

OLD HALL CEMETERY

Lewisville, Denton County, Texas

History of Cemetery, Hall, and Community

Texas Historical Marker

Application for

Old Hall Cemetery and Hall

This paper was written by Ray Morriss Martin, Fourth generation and interested person in the Old Hall Cemetery. The Old Hall Cemetery Association promoted this project. James Degan, president of the Association, and his wife, Henrimae, gave valuable information and assistance in the compilation.

Lewisville, Texas

1986

Edited by the Denton County Historical Commission

Old Hall Cemetery, Denton County, Texas

History of Cemetery, Hall and Community

Introduction

The Old Hall Cemetery is located about two miles northwest of Old Town, Lewisville, Denton County, Texas. The Cemetery is west of Interstate 35E and south of FM 407 on McGee Lane. McGee Lane was the original Highway 77 leading to Denton and to Dallas.

Denton County in 1836 was a part of Red River County under the Mexican government. Fannin County was organized by act of the Texas congress December 4, 1837, and what is now Denton County was a part of Fannin County. Denton County was organized out of Fannin County in 1846.⁽¹⁾

The Eighth Congress of Texas on February 5, 1844, passed an act to open and establish a national highway to be called the "Central National Road of the Republic of Texas"--to begin at or within fifteen miles below the mouth of the Big Elm on the bank of the Trinity River and run north to Red River opposite the Kiomisha River which comes into Red River on the north side. The president of Texas appointed a commission to lay out and establish a highway--beginning on the bank of the Trinity River near the present courthouse in the city of Dallas and running north to what has since been known as the Collin County Ridge to Preston's Bend on Red River, a distance of nearly seventy miles.⁽²⁾ This road, called Preston Road, gave the settlers access to the area of Denton County. The road ran on top of the ridge overlooking the great fertile valley commonly called in the early days the Elm Flats; it ran for thirty miles parallel to and one and a half miles from where the east line of Denton County was afterwards established.⁽³⁾ The great public highway, extending south to Austin, was designed to be, and was, the open door of Texas to the immigrants coming from the north.

There were two noted trails across Big Spring Creek or Big Elm from east to west--one where the McKinney road crosses and one at what was afterwards called the Fish Trap Crossing. At both places there was a rock bottom. The crossings on Big Spring Creek (Big Elm) gave access to the immigrants from the east. These trails were sometimes referred to as the "Indian Trail" and "Ranger Trail".⁽⁴⁾

The young Republic of Texas was in dire need of men, and strenuous efforts were being made to colonize the country. Colonization contracts were made on easy terms. The Fifth Congress on February 4, 1841, passed an act granting to married settlers 640 acres of land--to single settler 320 acres were granted on certain conditions of settlement. Section four of that act authorized the President to make a contract with W. S. Peters and eighteen others (collectively) to colonize land covering much of North Texas, the whole of what was afterwards set off as Denton County.⁽⁵⁾

The problems were numerous, but the settlers became known as the Peter's Colony. The Peter's Colony had an office in the southeast part of Denton County, (near present Hwy. 121). Oliver Hedgecoxe was employed as their agent and Judge S. A. Venters, as their land clerk. The colony had many problems, but it did promote immigration into the area known later as Denton County.

