

## Research Report: Robert Cisnie Royston: 1848 - 1915

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### ***Cemetery Record***

The inscription on the gravestone of Robert Cisnie Royston located in Parks Cemetery, Stephens County, Oklahoma states that R.C. Royston was born 9 February 1848 and died 2 May 1915.<sup>1</sup> He is further identified as the "husband of I.B. Royston." A death certificate for Robert might have listed his parents, cause of death, and other life details, but death registration did not begin in Oklahoma until statehood in 1908 and was not widely complied with until 1930.<sup>2</sup> Correspondence with the Division of Vital Statistics confirmed that Oklahoma does not have a death certificate on file for Robert.<sup>3</sup> Cemeteries often keep burial records, but the Parks Cemetery, also known as the "Old Santa Fe" Cemetery is a small rural cemetery seemingly without additional records.<sup>4</sup>

With no death record listing parents, a combination of census, pension, and probate records provide the evidence that is needed to place him in the family of Thomas Beverly Royston and Cynthia (nee) Dillard of Chambers County, Alabama.

### ***Census Records***

Tracing Robert backward in time shows his migration from Alabama to Oklahoma. The last census of his life, 1910, lists Robert and Isabell with son, Everette, living in Howard County, Arkansas, just over the eastern border of Oklahoma.<sup>5</sup> This census, along with the 1900 census of Chickasaw Nation Indian Territory,<sup>6</sup> and two enumerations of the 1880 census in Johnson County, Texas,<sup>7</sup> all reference Alabama as his place of birth. The 1890 census, damaged by fire and water, is not extant for Indian Territory where it is highly probable the family would have been living.<sup>8</sup>

### ***Confederate Pension File***

The 1910 census<sup>9</sup> provides the clue that Robert served in the Confederate Army with "ca" marked in column 30, the description interpreting: "CA=Survivor of the Confederate Army." A large check mark over

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<sup>1</sup> *Find A Grave*, database with images (<http://www.findagrave.com> : accessed 12 July 2016), memorial 13395707, R.C. Royston (1948-1915), Parks Cemetery, Stephens County, Oklahoma; gravestone photograph by Debbie, member 46637435.

<sup>2</sup> *The Handybook for Genealogists*, (Draper, Utah: Everton Publishers, 2002), 549.

<sup>3</sup> Division of Vital Statistics, Oklahoma State Department of Health, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; negative search for death certificate of "Robert Cisney Royston" 1908-1919.

<sup>4</sup> Tammy and Karla K Willis Sharp, "Parks Cemetery, Stephens County, Oklahoma," (<http://stephenscogen.org/> ; accessed 12 July 2016); cemetery description and transcription indicates size and remote nature.

<sup>5</sup> 1910 U.S. Census, Howard County, Arkansas, population schedule, Dillard township, enumeration district (ED) 24, sheet 13B (penned), dwelling 251, family 256, Robert C. Royston household; digital image, *FamilySearch*, (<https://familysearch.org> : accessed 29 April 2016); citing NARA microfilm publication T624, roll: 1254.

<sup>6</sup> 1900 U.S. Federal Census, Chickasaw Nation, Indian Territory, pop, sch., sheet 24B, fam.396, E. D.166, Robert H. Royston.

<sup>7</sup> 1st Enumeration: 1880 U.S. Census, Johnson County, Texas, population schedule, precinct 3, enumeration district (ED) 83, sheet 293C (stamped), p.14 (penned), dwelling 161, family 166, Robt Royston household; digital image, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org> : accessed 28 April 2016); citing NARA microfilm publication T9, roll 1313.. and 2nd Enumeration: 1880 U.S. Census, Johnson Co., Texas, pop.sch., precinct 1, ED 81, sheet 271A (stamped), p.41 (penned), dwell. 356, fam. 362, Robert C Royston household.

<sup>8</sup>Blake, " First in the Path of the Firemen: The Fate of the 1890 Population Census, Part 1," para.1.

<sup>9</sup> 1910 U.S. Census, Howard Co., Arkansas, pop. sch., Dillard township, ED 24, sheet 13B (penned), dwell. 251, fam. 256, Robert C. Royston household.

the “ca” is repeated on other pages of this same census indicating a count of confederate veterans in 1910.

