

Dora Algie Royston 1882-1925 and William Huston Shults 1877-1956

This report documents research on Dora Algie Royston, her parents, spouse, children, and life events. Dora was born 27 January 1882 in Texas. She married William Huston Shults on 11 December 1898 in Chickasaw Nation, Indian Territory. She died 11 January 1925 in Lubbock County, Texas, at the age of 42.

Dora's descendants had compiled vital information on Dora, her spouse, and children that would need to be verified by the records.¹ The family group sheet showed that Dora Algie Royston was born on 27 January 1882 in Montague County, Texas, on the border of Indian territory which became the state of Oklahoma on 16 November 1907. She married fellow Texan, William Huston Shults, on 11 December 1898 in Indian Territory. The couple eventually added ten children to their family before Dora's untimely death on 11 January 1925 in Lubbock County, Texas at the age of 42.

Death Certificate of Dora Algie Royston

The first step in verifying birth information is to obtain the birth certificate for an individual. In Dora's case, births were not required to be registered by law until 1903 in Texas, so no civil birth record listing Dora's name, birth information, and parents would exist.² By her death in 1925, however, death registration was more common and her death certificate provides many important details for her life.³ Of note is the spelling of Dora "Algia" on the death certificate. Family records show "Algie" as the correct spelling of the name which will be used in this report.⁴

- "Dora Algia" [sic] Shults was born 25 January 1882 in Texas.
- Dora died 11 January 1925 in Lubbock, Lubbock County, Texas, from complications due to "acute dilatation of heart, contributed by childbirth."
- Dora was buried in the Carlisle Cemetery, Lubbock County, Texas, on 13 January 1925.
- Dora's father was "R.C. Royston" born in Georgia.
- Dora's mother was "Isabelle Weatherford" born in Missouri.
- Informant of the birth and parent information was "W.H. Shults" of Lubbock, Texas.

Cemetery records can provide additional information, including birth and death dates, family relationships, and more. *Find A Grave* is a website devoted to memorials of individuals based on cemetery records, obituaries, and other records, including photographs of gravestones. A *Find A Grave* memorial created for Dora includes a photo of her headstone which reads: "Dora wife of W.H. Shults Jan 27, 1882 - Jan 11, 1925."⁵ There is a discrepancy between the birthdate of 25 January on the death certificate and the birthdate of 27 January on the headstone. It is probable that her spouse, William Huston, listed as "W.H. Shults," who was the informant on the death certificate also gave the information for the headstone. On the death certificate, the age at death has some crossing out possibly indicating confusion. The headstone would have been ordered some time after the death giving the family more time to consult on the correct day, so the 27th is probably a more correct date. The death date of 11 January 1925 on the death certificate, filed that same day, is direct evidence of her death in the city of Lubbock, Texas and does agree with the date on the headstone.

An obituary might have shed further light on Dora's birth date, but a search in the local newspaper, *The Lubbock Morning Avalanche*, proved fruitless. Issues of the paper for January 12 and 13 when it is likely a

¹ Bobby Gene Shults, William Huston Shults - Dora Algie Royston Family Group Sheet, supplied by Shults, [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] Burley, Idaho, not dated. This sheet contains some documentation but is not fully sourced.

² *The Handybook for Genealogists* (Draper, Utah: Everton Publishers, 2002), 647.

³ Texas death certificate no. 3184 -476, 1925, Dora Algia Shults.

⁴ Effie Lorain Shults Bassett, "Memories."

⁵ *Find A Grave*, database with images, (<http://www.findagrave.com> : accessed 10 March 2016), memorial 60243023, Dora Shults (1882 - 1925), gravestone photographed by Dawn Kelley, member 47319272.

death notice or obituary would have been published have not yet been located.⁶ As seen in the death certificate, Dora's husband, William, is often referred to as "W.H. Shults." W.H.Shults was mentioned in this newspaper in 1926 for a land transfer, so it would seem a probable newspaper to publish an obituary or report the death of Dora.⁷ Future research in the newspapers of the time could find an obituary for Dora.

