunteers. Soon he was appointed Sergeant Major then on 20 Oct 1862 was appointed 1st Lieut. and Adjt under Col. Joseph Bates who was commander of part of the troops in the

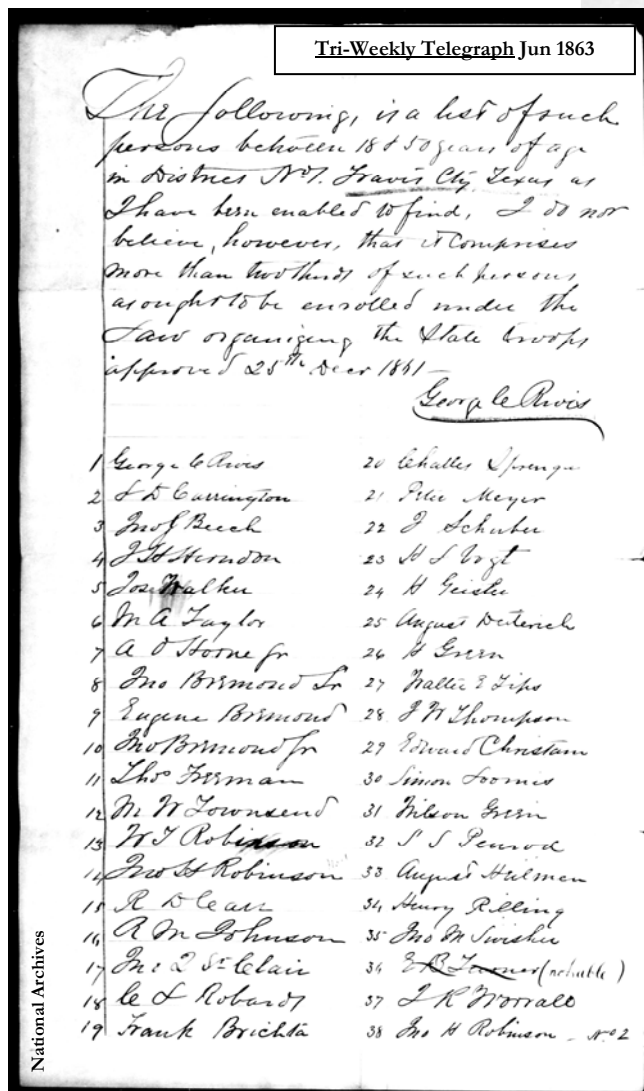
Central Sub-District of Texas.^{30 31} Robinson spent most of the war in Velasco and on 21 Feb 1864 he was placed on detached service to the staff of Colonel Bates. By 31 Jan 1865 he was on leave in Travis County.

Robinson and his brothers volunteered just a month before the Texas state legislature passed a law on 25 Dec 1861 which reorganized the state militia and made, with few exceptions, "every able bodied free white male inhabitant" between the ages of eighteen and fifty subject to service in the militia. Generally, militia service



John H. Robinson, Jr.

Austin History Center PBR Album



had consisted of parading around at a company assembly every other week. However, Section 34 of the new act gave the governor the authority to send the militia into the field. Those exempt from service in the militia included postmasters and mail carriers, ferrymen on public roads, railroad engineers and conductors, steamboat officers and crews, district judges and district clerks and county clerks, chief justices, and sheriffs. N. W. Shelley's papers in the National Archives include a letter reporting citizens in Austin, Texas eligible for conscription. John H. Robinson's name is on the list, along with his brother William T. Robinson and his father, John H. Robinson, Sr.³² In all probability, the pending conscription encouraged Robinson and his brothers to volunteer.

Just before going to war John H. Robinson Jr. buried the sum of \$250. After the war he recovered the money and with it bought a suit of confederate clothes which he wore for 2 years and more.³³ He found business conditions unfavorable, with the entire

country in an impoverished condition as the result of the war and the re-construction period following the war. Many businesses which were flourishing before the war were now bankrupt. John H. Jr. realized the need for new businesses and the need for men of sound judgment to stabilize the business situation. He resolved to start his own mercantile business. John H. Jr. and his friend and brother-in-law, John Bremond Jr., were both familiar with the mercantile business, having worked in their fathers' establishments. They made a good team.

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John Bremond Sr. had come to Austin from Philadelphia in 1847 and had established a dry goods and grocery store at 109 East Pecan (6th Street). In 1852 Bremond enlarged his building and took his sons Eugene and John Jr. in the business. John H. Robinson Sr. opened his store in 1856 on Congress Avenue and Robinson's sons worked with him in the years leading up to the Civil War. Both businesses suffered severe financial losses during the war and were in need of inventory, new capital and reorganization.

John H. Robinson Jr. and John Bremond Jr. took their combined finances to San Antonio, Texas and bought a small stock of merchandise, bringing it back to Austin under guard. They sold the stock for cash only and in 3 months they had made more than \$5000, which they used as capital to found the mercantile firm of Bremond and Company in 1865.³⁴

The partners were ultimately John Bremond Jr., Eugene Robinson, and John H. Robinson Jr.

The Bremond firm, located on East 6th Street, handled a complete line of merchandise, buying and selling practically every commodity of that day. Later the firm dropped the line of dry goods and clothing that had been carried for years and became grocery dealers exclusively. After many years of operations as retail grocers, a wholesale branch was added. In a back room of the store, Eugene Bremond operated a private loan business that eventually became the State National Bank, or "Bremond's Bank." Eugene sold his share of the family business in 1870 but continued to operate the bank. John Bremond Jr. then made his brother-in-law, John H. Robinson, a partner.³⁵ Robinson remained with the firm for 28 years, doing business in groceries, meat, buffalo hides, and like commodities, with a trade extending to a radius of 150 miles of Austin. The company even had a New York City office. Robinson eventually sold his interest in Bremond and Co. to John Bremond Jr. in 1898.



John Bremond Company (top)
Madelaine Bremond Robinson (above)

John H. Robinson Jr. was a business man and a family man. On 15 Jan 1868³⁶ in St. David's Episcopal Church in Austin, he married **Madelaine Bremond** (born 7 Apr 1845 in Pennsylvania),³⁷ the sister of his business partners and daughter of John H. Bremond Sr. and Elizabeth Roberts Bremond.

Madelaine came to Austin with her father and other members of the family in 1848. She was one of a large family and hers was one of three marriages that would join the Bremond and Robinson families.

The local paper reported: "Married, on Jan 15, by the Rev. B. A. Rogers, Mr. John Robinson Jr. and Miss M. Bremond. This office received the customary remembrance, and the editor is in danger of getting sick on cake and wine."³⁸ "Robinson

enjoyed saying that he dared not marry until he had saved \$5,000, a rather large amount in that day. To save this amount, he slept on the counters of the John Bremond store and ate his meals out of the store's grocery stock."³⁹

When Madelaine and John first married they settled near the Colorado River on Fannin Street where they were visited almost nightly by the prying eyes of some friendly and some not so friendly Indians from across the River. In 1880 the Fannin Street house was bursting at the seams. It was the home to Madelaine



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City of the Violet Crown

Fannin Street Home (top right)
306 West 8th (above)

and John plus their three children (Edward age 6, John H. age 4, and Mary Madelaine age 2); two borders Hugh A. and wife Mary Haralson (Mary was Mary Bremond Haralson sister of Madelaine B. Robinson; Mrs. Robinson's mother Elizabeth Bremond; nephew Eugene Bremond Jr. age 10; three servants and two children of the servants.⁴⁰ The house was sold eventually V. O. Weed.⁴¹ After 1880, John H. and Madelaine lived in the house that had belonged to Eugene Bremond at 706 Guadalupe.⁴² By 1900 they had built a large home at 306 West 8th Street.⁴³ Here they

raised a family of four: **Henry Robinson, Mary Madelaine Robinson, Mary (May) Robinson, and Edward Robinson.**⁴⁴

"Even though Mrs. Robinson was brought up in a wealthy family and married a man of wealth (in 1878 a local Austin newspaper claimed that 25% of Austin's city taxes were paid by the Bremond and Robinson families), she enjoyed household duties. Even with numerous servants about, she eagerly participated in supervising kitchen activities and testing out new ideas in the culinary art."⁴⁵ In addition to family life, Madelaine was also involved in the Austin community and even entered the realm of politics. In 1902 she, along with a committee of Austin ladies including her daughter Madeline Robinson, urged Governor-elect Lanham to reappoint Sam Harlan as superintendent of public building and grounds.

John H. Robinson Jr. was involved in the community as well. On 31 Jan 1871 Governor Davis replaced Austin's mayor by naming John W.

Glenn to the position. New aldermen were appointed and included J. H. Robinson and his partner John Bremond. Robinson continued his service and was elected to the Water and Light Commission in April 1905.⁴⁶ Four months after his election political clashes between the city council and the commissioners over funds held by city hall for repairs caused Robinson to suddenly resign his position on the commission. The resignation caused quite a stir and was reported as far away as Fort Worth in the Fort Worth Star Telegram. The move had the desired results and the bickering was resolved. Three days later Robinson announced he would remain on the commission and all was calm.

Robinson served as a volunteer fireman in the Washington Engine Co. No. 1 and was very active in St. David's Episcopal Church. He was appointed trustee for the Episcopal Endowment fund in 1906.⁴⁷

Robinson's business career was as varied as his community involvement. In 1892 he changed careers from merchant to banker when he resigned from Bremond and Company to become Vice-President of the State National Bank. The State National Bank had been organized ten years earlier with Eugene Bremond as president. In 1911 upon the death of Eugene Bremond, Robinson was made President of the bank, a position he held until 1917. The bank was located on the south east side of 6th Street just east of Congress Avenue. "The bank

ROBINSON RESIGNS

Austin Man Says He Is of No Further Use to Commission

Special to The Telegram.

AUSTIN, Texas, Aug 23—John H. Robinson, one of the members of the water and light commission, yesterday afternoon tendered his resignation to the board. The resignation of Mr. Robinson came as a complete surprise, it being the result of the continued bickerings between the commission and the city council. Mr. Robinson in resigning declared that things have reached such a stage that he can be of no further use to the city or the commission.

ROBINSON TO STAY IN AUSTIN COMMISSION

Reconsiders His Resignation at Solicitation of Friends—Tangle to Be Adjusted

AUSTIN, Texas, Aug 26—John H. Robinson, Jr., who a few days ago tendered his resignation as a member of the water and light commission, yesterday reconsidered his action and will remain on the commission.

"While I have not officially announced my decision in the matter to the commission," said Mr. Robinson, "I have reconsidered my decision and will remain on the commission. The pressure that was brought to bear on me to reconsider was so great that I could hardly decline to reconsider," concluded Mr. Robinson.

The decision of Mr. Robinson in the matter will be met with great relief by the people, as had he refused to withdraw his resignation it would have further tended to complicate matters, just at a time when peace between the two branches of the municipal government was about to be realized.

It is now a settled fact that at the next meeting of the city council an ordinance will be introduced providing for the appropriation of the \$12,000 now to the credit of the city hall fund to the commission and the funds will be expended in bettering the plant and to make needed repairs thereon.

The question of the election of a successor to Mr. Bachman will likely be taken up by the commission at its next meeting.

Ft. Worth Telegram 23 Aug 1905 (top)

Ft. Worth Telegram 26 Aug 1905 (above)

prospered under his guidance, but for reasons best known only to himself, he sold his interest at a substantial profit in about 1917 and became a “financier” when he entered the real estate and loan business. He was never a greedy or vindictive person – in fact he once confided that he never personally foreclosed on a loan. Further inquiry brought out a smile and explanation that when a note became long past due, he sold it at a discount in the open market thus personally dodging the foreclosure procedure.”⁴⁸

Just as the house John H. Robinson Jr. built became known as the “House on the Hill,” the neighborhood in which it was located became known as “bankers’ square,” and with good reason. Robinson wasn’t the only banker in the area. There were at least a



306 W. 8th after 1915 renovations



Madelaine Bremond Robinson

half-dozen or so others within a radius of two or three blocks. On the opposite side of Eighth Street lived a director of the same bank, Lewis Hancock. Across the alley north of the Robinsons lived the co-founders of the Austin National Bank, E. P. Wilmont, its president, and Henry Hirshfield, a director. The Bremond clan was nearby between Seventh and Eighth on Guadalupe. Robinson’s big comfortable house was the favorite gathering place of the bankers’ families. On pleasant summer evenings the men sat out on the beautiful lawn or on the wide verandas discussing banking and other business enterprises, while their wives exchanged “woman talk” or maybe favorite recipes.⁴⁹

In 1915 Robinson commissioned August Watkins Harris, a young draftsman with the architectural firm of Dennis R. Walsh, to replace the worn upper and lower front porches of his home with a newer, more classic front. Walsh and the original contractor and builder of the house, George Fiegel, were good friends and Robinson wanted the two men to work together on the project. Neither Walsh nor Robinson

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wanted to approach Fiegel because Fiegel refused to work with architects. Watt Harris finally got enough courage and approached Fiegel. The answer was an emphatic, "No." Walsh went ahead and

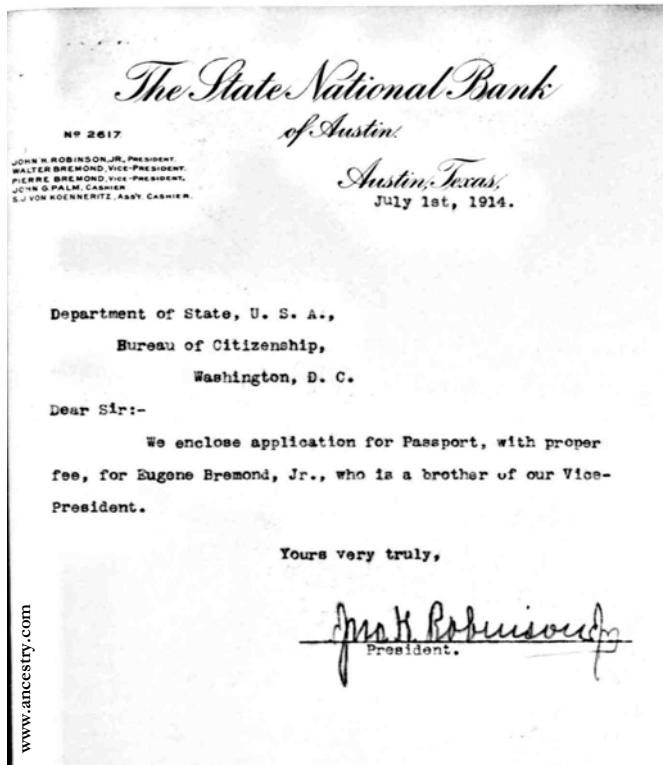
designed the new porch with two story classic columns with Roman ionic capitals that changed the face of the Victorian house. Harris did not destroy the unmistakable characteristics of Fiegel's Victorian style, however.⁵⁰

Madelaine and John celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary with an elaborate dinner and reception at their home attended by relatives from as far away as New York and Wisconsin. Walter Bremond spoke the family sentiments when he reflected on the couple and described John H. as "the leader and strong support of all his tribe, loved by his own, honored and trusted by all men." Of Madelaine he said she was "that rare gift of humanity, the social solvent, the blessed peace maker, in the sunshine of whose gentle presence no hateful thing could live."⁵¹

After 55 years together, Madelaine.

