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EDDY COUNTY, NEW MEXICO

RATTLESNAKE SPRINGS CEMETERY RECORDS

Records extracted by Richard Wilkinson
Typing by Richard Wilkinson July 2000
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This cemetery is small but well cared for. I do not know the history behind this cemetery. It is located at GPS coordinates 32 deg 06 min 29 sec North and 104 deg 27 min 35 sec West. The margin of error for these coordinates is 32 feet. There is no way you can miss it if you are within 32 feet of it.

To drive to it from Carlsbad, NM, begin at the south city limits on Highway 62/180 (National Parks Highway) and go south towards El Paso, TX for 17.6 miles. Turn right on the Washington Ranch Road and continue for 1.5 miles. You will come to a split in the roadway, stay to the left and continue for another 7/10 miles. Here you will be at another split in the roadway and a volunteer fire station. Turn right and the cemetery will be on the left at about 100 yards or less. It is enclosed with chain link but the gate is not locked.

There appears to be 16 graves here. Ten of these graves are marked but have no name. The other 6 are marked with some kind of red sand stone with carvings in them. It will not be much longer that the carvings will not be legible any longer.

I am grateful for the following information from Mary McGuire, relative of the Welch family buried in this cemetery. E-mail: mmcguire@cavemen.net

"The following is excerpts from info I have recently received on the Welch family. May help to identify some of the graves there.

"...across the field, south, up in the cat claws, a grave or two had been made. One was Uncle Henry, who had drowned in the Black River, a few hundred yards away, and an old Dutchman, who had been murdered up in the mountains, named "Dutch Fred". In January, 1886, they added Grandpa's grave. He had died of typhoid fever. In 1892, Anna and Frances' graves were added. In 1893, little Laura joined them. In 1906, Uncle Daniel Webster was killed in Montana in a wagon accident. They shipped him back. That made six Welch graves in a row...." (Some death dates were corrected, JWJ)

So ends the family's right to the property, except for the ties to the six members buried on the small plot of cemetery land. Angeline was concerned that the cemetery be preserved. She made an Affidavit in Spokane, Washington, stating, in effect, that she had been assured by D.H. Lucas and Jake Owens (clerk of the County of Eddy New Mexico) that no special provision in the deed needed to be made to preserve the cemetery. Later, when D.H. Lucas subsequently transferred the title to William Washington, she was again assured by Mr. Washington, in the presence of Ida Harrison of Black River on Rattle Snake Springs, Eddy County, New Mexico, that said cemetery and the land around belonged to her, Angeline Rebecca Welch, about one acre in area, more or less."

The marked and names sites are:

Dan 1872 to 1906

Laura 1886 to 1898

Frances Welch 1876 to 1892

Anna 1874 to 1892

James H. Welch 1844 to 1881

Henry Welch 186? to 1883

10 other marked but unnamed sites.