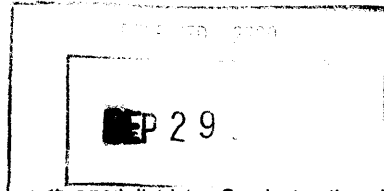


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



1159

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Pleasant Hill Cemetery
other names/site number Old Finley Cemetery

2. Location

street & number Approximately .7 mi N. of Finley; .1 mi W of cattle gate at end of Cemetery Rd. NA not for publication
city or town Finley vicinity
state Tennessee code TN county Dyer code 045 zip code 38030

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Herbert L. Hays 9/26/03
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet
- determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register.
- other,

(explain:)

Colson H. Beall 11.13.03
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Pleasant Hill Cemetery
Name of Property

Dyer County, Tennessee
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in count)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

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

Contributing Noncontributing

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| _____ | _____ | buildings |
| 1 | _____ | sites |
| _____ | _____ | structures |
| _____ | _____ | objects |
| 1 | 0 | Total |

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Funerary: Cemetery

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Funerary: Cemetery

Work in Progress

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A

walls N/A

roof N/A

other Stone, Concrete, Brick, Metal

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** moved from its original location.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Settlement

Period of Significance

1852 - 1952

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(complete if Criterion B is marked)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Multiple; unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS): N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- 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

Name of repository:

Pleasant Hill Cemetery
Name of Property

Dyer County, Tennessee
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 11.0188 acres Dyersburg 420 SW

UTM References

(place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

| | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|---|-------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | <u>16</u> Zone | <u>276296</u> Easting | <u>3991844</u> Northing | 3 | <u>16</u> Zone | <u>276103</u> Easting | <u>3991508</u> Northing |
| 2 | <u>16</u> | <u>276281</u> | <u>3991600</u> | 4 | <u>16</u> | <u>276128</u> | <u>3991828</u> |

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jack D. Wood
organization c/o Pleasant Hill Cemetery Association date June 6, 2002
street & number 22 Ellendale Cove telephone (731)422-1728
city or town Jackson state TN zip code 38305

Additional Documentation

submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 Or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO) or FPO for any additional items

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Pleasant Hill Cemetery Association, c/o Marshall Goad, president
street & number 840 Bishop Rd. telephone (731)286-5194
city or town Dyersburg state TN zip code 38024

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Pleasant Hill Cemetery
Dyer County, Tennessee

DESCRIPTION

Pleasant Hill Cemetery, established in or before 1852, is located in Dyer County, Tennessee, about .7 miles north of the town of Finley. It is situated on the south edge of a high hilly region that is part of a series of bluffs overlooking the Obion River basin. This high ground is permeated with many gullies and washes, the product of decades of erosion. The cemetery is approached from the east by turning west from Upper Finley Road onto Finley Cemetery Road. This road degrades and disappears altogether after about .25 miles. A cattle gate belonging to a local landowner bars the way. The cemetery is about .1 mile beyond the gate across a pasture (see photo # 1).

A field fence line marks the eastern edge of the cemetery. The fence is metal fence post and fence wire, with an occasional older wood post. Several large trees on this line may have served as survey markers in the early 20th Century. The entrance is on this east side, toward the south end, through a metal farm gate.

The southeast, south, and west sides of the cemetery are eroded by very deep and treacherous gullies, approximately 50 feet or more deep. The southwest corner slopes down, much as it originally would have, overlooking the road approaching from the west, today named Mitchell Road (see photo # 6, facing up this slope). The Finley Cemetery Road mentioned earlier, originally continued westward, descending the bluff along the south edge of the cemetery and meeting Mitchell Road where the west gully crosses. Historically access to the cemetery was always from this road. The road has been completely eroded away into the gully on the south side of the cemetery. This gully has been used as a landfill for years. The huge gully on the west is a result of erosion into a stream that drains the highlands on that side. The north side is a very steep slope. The surveyor's boundary markers for the cemetery tract are located in the center of these gullies. It is certain that some gravesites have been lost to this erosion over the years, but it is impossible to determine the extent to which this has occurred. Some erosion control measures had been taken a number of years ago, primarily to help landowners protect their farmland. Although this area is primarily farmland and rough terrain, there is some nearby residential development taking place, most notably to the southwest (see tax map).

The cemetery is relatively level, shaded by many large deciduous trees (photos # 3, # 5, # 18, and # 19, showing cemetery overviews from each approximate corner). Types of trees included in the district include tulip poplar, hickory, oak, cedar and pecan. There are no drives of any sort within the cemetery; however there appears to have been planned streets in the northern four-fifths (approximate) of the cemetery, as evidenced by the formal arrangement of wrought iron lot fences (see photo # 15). Many of these fences have an attached iron shield indicating the Stewart Iron Works Company in Cincinnati, Ohio made them. This shield design was first used in 1895, so the formalization of the cemetery may indicate a desire to conform to late 19th century customs. These street patterns however are disrupted by numerous graves, mostly unmarked, randomly arrayed throughout the cemetery. Burials appear wherever there was space.

