

JCHC JOURNAL

J E F F E R S O N C O U N T Y H I S T O R I C A L C O M M I S S I O N

THIRD ANNUAL HISTORIC MAGNOLIA CEMETERY TOUR

Friends of the Magnolia Cemetery

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- September 20,
2023 10:00 a.m.
- November 15,
2023 10:00 a.m.

Our third annual Magnolia Cemetery tour will soon be upon us, and this year, we can truly call it “Historic” because, as of July, the cemetery is now recognized by the Texas Historical Commission as a Texas Historic Cemetery. Stay tuned for a dedication in the future.

Magnolia Cemetery’s origins go back to the 1840s, William McFaddin, Jefferson County pioneer and Veteran of the Texas War for Independence, started a private graveyard on his land for his family

(Continued on page 2)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Historic Magnolia Cemetery Tour	1-3
Beaumont’s Six Railroads	4-7
From the Yellowed Pages: “How Big is a League?”	7-8
Marker Spotlight: The Opelousas Trail	9
Upcoming Events	10



2023 HISTORIC MAGNOLIA CEMETERY TOUR DATES

- Thursday, October 19 from
4:00 to 6:00 p.m.
- Saturday, October 21 from
10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

(Continued from page 1)

and friends. The plot overlooked Brakes Bayou and was located on the highest knoll in Beaumont. The first recorded burial on the larger site was in 1847 when John D. Gilbert was laid to rest. The first recorded burial on the McFaddin family's personal plot was William's son John Andrew McFaddin, who was killed during the Civil War on September 29, 1863, at the Battle of Fordoche Bayou.

During the 1860s another burial area adjacent to the McFaddins was marked for the Odd Fellows Lodge. William McFaddin then saw the need for even more space on the hill to give other Southeast Texans a place to bury their loved ones, and in 1876 he deeded two and a quarter acres of land adjacent to his private graveyard. It was used at the beginning primarily for civil war veterans and their families, but many others rest on the hill including another Texas War for Independence veteran, a Union soldier, a Deputy Marshal of Beaumont killed in the line of duty on September 25, 1881, and many victims of the Great Influenza Epidemic of 1918.

In 1887 some of the prominent citizens of Beaumont gathered together to form a Corporation for benevolent and charitable purposes under the General Laws of the State of Texas. The purpose was "to purchase, improve and subdivide land and grounds for a private cemetery for the citizens of Beaumont and vicinity, and the future maintenance of the grounds by the sale of lots and otherwise as shall be the By-Laws prescribed."

The Corporation was to have five Trustees as the Board of Trustees for the first year, with the five-named being Valentine Wiess, Edward L. Wilson, A.S. John, H.W. Smith and John L. Keith. The Corporation issued capital stock in the amount of ten thousand dollars, divided into four hundred shares of twenty-five dollars each. This Charter application was signed by E.L. Wilson, A.S. John, and V. Wiess. The Charter was approved by the Texas Secretary of State on August 3, 1887. The Trustees of the Company then went back to their friend William McFaddin to purchase an additional thirteen acres needed to start what is now known as Magnolia Cemetery.

In the years 1903 through 1906 the Corporation repurchased the stock sold and began to operate as a Non-Profit Organization. Then, under the leadership of V. Wiess, John N. Gilbert, P.H. Wiess, J.L. Keith, and W.P.H. McFaddin, an amended charter was recorded May 9, 1924. The new charter states that the Corporation "shall have no capital stock. Members of

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

said Cemetery Corporation and stockholders therein shall have no financial interest in the assets of said Corporation. No dividend of any character shall ever be declared for the benefit of the members or stockholders. All income shall be used exclusively for the maintenance, upkeep, and improvements of the property and the purchase and improvement of additional property as required." As the years have passed Magnolia has continued to expand to meet the community's needs through land acquisitions from houses, schools, churches, and one steel mill.

The times and dates of the 2023 Historic Magnolia Cemetery Tour are as follows:

Thursday, October 19 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Saturday, October 21 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.



