

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

HISTORIC TEXAS CEMETERY REQUEST FOR DESIGNATION INSTRUCTIONS

Historic cemeteries are among our most valuable cultural resources. They are also, unfortunately, vulnerable to loss and destruction. They are increasingly threatened by development, natural deterioration, neglect, vandalism and even misguided preservation efforts. Those cemeteries that are highly endangered could potentially be lost forever, along with the history they represent.

The Texas Historical Commission (THC) is the state agency for historic preservation, responsible for identifying, protecting and interpreting our historic resources. The THC works with interested citizens, county historical commissions, and heritage groups to preserve our historic resources, including cemeteries. These instructions explain the criteria, research methods, and documentation necessary to apply for a Historic Texas Cemetery (HTC) designation.

DESIGNATION PROCESS IS SEPARATE FROM MARKER PROCESS

The HTC designation program is separate from the Official Texas Historical Marker program. The HTC designation does not constitute an application or approval for a historical marker, although it is a prerequisite. For more information on how to apply for a marker for a cemetery, see the Official Texas Historical Marker Procedures or check the THC website (www.thc.state.tx.us) under “Markers and Designations.”

There is no deadline for submitting the HTC application.

CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

In order to be considered for HTC designation, a cemetery must be at least 50 years old, and deemed worthy of recognition for its historical associations.

For the purposes of the HTC designation, the THC defines an eligible cemetery as a secure burial place of human remains, **including single graves**. Collections or scatterings of ashes, unless associated with a columbarium within an established graveyard, do not constitute a cemetery eligible for the HTC designation.

The burden of proof of the existence of the cemetery is on the applicant.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE HTC REQUEST FOR DESIGNATION

STEP 1.

REQUEST FOR DESIGNATION FORM

The HTC designation request form can be downloaded from our website at www.thc.state.tx.us or you may request hard copies by calling the THC’s History Programs Division at 512.463.5853.

STEP 2.

GATHER DOCUMENTATION

All of the following required information will be used by THC staff to develop the Declaration of Designation for Cemetery Purposes and the accompanying Exhibit A for filing with the county clerk.

Photographs

Submit recent high-quality photographs of the historic cemetery. Photos may be taken digitally or with 35 mm film. Photos taken with film must be processed black and white.

For our purposes, we cannot accept instant/Polaroid photos or photocopies. Our guidelines are designed to ensure the prints can be expected to last at least 75 years or more before yellowing or fading.

Prints from digital media must be:

- Black and white or color prints produced from digital images processed through a professional photo lab or following the home printing specifications below
- Of sufficient quality to clearly show the detail of the photo's subject

Prints from traditional 35 mm negatives must be:

- Black and white images printed on silver-emulsion resin-coated (RC) papers
- Black and white images printed on silver-emulsion fiber-based papers

Printing photos from a home printer

You may print photos from your home printer provided the paper and ink can meet the 75-year standard. Be aware that not all products labeled archival can meet the 75-year standard. No firm definition of archival exists and the term is often used for marketing purposes only. In some instances, products labeled archival will last longer than non-archival products but may not meet the 75-year requirement before yellowing or fading. Following is a list of acceptable inks and papers for home printing. This list is not intended to be comprehensive. Photographs produced using other ink and paper combinations that can be documented to meet the 75-year permanence standard will be accepted, but only if verifiable information attesting to their anticipated longevity can be provided. If providing home-printed photographs, you must provide verification of the paper and ink used.

Inks

Epson Claria "Hi-Definition Inks"
Epson Picture Mate Pigment Inks
Epson DURABrite Ultra Pigmented Inks
HP Vivera Inks
Lexmark Evercolor Dye/Pigment Hybrid Photo Inks

Papers

Premium Presentation Paper Matte
Epson Ultra Premium Glossy Photo Paper
Epson PictureMate Paper
HP Premium Plus Photo Paper
HP Advanced Photo Paper Glossy
HP Photo Matte Paper
Lexmark Premium Photo Paper High Gloss

Submitting your photos

Photos may be submitted electronically as email attachments or on a CD. Photos submitted electronically must be identified by the cemetery name and photo number that corresponds with the photo key and log (see below). For example: John Smith Cemetery, Photo 1 as the file name.

Printed photos may also be submitted.

- Preferred sizes of printed photos are 4 x 6 or 5 x 7 inches.
- Do not mount or sleeve your photos. Simply place the loose photos in an envelope.
- Using a pencil, archival photo-labeling pen, or sticky note, number each printed photo on the **back**. Do not write or print any text on the front of the photo. Any additional information you wish to provide should be included on the photo log (see below). Adhesive backed labels will eventually deteriorate and detach from the photo and their acidity may cause damage.