Most of the gravesites in the cemetery are unmarked. According to State Archaeologist, G.F. (Nick) Fielder, who conducted a survey of the cemetery, there are 1,183 known gravesites, but only 261 known grave

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Pleasant Hill Cemetery
Dyer County, Tennessee

markers. (see map) The unmarked gravesites were identified by the presence of visible elongated depressions and by probing the soil with a steel rod. Each gravesite was marked with a laser transit. Although some gravestones were lost, due to erosion or vandalism, most all of the unmarked gravesites had never been marked. Some of the unmarked gravesites are from burials for refugees from area flooding in the early twentieth century.¹ The existing markers provide a representative variety of traditional gravestones and non-traditional markers, spanning the cemetery's period of significance (1852-1952). Some burials occurred after 1952, confirmed through funeral records and obituaries. They are for the most part, unmarked graves and are few in number. Also, family members marked some gravesites with modern gravestones years after the date of death, however most of these were more than likely placed before 1952.

The earliest of gravestones, beginning with 1852, appear to be typical hand carved limestone slabs (see photos # 7, #8, and # 9). Stones dating through the later 19th century reflect a variety of typical shapes and motifs of that period. Both slab stones and obelisks are plentiful. Woodmen of the World gravestones are prevalent. Several designs from single tree trunks (Woodman of the World marker, see photo # 2) to stacks of logs can be found. Various symbolic motifs can be found carved on gravestones throughout the cemetery, including floral (see photos # 2 and # 25), Masonic (see photo # 10), open gates of heaven (see photo # 13), tree of life, handshakes, hand pointing up to heaven, various crosses, open books, closed books, acorn, urns, and lambs (see photo # 16) Military stones are represented; most being World War I (see photo # 12) and one World War II (see photo # 26).

There are numerous non-traditional markers reflecting both economic poverty and simple utilitarianism. These include markers handmade of concrete (see photo # 22), lawn mower handle with metal funeral home marker (see photo # 20), a metal iron plate with a hole in it, an automobile or tractor axle, and simple bricks. One of the most intriguing markers is an iron railroad rail vertically in the ground (see photo # 17). Another marker of humorous interest appears to be an amateur carving, with the carver's instructions, "Leave Room for Wife," carved on the stone (see photo # 23). Many gravestones throughout the cemetery reflect upon infant and child mortality (see photos # 16 and # 24). There are in some places, like the southwest slope, fieldstones that appear to be grave markers.

Because the cemetery is currently undergoing cleanup and restoration, gravestones and markers are discovered from time to time. Erosion, wild vegetation, and kudzu continue to be threats. The gully on the southeast and south side of the cemetery is severely threatening the older portion of the cemetery. Human remains, grave markers, and coffin parts have been found at the bottom of this gully. Likewise on the west, many graves are within a few feet of the gully's edge (see photo # 11). These gullies can be seen on the USGS topographical map and are noted on the Dyer County tax map.

¹ Personal communication, Doris Kargard to Jack Wood.

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Section number 8 Page 3

Pleasant Hill Cemetery
Dyer County, Tennessee

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Pleasant Hill Cemetery, north of Finley in Dyer County Tennessee, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under criterion A for its relationship to the early settlement pattern of West Tennessee, and its specific reflection on the settlement and growth near Finley, Tennessee in Dyer County. It is the only surviving physical evidence of the pioneer community of Pleasant Hill, which was the predecessor of the town of Finley. It serves as a mark of historical continuity from the first settlers of this portion of Dyer County, who placed their church, cemetery, school, and store on the high ground of Pleasant Hill, to the establishment of the town of Finley on the lower ground, where the community's focus would shift in the late 19th century. This town would continue to develop during the early 20th century, and Pleasant Hill would be reduced to nothing but a place name. The cemetery on the hill remains the only physical evidence of this area's settlement ties to Pleasant Hill. The various grave markers provide clues to the community's own growth and change, but also connect the community with the broader patterns of history, such as the Civil War, World War I, and World War II; immigration, occupations, affiliation with Masonic and other organizations; the constant threat of child mortality; and the impact of natural events such as flooding on human communities. There are several unique "folk markers" that illustrate the limited material resources and simple practicality of rural West Tennessee culture. The period of significance for Pleasant Hill Cemetery begins in 1852 and continues to 1952, approximately fifty years prior to the date of this application for nomination.

Pleasant Hill Cemetery, in Dyer County, Tennessee is located in the southwest area of a large, rugged region of highlands, bordered on the south by the Forked Deer River bottom and on the west and north by the Obion River bottom. Both of these rivers flow in a southwestwardly direction to the Mississippi River. Evidence shows that both these highlands and the watercourses were geographically important to early Native Americans in the area.² Local Dyer County historian, Earl Willoughby, Jr. notes that the old road that passed directly to the south of the cemetery may have followed a trail created by these Native Americans. Mr. Willoughby states that these Native Americans, "...established the Brownsville, Fort Ridge and Hales Point Trail, that cut across the bluff before dropping down to the lowlands. It is believed that the old Mitchell Point Road followed the trail until it reached Amos Randle's ferry on the Obion River."³

