



Pleasant Hill Cemetery (Nolanville)

CONTEXT

The Pleasant Hill cemetery⁽¹⁾ is located 1.3 miles west of Nolanville, Texas on the north side of U.S. 190 and the railroad tracks. It began on land donated by the Fleming Trigg Cox Family in 1855 as part of a rural community but now serves Nolanville and the surrounding area. The Fleming Trigg Cox family was the original owners of the land on which the cemetery was started and through the years they sold their land to others who in turn gave and sold it to the cemetery. Mr. Fleming Cox and his wife, Mary Guinevera Leigh, moved from Missouri to what is now Bell county but was originally part of the Robertson county as shown by property taxes paid in 1852 in Bell county, Texas⁽²⁾. The cemetery served the rural community of Texas pioneers in and around Nolanville, Texas' beginning in circa 1855 and it is one of the oldest cemeteries in Bell county. A post office named Warren was opened about 1.3 miles east of the cemetery in 1878, and the Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fe railroad reached the community in the early 1880's⁽³⁾. The community changed its name from Warren to Nolanville in 1883⁽⁴⁾.

The burial site became known as Pleasant Hill cemetery because it had a pleasant view of the area. Among the earliest settlers in the Nolanville community in western Bell county in the 1880's were the families of Kaiser, Cox and Sutton. The first individual to be buried at the cemetery was Mr. J. Carmack, circa 1855, on the farm of Fleming Trigg Cox. In 1907, Samuel and Nicia Jane Cox, descendants of Fleming Trigg Cox, deeded 4 1/3 acres of land to form the Pleasant Hill cemetery⁽⁵⁾. Over the ensuing years, additional land was donated to or purchased by the cemetery Association until there is now approximately 8.6 acres. The cemetery is surrounded by a chain-link fence and has four entrances fronting on Pleasant Hill Road with two acres on the east side of Pleasant Hill Road which is used for cemetery parking. The cemetery is transitional because it was originally in a rural area but the cities of Nolanville and Harker Heights are rapidly surrounding it. The landscaping is natural with a few planted shrubs. The cemetery is well maintained and has graveled roadways throughout.

The original tabernacle built in 1901⁽⁶⁾ is still in use. Our annual meeting is held in this tabernacle. The Association annual meeting is held the last Saturday in June each year at the tabernacle. The care and maintenance of the Pleasant Hill cemetery is by a board of 3 officers (president, vice president and secretary/treasurer) and four trustees. The cemetery is not a segregated cemetery.

There are approximately 190 graves of unknown persons and most of these are identified by a plain granite headstone. There are approximately 850 known graves with ongoing burials plus additional space for approximately 1,150 new graves. The cemetery was surveyed and cataloged in June 2008 by Joe and Dorothy Button and a book listing burials, history and statistical data regarding the cemetery was printed and copies are in each of the Bell county libraries. There are 110 marked graves of veterans of various wars or conflicts of our nation. Freming Trigg Cox served in the Mexican American war (1846-1849) and 11 persons buried in the cemetery were members of the confederate states of America. Most common service was during world war II (54), Korea (18), Vietnam (20) but there are also some world war I (10) veterans buried in the cemetery⁽⁷⁾. A flagpole is located by the tabernacle and is maintained by the Veterans of Foreign wars post #10377 of Belton, Texas.

OVERVIEW

The Pleasant Hill cemetery Association was formed in 1901⁽⁸⁾ in order to provide maintenance for the cemetery for future generations. For many years, the families who had loved ones buried at the cemetery would set aside a work day each month to tend the cemetery and then have lunch. It was decided in 1930 to hire a maintenance person to take care of the cemetery since a lot of the original families were no longer living in the area.

The first person to be buried in the cemetery was J. Carmack in 1855⁽⁹⁾. The earliest recorded burial in the cemetery was Revenna (Revenny) Sutton Middleton Craghead (1828-1860)⁽¹⁰⁾ Mary Ann Ranne, daughter of Major W. H. and Cynthia Bridgers of Stephen F. Austin's Old 300 colony, was buried in the cemetery on December 7, 1895. Her father, William B. Bridgers, served in the volunteer Texas Army with Captain John Alley's Company from October 3 to November 25, 1835 when he was honorably discharged. He also served in the Texas Army from July 3 through October 3, 1836⁽¹¹⁾.

