

Vol. 17
December 2018

PLANNING FOR YOUR FUTURE

In an ideal situation, everyone would have a pre-planned funeral that included the purchase of a gravesite. The Athens Cemetery offers a Future Needs Program that allows up to five year financing at 0% interest on your future needs purchase. However, not everyone prepares their funeral plans in advance. This can result in difficult decisions for their loved ones.

Athens Cemetery lots and burial places are reasonably priced and are an inexpensive alternative compared to Dallas, Fort Worth Metroplex prices.

To learn more about the associated costs involved with burial at the Athens Cemetery, please contact Bobby Glass at 903-477-7281.



Athens Cemetery
Our Year in Review. . .

As another year comes to a close, we would like to personally thank you for your continued support of our historic Athens Cemetery and share a little bit of what's been happening lately. . .

The ten-member board of directors of the Athens Cemetery Association is dedicated to maintaining and enhancing the hallowed grounds of the cemetery and is committed to its preservation for the benefit of present and future generations. This year, we welcomed two new members to our board. Nanette Stelter and Kay King both have roots in the Athens community and a profound appreciation for the historic value of the Athens Cemetery. Their input into future decisions affecting the cemetery is much appreciated!

Whether you have an interest in history and wish to view the seven historic markers that honor leaders, characters, and icons that helped shape and form the Henderson County community and beyond, or just desire to walk under century old black gums, Lebanon cedars, or stately magnolias, the Athens Cemetery is a cherished gift.

In 2018, much of our efforts focused on maintaining the grounds of the cemetery. Trees were trimmed of low-lying limbs or removed if needed; curbs that marked family plots were cleaned for better visibility; and needed updates were made to the kiosk.

We invite you to tour and experience this unique place of reverence and beauty. Visit or stop by the kiosk at the entry gate of the cemetery to find loved ones or simply research the various sections of the cemetery.



It has been said that, at its best, preservation engages the past in a conversation with the present over a mutual concern for the future. . . . William J. Murtagh



WE HONOR THE FALLEN

The Veterans' Memorial contains the names of veterans who have served their country dating back to the mid-1800's.

Conflicts represented include the Cherokee Indian War, the Spanish-American War, the Civil War, World War I and World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars.

Each year the wall is updated with the name of veterans who were laid to rest. The names are permanently engraved in the granite monument, categorized by the conflict in which the veteran served.

The impressive 50' long, 10' high structure consists of eight granite panels inlaid in brick. The Veterans' Memorial is illuminated at night and has a plaza to honor the veterans. A United States flag stands as a silent sentinel over the memorial.

The wall was made possible by the generous donations of the Friends of the Cemetery.

Historical Spotlight . . .

As you may already be aware, the Athens Cemetery was established in the 1850's and has been designated as a Historical Cemetery by the State of Texas. Over the years, a total of seven historic marker have been placed on the grounds to recognized local pioneers and leaders. In this issue, we thought we'd share the story of our humble beginnings.

It all started with a man named William J. Brantley – the first person to be buried in what is now the Athens Cemetery. 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 what is now the town of Athens.

Mr. Brantley became active in local affairs. He was elected the first County Superintendent of Schools when all of Henderson County was one school district. A Mason, Brantley was one of the leading organizers of Masonic Lodge #165 in Athens. Upon his death in 1857 at age 28, Brantley was buried on a 1-acre plot south of town that had been donated for a Masonic cemetery so that Masons would have their own burial ground. His burial on this property marked the beginning of the Athens Cemetery. A marker honoring Brantley's achievements and acknowledging him as the first burial in the Athens Cemetery was erected at his grave.

History tells us that in 1859, the daughter of a county resident passed away and her father brought her to Athens hoping to bury her in the cemetery. Originally, his request was denied because at that point, the cemetery was strictly for Masonic burials.

Hearing of the man's plight, Pleasant Tannehill (the Worshipful Master of the Athens Masonic Lodge) graciously donated an additional two acres of land adjacent to the initial tract as a gift to the citizens of Athens for burial of their dead.

As needs grew within the town, the cemetery expanded. In 1919, another ten acres was purchased by what was to become the Athens Cemetery Association.

