

Struck Cemetery

James D. Barnes, 27th March 2026 – last revised 5th April 2026

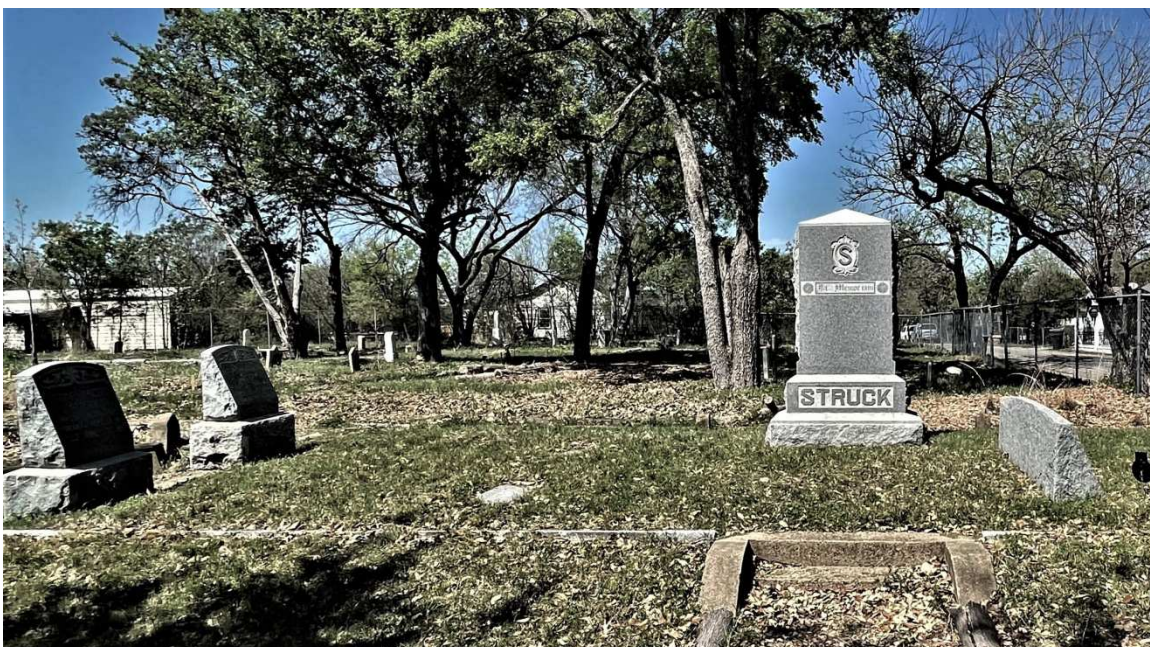


*Looking north into the Struck Cemetery section of Western Heights Cemetery (March 2026)
Located on the northwest corner of Fort Worth Avenue and Neal Street: (approx. 32.76605°N; 96.84586°W)*

Like many cemeteries in north Texas, *Western Heights Cemetery* is actually a combined growth. It started and remains as two separate cemeteries. The original cemetery, which included an earlier Coombes family graveyard, was established by a real estate deed in 1881-- covering a bit more than two acres.¹ The Heinrich F. Struck family lived nearby and three generations were involved in development of a separate adjacent cemetery section. Their *Struck Cemetery* started with a family burial in 1917.² A Struck real estate deed dedicated land as a cemetery in 1922.³ Today the *Struck Cemetery* encloses about 1/6 acre (~7,218 square feet). The most important historic artifacts of a cemetery are its various individual burials; however, this article will not try to discuss all of those separate internments but instead will focus only on the history of the overall site.

I have found that we are left with three basic questions regarding Struck Cemetery:

1. Why was this corner of a rectangular site not included in the 1881 deed creating Western Heights cemetery?
2. How did the Struck family gain ownership of their separate cemetery site?
3. How did the Struck family manage and arrange burials in its cemetery?



Struck family graves

Two stones at left:
Heinrich F. Struck (1856-1917), far left.
Anna Maria Struck (1864-1923).

