



Established in 1858

# ATHENS CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

A newsletter sponsored by the  
Friends of the Cemetery

Vol. 13

December 2014

## ATHENS CEMETERY NEWS

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# Happy Holidays

ATHENS CEMETERY IS A DESIGNATED STATE HISTORICAL CEMETERY  
ESTABLISHED IN 1858



# SCENES FROM THE ATHENS CEMETERY



Veteran's Memorial



Information Kiosk



Columbarium



Celtic Cross Section



Pioneer Section

The hallowed grounds of the cemetery continue to be meticulously maintained and provide a special place of reverence, solitude and beauty.

A new deep water well was added in 2014 for irrigation needs and the sprinkler system has been updated. The general maintenance and upkeep of the grounds and monuments are being conducted on an ongoing basis.

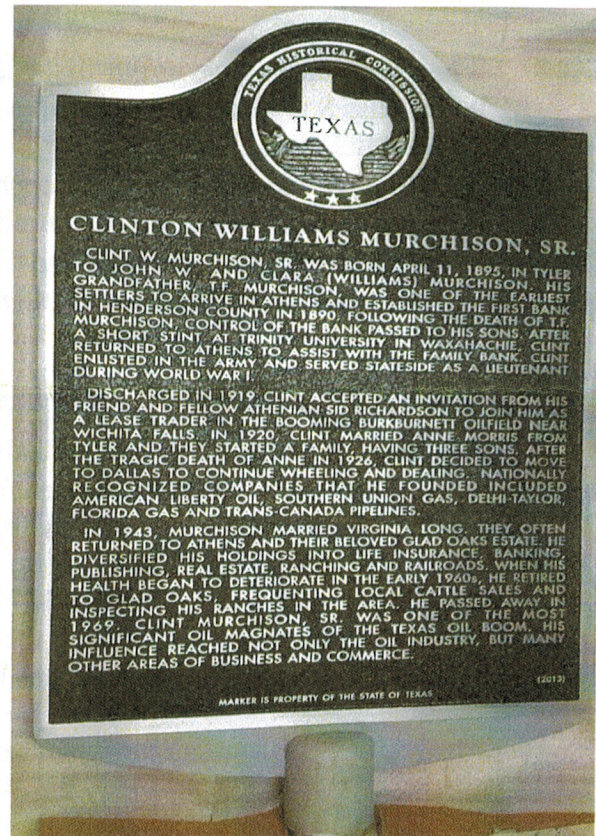
The Athens Cemetery would like to extend a special thanks to all our "Friends" that have supported the beautification of the cemetery.

**"Become a Friend in 2015!"**



# CLINTON WILLIAMS MURCHISON, SR. HISTORICAL MARKER DEDICATION

November 22, 2014



## Murchison Remembered

From Staff Reports of Athens Daily Review

A marker dedication commemorating the life of the late Clinton Williams Murchison, Sr. was held November 22 in Athens Cemetery.

The commemoration of Murchison, also known as Clint, was announced by the Texas Historical Commission and the Athens Cemetery Association.



Clint Murchison's grandson, Robert Murchison, told the audience at the commemoration that it was in June 1956 that his grandfather composed words for the 1956 Centennial Celebration Edition of the Athens Daily Review, an edition that would commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of Athens.

It read as follows:

"One hundred years is a long time in the memory of men, but a mere yesterday in the lives of communities and people.

"Our families set their roots in the soil and society of Athens over three generations ago. Our character and youthful ambitions were first nurtured in this environment.



“WE CAN REMEMBER -

When Dilsy Branch was chin deep to us;

When Dr. Bruce neither spared the rod, nor spoiled the child;

When Old Man Pickens had the best bunch of Red Polled cattle in East Texas;

When the Deen Hotel was the early winter meeting place of all bird hunters and their dogs;

When Will Henry gave us our first painful lesson in “hoss trading,”

When Miss Sally Coleman was still a bride.

“AND ABOVE ALL -

We will have and still cherish our memories of our youthful association with those fine old families whose righteous regard for truth and tolerance and charity shone as the brilliant star upon which we set our future destiny.

“Even though the old oak has yielded to the demands of time, it has left its seeds and the seeds have made their roots.

“We are proud to think that we will always be of those roots, and we want to congratulate those people who are so fortunate to be able to call Athens ‘MY HOME’, SID RICHARDSON, CLINT MURCHISON”.

