



History of the Linden Cemetery
and
Linden Cemetery Association

Researched and Written for the Association by
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The purpose of this document is to share the rich history of the Linden Cemetery and the association which has managed and overseen it for many years.

Genesis of the Linden Cemetery

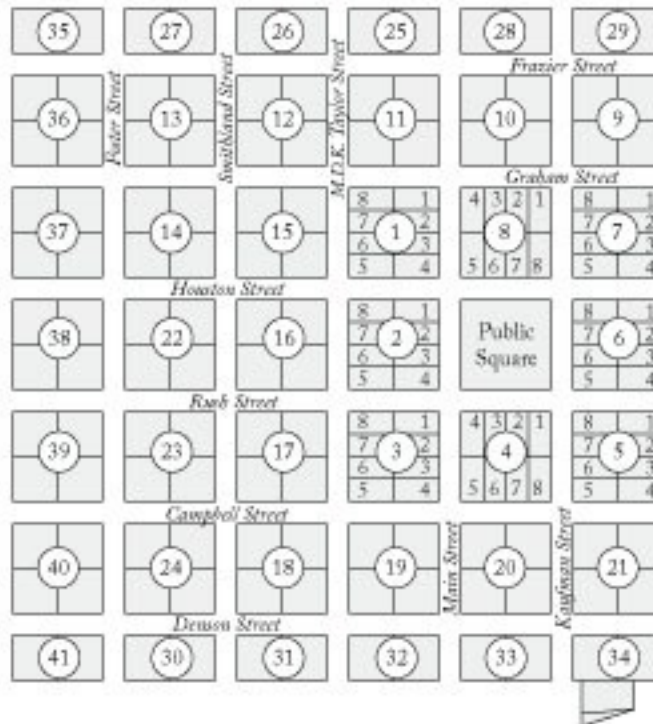
The beginnings of the Linden Cemetery date back to the mid-1800s when the township of Linden was first platted by survey and the county seat of Cass County was being decided in a drama-filled election contest between early settlers of Linden and Jefferson. That two-year drama began in 1848 and spanned two county-wide elections and a hard-fought legal contest that reached the Texas Supreme Court in 1850.

The Linden Cemetery was originally the family graveyard of Edward Washington Story (1822-1891) and his wife Emily Jane O'Henry (1831-after 1900). The young couple migrated to Northeast Texas from Perry County Tennessee in 1846, joining several close relatives and inter-connected families who arrived in central Cass County during that same decade. Significantly, in the spring of 1848, the Storys arranged to purchase an assignment for 320 acres of unlocated land. Story and his relatives soon surveyed a rectangular tract of 320 acres in the center of newly organized Cass County. Story purchased his right to survey unsettled land from Matthew Powell, who had been a citizen of the Republic of Texas since 1841. Powell chose to convert half of his earlier 640-acre headright into cash by assigning 320 acres to Story on August 7, 1848.

Edward and Emily Jane Story promptly entered a bond to donate fifty acres of their newly acquired land to the commissioners of the new county should Linden prevail in the election for county seat. Once the second election had re-confirmed Linden as the winner, the 50-acre Story gift was laid off by Thomas Heath to define a "Town Tract" with public square at the center of eight commercial blocks, and with another thirty-three city blocks eventually sold by the fledgling county for future business and residential development. This approach to lot sales allowed the county to fund the erection of county buildings and pay other expenses of the newly organized county.

Thomas Heath's original Plat of the Town of Linden has not been found. However, we know that only the central portion of the town, including the commercial district and surrounding residential blocks, was surveyed and marked by Heath. This satisfied the immediate need to begin selling enough town lots to get the county coffers adequately funded and to launch a proper town. Then, in 1871 a subsequent Town Plat was surveyed and marked to complete the Town Plat of 42 blocks, including the Public Square. That plat was surveyed by Jeremiah P. Wood, an 1840s settler who had been closely associated with the Story family back in Perry County, TN and who helped lead the 1848-1849 campaign to elect Linden as the seat of the new county.

