

# The History of the Bluffton Cemetery

## The "Old"

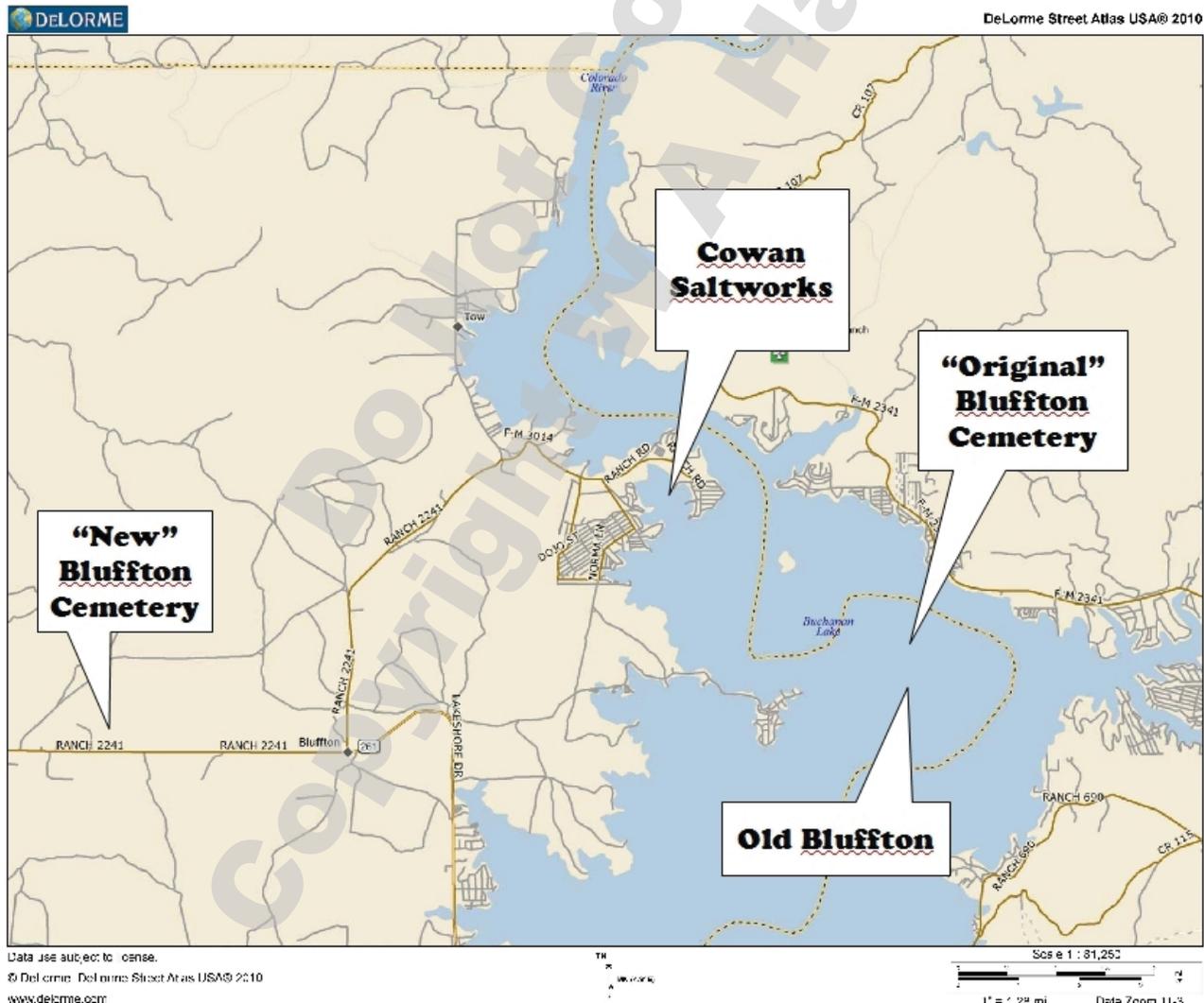
## Bluffton Cemetery

*"A New Community Emerges Along the Llano Basin of the Colorado River"*

With the development of any settlement, it is inevitable that a burial ground be established. Such would be the case for the community of Bluffton, in Llano County, Texas. This area which includes the Cowan Saltworks settlement to the north, and the Davis settlement to the east

and south, came to be known as Bluffton. This area of northeast Llano County was first settled in 1852-1854; even before Llano County was officially established in 1856.

David Cowan and family first settled on the west side of the Colorado River in 1852, and established a saltworks; based upon information gathered from friendly Indians. Shortly afterwards, the Billy Davis family settled about three miles south and east of the Cowan settlement; also on the west side of the Colorado River, on the east



*"Locations of Cowan Saltworks, Old Bluffton, 'Original' and 'New' Bluffton Cemeteries" taken from DeLorme Street Atlas 2011 Plus*

*"A Fitting Place of Rest"*



family. In 1861 or 1862, could they have lived with the Ike Maxwell family; he went off to war, and she had a baby, who was stillborn, as a result of a wagon accident? Could they have had a baby between 1868 and 1870, who died, and the date on the card is incorrect? Of course, but we will never know. So, was this truly the first burial in the Old Bluffton Cemetery?

