

SOME HISTORY OF THE MEDLIN CEMETERY  
By Mary Carpenter

The Medlin Cemetery is located on land that was donated by Charles and Matilda Medlin in April, 1850. The acreage was donated for the specific use of members of the Medlin Family and members of the Medlin community (which later became the town of Roanoke).<sup>1</sup> The cemetery was named for its original donors. Later, in 1900, James W. Medlin, a son of Charles and Matilda, donated more land which was divided into lots and sold. The income from this transaction was used for the upkeep of the cemetery. The land donated by James Medlin brought the total acreage of the cemetery to its present level of ten-plus acres. The cemetery is on a tree-studded hill overlooking the town of Roanoke which is located  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles to the west. A new controlled residential area, The Trophy Club, being built by a corporation headed by Ben Hogan, retired golfer, now encompasses the cemetery. The Club has provided a four-lane boulevard from state highway 114 to the cemetery and also have added a 24-hour patrol for the security of the area.

The location of the cemetery was selected by the daughter of Charles Medlin who before her death requested burial on the hill seen from her home because of its beauty. The daughter, Mittie Ann Medlin, was the first person buried there. Only a short time after she had stood in the yard of the family's home and looked up toward the hill and had said, "When I die I want to be buried up there on that hill",<sup>2</sup>

she died and her father fulfilled her request. This burial was carried out a short time after her death on April 15, 1850. She was not quite 22 years old, having been born in Missouri on October 27, 1828. She and her family along with twenty other families had migrated from Missouri in 1847, settling along Denton Creek in a settlement known as the Medlin Settlement and which was later named Garden Valley. This group of people, because of repeated floods, in 1850 moved up to higher ground and began the town of Roanoke.<sup>3</sup> Although there are several gravestones in the 1850's, the one for Mittie Ann is the oldest. It is still in good condition and the information on it is readable.<sup>P."5</sup>

Both the donors of the original plat of land (Charles and Matilda Medlin) and the donor of the later acreage (James Medlin) are buried in the cemetery. Along with James Medlin his 13 brothers and sisters as well as many other close relations are also buried there.<sup>P. #6 & #7.</sup>

Charles Medlin, the original donor of land, was the son of Robert and Mary Medlin. He was born on June 29, 1800 in Pendleton District, South Carolina. On November 29, 1827, he married Matilda Allen in Bedford County, Tennessee. Charles came to Texas in 1847 along with his family, his mother Mary, now a widow, and his brother Lewis. Several of Charles' children were born before his arrival in Texas. Charles Medlin died May 4, 1864 and was buried in the cemetery for which he had donated the land some fourteen years before.<sup>4</sup>

With approximately 1500 grave sites, the Medlin Cemetery is the largest cemetery in the area. Also, as far as can be ascertained, this cemetery is the oldest one in Denton County. As the courthouse was burned many years ago, the exact age of some of the cemeteries are uncertain; however, a clerk in the records office offered the suggestion that as far as she knew this cemetery was the oldest.

All the people buried in the Medlin Cemetery were residents from the immediate area. Although the Medlin descendants account for a large number of the graves, they are but a small part of the total. Among the earliest stones there were many graves of babies and young children. This seems typical of the 1800's due to inadequate medical care. As far as can be determined no major epidemics, disasters, etc. contributed significantly to the population of this cemetery.

From the cemetery's beginning in 1850 until 1947 its upkeep was left totally to the descendants of those buried there. In the spring of 1947 a formal association was organized. This association known as the Medlin Cemetery Association continues to this day. The first officers of the organization were Charles Medlin Jr., Cora Carruth, Mack Luttrell, Lee Dunham and Josphino Cannon. The purpose of the association was to clean up the cemetery and to maintain it in a suitable manner. This association is still very active and has kept its goal of steady improvement in the cemetery and in the organization. The beauty

of the cemetery is due to nature and to the care of the association. Picture #4

The officers of the Medlin Cemetery Assoc. are elected by oral ballot. There are presently six officers; two offices come up for election each year. Using this method of election, there are always experienced officers in the association. An annual meeting is held the first Sunday in May which all members are urged to attend. This meeting is held at the cemetery (weather permitting) or at the community center in Roanoke. A pot-luck lunch is brought by the association members; after which, a business meeting is held followed by a period of visiting. During the year many additional meetings are held among the officers to carry on the work of the organization. The present officers are: President - Henry E. Luttrell Jr, Vice-Presidents - Alonzo Medlin and Oren Blackburn, Secretary - Queva Martin, Treasurer - Mary Carpenter and Eugie Thomas - Expediter.

Of course, the cemetery is in perpetual use and a new area of approximately  $4 \frac{1}{3}$  acres is being readied at the present. Sale of the new plots should begin in 1977.

The entrance of the Medlin Cemetery overlooks rolling, wooded hills and a beautiful 18-hole golf course. P. #2 The cemetery is fronted by a fence with an archway made of iron with its name carved across the arch. P. #1 A circle drive permits easy access to the gravesites. In the future the Trophy Club organization plans to provide the cemetery with

water which will make the planting of more trees and shrubs feasible. Also, a fence is planned for the west side of the cemetery. The Trophy Club has already fenced in the east side, and the south end of the cemetery is enclosed by trees and brush. Within the confines of the cemetery a concrete based shelter with tables and benches has been provided for the comfort of the cemetery visitors.<sup>P. #3</sup> Future plans are for the construction of restrooms in the area.

Mr. Ben Hogan, representing the Trophy Club, has publicly stated his appreciation of the historical value of the cemetery and of his organizations intentions to preserve it and add to its significance.

The Medlin Cemetery Assoc. seeks to have this cemetery declared a "Recorded Texas Historical Landmark" because of its historical significance in the community and in the county. This cemetery has not only been enjoyed and used by various writers of history but also it has been used by the local school as a source of education and by the various Boy Scout, Girl Scout, and other child oriented groups. Therefore, through the years the Medlin Cemetery has had meaning and value for the young and old of the surrounding community and should continue to do so for generations to come.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Bates, Ed. F. History and Reminiscences of Denton County.  
(Denton, Texas: McNitzky Printing Co. 1918.) pp. 76.

<sup>2</sup>Files of Mary Carpenter, Roanoke, Texas

<sup>3</sup>Quad-Town Community News, (Publisher Unknown) September 14, 1962.

<sup>4</sup>Foster, Peart, Trek To Texas. (Ft. Worth, Texas: Branch-Smith, 1966.) pp. 121.

Credit for information contained in the files and memory of Mary Carpenter must go to the following people who so kindly told me the stories through the years that have made up the history of the Medlin Cemetery.

Sarrath, Cora  
Doohan, Lee  
Fove, Maude  
Mandire, Zera  
Medlin, Charles

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