Robinson died on 26 Jan 1923⁵² in Austin

of edema of the lung and is buried in Oakwood Cemetery, Austin, Texas. John H. lived to be 95 and to the very end he was mentally alert and enjoyed reminiscing about historical events of Austin and Travis County and its early settlers. Robinson died 4 Sep 1934 in Austin, Texas. He is buried with his wife in Oakwood Cemetery in Austin.



THE DEAD

ROBINSON — Private funeral services for John H. Robinson, 95-year-old Austin pioneer who died here Tuesday morning, will be held Wednesday at 5 p. m. at the family residence, 306 West Eighth street, with the Rev. James S. Allen of St. David's Episcopal church, officiating.

Burial will be in Oakwood.

Pallbearers will be Joe A. Martin, Walter Bremond, Pierre Bremond, Oscar Robinson, Eugene Robinson, Jr., Edward Robinson, Jr., Alfred Robinson, Jr., and C. Aubrey Smith.

BOY ON BICYCLE HITS J. H. ROBINSON KNOCKS HIM DOWN

While crossing Colorado Street at the intersection of Seventh Street Monday morning shortly after 9 o'clock J. H. Robinson, president of the State National Bank, was struck by a bicycle on which a negro boy was coasting down Colorado Street, and was thrown to the pavement. He suffered an abrasion on the head and was bruised considerably.

Mr. Robinson was carried to a doctor's office and then removed to his home, 306 West Eighth Street. Advice from the doctor are to the effect that the injuries are not of a serious nature. It is thought that he will recover within a few days.

Mr. Robinson is 75 years old and has been president of the State National Bank since 1910. He has been connected with the bank since its organization in 1882.



Austin Statesman 20 Jul 1915 (above right)
Austin Statesman 5 Sep 1934 (above left)

Oakwood Cemetery

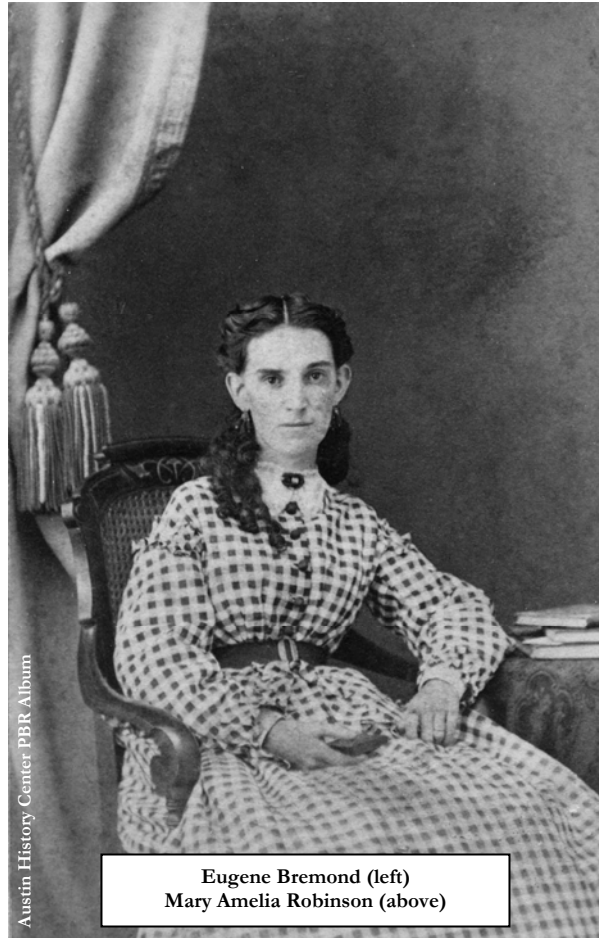
Mary Amelia Robinson 1842-1872

Mary Amelia Robinson, oldest daughter of John H. Robinson and Elizabeth Sheridan, was born 14 Aug 1842 in Little Rock, Arkansas. She moved to Texas with her family at age 13 in 1855 riding in a covered wagon. Six years later on 3 Jul 1861 in Austin, Travis County, Texas Amelia married **Eugene Bremond** before Charles Gillett, minister of St. David's Episcopal Church.⁵³ Eugene and Mary Amelia's marriage was the first of three uniting members of the Bremond and the Robinson families.

Mary Amelia was one of ten children, the third oldest and the oldest girl. Her father and Eugene's father, John Bremond, were both Austin merchants and good friends and Eugene and Mary Amelia's father were in business together for a short period of time. Mary Amelia was a gentle and amiable child and a happy woman, shedding sunshine



Austin History Center PBR Album



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Eugene Bremond (left)
Mary Amelia Robinson (above)

around her. She was a loving and affectionate mother⁵⁴ of four: **Elizabeth "Lizzie" Bremond** born 26 Apr 1862, **Walter Bremond** born 22 Sep 1864, **Lily Bremond** born 7 Mar 1867, and **Eugene Bremond Jr.** born 22 Apr 1870.

Eugene was born 8 Dec 1832 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the son of John H. Bremond Sr. and Elizabeth Roberts Bremond.⁵⁵ Eugene came to Austin with his father in 1847 at the age of 15. In 1849 Eugene's father opened a branch store of his mercantile shop on the east side of Congress Avenue, between Sixth and Seventh Streets and Eugene was placed in charge of the new store.⁵⁶

In the days leading up to the Civil War, Eugene was a Unionist and opposed secession from the union primarily for business and economic reasons. The Unionists in Austin formed the Austin Association for Maintaining Our Rights in the Union and circulated a petition protesting the state's secession convention of January 1861. Eugene Bremond was one of the signers of the petition.⁵⁷ After war was declared and following the passage of the state conscription laws on 25 Dec 1861, Eugene joined the

Second Generation

Confederate forces and became a member of the Texas Conscripts.⁵⁸ Nothing is known about his service but conscripts (draftees) were often used as quarter masters or in clerical positions.

Following the war, Eugene was baptized at St. David's Episcopal Church in Austin on 21 Apr 1867.⁵⁹ He was active in the mercantile business with his father and then with his brother, John Bremond Jr., and his brother-in-law, John H. Robinson Jr. His main interest in the business was making loans to private individuals. He operated his loan business out of a small room in the back of the store and charged the going rate of 18% interest. For a brief time in the late 1860s, Eugene was a partner with John H. Robinson Sr. and operated a private bank known as Bremond & Robinson.⁶⁰ This partnership did not last beyond 1871. In 1870, he sold his portion of the Bremond mercantile business to his brother, John Bremond Jr., although he continued to operate the private bank out of the store.

Banking was in its infancy in Texas following the war, largely due to public hostility to public banking institutions. George W. Brackenridge of San Antonio, Texas, one of the state's earliest and most successful bankers, attempted to open a national bank in Austin in 1869. Brackenridge withdrew from the effort in 1872 and Howard M. Holden, president of the First National Bank of Kansas, joined with Elisha M. Pease, Eugene Bremond, and other Austin citizens to obtain a charter for the First National Bank of Austin. Holden was the first president, Pease the vice-president. Holden, Pease, Eugene Bremond, George Hancock, and George B. Zimpleman were the first directors. The bank opening was planned for 1 Oct 1873, but in September, the Panic of 1873 hit and Holden suffered severe financial losses. Pease replaced him as president

and in 1874 brought back George Brackenridge to help. Brackenridge had stipulations for his aid; Brackenridge became president, Pease vice-president and the First National finally opened its doors on 11 Apr 1874⁶¹ at the northwest corner of Sixth and Congress.

How long Eugene Bremond remained a director of the First National Bank of Austin is not known, but in 1880 Eugene established Bremond & Company, a

private banking company, one of the first banks established in Austin. In 1882 it reorganized and was chartered as the State National Bank with Eugene as president.⁶² Locally, the bank was always known as "Bremond's Bank" and for nearly a century members of the Bremond family were bank officers in Austin.⁶³

Collections solicited on All Points in the State.
Commercial paper discounted. Bills on Mexico

STATE NATIONAL BANK
OF AUSTIN.
Successor to BREMOND & CO.
CAPITAL \$100,000
Collections and correspondence solicited.
EUGENE BREMOND, President; WM. W. BISSELL,
Vice President; E. T. EGGLESTON, Cashier.

Galveston Daily News 24 Mar 1882

Bremond was a civic leader as well as a business man. On 25 Dec 1871 the last rail of the Western branch of the Houston & Texas Central Railroad was laid in Austin and Eugene Bremond, representing the citizens of Austin, drove in the final spikes.⁶⁴ Eugene's uncle, Paul Bremond, and his partner, Thomas William House (House was the baker who had been in business in New Orleans with Mary Amelia's father), were among the partners of the railroad that had broken ground for the Houston & Texas Central on 1 Jan 1853 at Houston. The railroad was first named the Galveston and Red River Railway but was changed to H&TC on 1 Sep 1856.⁶⁵ The Civil War slowed construction of the railway but after 1867 expansion resumed and the rail connection brought business expansion and economic progress to Austin.⁶⁶ Railroads were unquestionably the biggest economic force in Texas after the Civil War.

The establishment of a public university next peaked Eugene's interest. In 1881 Eugene joined Judge Terrell, Frank Hamilton, William Brueggerhoff, A. J. Pecker, C. F. Millett, J. T. Brackenridge, E. J. Davis, W. C. Walsh, Dr. M. A. Taylor, Walter Tips, Phineas de Cordova, E. T. Eggleston, and A. P. Wooldridge to head the campaign to establish a university to be known as the University of Texas. The place was to be determined by a vote of the people of Texas. Bremond's group organized on 6 Apr 1881 to begin planning the strategy to have the university built in Austin.⁶⁷ Wooldridge was named

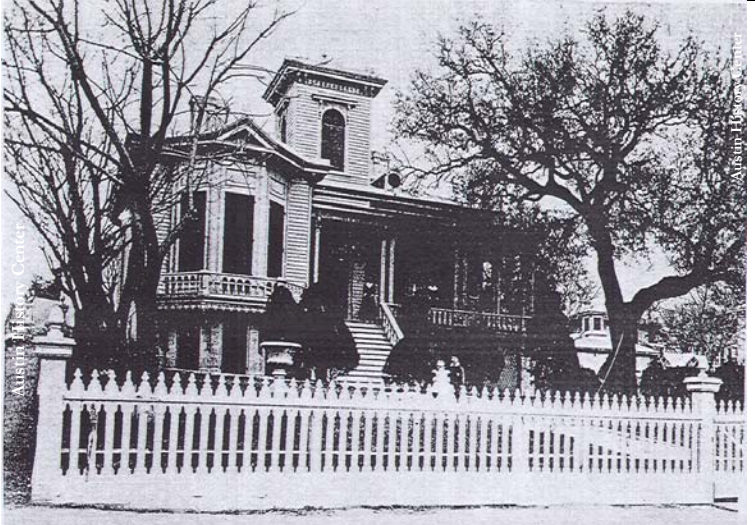
chairman and the “committee began flooding Texas with pro-Austin literature, dispatching articles and editorials to newspapers and asking friends to post handsome placards in courthouses and post offices. The Austin campaign committee ticked off a number of points in the city’s favor: its healthfulness, central location, beauty, and its accessibility by rail.” Austin ultimately won the vote and the University opened in Sep 1883.⁶⁸

Eugene was involved in all aspects of the city. In 1887 he helped establish the Austin Board of Trade (forerunner of the Chamber of Commerce) and became a director on 27 Oct 1887.⁶⁹

Eugene’s father, John Bremond, aided in organizing and chartering the Austin Hook and Ladder Company No 1 in 1858, Austin’s first volunteer fire department. Eugene followed in his father’s footsteps and was a member of the same volunteer company.