If an individual served in a military capacity, often they were awarded a pension several years later, depending on the laws of the federal or state government distributing the pension. A man or his widow could apply for the pension and that application often states genealogical information: birth, marriage, and death dates, as well as family relationships.

Robert died in 1915, the same year that Oklahoma’s Fifth legislature approved the Confederate Soldier’s Pension Bill that was to provide financial relief for Confederate veterans and their widows.<sup>10</sup> In 1929, fourteen years after his death, Isabell applied for this pension. The original application and subsequent letters between her and government officials provide valuable information.<sup>11</sup>

In the “Application of Indigent Widow of Confederate Soldier or Sailor, for a Pension Under the Laws of the State of Oklahoma,” Isabell gives the following details about Robert’s military service:

- Robert C. Royston served as a sharpshoot in the Confederate Army, company or regiment unknown.
- He enlisted at Montgomery, Alabama, served for two years, and was honorably discharged.

Isabell’s reporting of his enlistment at Montgomery provides further corroboration of Alabama as Robert’s state of origin. Although Isabell did not personally witness Robert’s military service, it is reasonable to conclude that during the almost forty years of their marriage, Robert would have discussed some of his Civil War experiences with her.

The typed pension application records Robert’s death as 2 May 1925, which conflicts with Robert’s gravestone inscription of 2 May 1915. This was probably a clerical error as three corrections to the typewritten application suggest room for error:

1. Isabell’s middle initial of D. is crossed out.
2. Isabell’s age is inked over with 72.
3. The typed marriage year is corrected To 1877.

A letter from Isabell dated 24 Sept 1934 states that “my husban ben [sic] dead 20 year,” making the 1915 death date almost certainly correct.<sup>12</sup>

### *Marriage of Robert and Isabell*

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<sup>10</sup> “Oklahoma Confederate Pension Records,” *Oklahoma Digital Prairie* (<http://www.digitalprairie.ok.gov> : accessed 15 July 2016).

<sup>11</sup> Isabell D. Royston, widow of Robert C. Royston, application no. A6942, 1929-1942, Record Group 5, Commissioner of Confederate Pensions, Oklahoma State Archives, Oklahoma Department of Libraries, Oklahoma City, OK.; digital images, Oklahoma, “Confederate Pension Records Database,” *Oklahoma Digital Prairie* (<http://www.digitalprairie.ok.gov> : accessed 15 July 2016).

<sup>12</sup> Mrs. IB Royston (Apache, OK) to “Col. R.A..Sneed” (Oklahoma City), letter, 24 September 1934, p.24-28 of pension file; Isabell D. Royston, widow of Robert C. Royston, application no. A6942, 1929-1942.es, Oklahoma City, OK.

Isabell reported on the pension application that she married Robert C. Royston 16 January 1877 in “Decater Tex.”<sup>13</sup> Although recorded long after the fact, it is highly probable that Isabell would have recalled this important date in her life. Texas marriages are kept on the county level and a marriage record could be available at the Wise County Courthouse. Unfortunately because of a courthouse fire, marriage records are only available from 1881, four years after the purported marriage of Robert and Isabell.<sup>14</sup> The marriage year of 1877 does correspond to the 1900 census where the couple is reported as having 23 years in the current marriage.<sup>15</sup>

### **Texas Connections**

Establishing Robert’s residence in Texas is key to connecting him to his Alabama family. Following their marriage in 1877, Robert and Isabell lived in Texas for the next four to seven years. Isabell’s pension application indicates that she has lived in the state of Oklahoma for 48 years, which would make 1881 the approximate year of their arrival in Indian Territory/Oklahoma.<sup>16</sup> However she later wrote: “we came to this state in 1884 when it was a teritory [sic].”<sup>17</sup>

Regardless of the exact year that the Royston family moved into Indian Territory, evidence of a Texas residence occurs with the 1880 census, in fact the family is enumerated twice in Johnson County, Texas. The two entries are just two weeks apart, in different precincts, and with some of the information quite different. This is a good example of how information in a census record needs to be evaluated carefully and can be quite different than it seems on the surface. (See Table 5)