~ Town of ~
LINDEN



I, J.P. Wood, Clerk of the District Court of Davis County, Texas, and the Ex Officio Recorder, hereby certify that the above Plat represents a 50 acre tract of land deeded by Ed W. Story & Wife to the County of Cass on the 10th day of Feby 1849 and Recorded in Book C. page 69.
This Plat Executed by J. P. Wood, May 6, 1871.



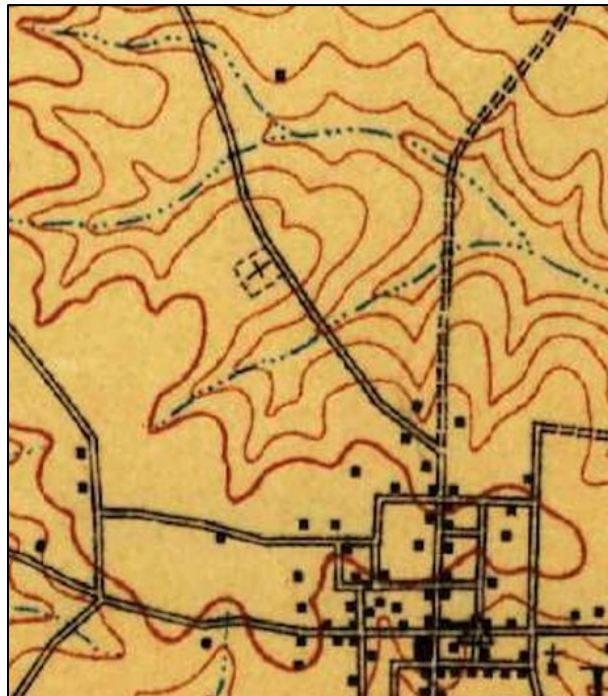
Left: Plat of the 1849 Linden Original Township, with pen notes laid on as lots were sold. Imaged from original Plat, courtesy of Dr. Joyce Henderson. **Above:** Reconstruction for easier readability. A study of the arrangement of Blocks 1-21 shows these to be the first group of Blocks to be publicly offered in 1849, followed by Blocks 22-27. Significantly, Blocks 1-27 enjoy the best access to water in the town tract.

The 42 blocks platted on Story's 50-acre gift comprise the core of Linden today, as shown on the modern graphic of the old Town Plat above (courtesy of Alex Lazara). The recorded deed from Story to the commissioners gave rise to Linden, now the oldest town in present-day Cass County. Although Jefferson is five years older, Marion County was severed from Cass in 1860.

The Story family settled on thirty-five acres in the northwest corner of their remaining 270 acres, and over time, they sold all but the thirty-five acres that included the graveyard. Later, several of

the sold tracts, or portions thereof, were purchased by the Linden Cemetery Association to expand the cemetery.

The 35-acre Story home place was between their family graveyard and the town. Both house and graveyard were situated on the west side of the old road to the north-northwest from town. Both the old road and the Story graveyard are shown on the 1910 U.S. Geological Survey map below, which also shows a newer road to the north-northeast.



In addition to the Cross for the graveyard and the roads emanating from the town of Linden, the small black squares represent structures on the ground as of 1910, while stream beds are shown as dotted black lines and the topography is shown in red. The road to the old graveyard was still in use, and it required crossing a creek bed, the bridge for which is mentioned in several old press accounts. The Story house, however, is not shown, indicating that in 1910 it no longer existed.

Importantly, in the very early 1850s, Edward and Emily Jane began to allow the graveyard on their place to be used as a burial ground for other early Linden families. Over time, those 4+ acres became the “old section” of the Linden Cemetery, surrounded on the north and east by a total of ten subsequent additions to the cemetery. The Storys chose to place their 35-acre home place on the west (left) side of the Old Linden-Douglasville Road, which at the time was the original route from Linden, seat of Cass County, to Boston, seat of Bowie County. In fact, the Story Home Place of thirty-five acres is still intact and readily identifiable on the tax map at casscad.org as being owned to this day by a direct Story descendant, Kerlin Bruce Harris, son of Kerlin Harris and Charlie Reece Crow Harris.

