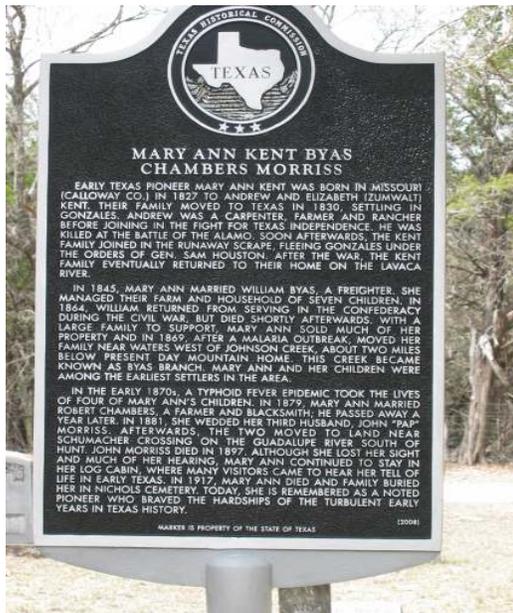


MARY ANN KENT BYAS CHAMBERS MORRISS



Early Texas pioneer Mary Ann Kent was born in Missouri (Calloway Co.) in 1827 to Andrew and Elizabeth (Zumwalt) Kent. Their family moved to Texas in 1830. Settling in Gonzales. Andrew was a carpenter, farmer and rancher before joining in the fight for Texas independence. He was killed at the Battle of the Alamo. Soon afterwards, the Kent Family joined in the runaway scrape, fleeing Gonzales under the order of Gen Sam Houston. After the war, the Kent family eventually returned to their home on the Lavaca River.

In Texas, Mary Ann married William Byas, a freighter. She managed their farm and household of seven children. In 1854, William returned from serving in the Confederacy during the civil war, but died shortly afterwards. With a large family to support, Mary Ann sold much of her property and in 1869, after a malaria outbreak, moved her family near waters west of Johnson Creek about two miles below present day Mountain Home. This creek became known as Byas Branch. Mary Ann and her children were among the earliest settlers in the area.

In the early 1870s, a typhoid fever epidemic took the lives of four of Mary Ann's children. In 1879, Mary Ann married Robert Chambers, a farmer and blacksmith. He passed away a year later in 1881. She wedded her third husband, John "PaPa" Morriss. Afterwards, the two moved to land near Schumacher Crossing on the Guadalupe River south of Hunt. John Morriss died in 1897. Although she lost her sight and much of her hearing, Mary Ann continued to stay in her log cabin where many visitors came to hear her tell of life in early Texas. In 1917, Mary Ann died and family buried her in Nichols cemetery. Today she is remembered as a noted pioneer who braved the hardships of the turbulent early years in Texas History. (2008)

Driving Directions: from Ingram, two miles east on TX 27, turn right into Nichols Cemetery.

GPS Coordinates: 30°04.209N & 99°13.066W