**Table 5. Comparison of the Royston Family enumerated twice on the 1880 census, Johnson Co. Texas<sup>18</sup>**

1880 Census (26 Jun) Precinct 1	1880 Census (7 Jun) Precinct 3	1880 Census (26 Jun) Precinct 1	1880 Census (7 Jun) Precinct 3	1880 Census (26 Jun) Precinct 1	1880 Census (7 Jun) Precinct 3	Birthplace
Name	Name	Age	Age	Relationship	Relationship	No difference
Robert C Royston	Robt Royston	29	29			Alabama
Isabel Royston	Belle Royston	21	21	wife	wife	Missouri
	Mary Royston		4		daughter	Texas

<sup>13</sup> Isabell D. Royston, widow of Robert C. Royston, application no. A6942, 1929-1942.

<sup>14</sup> *The Handybook for Genealogists* (Draper, Utah: Everton Publishers, 2002), 676.

<sup>15</sup> 1900 U.S. Federal Census, Chickasaw Nation, Indian Territory, pop, sch., sheet 24B (penned), fam.396, ED166, Robert H. Royston household.

<sup>16</sup> Isabell D. Royston, widow of Robert C. Royston, application no. A6942, 1929-1942.

<sup>17</sup> Mrs. Isabell D Royston (Ardmore, OK) to "Dear friend" (Pension Dept. Oklahoma City), letter, 5 July 1938, p.42-44 of pension file; Isabell D. Royston, widow of Robert C. Royston, application no. A6942, 1929-1942.

<sup>18</sup> 1st Enumeration: 1880 U.S. Census, Johnson Co. Texas, pop. sch., precinct 3, ED 83, sheet 293C (stamped), p.14 (penned), dwell., 161, fam. 166, Robt Royston household. and 2nd Enumeration: 1880 U.S. Census, Johnson Co., Texas, pop. sch., precinct 1, ED 81, sheet 271A (stamped), p.41 (penned), dwell. 356, fam. 362, Robert C Royston household.

Robert E Royston	Edward Royston	2	2	son	son	Texas
Charles B Royston	Charles Royston	3/12	4/12	son	son	Texas
Clemsy Carpenter		4		no relationship		Texas

The most notable difference between the two census enumerations is the 4-year-old child listed as Mary Royston in the census of Precinct 3 and the listing of 4-year-old Clemsy Carpenter in the census of Precinct 1. Mary “Clemsy” Carpenter would have been born in 1876, one year before the marriage of Robert and Isabell. The 1910 census provides the clue needed to explain this child: Isabell was married twice, with Robert being her second husband.<sup>19</sup> Mary “Clemsy” Carpenter almost certainly was Isabell’s daughter from her first marriage in 1874 to John W. Carpenter.<sup>20</sup> The death certificate for Mary Clemsy could be ordered to verify her parents.

### ***Family of Robert and Isabell***

A family group sheet lists the family of Robert and Isabell with seven children.<sup>21</sup> Because this is an authored work, records would need to verify names, dates, and places of events. Isabell first married John H. Carpenter 3 January 1874 in Dallas County, Texas,<sup>22</sup> and their daughter Mary “Clemsy” Carpenter was born in 1875. John presumably died before 16 January 1877 when Isabell and Robert married in Decatur, Texas.<sup>23</sup> Isabell then had six more children with Robert. The 1900 census shows that she had seven children, all living.<sup>24</sup>

Birth certificates in Texas were not issued until 1903<sup>25</sup> and Indian Territory, later Oklahoma, did not issue birth certificates until after 1908.<sup>26</sup> Birth information for the children of Robert and Isabell had to be determined from records created later in their lives. See Table 6 for a listing of each child in the family and the birth and death information from various sources. The Research log and Family Group Record give further documentation.

**Table 6. Children of Robert and Isabell Royston**

Name of Child	Birth Date and Place	Death Date and Place	World War I	WWII Draft	California Death	Obituary	Death Certificate	Cemetery Record
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<sup>19</sup> 1910 U.S. Census, Howard Co. Arkansas, pop. sch., Dillard township, ED 24, sheet 13B (penned), dwell. 251, fam. 256, Robert C. Royston household.

