

John B. Swain: The Respectful Fugitive

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It's hard to believe that a man who broke someone out of jail was also known as being a very respectful man, but respectful is exactly what John B. Swain was. Because John B. Swain was a respectful person, it helped him in many different ways through his life. But during his life, he never let his respect for others get in the way of doing what he thought was best.

John B. Swain was born on February 9th, 1823 in Emanuel, Georgia. He was the youngest of nine children. So far no records show what the B stood for in his middle name, but he was often called by the nickname of "John the Baptist." In fact, when he wrote his signature, there was usually a symbol of the cross underneath the letter B in his name.

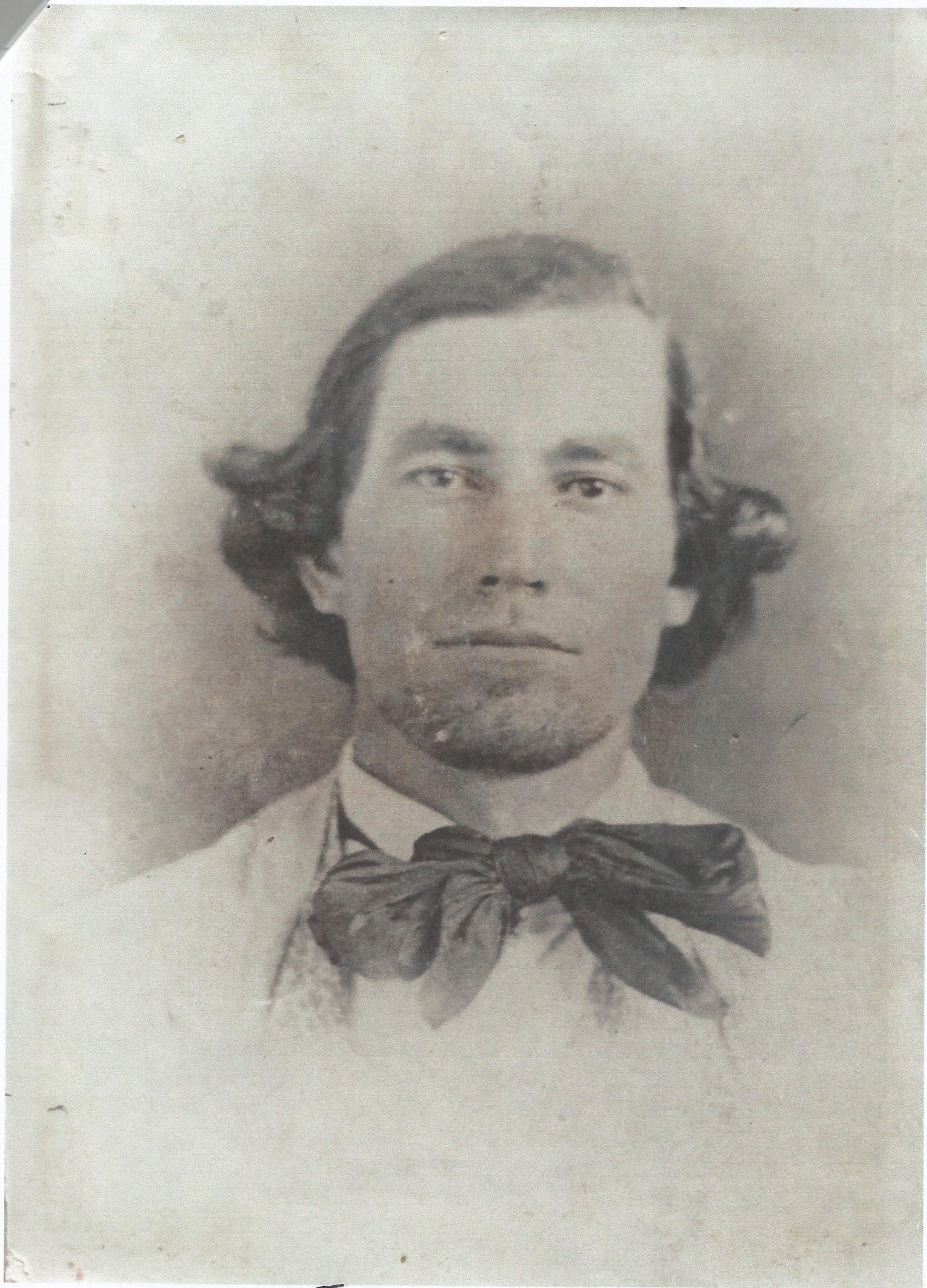
Not much is known about John as a child, but in John's journal he said that the Swain brothers were all very well-known for their dancing. So well-known in fact, that many town people described the Swain s as being "the best dancers in the country." Once John showed up to a party without being invited and was asked by the landlord to stop dancing after a while because he hadn't been invited and because he was jealous of John's dancing. As usual, John respected the landlord's wishes and stopped dancing. He met the brother of the landlord while he was outside, and was asked by the brother to dance for him because he knew John could dance so well. But still John would not dance for him until the brother got permission from the landlord. After the brother got permission, John danced his very best and soon everyone inside was watching him out the window. After he was done, the landlord invited him back inside for the rest of the party.