It stands to reason that the true first burial in the Old Bluffton Cemetery was that of Charles L. Davis, an 8 year old boy, the son of Thomas Henry and Martha Davis. He was buried on Davis land after he died on September 26, 1866, and his 15 year old sister Elzira, was buried beside him in not quite 4 months. So, if



Jim Maxwell sitting on the steps that went over the fence and into the Old Bluffton Cemetery  
Taken from THE CATTLEMAN - a monthly magazine, "The Story of Old Bluffton", April 1943

State of Texas, }  
County of Llano. ) KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS: That I, T.H.Davis of the County of Llano and Town of Bluffton, in said County, It being a part of survey 191, Bighams Dist.No.10, Franz Gross, Original Grantee, and known as Lot No.17 of said Town of Bluffton, Beginning 37½ vs. South of the South East corner of 1 acre lot No.7. The ce East 20 vs to a Black Jack 7 in. dia for the South E corner of this survey. Thence South 107½ vs to a stake. Thence West 103½ vs to a stake for the south west corner of this survey. Thence East 103½ vs. to a stake set for the North East corner of this survey. Thence South 37½ vs to the place of beginning, containing 3 acres of land, more or less. The above donation is given and being made to the Trustees towit: M.H.Blevens, Jefferson Hammons, John Atchison and successors in office, In and for School District No.4 in said County of Llano, for the purpose and benefit of School House and Burial Ground and Church for said District.

To have and to hold the above described parcel of land to the only proper uses and benefit of the Citizens of said School District No.4. And I, the said T.H.Davis do hereby warrant and defend the title to the same against myself, my heirs, executors and assigns forever.

As witness my hand and using scroll for seal this the 26 day of July, 1875.  
T.H.Davis.

The State of Texas, }  
Llano County. ) This day personally appeared before me, the undersigned authority, T.H.Davis to me well known and acknowledged that he assigned the within and foregoing deed of Transfer for all theuses and benefits therein stated given under my hand with the notarial seal thereto attached this 26th day of July A.D.1875.

(Seal) D.C.Cowan J.P. Prec. No.2, & Exo. Notary Public.

Filed for record the 25th day of October, A.D.1935, at 11:30 o'clock A.M. and duly recorded this 25th day of October, A.D.1935, at 2 o'clock P.M.

*J.A. Mayer* Clerk  
County Court, Llano County, Texas.

*Donation of 3 acres by Thomas Henry Davis in 1875*

*"...for the purpose and benefit of School House and Burial Ground and Church..."*

the Nelson child was buried in 1869 or 1870, it would have been the 4th or 5th burial at least, and not the first to be buried at the Old Bluffton Cemetery, since Charles Chadwick and Ned Davis had also died and been buried by then.

At least nine other people were buried in this same area of the cemetery whose deaths preceded the cemetery's formal establishment. There are about twenty more whose birth and death dates cannot be determined who could have been buried prior to 1866. Could any of these have been the first burial?

*"A Cemetery is Established"*

In 1875, Thomas Henry Davis formally recorded the donation of the land where these burials were located to the community of Bluffton, to be used as a "burial ground", or

