NANCY GARDNER ROOP

Wife of the Provisional Governor of the Proposed Territory of Nevada
Isaac Newton Roop who served 12-15-1859 to 3-2-1861

At A Glance:

Born: Dec 22, 1822, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania

Died: June 20, 1850, Ashland County, Ohio

Maiden Name: Nancy Gardner

Race/nationality/ethnic background: German

Married: Isaac Newton Roop, m: 12/24/1840

Children:
Susan Engle Roop Arnold (1841-1921)
John Valentine Roop (1843-1919)
Isaiah J. (1845-1862 or 1863)

Primary city and county of residence and work:
Ashland County, Ohio

Major fields of work: Tutor

Other role identities: Wife, mother

Seal, Territory of Nevada
Designed by Orion Clemens

Wife of provisional governor tutored him in literacy

Although Nancy Gardner Roop never lived in Nevada, she played an instrumental role in the success of her husband, Isaac Newton Roop, by teaching him to read and write in English, after they were married. Nancy lived only 27 years, but she left a loving husband and three healthy, educated children.

Nancy Gardner was born in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, on December 22, 1822. Her parents were John V. Gardner and Jane Montgomery Gardner. John Gardner immigrated from Germany to the United States and engaged in a carriage manufacturing business.

Gardner was a graduate of Transylvania College in Lexington, Kentucky. When she and Isaac were married, she began to tutor him in English, as his native language was German. According to Judge Bruce, “Under her tutorage he received a thorough English education and laid the foundation work for that period of usefulness that succeeded to him in his later years.” The Roops had three children: Susan, John, and Isaiah.

Nancy Gardner Roop died at the age of 27 on June 20, 1850, of typhoid fever. The image of her headstone has a different date, May 23, 1950, for which we have no explanation.

Nancy Roop headstone
Courtesy Lassen Historical Museum

Three months after Nancy's death, in September of 1850, Isaac left Ohio and joined his brother Josiah Roop in Shasta, California. According to Fariss and Smith, Isaac was "leaving John in charge of his Grandfather Roop, and left Isaiah and Susan with their Grandfather Gardner."

Their two sons both served in the Union Army during the Civil War and participated in the Northwestern campaign under General William Rosecrans. According to Guinn, "Their eldest son John was a member of the Seventh Iowa Infantry and served as an aid to General Grant; and Isaiah, who enlisted in the Twenty-third Ohio Infantry, was wounded at South Mountain, and died of smallpox while still in the service." After the war, John became a physician and moved to Oklahoma.

According to Susan Couso, Lassen Historical Museum, Susan Roop came to California alone on a steamship then took a stage to Virginia City to meet her father. He had staked a large land claim near Honey Lake Valley and established the town of Susanville, California, which he named for his daughter.

Susan Roop Arnold
Courtesy Lassen Historical Museum

Susan did not have a part of her father's political career, as he had already been the Provisional Governor of the Proposed Territory of Nevada prior to her coming to California. However, she was a large part of his remaining years of life in Honey Lake Valley.

Susan married Alexander Thrall Arnold in Susanville on December 27, 1864. Arnold had arrived there in 1857 and was a pioneer of that area. Susan and Alexander had eight children: Susan M. Roop Goodfellow Allison; Isaac N.; Dora Mary Roop Robertson Haley; Alexander T. and Thomas, who died respectively at four and three months; Carl Victor; Mark Eugene, who died at seventeen years; and Medford.

Susan was a member of the Eastern Star. The Arnold family took over Isaac Roop's business interests following his death in 1869. There are descendants of Isaac and Nancy Roop, through their daughter Susan, still living in the Susanville area.

For the story of Isaac Roop's life and political career, see James Thomas Butler's book *Isaac Roop: Pioneer & Political Leader of Northeastern California*, published by the Lassen County Historical Society. This book is the history of both northeastern California and Nevada, along the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada mountain range.

Governor Isaac Newton Roop and his daughter Susan Roop Arnold are buried in Susanville, California.

Researched and written by Mona Reno, 2025.

Sources of Information

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