Of all of his accomplishments, Eugene is best known as the “architect” of the Bremond Block, because it was through his efforts that this family compound came to be. In 1866 Eugene purchased the north half of block 80 in the city of Austin. Today, this block still bears his name. The first house owned and occupied by Eugene Bremond was at 706 Guadalupe, the oldest structure on the Bremond Block.⁷⁰ Eugene and Mary Amelia and their family lived in this small house built originally for William Phillips by master builder, Abner Cook. In 1872, to accommodate his growing family, Eugene enlarged the house with a rear Italianate addition.⁷¹

Unfortunately this was also the year his wife Mary Amelia died, leaving him with four young children. Mary Amelia died of pneumonia at the age of 30 on 21 Mar 1872⁷² and was buried 22 Mar 1872 in

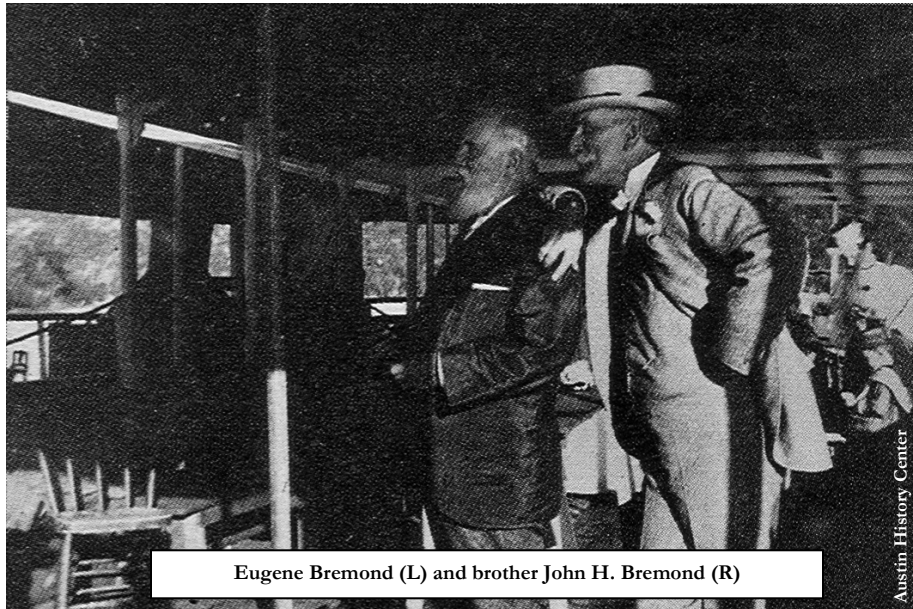


Eugene Bremond’s Homes: 706 Guadalupe (top), 404 W. 7th before renovation (middle), 404 W. 7th after renovation by Eugene Bremond (bottom)

Second Generation

Oakwood Cemetery in Austin, Texas⁷³. Her obituary paid tribute to her as a woman who was known for her “virtue and affection.”⁷⁴

Two years after Mary Amelia’s death, Eugene married **Augusta Palm** at St. David’s Episcopal Church on 24 Aug 1874 and moved his family and new bride to the opposite side of the block. (Agusta was the daughter of Emily and Gustav Palm and was born 13 Feb 1843 in Sweden.)⁷⁵
⁷⁶ Before Eugene



Eugene Bremond (L) and brother John H. Bremond (R)

Austin History Center



Austin History Center PBR Album

Augusta Palm Bremond

moved, he divided up his property among his children. His son Walter and daughter Lizzie got the west end of this half block; His daughter Lily received property located elsewhere in town, and his son Eugene Jr., nicknamed Bud, acquired this Greek revival house at 706 Guadalupe.⁷⁷

In 1874 and in preparation for his marriage to Augusta Palm, Bremond paid \$15,000 for an Italianate house at 404 W. 7th and the empty lot next door. The house was a white frame structure belonging to D. C. Sandel, a mattress-maker. Eugene remodeled the structure, smoothing out the Victorian edges of the bay window and adding a graceful, curving porch. The home was a present for his new wife and the couple and Eugene’s four children moved in to the house that would be Eugene’s home for the rest of his life.⁷⁸ Two more children were born to Eugene and Augusta, **Pierre Augusta Bremond** and **Maud E. Bremond**, bringing the number to six. Life in the house and on the Bremond Block certainly must have been lively.

Tragedy struck the family again in 1876 when Eugene’s daughter, Lizzie, died after a brief illness

in Staunton, Virginia. Lizzie was not quite 14 when she died while attending school in Virginia. Eugene rushed to her bedside and was with her when she died.⁷⁹ Eugene was a family man and this death must have been difficult for him.

Never flashy or pretentious, Eugene kept his purse open to family members, ensuring the genteel, affluent lifestyle for which the Bremonds became known. In 1887 Eugene hired local builder George Fiegel to remodel the house at 711 San Antonio, adding one and a half stories to the stone house

transforming it into a fashionable Second Empire home. The house was a wedding gift from Eugene to his son Walter and his bride, Mary Anderson. In 1891, Eugene moved his sister, the recently widowed Pauline Bremond Robinson, and her seven young children to the block at 705 San Antonio, a house that he had enlarged for her. And finally in 1898, the last of Eugene's projects on the Bremond block was completed, a Queen Anne style residence built by George Fiegel as a wedding present for Eugene's son, Pierre, and his wife, Nina Abadie Bremond.

Eugene died 4 Dec 1910 at his home at 404 W. 7th Street, Austin, Travis County, Texas. He was buried in Oakwood Cemetery, Austin, Travis County, Texas. Augusta died 25 Aug 1929 in Austin and is also buried at Oakwood Cemetery.



Ann Dole Collection



Ann Dole

Oakwood Cemetery

BREMOND FUNERAL LARGE

Body of Prominent Austin Banker Laid to Rest in Oakwood Cemetery. Ceremony at Church.

The funeral of the late Eugene Bremond was held yesterday morning at 10 o'clock at St. David's Episcopal church, Rector T. B. Lee conducting the ceremonies, assisted by Bishop Kinsolving. At the service at the church a quartette consisting of Mrs. Guest Collins and Mrs. H. L. Hilgartner and Messrs. George Warner and H. C. Calloway sang "Lead Kindly Light." At the conclusion of the church service the funeral procession proceeded to Oakwood cemetery, where service was also held. The quartette rendered "Abide With Me."

The funeral of this citizen of Austin was one of the largest ever held here. The floral offerings were beautiful and in large quantities. It required four wagons to take the flowers to the cemetery. The following named persons were the pallbearers:

Honorary — George Fiegel, L. N. Goldbeck, Joseph Nalle, S. K. Morley, R. M. Castleman, Judge T. S. Maxey and former Governor Joseph D. Sayers. Active — John Bremond, Jr., Henry Robinson, Fred Fisher, Stephen N. and Ed Palm.

In Memoriam.

Died, on Thursday morning, the twenty-first inst., of pneumonia, after a brief illness, Mrs. MARY A. BREMOND, wife of Eugene Bremond, and daughter of J. H. Robinson, Esq., of this city. The deceased was well known to us. It is not our purpose to eulogize her. As a friend we would pay a simple tribute to her memory. She grew up here among us from childhood. The gentleness and amiability for which she was distinguished as a child, shed sunshine around her as a woman. As a wife and as a mother she has well fulfilled her mission. From her home, which for ten years has been made happy by her virtue and affection, and from her four little children whose tender hearts clung to her for support and guidance, she has been suddenly taken away. To him and them who are thus deeply bereaved human consolation were but mockery. But holding the blessed word of Jesus we own the truth, it's darkness is dispelled. He passed through the same gateway to show us the way. It was He who said, "Let not your hearts be troubled," "I go to prepare a place for you." Trust Him and believe that even this, though hard, is best, for He wills it.

Austin History Center

August 25, 1929

Pioneer Austin

Woman Dies at 86

Mrs. Augusta Bremond
Widow of Banker

Death claimed Mrs. Augusta Palm Bremond, 86, pioneer resident of Austin and one of Central Texas best known citizens, Sunday morning after an illness of six weeks.

Mrs. Bremond was widow of the late Eugene Bremond, founder of the Bremond Banking company, a private financial institution, in 1847. This bank later became the old State National bank in 1882 in which the late Walter Bremond, Sr., was president and a few years ago its assets were absorbed by the Republic Bank and Trust company, of which a grandson of the founder, Walter Bremond, Jr., is now vice president.

Funeral services for Mrs. Bremond have been set for 6 o'clock Monday night from the home of her son, Pierre Bremond, 402 West Seventh street. The Rev. Beverly Body, rector of St. David's Episcopal church, will officiate at the service.

Mrs. Bremond was preceded in death by her husband, who died in 1910. Surviving her are two sons, Pierre Bremond and Eugene Bremond, Jr., and a daughter, Mrs. Alfred Carr of St. Louis. Other survivors are a brother, Carl Palm of Austin and two sisters, Miss Julia Palm and Mrs. Zanna Palm of Austin; three grandsons, Walter Bremond, Jr., Eugene Steiner, Waco, and Alfred Carr, Jr., St. Louis, and two granddaughters, Mrs. Carl D. Matz of Kansas City, Mo., and Mrs. Adele Steiner Fisher of Austin.

Austin History Center

Alfred Henry Robinson 1844-1885

Alfred Henry Robinson, son of John H. Robinson and Elizabeth Sheridan, was born on 23 Aug 1844⁸⁰ in Arkansas. He came with his family by covered wagon in 1855 and by 1860 at age 16 he worked as a clerk in his father's mercantile establishment on Congress Avenue in Austin, Texas.⁸¹ At the onset of the Civil War, he followed his older brothers William and John H. Jr. and joined the ranks of the Thirteenth Texas Volunteers, known as the Bates' Regiment. He enlisted as a private on 1 Nov 1862 in Austin and mustered out as Sgt. Major. On 1 Oct 1863 his daily duty was that of orderly for the commanding officer by order of Col Bates. At other times he was detailed to a schooner and served as an inspector of customs by order of General Magruder.⁸²

Following the war, as the boys made their ways home to Austin, his oldest brother, William, decided to move to Waco where he opened his own mercantile store and the next oldest brother, John H. Jr., went into business with John Bremond Jr. Alfred took over the reins at his father's mercantile store and became the "Son" in Robinson and Son.

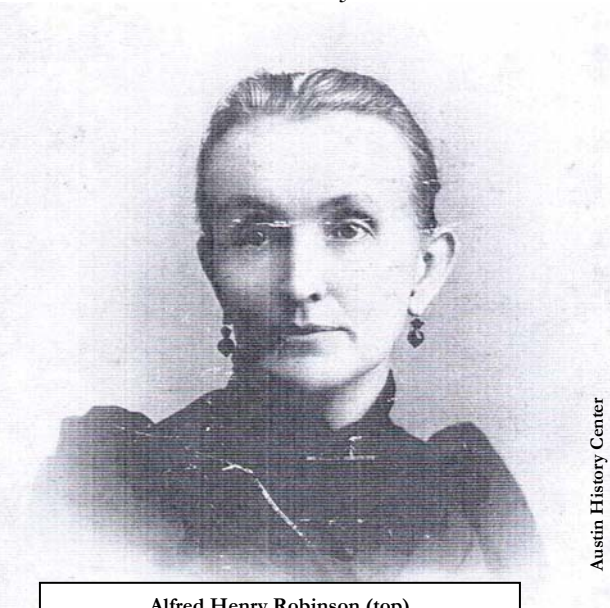


Austin History Center PICB 14422

Alfred married **Pauline Bremond**, sister of his brother's business partner, on 30 Mar 1869 in Austin, Texas at St. Mary's Catholic Church.⁸³ Witnesses were Ben Walker, James Hart, Mollie



Austin History Center PBR Album



Austin History Center

Alfred Henry Robinson (top)
Pauline Bremond Robinson (bottom and left)

Peck and Lizzie Robinson, sister of the groom.⁸⁴ Pauline was born on 6 Sep 1849 in Austin and was the daughter of John H. Bremond Sr. and Elizabeth Roberts. This was the third of three

marriages uniting members of the Bremond and Robinson families. The Bremond and Robinson families were Episcopalians but Pauline converted to the Catholic religion and she and Alfred raised their children in the Catholic faith and sent them to Catholic schools. This branch of the Robinson family today remains primarily Catholic.⁸⁵

The couple made their home at 706 Rio Grande in what is today known as the Robinson-Wagner house where they raised seven children:

Elizabeth R. Robinson born 24 Dec 1869, **John Alfred Robinson**

born 18 Jul 1871, **Mary P. Robinson** born 22 Sep 1872, **Catherine Agnes Robinson** born 17 Nov 1873, **Alfred Henry Robinson II** born 2 Oct 1877, **Pauline Robinson** born 3 May 1881, and **Josephine Cecilia Robinson** born 29 Sep 1884.

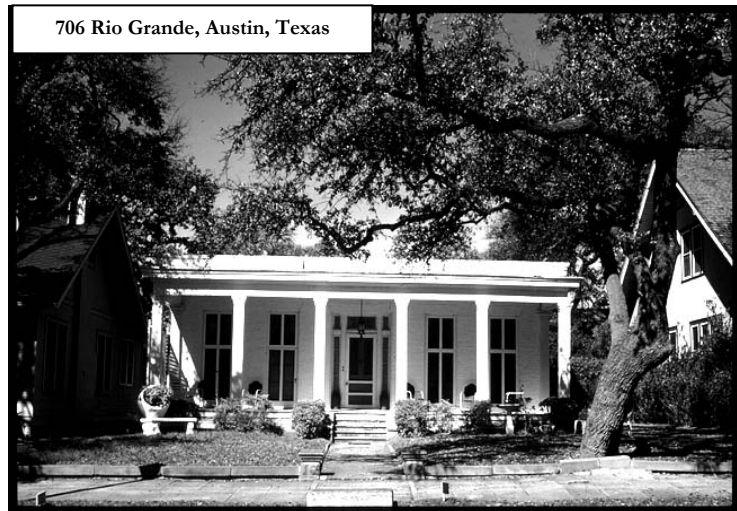
Alfred was “esteemed, admired and loved by hundreds, for his manliness, integrity and kindness of Spirit.”⁸⁶ In addition to being a merchant Alfred was a member of the “Kid Glove” volunteer fire company (Washington Fire Engine Company), so called because of the numerous prominent men who belonged to it.⁸⁷ He served as Recorder of Austin’s Volunteer Fire department for many years.

The State Capitol was destroyed by fire on 9 Nov 1881. The 16th and 17th Legislature had failed to approve funding for hydrants; there was insufficient water or water pressure to mount an effective attack on the fire.

