

## **WILLIAMSON COUNTY DRY STACK STONE WALLS**

Dry stacked stone walls are a defining landscape feature in Williamson County, and yet; these cultural landscape gems are not protected through any countywide historic preservation ordinances. The historic dry stacked stone walls of Williamson County have remained key cultural landmarks of the area for nearly two centuries. Initially constructed by highly skilled Irish and Scots stone masons, the walls were also maintained by enslaved peoples as landowners continued to desire their construction towards the eve of the Civil War. Once freed, many of these enslaved people continued to work as paid stone masons, progressing the skilled tradition of constructing dry stacked stone walls.

Dry stacked stone walls originally established property boundaries and managed livestock. The walls also served as a guardrail for historic turnpikes. Today, with the ongoing development throughout the county, many of the dry stacked stone walls, with their specialized mortarless methods – reliant on the perfect balance to remain standing – are being lost simply because many people do not understand nor recognize their significance. Though several segments of dry stacked stone walls recently received repairs, there are miles of dry stacked stone walls facing deterioration from crumbling or missing stones, car accidents, and removal for widening roadways.