

Descriptive Summary:

Creator:	Lawrence Sullivan Ross, Shapley Prince Ross, Victor M. Rose
Title:	Ross Family Papers
Inclusive Dates:	1846-1931, undated
Bulk Dates:	1861-1864, 1870-1894, undated
Abstract:	The Ross Family Papers consist of correspondence, legal, financial, and literary manuscripts plus photographs and artifacts. The main letter writer was Lawrence Sullivan Ross, Governor of Texas and Confederate general.
Accession #:	0014
Extent:	5.8 linear feet (10 document boxes and 1 oversized box)
Language:	Collection is in English.
Repository:	The Texas Collection, Baylor University, Waco, Texas.

Biographical Note:

The Ross family of Waco, Texas, was one of the most influential families in local and state history in the late 1800s. Lawrence Sullivan Ross, writer of many letters within this collection, was a Texas Ranger, Confederate general, President of Texas A&M University, and Governor of Texas. Lawrence "Sul" Ross continues to be one of the most famous figures of Texas history in a state filled with larger than life personalities.

Lawrence Sullivan's father, Shapley Prince Ross, came to Texas with his wife Catherine Fulkerson Ross in 1839 from Kentucky and Missouri. Originally settling in Milam County, Ross became a member of the famous Texas Ranger company commanded by John C. "Jack" Hays in 1842, later rising to command a company himself in Peter H. Bell's Ranger Battalion. The Ross family moved permanently to Waco in 1849 where he became a postmaster, hotel owner, and Indian agent. Shapley Ross died on 1889 September 17 and was buried in Oakwood Cemetery, Waco, Texas. Several documents pertain to Shapley Ross, including most of the legal series, and many of the biographical manuscripts explore his life as well as that of his most famous son, Lawrence Sullivan Ross.

Lawrence "Sul" Ross, the fourth child born to Shapley and Catherine Ross on 1838 September 27, grew up in Milam County and Waco, Texas. As the son of a well-respected leader of the local community, Lawrence was educated at Baylor University in Independence, Texas, then graduated from Wesleyan University in Alabama in 1859. While in Central Texas on vacations during his years at the university, Ross fought American Indians with the United States army and the Texas Rangers. Immediately upon his graduation from Wesleyan University, he came home and participated in the Battle of the Pease River as a Texas Ranger, where he recovered the long-lost Cynthia Ann Parker, who had been captured as a girl and raised as a Comanche woman. Right before the American Civil War, he resigned from active Ranger service and married Waco girl Elizabeth Dorothy Tinsley in 1861 May 28. Many of the biographical manuscripts in this collection about Lawrence Ross and his father go into great detail on Lawrence's life up to this point.

Ross' Civil War service began as an Indian agent for the State of Texas, but he looked for work elsewhere when the Confederate government sent Albert Pike and

Benjamin McCulloch as their agents to the various western Indian tribes. Lawrence enlisted as a private in a cavalry company raised in Waco and commanded by his older brother Peter F. Ross. This company was merged into the 6th Texas Cavalry, and Ross served with them in Indian Territory, Arkansas, Tennessee, and Mississippi, during the Pea Ridge, Corinth, and Van Dorn's Tennessee Campaigns. Lawrence was promoted quickly, reaching colonel by 1862. In December 1863 Ross became a Brigadier General at the age of 25, and commanded a cavalry brigade in the Army of Tennessee for the rest of the war, which included the Atlanta and Hood's 1864 Tennessee Campaigns. Ross was on leave in Texas when his brigade surrendered in 1865 May 4, possibly trying to recruit more men for his depleted brigade. A major part of this collection is Lawrence's letters to his wife Elizabeth back home during the Civil War. This correspondence is legible and understandable, with few misspellings. The letters describe Ross' service throughout the war. This correspondence has been transcribed, with the transcriptions available in book form at The Texas Collection.

After the war, Ross returned to Waco and rebuilt his life. In 1873 he was elected sheriff of McLennan County, and he helped write the Texas Reconstruction Constitution of 1876 as a delegate from Central Texas. He was elected state senator in 1880 and served one term. Despite his inexperience in politics, he was well-educated and respected across Texas, and won two terms as governor in 1887 and 1889. His administrations were unmarked by major events, allowing Ross to push for modest initiatives, including regulation of railroads, better sale and lease of public lands, establishment of elementary educational opportunities for young Texans, and the defeat of a state prohibition amendment. He left the governor's office in 1891.

Ross did not slow down after leaving the governor's office; he immediately accepted the presidency of the troubled Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas (present Texas A&M University). Rebuilding the university became his life, and he restored trust in the school, built many new buildings, and multiplied attendance. He turned away an appointment to the powerful Railroad Commission to stay with A&M, but accepted a position as commander of the Texas Division, United Confederate Veterans reunion organization. One of the most effective of Texas A&M presidents, Lawrence Ross died still as A&M president in 1898 January 3, having only been president seven years. He left behind a legacy as one of Texas' most famous heroes in a generation, having impacted military, political, and educational life in Texas for over fifty years as governor, Confederate general, and president of a major state university.

Sources:

- Benner, Judith Ann. "Ross's Brigade, C.S.A." *Handbook of Texas Online*.
<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/qkr02>. Accessed 2011
November 17.
- Benner, Judith Ann. "Ross, Lawrence Sullivan [Sul]." *Handbook of Texas Online*.
<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fro81>. Accessed 2011
November 17.
- Bridges, Jennifer. "Sixth Texas Cavalry." *Handbook of Texas Online*.
<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/qks13>. Accessed 2011
November 17.

