

## Early Day Builder of Texas Dies

One of a rapidly vanishing troupe on the Texas stage—the aristocrat who came to build Texas after the devastation of the Old South – took a curtain call when Taliaferro A. Witcher, 91, of Brownwood died at his home last Sunday.

Father of W. C. Witcher of Wichita Falls, Witcher was the sole survivor of five brothers who entered the Confederate army. He ran away at 15 to fight under Gen. Joe Wheeler.

After Appomattox, the youth returned home to find a scene of utter desolation. He was alone, for one brother was buried at Kenesaw mountain, another at Gettysburg, another in an unknown grave in Virginia and another in Georgia. So it was that he worked his way through Alabama to Memphis, Tennessee, where he boarded a steamer that brought him to Harrisburg, Texas.

Brownwood Bulletin sums up Witcher's years in Texas as follows: "Witcher spent the remainder of his early days and those of middle life on the western fringe of Texas civilization. He was one of the early settlers in Western Lampasas county during the violent years of the San Saba feuds, when such men as Sam Bass, Bill Longley, Bill Thompson, John Barbour and others of lesser note roamed the region. But Witcher was a man of peace.

"For years his name was never missing from the panels of grand juries and petit juries of his county, and he often headed special posses tracking down murderers. He often said that the only thing that saved his life in those stormy vigilante days was the fact that he always went unarmed.

"In the '80's, Witcher decided that the neighbors were getting "too thick"; so he removed by covered wagon to a ranch he had filed on adjacent to the South Plains country west of Colorado City. There he became a cattle and sheep rancher and was known as "the law west of the Colorado" while serving as justice of the peace and county commissioner for a period of years. In those days antelope could be counted by the hundreds from Witcher's ranch house."

When Witcher's five children sought careers other than ranching, the pioneer moved to Brownwood, where he resided for 40 years. He is survived by his three daughters and two sons.