

## HISTORICAL MARKERS

- Benjamin Burke

Marker Location:

At the Burke Cemetery, Fm 2501, 4 miles north of Apple Springs

Marker Text:

Benjamin Burke  
(1793-1863)

Pioneer farmer Benjamin Burke migrated to Texas in 1829 and received an 1834 land grant from the Mexican Government in what is now Tyler County. He served in the Texas Arm in 1836 during the war for independence. About 1859 he moved to the Centralia Community in Trinity County. He married Susan (Ogden) Burke (1808-1890) and had nine children. Two of his sons fought in the confederate army during the Civil War (1862-1865).

Recorded in 1977.

- Calvary Cemetery

Marker Location:

Form Apple Springs on hwy 94 west take Fm 357 4.8 miles to Fm 233

Maker Text:

Sometime between 1865 and 1874 Alexander and Jane (Tucker) Smith moved from Alabama and settled here in the community of Nogalus Prairie with their daughter Ann, and sons Thomas, Redick, Kirby, and Nathan Marion.

The cemetery site was originally part of 156 acres acquired by Nathan M Smith on June 2, 1874. According to Smith Family set aside a one-acre section here out of his son's 156 acres to bury Nathan, who had been murdered. However, the 1875 dates on the grave sites of James McClain and the unidentified child of J.W. and T.E. Bowman indicated earlier burials. The cemetery later was deeded to the local Calvary Baptist Church by descendants of Alexander Smith.

In 1908 Mrs. Z.A. Lovelady donated 2.5 acres and J.W. and Millie Kee donated 0.4 acres to enlarge the cemetery. In 1965 another 1-6 acres were donated to the cemetery by the Davis Family Members. The Calvary Cemetery Association, formed in 1962, purchased two acres from the Champion International Corporation in 1988. Among the more than 380 grave sites recorded here in 1992 were those of veterans of the Civil War, World Wars I and II, and the Korean Conflict.

- Chita Cemetery

Location:

11 miles west of Groveton on FM 355, then 0.25 miles south of Chita Cemetery Road

Marker Text:

The earliest known burial in this cemetery is that of Virgil Foster, who died in 1861. According to local tradition, Peter Parker, who died the same year and is interred here, chose the site for the burial ground. Used primarily by residents of Chita, Sebastapol and other communities, the cemetery is a reflection of the area's pioneer heritage and burial customs. Tombstones bear inscriptions disclosing the military service of Civil War, World War I and World War II veterans, and mark the graves of many who died of typhoid fever, an indication of the harshness of pioneer life in the area. (2001)

- Dorcas Wills Memorial Baptist Church

Location: Corner of Hwy 94 Hwy 19

Marker Text:

Originally known as the Trinity Baptist Church, this congregation was formally organized on January 23, 1876, by the Rev. D.S. Snodgrass. Charter members included J.R. and Rachel Shaw, Mrs. S.J. Knox, O.G. Shaw, Dr. and Mrs. J.M. Arnold, and Catherine Turner. During Snodgrass pastorate, which lasted until December 1877, a Union Sunday school was organized and a sanctuary was built on land donated by the International & Great Northern Railroad. Despite early setbacks, such as a 1909 fire that destroyed the church building, the congregation grew in numbers and provided significant service and leadership to the community. The current name was adopted in 1934 upon the completion of a new sanctuary in memory of Dorcas Sheffield Wills. Over the years, several members of the congregation have been licensed to important part of the the religious heritage of Trinity, Dorcas Wills Memorial Baptist Church continues to uphold the ideals and traditions of its nineteenth-century founders. (1985)

- First United Methodist Church of Trinity

Location: Northwest corner Elm and Caroline Streets, Trinity

Marker Text:

This congregation was organized in 1872, the same year the city of Trinity was founded. The rev. John Woolam is credited with the establishment of the church and also served as its first itinerate minister. Woolam held services in Trinity one Sunday each month. His preaching circuit at that time consisted on 12 to 15 stations, including Trinity, Nevilles Prairie, Blackland, and Lovelady. Early worship services were held in the Barnes-Lister store in Trinity. In 1873 a one-room log schoolhouse was constructed, and it served for a time as a community church building as well. The Methodist congregation built the first sanctuary during the early 1880s at the corner of what is now Robb and Madison. The one-room building soon became too small for the growing fellowship, and additions were made in 1902 and in 1913. The current sanctuary was completed in 1928. Throughout its history, Trinity United Methodist Church has provided significant service and leadership to the community. With its emphasis on Christian education and missionary programs, the congregation continues to uphold the ideals and tradition of its founders.

