

# Jefferson County

Since Roe (see below) has been removed from the running, Jefferson County death records have been searched on line from 1936-1941. One candidate has been found, although others may still be better. At present, Green McGuire is the best candidate.

## **McGuire, Green**

**(Greenbriar)** (1835 or 1841-3 Mar 1936) born in Kentucky to Gabriel McGuire and Margaret Trout. Green enlisted in Co. E, 32<sup>nd</sup> Enrolled Missouri Militia, on 5 Apr 1862 in Potosi and served for 90 days. He was transferred to Co. E, 8<sup>th</sup> Provisional Enrolled Missouri Militia,



on 1 May 1863. His muster card reports 184 days of actual service and surviving muster rolls state that he was at Mineral Point on 4 May 1863 and 2 Apr 1863 at Potosi. His unit was relieved from duty 8 Nov. 1863, per Special Order No. 74, HQ Dist. South East Missouri. Green worked as a farmer around DeSoto in Valle township. He is buried in the City Cemetery in DeSoto.

## Why Henry Roe Is Not Considered The Last Soldier in Jefferson County!

**Roe, Henry M. (R?)** (25 Mar 1848 - 18 Apr 1949) of Valle Township, Desoto, MO. claims to have been a messenger and spy for President Lincoln. If you read his entire story, it is to say the least an interesting read. His reason for being a messenger is utterly ridiculous. If evidence can be shown that he actually served in a unit or actually as a spy, he will be restored to “last soldier” status. Is his story a true one? A fake? Was Henry a liar or a story teller whose story got out of hand? Was he asked one too many times in old age if he was in the Civil War and got tired of saying he wasn't. Other men born in 1848 served in units, some lying about their age, so why didn't Henry? Was he even born in 1848 in Philadelphia as claimed?

Checking through available on-line census records a definite lack of evidence exists for Roe being born in 1848 in Philadelphia. Henry M. Row is present on the Missouri census records in 1910 and 1940. In both records his birth year is 1848. It's possible that he shows up in the 1920 Missouri census as H.M.

Roe but with a birthdate of 1864. Henry doesn't seem to appear on the 1900 or 1930 Missouri census using either birthdate or under variations of his name. However, misspellings and staying one step ahead of the rent collector might keep anyone off of the census rolls.

The interesting thing about being born in Philadelphia, as Henry reports to be, is that the city of brotherly love kept pretty good birth records especially starting in the 1860s. So, isn't it curious that a Henry Roe is born in Philadelphia on 26 Mar 1864 and our Henry claims a birth date just one day off that day in 1848? Two Henry Roes, both born in Philly, exactly 14 years and one day apart? It seems improbable that of the potentially 4 Henry Roes born in Pennsylvania between 1848 and 1864 (two being born between 1855 and 1857), that two of the four share such a close birthday. Three of the four would be much too young for service even as a spy. So was the man who claimed to be 101 in 1949, really only 89? The one birthdate definitely matches the 1920 census while no Henry Roe birth records match the 1910 or 1940 censuses. So the comment made in some of the news articles that he seemed young for his age is probably well founded.

The next question has to address the messenger/spy part of the story. President Lincoln is one of our most respected presidents and men in U.S. history. He had to give orders that sent thousands of young adult men to their deaths. Would he really tell a 14 year old in 1862 to be a spy for him? Would the President of the United States deliberately place a 14 year old in harm's way just to find out why "so many Northern boys were joining the Johnny Rebs?" While certainly some did go south, the reverse was also true and some went north. Roe's story is the first statement known to the author that the President of the United States considered this a rampant problem that needed to be stopped. So, why would the President risk the life of a 14 year old boy to attempt to turn a few misguided northerners back to the embrace of the Union? The answer must be that President Lincoln did not make a 14 year old a spy forcing him to risk life and limb. If he did, his ethics and decision making come into question.