Marriage License

The family group sheet gives the marriage date for Dora and William as 11 December 1898 in Elmore City, Garvin County, Oklahoma.⁸ An official marriage license or certificate was sought to verify this important information. In 1898, Elmore City would have been in the Chickasaw Nation, Indian Territory, not Oklahoma. A search of that location resulted in a copy of the original marriage license and certificate. Primary or first hand details gleaned from the record are the marriage date, names, ages, and residence of the couple.⁹ Although Dora's initials are reversed and her surname is incorrectly spelled, William's initials and surname, the location of Elmore, and the date of the marriage all support the information from the family group sheet.

- "Mr. W.H. Shults" of Elmore, in the Indian Territory, aged 20 years, and "A. D. Rayston" of Elmore, in the Indian Territory, aged 16 years
- Marriage license dated "7th day of December A.D. 1898"
- Marriage certificate dated "11th day of December A.D.1898"

The marriage license and certificate show the jurisdiction as: "United States of America, Indian Territory, Southern District." According to the Oklahoma Historical Society, "[the] Southern District [was] established in 1895, covering the area of the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations, with Ardmore as court seat."¹⁰

1900 Census

In the United States, a census was taken every ten years from 1790 on. Beginning with the 1850 census, each member of the household is listed. A search of the 1900 census found "Dora" and "Houston Shults" residing in Chickasaw Nation, Indian Territory, the area of their marriage.¹¹ Listed next to the couple is the household of "Robert H. Royston" and "Isabelle" with five children: "Eddie, Charley, Oscar, Effie, and Everett." When combined with the listing of Dora's parents as "R.C. Royston" and "Isabelle Weatherford" from the death certificate, these appear to be Dora's parents and siblings. This family will be discussed more fully later in this report.

Census records often have incorrect spellings, dates, ages, and birthplaces, depending on the informant, the individual giving the information. In the 1900 census, William is listed as "Houston," the census taker's spelling of his name different than the "Huston" in other records. Dora's birthday is recorded as January 1882 which corresponds to her birth information in the death records. The census shows that the couple have been married one year and have no children. William's occupation as a farmer fits with the economy

⁶ *Lubbock Avalanche*, Vol. 3, No. 68, 75, and 76, 14 and 21 January 1925, Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum, Canyon, Texas; search performed by Millie Vanover 23 March 2016 located no obituary for Dora; Vol 3, No. 65 and 66 for 12 and 13 January are not at this location. See research calendar for further searches performed.

⁷ *Lubbock Morning Avalanche*, "Public Records," 19 November 1926, Lubbock, Texas; database with images, *NewspaperARCHIVE*, (myheritage.com./research/collection-10025 : accessed 14 March 2016).

⁸ Bobby Gene Shults, William Huston Shults - Dora Algie Royston Family Group Sheet, supplied by Shults, [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] Burley, Idaho, not dated. This sheet contains some documentation but is not fully sourced.

⁹ Carter County, Oklahoma, marriage license and certificate, Shults-Rayston, 11 December 1898, Indian Territory Southern District, recorded 1943, County Clerk, Ardmore, Oklahoma.

¹⁰ Oklahoma Historical Society, Research Center "Indian Territory Marriage Records," (<http://www.okhistory.org> : accessed 25 February 2016).

¹¹ 1900 U.S. Census, Chickasaw Nation, Indian Territory, population schedule, township 2S range 5W, enumeration district (ED) 166, sheet 24B (penned), dwelling 378, family 393, W.H. Shults; digital image, *Ancestry*, (<http://www.ancestry.com> accessed 17 February 2016); citing NARA microfilm publication T623, roll 1849.