Other burials of significance to the area are: William Anderson Sutton who was born in 1888, and who headed the committee that helped locate Camp Hood, later to become Fort Hood, near present day Killeen⁽¹²⁾, Mary Ethridge Wilkinson (1802-1906), daughter of Lord and Lady Etheridge and wife of Professor Francis Wilkinson of Yorkshire, England⁽¹³⁾, Wilson Parmer (1842-1930) was one of the founders with Elam M. Sprott of the Church of Christ Campground in Nolanville which was begun in the 1880's⁽¹⁴⁾. Parmer's ancestor, Martin Van Buren Parmer, was one of the Signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence⁽¹⁵⁾. W. R. Willis (c. 1829-1902) served in the Texas Rangers⁽¹⁶⁾. Fleming Trigg Cox served in the Mexican American War in the Ralls Missouri Mounted Infantry, Company H⁽¹⁷⁾.

Civil War veterans are: Guadalupe Luna, who served under General Santos Benavides as a private in the Confederate Army in Company C, Benavides Regiment CSA 33rd Texas Cavalry; he participated in the last battle of the war at Palmito Ranch near present day Brownsville, Texas⁽¹⁸⁾;

James Alfred Polk 1st Company, Company K⁽¹⁹⁾, Elam M. Spratt Company G, 2nd Texas–Arizona Calvary 1836 and Company A, Giddings, Texas Calvary Battalion CSA, 2nd Texas–Arizona Calvary, 1836, and Company A, Giddings, Texas Calvary Battalion in the CSA ^(19, 20); Anderson Sutton (1814–1906) entered the Confederate military service on January 20, 1862, he was a private in Company D, 18th Regiment, Texas Volunteer Calvary⁽²¹⁾; James Riley Sutton (1883) was an early Bell County settler and was a resident of Texas during the days of the Republic of Texas. He served as an appointed road overseer during the opening of roads through the new settlements including blazing the trail for the first road from Belton to Lampasas. He did this by dragging a log by two lariats tied to his saddle horn and to each end of the log. He also was a member of the Bell County Minute Men of 1859; took part in the posse that pursued the Indians who kidnapped the Riggs daughters at Sugar Loaf and was an early enlistee in the Confederate Army⁽²²⁾. He served in the CSA Troop A, Texas Calvary and filed for a Confederate pension, application #14685^(23, 24); Jesse Sufton (1839–1917) served in the CSA as a private in Company F, 6th Regiment Texas Infantry⁽²⁵⁾; William H. Cypert 2nd Lieutenant, Missouri Militia⁽²⁶⁾; James Whaley Evans Company F 23, Texas Calvary⁽²⁶⁾ and James Madison Lane Company I, 17th Texas Regiment⁽²⁸⁾.

We have burials from most of the wars in which the United States has participated in including CSA, WWI, WWII, Korea and Vietnam. Some of the individuals are: Benjamin J. Biles WWI; Herbert Campbell WWII; Ruel Cox WWI; Harold C. Elliott WWII; Sherwood D. Levy WWII; Robert Lee Milter WWII and Korea; Shirley Max Levy WWII; Darrell Spratt WWII and John S. Ross WWI and WWII.

SIGNIFICANCE

The Pleasant Hill Cemetery is significant because it is the primary vestige of the Nolanville community settlement. Its graves provide a record of pioneer area families, as well as teachers, preachers, military veterans and business leaders. The continued use of the cemetery reflects the continuum of the area's history, with clearly discernible pioneer and modern sections as determined by the different types of headstones used. The land around the cemetery is changing rapidly as development associated with the growth of the West Bell County area continues largely due to the presence of Fort Hood. The Pleasant Hill Cemetery is one of the larger rural cemeteries in our county and it predates the cemeteries in both Killeen and Temple. The cemetery currently has 190 unknown graves, 875 known graves and space for approximately 1,140 additional graves. The cemetery received a Historical Cemetery Designation in April, 2009 and an Official Texas Historical Marker for the Pleasant Hill Cemetery would provide important historical interpretation of the pioneer era and serve to educate young people, many of whom attended the Nolanville School, about the names and events of the past and would serve as a resource for individuals tracing their family history.

DOCUMENTATION

¹Cemeteries of Texas,

<http://www.cemeteries-of-tex.com/Etx/Bell/cemetery/pleasanthill.htm>

²Bell County Deed Records, Volume 400, p. 134; Volume 4746, p. 147 and Book 175, p. 644.

³Story of Bell County Texas, Volume II, pp. 160-1.

⁴Story of Bell County Texas, *ibid.* p.161.