Land Comprising the Linden Cemetery Today

Having expanded east and north of the original Story graveyard of 4.36 acres, the Linden Cemetery today comprises over twenty acres. Over time, there have been ten additions by donation and purchase, the last of the ten having been contributed by a direct Story descendant, Bruce Harris, and wife Bernadette Harris.

Details on the sequence of tracts comprising the Linden Cemetery today are as follow:

Original graveyard:

1848 – Edward & Emily Jane Story, about 4.36 acres dedicated to very early settler burials

Cemetery additions by deed:

1 st	1940, March 18	Emmett and Viola Sheffield, 3.49 acres immediately east of the Story graveyard
2 nd	1962, July 18	Reed Beasley, 1 acre immediately east of Addition 1
3 rd	1962, Nov 7	Bucy-Glenn Hospital Inc., 1 acre east of Addition 2, adjoining North Main Street
4 th	1976, April 2	Christy and Chesley Dooley, 8 acres adjoining Story's north boundary
5 th	1989, Aug. 23	Floyd Stephens, 0.162 acre adjoining Addition 1
6 th	1980, Jan. 21	Floyd Stephens, 0.117 acre adjoining Addition 5
7 th	1990, July 17	Mildred Beasley, 1.1612 acres adjoining Addition 1
8 th	2017	Bob and Brenda Swisher, a small parcel, north part Old Macedonia Cemetery
9 th	2021, Dec. 16	Coach Brothers, 0.43 acres, south part Old Macedonia Cemetery
10 th	2023, Aug. 9	Bruce and Bernadette Harris, 0.58 acres, squaring off the southwest boundary line

Early Burials of Linden Pioneering Citizens

Among all burials in the Linden Cemetery, the earliest date of birth is that of John Stewart, born in 1798. Stewart, an Englishman by birth, fully embraced Linden as a prominent early businessman and civic leader and a close friend of the Story family. Other early Linden families, Wood, Graham, Givens, and Erwin were closely aligned with the Storys by marriage. It was one of those connections, Jeremiah M. Wood (1804-1870), who suggested the name "Linden" for Story's offer of a centrally located "county site" to appear on the county's 1848 election ballot.

According to a June 24, 1934, article in *The Cass County Sun*, the first Linden city government was organized in the year 1858, with John Stewart as Mayor and John Meeks as Town Marshal. Before that, local government had been left to county officials. In the early 1860s, Stewart also served as one of five county commissioners on the court that provisioned the county's first local companies going off to the Civil War. This is ironic in that while Stewart was a strong anti-slavery voice and conflicted over secession, as a member of the County Court he chose to help local volunteers with the necessities of survival. One illustration of his sentiment is documented in a post-war letter to his wife's brother in Illinois:

"My three daughters are all living. We have three sons dead. Rufus, the youngest, is living

in 5 miles of us, doing well. My youngest daughter, Sally, is a widow; made so by that unrighteous war ... I was one of the first in the county that went dead-out against secession. I had no sympathy for them that lost their Negroes that went for the war."

Nine people buried in the Linden Cemetery were born in the decade after John Stewart (1800 to 1810). The three eldest members of this group are Nancy Stewart, wife of John Stewart, and Thomas C. Taylor and his wife, Mary R. Gregory. Other Linden "old-timers" buried in the Story section of the graveyard also appear in the list below.