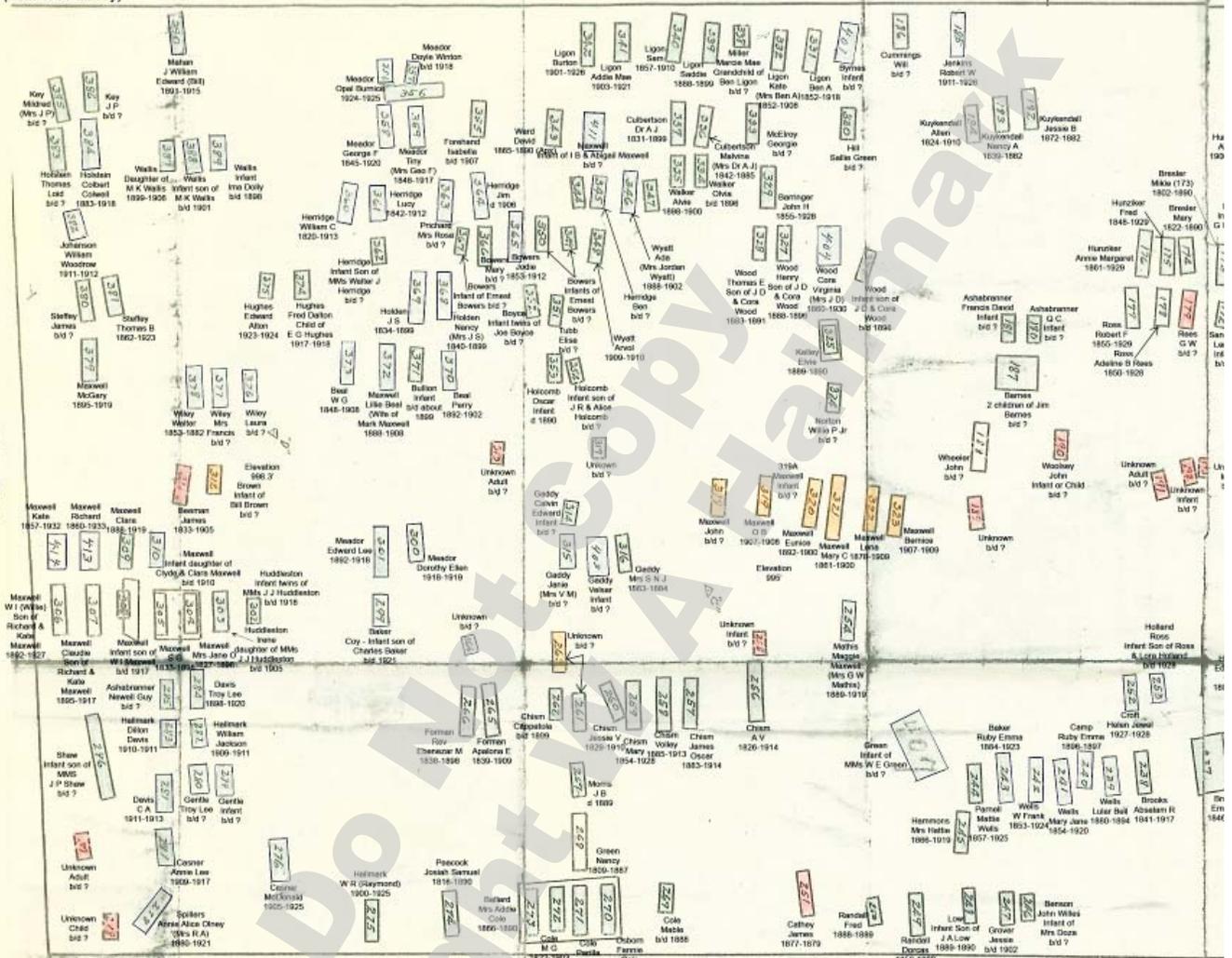
*"A Fitting Place of Rest"*

# The History of the Bluffton Cemetery

Elevation  
992.9'  
(from 1931 survey)

West Side - 499.5'

South Side - 210'



Elevation  
998.3'  
(from 1931 survey)

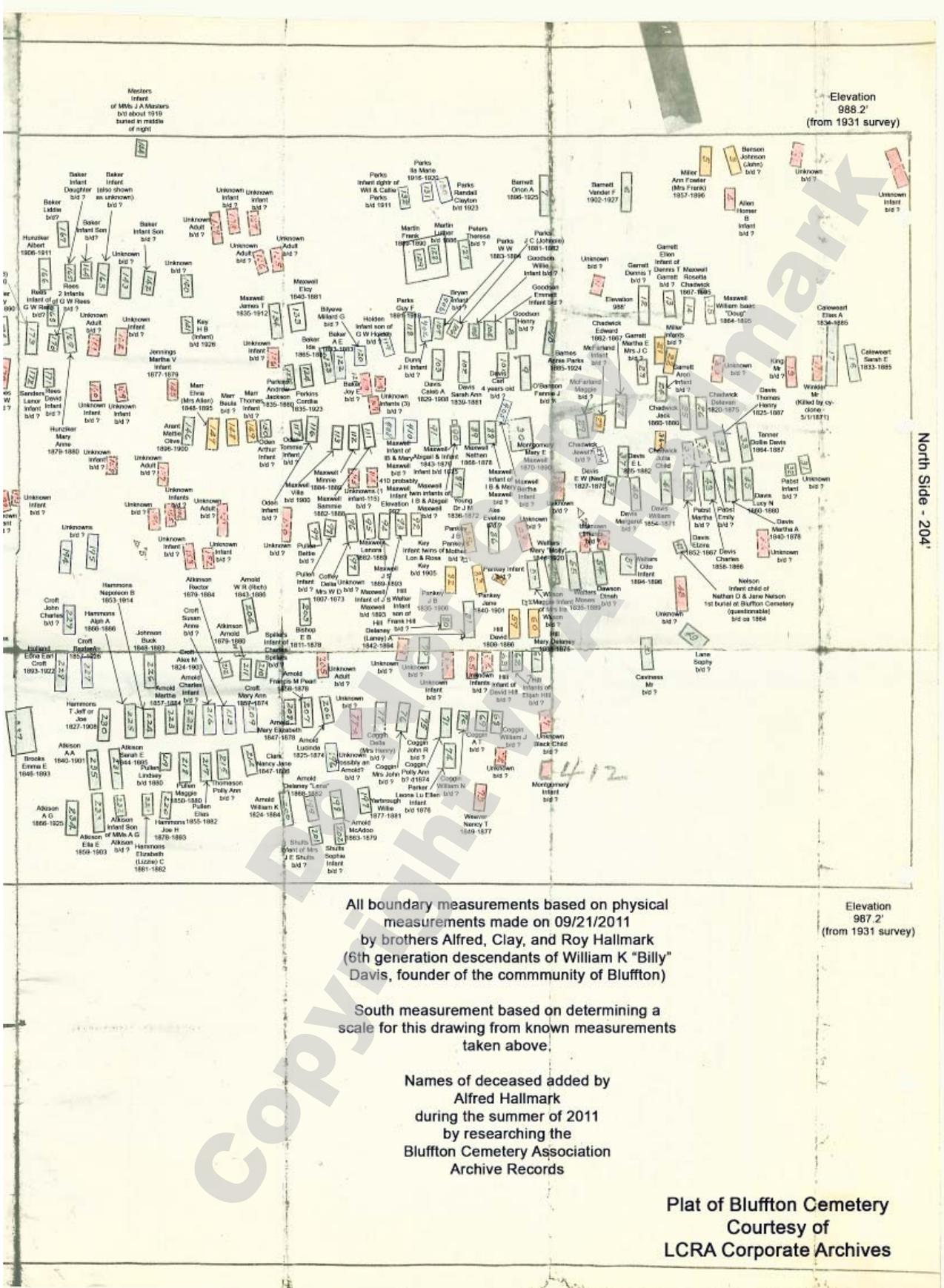
East Side - 492'

GRANITE - Graves previously moved.  
 RED - Graves unidentified and graves identified with no living relatives.  
 ORANGE - Graves on which permits have been obtained ready for reinterment.  
 WHITE - Graves on which permits have not been received.

BLUFFTON CEMETERY  
 Scale 1"=20'  
 PLOT

"A Fitting Place of Rest"

# The "Old" Bluffton Cemetery



All boundary measurements based on physical measurements made on 09/21/2011 by brothers Alfred, Clay, and Roy Hallmark (6th generation descendants of William K "Billy" Davis, founder of the community of Bluffton)

South measurement based on determining a scale for this drawing from known measurements taken above.

