

## Josephine Harvelia Turner Hirshfield Ryan January 4 1851- April 13, 1931

Josephine was born to Capt. Charles and Amanda Turner on January 4, 1851. Her father fought in the Mexican-American War of 1846-1848. In 1849 he was one of the soldiers who rode with Major Ripley Arnold and Colonel Middleton Tate Johnson when they selected a site on the Trinity River on which the Army would establish Fort Worth.<sup>1</sup>

Josephine was a small child when her parents moved from Shelby County, Texas to Tarrant County in the early 1850's.<sup>2</sup> The family crafted a farm out of nothing but prairie grass and live oak trees at the location of the present day Greenwood Cemetery. When the Civil War began, the Confederate government ordered Southerners to exchange their gold for Confederate money. Charles Turner chose not to. Instead, with the help of a trusted slave, Turner buried thousands of dollars worth of gold under an oak tree that still stands in Greenwood Cemetery, known as the "Turner Oak." After the war, Turner dug up that gold he had buried and used the money to help stabilize Fort Worth's economy and to ease the debt Fort Worth had incurred.

In 1866, at the age of 15, Josephine married 37 year old John S. Hirshfield. Mr. Hirshfield owned a very successful construction company that is noted as building the "first road into the city."<sup>3</sup> Alongside with his father-in-law Charles Turner, he also owned stores of general merchandise along the route of the Houston & Texas Central Railway in Robertson and Limestone counties. Hirshfield is noted as being one of the Fort Worth business leaders that brought the railroad to the city in 1876. The couple would have 7 children, five of which would live to adulthood. Josephine is also "the step-granddaughter of Captain E. M. Daggett" who "owned the silver wash basin captured from General Santa Anna." Josephine H. Ryan said of the wash bowl: ". . . my husband, John S. Hirshfield, gave him [Daggett] fifty dollars in gold for it...and my children and grandchildren have had their first bath in it."<sup>4</sup>

After the death of her first husband in 1877, Josephine found love again. In 1880, she married Capt. Alvis P. Ryan. The couple would have 3 children, but sadly their marriage would end in divorce in 1889.<sup>5</sup> Josephine passed away in her home on April 13, 1931 at the age of 80. She is buried in Pioneer Rest Cemetery in the Hirshfield family plot next to her first husband and 4 children. Her parents and one sister are also buried in the same cemetery.

---

<sup>1</sup> "Josephine Ryan: Her Story is Our Story". *Hometown by Handlebar*. 6 Aug 2020, <https://hometownbyhandlebar.com/?p=4087> ; Accessed 22 Aug 2023.

<sup>2</sup> Hudson, Weldon and Barbara Knox. *Pioneers Rest Cemetery, Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas*. Fort Worth Genealogical Society. 2001. Pg 142.

<sup>3</sup> "Tarrant Pioneer, Mrs. J. H. Ryan, to be Buried Today." *Dallas Morning News*, Final Edition ed., 14 Apr. 1931, p. 9. [NewsBank: Access World News – Historical and Current](#), Accessed 22 Aug. 2023.

<sup>4</sup> "Josephine Ryan: Her Story is Our Story." 2020.

<sup>5</sup> "Alvis Parmley Ryan." *Find a Grave*. N.D. <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/12895747/alvis-parmley-ryan> ; Accessed 22 Aug 2023.