Kemp, L.W. "Ross, Shapley Prince." *Handbook of Texas Online*. <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fro86>. Accessed 2011 November 17.

Ross, Lawrence Sullivan. *Personal Civil War Letters of General Lawrence Sullivan Ross: With Other Letters*. Austin: Shelly and Richard Morrison, 1994.

Shelton, Perry Wayne. *Personal Letters Written by Lawrence Sullivan Ross*. M.A. thesis, Baylor University, 1938.

Scope and Content:

The Ross Family Papers were acquired by gift and transfer in six separate transactions from private donors and The Texas Collection. The first gift, probably most of the letters, legal, and financial documents, was given by the Padgitt Estate at an unknown time. The second transaction was a transfer by The Texas Collection of Shapley Prince Ross materials into the Ross Family Papers. The third gift was of Ross' military service records, given by Ellen Kuniyuki Brown in 1977 May 6. The fourth gift, given by Mildred Depping, was added in 1979 March 4. The fifth gift was given by Roger N. Conger via the Waco-McLennan County Library in 1979 September. The sixth and final gift was given by Elizabeth Estes Taylor in 2002 June, and was the photocopies of the Ross scrapbook.

The collection begins in 1846 and ends in 1931. Records include correspondence, financial and legal documents, legal productions, literary productions, photographic materials, and artifacts. The subseries of letters by Lawrence Sullivan Ross during the American Civil War is a truly outstanding collection of very rare and intimate letters written by a Confederate general serving in the Trans-Mississippi and Western theaters. Some of these letters were damaged in a fire at an unknown time, making full transcriptions of some of them very difficult. While the correspondence series of this collection is large, the literary productions series is the largest in the collection. Most of this series are drafts of a book about Shapley and Lawrence Ross, possibly prepared by either Victor M. Rose or Elizabeth Ross Clarke. There are no photographs in the collection of either Shapley or Lawrence Ross.

Organization and Arrangement:

Parts of this collection were extensively organized prior to this finding aid. The Lawrence Sullivan Ross Civil War letters were organized through the use of numbered stickers placed on the upper right corner of most letters. An up to date inventory already existed before this finding aid.

Currently, the Ross Family Papers are arranged in six series: I. Correspondence, II. Legal Documents, III. Financial Documents, IV. Literary Productions, V. Photographs, and VI. Artifacts.

Restrictions: The collection is open for research.

Literary Rights Statement:

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Index Terms:

Confederate State of America. Army. Texas Cavalry. Ross' Brigade.
 Confederate State of America--History, Military.
 Frontier and pioneer life--Texas.
 McLennan County (Tex.)--History.
 Rose, Victor M., d. 1893.
 Ross, Lawrence Sullivan, 1838-1898.
 Soldiers--Texas.
 Texas--History--1846-1950.
 United States--History--Civil War, 1861-1865, Personal narratives, Confederate.

Related Materials:

Clint Padgitt Papers, #2906.

De Cordova Family Collection #2311.

Lawrence Sullivan Ross Letters, 1846-1894, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.

Records, Texas Governor Lawrence Sullivan Ross. Archives and Information Services Division, Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

Separated Materials: None.

Custodial History:

Acquisition:	Collection was acquired in six separate gifts and transfers in 1977, 1979, 2002, and an unknown time. Gift of Padgitt Estate, unknown time. Transfer from uncatalogued holdings, Texas Collection, at unknown time. Gift of Ellen Kuniyuki Brown, 1977 May 6. Gift of Mildred Depping, 1979, March 4. Gift of Roger N. Conger via Waco-McLennan County Library, 1979 September. Gift of Elizabeth Estes Taylor, 2002 June.
Citation:	Ross Family Papers, Accession #0014, Box #, Folder #, The Texas Collection, Baylor University.

Processing Information: Finding aid completed by Paul Fisher, 18 November 2011.

Container List:

Series I. Correspondence, 1850-1930, undated, 1.35 linear feet (3 document boxes).

These series contains letters written by a variety of people, but the majority of the series is letters from Lawrence Sullivan Ross to his wife Elizabeth Tinsley Ross. These letters are written over most of the Civil War during Ross' service in the Trans-Mississippi and Western theaters. A transcribed book of the letters is available. Other Lawrence Sullivan Ross letters were written after the Civil War. A number of letters were also written to Victor M. Rose and Ross family members. The series is in average to good condition.