If he didn't get the respect of the landlord he may never have met his future wife, Elizabeth McMullen, because later at the same party, John had to sit on Elizabeth's lap as part of one of the party games and that's how they got to know each other. When he was 17 years old, John joined the military on May 6th, 1840 during the Indian War. When he returned from the military, John (age 17) married Elizabeth McMullen (age 21) on December 17th, 1840. They had 7 children.

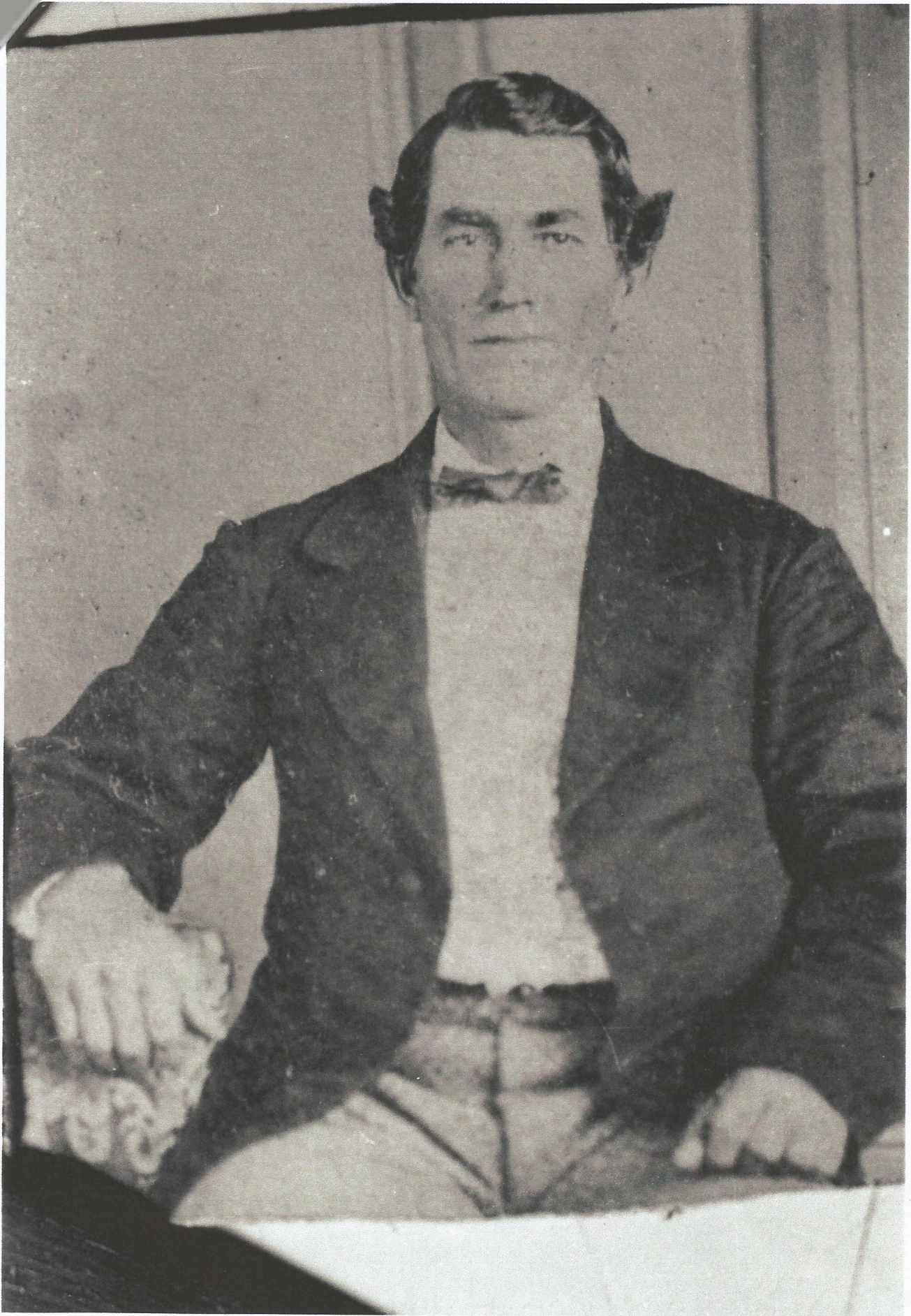
Two years after he had his youngest child, John's brother Augustus C. Swain, known as Gus, was arrested for murdering William Blueford Barwick on August 6th, 1855 in Thomas County, Georgia. In the newspaper called the "Southern Enterprise," it said that William Barwick had been drinking and tried to attack Gus with a knife because he thought Gus had stolen his money, which he hadn't. To protect himself, Gus drew out a bowie knife and killed William Barwick with one stab.