JCHC Cemetery Chair, Paul Prosperie at the Catherina Stengele plot during the 2022 Magnolia Cemetery Tour. Photo Credit: Jerrilynn Miller



JCHC Chair, Theresa Goodness at the Norvell family plot during the 2022 Magnolia Cemetery Tour. Photo Credit: Jerrilynn Miller

BEAUMONT'S SIX RAILROADS

Les McMahan

Eastern Texas Railway/Sabine & East Texas – 1st

The ETR was originally built from Sabine Pass to Beaumont in 1861 but was abandoned in 1863, and some of the rails on the southern end were used to protect Fort Griffin. The S&ET built on the same route between Beaumont and Sabine Pass in 1881, and added a new route from Beaumont to Rockland in 1882. The S&ET became part of the Texas & New Orleans Railroad in 1882. The S&ET may have initially had its own facilities in downtown Beaumont, but later probably shared the Beaumont passenger depot and yard facilities with the T&NO, but no record of separate facilities could be found.

The only section of the former S&ET that remains in service is that which runs from Beaumont to Port Arthur along Spur 93, through the Valero Refinery, and ending at the Intra-coastal Canal. It is operated today as part of the Union Pacific Railroad system.

Texas & New Orleans/Southern Pacific – 2nd

The T&NO was built westward from Orange starting in 1859 and reached Beaumont in 1865, then continued on to Houston in that same year. The section between Orange and Beaumont was extensively rebuilt in 1875 due to its poor condition resulting from usage during the Civil War. The T&NO crossed the Neches River on a steel swing span bridge. The T&NO, which operated as a subsidiary of the Southern Pacific Railroad, was officially absorbed by the SP in 1961.

The T&NO/SP operated a large depot and freight house, a large yard, and service facilities in downtown Beaumont until the late 1960s when their bridge across the Neches River was removed, as well as the downtown facilities, and SP rail traffic was rerouted over the KCS bridge to the new SP facilities in west Beaumont.

The route continues to operate today as a part of the Union Pacific Railroad system.

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

Gulf, Beaumont & Kansas City/Gulf, Colorado & Santa Fe – 3rd

The GB&KC was built from Silsbee to Beaumont in 1894. It had a depot, a small yard and services facilities north of Calder Avenue between Gulf Street and North 1st Street, and had a large freight depot in downtown Beaumont at the intersection of Neches Street and Crockett Street. This building was lengthened in later years, became a passenger depot as well, and is still standing today. The GB&KC operated under the umbrella of the Gulf, Colorado & Santa Fe which became part of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad in 1948.

The route continues to operate today as part of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad system.

Gulf & Interstate of Texas/Gulf, Colorado & Santa Fe – 4th

The G&I was built from Beaumont to Port Bolivar/Galveston in 1895-96 to provide an alternate shipping route for farm products, cattle and oil from western Jefferson County and eastern Chambers County. It also served as a direct tourist route to Galveston.

The G&I had a small depot and freight platform in downtown Beaumont at the intersection of Crockett Street and Trinity Street, just west of the GB&KC freight depot. The G&I was unique for having the only railroad car ferry operation in Texas, that being across the entrance to Galveston Bay from Port Bolivar to Galveston. The G&I was leased by the Gulf, Colorado & Santa Fe in 1932. By 1942, the route had been abandoned from Galveston to High Island then later as far as Stowell.

The only remaining segment of the G&I is that which runs from Beaumont to the Good-year plant along Highway 124, and which is operated as part of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad system.

Kansas City, Pittsburg & Gulf/Kansas City Southern – 5th

The KCP&G built from Port Arhtur to Beaumont in 1896, then built concurrently from Beaumont eastward and from Dequincy, LA westward in 1897 with the lines meeting just west

