



ATHENS CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

2023 NEWSLETTER

ATHENS CEMETERY IS A DESIGNATED STATE HISTORICAL CEMETERY
ESTABLISHED IN 1858

ATHENS CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Steve Grant, President

Steve Sparkman,
Vice President/Treasurer

Lynne Stultz, Secretary

Randy Daniel, Member

Charles A. Hawn, Member

John Cain, Member

Chip Perryman, Member

Kay King, Member

JoAnne McElroy, Member

Cemetery Liaison

Jim Rogers

(972)965-1205



HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Vol. 22, December 2023

ABOUT US

The Athens Cemetery Association is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to maintain and preserve our historic cemetery.

OUR MISSION

We are dedicated to being good stewards to guarantee that the cemetery remains a sanctuary for reflection, meditation, and a celebration of past and future generations.

OUR STRATEGY

The challenge is being met through lot sales, interments, special donations, and planned giving arrangements.

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

In 2023, the Athens Cemetery Association celebrated its 102nd anniversary of maintaining and supporting the historic Athens Cemetery (Est. in 1858). Part of the celebration included the annual Memorial Day Ceremony held on May 29, 2023.



MEMORIAL DAY REMEMBRANCE

On Monday, May 29, 2023 at 11:30 a. m. a Memorial Day Dedication Ceremony was held in front of the Veterans Memorial Wall at the cemetery.

Henderson County Sheriff's Office Chief Deputy Kevin Halbert was the keynote speaker of our annual event. Halbert, as well as each of his brothers, served in the United States Marine Corps and is all too familiar with the sacrifices of those who wore our nation's military uniform into battle.

Many thanks to the following participants in the program who contributed so much to this special remembrance.

- **Invocation**—Father Mathew M. Frick Vicar - Saint Matthias Episcopal Church of Athens
- **Presentation of Colors**—Henderson County Sheriff Department Color Guard
- **Pledge of Allegiance**—The Daughters of the American Revolution-Daniel McMahon Chapter
- **National Anthem**—Nickie DuBose (Soprano) and Janis Capelle (Alto) with sound technician, Ken Scofield.
- **Keynote Speaker**—Kevin Halbert, Henderson County Sheriff's Office Chief Deputy
- **Raising of the Flag**—Boy Scout Troop #343 of the Athens Methodist Church
- **Playing of "Taps"**— Jack Cowart



WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA—

This December 16, 2023, volunteers will come together for the fifth year to pay tribute to the approximately 650 veterans laid to rest in the Athens Cemetery. In addition, the Oaklawn Cemetery as well as the Athens North Cemetery will take part in what has become an annual local tradition.

The beautiful handmade Christmas wreaths are donated by loved ones, local businesses and service organizations and will help fulfill the mission of Wreaths Across America to “REMEMBER, HONOR AND TEACH.”

A ceremony of appreciation will begin at 11:00 a. m. and will coincide with the national effort which starts at the Arlington National Cemetery at noon EST. Volunteers at more than 3,000 locations across 50 states, at sea and around the globe, will take part in the annual remembrance. More information is found at wreathsassamerica.org/tx0725. If donating, please be sure to reference the local location TXATHC and Group ID #0725. This insures the wreaths are credited to the local effort.



Here is a little of the story of how Wreaths Across America came to be. I think you will find it very interesting. Much of this information is taken from the National website.

“One man's annual tribute to our veterans inspired a legion of volunteers and gave rise to the Wreaths Across America of today”

“Morrill Worcester, owner of [Worcester Wreath Company](http://WorcesterWreathCompany.com) of Harrington, Maine, was a 12 year old paper boy for the Bangor Daily News when he won a trip to Washington D.C. His first trip to our nation's capital was one he would never forget, and Arlington National Cemetery made an especially indelible impression on him. This experience followed him throughout his life and successful career, reminding him that his good fortune was due, in large part, to the values of this nation and the veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

In 1992, Worcester Wreath Company found themselves with a surplus of wreaths nearing the end of the holiday season. Remembering his boyhood experience at Arlington, Worcester realized he had an opportunity to honor our country's veterans. With the aid of Maine Senator Olympia Snowe, arrangements were made for the wreaths to be placed at Arlington in one of the older sections of the cemetery that had been receiving fewer visitors with each passing year.