An entry in fire records by department recorder A.H. Robinson noted "...the pressure, however, was not sufficient to throw water

*even a few feet. The economical solons (sessions) of the sixteenth legislature and so, too, the seventeenth, refused to appropriate enough money to supply the Capitol building and the grounds with hydrants and water. Today, we gaze upon the blackened walls of a burnt state house as the monument to their penny-wise and pound-foolish policy."*⁸⁸

In the same year, a tribute to Austin firefighters appeared in the Texas Siftings: "In no city in Texas that we know of, or elsewhere, is there so large a proportion of the best men in the community connected with the fire department. The most prominent bankers, merchants, and professional men in Austin are firemen."⁸⁹



IN MEMORIAM

ALFRED H. ROBINSON.

Death comes in many shapes—always sad, always terribly majestic—the death of any noble, good man is doubly sad; but when the dread summons comes as it did to poor Alfred Robinson, the heart rebels and erring, suffering humanity almost doubts the all-kindness of our Maker.

Stricken down in the pride of health and manly strength, just as his life had grown into manhood, almost without warning called from those whose happiness he had given all the love of his generous heart and that, just when his courage and honor and energy had born best fruit, and he could anticipate years of assured comfort. Could look forward to such rearing of his children as would make them worthy of his name—could turn his every thought to tender care, in their declining years, of those noble ones, whose early teachings made him what he was. With such loss fresh upon us, we can only say that His wisdom is beyond ours—"Thy will be done."

The heart of our whole city will go out in tender sympathy to the stricken father and mother—they whose gray heads are crowned with honor, who for years have lived among us honored, loved, revered, fit parents of a noble son—to the brothers and sisters, born among our people, a part of them, bound to them by ties that years have fostered.

But for the poor wife, widowed, for her, words of comfort have no hearing. Many a mother's heart bleeds as she pictures this mother waiting—throned among her children—for the step she will never hear again, waiting for the face of him, her boyish sweetheart, her manly lover, her proud and happy husband, the noble father of her children—Oh! God, in Thy infinite mercy, pity her, and soften with Thy kindly hand the realization—so slow to come—that he has gone. Slow to come! Why those who only knew him from some kindness done, those whose lives were not made up in part of his, can not believe that this manly man that only a few short days ago they saw in perfect health lies now in cold and pulseless death; that this great hearted man whose hand was always open was no more. He gave freely, but his charity was not blazoned to the world. In many a place, beyond the range of those who met him in business life, the mention of his name will evoke a silent blessing. Far out among the western men the knowledge of his death will bring to unaccustomed eyes tears of such value as would wash out many sins.

Devoted to his noble wife, loving to his children, faithful, considerate and affectionate to his parents—in all relations he did his duty. He leaves a home that is a synonym for honor. God seldom sends better men.

All knew and loved him; in the last sad rites, appreciation of a noble life was shown—the people did him honor.

V. Johnston Collection

a tear. A true loving and devoted husband and father, without ostentation, good and charitable. Yes one whom to know, was to love and respect. None named him, but to praise him in life esteemed by all, in death mourned and regretted. In the wisdom of God, in the very midst of his prime, manhood and usefulness, was taken from us, leaving behind him a legacy of all that was commendable.

Following Alfred's death, Pauline's brother, Eugene Bremond, remodeled a house at 705 San Antonio for her and her children. Eugene and his family lived just across the alley at 404 W. 7th. How comforting it must have been for her young family to be surrounded by the love and caring of in the family enclave known as the Bremond Block. Eugene's daughter Lily wrote to her stepmother Augusta Palm Bremond on 8 Aug 1891, "Aunt Pauline will move in her new house next Monday, and then your hill with be complete."⁹²

Alfred's death was the first blow that struck the family. Five of Pauline's seven children preceded her in death: Elizabeth, John, Alfred, Josephine, and Mary. In addition, her daughter Pauline contracted polio and was paralyzed on one side of her body. Only through long hours of physical therapy did Pauline recover much of her mobility.

In spite of tragedies, Pauline's house was a home of joy and laughter and served as a gathering place for the family through the years. The doors were always opened to family members

Alfred died unexpectedly at age 41 on 11 Apr 1885 in Austin of rheumatism of the heart⁹⁰ and was buried 12 Apr 1885 in Oakwood Cemetery, Austin, Texas. Pauline was shocked by his death. Alonzo Robinson recalled in an interview, that from blocks away Pauline could be heard screaming.

The character of the funeral procession was of itself sufficient testimony of the high standing of the deceased. Over a hundred firemen in uniform were out, in honor to their dead comrade. In front of his own company – Washington – was the company's horse with habiliments of mourning thrown over him, led by his faithful driver, Essex Carrington. Hundreds of friends followed on horseback and vehicles, the cortege extended for nineteen blocks along the Avenue and West Pecan. And thus was laid to rest, amid the tears of his kindred and the sorrow of devoted friends, all that was earthly of one of nature's noblemen.⁹¹

Alfred was fondly remembered by his father in a letter dated 3 Sep 1890 to John Alfred Robinson, eldest son of Alfred and grandson of John H. Robinson, Sr.:

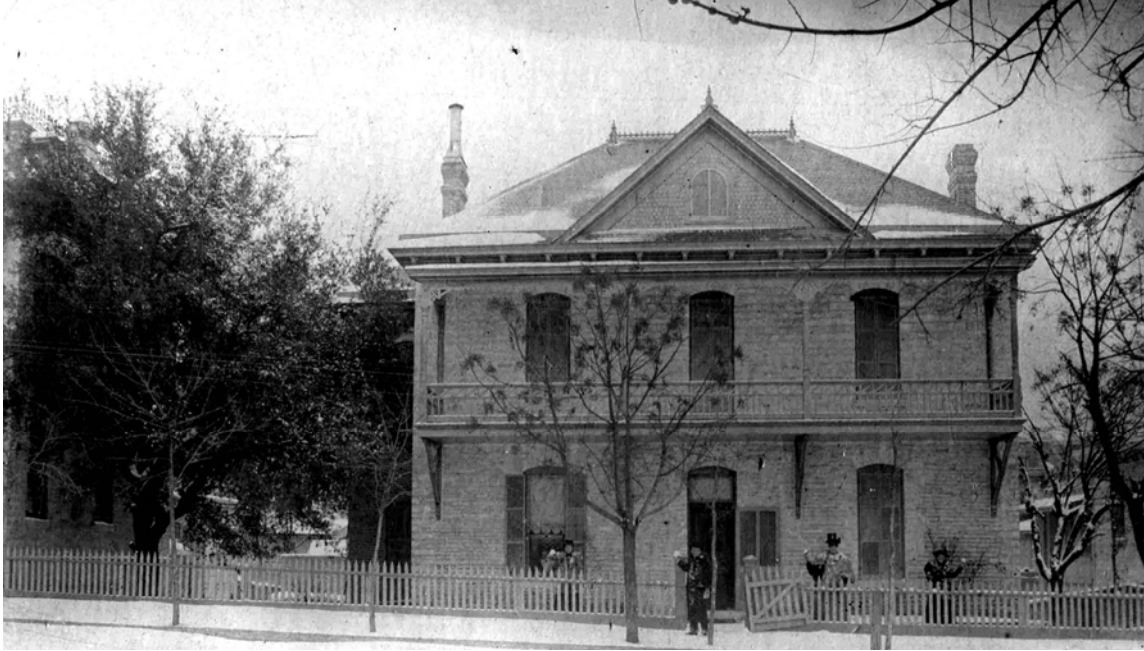
No young man ever had a nobler or better father than you had, one whose example tis well to follow. A son, while in life, never caused his parents a regret, a pang or

ure.
No sadder funeral was ever seen in Austin than that of the lamented Alf. H. Robinson. Stricken down, as he was, in the early prime of a splendid manhood, esteemed, admired and loved by hundreds, for his manliness, integrity and kindness of spirit, it was indeed a matter of infinite regret, that one so good and true and generous should have to go.

The character of the funeral procession was of itself sufficient testimony of the high standing of the deceased. Over a hundred firemen in uniform were out, in honor to their dead comrade. In front of his own company—Washington—was the company's horse with habiliments of mourning thrown over him; led by his faithful driver, Essex Carrington. Hundreds of friends followed on horseback and vehicles, the cortege extending for nineteen blocks along the Avenue and West Pecan. And thus was laid to rest, amid the tears of his kindred and the sorrow of devoted friends, all that was earthly of one of nature's noblemen.

Austin Daily Statesman 14 Apr 1885

who needed a home. Pauline's widowed daughter, Elizabeth "Bess" Haldeman, and her two children



705 San Antonio Street before
and after renovation



moved home in 1905 and insisted on updating the house by adding the columns and second floor gallery in the then-fashionable Colonial Revival style. After Bess' death in 1915, her children continued to live with their grandmother. The grandchildren dubbed Pauline "Ban," a name by which she was thereafter and forever known to all.

Following the death of daughter, Josephine Robinson Butler, Ban and her daughter, Catherine, took in the youngest of Josephine's children, Martin Butler. In 1935 Ban bequeathed the house to her maiden

Second Generation

daughter, Catherine. Ban was a favorite of all the family and the grandchildren have fond memories of afternoons at her home with homemade ice cream.⁹³

On 25 Mar 1982 following the closing of Ban's estate and the sale of a building at 610 Congress Avenue that she had left to her grandchildren, Flora Louise "Sis" Robinson King, one of the grandchildren, wrote the following letter to Martin Butler, another of the grandchildren:

Dear old Martin,

Your check for \$246.28 as a final distribution of the Pauline Robinson estate was received very gratefully, but also sadly. For it marks the end of an era of Ban and her grandchildren, and great grands, who have benefitted from her generosity, and frugality.

She could have sold the building and squandered her profit. But she did not. She could have bequeathed to a sole heir. But she did not. For she was a grand lady with an equal and abiding love for all of us, good and bad, great and small.

She left us far more than a building. She left a strength and will and spirit to each of us. I can see her now as she lay in that clean white bed in the big bedroom upstairs and if felt then, and still feel, she was saying "to you from failing hands I throw the torch. Be your to hold it high."

You have fulfilled your mission to carry out her wishes faithfully and well. I am eternally grateful to you for all you did in my behalf. Thank you again, and again. I can only remember you in my prayers and believe me, I will.

Let's keep her spirit alive by seeing each other more often. That would please her more than any other single thing.⁹⁴



She died of interstitial nephritis or kidney failure on 18 Nov 1935 at home 705 San Antonio Street, Austin, Texas⁹⁵ and following a funeral at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Austin, was buried in Oakwood Cemetery.

THE DEAD

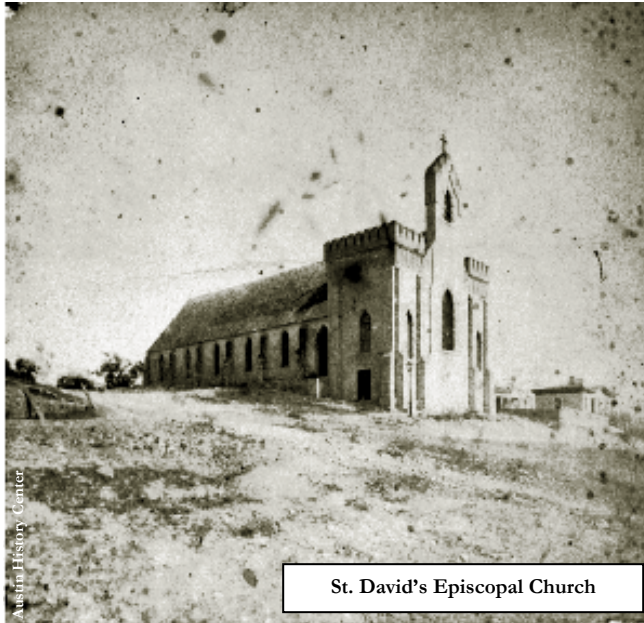
ROBINSON — Mrs. Pauline B. Robinson, resident of Austin all of her life, died at her home, 705 San Antonio street, Monday at 3:30 p. m. She was born in Austin Sept. 6, 1849. She is survived by two daughters, Mrs. L. J. Schneider and Miss Katherine Robinson; one sister, Mrs. Kate B. Hamby, all of Austin; 12 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Funeral services were held from the residence Tuesday at 3:30 p. m. and at 4 o'clock from St. Mary's Catholic church with the Rev. Father J. H. Galligan officiating. Interment was in Oakwood cemetery. Pallbearers, all grandsons, were Alfred Robinson, George Robinson, Horace Haldeman, John W. Penninger, Robert Butler and Martin Butler.