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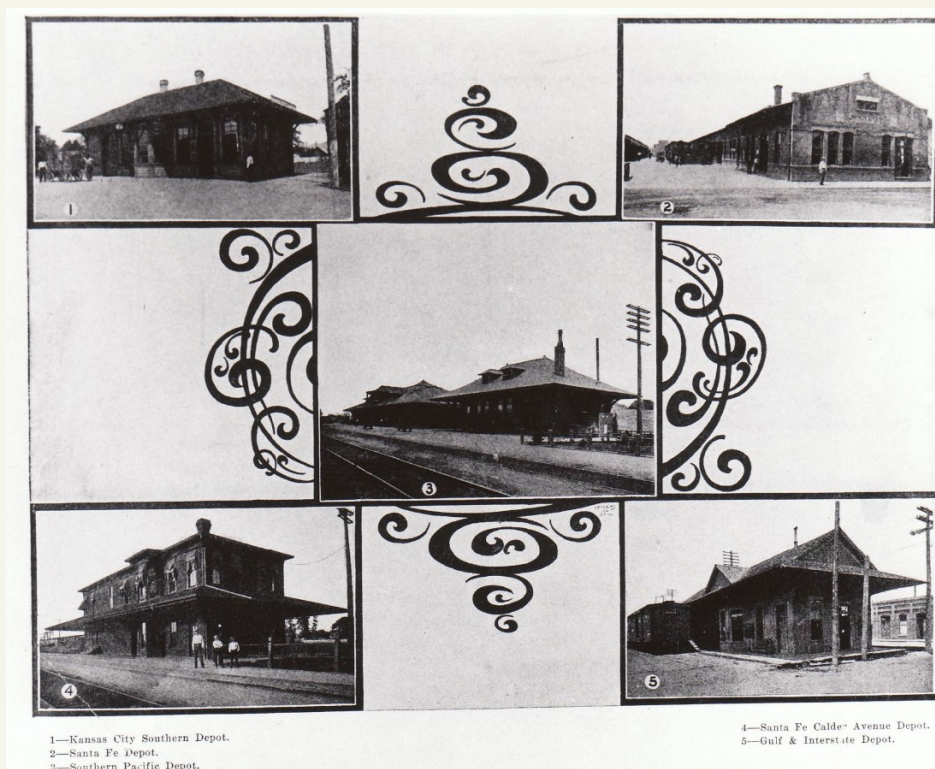
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of Mauriceville. The KCP&G's name was changed to the Kansas City Southern Railway in 1900.

The KCS crossed the Neches River on a steel swing bridge and entered Beaumont along what used to be Washington (Gilbert) Street. There was a small depot and freight house between Archie Street and Jefferson Street, with a small yard west of present-day MLK Parkway. In 1916, the KCS built a new passenger depot between Archie Street and Trinity Street that became a joint depot with the Missouri Pacific Railroad. The KCS famously ran in the middle of Railroad Avenue toward Port Arthur and to its new yard south of Washington Avenue. KCS' original depot is now preserved near the intersection of Franklin Street and Orange Avenue.

The KCS merged with Canadian Pacific Railroad in 2023 and this route operates today as part of the CPKC Railroad system.

(Continued on page 7)



Numbered and keyed passenger depot photos . As noted in the text, there are no photos for the Sabine & East Texas or the Beaumont, Sour Lake & Western passenger depots. Photo credit: Tyrrell Historical Library Digital Photographs Collection.

(Continued from page 6)

Beaumont, Sour Lake & Western/Missouri Pacific – 6th

The BSL&W built from Beaumont to Sour Lake in 1904 then continued on to Houston in 1908. In the meantime, the Colorado, Southern, New Orleans & Pacific Railroad was wanting to make a connection from the end of its line at Dequincy, LA to the BSL&W at Beaumont. The CSNO&P secured trackage rights over the KCS from Dequincy to Beaumont in 1905 to make that connection. In 1916 the CSNO&P along with the BSL&W became a part of the Gulf Lines, a conglomeration of small railroads, which in turn became part of the Missouri Pacific Railroad in 1924. The BSL&W had a freight depot on Neches Street between Franklin Street and Fannin Street, and a small yard west of South 4th Street and north of Hollywood Street. No record could be found for a passenger depot.

The route continues to operate today as part of the Union Pacific Railroad system.

HOW BIG IS A LEAGUE?

A STUDY OF THE HEZIKIAH WILLIAMS LEAGUE

Wright, M.S. (1987) Yellowed Pages. XVII(4),7-10

Hezekiah Williams received one league of land in Jefferson County, Texas. The league shares a common boundary with Charles Williams, Almazon Houston, A. Savery, Noah Tevis, and Thomas Lewis surveys.

Comparing distances of the Tevis survey, and maps relating to land surveys, a preliminary estimate would place the eastern boundary on or near 23rd street in Beaumont; the south boundary just north of the Southern Pacific railroad yard; the west boundary being Major Drive and the north boundary at the present Folsom Drive.

