



Established in 1858

ATHENS CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

A newsletter sponsored by the
Friends of the Cemetery

Vol. 10

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ATHENS CEMETERY NEWS

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Happy New Year

SCENES FROM THE ATHENS CEMETERY



Entrance



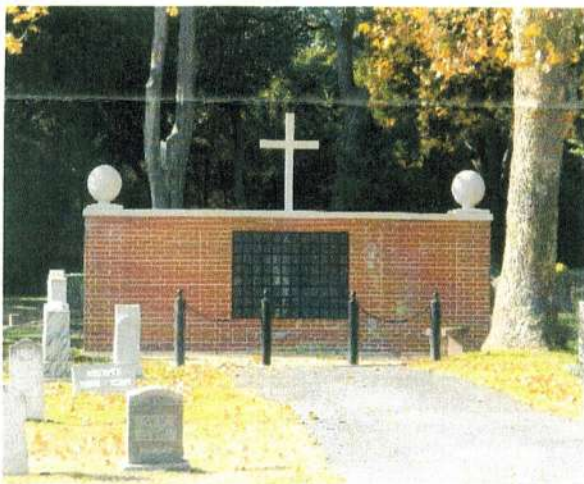
Information Kiosk



Pioneer Section



Celtic Cross Section



Columbarium

Coming Soon!

**The Athens Cemetery
Association announces
cemetery expansion in 2012.
An approximate 1,220
additional burial plots will be
platted and dedicated.**

Friends' News

As 2011 draws to an end and we have experienced the worst drought in recent history, the condition of the Cemetery has maintained its beauty and splendor thanks to the untiring efforts of Board Member Bob McDonald and the grounds crew.

The existing irrigation systems were put to the test to provide the grounds much needed water during the drought. The drought revealed the need for an update of the irrigation system and plans are underway to update the existing system.

The Athens Cemetery is designated as a State Historical Cemetery and has five historical markers within its boundaries. 2011 saw another historical marker dedicated on the grave of Mr. William J. Brantley, whose resting place represents the first burial at our Cemetery in 1857. Please see the related story provided by Board Member Art Hall. Art is a master historian and is committed to the preservation of the historical significance of the Cemetery.

The Cemetery Association continues to maintain and preserve the appearance of the Cemetery. Tree trimming and efforts to restore or preserve older monuments are continually in progress.

A Veterans Memorial Court is planned for 2012.

In an effort to honor the men and women who have served in the service of our nation, the Athens Cemetery will have a new addition in 2012. The Veterans Court will be a memorial and tribute to those who served our nation.

The Cemetery is the resting place of individuals who served in the Civil War, Cherokee Indian War, Spanish American War, World War I, World War II, Korean War, Vietnam and other conflicts. The Court is planned to be formally dedicated in 2012 and will be located near the entrance of the Cemetery. Names of the ones who served will be engraved on a permanent monument. If your family member served our country, please let the Cemetery Association know. We are researching the records that we have now.



(Artist Rendition)

The Veterans Memorial Court and other beautiful updates to the Cemetery are funded in part by the generosity of the Friends. Athens Cemetery is fortunate to have the many Friends that help make the grounds a beautiful sacred place for remembrance and reflection.

~ HISTORIC MARKER PLACED AT GRAVE OF FIRST BURIAL ~

On Saturday, October 1, the Athens Cemetery Association and Masonic Lodge #165 held a joint dedication ceremony of a historical marker at the gravesite of William J. Brantley, the first person to be buried in the Athens Cemetery.

Mr. Brantley was born in Georgia in March, 1829. In 1852, he and his wife, Elizabeth, moved their small family to Texas by covered wagon, first settling in Cherokee County. Two years later they moved to Henderson County, establishing a farm a few miles west of Athens.

Mr. Brantley became active in local affairs. He was elected the first County Superintendent of School when all of Henderson County was one school district. A Mason, Mr. Brantley was one of the leading organizers of Masonic Lodge #165 in Athens.

William J. Brantley died on June 7, 1857, at age 28. Pleasant Tannehill, the Worshipful Master of the Masonic Lodge in Athens at the time, donated land just south of town for a Masonic cemetery so that Masons would have their own burial ground. It was here that William J. Brantley was buried, thus beginning the Athens Cemetery.