- Glendale Cemetery

Marker Text:

Trinity County was created in 1850. Settlers came to this area by 1854. By 1886, a town of about 100 had grown up near the large antebellum Tullos Plantation. In 1887 the Glendale post Office was established. The earliest known graves in the cemetery are those of four-year-old Ida J. Arnold, who died in 1884, and infant Albert Munson, who was born and died that same year. The earliest adult grave on this site is that of H.W. Threadgill. By 1899, the year of Threadgill's death, Glendale was a boomtown of 1,200 residents due to the success of the J.I. Cameron Lumber Company and the Glendale Orchard Company. Local industry declined after 1900, and by 1914 the population had dwindled to 75. Area residents continued to care for the cemetery, which remains a chronicle of Trinity County history. (2000).

- Groveton

Marker Location:

South side of the Courthouse Lawn in Groveton.

Marker Text:

Named for a grove of Black Jack Oak trees, Groveton resulted from the establishment of the Trinity County Lumber Company Sawmill in 1882. After the Trinity and Sabine Railroad Company built a sixty-five mile branch line through area forests, the Trinity County Lumber Company bought about 20,000 acres of land from the Trinity and Sabine Timber Company, leaving acreage on either side of the railroad tracks for a town.

The county seat was moved from Pennington to Groveton in 1882, by 1884 the first permanent courthouse was completed and the town included a barber shop, grocery store, drug store, hotel, boarding house, several saloons, homes, and a school. The city was incorporated on September 29, 1919, and officials were elected.

By 1930 all of the timber for miles around had been cut; consequently, the sawmill closed December 31, 1930. The once prosperous town of Groveton went into decline. The civilian conservation corps was responsible for road construction and a reforestation program in the 1930s. Through the years Groveton has seen economic booms and hard times, but as the county seat, it has served to leave a rich heritage.

- Hedrick House

Marker Location:

Camp Olympia; from Trinity SH 94 northeast to FM 3188, then east on FM 3188 to Camp Olympia

Marker Text:

Originally located on tenth street in Huntsville (30 miles SW), this house was built for J.E. Coldwell in 1900 by Elias Jones. Walter Gibson Hedrick (D. 1944), the owner of a grocery store and meat market, bought the home in 1919 and members of his family owned the structure until 1978, when it was moved to this site. The Victorian residence features a second floor turret with fish scale shingling and a large porch with gingerbread ornamentation.

Recorded Texas Historic Landmark- 1981.

- Jacob Pope and Elizabeth Ann Barnes

Marker Location:

FM 230, Cedar Grove Cemetery

Marker Text:

Mississippi natives Jacob Pope Barnes (1832-1877) and Elizabeth Ann Rankin (1834-1912) were wed on June 12, 1860. They moved to Texas in 1866 and came to Trinity in 1872. Jacob opened a mercantile store in partnership with Frank Lister and was serving as county treasurer at the time of his death. Widowed at age 43, Elizabeth reared nine children and operated the mercantile store with the help of her eldest son, Samuel Edward (1861-1914).

- McDonald, Ranald, House

Marker Location:

Corner of Maple and San Jacinto

Period: 1875-1899

Marker Text:

Married after 1876 to Mollie Turner (1857-1919), daughter of an early Trinity Pioneer, Ranald McDonald (1846-1931) settled on his land along the Trinity River. He bought this lot in 1890 and hired John Denton Gibbs to erect this Victorian structure, which stands on stone piers; McDonald kept bees, honey, buggies, and wagons. His son Alexander (d.1944), the second owner of the house, built a power plant on this property to provide Trinity's first electrical system.

Recorded Texas Historic Landmark-1976.

Acreage: 17

- Old Red

Trinity's Old Red is a schoolhouse built in 1911-1913. During its life, the red-brick building served thousands of Trinity County children. The building had been abandoned as a school and was becoming a community eyesore until its former students stepped in and raised \$100,000.00 to restore it with new exterior, new woodwork, and other improvements.

With the exterior completed, the Save Old Red Committee will turn the building back to its owner, the Trinity Independent School District, for interior remodeling. Old Red's rescue might not have happened if Raymond Smith, who attended school inside Old Red in the 1940s. He got involved in 1993 with other ex-students when they learned of the building's possible demise.