- John Stewart lived 1798 -- 1883
- Nancy E. Givens Stewart (wife of John) lived 1803 – 1883
- Thomas "Tommy" Taylor lived 1803 – 1865
- Benjamin Morris lived 1804 – 1871
- Mary R. Gregory Taylor (wife of Tommy) lived 1806 – 1859
- Phillip Lanier lived 1808 – 1892
- Green A. Choate lived 1809 – 1875
- Ann Virginia "Jennie" Givens Logwood lived 1862 – 1919
- Elizabeth Jane Minor Lewis lived 1810 – 1859

At the time W.T. Stewart, Linden cemetery's earliest marked grave, was buried in 1852, the first courthouse was under construction and the town of Linden had a small but growing population. The first nine known burials all occurring between 1852 and 1860 are as follows:

- 1852 W.T. Stewart birth date unknown
- 1857 James W. White born 1836
- 1858 Lucy Annie Oliver born 1840
- 1859 Edmond A. Stewart born 1828
- 1859 Elizabeth Jane Minor Lewis born 1810
- 1859 James C. Stewart born 1830
- 1859 Mary R. Gregory Taylor born 1806
- 1860 Alice M. Rogers born 1860
- 1860 William Banks Oliver born 1857

Once again, the Stewart family figures prominently in the list of early burials, with multiple family members interred during the 1850s. All headstones may be viewed on findagrave.com with the following early Linden notables among them:

- 1873 Jeremiah Preston Wood 1839 – 1873 Named the Town of Linden
- 1883 John Stewart 1798 – 1883 First Mayor of Linden
- 1883 Nancy Elizabeth Givens Stewart 1803 – 1883 Wife of First Mayor of Linden John Stewart
- 1884 Thomas Hinkle 1819 – 1884 Built 1905 addition to the courthouse
- 1912 Mary Louisa H. Tate Davis 1836 – 1912 Mother of Dr. Charles Edward Davis
- 1917 Charles Edward Davis 1829 – 1917 Father of Dr. Charles Edward Davis, Jr.
- 1940 Isaac Hart Lanier 1853 – 1940 Sheriff of Cass County
- 1945 John Edward Armenious Banger 1865 – 1945 Longtime editor of *The Cass County Sun*
- 1952 Dr. Charles Edward Davis 1869 – 1952 Linden's popular doctor-by-buggy

- 1953 John Newton Patman 1868 – 1953 Father of Wright Patman, U.S. Congressman for forty-seven years

Edward Story lived to age sixty-nine, passing away in June 1891, according to his widow's 1899 Confederate Pension Application. Emily Jane Story, nine years her husband's junior, lived into the early 1900s.

In Cass County Texas on 4 Oct 1899, Emily Jane Story filed an application for a Confederate widow's pension. She stated that she was married to E.W. Story on 11 Jun 1846 in Tennessee and that E.W. died on 24 Jun 1891. On the application, she stated that her age was sixty-nine and that she had been a resident of Cass County for fifty-three years, i.e., since 1846. She wrote that she owned thirty acres of land but probably could get only a little money by selling that land, having previously sold twenty acres for \$125. Finally, she wrote that she was unable to work and destitute.

This CSA Pension application shows two interesting things. First, that Edward Story served in the Civil War when he was in his forties and second, that as a widow Emily Jane no longer considered the approximately five acres of the cemetery her property, only the remaining thirty acres. She was correct. Although she and Edward never deeded the graveyard, they did effectively "give" it because by law the graves that populated those acres had set it apart and precluded any other use.

The 1900 Census of Cass County Texas recorded Emily Jane Story as being age sixty-eight and living in the household of her son-in-law and daughter, W.H. and Mattie Story Crow.

Veterans Interred in Linden Cemetery

The Linden Cemetery is the final resting place of many who served their country as early as the Mexican War (1846 to 1848) and continued with the Civil War, Spanish American War, World War I, World War II, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf War. In addition, other veterans are buried without a war indicated on their military footstones. A list of the hundreds of veterans buried in the cemetery is available on the Linden Cemetery Association website or by mailing a request to The Linden Cemetery at P.O. Box 863, Linden, Texas 75563.

Among the earliest interred veterans are Henry F. O'Neal, who served in both the Mexican War and the Civil War; Rev. J.W. Erwin, Joseph Pickens Harris, L.A. McGehee, J.N. Simmons, and James R. Yarborough, who served in the Civil War; and George Washington Beasley, who served in the Spanish American War.