BOX NUMBER	FOLDER NUMBER	FOLDER TITLE	DATES
1	1	Correspondence: General	1879-1930
	2	Correspondence: General	undated
	3	Correspondence: General: Invitations and Calling Cards	1850-1886
	4	Correspondence: General: Invitations and Calling Cards	undated
	5	Correspondence: From Lawrence Sullivan Ross	1859-1861 September
	6	Correspondence: From Lawrence Sullivan Ross	1861 October
	7	Correspondence: From Lawrence Sullivan Ross	1861 November-1862 May
	8	Correspondence: From Lawrence Sullivan Ross	1862 June-July
2	1	Correspondence: From Lawrence Sullivan Ross	1862 August-September
	2	Correspondence: From Lawrence Sullivan Ross	1863 January-August
	3	Correspondence: From Lawrence Sullivan Ross	1863 October-December
	4	Correspondence: From Lawrence Sullivan Ross	1864 February-July
	5	Correspondence: From Lawrence Sullivan Ross	1864 August-1865
	6	Correspondence: From Lawrence Sullivan Ross	1870-1880 October
	7	Correspondence: From Lawrence Sullivan Ross	1881

BOX NUMBER	FOLDER NUMBER	FOLDER TITLE	DATES
2	8	Correspondence: From Lawrence Sullivan Ross	1882-1890
	9	Correspondence: From Lawrence Sullivan Ross	1891-1894, undated
3	1	Correspondence: From Frank	1894-1898
	2	Correspondence: Elizabeth Ross Clarke	1927-1931, undated
	3	Correspondence: To Victor M. Rose	1880 February-May
	4	Correspondence: To Victor M. Rose	1880 June-1882
	5	Correspondence: To Victor M. Rose	1884, undated

Series II. Legal Documents, 1846-1877, undated, 1 folder.

These important legal documents include the appointment of Shapley P. Ross as captain of a mounted ranger company and two land sales of land in Waco Village to Shapley Ross. This series is in good condition.

BOX NUMBER	FOLDER NUMBER	FOLDER TITLE	DATES
3	6	Legal: General	1849-1850, undated
12 OVZ	1	Legal: Military appointment	1846
	2	Legal: Military appointment	1877

Series III. Financial Documents, 1861-1929, 1 folder.

This series includes bills, bank statements, and photocopies of Civil War vouchers. This series is in good condition.

BOX NUMBER	FOLDER NUMBER	FOLDER TITLE	DATES
3	7	Financial: General	1861-1929

Series IV. Literary Productions, 1860-1928, 5.35 (9 document boxes and 1 oversized box).

This series includes essays, clippings, muster rolls, biographies, and notes. Almost all of this series is about Shapley P. Ross and Lawrence Sullivan Ross through biographies, essays, and notes. The series is in average to good condition.

BOX NUMBER	FOLDER NUMBER	FOLDER TITLE	DATES
3	8	Literary: General	undated
	9	Literary: Essays	1928, undated
	10	Literary: Essays	undated
4	1	Literary: Clippings	1927-1928, undated
	2	Literary: Muster Rolls	1861-1865
12 OVZ	3	Literary: Muster Roll	1860
4	3	Literary: Biographies: John Henry Brown	undated
	4	Literary: Biographies: Capt. Shapley P. Ross	undated
	5	Literary: Biographies: [Shapley P. Ross]: (1 of 2)	undated
	6	Literary: Biographies: [Shapley P. Ross]: (2 of 2)	undated
	7	Literary: Biographies: "Life and Adventures of Capt. Shapley P. Ross": (1 of 8)	undated
	8	Literary: Biographies: "Life and Adventures of Capt. Shapley P. Ross": (2 of 8)	undated
	9	Literary: Biographies: "Life and Adventures of Capt. Shapley P. Ross": (3 of 8)	undated
5	1	Literary: Biographies: "Life and Adventures of Capt. Shapley P. Ross": (4 of 8)	undated
	2	Literary: Biographies: "Life and Adventures of Capt. Shapley P. Ross": (5 of 8)	undated
	3	Literary: Biographies: "Life and Adventures of Capt. Shapley P. Ross": (6 of 8)	undated
	4	Literary: Biographies: "Life and Adventures of Capt. Shapley P. Ross": (7 of 8)	undated
	5	Literary: Biographies: "Life and Adventures of Capt. Shapley P. Ross": (8 of 8)	undated
	6	Literary: Biographies: [Shapley P. Ross and Lawrence Sullivan Ross]: (1 of 11)	undated

BOX NUMBER	FOLDER NUMBER	FOLDER TITLE	DATES
5	7	Literary: Biographies: [Shapley P. Ross and Lawrence Sullivan Ross]: (2 of 11)	undated
	8	Literary: Biographies: [Shapley P. Ross and Lawrence Sullivan Ross]: (3 of 11)	undated
	9	Literary: Biographies: [Shapley P. Ross and Lawrence Sullivan Ross]: (4 of 11)	undated
6	1	Literary: Biographies: [Shapley P. Ross and Lawrence Sullivan Ross]: (5 of 11)	undated
	2	Literary: Biographies: [Shapley P. Ross and Lawrence Sullivan Ross]: (6 of 11)	undated
	3	Literary: Biographies: [Shapley P. Ross and Lawrence Sullivan Ross]: (7 of 11)	undated
	4	Literary: Biographies: [Shapley P. Ross and Lawrence Sullivan Ross]: (8 of 11)	undated
	5	Literary: Biographies: [Shapley P. Ross and Lawrence Sullivan Ross]: (9 of 11)	undated
	6	Literary: Biographies: [Shapley P. Ross and Lawrence Sullivan Ross]: (10 of 11)	undated
	7	Literary: Biographies: [Shapley P. Ross and Lawrence Sullivan Ross]: (11 of 11)	undated
	8	Literary: Biographies: Manuscripts: "Life and Adventures of Capt. Shapley P. Ross": (1 of 12)	undated
	9	Literary: Biographies: Manuscripts: "Life and Adventures of Capt. Shapley P. Ross": (2 of 12)	undated
7	1	Literary: Biographies: Manuscripts: "Life and Adventures of Capt. Shapley P. Ross": (3 of 12)	undated
	2	Literary: Biographies: Manuscripts: "Life and Adventures of Capt. Shapley P. Ross": (4 of 12)	undated