As plans were underway, a number of other individuals and organizations stepped up to help. James Prout, owner of local trucking company Blue Bird Ranch, Inc., generously provided transportation all the way to Virginia. Volunteers from the local American Legion and VFW Posts gathered with members of the community to decorate each wreath with traditional red, hand-tied bows. Members of the Maine State Society of Washington, D.C. helped to organize the wreath-laying, which included a special ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

The annual tribute went on quietly for several years, until 2005, when a photo of the stones at Arlington, adorned with wreaths and covered in snow, circulated around the internet. Suddenly, the project received national attention. Thousands of requests poured in from all over the country from people wanting to help with Arlington, to emulate the Arlington project at their National and State cemeteries, or to simply share their stories and thank Morrill Worcester for honoring our nation's heroes.

In 2007, the Worcester family, along with veterans, and other groups and individuals who had helped with their annual veterans wreath ceremony in Arlington, formed Wreaths Across America, a non-profit 501-(c)(3) organization, to continue and expand this effort, and support other groups around the country who wanted to do the same.

Each December on National Wreaths Across America Day, our mission to Remember, Honor and Teach is carried out by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery, as well as at more than 2,100 additional locations in all 50 U.S. states, at sea and abroad.”



HISTORICAL SPOTLIGHT

CLEANING UP OUR HISTORY

Refurbishing Commemorative Markers in the Athens Cemetery by Anne Adams

On a recent October Saturday morning, when several Athens residents could be doing tasks on their weekend list, instead they gathered at the Athens Cemetery to take part in an important community project. In short, they were there to clean up history—literally. And that means there were going to refurbish the various gravestones and historical markers there.

This work is necessary because before they can commemorate these persons their markers must be readable. However, the ravages of time, debris and especially organic growth has frequently obliterated and obscured the marker's lettering and symbols. Thus the various markers—metal state-type tablets, originally pristine gravestones and especially the marble grave markers—have become smudged. Also, there are other obscuring factors. For example, if a stone is located adjacent to a pine tree it can acquire a spattering of tar and stains from the neighborhood growth. Another hazard to marker perpetuation is occasionally when a stone slab for various reasons cracks or even separates into pieces. Also, when this happens it means there must be careful preservation methods.

So who are these workers? They are members of the Daniel McMahon Chapter NSDAR (National Society of Daughters of the American Revolution) and the Athens chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution, and they are part of a joint project to commemorate the honorees whose stones are being cleaned up.

DAR Regent (president) Marie Hickman described their reasoning. Project participants, she said, "...feel the history of our nation, state and city is important to everyone's future and cleaning/refurbishing markers and gravestones honors our ancestors."

So how do they locate a potential marker and what's actually involved in the process? Mrs. Hickman continued: "We drive around and look at the markers, to see what wear and tear they have." They also consult the state-issued marker guide and using this they check the marker's erection date. "I looked for those that were installed 20 or more years ago," Mrs. Hickman said, "...most of the ones in the Athens Cemetery fit into that timeframe."

So after they locate and identify the markers to be refurbished then they set to work using special products. One of these, according to Mrs. Hickman, is "D2" which is "made especially to remove stains from, mold, mildew, algae, lichens and air pollutants." It's not only non-toxic but also biodegradable and is safe for plants and wildlife. The product, she related, "works with the elements and takes up to several weeks to months depending on the severity of the stain." Made in the U.S., it's approved by the National Cemetery to maintain the marble stones for Veterans."

Another product is called "Wet and Forget" where the refurbisher sprays the product on the stone, then leaves it to clean the surface.

These products are most often used on stone grave markers, but the metal state historical markers have their own state-recommended cleaning regimen. Also, unlike the individual grave markers which commemorate one person and are placed by the family, the state historical markers are different. They honor a particular prominent person and/or event and are erected only after approval of their purpose and their historical accuracy from the State Historical Commission. Also, individuals can purchase a marker for \$2,600 apiece. In addition, according to Mrs. Hickman, "There are over 120 markers just in Henderson County, with many thousands more in Texas."