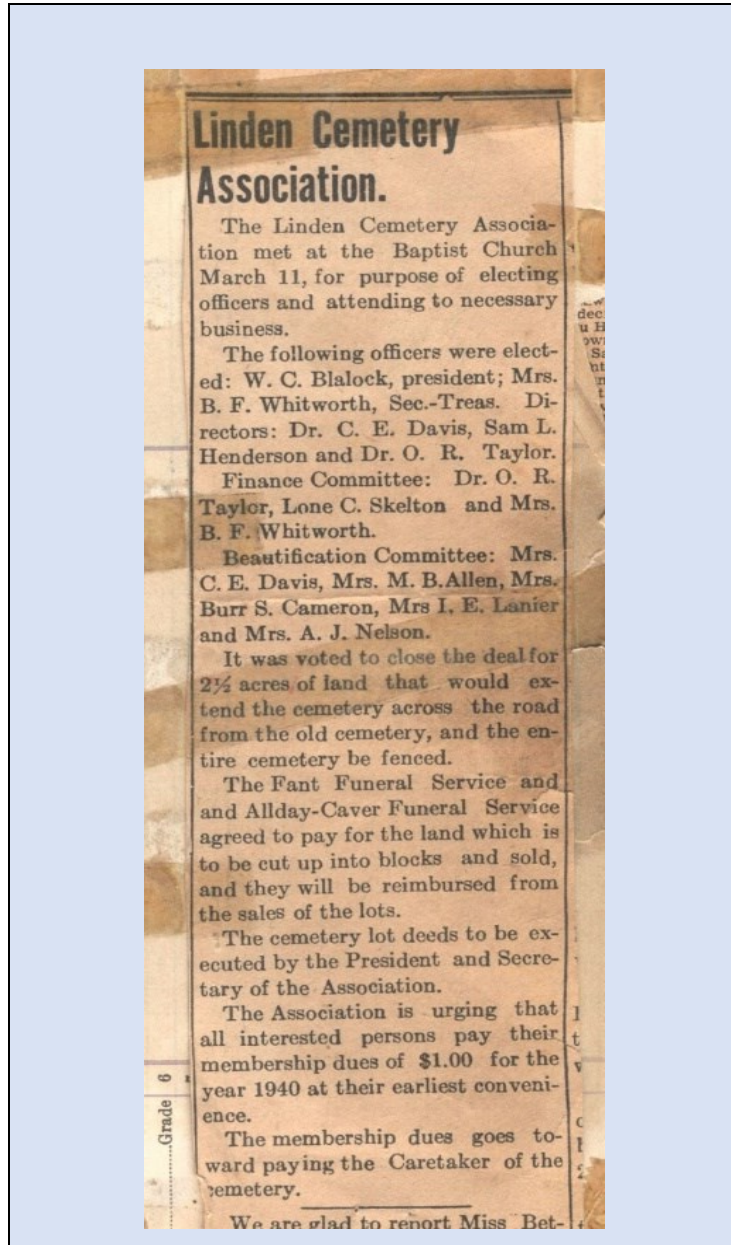
Reports in *The Cass County Sun* Reveal Struggles for the Cemetery's Upkeep

Burials in the Linden Cemetery were announced in the local newspaper, as were a long series of requests for help to maintain the grounds. The following examples were published in *The Cass County Sun* to seek help to maintain the cemetery grounds:

- July 5, 1898 "The Linden Cemetery needs cleaning again!"

