



## #16: The Old Humble Cemetery

The old Humble Cemetery. I'm sure you've seen it. It's the old country cemetery at the corner of Old Humble Road and Isaacks Road, just across the street from St. Mary Magdalene Catholic Church. It has a gate with a narrow dirt road going down the middle of the cemetery. If you haven't seen it, then get over there and have a look. There is a lot of history in that cemetery!

The cemetery originally started out as the Dunman Family Cemetery. Humble's original settler, Alamo Rider Joseph Dunman, was buried there back in 1859. There are several Dunmans buried in the back, northwest corner of the cemetery, although we don't know where Joseph Dunman's 1859 grave is because it is not marked. After 1860, the Dunman family allowed other people to bury their departed family members on this land, and it slowly became the community cemetery.

The cemetery was smaller back then. The cemetery was only the land north of that little dirt road, although it had quite a lot of graves. In 1914, then owner Jonas Altamont sold the cemetery to the trustees of the Humble Cemetery Association. The land on the southern side of the little dirt road? Well, that part wasn't a cemetery back then. That land was donated by William Humble (son of town founder Pleasant Humble) to the local school district. It was used as the location of the West River School, which opened in 1888. Some family history stories mention that, on occasion, students at the school had to attend funerals that were held during the day.

The West River School closed in 1909 when a new brick schoolhouse was built over on Higgins Street. The three schoolhouse buildings were sold, but the land just sat there unused for a few years. In 1917, the one acre of land (remember, this is the land on the south side of the little dirt road) was sold to W. E. DeFee. In 1920, Mr. DeFee sold the land to the Humble Cemetery Association, who used it to expand the cemetery.

Burials in the cemetery continued from the 1920s into the 1970s. The cemetery would get overgrown with weeds from time to time, but the City of Humble took over basic maintenance of the cemetery years ago. If you walk through the cemetery, it looks like there is plenty room for more burials. However, this is deceiving. Most of those "empty spots" actually have people buried in them. Unfortunately, we don't know exactly how many people are buried in the cemetery because several people have been buried in the cemetery without tombstones. Plus, many tombstones have come up missing over the years. One of those graves missing a tombstone? The grave of Jane Elizabeth Humble, wife of town founder Pleasant Humble.

The Humble Cemetery does have a Texas Historical Marker on the entrance gate, placed there in 1992. Last year, the local chapter of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, the Seth Hurin Bates chapter, installed another historical marker at the cemetery. This marker honored the original owner of the cemetery, Joseph Dunman. Their ceremony honoring Joseph Dunman, held back in April 2018, was a grand event with several guest speakers, a proclamation read by Humble Mayor Merle Aaron, and shots from a huge cannon brought in for the occasion. It was memorable, and brought people back into the cemetery to celebrate its history.

Got nothing to do this weekend? Stroll through the cemetery and read the tombstones. Take time to reflect on the names you see, along with the birth and death dates, and any messages written on their marker. Think of their

lives during those years...their hardships, their accomplishments, and their town. It's a great way to immerse yourself in the past. But, take nothing but pictures, and leave nothing but footprints.

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