A treaty in 1818 opened Tennessee's Western District to settlement. Surveyors had, in the latter 18th century, visited the region in behalf of North Carolina and Tennessee land speculators. The organizing of counties quickly followed the rush of settlers into the district. In 1823, Dyer County was one in the third group of counties formed.⁴ River transportation, when possible, was often favored over land routes for the movement of passengers, animals, and freight. Middle Tennesseans could utilize the Tennessee, Cumberland, Ohio, and Mississippi rivers as an effective highway system. The smaller streams, however, were often not navigable. Such was the case for the Obion River, where driftwood and logs clogged the channel. Samuel Cole Williams concludes, "This, in part, accounts for the belated settlement of the lower Obion region."⁵ Throughout the 1820's and early 1830's, West Tennessee settlements sprang up, but most all of these, like Dyersburg, located on high ground. Williams quotes an 1841 writer, reflecting on the delayed settlement of lowlands, "The interior counties were settled first, because the river counties were supposed to be luxuriant

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Pleasant Hill Cemetery
Dyer County, Tennessee

in disease and death. But the superior advantages they possessed in proximity to market soon found adventurers who for the sake of the price were willing to encounter the risk."⁶ Those who did come to the Pleasant Hill area, more than likely did so by land, following and improving the established trails. An early road following the high ground between Dyersburg and the Pleasant Hill area exists today as the Upper Finley Road. Another important purpose to ascribe to road development in this period is mail service. A post office was established in Dyersburg in 1829.⁷ A road, today referred to as the Finley Cemetery Road, ran from today's Upper Finley Road, west, past the cemetery, joining what is today called Mitchell Road. This road is referred to as the Dyersburg – Cottonwood Point Road in the land partitioning of Joseph J. Jackson's estate in 1906, which included within its boundary, the Pleasant Hill Cemetery.⁸ It is logical that this may have been the first road to Pleasant Hill. As this road essentially formed the southern boundary of the cemetery, access to the cemetery throughout its history would have been from this road. The portion of this road, which ran down the bluff along the southern boundaries of the cemetery, has eroded away into the large gullies that form the cemetery boundaries today. Current survey markers for the cemetery's southern boundaries are located in the center bottom of these gullies.

Settlement and formation of a community on Pleasant Hill appears to begin in the 1840's. The settlers came mostly from North Carolina and Middle Tennessee. The marshy bottomland, often included in huge tracts of land held by absentee land speculators, was avoided by settlers because of the difficulty of travel and the belief in its unhealthiness. Another factor that drove the early settlers to the high ground was the dense forest growth. Ironically, this heavy timber was due to the extreme fertility of the bottomland. Clearing fields for cultivation out of these forests was extremely difficult and time consuming.⁹

One such early settler, a North Carolinian by birth, was Mark Spence, who, in 1848, obtained a 200-acre land grant from the state of Tennessee.¹⁰ He soon became one of the most influential landowners in the 10th Civil District. The community became known as Spence's Chapel, most likely after June 24, 1848, when he gave one acre of land for a Methodist church.¹¹ About the same time (1848), the Murphy School was established east of present-day Finley, possibly by a man named William Murphy. It is said that one of the first school libraries in the state of Tennessee was in the Murphy school.¹² Another early settler who emigrated from Scotland, Andrew Hart, Jr., appears in 1850, living in another Spence household; that of Geo. E. Spence. Andrew is reported to be a schoolteacher. Also in the household is 15-year old Elizabeth Wilkins, who married Andrew the following year.¹³ It is this relationship of the church, the school, and several of these early families, like those of Spence and Hart, that form the beginning of Pleasant Hill Cemetery. Whatever buildings were erected regarding community development on Pleasant Hill, none remain today. Only the cemetery provides physical reminders of the earliest pioneers of this community.

In 1865, Mark Spence died. His broken gravestone is still visible (photo # 7). About two years later, in 1867, his wife, Margaret and other heirs deeded about three and one-half acres for a new church. The church that had been built on the one acre earlier given by Mark Spence, was to be moved to the new location. The one-acre was to be used for burial purposes only.¹⁴ The burial ground had been already established at an earlier date as part of the first churchyard. The earliest surviving gravestone at Pleasant Hill is that of sixteen-month old Margret [sic] Prichard, who died July 17, 1852 (photo # 9). Her father was Benjamin F.

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Pleasant Hill Cemetery
Dyer County, Tennessee

Prichard, whose wife was Elizabeth Spence, clearly a relative of Mark Spence.¹⁵ Benjamin's gravestone is also found near his family in Pleasant Hill Cemetery, having died in 1881. His stone provides a beautifully preserved Masonic divider and rule engraving, documenting his membership to that organization (photo # 10). Andrew Hart's wife, Elizabeth died in 1857, and was buried in the one-acre churchyard, as was his second wife, also named Elizabeth, who died in 1859. Andrew would join them many years later when he died on January 23, 1906 (photo # 14).¹⁶ The open Bible relief carved on Andrew's stone, often symbolizing divine knowledge, is typical for clergy and teachers, and reflects his role as schoolteacher in the early community.