BOX NUMBER	FOLDER NUMBER	FOLDER TITLE	DATES
7	3	Literary: Biographies: Manuscripts: "Life and Adventures of Capt. Shapley P. Ross": (5 of 12)	undated
	4	Literary: Biographies: Manuscripts: "Life and Adventures of Capt. Shapley P. Ross": (6 of 12)	undated
	5	Literary: Biographies: Manuscripts: "Life and Adventures of Capt. Shapley P. Ross": (7 of 12)	undated
	6	Literary: Biographies: Manuscripts: "Life and Adventures of Capt. Shapley P. Ross": (8 of 12)	undated
	7	Literary: Biographies: Manuscripts: "Life and Adventures of Capt. Shapley P. Ross": (9 of 12)	undated
	8	Literary: Biographies: Manuscripts: "Life and Adventures of Capt. Shapley P. Ross": (10 of 12)	undated
	9	Literary: Biographies: Manuscripts: "Life and Adventures of Capt. Shapley P. Ross": (11 of 12)	undated
8	1	Literary: Biographies: Manuscripts: "Life and Adventures of Capt. Shapley P. Ross": (12 of 12)	undated
	2	Literary: Scrapbook: (1 of 11)	undated
	3	Literary: Scrapbook: (2 of 11)	undated
	4	Literary: Scrapbook: (3 of 11)	undated
	5	Literary: Scrapbook: (4 of 11)	undated
	6	Literary: Scrapbook: (5 of 11)	undated
	7	Literary: Scrapbook: (6 of 11)	undated
	8	Literary: Scrapbook: (7 of 11)	undated
	9	Literary: Scrapbook: (8 of 11)	undated
9	1	Literary: Scrapbook: (9 of 11)	undated
	2	Literary: Scrapbook: (10 of 11)	undated
	3	Literary: Scrapbook: (11 of 11)	undated
	4	Literary: Scrapbook: (12 of 11)	undated
	5	Literary: Notes: Biographies: (1 of 19)	undated
	6	Literary: Notes: Biographies: (2 of 19)	undated

BOX NUMBER	FOLDER NUMBER	FOLDER TITLE	DATES
9	7	Literary: Notes: Biographies: (3 of 19)	undated
	8	Literary: Notes: Biographies: (4 of 19)	undated
	9	Literary: Notes: Biographies: (5 of 19)	undated
	10	Literary: Notes: Biographies: (6 of 19)	undated
10	1	Literary: Notes: Biographies: (7 of 19)	undated
	2	Literary: Notes: Biographies: (8 of 19)	undated
	3	Literary: Notes: Biographies: (9 of 19)	undated
	4	Literary: Notes: Biographies: (10 of 19)	undated
	5	Literary: Notes: Biographies: (11 of 19)	undated
	6	Literary: Notes: Biographies: (12 of 19)	undated
	7	Literary: Notes: Biographies: (13 of 19)	undated
	8	Literary: Notes: Biographies: (14 of 19)	undated
	9	Literary: Notes: Biographies: (15 of 19)	undated
11	1	Literary: Notes: Biographies: (16 of 19)	undated
	2	Literary: Notes: Biographies: (17 of 19)	undated
	3	Literary: Notes: Biographies: (18 of 19)	undated
	4	Literary: Notes: Biographies: (19 of 19)	undated

Series V. Photographic Materials, 1912-1913, undated, 0.45 linear feet (1 document box).

These photographs include general pictures of unknown Ross family members, several identified pictures of various people, and a picture of Lawrence Sullivan Ross' casket. Tehuacana Jim, one Sul Ross' companions through the years, came with a group of other American Indians to the Waco Cotton Palace 1912-1913. Most of the pictures are of women in the Ross family. This series is in average to good condition.

BOX NUMBER	FOLDER NUMBER	FOLDER TITLE	DATES
11	5	Photographic: Photographs: General	undated
	6	Photographic: Photographs: Lawrence Sullivan Ross Casket	undated
	7	Photographic: Photographs: Tehuacana Jim	1912-1913
	8	Photographic: Photographs: Elizabeth Ross Clarke	undated
	9	Photographic: Photographs: Florene Ross Harrington: (1 of 2)	undated
	10	Photographic: Photographs: Florene Ross Harrington: (2 of 2)	undated

Series VI. Artifacts, undated, 1 folder.

Series contains several colorful ribbons with lists of names on them, and a small pencil with attached string, perhaps for signing some kind of public book. This series is in average condition.

