

FRIENDS OF THE CEMETERY

A newsletter sponsored by the
Athens Cemetery Association

Vol. 4

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NEW SOUTH GATE COMPLETED



**A GIFT FROM
FRIENDS OF THE CEMETERY
JULY, 2005**

The new south gate (some call it the "back gate") shown above has been constructed at the Valle Vista entrance to the cemetery and is now in use. This is another example of the beautification projects that are funded entirely by the **Friends of the Cemetery**. The new gate, which was designed and constructed under the direction and supervision of cemetery board member Bob McDonald, represents a significant improvement over the old gate.

This is another beautification project funded entirely through the **Friends of the Cemetery**. It is through your continuing generosity that the cemetery association can plan and realize additional projects in the future. If you have not yet joined the **Friends**, please consider doing so now. And to those of you who have already become a **Friend of the Cemetery**, thank you for your continuing support which makes these beautification projects possible.

NEXT PROJECT

As you have probably noticed, the fence along the southern perimeter of the cemetery is an old, chain-link fence that has seen better days. For our next **Friends of the Cemetery** project, we would like to replace this aging fence with a decorative wrought iron fence similar to the one at the main entrance on South Prairieville St. As the cost to replace the entire length of this old fence is approximately \$6,000 to \$7,000, we may need to replace only one half of it until such time as additional funding from the **Friends** is available.

COLUMBARIUM?

One of the issues the cemetery association has been considering is whether or not to construct a columbarium at the cemetery. As you know, a columbarium is a vault with niches in which to place urns holding cremation remains. With more and more persons now electing cremation instead of traditional burial, it has been suggested that our cemetery may need a columbarium to continue to meet the needs of Athens and the surrounding area.

Of course, burial plots are currently available in the cemetery for cremation remains, but a number of persons considering cremation have expressed an interest in having their or their loved one's remains placed in an above ground vault.

As the cost of constructing a columbarium is substantial, we would not want to undertake such a capital expenditure unless there was enough interest to justify the expense. Please take a minute to contact one of the board members listed on the next page to express your thoughts on the subject. Thank you.

NEW HISTORICAL MARKER

The Texas Historical Commission has approved an historical marker to be erected at the gravesite of John Matthews McDonald. The marker chronicles many of the accomplishments of this remarkable man and reads as follows:

JOHN MATTHEWS McDONALD

NORTH CAROLINA-BORN JOHN MATTHEWS McDONALD (1827-1883) CAME TO TEXAS IN 1848 AND LIVED FIRST AT LARISSA, CHEROKEE CO. AND THEN MOUND PRAIRIE, ANDERSON CO., WHERE HIS BROTHER MURDOCH EARLIER SETTLED. TWO YEARS LATER, HE MOVED TO THE YOUNG TOWN OF ATHENS AND BECAME A TEACHER AND A LAWYER. HE ALSO SERVED AS THE TOWN'S FIRST MAYOR. HE WED MARY ANN ELIZABETH PINSON (1842-1931) IN 1858, AND THE COUPLE HAD TEN CHILDREN. DURING THE CIVIL WAR, McDONALD FOUGHT WITH THE CONFEDERATE ARMY AS PART OF HOOD'S TEXAS BRIGADE. ACTIVE IN PUBLIC SERVICE, HE HELD THE OFFICES OF JUSTICE OF THE PEACE, COUNTY JUDGE AND STATE REPRESENTATIVE. HIS PIONEER LEADERSHIP PROVED VITAL TO THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF HIS ADOPTED HOME.

A dedication ceremony for this Official Texas Historical Marker will be scheduled for April or May of 2006, and will be held in conjunction with the Henderson County Historical Commission.

WILLS and TOMBSTONES (some humorous, some sad)

Sometimes the personality of a person shines through in his will or on his tombstone. The following are excerpts from actual wills and tombstones.

In his will, Alexander Spence left nothing to his wife "*only allowing her now wearing apparel for her paraphernalia.*" In other words, he left her the clothes on her back and nothing more.

Heinrich Heine in his will left his wife all of his assets on the condition she remarry "*because then there will be at least one man to regret my death.*"

Christopher Hoomes in his will came to grips with his wayward lifestyle and made ready for his exit from this world. He identified the illegitimate child he had by his first mistress and seven additional children he had by his second mistress with whom he was cohabiting. He specified that his current mistress, Elizabeth Freeman, was to be allowed to live on the land he had given to her sons *"so long as she remains chaste and unmarried."*

Old tombstones sometime reflect a person's personality or character and sometime how the person met his or her demise. Some are humorous and some are sad, but all tell a story. Here are a few examples from old graveyards.

**"Abial Ledoyt son
of Jacob & Polly Perkins
who was drowned August 17, 1826
aged 13 years & 14 days
THIS BLOOMING YOUTH IN HEALTH
MOST FAIR
TO HIS UNCLE'S MILL-POND DID
REPAIR
UNDRESSED HIMSELF AND SO
PLUNGED IN
BUT NEVER DID COME OUT AGAIN"**

Next to Capt. Mathias Marin, U.S.N., 1818-1895, lies the body of his dog.

**"Faithful Unto Death
My Friend
Jack Hammett
The Best of Dogs
Aged 11 Years
IN LIFE EVER AT MY SIDE, ALWAYS
READY TO COMFORT AND PROTECT
ME. DYING AT MY FEET IN HIS OLD
AGE, HE NOW RESTS BESIDE THE ONE
HE LOVED.
CEASE CARPING FOOLS YOUR GIBES
AND SNEERS
A TRUE AND FAITHFUL FRIEND RESTS
HERE.
HE LOVED HIS MASTER, TO HIM WAS
TRUE:
CAN THE RECORDING ANGEL SAY THIS
OF YOU?"**

**"James Anthony
son of
James & Elizabeth Anthony
For eighteen years attached
To the United States Navy
Died Dec. 9, 1857**

**In the 73 year of his age.
HE SPENT HIS LIFE UPON THE SEA
FIGHTING FOR THE NATION
HE DOUBLED HIS ENJOYMENT
BY DOUBLING ALL HIS RATIONS"**

**"Capt. Samuel
Jones Leg which
Was amputated
July 7, 1804"**

(Later the captain moved to another location, where the rest of him is buried.)

**"Josiah Haines
Died May 29, 1838
Age 60**

**HE WAS A BLESSING TO THE SAINTS,
TO SINNERS RICH AND POOR,
HE WAS A KIND AND WORTH MAN
HE'S GONE TO BE NO MORE.
HE KEPT THE FAITH UNTIL THE END
AND LEFT THE WORLD IN PEACE;
HE DID NOT FOR A DOCTOR SEND
NOR FOR A HIRELING PRIEST."**

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Should you have any questions or suggestions concerning our cemetery, please contact one of the directors.

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