

## William Robert B. Wills Long Distance Husband

Wills, a native of Kentucky was born around 1810. A lawyer by trade, Wills lived in New Orleans, Louisiana for several years. He married Elizabeth Maria Bonney on November 10, 1842, in New Orleans and the couple were joined by two children, one in 1843 and the second on 1845.

By 1845, Wills was living in Harris County, Texas and by 1848 was established in Petersburg, Texas where in 1848 he was appointed the Postmaster.

When the 1850 census was taken, Wills was recorded as living in the Sherill Inn along with the Sherrills and other local professionals. His wife, Elizabeth, was not in residence.

His wife, Elizabeth Bonney, was the daughter of a highly regarded family in New Orleans and was an incredibly talented young woman educated in New York. While Wills was in Texas in 1850, Elizabeth was in San Francisco, California working as a correspondent for the newspaper the *New Orleans Picayune*. Elizabeth remained in California the remainder of her life where she died in 1892.

Back in Petersburg, Wills' life was not quite as successful as his long-distance wife.

On Christmas Eve 1852, he was brutally assaulted and beaten with a stick by a man by the name of Allen in a Petersburg grocery store. It was reported that Wills wounded his assailant when the affair ended. Allen made his escape.

On June 23, 1858, Wills committed suicide at his residence with a single shot to the head. Prior to this act, Wills wrote a letter to a local lawyer, William Tate, and appointed his executor of his estate giving Tate all the necessary instructions in reference to the disposal of his property.

At the site of his death, Wills left a note stating that Henry Terrell, of Colorado County, was the cause of the act. Terrell was later exonerated in the local newspapers freeing Terrell of any responsibility for Will's death.

Note: In the inventory of Wills estate, it is listed that at the time of his death, Wills was the owner of the old Count house, and the five-acre lot is resided on in

Petersburg. Wills had purchased this property at a sheriff's sale on October 3, 1854.