

TURKNETT CEMETERY RECORDS, EDDY COUNTY, NEW MEXICO

ARTESIA AREA

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This tiny cemetery containing only a few graves sits stolidly and lonely on a small hill a mile south of Artesia, NM, and 1/4 mile east on Castleberry Road. It still resists the encroachments of progress as it has for nearly a century. In spite of the unique metal fence around the weed-grown tract, vandals have found it a likely target and several times have left their damaging marks. All but one identifying headstone has been stolen or vandalized. Because it is land-locked on private land, access to this cemetery is denied.

The GPS is: 32 degrees 49 minutes 02 seconds North, 104 degrees 23 minutes 34 seconds west, at about 3385 feet above seal level. The margin of error at the time of reading was only 3 feet. Adjustments were made to compensate for the fact that reading had to be taken from Castleberry Road.

In a June 14, 1964 interview with the Artesia Daily Press, Mrs. W.T "Ruby" AMSTUTZ, daughter of J.W. TURKNETT, related the following story:

James William "Uncle Dick" TURKNETT established the plot as a family cemetery in 1905 or 1906. The history of the Turknnett family is a full one and closely linked to the development of this area of the Pecos Valley, beginning before the turn of the 20th century.

J.W. TURKNETT was an ex-Texas Ranger and Indian fighter. In the autumn of 1880, he and Edward PERIL, George LARIMORE, J.T. FANNING and Marion BULESON (sic), all drove their herds of cattle (about 1,800 head) from Kerr County, Texas to the Pecos Valley. The following spring all of the cattle were sold to Arthur EDDY, brother of C.B. EDDY, in whose honor Eddy County was named. After this sale Mr. TURKNETT and his companions returned to Texas. All of these men made eventual settlement in the Pecos Valley.

In May of 1882, J.W. TURKNETT returned to New Mexico accompanied by his wife, their two children and two teams of horses. He eventually acquired some 500 acres of land southeast of where Artesia now lies. The family's first home was near Lakewood but they later build a home not far from where the cemetery is situated. Mrs. AMSTUTZ was born in the home about one and one-half miles southeast of the cemetery plot. Mrs. AMSTUTZ remembers hearing her mother tell about GERONIMO coming to their ranch, and being fed. She also recalls that her father went for supplies, not more than twice a year, to Pecos, TX or to Las Vegas, NM. It was also the time he took the wool or young calves to market. Mr. & Mrs. J.W. TURKNETT were buried in Woodbine Cemetery in Artesia.

Several of the graves in the TURKNETT CEMETERY were originally placed a few

hundred yards east of the present cemetery but the ground was low and damp and so Mr. TURKNETT had them moved to the present location. The following names and comments were taken from the 1964 interview of Mrs. Ruby AMSTUTZ.

In May of 2001 there is only 1 marked grave, that being "Dick TURK, 1902".

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| Peril, Mrs. Ed. | Died of smallpox. She was the aunt of Mrs. Amstutz. |
| Peril, child | Died of smallpox. Daughter of Mrs. Ed. Peril |
| Peril, child | Died of smallpox. Daughter of Mrs. Ed. Peril |
| Peril, child | Died of smallpox. Daughter of Mrs. Ed. Peril |
| Pool, Lee | d. 1890's. A cowboy. Drowned while swimming in the Penasco River |
| Scoggins, Amanda Liona- | Infant daughter of Mrs. Amy Henry of Nevada and grandchild of the J.W. Turknetts |
| Turk, Roy | b. 1898, d. 1899 Son of William R. Turk and grandchild of the J.W. Turknetts. |
| Turk, William R."Dick" | b. 12 Aug 1868, d. 18 Dec 1902. He was was killed in a gunfight in Hope, NM. Son of Archibald R. Turk. (his father was made guardian of the small children upon his death) Son-in-law of J.W. Turknett. |
| Turknett, Pearl, | 21 1/2 month old daughter of Mr. & Mrs. J.W. Turknett. Died of "summer complaint" on 6 July 1900. |