During this time, Henderson County operated a facility known as the Poor Farm. The Poor Farm was located on the west side of Athens off Hwy. 40. The residents were primarily individuals with disabilities whose local families could not facilitate their well-being. If a resident died and did not have family or was indigent, they were buried onsite at the Poor Farm. This practice continued until 1919, just after the previously mentioned purchase of ten acres at the Athens Cemetery. From that point forward, the county buried its indigent in a section of the Athens Cemetery. However, the original twenty graves at the Poor Farm remained. In an expression of empathy for these lost souls, W. W. Howard (manager of the facility) collected donations from the citizens of Athens in 1927 to erect a monument to honor these twenty "unknown friends."



The Poor Farm continued to care for the needy until 1933 when the county announced that for economic reasons it could no longer care for the remaining residents and began the process of placing them back into the homes of their families. Of the 27 residents at that time, 7 could not be placed and remained in the care of the county until 1943 when the Poor Farm closed its doors forever. It was at this time that the graves of the twenty individuals that remained at the Poor Farm and the marker that paid them homage were relocated to the county pauper section of the Athens Cemetery where they remain today. The photo above shows the marker in its current, broken state. We are currently excavating the marker to be refurbished and rededicated in that prominent area of the cemetery.

Since 1943, the Athens Cemetery Association has purchased additional land to further expand. The Celtic Cross section is nestled among the trees at the northwest corner of the cemetery, and an area just beyond remains for future development.

DID YOU KNOW . . .

. . . in addition to being instrumental in the beginning of the Athens Cemetery, local members of the Masonic Lodge had a lasting effect on its beauty?

In 1858, Joseph M. La Rue, 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. La Rue 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.

HAVE YOU MET OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS?

As mentioned previously, the Athens Cemetery is funded by the sale of lots and by private donations. Operations are overseen by a volunteer board of directors and two part-time staff, each having their own passion for the cemetery. Current board members include:

- Steve Grant, Pres.
- Stephen Sparkman, VP
- Randy Daniel, Sec.
- Larry Babb, Treas.
- John Cain, Member
- C. A. Hawn, Member
- Kay King, Member
- R. F. Murchison, Jr., Member
- Chip Perryman, Member
- Nanette Stelter, Member

Bobby Glass, Cemetery Liaison
Darlene Forshage, Office Mgr.

If you have an issue or concern that you feel should be addressed by the board, we ask that you first check our website to see if the issue may be addressed there. If not, please contact us through the contact information provided here. Should we not be able to assist, the item may be added to the agenda of a future meeting of the board.

WE'RE ON THE WEB! Looking for additional information about the historic Athens Cemetery? Visit us at www.athenstxcemetery.com.



REASONABLE RATES

The sale of each lot/space within the Athens Cemetery is handled by transfer of deed. The purchaser then owns the property in its entirety. The Athens Cemetery Association maintains the cemetery, but individual property owners may also tend their plots as they deem necessary. The transference of deed also aids in genealogical research as it provides the researcher with a clear path of ownership.

Currently, there remain 4,000 lots/spaces available within the historic grounds (including cremation lots and Columbarium niches). The map will help you in identifying availability and consider pricing.

Principal and Historic Sections
$1,100.00 per space

Celtic Cross Section
$1,450.00 per space

Multi-Lot Family Section
$1,000.00 per space
(Burial spaces sold in groups of 8 or more and may be landscaped to suit buyer)

A traditional burial is not the only form of interment. If your loved one has chosen cremation over burial, perhaps you could consider purchasing a niche in our Columbarium. Each niche is reasonably priced at $1,500.00 and will accommodate up to two individual urns.

FRIENDS OF THE CEMETERY

While the Athens Cemetery Association is tasked with the day-to-day maintenance of the grounds at the Athens Cemetery, periodically there are needs at the cemetery that could cause the property to suffer financial hardships if met from the general fund. In 2002, forty-seven charter families put their financial support into what became known as the Friends of the Cemetery. Today, that number exceeds 150.

In October of 2003, an impressive seven-foot high Celtic cross was placed in the center of a newly expanded section of the cemetery. At its base is a circular red brick bench. The cross represented the first beautification project funded entirely by the Friends of the Cemetery, and a plaque commemorating the project is attached to its base. Today, the cross and bench continue to provide a place for quiet contemplation among the oak trees.