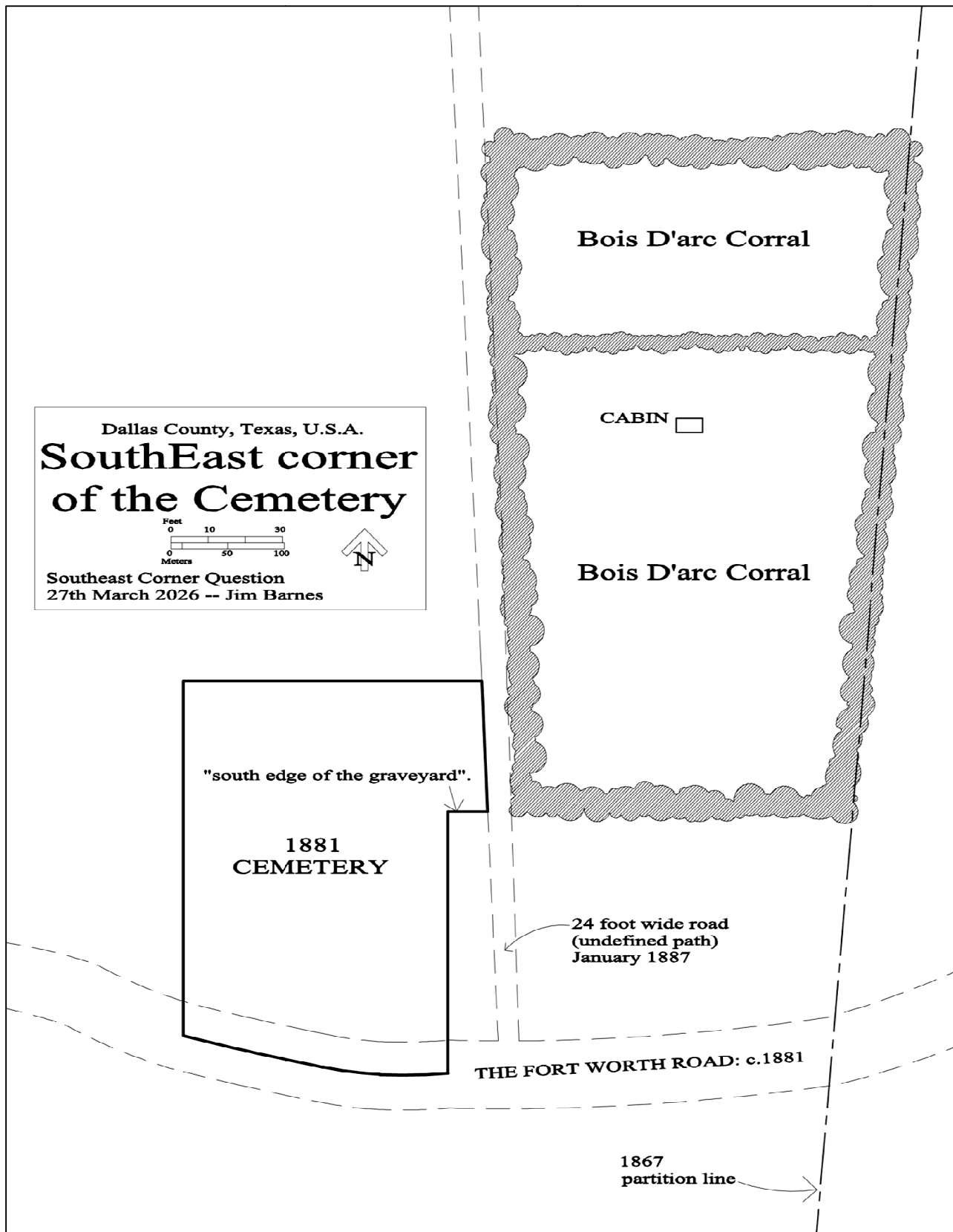
Struck monument

Double stone at right:
Henry Carl Struck (1890-1955) and wife
Helen Hazel (Heist) Struck (1900-1999).

1. Why was this corner not included in the 1881 creation of the Western Heights cemetery?

In 1874 Barclay M. Bradford, foster father to the last children of William Nelson Coombes and his second wife Rachel Coombes, bought out the inherited land of the Coombes' heirs, and used that money to sustain his foster children. Bradford then slowly sold off pieces of the forty acre site.⁴ In 1881 he sold approximately two acres to the Trustees of the West Dallas Church of Christ to be used as building site and cemetery. In 1890 they built their church building elsewhere – several blocks northeast.⁵ The 2 acres remains as Western Heights Cemetery.

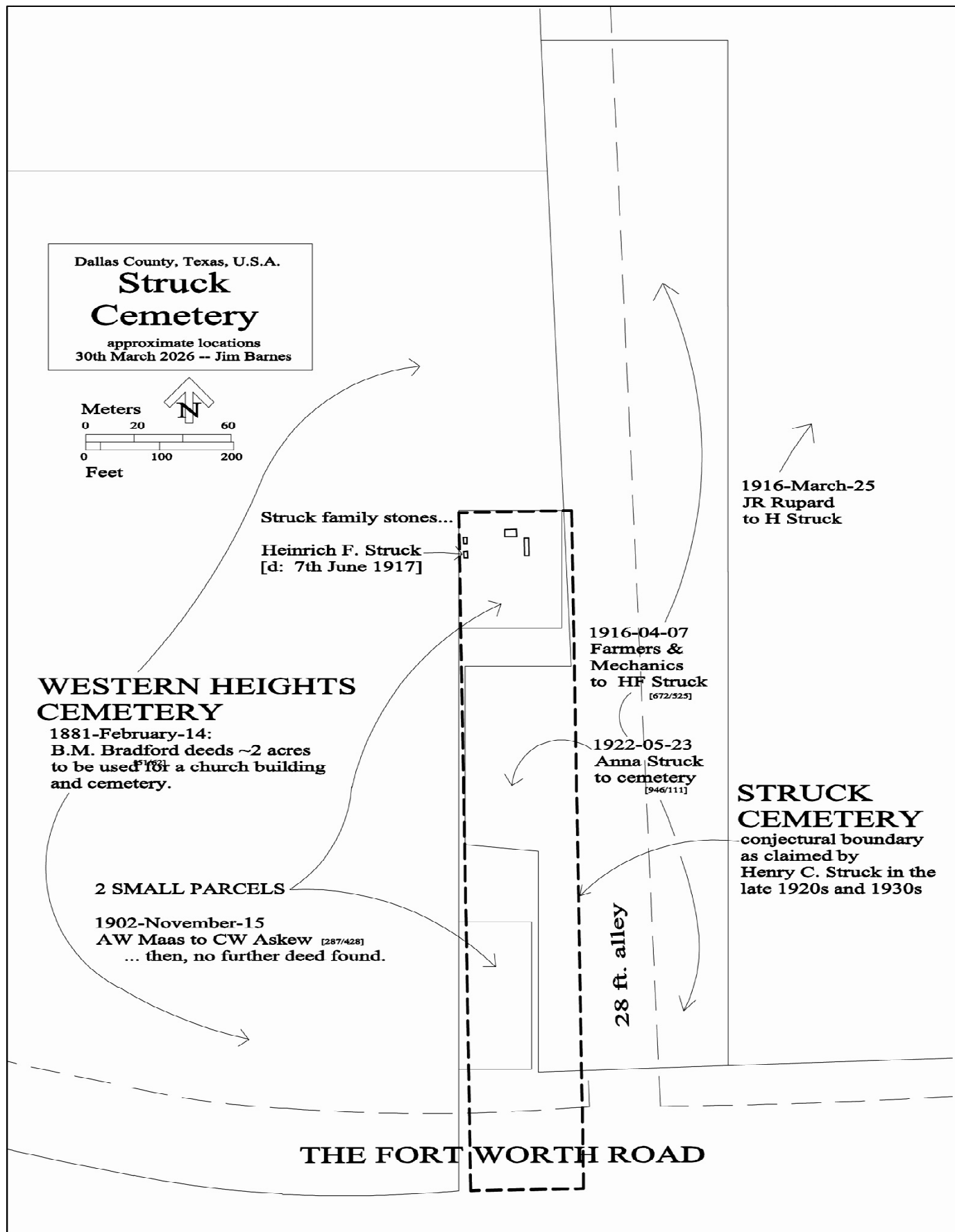
Another article on this webpage discusses this southeast corner of Western Heights Cemetery, wondering why it had been notched out of the original cemetery boundary.⁶ It is known that William Coombes had surrounded the cabin which he had purchased from Mabel Gilbert in 1843 with a corral of thorny bois d'arc trees. Surviving photographs from the 1920s show remnants of that bois d'arc corral running along what is now Neal Street, with that remnant tree line starting across the street from the Coombes family graveyard. Deeds from the 19th century describe corners for northern segments of that bois d'arc corral, with a secondary internal bois-d'arc partition, but those deeds do not explicitly locate the southern corners of the corral.⁷ Below is a conjectural site plan, showing how it is possible that the southern edge of the bois d'arc corral might have been started north of the Fort Worth wagon road. We do not know what might have been located in the southeast corner notched out of the cemetery.