American Statesman 19 Oct 1935
Oakwood Cemetery (left)

Elizabeth Robinson 1847-1920

Elizabeth (Lizzie) Robinson, fifth child and second daughter of John H. Robinson and Elizabeth



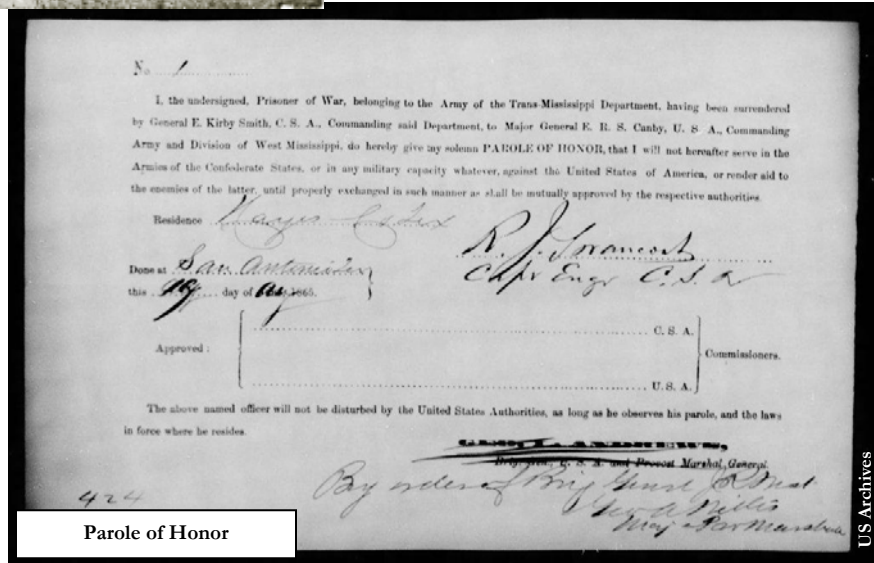
St. David's Episcopal Church

Sheridan, was born 18 Apr 1847 in Little Rock, Arkansas.⁹⁶ She moved with her family in 1855 to Austin, Texas in a covered wagon and was baptized 11 Apr 1867 at St. David's Episcopal Church in Austin along with her brothers, Eugene and Austin, and her sister, Laura Ada.⁹⁷ On 3 Mar 1869 Lizzie served as a witness for the marriage of her brother, Alfred Henry, and Pauline Bremond.⁹⁸ A year later she married **Richard Jones Swancoat** on 11 Apr 1870 in St. David's Episcopal Church in Austin, Texas. The Rev. B. A. Rogers officiated.⁹⁹

100

R. J. Swancoat was born 23 Sept 1831 in Meifod, Montgomeryshire, Wales and was christened Oct 1831 in Meifod Calvinistic Methodist Chapel.¹⁰¹ He gained his

citizenship in 1850¹⁰² when he was living with his parents in Genesee, Waukesha County, Wisconsin.¹⁰³ In 1854 he was a librarian in the Sabbath School in Peoria City, Illinois and, a year later, married Emily R. Day on 14 Nov 1855 in Baltimore, Maryland. (Emily was born 29 Oct 1830 in Maryland; died 6 Mar 1915 in Baltimore, Maryland and was buried Mar 1915 in Loudon Park Cemetery, Baltimore.)



Parole of Honor

Emily and R. J. lived in Baltimore, Maryland and had a daughter Malinda who was born in 1858. In 1860 the family was together but he left the family before or during the Civil War and did not return.¹⁰⁴

12	4 Nov 1855	Robert Swancoat	28 M	Bookkeeper	1000	England					19
13		Ellen	75 A								18
14		Malinda	2 A								14
15		William	15 M								15
16		May Day	72 A		1000	700	England				16
17		Elizabeth	18 A								17
18		Joseph Selena	15 A								18

1860 Census, Baltimore, MD

Second Generation

Swancoat enlisted in the army of the Confederacy on 28 May 1861 at Harper's Ferry Virginia. From the surviving Confederate records it is known that he was a bookkeeper and received a commission in Company G, 13th Infantry Regiment of Virginia as a Lieutenant.¹⁰⁵ In Sep and Oct 1861 he was absent but on detached service. Beginning in Feb 1862 he was absent without leave.¹⁰⁶ His next appearance is in the form of a letter written on 2 July 1863 from Tallahassee, Florida. No rank or official position is indicated. Another letter dated 23 Nov 1863 gives his rank as a Captain and introduces himself as a volunteer aid-de-camp to Maj. Gen. S. D. Lee (General Orders #16). This order was rescinded one month later by Lee. The final document that was found is his "Parole of Honor" dated 19 Aug 1865, issued in San Antonio, Hays County, Texas. His rank is that of Captain in the Engineers CSA.¹⁰⁷ After the war, he wrote in his own hand the following account of his service:

On May 25, 1860 I was elected First Lieutenant of Company G 13th Virginia Volunteers. Captain Alexander G. Taliferra, Col. A.P. Hill, Brig. Gen'l Elezey, Genl Jos E. Johnstone's Division, Army of the Potomac. My first battle was the First Manassas Va. And the last at Moscow on the Memphis and Charleston RR. Northern line, between Miss and Tenn. Just before coming to Moscow we surprised a whole body of Yankees at Salisbury on the M&C RR, and among other things captured a few supplies belonging to a Yankee sutler's store, and out of this I secured a white silk shawl now in the possession of dear Nettie B. Young – San Marcos, Texas.

Some five or six weeks after the battle of Manassas first I was assigned to Genl Beauregard's staff, Engineer Corps, with headquarters near Centreville VA where I supervised field works during the winter of 1861 & 1862. During this time Genl Beauregard was assigned to command a Kentucky division, having been ordered to Genl Jos. E. Johnstone's [Johnston's] command, and I was also transferred on account of Gen J's chief Engineer Maj. Walter E. Stevens being sick. I remained with Genl J. until the battle of Seven Pines, when he was wounded. I then joined Stonewall Jackson in the Valley Campaign. When he defeated Gens Milroy, Banks, Fremont and Shields. The most extraordinary campaign of the War. Soon after I got a furlough & while on my way to Savannah Ba met T. Gen S. A. Lee [S. D. Lee] at Columbia S.C. who offered my a place on his staff as Captain of Engineers to go with him to Miss. Where he was to command the Cavalry – with whom I remained until the Winter of 1864 and 1865 when on account of bad health I came to Texas, though all who met me didn't think I could live through Monday, yet her I am June 1st 1903 in my 72nd year.

Will Hawkins and G. A. Wheatley, of Austin and Maj Sherrard of Burnett, Tex belonged to the 13th Regiment at the time I was connected with it, also Bailey Ashby – Round Rock – bookkeeper in the bank."

Swancoat wrote a second version of his service on a small piece of plain white paper, most likely composed just before he died:

1861 – Entered 13th Virginia fought First Battle Manassas or Bull Run. Harper's Ferry (mustered in.) Soon after battalion transferred to Beauregard's staff as military engineer until he was ordered West on account of Genl Joe E. Johnson's [Joe E. Johnston's] staff engineer (Maj Stevens) being sick – not able to attend to duties in his office. I was temporarily transferred to Johnson staff and with him until he was wounded at Seven Pines – when I joined Gen Stonewall Jackson on his campaign thru the Valley of Virginia where four Federal Gens were driven out one after another – beginning at Front royal, Gens Milroy Banks Fremont and Shields – after which I received a leave of absence. At Columbia S.C. I was assigned to Maj Gen. Stephen D. Lee who was ordered to Miss. To command the

R. J. SWANCOAT'S
Male and Female School
AUSTIN, TEXAS.

FACULTY:

R. J. SWANCOAT, Principal, Prof. English, Astronomy and Spanish.
T. L. NUGENT, Prof. Mathematics, Natural Philosophy and History.
E. HAMVASY, Prof. Music, French and German.
WM. O. OTIS, Prof. Latin, Greek, Rhetoric, Chemistry and Botany.
MRS. T. L. NUGENT, Preceptress Drawing, Painting, Embroidery, &c.

The next session commences on the First Monday in September, 1868, and continues forty weeks.

For circulars containing terms, course of instruction, &c., address the Principal, Box 331, Austin, Texas.

Daily Austin Republican 25 Aug 1868

cavalry of the Military District. While on Am. Expedition to Texas accompanying Gen Forest with a segment of his brigade to recruit its ranks, in a little skirmish at Salisbury Miss. — a small station on the Memphis & Charleston RR we captured a good many supplies — among them a sutler's outfit in which I found Nettie's crepe shawl — strapped it to my saddle and carried it to Headquarters at Grenada Miss. Was with Stephen E. Lee [Stephen D. Lee] at the close of the war — 1865.¹⁰⁸

Swancoat remained in Texas after the war and in Feb 1868 opened a school for boys and girls in Austin known as R. J. Swancoat's Male and Female School. The school began with a class of 80 students.¹⁰⁹ This academy was the pride of Austin a couple of decades before the University of Texas was born.¹¹⁰ Swancoat served as the principal and professor of English, astronomy, and Spanish.¹¹¹ In addition to daytime classes, Swancoat held evening classes in "Book-keeping, Mercantile Calculations, French, German and Spanish" for those "young gentlemen who are engaged during the day."¹¹² In July of 1868 in order to deal with a rapid increase in student applications, he leased the new Christian Church on old Capitol Hill for his school. Professor Swancoat was known as a rigid disciplinarian and an excellent teacher.¹¹³

Swancoat was also active in the Episcopal Church and on 2 Jun 1869 he was ordained a deacon of the Church by Bishop Gregg.¹¹⁴ He was assigned to conduct services at Bastrop, Texas soon after his ordination, but the arrangement terminated less than two years later, probably due to the substantial difficulty in traveling between Austin and Bastrop.¹¹⁵ He was transferred to the Diocese of Missouri on 11 July 1871. There he was the principal and chaplain of a school for girls called Jefferson City Female Seminary, a church school for young ladies. The school became known as Lindell Hall and was in Jefferson City, Missouri. He was officially transferred back to Texas on 7 Apr 1874 but he may have left Missouri as early as May of 1873.¹¹⁶ In 1874 he was assigned to take services at Lockhart, in Caldwell County.

During these years, Elizabeth and Richard began their family of five children who lived to adulthood and one daughter who died in infancy: **Mary Eugene Swancoat** who was born 4 Sep 1873 and died four months later, **Paul Emir Swancoat** born Sept 1874, **Nettie Swancoat** born Nov 1876, **Zella Swancoat** born Sept 1879, **Austin R. Swancoat** born Sept 1880, and **Walter Bremond Swancoat** born 4 Sept 1883. Despite the blossoming family, there was a large cloud looming over the marriage.

Swancoat's first wife, Emily R. Day, was still alive in Baltimore and there had been no divorce. Richard Swancoat was prosecuted in the District Court of Travis County in 1876 on one count of bigamy. The prosecution failed because the period stipulated for commencing proceedings by the statute of limitations had been exceeded. The State authorities tried again, this time prosecuting on 13 Jun 1877 in the Travis County Court for the lesser offence of "cohabitation in adultery", an offence under the Texas Criminal Code. As this was a continuing offence the limitation

proved some in the past few days.

R. J. SWANCOAT was indicted by the late grand jury for bigamy. The act of his unlawful marriage having been committed more than eight years ago the case of felony was dismissed against him in the district court, it being barred by the Statute of Limitation. The STARNESMAN, having been led into an erroneous statement at the time this case was disposed of, feels impelled to make this correction.

Swancoat was held to trial yesterday, on information before the county court, for adultery. The case was submitted to Judge Smith, who assessed a fine of \$750. The case was then taken to the Court of Appeals, where it will receive immediate attention. The testimony given before the court yesterday, especially that of Rev. B. A. Rogers, was of a nature that places the accused in a most unenviable light before the public. The brother of the wife in Baltimore is here and appeared on the witness stand against Swancoat. The wife and a grown daughter live with the brother in the above named city.

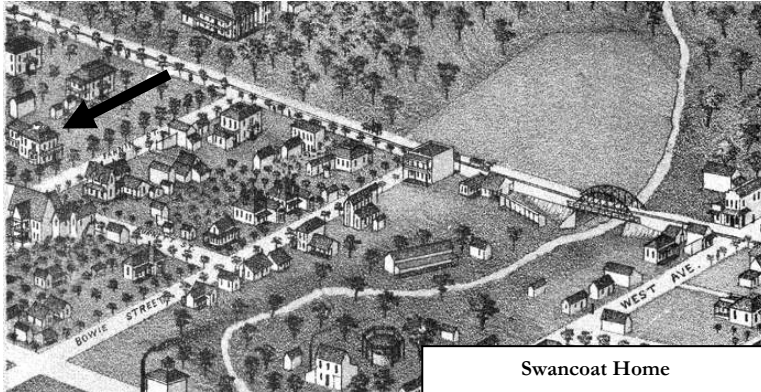
The case creates much interest, and it is a matter of regret to us that such publicity has been given it, since parties most highly respected in this community are indirectly involved. For them we would hope that the matter be hastily disposed of.

The Statesman 14 Jun 1877

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Second Generation

period had not expired and he was tried and found guilty. Appearing as witnesses in the case were the



Swancoat Home

brother of Emily R. Day from Baltimore and Rev. B. A. Rogers of Austin who had married Elizabeth and Richard. Swancoat was fined \$750.¹¹⁷ His appeal against the conviction to the Court of Appeals for Texas was dismissed on 28 April 1878.¹¹⁸ (\$750 in 1876 has the same purchasing power as \$12,800 dollars in 2005.)

R. J. and Lizzie Robinson

underwent a second marriage ceremony on 18 Oct 1877 before Judge E. Turner.¹¹⁹ This is a clear indication that he had managed to obtain a divorce from Emily R. Day. The scandal of the bigamy put an end to his position as a deacon and he was publicly deposed on 22 Feb 1877.¹²⁰ By 1877 Swancoat's school had closed and he and Lizzie lived on the northwest corner of Fannin and Burnett St. in Austin with their three children Paul, Nettie, and Zella. In 1879 Swancoat was an ice manufacturer and owned the Austin Ice Factory. The ice factory was a short-lived



William P. Scott Jr. Collection

Elizabeth Robinson Swancoat



William P. Scott Jr. Collection

R. J. Swancoat

venture because in 1883 he was with the Austin-Central Texas Coal Company and in 1885 he was a brick manufacturer. In 1887-1892 he was a bookkeeper for Nelson Davis and Co.¹²¹ In 1900 he listed his occupation as a railroad claim agent.¹²²

In Jul 1890 Richard and Lizzie put their home up for sale: "Gaines and Roberts have for sale the Swancoat residence, one of the best in Austin. Four lots 52 x 210 feet in Block 3 division Z, northwest corner Burnet and Fannin streets, two story stone house, ten rooms, stable, barn, and other out houses;

water works and two good cisterns; fine yard, thirteen bearing pecan trees.”¹²³ On 2 Jan 1892 the Biloxi Herald (Harrison County, Mississippi) reported that R. J. Swancoat of Austin, Texas had real estate interests on the Back Bay and hoped at an early time to become a resident of Biloxi.