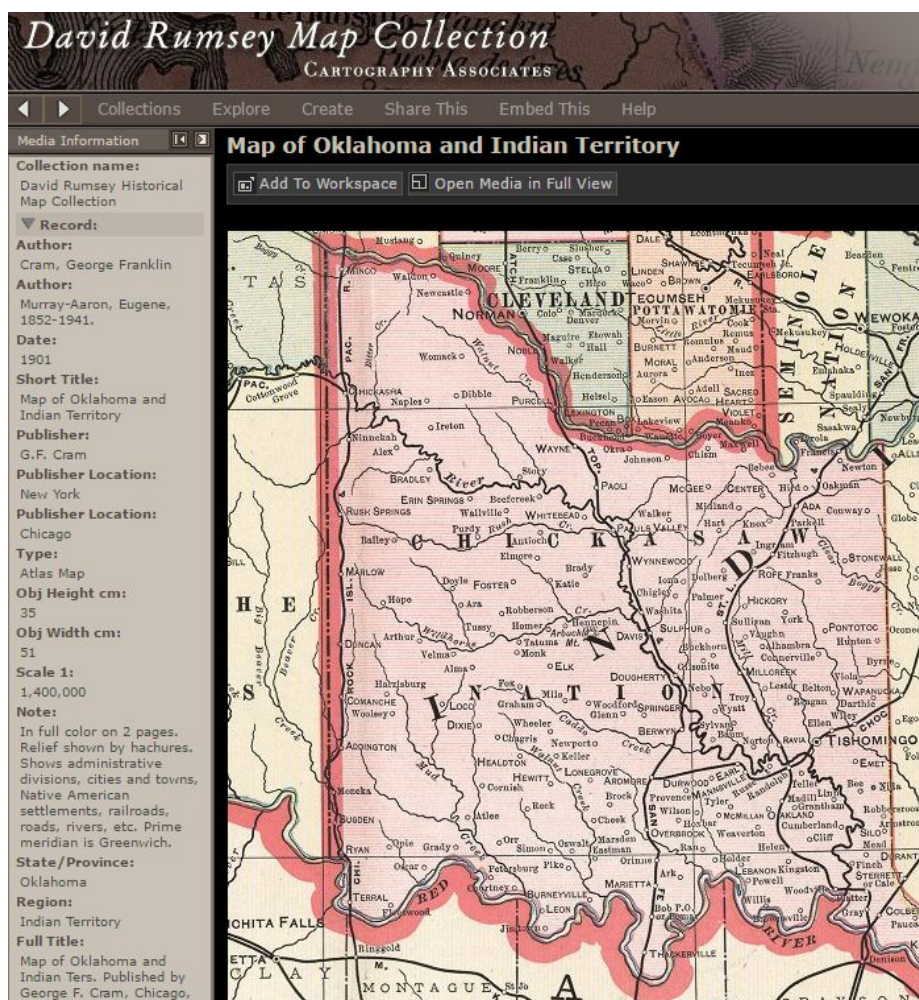
of the area. Many settlers moved into Indian Territory during the 1890's because of the good farm land. Unable to purchase the land, the settlers leased the land from the citizens of the Chickasaw Nation.¹² Future research in the records of the Chickasaw Nation could possibly discover new and interesting records to document the family of Dora and William Shults.

Figure 1. "Dora and Houston Shults" household listed above "Robert H and Isabell Royston"

62	388 404	Shults, Houston	Head	W M Dec 1872	M 1	Texas	Texas	Texas
63		, Dora	Wife	W F July 1852	18	M 1	Texas	Alabama
64	378 374 394 404	Royston, Robert H.	Head	W M Feb 1850	50	M 28	Alabama	Alabama
65		, Isabelle	Wife	W F Feb 1860	40	M 23	7	Missouri
66		, Eddie	Son	W M May 1878	22	8	Texas	Alabama
67		, Charley	Son	W M Feb 1879	21	8	Texas	Alabama
68		, Oscar	Son	W M Apr 1884	16	8	Texas	Alabama
69		, Effie	Daughter	W F Apr 1887	13	8	Texas	Alabama
70		, Corbett	Son	W M May 1891	8	2	Indian Territory	Alabama

1900 U.S. Federal Census, Chickasaw Nation, Indian Territory, Township 2S. Range 5W¹³

The following map shows the area known as Chickasaw Nation, that became part of Oklahoma in 1907.



¹² Nova A. Lemons, *Pioneers of Chickasaw Nation, Indian Territory*, (Miami, Oklahoma : Timbercreek Ltd. 1991), 6-17.

¹³ 1900 U.S. Census, Chickasaw Nation, Ind. Terr., pop. sch., ED 166, sheet 24B (penned), dwell. 378 and 379, fam. 396 and 397, Shults and Royston households.