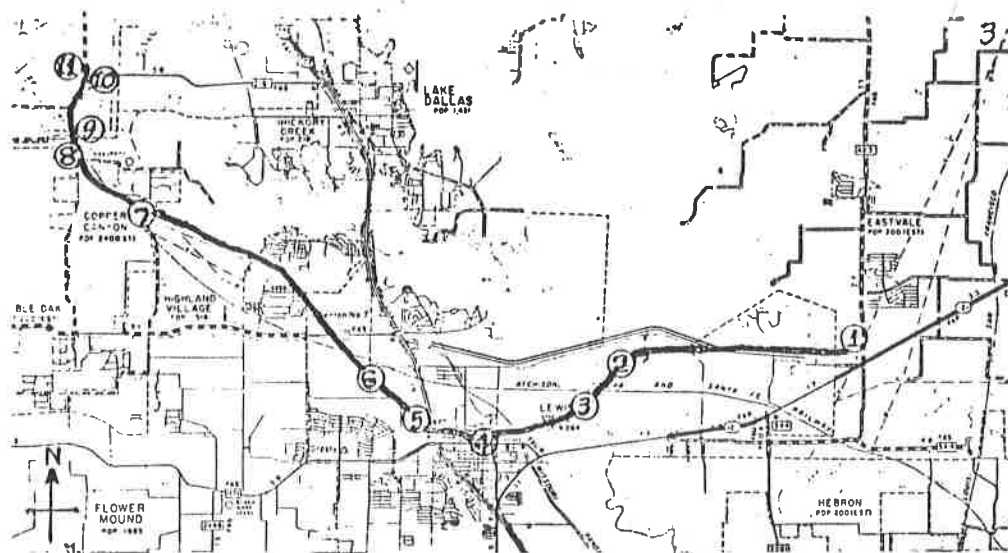
The Holford Prairie

In 1844, John W. King, his wife, Jane, and their children came from near Bonham and settled on the east end of the prairie west of Big Elm, near the present location of Lewisville. Also in 1844 a large family moved from Platt County, Missouri, and settled on the prairie towards the west end. Among the number were John Holford and James Holford for whom the prairie was named.⁽⁶⁾

Wagon trails cut deep ruts into the soil. One such trail came by what is now Old Hall Cemetery, and the marks were visible on the "Millican Place" until developers removed them forever. This trail was recorded in an article written by Olin Millican, grandson of Mr. G. T. Millican who settled the Millican place.⁽⁷⁾

Faint traces of short sections of this old trail made by Peter's Colony pioneer settlers on Halford Prairie in southern Denton County, Texas, may still be seen as old worn down roadways in a few places. The many new housing developments here of late threaten to remove these remaining traces. At the time of this writing, 1986, developers have bull-dozed and leveled the whole Millican farm into a development, so the trail is gone forever.

Beginning at the Peter's Colony Office branch, 1843, just north of the intersection of FM 423 with Hwy 121 some six miles east of Lewisville, the Old Trail led west along Office Branch and by Ritter's Lake to a hazardous crossing of Elm Fork (Big Elm) at Ritter's Ford just below the present Lewisville Dam and north of the Old Iron Bridge crossing on the Old Hebron road.



Old Trail Overlaid on Part of Texas State Highway Map of Denton County

1. Peters Colony Office Branch Office, where settlers came to file on new lands, located SW of Lebanon on Preston Road.
2. South end of Ritter's Lake.
3. Ritter's Ford of "Big Elm", Elm Fork of Trinity River.
4. King Families Settlement; present, Lewisville.
5. Rock Crossing of Prairie Creek with "Mason Hole"
6. Halford Prairie Hall, first public meeting place and school with developed into Old Hall Cemetery
7. Whyburn, (Or Loving ?), Spring, strong spring furnishing water for early settlers and the site of a former Indian village.
8. Top of Murphy Hill, (Now called "Copper Canyon"), where settlers found good building and chimney rocks.
9. Murphy Spring, large spring at mouth of canyon; used by Indians and near vital to early travelers and settlers.
10. Alton, (Old Alton), third county seat of Denton County and crossing place of early trails and roads.
11. Old Alton Cemetery.

It ran westward to the King's Settlement (1844) at the east end of Holford Prairie and the present site of Lewisville, and then turned northwest to the "Rock Crossing" of Prairie Creek about 100 yards west of the present Prairie Creek Crossing of Interstate 35E. It passed "Mason Hole", a water hole of pioneer days, then went northwest across the Jones-McNeill lands to Old Hall Cemetery, then called Holford Prairie Hall. At that place there stood, in 1855, a two story log building housing the first public meeting place and school in the area.

From this meeting place winding paths cut across the country in many directions. They bore such names as "the Old indians Trail", "Buffalo Trail", and "Ranger Trail". There were no fences to hinder the cutting across country.

Location and Use of Holford Prairie Hall

Olin Millican's research indicates the Old Hall is located in W. B. Brown Survey, abs. 63 and northwest corner of J. D. Jones land. The oldest part is the southwest corner at the offset in the road. "Old Masonic records state that only requirements for use of the hall were that there would be no religious debates: no one could make remarks that would cast any reflection on another person's religious beliefs; the hall had to be swept clean after being used, and people had to furnish their own candles. The Masonic Lodge continued to operate the school, which later moved into Lewisville."⁽⁸⁾

