

Journey to Acton: Explore Davy Crockett's Baptist family ties

July 6, 2016

Not far from the foot of Comanche Peak, just 34 miles southwest of Fort Worth, off Highway 377, lies the site of the old pioneer post office and village of Acton. Several sites near Acton and Granbury are related both to the Davy Crockett family and its Baptist connections, as well as to the founding of Texas Christian University.

Early in January of 1836, David Crockett (1786-1836) wrote a letter from San Antonio, where he was staying temporarily, to his second wife, Elizabeth Patton Crockett (1788-1860; married in 1815) and their children in Tennessee. He had found "the garden spot of the world" and planned to bring them all to Texas and make a future in the northern part of the territory. Eight weeks later, however, on March 6, 1836, the battle of the Alamo changed everything for the family when he and more than 200 other defenders of the Alamo were killed by Santa Anna's troops.



Elizabeth Crockett, widow of Davy Crockett, and her daughter, Rebecca. In the next few years, while Davy and Elizabeth's children became adults, married and had children of their own in Tennessee, the Republic of Texas was awarding grants of land to the heirs of all of the men who had fought in the Texas Revolution of 1836. Eight years after Texas became a state, 65-year-old Elizabeth, still wearing her black widow's garments, left her home with some of their children—grown sons George Patton and Robert Crockett and families, daughters Margaret Patton and Rebecca Crockett Halford and her husband—to claim their "Crockett's Bounty" of 320 acres. Most of the Crocketts were Methodists, but Rebecca had married a Baptist preacher in 1847 after her first husband's death.



Robert Crockett built a couple of two-room log cabins for the family on Rucker's Creek on their new land, four miles north of Acton, the oldest settlement in Hood County. Charles Barnard had built a trading post on the Brazos River there to trade with the friendly Caddo Indians and the many new settlers coming in to clear land and farm.

On Aug. 22, 1855, two years after the Crocketts moved to their acreage, Pastor Joseph "Fighting Joe" Robinson led about 20 charter members to organize a Missionary Baptist church in Acton, called Harmony Baptist Church. A building named the Long House on Walnut Creek was built the same year and was shared by Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians and Reformed Christians, each group using the sanctuary on a rotating basis one weekend a month. During the weekdays, Long House was used as a one-room schoolhouse.



The church soon called as pastor James Halford, son-in-law of the late Davy and Elizabeth Crockett and husband of Rebecca. James served the congregation until he rode off to fight in the Civil War and died in 1863 before he could return home. Elizabeth Crockett also died after an early morning walk from her cabin in January 1860. She was 72 years old. She was buried in the Acton cemetery, and today her remains and those of several of her family members are in a 12- by 21-foot burial plot that constitutes the Acton State Park and Monument—the smallest state park in Texas.

The church survived the death of its pastor, however, and continued to

meet until S.L. Tarrant led in its reorganization and name change in 1888. Acton Baptist Church was represented in the meeting of Paluxy Baptist Association for the first time that year. Acton Baptist members then built a new sanctuary in 1894 and, although altered, it still is used today. Over the years, Acton Baptist Church faithfully has sponsored the establishment of new churches and provided leadership for local missions, community outreach and Baptist associational work.



Visit the Acton Cemetery and locate the graves of Elizabeth Patton Crockett and many Crockett family members, including her daughter Rebecca, who died in 1879 and was buried beside her mother, her Baptist pastor-husband, James Halford, and their son. Look for the statue honoring Elizabeth Crockett erected above her tomb in 1911—a bonneted pioneer woman looking to the west, eyes shaded, waiting for her husband to come home from the war.

The story of pioneers in this part of Texas is one of blended faith, common vision and gentle courage. In this beautiful oak grove of Acton, the quiet stillness of the historic cemetery connects us to Texas’s earliest days and reminds us of the richness of our shared heritage.

Directions and Contact Information:

[Acton Baptist Church](#)

3500 Fall Creek Hwy (Hwy 167)

Granbury, TX 76049

Phone (817) 326-4693

[Acton State Historic Site](#)

Acton State Park and Monument

Acton Cemetery

FM 167

Acton, TX 76049

Phone (512) 463-7948

Elizabeth “Crockett’s Bounty” and Log Home Sites:

Texas State Historical markers identify Elizabeth’s land and log home site, both on private ranch property near present-day Granbury:

- A Texas State Historical Marker, number 14754, establishes the site of the land itself at 2900 Temple Hall Highway, FM 167 North. From the junction of US 377 and FM 167 North, drive 4.9 miles north on FM 167. The marker is on the northbound roadside in the Waples vicinity of Granbury.
- The historical site of her log cabin is Texas State Historical marker number 6257. This is a 1936 Centennial Marker located at 1381 M&M Ranch Road, County Road 414. The marker is on the property of M&M Ranch, about 0.9 miles from the M&M Ranch Road gate on private property. It reads: “Wife of David Crockett, hero of the Alamo. She died

here March 2, 1860. Age 74.”

Other Interesting Historical Sites:

- To learn about the earliest beginnings and site of what became Texas Christian University (established in 1873 and known as Ad-Ran College) click [here](#).
- Read more about Thorp Spring, FM 4, five miles northwest of Granbury, and site of Ad-Ran College, later TCU, in Handbook of Texas [here](#).
- Discover more about Texas Christian University beginnings [here](#).