



AURORA CEMETERY

THE OLDEST KNOWN GRAVES HERE, DATING FROM AS EARLY AS THE 1860s, ARE THOSE OF THE RANDALL AND ROWLETT FAMILIES. FINIS DUDLEY BEAUCHAMP (1825-1892), A CONFEDERATE VETERAN FROM MISSISSIPPI, DONATED THE 3-ACRE SITE TO THE NEWLY-FORMED AURORA LODGE NO. 479, A.F. & A.M., IN 1877. FOR MANY YEARS, THIS COMMUNITY BURIAL GROUND WAS KNOWN AS MASONIC CEMETERY. BEAUCHAMP, HIS WIFE CAROLINE (1829-1919), AND OTHERS IN THEIR FAMILY ARE BURIED HERE. AN EPIDEMIC WHICH STRUCK THE VILLAGE IN 1891 ADDED HUNDREDS OF GRAVES TO THE PLOT. CALLED "SPOTTED FEVER" BY THE SETTLERS, THE DISEASE IS NOW THOUGHT TO HAVE BEEN A FORM OF MENINGITIS.

LOCATED IN AURORA CEMETERY IS THE GRAVESTONE OF THE INFANT NELLIE BURRIS (1891-1892) WITH ITS OFTEN-QUOTED EPITAPH: "AS I WAS SO SOON DONE, I DON'T KNOW WHY I WAS BEGUN." THIS SITE IS ALSO WELL-KNOWN BECAUSE OF THE LEGEND THAT A SPACESHIP CRASHED NEARBY IN 1897 AND THE PILOT, KILLED IN THE CRASH, WAS BURIED HERE.

STRUCK BY EPIDEMIC AND CROP FAILURE AND BYPASSED BY THE RAILROAD, THE ORIGINAL TOWN OF AURORA ALMOST DISAPPEARED, BUT THE CEMETERY REMAINS IN USE WITH OVER 800 GRAVES. VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR, WORLD WARS I AND II, AND THE KOREAN AND VIETNAM CONFLICTS ARE INTERRED HERE.

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