

LUTHER JAMES DORSEY – BUFFALO SOLDIER ABT 1852-1939



Born: abt 1852

Died: 17 Sep 1939

Served: Company E, 10th US Calvary 14 Nov 1873 until 14 Nov 1878

Residence 1873

The 1873 city directory for Washington DC shows a Luther Dorsey living at 472 Ridge NW.

The closest Dorsey living near him at that time was a William Dorsey living at 481 Ridge NW.

Military Record

According to the [Enlistment records](#), Luther James Dorsey enlisted in Company E, 10th US cavalry, also known as the Buffalo Soldiers, an all black cavalry commissioned by Congress, on 14 Nov 1873. He was 21 7/12 years old and was born in Montgomery County

Maryland. This would place his birth date in May 1852.

He was discharged from the army on 14 Nov 1878, in San Felipe, Texas.

Records of engagement for Company E, 10th US Cavalry include:

- 22-23 Aug 1874; Wichita Agency, Indian Territory: Troops C, E, H, and L fought roughly 400 Comanches and Kiowa. They attempted to burn out the Agency and its friendly Indians. Four soldiers were lost and four horses. Sixteen warriors were also lost and wounded.
- 10-29 Apr 1876: Troops B, E, and F, bordering Coahuilla, Mexico, scouted unknown territory without guides. They describe the country as the roughest and most desolate land they had ever seen. It was without any value, in anyway.
- Jul 1876; Troops B, E and K crossed into Mexico as part of a column commanded by Lieut. Colonel Shafter, 24th Infantry. A detachment of this command, made up of twenty picked men of Troop B under Lieutenant Evans, and twenty Seminole scouts, all under command of Lieutenant Bullis, 24th Infantry, made a march of 110 miles in twenty-five hours and thereby succeeded in surprising a camp of twenty-three lodges of hostile Lipans and Kickapoos near Saragossa, Mexico. They killed ten Indians and captured four, and also captured about 200 horses. They then made a bonfire of the camp material and with their prisoners and captured stock rejoined the main column as fast as their horses would carry them.
- 12 Aug 1876; Troops B, E, and K, in the Santa Rosa Mountains of Mexico, destroyed an Indian village and its' supplies. Sixty horses were captured in the raid.
- Nov-Dec 1876; Company at Ft. Clark, Texas, Colonel Grierson put Companies A, B, D, E, F, K, L on patrol in the Pecos River area and in the Guadalupe Mountains, scattering small bands of Indians.
- 10 Jun 1877; Devil's River north side of The Rio Grande: Mexican Federal Troops attacked 50 Mexican Lerdistas revolutionaries. The troops chased the Lerdistas across the border into the United States. The Lerdistas were intercepted and arrested by Captain Kelly of the Tenth, with E Company and Seminole-Negro Indian Scouts. The Mexican troops had crossed the Rio Grande River back into Mexico before the arrests were made. Their incursion across the border into the U. S. was illegal.
- 25 Jul 1878; Company E: Company left San Felipe, Texas, on a fresh trail in pursuit of cattle thieves, marched to San Vincente, Mexico, and returned to and recrossed the Rio Grande River into Texas the same day, having captured most of the stolen stock, and returned to post 26 Jul 1878.
- 15 Aug 1878; Company E: San Felipe, Texas. The company left post and crossed the Rio Grande into Mexico in pursuit of Mexican murderers, and returned to post 18 Aug 1878.

Pension Application – 31 Mar 1897

Luther Dorsey applied for a pension as an invalid on 31 Mar 1897, Application # 1188212 under the 3 Mar 1827 law, Certificate # 1292259. He is listed on the application as serving in Company E, 10th Regiment, US Cavalry.

1880 Federal Census – 14 Jun 1880

Luther Dorsey is listed as James Dorsey, living in Precinct 1 of Montgomery County, mulatto, 28 years of age, single, born in Maryland. He is working as a farm hand and living in the home of James Mitchell.

1900 Federal Census – 9 Jun 1900

Luther Dorsey is living in Justice Precinct 7 of Montgomery County, Conroe Town. His date of birth is listed as Jul 1850 and that he was born in Washington DC. He has been married for 19 years. He was working as a day laborer and had not worked for four months. He owned his home free of mortgage.

Also in his home was:

- Emma Dorsey, wife, born in Nov 1847 in Texas. She had been married 19 years, had 11 children of which only 6 are alive. She works as a laundry woman and has not worked for six months.
- Mike Dorsey, son, born in Aug 1885 in Texas.
- Beatrice J Dorsey, daughter, born Dec 1887 in Texas.
- D D Dorsey, son, born Mar 1892 in Texas.
- T Bertha Dorsey, daughter, born Apr 1896 in Texas.
- Carrie Davis, boarder, born Mar 1872 in Texas. She works as a cook and has not worked for three months.
- Charles Collins, boarder, born Feb 1853 in Texas. He works as a tie maker and has not worked for three months.

