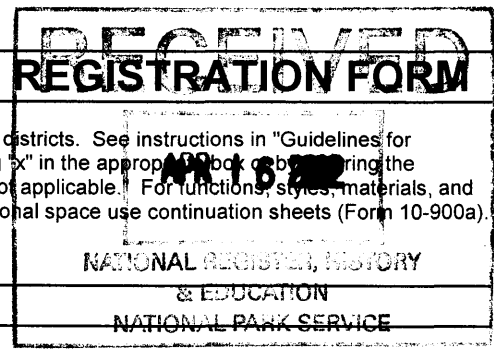


263



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in "Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms" (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate block concerning the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Paradise Cemetery
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Located east of the Southern Railroad between Lawrenceville Street and Mahaffey Circle
city, town Jefferson () vicinity of
county Jackson code GA 157
state Georgia code GA zip code 30549

() not for publication

3. Classification

Ownership of Property:

- private
- public-local
- public-state
- public-federal

Category of Property:

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing

Noncontributing

buildings	0	0
sites	1	0
structures	0	0
objects	0	0
total	1	0

Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of previous listing: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: Historic and Architectural Resources of Jefferson, Georgia

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

Richard Coates

4-11-02

Signature of certifying official

Date

to W. Ray Luce
Historic Preservation Division Director
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

In my opinion, the property () meets () does not meet the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency or bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

() entered in the National Register

() determined eligible for the National Register

() determined not eligible for the National Register

() removed from the National Register

() other, explain:

() see continuation sheet

Edson H. Ball

5/30/02

[Signature]

Keeper of the National Register

Date

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

FUNERARY/CEMETERY

Current Functions:

FUNERARY/CEMETERY

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

NO STYLE

Materials:

foundation	Concrete
walls	N/A
roof	N/A
other	Stone/Granite

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

Paradise Cemetery is an approximately two-acre site located in Jefferson, Georgia, one-half mile northwest of the downtown square. The cemetery is historically African-American and the only extant component of a larger setting that included the Paradise African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church, a parsonage, a school, and two duplexes all owned by Paradise Church. The property is bounded on the north by Lawrenceville Street, on the east by private property, on the south by private property and North Mahaffey Street, and on the west by the Southern Railroad (formerly Gainesville Midland Railroad) right-of-way. A short gravel and dirt entrance drive provides access to the property from Lawrenceville Street, and a large section of rock and concrete foundation (from one of the first two churches to stand on this site) has been placed by the drive and "Paradise A. M. E. Memorial Gardens" has been carved into a granite slab placed on one side of this foundation remnant (photograph 1).

The irregularly shaped property slopes from east to west with several distinct drops in elevation. A stacked stone and rock wall is located along one of these drops and is believed to be the foundation of one of the first two church buildings to stand on the property. Also on the property is the ground-level concrete block foundation of the church constructed on the site in 1919, which measures approximately thirty feet by sixty feet and is located parallel to Lawrenceville Street. Much of the northern two-thirds of the property is an open, grassed area with only a few trees, while scattered over the southern third of the property are several very large oak trees as well as cedars, pines and a few other species. A post-and-wire fence marks the eastern boundary of the property as well as a portion of the southern boundary.

The foundation ruins of the Paradise African Methodist Episcopal Church, constructed in 1919, are located on the east side of Lawrenceville Street at its intersection with Martin Street. The other

