

Investigation

Investigator: Louis C. Hearn Jr.

Case # CA-74-06

Date: 03/22/2006

Location: office assignment

Introduction: Determine if a Mrs. Lola Harris was buried at a site that is now to be used as a storm water detention facility.

This question has been the center of an investigation that has been ongoing for over a year. Assistant Development Manager for Perry Homes, Michael Rokas had several conversations with Louis Hearn about the possible burial site of Lola Harris who died in 1938. A head stone was found on the riverbank near where her family owned land until 1958.

The Historical Society of Fort Bend County has been documenting the historic graveyards in the county and this site was investigated. They have asked that this site be investigated as to the possible existence of Lola Harris.

During the first part of the investigation, Michael Rokas stated that the title company said that Mrs. Harris was buried in Bryan Texas. However no documentation could be found to confirm this. Historically many times a family member was buried on property that the family owned. Also people were buried on or near a riverbank as this was not land used for farming. Mrs. Harris requested in her will that she have a tombstone. The tomb stone that was found was very expensive to have made in 1938, and would most likely not be discarded, even if the date of death on the stone was incorrect, as it shows to be.

At our request Perry Homes had an archaeological company CRC.LLC perform an investigation of the site in October of 2005. The company concluded that they were not able to find any indication of a burial site around or near the location of the headstone and base. A copy of the report was sent to Louis Hearn. Hearn sent a copy of the report to Bob Crosser, Hearn's contact with the Historical Society. After reviewing the report Bob Crosser notified Hearn that the company had not properly investigated the site.

Hearn is not well versed in this type of investigation and notified Michael Rokas of the information he had received from Bob Crosser. During one conversation that Rokas had with Hearn a possible solution to the problem was entertained.

Michael Rokas agreed to let Hearn take the GPS readings that Bob Crosser provided to Him and mark off an area in a circle of 30-40 feet around it. Hearn would be present when an operator with an excavator would remove earth in that area to a dept of four feet plus. **Note: only a small area of that being excavated would be disturbed with the digging of the storm water detention facility.**

Hearn spoke with Bob crosser and the First assistant and it was agreed that this would be the best solution at this time. Hearn got back with Mr. Rokus and it was arranged.

On Wednesday, March 15, 2006, at 1300 hours Hearn met with Jan C. Samson, employee of Carter and Burgess, Inc. who is digging the detention area for Perry Homes. Samson had a small crew to help observe and work the site. A sign in sheet was generated and then the work began.

The area Hearn had marked off with paint was carefully excavated to a dept of four feet plus. Every pass of the excavator bucket made was carefully observed. Mr. Samson directed the operator to dig wherever Hearn directed. After the area was completely excavated the observers and operator went down in the hole to look even closer. During the excavation Samson and Hearn took digital photos of the work. The photos are included in the case report file.

The final conclusion is:

1. The area excavated has not been used as a burial site.

2. The grave possibly could be in the area, however the excavated portion of the detention facility itself will not disturb the site, if it does in fact, exist.

3. If by chance the grave is discovered in another area, work will be stopped and the County Attorney's Office will be notified promptly.

At this time there is no other information.

Closed case.