⁵Bell County Deed Records.

⁶John Madison Milton journal presently in the care of Duryl Bailey.

⁷Pleasant Hill Cemetery, Bell County, Texas, First Edition, June 2008, p. 3.

⁸Notarized paper written by A. L. Bailey in the possession of Duryl Bailey of Belton, Texas.

⁶Bell County Revisited and Bell County Deed Records, p. 302.

⁷Pleasant Hill Cemetery Bell County, Texas, Joe and Dorothy Button, June 2008.

⁸Cra(i)gheads Online,

<http://freepages.oenaloov.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~craiohead/bios/allen.html>

⁹Story of Bell County Texas, Volume II, p. 925.

¹⁰Bell County Revisited, p.302.

¹¹Texas Historical Commission Report, 2001.

¹⁰Story of Bell County Texas, Volume II, pp. 922-23.

¹¹*ibid.*

¹²*ibid.*

¹³Texas State Library and Archives Commission Web Site,

<http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/arc/pensions/index>

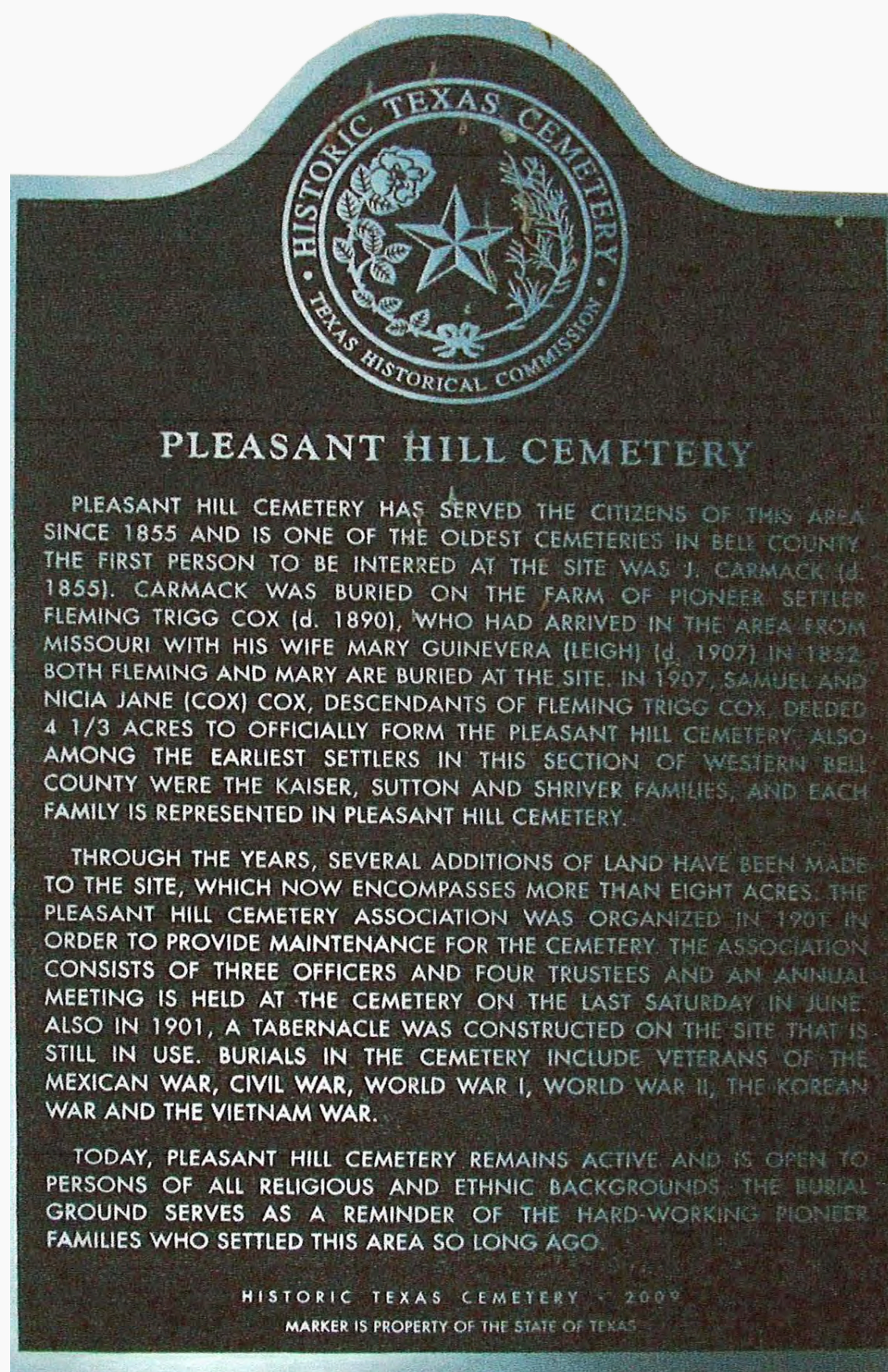
¹⁴Story of Bell County Texas, Volume II, p.922.