Names of deceased added by Alfred Hallmark during the summer of 2011 by researching the Bluffton Cemetery Association Archive Records

Plat of Bluffton Cemetery  
 Courtesy of  
 LCRA Corporate Archives

*"A Fitting Place of Rest"*

<i>Surnames and number of deceased by that name in the Old Bluffton Cemetery</i>					
Ake, 1	Bullion, 1	Garrett, 4	Key, 4	Oden, 3	Thomason, 1
Allen, 1	Byrnes, 1	Gentle, 2	King, 1	Osborn, 1	Tubb, 1
Arant, 1	Caleweart, 2	Gooch, 2	Kuykendall, 3	Pabst, 3	Walker, 2
Arnold, 9	Camp, 1	Goodson, 2	Lane, 1	Pankey, 4	Wallis, 3
Ashabranner, 3	Casner, 2	Green, 2	Ligon, 6	Parker, 1	Walters, 3
Atkison, 7	Cathey, 1	Grover, 1	Low, 1	Parks, 6	Ward, 1
Baker, 10	Caviness, 1	Hallmark, 3	Mahan, 1	Parnell, 1	Weaver, 1
Ballard, 1	Chadwick, 5	Hammons, 6	Marr, 1	Peacock, 1	Wells, 3
Barnes, 3	Chism, 6	Herridge, 6	Martin, 2	Pearl, 2	Wheeler, 1
Barnett, 2	Clark, 1	Hill, 8	Masters, 1	Perkins, 2	Wiley, 3
Barringer, 1	Coffey, 1	Holcomb, 2	Mathis, 1	Peters, 1	Wilson, 1
Beal, 2	Coggin, 7	Holden, 3	Maxwell, 36	Prichard, 1	Winkler, 1
Beaver, 3	Cole, 3	Holland, 2	McElroy, 1	Pullen, 5	Wood, 4
Beeman, 1	Croft, 6	Holstein, 2	McFarland, 2	Randall, 2	Woolsey, 1
Benson, 2	Culbertson, 2	Huddleston, 2	Meador, 6	Rees, 5	Wyatt, 2
Bilyeve, 1	Cummings, 1	Hughes, 2	Miller, 4	Ross, 2	Yarbrough, 1
Bishop, 1	Davis, 14	Hunziker, 4	Mitchell, 1	Sanders, 1	Young, 1
Bowers, 5	Dawson, 1	Jenkins, 1	Montgomery, 2	Shaw, 1	Unknowns, 54
Boyce, 1	Dunn, 1	Jennings, 1	Morris, 1	Shults, 2	
Bresler, 2	Forehand, 1	Johanson, 1	Nelson, 1	Spillers, 2	
Brooks, 2	Forman, 2	Johnson, 1	Norton, 1	Steffey, 3	
Bryan, 1	Gaddy, 4	Kelley, 1	O'Bannon, 1	Tanner, 1	
<b>Number of Surnames - 127</b>			<b>Number of Deceased - 394</b>		

cemetery, and, a place to build a school.<sup>6</sup> This land was comprised of three acres and was located to the south of the community of Bluffton, which was growing on the south side of the Colorado River, located on the upper bend of the river.

The cemetery was roughly rectangular in shape, and ran north-to-south. The highest elevation of the cemetery was at the southeast corner, and the lowest elevation was at the northeast corner. The southwest corner was about six feet lower in elevation than the southeast corner, while the northwest corner of the cemetery was only about a foot higher in elevation than the northeast corner. The dimensions of the cemetery were roughly 205 feet by 495 feet.<sup>7</sup> There were numerous trees on the cemetery grounds, and the cemetery was fenced, with a gate and set of steps that went

over the fence on the west side of the cemetery.

There was no formal layout for the cemetery, as can be seen from the plat of the cemetery on pages 4 and 5. The graves were, for the most part, oriented east/west, with the tombstones located on the west end of each grave, facing east.

There do seem to be “groups” of families in various sections of the cemetery. Though, there does not appear to be any type of “lot” assignment in the cemetery.

For example, there are numerous Davis family member graves in the northern part of the cemetery, though there are two Davis graves in the southern most part of the cemetery. (Those were of Troy Davis, who died in 1920, and a small child, C A Davis, who died in 1913) The north part of the cemetery had gotten quite congested

by this time.

The Maxwell family is also well represented. After all, during his lifetime, Ike outlived two wives, and was married to his third wife at the time of his death. He and his three wives bore nineteen children. Maxwell graves were centered in the central part of the cemetery, with another group in the southern part of the cemetery.

The list in the table on page 6 is an approximation of the number of those interred, as the Old Bluffton Cemetery plat and the Bluffton Cemetery Association documentation are not in complete agreement. However, the numbers are pretty much in line with those in summary LCRA

documents of 1937 and 1938.<sup>8</sup>

*"Monuments & Epitaphs"*

The deceased were honored in many ways. Most, but not all, had headstones, some had curbing of all sorts around their graves, in at least one case, a grave had a complete "vault like" covering over it; and many had epitaphs in their memory. Many, of course, especially the unknowns, were not marked at all. Others had wooden markers, tombstones made of stone, limestone, soapstone, formed concrete, granite, and marble.



*"Typical Tombstones in the Old Bluffton Cemetery"*  
Photos by Alfred Hallmark, taken at the Current Bluffton Cemetery

*"A Fitting Place of Rest"*

Wooden markers of course had a very short life. If not soon replaced, the deceased soon became an unknown.

