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Holt Cemetery [2005]

Latitude 30° 08' 43" - Longitude 96° 33' 56"

Located on private property - about 2 ½ miles SE of Burton at Vine Grove Vista on Willow Springs Road

A private family plot containing five well-marked graves; only chipped and broken bases remain at other grave sites. The graves are surrounded by a wrought iron fence and are in a grove of trees on a hill overlooking Willow Springs Road.

James Hines Holt, the son of Samuel Simon & Mary (Moore) Holt, was born on June 1, 1808, in Georgia. On October 4, 1838, he signed a document at Washington, Texas, certifying that he “arrived in this Republic subsequent to the declaration of Independence and previous to the first of October 1837—that he is a married man, family here in time, and entitled to twelve hundred and eighty acres of land to be surveyed after the first day of August 1838.” No marriage record has been found here, so it is assumed that he married Mary Watson before he arrived in Washington County. The property, located on the headwaters of Mill Creek, was surveyed on May 20, 1842, and signed at Mount Vernon on May 27, 1842. James also bought 2 labors of land to the southeast of his 1280 acres in 1847; one of these labors had been granted to Stephen Jones and the other to McHenry Winburn. Probate records also show he owned a mill and a gin. James & Mary had at least 6 children:

(1) Marcus, born about 1839. Marcus died between about 1855 and 1860.

(2) Mary Ann, born July 12, 1842. She married Nathan Busby in February 1859, and by July 12, they were living in Guadalupe County. They were in Gonzales County in 1870 and in Milam County in 1880. Nathan and Mary Ann had 9 children: (1) Nathan C., born about 1860, (2) James F., born about 1862, (3) Antoinette, born about 1867, (4) Myrtle, born about 1869, (5) Mary E., born about 1871, (6) Walter, born about 1873, (7) Thula, born about 1875, (8) Tiney, born about 1878, and (9) another child, name unknown. Nathan Busby was a constable in Milam County in 1894. While attempting to bring a suspect to jail, he was stabbed and died on April 26, 1894. The article reporting Nathan’s death indicated that his wife, Mary Ann, had preceded him in death during childbirth. It is assumed that Mary Ann died soon after mid-1880 and that she and the unnamed child are buried in Milam County. It is recorded that Nathan is buried in the Old City Cemetery in Rockdale, Milam County.

(3) Henrietta E., born about 1844. She married Benjamin W. Mock in April 1862; she married William G. Blanchard in March 1867. Henriette E. Blanchard was living in Huntsville in 1913.

(4) James H., born July 23, 1847, married Mallie Stamps, daughter of John & Henrietta Stamps, on December 6, 1866. James & Mallie had at least one child, Stella, born August 6, 1868, died December 5, 1868. Mallie died on Oct 11, 1872. In October 1877, James’ plantation home near Long Point caught on fire and burned to the ground. James married Mollie Hons in May 1880.

His occupation was listed as farmer; he also bought 700 steers on contract to be delivered to DeWitt County and he and several area men drove them to their destination. On September 11, 1888, James died from gunshot wounds at the hands of an unknown assassin. The New York Herald reported on September 9: "Between ten and eleven o'clock last night Messrs. Joseph Hoffman, Tax Assessor of Washington County, and James Holt, a prominent planter, were sitting at the corner of Murphy's saloon on the public square, engaged in conversation, when shot from a shotgun heavily loaded with buckshot entered the bodies of the two gentlemen, instantly killing Mr. Hoffman and fatally wounding Mr. Holt. The shot came out of the darkness and nothing can be learned as to the identity of the assassin. Mr. Hoffman was terribly wounded in a number of places. A buckshot entered Mr. Holt's throat just beneath the chin and passed entirely through the neck. As soon as the shot was heard a number of persons gathered on the spot and their number was soon largely increased. Dr. Lockett was called and did what he could for Mr. Holt, but it is said he cannot recover. The cause of the shooting is a mystery. Hoffman was a republican and a candidate for re-election. He was one of the number prescribed during the political troubles in Brenham some time ago, which was made the subject of Congressional investigation. The republicans here claim that Hoffman was the man shot at and that the shooting of Holt was purely accidental." James H. Holt, his first wife, Mallie (Stamps), their daughter, Stella, and James' second wife, Mollie (Hons), are all buried in Prairie Lea Cemetery, Brenham.

(5) Orren Thaddeus, b. Jan 13, 1849, married Marian Seward on September 1, 1887. He graduated from the University of Michigan Law Department in 1870 and was admitted to the bar that same year. He was elected Mayor of Houston on April 14, 1902, and served for one two-year term. He died Feb 7, 1913, and is buried in Glenwood Cemetery, Houston.