In 1900 Lizzie, Richard, and three of their children (Zella, Austin who was working as a dry goods salesman, and Walter) were still in Austin and lived with Elizabeth’s mother, Elizabeth Robinson, at 700 Rio Grande. Richard was named as an Austin delegate to the John B. Hood Camp of Confederate Veterans in 1902¹²⁴ In 1903 they were still in Austin and were mentioned in the Galveston Daily News as receiving a visit from their daughter, Mrs. Coleman Young.¹²⁵ In Oct 1906 Richard and Elizabeth sailed from New York to Texas with their daughter, Nettie Swancoat Young, and their arrival was noted in the Galveston Daily News on 4 Oct 1906.

In July of 1909 the Swancoats lived in Bryan, Texas and visited their daughter, Mrs. J. L. Buell (Zella Swancoat), in Springfield, Massachusetts.¹²⁶ R. J.’s name was listed in the Fort Worth Star Telegram on 12 Feb 1910 as a party to a court case involving title to property and it was listed again on 23 Jul 1910 when real estate (Lot 14 Block A) in Bellevue in Ft. Worth, Texas was transferred to Margaret Finnie. On the same date the Dallas Morning News recorded that R. J Swancoat had transferred the same real estate to a John R. Swancoat (perhaps his brother). Not long after this property transfer, Richard Jones Swancoat died in 1911 and was buried in California at Hollywood Forever Cemetery, Chandler Gardens plot, in Hollywood, California.¹²⁷ Most likely, R. J. and Elizabeth had been visiting their daughter Nettie and her husband, Lloyd Coleman Young, who lived in Los Angeles at the time.

Elizabeth lived most of her life in Texas but moved to Detroit, Michigan towards the end of her life to be with her daughter, Zella, Mrs. J. L. Buell. Elizabeth died 3 Feb 1920 in Detroit, Michigan and is buried next to her husband in Hollywood Forever Cemetery Chandler Gardens plot, in Hollywood, California.¹²⁸ Her obituary in the Austin Statesman reported:

Mrs. Lizzie Robinson Swancoat

Relatives have been advised of the death of Mrs. Swancoat on Tuesday Feb 3 in Detroit, Michigan at the home of her daughter Mrs. Lawrence D. Buell [J. Lawrence Buell]. The immediate family surviving her are: Mrs. Coleman Young of Los Angeles, California; Mrs. Buell of Detroit; Mr. Paul Swancoat of Bryan, Texas; Mr. Walter Swancoat of El Paso, Texas; Mrs. Austin Swancoat of San Marcos, Texas.

The Robinson and Bremond families of whom Mrs. Swancoat was a member are among the most prominent and esteemed of Austin’s pioneer citizens.

*She had in rare measure those qualities of heart and mind which made her life a beautiful expression of sweetness and light. She was greatly loved by a wide circle of devoted relatives, and the news of her passing will awaken fond memories among friends of old.*¹²⁹



Lillian Helen Robinson 1849-1867

Lillian "Lillie" Helen Robinson, daughter of John H. and Elizabeth Sheridan, was born 23 Nov 1849 in Little Rock, Arkansas.¹³⁰ Her name was reported as Lillias Helen by William Herme Robinson, but most sources use the name Lillian or Lillie.¹³¹ In Arkansas at the end of 1850 when she was one year old, Lillie became very ill but made a swift recovery by the beginning of 1851.¹³² In 1855 she moved with her family to Austin, Texas, traveling in covered wagons. Lillie was a boarding student in "The Convent" (this was most likely the Ursuline Convent) in Galveston, Texas when she developed pneumonia.¹³³ She died on 9 Apr 1867 in Galveston, Texas and is buried in Austin in Oakwood Cemetery.¹³⁴

Following Lillie's death, her father wrote to her brother Alonzo on 20 Apr 1867:

Dear Son Lonnie,

*Your last favor duly rec'd and plainly could we see, on its pages – the hearts anguish that posses'd you when you wrote – the tear drop was plainly visible on many a line – and fain should we weep, for a brighter and purer being that has soar'd to Realms above – few could have excel'd her that but as yesterday left us, for that Heavenly Sphere where sorrow never comes – My Dear Son tis our favored priveledge to know that now we have one in Heaven who is allow'd to approach the throne of grace and offer her supplication and petitions in our behalf. – Oh: My Son let her Death be the birth of our Salvation – and daily we will ask divine help to keep us in the path that leads to the home where our Dear Lillie dwells. ... We enclose you a memorium of your Dear Sister which you will keep as a sacred relic to her memory – and we also enclose her picture as she lay in death. Look upon it – note its sleeping angelic expression. No show of weariness is there but all is serene quiet and holiness. A calm repose that we well might envy. Now my Dear Son, keep these relics forever, and if earthly trials and temptations come to lure you to evil – look on them seriously, look read and consider, and let the knowledge that you have a Sister Saint in Heaven keep you from all wrong doing making you virtuous, good and holy – a follower of the meek and lowly Jesus."*¹³⁵



Alonzo Robinson 1852-1936

Alonzo Robinson, son of John H. and Elizabeth Sheridan, was born 19 Sep 1852¹³⁶ in Little Rock, Arkansas. Of his birth his father wrote:

"He (the year 1852) on the 19th day of his 9th month gave us another son to love and cherish, our Alonzo whom in future times we hope will be a comfort to his parents and an honor to himself – the portrait of My Loved and Venerable Mother – accompany'd by the likeness of my sister."¹³⁷

Alonzo, known as "Lonnie" by family members, moved with his family to Texas in 1855. He was baptized on 29 Sep 1867 at the age of 15 at St. David's Episcopal Church in Austin, Texas.¹³⁸ As a young man he began to work as a clerk in his father's mercantile store, Robinson and Son, located at 504 Congress Avenue. In the 1870s he was one of a group of fashionable young men who, dressed in Prince Albert coats, striped trousers and silk hats, drove on New Year's day in an open carriage from house to house leaving their greeting cards with friends. In 1877 Alonzo married **Laura Watson**



Alonzo Robinson

who was born 1 Aug 1853 in Montgomery, Louisiana.¹³⁹ Laura came to Austin as a bride and spent the remainder of her life as a Texan.¹⁴⁰

In 1885 following the death of their older brother, Alfred, Alonzo and his younger brother, Eugene Bremond Robinson, began running the family business at 504 Congress under the name A. Robinson and Brother.¹⁴¹ ¹⁴² The partnership only lasted a year or so and by 1889 Alonzo was the sole proprietor of A. Robinson Groceries,¹⁴³ taking the reins of the firm founded by his father in 1858 and changing the name to reflect his ownership.

Alonzo expanded the business and though the company had started out selling only basic groceries, in



1894 under Alonzo's management, the store featured "olives from Spain, sardines from France, caviars from Russia, and cheeses from England."¹⁴⁴ "The store is a large and fine one, comprising two floors each of the dimensions of 25x160 feet. Here displayed on every side are the



choices delicacies from all parts of the world, including olives from Spain, sardines from France, caviar from Russia, cheeses from England, France and Germany, *pate de fois gras* from Strasburg, jams, pickles, and sauces from Great Britain, choice confectionery and fruits, and indeed, not to weary the reader to enumerations, we will state that at this establishment will be found all that is choicest and best, both of domestic and imported manufacture, which could tempt a

sated appetite or astound an uncultivated one with gastronomic

Mrs. Alonzo Robinson Died in San Antonio

Intending to make preparation for a trip to California, Mrs. Alonzo Robinson of 706 West Seventh Street, left June 8 for the home of her daughter, Mrs. Clinton G. Brown, wife of Mayor Brown of San Antonio. The following day she became ill and her illness resulted last Sunday afternoon at 6:30 o'clock in death. Her sons, Ralph Robinson of Austin and Oscar Robinson and wife of Hearne, and daughter, Mrs. Brown and husband, were with her at death. Throughout her illness they were at her bedside.

The body arrived in Austin Monday afternoon on the 2:55 o'clock International & Great Northern passenger train. It was accompanied by Mr. Robinson, Ralph Robinson, Oscar Robinson and wife of Hearne, and Mayor and Mrs. Clinton G. Brown of San Antonio. Funeral services will be held Tuesday morning at 8:30 o'clock at the residence of Alonzo Robinson, 706 West Seventh Street. The services will be private as will be the interment which will be made in Oakwood Cemetery. Rev. H. W. Knickerbocker, pastor of the First Methodist Church, will officiate.

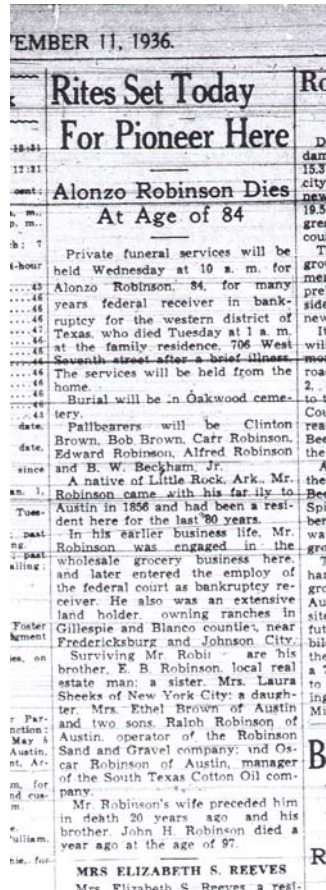
Mrs. Robinson is survived by her husband, Alonzo Robinson, sons, Ralph Robinson and Oscar Robinson of Hearne, Mrs. Clinton G. Brown of San Antonio; mother, Mrs. A. M. Watson of Abilene; sisters, Mrs. Emma F. Shumate and Mrs. Kate Z. Williams of Abilene; and brothers, O. W. Watson of Austin and A. E. Watson of Abilene. She was born in Montgomery, La., her maiden name being Laura Watson. Her husband, Alonzo Robinson of this city is the brother of John H. Robinson Jr., and E. B. Robinson of Austin, and William T. Robinson of Waco.

Missy Miller Jackson

Second Generation

wonder.”¹⁴⁵ Robinson operated both a wholesale and retail business and employed five assistants and two teams for city deliveries.¹⁴⁶ When Alonzo closed his grocery business after 1904¹⁴⁷ 148 he sold the building to Charles Rosner who opened a dry goods store. Alonzo took on a new career and for many years was the federal receiver in bankruptcies for the western district of Texas.¹⁴⁹

At an early age Alonzo began accumulating cattle and ranch land in Central Texas including ranches in Gillespie and



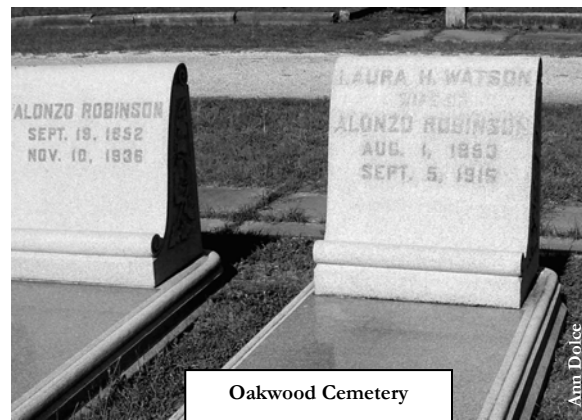
Austin American 11 Sep 1936

Blanco counties. His Blanco County stock farm included 7,000 acres and it was here that Alonzo raised cattle for market. In 1894 he had over 1,500 three and four year old steers in addition to many horses and mules. Much of the stock he raised, he sold to dealers in the Indian Territory.¹⁵⁰ In 1905 he proudly listed his occupation as stockman in the Austin City Directory and in 1909 he opened an office at 616 Congress. He looked after his interest in Blanco County by traveling on horseback from his home in Austin. The journey, with the best horses, took him from 4 a.m. until 2 p.m., stopping

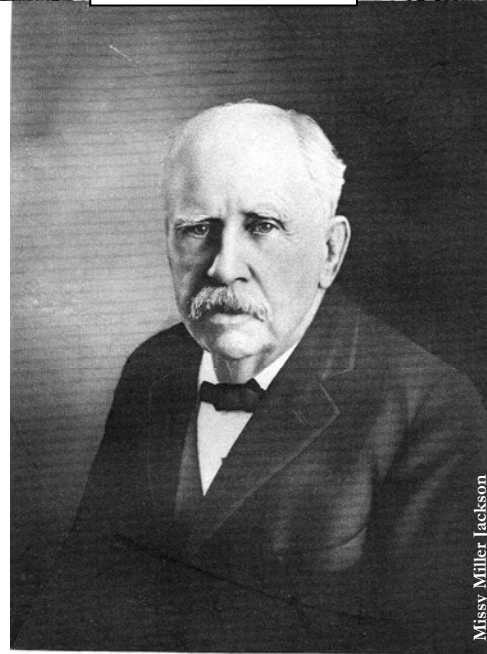
at noon for lunch on the trail.¹⁵¹ In 1912 he added to his ranching interests and formed the Robinson Cedar Co., a wholesale dealer in mountain cedar timber, posts, poles, logs, and pilings. For a few years he shared an office with his son Eugene at 704 Congress and in 1916, he moved the business to the newly opened Scarbrough Building (# 608) and brought in his son Ralph as manager.¹⁵² Alonzo was a man of many interests and energies.

In addition to his business interests, Alonzo had a growing and busy family. In 1880 Laura and Alonzo lived on Pecan Street at the corner of San Antonio with their one year old son **Oscar Robinson**, Laura's younger sister Kate (age 16) who was attending school, and a cook, Adeline Johnston.¹⁵³ Daughter **Ethel Robinson** was born on 9 Oct 1882 and a second son, **Ralph Watson Robinson**, was born on 8 Sep 1886. By 1910 the couple had moved to 708 West 7th Street. The household included their son Ralph (age 22) and Laura's brother, Oscar Watson.