Roe apparently showed a picture of President Lincoln with a boy from time to time. There was no verification he was the boy. In the 1930s after complaining to the governor of Missouri, he applied for a Civil War pension, and got it. The reasoning behind the pension seems more political than fact based. Most soldiers of the war had to go through a

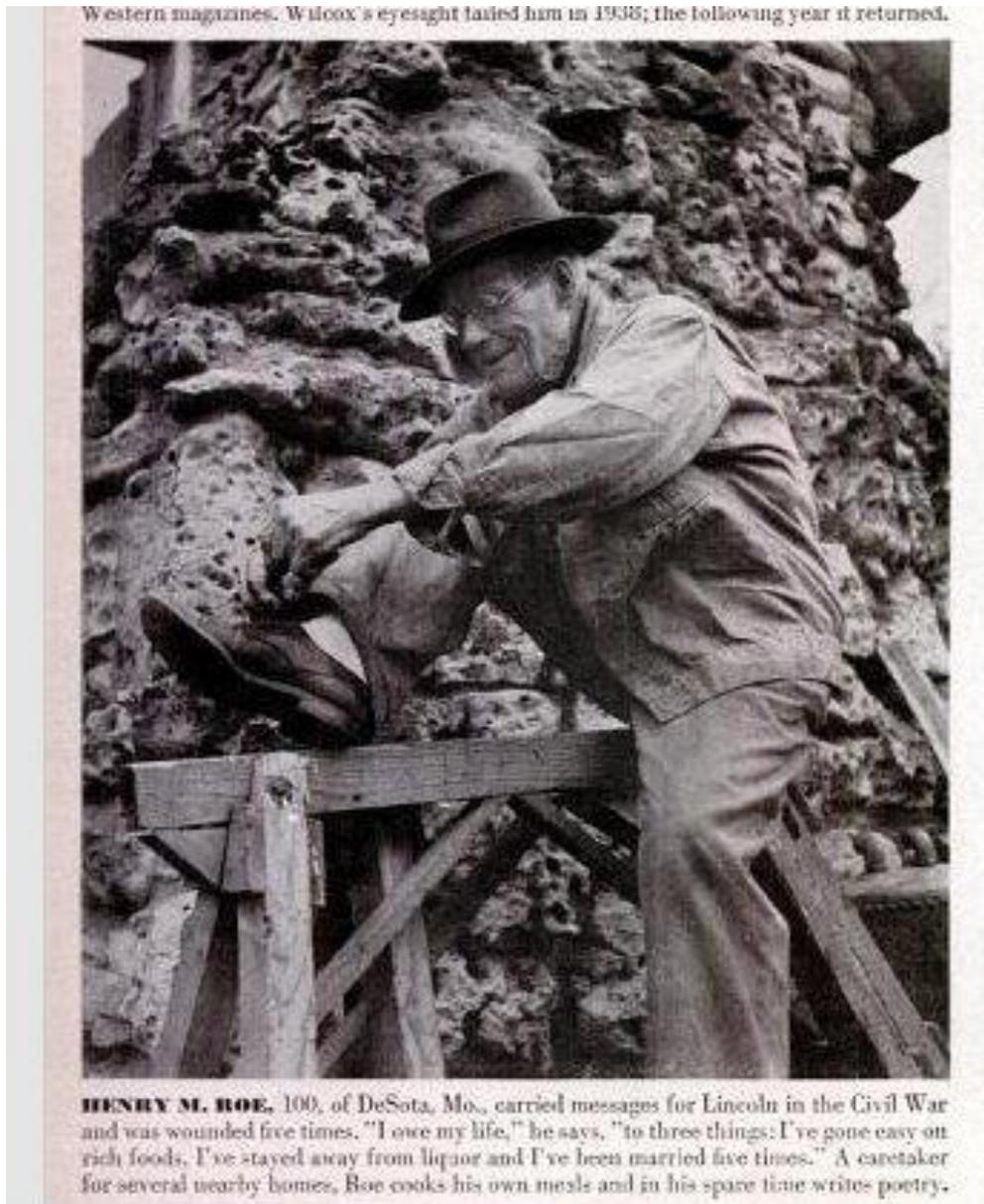
lot of paperwork to get their pensions at the turn of century. The government wasn't just giving them to everyone who claimed they were a soldier or soldier's wife. To prove the death of her non-soldier husband so that she could get her soldier husband's pension, one Illinois woman to whom the author is related had to find the church records of his death and get statements from the hearse driver and grave digger. However, by the 1930s the requirements had significantly lessened and some old men began claiming that they were either a Union or Confederate soldier, or Jesse James and found people to believe them.