(6) Walter, born December 8, 1850. In September 1869 during an altercation in Round Top, Walter killed Patton Rankin. On January 12, 1870, Flake's Bulletin had a news report from the LaGrange New Era of January 7, stating "Last Friday at Wilson's Store in Washington County, a difficulty occurred between Walter Holt and Mac Zapp. The reports that we hear are that Holt made the attack with a pistol and in the struggle he was killed by Mr. Zapp. So far as we are informed, Zapp acted only on the defensive. Zapp gave himself up and is now in the hands of the proper authorities." Walter died December 30, 1869, and is buried in this cemetery.

James Hines Holt died May 15, 1854, and, by 1855, Mary (Watson) Holt married J. G. Berlin. In 1860, J. G. Berlin had 7 slaves and 1 slave house. J. G. & Mary had at least three children:

(1) Frances, born July 24, 1855, married Richard Inge Whitener in November 1873. Richard was born September 29, 1852, the son of Aaron Sherrell & Martha Jane (Quinn) Whitener. Richard & Frances possibly had 8 children: (1) Fannie Bell, born August 29, 1874, died October 16, 1878, and buried in this cemetery; (2) John A., born November 1875, married Fannie Lackey in about 1927. Fannie died February 27, 1944, and is buried in Bell Springs Cemetery in Hill County. No death date was found for John. (3) Estella A., born February 1879; (4) Mable Louise, born April 5, 1881, married George Rush Sevier in 1905. George died October 31, 1976, and Mable died December 7, 1976. They are buried in Milford Cemetery, Ellis County. (5) Richard Walter Whitener, born October 22, 1882, in Burnet County, never married, died March 10, 1946, buried in Milford Cemetery, Ellis County. (6) Inez, born November 28, 1887/1885, in

Lampasas County, married Mr. Smith, died August 5, 1972, buried Rose Hill Memorial Park, Corpus Christi. (7) Lorine, born May 1887; and (8) Emma F., born circa 1891. Richard Whitener died March 11, 1917, and Frances Berlin Whitener died October 5, 1922; they are buried in Milford Cemetery, Ellis County.

(2) Florence, born December 8, 1856, married James T. Simms in July 1873. James & Florence had at least 4 children: (1) Mary E., born circa 1875; (2) Florence born circa 1876; (3) Lucy, born circa 1878, and (4) James T., born circa 1879. Florence died September 20, 1884, and is buried in this cemetery.

(3) Virginia, born circa 1859. Jenny married Wayne. B. Estes in November 1876. They had 8 or 9 children: (1) Phillip B., born 1878, (2) John O., born 1879, (3) John, born July 1881. [John may actually be the same child as the John born in 1879, but simply with the wrong birth date.] (4) Wayne, born February 1883, (5) Mary, born January 1885, (6) Henrietta, born April 1887, (7) Thadeus, born August 1891, (8) Ada, born December 1893, (9) Herbert, born September 1895.

Mary (Watson) Holt Berlin died August 26, 1886, and is buried in this cemetery. J. G. Berlin was living with son-in-law and daughter, Wayne B. & Virginia "Jenny" Estes, in 1900. It is unknown when J. G. died or where he is buried.

Sources: Deed Records, Washington County, Texas; Genealogybank.com, Dallas Morning News, February 8, 1913, Flakes Bulletin, January 12, 1870, Galveston News, October 15, 1877, New York Herald, September 8, 1888; "Constable Nathan Busby", The Officer Down Memorial Page, Inc., <http://www.odmp.org/officer/17148-constable-nathan-busby?printview=1>; Land Grants, Texas General Land Office; Probate Records, Washington County, Texas; Various Census Records, ancestry.com; Who's Who in America 1906-1907 v. 4, edited by John William Leonard and Albert Nelson Marquis, Chicago. A. N. Marquis & Company

Burials:

Berlin, Mary (Watson) [Holt], b. Jun 13, 1821 in South Carolina, d. Aug 26, 1886, wife of: 1st James Hines Holt, 2nd John G. Berlin. Find A Grave Memorial# 48289774, photo.

Holt, James Hines, b. Jun 1, 1808, in Georgia, d. May 15, 1854, 1st husband of Mary (Watson) Holt [Berlin], son of Samuel Simon & Mary (Moore) Holt. Find A Grave Memorial# 48289780, photo.

Holt, Walter T., b. Dec 8, 1850, d. Dec 30, 1869, youngest son of James Hines & Mary (Watson) Holt. Find A Grave Memorial# 48289786, photo.

Sims, Florence C. (Berlin), b. Dec 8, 1856, d. Sep 20, 1884, wife of J. T. Sims, daughter of John G. & Mary (Watson) [Holt] Berlin. Find A Grave Memorial# 48289809, photo.

Whitener, Fannie Bell, b. Aug 29, 1874, d. Oct 16, 1878, daughter of Richard J. & Francis C. Whitener. Find A Grave Memorial# 48289813, photo.