<sup>20</sup> Dallas County, Texas, photocopy of marriage license, Carpenter-Weatherford, 3 Jan 1874, Volume E Page 407, County Clerk, Dallas.

<sup>21</sup> Bobby G. Shults, "Robert Cisney Royston-Isabelle Weatherford Family Group Sheet," privately held by author [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE], dates and places handwritten, not sourced.

<sup>22</sup> Dallas Co., Texas, marriage license, Carpenter-Weatherford, 3 Jan 1874.

<sup>23</sup> Isabell D. Royston, widow of Robert C. Royston, application no. A6942, 1929-1942.

<sup>24</sup> 1900 U.S. Census, Chickasaw Nation, Indian Terr., pop. sch., ED 166, sheet 24B, (penned), fam. 396, Robert C Royston household.

<sup>25</sup> *The Handybook for Genealogists* (Draper, Utah: Everton Publishers, 2002), p. 647.

<sup>26</sup> *The Handybook for Genealogists* (Draper, Utah: Everton Publishers, 2002), p. 549.

			Draft Registrat ion	Registra tion	Index			
Mary Clem Carpenter	3 October 1875 Van Zandt County, Texas	1947 Ardmore, Carter County Oklahoma						X
Robert Edward Royston	5 January 1878 McKinney, Collin County, Texas	12 Dec 1957 Visalia, Tulare County, California	X		X			X
Charles Baldwin Royston	18 February 1880 Van Zandt County, Texas	18 Dec 1959 Stephens County, Oklahoma				X		X
Dora Algie Royston	25 January 1882 Montague County, Texas	11 Jan 1925 Lubbock County, Texas					X	X
Oscar Herbert Royston	6 September 1884 Van Zandt County, Texas	6 Dec 1970 Reedley, Fresno Co., California	X	X	X			
Effie Delaney Royston	8 April 1887 Wills Point, Van Zandt, Texas	1 Jun 1971 Tucumcari, Quay Co., New Mexico						X
Everitt Lee Royston	2 January 1892 Elmore City, Indian Territory	27 Aug 1911 Anadarko, Caddo Co., Oklahoma						X

### **Isabelle Life Events**

Following Robert's death in 1915, Isabella continued to reside in Oklahoma and is listed on the 1920<sup>27</sup> and 1930<sup>28</sup> census records in Stephens County, Oklahoma. She died 8 May 1942, in Tucumcari, Quay County, New Mexico, at the home of her daughter, Effie D. Royston Huntley.<sup>29</sup> Her death certificate states her place of usual residence was Ardmore, Carter County, Oklahoma. Her widow's pension file from 1929 until her death in 1942 fills in many details of her life:<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> 1920 U.S. Census, Stephens County, Oklahoma, population schedule, Parks Township, enumeration district (ED) 260, sheet 9A, (penned), dwelling 164, family 171, Isabell in Charles B. Royston household, digital image, *Ancestry*, (<http://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 31 August 2016), citing NARA microfilm publication T625, roll 1484.

<sup>28</sup> 1930 U.S. Census, Stephens County, Oklahoma, population schedule, Duncan City, enumeration district (ED) 69-6, sheet 10A (penned), p.62 (stamped), dwelling 197, family 199, Isabell Royston household; digital image, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 31 August 2016); citing NARA microfilm publication T626, roll 1932.

<sup>29</sup> New Mexico Department of Public Health, death certificate 3682 (1942), Isabelle Royston; Vital Records Unit, New Mexico Health and Social Services Department, Santa Fe.

<sup>30</sup> Isabell D. Royston, widow of Robert C. Royston, application no. A6942, 1929-1942, pension no. P5893.

- She and Robert first came to the area [Indian Territory/Oklahoma] in 1885
- Robert died in 1915 after an illness of 3 years leaving him with the mind of a 2 year old
- She lived in the Confederate Home in Ardmore for a period of time near the end of her life
- She made her home in Oklahoma for 45 years, occasionally visiting New Mexico and California.