The name Pleasant Hill may have originated simply as a place name for the high ground upon which the growing community was focusing. Spence's Chapel was a reference to the small log church, built by Mark Spence on the one-acre site previously mentioned. When the church was moved to or rebuilt on the new three and one-half acre site circa 1867, the Methodist Church was given exclusive right to organize a congregation, but any denomination could preach there. The name Pleasant Hill is not used in the deed at that time.¹⁷ The name Spence's Chapel seems to have stayed in use until about 1874. The Murphy School was moved to Pleasant Hill about 1875. It is possible that the building of a new frame church coincided with the addition of the school on Pleasant Hill. In any event, the name Spence's Chapel disappears, and the name Pleasant Hill continues in use for the Methodist church, the school, and the community until about 1911. This was the year in which the church moved off Pleasant Hill, into the town of Finley.¹⁸

About the year 1877, Allen Finley and a Mr. Miss Kelley [sic] opened a store at Pleasant Hill. It is uncertain how long this store operated, however, Allen Finley later built a new store in the growing town in the lowland to the south, probably called Spenceville at first. It soon was being derogatorily referred to as "Tank" because of the number of saloons available. Finley's store on Pleasant Hill may have continued to be operated by a Mr. Little, but it is not certain how long.¹⁹ When, in 1881, a post office was to be opened, a name other than Spenceville had to be chosen, because there already was a Spenceville, Tennessee. The name chosen was Finley, named after Allen Finley whose store served as the post office.²⁰ P.S. Hudgepath was the first postmaster.²¹ Allen Finley died in 1902, and like other family members and neighbors, he was laid to rest in Pleasant Hill Cemetery (photo # 13). The pastureland to the east and south of the cemetery is owned by his descendent.

The region around Pleasant Hill was and is primarily a farming region. By the 1860's the occupations in the voting district of Spence's Chapel other than farmers were blacksmith, doctor, wagon maker, cabinetmaker, and miller. Most of the farms were moderate to small and located on the high grounds. Absentee owners, like Isaac Sampson and Daniel Parker, held vast tracts of timbered bottomland.²²

The Civil War disrupted the entire nation, and few, if any communities were left untouched. As Dyer County historian Earl Willoughby, Jr. writes:

During the Civil War most of the locals enlisted in the Confederate 47th Infantry Regiment or the 15th Cavalry Regiment, though other units were represented. Munson R. Hill, Colonel of the 47th

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Pleasant Hill Cemetery
Dyer County, Tennessee

Regiment, had been a Dyer County lawyer and owned land in the 10th civil district. Two of the men buried at Pleasant Hill Cemetery, Wilson A. Bunnell and Allen Rawles, belonged to the 15th Tennessee Cavalry.²³

After the Civil War, the nation, particularly the South, was restless. Veterans were trying to re-establish their lives or find new ones. At least eleven known Civil War veterans are buried at Pleasant Hill Cemetery; two are Union soldiers. Nathaniel Pritchett, Co. A 7th Tennessee Cavalry, USA, was a resident of Henderson County, Tennessee when he enlisted. He relocated to Finley, Tennessee after the war and farmed. When he died in 1924, the funeral was held in his front yard under a tree. Then like his neighbors and kinsmen, he was taken up the hill and buried in the family lot at Pleasant Hill Cemetery.²⁴

Joseph J. Jackson, 52nd Tennessee Infantry, CSA was a resident of Decatur County, Tennessee when he enlisted. He was wounded at Shiloh and sent home. After the war he relocated to Finley and farmed. One of his sons married a daughter of Nathaniel Pritchett. About a year before his death, he deeded four acres of land to the Trustees of the Pleasant Hill Cemetery, substantially increasing the size of it by adding acreage to the north. When he died in 1905, he was buried in a fenced family lot in the four-acre addition (photo # 15).²⁵

Elkanah "Kane" Andrew Alford, 21st Virginia Cavalry was another Confederate veteran, who had migrated to the Lenox community just to the north of Pleasant Hill. When he died in 1914 he was buried at Pleasant Hill Cemetery. His grave and that of his wife are among those graves that have been lost through erosion.²⁶

The vast, heavily timbered bottomland that proved such a barrier to farming in the early days, turned into a gold mine in the post Civil War 19th century. Steam driven saw mills and the expansion of railroads in the nation dramatically increased the need for timber. Several timber companies, like the A.M Stevens Company out of Dyersburg, contracted with local farmers to cut and haul off their timber, thus clearing the rich bottomland for cultivation. The thousands of acres of bottomland today are remarkably barren of trees, a result of this massive harvesting of timber in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Many younger men and women, the sons and daughters of the earlier settlers, were carving out futures for themselves. Thomas G. Wheeler (born in 1859) became a landowner, farmer, magistrate, and notary public. He was called Squire (pronounced locally as "square"). He handled many legal matters for citizens of the Finley community. He died in 1939 and was buried at Pleasant Hill Cemetery. Some of his descendents still live in Finley. His father, William, was killed in a shootout with a Mr. MisKelley in Finley, illustrating the community's harsher side. He is believed to be buried at Pleasant Hill.²⁷

The railroads became an important part of turn of the century Finley. The Chicago, Memphis, and Gulf Railroad began as a result of the timber industry, hauling logs out of the bottomland to Dyersburg. Around 1908 a depot was established at Finley. Passenger travel, as well as the hauling of freight was provided from Dyersburg to Hickman, Kentucky. The presence of the railroad in Finley's history is uniquely symbolized by the lone iron Railroad rail embedded vertically in the ground to mark some unknown individual's grave

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Pleasant Hill Cemetery
Dyer County, Tennessee

(photo # 17).²⁸ The tragic collision of personal daily farm life and the railroad is hidden by the silence of the gravestone of Olive "Ollie" Bradley, who died in 1912 and was buried at Pleasant Hill Cemetery. This mother of eight children was killed by a train in Finley, at the age of thirty-eight, while she was carrying eggs to the grocer to sell or trade. Two of her sons are also buried at Pleasant Hill Cemetery in unmarked graves.²⁹

As with the Civil War, veterans from later wars also point to the fact that the community of Finley was not untouched. Five veterans of World War I are interred at Pleasant Hill Cemetery. Of these, Flurry Howard, (probably the Pvt. Flury Howard, 324 Infantry) was killed during the war on November 16, 1917. Though not confirmed, it appears as if he may have been killed in training, since his unit would not have arrived in France until August, 1918.³⁰ Two of the men died relatively soon after the war: Archie Richardson, died December 25, 1920 and Cecil D. Kolwyck, died October 31, 1925. One identified World War II veteran is buried at Pleasant Hill, Charley Yarbrow, 95th O.M. Bakery Battalion, who died November 21, 1944 (photo #26).