BOX NUMBER	FOLDER NUMBER	FOLDER TITLE	DATES
11	11	Artifacts: Ribbons and Pencil	undated

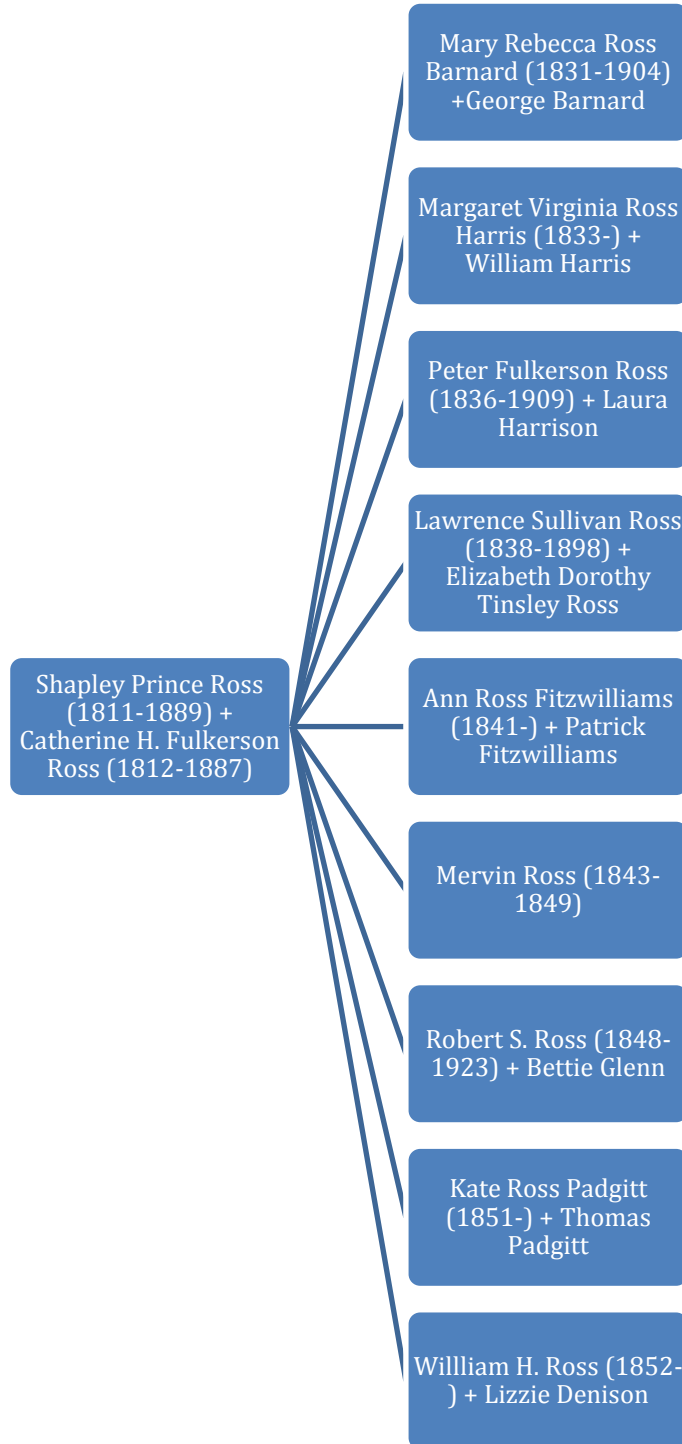
Notes:

This collection is a very rare look at a Texas unit in the Trans-Mississippi theater in the early years of the American Civil War. Several long letters detail important early battles, including the Battle of Pea Ridge. This collection should be of interest to anyone studying the Trans-Mississippi west during the Civil War.

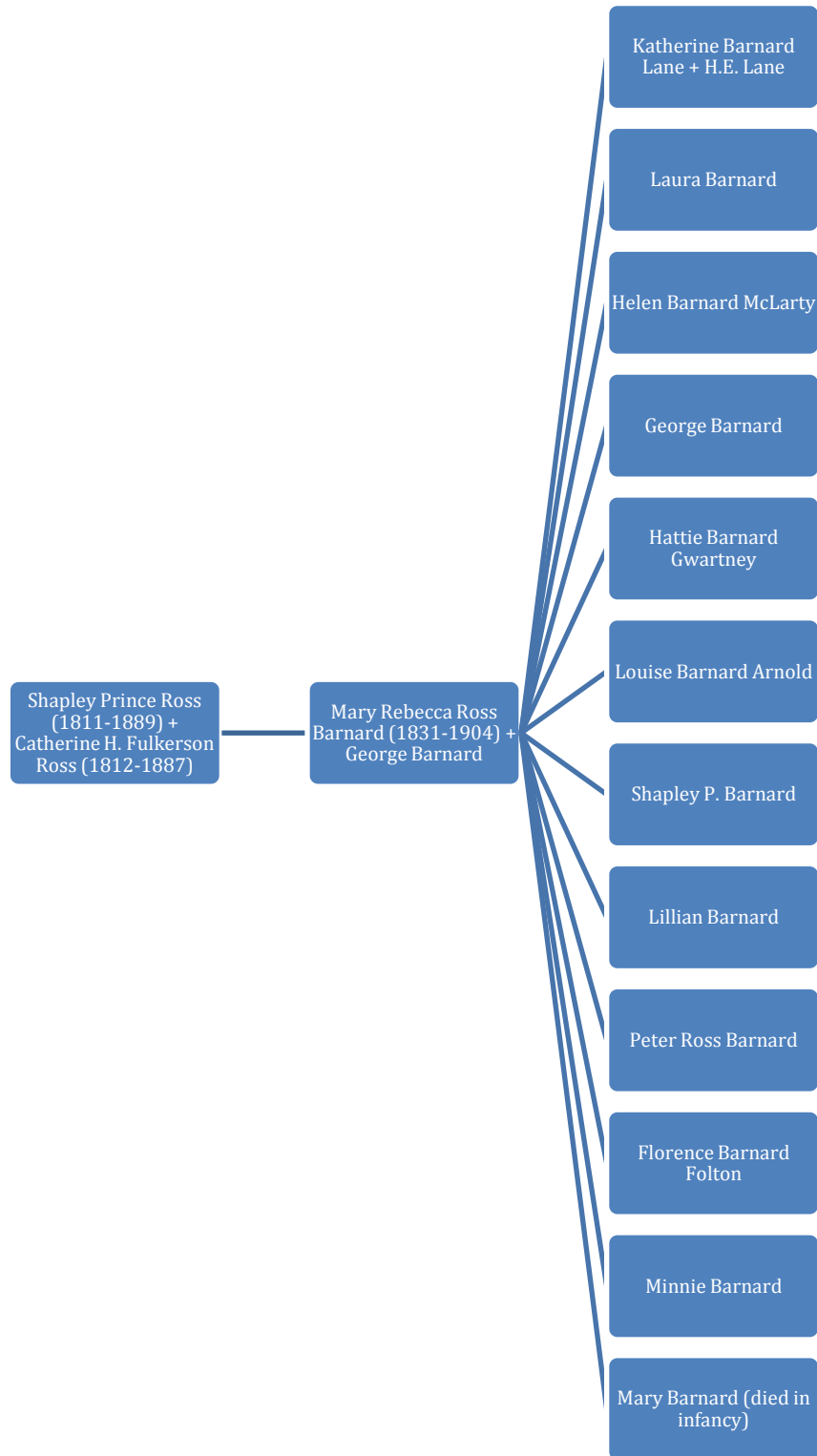
The Ross family was quite active in Waco during the 19th century. Several of Lawrence's siblings married members of other prominent Waco area families, notably Kate Ross Padgitt to Tom Padgitt. Kate Ross was a well-known hostess in Waco, and together with Tom pioneered many important ideas in early Waco.