- June 23, 1914 “Can’t it be managed to have the cemetery cleaned off before the unveiling? It should be done by all means. Surely there is not a citizen in town who would not be willing to help pay to have it cleaned. Who will see that it is done? It would only take a small amount from each one. We will head the list with \$1.00.”
- June 23, 1914 “We think the people of town should get together and make some arrangements about getting the cemetery cleaned off and put in good condition. Seems like we should be able to keep someone hired for that purpose all the time and see that it is kept clean.”
- June 23, 1914 “We are glad to note that the citizens responded at once to the graveyard proposition, the funds were raised and a contract let to A.L. Kelly, who began the work at once. We understand he almost has the work completed. Now while we are on the subject why not meet and organize a graveyard association and appoint someone to look after the cemetery at all times? It can easily be done with little cost to each individual if all will take hold and help. We do not want to let the cemetery get in the condition it was before.”
- May 6, 1924 “To those who are interested in the Linden Cemetery: Some time back I made an effort to have the Civil League take over care of the cemetery, but they did not see fit to do so, and suggested that I continue to look after it as I have done for the past four years. This I will gladly do if the people will provide the funds necessary to carry on the work. With this in view, I have prepared a list and suggested an amount I believe each one should pay. In a few days this list will be presented to you asking you to ratify it and pay your assessment. Should you see fit to pay more or less than the amount names, feel free to do so. Unless the money is paid in and placed in the bank in the cemetery fund, I will not make any effort to care for the cemetery this year. Yours truly, Sam L. Henderson”
- Aug. 26, 1924 “NOTICE – all who have not paid their subscription to the cemetery fund are urged to do so at once as some other work is to be done and the funds are exhausted.”
- Dec. 9, 1924 “The bridge leading into the Linden Cemetery is badly in need of repair; this is a duty that should not be neglected – that of caring for the “Silent City of Our Dead”.
- May 29, 1928 “Mrs. W.C. Blalock is having all rubbish removed from the lot just beyond the cemetery and the people are requested not to use this vacant space for a dumping ground, as it belongs to and is a part of the Linden cemetery.”
- Oct. 1, 1929 “A success – the entertainment gotten up by the liberal citizens of our town, on behalf of the fund for enclosing the graveyard. We have been most agreeably surprised at the results these hard times, some \$150 or more was realized. This shows the spirit of the community.”
- Mar. 30, 1939 “Attention – The Linden Cemetery Association wants to call your attention to the good condition of the cemetery and how well it has been kept the past year. There certainly has been a great improvement made. All interested in keeping this work going should send in their donations early as there is a great work to be done this year. See Mrs. Forest Whitworth, Secretary/Treasurer.”

- May 2, 1940 “Linden Cemetery Association – Everyone is urged to send in his or her donation on the Cemetery Fund. As you know, more land has been bought to enlarge the cemetery, and it will have to be fenced, so please send in your donation to Mrs. B.F. Whitworth, Treasurer of the Association at an early date.”
- June 24, 1948 “Linden Lion’s Club paid two months’ salary to the city cemetery caretaker.”
- The following is an excerpt from the March 11, 1940, *Cass County Sun*: It is the second press mention of Linden Cemetery Association by name, and its content is evidence of the community volunteer involvement of Linden leaders at that time.



Development of the Linden Cemetery Association over Time

The 20th century has seen ongoing expansion, burials, and caretaking activity at Linden Cemetery. By 1939 the name of Linden Cemetery Association had been adopted, and a fund for continuing maintenance had been established. In 1981, the Association adopted bylaws, which were recorded with the County Clerk in June. The Association's stated purpose in those bylaws is "to provide continuous care and upkeep of the Linden Cemetery, to acquire additional land as needed, to sell lots, and to make a more attractive burial place for the deceased of the community at a reasonable cost and in an orderly manner."

There was a gradual leadup to the creation of a formal association to care for the Linden Cemetery and to publicize the need to address ongoing neglect. The first documented "call" was published in early June of 1914.

- 1914.06.23 *The Cass County Sun*: "We are glad to note that the citizens responded at once to the graveyard proposition, the funds were raised, and a contract let to A. L. Kelly. Why not meet and organize a graveyard association and appoint someone to look after the cemetery at all times? It can easily be done with little cost to each individual if all will take hold and help. We do not want to let the cemetery get in the condition it was before."

Unfortunately, not all historic newspaper issues survived to be archived, and the Great Depression era is a particular gap in the local newspaper records. The first located press mention of the Linden Cemetery Association is dated March 3, 1939. That article makes it clear that the Association had in fact been organized earlier, after the 1914 "call to action" and before the following 1939 newspaper notice.

