• TREE TALK •

Volume 41 Issue 2

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Editor's Letter

John Ross, Deborah Burkett, Richard Hacknet and I made presentations at 2015 Fall Meeting of the East Texas Historical Association at Stephen F. Austin State University, Baker Pattillo Student Center, Nacogdoches, Texas. Session XXI, on Friday, October 9th at 3:15 PM in the Tejas Meeting Room. John Ross, Deborah Burkett, and I are honored to present our papers for publication in TREE TALK.

John Ross wrote "The Southern Folk Cemetery: Mt. Hope as a Case Study (2015 Revision of 1992 Edition)." This begins on page 39

"Efforts of Locating Lost Cemeteries, Part 1" by Deborah Burkett begins on page 47.

I wrote "Efforts of Locating Lost Cemeteries, Part 2" This paper starts on page. 54.

We continue the publication of Ogreta W. Huttash's archives with the publication of "Benjamin Selman, Sr. Last Will and Testament" transcribed by Mrs. Huttash on page 61 and "Letter to Nona Clarice Mellard regarding Jacob Womack with proofs from the Will of Benjamin Selman" on page 64.

Gordon Bennett Editor

- Don't Mess With The Living, TEXAS

TREE TALK Volume 41 Issue 2 Winter 2015-2016 Page 39 THE SOUTHERN FOLK CEMETERY: MT. HOPE AS A CASE STUDY (2015 REVISION OF 1992 EDITION) By John Ross

Terry G. Jordan's Texas Graveyards: A Cultural Legacy provides an excellent methodology for studying the perseverance of traditional cultural traits through an analysis of traditional burying grounds. Jordan focused on small rural cemeteries because they show the greatest persistence of early traditions. He identified four truths about these cemeteries: they exhibit pronounced regional variation, they are for the living, they preserve some really old cultural traits, and they are endangered.

He found in Texas three separate folk traditions: the Mexican, the German, and the Southern, which is common to Anglo-Americans, African-Americans, and Native Americans. All the traditional cemeteries of Cherokee County fall into the Southern tradition. In these cemeteries we can find an amazing range of cultural holdovers from the distant past and from far-flung regions, if only we step back away from our own cultural expectations and look at what is there.

Jordan found in the Southern folk cemeteries customs that go all the way back to pre-Christian Europe, Africa, and America as well as from Christian Britain. These included traditions from Pagan Mediterranean Europe (lamps on grave mound, flowers and rose bushes in graveyard), Pagan Northwestern European (mounding of graves, false crypts, cedar trees), Christian British (burial with feet to the east, burial of wrongdoers on a north-south axis, burial of wife to the left of the husband, surrounding fence, lichgate), Pagan African (scraping of graves, broken crockery on the mound, shells as decoration), and Pagan Native American (gravehouses). Some traits originated on the American frontier: family plots, burial in unsanctified ground, and tabernacles. ¹ Jordan observed that many ¹Terry G. Jordan, *Texas Graveyards: A Cultural Legacy* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982), 17. TREE TALK Volume 41 Issue 2 Winter 2015-2016 Page 40 THE SOUTHERN FOLK CEMETERY: MT. HOPE AS A CASE STUDY of the traditional practices were already declining while he was researching his book in the 1970s. ² An analysis of the Mount Hope Cemetery reveals that some of the practices Jordan observed remain strong, others appear only as vestiges, and some are absent altogether.

Mount Hope Cemetery lies in west central Cherokee County, Texas, some five miles west of the county seat of Rusk. Oil-topped County Road 2109 separates the cemetery from Mount Hope Missionary Baptist Church. The church and cemetery are located near the heavily wooded summit of one of the highest hills in the county. The first burial in the area was in 1871 near the original church site in what is now a pine plantation about one hundred yards southwest of the present fenced cemetery. Shortly thereafter, the church moved closer to the spring located about one hundred yards north of the present cemetery, and subsequent burials have been within the present fenced area. ³ At the end of 1991, about 150 grave stones marked some 200 burials. In the 1990s, the fenced area was expanded to the north, and by 2015, fifty-four graves had been added in the new area. ⁴

The people who settled the Mount Hope area were mostly small yeoman farmers, share tenants, and sawmill workers. Their descendants today are health service workers, clerks, loggers, teachers, transportation workers, and at least one college professor. The large number of unmarked graves and the unpretentiousness of the existing markers show that this is not the burying ground of the local elite.

The cemetery is in the charge of a three-member committee, which hires someone to mow the grass. The traditional cemetery working is no longer held, but many people decorate their family's graves during the annual homecoming on ² Ibid. 123-26.

³Emmett Scott, Jr., member of the cemetery committee, interview with the writer, Mr. Hope, 8 January 1992.

⁴Author's observations, 12 April 2015.

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the third Sunday in May. Some of them individually work their plot, and these have maintained some of the more traditional practices.

One of the most interesting traits, which Jordan traced to African antecedents, is the practice of "scraping," removing the grass from graves. This practice

was once very common, but today few cemeteries are fully scraped.⁵ At Mount Hope in 1992, eight graves showed signs of scraping. By 2015, there were no scraped graves. Traditionally, earth was heaped into elongated mounds over the graves. New burials all show this mounding practice, but this is partly to account for settling of the sandy soil. In 1992, when a new grave was placed in a family plot, the mounds were often restored over the adjoining graves. That practice seems to have disappeared by 2015. There is no evidence of false crypts or grave houses at



Mount Hope. In 2015 as in 1992, a majority of the marked graves are decorated with artificial flowers, usually beside, in front of, or upon the headstone. Some flowers are placed in a variety of pots, others are stuck in the ground or lie ⁵ Jordan. 14-16.

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THE SOUTHERN FOLK CEMETERY: MT. HOPE AS A CASE STUDY directly on the stone. In 1992, one child's grave dated 1989 was completely covered with artificial flowers. On two unrelated graves dated 1979 and 1984, small white stones covered the grave mound. The only sign of sea shells was one conch in an iron flower pot at the foot of a grave. There was one small statue of an angel and one empty flower pot in the form of a rabbit, both beside children's graves.

Two atypical examples of grave decoration showed a Roman Catholic influence. One grave, dated 1977, was surrounded by a low iron railing and had a wooden cross and a statue of the Virgin at the foot. This grave belonged to an Ohio native, a Protestant whose grave was decorated by his Catholic widow.⁶ One other grave had a small plastic crucifix beside the footstone.

