



Pleasant Ridge Cemetery

By Frances James (1922 – 2019)

The Pleasant Ridge Cemetery is located high on a hill north of Barnes Bridge at the intersection with Belt Line Road in Sunnyvale. The cemetery also known as the New Hope Cemetery is a small parcel of the Peters Colony six hundred and forty acre Survey Number 696 that was assigned to John Johnson. The Johnson family migrated to the Three Forks area before July 1848 and qualified for a Grant, but Johnson died before 1850. Samuel Pryor, the county District Clerk, was the administrator of his estate and received the certificate for John Johnson's heirs. The small town that began in 1885, initially called New Hope, was on this same survey.

In 1868 widow Mary Johnson and her children agreed to a partition of the 640 acres. This agreement was not filed until 1875 and each of the five children, now adults received eighty acres apiece. In 1874, one of the sons of Mary and John Johnson, Robert Johnson gave one acre of land from his parcel for a school. The parcel was given to the trustees H. J. Heckler, William Worthington, and C. D. White. This deed also said if not used for this purpose it would fall back to the original deed.

The original burial on the one acre plot was for Cassie Keen the fifteen year old daughter of Abner M and Elizabeth Keen. Abner M. Keen, listed on the census as a surveyor, was the son of Virginia native Peter Colonist Abner Keen who has been noted as establishing many Methodist churches in North Texas. An additional one and one half acres of land for the cemetery was sold for \$25.00 by R. W. Johnson and his wife M. J. Johnson in 1886 to George Miller, J. J. Jones, J. D. Cullum, and D. A. David. Subsequently these men conveyed the land to J. J. Jones, James A. White, J. A. Florence, J. C. Anderson, and Elias T. Myers who had been constituted a Board of Trust by the Quarterly Conference of the Mesquite Circuit North Texas Annual Conference. Robert and his wife reserved a section in the burying ground for their own use.

In 1903 the Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church South sold, transferred, and conveyed to the Pleasant Ridge Cemetery Association the land that had been dedicated as a cemetery. The church and the school were no longer there. These trustees of the church were W. S. Jobson, G. W. Miller, L. C. Ebrite, and Frank Potter. It took a while but in November 1911 the Pleasant Ridge Cemetery Association published in the Texas Mesquiter, the local newspaper at that time, that there would be a meeting for all persons of interest to attend and vote on the whether the cemetery should incorporate and accept all land that had been dedicated for a cemetery. It was unanimously decided to acquire title to the land. This consisted of four parcels a one and one-half piece, two and one-half piece, a one-half acre, and a one acre a total of five and one-half acres in New Hope,

Texas. The volunteers who signed off on this transaction were T. N. Tunell, W. F. Miller, Bedford Galloway, W. H. Myers, Sr., J. C. Rugel, J. A. White, D. A. Davis, and A. W. Lander, all trustees.

The inventory of the cemetery reveals that many of the first families to come to Dallas County buried their families in the Pleasant Ridge Cemetery. There was a plot for A. W. Lander (1859-1950) and some of his descendants that united with the Miller, Peavy, Lee and Brown families. Mr. Lander came to the area to be a teacher and taught in the first structure used for a school which was the small Pleasant Ridge Methodist Church near the cemetery. Lander later bought the brick store built by Ellis in 1919 in New Hope and operated it for many years. All other structures in New Hope, but this one store, were blown away in a storm in 1921.

Although the Anderson family had a cemetery of their own near Rowlett Creek and the East Fork of the Trinity, there are over thirty members of the large Anderson family buried at Pleasant Ridge. Of particular note is the shared headstone for James Carter and Rebecca Anderson. Rebecca had left James Carter Anderson to live with his brother Henry Anderson. The wayward couple went to Missouri until Rebecca's conscience caused her to write her husband and ask to come back to him. James Carter agreed, and they are buried side by side at Pleasant Ridge.

Another community that has many families buried at Pleasant Ridge was the Housley Community. There was even a post office called Housley from 1884 to 1907. This area developed in the 1880s where Lyons Road and Bob Town Road intersect. The Housley Cemetery was located in this area, too, and later abandoned. This was north and east of the Pleasant Ridge Cemetery site. Later as a small store and gin were built at the intersection of Bob Town and Rose Hill Road the community spread out and became known as Rose Hill.

Henry Loving (1842-1927), the son of James and Margaret Loving and other members of his family are buried at Pleasant Ridge. James Loving was murdered by J. L. Parker in 1869. Parker coveted the large, beautiful, bay horse that James owned and with a gang of thugs killed James Loving and took the horse. James and Margaret were buried in the Housley Cemetery but, the shared headstone for James and Margaret Loving was moved to the Lyons Cemetery on Barnes Bridge Road as was the Texas Historical Marker for this couple in 1972.

There is a large very impressive head stone for Benjamin Galloway at Pleasant Ridge. This stone is between the two smaller stones for both of his wives and the twin infant babies who died in 1883. Benjamin's first wife Eliza Fletcher was nineteen when she and Benjamin were married in Tennessee in 1872 and three hours later they headed for Texas. They rented land for two years and then started buying up farmland. After Eliza died in 1883, with the birth of the twins, Benjamin married Amanda Miller in 1887.

Some of the Galloway land is where Shepler's Western Store is near Town East Mall. There is a Texas Historical Marker at the original site of the home place.

Along the edge of the paved drive that circles through the Pleasant Ridge Cemetery is the headstone for B. F. Tisinger, his wife and son. B. F. was a school teacher at the school in Housley/Rose Hill. A carefully preserved article he wrote describes what life was like before the turn of the century.

The Pleasant Ridge Cemetery has had an association to care for it since 1911. The officers and trustees who volunteered through the years were careful with the funds

and were able to support the maintenance and improvements. A few years ago a local Funeral Home in an adjacent city, with a cemetery attached to it already, decide to expand its operation and managed to maneuver the control of Pleasant Ridge Cemetery in such a way that they could buy the adjacent vacant property and hold it for future cemetery expansion. The Funeral Home gave the vacant land a new name as if it were a cemetery and do not pay taxes on the vacant land. A thought to remember: The LOVE of money is the root of all evil.

The names of the pioneers in the inventory who rest in this hallowed ground remind all that they were among the settlers who came to Texas seeking a better life. Each name has a story to tell.

Frances James, "Dallas County History – From the Ground Up, Book II"

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