Since the first project in 2003, the following projects have been funded in part or in their entirety by the Friends of the Cemetery program:

A New South Gate Entrance (2004)
Fencing along the South Side of the Cemetery (2005-2006)
Informational Kiosk (2009)
Infant Burial Area (2010)
A Columbarium (2010)
Veteran's Memorial Court (2013)
New Irrigation Water Well (2014)

It's through the continued generosity of our Friends of the Cemetery program that the Cemetery Association can plan and develop beautification projects into the future. If you have not yet joined the Friends, please consider joining by making a donation. A return envelope has been provided for your convenience. There is no set membership fee – contributions of all levels are accepted and most definitely, appreciated! To those who have already joined, thank you for your generous support which makes these beautification projects possible!

Donations may also be made on this page of our website:

http://athenstxcemetery.com/friends-of-the-cemetery

Credit cards are accepted.

Our Sincerest Thanks to . . .

We would like to express our sincerest thanks to the men and women listed below - current members of the Friends of the Cemetery. Your assistance allows us to do so very much toward the preservation of our beautiful cemetery!

Mr. John M. Adams
Ms. Doris Albers
Mrs. William Ayers
Mr. & Mrs. Larry Babb
Mr. & Mrs. Jack Bailey
Ms. Carol S. Barton
Mr. & Mrs. Melvin Bateman
Mrs. Gail Baum
Ms. Susan Beaird
Mr. & Mrs. Don Bennett
Ms. Linda E. Berger
Mr. William D. Berry
Mrs. Rosa Lee Bishop
Mr. Bill L. Bledsoe
Mr. Floyd Blount
Mr.Richard E. Bolle
Ms. Becky Hawn Brown
Mr. & Mrs. Johnny Brown
Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Brown
Mr. Mike Cade
Mr. & Mrs. John Cain
Ms. Shirley M. Calhoun
Ms. Esparanza Campa
Mr. & Mrs. Donny Campbell*
Mr. Marlin Castleberry
Mr. Billy Cissell
Ms. Barbara J. Coffman
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Cole
Mr. & Mrs. James Conley
Ms. Deanne Cope
Mr. & Mrs. Don Copeland
Ms. Nora Cortez
Mrs. William M. Cox
The Tim Crecilius Family
Ms. Joanne Crout
The Honorable Judge & Mrs. Randy Daniel
Mr. Billy Davis
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Dean
Mr. & Mrs. David Deas
Mr. Franklin Denius
Mr. Wofford Denius
Mr. & Mrs. Bruce Dingler
Ms. Frieda Doolen
Mr. Hank Douglas
Mrs. Tony Douglas
Mr. Dan A. Dwelle
E. T. Crude, Inc.
Mr. Bob Farmer
Ms. Eleanor Farr
Mrs. Earlene Farrell
Mrs. J. D. Ferguson
Ms. Jacquelyn Fisher
Mr. & Mrs. Randall Fleming
Mrs. Betty A. Foster*
Mr. & Mrs. Gregorio Galvan
Mr. Salas Garcia
Mr. & Mrs. Bobby Glass
Elizabeth Gentry & Brandon Staggs
Mr. & Mrs. Bobby Glass
Mr. & Mrs. Bob Gould
Ms. Mary Ann Grady
Mr. & Mrs. Steve Grant*
Mr. Art Hall
Mrs. Rosie Marie Royall Harpool
Ms. S. Vincent Hash
Mr. Charlie Hawn
Mr. Harry D. Hawn
Mr. & Mrs. Joe V. Hawn, Jr.
Ms. Sarah Diana Hawn
Mr. & Mrs. Bob Herrington
Mrs. Patricia Herrington
Mrs. Imogene B. Higgs
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Hocutt
Ms. Mildred Holland
The Honorable Judge Jack H. Holland
Mrs. Betty Hollowell
Ms. April C. Holt
Mr. & Mrs. Glenn Hood
Mr. & Mrs. Billy Dan Hope
Mr. & Mrs. Jim Hudson
Mrs. Billie Nell Hutton
Col. Robert E. Joiner
Mr. & Mrs. Walter E. Judge
Ms. Ellen R. Justice
