



Gregg County Historical Commission

Norman W. Black, D.D.S.
Chairman

417 Mobberly Avenue
Longview, Texas 75602

Phone 903-757-2261
Fax # 903-753-5337

August 18, 2002

Mr. Bob Barbee, Commissioner, Pct. 3
Gregg County, Texas
Rt. 4, Box 648
Longview, Texas 75604

Dear Commissioner Barbee:

Re: Strong Cemetery

Dear Bob:

I found the cemetery, thanks to the fine directions given me by your secretary, Donnie Sullivent.. I walked over the site on July 21st and I apologize for the delay in reporting to you. There must be some kind of a cemetery association here but neither my contacts nor I have been unable to find one.

There are approximately thirty-five burials with the oldest being 1953. Of course, there could be earlier burials there not marked. If you are considering getting a (new) Historic Cemetery Marker for Strong Cemetery it looks like we will have to wait until next year; a cemetery must be fifty years old to qualify. However, it is not too early to begin working on the application.

About two or three years ago the Texas Historical Commission, in an effort to simplify the procedure, took this program more or less out of the county historical commissions' purview. It is under the direction of a friend of mine, Gerron Hite. I can still help with this if this is what is desired. Bob, there are a few intra-commission bugs in the program but I believe Gerron may have already worked them out.

Let me know if you need more information.

Sincerely,



Gregg County Historical Commission

Norman W. Black, D.D.S.
Chairman

417 Mobberly Avenue
Longview, Texas 75602

Phone 903-757-2261
Fax # 903-753-5337

January 27, 2003

Mr. Bob Barbee, Commissioner, Pct. 3
Gregg County, Texas
Rt. 4, Box 648
Longview, Texas 75604

Re: Strong Cemetery

Dear Commissioner Barbee:

This cemetery is now fifty years old and thus, according to the Texas Historical Commission, is a historic cemetery. The first burial I know of was in 1953 although there may be other burials, unmarked, which are older.

Sincerely,

Norman W. Black, D.D.S.

GREGG COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION



FACSIMILE TRANSMITTAL SHEET

TO:
DONNIE SULLIVENT

FROM:
Dr. Norman W. Black

FAX NUMBER:
903-753-5337

DATE:
AUGUST 20, 2003

PHONE NUMBER:
903-757-2261

TOTAL NO. OF PAGES INCLUDING COVER:
4

SUBJECT: STRONG CEMETERY

URGENT

NOTES AND COMMENTS:

Donnie,

Here is an example of the proper form for the narrative needed for the application of a historical marker for a cemetery. Let me know if you have any questions.

Norman

EXAMPLE OF NARRATIVE HISTORY

WASHBURN CEMETERY, GRAYSON COUNTY

Prepared by Billie Davis, December, 1996

Samuel S. and Mary Elizabeth Washburn and their eleven children came to Texas from Barry County, Missouri, in 1836 under the ordinances of the Convention of March 1836 of the Republic of Texas. Samuel staked his claim and was granted 1280 acres of land under Certificate #5 from the Republic of Texas on August 2, 1838.¹ This 1280 acres was and is still known as the Samuel Washburn Survey and is located in the Pink Hill Community, 2.5 miles west of Bells, Texas.

Later that same year (1838) Samuel Washburn was killed by Indians. His wife and children returned to Sugar Creek, Benton County, Arkansas (just across the state line from Barry County, Missouri, the Washburns' home before coming to Texas). Mary Elizabeth and the children returned to Texas in the early 1850s to claim their 1280 acres and were granted title to their land by E.M. Pease, Governor of the State of Texas, on June 21, 1854.²

By this time, more settlers were moving into the area and it became necessary to have a cemetery in the community. A burial site was set aside on a portion of the Washburn land, which was to be used by those in the community. The cemetery was located on the extreme south edge of the original 1280 acres. There is no record of the land ever having been deeded to the cemetery by the Washburn family, however, through the years the land around and including the cemetery changed hands many times. As it was transferred from sellers to buyers the deed records noted the land as "less 2.5 acres set apart from above for burial purposes".³ In 1936 a portion of the original 1280 acres, including the cemetery location, again came under ownership by a member of the Washburn family and remains so to the present time.