According to Gordon Grasty, Olin Millican, and Andrew Morriss, the Hall building was located about fifty feet southeast of the southwest corner of the Iron Fence Plot usually recognized as the Crawford-Lusk plot. Some of the oldest graves in the cemetery are in that area. The iron fence was put around the plot to protect the graves from the cattle as they roamed the prairie. Quoting directly from a letter written to Bates from W. E. Brown. "I came to Denton County in 1854. In 1855 I helped build a church house in the county. The building was erected about two hundred yards southeast of the Morgan Candle home and about two miles northwest of the present town of

Lewisville. The erection of the church represented cooperative work on the part of the settlers, the labor and material being furnished by various individuals."⁽⁹⁾ The first church house was called the Holford Prairie Hall. It was about midway in the Prairie from east to west and on the north side at a grove that extended out into the prairie. The building was a two-story structure. The Masons occupied the upper story. The lower floor was used for school and church purposes.⁽¹⁰⁾ All denominations worshipped in the Hall.⁽¹¹⁾ Rev. King organized the first Methodist class in that building soon after it was erected.⁽¹²⁾ "The Holford Prairie Baptist church was organized in 1869 in the two story community building which stood where Old Hall Cemetery is now located. The different denominations each had a Sunday for its religious services. In 1881 the Dallas and Wichita railroad came to Lewisville. The Hall Baptist Church, or 37 members from it, met in Lewisville in August, 1881, to organize the Lewisville Baptist Church."⁽¹³⁾

Holford Prairie Settlers

Settlers listed in Ed. F. Bates, History and Reminiscences of Denton County were: John W. King, Guss King, Mrs. J.C. Wright, Aleck Coker, J.B. Ship, Tom Kealy, J.N. Kealy, S.A. Kealy, Crockett Kealy, Joe Minor, Dan Rallings, E.P. Lusk, Sam Lusk, New Lusk, Robert Allen, Hugh McKenzie, Andy Crews, Virgil Crews, Morgan Caudle, S. H. Crawford, J.H. Crawford, Jim Crawford, Sam Crawford, Bill Crawford, Andy Farmer, Houston Gray, William Gray, Burt Cobb, Tom Cobb, Rev. Terrel Jasper, A. Jasper, T.F. Jasper, Joe Knight, William Purnell, T.M. Smith (representative), G.L. Beevers, Russell Craft, John Craft, Sr., John Craft, Jr., Jesse Craft, Caz Hall, Simon Simmons, J.K. Fox, Phillip Zigler, Anderson Nowlin, Henry Nowlin, Jim Nowlin, John Nowlin, Arch Nowlin, Davis Gulledege, Edward Brown, W.B. Brown, L.A. Brown, E.P. Brown, Josiah Wilkins, Dock Wilkins, Charley Wilkins, Tom Craft, Sam McCombs, George McCombs, Wes McCombs, John McCombs, Taylor Boyd, John Boyd, John Lauderdale, Dr. Vanfleet, T.M. Claytor, Ed Claytor, Jim Cowen, W.H. Cowen, J.H. Griffith, Jim

Baker, Cal Evit, John Ferguson, Dr. Clark, Wm. Hill, Steven Hyett, Sam Hyett, Joel Summers, Theodore Dorsett, Charley Rivers, David Street, W. H. Street, Homer Street, Wm. Kelly, W. G. Evans, Sr., W. G. Evans, Jr., J.M. Evans, Jonus McCurley, John Maloney, Jake Zigler, George Zigler, Jasper Baker, Anson Baugh, Wm. Raspberry, Nicholas Karns, J.N. Baker, Marion Fry, Rev. John Holford, Andy Holford, Mike Mossberger, George Mossberger (J.P. in 1860), Jim Herrod, Wm. Garvin, Ann Garvin, Thomas Garvin, Newt Herrod, Jap Herrod, Perry Harmonson, Sr., Perry Harmonson, Jr., George Harmonson, Peter Harmonson, John Guy, Rev. Robert Guthrie, Mart Guthrie, Burns Gentry, Burrell Hunter, George Haigler, Jim Crosby, Edmon Sutton, Vincent Sutton, Joe Sutton, Frank Sutton, Jim Sutton, Jesse Sutton, Eliza Smith, Robert Donald, Jim Donald, B.F. Donald, Steve Donald, Robert Donald, Jr., E.L. Harrell, Tom Young, Joe Young, Dr. Martin T. Green, W.H. Green, C.R. Green, P.K. Waggoner. (14)

The Cemetery

There is a story that has come down by word of mouth about the first grave in the Old Hall Cemetery. A family was traveling across the country. Some say the man got sick and died, but others say he was killed by Indians. This man was buried in Old Hall Cemetery. No one knows his name or the date, but the grave was located just east of the Iron Fence plot.