As the pioneer tendency to settle high ground gave way to timber cutting and clearing of rich bottomland, landowners and tenant farmers began to occupy the low Mississippi River and Obion River bottomland in ever increasing numbers. As can be seen today, houses were often built on posts, because of the seasonal flooding or backwater that would occur in late winter and spring. Sometimes the rivers would overflow in excessive amounts, causing catastrophic flooding as happened in 1927 and again in 1937. This flooding forced the people living in these lowlands to seek refuge on the higher ground, sometimes staying with relatives or friends. In 1937, refugee camps were set up for those who had no one to stay with. The *Dyersburg State Gazette* throughout February and March of 1937 frequently reported the deaths of flood refugees from such diseases as influenza or pneumonia. It appears that many were buried at Pleasant Hill Cemetery. This included people like Mrs. Thelma Walk of Richwoods community and Henry Clark, tenant farmer of Midway community.³¹ Children took a heavy toll from these diseases. Josephine Pugh, one year old, Luther Burns, five years old, and Marvin Austin, three days old, were all flood refugees, all died, and all buried at Pleasant Hill Cemetery.³² The 922 located, unmarked graves contain the remains of these victims and many more from unknown causes. Many of these refugee victims died in the Baird-Brewer Hospital in Dyersburg, but were taken to be buried at Pleasant Hill, rather than in the Dyersburg cemetery. Pleasant Hill, by this time, was clearly serving a regional purpose.

The many hundreds of graves at Pleasant Hill Cemetery stand as silent reminders of the community that once focused its economic, religious, and educational activity in that area. Local records and preserved family histories attest to its importance as a landmark of remembrance. Only the eroding remnants of an aged road and the geography of the land itself provide supportive physical evidence. The cemetery is clearly all that remains of the predecessor community to the town of Finley. A strong resurgence of interest in the restoration and preservation of the cemetery has manifested itself in the activities of a renewed Pleasant Hill Cemetery Association. This group is aggressively making attempts to stop the tremendous erosion as well as cleaning the grounds, resetting stones, and setting metal markers in ground for future locating of unmarked graves. Gathering and sharing historical and genealogical information is also increasing. Much is yet to be

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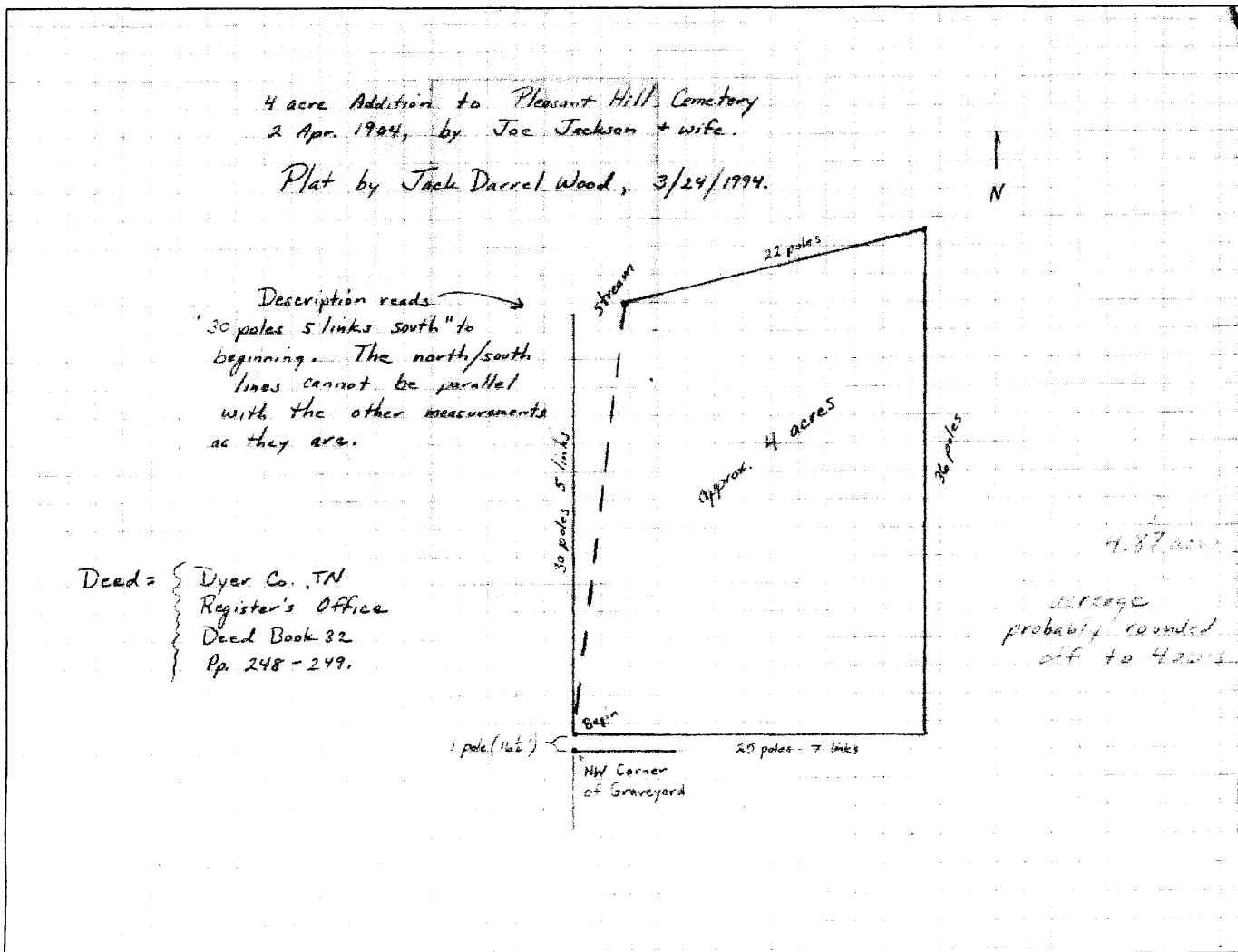
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Pleasant Hill Cemetery
Dyer County, Tennessee