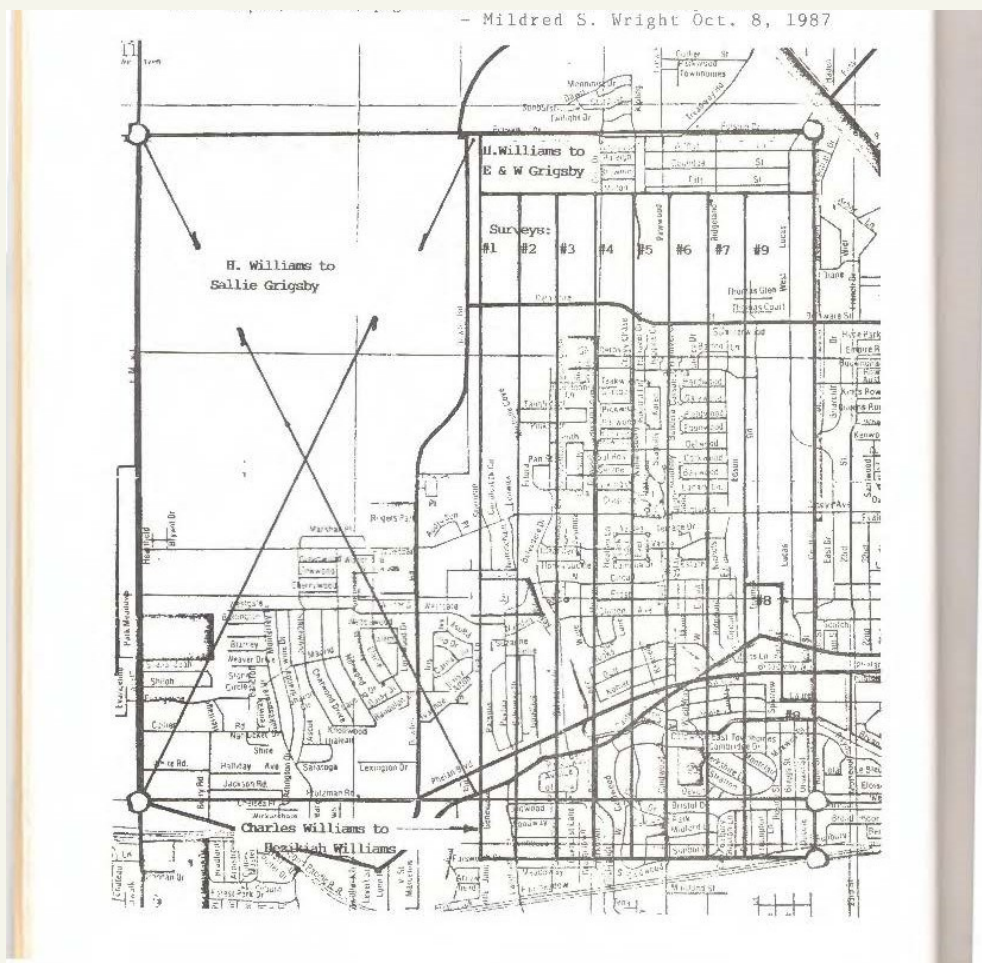
The plat maps in the Jefferson County Clerk's office place the southeast corner of the H. Williams survey to be within the easement between 181 and 185 Orgain, Caldwod Forest, on the rear or east line of the lots. The adjoining Russell Addition lies in the Noah Tevis survey. The east line of the league continues northward along the west side of the shopping center at Phelan and 23rd street (Albertson's in 1987) and the shopping center at Calder and 24th

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

(Market Basket, 1987) as identified by the plat of the Broadway Place addition of Beaumont, and continues across Calder Avenue, being the west side of Central Avenue, where the corner of the Noah Tevis and Thomas Lewis surveys is placed at the intersection on Central and East Drive. The east line continues to a point where the present Folsom Drive, then Treadway, ends at the rear of the present (1987) Wal Mart parking lot on Eastex Highway.