1910 Census

The 1910 census sheds more light on the growth of William and Dora's family.¹⁴ Indian Territory became the state of Oklahoma in 1907 and the family is listed on the census as residing in Jefferson County. Of interest is the information on Dora's line that shows she is in her first marriage and she has borne five children with three living. This suggests that two children have died between the 1900 and 1910 census.

Table 1. 1910 U.S. Federal Census, William H Shults household Jefferson County, Oklahoma¹⁵

Family Member	Relation	Sex	Age	Marital status	Children born and living	Birthplace
William H Shults	Head	M	32	Marriage 1 for 11 years		Texas
Dora Shults	Wife	F	27	Marriage 1 for 11 years	5, 3	Texas
Charles L Shults	Son	M	5	S		Oklahoma
Dela V	Daughter	F	3	S		Oklahoma
Lola M	Daughter	F	1 5/12	S		Oklahoma

The surmise that two children had died before 1910 was corroborated by the personal knowledge of daughter, Effie Lorain Shults Basset. In her personal history she states: "Robert and Leonard died there [Maxwell, Oklahoma] and were buried at McGee, 1 mile north of Stratford. They were 3 and 5 years old. They died of Membrous croup. Both were buried in the same grave with a double headstone."¹⁶

Cemetery Transcriptions

In 1966, Dora and William's grandson, Bob Shults, hired a researcher to find the grave of Robert and Leonard. A letter from the researcher in Oklahoma who examined the headstone in McGee Cemetery, Stratford, Oklahoma, reported that "the lettering on it [the marker] is getting just a little dim. It was a double marker and this is the information I wrote down from it".¹⁷

Robert G.[Shults]	W. Linard [Shults]
Son of W.H. & D.A.	son of W.H. & D.A.
Born July 12, 1900	Born Dec 8, 1901
Died Mar 10, 1905	Died Mar 10, 1905

¹⁴ 1910 U.S. Federal Census, Jefferson County, Oklahoma, population schedule, Earl Township, enumeration district (ED)152, sheet: 9A (penned), dwelling 106, family 107, William H. Shults household, digital image, *Ancestry*, (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 2 March 2016), citing NARA microfilm publication T624, roll 1254.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Effie Lorain Shults Bassett, "Memories."

¹⁷ Mrs. Jack Lambert (Stratford, Oklahoma) to Mr. Shults [Bobby Gene Shults], letter, 18 August 1966; privately held by author, [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE], 2016. [Bob Shults gave letter to author].

It is always helpful in evaluating a source to examine the original, so *Find A Grave* was searched for a photograph of the marker. A memorial for each son of Dora and William gives another transcription of the gravestone, but no photograph.¹⁸

- Robert C. Shults born 2 July 1900, died 10 March 1905
- W. Linard Shults born 3 December 1901, died 10 March 1905

According to the memorial, both children are buried in the McGee Cemetery, Garvin County, Oklahoma with the inscription on the double headstone for each child: “son of W.H. & D.A. Shults. Without a photograph of the actual gravestones, the cemetery transcriptions are considered derivative sources and prone to error. Several differences point out the difficulty in reading the lettering: G instead of C as Robert’s middle initial and the birthday of each boy. Despite the differences, combined with Bassett’s history, the transcriptions of the double headstone provide direct evidence of the birth and death of these two oldest sons of Dora and William Shults.

The 1900 census enumeration of the family is dated 13 July 1900,¹⁹ so Robert had been born by that date. The 1900 census, however was to record only those individuals as of 1 June 1900, so Robert would not have been listed.²⁰ Because William and Dora’s marriage took place in 1898 and the oldest living child on the 1910 census, Charles, was born in 1904, it is almost certain that Robert born 1900 and William born 1901 are the two children missing on the 1910 census. In a letter, Effie Lorain Shults Bassett, explains that the full names of the boys were: “Robert Cisnie and William Linard and Robert was named after “Grandpa Royston.”²¹ The fact that Dora named her oldest son, Robert Cisnie, gives further indication that Robert C. Royston was Dora’s father. The middle name of “Cisnie” will prove to be an important connection to the fourth generation of Roystons.