Another possible location of the southern edge of the Bois D'arc Corral

2. How did the Struck family gain ownership of the cemetery site?

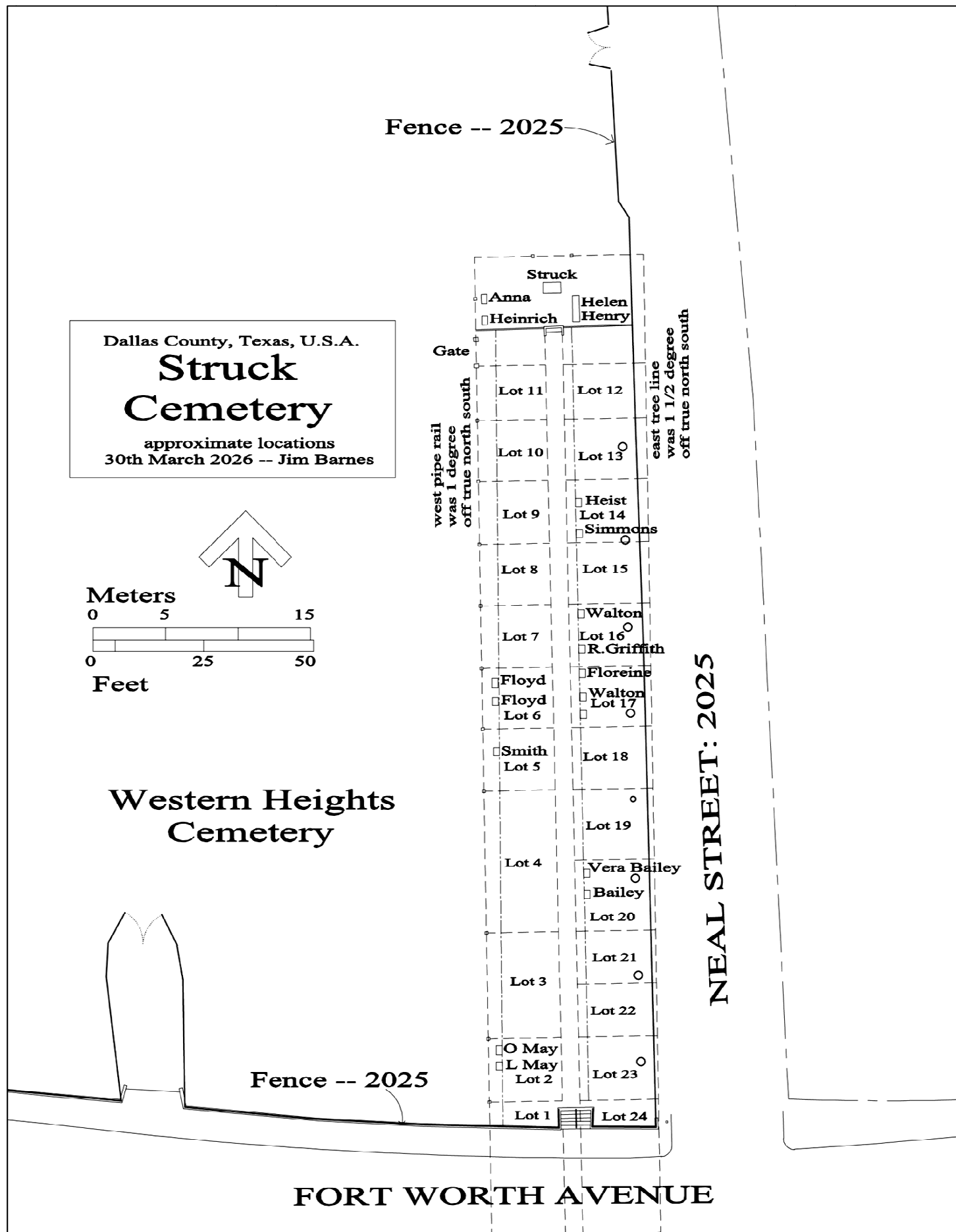
A separate article on this website gives the history of deed transfers filed in Dallas County Real Estate Records for the cemetery area.⁸ Another separate article shows boundaries described in those deeds compared to the present cemetery boundaries, and fences, as rendered on a survey drawn in year 2025 by *TransTexas Survey & Mapping*.⁹ That survey's boundaries, and the deed it cited for the Struck Cemetery section, are copied from the *Dallas County Central Appraisal District*. But the deed cited for Struck Cemetery and its parallelogram boundaries are totally without documentation. The deed cited by the *Dallas Central Appraisal District* for Struck Cemetery actually describes only boundaries of the 1881 cemetery located next to it. The *Dallas Central Appraisal District* eventually could find no document record of the Struck Cemetery – nor could I.