In 1858, Joseph M. LaRue, also a Mason, traveled back to Lebanon, Tennessee, to visit relatives. There he collected seed from the large cedar trees which were said to have come from the cedar trees of Lebanon in the Middle East. Upon his return to Athens, Mr. LaRue began the practice of planting the seeds at the gravesites of fellow Masons. He continued this practice until his death in 1887. While some have succumbed to lightning strikes and disease over the years, many of these magnificent old cedar trees can still be seen today in the original section of the Cemetery.

Among family members buried near William J. Brantley are his daughter, Mrs. Anna Williamson, his grandson, John Brantley Williamson and his son, John Brantley.

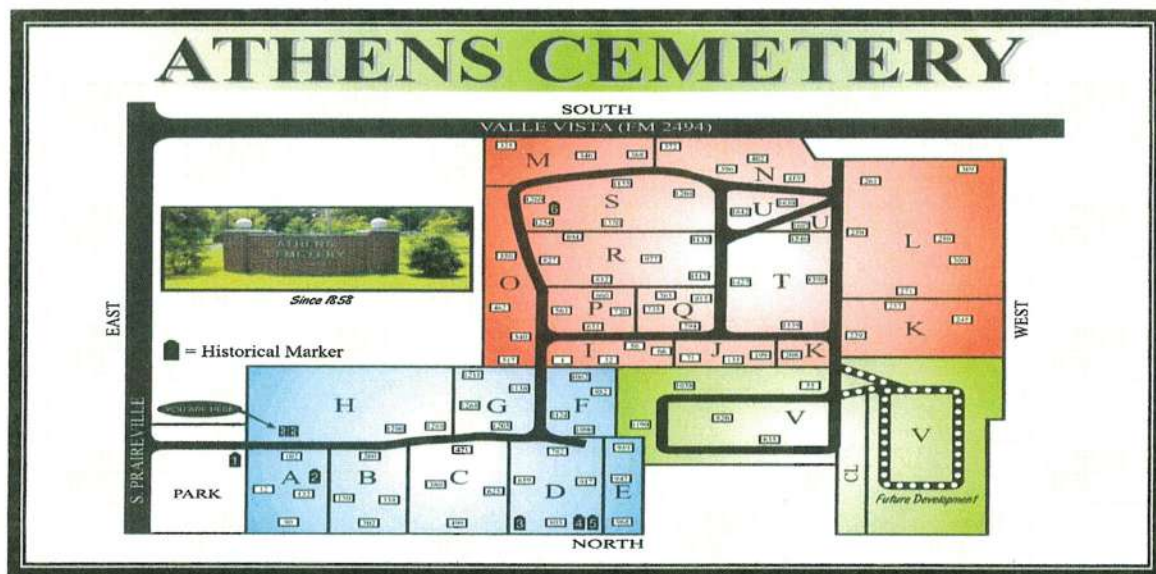
Following the death of her husband, Elizabeth Ann Brantley married John M. Pickens. She lived until 1904, thereby outliving her first husband by 47 years. She and John Pickens are also buried in the Athens Cemetery, surrounded by a number of their children. She rests not far from her first husband, William J. Brantley.

Contributed by Art Hall
Athens Cemetery Board Member

The Athens Cemetery is maintained by the Athens Cemetery Association, a non-profit organization whose purpose is to maintain and preserve our historic cemetery. The Athens Cemetery depends on lot sales, internments, special gifts and planned giving to operate. Costs to maintain the cemetery have continued to increase, but the challenge has been met. The Board of the Athens Cemetery Association is dedicated to being good stewards of the funds provided to see that the cemetery remains a beautiful sanctuary for reflection, meditation and celebration of past and future generations.

The Board of the Athens Cemetery Association would like to thank the Friends of the Athens Cemetery for their continued support.

4,000 lots are available including cremation lots and columbarium niches. Call Bob McDonald at (903)681-1721 for further information.



Space Prices:

Principal and Historic Section - \$1,000.00

Celtic Cross Section - \$1,300.00

Multi-Lot Family Section - On a per square foot basis

Internment Fee - \$200.00 on non-holiday or \$250.00 on recognized holiday

Columbarium Fee - \$1,500 (price is for two internments)

Special thanks to Board Member and Cemetery Liaison, Bob McDonald, for his dedicated service to the cemetery.

"For all who visit our cemetery, may it remind them of all those who have gone before and of the nobility of life well lived. Remember that nothing is ended until it is forgotten. Whoever is kept in memory still endures."

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