Children of William Huston Shults and Dora Algie Royston

Dora and William Shults had ten children between the years of 1900 and 1925. The family group sheet lists each child’s name and vital information such as birth, marriage, and death.²² Because this is a compiled record, original sources needed to verify the information. Census records can help to construct a family, giving names, ages, and birthplace. However as discussed above, the two oldest sons died in 1905 and are not listed on any census. The other eight children are found on the 1910, 1920, 1930, and 1940 census records and the table below shows the movement of the family from Indian Territory/Oklahoma to Texas to California.

Table 2. Census Records with William Huston Shults as head of household

¹⁸ *Find A Grave*, database with images (<http://www.findagrave.com> : accessed 7 March 2016), memorial 12239069, Robert C. Shults (1900-1905), no gravestone photograph. Also *Find A Grave*, database with images (<http://www.findagrave.com> : accessed 7 March 2016), memorial 12239075, W. Linard Shults (1901-1905), no gravestone photograph.

¹⁹ 1900 U.S. Census, Chickasaw Nation, Ind. Terr., pop. sch., ED 166, sheet 24B (penned), dwell. 378, fam. 396, W.H. Shults household.

²⁰ 1900 U.S. Census population schedule form gives this instruction in the heading: “NAME: of each person whose place of abode on June 1, 1900 was in this family.” See also “Instructions to Enumerators,” Department of the Interior, Washington, 1900; digitized booklet, *United States Census Bureau*, (<https://www.census.gov> : accessed 3 May 2016).

²¹ Effie Lorain Shults Bassett (Sanger, California) to [Bobby Gene Shults], letter, 5 May 1966; privately held by author, [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE], 2016. [Bob Shults gave letter to author].

²² Bobby Gene Shults, William Huston Shults - Dora Algie Royston Family Group Sheet, supplied by Shults, [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE], Burley, Idaho, not dated; This typewritten sheet contains some documentation but is not fully sourced.

Family member and birth year	1900 Census Indian Terr. ²³	1910 Census OK, Jefferson ²⁴	1920 Census OK, Okfuskee ²⁵	1930 Census TX, Hockley ²⁶	1940 Census CA, Fresno ²⁷
William Shults born 1877	age 20	age 32	age 42	age 52	age 62
Dora Algie born 1882	age 18	age 27	age 38		
Robert Cisnie born 1900					
William Linard born 1901					
Charles Leslie born 1904		age 5	age 16		
Della Virgil born 1907		age 3	age 13		
Lola May born 1908		age 1 5/12	age 11		
Orval Dennis born 1911			age 9	age 19	age 28
Effie Lorain born 1913			age 7	age 16	
James Herman born 1915			age 3 11/12	age 14	
Oscar Thurman born 1919			age 4/12	age 11	
Dora Christine born 1925				age 5	age 15

The first four children, Robert, William, Charles and Della were born in Indian Territory which had no requirement for birth registration. The next five children, Lola, Orval, Effie, James, and Oscar were all born in Oklahoma after statehood, but registration of births was not required until 1917 and it wasn't until 1928 that 90% compliance occurred.²⁸ The only child born after 1917 in Oklahoma was Oscar Thurman Shults. A birth certificate might be on record for him, but Oklahoma law prohibits ordering a birth certificate for an individual unless the birth occurred 125 years ago.²⁹

²³ 1900 U.S. Census, Chickasaw Nation, Indian Terr., pop. sch. ED 166, sheet 24B (penned), dwelling 378, family 396, W.H. Shults household.

²⁴ 1910 U.S. Census, Jefferson Co., Oklahoma, pop. sch., Earl Township, ED 152, sheet: 9A (penned), dwell. 106, fam. 107, William H. Shults household.

²⁵ 1920 U.S. Census, Okfuskee County, Oklahoma, population schedule, Okemah Township, enumeration district (ED) 150, sheet 11A, (penned), family 185, W.H. Shults; digital image, *Ancestry*, (<http://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 7 March 2016), citing NARA microfilm publication T625, roll 1478.

²⁶ 1930 U.S. Census, Hockley County, Texas, population schedule, Justice Precinct 5, enumeration district (ED) 110-7, sheet 3A (penned), p. 248 (stamped), dwelling 35, family 36, William H Shults; digital image, *Ancestry*, (<http://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 10 March 2016,); citing NARA microfilm publication T626, roll 2357.

