

History of the Baker-Lain Cemetery

The Baker-Lain Cemetery lies hidden about 5 miles south of the Cleburne State Park in Johnson Co., TX, on County Road 1239. The original land donated for cemetery use belonged to a Baker. Its believed it was J L Baker who is buried in Section G, Row 5, Lot 132. A picture of his monument can be seen on page 14.

The story about the origins of the cemetery was related by H “Grady” Cheek. He said, “Its said the first person buried here was a child. A family was traveling (through this area) by wagon train when the little girl got sick and died back in the late 1850s. She’s supposed to be the first one buried here.”

Records of the New Hope Baptist Church, that remain in tact, show that the church was organized on the “Saturday before the Second Lord’s Day, November 1860.” Its original name was The Mars Hill Baptist Church of Christ and, according to the remaining records, its earliest members¹ were: Richard and Catherine (Waggoner) Young, their son and his wife, (the records do not identify which son), Mr. & Mrs. William Burton and his sister, Vina Irving, who later became Mrs. S E Moss, and Christopher and Frances Ann (Donoho) Young. The small congregation was led by the Reverend Louis Baldwin.

Rufus M Lain settled in the area after the Civil War and purchased the land that contained the Baker cemetery and renamed it the Baker-Lain Cemetery. His family has remained in the area and further contributed to the Baker-Lain cemetery, along with the Jackson family, until it is no longer an acre or two, but 14 acres of land, hosting and preparing to host the descendants of this community.

A photo of the monument erected by the descendants of Richard and Catherine Young may be found on page 15. There is a strong indication that she is buried here, however, the exact location of the burial has been lost. If this is true Catherine Young would be the earliest dated burial, having died in 1864. Because this burial location is unknown the distinction of the oldest marked grave was given to Hixy Moore who died in 1870.

The “[New Handbook of Texas On Line](#)”,² states that the area known as Freeland, Bosque County, Texas was originally located near a tributary of the Brazos River known as Camp Creek. It goes on to state that most community activities revolved around the Baptist Church. And according to a life long resident, Wilda Jean (Kinser) Blackstock, the church was once located nearer to the Baker-Lain Cemetery. Camp Creek still runs along the south side of County Road 1239 leading to the cemetery. The minutes of the New Hope Baptist Church stop referring to the church being in Bosque County around 1865 and 1866³. It was at this time that Johnson County gained the area known as Brazos Point from Bosque County, bringing the Baker-Lain Cemetery and the New Hope Baptist Church into Johnson County.

There are many stories that make up the history and heritage of the Baker-Lain Cemetery. I have been privileged to present a few of them here. The story of Captain J B Goldsmith, and J L Baker. The story of “Catherine Waggoner Young”. The purchase of the cemetery by Rufus M Lain. The story of the cedar trees planted by Robert Houston “Hute” Moore, “The Moore Cedars”, and “Little Lenard”. The stories are presented here to give a fuller picture of this cemetery and its people.

¹ Information provided by Nancy Wilson, present Secretary of the New Hope Baptist Church

² Internet query: Freeland, Texas

³ Information provided by Nancy Wilson, present Secretary of the New Hope Baptist Church