learned from this historic place. Including this cemetery on the National Register of Historic Places will provide greater awareness of the historic settlement patterns of rural West Tennessee, particularly along the bluff areas overlooking the vast bottomlands.

Jackson's addition to the cemetery. Drawn by Jack Wood, March 24, 1994.



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Pleasant Hill Cemetery
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- ² Ray, Joe. "History of Finley, Tennessee." In *A Compilation of the History of Dyer County, Tennessee*, compiled by Albert Hulme. State Gazette, Dyersburg, Tennessee, November 2, 1973. p. 43.
- ³ Willoughby, Earl, Jr. "Pleasant Hill Cemetery." Typescript furnished to Jack D. Wood via e-mail, May 23, 2002. p. 1.
- ⁴ Williams, Samuel Cole, *Beginnings of West Tennessee, In the Land of the Chickasaws, 1541-1841*. Watauga Press, Johnson City, Tennessee, 1930. p. 140.
- ⁵ *Ibid*, p.120-121.
- ⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 121-122.
- ⁷ *West Tennessee Postmasters, 1832-1971*, compiled by L.M. McDaniel, Thomas Earl Wade, and Earl Willoughby, Jr., Jackson, Tennessee, 1992. Entries for Dyer County, no page numbers.
- ⁸ Jesse Jackson, et al vs. J.W. Rawles, et al. Decree confirming Commissioners report on the partitioning of the lands of Joe Jackson, deceased, September 24, 1906. Dyer County Court Clerk, Minute Book N, p. 274.
- ⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 152-153.
- ¹⁰ Tennessee Land Grant No. 6625. West Tennessee Land Grant Book 9, p. 326 (October 1, 1848). TSLA microfilm.
- ¹¹ "History of Finley United Methodist Church." Single page compiled and printed by Finley Methodist Church, Finley, Tennessee, 1979.
- ¹² Willoughby, "Pleasant Hill Cemetery." p. 2.
- ¹³ 1850 United States Census, Dyer County, Tennessee. Civil district 10, household # 514, p. 211. National Archives microfilm M432
- ¹⁴ Deed from Margaret Spence, et al to Wilson Wynne, et al, August 1867 (recorded October 5th, 1889). Dyer County Register of Deeds, Courthouse, Dyersburg, TN. Dyer County Deed Book 3, pp. 45-46
- ¹⁵ *Ibid*. B.F. Prichard and wife, Elizabeth "formerly Spence" appear among the grantors.
- ¹⁶ Hart family gravestones. Woodley, James. "Pleasant Hill "Old Finley" Cemetery." A compilation of gravestone inscriptions and extracted data from J.W. Curry & Son Funeral Home records as part of the USGenWeb site for Dyer County, Tennessee. <http://www.rootsweb.com/~tndyer/cemetery/pleasant.txt>
- ¹⁷ Deed, Dyer County Deed Book 3, pp. 45-46.
- ¹⁸ Ray, in *A compilation...*, p.44. Also, Willoughby, "Pleasant Hill Cemetery," p.3.
- ¹⁹ Ray, in *A Compilation...*, p.44.
- ²⁰ *History of Tennessee..together with an Historical and a Biographical Sketch of Gibson, Obion, Dyer, Weakley, and Lake Counties*. (Nashville, The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1887) Reprint by Southern Historical Society Press, 1978. 1036.
- ²¹ *Ibid*. also *West Tennessee Postmasters*. Dyer County, no page numbers.
- ²² Willoughby, "Pleasant Hill Cemetery," p. 3.
- ²³ *Ibid*.
- ²⁴ Holland, Joe and Mary. Family group sheets and compiled information regarding Pritchett and Little families, including some who are buried at Pleasant Hill Cemetery. Given in person to Jack D. Wood, May 28, 2002.
- ²⁵ Deed from Joe Jackson and Wife to Trustees Pleasant Hill Grave Yard, April 2, 1904. Dyer County Register of Deeds, Courthouse, Dyersburg, Tennessee. Dyer County Deed Book 32, pp. 248-249.
- ²⁶ Thurman, Lynda, May 15, 2002. Personal family information.
- ²⁷ Seaton, Christine, Letter to Jack D. Wood (received June 4, 2002). Describing Wheeler family members buried at Pleasant Hill Cemetery.
- ²⁸ Ray, in *A Compilation...* p.44.
- ²⁹ Presley, Donna Pritchett. Correspondence to Jack D. Wood, containing notes about Bradley family members buried at Pleasant Hill Cemetery. Received June 6, 2002.
- ³⁰ *History of the American Legion, Department of Tennessee, 1919 1933*. (American Legion, Dept. of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1933). Pp. 116, 321.
- ³¹ *State Gazette* (Dyersburg, Tennessee), February 18, 1937.
- ³² *Ibid*, March 11, 1937.

