

BELL, PETER HANSBROUGH - Born in Culpepper, Culpeper County, Virginia, May 18, 1812, a son of James Miller and Amelia (Hansbrough) Bell, whose other children were Elizabeth, Hansbrough, who married William Smith; Ellen, who married Dr. Shepard; Amelia, who was never married; Judge John W.; William; Marcellus and Dr. James Madison Bell.

Upon attaining his majority, Peter H. Bell removed to Petersburg, Virginia, where he engaged in business. He decided to offer his services to the Texans in their struggle for independence and consequently took a boat for Velasco. He arrived in the latter part of March, 1836 and immediately set out on foot to find the army. Following the course of the Brazos he arrived at the Groce plantation, near the present town of Hempstead, the then camp of the army, April 12th. He was assigned to the cavalry company of Captain Henry W. Karnes. He was issued Bounty Certificate No. 303 for 640 acres of land June 6, 1838 for having participated in the battle of San Jacinto. On February 5, 1839 he received Bounty Certificate No. 8049 for 1280 acres of land for having served in the army from May 1, 1836 to January 23, 1839. This was the maximum amount of bounty land granted to any soldier (who was not killed) and probably for that reason his full enlistment period was not shown in the certificate.

Mr. Bell on May 10, 1837 was appointed Assistant Inspector General and on January 30, 1839, Inspector General of the army. In 1840 he joined the Ranger force commanded by Captain John C. Hays.

In 1845 he was captain of a company of rangers. He resigned his commission to enter the United States army at the outbreak of the Mexican War and assigned to the command of General Zachary Taylor. John C. Hay's regiment was divided, part going to Colonel Hays in the army of General Winfield Scott and the remainder, under Lieutenant Colonel Bell, was assigned to duty on the Rio Grande.

Colonel Bell Claimed Harrisburg County as his home June 7, 1838, when he received a Headright Certificate for one-third of a league of land. He later moved to Washington County and was living there November 5, 1849 when he was elected governor. He was opposed by former Governor George Thomas Wood and John T. Mills. He was administered the oath of office November 15, 1849 by C. G. Keenan, Speaker of the House of Representatives. Bell County was created January 22, 1850 and was named for the then governor. He was reelected August 4, 1851, defeating Middleton T. Johnson, John A. Greer, B. H. Epperson and Thomas J. Chambers. David C. Dickson of Anderson, Texas, Speaker of the House of Representatives, administered the oath of office December 22, 1851.

In 1853 Governor Bell was elected by the legislature to fill out the unexpired term of Congressman David S. Kaufman, who had died. He resigned as governor November 23, 1853 to take his seat. James W. Henderson of Houston, the lieutenant-governor, then became governor in fact and served as such for 21 days, in spite of the fact that most histories do not record him as a governor of Texas. Governor Bell was reelected to congress in 1855. When his term of office expired,

March 3, 1857, he married Mrs. Ella Reeves Eaton Dickens, daughter of the Hon. William Eaton, and moved to her home at Littleton, Warren County, North Carolina.

Mrs. Bell died July 16, 1897 and was buried in the cemetery at Littleton. Governor Bell died March 8, 1898 and his remains were placed in the same vault as those of his wife.

The remains of Governor and Mrs. Bell were removed to Texas in 1930 and reinterred in the State Cemetery at Austin, January 29, 1930 by the State of Texas.

Elizabeth Hansbrough Bell, sister of Governor Bell, was married to William Smith, who had a distinguished career. He served in the United States Congress 1841 to '43; Governor of Virginia, 1846 to '49; Congressman from 1853 to 1861; Major general in the Confederate army, participating in the battles of Gettysburg, and in 1864 again Governor of Virginia. William Bell, brother of Peter H. Bell, was married to Martha Smith, sister of Governor Smith.

Judge John W. Bell, brother of Peter H. Bell, was married to Maria Champe Storrow. A daughter of this union, Eliza Amelia Bell, was married to Judge Otis Bowyer and resides with her husband in Baird, Texas.

Children of Judge and Mrs. Bowyer are James Hubard Bowyer, Tuscon, Arizona; Mrs. H. L. Gallegly, 810 Armstrong Avenue, Bartlesville, Oklahoma; Mrs. R. B. Landram, Jr., 4322 Pelham Drive, Houston, Miss Aurelia McDonald Bowyer, Miss Mary Appleton Bowyer and Mrs. Maria Champe Leache, 2233 College Avenue, Ft. Worth, and Otis Bowyer, Jr.,

Attorney-at-Law, First National Bank Building, Dallas.