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7--Description

buildings on the site were located in the open areas to the east and southeast of the church site. The grave markers in the cemetery are located primarily to the southwest and west as well as to the south of the concrete block foundation of the 1919 church building. Markers in the vicinity of the church site are situated in a grid arrangement with approximately two dozen square-shaped family plots with very low concrete or granite enclosures (photograph 2). Many of the burials are marked with beveled markers and covered with large concrete slabs (photograph 3). The remaining markers, located in the southern portion of the cemetery property, are informally arranged near North Mahaffey Street. There are only a few 19th century markers in the cemetery, but at least a dozen, and perhaps many more that are either not legible or no longer have markers dating from between 1900 and 1920. All of the late-19th and early-20th century burials are located in the southern portion of the cemetery, thus away from the majority of the burials that are situated in the vicinity of the church foundations. The more recent burials (1950-1990s) are located immediately behind the church site and the earlier burials (1880s-1949) are located closer to the Southern Railroad. The cemetery contains both family plots and individual burials. The majority of the individual burials are located towards the southern end of the cemetery near the Southern Railroad. There appears to be an approximately equal number of visible family plots and individual burials, but given that many of the earliest burials are believed to have been destroyed or no longer have markers it is likely these individual burials actually outnumber family plots. Many graves are simply identified by unmarked rocks while others have metal or plastic markers provided by the mortuary. There is no statuary in the cemetery, but several graves are marked by obelisks, urns or engraved designs on flat grave markers. Four large, distinctive markers are located in this area. A tall obelisk (photographs 7 and 8), which can be seen from all vantage points within the cemetery, marks the burial of Harrison Hawkins (1845-1917) and a smaller decorative headstone marks the burial of Effie Hawkins (1885-1910). Other decorative headstones in this area mark the burials of Anor Wright (1872-1914) and Harrison Griffin (1896-1917). Little has been learned about these individuals and living relatives have not been located in Jefferson. It is known that the Hawkins family "lived better than most blacks in Jefferson and owned some land" (in the words of one interview subject). The stones vary in size and several feature decorative designs, engravings, and small sculptures. Several of the grave markers resemble alters with open bibles. The date of the earliest identified burial is 1880, however, earlier burials possibly exist within the cemetery. Several of the burials are marked by plain stones with no inscription and other grave markers were destroyed by tractors during a clean up of the cemetery. Further research is being conducted to identify the earliest burial.

There is no entirely accurate accounting of the number of graves in Paradise Cemetery. The 1980 publication of Jackson County Cemetery Records lists seventy-nine graves located in Paradise Cemetery. Of this total, forty-two were for males and twenty-seven for females. The earliest date recorded was from the stone for the four-month-old son of W. A. and E. C. Stephens, who died on October 15, 1880. It is possible that earlier unmarked graves are located in the cemetery. A visual inspection of the property does not give an accurate grave count due to the fact that some graves were never marked.

The landscaping consists of mature cedar, oak, and pine trees, grass ground cover, concrete and granite curbing, and open space for parking. Even though not formally investigated for archeological significance, the cemetery and building sites have the potential to yield archeological information

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 7--Description

about the history of the property. The area outside of the district encompasses a historic textile mill, a mill village, and modern residential construction.

Although the present Paradise Cemetery property consists only of the cemetery and foundation remains of demolished buildings, the site was formerly a complex that included as many as five buildings at one time: Paradise A. M. E. Church, a two-room schoolhouse, the church parsonage, and two duplex dwellings. Although there is no firm documentation that three different church buildings have stood on the property, it seems likely that this is the case. The first Paradise A. M. E. Church was built at least by 1879 and, according to a description in the October 31, 1879 Forest News, the local newspaper at that time, it was "a large framed house, neatly weather boarded and painted outside, well ventilated with large windows, neatly plastered inside, good seats, good pulpit, etc., two small vestry rooms in front, and is a commodious house for worship or school purposes." This building was destroyed by fire in 1891 and rebuilt much as it originally appeared. In 1919 a third Paradise Church was constructed of smooth-faced cast concrete block. Some materials from the second church building were used for the new structure (primarily wood for interior finishing). The 1919 church was a rectangular, gable-end structure that measured approximately thirty feet by sixty feet and included a small bell tower at the northeast corner. Relatively little is known about the appearance of the other buildings that formerly occupied the cemetery property. The two-room schoolhouse, parsonage and two duplex dwellings were all frame buildings and were oriented toward Lawrenceville Street in close proximity to the church. The schoolhouse was immediately to the east of the church while the parsonage, a two-story building, was next in line to the east followed by the two duplexes. None of these buildings, other than the church, was standing in 1966 when the decision was first made to construct a new Paradise Church on another site.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):