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Pleasant Hill Cemetery
Dyer County, Tennessee

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_____. Untitled chronological outline of events pertaining to the history of Pleasant Hill, Pleasant Hill Cemetery, and Finley, Tennessee, 2001.

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Pleasant Hill Cemetery
Dyer County, Tennessee

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

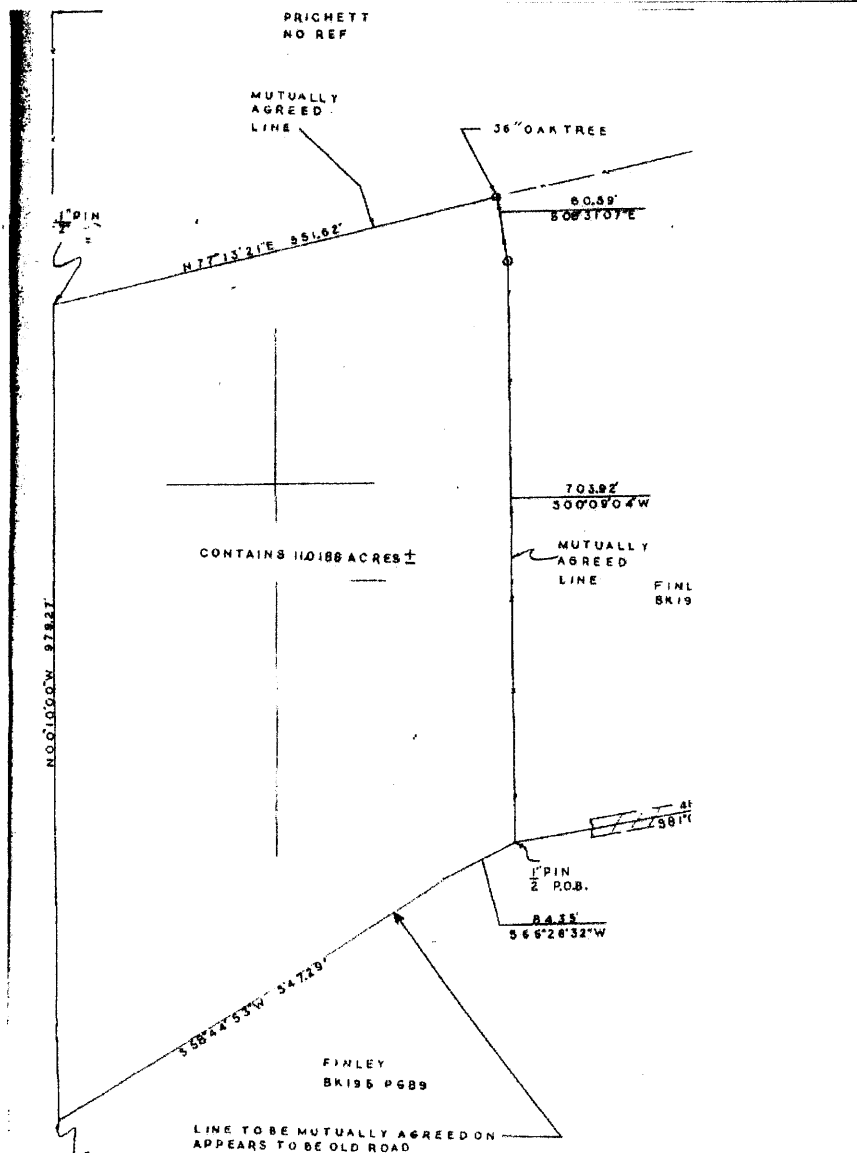
Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property is parcel 16 on Dyer County tax map 86.

Boundary Justification:

The nominated property includes all the land currently associated with the cemetery.
The map scale for this property is 1" = 400', the only scale map available for rural areas of Tennessee.

