



Established in 1858

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**Athens Cemetery
Association**
P. O. Box 1296
Athens, Texas 75751
(903)675-9203

FRIENDS OF THE CEMETERY

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Athens Cemetery Association

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ATHENS CEMETERY NEWS



ATHENS CEMETERY DEDICATES INFORMATION CENTER AND COMPLETES ROAD PRESERVATION PROJECT

The Athens Cemetery recently dedicated the information center located at the entrance of the Cemetery on South Prairieville Street in Athens. This dedication was an accumulation of a two-year effort to create a permanent location that provides information regarding the location of burials and the layout of the Cemetery.

In addition, the road system of the Cemetery was improved and sealed to insure that the roadways throughout the Cemetery will continue to be functional.

The information center is dedicated as a tribute to Frank and Betty Hollowell for their efforts in mapping and preserving the locations of burials. "Frank and Betty Hollowell spent hours and hours indexing individual grave sites", said Bob McDonald, Board Member of the Cemetery. "The gift to the cemetery provided by Frank and Betty Hollowell greatly enhances our historical cemetery, and their efforts will benefit generations to come" McDonald added.

In addition to the index, there is a map located inside the walls of the brick structure of the information center which is available to anyone.

The Athens Cemetery is an official historical site as designated by the Texas Historical Commission.

Funds were raised for the dedication of the cemetery through Friends of the Cemetery, individual gifts and various grants. Friends of the Cemetery support the beautification projects of the Cemetery, and they have provided funds for many projects over the last five years which have included wrought-iron fencing, new gates and monument preservation.

The Athens Cemetery Association's main goal is to preserve the historic Cemetery, originally dedicated in 1858, as a place of reverence, meditation and serenity for generations to come. Remembering past generations, but providing a service for future generations in our community, is our focus. The Cemetery offers individual burial plots, custom family sections and cremation plots.

The Athens Cemetery Association oversees the operation of the Cemetery and is a 501(c)(13) non-profit corporation. The Association encourages all interested parties to come and tour the historic Cemetery and see the newly dedicated information center or call (903)675-9203 for further information.

A special thanks to the Friends of the Cemetery and other donors for the successful completion of the fundraising efforts. The Friends of the Cemetery raised over \$15,000 which qualified the Cemetery for grants to complete the project cost. This project could not have been possible without the kind support of the Friends of the Cemetery!

Future Friends' Projects

The Board of the Athens Cemetery Association is considering many beautification projects at this time. Your suggestions are welcome. Please contact the cemetery if you have any suggestions. Donations from the Friends of the Cemetery are used primarily for beautification projects. Over the last few years, Friends have supported new wrought-iron fencing and brick column entrance at east gate and on Lakeside Drive in addition to the new information center.

A Bit of History

The Cemetery is a genuine treasure full of history of Athens and Henderson County. This year's focus on history is on Captain William T. Eustace, an early Athens' citizen.

Captain William T. Eustace - As one drives through the front gate of the Athens Cemetery, the area immediately to the right is called the Pioneer Section. It is appropriately named because it contains so many of Athens' pioneering families within its hallowed ground.

One such internment is that of early Athens resident and prominent citizen, William T. Eustace. Eustace was born in Virginia on August 24, 1845, and was a veteran of the War Between the States, serving in the 47th Virginia Regiment and then the 1st Richmond Howitzers. He was a captain in the units. Eustace served under Generals Beauregard, Johnson and Lee. He served throughout the entire war and was in all the principal engagements of the Army of Northern Virginia, surrendering with Lee in April 1865.

In 1876, he was elected to his first public office, District Clerk of Henderson County. In 1880, he was elected County Clerk and in 1888, he was elected County School Superintendent. In 1890, his eyesight failing, he withdrew from public life and entered the practice of law. He was with the Eustace and McDonald firm when he accepted the post of City Assessor and Collector and was later the first City Secretary of the newly incorporated town of Athens.

Eustace was a staunch Methodist and was elected to its board of Stewards where he was ultimately named a board member for life. He was a long time member of the Athens Masonic Lodge No.165 and had served as its Worshipful Master and then as Secretary. He was also a member of the local Chapter, Council and Commandery of the York Rite Masons.

After the Texas and New Orleans railroad extended its line through Athens in 1900, it had by-passed the established community of Goshen. A new settlement sprang-up along its right of way. The new settlement was named Eustace in honor of the prominent County leader. Eustace never lived there, but he was held in such high esteems by the citizens of the county and was honored by having the new town named after him.

On January 6, 1927, Captain Eustace died peacefully while eating his lunch. He was buried in the Athens Cemetery on January 7th with the usual customs of the Masonic craft. The Minutes of Athens Lodge No. 165 reflect that the Lodge was busy burying two of its members on that day with two funerals at the Athens Cemetery. Captain Eustace's was the second of the day by the Lodge.

In one of Captain Eustace's run for public office, he received every vote cast., but one and it was speculated that someone had mistakenly mis-marked their ballot. Such was the popularity of one of Athens and Henderson County's leading citizens.

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. Cost to maintain the cemetery has 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.

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

Lot Prices:

Older, Historic Section - \$900.00

Celtic Cross Section - \$1,200.00

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

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

“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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