The south line is confirmed by plats of Caldwood Forest and the Manion Oaks subdivision. In the latter, the H. Williams line is identified as the north side of Longwood. Extending the line from the Orgain address, to the Longwood citation, and to Major Drive, the southwest corner is identified at the shopping center, on Old Sour Lake Road and Major Drive prior to the creation of Phelan Boulevard. Extending the line from the southwest corner northward, and the northeast corner westward, the resulting corner places the northwest corner on Major Drive at a ditch on the Boy's Haven property.



MARKER SPOTLIGHT: THE OPELOUSAS TRAIL

Named for one of several Atakapan-speaking Native American tribes originally connected by this trail, the Opelousas ran from La Bahia (later Goliad) to the Mississippi River in Louisiana. Evidence of cultural interchange between tribes indicates the presence of such a trail for hundreds of years. Spanish explorers, soldiers, and vaqueros employed this route. by the 1750s, French traders had been traveling the trail for about twenty years. After 1820 settlers began to arrive from Louisiana and other southern states. Don Martin de Leon and Anglo cattlemen such as James Taylor White and William B. Duncan herded large droves of cattle, mules, and horses to market in New Orleans. A post route was established along the Opelousas in early 1836. That spring, Texas pioneers fled along this path during the "Runaway Scrape." Later Santa Anna was led down the trail toward New Orleans and ultimately to Washington, D.C., as a prisoner of war. A stage and mail route followed the trail after 1850; the Confederate Army used the road to move troops during the Civil War. Use of the route continued throughout the 20th century. Many segments of the trail were incorporated into U. S. Highway 90 from Liberty to Orange. (1998)



Opelousas Trail marker dedication held on December 5, 1998. L to R: former THC Chairman John L. Nau III, former Jefferson County Commissioner Jimmie P. Cokinos, former Jefferson County Judge Carl R. Griffith, Jr., J.W. McManus, former JCHC Chairman H. Tracy Richardson, III.

UPCOMING EVENTS

•**September 21, 2023**– Heritage Happy Hour with the Beaumont Heritage Society. The featured location will be St. Anthony’s Cathedral Basilica at 700 Jefferson St. in downtown Beaumont. 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Visit beaumontheritage.org for more information

•**September 28, 2023**- Music at the McFaddins’ featuring Jimmy Simmons and Friends. To be held on the McFaddin Ward House Lawn at 1906 McFaddin, Beaumont. 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

•**October 5, 2023**– McFaddin Ward House Lecture Series *Texas Fossil Finds: Following the Journey from Dig to the Museum*. To be held in the McFaddin Ward House Lecture Hall. 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Visit McFaddin-Ward.org

•**October 19, 2023**– Historic Magnolia Cemetery Tour. Visit the historic Magnolia Cemetery and hear stories of some of the early resident of Beaumont. To be held at the Magnolia Cemetery, located at 2291 Pine Street, Beaumont. 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

•**October 20, 2023**– Spookfest and Movie Night at the Spindletop-Gladys City Boomtown Museum, located at 5550 Jimmy Simmons Blvd., Beaumont. 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

•**October 20, 2023**– McFaddin Ward House Lecture Series in partnership with the LU Center for History and Culture present: *Swamp Pop: History and Sounds of a Gumbo-Combo of Rock ‘N’ Roll, Country, and Cajun Music*. To be held on the McFaddin Ward House Lawn. 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Visit McFaddin-Ward.org for more information

•**October 21, 2023**- Historic Magnolia Cemetery Tour. Visit the historic Magnolia Cemetery and hear stories of some of the early resident of Beaumont. To be held at the Magnolia Cemetery, located at 2291 Pine Street, Beaumont. 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

•**October 21, 2023**– Pumpkin Walk and Fall Festival hosted by the Beaumont Heritage Society. John Jay French House, 3025 French Road, Beaumont. 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Visit beaumontheritage.org for more information

•**October 28, 2023**– “Spooktacular” Family Fun Day at the Museum of the Gulf Coast. 700 Proctor Street, Port Arthur. 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

•**October 28, 2023**– Lamar University Athletics Nonprofit Spotlight. Support the Lamar Cardinals and the Beaumont Heritage Society by purchasing tickets to the October 28th home game through the BHS’ unique link.

Visit beaumontheritage.org for more information

GET IN TOUCH

JCHC Offices: 1149 Pearl Street—3rd floor Beaumont, TX 77701
409-835-8701 • www.facebook.com/FRIENDSofJCHC