

History of The Goodlett Cemetery

Located in Hardeman County, Texas, in the southeast quarter of section 280 in block "H" of the W & NW R.R. Co. surveys. Deed was recorded in vol. 121, page 353 of the deed records of Hardeman County, Texas. Present day directions to the Cemetery is from highway U.S. 287 at Goodlett, south one and one fourth mile on F. M. 2363.

Under several owners burial was allowed as early as 1892 according to the oldest marked grave in the cemetery. The absence of records prior to that time indicates the land was used simply as a graveyard.

In 1902 J.B. Mann acquired the land. Mr. Mann then deeded the S.E. five acres to the Goodlett Cemetery under the direction of elected Trustees. The land was fenced with barbed wire and plot owners simply marked their lots with curbs or fences. No records have been found specifying ownership of individual lots.

In 1947, after the death of Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Young and notification they had left a generous portion of their estate to the Cemetery a reorganization meeting was held for the purpose of establishing a not for profit organization. Application was made to the Secretary of State and was granted Non-Profit Corporation in accordance with the laws of the State of Texas. The money given by Mr. and Mrs. Young was used for a modern chain-link fence, a new water well equipped with an electric pump and piping to various locations in the Cemetery.

Before the fence was constructed and realizing the growth of the Goodlett Community might require more space in the future, the then owner of the surrounding land, Mr. and Mrs. Rex Sullivan Sr. donated two acres on the west side of the original five acres which then made a total of seven acres inside the fence that stands today.

Due to the migration away from the community it became apparent the Cemetery would fall to neglect if left up to individual families to keep the grounds maintained. A new board was elected in 1974 for the purpose of establishing a plan of improvement and general maintenance. A fund was established and placed in an Irrevocable Trust of which only the interest income could be used. This fund has grown considerably and to date is sufficient for keeping the grounds maintained.

A special plaque erected by his patients marks the graves of Dr. and Mrs. S.D. Terry. Residents of and practicing in Goodlett from 1907 to 1946. The Doctor cared for the sick and tended to numerous births in the community. An attractive marker donated by appreciative citizens also is erected on the grave of Malon C. Owen, Mr. Owen was Hardeman County Sheriff and later Justice of The Peace. His public service ranged from 1933 to 1965. A brass plate is also located on the plot of Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Young. This plate was taken from The Goodlett Methodist Church when it was disbanded. Mr. and Mrs. Young was also major benefactors of this church. Also among the notables is the grave of Winston Wilson. Mr. Wilson, a native of Goodlett was Deputy Secretary of Agriculture in 1980, he held several positions of national scope but was mainly remembered as President of U.S. Wheat Associates. His national service ranged from 1980 to 1999.

On the 28th day of December 1998 a document was filed in the Hardeman County Clerk's office by The State of Texas dedicating the Cemetery as a Texas Historic Cemetery.

The Goodlett Cemetery is an attractive part of Texas history. The gates remain unlocked. Rarely a day goes by that visitors cannot be seen touring the grounds. The Goodlett Cemetery is truly a reminder of small town Texas and the pioneers that farmed the land and provided the goods to develop the western portion of Hardeman County Texas.

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