A wide variety of ornamental plants have been added to the natural oaks, sweet gums, and pines in the graveyard. Two large cedars and seven crepe myrtles, four of them very old, stand among the graves in the south part of the enclosure. Four rose bushes have been planted by individual graves, and ten other ornamental shrubs adorn family plots. In 1992, a small pansy blossoms beside a gravestone, and lilies adorned one family plot. In 1992, there were few other flowers, but by 2015, a scattering of bluebonnets adorned the cemetery.

Traits of Christian British and American frontier origin seem most persistent. All graves are oriented with their feet to the east. Tombstones stand at the head of the grave, and most have small footstones as well. Most burials are in family plots surrounded by a low concrete curbs. Four curbs are of brick and two of cinder blocks. In one case, the central grave is edged with concrete while the whole plot is surrounded by cinder blocks. One of the concrete curbs is embellished by glass marbles set in the top, spaced one foot apart. In the 1992 survey, ⁶Frank Ford, cemetery committee member, interview with the writer, 8 January 1992.

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fifty-five married couples were buried side-by-side, the wife lying to the left (north) side of the husband in thirty-seven, or 67 percent. In the 2015 survey of the new part of the cemetery, this had become even more standardized: Of the eighteen couple burials, the wife lies to the left in sixteen, or 89 percent. In the cemeteries survey by Jordan, the range was 60 to 100 percent, but "generally over two-thirds."⁷ The whole cemetery is surrounded by a chain-link fence, which in the 1970s was extended north to add about 50 percent to the enclosed area.⁸ This enclosure is maintained despite there being no cattle on the surrounding land, which is devoted to forestry. However, feral hogs have become a serious problem in the area, so the fence serves a practical purpose. Four gates give access to the graveyard, but none of these are lichgates, though all are wide enough to admit a hearse. One individual grave and one family plot are surrounded by wrought-iron fences.

Most markers are granite of the type supplied by commercial monument companies, of which there are several in neighboring towns. Many of these modern markers were obviously installed long after the burial. All tombstones stand at the head—west—of the grave. In all but three cases, the inscription appears on the east face of the stone. Two modern stones have the inscriptions on the west face, the common practice in West Texas, but unusual in the east. In at least one of these cases, the engraver reversed the order of the husband and wife, so the stone had to be set backwards to identity the proper grave.⁹ One marble stone from the 1890s takes the form of a square column with the husband's name on the south face and the wife's on the north. Some graves are marked only with the

⁷Jordan, 30.

⁹Tradition in the writer's family. The graves in question are those of the writer's maternal grandparents.

⁸ Ford interview.

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temporary aluminum markers provided by funeral homes. Many of these have become illegible. A few graves have only pipes at the head and foot. A handful of old field stone markers remain, although many of these have been replaced with modern markers. In one case, a well-done field stone marker was left in place after the new stone was placed. Many of the field stone markers were only roughly squared and left unengraved. In others, the engraving is faded to illegibility, an almost inevitable result considering the soft nature of the local ironstone. A couple of field stones were more elegantly worked, including one gothic pointed stone. There is one example of a field stone marker from 1984 on a child grave. This is a white stone not native to the area; the inscription is in ink. An unusual feature is the metal crosses on the Ford family row. The crosses were placed as a temporary measure in the late 1970s on a long row of unmarked graves. Soon after, the family placed modern granite stones, but most of the crosses have never been removed.¹⁰

About two-thirds of the stones have carved decorations. Most of these are from standard pattern books provided by the monument companies. By far the most popular design is flowers, which appear on over half of the carved stones. Other modern patterns include ivy; wedding bells, rings, or a heart with wedding dates; and angels (on three children's monuments). Crosses appear on only two monuments other than Veterans Administration or Confederate veteran markers. On two markers, relief carvings of a catfish and a cow indicate special interests of the deceased. In 1992, seven of the markers bore photographs of the deceased. Most of these were placed since 1970, but one is dated 1934. Nineteenth-century commercial markers had more symbolic figures: two had crowns and towers;

¹⁰Writer's personal recollection.

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three, clasped hands; three opening gates; two, a hand with finger pointing heavenward; and one each, praying hands and descending dove. One child's monument had a full relief carving of a lamb on top. The importance of military service is shown by the presence of about twenty Veterans Administration markers and half a dozen Confederate veteran markers. Several of the VA marker sit at the foot of the grave, supplementing an ordinary commercial headstone. In contrast, only two monuments bore Masonic emblems and one, Eastern Star. No other social affiliations are indicated.

Inscriptions, in keeping with the custom, are terse, usually revealing only the name and birth and death dates of the deceased. A dozen double stones bear marriage dates. Most other inscriptions are stock phrases from the monument mason's order book: "Our Baby," "Mother," "At Rest," "Gone but Not Forgotten." A few of the older stones had more personal epitaphs: "A friend to his country and a believer in Christ"; "She was the sunshine of our home" [on the grave of a woman of seventy-five]; 'She was a kind and affectionate wife, a fond mother and a friend to all." Only one of the field stones markers bore an epitaph, but it is illegible.

As with many Anglo cemeteries, in 1992 there was a tabernacle at Mount Hope. A typical open-sided structure, its sheet metal roof was supported by handhewn beams taken from the old church building. For a number of years in the mid twentieth century, Mount Hope church met in the old school building a mile and an half away at the foot of the mountain. The tabernacle was constructed for use during the annual homecoming, which continued to be held at the old site by the cemetery. After the church moved into a new building back at the old site, the tabernacle was little used and was torn down after a fellowship hall was added to the church.

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The new survey of the cemetery in 2015 shows continued use of traditional cultural traits, but with some modifications. The new portion of the cemetery where almost all the burials date after the first survey, is particularly instructive. Some of the traditional practices seem even more entrenched, including burial of husbands to the right of their wives and an increase in use of plastic figurines and plastic flowers to decorate the graves. These plastic items and the fact that fewer graves remain unmarked surely reflect increased prosperity, ease of access, and improved technology. Only four graves are unidentified, marked with a pipe, metal cross, or unengraved fieldstone. One grave has a homemade engraved stone. On the other hand, four recent graves have photographs and one has a portrait engraved on the stone, a very new technical innovation for the area.