²⁷ 1940 U.S. Census, Fresno County, California, population schedule, Fairview, enumeration district ED 10-115, sheet 61 B (penned), family 13, William H. Shults household; digital image, *Ancestry*, (<http://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 10 March 2016); citing NARA microfilm publication T627, roll 205.

²⁸ Nova A. Lemons, *Pioneers of Chickasaw Nation Indian Territory*, (Oklahoma:Timbercreek Ltd.,1991), p.14.

²⁹ Oklahoma State Department of Health, "Birth Certificate Eligibility," (<https://www.ok.gov> : accessed 27 October 2017).

Dora Christine, born 1925 in Texas, may be the only child of William and Dora to have a birth certificate.³⁰ Her certificate does state her parents as “W.H.Shultz” and “Dora Royston,” but her date of birth is incorrectly listed as 11 February 1925 instead of 11 January 1925. The certificate was filed on August 6, 1925, almost eight months after her birth which might account for other errors as well.

- Number of children born to the mother (six - should be ten)
- Number of children now living (six - should be eight),
- Spelling of the last names as Shultz instead of Shults
- Age of William (50 - should be 47)
- Age of Dora (38 - should be 42).

A birth certificate is considered good evidence of birth when registered soon after the event, but in this case, the birth month is incorrect. Dora Algie died shortly after Dora Christine’s birth on 11 January 1925, as stated on the death certificate, so Dora Christine’s correct birth date would be 11 January 1925.³¹ The naming of William and Dora as parents is direct evidence of this family relationship.

Church records can be a substitute for birth records, but given the movement of the family and the lack of good record-keeping at this time period in the area, it is unlikely that any records will be uncovered. Predominant churches in Indian Territory included Methodist, Baptist, Disciples of Christ, Presbyterian, and Catholic. Records that do survive list mainly ministers/pastors and other leaders.³² Kay Black, the county historian for Pushmataha County related that no known church records exist for the county from 1910-1920 when the Shults family lived in the area.³³

Because of the lack of birth records in Indian Territory and Oklahoma, birth information for the children of William Shults and Dora Algie Royston had to be obtained by records generated later in their lives. See Table 3 below 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 3. Sources of Information for Children of Dora Algie Royston and William Huston Shults

Name of child	Birth Date and Place	Death Date and Place	Find A Grave.com	Social Security Death Index	Death Certificate	Other
Robert Cisnie Shults	12 July 1900 Indian Territory	10 March 1905 Indian Territory	McGee Cemetery Garvin Co. OK			Letter from Mrs. Jack Lambert
William Linard Shults	8 Dec 1901 Indian Territory	10 March 1905 Indian Territory	McGee Cemetery Garvin Co. OK			Letter from Mrs. Jack Lambert
Charles Leslie Shults	11 May 1904 Indian Territory	19 Jan 1996 Arizona	Sanger Cemetery, Fresno California	C.L. Shults	Arizona	Delayed Birth Certificate Oklahoma

³⁰ Texas, “Birth Certificates, 1903-1932,” database with images, *Ancestry*, (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 14 March 2016), certificate image, Dora Christine Shultz, 11 Feb 1925, no.12753; citing Texas Department of State Health Services.

³¹ Texas death certificate no. 3184 -476, 1925, Dora Algia Shults.

³² Stephen J. England, *Oklahoma Christians*, (Oklahoma: Bethany Press, 1975), p. 57-70. See also E.C. Routh, *The Story of Oklahoma Baptists*, (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma : Baptist General Convention, and 1932). And C.W. West, *Missions and Missionaries of Indian Territory*, (Muskogee, Oklahoma : Muskogee, 1990). See research log for further searches of church records.

³³ Kay Black, County Historian for Pushmataha County, phone interview by author 3 June 2016, transcript privately held by interviewer, [address for private use], 2016.

