

PRAIRIE MOUND CEMETERY

DENTON COUNTY, TEXAS

Historical Narrative researched and written by Yvonne A. Jenkins for Texas Historical Commission THC
Subject Marker Application. Denton County. 1981

PRAIRIE MOUND CEMETERY

TEXAS HISTORICAL MARKER APPLICATION

The Prairie Mound Cemetery is located west of I-35 W, between Old Justin Road and FM Road 407, being on the western edge of the crossttimbers on the prairie west of Argyle. The Prairie Mound Cemetery and Methodist Episcopal Church, South, have played an integral role in the settlement of the southwest part of Denton County.

In the Denton County Deed Records, Volume V., page 213, a deed is found that originally conveys six acres of land to the trustees of the Prairie Mound Methodist Episcopal Church, South and their successors which is dated April 10, 1882. W. T. Clark, agent and attorney in fact for L. C. Carrington, signed the document. A sum of \$18.00 was paid in full, in cash by W. H. Alexander and R. B. Anderson to Mr. Clark. There are actually two tracts of land pertinent to the Prairie Mound activities, the original six acre tract for the church and the tract for the cemetery. The Prairie Mound Cemetery was already in existence when John Wesley Faught bought farm land just west of the cemetery in 1883. Denton County Deed Records, Volume V., page 454, show that J. W. Faught obtained the land from Pleas M. Faught on September 5, 1883. Approximately four and one-half acres are fenced as a cemetery. Mrs. Miller Faught (Route 1, Argyle) deeded an additional two acres to the cemetery in 1970. The cemetery is plotted but not on record in the Denton County Courthouse. (1)

According to a survey by Hazel Shelton in the Denton County Historical Commission's Cemetery Census there were 463 legible marked graves in 1974. The oldest marked grave is that of a child, Edgar Myers, son of J. E. & M. J. Myers born March 11, 1875 and died May 6, 1878. Many of the pioneer families of this area buried their loved ones in both the Graham-Argyle and Prairie Mound Cemetery.

These families were from the Argyle and Justin area and include the surnames of: Brown (8), Cope (6), Faught (28), Fincher (18), Hall (14), Hampton (13), Heath (7), Jarrell (4—who gave the land for the Graham-Argyle Cemetery), Johns (2 for whom Johns' Well is named), Reed (9), Strader (4), Taylor (18) and Yarbrough (6). (2)

The Prairie Mound Methodist Church had a substantial membership and was active until after the turn of the century. In 1901, the Justin Methodist Church was established and many of the families moved their church memberships there. The NORTH TEXAS CONFERENCE ANNUAL JOURNAL show that Prairie Mound, as part of the Argyle Circuit had Sunday School Superintendents listed from 1913 to 1917. Serving in 1913 was W. Y. Fincher; 1914-15 was Curt Taylor; 1916 was A. B. Faught and in 1917 was A. J. Faught. In the following twenty years, efforts were made to rejuvenate it, but to no avail. The church had been elaborately furnished for its day, with an organ, songbooks, handsomely carved pews, and hanging-swinging brass lamps. The church building featured two diamond shaped windows behind the pulpit. Outside was a hitching rail made of bois d' arc with rings for tying the horse reins. (3)

On May 22, 1873, the State of Texas passed a law to establish and maintain a system of free public schools in the state. Each community desiring a school had to build a school house, obtain a deed to land for the school, agree to teach school for four consecutive months to receive the pro rata share of the County School Funds. The community had to petition the county judge to establish a school. On August 27, 1878, residents of the Prairie Mound community petitioned the County Judge to establish a community school with twenty-six students enrolled. Named to the Board of Trustees were Z. H. Parr, B. N. McLaure and W. H. Alexander. The newly created community school received \$101.40 with which to operate the school the first year. Listed as early teachers for the Prairie Mound Community School in 1878 was A. T. Hill and S. H. Tucker in 1881. Records indicate that Tucker was paid

a sum of \$95.00 for a teaching position at the #75 Community School. (4)

