

The Gonzales Inquirer

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Marker, plaque to be dedicated at cemetery in J. B. Wells Park

The Gonzales County Historical Commission will participate in the dedication of the Green DeWitt Cemetery as an historic cemetery at 2:30 p.m. Thursday, April 1.



This special designation is issued by the Texas Historical Commission based on an extensive application process justifying this recognition, according to Bob Burchard, chairman of the Gonzales County Historical Commission.

"The Green DeWitt Cemetery is probably our most historically significant cemetery in Gonzales County because Sarah Seely DeWitt, wife of Green DeWitt is buried there. Green DeWitt, founder of Gonzales and Green DeWitt's Colony in 1825, died in Mexico in 1835 and is buried there, but Sarah, his wife, several children and grandchildren are interred here," Burchard said.

The Green DeWitt Cemetery, located in the J.B. Wells Park, is situated on a league of land granted by the Mexican government in 1830 to Sarah Seely in her individual name. She petitioned the Mexican government for the land basing her request on the dire economic circumstances placed on her family by the

slow growth of her husband's colony.

Special guests at the dedication ceremony will be Esther Simon and Jimmie Wootten of Houston, great-great granddaughters of Green DeWitt and Sarah Seely DeWitt. Also in attendance will be members of the San Jacinto chapter of Houston and the Thomas Shelton chapter of Gonzales of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas. The public is invited to attend.

Here is the text of Sarah Seely DeWitt's request for the Mexican government to grant the land to her where J.B. Wells Park now is located:

Most excellent Sir:

I, Sarah Seely, wife of Green De Witt, with a family of six children, with all due respect and in the best form of law, present the following statement: in the year 1826 I arrived in this country with my above mentioned family from the state of Missouri, one of the United States of the North. Since the said year, 1826, until now I have dwelt on a sitio of land, chosen by my husband, on the right bank of the Guadalupe River, opposite the town of Gonzales. My husband, before mentioned, has made improvements such as houses and out buildings for the family and has opened a rather large farm. The family has suffered much in consequence of being in an unpopulated country on the frontier, through exposure to the incursions of the savage Indians, and for want of supplies. For these reasons and also because my husband, the said Green De Witt, finds himself much embarrassed in his affairs on account of the enterprise that he has undertaken, and because of other circumstances which have placed the family in an unfortunate situation, I, the petitioner, with a view to acquiring and preserving a secure estate for the maintenance of myself and children, humbly beg your excellency to have the kindness to concede to me and my children in fee simple for myself and my heirs the sitio of land above mentioned on which I now live, with the understanding that all the requirements of the law in the matter will be fulfilled. Therefore I ask and beg that

you be so kind as to favor me by doing as above stated.

SARAH SEELY

Gonzales, September 11, 1830.

[Then follow endorsements of the petition by Stephen F. Austin and Samuel M. Williams. DeWitt then adds that this has been done with his knowledge and consent, that at the time of their marriage his wife had possessed considerable property which he had since spent, and that, as he had no other means of recompense, he had given her all the improvements on the land, and he now hoped that the government would concede her the land.]

Leona Vicario, February 15, 1831.

In accordance with the provisions of the State colonization law of March 24, 1825, and in virtue of the foregoing report, I grant the petitioner the sitio of land for which she asks, either in the place which she indicates or in any other that may be more desirable, provided that it be entirely vacant and that no corporation or person holds any title to it. The commissioner for the distribution of lands of the grant in which is located that asked for by the petitioner, and in his absence the first or the only alcalde of the municipality concerned will put her in possession of the said sitio and extend to her the proper title, previously designating the quality of the land in order to determine what ought to be paid to the state, to satisfy which I allow the time prescribed by article 22 of the said law. Let there be given by the secretary's office to the interested party a copy of her petition and of this concession, in order that, when she presents the copy to the commissioner, he may act accordingly.

VIESCA.

SANTIAGO DEL VALLE, Secretary.

[Then follow the petition to the commission, the order

for the title, and the issuance of the title including the field notes.]

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Phone: 830-672-2861 - E-Mail:

news@gonzalesinquirer.com