Mount Hope continues as a focal point of a community with strong but declining commitment to traditional culture. Those traits most easily adapted to modern mechanized culture survive most strongly, such as orientation of the graves, family plots, and fences. Mounds and objects on the grave get in the way of mechanical lawn mowers. Scraping is too time consuming, especially since many families no longer have members living in the community. Yet Mount Hope is a much-loved spot and still reflects the culture, both traditional and modern, of its people.

John Ross Texas College

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TREE TALK Volume 41 Issue 2 Winter 2015-2016 Page 47 Efforts of Locating Lost Cemeteries Deborah Burkett

Context:

Serendipity is defined as an occurrence and development of events by chance--in a happy or beneficial way. That's a perfect description of what's been going on in Cherokee County. Since 2014, individuals, city council members, church groups, genealogy and history organizations have realized they share a common goal, the care and preservation of local cemeteries. Sensing the need to pool resources and share expertizes the Cherokee County Historical Commission (CCHC) and the Cherokee County Genealogical Society enthusiastically agreed to coordinate all activities. My presentation today will be done jointly with Gordon Bennett. He and I will discuss the topic: locating lost and neglected cemeteries, which is but one aspect of a much larger effort--the Cherokee County Cemeteries Project.

Gravestone cleaning workshops and historical marker dedications by the CCHC have provided an entrée into every corner of the county. What we've discovered is all burial sites have similar needs, whether it's a large city cemetery or a small family plot. In early planning sessions it was decided that efforts would focus on documenting and mapping the location of all graves including scanning for the unmarked ones. In addition, attention would be paid to cleaning and repairing damaged grave stones. Some damage naturally occurs over time but when you add storms and straight line winds as we've experienced in Cherokee County--you have a big problem. This kind of disturbance can wreak havoc to grave stones in a matter of minutes while also toppling century old trees. The result—a task so overwhelming the need for unified efforts throughout the county became paramount. As we banded together we've collaborated in activities such as: clearing debris, landscaping cemetery grounds, purchasing computer software for



Deborah Burkett demonstrates the non-destructive method of cleaning headstones at the New Hope Community Cemetery.

From left to right: 1. Reginald Willis, 2. Bettie Session, 3. Vernon Martin, 4. David Adams, 5. Deborah Burkett, 6. Larry Jenkins, 7. Brenda Hackney-Jackson, 8. Edna Crain, 9. Charles Ann Blakemore Martin, 10. Richard Hackney, 11. George Martin

mapping, documenting histories of those buried in cemeteries and creating a collection of photographs which are kept in digital files.

Overview

Cherokee County is located in central East Texas, bordered on the north by Smith County, on the east by Rusk and Nacogdoches, on the south by Angelina County, and on the west by Anderson and Houston counties. Cherokee County was marked off from Nacogdoches County on April 11, 1846, and was organized on

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July 13 of that year, with the town of Rusk as the county seat.

Because Cherokee County is one of the oldest in the state there are many large city cemeteries which contain old stones that need preservation and care, as well as smaller cemeteries and other burial sites located on the side of roads or in wooded areas on private property.

One of the largest city cemeteries in the county is Cedar Hill which is managed by the City of Rusk. Just weeks ago, on September 19th, a state marker was dedicated recognizing the historic importance of the burial site which was established by June 1847.

Cedar Hill is not a lost or neglected cemetery. The city does a fine job mowing, assigning family plots and supervising current burials but while working on the marker application we recognized needs in the area of preservation. In 1850, Rusk had 355 residents and over the ensuing decades commerce would flourish fueled by pioneers and immigrants from Europe and the old South including African Americans. And it is in the oldest part of Cedar Hill Cemetery, on the Old North side where the earliest burials are--both African Americans and Anglos.

At the marker dedication ceremony for Cedar Hill, serendipity once again played a role--when one of Rusk's African American civic leaders told me her grandmother is buried in an unmarked grave on the Old North side. As a young girl her mother took her to the grave and she remembers the approximate location. I assured her when we scan that section her grandmother and many others will no longer be in unmarked graves.

TREE TALK Volume 41 Issue 2 Winter 2015-2016 Page 50 Efforts of Locating Lost Cemeteries Lost or Neglected Cemeteries

The difficulties in working to document and preserve the lost and neglected cemeteries are many but the joy of finding stones hidden away for decades makes all efforts worthwhile, even encounters with poison ivy and fire ants seem trivial. Communication across many levels is critical in terms of locating these sites. First, making the public aware of our project was accomplished through a series of programs, newspaper columns and social media, word got out regarding our interest in finding these lost cemeteries. The next area of communication is at the public level, as individuals contact us and offer leads. It's exhilarating to receive a phone call or read an email telling of an old cemetery plot or several gravestones in someone's pasture.

The first example today is located off Highway 79 west of Jacksonville---way off. The earliest recorded burial is 1872. This site sits next to the Pennel Chapel which was organized some 20 years later in 1891. The site is interesting because it's actually a combination of a lost and neglected cemetery and one which is active and well maintained.

This site first came to my attention when Mr. Preston Meador walked into our county historical commission office in early 2015. He wanted a metal sign erected for an African American cemetery. During a lengthy visit and after many questions—one in particular regarding what Mr. Meador wanted the sign to say—his answer – Pine Grove Cemetery. But he also acknowledged there were really two cemeteries located in one large square tract of land.

The visible well maintained cemetery called Pine Grove was for African American burials and was composed of two sections—one for burials dated late 1800s to early 1900s and the other section was for current burials. However both were separated by a stretch of woods and each section for African American burials had

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a different entrance. What I learned next was a surprise indeed—hidden deep within the stretch of woods was another burial plot---one for Anglo Americans called Daughtery Cemetery.

A state historical marker in the area for Pine Grove School describes: earliest county school records indicate that the Pine Grove School was in operation by at

least 1885, serving African American students in that part of rural Cherokee County. Pine Grove operated as a segregated institution until it closed in 1968 and merged with the New Hope school district.

I'd like to draw your attention now to the poster which contains



photos of these two cemeteries. The update is: I visited this site a week ago and work has begun to carefully clear brush and small trees which surround the graves in the Daughtery Cemetery.