Murchison was born in Athens in 1895, a decendent of Henderson and Smith County pioneer families. As a young man, he left the family banking business in Athens, and entered the wheeling and dealing of the new oil and gas business.



He eventually became one of the most significant oil magnates of the Texas Oil Boom. His influence reached not only the oil industry, but many other areas of business and commerce.

Robert Murchison termed the message he had read which was composed by his grandfather, as a “public love message to Athens.”

Robert said Clint Murchison had business partnerships with friends like Sid Richardson, Ike and E. B. LaRue, Wofford Cain and Arch Underwood, as well as siblings Frank, John W. and Kenneth.

“He helped many entrepreneurs like Bill Perryman, and financed Myer Donosky’s acquisition of the *Athens Daily Review*,” Robert said. “When a job needed to be done, it delighted him to hire a capable person from Athens.” Among those Robert named were Clem England, Ralph Briggs, Willie Franks, Gene Goodman, Ernie Shelton and Winston Nowlin.

Robert said that young Athens football players were given summer job opportunities to work on Clint’s pipeline construction crews, after which they went to his Dallas estate for pre-season practice.

Also mentioned by Robert were Clint Murchison’s grandchildren, Jimmy and Eunice Forester, who grew up with him..

Robert said “Pop” passed time by driving to his many area ranches and business interests with Warren Tilley at the wheel and Jimmy Forester in the back seat. “I am sure many of you will remember being stuck behind him on Highway 19 as they putted along at 35 miles per hour.”





Robert ended his speech at the commemoration by thanking those present, along with the community.

“Our family is grateful and thankful of how the City of Athens has honored the legacy of our grandfather by naming the library after him, and here we are once again commemorating his legacy with this historical marker: On behalf of the Murchison family, I’d like to thank the historical commissioners of Texas and Henderson County, the Cemetery Association, and Ginger Murchison’s foundation for making this dedication possible. I’d personally like to thank those who have helped me in the planning process - Mary Ann Perryman, Sarah Smith and Steve Grant, Finally, we would like to thank each of you for allowing us to call Athens “My Home.”

In his late years, Clint and his wife, Virginia, “Ginny” retired to his beloved Glad Oaks Ranch, where he enjoyed the country life. He died there in 1969.



**Clinton Williams Murchison, Sr.'s Descendants  
Historical Marker Dedication  
November 22, 2014**



# “A HISTORICAL SPOTLIGHT”

## Sid Williams Richardson (1891-1959)

There are many notable persons buried in our Athens Cemetery who contributed greatly to Athens, to Texas, and to the nation, but two of the most notable were Sid Williams Richardson and Clinton Williams Murchison, Sr., two of the wealthiest men in America.

Clinton Williams Murchison, Sr. was remembered on November 22 of this year with the dedication of an official Texas Historical Marker at his gravesite as chronicled elsewhere in this newsletter.

Sid Williams Richardson rests in an unimposing, simply marked grave in the Richardson plot located in the Pioneer Section of the cemetery.

Sid Williams Richardson was born in the Athens on April 25, 1891, the son of John Isadore and Nancy Bradley Richardson. His father was a farmer, trader and merchant and had a peach orchard where Sid and Clint Murchison picked peaches together during the harvest when they were youngsters. Sid attended school at Bruce Academy in Athens and his schoolmates and good friends included among others Wofford and John Cain, Clem England, Jimmy Forester, Will Paul Jones, Ike LaRue, Clint Murchison, and Arch Underwood. These boyhood friends would all contribute greatly to Athens and to Texas throughout their lives.

According to several sources, Sid, when 16 years old, got a job at the Athens cotton compress, but was fired later for “laziness”. But he had several hundred dollars and went to Ruston, Louisiana to buy calves. Buying several after negotiating the price down well below the market price, he shipped the calves back to Athens, sold them and tripled his money. And while a senior in high school the following year, he made \$3,500 trading cattle.

Deciding to attend college, Sid first attended Baylor University in Waco, but when his father died, he transferred to Simmons (now Hardin-Simmons in Abilene). When his money ran out, he returned to Athens and became an oil well supply salesman and soon graduated to oil scout and lease purchaser. By 1917, he could list himself as an independent oil producer and had moved to Ft. Worth.