Della Virgil Shults Jerden	23 Sept 1907 Oklahoma	11 June 1928 Lubbock, Texas			Lubbock, Texas	
Lola May Shults Jerden	24 Oct 1908 Ada, Pontotoc, Oklahoma	22 May 2000 Sanger, Fresno, California		Lola M. Jerden		
Orval Dennis Shults	22 March 1911 Ada, Pontotoc, Oklahoma	15 Sept 1978 Sanger, Fresno, California	Sanger Cemetery Fresno Co. California	Orval Shults		California death index - Orval D Shults
Effie Lorain Shults Bassett	23 May 1913 Antlers, Pushmataha, Oklahoma	22 April 2000 Sanger, Fresno California	Sanger Cemetery, Fresno County, California	Lorain Bassett		
James Herman Shults	11 February 1915 Antlers, Pushmataha, Oklahoma	11 March 1942 Lebanon, Linn, Oregon	Siskiyou Memorial Park, Jackson County, Oregon			Oregon Death Index
Oscar Thurman Shults	12 September 1919 Okemah, Okfuskee, Oklahoma	5 November 1983 Fresno, Fresno, California		O. Shults		California Death Index
Dora Christine Shults	11 February 1925 Lubbock, Lubbock, Texas	18 February 2012 Auburn, Placer County, California	Colfax Cemetery, Placer County, California			Texas Birth Certificate Obituary

Life Events of Dora's husband, William Huston Shults 1877-1956

On the World War I Draft registration, "William Huston Shults," states his date of birth as 13 February 1877, and nearest relative "Dora A. Shults."³⁴ An affidavit of birth dated 1942 and signed by his uncle gives this same birth date adding credibility to the information.³⁵ With civil birth registration not beginning in Texas until 1903,³⁶ this birth information is the best proof of his birth date.

William's death certificate fills in more details of his later years, after Dora's untimely death in 1925.³⁷ William appears to have lived the rest of his life in Fresno County, California, having arrived there about 1937. His death certificate cited his death as 2 December 1956 and described him as widowed with his date of birth as 13 February 1877. The informant is Mr. O.T. Shults who stated that William had lived in

³⁴ "United States World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918," digital image, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org> : accessed 10 Mar 2016), card for William Huston Shults, serial no. 2394: Local Draft Board for the County of Okfuskee, Oklahoma, United States; citing NARA microfilm publication M1509.

³⁵ A.O. Hobbs, Notary Public for Fresno County, California, Affidavit of Birth Personal and Statistical Particulars, William H. Shults, 1942, Fresno.

³⁶ *The Handybook for Genealogists* (Draper, Utah: Everton Publishers, 2002), 647.

³⁷ California Department of Public Health, Certificate of Death: William Huston Shults, Document # 2424, 1956, Fresno County, California.

Sanger, California for nineteen years. O.T. Shults was probably son, Oscar Thurman Shults. This secondary birth information agrees with that given by William on his World War I draft registration and affidavit of birth.

Parents of Dora Algie Royston

Several records that have been used to identify Dora Algie Royston, her spouse and family also give proof that her parents were Robert Cisnie Royston and Isabell Weatherford. Although a birth record directly naming parents would be the best proof of a relationship, as previously stated, births were not required to be registered by law until 1903 in Texas, so no civil birth record listing Dora's name, birth information, and parents would exist.³⁸

Death certificates are another record that often list the parents of the deceased but the accuracy of the information depends upon the knowledge of the informant, the person giving the facts. Dora's husband, "W.H. Shults," as the informant on her death certificate lists her parents as "R.C.Royston" born in Georgia and "Isabelle Weatherford" born in Missouri.³⁹ Although William was not present at Dora's birth, it is almost certain that he knew the names of her parents given their proximity on the 1900 census, as discussed below. However, his listing of their birthplaces was less reliable as will be shown.

In the United States, a census was taken every ten years from 1790 on. Beginning with the 1850 census, each member of the household is listed so the 1890 census is the first census that could have shown Dora (age eight) in the household of her parents, Robert and Isabell. Unfortunately, little remains of that census due to fire and water damage.⁴⁰ The first census listing Dora is the 1900 census of Chickasaw Nation Indian Territory where she and her husband, "Houston" are living next to the household of "Robert H. and Isabell Royston."⁴¹

Although the middle initial of "H" on the 1900 census differs from the "C" on Dora's death certificate, this doesn't disprove Robert as Dora's father. Names on census forms were often miswritten. Dora's age of 18 fits between sons of Robert and Isabell Royston: Charley, age 21, and Oscar, age 16. Isabell is noted on this census to have given birth to seven children, with seven living. With the five listed in the household and Dora, six of the seven children are accounted for.