The second example is a small unnamed cemetery found on Old Larissa Road. This came to our attention when a new county historical commission member, David Adams, began to join Gordon Bennett and me on our cemetery treks. With David's knowledge of the terrain and love of history we made numerous forays. But on this particular day David led us to a spot he first saw as a young Boy Scout camping in the area in the 1960s. According to David, at that time it was common knowledge there was a small cemetery there. The stones, although in the woods, were very visible and located on the side of the cutoff road which connects Old

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Larissa and the Old Jacksonville Road. David remembers seven graves—all marked with native rock. Etched into the rock were dates from the 1800s—the only name he remembers was Jones.

What makes this example so poignant is the gravestones are no longer there. This illustrates the need for quick action; to photograph stones and research those buried in lost and neglected places before they become unmarked graves.

The third and last example today is Walker Cemetery. Once again I stress the importance of communication in locating graves. Because of our efforts in terms of writing newspaper columns—individuals outside the county are becoming aware of the project and contacting us.

I received an email from a lady who lives in Houston. She wrote that she and her husband had purchased a weekend farm in Cherokee County about four years ago. The property included had an old cemetery plot in a wooded area with about eight graves. At one point there was a fence around it but she was concerned because the fence was down and cows were in the pasture and might damage the stones. She had asked everyone she could think of for help. Instead of responding to her by email I called her number in Houston and told her I and a colleague would drive out to the site right away and take a look. She was so very grateful. Even though the graves were not her relatives she had a love of history and wanted someone to help preserve the plot. Two of the oldest stones are for husband and wife: Anderson Walker, born July 14, 1806, died fall of 1861 and Mary Elizabeth Walker born Feb 1811, died July 26, 1892. Carved on both markers is the date of their marriage Jan. 22, 1829. And it's interesting to note one large replacement stone has been erected for Patrick and Jenny Johnson denoting Patrick was born in Ireland 1780-1856 and Jenny Houston was born in Virginia 1784-1854. Research is on-going at the present time to ascertain more about these families.

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In closing today I want to summarize several keys to success and offer a few tips which you may want to use as you search for lost and neglected cemeteries. As stated earlier communication is vital across many levels and following leads as quickly as possible is critical. And don't forget to keep your colleagues informed. Let them know which cemeteries you've visited recently and what you've learned from your research, etc. Once you've arrived at a cemetery, document the site and stones by taking photographs and make hard copy handwritten notes as well. Al-ways travel with a partner. Each time you visit the site, and as cleaning and repairs are done, take more photos and compile more notes. Throughout the process conduct oral history videos with individuals who have knowledge of the site and families buried there. And one final tip—you'll need a great pair of boots and sturdy jeans–oh so very necessary for trudging through the woods. Text and photo copyright 2015 by Deborah Burkett. Used by permission.

By Gordon Bennett Compilation of Data

History

Ogreta Wilson Huttash compiled Cemetery Records of Cherokee County, Texas published by Major Thaddeus Beall Chapter, NSDAR, Jacksonville, Texas in 1971. This book listed 34 cemeteries.

From about 1970 through 1974, Helen Wooddell Crawford published 5 books on Cherokee County Cemeteries totaling 119 cemeteries.

In 2000, Ira Gaylon White compiled <u>Grave Marker Index of Cherokee County.</u> This book listed 156 cemeteries and was published by the Cherokee County Genealogical Society

The Cherokee County Genealogical Society has an Internet site since 1996 listing 169 cemeteries. Rather than try to update the books by Mrs. Huttash, Mrs. Craw-ford, and Mr. White, the Cherokee County Genealogical Society has chosen to update the lists of the cemeteries on our web site.

The Cherokee County Appraisal District showed 115 cemeteries in 2014.

Find A Grave Cherokee County Texas showed 189 cemeteries in Cherokee County in 2015.

Compiling

From these sources and more we now have list of 197 cemeteries in Cherokee

4740		11800	105580			821750				9800175			1	
4740 Afton Grove-Vinson AKA Tilley	Alexander	Alto City Cemetery	Antioch	Arnold	Arnwine Plot	Atoy	Augusta	Ball (Maydelle)	Ball Family (Alto)	Benge	Berry	Berryman AKA Forrest Hills	Box AKA Stephens- Box	Bradford AKA New Garden Friends Lower
31.9763889, -95.189166	6	31.653470, -95.075139	31.883734,-95.314541	31.5441667, -95.054166	31.927973, -95.289652	31.774919, -95.014101	ć	5	C	31.8704474, -95.318837	31.718620, -95.248379	31.6879543, -95.023550 CR 2501, NE of Alto	- 31.6786000, -95.218100	31.73810, -95.07670
Afton Grove-Vinson 31.9763889, -95.1891867 CR 4209 (Myrtie Dr.), N of US 79 Afton Grove-Vinson 31.9763889, -95.1891867 CR 4209 (Myrtie Dr.), N of US 79 AKA Tilley	In Jacksonville City Cemetery (?) on a hill by the fence near the back	Cemetery St., Alto, just W of Hwy 69	CR 3111 (Union Grove Rd.), adjacent to Antioch Church	31.5441667, -95.0541667 FM 1911 (NW of Forest, CR 2756)	Private property on Lakeshore Dr., Lake Jacksonville	FM 343 (Atoy~7 miles SE of Rusk)	Near Priscilla	CR 2120, ~ 3 m. SE of Maydelle on private posted property on a dirt	CR 2501 (Thomas Ball Farm NE of Alto)	31.8704474, -95.3188379 CR 1815 (SW of Jacksonville, NE of junction w/ CR1816)	31.718620, -95.248379 FM 1857, just W of CR 2217, SW of Rusk	0 CR 2501, NE of Alto	Box AKA Stephens- 31.8786000, -95.218100 CR 2323 (Located on the Joe Box Mosley Place in the Bulah Community)	CR 1107, E of Hwy 69, ~ 4.5 mi. SE of Rusk
Afton Grove Baptist Church?		Marie Thomas				BILLY SESSIONS, Atoy Cem. Assn.	Shirley Cutler			Gordon Benge				
		936-858- 4207					936-687- 5162			903-586- 3473				
360 CR 4208, 10/20/05 UKN AVG Jacksonville, TX 75766						734 CR 2807, Alto, TX 75925				1750 County Road 3107, Jacksonville, TX				
10/20/05		12/31/73	09/01/96	10/30/00	~	05/26/05		12/31/74	12/31/74	09/30/02	09/01/02	12/31/72		
UKN		UKN	1918	UKN	1859	1885		1862	1972	1846	1888	1849		1925
AVG Jacksonville East	Jacksonville West	ALT Alto	ANT	ARN	ARW Jacksonville West	АТҮ		BLL Maydelle	BAL Alto	BNG Maydelle	BER Pryor Mountain	BRM Alto	Pryor Mountain	BRD Alto
ille 3, 7	rille 7	1,3,6,7	1,3,6,7	1,3	rille 1,3	1,3			1,3	~	2,3	1,2,3	5	N