The number of photographs necessary to adequately document the site will depend upon the size of the cemetery. Overall views of the site taken from the corners looking toward the center, as well as representative views of the entrance (this will be used to illustrate the cemetery on the THC Atlas of Historic Sites), all characteristic features and interesting or important gravestones should be included. Try not to include people, vehicles or date stamps in the photos. Good quality copies of historic photographs are also helpful.

Photo log and key

Produce a log of your photos using the numbers as assigned above. Be sure to include the photographer's name, date of the photograph, direction and description of the view and any other information you wish to provide regarding the photo.

Create a simple hand-drawn or electronic overview map of the cemetery, which will serve as your photo key. Add arrows indicating the direction the camera was aimed and number these arrows with the corresponding picture from the log.

See the sample photo log and key in the sample application.

History and bibliography

The narrative history of the cemetery should include information regarding landownership, cemetery name origin, historical associations, cemetery development, and current activity. Consider the following questions:

- How and when did the cemetery start? How do you know this?
- How did it get its name(s)? Was it associated with a person, community, or church?
- Who first owned the land surrounding the cemetery?
- If no longer active, why not? When was the last burial?
- Are there historically significant people buried there?
- If there is a cemetery association, when did it begin?

A bibliography must also be provided. See the sample application for a sample narrative history and bibliography.

Maps

Submit a map of the cemetery and surrounding property such as county appraisal district maps, plat maps, archival documents, historical maps, professional surveys (if available) and aerial photographs, which may be used to establish the existence and location of the cemetery. Please also submit a county or city map clearly indicating the location of the cemetery.

In some cases, the county appraisal district will have a map indicating the cemetery and surrounding land. Please clearly denote road names or numbers, access routes to the cemetery, name of surrounding landowners and major landmarks including associated buildings such as churches, schools, tabernacles, etc. Legal boundaries should be delineated and include the full extent of the cemetery. Existing fences may not necessarily indicate the exact boundaries; burials may be located outside the fenced perimeter.

Submit an annotated site plan of the cemetery to record important features. Include the cemetery dimensions and elements such as fencing, landscaping, prominent gravestones, flagpoles, memorials, structures, entryways, roads, and paths. Also include nearby landmarks such as buildings and/or roads. This site plan can also be used as your photo key as described above.

Sample maps can be found in the sample application.

Deeds

Provide copies of deeds that **reference** the cemetery. If no deeds referencing the cemetery exist, please note this on the application.

Application Fee

A check or money order for \$25 made out to the "Texas Historical Commission" must be submitted. The THC cannot accept electronic or credit card payments for the application fee.

- If sending the application electronically:
The THC will send the applicant an invoice for the application fee.
- If sending the application through the mail:
The fee should be included with the application material.

STEP 3:

CHC NOTIFICATION

The application is reviewed by the County Historical Commission (CHC).

- If sending the application electronically or on a disc:
The THC will send the application to the appropriate CHC for review.
- If submitting the application through the mail:
Contact your CHC to find out how they prefer the application to be submitted to them.
- The **CHC chair** completes the CHC information on the application. CHC contact information can be found at <http://www.thc.state.tx.us/markerdesigns/madmark.shtml>.

STEP 4: SUBMIT THE APPLICATION

HTC applications may be submitted to the THC electronically by email or in hard copy or disc through the mail.

- If sending electronically:
Send the application, photos, and supporting documents as email attachments to:
annette.bethke@thc.state.tx.us.
Be sure to include in the subject line "HTC application".
- If sending hard copies or on disc:
Send the application, photos, supporting documents and application fee to:
History Programs Division
Texas Historical Commission
PO Box 12276
Austin, TX 78711-2276

APPLICATION SUBMITTAL CHECKLIST

- Completed HTC Request for Designation form
- Images, either prints or digital files
- Photo log and key
- Narrative history with bibliography
- Maps (location, appraisal district, site plan)
- Deeds (if they exist)
- \$25 application fee payable to the Texas Historical Commission

QUESTIONS?

History Programs Division
Texas Historical Commission
PO Box 12276
Austin, TX 78711-2276
Phone: 512.463.5853; Fax: 512.475.3122
Email: history@thc.state.tx.us

The Historic Texas Cemetery designation policies are adopted as Commission rules in the Texas Administrative Code, Title 13, Chapter 22, Section 22.6.

Texas Historical Commission
P.O. Box 12276
Austin, TX 78711-2276
512.463.6100
fax 512.475.4872
thc@thc.state.tx.us



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
real places telling real stories

www.thc.state.tx.us