

Thence east 462 feet running north of the Old Palestine Highway South. Thence northwest 300 feet to Black Jack tree for corner on Mrs. Nanie Carroll tract; Thence west 185 feet to place of beginning."<sup>2</sup>

#### Map of Land

Mrs. Perryman visited and conversed with old timers who lived in that area to inquire if they know where this Black cemetery was located and if they knew of some of the people buried in the Fisher Robinson Cemetery.

Mrs. Perryman visited and conversed with the late Laura Shafer-Robinson who stated she was familiar with the described land located in Athens, when it was used as a cemetery. She had lived near the Fisher Robinson Cemetery during her life. She married Robert Robinson, son of Fisher Robinson who set aside the above described property to be used as a Black cemetery.

Mrs. Laura Robinson stated that some of the people buried in the cemetery are: Lizzie Winfield and husband, Aunt Susan Postell, and Old Man Rube Richardson. All these people were buried near each other in the above-described cemetery. Also buried there were Pearlie and Rube Richardson, son of Della Richardson. Della was the daughter of Old Man Rube Richardson. Also Henry Massey and his wife, daughter and son, and Jim Wimbley--all in the above-described cemetery.<sup>3</sup>

Mrs. Perryman visited and had conversation with the late LeAnna Richardson-Carter who knew of the use of the land as a cemetery in Athens. Mrs. Carter stated that she remembers the Oshmans family being buried under a tree and that folks were scared to pass the cemetery. She also stated that some of the people who are buried in the above-described ceme-

7  
tery are: Jeff Criner and wife Tempie Criner, Fed Massey and wife Mattie, and Charlie White and Emma White.<sup>4</sup>

The day of research was about to end with a visitation with Mrs. Beulah Larkin-Smith, who stated that she once lived near the described land, located in Athens, and it was used as a Black cemetery. Also she stated that some of the people buried in the cemetery are: Old Man Rube Richardson and family, Fed Massey and wife Mattie, other members of the Massey family, Jim Wimbley and wife Rozelle, and Old Man Will Graham.<sup>5</sup> This confirmed information provided by foregoing sources.

Years of neglect do not cause a cemetery to be non-existent in the eyes of the law; so it is still inviolate and not to be disturbed.<sup>6</sup> Both counties and cities are allowed under law to provide funds for the upkeep of cemeteries; however, they are not required to do this.

In the case of the Fisher Robinson Cemetery, they have been years of neglect--possibly abuse of the area. It is hoped that particularly during Black History Month, that volunteers, Black descendants of the Black Ancestors whose Final Resting Place has been neglected and forgotten, will have the courage to come forward and save this Black Cemetery. The Henderson County Historical Commission is sponsoring the effort to restore the cemetery and to install an appropriate marker.<sup>7</sup>

The Father of Black History, Carter Godwin Woodson, made Black Americans aware of their history and charged them with its preservation. Woodson stated, "If a race has no history, if it has no worthwhile tradition, it becomes a negligible factor in the thought of the world, and it stands in danger of being exterminated."<sup>8</sup>

4

Mrs. Marian Westbrook, chairman of the Henderson County Historical Commission, is chairman of the project to restore and properly identify the Fisher Robinson Cemetery for posterity. It was Mrs. Perryman, her husband, Bill Perryman, and their staff who ensured the legal identity of the cemetery, in recent years.

In 1980 the Henderson County Historical Commission began research of the Black Cemetery, known as the Fisher Robinson Cemetery. Through the years interest had been kept by the Henderson County Historical members that a Texas State Historical marker and place a fence around the area and be maintained as the Fisher Robinson Cemetery.

The Henderson County Historical members met April 14, 1984 to work on further cleaning, burning brush and securing documentation to apply for the marker.<sup>9</sup>

Mary Ann Perryman and Marian G. Westbrook visited and inquired of information about the people who were buried in the Fisher Robinson Cemetery and who lived in that area during that period.

Descendants and friends who knew of the described land located in Athens on Robbins Road as the Fisher Robinson Cemetery were: Rev. Billy Hudlin, A.M. Barnes, Jr., Mary Randle-Bell, Sylvester Winfield, Albert Brown, Georgia Coit Fite, Lizzie Dollie Bynum and Winloise Bynum-Taylor.<sup>10</sup>

Lizzie D. Bynum stated the cemetery was located northeast of the Methodist Episcopal Church. This property was deeded to the Methodist Episcopal Church in America By Dilcy Ruffin - September 15, 1874.<sup>11</sup>

Once this bit of Henderson County history is completed, it will be written and marked for future generations and future historians.

This final resting place is forgotten by many but not by the Henderson

County Historical Commission members.