1910 Federal Census – 28 Apr 1910

Luther Dorsey is listed in the census as Jim Dorsey, living in Justice Precinct 7 of Montgomery County, Part of Conroe. He is listed as being born in Washington DC and is 60 years old which places his birth year at 1850. He has been married 30 years and is working on his own account as a house builder. He owns his home free and clear.

Also in his home was:

- Ella Dorsey, wife, age 60 years, born in Texas. She has been married 30 years, has had 13 children of which seven are still living. She is not working.
- Mike Dorsey, son, age 25 years, single, born in Texas. He is working as a team driver.
- Beatrice Lewis, daughter, age 17 years, married, born in Texas. She has been married for one year and has had one child, still living. She is not working.
- Will Lewis, son-in-law, age 22 years, married one year. He is working as a porter.
- Bishop Dorsey, son, age 14 years, born in Texas. (Real name was David Daniel)
- Bertha T Dorsey, daughter, age 10 years, born in Texas.

1920 Federal Census – 31 Jan 1920

Luther Dorsey is living in Justice Precinct 7 of Montgomery County, part of Conroe. His age is very difficult to read as it appears to have been written over several times. He was born in Washington DC, is now widowed, and is now working as a carpenter in public work. He owns his home free and clear.

Also in his home was:

- Beatrice Kirby, daughter, age 27 years, born in Texas. She is widowed and working as a cook for a private family. The interesting thing is her father is listed as having been born in Maryland.
- Luderlay Lewis, granddaughter, age 9 years, born in Texas.
- Ludger Lewis, granddaughter, age 8 years, born in Texas.
- Henry W Lewis, grandson, age 6, born in Texas.

Pension Application – 8 Mar 1929

A Pension Application for the Indian Wars was filed on 8 Mar 1929 for Luther Dorsey. It lists Application # 1188212, Certificate # 1292259 under the 3 Mar 1827 Act. He is living in Texas. On this application it shows he served from 1873 to 1878 in Company E, 10th US Cavalry.

1930 Federal Census – 30 Apr 1930

Luther Dorsey is living in part of Justice Precinct 7 of Montgomery County, Conroe City, in the house of his daughter, Beatrice Bonner. He is listed as being 65 years of age which puts his birth year as 1865, and born in Texas. He is widowed and was married at 19 years of age. He is not working.

Also in the house were:

- Beatrice Bonner, head of house, age 38 years, born in Texas. She is widowed, married first time at 15 years of age, and working as a cook for a private family. The interesting thing is her father is listed as having been born in Washington DC even though her father is shown in the house being born in Texas.
- Lula M Lewis, daughter, age 20, single, born in Texas. She is working in a private home but unable to read what her job description is.
- Lazelle Davis, daughter, age 18, born in Texas, married at age 18. She is not working.
- Charlie Davis, son-in-law, age 23, born in Texas, married at age 23. He is working as a tie maker.
- Henry W Lewis, son, age 16, single, born in Texas. He is working in a box factory.

Gift Deed – 1 Sep 1937

In a gift Deed by Luther Dorsey, dated 1 Sep 1937, he stated he was 88 years of age, which would make his birth year 1849.

In the Gift Deed he names his daughter Bertha Dorsey Mapp of Louisville, Kentucky, his granddaughters Sula Mae Lewis and Luzella Lewis Davis, daughters of Beatrice Bonner who is deceased.

The interesting thing about this Gift Deed is Beatrice Dorsey Bonner was alive at this time and died in 1978. Beatrice is the one who was the informant on Luther Dorsey's Death Certificate and the one who filed for his military headstone.

Death – 17 Sep 1939

Luther James Dorsey died on 17 Sep 1939, in Conroe, due to pneumonia.
His daughter,

Beatrice Bonner, was the informant on the death certificate. She stated he was born on 26 Nov 1878, making him 60 days, 1 month, and 21 days old at the time of his death. She also listed his birthplace as Montgomery, Texas.
J. E. Pruitt of Pruitt & McIntyre Funeral Home was the undertaker.



Luther James Dorsey Headstone

On 14 Nov 1940, Beatrice Bonner applied for a military headstone for Luther Dorsey.

His records were located by the War Department indicating he served from 14 Nov 1873 until 14 Nov 1878, as a sergeant in Company e, 10th shipped to Beatrice Bonner on 24 Jan 1941.

His date of birth seems to have always been a mystery throughout his life as he is listed with the same family members in various census records and other records, but different ages/dates of birth are given.

1873 – 21 7/12 years old – Date of birth, May 1852

1900 – Jul 1850

1910 – 60 years old – Year of birth, 1850

1920 – Unclear date

1930 – 65 years old – Year of birth, 1865

1937 – 88 years old – Year of birth, 1849

1939 – 60 years old – Date of birth, 26 Nov 1878