From some records of the graves it was found that over 125 graves were entered in the The Old Hall Cemetery before 1900. (15) Graves entered before 1870 are as follows:

1. Crawford, Cynthis Lusk - b July 15, 1839 - d Sept. 22, 1861
2. Gray, Cynthis - July 10, 1789 - Dec. 7, 1861
3. Crawford, J.G. - Oct. 9, 1830 - July 7, 1862
4. Sanders, L.A. d April 15, 1863 - (43)

5. Sanders, Elizabeth (wife died next day) 1863 (40)
6. Crawford, Susan I. (Gray) wife of Wm Crawford - March 26, 1865 (19)
7. Nowlin, Flora - daughter J.L. and M.E. 1862-1863
8. Lusk, E.P. - Sept 18, 1805 - June 3, 1868
9. Crawford, Tolbert - 1862 - 1868
10. Crawford, M.A. (Wife of J.H.) - d March 1, 1867
11. Cruze, Susan, Daughter of A & E - Dec. 7, 1886
12. Hall, Margaret - Feb. 29, 1832 - Aug. 11, 1867
13. Hall, Infants (This would be the oldest recorded grave.)
 1. 1855
 2. 1862
 3. 1863
14. Allen, J.H. - Nov. 19, 1812 - Nov. 7, 1869

The Hall infant is shown as having been buried in 1857. The Hall was built in 1855 which makes it likely that the Hall was built and the cemetery came into being about the same time.⁽¹⁶⁾

Two Civil War veterans are buried in Old Hall Cemetery. They were G.T. Millican (March 28, 1830 - April 2, 1909) and Samuel V. Lusk, December 9, 1833 - May 12, 1918). The local VFW maintains a record of all veterans buried in the cemetery. It is a local tradition to place flags honoring these veterans annually on Decoration Day.

The Old Hall Cemetery Association

The Certificate of Incorporation for the Old Hall Cemetery Association was recorded on record, July 26, 1972.⁽¹⁷⁾ The corporation is a non-profit corporation. The period of duration of this corporation is perpetual. Its purpose is to maintain and care for the Old Hall Cemetery. The number of directors constituting the initial Board of Directors was five (5): Henrimae Degan, Robert Sparks, Eldon Kirkland, and Urby Nowlin. The incorporators were Gordon Grasty, Scott Ready, Jr., and Naomi Crawford. This corporation was organized on a continuing basis and all proceeds must be used solely for the maintenance and care of Old Hall Cemetery.

Bibliography

Governmental Records

Denton County, Texas. County Clerk, Deed Records, S H36, Abstract #63, Abstract #544.

Denton County, Texas. Tax Assessor/Collector.

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Crawford, Wm. L. Ancestors and Friends. Dallas, Texas: Farmer Genealogy Co., 1978.

Jordan, Terry G. Texas Graveyards: A Cultural Legacy. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982.

Millican, Olin M. "Notes on Establishment of Old Hall Cemetery." Unpublished paper, Lewisville, Texas, 1983.

Millican, Olin M. "A Pioneer Hallford Prairie Settlement Trail. Notes, and Map." Unpublished paper, Lewisville, Texas, n.d.

Old Hall Cemetery Association. "Old Hall Cemetery Record of Graves." Typescript, Lewisville, Texas, 1978.

Rayzor, J.N. History of Denton County Baptist Association; and the Sixty Churches Within Its Jurisdiction. Denton, Texas; Wm. H. McNitzky Printing Co., 1936.

Newspapers

Dallas Times Herald, 19 May 1918.

Denton Record Chronicle, 3 February 1957, 4 July 1976.

Lewisville Daily Leader, 30 June 1976.

Appendix C
Summary of Land Transactions Related to
Old Hall Cemetery, Denton County, Texas

1862 The Old Hall Cemetery was transferred by deed to the Masonic Lodge #201 A.F. & A.M. in 1862. A deed was conveyed to the Denton Masonic Lodge #201 from William B. Brown as shown in volume B, page 277 of the Deed of Records of Denton County. The record describes the land as being 783.99 feet south, 0 degrees 9 minutes east from the northwest corner of Brown survey 63 (Deed Book Vol. 436 page 8 in Denton County Court House). The land was later purchased by J.D. Jones.