BELL, PETER HANSBROUGH - Born in Culpepper, Virginia, May 18, 1812, and was reared and educated there. Upon attaining his majority, he removed to Petersburg, Virginia and was engaged in Business there when he decided to offer his services to help free Texas from Mexican oppression. He arrived by boat at old Velasco at the mouth of Brazos in the latter part of March, 1836. From there he set out on foot to find the army, following the course of the river, and on April 12 reached the plantation of Jared E. Groce where General Sam Houston was encamped. He immediately enlisted as a private in Captain Henry W. Karnes' Company and fought as such in the battle of San Jacinto. He was appointed assistant adjutant general of the army by President Houston, May 10, 1837 and was promoted to inspector general, January 30, 1839. In 1842 he was elected major of a battalion on the Somervell Expedition to Mexico, but while he accompanied the expedition, he did not act as such, the men of the battalion being under the command of Captain Bartlett Simms. In 1840 he had joined the ranger force of Captain John C. Hays, to which he returned when Somervell's army returned. In 1845 he was commissioned Captain of rangers and was in the service when the Mexican War began. He then enlisted as a volunteer in the United States Army and was assigned to General Zachary Taylor's army. Upon the organization of Hay's Second Regiment it was divided, part going to Hays in the army of General Winfield Scott and the remainder, under Lieutenant-Colonel Bell, was assigned to duty on the Rio Grande.

In the election held November 5, 1849 Bell, then living in

Washington County, was elected governor of Texas, defeating Governor George Thomas Wood for the re-election and John T. Mills. The vote stood; Bell, 10,319; Wood 8,764; Mills, 2,632. John A. Greer was reelected Lieutenant-Governor.

The third legislature met November 5, 1849 and adjourned February 11, 1850. C. G. Keenan was elected speaker of the house, and administered the oaths of office to the governor and lieutenant-governor, December 21, 1849.

On January 16, 1850 Senator Benton introduced a bill authorizing the payment of \$15,000,000 to Texas if the State would cede to the United States a certain portion of territory. Henry Clay offered a compromise measure of the 29th. It was General Pearce's "Boundary Bill", introduced August 5th, which was finally adopted by both branches of congress, September 4, which ended the controversy by fixing the amount at \$10,000,000. President _____ signed the bill September 7 and Governor Bell immediately called a special session of the legislature, which on November 25 passed a law accepting the proposal.

In 1850 by a popular vote, Austin was chosen the capitol for twenty years. The places voted for were Austin, 7,647; Palestine 1,854; Tehuacany, 1,143 and some scattering.

Governor Bell was re-elected August 4, 1851 by the following vote: Bell, 13,595; Middleton T. Johnson, 5,262; John A. Greer, 4,061; B. H. Epperson, 2,971; Thomas J. Chamber, 2,320. James W. Henderson was elected Lieutenant governor.

Bell County, created January 22, 1850, was named in honor of the governor.

The Fourth Legislature met November 3, 1851 and adjourned February 16, 1852. David C. Dickson was elected speaker of the House. He administered the oaths of office to the governor and lieutenant-governor elected beginning at 11 A. M., December 22, 1851.

A called session of the legislature met January 10 and adjourned February 7, 1853.

In 1853 Governor Bell was elected to the house of representatives of the United States congress and he resigned as governor November 23, 1853 to take his seat. James W. Henderson of Houston, the lieutenant-governor, then became governor in fact and served as such for 21 days, in spite of the fact that most histories do not list him as a governor of Texas. Bell was re-elected to congress in 1855. When his term of office expired, March 3, 1857, he married Mrs. Ella Reeves Eaton Dickens, daughter of the Honorable William Eaton, and moved to her home at Littleton, Warren County, N. C.

In 1891 the Texas Legislature voted Governor Bell a pension.

Mrs. Bell died July 16, 1897 and was buried in the cemetery at Littleton, Warren County, N. C. He died March 8, 1898 and his remains were placed in the same vault as those of his wife. They had no children.

Their remains were removed from North Carolina and reinterred in the State Cemetery at Austin, January 29, 1930.

The _____ Legislature appropriated \$500.00 with which to

remove the remains of Governor Bell to the State Cemetery but
Governor Lanham vetoed the bill May 15, 1903.

BELL, PETER H. - The following appeared in the Central Texian,
Anderson, Texas Nov. 19, 1856.

Our Representative in Congress P. H. Bell has married recently,
and having done so, it is said, will not want to go back to Congress,
or at least to the House. A correspondent of the Delta suggests the
Gov. as a proper person to send to the Senate, and we do not doubt
his willingness to go.