His finances fluctuated widely, and he accumulated wealth and lost it several times during the 1920s. In the early 1930s, his debts topped \$1 million by all accounts. But he was well established as a millionaire by 1935 when he opened up the rich Keystone oilfield in Winkler County and eventually operated 80 wells there. He individually leased more oil land than did several major oil companies, operated three cattle ranches, and owned the Texas State Network, a carbon black plant in Odessa, and the Texas City Refining Company.

In 1936, Sid Richardson purchased San Jose Island (also known as St. Joseph’s Island), an island about five miles from Rockport and about 30 miles up the coast from Corpus Christi, accessible only by plane or boat. The *Athens Review* reported in 1937 that he was investing from \$250,000 to \$300,000 in new buildings for his ranch which covered the entire island. \$100,000 was for the only home he ever owned which included 16 rooms and seven baths and would serve as his home when away from Ft. Worth. Included in the construction was a new stable for saddle horses and six or more large cattle barns. Sid’s nephew, Perry Bass of Wichita Falls, was reported to be in charge of the construction.

Sid Richardson was also concerned that the Longhorn of early Texas history might become extinct. He persuaded writer, J. Frank Dobie, and several cattle inspectors to select a herd of Longhorns for preservation. Through the years, the number of offspring of the initial



herd has grown, and they can be found today grazing at San Jose and at a number of state parks including Lake Corpus Christi and Fort Griffin.

Richardson was a friend of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Dwight Eisenhower and Senator Lyndon B. Johnson, who visited him at his home on San Jose Island at one time or another during their trips to Texas. In turn, they entertained Sid when he was in Washington. He was also a friend of Roosevelt's son, Elliott, who had moved to Ft. Worth and with whom he had several joint business dealings. Elliott Roosevelt was fond of fishing and would stay at Richardson's home on the island when he came to fish in the Gulf.

Sid Richardson almost never talked to newsmen and would seldom give interviews. Nevertheless, he was featured in magazines such as Time and Look on occasion, described as the "billionaire bachelor" (he never married) though it is doubtful if his holdings ever reached a billion. But with so much of his wealth in underground oil reserves, it was hard to put an accurate figure on his wealth.

He was always mindful of his Athens roots and was generous in assisting local endeavors from time to time. For instance, in 1938 he gave enough money to Athens High School so that the band could purchase much needed musical instruments. And in 1959, he contributed \$100,000 to the building fund of the First Baptist Church of Athens, where he was baptized at age 12 and where he continued to be a member until his death. The money was used to build a new auditorium at the church and was named for his mother, Nancy Bradley Richardson, who was a devoted member there for over 40 years.

Regarding his reputation as a tireless deal maker, Mr. Richardson was once quoted as saying, "Only one thing I know...I'll still be tradin' when they bury me." As he predicted, after arriving at San Jose Island from his office in Ft. Worth, he died quietly in his sleep of an apparent heart attack on September 30, 1959, after a full day of activities.

Funeral services were held at the Broadway Baptist Church in Ft. Worth, conducted by Rev. H. Guy Moore and assisted by Evangelist Billy Graham. A business associate said Richardson and Graham had been good friends for about 11 years.

He was extolled by Rev. Dr. Graham as a businessman of honesty and integrity, a loyal Texan, a patriotic American, a philanthropist who preferred no publicity and, in his own way, a man of deep religion.

A dramatic personal farewell was made by Graham at the end of the eulogy. Leaning from the pulpit, which was adorned with a white floral cross sent by President and Mrs. Eisenhower, Graham looked at the casket and said: "To you, Mr. Sid, you have been a wonderful friend. We love you and we don't say goodbye. As the French say, 'Till we meet again.'"

Senator Lyndon B. Johnson and Speaker Sam Rayburn attended the funeral. Col. Robert Schultz, military aide to President Eisenhower and a friend of Richardson represented the President. Members of the Ft. Worth City Council recessed their meeting and attended, along with scores of prominent Texans.

He was survived by two sisters, Mrs. E. P. Bass of Ft. Worth and Mrs. Howell E. Smith of Dallas; his nephew and business partner, Perry R. Bass, and a niece, Mrs. James B. Kirksmith of Dallas.

Graveside rites were held later at the Athens Cemetery, conducted by the Rev. Lee Ramsour, Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Athens.

