



REPORT

PALO PINTO CEMETERY

INVESTIGATION



*Palo Pinto
Texas*

TX014

SOUTHWEST GHOST HUNTERS ASSOCIATION

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Forward

The word “investigation” is defined as
“a searching inquiry for ascertaining facts; detailed or careful examination.”

The key word here is “facts”. Do ghosts exist? No, it has not been proven.
Therefore are no facts to investigate.

What we do have is the testimony of the witnesses and this is where an investigational process will work. Investigations are often viewed as a skeptical activity because the main goal is trying to determine what the witness actually saw. Is it explainable or not? This is done through critical thinking and an event replication process developed by SGHA. This is an important concept because what defines a haunting or ghost sighting is “Multiple witnesses reporting unusual phenomena over a period of time”. If these phenomena can be explained, the witness reports are no longer validating paranormal activity as a cause and thus there is no ghost or haunting. Additionally historical research may be done in an attempt to validate facts.

It is important to understand that the goal of an investigation is not to find evidence of the paranormal but to attempt to identify any natural or manmade causes of the reported phenomena

Definition of Terms

Investigation Status: Unsolved investigations will have either an open or closed status. An investigation is given an “Open” status if:

The investigators were unable to replicate all of the witness events. Something significant remains that is still unsolved.

It is important to understand that an “open” investigation does not mean that the unsolved facts are paranormal in nature. It simply means that we have exhausted our resources and cannot solve the “open” items/events.

A “Closed” status indicates that there is insufficient data or confounding variables that prevents replication or identifying possible explanations. This often occurs when investigators do not have direct access to witnesses or some other environmental change have occurred that creates confounding variables.

Confidentiality Notice

Many of the witnesses interviewed have wished to remain anonymous in exchange for presenting their accounts of paranormal experiences. We honor that request and thus witnesses will often be identified by aliases. Any coincidence between aliases and actual persons is unintentional.

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Part 1: Location Information

Palo Pinto Cemetery

Palo Pinto, Texas

Part 2: Location History

Palo Pinto, the county seat of Palo Pinto County, is on U.S. Highway 180 and Farm Road 4, twelve miles southwest of Mineral Wells in the central part of the county. Settlers began arriving in the area in 1855, attracted by the fertile soil in the Brazos River valley. A legislative act of August 27, 1856, formed Palo Pinto County and specified that the county seat, to be named Golconda, be located within five miles of the center of the county. The county was organized on May 13, 1857, and at the first meeting of the county court (held on August 18 of that year) steps were taken to have Golconda surveyed and laid out. The Golconda post office was established in March 1858.



That same year the name of the community was changed to Palo Pinto, and the post office was renamed accordingly in 1860. The first courthouse cost \$300 and was built in 1857; a two-story jail was erected in 1858. Joseph H. Dillahunty was the first postmaster and operated the first general store. Some of his early customers

included Charles Goodnight and Christopher Columbus Slaughter.

Other enterprises included several saloons, a hotel, and a law firm. James H. Baker began the community's first school in 1858. Hardships caused by the Civil War curtailed most businesses during the 1860s, but during the next decade Palo Pinto became established as a ranching center. The original courthouse was replaced by a native sandstone building in 1881. The town was on the Fort Griffin-Weatherford stage line, which crossed the Brazos at Oaks Crossing.

A ferry on the Brazos was replaced by a bridge in 1895. James C. Son started the first newspaper in the county, the Palo Pinto County Star, in Palo Pinto on June 22, 1876. The oldest Masonic lodge in the region was active by that year as well. Palo Pinto was the county seat and only town in the county in 1880, but that year it was bypassed by the Texas and Pacific Railway when its tracks were laid through the area. Although the town declined somewhat, its 1891 population was 400, and its businesses included a flour mill, a bank, a hotel, a gin, and a saloon. In 1940 a new courthouse replaced the 1881 structure. The population of Palo Pinto by 1947 had reportedly reached 550. In 1990 Palo Pinto reported 350 residents and eight businesses; at that time it still was unincorporated. The community sponsors an annual old settlers' reunion.

Part 3: Witnesses

This section identifies the witnesses to the reported activity.

Name	Sex	Connection with reported incident	Interviewed
Berry Smith*	M	Witness	04 August 2001

*Witnesses given aliases are noted by a **

This single witness e-mailed the story of the cemetery to us and claims to have heard the phone ringing in the cemetery (see Reported Phenomenon)

Part 4: Reported Phenomenon

Around 1920, Earl Allen of Palo Pinto County wanted to be able to reach out and touch someone on the off-chance he was still able. Apparently no stranger to the evils of alcohol, Allen was worried that a drunken stupor might be mistaken for death and that he might be called to the bone orchard prematurely.

This was before embalming was commonplace but just after the telephone had made their debut in West Texas. Just to be sure he was really dead, Allen wanted to be buried with a telephone in his mausoleum. If no one got a call from him in three days, the 84-year-old said, the line could be disconnected, as he would be answering the roll call up yonder. However,

there are present day stories that a phone can be heard ringing out in the graveyard late at night.

Part 5: Investigation

At one point we did hear the sound of bells which resembled the sound of a phone ringing. We tracked down the source to an old wreath that had bells on it. Whenever the wind would blow, it moved the bells and made the ringing sound. The ringing could only be heard clearly if you were downwind of the wreath.

As we moved throughout the cemetery, we located two more of these bell laden wreaths. Undoubtedly, they are probably the source of the "phone" in the ghost stories we heard from the locals.

Part 6: Conclusion

The claims of paranormal activity were identified and explained.

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Part 7: Photographs







PALO PINTO CEMETERY

THIS CEMETERY TRACES ITS HISTORY TO 1857 WHEN A 320-ACRE TRACT OF LAND WAS SURVEYED FOR THE ORIGINAL PALO PINTO TOWNSITE. THE TOWN WAS PLATTED IN 1858 AND ONE BLOCK WAS LAID AROUND AN EXISTING CEMETERY. IN 1880 PALO PINTO CITIZENS PURCHASED THE GRAVEYARD FROM THE COUNTY. THE OLDEST LEGIBLE GRAVE MARKER IS THAT OF GEORGE W. SLAUGHTER (MAY 6, 1843-JUNE 15, 1860). THOSE INTERRED HERE INCLUDE AREA PIONEERS, MILITARY VETERANS, TEXAS RANGERS, AND PROMINENT PALO PINTO CITIZENS. THE PALO PINTO CEMETERY ASSOCIATION WAS ORGANIZED IN 1974 TO PROVIDE MAINTENANCE FOR THE CEMETERY.

(1893)