The Efforts of Locating Lost Cemeteries

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County. There is some evidence that the list of names is still incomplete. For each cemetery we want to know the Appraisal District Owner number ID, Cemetery name(s), Latitude and Longitude, 911 address, Contact person, Contact number, Contact address, Survey Date, Earliest Burial, United States Geological Survey Topographic Name, and the source of the information. See the spreadsheet in the handout.

The information came from at least 27 distinct sources.

In several cases we have evidence that a cemetery exists, but the information is not precise enough to locate the cemetery on the ground. For this reason we have made a list of Lost and Neglected Cemeteries and have widely circulated this list to funeral homes, cemetery associations and the public. See the yellow handout.

We are still filling many blanks in the list. However, we are far enough in our research to start on the next step of our goal.

Surveying

Each cemetery should have a general description showing the name, location (by road address and GPS location) and a general history. By surveying, we mean the process of listing the names, dates and other inscriptions on the head and foot stones. If possible, photos are made and shared. We also want to list the information from reliable sources of persons known to be buried in each cemetery. Some of the cemeteries located on the Cherokee County Appraisal District have never been surveyed. Some of the cemeteries were last surveyed in the late 1960s. A very few cemeteries are continually or annually surveyed. We plan to re-survey each cemetery beginning with those that have never been surveyed, then by the

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The Efforts of Locating Lost Cemeteries

CEMETERY NAME	Neglected Cemeteries in Cherokee County, Texas APPROXIMATE ADDRESS				
Alexander	In Jacksonville City Cemetery (?) on a hill by the fence near the back				
Ball Family (Alto)	CR 2501 (Thomas Ball Farm NE of Alto)				
	CR 2120, ~ 3 m. SE of Maydelle on private posted property on a di				
Ball (Maydelle)	road in the back woods, near 31.758507, -95.316657?				
Bradshaw	No site reference				
Brooks Williams	Homeplace of Brooks Williams, SW of Alto?				
Butcher Family	Rusk				
Carroll AKA Bloomfield	New Emmaus, NE of Jacksonville				
Cates Family	Near Bullard?				
Conway	Alto				
Copeland	Alto				
Couch Plot	CR 4727 NE of New Summerfield, near 32.01002, -95.07092?				
Dear Place	West of Alto (Archie Dear Place)				
Egbert	No site reference				
	CR 2138 (~ 4 miles S of Jacksonville, W side of road) (GPS				
Glass Felps	approximate 31.902335,-95.275011)				
Green	New Summerfield (no site reference found)				
Hanna	No site reference				
Herring Family	No site reference				
loisomback	Old Highway north of Wells about 1.5 miles on Melvin Burroughs farm				
loot	CR 2712, off FM 1911, 2 mi. W of Hwy 69 (Morrill Community) - GPS coordinates approximate 31.592405,-95.059661				
Cennedy plot	Hwy 110 (N of Ponta, on the Frances Miller Lester place, W of Highway 110)				
andrum	Donnie Wallace place, off FM 294, W of Alto (Lynches Chapel?)				
one Star	FM 235 & CR 2274 (NE of Rusk, near Ponta) Myrtle Springs???				
ow Family	Low familly land?				
lanning AKA Graveyard	FM 851, 7 miles NE of Alto, north of Central High Community, on a hill known as Graveyard Hill, near 31.760324, -95.022550?				
IcCall	on a rural road about 3.5 miles west of Forest.				
lonkress (W.C.) plot (in					
till Waters)	Loop 456, between Hwy 69 and FM 768, Jacksonville				

The Efforts of Locating Lost Cemeteries

Help Cherokee County Genealogical Society and Cherokee County Historical Commission find

Lost and Ne	eglected Cemeteries in Cherokee County, Texas					
Neches River Bottom	5					
(Ezell)	Graves on Ezell Land, Neches River bottom, W of J'ville					
Odom Farm	CR 2138 (T.H. Odom farm, Maydelle), between Union Grove Cemetery and Mt. Comfort Cemetery					
Old Cunningham	CR 3305, about 2 miles east of Corine cemetery (on Bearden Ranch), ~31.985102, -95.367525?					
Pine Hill CME	E. Pine St. Jacksonville?					
	HWY 69 S of Rusk, 1/4 mile N of the roadside park					
Sickenberger						
Smith	Hwy 110 5 mi. N of New Summerfield (Blackjack), .25 mi. SE of school					
Smyri plot	FM 747 SE of Pierces Chapel in the woods possibly near 31.868093, -95.359500?					
Terrell	Hwy 21, ~ 1 m. E of Linwood (N of Hwy. 21)					
Thompson Plot	FM235, Thompson Farm, between Stryker Lake and Walker Chapel on the south side of FM 235, at a sharp corner, 31.947835, - 95.037110?					
Todd Graves	Hwy 69 (Todd Farm near New Birmingham)					
Warren	CR 3220 (S of Hwy 79) dirt road toward Neches River, .75 mi.					
Watching Rock Cemetery	Jacksonville					
Waters graves	Jacksonville					
White	Hwy 21, E of Linwood					
Person furnishing Information						
Contact Name (Person who can lead us Contact Address:						
Contact Telephone Contact Email:						
Send to:	Or:					
	t Cherokee County Historical Commission					
PO Box 1332	PO Box 532					
Jacksonville TX 75766-1332	Rusk TX 75785-05832					
ccgs@suddenlink.net	Deborah L. Burkett, Chairman					
Gordon Bennett 903-586-0135	903-752-7850					

TREE TALKVolume 41 Issue 2Winter 2015-2016Page 59The Efforts of Locating Lost Cemeteries

earliest surveyed to the latest surveyed. Future surveys may also use ground penetrating radar or other reliable methods to find unmarked graves.