The oldest marked grave in the Washburn Cemetery is that of an eight-month-old baby girl who died February 13, 1867.⁴ There are many older unnamed graves there, however, that are marked with only a rock or bois d'arc posts. It is believed that some of these graves date from the 1850s. Efforts to locate the graves of Samuel and Mary Elizabeth Washburn have proven futile. It is quite possible that Mary, who

died in 1857, is buried in this cemetery, but no record exists to verify this. Their son, John P. Washburn, who died in 1897, is buried here with a large marker noting his grave. Many other Washburn family members are buried here also.

As more and more people settled in the area, many pioneer leaders and their families made extensive use of the Cemetery. Of the approximately 300 marked graves now existing in the cemetery, some 100 of these date from before 1900.⁵ Many of the graves in this cemetery belong to veterans of the various wars in which the United States has been involved. Also, many of the graves in the cemetery are marked with Masonic or Woodmen of the World symbols.

One unique fact regarding the Washburn Cemetery is that it has always been and still is made available free of charge to anyone wishing to be buried there. For many years the cemetery was bordered by a barbed wire fence that sometimes became broken allowing cattle to gain access. In the 1960s a chain link fence was installed so that cattle were no longer able to enter the cemetery.

Through the years the Washburn Cemetery has been cared for by those in the community with various community leaders taking responsibility to oversee its maintenance. In 1986 the Washburn Cemetery Association was formed and was incorporated with the State of Texas in 1987.⁶ The Association, which administers and maintains the cemetery, meets on a regular basis once a year to elect officers and transact business. The goal of the Association is to maintain perpetual care of the cemetery in the future and to continue to provide a final resting place free of charge for anyone wishing to be buried there.

¹ Certificate #5, issued by Republic of Texas - Referred to in Field Notes dated March 10, 1840, and recorded in Surveyor's Rec. Vol. A/31 from J.D. Black, Surveyor, Fannin County to Samuel Washburn. (Copy attached as Ex. 1)

² Patent dated June 23, 1854 and filed August 10, 1854 from E.M. Pease, Governor, to Heirs of Samuel Washburn, Recorded Deed Records Vol. G/p. 27, Grayson County, Texas. Also: Certificate from E.M. Pease granting 1280 acres. (Copies attached as Ex. 2)

³ Portion of Deed Records Vol. 384/p.421 from Hogan to Washburn dated March 8, 1936. (Copy attached as Ex. 3)

⁴ Marker in Washburn Cemetery of Mary Gentry, 8 months old, died February 13, 1867.

⁵ Marked graves in Cemetery and also List of Burials in Washburn Cemetery Records.

⁶ Articles of Incorporation of Washburn Cemetery Association issued by the State of Texas. Copy attached as Ex.4)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Grayson County Deed Records, Volumes G and 384, Grayson County, Texas.

Grayson County Frontier Village. *The History of Grayson County, Texas, Vol. I*. Hunter Publishing Company, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, 1979.

Grayson County Frontier Village. *The History of Grayson County, Texas, Vol. II*. Heritage Publishing Company, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1981.

Grayson County, Texas. *Surveyor's Record, Volume A*.

Landrum, Graham. *An Illustrated History of Grayson County, Texas*. University Supply & Equipment Company, Fort Worth, Texas, 1960.

Lucas, Mattie D., and Mita H. Hall. *A History of Grayson County, Texas*. Scruggs Printing Company, Sherman, Texas, 1936.

State of Texas. *Certificate of Incorporation, Charter Number 01030932*.

Washburn Cemetery Association, *Minutes* and other unpublished records, 1987-1996.



BOB BARBEE
COUNTY COMMISSIONER
GREGG COUNTY - PRECINCT 3

6174 FM2206
LONGVIEW, TEXAS 75604

903-759-8962 - Longview
903-984-4653 - Kilgore
903-845-4311 - Gladewater
903-297-9140 - FAX

August 12, 2003

TO: Norman W. Black, D.D.S.,
Chairman Gregg County Historical Commission

FROM: Donnie Sullivent, Administrative Assistant *DS*

SUBJECT: Strong Cemetery

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Attached is a narrative I received from Mrs. Darnetta Strong, whose husband is buried in the Strong Cemetery. If you need further information please let us know.

Fax # 297 9140

In the late 1940's
Josephine Strong had
the idea to establish
a Strong Cemetery.
She owned the property
the cemetery is
on, off Levine Rd.
Josephine Strong donated
the acreage the
cemetery is on, later
the remaining property
was divided among
her heirs.
Dorcell Strong, a
granddaughter was
one of first persons
to be buried in
the cemetery.