According to the state recommendations for historical markers, the refurbisher begins by using a stiff brush to clean off flaking, and sometimes utilizes a sharp tool to clean out individual letters. Then comes use of soft bristle brush to do further cleaning, particularly the debris around the letters. Next the refurbisher uses soap and water for total cleaning, then dries it with the towels and allows it to dry. However, stone grave markers that have become cracked or broken are gently cleaned and not scrubbed.

When Athens was first settled in the 1850s one of the earliest burying grounds in Athens when it was first settled in the 1850s and it began as a Masonic cemetery. As recorded in the 2003 Newsletter on their website (athenscemetery.com), when the daughter of a Mason passed away and she could not be buried in the Masonic graveyard, the man who had originally donated the cemetery land provided adjacent land for burial of the girls and other non-Masons. Apparently the location of this land is unknown today but as more burials were made over the next few years the city of Athens maintained the property. Until 1900 upkeep was to be maintained by families of those buried there and other organizations. Then about 1922 the Athens Cemetery Association was formed to maintain the property and to manage future burials.

But what makes Mrs. Hickman and her associates become refurbishers of history? She explains; "I think that once you stand back and look at the Historical Marker, you have a sense of pride and accomplishment. Because I am not from Athens, but it is my home now, I have learned many things about the markers and their importance."

Perhaps the best description of the Athens Cemetery and by extension these commemorative grave and state markers is from the 1929 Henderson County history by Judge J. J. Faulk. He said about the cemetery; "Here can be seen the last resting place of practically all of the old pioneers who laid the foundation for this beautiful little city. Is it too late to return thanks to them for the hardships and inconveniences they underwent that we might enjoy the blessings and comforts which are ours now?"

So it could be said that refurbishing the markers in that cemetery is a way to remember those who came before.

SCENES FROM THE ATHENS CEMETERY

Perhaps you know that the Athens Cemetery has been designated a Historical Cemetery by the State of Texas. There is a marker designating this at the main entrance gate of the cemetery on South Prairieville Street.

There are nine state designated historical markers within its boundaries, one for the cemetery itself and others to honor eight notable individuals. These markers are on the graves of the following people who contributed to the growth and success of Athens and Henderson County: Mrs. Dulcinea Ann Holland Thompson Avriett, Clinton Williams "Clint" Murchison, Sr., Rupert Talmadge Craig, John Matthews McDonald and Joseph Thomas LaRue, Stella Parsons LaRue, Sid W. Richardson and Virginia L. "Ginger" Murchison.

The Board of the Athens Cemetery encourages you to visit these graves and markers on your next trip to the cemetery. You will indeed learn something you did not know about these pioneers and leaders of our city and county.



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

The general maintenance and upkeep of the grounds and monuments is conducted on an ongoing basis including additions of the veterans' names to the Veterans' Memorial and regular cleaning and removal of worn out flowers.

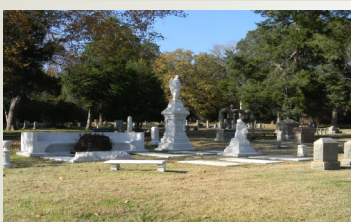
The Athens Cemetery would like to extend a special thanks to all our "Friends" who have supported the beautification of the cemetery.

As the Athens Cemetery completes its 165th year as this community's premier memorial grounds, the Cemetery Association completes 102 years of care for this landmark. In an effort to stay relevant and up to date with our changing world, the association has created a website, www.athenstxcemetery.com. This tool, along with our other public relations, are meant to keep everyone up to date with the life of the cemetery.

Operating as a nonprofit organization, the cemetery relies on the continued generosity of friends like you. Please help us continue our commitment of service and upkeep by considering a gift of your donation. Use the included slip and envelope to send in your check or use a credit card by going online to www.athenstxcemetery.com. Once there you will find a DONATE button at the bottom of every page.