Community service was also a part of Alonzo's heritage and he served as a member of the Texas Rifles, (Company [E] L, 2nd Regiment, Infantry),¹⁵⁴ a company in the Texas Volunteer Guard that supported Richard Coke, democratic governor against the last of the carpetbaggers, E. J. Davis.¹⁵⁵ He was also a



Oakwood Cemetery



Missy Miller Jackson

member of the Washington Volunteer Fire Engine Company and served as vice president and treasurer of the company from 1890-1897.¹⁵⁶

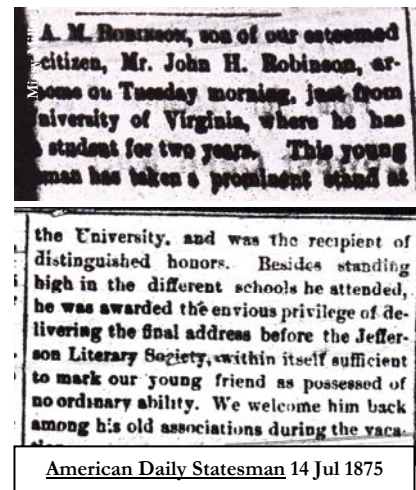
Laura died 5 Sep 1915 while on a trip that was supposed to end in California. She first went to San Antonio to visit her daughter Ethel (Mrs. Clinton G. Brown, wife of Mayor Brown of San Antonio) and there, she became ill and died¹⁵⁷. Her body was returned to Austin on the International & Great Northern passenger train accompanied by Alonzo, sons Ralph and Oscar, and Mayor and Mrs. Brown. Funeral services were held at Alonzo and Laura's home and she was buried at Oakwood Cemetery in Austin, Texas. Rev. H. W. Knickerbocker pastor of the First Methodist Church officiated.¹⁵⁸

Alonzo died 10 Nov 1936 at age 84 of myocarditis at his home after a brief illness at 706 W. 7th in Austin. He was buried at Oakwood Cemetery next to his wife.¹⁵⁹

Austin Mortimer Robinson 1856-1912

Austin Mortimer Robinson, son of John H. and Elizabeth Sheridan, was the first of the Robinson children to be born in Texas and was appropriately named "Austin" after their new home. Austin was born 5 Apr 1856 in Austin, Texas¹⁶⁰ following his family's arrival by covered wagon from Arkansas. At age 14 he was away from home attending school and according to his

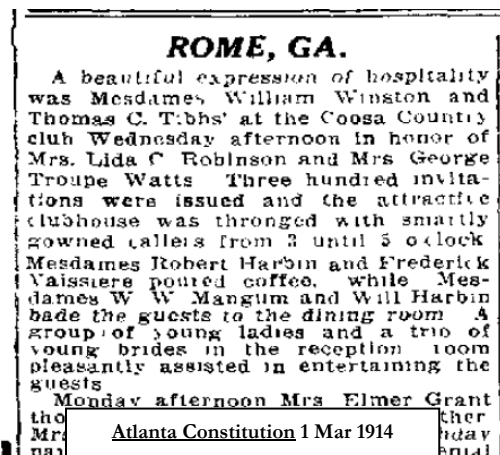
nephew, Oscar Robinson, graduated from law school at the University of Virginia.¹⁶¹ Oscar remembers his uncle as "the most brilliant of the boys" but he never kept on a job very long. According to Oscar, Austin had a wonderful personality and "made a wonderful speech."¹⁶² At his graduation, Austin was the recipient of distinguished honors and was awarded the privilege of delivering the final address before the Jefferson Literary Society.¹⁶³ In 1885 Austin lived with his father and worked as a ranchman.¹⁶⁴



On 5 Feb 1888¹⁶⁵ Austin married **Lida Tibbs**, born 22 Aug 1865 in Mississippi. Lida was the daughter of Louisa Bennett and Major Thomas C. Tibbs who was born in Mississippi and brought his family to Waco, Texas in 1879.¹⁶⁶ Major Tibbs was an alderman in Waco for several terms and was elected mayor pro tem twice and had a carriage and saddle business, a real estate business, and was a bank vice-president in Waco.¹⁶⁷

By 1891, Austin served as a deputy US Revenue Collector for the Internal Revenue in Waco, Texas.¹⁶⁸ His speechmaking served him well and Austin became chairman of the McLennan County Republican executive committee.¹⁶⁹ On 18 Oct 1887 Austin was appointed postmaster in West, McLennan County, Texas¹⁷⁰ and he also served as mayor of West at one time.¹⁷¹

A newspaper article in 1901 referred to Austin as a businessman in West¹⁷² and in 1903 he was a traveling salesman for the National Coffee Company of Fort Worth, while his family continued to live in West, Texas.¹⁷³ On 18 Jan 1904, Lida was nominated to be postmaster of West, Texas.¹⁷⁴ She was also an advisor to the Auxiliary of Woodmen of the World, Pearly Grove No 307, Woodsman Circle.¹⁷⁵ Lida and Austin had two children: **Stanley T. Robinson** born on 5 Dec 1889,¹⁷⁶ 5 Dec 1890,¹⁷⁷ or 5 Dec 1891¹⁷⁸ and **Louise F. Robinson**

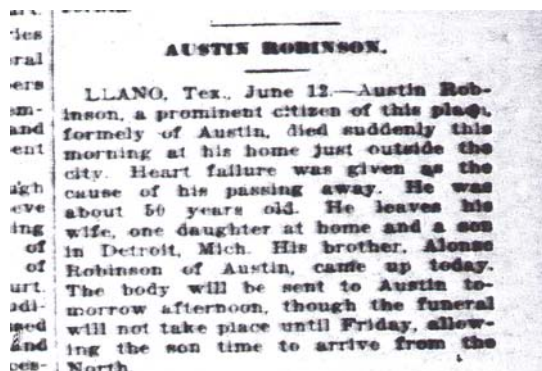


Second Generation

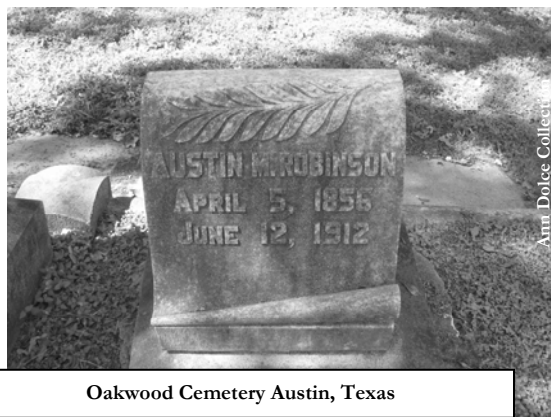
born in August 1889.¹⁷⁹

By 1910 Lida and Austin and their children lived in Llano County where Austin was the assistant general manager of the granite works in Llano. Austin died unexpectedly in Llano, Texas of a heart condition on 12 Jun 1912 and was buried in Austin, Texas at Oakwood Cemetery.

Two years after Austin's death, Louise Robinson married George T. Watts in Rome, Georgia and by 1920, Lida was living with George and Louise in Rome. Lida's sister, Caroline "Carra" Tibbs Winston,



Austin Daily Statesman 14 Jun 1912



Oakwood Cemetery Austin, Texas

her husband William, and their mother Louise Bennett Tibbs all lived in Rome, Georgia¹⁸⁰ and provided a strong family connection for Lida and Louise following Austin's death.

All was not well in Rome though. Louise and George divorced in the mid to late 1920s and Lida and Louise moved to California by 1932 and to San Francisco in 1944 where they lived at 65 Culebra Terrace.¹⁸¹ Lida died in San Francisco on 10 Jan 1947. Five weeks before her death, suffering from senility, she fell from a ladder and fractured her femur and mandible. She developed pneumonia and died. Her body was cremated on 11 Jan 1947 by the Oakland Crematorium.¹⁸²

Laura Ada Robinson 1859-1946

Laura Ada Robinson, youngest daughter of John H. and Elizabeth Sheridan, was born 3 Jun 1859¹⁸³ in Austin, Texas. She was baptized at St. David's Episcopal Church in Austin on 11 Apr 1867 with her parents as sponsors.¹⁸⁴ A great-nephew, William Herme Robinson, recalled that Laura was educated "at a Girl's College in Virginia."¹⁸⁵ On 1 June 1881 Laura married **James David Sheeks**.¹⁸⁶ The wedding took place in St. Louis, Missouri at St. Peter's Episcopal Church.¹⁸⁷

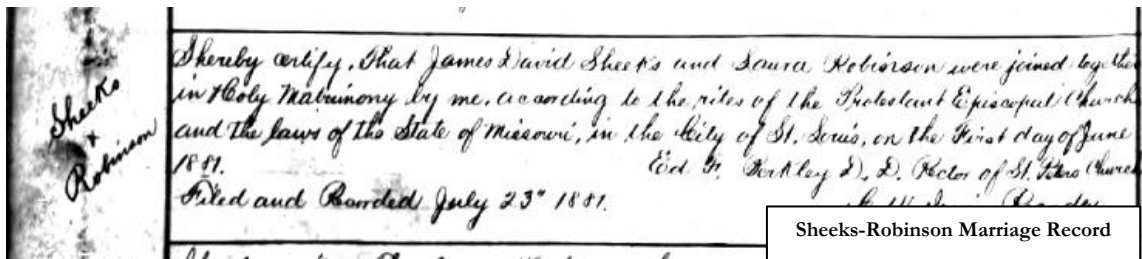
*"SHEEKS – ROBINSON – News comes from St. Louis of the marriage in that city of Mr. James Sheeks and Miss Laura Robinson. The charming and accomplished bride, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John H. Robinson, and the bridegroom, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. D. Sheeks, have the sincere congratulations of their many friends, both far and near upon the felicitous event, with wished for a long joyous and cloudless future. The happy pair after enjoying their honeymoon in an extended tour through the north will return to Austin."*¹⁸⁸



Laura Ada Robinson Sheeks

Austin History Center PICB 12058

Sheeks, the son of David and Mary Florence Barnes Sheeks, was born in 1855 in Bloomington, Indiana.¹⁸⁹ ¹⁹⁰ The elder Sheeks was from a wealthy family and graduated from the Law School of



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J. Sheeks Record at the Naval Academy

certificate of distinction from the school. He was admitted to the US Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland in Sep 1872 and attended through 1876.¹⁹² By 1880 he had earned his law degree and was a partner with his father in the law firm Sheeks & Sheeks located at 622 Congress Avenue on the corner of 7th Street.¹⁹³

Following their wedding, Laura and James lived with Laura's parents on Rio Grande.¹⁹⁴ In 1885, while living with the Robinsons, James had an encounter that tied him in with the mysterious Servant Girl Murders in Austin. "Many people must have been aroused between one and two o'clock by a rapid

the University of Indiana. He practiced law and was Judge of the Court of Claims at Washington, D.C. When Judge Sheeks' health began to fail, he moved his family to Texas in 1866 on the advice of his doctor. Judge Sheeks set up a law practice in Austin and his family became an influential part of the community.¹⁹¹ The Sheeks family lived at what is now 610 West Lynn and the house remains to this day and is on the National Historic Register. James moved with his family to Austin at age 11 and in 1870 he attended the Texas Military Academy in Austin and won a

Second Generation

discharge of fire arms on Rio Grande street, near its intersection with Pecan. This time it was at the residence of Mr. J. H. Robinson. Some outhouses occupied by colored women were visited, window panes broken in, and the inmates frightened nearly to death. Their screams aroused the family. Mr. James D. Sheeks fired a couple of times at the retreating form of a man, and "Red," a hackman who lived nearby emptied his pistol at another one. Neither of his shots took effect. Mr. Sheeks thinks the man fired back once as he ran off. The home of Mr. Lawrence, on West Mulberry, did not escape the gang, but here again the intruder got off. Several other places shared a similar experience, but it is monotonous to recount them all."¹⁹⁵

The couple had one son, Greek Sheeks. James ran for the judgeship of the 53 Judicial District in 1892¹⁹⁶, the same year his father ran for chief justice of the third supreme judicial District under the People's Party ticket.¹⁹⁷ Both men were defeated. John H. Robinson Sr. refers to the campaign of James Sheeks as follows:

*Since receiving yours, Mr. Sheeks has been so busy electioneering for the Judgeship of the 53rd judicial district that all thoughts of a temporary change by Mrs. Sheeks was abandoned pending the election. Well we have met the foe and we are his, however we ran a wooly race, out of 6000 voters in the county we were beat by one 349 and recollect we had an old Political Veteran to contend against — one thoroughly versed in all the dark ways of political trickery knowing the ways and means of pulling the wool over voters eyes — tricks and ways unknown to the young aspirant who for the first time enters the political arena. Again our opponent was the incumbent, quite a strength within itself.*¹⁹⁸

Less than two years after the election, James died 3 Apr 1894. He committed suicide and his death caused much sorrow in the community. "Exemplary in every relation in life, James D. Sheeks, cut off in the very flower of his youth and promise, will be mourned indeed. Descended from a line of brilliant ancestors, inheriting all their virtues, he was an accomplished lawyer, a friend strong in his attachments, a citizen, modest, retiring, at all time courteous, and to all persons; a husband and father kind and indulgent to a fault, his death will be widely felt and sincerely mourned."¹⁹⁹ James was deeply disturbed by the death of his father who had died one month earlier. James himself had been in ill health for a year.

To compound the family tragedy, Laura and James's son, Greek, died the next month on 22 May 1894. Greek's birth date is not



Oakwood Cemetery

Austin Daily Statesman 4 Apr 1894

Vendor resolution.

COMMITTS SUICIDE.

Mr. Jim Sheeks Found Dead in a Buggy House Yesterday Afternoon.

All Austin was horrified late last afternoon when it became known that Mr. Jim Sheeks had died at his own hands. The particulars of this horrible matter, as gleaned by a STATESMAN reporter last night, was as follows:

Mr. Sheeks left his home yesterday morning as usual for the city. Not returning for dinner his relatives sent down town to find him. He could not be located, however, and they were annoyed at his continued absence, but thought not of the horrible discovery that was in store for them. About 5:30 last afternoon a negro boy employed at Mr. Sheeks' home went down to the stable in the back yard to feed the horses. As he entered the stable he saw the body of Mr. Sheeks sitting boldly upright in the carriage in the buggy house. Speaking to him and receiving no answer the boy approached and made the horrible discovery that Mr. Sheeks was dead. A bullet hole in one temple and a corresponding one on the opposite side of the head told only too well the fact that Mr. Sheeks was dead, and a pistol lying in the bottom of the carriage also conveyed the certain intelligence that the death was one of suicide.