John decided to help his brother escape from jail. He had a gunsmith make a key to open his brother's prison cell and hired a band to distract the guards so he could successfully break-out his brother without being noticed. After they escaped, they ran from Georgia and went to San Antonio, Texas so they wouldn't get caught and thrown back in jail. What's funny is that later Gus became a sheriff in Arizona and John became a sheriff in Texas.

John lived in Texas for the rest of his life. He died at age 75 in his granddaughter's house, which was right behind the Alamo in San Antonio, Texas on the 23rd of September in 1898. As you can see, John B. Swain was just as respectful as he was determined during the years of his life.



John B. Swain



John B. Swain

DROPPED

Oct. 31, 1955
Death M.L.
Jan. 15, 1957. And
adv of death. Ind.

(3-249.)

No. 2715

Indian Wars.

(ACT OF JULY 27, 1892.)

SURVIVOR.

John B. Swain

Rank Priv.

Company Capt. Whitfield's

Regiment Ga. Vols.

Agency: Providence

Rate per month. \$8.00

Commencing July 27, 1892.

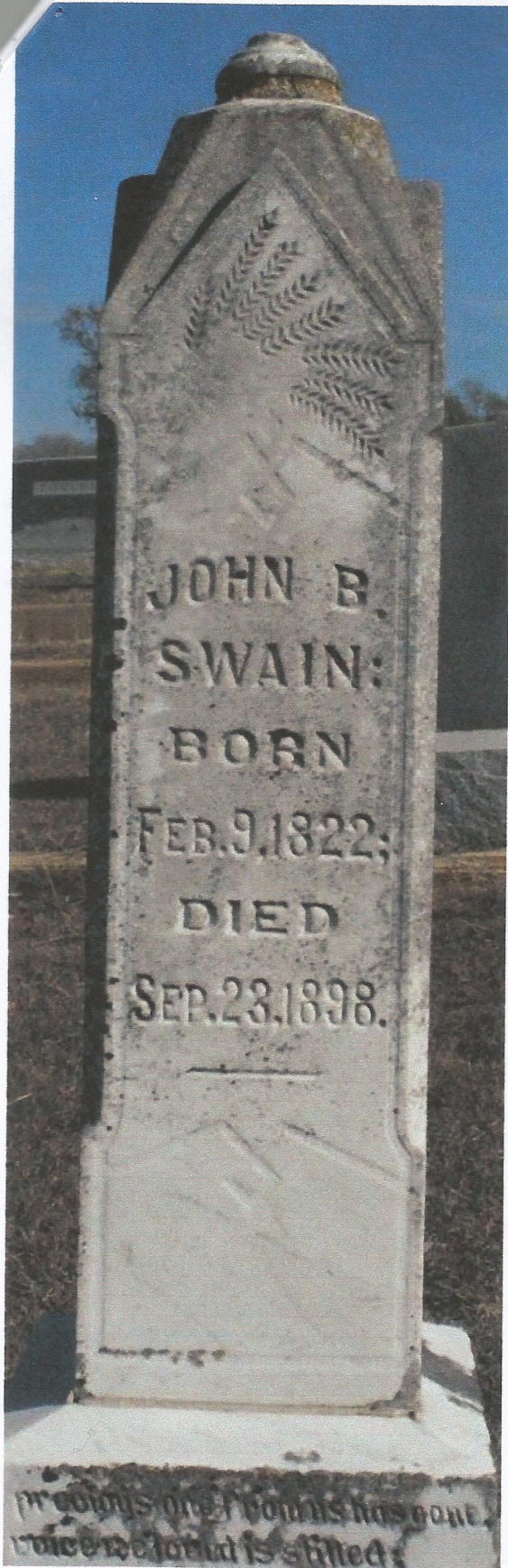
DEAD

Certificate issued Sept 12, 1893.

" mailed 19, 1893

Fee, \$ 10

Military certificate



headstone