

# THE FRIENDS OF BENNETT CEMETERY, INC.

*A nonprofit corporation dedicated to preserving and restoring Bennett Cemetery, designated by the Texas Historical Commission as Lavaca County's first **Official Historic Texas Cemetery**. The I.R.S. recognizes us as a Section 501 (c) (3) organization. Donations and bequests are tax deductible. Bennett Cemetery is located one mile north of Sweet Home on the west side of FM 531 at the Texas Historical Marker.*

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**Family surnames known to be represented in the cemetery include:** Armstrong\*, Bell\*, Bennett, Berdych\*, Bethel, Bingham, Bolsius, Bonneau\*, Calhoun\*, Clements, Clifton, Cox, Currington, Dew, Durst, Dyer, Ellis, Fisk\*, Greenwood, Hagin, Harrison, Harwood, Hooper\*, Hranitzky, Kaiser, Koerth, Kuenstler, KUNETKA, Layton, Lehmann, Lewis, McCord, McCutcheon\*\*, McGrew, McMurrey\*, McVey, Middlebrook\*, Moore, Morgan, Mudd, Neely, Niemann, Noble, Oldham, Perrin, Rathke, Saunders, Schlageter, Sharber, Slanina, Spaulding, Stephenson\*\*, Sutton, Tate, Tolleson, Vick and Williams.  
**Surnames added this issue:** None

For the benefit of genealogists and family historians, some of the surnames shown above are the maiden names\* of married women. Similarly, when known that a woman was married more than once we have, when known to us, shown the surnames\*\* of her several husbands.

## APRIL 2003 DIRECTORS MEETING

The third annual meeting of the corporation's Board of Directors is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 5, 2003.

We had hoped to meet in the firehouse of the Sweet Home Volunteer Fire Department located on the square in Sweet Home, however, because of insurance regulations, that is not possible this year. We have been told that they are trying to solve this problem and that maybe next year we can meet there!

Instead, we will meet again this year at Werner's Restaurant in Shiner. Space has been reserved for us from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., but Werner's is open early and serves a wonderful breakfast, so feel free to arrive early. Some of us will almost certainly have lunch after the meeting and we hope you can join us.

This will be an open meeting and everyone is invited to attend. Some of the items on the agenda are electing (or reelecting) two directors. Jimmie Ruth Eash of San Antonio and Tom Finger of Shiner have both agreed to stand for reelection to a full three-year term. We will consider and adopt a new budget for 2003 and consider erecting an entrance sign so as to better identify the cemetery for visitors and the general public. Another item to be discussed is the mounting of the State Historical Commission's medallion identifying the cemetery as a HISTORIC TEXAS CEMETERY. There will undoubtedly be other items presented to the board for consideration.

Questions and suggestions from anyone attending will be welcome. If you are unable to attend, but would like for the board to know of your suggestions or concerns, please send a letter to me, and I will see that the board is made aware of your comments.

Werner's address is 317 N Avenue in Shiner. If you have any trouble finding it, just ask anybody you see in Shiner, and they will tell you how to get there.

## SPRING AGAIN

For those of us accustomed to the climate of North Texas, spring always seems to come very early in South Texas. We envy those beautiful warm days with the coming of the wild flowers, but with those warm days and wild flowers also comes the regrowth of grass and weeds in our cemetery. It surely is looking good right now, and we hope to keep it that way as the regular mowings will eventually tame some of the really obnoxious weeds and plants.

We need the help of everyone to continue the regular mowings. It's not too early! The weeds are already growing! I expect a mowing bill almost anytime now. Please help us stay on top of maintenance.

Remember, donations to the "Friends," (an I.R.S. 501 (c) (3) organization) are tax deductible in most cases.

Please get your donation in the mail now. It is greatly appreciated and will be acknowledged.

## THIS NEWSLETTER

This newsletter is being mailed to 174 addresses. We are happy to add the name of anyone who would like to receive it. Please notify us when you move. Doing so will save us postage. The Post Office will only forward mail to a new address for a short time. After that time, they return it to the sender (us).

Newsletters are returned after nearly every mailing and with the notation "addressee unknown." They have the same address that we have used for the last several years. In some cases, we later receive a note from one of those persons advising they have not received their newsletter, and they do not understand why as they gave the P.O. a change of address card. Sometimes they have moved just a few blocks from their old address.

## **HISTORICAL PRESERVATION**

In these newsletters, I usually try to stay strictly with cemetery business, but in this issue I am going to stray a bit. Perhaps you have seen or heard that there is a bill in the current Texas Legislature to designate the month of March as "Texas History Month." I am enthused about this development and hope that it will become law. It's time we try to reclaim and preserve our historic Texas holidays which have been all but lost in the last fifty years. I hope that most of you will agree that Texas History Month is a good idea.

With or without Texas History Month, we will very soon be observing Texas Independence Day, the heroism of the Alamo, and the tragic massacre of Fannin and his command at Goliad. I feel that much of the reason that our Texas holidays have slipped away from us is because of modern misconceptions that the Texas Revolution was fought by ugly Americans with bad motives. Certainly this is what many of the current crop of historical revisionists tell the world. Even our favorite Hollywood and Disney portrayals of early Texas have serious historical shortcomings which were widely recognized at their issue.