### **Parents of Robert C. Royston - Alabama Census Records**

If Robert C. Royston really was born in Alabama in 1848 as stated on his gravestone,<sup>31</sup> it is likely that he would appear on census records in the household of his family. The 1850<sup>32</sup> and 1860<sup>33</sup> censuses of Chambers County, Alabama show a Robert C. Royston in the household of Thomas B. and Cynthia Royston. These censuses do not list relationship to head of household, but combined with probate records, prove that he is a son. His age in 1850 is 3 with a possible birth year of 1847 and his age in 1860 is 14 with a possible birth year of 1846. Neither age corresponds exactly with the birth date of 1848 from the gravestone, but birth dates taken from census records often differ by a few to several years.

The 1870 census for the Chambers County, Alabama, Royston family lists Cynthia Royston, widow, and several of the children.<sup>34</sup> Robert, about 22 years old, is notably missing from the family and a thorough search of the 1870 census did not result in any listing for him.<sup>35</sup> In the years following the Civil War, an estimated 1.2 million southerners are missing from the 1870 census.<sup>36</sup> Robert was possibly en route to Texas and missed because he was traveling or because of issues administering the census.

### **Parents of Robert C. Royston - Probate Records**

Probate records can provide a wealth of genealogical information, both in the will and in the administration of it following an individual's death, especially if there is land involved. On 18 September 1867, Thomas B. Royston wrote his will and named Robert C. Royston as his son.<sup>37</sup>

"I also give & Bequeath unto my Sons Joseph Royston & Robert C Royston that part of my Dozier place lying East of the Chickaseknocksee Creek & that part of my Parker place lying South of the Vernon Road to go into possession of the said lands at any time after the present year 1867."

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<sup>31</sup> *Find A Grave*, memorial 13395707, R.C. Royston (1948-1915), gravestone photograph by Debbie.

<sup>32</sup> 1850 U.S. Census, Chambers County, Alabama, population schedule, 19th District, p. 318 (stamped), dwelling 749, family 749, Thomas B Royston household; digital image, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 17 August 2016); citing NARA microfilm publication M432, roll M432\_2.

<sup>33</sup> 1860 U.S. Census, Chambers County, Alabama, population schedule, Northern Division, Milltown Post Office, page 130 (penned), dwelling 915, family 895, Thomas B. Royston household; digital image, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org>: accessed 29 April 2016); citing NARA microfilm publication M653 roll 4.

<sup>34</sup> 1870 U.S. Census, Chambers County, Alabama, population schedule, Beat No 2, p. 4 (penned), p.22 (stamped), dwelling 24, family 24, Cynthia Royston household; digital image, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 26 April 2016); citing NARA microfilm publication M593, roll 6.

<sup>35</sup> 1870 U.S. Census, population schedule, negative search for Robert C Royston; database with images, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 26 April 2016); citing NARA microfilm publication M593. and 1870 U.S. Census, population schedule, negative search for Robert C. Royston; database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org> : accessed 29 Apr 2016); citing NARA microfilm publication M593.

<sup>36</sup> William Thorndale and William Dollarhide, *Map Guide to the U.S. Federal Censuses, 1790-1920*, (Baltimore, Maryland : Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc), xiv.

<sup>37</sup> "Chambers County, Alabama Estates, box 26 folder 24, Thomas Beverly Royston, for will of 1867; "Alabama, Wills and Probate Records, 1753-1999," case file for Thos B Royston, 1867-1883, *Ancestry* (<http://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 19 August 2016), digital images 138-140.

If an individual left a will, upon his death the administration of that will sometimes consisted of a lengthy process that generated many documents typically naming his heirs. One year after Thomas B. Royston's will was drawn up, Cynthia appeared before the court stating that Thomas B Royston "departed this life on the 21st day of September A.D. 1868 in said county & state."<sup>38</sup> This petition began the probate process where she names each of the living children. Robert's entry reads: "Robert C Royston a minor over fourteen who resides with the petitioner in said county." A minor over fourteen in the state of Alabama means that Robert was not yet twenty-one.<sup>39</sup> The date of the petition is 29 September 1868, so if born in 1848 as stated on his gravestone, Robert would be twenty. This is further evidence that the 1848 birth year is more correct than the 1846 or 1847 birth years taken from his age on the 1850 and 1860 census records.