- 1939.03.30 *The Cass County Sun*: Attention – "The Linden Cemetery Association wants to call your attention to the good condition of the cemetery and how well it has been kept the past year. There certainly has been a great improvement made. All interested in keeping this work going should send in their donations early as there is great work to be done this year. See Mrs. Forest Whitworth, Secretary – Treasurer."

An article published the following year, 1940, lists the names of the Linden Cemetery Association leadership at the time.

- 1940.03.11 *The Cass County Sun*: "LINDEN CEMETERY ASSOCIATION. The following officers were elected: W.C. Blalock; President, Mrs. B.F. Whitworth, Sec-Treas; Directors Dr. C.E. Davis, Sam L. Henderson, Dr. O.R. Taylor. It was voted to close the deal for 2.5 acres of land that would extend the cemetery across the road from the old cemetery, and to fence the entire cemetery. The Fant Funeral Service and Allday-Caver Funeral Service agreed to pay for the land which is to be cut up into blocks and sold, and they will be reimbursed from the sales of the lots. The cemetery lot deeds to be executed by the President and Secretary of the Association. The Association is urging that all interested persons pay their

membership dues of \$1 for the year 1940 at their earliest convenience. The membership dues go toward paying the Caretaker of the cemetery.”

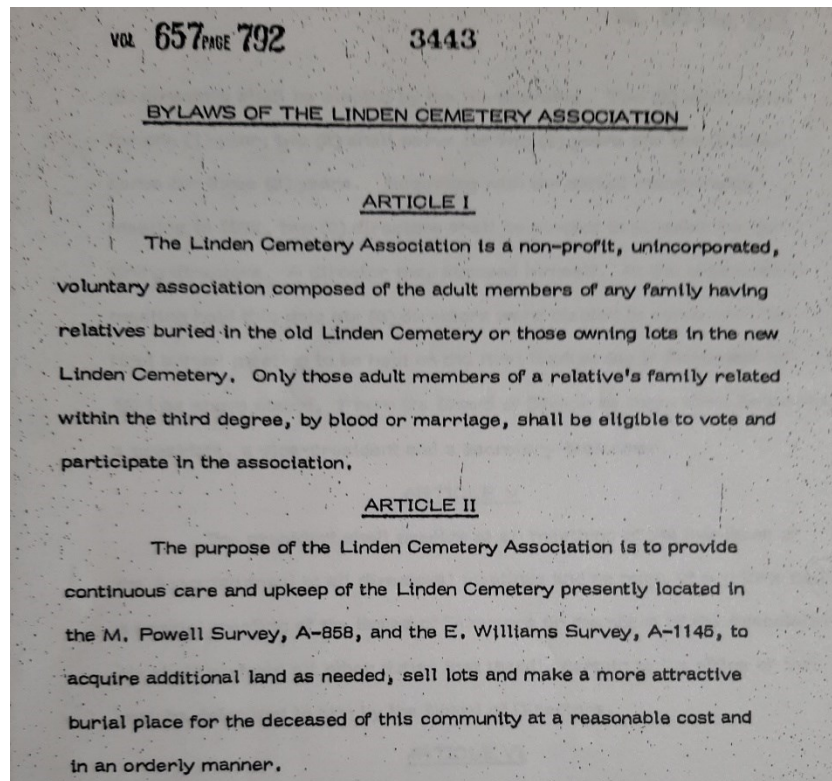
When Linden’s Centennial celebrations were held in 1948, in recognition that Edward and Emily Jane Story’s graves were unmarked, a monument memorializing them was erected.

- 1948.06.24 *The Cass County Sun*: “At 3:00 PM on Sunday June 27, a memorial service for E.W. Story who gave the ground for the town of Linden was held. After the memorial service at the Baptist Church everyone will go to the cemetery for the unveiling of the monument erected at the graves of Mr. and Mrs. Story.”



