A Harlingen Cemetery Chronology

12/10/09 Seventeen year old Robert Keen Weems is to die in an industrial accident. Town founder, Lon C. Hill, in a telegram from St. Louis designates a site along the San Benito Highway, now South F Street, for the burial.

2/1/12 Initially the Harlingen Cemetery Association, an offshoot of the Harlingen Civic Club (a women's organization), handles burial arrangements, but upon the club's recommendation the Harlingen Land and Water Company sells 7.6 acres for one dollar to the Trustees for the Harlingen Cemetery. These were B.F. Surface, C.W. Clift, and E.W. Anglin.


5/9/47 The Trustees deed the cemetery property to the City of Harlingen. Prior to this date the cemetery includes two major sections. F Street to E Street is the "American Section, and E Street to D Street is the "Mexican Section". Other areas were designated for blacks and for babies. After this month, grave sites may be selected regardless of ethnic or racial origin.

1962 The Tip-O-Texas Genealogical Society surveys and records graves in the cemetery.

1974 The City Commission authorizes a hurricane fence topped with barbed wire to surround the cemetery and two lockable gates. These are erected around the site to stop vandalism. Although the cemetery had a sexton or caretaker, it became neglected in appearance over time.

1981 The Harlingen Cemetery is included in the Harlingen Register of Historic Places.

1982 The Tip-O-Texas Genealogical Society updates, corrects, and alphabetizes the Harlingen Cemetery grave list.

1984 Thanks to the efforts of Mrs. Menton (Betty) Murray, who compiles a history of the cemetery among other lobbying work, a Texas Historical Commission Marker is obtained for the Harlingen Cemetery.

2000s Harlingen Proud, the city, and other organizations take a renewed interest in the cemetery, its heritage, and its maintenance.

11/1/04 The Harlingen Cemetery sees its first annual Día de los Muertos or Day of the Dead Celebration.

3/05 The Harlingen Public Library computerizes all available names and additional information on individuals buried in the Harlingen Cemetery. Mary Lou Rumbo of the Harlingen Historical Preservation Society spearheads efforts to organize documents and
people to systematically plot the graves and accompanying names of those buried in the Harlingen Cemetery. Considerable material is gathered and archived in the Archive Room at the Harlingen Public Library.