

MAGNOLIA CEMETERY TOUR 10-19-15

Enter the south gate, drive to Stratton plot.

1. Stratton plot (on right at corner)—Florence Stratton was a Beaumont newspaper reporter and author. In 1929, she built a home at 1929 McFaddin, using plans from a New England cottage and brick from the 1892 Jefferson County courthouse. Eunice Stevens, Florence's niece, lived in the house after Florence's death.

2. Coe plot (walk left on crossroad, plot is on right)—Sculptor Herring Coe carved tombstones for himself, his parents and siblings and their spouses. Carving on the blocks represents each person's interests or talents.

3. Thomas Langham (return to crossroad, go north, plot is on left)—An early sheriff of Jefferson County, descendant of Biddle Langham, who came to Texas from Tennessee in 1836.

Return to crossroad. Turn right at Stratton plot corner, stop just before you get to the wooded boundary. The next two graves are on the left side of the road.

4. Grave near woods with Asian "roof" design—Chinese characters indicate that Lisheng Wen is buried here; his "family" name roughly translates as "three months village hall."

5. Grave in edge of woods—Burial site of Albert D. Howard in 1882, one of the graves in the cemetery that preceded Magnolia Cemetery (b. May 10, 1823, d. July 16, 1882).

From this point, you can see the original McFaddin plots directly to the north, on top of the hill, and the IOOF cemetery to the northwest that formed the original Magnolia Cemetery.

Loop back around to the road that goes by the Stratton plot-, head north. Turn left (west) on next road.

6. Chambers plot (to right of road)—Charles Homer and Edith Fuller Chambers and their daughters Ruth and Florence. They lived at 2240 Calder Avenue, and Homer Chambers owned Chambers Hardware. Ruth and Florence never married and left their home as a museum.

Drive to main entrance, turn right (east), go all the way to the end, turn right (south), pass McFaddin plot, turn right onto next road.

South of road:

7. Confederate soldiers (on south edge of hill, 2 upright stones, 1 flat)—James A. Tiner d. 1869, Lewis Andrew Smith d. 1917, George P. Abney d. 1918

8. Van Wormer plot—At least 2 separate Van Wormer plots in cemetery marked by large monuments—S.H. Van Wormer owned a large tract south of the William McFaddin homestead, known as “Van Wormer’s Pasture.” Downhill (to the east) from the Van Wormer monument, note the stone embedded in a tree, indicating the age of the tree. What is probably the replacement marker reads Annie Lee Fitzenreiter, d. 1892.

9. William E. Patterson—Deputy City Marshal who tried to apprehend Pattillo Higgins (later of Spindletop fame) in the act of vandalism in 1881. In the ensuing gun battle, Higgins was hit in the arm and later lost it, Patterson died. Higgins was tried and acquitted. Patterson's stone reads that he died of "a gunshot wound received...while in discharge of his duty."

10. Andrew F. Smyth—from Bevilport, near Jasper, he served in the Texas Revolution. His riverboat, the Laura, navigated the Angelina and Neches rivers in the 1870s. He died while in Beaumont on a routine trip.

North of road:

11. McFaddin-Kent-Ward plots—Burial site of William and Rachel McFaddin and descendants, including family of Drusilla McFaddin Kent. In 1876 William McFaddin donated 2-1/2 acres of land for a public burial site; in 1887 a group of Beaumont businessmen bought 13 more acres and formed a corporation. The Ward plot holds John C. Ward family members; Ward's son, Carroll Ward, married Mamie McFaddin in 1919.

12. Caswell plot—Robert Kidd, who lived to be 116 years old, is buried here. Family tradition says that he farmed his land himself until he was nearly 100. Nearby is the grave of his daughter Martha, who died at 14.

13. Wiess plot—Descendants of Polish immigrant Simon Wiess and his wife Margaret Sturrock, a Scots immigrant. Simon began business in Beaumont but later opened a store at Wiess Bluff on the Neches River above Beaumont. Two of Simon's sons, William and Valentine and their families, are buried here.

14. Chaison plot—Brandon Chaison was thrown from his horse and killed at 21. His grieving family honored his memory with a large obelisque. Family tradition holds that he and Skipwith McFaddin, W.P.H. McFaddin's daughter by his first marriage, were in love.

15. Carroll plot—George W. and Underhill Mixson Carroll graves. George was a pillar of the Baptist community and a generous philanthropist, as well as a stockholder in the Gladys City Oil and Gas Company.

16. Gilbert and Fuller plots—Both Nathan Gilbert and Zachary Taylor Fuller were ancestors of Florence and Ruth Chambers. Gilbert came to Sabine Pass as a cotton agent for the Confederacy. Fuller was a respected Beaumont doctor who died suddenly after being bitten by a spider.

17. Ogden plot, huge tree trunk monument surrounded by “log” sections—Lem and Ed Ogden and their families are buried here. Their father was Frederick W. Ogden, the first lawyer in Beaumont.

North of second road:

18. A.N. Vaughan—Confederate veteran and editor of the Beaumont Banner, Beaumont’s first newspaper.

19. Fletcher plot (one of two plots)—W.A. Fletcher, Confederate veteran and later a prosperous lumberman. He wrote Rebel Private, Front and Rear, a memoir of his time in the Civil War.

20. Keith plot, Tom the Tramp stone—Tom, an epileptic, saved 2 of J. Frank and Alice Keith’s daughters, who were on Bolivar Peninsula during the 1900 Galveston storm. The Keith family later gave him a house at their Voth sawmill; he died in 1909 when the house burned after he kicked over a lantern during a seizure.

Drive west to main north-south connector, turn right, drive to flag.

21. Historical marker for Magnolia Cemetery—The Magnolia Cemetery Corporation was formed in 1887 by a group of Beaumont businessmen, who combined land from two private cemeteries—the McFaddin burial ground and the International Order of Oddfellows cemetery—with 13 acres of purchased land to create a public cemetery.

Southeast corner of intersection:

22. Firefighters' plot—Pie-shaped plot that provided burial sites for Beaumont's firemen when there was only a volunteer fire department. At the back of the plot is a monument to Miss Jesse McDonough, who drowned in the 1886 hurricane that destroyed Sabine Pass. The monument was erected by her brothers.

North side of main road near entrance:

23. David French plot—Graves of David, son of John Jay French (Sr.), and his descendants. David married Amelia Guedry when she was barely 15 and reputedly spoke no English, only French.

24. Jeanette Caterina Stengele grave—native of Germany who became a U.S. citizen in 1898 at Beaumont. The statue is of St. Catherine. Stengele, a milliner who never married, lived and worked in Beaumont, then moved to California. When she died in 1909, she left instructions to be buried in Beaumont with the most elegant memorial her money (\$38,000) could buy. The statue is of St. Catherine and the site takes up 12 grave plots. Near Stengele's grave is the gravestone of Ashley and Edith Eugenia Weaver, notable because it is in the shape of a boulder. Their son Ashley was a Beaumont banker.

Drive out main gate, turn left, make quick right into cemetery section on west side of Pine.

25. Yount plot—Burial site of Frank and Pansy Yount, their daughter Mildred and son-in-law E.D. Manion. Frank died in 1933; to house his remains, Pansy first built a huge granite-and-sandstone mausoleum costing \$100,000. When she found out it would only last about 600 years, she had it torn down and replaced with a flat bronze coffin-sized plaque.