**Contributed by Art Hall  
Athens Cemetery Board Member & Historian**



## NEW WATER WELL



2014 brought a wonderful development/benefit for the cemetery. A 725' Wilcox water well was completed that will serve the irrigation needs of the cemetery for years to come. The Athens Cemetery Association would like to thank the Richardson Trust, the Athens Historical Preservation Corporation and other donors for their tremendous support of this endeavor.

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## PLAN GIVING

Originating in 1858, the Athens Cemetery has been generously supported through space sales, donations and other special gifts.

Through tax and estate planning, many individuals have realized a taxable advantage to their estate through donating a portion of their estate to charitable entities like the Athens Cemetery Association, Inc., a 501(c)(13) non-profit organization.

Donations made in this manner, not only offer the potential to minimize federal estate taxes, but provide a tremendous benefit to the maintenance and long term sustainability of the cemetery.

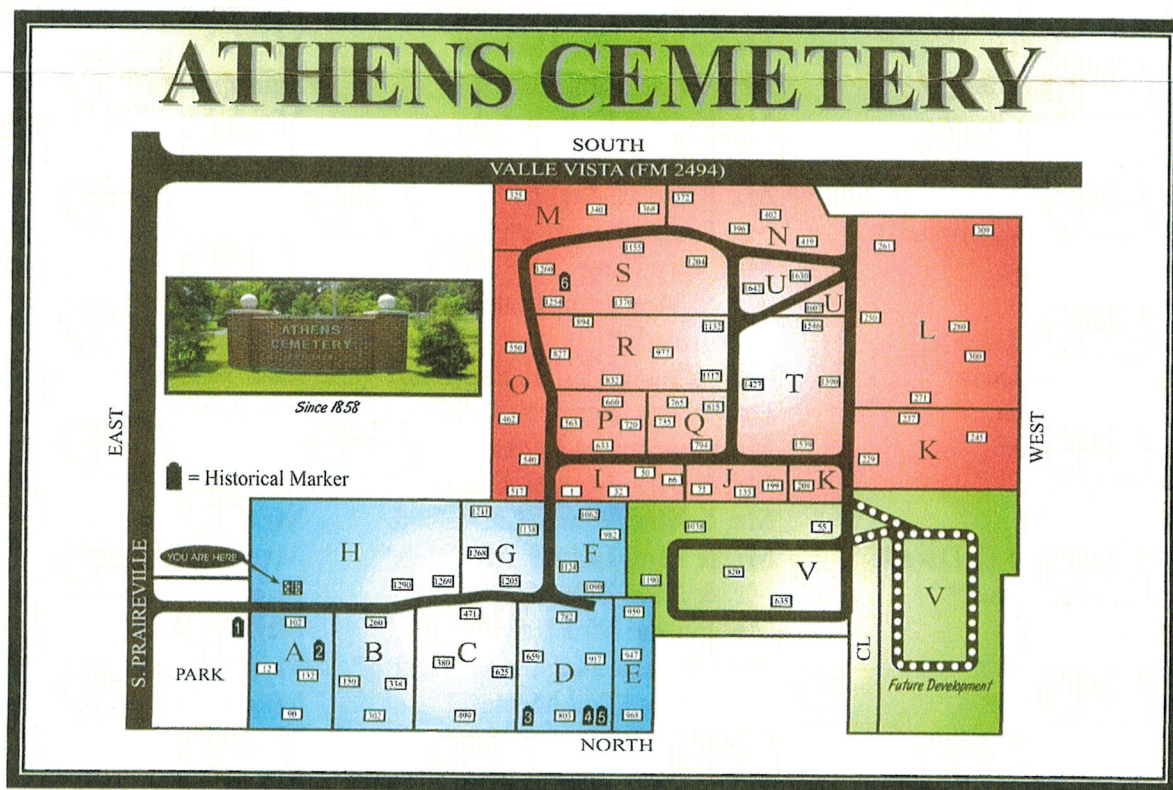
If interested, please consult your tax professional to see if this would be a benefit to you.



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. Donations from the "Friends" are used for the beautification and permanent improvement to the cemetery.

4,000 lots are available including cremation lots and columbarium niches. Call Cemetery Liaison, Bobby Glass, at (903)477-7281 for further information.



#### Space Prices:

Principal and Historic Section - \$1,100.00

Celtic Cross Section - \$1,450.00

Multi-Lot Family Section - \$1,100 to \$1,450 per space (burial spaces sold in groups of 8 or more)

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

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

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*"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."*



# 2014

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