

# Obituary for Joel Greenwood Larrison (1821-1900)

**Houston Semi-Weekly Post**

**Thursday February 1900**

## **Joel G. Larrison**

Here is a story of a wonderful old Texan to whom during his lifetime came many experiences not allotted to man.

His name was Joel G. Larrison, and he died at Madisonville, Madison County, Texas on January 31<sup>st</sup> of the present year. (1900) During the seventy-nine years that had elapsed since September 3, 1821, when he was born, he lived under three different flags and saw another fall. Without changing his place of residence, he lived under successively in three counties.

He married four times. His fourth wife and the son she bore him, he never saw, nor did he ever see his third wife after his marriage to her. He became afflicted with total blindness three years before the breaking out of the civil war and during the last forty-two years of his life he lived in darkness.

Before the sun ceased to shine on him, he saw a glorious liberty wrestled from Mexican despotism by the sturdy pioneers who had left the old States to seek freedom and fortune in the broad land of Texas. He saw what was at first a wild and rugged country, the ... (torn) of which were struggling under the ... (torn) heel of the dark skinned tyrants who lived across the Rio Grande develop into an independent republic where honest, God-fearing people built happy homes and led peaceful contented lives. He saw that republic turn into a part of the great United States. He saw, perhaps before the darkness came to him in 1858, some of the things that foretold the bloody civil strife which commenced three years later.

And then, before he died, he heard, the echoes of another war in which the Stars and Stripes brought liberty to the dusky people across the sea and he knew, although he could not see, of the wonderful changes which had taken place in his native land since those days, long ago, when a light hearted happy youth, he had roamed the Texas forests in search of wild game, had protected his loved ones from the Mexican and the Indian and had, perhaps, dreamed of what the future held for him.

Before he crossed the dark river to rest forever in the shade of the trees on the other side, he knew that the rough woodland paths he had trod in his boyhood had been converted into bands of steels over which millions of dollars' worth of merchandise was annually carried between the bustling cities and towns which had taken the place of the rough frontier he had known in the old days.

Joel G. Larrison was born on September 3, 1821 at a point which is now in the extreme northeastern corner of the great state of Texas. Afterwards this place became a part of Lamar County, but as a result of a changing of lines, which has occurred during the last few years, it is now within the confines of Red River County. He lived at the place of his birth for the first 15 years of his life, the uneventful course of which was finally disturbed by the revolt of brave Texans under the gallant Houston against the oppressive rule of Mexico.

When only 15 years of age he shouldered his musket and took service under General Houston in the defense of his native country. He was fated not to participate in the battle of San Jacinto, where the Mexican yolk was finally and forever thrown off, with a part of the command to which he was attached, been sent into East Texas to protect the people of that section against the raids of a band of Indians, who were murdering and pillaging there. Before the redskins were driven off the battle of San Jacinto was fought and won and the Texas army was disbanded before the young Larrison and his companions were able to return to this part of the State. He never officially mustered out of service and as a result was never able to secure a pension from the State.

After the war Larrison returned to his home, where on June 24, 1847 he married Miss Mary Lawrence, who died nineteen years later. The fruits of this marriage were five children, two of whom, Mrs. Emma Horton and Mrs. Mattie Wright, are still living. Mrs. Wright is now a resident of Madison County.

In 1848 Larrison, then in the prime of a vigorous manhood left his old (home) and settled on Larrison creek at a point about 8 miles from the present town of Madisonville. At that time his home was in Montgomery County, but the changes which time brought about placed it afterwards in Walker County now it is in the lines of Madison County. Thus, as before been said, this wonderful old man lived successively in three different counties without moving the place of his residence.

It was in 1858 that Larrison became afflicted with total blindness, which malady successfully resisted the efforts to restore the old man's sight up to the time of his death last month. It was this fact that prevented him from participating in the civil war, and thus adding another chapter to his interesting career.

After the death of his first wife Larrison was married three times. He never saw his fourth wife and his sight never rested upon the child that the latter bore. This child grew to manhood and died in 1898, leaving a wife and a son. The lady who was his third wife, he had known previous to the time he was afflicted with blindness. She is still living.

The old man died in the Methodist faith having been a member of the Methodist church for many years. From 1821 to 1836 Larrison lived under Mexican rule, from 1836 until 1846 his allegiance was to the Republic of Texas. after that until his death he was a citizen of the State of Texas and of the United States, with the exception of the period occupied by the civil war. He died on the identical spot on which he settled in 1848 having lived there continuously for fifty-two years.