Heinrich Frederick Struck (1856-1917) bought a house on the southwest corner of Stafford and Edgefield in 1887¹⁰, married Anna Maria in 1889¹¹, and they had one child, Henry Carl Struck (1890-1955).¹² The Strucks bought and sold many parcels of land but didn't buy the site east of today's Neal Street until March of 1916,¹³ then bought the funny little T-shaped lot including parts of today's Struck Cemetery a couple of weeks later.¹⁴ Two little parcels inside the notch at the southeast corner of the Western Heights Cemetery had been sold together in 1887, but those titles were then traded in south Texas, far from Dallas, and a final deed sold the two little parcels to a Charles W. Askew of Washington County, Texas in 1902.¹⁵ Askew then died in 1909¹⁶ and his heirs had moved to California where they were enrolled in the 1920 Census.¹⁷ It appears that the two little parcels in Dallas County had been abandoned. When Heinrich F. Struck died in 1917 he was buried on the northern of the two little tracts – land the Struck family had never formally purchased. I searched the Deed Indexes several times – I find no record of title to the two little parcels being sold after Askew's purchase in 1902, nor can I find any record of any Struck ever purchasing them.

It isn't known why the *Farmer & Mechanics Lumber Company* had purchased the uniquely odd-shaped lot along modern Neal Street in 1905.¹⁸ At first, I thought perhaps they were logging the old bois d'arc hedgerow for commercial timbers, but their site never included other available hedgerows nor were all the bois d'arcs on this site cut down before they sold it to Heinrich Struck 11 years later.¹⁹ In 1922, shortly before her own death, Heinrich's widow Anna Struck dedicated the 1.5 acres of this strange T-shaped parcel to become a permanent cemetery, though most of it was never used as cemetery at all, and merely became Neal Street. Since 1884 there had been a deeded road easement along the east side of the Coombes family cemetery,²⁰ though it appears to have been unnecessary after the "public highway" easement along what is now Montclair Avenue was deeded in 1909.²¹

At any rate, after his parents are both dead and buried on land which is neither inside the 1881 cemetery nor on land they had ever formally purchased, sole child Henry Carl Struck started filling in the Struck Cemetery area. In a pair of 1929 real estate deeds he mentioned that he had an "unrecorded plat" map of his cemetery.²²

