



WHAT ARE STOPPING STONES?

[en español](#)

Stopping Stones is a unique organization that creates small memorials that commemorate individuals who were enslaved. The purpose of these memorials is to help citizens realize and remember the histories of slavery and to create conversations that address racial issues today. This is an art project started by an artist in Vermont after being inspired by similar stones memorializing those lost in the Holocaust in Germany. Each hand-engraved “stone” carries the name, profession, and enslaved dates of an individual enslaved in that particular place.

On June 10, 2023, Log Cabin Village staff were honored to dedicate two Stopping Stone memorials bearing the names of Jefferson Walton and Molly, two individuals enslaved at the home that now serves as the entrance to Log Cabin Village. With these two stones, we acknowledge Jefferson Walton and Molly’s unrecognized and uncompensated work and contributions to Texas history. We hope that the two Stopping Stones will give visitors a space to pause and reflect on the complexities of the past.



JEFFERSON WALTON & MOLLY: WHAT WE KNOW

Our research into the lives of Jefferson Walton and Molly began with two photographs. Handwritten notes on the backs of those photos gave us a place to start digging up the evidence that would help us piece together the lives of these two individuals. Below is the information we have uncovered so far. As more sources become available, we will add more details to their histories to give a more complete picture of the lives of Jefferson Walton and Molly.



The note of the back of this photograph refers to the woman pictured as Molly. However, that may have been a nickname. Census records do not contain a woman named Molly who meets the rest of the details in the note. We are continuing to research this, but we believe her given name may have been Betsy Rhyne Johnson.

She was born in Mississippi around 1833. Enslaved by Martha Ann and Harry Foster, she moved to Port Sullivan, Texas, with their family when she was 16. The end of the Civil War resulted in the emancipation of all of those enslaved by the Fosters, including Molly/Betsy. She married Henry Johnson in 1868 and they remained in the Port Sullivan/Branchville area for the rest of their lives. She gave birth to seven children: Susan, Charley, Ebbie, Virginia, Mary, Waarie, and Loueselle. She spent her last years living with her oldest daughter in Milam county.

We know that she remained in contact with the Foster family because she is pictured with a Foster descendant in this photo taken sometime in the early 1930s. She passed away in 1934 at the age of 101.

Jefferson (Jeff) Walton was a son, husband, father, grandfather, farmer, voter, and Texas transplant. He was born in Alabama in either the late 1820s or early-mid 1830s. He moved to Milam County, Texas, with his enslavers in the early 1850s. We don’t know if Mr. Walton was one of the talented enslaved craftspeople who built the large log plantation home preserved at Log Cabin Village, but we do know his and others’ farming skills would have been instrumental in the economic advancement of the plantation. His contributions would not have been voluntary, but that cannot diminish what Mr. Walton and the thousands of other enslaved workers contributed to 19th century Texas development and economy.

We know he married Fanny Wollard Holland around 1860. During their 66 years of marriage, Fannie gave birth to their 13 children: James, Jeffie, Walter, William, Fannie, Lulu, Mary, David, Burthenia, Walton, Ivory, Addie, and Ozie. These children later gave Jefferson and Fanny a number of grandchildren.

During the Reconstruction years, Jefferson registered to vote in Texas in 1867. He lived out his farming life in the Branchville area with his family until his death in 1926.