1882 Reubin McGee and Sarah J. McGee sold 1/4 acre to the Masonic Lodge #201 for five dollars--Deed Book S, p. 436. This record states where the Old Hall stood. So the Hall was probably gone by 1882.

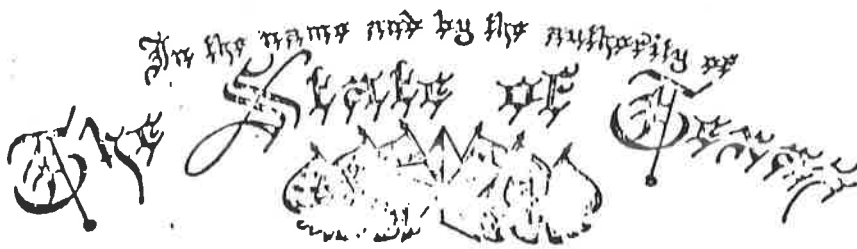
April 12, 1931 Lewisville Masonic Lodge #201 A.F. & A.M. bought from Emma Jones and Bettie McLeod, five acres for \$200--W.B. brown Survey Abst. 63.

June 13, 1958 Imogene McNeill and Johnnie McNeill received \$300 from the Masonic Lodge #201 for two acres. They donated another one acre for cemetery purposes. These three acres are on the southern boundary of the cemetery.

October 30, 1962 The new east part came into existence--Abst. Vol. 487, p. 129-130-131. Johnnie McNeill, Imogene McNeill, and Ed. S. Apple received \$4500 from Masonic Lodge #201 A.F. & A.M. for three acres--W.B. Brown Survey, Abst. No. 63. They, in turn, gave additional three acres to be known as McNeill Addition.

Endnotes

1. Ed. F. Bates, History and Reminiscences of Denton County (Denton, Texas: McNitzky Printing Company, 1918; reprinted, Denton; Terrill Wheeler Printing Company, Inc., 1976), 2.
2. Ibid., 4.
3. Ibid., 5.
4. Ibid., 4.
5. Seymour V. Conner, Kentucky Colonization in Texas (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, Inc., 1983), 8.
6. Bates, History and Reminiscences, 13.
7. O.M. Millican, "Pioneer Halford [sic] Prairie Settlement Trail," (n.d.) 1, attached as Appendix A.
8. Denton Record Chronicle, 3 February 1957, 7:2.
9. Letter of W.B. Brown, quoted in Bates, History and Reminiscences, 405.
10. Denton Record Chronicle, 4 July 1976, 5E.
11. Bates, History and Reminiscences, 31.
12. Lewisville Daily Leader, 30 June 1976, 1F.
13. James Newton Rayzor, History of The Denton County Baptist Association, Denton, Texas (Wm. H. McNitzky Printing Company, 1936), 49.
14. Bates, History and Reminiscences, 32 & 35.
15. See Cemetery Census of Old Hall Cemetery (1978), attached as Appendix B.
16. See Summary of Land Transactions Related to Old Hall Cemetery, Denton, Texas, attached as Appendix C.
17. Attached as Appendix D.



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

CERTIFICATE OF INCORPORATION
OF

OLD HALL CEMETERY ASSOCIATION, INC.

The undersigned, as Secretary of State of the State of Texas, hereby certifies that duplicate originals of Articles of Incorporation for the above corporation duly signed and verified pursuant to the provisions of the Texas Non-Profit Corporation Act, have been received in this office and are found to conform to law.

ACCORDINGLY the undersigned, as such Secretary of State, and by virtue of the authority vested in him by law, hereby issues this Certificate of Incorporation and attaches hereto a duplicate original of the Articles of Incorporation.

Dated July 26, 1972

Foss Louder
Secretary of State



FILED
In the Office of the
Secretary of State of Texas

JUL 26 1972

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION OF
OLD HALL CEMETERY ASSOCIATION, INC.

Bill Zimmerman
Deputy Director, Corporation Division

WE, the undersigned, natural persons of the age of twenty-one years, or more, at least two of whom are citizens of the State of Texas, acting as incorporators of a corporation under the Texas Non-Profit Corporation Act, do hereby adopt the following Articles of Incorporation for such Corporation:

ARTICLE I

The name of the Corporation is: OLD HALL CEMETERY ASSOCIATION, INC.

ARTICLE II

The Corporation is a Non-Profit Corporation.