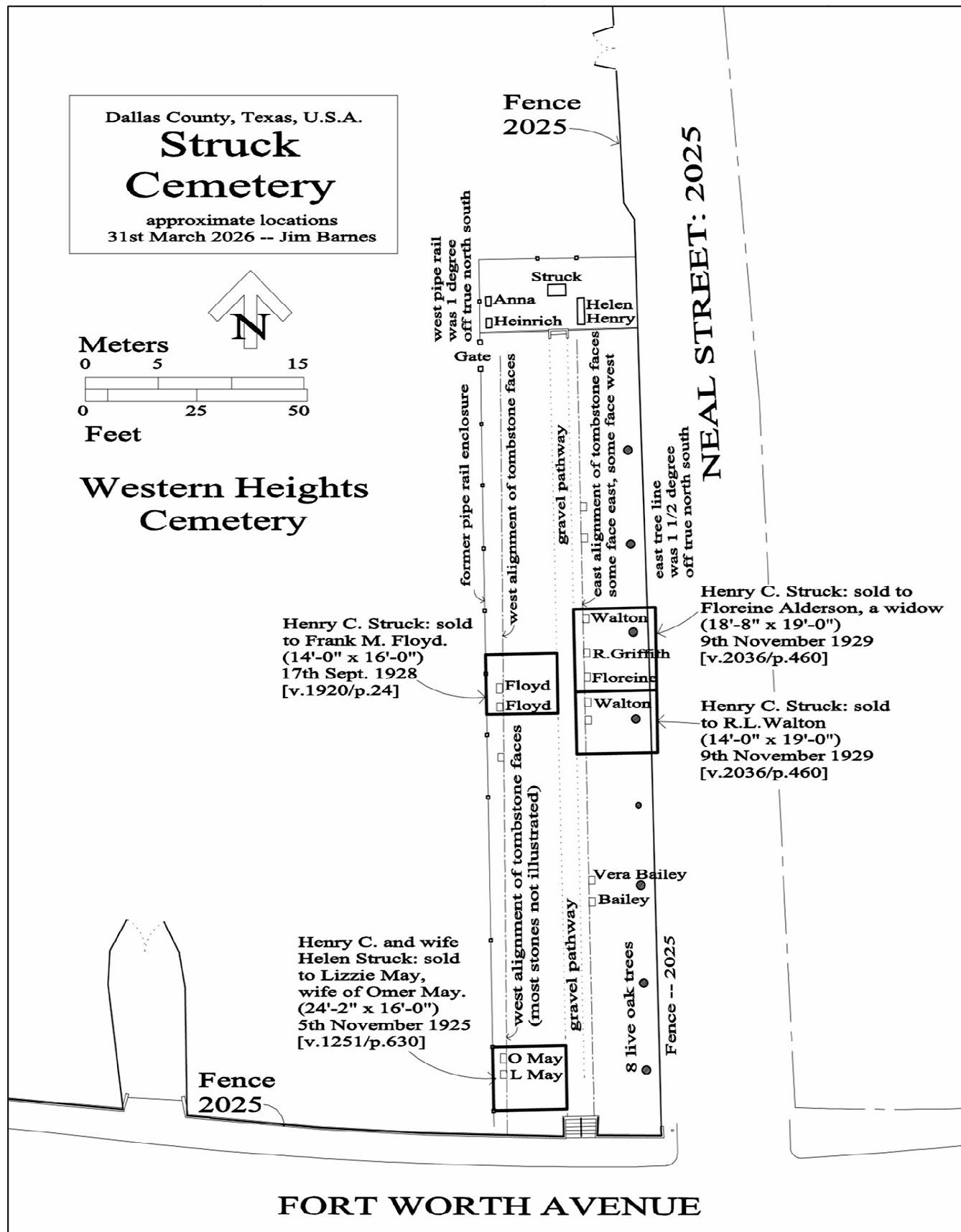


Highly conjectural reconstruction of Henry C. Struck's plat map for Struck Cemetery, c. 1929.

A row of live oak trees was planted along the east side of *Struck Cemetery* by Carl Struck (Heinrich and Anna Struck's grandson, Henry Carl Struck, Jr. – 1931-2019), apparently in the 1960s, after his father's death.²³ I measure that tree line orientation as being about one-half degree off the alignment of his father's plat. The fence along Neal Street lines up with those trees -- apparently erected after their plantings. The metal fence and concrete retaining wall and steps along Fort Worth Avenue appear to date from a road widening in about the 1960s, decades after Henry C. Struck's plat. Perhaps someday this valuable private plat map will re-surface from private Struck family archives. Henry C. Struck apparently never filed a claim to the complete site of his Struck Cemetery.

3. How did Henry C. Struck manage and arrange burials in its cemetery?

There are Dallas County Deed Record documents of Henry C. Struck selling four burial lots inside his Struck Cemetery. There are receipts for further burials – Mullinex, Harrison, Smith, Evans – for which I can find no corresponding deed filings. It appears that Henry Struck was both selling burial lots and charging grave fees inside his Struck Cemetery. We have no complete inventory of his transactions, nor is it known what happened to the ownership title of these lots which he sold.