We are also trying to update our contact list for all of our friends. Please send us your most current contact information. Include your mailing address, cell phone number and email address so that we can stay in touch with you. The enclosed slip may be used when you make your contribution by mail or you can email us this information to info@athenstxcemetery.com. If you know any one who would be interested in receiving these updates, please include them too.

The Athens Cemetery is dedicated to maintaining and enhancing the hallowed grounds of the Athens Cemetery and is committed to its preservation for the benefit of present and future generations.



4,000 spaces are available including cremation spaces columbarium niches. Call Cemetery Liaison, Jim Rogers, at (972)965-1205 or visit our website at www.athenstxcemetery.com for further information.

ANNUAL FINANCES

Annual budget needs for the maintenance and upkeep of the Athens Cemetery fall between \$60,000 and \$70,000 per year.

Funding of the cemetery is done through space and columbarium sales, interment fees and donations. Your gift does make a difference!

PLANNED GIVING



Originating in 1858, the Athens Cemetery has been generously supported through space sales, donations and other special gifts. Costs to operate the cemetery include tree trimming, weekly mowing and pick up, utilities, irrigation wells and system upkeep, insurance, automatic gate expenses and other updates.

Through tax and estate planning, many individuals have realized a tax advantage to their estate by 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 are of tremendous benefit to the maintenance and long term sustainability of the cemetery.

INVEST IN THE FUTURE OF THE ATHENS CEMETERY — DONATE TODAY!

BY PHONE TO OUR OFFICE—

Cemetery Office Voicemail

(903)386-3513

BY PHONE TO—

Jim Rogers

our Cemetery Liaison

(972)965-1205

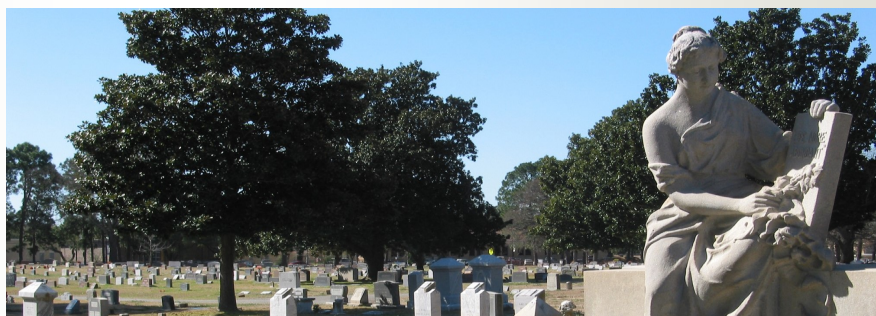
BY EMAIL TO—

info@athenstxcemetery.com

ON OUR WEBSITE—

www.athenstxcemetery.com

Find us and “Like” us
on our Facebook page for additional
and current information.



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 upon lot sales, interments, donations and planned giving in order to operate. Costs to maintain the cemetery are ongoing and have continued to increase, but the challenge has been met thanks to the generous financial support of individuals and businesses. Without their support, it would be very difficult to maintain the cemetery in a manner fit to honor those interred there.

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 remembrance for past and future generations.

Donations can be mailed to the Athens Cemetery Association at P. O. Box 1296, Athens, Texas 75751, or made online by credit card at www.athenstxcemetery.com. A donation button is located at the bottom of each page for your convenience. For additional information, please visit our website or email us at info@athenstxcemetery.com.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

Our sincerest thanks to:

Mr. Carl Adams
Mr. John M. Adams
Andrews & Foster Drilling Co.
Erhart & Abby (Holland) Asaad
Mrs. William Ayers
Mr. & Mrs. Larry Babb
Mr. & Mrs. Jack Bailey
The Family of Melvin Bateman
Mrs. Ron Baugh
Ms. Gail Baum
Ms. Susan Beaird
Mr. and Mrs. Donald Bennett
Ms. Linda Berger
Ms. Diane Bergman
Mr. William D. Berry
Rosa Lee Bishop
Mr. Bill Bledsoe
Mr. Richard Bolle
Ms. Jane Frizzell Boyd
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Branscum
Mrs. Jimmy Brooks
Mr. Dennis G. Brown
Mr. John H. Brown
Mr. & Mrs. Stephen T. Brown III
Mr. Mike Cade
Mr. & Mrs. John Cain
The Cain Foundation
The Family of Shirley M. Calhoun
Ms. Esparanza Campa
Mrs. Donny Campbell
Ms. Yazmin Carreon
Mr. Marlin Castleberry
Mr. Richard L. Chambers
Mr. Billy Cissell
Barbara Coffman
Mr. Charles Cole
Mr. & Mrs. James Conley
Ms. Deanne Cope
Mr. & Mrs. Don Copeland
Ms. Nora Cortez
The Tim Crecelius Family
Ms. Joanne Crout
The Honorable Judge & Mrs.
Randy Daniel
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Dunn
Mr. & Mrs. David Deas
Mr. Michael C. Dean
Mr. Jack Dempsey
Mr. Wofford Denius
Mr. & Mrs. Bruce Dingler
Mrs. Frieda Doolen
Mrs. Tony Douglas
Mr. Dan Dwelle
Dr. & Mrs. Earl Estep
Mr. Bob Farmer
Mrs. Earlene Farrell
Ms. Jeanette Ferguson
Mr. and Mrs. Larry Fitzhugh
Mr. & Mrs. Randall Fleming

Mrs. Betty Andrews Foster
Mr. Donald Foster, II
Mr. & Mrs. Bruce Galleger
Mr. & Mrs. Gregoria Galvan
Mr. Salas Garcia
The Family of Ken Geeslin
Ms. Elizabeth Gentry & Mr. Brandon Staggs
Mr. & Mrs. Bobby Glass
Ms. Barbara Goczoll
Mrs. Peggy Gould
Ms. Mary Ann Grady
Mr. & Mrs. Steve Grant
Mr. Art Hall
Mr. Donald Hall
Hannigan Smith Funeral Home
Mrs. Rose M. Harpool
Mr. Clint D. Hart
S. Vincent Hash
Mr. Joe Hawn, Jr.
Mr. C. A. Hawn
Mr. Harry D. Hawn
Ms. Ladona Hensley
Ms. Teresa Hererra
Mr. & Mrs. R. E. Herrington
Mrs. Patricia Herring
Ms. Dolores Herrington
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Hocutt
Mr. and Mrs. Alan Holland
Mr. Grey Holland
The Family of Judge Jack Holland
Mr. Marshall Holland
Mrs. Mildred Holland
Mrs. Richard Holland
Mr. Will Holland
Ms. Betty Hollowell
Ms. April Holt
Mr. & Mrs. C. Glenn Hood
Mr. & Mrs. Billy Dan Hope
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Hudson
Ms. Kay Hundley
Ms. Billie Neill Hutton
Ms. Beverly Jackson
Mr. Peter Jedrzynski
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Jenkins
Mr. Gainey Johnson
Col. Robert E. Joiner
Ms. Pat Jones
Mr. & Mrs. Walter E. Judge
Ms. Ellen Justice
Mr. & Mrs. Bruce Kelley
Mr. W. H. Keyworth
Ms. Kathy Killingsworth
The Family of Lester
Kinabrew, Jr.
Ms. Kay King
Mr. & Mrs. J. L. Lahourcade
Ms. Eleanor Landrum
Ms. Joyce B. LaRue