According to Denton County Commissioners' Minutes, County School District #40 was established at Prairie Mound in 1884. This resulted because the state public school law abolished in 1884, the community system of school organization and adopted the numbered county school district system, the building blocks of the modern consolidated school districts. Every school building had to have its district number displayed in large numerals above the school door. Emphasis of this new law shifted control from the state to the counties and permitted the county school district to levy taxes for the establishment and support of public schools for the 4,425 pupils in Denton County. The county judge served as ex-officio school superintendent. By August of 1884, the seventy-three common school districts established by the Commissioners Court had been surveyed by the county surveyor, Elijah Biggerstaff. The districts were laid out crisscrossing the county from east to west, starting in the northeast corner. Consideration was given to schools already located, so that, with a few exceptions, each district had only one school. The trustee elections for each of these districts were held in August of 1884. (5) Serving as the first trustees of the #40 Prairie Mound Common School District in 1884 and 1885 were M. H. Alexander, J. P. Hampton and S. L. Strader. With an enrollment of thirty-six pupils, E. M. Teel was paid \$35.00 monthly for a teaching position. Records indicate that A. J. Jarrell received \$30.00 for teaching in 1885. Enrollment figures show a school population of thirty-one in 1886 and twenty-eight in 1888. J. E. Lively, J. P. Hampton and S. L. Strader served as trustees of the district in 1888 with an enrollment of twenty-nine pupils. The 1889 Board of Trustees was comprised of J. P. Dooley, Eli F. Merrell (1851-1933) and W. T. Myrick and Lavinia T. Bradley was listed as the teacher. By 1890, the enrollment at Prairie Mound had dropped to eighteen pupils with J. W. Russell listed as the teacher. (6) The Prairie Mound School

district functioned until it was consolidated with Argyle in 1946 and Northwest (formerly Justin) in 1949. Classes were last taught in 1936 at the school. (7)

Descendants of the pioneer families of the Prairie Mound area began organized meetings in 1958 with Miller Faught serving as the first president of the Prairie Mound Cemetery Association. Other officers were: Vice-President--C. R. "Happy" Salmon and Secretary--Pete Faught. The finance committee was composed of Jack Faught, Pete Faught and Dick Taylor. Program committee members were Edrena Jennings, Anna Jennings, Frances Faught and Golda Faught. (8) The Association meets on the first Sunday of each May for a Decoration Day that includes dinner on the ground, a worship service and business meeting. Year round maintenance and mowing is conducted with a special work day being held on the Saturday before Decoration Day.

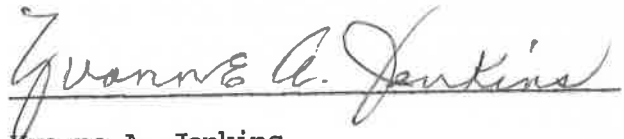
At the May 1, 1960 annual business meeting, President Miller Faught presented a deed to the congregation showing the the Methodist Church Conference had deeded the church building to said cemetery. (9) During the years of existence of the Prairie Mound Methodist Church, it has been a part of various circuits including: Argyle, Garza, Chinn Chapel, Roanoke, Cooper Creek, Lake Dallas, Lynchburg, Oak Grove, Brown School House, Little Elm, Green Valley and Ponder. The church membership participated with other community churches in the summer revivals held at the old campgrounds near Johns Well (today at the intersection of C. Taylor Road and Old Justin Road) east of the Prairie Mound Church. That same year, the Argyle Methodist Church, in behalf of the Prairie Mound Church, deeded the six acres to the Association and their trustees and their successors. (10)

The Association set fees for the sale of cemetery lots, raising the price from \$5.00 to \$25.00 on one full lot. An Executive Committee was appointed to look into the matter of the church building. (11)

The minutes of the Association chronicles the progress of this group of devoted descendants of their Prairie Mound heritage. By 1961, the Executive Committee recommended to the Association that the old church building be sold for the largest sum possible. (12) The church building was sold to Doug W. Coin for \$350.00 and he moved it to his dairy farm approximately two miles south (old Litsey community), where it is now utilized as a hay barn--still a very durable and well kept structure. During this same period of time, Mrs. Lark Heath of Roanoke built a Memorial Chapel on the church grounds in memory of her husband. Mrs. Heath also provided fencing and built two cattle guards at the entrances. The original podium from the Prairie Mound Methodist Church is in the beautiful and modern white brick chapel. (13) On August 27, 1961, at 3:00 Pm, a Dedication Service was held in the Lark Heath Memorial Chapel at Prairie Mound. Participating in the program were Fred Minor, the Rev. T. A. Malone, Rev. Jack Sanders and Rev. Roy Montgomery. Music was provided by Mrs. Joe House and Charles Nelson. (14)

