

History

The Texas branch of the Winters family was founded by James Washington Winters Sr., an 1812 War Veteran who left Tennessee in a covered wagon in August 1834 and arrived in Nacogdoches with his family in December.

He received original title to a Spanish Land Grant at Nacogdoches the same year and held a headright certificate to this land upon which the town of Old Waverly emerged. After 1837, it was in the limits of San Jacinto County when Washington, Montgomery, Grimes and other early counties were divided.

James Sr. descended from Tom and Otha Winters who lived near the James River in Virginia in early 1609. His father Thomas J. Winters served 84 months in George Washington's Continental Army. The home of his father and mother, Mary Willis Winters in Halifax, North Carolina, where he was born in 1773, was robbed by Tories during the Revolutionary War.

As a young man he moved to Tennessee where he met and married Miss Rhoda Beal, daughter of Benjamin Beal and Nancy Taylor of Chatham, North Carolina, in 1808.

While they lived in Memphis, there was an Indian uprising and the people fled to Fort Franklin for protection.

James W. Winters Sr. enlisted in Andrew Jackson's West Tennessee Militia in 1812 and served in Col. Thomas Mc Crory's Regiment until 1814.

He was active in the battles at Talladega and Hoersshow Bend, where he met the young Samuel Houston and they became friends.

In 1835, he met Sam Houston again in San Antonio where he and his three sons joined the army of Stephen F. Austin. They renewed their acquaintance and talked of the battles of the War of 1812.

James Sr. and his young son Benjamin, hauled supplies to the San Jacinto Battlefield in 1836, where his sons, William Carver, John F. and James W. Winters Jr. were in action in General Sidney Sherman's Second Regiment and Captain William Wares Company. William Carvin Winters was wounded during the battle.

His brother, John F. brought him to his home in Old Waverly when he was able to ride and nursed him back to recovery.

The three San Jacinto veterans received Bounty and Donation Land Grants for their military service, and were listed on the first tax rolls of Washington County, in 1837. They later bought and traded land in Hays, Bexar, Liberty, Montgomery, Harris and Walker counties. Their names are engraved on the bronze panel, interior of the San Jacinto Monument. John F. Winters, his wife Margaret Ella Miller, and several of their children are buried on land where they lived in Waverly.

During the Texas Centennial in 1936, the State placed a granite marker at the grave of John F. Winters. The cemetery was restored in 1967 and Official Texas State Historical Markers were dedicated in 1968 when 200 family members and friends attended. The brothers William Carvin and John F. Winters arrived in Mexican Territory, later Texas, in 1832 and were the first Anglos in that part called "Big Thicket".

Their neighbors ere friendly Indians who came to warm by the fireplace and lingered for a week. It was a custom in those days for the older sons to go to the Frontier for adventure.

James and Rhoda Beal Winters now have 7 generations of descendants living in the State of Texas which they helped to found. Many of them are teachers,