Appendix A:
Ross Family Trees

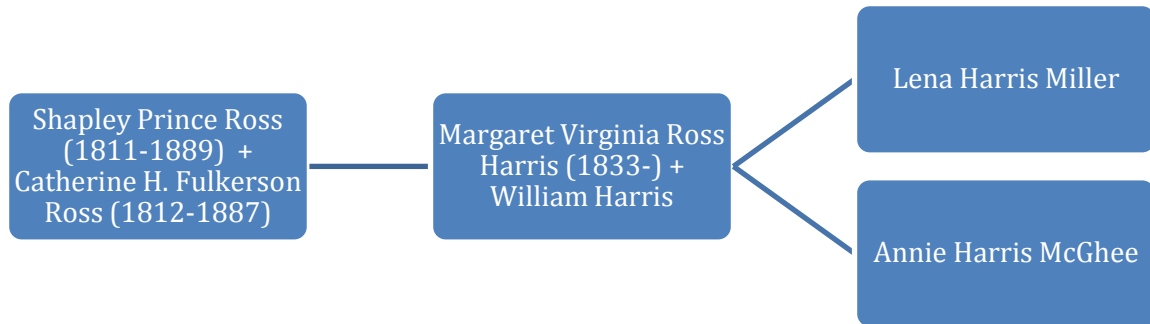
Shapley Ross Family Tree



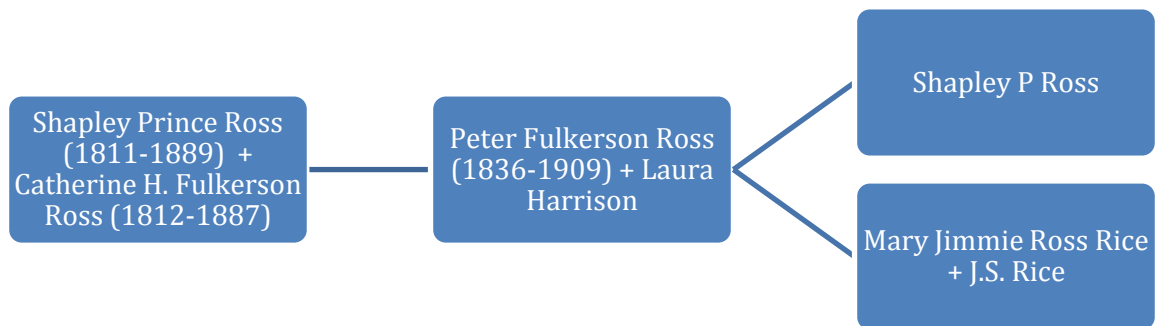
Mary Rebecca Ross Barnard and George Barnard Family Tree