The Association formally adopted a constitution and By-Laws at a special meeting on July 3, 1964. The By-Laws set forth the purposes of the Association; Officers and terms of election; Committies and cost of cemetery space (20x20 foot lot which will provide eight grave spaces for \$100.00; one-half lot for four spaces for \$50.00 and a single space for \$15.00). (15) John Donald Faught was elected to the Board of Trustees and president of the Association following the death of his father, Miller Faught. The Association also began thinking about establishing an Endowment Fund for the Cemetery and filing the cemetery records in the County Courthouse. (16) By 1969, the Association was ready to implement a landscape plan that took into consideration minimum upkeep and future expansion of the cemetery. The Association wanted to acquire additional land for the cemetery and passed a resolution to create a permanent Endowment Fund of

The condition of the Prairie Mound Cemetery and chapel is immaculate as we enter the 1980's---being maintained year-round by the Cemetery Association. The cemetery is in current use. The first Sunday of each May you will find hundreds of descendants at the Cemetery to pay their respects to their heritage and to make plans for the continuation of this preservation project on the prairies of southwest Denton County.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Yvonne A. Jenkins". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Yvonne A. Jenkins
Box 184
Argyle, Texas 76266

May 11, 1980

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

- Constitution and By-Laws of Prairie Mound Cemetery Association, (non-published, 1964, in custody of W. T. Yarbrough, Route 1, Box 86, Justin, Texas 76247).
- COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS SCHOOL RECORD OF DENTON COUNTY, Edition of 1884, 1885, 1886, 1888, 1889 and 1890, in custody of Denton County Historical Commission.
- Denton County Historical Commission, Cemetery Census (non-published) 2nd floor, Courthouse on the Square, Denton, 1974.
- "Director's School Record for Denton County, State of Texas, A Uniform Method of Keeping the Records of this County", (News Book and Job Printing Establishment, Galveston), 1876 Edition in custody of Denton County Historical Commission.
- Jenkins, Yvonne Allen, ARGYLE COMMUNITY HISTORY, (M & M Printing, Denton, 1976).
- Prairie Mound Cemetery Association Minutes, 1958 to 1980, (non-published, in custody of W. T. Yarbrough, Route 1, Box 86, Justin, Texas 76247).
- Watson, Myrtle, "Education, A Debt the Present Owes to the Future", Research Paper, May 6, 1976, (non-published) in custody of Denton County Historical Commission.

F O O T N O T E S

(1) Yvonne Allen Jenkins, ARGYLE COMMUNITY HISTORY, (M & M Printing, Denton, 1976), page 14.

(2) Denton County Historical Commission, Cemetery Census (non-published, 2nd floor, Courthouse on the Square, Denton, 1974).

(3) Yvonne Allen Jenkins, ARGYLE COMMUNITY HISTORY, (M & M Printing, Denton, 1976, page 14.

(4) "Director's School Record for Denton County, State of Texas, A Uniform Method of Keeping the Records of this County", (News Book and Job Printing Establishment, Galveston), 1876 Edition in custody of Denton County Historical Commission.

(5) Myrtle Watson, "Education, A Debt the Present Owes to the Future", Research Paper, May 6, 1976, non-published, pages 7-8, in custody of Denton County Historical Commission.

(6) COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS SCHOOL RECORD OF DENTON COUNTY, Editions of 1884, 1885, 1886, 1888, 1889 and 1890 in custody of Denton County Historical Commission.

(7) Watson, page 19.

(8) Prairie Mound Cemetery Association Minutes (non-published, in custody of W. T. Yarbrough, Route 1, Box 86, Justin, Texas 76247), 1958.

(9) Ibid, 1960.

(10) Jenkins, page 15.

(11) Praire Mound Cemetery Association Minutes, 1960.

(12) Ibid, 1961.

(13) Jenkins, page 15.

(14) Prairie Mound Cemetery Association Minutes, 1961.

(15) Constitution and By-Laws of Prairie Mound Cemetery Association (non-published, 1964, in custody of W. T. Yarbrough, Route 1, Box 86, Justin, Texas 76247).

(16) Prairie Mound Cemetery Association Minutes, 1964.

(17) Ibid, 1969.

(18) Ibid, 1970.

(19) Ibid, 1971.

(20) Ibid, 1974.

(21) Ibid, 1977.

(22) Ibid, 1978.

FOOTNOTES, CONTINUED

(23) Ibid, 1978.

(24) Ibid, 1979.

(25) Ibid, 1980.