

# WHERE THEY LIE

BY TRISHA FAYE



**OCTOBER IS THE MONTH** of spooky delights and pumpkins. Hanging ghosts decorate trees and mock headstones line planters. Movies feature people running through cemeteries in terror.

So, why do I spend so many lunch hours sitting in cemeteries – this source of fright? Cemeteries don't scare me. I don't see ghosts, demons, or zombies. I see the past. I see local history. The people that lie entombed are the ones responsible for taming the Texas land we reside in.

**MEDLIN CEMETERY, Trophy Club:** Now overlooking the greens of the golf course and country club, the area is vastly different than what the Medlin's saw when they surveyed their new Texas land. In 1847, the Medlin's arrived in covered wagons from Missouri. Mittie Ann, daughter of Charles and Matilda Medlin, admired the view from the hilltop and expressed her desire to be buried there. In April 1850, probably years before she thought it would happen, Mittie Ann died from complications in childbirth. She was the first person to be buried at Medlin Cemetery. Many family and friends soon joined her at the top of the hill.

The Medlin's land from the Peters Colonies land grants formed much of what is now Roanoke, Trophy Club, and portions of Westlake.

Another notable local person buried at Medlin Cemetery is Bob Jones. As a child, his white father and his slave mother moved here from Arkansas. When he was older, he purchased several acres of land from his father. He married John Chisum's daughter, Almeady and they had ten children. He raised cattle and farmed and eventually became one of the largest landowners in the area, owning over 1,000 acres. When he died in 1936, over 500 people attended his funeral. Much of his land now lies under Grapevine Lake. The remaining property is home to the Bob Jones Nature Center.

**IOOF CEMETERY, Westlake:** Stop by the IOOF Cemetery and you can pay your respects to Ida Lee Cowan, Roanoke's postmistress from 1910-1946. You can also see the graves of Fannings, Sams and other people significant to Roanoke's history. There used to be a headstone of a man accused of horse thievery who was hung in 1906, but on my last visit there it had disappeared.

**EASTER CEMETERY, Southlake:** If you've shopped in the TJ Maxx/Old Navy shopping center in Southlake, you've most likely passed right by this cemetery and didn't even know it. Thomas Easter patented 640 acres of land in 1855 and 1859. After his death in 1876, a 1.25-acre piece was deeded for a schoolhouse and graveyard. Only a few tombstones and several unmarked graves remain in this small piece of land that lies between Southlake Boulevard and the shopping center.

These are just a few of the local, historic cemeteries that tell their tales of the people we came before us. They loved their families, their churches, and their land. Now they lie buried, with only traces of their memories left. Time passes on. Roads, houses, and shopping centers grow and flourish. But these silent residents leave us a legacy that progress can't erase.

Trisha Faye is happiest when writing of people, places, and items of the past. You can find her at [www.trishafaye.com](http://www.trishafaye.com).

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