Limestone monuments also were not very durable. The lettering wore fairly quickly, and the monuments broke very easily.

Soapstone monuments were inexpensive, but were not durable. They were prone to break easily, and the lettering did not hold up well.

Stone markers were durable, but lettering on them was difficult, and sometimes the graves were known by the size and shape of the stones alone.

Formed concrete monuments usually were readable, but were pretty brittle, and tended to break fairly easily.

Granite monuments were the most durable, and in many cases were very ornate and decorative. Many simply had the deceased name and date of birth and death, while others were very massive and ornate. The largest monument belonged to a Nancy Green, who was born in 1809, and died in 1887. Most granite monuments were made of gray granite, though a few were made of pink granite.

Finally, some monuments were made of marble. Marble monuments were very pretty, but were not as durable as the granite stones.

Many monuments had religious overtones. Scrolls, Bibles, open Bibles, angelic images, hands, with the index finger pointed heavenward were also prevalent.

Many times the tombstones had animal likenesses on them. Most were doves, though a lamb was also seen among the old monuments. Also, some tombstones had organizational symbols on them, such as Masonic symbols.

Additionally, the deceased were often honored by epitaphs. The following are some examples of the epitaphs found on tombstones that were in the Old Bluffton Cemetery.

**Apalona Forman** (70 years old)

*"Weep not, she is not dead, but sleepeth. Luke 8:52"*

**A. V. Chism** (88 years old)

*"Sleep dear Father and take your rest, God called you home, He thought it best. May God bless you is our prayer."*

**James Oscar Chism** (31 years old)

*"Remember friends as you pass by, As you are now, once was I, As I am now you will be, Prepare yourself to follow me."*

**W. W. Parks** (Infant)

*"Sweet be thy rest until we meet again."*

**Hunziker, Mary Anne** (Infant)

*"Budded on earth, to bloom in Heaven"*

**Beal, Perry** (10 year old child)

*"Our darling boy sleeps gently here."*

**Maxwell, Claudie**

(Almost 22 year old WW I Soldier)

*"While stationed in Supply Co. 114<sup>th</sup> Inf. at Camp Bowie, Fort Worth, Texas"*

**Ballard, Addie** (25 year old young woman)

*"Tell everybody to be good."*

**Hammons, A. A.** (20 year old young man)

*"Farewell my father and mother dear. From you a son, God doth call. Weep not for me, it is in vain, to call me to your side again."*

By no means are the above meant to be an exhaustive study of the epitaphs found in the Old Bluffton Cemetery. Rather, they are meant to show the varied messages that were found throughout the cemetery. Some were very touching. Some were historic in nature, telling about the deceased. Some were verses from the Bible. And finally, some were humorous in nature.

In some cases, graves were enclosed with curbs, or even fences, to designate them. Some enclosed single graves, some several. They were varied in nature. Some were simply stones placed next to each other, some were made of stone - set together with mortar, and some were actually ornamental metal fences. Some graves appeared to

have been even surrounded by wood picket-like fences made of wooden staves.

*Interesting Facts*

Those who were buried in the cemetery tell a story of the life and times of the Bluffton community in those early days. A large number of those buried were either infants, or young children. In fact, on the plat of the cemetery (pages 4 & 5), one section shows eight infants or small children lost by Ike Maxwell and his wives. Also, many lost their lives at early ages. At least one, a 15 year old boy, Robert Jenkins, drowned in the Colorado River.

Three Bluffton young men, Raymond Hallmark, 24, Orion Barnett, 29, and McDonald Casner, 20, were killed on June 28, 1925, in an auto accident in California, where they had gone to find work. Two other young men, Hollace Taylor, 19, and Roy Parks, survived the accident. Raymond left a pregnant wife and two year old daughter. Orion left a wife and a five year old

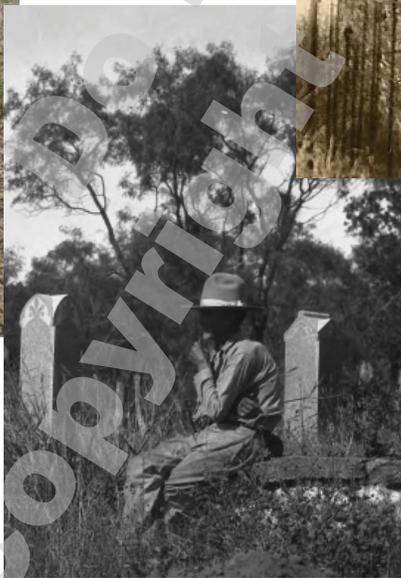
son. McDonald was single and was survived by his parents. Their bodies were shipped back to Bluffton accompanied by relatives, and reportedly the funeral for the three, held for all at the same time, was the largest ever held at the Old Bluffton Cemetery.<sup>9</sup>

On May 1, 1871, a cyclone, or tornado, struck the Saltworks area doing serious damage. A transient, a Mr. Winkler, was killed while trying to seek shelter, and was buried in the Old Bluffton Cemetery. An infant was also killed in the storm and was buried in a field just south of the Saltworks which later became the Jack Frazier field. The story of this storm is recounted in both the "The Story of Old Bluffton" by Hazel Oatman Bowman,<sup>10</sup> and CANYON OF THE EAGLES, by C. L. Yarbrough.<sup>11</sup>

At least five people who were buried in the Old Bluffton Cemetery were born in the first decade of the nineteenth century. Mickle Bresler was born in 1802, David Hill was born in 1805, Delia Coffey was born in 1807, Mary Hill was born in 1808, and Nancy Green was born in 1809. There could have been possibly some born ear-



"Bushes, small trees that evidently lined a gravesite" picture taken in 2011



"Jim Maxwell sitting on curbing which is around Atkison family graves" - notice the tall grass in the cemetery"



"Metal Ornamental Fencing Surrounding Cole Family Graves" - again, notice the tall grass in the cemetery"



"The Grave of Elcy Maxwell" b1/5/1840 d1/22/1881

*"A Fitting Place of Rest"*

lier, and there could be others born in this decade, but there are no records to show them.