As to what caused the rash act on the part of Mr. Sheeks cannot be truthfully said. Ever since his father's death, about a month ago, he has been unusually melancholy. This fact, in connection with the ill health he has been in for over a year, are the only known causes for his rash act.

As a practising attorney at the Austin bar he commanded the respect and esteem of all the citizens of Austin, and the sad intelligence of his death will be the source of universal sorrow. Justice Barbour viewed the remains last afternoon and will take testimony in the case this morning.

Protection News Columnar Wa 2

known but he was almost eleven. The tombstone inscription reads: "Our only child; beloved till life can charm no more and mourned till pity's self be

dead.”²⁰⁰ The death of a father-in-law, a husband and a child within two months must have been more than Laura could bear and was a tragedy for the entire family. Laura’s father, John H. Robinson, Sr. wrote of the sorrow in his ledger.

May 1894

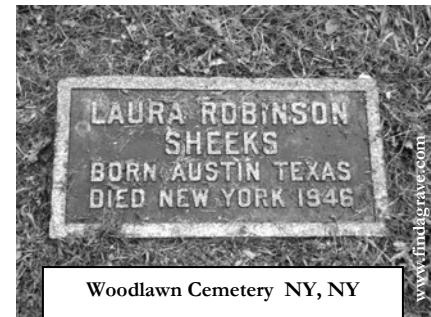
In all likely, this will be my last writing in this the Old Book now near one half century old.--- Truly I fully recognize the truth of Pslamest Word who wrote the “Days of mare are three score & ten and thow he liveth to four score years yet his days are all vanity and vexation of spirit.” Yes, Oh! How much sadness and sorrow would have been spared us, had we ended our lives at three score and ten years. It now only in the 5th month of year, our hearts have ached and our head bowed down with sorrow. On April 3rd James Sheeks our loved and respected son in law departed hence to that bourne from which no traveler returns, leaving a disconsolate widow and fatherless child— Bright of intellect, strong physically, and gave bright promise of a brilliant future. His mothers pride, her hope, her comfort, on the morning of the 22nd of this month got up well, bright and cheerful and commenced his days amusements and before the close and long before sunset he passed away, bringing a mother heart & brain to near madness. Oh!! God why is this. We are mortals and cannot comprehend immortality— but is our weakness with our sensed too limited. We cry OH God!! Why is this”²⁰¹

Both James and Greek are buried at Oakwood Cemetery in Austin, Texas.

Laura left Austin and moved to New York City. She was in New York on 7 Apr 1909 when her name appeared as a member of the newly formed Texas Club.²⁰² She lived at 42 W. 35th in New York in 1922 and in the census of 1930 lists her occupation as purchasing agent for a decorator. She resided on West 44th. William Herme Robinson recalled that Laura established “a prosperous service bureau for out-of-town customers. Laura became a close friend and companion of Supreme Court Justice Reynolds. Apparently

New York Times 9 May 1946
Calvary Cemetery.
SHEEKS—Laura R., May 7, 1946, formerly of Austin, Tex. Funeral services Stephen Merritt Memorial Chapel, 8th Ave. at 22d St., Thursday afternoon, at 1:30.
SHEPARD—William E., May 8, 1946, husband of the late Katharine Shepard (nee Short), father of Mrs. John Mallon, John, Katharine

Laura possessed a charming and dynamic temperament, for she impressed each family member who met



her.”²⁰³

Laura died at age 87 on 7 May 1946 in New York City and her funeral service was at Stephen Merritt Memorial Chapel at 8th Avenue and 22nd Street.²⁰⁴ She was buried in Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx, New York in the William Ward Bissell and Nettie Van Patten Bissell plot. The Bissells were family friends of Laura’s sister, Elizabeth Robinson Swancoat, and William W. Bissell had been a banking partner of Laura’s brother-in-law, Eugene Bremond. The Bissells had moved to from Austin to New York in 1889 and had obviously been close to Laura and helped her to relocate and establish her home in New York City.

Eugene Bremond Robinson 1862-1949

Eugene Bremond Robinson, the youngest child of John H. and Elizabeth Sheridan, was born 28 Apr 1862 just as his older brothers were signing on with the Confederate army. Eugene was named for Eugene Bremond, eldest son of John H. Robinson’s close friend John Bremond. Eugene Bremond was also married to Eugene Bremond Robinson’s oldest sister, so the recognition was doubly earned. Eugene attended Texas Military Institute in Austin 1877-78 among other schools.²⁰⁵ The school was located at 111 West 11th. This was Austin’s first military academy and was modeled after Virginia Military Institute and West Point.²⁰⁶ He also was sent to “the aristocratic ‘University of the South’ – the college of the Episcopal Church in Sewanee, Tennessee.”²⁰⁷

E. B. ROBINSON



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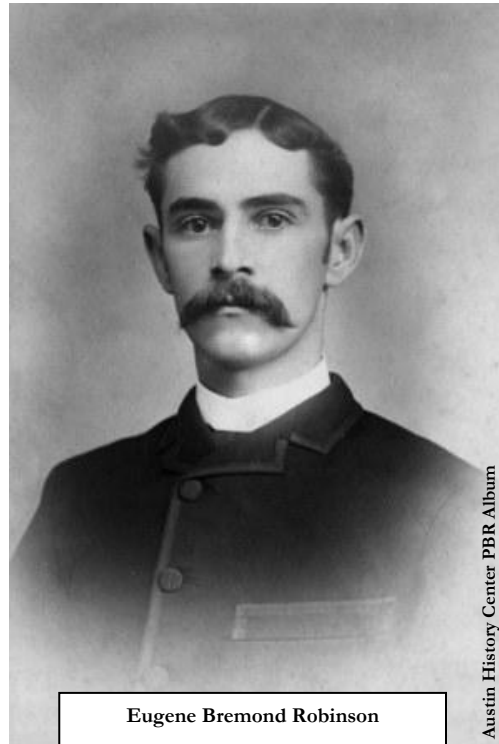
711 Congress Ave.
AUSTIN, TEXAS

UT Cactus 1898

and began work as a clerk at John H. Robinson and Son in 1885.²⁰⁹ After the death of his older brother Alfred Henry in that same year, Eugene became a partner with his brother Alonzo in the business they now called “A.

Eugene is alleged to have been a friend of short-story writer William Sydney Porter, who came to Austin in 1884 at the age of 22. Tradition has it that the two young men were very good friends and the O. Henry often visited Eugene at his home. They even had a contest to see who could grow the longest mustache.²⁰⁸

Eugene followed his older brothers into the family grocery business



Eugene Bremond Robinson

Austin History Center PBR Album

**MRS. EUGENE ROBINSON
DIES AT BATTLE CREEK**

SHE EXPIRED EARLY YESTERDAY MORNING AFTER ILLNESS OF SEVERAL MONTHS—REMAINS WILL REACH HERE SUNDAY.

Information was received here yesterday morning announcing the death of Mrs. Eugene Robinson of this city at Battle Creek, Mich. She died at 2:30 o'clock after a lingering illness, and her remains are expected to reach here Sunday morning. Definite arrangements for the funeral have not yet been made, but it will probably be held Sunday afternoon from the family residence, 700 Rio Grande street.

While the death of Mrs. Robinson was not wholly unexpected, it came as a great shock to her many friends in this city, where she was born and reared. She had been at Battle Creek for the past two months for her health. Shortly after her arrival there she became very ill and grew steadily worse until she died. Her husband and mother were with her at the time of her death.

Mrs. Robinson is survived by a husband, Eugene Robinson of the real estate firm of Pressler & Robinson, and four children. She was formerly Miss Birdie Swearingen, daughter of the late Dr. R. M. Swearingen, and was beloved by all who knew her.

Austin Statesman 9 Sep 1905

Robinson and Brother”. But Eugene had many business adventures and the partnership with his brother was a brief one.

In 1889 he joined with Joseph L. Hume and formed Hume & Robinson, buying and selling cattle. Their office was at 101 E. 9th.²¹⁰ Also in 1889 he

returned to the grocery business, joining with Benton W. Randolph to open Randolph & Robinson at 814 Congress.²¹¹ They sold

fancy foods in a two-story brick building that was 24x120 feet in dimensions. The stock consisted of

“everything in the way of staple and fancy groceries, such as teas, coffees, spices, canned goods, foreign fruits, table delicacies, imported condiments, sauces, jams, etc. The facilities of the house are such as include the closest connections with manufacturers and importers, and the



Bird Swearingen Robinson

Austin History Center PBR Album

practical and lengthened experience of the proprietor gives him every facility in this regard, and makes it a desirable thing for consumers to inspect his stock before dealing elsewhere. ... Mr. Robinson imports direct some of his goods, and notably, olives, French peas, and olive oil, which are put up for his trade over his own brand name and title. The trade of the house is with the best classes of the city, and it may be said of his patrons, that having once been connected with it in trade relations the connection is seldom broken. Mr. Robinson is a well known resident of this city, thoroughly conversant with all pertaining to the business.”²¹² Robinson assumed complete control of the company in 1891²¹³ and operated the grocery at 814 Congress through 1897.

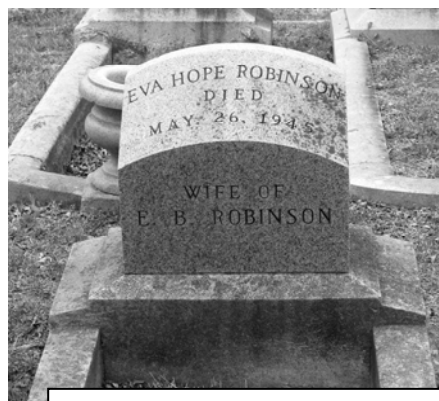
In 1898 he again advertised his cattle business as well as E. B. Robinson Groceries at 711 Congress Avenue; in 1900 he operated the Robinson Grocery Co. at 211 E. 6th; in 1905 it was Pressler & Robinson; in 1909 he joined with R. H. Kirby and Mrs. H. M. Kirby to charter the Austin Oil Company to prospect for oil and coal and conduct an oil and coal business. Kirby and Robinson were “regarded as careful and astute business men.”²¹⁴

In 1909 Eugene entered into the “land, real estate, insurance, and rental” business, an occupation that he would continue through 1930.²¹⁵ He formed the company “Goldbeck, Robinson, Hamby” with Louis N. Goldbeck and Robert M. Hamby with offices at 107 E. 6th in Austin. The following year Goldbeck had left the firm but “Robinson & Hamby” remained, advertising fire insurance and notary services. In 1914 Eugene added an additional business to his portfolio. He was president of the Industrial Development Co., with John F. Butler as vice president and Joe C. Kerbey as secretary-treasurer. The company and Robinson’s insurance and real estate business were both located at the newly built Scarbrough Building, numbers 808-810.

Eugene was not a man of all work and no play. On 3 Mar 1887²¹⁶ Eugene married **Jennie Gertrude "Bird" Swearingen** who was born 9 Oct 1868 in Chapel Hill, Mississippi. Bird was the daughter of Dr. Richard Montgomery Swearingen and his wife Jane H. Jessee Swearingen. Eugene and Bird had five children: **Jeanne Robinson** born Mar 1888, **Richard Swearingen Robinson** born 8 Oct 1892, **Eugenia Robinson** born Nov 1899,²¹⁷ **Eleanor Robinson** born 1900, and **Eugene B. Robinson Jr.** born 10 Mar 1903.

Bird was not well and was at the Battle Creek Sanatorium in Battle Creek, Michigan when she died in Sep 1905.²¹⁸ She had been at the Battle Creek Sanatorium for some time receiving treatment for an unknown ailment. Her remains were brought to Austin and she was buried at Oakwood Cemetery, Austin, Texas.

Eugene later married **Eva Hope Anderson** in 1908. Eva, the daughter of John Wesley and Ella May Layman Anderson, was born 6 Aug 1879 in Paris, Illinois. Eva had been married to J. P. Thayer of Ardmore; they married 6 Jun 1900. . Eugene’s children were living with their grandmother, Jeannie J. Swearingen in 1910 while Eugene and Eva lived at 706 West Avenue



Oakwood Cemetery

Ann Dolce Collection

Ann Dolce Collection

Ann Dolce Collection

Robinson Death Held Suicide

Justice of the Peace Travis Blakeslee Monday returned a verdict of suicide in the gunshot death of 87-year-old Eugene B. Robinson Sr., 700 Rio Grande.

The aged man was found Sunday about 3:30 p. m. with a bullet wound in his chest and a revolver on the floor near his chair.

Relatives told city detectives that Robinson had been ill for several days. He had been an insurance and real estate dealer here for many years.

Survivors include one son, E. B. Robinson Jr., and one daughter, Mrs. Jeanne Gerhard, both of Austin. The body is at the Weed-Corley Funeral Home pending funeral arrangements.

Austin Statesman 17 Jan 1949

Eva died of myocarditis at age 65 on 26 May 1945 and is buried in Oakwood Cemetery, Austin, Texas.²¹⁹ Eugene committed suicide on 16 Jan 1949 at age 86.²²⁰ Only two of his five children survived him. Eugene was buried at Oakwood Cemetery alongside Bird and Eva.

ROBINSON — Private graveside services for Mrs. Eva Hope Robinson, wife of E. B. Robinson, were conducted by the Rev. Charles A. Sumners at Oakwood cemetery at 3 p. m. Sunday under the direction of the Weed-Corley Funeral home.

Austin Statesman 26 May 1945



Congress Avenue, Austin, Texas 1888