God who gave our fathers freedom,  
God who made our fathers brave,  
What they built with love and anguish,  
Let their children watch and save.<sup>12</sup>

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February 1983

From Selections by Robert Nathan, To See a World in a Grain of Sand, page 47.  
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Map of survey plot - Thomas Pormer - A - 782, February 23, 1970, Book K -  
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12

FOOTNOTES

- 1 and 2 - Book K, page 401, District Court Minutes, Henderson County Court-house, Athens, Texas
- 3 - Laura Shafer-Robinson, Book 908, page 246, The State of Texas, County of Henderson
- 4 - LeAnna Richardson-Carter, Book 908, page 244, The State of Texas, County of Henderson
- 5 - Beulah Larkin-Smith, Book 908, page 242, The State of Texas, County of Henderson
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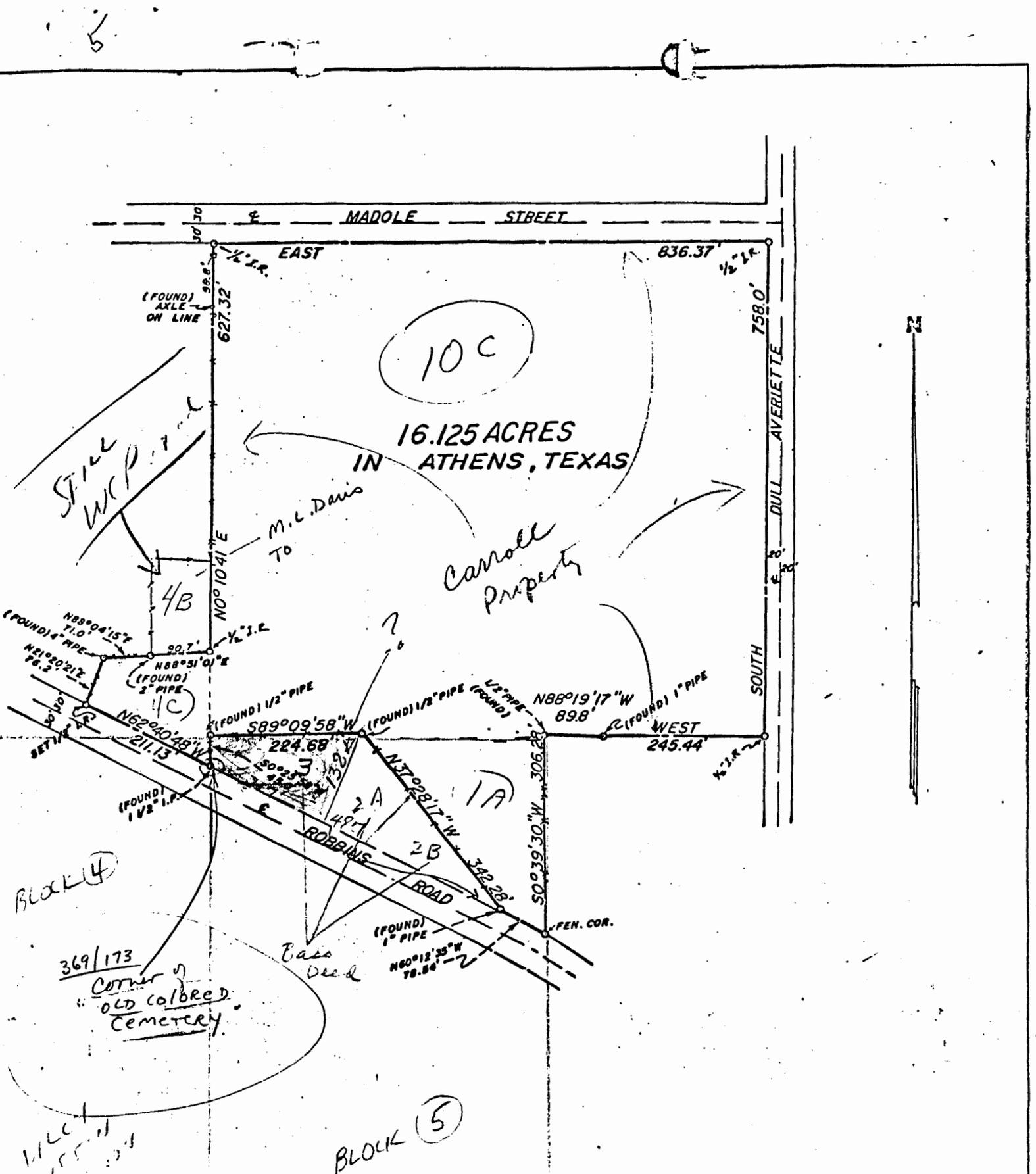
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- 11 - Volume K - page 649 - City of Athens, Henderson, TX - District Court Minutes, September 15, 1874.
- 12 - From Selections by Robert Nathan, To See A World in a Grain of Sand, page 47. Copyright MCMLXXII by the C.R. Gibson Company, Norwalk, Connecticut.



PLAT OF SURVEY

SCALE 1" = 200 FT.

THE ABOVE DESCRIBED TRACT WAS SURVEYED FEB. 23, 1970  
 AND THE DIMENSIONS SHOWN ARE HEREBY CERTIFIED TO BE TRUE AND  
 CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF.

*Jack A. Hearn*  
 JACK A. HEARN

|                            |               |
|----------------------------|---------------|
| SURVEY - - THOMAS PARMER   |               |
| A - 782                    |               |
| DESCRIPTION                |               |
| HENDERSON                  | COUNTY, TEXAS |
| SURVEY FOR ALAN D. WHATLEY |               |
| JACK A. HEARN              |               |