Ms. Kathy Killingsworth
Mr. Lester Kinabrew*
Mrs. Kay King
Mr. & Mrs. Lance Lahourcade
Mrs. Eleanor Little Landrum
Mrs. Joyce B. LaRue
Mr. Eddie Lassiter
Mr. & Mrs. Don Lawyer
Mr. & Mrs. Leo C. Lee
Dr. & Mrs. Kenneth P. Lemmon*
Mr. & Mrs. Matt Livingston
Ms. Charmaine Locke
Mrs. Max E. Logan
Mr. & Mrs. Hugh Lucas
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Lunceford
Mr. Jaime Mancio
Ms. Barbara Martin
Mrs. Bob McDonald
Ms. JoAnne H. McElroy
Ms. Sandra Sawyer McLeroy
Mr. David McMichael
Lt. Col. Jim T. Meredith, USAF, Ret.
Dr. & Mrs. Ted Mettetal
Ms. Michelle Pope Mills
Mrs. Nancy H. Mills
Mrs. Sue S. Montgomery
The Honorable Judge & Mrs. Dan Moore
Mr. & Mrs. Randall Morse
Mr. & Mrs. Clint W. Murchison, III
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Murchison
Mr. Robert "Bear" Murchison, Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. Lonnie A. Murphy
Dr. James R. Ogburn, Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. Michael O'Shaughnessy
Ms. Margaret L. Parks
Mr. & Mrs. William M. Parsons
Pearce Construction
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Peek
Ms. Dolores Perkins*
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Perkins
Mrs. Mary Ann Perryman
Mr. & Mrs. T. E. Perryman
Mr. & Mrs. W. C. Perryman, III
Mr. & Mrs. Albert Phillips
Ms. Melissa Qualls
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Ragland
Mr. & Mrs. Lloyd Ray
Mr. & Mrs. David Ring
Mr. & Mrs. Jed Robinson, Jr.*
Ms. Jill Robinson
Mr. & Mrs. William D. Rogers
Mrs. Ann Rounsavall
Estate of Charles M. Sanders, Jr.
Ms. Claudia Santos
Mr. John R. Sawyer
Mr. Robert D. Schneider
Mr. Stephen Sharpe
Mr. & Mrs. Lloyd Shelton
Mr. & Mrs. Gregory A. Shumpert*
Ms. Patricia Simpson
Mr. & Mrs. Garrett O. Smith
Mr. & Mrs. Kelly Smith*
Mr. & Mrs. Trevanion M. Smith
Mr. Caddo Smith
Mr. & Mrs. Charles L. Spann
Mr. & Mrs. Stephen R. Sparkman*
Ms. Geneva Stelding
Ms. Nannette M. Stelter
Mrs. Garry Stewart
Mr. & Mrs. John B. Stultz
Mr. Jim Summers
Mr. Rob Tyner
Mrs. Carol Ann Wallace
Mr. Bill Ward
Mrs. Mary Faye Ward
Ms. Lela S. Warren
Mr. & Mrs. Donald W. Weibel
Mr. & Mrs. Tim Wheeler
Mr. & Mrs. Sam Whitten
Ms. Mary Margaret Wright
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Young
Mr. Jesus Zanala

CONTACT US ANYTIME WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

By phone to the office
903-675-9203

By phone to
Bobby Glass, our
Cemetery Liaison
903-477-7281

By email
info@athenstxcemetery.com

On our website
www.athenstxcemetery.com

We can't do it without 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 upon lot sales, interments, donations and planned giving in order to operate. Costs to maintain the cemetery have continued to increase, but the challenge has been met. The board of the Athens Cemetery Associiaton 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.

We would like to thank each contributor for their continued support of the cemetery, and members of the Friends of the Cemetery for their contributions used toward special projects and permanent improvements to the cemetery.

Donations can be mailed to P. O. Box 1296, Athens, Texas 75751, or made online at www.athenstx-cemetery.com.

Thank you for your generosity!!

athens cemetery association
p. o. box 1296
athens, tx 75751