Ethnic Heritage/Black and Landscape Architecture

Period of Significance:

c.1880-1952

Significant Dates:

1880-Date of earliest known grave at Paradise Cemetery
1919-Concrete block Paradise A. M. C. Church constructed
1948-Schoolhouse demolished

Significant Person(s):

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

N/A

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

Statement of significance (areas of significance)

In the area of ethnic heritage/black, Paradise Cemetery is significant as the last surviving component of a large African-American complex that included a church, a school, and other related buildings. The cemetery is a good example of an African-American cemetery in a small town with primarily modest headstones and unmarked graves. The majority of the markers are small stone tablets with minimal decoration. A few large distinctive headstones mark the graves of prominent citizens in the African-American community of Jefferson. The cemetery served not only Jefferson, but also much of Jackson County. According to Historic Black Resources: A Handbook for the Identification, Documentation, and Evaluation of Historic African-American Properties in Georgia, by Carole Merritt, this type of cemetery is typical of African-American cemeteries in small Georgia towns.

Paradise Cemetery is also significant in the area of landscape architecture as a good example of an informally planned African-American cemetery in a small Georgia town. As documented by Carole Merritt, the informal character and large number of unmarked graves in typical of African-American cemeteries in Georgia. Also typical of black cemeteries in small towns is the presence of some distinctive markers mixed in with the unmarked graves and very minimal markers.

National Register Criteria

Paradise Cemetery is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of ethnic heritage/black as the only remaining extant resource associated with a larger historic African-American complex that included a church, a school, a parsonage, and two duplexes and for its use as a burial place for both common and wealthy African-Americans living within the city of Jefferson as well as Jackson County. Those buried in the cemetery include teachers, farmers, landowners, church leaders, and ministers. Harrison Hawkins, whose burial is marked by a tall draped obelisk, was a wealthy land-owning African-American resident of Jefferson. The cemetery is also eligible for listing under Criterion C in the area of landscape architecture for its design. In Georgia, African-American cemeteries feature a collection of modest headstones, unmarked burials, and large distinctive markers of prominent members of the African-American community. The burials in Paradise Cemetery include small stone tablets with minimal decoration, unmarked burials, and elaborate markers representing important African-Americans from Jackson County. Typical of other African-American cemeteries in Georgia's small towns, the cemetery is removed from the historic core of the town.

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

Paradise Cemetery is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion Consideration D as a cemetery that derives its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events. It is the principal historic resource representing African-American heritage in the community, and it features distinctive design, landscape, and funerary art characteristic of small-town African-American cemeteries in Georgia.

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

Period of significance (justification)

The period of significance for Paradise Cemetery begins in 1880 with the date of the earliest known grave marker and ends in 1952, the end of the historic period.

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)

The cemetery is the one contributing resource in the proposed nomination.

There are no noncontributing resources associated with the nomination.

Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)

****NOTE: The following history was compiled by John A. Kissane, preservation consultant, September, 1998. On file at the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia.**

Paradise Cemetery has a long association with religion and African-American heritage in Jefferson and Jackson County, Georgia. Paradise African Methodist Episcopal (A. M. E.) Church was founded in Jefferson in 1854. It was the first black church in Jackson County and one of the earliest A. M. E. congregations in Georgia. Church meetings were held at the homes of various church members until a permanent church building was constructed. The exact date of construction of the first Paradise A. M. E. Church is uncertain, although it is known that the original building stood near the Gainesville Midland Railroad right-of-way, to the west of the present grave markers of Paradise Cemetery. Two subsequent church buildings, constructed c.1891 and 1919, stood on the property. In 1971 a fourth Paradise Church was built on a new site in Jefferson and the 1919 building was demolished. Paradise Cemetery, however, has remained in continuous use since its establishment at least as early as 1880, the date on the oldest known grave on the property. The cemetery was used for burials of members of Paradise Church as well as black nonmembers from Jefferson and elsewhere in Jackson County.