Old Red served as Trinity's only school building until 1928 when a second two-story structure was built next door to house the town's junior high and high school. Although Old Red's bricks were later painted yellow, their original red color gave the school its nickname. The building was built in the shape of a T to capture wind from any direction it could blow in Trinity.

The building had 91 wooden windows, which were copied by the remodeling crews, many of which were made up of Old Red's former students. "When I found out Old Red had been condemned and was going to be torn down, it really tugged at my heart, said Smith.



- Pennington Baptist Church

Marker Location:

Located at the Reese Farm in the community of Friendship, Trinity County, Texas.

Marker Text:

George Washington Reese (d.1863), his wife Celia (d. 1879), and seven children came to Texas from Alabama in 1857. They settled at Sumpter, then the Trinity County Seat. Sumpter declined after the Civil War, and in 1870 Celia and her twin sons, Robert (d. 1881) and William (d.1925) bought land at this site in the Friendship Community. William built a sawmill, grist mill, and cotton gin. He also deeded land in 1906 for Friendship School, which operated until 1939. The community eventually disappeared, but William Rees's family has operated this ranch for over a century. (1985)

- Scrub Creek School

Marker Location:

From Groveton, about 11 miles east on Hwy. 94 to FM 358, west to sign for Scrub Creek Baptist Church go for .3 miles to church. Marker is across the road from the church.

Marker Text:

Settlement of this area of Trinity County began after the Civil War. The farming communities of Scrub Creek and Crecy grew gradually as people moved into the area they established homes and community gathering places. The Scrub Creek Baptist Church was followed by the Scrub Creek School and Crecy Post office, located in Chapman's general Store.

The earliest documented record of the Scrub Creek School dates to 1877. It began as a one-room structure with one teacher to instruct students in all grades. As the local population increased, the school grew and eventually was housed in a three-room facility with several teachers.

The school became an integral part of community life in Scrub Creek and Crecy. Numerous events and activities occurred at the schoolhouse, which served as the center of social activity as well as education. The school was closed in 1935 when it was consolidated with other rural schools in the county to form the Centerville School District. The schoolhouse burned and the property reverted to the descendants of J.L. Mangum, who had sold the land for school purposes in 1907.

- Sebastopol

Marker Location:

An intersection of FM 356 and FM 355; 8.2 miles southeast of Trinity on FM 356

Marker Text:

An important shipping point established in the late fifties. Named in commemoration of a naval station of Russia. Declined in importance after railroads reached this region.

Erected by the State of Texas 1937.

- Steele's Academy

Marker Location:

Just off Hwy. 287 west on the road leading into the town of Pennington, Texas.

Marker Text:

Named in honor of its founder and principal D.W. Steel of New Hampshire Academy. Attended by students from many countries.

Erected by the State of Texas 1936.

- Sumpter

Marker Location:

In the pasture of Thunderbird Ranch, 4.6 miles from Groveton, Texas on hwy. 287 south and the marker is about ¼ mile north of the highway.

Marker Text:

Site of the town of Sumpter, first county seat, Trinity County. Land granted in 1850. County seat located here in 1854. Town was laid out November 20, 1854, incorporated in 1862. Courthouse and records were destroyed by fire in 1872. In 1873 the county seat was removed to Trinity. The legislature of the State of Texas created Trinity County out of Houston County in 1850. A group of seven commissioners was appointed to locate and survey a site for the seat of government. The town of Sumpter thus was founded in this area, near the geographic center of the county. Trinity County's first seat of justice grew slowly. Early settler Solomon Adams operated a small general store, and his log home also served as a hotel. The courthouse was a small frame building located on the plaza, near which a small schoolhouse was erected. When Goodwin Woodson and R.O. Crow opened a saw and grist mill four miles south of Sumpter in 1857, the town began to develop rapidly and was incorporated five years later. As the population increased, a larger courthouse was built. An influx of businesses, such as drugstores and saloons, appeared around the courthouse square. A number of plantations flourished in the area until the coming of the civil war. In 1872, the courthouse at Sumpter burned, and a rail line was built through the town of Trinity. Sumpter was gradually abandoned, and nearby cemetery is all that is left of the once-thriving community.

Marker placed in 1936.