Mr. Eddie Lassiter
Mr. & Mrs. Don Lawyer
Mr. & Mrs. Leo C. Lee
The Family of Aaron Lemmon
Dr. & Mrs. Kenneth Lemmon
The Honorable & Mrs.
Matt Livingston
Ms. Charmaine Locke
Mrs. Max E. Logan
Ms. Holly Long
Mr. & Mrs. Bobby J. Lorance
Mr. & Mrs. Hugh Lucas
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Lunceford
Mr. Jaime Mancio
Ms. Barbara Martin
Mr. Joe Masso & Family
Mrs. Bob McDonald
Ms. JoAnne McElroy
Mr. Ronny McElroy
Mr. Pete McGee
Ms. Sandra McGee
Ms. Sandra Sawyer McLevoy
Mr. David McMichael
Mr. & Mrs. Richard McVicker
Georgia and Jim Melton
The Family of Lt. Col. Jim T.
Meredith, USAF, Ret.
Mr. Martin Meredith
Dr. C. Ted Mettetal
Mr. & Mrs. Clifford Miercort
Mr. & Mrs. John Miles
Ms. Betty Miller
Ms. Nancy Mills
Ms. Michelle Pope Mills
Mrs. Mary J. Mirdo
The Honorable & Mrs.
Dan Moore
Mr. & Mrs. Randall Morse
Mr. & Mrs. John Morton
Clint W. Murchison, III
Mr. Kenneth Murchison, III
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Murchison
Mr. R. F. "Bear" Murchison, Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. Lonnie Murphy
James Ogburn, Jr., M.D.
Mr. & Mrs. Michael
O'Shaughnessy
Mrs. Maxine Pagitt
Mr. & Mrs. William M. Parsons
Pearce Construction Co.
Mrs. Charles M. Peek
Mrs. Elizabeth Pence
Mr. & Mrs. Phillip Pence
Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Pence
Ms. Dolores Perkins
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Perkins
Mrs. Mary Ann Perryman
Mrs. Thomas E. Perryman
Mr. & Mrs. W. C. Perryman, III
Ms. Marilyn Perryman
Mr. & Mrs. Albert Phillips

Mr. & Mrs. Clyde Pine
Mr. Bobby G. Porter
Mr. & Mrs. Danny R. Potter
Ms. Melissa Qualls
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Ragland
Mr. & Mrs. Lloyd Ray
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Richards
Mr. & Mrs. David Ring
Ms. Heather Roberts
Ms. Jill Robinson
Mr. & Mrs. Jed Robinson, Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. William D. Rogers
Ms. Ann Rounsavall
Estate of Charles M. Sanders, Jr.
The Family of Richard Sanders
Ms. Claudia Santos
Mr. John R. Sawyer
Mr. Robert D. Schneider
Mr. Stephen Sharpe
Mr. & Mrs. Lloyd Shelton
Mr. & Mrs. Gregory Shumpert
Mr. Thomas D. Simmons
Ms. Patricia Simpson
Mrs. Garrett O. Smith
Mrs. Kelly Smith
Ms. Liz Smith
Mr. & Mrs. Trevanion M. Smith
Mr. Caddo Smith
Ms. Diane Slaton
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Spann
Mr. & Mrs. S. R. Sparkman
Ms. Geneva Stelling
Ms. Nannette M. Stelter
Mrs. Garry L. Stewart
Mr. & Mrs. John Stultz
Mr. Jim Summers
Mr. Douglas Tanner
Mr. & Mrs. Terry Taylor
Mr. Terry Teems
The Family of Gil Traverse
Mr. Donald Tyler
Mr. Rob Tyner
Ms. Carol Ann Wallace
Mr. & Mrs. Pat Wallace
Mr. Bill Ward
Ms. Mary Faye Ward
Mr. Joe Warren
Ms. Lela S. Warren
Ms. Donna Walton
Mr. & Mrs. Donald Weibel
Mr. & Mrs. Tim Wheeler
Mr. & Mrs. Sam Whitten
Ms. Vicki Williamson
Mr. & Mrs. Bob Williford
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Wood
Wofford Cemetery
Mrs. Mary Margaret Wright
Mr. Jesus Zanala



ATHENS CEMETERY ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 1296
ATHENS, TEXAS 75751



HISTORICAL QUIOTE: Judge Faulk, a prominent historical figure in Henderson County, pinned the following quote in 1929 in the *History of Henderson County* in regards to the cemetery:

"Here can be seen the last resting place of practically all of the old pioneers who laid the foundation for this beautiful little city. It is not too late to return thanks for them for the hardships and inconveniences they endured that we might enjoy the blessing and comfort which are ours now!"

Judge Faulk's words are as appropriate today as they were in 1929.

ADDRESS: P.O. Box 1296, Athens, TX 75751 - TEL: (903)386-3513 - WEB: www.athenstxcemetery.com