Visiting

Our next step is to visit all the known cemeteries on a regular basis, two to four times a year. We have recruited a list of 18 people, known as "Cemetery Rangers", who are willing to visit the cemeteries of their families and other cemeteries in the same area. We are still working out the reporting and managing the data we collect.

Ongoing

We will continue to contact the public for support by visiting cemetery associations, Clubs (Rotary, Lions, etc.)

The Cemetery Rangers will visit each cemetery and make a report on a regular basis to the Historical Commission. The Historical Commission (and some of the volunteers) will make a list of the most critical actions needed each year and list the actions in order of most critical. Then an action plan will be written and carried out.

Under the leadership of the Cherokee County Historical Commission and with the help of government officials and many volunteers, we are confident the cemeteries will be preserved. The Efforts of Locating Lost Cemeteries

Cemetery Sources

Books

Cherokee County Appraisal District. <u>2015 Certified Appraisal Roll as of Supplement: 0.</u> Rusk, Texas.

Volume 41 Issue 2

- Crawford, Helen Wooddell. <u>Cemeteries of NW Cherokee County, Book 1</u>. 2nd ed. Jacksonville, Texas: Cherokee County Genealogical Society ISBN 978-1-931167-46-8
- ---. <u>Cemeteries of Jacksonville, and others, Book 2</u>, 2nd ed. Jacksonville, Texas: Cherokee County Genealogical Society ISBN 978-1-931167-41-3
- ---. <u>Cemeteries of NE Cherokee County, Book 3.</u> 2nd ed. Jacksonville, Texas: Cherokee County Genealogical Society ISBN 978-1-931167-38-3/
- ---. <u>Cemeteries of Mid Cherokee County, Book 4</u>, 2nd ed. Jacksonville, Texas: Cherokee County Genealogical Society ISBN 978-1-931167-35-2
- ---. <u>Cemeteries of Southern Cherokee County, Book 5</u>, 2nd ed. Jacksonville, Texas: Cherokee County Genealogical Society ISBN 978-1-931167-44-4
- Huttash, Ogreta Wilson, <u>Cemetery Records of Cherokee County, Texas.</u> Major Thaddeus Beall Chapter, NSCAR, Jacksonville, Texas. 1971
- White, Ira Gaylon. <u>Grave Marker Index for Cherokee County, Texas</u>. Jacksonville, Texas: Cherokee County Genealogical Society, 2000. ISBN 0-9703085-7-4

Internet

Cherokee County Appraisal District, Eddie Don Parsons, Public Information Officer, - <u>Appraisal and Info</u> www.cherokeecad.com

---. Property Search Options: https://propaccess.trueautomation.com/clientdb/?cid=61

Cherokee County Cemeteries: http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~txcherok/6/Cemeteries/cem.htm

Find-A-Grave <u>http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=csr&CScnty=2556</u>

Geographic Names Information System Query, <u>http://geonames.usgs.gov/apex/f?</u> p=136:1:15732021722821

Benjamin Selman Sr. Last Will and Testament

State of Texas County of Cherokee

In the name of God amen: I. Benj: Selman. Sr., of the county and State aforesaid. being sick In body, but of sound and disposing mind, memory, and understanding, hereby make publish and declare, this my last will and Testament, revoking ail or any wills or will at any time heretofore made by me.

Impromis; I commit my body to the dust from which it sprung, my soul: to the God who gave it; and as to such worldly goods, as it has pleased Almighty God, to endow me with I Will Devise and Bequeath them as follows:

First ---- I Will Devise and Direct my Executors. hereinafter named, as soon after my Death, as practicable, to collect all debts due me or my Estate - and pay all my obligations due by me - in that order which the Law Prescribes.

PAGE 2

Second - I Will, Devise, and Direct My Executors to pay over to my Son Thomas Selman of Mississippi, his heirs successors or assigns as soon after my Death as practicable the Sum of Two hundred dollars in Gold as his portion of his mothers Estate.

Third - I Will, Devise and Direct (in like manner) my Executors, to pay over to my Daughter: Sarah Benton Lewis, of the State of South Carolina: her heirs or assigns the Sum of Two hundred dollars In Gold as her portion of her Mothers t:state.

Fourth - I will, Devise and Direct, in Like manner, my Executors to this my iast Will and testament Greenlee Bean Selman, and William Lafayette Selman to assume to themselves the sum of Two hundred dollars Gold each, as their Shares respectively of their mothers Estate-

Fifth – I will devise and direct my Executors, in like manner as in the foregoing, to pay to James Boyd, Jr., his sister Louisa Williams - heirs of the body of Martha Ann Boyd decd, as their respective shares - of the Grand-mothers Estate.

PAGE 3

REMARK I -- As to my Daughters, Nancy Moody, Elizabeth McNeil, Artemesia Boone, and Polly Ann Scott, It is but right and proper to state that I have settled with them In full, to the amt. of the award by the board of Arbitrators (Green Fisher and Robert Sowers) as their respective share of their mothers estate,

REMARK II -- As to my Grandchildren --- Elizabeth Wood, Sarah Hoyt and the heirs of Martha Donegan, Ann Moore, and John Boyd, William Boyd, and to the last named, as guardians for Josephine Boyd, Calvin Boyd and Claudier Boyd and Albert Boyd, minors, I have paid their respective shares, as the representatives of their mother, Martha Boyd, In their Grandmothers Estate, as for the arbitration - in the aforesaid. REMARK Sixth -- I will Devise and Direct my Executors - after the aforesaid distribution of the Legacies as a final Settlement of the Estate of my deceased Wife Sarah Selman, to Set aside for the Education maintenance and welfare of my infant daughter by my wife Sarah Ann Selman, Ann Olivia B.

Box 99

TREE TALK

Benjamin Selman Sr.