¹⁵Family Search Record,

<http://pilot.familysearch.org/recordsearch/start.html>

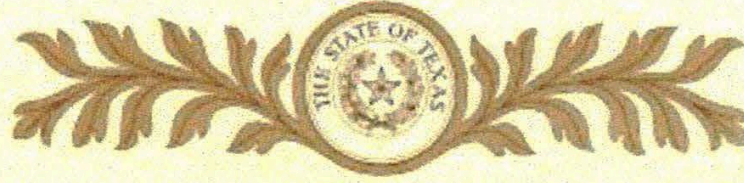
¹⁶Tombstone in Pleasant Hill Cemetery.

Our historical marker reads:



As the marker indicates, the first burial in the Pleasant Hill Cemetery was that of J. Carmack in 1855. Probably there are several other burials between then and 1859 but they have been lost to society. The next marked grave is George Harper Brown and he was buried 12-21-1855. The next one after him was Ravenny Sutton Middleton Craghead in 1860. She was born in Tennessee. After her marriage she moved to Arkansas, gave birth to two children; her husband died and she moved to Bell County. In Bell County she married Allen Craghead and had another son before her death in 1860. There were 18 other burials during the decade ending in 1869. The oldest persons interred in a marked grave in the cemetery are Mary Etheridge Wilkinson who was 104 years old and Nettie Morriss Jackson who died 16 days before her 102nd birthday.

The State of Texas



RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, An official Texas Historical Marker is being dedicated at Pleasant Hill Cemetery in western Bell County on October 9, 2010; and

WHEREAS, The site of Pleasant Hill Cemetery has been used as a burial ground since 1855, when J. Carmack was interred there; at that time, the land constituted part of a farm belonging to Fleming Trigg Cox and his wife, Mary Guinevera Leigh Cox, who had moved to the area from Missouri in 1852; and

WHEREAS, Over the ensuing years, members of some of the earliest families in Bell County were laid to rest in this graveyard; in 1901, a tabernacle was constructed on the site and the Pleasant Hill Cemetery Association was organized to ensure the upkeep of the grounds; six years later, the association acquired a parcel of land containing the cemetery, 4-1/3 acres in all, from Samuel and Nicia Jane Cox, descendants of the original landowners; and

WHEREAS, Pleasant Hill Cemetery currently holds more than a thousand graves, approximately 850 of which are identified; among these are military veterans from the Mexican War, the Civil War, World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, Situated about a mile west of Nolanville and predating the cemeteries in Temple and Killeen, Pleasant Hill Cemetery is one of the oldest burial grounds in Bell County; now encompassing more than eight acres, it is also one of the county's larger rural graveyards; the cemetery is still in use, without restriction as to religious or ethnic background; in 2009, the Texas Historical Commission designated the property as a Historic Texas Cemetery; and

WHEREAS, Pleasant Hill Cemetery is the final resting place of individuals who have helped to shape the history of Bell County in myriad ways for more than a century and a half, and those who have researched and documented this site and those who have supported them in that effort have performed a truly valuable service; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the dedication of an official Texas Historical Marker at Pleasant Hill Cemetery be commemorated and that all those involved with this project be extended sincere appreciation for their commitment to preserving the heritage of the Lone Star State.



Ralph Sheffield

Ralph Sheffield
State Representative
District 55



THE STATE OF TEXAS

GOVERNOR

*To all to whom these presents shall come,
Greetings: Know ye that this official recognition is
presented to the:*

Pleasant Hill Cemetery Association

on receiving a

**Texas Historical Commission
Official Texas Historical Marker**

October 9, 2010

*Under the laws of the State of Texas, with all rights,
privileges and emoluments appertaining to said office,
I grant this official recognition. In testimony whereof,
I have signed my name and caused the Seal of the State
to be affixed at the City of Austin, this the 20th day of
September A.D., 2010.*



Rick Perry
Rick Perry
Governor of Texas