

FURNEAUX CEMETERY AT CARROLLTON, TEXAS

Historical Narrative researched and written by Georgia Myers Ogle for Texas Historical Commission THC subject marker application, Denton County (1984)

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William Furneaux had indicated his intention of establishing a public burial ground on a certain part of his farm in southeast Denton County, but before he could implement his plan for the proposed graveyard, he died suddenly of a heart attack¹ on May 6, 1884.² Knowing of his intentions, his family buried him at the site he had selected for the cemetery.³

Soon thereafter seven-year-old Peter Husky, son of William and Nancy Husky, died and was buried near Mr. Furneaux. The boy's father designated two acres of his farm land across the dirt road west of the graves as a church site.⁴ The dual installation--cemetery and church--became known as Cemetery Hill.

Then, the location of the two facilities was a rural area two miles west of Hebron and seven miles southeast of Lewisville--both in Denton County--and two miles north of Carrollton, Dallas County. In records of that day the site was described as being near the Willow Springs School, Denton County, and Trinity Mills, Dallas County--neither of which is now existent. The only access to the cemetery and church was a country road called Cemetery Hill Road.⁵ Today, only the cemetery remains at the intersection of Rosemeade Boulevard and Cemetery Hill Road, well within the City of Carrollton. Originally extensive farm land encompassed the sacred spot on a grassy knoll visible for several miles in all

directions on the serene countryside; now modern homes surround it on all sides, with a school and a church only a block or so away, and the sounds of daily traffic on the busy east-west thoroughfare shatter the quietness.

In time, tombstones were erected on the graves of the first two people buried there. Mr. Furneaux's marker, a joint one with his wife's, stands in a central position about 25 yards directly behind the ornamental iron gates. The monument is a large granite square atop which are four stately columns supporting an overhead slab on which is a sculptured eternal flame. The inscription reflects the family's pride in their English ancestry and in a similar manner suggests their pleasure in pioneering this part of the New World. It reads as follows:

Wm. Furneaux, native of Buckfastleigh
Devonshire, Eng. Emig. to Texas Oct., 1857
Died May 6, 1884
Aged 44 yrs., 8 mos., 8 days

On the opposite side is the epitaph for Mrs. Furneaux, who survived her husband a third of a century.

Fanny, wife of Wm. Furneaux, Emig. to
Dallas Co. with parents, John and
Mary Jackson 1848
D. March 30, 1917 Aged 74 yrs., 10 mos., 26 days

The memorial is enclosed in an arbor structure with towering oak trees and spreading cedar bushes surrounding it and the concrete benches at the head of the graves.

The grave of the Husky lad is on a front row slightly to the left of the entrance. His gravestone reads:

Little Peter Husky, son of Wm. and Nancy Husky
Oct. 15, 1877-July, 1884

3 Thus it was that the two pioneer families that made Cemetery Hill, Graveyard and Church--possibly were the first two families to bury their dead in the new facility. Of the three tombstones that indicate earlier deaths than the two mentioned, one is at the grave of John Jackson, father of Fanny Jackson Furneaux. The date of his death is given as May 30, 1866. His great grandson, George A. Jackson, explains that Mr. Jackson had been buried on the family farm, but when the cemetery was established, his body was moved.⁶ A similar story accounts for the graves of the infant son (b. and d. December 26, 1879) and an infant daughter Linnie (b. January 13, 1882 and died August 23, 1882), children of W. E. and S. A. McMurry.⁷

On July 21, 1884, a public meeting was called at Willow Springs School. The minutes for that assembly began: "Those interested in a Public Cemetery for this Community met at the above named place for that purpose at ten o'clock July 21st 1884."⁸ Thirteen men attended. Jos. E. Morgan and J. H. Furneaux were made chairman and secretary respectively.⁹ The first resolution passed read as follows: "Resolved that we citizens residing in the neighborhood of Willow Springs School house and Trinity Mills thankfully accept for the community at large the donation of land by the late

William Furneaux and that given by William Husk(e)y for the purpose of making and maintaining a public cemetery and for building a church house open to all denominations of Christians."¹⁰

A committee was appointed to survey both plats and to draw up a map of the cemetery laid off into sections and lots according to specific measurements. In succeeding meetings business dealt only with the cemetery.¹¹ Among other things it was decided that lots would sell for ten dollars each and that individuals could receive credit to their accounts by volunteering to do some of the necessary work at the cemetery.

The records book suggests that there were no business meetings held between August 24, 1884, and April 14, 1888, because at the top of Page 54 Secretary J. H. Furneaux makes the following entry: "Willow Springs Aug. 1884. Have no minutes of a meeting held on this date." Immediately below, the same gentleman enters minutes of a meeting April 14, 1888, under the heading of "Cemetery Hill--Denton Co. Texas." The purpose of the session was "to make more permanent arrangements for the carrying on of the cemetery." The result was plans for drawing up a charter for a cemetery association.¹² The name "Furneaux Cemetery" was first used on the proposed 50-year charter, which was approved by the Texas Department of State and filed on May 12, 1888.¹³ Charter directors were Joseph Morgan, W. R. Dudley, John Jackson, V. S. Dudley, and J. H. Furneaux. According to the terms of the contract, the charter would have expired in 1938; however, the renewal was not filed until Nov. 7, 1949.¹⁴ The Furneaux Cemetery Association

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