One of the things that really bothers me is the idea current among so many people that the struggle was Americans against Mexicans. Way back in the 1930's, I knew better than that! I was taught by a wonderful old Texas History teacher that the Texian Army, from its very beginning, was composed of people from many countries including many Mexican citizens who joined in the fight against their dictator and his tyranny.

For several years now, I have tried to persuade one of the Dallas suburban cities to begin observing March 2<sup>nd</sup> at their Historical Park. This is now happening, but in that process, I came to realize that most of the city's elected officials were people who came to Dallas from out of state after they were adults. They did not know Texas history and were, deep down, embarrassed by what they had been taught was Texas history. I decided to make a quick study of information readily available on the web to determine the ethnic background of our Texian patriots. You may be a little surprised at how many Mexican citizens fought to free Texas from the yoke of Santa Ana.

In the true spirit of historical preservation, let's take a look at these listings of Texian patriots of Mexican origin and pay tribute to their valor and many sacrifices. These lists are accurate, but I know some are not complete!

### **TEXAS HEROES ALL**

#### **Signers of the Texas Declaration of Independence**

Navarro, Jose Antonio Baldomero  
Ruiz, Jose Francisco  
de Zavala, Lorenzo

#### **Alamo Defender but Absent During the Final Assault**

Seguin, Juan - sent out by Colonel Travis for reinforcements. He later served at San Jacinto with Sam Houston

#### **Those Known to Have Died in the Alamo**

Abamillo, Juan  
Badillo, Juan A.  
Espalier, Carlos  
Esparza, Gregorio  
Fuentes, Antonio  
Jimenes, Damacio  
Guerrero, Jose Maria  
Losoya, Jose Toribio  
Nava, Andres

#### **Some who Served with Fannin at Goliad**

Arreola, \_ \_ \_  
Blanco, \_ \_ \_  
Garcia, Francisco  
a number whose names are lost to history

## Some Who are Known to Have Fought for Texas at San Jacinto

Arocha, Jose Maria  
Arocha, Manuel  
Arreola, Manuel  
Bernardi, Prospero  
Carmona, Cesario  
Cruz, Antonio  
Casillias, Gabriel  
Curbiere, Antonio  
Curbiere, Mathias  
Enriquez, Lucio  
Flores, Manuel Maria  
Flores, Martin  
Flores, Nepomuceno  
Herrera, Pedro  
Maldonado, Juan  
Mancha, Jose Maria  
Menchaca, Jose Antonuio  
Molino, Jose  
Navarro, Juan Nepomuceno  
Pena, Jacinto  
Ramirez, Eduardo  
Rodriquez, Ambrosia  
Seguin, Juan N.  
Zavala, Lorenzo de

following States of the United States A powerful coalition for those days!!

Alabama  
Arkansas  
Connecticut  
Georgia  
Illinois  
Kentucky  
Louisiana  
Maryland  
Mississippi  
Missouri  
New Jersey  
New York  
Massachusetts  
North Carolina  
Ohio  
Pennsylvania  
South Carolina  
Rhode Island  
Tennessee  
Virginia

Texian soldiers are also known to have come from the following countries.

## Places of Origin of Texian Soldiers

The soldiers of Texas came from many walks of life and from at least twenty of the then twenty-five states of the U.S. They also came from a number of foreign countries. They are known to have come from the

Denmark  
England  
Germany  
Ireland  
Mexico - excluding Texas  
Scotland  
Texas  
United States  
Wales

## The Angel of Goliad

Little mentioned now, but perhaps the single greatest heroine of the Texas Revolution was a Mexican lady, presumed to be the wife of Captain Telesforo Alvarez, an officer in General Urrea's command at Goliad. Her name was Francisca or Pancheta Alvarez and originally her home was in Matamoros. At the time of the Goliad massacre she was said to be a "black-eyed beauty, about twenty years old." The true story about her pleading for the lives of all of Fannin's men, saving some of them using trickery, intrigue and deceit in open defiance of Santa Ana's orders, comforting others, and later helping those that were taken to Matamoros as prisoners is much too long to detail here, but was well documented by many of those she saved and is thoroughly substantiated by modern historians. No wonder she is called "the Angel of Goliad."

After the defeat of the Mexican Army at San Jacinto, she and Captain Alvarez returned with the army to Mexico City where he later abandoned her. Destitute, she then returned to her home in Matamoros. Later, she and some of her children came to Texas to work and live on the King Ranch. Some of her offspring became managers of the Santa Gertrudis and Laureles Divisions of the ranch. Several of her descendants have achieved great distinction in our time. One, Dr. Lauro Cavazos, served as the Secretary of Education under Presidents Reagan and Bush subsequent to serving as the President of Texas Tech University. He was the first Hispanic member of a U.S. Cabinet. His brother, Richard O. Cavazos, was one of America's most decorated soldiers and rose to the rank of Lieutenant General in the Army. Senora Alvarez lived into her nineties before dying and being buried on the ranch. We should all remember "the Angel of Goliad" for her extraordinary bravery and great compassion.