Jefferson, Georgia was incorporated in 1806 to serve as the seat of government for Jackson County (established 1796). The city has never had a large black population, but until the 1960s, when public housing grouped many blacks into an area southwest of downtown, blacks lived throughout Jefferson rather than in a specific section of town. Through the nineteenth century, many of Jefferson's residences were actually small farm properties and had tenant houses where blacks lived, first as slaves and later as employees. During the early twentieth century, these farms were subdivided and additional residential development occurred, and in many cases large white-occupied houses continued to have small houses at the rear for black maids or servants. By mid-century, black housing was still scattered throughout Jefferson, typically in clusters of three or four dwellings located along streets that also had white residents. One such street was Lawrenceville Street, which has its eastern beginning at Washington Street, also referred to as Gainesville Highway. Historically this

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

street continued west as a road toward Lawrenceville, but today it is only three blocks in length. Prior to 1840, the Jackson County Academy was located at the intersection of Washington and Lawrenceville streets and white teachers' cottages were located behind the school building along the south side of Lawrenceville Street. Much of the northern side of the street was taken up by a large farm owned by the Turners, a prominent banking family in Jefferson. Theirs was the only house on the north side of Lawrenceville Street until shortly after 1900. West of the Turner home, the street begins to slope downward toward what was originally the Gainesville Midland Railroad (now the Southern Railroad). Black families lived along Lawrenceville Street in the vicinity of the railroad and began to own houses in this area shortly after the Civil War. Paradise A. M. E. Church was established by Jefferson blacks in 1854 and a church building was constructed on land along the south side of Lawrenceville Street at least as early as October of 1879. An October 31, 1879 ad for a Sheriff's sale of property located in the vicinity mentions Paradise Church.

The founding of Paradise Church took place in 1854 at a meeting at the home of Mr. and Mrs. William Oliver Watson about two miles east of Jefferson. Until a permanent church building was constructed, subsequent meetings of the congregation were held in the homes of different members, including the house of a member who lived along Lawrenceville Street near the Jackson County Academy teachers' cottages. The Church acquired a one-half acre lot sometime prior to 1879 and constructed a frame church building on the property. The church was initially also used by other black denominations. Two additional land purchases were made prior to 1891, bringing the total property acreage to 2.12 acres. In 1891 the original Paradise Church was destroyed by fire and a new building was soon constructed. A third church structure, this time built of smooth-faced cast concrete block, replaced the second building in 1919. It is not known when the schoolhouse, parsonage and two duplexes were constructed.

Paradise Cemetery was in use at least as early as 1880, the earliest date visible on a grave marker, and has been in continuous use since that date. Many graves are not marked with engraved stones, as families could not afford the expense and simply marked the graves with rocks. Other early stones are believed to have been destroyed or lost when a city crew was clearing heavy overgrowth in the 1980s. Because the earliest known marker dates from 1880 and the Gainesville, Jefferson and Social Circle Railroad (later Gainesville Midland Railroad and now Southern Railroad) was not completed to Jefferson until 1883, there is nothing to suggest that the location of the railroad had anything to do with the location of the cemetery.

Some of the most prominent blacks in Jackson County history are buried at Paradise Cemetery, including teachers, farmers and landowners, church leaders, and former ministers. Perhaps most notable are Reverend Willie D. Cash (1901-1963), the longest-serving pastor of Paradise A. M. E. Church, and his wife, Martha E. Cash (1905-1970). Both Reverend and Martha Cash were teachers and were instrumental in establishing a new school for blacks built in Jefferson in 1948. In 1980, Paradise Cemetery included graves of thirteen veterans of the armed services, and several more have been buried in the cemetery since that time.