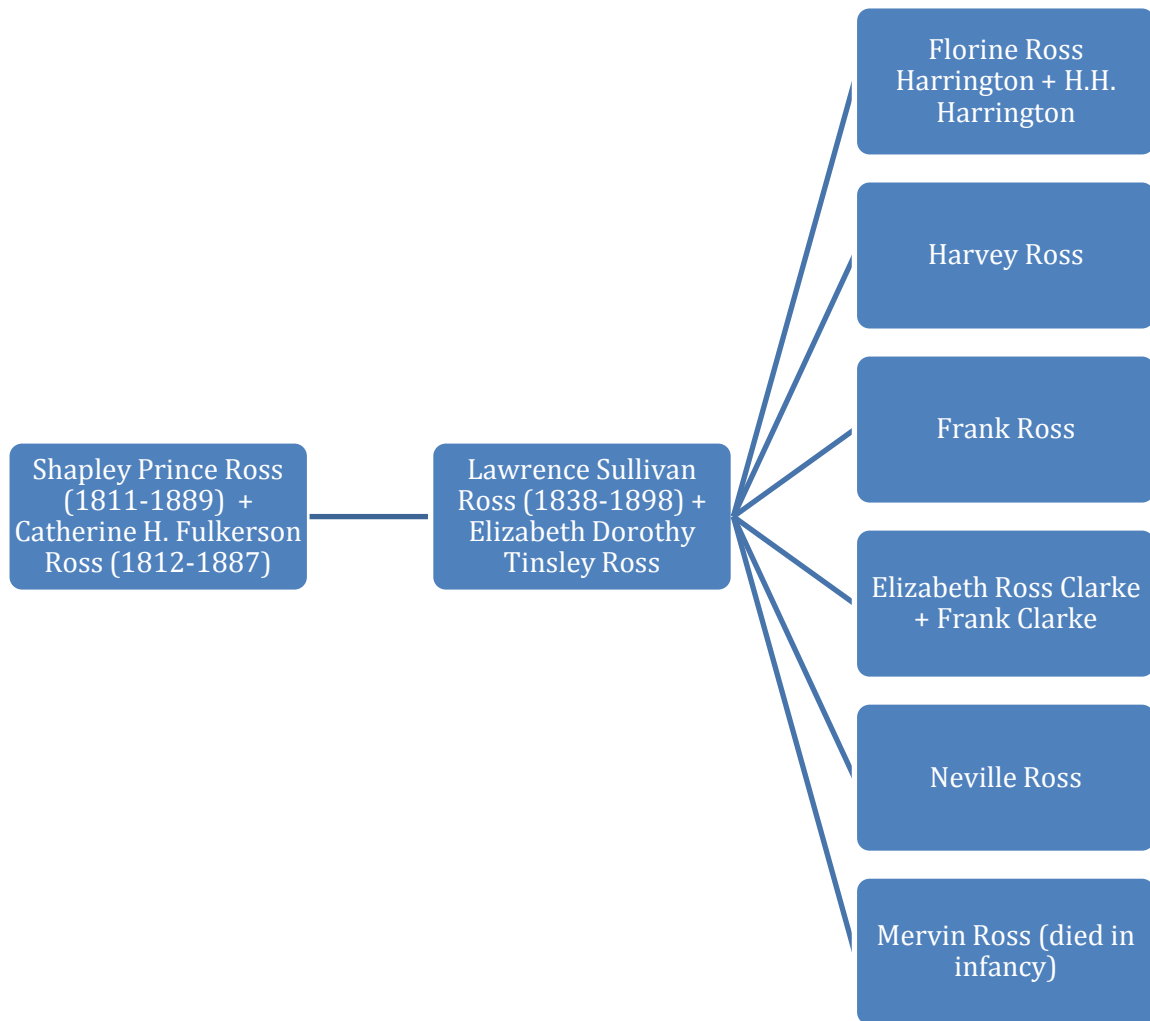
Margaret Virginia Ross Harris and William Harris Family Tree



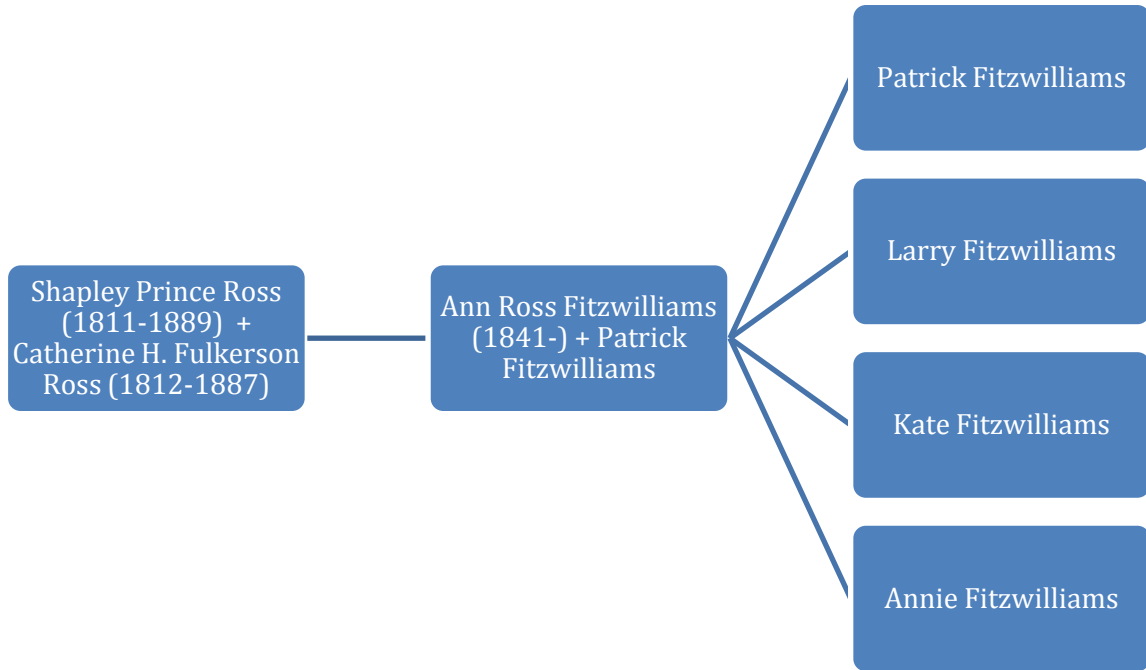
Peter Fulkerson Ross and Laura Harrison Family Tree