On the Confederate side, out of 13 "last Confederate soldiers" nationwide, 12 either are debunked by people such as author William Marvel and there is a total lack of evidence to support their claims. That means that the last United Confederate Veterans convention in 1949 had a bunch of fakes standing around and swapping lies. On the Union side, the last known verified veteran is Albert Woolson who was born in 1849 (a year later than Roe claims) and died 2 Aug 1956. He served as a drummer boy. For more info on him:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert\\_Woolson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert_Woolson) . The last known verified Confederate veteran was Pleasant Crump who died 31 Dec 1951. For more info:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Last\\_surviving\\_Confederate\\_veterans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Last_surviving_Confederate_veterans)

PHOTO: LIFE MAGAZINE 1-24-1949 Page 9



**From the  
*News and  
Courier,***

**Charleston, SC, April 20, 1949**

## Death Takes 101 Year Old Man As He Dances Jig

New York, April 19. (UP): Henry R. Roe, 101-year-old Missouri handyman, danced a jig to show how young he felt and died of a heart attack before he got to tell the nation about being Abe Lincoln's private spy.

Today was to have been a great day for Roe, who survived five wives and lived alone eight miles from De Soto, Mo., as caretaker for some summer homes.

The chipper old man wearing rimless spectacles, a hat with the brim turned up all around and a gay necktie tied in a large knot in a collar that hung loose around his gaunt neck, boarded a plane for New York last Sunday to tell his story on a nationwide radio program.

“He was a great kidder ,” said Joan Devlin, the hostess on Henry Roe's first, and last, plane ride.

Roe said that he credited long life to “work and moderation.” His one regret, he said, was that he never got to fight in a war. He too young for the Civil War was rejected for the Spanish-American war and was declared too old for World Wars I and II.

“Imagine me, old,” he said.

He besieged President Roosevelt with letters in World War II asking to play some part. Manpower Director Paul McNutt intervened and the Liaster-Kaufmann Glider company in St Louis gave him a job as a plant messenger. He held it for a year and a half.

“My mother lived to be 100,” he said.

The National Association of Manufacturers brought him to New York during the war and honored him with a dinner. He always wanted to come back.

Then he got his chance. Monday he went to the radio station to rehearse. Yesterday he went to the radio station to rehearse his story.

This is what he had planned to say tonight:

“Abe wanted to know why so many Northern boys were joining the Johnny Rebs, and he asked me to find out for him. I was only 14, but I spied for old Abe for a couple of years and I was wounded five times.

“I stopped lots of them from joining the South. Abe told me. ‘you have done your country a great service my boy, now look to your own health.’

“I said, ‘Sir, I'm not afraid to die.’

“He said, I'd rather have you live for it.””

Roe did a few steps of a jig and left the studio. He slumped in the hall on his way to an elevator and died.

END OF ARTICLE

Is Roe a true hero? An old man who told good stories? Or someone who might now days be considered as *stealing valor*? Was he 101 when he died or 89? A detailed pension record would be nice as some proof.

Unfortunately, at this time, it appears he was born during the Civil War and cannot possibly have been the spy who suffered 5 wounds.

NOTES:

Besides the above article and on-line research, some information provided about Roe is in

HOAR, Jay S. *The North's Last Boys in Blue Vol. 2*, Salem, MA: Higginson Book Co. 2007, page 758-759.