In 1966, under the pastorate of Reverend Preston W. Williams, the members of Paradise A. M. E. Church agreed to move to another location in Jefferson. By that time, the concrete block church was

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Section 8--Statement of Significance

the only building remaining on the property. The present site of Paradise A. M. E. Church, on Martin Luther King, Jr., Drive (formerly Hancock Avenue), was purchased in 1967 and a ground breaking for the new church was held on August 11, 1968. The concrete block church was demolished shortly after the new church was completed in 1971. The entire 2.12 property that now consists of Paradise Cemetery remains under the ownership of Paradise A. M. E. Church.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Davis, Charles. Jefferson resident and retired professor at Gainesville College and the Atlanta University Center. Interview by John A. Kissane, September 1998.

Deaver, Susan B. "Paradise Cemetery Draft National Register of Historic Places Registration Form." City of Jefferson Historic Preservation Commission, September 1996.

Finch, Louisa. Granddaughter of Reverend Willie D. Cash and Martha Cash. Interview by John A. Kissane, September 1998.

Merritt, Carole. *Historic Black Resources: A Handbook for the Identification, Documentation, and Evaluation of Historic African-American Properties in Georgia*. Atlanta: Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, 1984.

Victrum, Mattie Lou. "History of Paradise A. M. E. Church." Unpublished narrative summary, written c.1985.

Wilhite, Hilda. Member of Paradise A. M. E. Church. Interview by John A. Kissane, September 1998.

Previous documentation on file (NPS): (X) N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested**
- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been issued**
date issued:
- previously listed in the National Register**
- previously determined eligible by the National Register**
- designated a National Historic Landmark**
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #**
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #**

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office**
- Other State Agency**
- Federal agency**
- Local government**
- University**
- Other, Specify Repository:**

Georgia Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): N/A

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2.1 acres

UTM References

A)	Zone 17	Easting 261925	Northing 3778267
B)	Zone 17	Easting 261908	Northing 3778068
C)	Zone 17	Easting 261761	Northing 3778076
D)	Zone 17	Easting 261766	Northing 3778263

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the proposed National Register nomination is indicated on the attached map by a heavy black line.

Boundary Justification

The boundary of the cemetery includes all of the land historically associated with the cemetery and the complex of buildings that once stood on the site.

11. Form Prepared By

State Historic Preservation Office

name/title Holly L. Anderson, National Register Historian
organization Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources
mailing address 156 Trinity Avenue, S.W., Suite 101
city or town Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30303
telephone (404) 656-2840 **date** April 11, 2002
e-mail holly_anderson@mail.dnr.state.ga.us

Consulting Services/Technical Assistance (if applicable) () not applicable

name/title John A. Kissane
organization
mailing address 310 three Oaks Drive
city or town Athens **state** Georgia **zip code** 30607
telephone
e-mail

- () **property owner**
(X) **consultant**
() **regional development center preservation planner**
() **other:**

Property Owner or Contact Information

name (property owner or contact person) Tommy Benton
organization (if applicable) Jefferson Historic Preservation Commission
mailing address P.O. Box 875
city or town Jefferson **state** Georgia **zip code** 30549
e-mail (optional)

National Register of Historic Places **Continuation Sheet**

Photographs

Name of Property: Paradise Cemetery
City or Vicinity: Jefferson
County: Jackson
State: Georgia
Photographer: James R. Lockhart
Negative Filed: Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Date Photographed: August, 1999

Description of Photograph(s):

Number of photographs: 8

1. Paradise Cemetery entrance; photographer facing south.
2. Photographer facing southwest.
3. Photographer facing southwest.
4. Photographer facing southwest.
5. Photographer facing northwest.
6. Photographer facing southeast.
7. Photographer facing southeast.
8. Photographer facing northeast.

(HPD WORD form version 11-03-01)

