

# Group adds new markers at historic burial ground

10/20/2021 Conroe Cobvier

By **Sondra Hernandez**

STAFF WRITER

Members of the Margaret Montgomery Chapter of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution became a part of the ongoing cleanup and renovation efforts Saturday at the Conroe Community Cemetery in Conroe.

The restoration process for the historic cemetery started for historian and researcher Jon Edens in the fall of 2016.

The cemetery exists between the Oakwood Cemetery and Old Normal College property. It is said to be one of the oldest burial grounds in Montgomery County serving as a final resting place for dozens of Black citizens who settled here during the post Civil War era.

Edens was transcribing graves at the adjacent Oakwood Cemetery in the fall of 2011 when he saw a grave on the north side of the fence of the property. He

*Cemetery continues on A3*



Margaret Montgomery Chapter of the NSDAR / Courtesy photo

**Margaret Montgomery Chapter of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution help in a cleanup.**

# CEMETERY

From page A1

climbed the fence and discovered several graves among the overgrown property.

The Conroe Community Cemetery Restoration Project was launched and a group of volunteers banded together to clean the property and identify as many graves as possible there.

Mittie J. Campbell, an early educator of Black students, is buried there. As is Montgomery County's only known Buffalo soldier Luther J. Dorsey. The group is going strong with their fall clean up sessions and over the summer the cemetery was designated a Historic Texas Cemetery by the Texas Historical Commission. The project will receive its marker sometime in 2022.

On Saturday, chapter members placed five "unknown" markers at graves where the information about the person interred there is not known. The Conroe Community Cemetery Restoration Project received the unknown markers this summer and will spend the fall placing them. Volunteer John Meredith said volunteers have identified about 150 burials



Margaret Montgomery Chapter of the NSDAR / Courtesy photo

**On Saturday, 17 members of the Margaret Montgomery Chapter of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution became a part of the cleanup and renovation efforts at the Conroe Community Cemetery in Conroe.**

where they don't know the names of the people interred there.

The members worked with project volunteer Tommy Cheney to learn how to place the markers while not disturbing artifacts – like pitchers, shells, plates and more – that were traditionally used in the Black burial tradition. They also heard a history of the cemetery and its renovation efforts from Meredith.

The chapter namesake Margaret Montgomery was born in South Carolina in 1773.

Montgomery married Owen Shannon in Wilkes County, Georgia, on Oct. 12, 1792; both Owen and his father had served in the American Revolution and received bounty land in Georgia for their service. In 1827, the couple settled on a league of land granted to Austin's second colony by

the Mexican government, and Owen established a trading post, calling it "Montgomery," his wife's maiden name.

The Margaret Montgomery Chapter NSDAR, organized Oct. 6, 1950 and placed a marker on Montgomery's grave in 1959.

According to Chapter Regent Cindy Amburgey, the chapter focuses on historic preservation, patriotism and service in the commu-

nity.

Amburgey is also on the board of the Conroe Community Cemetery Restoration Project and she thought the two groups could go hand-in-hand.

Chapter members encountered artifacts like a part of a pitcher, its base and metal nameplates for the grave as they placed the markers. Meredith noted in a previous Courier article it was not uncommon to find

items like plates, water pitchers and more around a grave indicating that the piece may have belonged to or had special meaning to the deceased when they were alive.

In November, as one of five chapters in Montgomery County, the Margaret Montgomery Chapter will lay a wreath as a part of Veteran's Day services at the Montgomery County Memorial Veteran's Park at Texas 105 and Interstate 45 in Conroe.

This Saturday, members of the restoration project will host a clean up at the cemetery from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. According to Meredith, there is a large amount of debris left from the last cleanup that needs to be moved and chipped up as well as brush cleared from along the Oakwood Cemetery side of the south fence.

For more information about the Margaret Montgomery Chapter of NSDAR, visit <https://www.texasdar.org/chapters/Margaret-Montgomery/>.

For more information about the Conroe Community Cemetery Restoration Project, visit <https://www.facebook.com/cccrp>.