ARTICLE III

The period of duration of this Corporation is perpetual.

ARTICLE IV

The purpose or purposes for which the Corporation is organized are without being limited to, any one or more of the following:

Charitable, benevolent, religious, eleemosynary, patriotic, civic, missionary, educational, scientific, social, fraternal, athletic, aesthetic, subject to the purposes disallowed by Article 1396-2.01, Section B, and for the maintenance and care of Old Hall Cemetery, as a perpetual care cemetery.

This Corporation is organized and operated exclusively for the above purposes and other non-profit purposes, and no part of any net earnings shall inure to the benefit of any private member or shareholder, and being made up of an association of Cemetery Lot Owners.

ARTICLE V

The street address of the initial registered office of the Corporation is 209 Huffines Center, Huffines Street, Lewisville, Texas, and the name of its initial registered agent at such address is Gerald W. Cobb.

ARTICLE VI

The number of directors constituting the initial board of directors of the Corporation is five (5) and the names and addresses of the persons who are to serve as the initial Board of Directors are:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>
Gordon C. Grasty	FM Road 1171 Lewisville, Texas
Henri Mae Degan	Highway 77 South Lewisville, Texas
Robert Sparks	358 Fagg Drive Lewisville, Texas
Eldon Kirkland	Route 1 Lewisville, Texas
Irby Nowlin	Route 3 Lewisville, Texas

ARTICLE VII

The name and street address of each incorporator is:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>
Gordon C. Grasty	FM Road 1171 Lewisville, Texas
Scott Ready, Jr.	355 West College Street Lewisville, Texas
Naomi Crawford	151 West Walters Lewisville, Texas

ARTICLE VIII

The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall have the right to amend, alter, change, add to, or repeal any provision contained in these Articles of Incorporation as provided in the By-Laws, provided that any such change shall be consistent with

the laws of this State which define, limit, or regulate the powers of this Corporation or the Directors of this Corporation.

ARTICLE IX

This Corporation is organized on a non-stop basis and all proceeds shall be used solely for the maintenance, care and upkeep of Old Hall Cemetery.


ARTICLE X

Every person who owns a lot in Old Hall Cemetery or who has members of their family buried in Old Hall Cemetery shall thereby become a member of the Corporation and shall be entitled to vote at all meetings of the members.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF we have hereunto set our hands, this the 8th day of June, A.D. 1972.


GORDON C. GRASTY

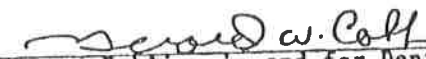

SCOTT READY, JR.


NAOMI CRAWFORD

STATE OF TEXAS I
COUNTY OF DENTON I

I, GERALD W. COBB, a Notary Public, do hereby certify that on this the 8th day of June, 1972, personally appeared before me the three Incorporators who being by me first duly sworn, severally declared that they are the persons who signed the foregoing document as Incorporators, and that the statements contained therein are true.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto set my hand and seal the day and year above written.


Notary Public, in and for Denton
County, Texas

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED, on this the 20th day of DECEMBER,
1971, that Gordon C. Grasty, and Naomi Crawford,
and Scott Ready, Jr., are hereby authorized to
execute Articles of Incorporation for the OLD
HALL CEMETERY ASSOCIATION, in conformity with
Article 1396-3.02 of the Texas Non-Profit
Corporation Act, and, for that purpose, to exe-
cute and deliver to the Secretary of State the
Articles of Incorporation.

OLD HALL CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

G. C. Grasty
G. C. Grasty, President

Naomi Crawford
Naomi Crawford, Secretary

AFFIDAVIT

STATE OF TEXAS I
COUNTY OF DENTON I


WE, GORDON C. GRASTY and NAOMI CRAWFORD, President and Secretary of the Association, respectively, being first duly sworn, each for himself, deposes and says:

That Gordon C. Grasty is the President, and that Naomi Crawford is the Secretary, of the Old Hall Cemetery Association, the unincorporated association mentioned in the foregoing Articles of Incorporation; that said Association has duly authorized this incorporation and has authorized Gordon C. Grasty, Naomi Crawford and Scott Ready, Jr., to execute the Articles of Incorporation.


Gordon C. Grasty, President


Naomi Crawford, Secretary

SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED BEFORE ME, the undersigned authority, by the above named Gordon C. Grasty and Naomi Crawford, on this the 8th day of June, 1972.


Notary Public, in and for Denton County, Texas