Survey map



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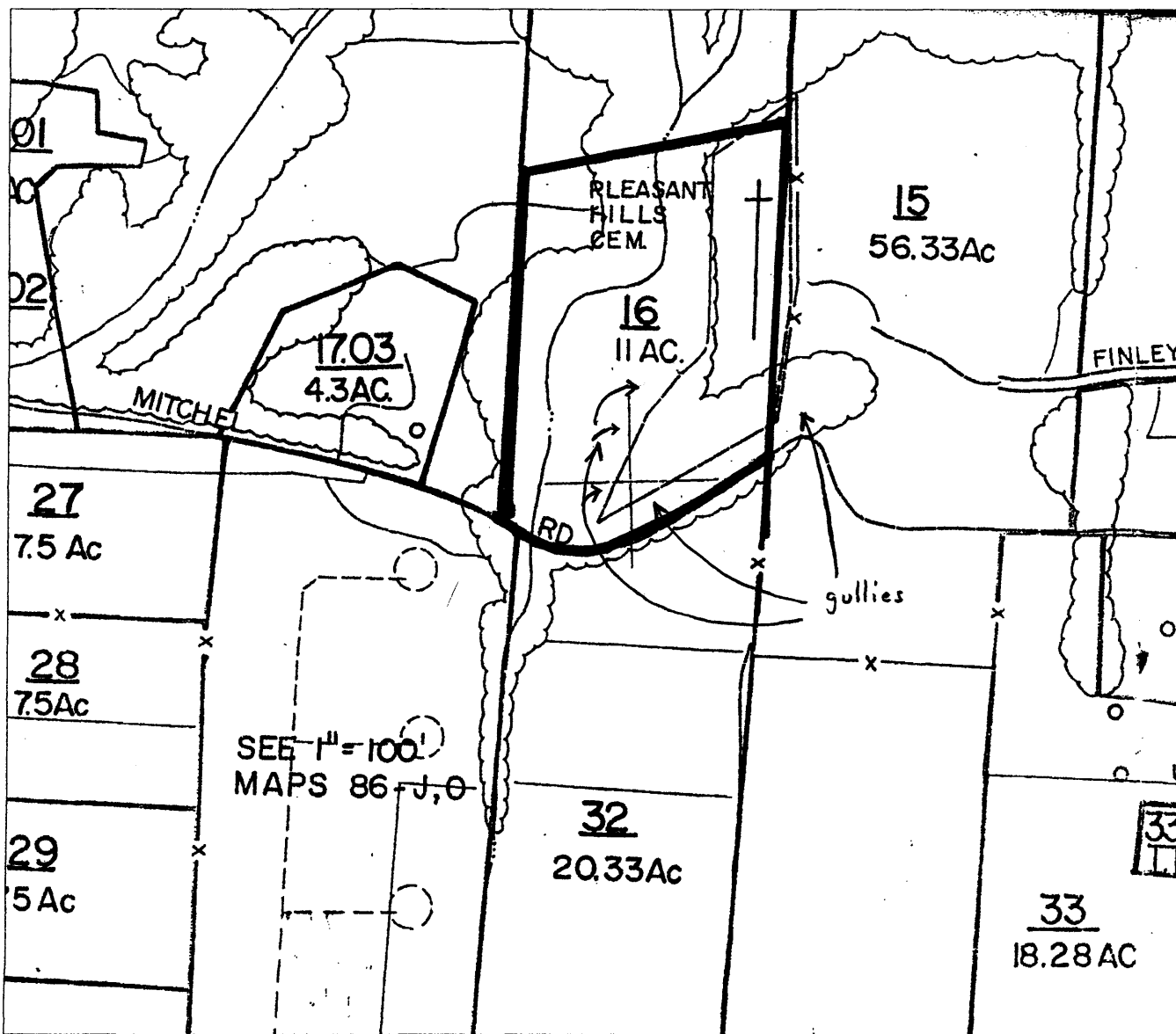
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Pleasant Hill Cemetery
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Tax map

1" = 400'



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Pleasant Hill Cemetery
Dyer County, Tennessee

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photo by: Jack Wood
Date: May 2002
Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission

Current approach to cemetery from the east, facing west
1 of 26

Woodman of the World marker
2 of 26

Cemetery overview from southeast corner, facing northwest
3 of 26

Erosion on south side of cemetery
4 of 26

Cemetery overview from southwest corner, facing northeast
5 of 26

Southwest corner of cemetery, approach from southwest
6 of 26

Marker for Mark Spencer, d.1865
7 of 26

Marker for Elizabeth hart, d. 1857
8 of 26

Marker for Margret (sic) Pritchard, d. 1852, oldest extant marker in cemetery
9 of 26

Marker with Masonic symbols for Benjamin Pritchard, d.1881
10 of 26

Erosion on west side of cemetery
11 of 26

Marker for WWI veteran Rice P. Goad, d. 1934
12 of 26

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Pleasant Hill Cemetery
Dyer County, Tennessee

Marker for Allen Finley, d. 1902
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Marker for Andrew Hart, d. 1906, schoolteacher
14 of 26

Fenced family plot for Joseph J. Jackson and family, who gave four acres to cemetery
15 of 26

Marker for a child, with lamb
16 of 26

Iron rail marker
17 of 26

Cemetery overview from northeast corner, facing southwest
18 of 26

Cemetery overview form northwest corner, facing southeast
19 of 26

Lawn mower handle marker
20 of 26

Marker for Stephen Johnson, d.1912
21 of 26

Marker for J.S. and Lula Lewis, d. 1929 and 1932
22 of 26

Marker for J.H. Hyde, d. 1945
23 of 26

Marker for Luise (sic) Blalock, 1922-1923
24 of 26

Marker for Olla Finley, d. 1918
25 of 26

Marker for WWII veteran Charles Yarbrow, d. 1944
26 of 26