It is not known whether the 1981 set are the first Linden Cemetery Association bylaws, but it is known that the Linden Cemetery Association existed prior to 1939 and that other Linden organizations had adopted bylaws by the 1950s. The 1981 LCA bylaws were signed by T.C. Strickland, President, and Mary Elizabeth O’Rear, Secretary. The board of directors at the time included James F. Grubbs, Ruth Bridges, R.E. Stone, Milton Caver, Jr., and two ex-officio board members, Linden Mayor E.W. Rountree, Jr., and Linden Garden Club President Mrs. J.D. Harris.

Below is a photo of a portion of the first page of the recorded 1981 LCA bylaws, which are found in Cass County Deed Records, Book Volume 657 p. 792.



In 1985, the IRS recognized the Linden Cemetery Association as a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization and issued federal tax ID number 75-2014621, entitling donors to the cemetery to take a legal tax deduction. The officers of the association file an annual IRS Form 990 to maintain this tax-exempt status.

Amended bylaws adopted in 2015 bear the signatures of James Penny, President; Vicki Morse, Treasurer; Bruce LeGrow, Secretary; and Directors Donna Henry and Kenny Hamilton.

Generous Contributions

Over the last 175 years, gifts of real estate and financial contributions have sustained the ground that the Linden Cemetery Association now cares for and has allowed it to maintain the more than twenty acres and more than two thousand graves. The donations received each year remain essential to cover the cost of mowing and edging, fencing, pest control, road maintenance, and other maintenance needs. In addition to the funds for the upkeep of the cemetery, a series of personal gifts have enhanced the beauty and function of the cemetery grounds. Among them are the following examples:



Otis Reynolds donated the cemetery's gated entrance including the brick gateposts and arched sign in 1995. Renovations were made to the structure in 2014.



In the loving memory of his wife, Maurine Grubbs Buckland, Charles Waylon Buckland funded repaving the road through the cemetery.

Tom Price built and donated the flagpole displaying the United States Flag.



Mrs. Clifford Nelson Murphy donated a beautiful white marble statue of Jesus in memory of her husband Joseph Murphy.



Other Milestones and Collaborations

The Linden Cemetery Association has a longstanding relationship with the Linden Reeder-Davis Funeral Home staff who have carefully and professionally prepared plots in the cemetery and managed the burials. In addition, they have assisted with record keeping and communications regarding plot ownership, new plot purchases, and family burial histories.

In 2018 a set of formal rules and regulations were written to guide plot owners and visitors to the cemetery. These can be found on the Linden Cemetery Association's website home page at <https://lindencemeteryassociationtx.com> under the tab of Rules and Policies and can also be requested via email at lindentxcemeteryassoc@gmail.com or through the mail at P.O. Box 863, Linden, Texas 75563.

The logo displayed at the beginning of this document was designed for the Association in 2023 by Joyce Henderson and Sam Higdon.

Shared in a separate document is information about the reclamation of the Old Macedonia Cemetery, a burial ground that shares a common boundary with the original west boundary line of Linden Cemetery. After more than half a century of sore neglect, Old Macedonia Cemetery has been attentively recovered in recent years. At least one known enslaved woman named Aunt Emily Smith, born about 1838 and reported in the newspaper to have been 104 years old at death, is buried there. The history of Old Macedonia Cemetery may be found on the Linden Cemetery Association's website at <https://lindencemeteryassociationtx.com>.

Acknowledgements

This history of the Linden Cemetery and the Linden Cemetery Association was co-written by Joyce Henderson and Sue Lazara with others' assistance in verifying specific facts and editing. The text

is based on original research in the early records of Perry County Tennessee and Cass County Texas, historic press archives, various genealogy websites, the General Land Office of Texas, and the National Archives and Records Administration. Numerous individuals supplied the photos shown in this document. Norman Daniels approved the association's use of photos which he contributed to findagrave.com.

The public is invited to send questions, comments, and additional historical documentation to the email or postal address below.

THE LINDEN CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 863, Linden, Texas 75563

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