Thomas B. Royston's will includes a statement that is an important clue that the estate won't be fully settled until Cynthia's death and the children who are minors have come of age.<sup>40</sup> Considering that the youngest child, Martha, was only four years old at the writing of the will in 1867, this wasn't going to happen until her marriage, or at the latest, 1884.

"After the death of my wife Cynthia Royston all my estate both real and personal be equally divided between my several children share and share alike after my children which are now unmarried and minors be made equal with my children which are married."

Seven years later, several administration papers dated from 6 February to 27 March 1875 show that Cynthia has "removed to the State of Texas"<sup>41</sup> and an account paper of 1 November 1882 indicates that "Cynthia Royston departed this life in the state of Texas on or about the 2nd day of August 1882."<sup>42</sup> In the course of administering the remainder of the estate of Thomas B. Royston, several documents between 1882-1883 list the heirs in Texas. Each includes a reference to "Robert C. Royston" or R.C. Royston" of Kaufman County, Texas, post office Elmore.<sup>43</sup> Most likely this reference is to the settlement in Kaufman County named Elmo. A post office branch opened there in 1873 and by 1883 was a thriving community of 900 residents.<sup>44</sup>

The proximity of the three northeast Texas locations mentioned in the marriage, census, and probate documents lends credibility to the premise that Robert C. Royston of Chambers County Alabama, son of Thomas B. Royston and Cynthia, is the same individual as Robert C. Royston married to Isabell.

- 1877 Wise County<sup>45</sup> (marriage of Robert and Isabell)

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<sup>38</sup> Chambers Co. Al. Estates, box 26 folder 24, Thomas Beverly Royston, petition papers 29 September 1868, images 145-146.

<sup>39</sup> Abram Joseph Walker and Alabama, *The Revised Code of Alabama*, (Montgomery, Alabama : Reid & Screws, 1867), 493.

<sup>40</sup> Chambers Co. Al. Estates, box 26 folder 24, Thomas Beverly Royston, will of 1867, images 138-140.

<sup>41</sup> Chambers Co. Al. Estates, box 26 folder 24, Thomas Beverly Royston, administration papers of 1875, images 143, 148, 172, and 173.

<sup>42</sup> Chambers Co. Al. Estates, box 26 folder 24, Thomas Beverly Royston, account paper, 1 November 1882, images 165-166.

<sup>43</sup> Chambers Co. Al. Estates, box 26 folder 24, Thomas Beverly Royston, petition papers of 1882-1883, images 163, 165, 166, and 169.

<sup>44</sup> David Minor, "Elmo, TX," *The Handbook of Texas* (<https://www.tshaonline.org> : accessed 23 August 2016).

<sup>45</sup> Isabell D. Royston, widow of Robert C. Royston, application no. A6942, 1929-1942, pension no. P5893, Record Group 5, Commissioner of Confederate Pensions, Oklahoma.

- 1880 Johnson County<sup>46</sup> (1880 census, two enumerations of Robert and Isabell Royston)
- 1882-83 Kaufman County<sup>47</sup> (will administration papers)



**NORTHEAST TEXAS COUNTIES**  
 Location of Robert C. Royston  
 life events 1877-1883

### **Conclusion**

As proven by his gravestone, census, pension, and probate records, Robert Cisnie Royston was born 9 February 1848 in Alabama, the son of Thomas Beverly Royston and Cynthia Dillard. He married a widow, Isabell Weatherford Carpenter, on 16 January 1877 in Wise County, Texas. She had a child from her previous marriage and bore six more children to Robert. He died in Stephens County, Oklahoma, on 2 May 1915. Isabell died 8 May 1942 in Quay County, New Mexico.

<sup>46</sup> 1st Enumeration: 1880 U.S. Census, Johnson Co. Texas, pop. sch., precinct 3, ED 83, sheet 293C (stamped), p.14 (penned), dwell., 161, fam. 166, Robt Royston household. and 2nd Enumeration: 1880 U.S. Census, Johnson Co., Texas, pop. sch., precinct 1, ED 81, sheet 271A (stamped), p.41 (penned), dwell. 356, fam. 362, Robert C Royston household.

<sup>47</sup> Chambers Co. Al. Estates, box 26 folder 24, Thomas Beverly Royston, petition papers of 1882-1883, images 163, 165, 168, and 169.