PAGE 4

Sixth – continued -- in the Sum or one thousand dollars In Gold - this amount to be held by my Sons and Executors G. B. Selman and Willis S. Selman. on the following uses and trusts: That they will invest this last named amount of one thousand dollars inI gold as aforesaid in their own name or names - So that it may yield and pay the annual sum of one hundred dollars Gold or ten per cent annual interest on the above named principal, in trust for the aforesaid infant daughter, Ann Olivia Belle Selman, which annual interest in the appropriated to the use of the Said infant in the following manner; While the said child resides with its mother, this amount of one hundred dollars to be paid annually to her as the authorized agent for the disbursement of this money for the benefits of the Said child - Ann Olivia Belle. And I further direct that If by the instigations of Providence the mother should not be spared to see the said daughter arrive at the age of maturity then, and In Such case, the Executors herein after named do act as Guardians under this Will and Testament - and it Shall be their duty

PAGE 5

to see the said Ann Olivia Belle Educated Sufficiently well - for a station in society and the Said amount of one thousand Dollars to be paid to the said Ann Olivia Belle, on her arriving at the age of maturity or as soon after her marriage as possible -- and I furthermore direct - that the Said G B Selman and Willis L. Selman Shall invest or reinvest this amount of one thousand Dollars in Gold - In trust for the Said Infant daughter Ann Olivia Bell as they Shall deem fit and proper - and that they shall be placed under no bond - as to the faithful discharge or this trust but shall discharge the said trust without appellation in any courts - either of Ordaining Probate or Equity.

Seventh - I devise and direct That my beloved wife Sarah Ann Selman shall hold occupy and enjoy the fruits and profits of all the Real Estate that I die possessed of - for the term and period of her natural lifetime That she may occupy the homestead - or - rent it - as She sees fit or proper - provided it be to an approved tenant and one who can give a good Bond - for the honorable

PAGE 6

Seventh –continued - discharge of his duties and obligations as a tenant and at his death to descend to the lawful heirs of my body or their Representatives share and share alike in ratable proportions.

Eighth - I will devise and direct that my beloved wife Sarah Ann Selman Shall Keep use and enjoy - all my farming utensils and agricultural implements live Stock - and other perishable property - as an assistance in the support and maintenance of herself and family: for comfort or otherwise -

Ninth - I Will and direct that the balance and remainder of my personal Estate not enumerated heretofore - be appraised and used for the purpose of walling and inclosing the graves of my deceased Wife and myself with a Suitable Wall or Stone or iron and for marking our respective graves with marble and granite, and if not Sufficient - then enough of the Livestock heretofore enumerated be sold to Supply the deficiency.

Tenth - I name constitute and appoint My Sons - Green B Selman and Willis L. Selman Executors of this my last will and Testament with full power to discharge their duties as such to act either Solely or Collectively

Benjamin Selman Sr.

PAGE 7

Tenth Claus Continued - and in fact to do any and all acts herein enumerated without appellation to any courts either of Ordaining Probate or of Equity and without having been previously bound by any Bond for the faithful discharge of their duties as Executor or Executors and I further direct that in the final Settlement, they each, if acting collectively receive the sum of one hundred dollars gold - if acting solely - the one who acts to receive the sum of one hundred dollars gold for their or his trouble - in the execution of this trust.

Eleventh - I Will. devise and Bequeath unto Noel Smith a good horse bridal and Saddle - provided he will remain with my Wife until he arrives or the age of Twenty one years, and direct my executors heretofore named to give to the said Noel Smith a year's Schooling at a good School.

In Testimony whereof I hereunto Set my hand and Seal this the 27th day of December A.D., 1872.

Benj Selman.

The words "or their representatives" on pages (6) and (7) clause and the words "be Sold" on page (6) clause IX inserted before signing.

PAGE 8

We the undersigned hereby Certify that we Saw the within named Benj. Selman, Sr. Sign Seal and Deliver the within instrument as his last Will and Testament and we hereby subscribe our names as attesting witnesses in presence of the Testator - and in presence of each other - this the 27 day of December A. D. 1872

J.V.B. Quinn Benj I. Boone TREE TALKVolume 41 Issue 2

Winter 2015-2016 Page 64

Letter to Nona Clarice Mellard regarding Jacob Womack with proofs from the Will of Benjamin Selman

by Ogreta W. Huttash

Nona Clarice Mellard 130 Six Flags Dr. Georgetown, TX 78628

Daniel Coleman Chapter 6-029-TX Georgetown, TX

ANCESTOR: Jacob Womack

GENERATION 5 PROOFS

Connecting generations 4 and 5: Will of Benjamin Selman, Cherokee Co., TX, Box 99. 27 Dec. 1872. Will names daughter, Mary Ann Scott.

Transcript attached.

Benjamin Selman

Birth and Death dates: Records of East Texas, Vol. 7, # 3, April 1973, p. 111, 113, Records of Old Palestine Cemetery, Cherokee Co., TX

Marriage: Over the Mountain, p. 157, List of children of Benjamin Selman and Sallie Bean giving birth of first born as 18 March 1817, thus the probable date c. 1815-1816

Sarah (Sallie) Bean

Birth: Over the Mountain, p. 157, list of children includes Mary "Polly" Selman, giving birthdate as 1830, Marion Co.

Birth and Death dates: Records of East Texas, p. 111, 113.

Connecting generations 5 and 6: Over the Mountain, p. 127, list of children of Robert and Martha Bean, taken from a widow's pension application submitted to the U. S. Pension Office in 1893. This lists Sarah Bean as a daughter showing birth as Nov. 6, 1798

Letter to Nona Clarice Mellard regarding Jacob Womack with proofs from the Will of Benjamin Selman

Index A - 1846 - 1863

Benjamin Selman, Sr.

on

Deed Records of Cherokee County, Texas

Deed Book Date of Instrument Type D - 457 23 Nov 1848 Deed Elija J. DeBard of Anderson County sold him 566 acres for \$553.50, mentions George Terrell's line

C-437-438

19 Jan 1949

Deed

Ira R. Lewis of Brazoria Co. sold him 100 acres that Lewis had purchased in 1837 from John Durst, also known as Barr and Davenport 9 league grant Consideration: \$200 paid

E-221 Jan 1849 Deed Ira R. Lewis of Brazoria Co. sold him 100 acres in John Durst or Barr and Davenport 9 league grant for \$200 paid