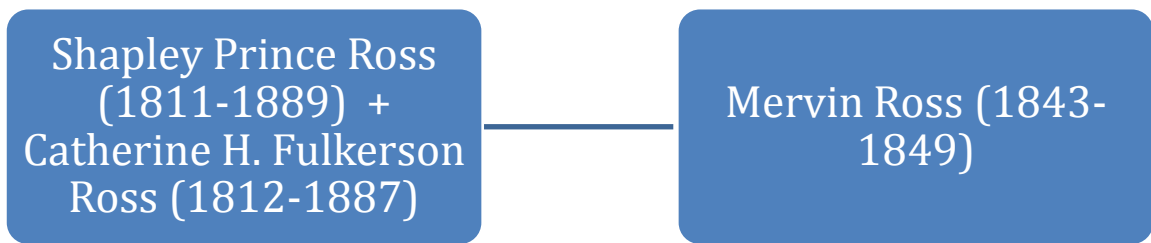
Lawrence Sullivan Ross and Elizabeth Dorothy Tinsley Ross Family Tree



Ann Ross Family Tree



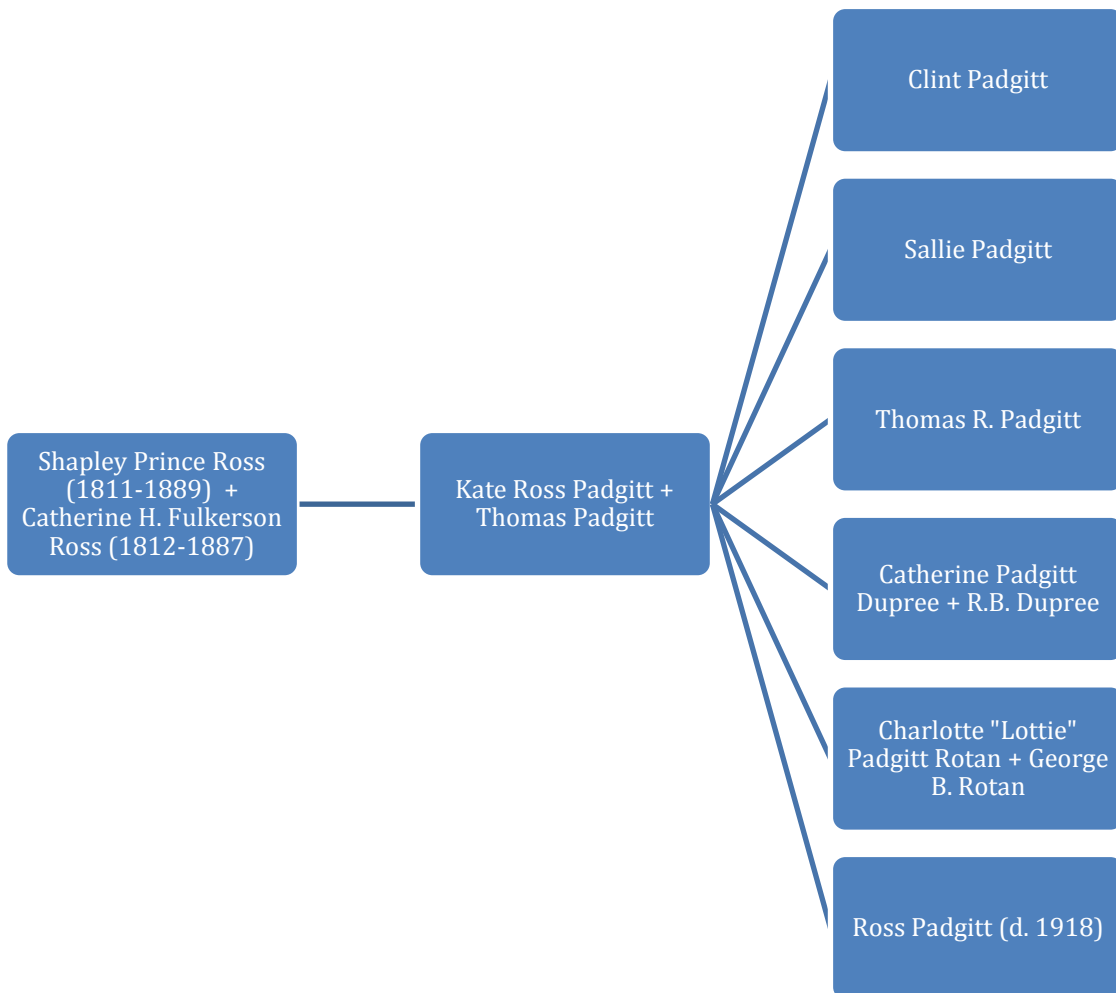
Mervin Ross Family Tree



Robert S. Ross Family Tree



Kate Ross Padgitt Family Tree



William H. "Billy" Ross Family Tree