However, these are not the earliest births of people who lived in the Bluffton community area. Records show a Mary Duff to have been born in 1775, and Joseph Shults born in 1797. They were buried in the Holland Cemetery.

The last to be buried in the Old Bluffton Cemetery was Richard (Dick) Maxwell. He was buried there in 1933. His wife, Kate, died in 1932, and was the next-to-last to be buried in the cemetery.

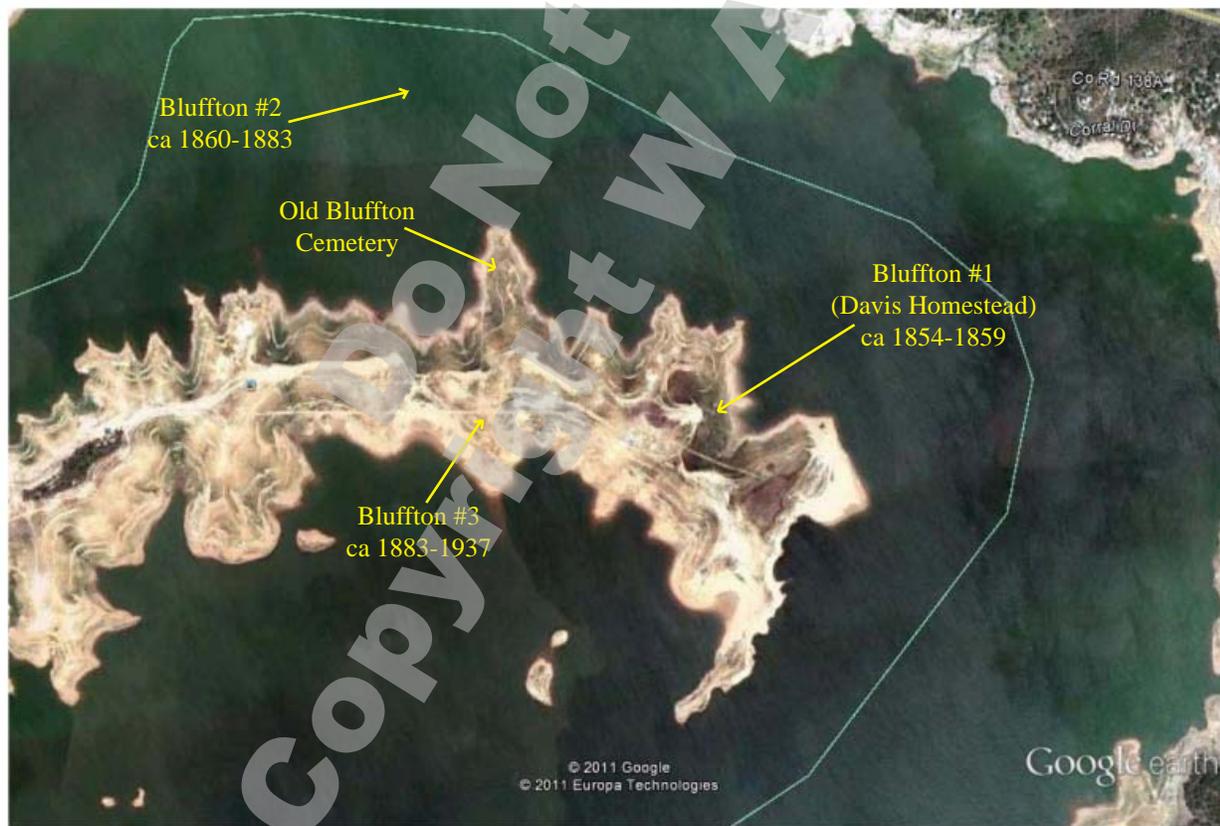
### *Old Bluffton Cemetery Today*

On occasion, descendants of the Bluffton community are privileged to visit their old cemetery once again. During drought conditions,

the waters of Lake Buchanan recede and allow a glimpse of the Old Bluffton Cemetery.