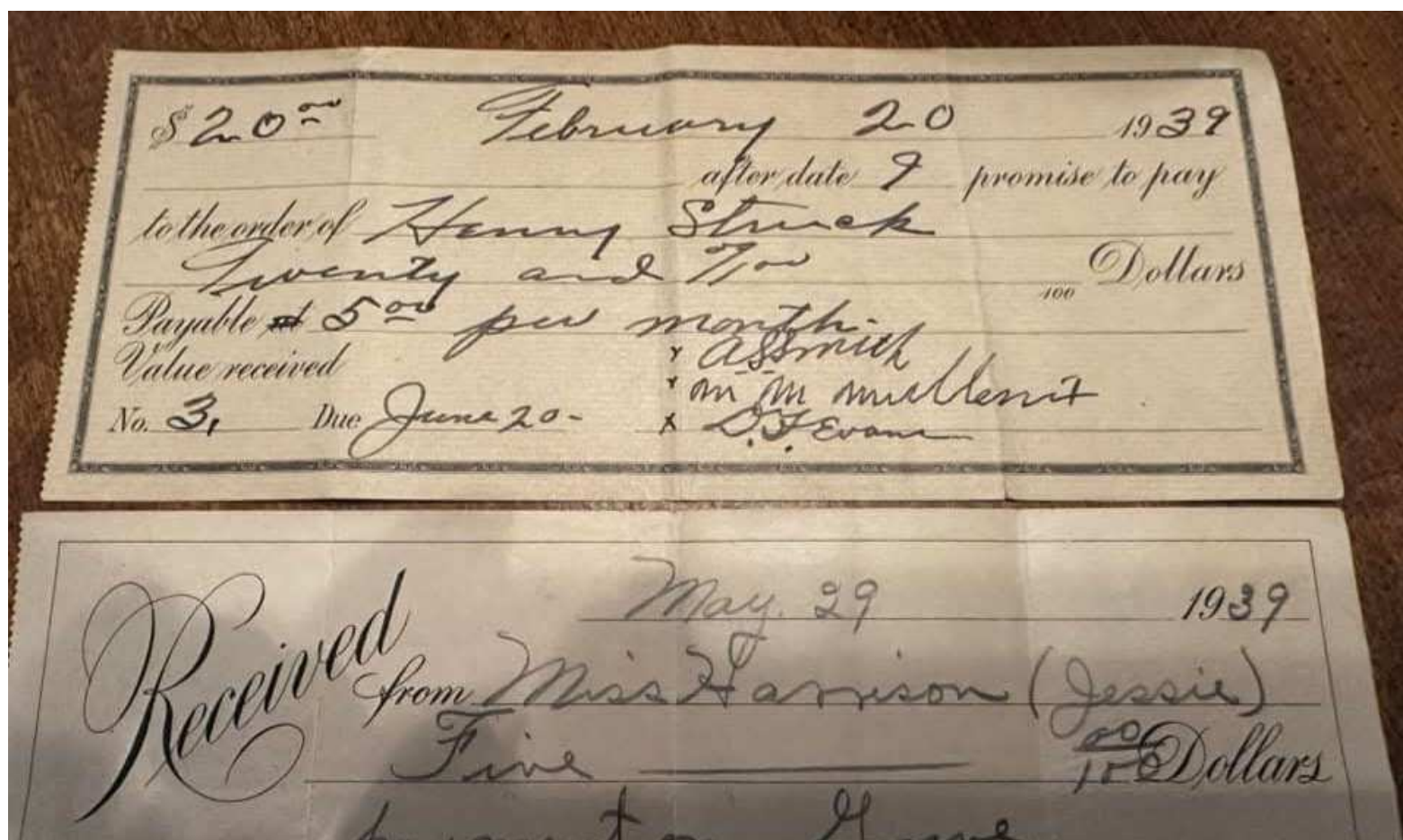


Four burial lots sold by Henry C. Struck inside his Struck Cemetery

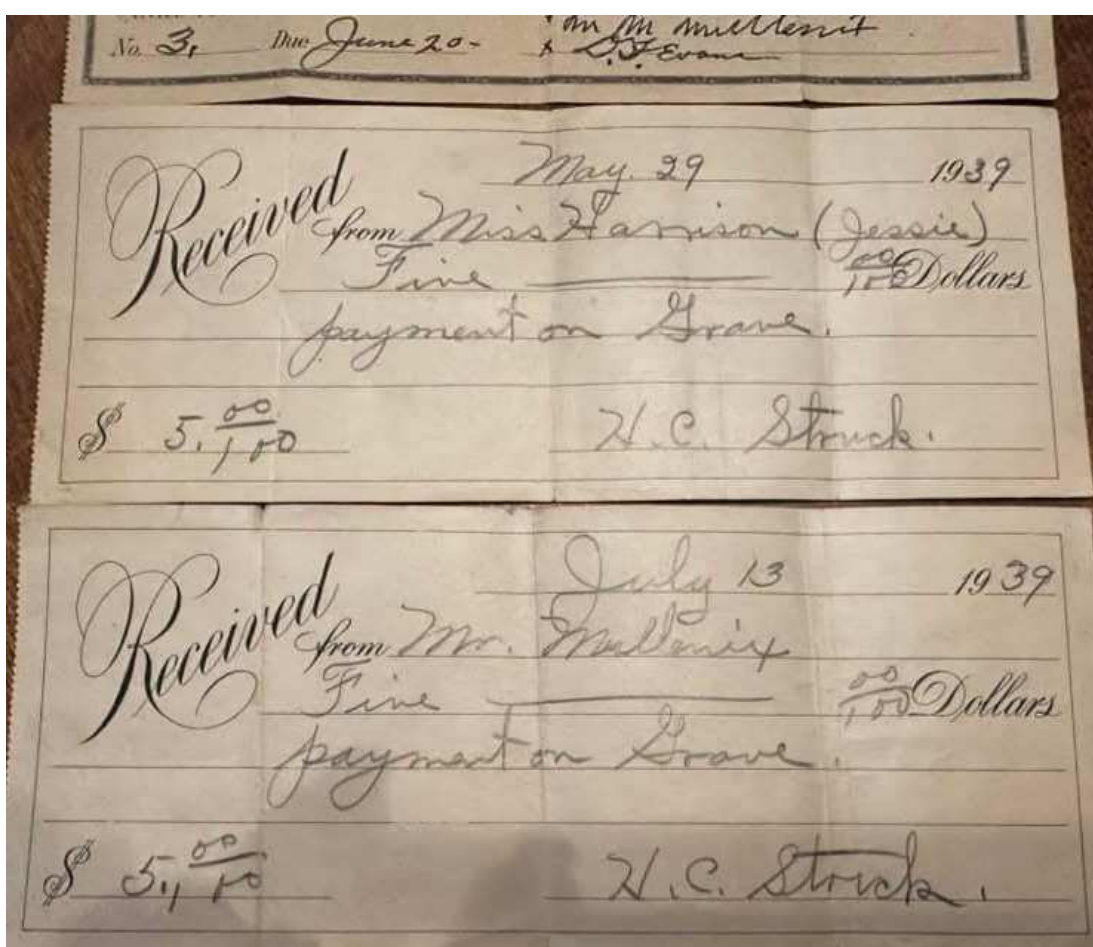
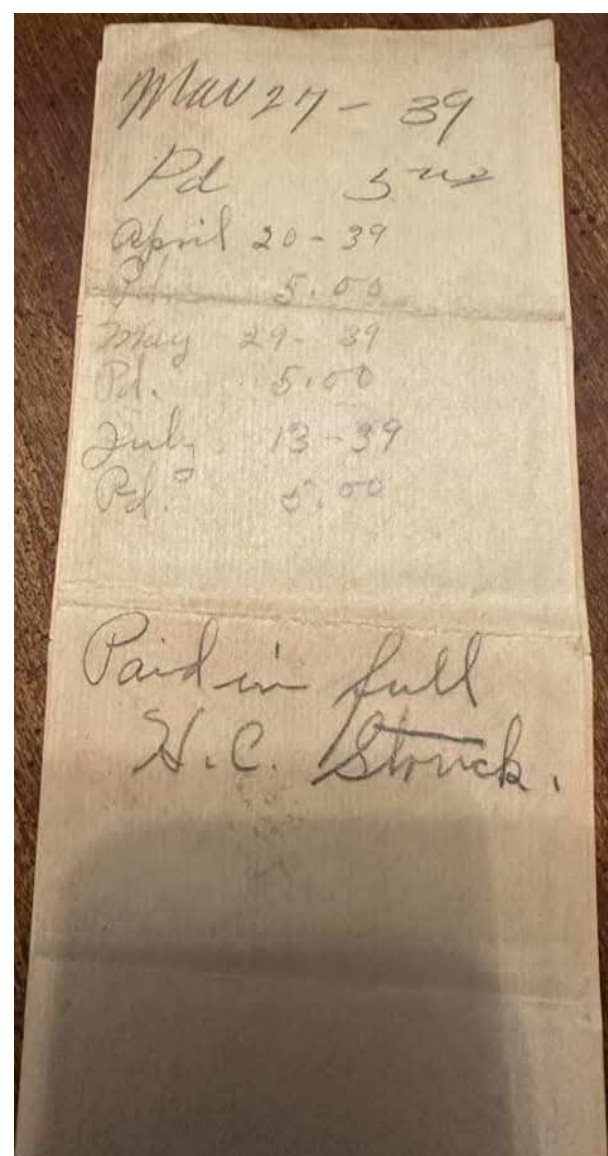
It is noteworthy that the southern lot sold to Lizzie May in 1925 was deeded by Henry C. Struck together with his wife Helen Struck, while deeds for the central three lots were signed by Henry alone. The land of the central area of Struck Cemetery was inherited from Struck's mother, and under Texas inheritance law was his property alone, whereas the deed for the southern site being signed by both Henry and his wife Helen indicates that it was not inherited; that it was common-property of their marriage, presumably because it was part of the two small parcels claimed by "adverse possession" -- an enterprise in which son Henry C. Struck had participated.