C 433-434 27 Jan 1849 Deed Ira R. Lewis of Brazoria Co. for and in consideration of the good will and friendship which I entertain for the citizens Benjamin Selman, Sr. and William Roark, Esq. of County of Cherokee as aforesaid and for their neighbors and fellow citizens in their respective settlements where they are now residing and for the further consideration of forming Encouraging and advancing the cause of Education and the Christian religion do by this act and deed give grant and donate unto the said Benjamin Selman, Sr. and William Roark, Esq. as aforesaid all and singular following land in front of or nearly South of said Benjamin Selman on Old San Antonio de Bexar and Nacogdoches Road and known designated and bounded as follows according to a survey of the same made this day by the said Citizen Surveyor William Roark, Esq 10 acres more or less for benefit of Schools education and said inhabitants may if they think proper in addition to above but not to interfere with school or schools may appropriate a part of said 10 acres for a church or churches by building a church for a place of worshipping God in their own way donated for above purposes

D 44-45-46 17 April 1850 Deed R F Mitchell sold Benjamin Selman 2 tracts, 130 acres and 54.6 acres for \$314 paid

0-421 29 Jan 1851 Deed W L Selman sold to Benjamin Selman, Sr. for \$500 paid a 100 acre tract purchased by himself, Willis L. Selman, from Ira R. Lewis in 1849, and a 125 acre tract

I-371 7 Jan 1854 Deed Benjamin F. White and wife Lucy sold Benjamin Selman 240 acres for \$650 paid

I-460 15 May 1854 Deed Reuben H. Boone sold to Benjamin Selman, Sr. and Volentine H. Moody 94 acres of land for \$300 paid

0-207, 208 11 Aug 1854 Deed Elizabeth W. Boulter (X her mark) sold to Benjamin Selmen, Sr. $20\frac{1}{2}$ acres for \$90 paid

Letter to Nona Clarice Mellard regarding Jacob Womack with proofs from the Will of Benjamin Selman

Benjamin Selman, Sr. - page 2

J-207 Nov 1854 Deed Benjamin Selman Sr. and Volentine H. Moody sold to George W. Simmons for \$300 paid 94 acres beginning on SW Corner of Willis Selman Survey

L-282 26 Jan 1856 Deed Benjamin Selman, Sr. and Ruben Boone and Artemessa Boone sold to Leah McBee 200 acres in Helena Kimble Survey

L-575 10 Dec 1856 Deed Benjamin Selman, Sr sold to Sarah Benton Lewis, wife of Daniel B. Lewis, all of Cherokee County, 120 acres for \$150 paid

L-214 Acting as the power of attorney for

sold to J. T. McLauren

P-127 3 Feb 1860 Deed Benjamin Selman, Sr. sold to Daniel B. Lewis for \$1,600 a 175 acre tract Witnesses: G. B. Selman and Samuel Beene

> <u>Index B 1863 - 1879</u> Cherokee County. Tex

S-285

8 Sept 1866 Deed Benjamin Selman and Sarah his wife sold to Berry Willingham "for a valuable consideration to us paid" [not specified] 100 acres beginning at L. H. Harvey's corner

S-177 Dec 1866 Deed Benjamin Selman et al sold to Joseph T. Moore for \$150 a 50 acre tract plus a small tract of 15 acres. Note: the "et al" was Artemissa Boone. witnesses: Benjamin J. Boone and C. C. Scott

U-72 4 Feb 1868 Deed Anna and Willis Selman by their Administrator George C. Holcomb sold to Benjamin Selman, on a credit of 12 months, and to V. H. Moody for \$65 (think it was 65 acres) They were highest and best bidder when this tract was sold at the Court House door.

W-28 1 Aug 1871 Deed Benjamin Selman to J. C. Stuart for \$650 paid a tract of land $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles SE of Alto of 115 acress and other small tracts (town lots, looks like) Witnesses: W L Kirksey, and I. Lee

X-526 30 Dec 1872 Deed Benjamin Selman Sr. to James W. McNeil for \$50 paid 50 acres more or less, in Barr and Davenport grant

X-527 18 Dec 1872 Deed Benjamin Selman Sr. todArtemesia Boone same tract on which said Artemesia Boone now resides $156\frac{1}{2}$ acres in Helena Dill svy for \$900 and for same consideration above stated "my 1/2 interest adjoining above tract, 85 acres part of original svy for Benjamin Selman and Artemesia Boone

Deed

Deed

Letter to Nona Clarice Mellard regarding Jacob Womack with proofs from the Will of Benjamin Selman

Daniel B. Lewis and his wife Sarah Benton Lewis from Deed Records of Cherokee County, Texas

Index A 1846 - 1863

10 Dec 1856

L-575

Benjamin Selman, Sr. sold to Sarah Benton Lewis, wife of Daniel B. Lewis, all of Cherokee County, Texas, 120 acres for \$150 paid

P-126 11 Feb 1860

Green B. Selman and Debora Amanda Selman, his wife, for \$1,500 paid by Daniel B. Lewis sold him land in Barr and Davenport or John Durst grant purchased by said Green B. Selman from Executors of John Durst, deceased.... to SW corner of 110 acre tract conveyed by said Green B. Selman to Robert N. Lewis... 210 acres with all appurtenances &c Test: R H Boone

James W. McNeal

/s/ G. B. Selman Debora A. Selman

P-127 3 Feb 1860 Deed Benjamin Selman sold to Daniel B. Lewis for \$1,600 paid 110 acres plus.... (W bank of Larrison Creek...dividing line between John Durst and Ira B. Lewis) 175 acres more or less Attest: G B Selman Samuel Beene

Letter to Nona Clarice Mellard regarding Jacob Womack with proofs from the Will of Benjamin Selman

WAR OF 1812. SURVIVORS' PENSION. St an Company Ussell Poate for month-- Bight dollars. Commencing Sebruary 14, 1871. Certificate dated and sent to Pension Agent. Act 1 Ath February, 1871.

From the archives of Ogreta W. Huttash in the Genealogy section of the Jacksonville Public Library, Catalog number 929.3764 Hu 377 in the name of Selman, Benjamin. Most of the literary works of Ogreta Wilson Huttash (including the archives) were assigned to the Cherokee County Genealogical Society, August 27, 2008 by Mary Ann Russell, and Martha Ann Huttash Ezell, Joint Executors, Estate of Ogreta Wilson Huttash and recorded at the Library of Congress, September 15, 2008.

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Jacksonville Daily Progress Obituary Index 1984-2013 compiled by staff	of Jackson	ville Public Library edited by Gordon Bennett				
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