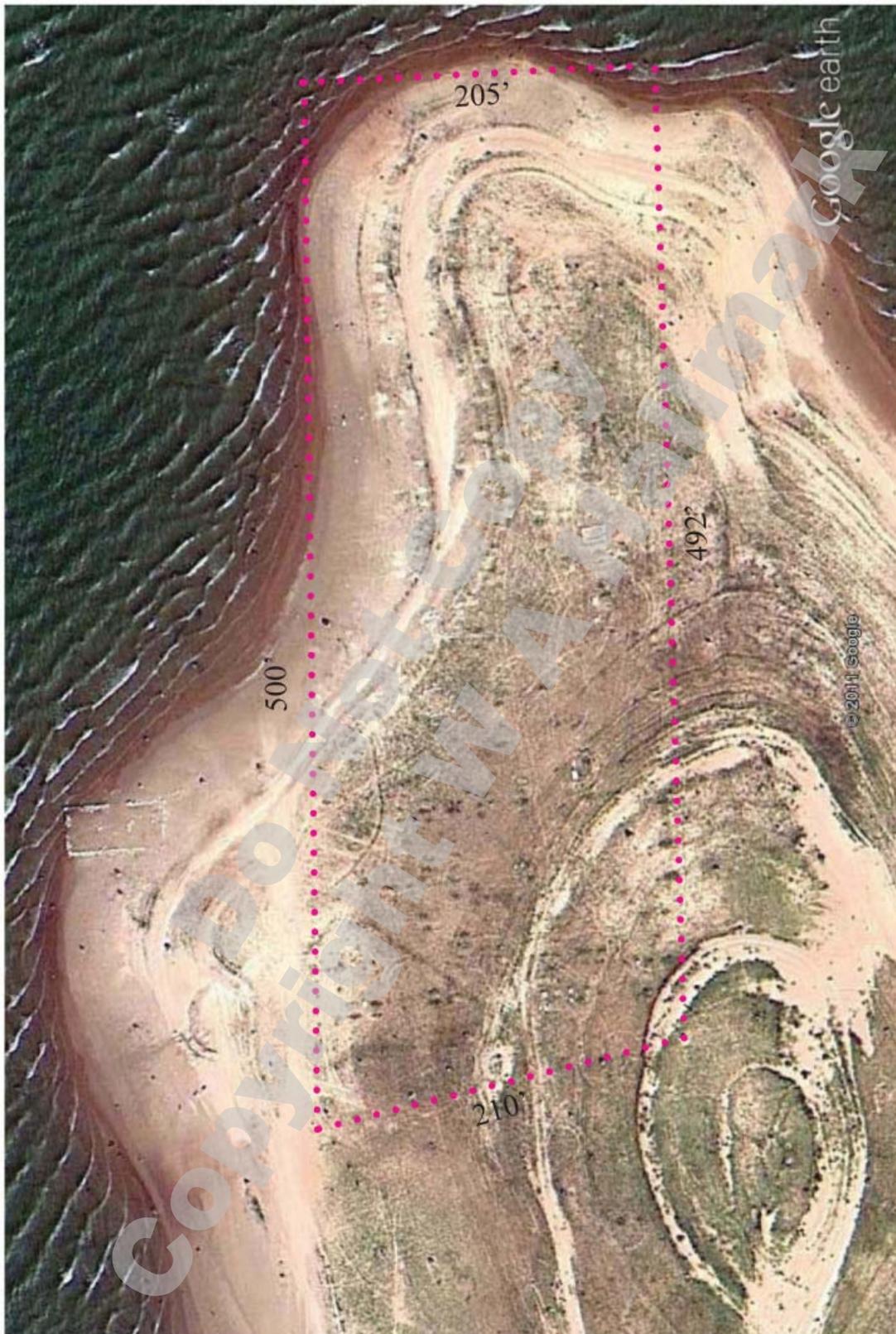
Recently, December, 2011, to be more precise, Google Earth updated its satellite imagery to show the Lake Buchanan area as of October 17, 2011. These images show the lake, and more specifically Old Bluffton, in amazing clarity. The image below shows the Old Bluffton area as a whole.

The image on the facing page is especially impressive. It shows the Old Bluffton Cemetery in astonishing detail, considering that these images were captured by a satellite, some 22,000 miles above the earth. Note the old school/church/lodge building foundation, the road (that went to the north to Old Bluffton #2, the Chadwick Mill, and the Saltworks Crossing) to the west of the cemetery, and the locations of individual graves. This image has been annotated to show the boundaries of the old cemetery.



*Bluffton Area, October, 2011 - Annotated to show the different Old Bluffton locations and the location of the Old Bluffton Cemetery (Image courtesy Google Earth)*

*"A Fitting Place of Rest"*



Old Bluffton Cemetery, October, 2011  
Annotated to show the boundaries of the cemetery (see pages 4 & 5)  
(Image Courtesy Google Earth)  
*"A Fitting Place of Rest"*

## *The History of the Bluffton Cemetery*

Though not a lot is left, bases to tombstones can be seen, empty graves can be identified, and curbing around graves can be seen. The foundation of the old school/lodge building which sat to the west of the cemetery is also visible.

The east boundaries of the old cemetery are identified by large (12-15 inch diameter) corner fence posts at the southeast and northeast boundaries. Six fence post stumps are spaced along the east boundary of the cemetery. Along the north side, the boundary of the cemetery is also visible, with the northwest corner post visible, about 8 inches in diameter and about 8 inches

out of the ground. Along the west side, the boundary lies to the east of the road which went from “downtown” Bluffton to the Saltworks Crossing at the Colorado River. The south boundary is not immediately identifiable; however, with known measurements, its location has been determined.

The pictures of the Old Bluffton Cemetery that give a glimpse of what it looks like today are seen on this, and the next three pages. With the information gathered from the plat and early documents of the cemetery, numerous graves can once more be identified.



*Left - North Boundary of Old Bluffton Cemetery*

*“Looking east from the northwest corner of Old Bluffton Cemetery” At the edge of the lake along the edge of the water, in the center of the picture, the northeast corner fence post is visible. In the immediate area of the corner post in the bottom part of the picture, the grave of an unknown adult was located. The ground is very soft in this area.*

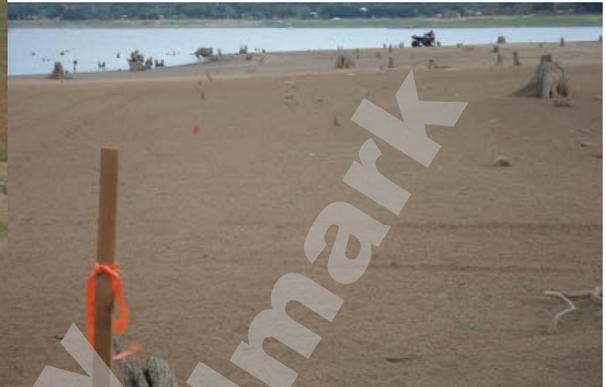
*Right - East Boundary of Old Bluffton Cemetery “Looking north from the southeast corner of Old Bluffton Cemetery” Notice monument bases and remains of stone walls that surrounded graves. Northeast corner post of the cemetery is visible near the water just to the left of the foreground southeast corner post.*