Although the informant for the census information of each household is unknown, Dora's parents are noted as being born in Alabama and Missouri which corresponds to the birthplaces listed for Robert and Isabell on their lines of the same census. The proximity of Dora and Huston Shults to Robert and Isabell Royston on the 1900 census gives support to the parental information cited on Dora's death certificate by "W.H Shults." Living close to Dora's parents, it is almost certain that he would have known of their relationship.

Table 4 below highlights the agreement of birthplaces for the parents of Dora and the birthplaces of Robert and Isabell on the 1900 Census. Also bolded are the ages of Dora and probable brothers Charley and Oscar.

Table 4. 1900 Census, Chickasaw Nation, Indian Territory, Township 2S Range 5W⁴²

Family member	Relation	Sex	Birth Date	Age	Relation	Years	Children	Birth Place	Birthplace of Parents:
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³⁸ *The Handybook for Genealogists* (Draper, Utah: Everton Publishers, 2002), 647.

³⁹ Texas State Board of Health, Certificate of Death: Dora Algia Shults.

⁴⁰ Kellee Blake, "First in the Path of the Firemen: The Fate of the 1890 Population Census, Part 1," *Prologue Magazine*, (Spring 1996), vol. 28, no. 1 para.1; e-journal, (<http://www.archives.gov>: accessed 11 July 2016).

⁴¹ 1900 U.S. Census, Chickasaw Nation, Ind. Terr., pop. sch., ED 166, sheet 24B (penned), dwell. 388 and 389, fam. 396 and 397, Shults and Royston households.

⁴² Ibid.

					Married	Born & Living	father, mother		
Houston Shults	Head	M	Dec 1877	22	Head	1		Texas	Texas, Texas
Dora Shults	Wife	F	Jan 1882	18	Wife	1	0, 0	Texas	Alabama, Missouri
Robert H Royston	Head	M	Feb 1850	50	Head	23		Alabama	Alabama, Alabama
Isabell Royston	Wife	F	Mar 1860	40	Wife	23	7, 7	Missouri	Missouri, Alabama
Eddie Royston	Son	M	Jan 1878	22	Son			Texas	Alabama, Missouri
Charley Royston	Son	M	Feb 1879	21	Son			Texas	Alabama, Missouri
Oscar Royston	Son	M	Apr 1884	16	Son			Texas	Alabama, Missouri
Effie Royston	Daughter	F	Apr 1887	13	Daughter			Texas	Alabama, Missouri
Everette Royston	Son	M	Jan 1892	8	Son			Ind.Terr.	Alabama, Missouri

Conflicting information between the 1900 census and Dora's death certificate is the birthplace of Robert C. Royston. The 1900 census shows Alabama on both his own line and the line of Dora's father and is more reliable than the conflicting birthplace of Georgia that Dora's husband, "W.H. Shults" reported on Dora's death certificate in 1925. Although the informant for the census record is unknown, it is likely that Robert or Isabell provided the birthplace information. William's citing of the birthplace for "R.C" Royston as Georgia on Dora's death certificate was twenty-five years later and given his distance from the event, not as credible.

The direct evidence from Dora's death certificate and Bassett's letter, combined with the proximity of the families on the 1900 census, prove that Robert Cisnie Royston and Isabell Weatherford were the parents of Dora Algie Royston.

Conclusions

Through original sources such as the death and marriage certificates of Dora and William, the census records from 1900-1940, and cemetery headstones, it was proven that Dora Algie Royston was born 27 January 1882 in Texas to Robert Cisnie Royston and Isabell Weatherford. She married William Huston Shults, born 13 December 1877 in Texas. The marriage took place in Indian Territory on 11 December 1898. They were the parents of ten children born between 1900 and Dora's death on 11 January 1925 in Lubbock, Texas. William died in Sanger, California on 2 December 1956.