(Henry C. Struck left Dallas to attend Texas A&M College and he was soldier during World War I; but his enrollment at Texas A&M begins in 1909²⁴ and he would have graduated, and have been an adult living back in Dallas when his parents bought the parcels east of Western Heights Cemetery in 1916. He is listed in the 1918 *Dallas City Directory* along with his widow mother living with him on Edgefield. His military service was relatively late during WWI, and there is no record of him ever leaving the continental USA. He went for military training in Florida then is seen doing aviation repairs at the air base in Dallas -- Love Field presumably-- as the army was demobilizing.²⁵ Henry C. Struck Sr. would have been present for, and presumably participated in, the burials of both his parents.)

I must confess that my drawings in this article were never able to conform to the metes-and-bounds specifications of the various deeds signed by Henry C. Struck Sr.; nor were my drawings able to fit those dimensions to my field measurements of the existing gravestone positions. In the first Struck Cemetery lot sale, to Lizzie May in 1925, Henry Struck starts his survey from the southeast corner of a parcel sold by the Estate of B.M. Bradford to Homer Ferguson (Dallas County Deed Records, Vol. 298/p. 433, dated 13th May 1903); but that deed explicitly established that corner "on the north side of the Fort Worth + Dallas Road", whereas Struck's survey description seems to have started from the centerline of the road—a point which is never established in the Deed Records. At any rate that southeast corner of the Struck Cemetery is never defined, and my measurements are unable to deduct a consistent location for it. My drawings reconcile locations as best I could guess, but the deed specifications never made full and consistent geometric sense to me.



Three scans: A check to Henry C. Struck and receipts for graves signed by Henry C. Struck.
Source: Van Johnson, March 2026.



Fences for the Struck Cemetery:

Today along the west and north sides of the Struck Cemetery area are a series of short reinforced concrete posts with holes through which a low pipe rail formerly ran. Two slightly larger concrete posts appear to have been a gateway, located just below the raised platform on which the Struck family's four burials reside. Only one segment of this pipe fence remains today. It appears that years later, after the pipes had mostly been removed, a medium height chain link fence was run along the west side of Struck Cemetery. That fence has also been removed.



Last surviving pipe segment of low fence along west side of the Struck Cemetery, behind tombstones of Anna and Heinrich Struck. To its right is an opening when appears to have been a former gate. (Photo by author, March 2026)



3-4 foot high chain-link fence along the west side of the Struck Cemetery, circa 2007. (Photo via Van Johnson, April 2026)

(End)

FOOTNOTES:

1. 1881-February-14th; *Dallas Co. Deed Records*; Vol. 51, Page 62-63; BM Bradford to Trustee of the Church of Christ.
2. *FindAGrave.com* (March 2026); webpage on burial of Heinrich Frederich Struck (1856-1917) in Western Heights Cemetery; Dallas, Texas.
Curiously, there is an earlier date of death marked inside the Struck Cemetery section by the tombstone for Vera Bailey (1900-1907). This is apparently a burial moved here at some later date. She is buried alongside her aunt and uncle. Though no explicit record of her reburial in the Struck Cemetery is found, the carving of her tombstone seems to match her aunt and uncle's whose earliest death date is 1934.
3. 1922-May-3rd; *Dallas Co. Deed Records*, Vol. 946, Pages 111-112.; Anna Struck dedication of Family Cemetery.
4. 1874-December-23rd; *Dallas Co. Deed Records*; Vol. Y, Pages 766-767. ; EG Bower to BM Bradford
5. See also the history of the West Dallas Church of Christ: <http://www.7Ladders.com/Coombes/WGCC.pdf>; (January 2026)
6. SouthEast Corner of the Western Heights Cemetery; <http://www.7Ladders.com/Coombes/Corner.pdf>; (October 2025).
7. The Bois D'Arc Corral; <http://www.7Ladders.com/Coombes/Corral>; (October 2025).
8. Western Heights Cemetery: Real Estate Deed History: <http://www.7Ladders.com/Coombes/CemDeed.pdf>; (March 2026).
9. Western Heights Cemetery: Boundaries: <http://www.7Ladders.com/Coombes/Boundaries.pdf>; (March 2026).
10. 1887-January-25th; *Dallas Co. Deed Records*; Vol. 79, Page 497; Reinhart + Sarah Noel to Henry Struck; Lot 3, Block 3, Flanders Hts.
By the way, this lot had been purchased by Reinhart Noel from Daniel Stafford on the 4th of September 1884, shortly after Flanders Heights was first platted. I believe the price increase, from \$200 in 1884. to \$1,000 in 1887, indicates that a house was already constructed on the site when bachelor Heinrich Struck bought it. That house was added to multiple times during Struck ownership.
11. 1889-May-16th; *Dallas Morning News*; page 5, *Local Notes*. – Henry Struck marries Miss Anna Salemon at her residence.
12. 1923-June-2nd; Affidavit by Henry C. Struck and J.L. Cain; *Dallas County Deed Records*; Vol. 1031; Pages 228-229.
13. 1916-March-25th; *Dallas Co. Deed Records*; Vol. 146, Pages 145-146; Rupart to Henry and Anna Struck.
14. 1916-April-7th; *Dallas County Deed Records*; Vol. 672; Page 525-526; Farmers & Mechanics Lumber Co. to Henry Struck + wife.
15. See *Note 8* above for string of titles with record document citations.
16. *FindAGrave.com* (March 2026); webpage on burial of Charles W. Askew (1835-1909), Masonic Cemetery, Chappell Hill, Texas.
17. The daughter of Charles W. Askew (1835-1909) of Washington County, Texas, Eva (Askew) Gray had married Richard Gray in June 1889.
They are enrolled in the 1920 U.S. Census as living in Los Angeles, California (1920 Census, Family Search – March 2026).
Charles W. Askew's wife, Caroline Sophia (Wood) Fife Askew (1829-1900) was deceased when Askew buys the 2 small parcels in 1902.
18. 1905-October-16th; *Dallas County Deed Records*; Vol. 373, Page 38; Homer Ferguson and wife to Farmers+ Mechanics Lumber Co.
19. Same as *Note 14* above.
20. See map cited in *Note 8* above for date and record citation for this easement along modern Neal Street.
21. See map cited in *Note 8* above for date and record citation for this easement along modern Montclair Avenue.
22. 1929-November-9th; *Dallas County Deed Records*; Vol. 2036, Page 460; Henry Struck to R.L. Walton (lot in Struck Cemetery).
1929-November-9th; *Dallas County Deed Records*; Vol. 2036, Page 460-461; Henry Struck to Florine Alderson (lot in Struck Cemetery).
Florine Alderson is cited as a widow in this cemetery lot deed. She later marries a third time and is buried in Struck Cemetery as:
Donna Floreine (Walton) Griffith (1908-1970), wife of Edwin Todd Griffith (1907-1971).
23. Longtime Western Heights resident Deborah Carpenter recalled for me -- twice during March of 2026-- that she had been told by Carl Struck (Henry Carl Struck, Jr. – 1931-2019) – in face-to-face conversation with Deborah -- that he himself had planted the live oak trees growing today along the east edge of the Struck Cemetery section of Western Heights Cemetery. There is a similar line of young plants visible there in the 1930 Fairchild vertical aerial photo survey of Dallas County, Texas (SMU Library's website, 2026), but given the conversation Deborah recalls. and the age which the live oak trees s presently appear to be (to my amateur eye), I imagine that these 1930s plantings were somehow later replaced by the live oaks, which I imagine planted around 1965.
As a note regarding precision: I would like to comment here that my own site measurements were made with simple hand-held instruments. Given that so many metes-and-bounds survey descriptions inside the William Coombes Survey fail to fit precisely together it doesn't particularly surprise me that my crude measurements do fit precisely to legal survey geometries. These jostling slight misfits and misalignments are significantly different however from the gross mismatch of boundary lines seen where parcels appear to have been abandoned, resulting in apparent adverse claims of entitlement. A repetitious problem in the William Coombes Survey is that legal boundaries were described in deeds with respect to the outer edges, or center line, of the Fort Worth Road (today's Fort Worth Avenue); while no formal geometric definition of that road was ever given. Over time its path can be seen to wiggle around, eventually being obliterated by the 1930 highway and later widenings and modifications – erasing all traces of the original boundary corner points.
24. 1909-September-24th; *Dallas Morning News*; page 11; *Personal*.
25. World War I "muster cards" for Henry C. Struck; *FamilySearch.com, Military Records*, accessed during March 2026.

(End of Footnotes)