*“A Fitting Place of Rest”*



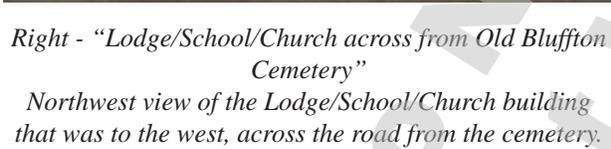
*Left - South Boundary of Old Bluffton Cemetery Cemetery is in the right side of the picture. Notice the numerous trees in the cemetery.*



*Right - West Boundary of Old Bluffton Cemetery Road that went north to the Saltworks Crossing of the Colorado River is to the left of the southwest corner stake that is shown in the foreground of this picture.*



*Left - "Lodge/School/Church across from Old Bluffton Cemetery"  
Northeast view of the Lodge/School/Church building that was to the west, across the road from the cemetery.*



*Right - "Lodge/School/Church across from Old Bluffton Cemetery"  
Northwest view of the Lodge/School/Church building that was to the west, across the road from the cemetery.*



*Left - "Hollowed out stump in the Old Bluffton Cemetery"*

*Right - "Tree stumps of the more than 75 trees that were in the Old Bluffton Cemetery"*



*"A Fitting Place of Rest"*

*The History of the Bluffton Cemetery*



*Above - Right - Below  
“Stone walls and curbing that surrounded graves at the  
Old Bluffton Cemetery”*



*Right - “Axe head found in Old Bluffton Cemetery”*



*Left - “Road leading south from Old Bluffton Cemetery  
to Old Bluffton Store”*

*Right - “Road leading north from Old Bluffton Cemetery  
to the Saltworks Crossing of the Colorado River”*



*“A Fitting Place of Rest”*



Left - "Nancy Green Monument Base"  
Nancy Green's tombstone was the largest the Old Bluffton Cemetery. The monument can be seen on pages 7 and 16 of this book.



Right - "Thomas Henry Davis gravesites location in the Old Bluffton Cemetery"

This includes the grave of his son Charles (possibly the first grave in the cemetery), and Dollie Davis Tanner, his daughter, see below.



Left - "Newell Guy Ashabranner (infant), Troy Lee Davis (22 year old), Dillon Davis Hallmark (Infant), William Jackson Hallmark (Infant) Grave sites"

Right - "Tombstone of Johnny C. Parks" - Born October 17, 1881, Died October 15, 1882 - This tombstone was found in September of 2011. He was the son of Alex & Cena (Davis) Parks, and the grandson of Caleb & Sarah Davis, who were buried at his feet (just to the east of his grave).



"Dollie Tanner's Tombstone"

This tombstone was found in 2009 when the cemetery was visible at that time.

The picture to the left shows the tombstone as it was found, and the picture to the right shows the tombstone after it was reassembled.

The tombstone is no longer in the cemetery however, as descendants of Dollie got permission from the LCRA and removed it from the cemetery in the fall of 2009.

The inscriptions on the tombstone read, "Dollie E. Tanner, Born June 6, 1864, Died Feb. 15, 1887" and the epitaph was "Dear Mother in earth's thorny paths. How long thy



feet have trod. To find at last a peaceful rest. Safe in the arms of God."  
(Notice the large stump behind the tombstone-it can be found in the nw corner of the cemetery.)

*"A Fitting Place of Rest"*

*Final Thoughts*

The Old Bluffton Cemetery was born, and grew out of necessity. There was little organization to the cemetery and there is no record of a list, or roster, of those buried. Unless graves were marked, locations of deceased were known only to relatives, friends, or those familiar with the cemetery.

There appears to have been no formal maintenance in the cemetery as well. All photographs available show the cemetery to be grown

up with grass, weeds, and underbrush, making locations of graves even harder.

The Old Bluffton Cemetery ceased to be an active cemetery in 1931; though as can be seen above, two were buried in the cemetery, in 1932, and 1933 (that is a story to be covered later). A new cemetery, the "New" Bluffton Cemetery was completed by early 1931, and five Bluffton citizens, who died during that year, were buried in the new cemetery. So, the life of the Old Bluffton Cemetery ended, like the life of the community it had served for over 60 years.



*Old Bluffton Cemetery in about 1914*

*Identifiable graves include: Front: Mrs. Addie Cole Ballard (1866-1890), M. G. Cole (1822-1903), Parilla (Mrs. M. G.) Cole (1838-1885) Center: Nancy Green (1809-1887) Next Row: J. B. Morris (died 1889) - appears to be covered with gravel, or small stones Back Row: Cappatola Chism (b/d 1899), Jessie V. Chism (1829-1910), Volley Chism (1885-1913), A. V. Chism (1826-1914) The grave in the distance behind the Nancy Green grave, and to the right and behind the Volley Chism grave is a Maxwell grave - O. B. (1907-1908), Eunice (1892-1900), or Mary (1861-1900). Other graves are visible in the back part of the cemetery, but cannot be identified. A gate is visible on the west side of the cemetery near the left side of the picture. Notice the heavy growth of grass and brush in the cemetery.*

*"A Fitting Place of Rest"*