- Taylor Cemetery

Marker Text:

Georgia natives James T. Durbin (b.1819) and his wife Sarah Washington Ricks (b.1819) and their five children settled here on a land grant they purchased from Joel Clapp in 1851. Two of their three sons, Washington Bruce and James Francis, died in 1852 and were buried on their property at this site. In their sale of this property to James E. and Mary E. Taylor in 1857, the Durbin's set aside this site which they called the Durbin's graveyard. James Durbin died in 1859 and was buried here beside his two sons. The first recorded burial of a Taylor family member was James and Mary's granddaughter, Ida Arrenia Merrill, in 1873. James (d.1874) and Mary Taylor (d.1912) are buried here. The Taylors continued to bury members of their family here and about 1890 opened the graveyard to community burials. The first person outside of the Durbin and Taylor families buried here was Mrs. Joe Barnett, a resident of nearby Pegoda, in the 1890s. Citizens of Pegoda and the surrounding area used the graveyard and by the 1920s were maintaining its grounds. The Taylor Cemetery Association was formed in the 1950s. The property remained in the Taylor family until 1946.

- The Parker House

Marker Location:  
304 North Maple

Marker Text:

Built about 1888, this was the home of the local merchant Isaac Newton Parker (1841-1918) and his family. Parker, a Confederate Civil War veteran, and his first wife, Mary C. Ashley (d. 1905) reared eight children here. After Mary's death Parker married Lou Palmer, who lived in the house until her death in 1955. According to family history, Parker changed the original Victorian appearance of the house to a simpler classical style about 1911.

Recorded Texas Historic Landmark- 1996.

- Thornton Church Community

Marker Location:  
Thornton Road, north off Hwy. 94 east of Glendale.

Marker Text:

James Thornton (1807-1870) came to this area with his family in 1858. Traveling in a wagon train with other families from their Mississippi home, the Thorntons joined friends and relatives who had preceded them to Trinity County. A farming community was established, and much of life centered around the Thornton Church and school, built on land donated by James D. Thornton. Farming continued to be the principal economic base until population began to decline after World War II. Many area pioneers are interred in the Thornton Church Cemetery.

- Trinity Cedar Grove Cemetery

Marker Text:

The first documented burial in this cemetery that of Phebe A. Martin, took place in 1875. Three years later, the town of Trinity was laid out on the George W. Wilson survey. Nearly 100 graves, many of them from the 1897-98 diphtheria epidemic, date to the 19th century. In 1914, a cemetery association was chartered to manage and maintain the public burial ground. Among those buried here are the founders of Trinity, professional and business leaders, and local citizens who served in the United States Armed Forces.

- Trinity Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church

Marker Location:  
980 South Robb, Trinity

Marker Text:

The Trinity Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church traces its beginnings to 1882 when it was established as a mission church. The Reverend W.M. Apling was appointed as the first pastor. Land for a church was donated in 1887 by the New York and Texas Land Company, Ltd. A small one-room building was erected by 1890. To house its growing numbers, the members redesigned the sanctuary. Changes included relocating the entrance, adding a bell tower, and attaching a wing to the north and south sides. The pews were hand-hewn wooden benches, supported by backs decorated with nine-inch spindles. Several prominent area citizens have been members of this church. The congregation promotes programs such as Sunday school and vacation Bible School, and supports civic responsibility through local scholarships and financial patronage of Paul Quinn College in Dallas, and the Trinity Community Cemetery. The church also sponsors a clothing bank, promotes an African American parade and contributes to other social outreach programs. The Trinity Chapel A.M.E. Church continues to serve the Trinity area as it has for more than a century.

- Trinity County Seats

Marker Location:

On the south side of the courthouse lawn, Groveton, Trinity County, Texas.

Marker Text:

Trinity County was formally organized by an act of the Texas Legislature on February 11, 1850. Soon after, county residents chose between two sites for the establishment of a county seat, which was named Sumpter (5 miles East). Government offices were located in the residence of Solomon Adams until a courthouse was built. Now a ghost town, Sumpter served as the Trinity County Seat until 1872, when the courthouse was destroyed by fire. The town of Trinity (20 miles SW) was named the new county seat by a legislative act. In 1874, however, local voters chose to relocate the seat of the government at Pennington (12 miles NW). A courthouse fire there in 1876, coupled with the theft of district court records in 1880, led county residents to consider a new site for the government offices. As the result of an election on October 7, 1882, the sawmill and railroad town of Groveton became the fourth seat of Trinity County. Official records were moved here 13 days later. The courthouse square was donated by the Trinity & Sabine Timber Company. The history of the Trinity County seats reflects a proud heritage based on the early struggles and hopes of the area's pioneer settlers. (1982)