

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

### SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 91000224 Date Listed: 03/13/91

Dancyville United Methodist Church Haywood TN  
Property Name County State

N/A  
Multiple Name

**This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.**

*[Handwritten Signature]*  
Signature of the Keeper

3/13/91  
Date of Action

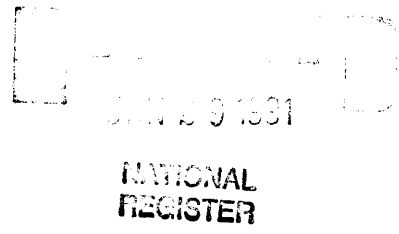
=====  
**Amended Items in Nomination:**

The period of significance should be limited to ca. 1850-1851 for the church and cemetery, rather than also including ca. 1837-38 to 1940 for the cemetery.

Discussed and concurred in by Claudette Stager, TN SHPO, on 3/11/91.

**DISTRIBUTION:**  
National Register property file  
Nominating Authority (without attachment)

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service



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 box or by entering 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 Dancyville United Methodist Church and Cemetery other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Dancyville Methodist Church Street N/A not for publication city, town Dancyville N/A vicinity state Tennessee code TN county Haywood code 075 zip code 38012

3. Classification

Table with 3 columns: Ownership of Property, Category of Property, and Number of Resources within Property. Includes checkboxes for private/public ownership and building/district/site/structure/object categories.

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

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 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 forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet. Signature of certifying official Deputy SHPO, Tenn. Hist. Commission Date 1/23/91

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 and 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:) Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

RELIGIOUS/religious structure

FUNERARY/cemetery

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

RELIGIOUS/religious structure

FUNERARY/cemetery

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation BRICK

walls WOOD/weatherboard

roof ASPHALT

other Sheetmetal

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

See Continuation Sheet

**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)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

ca. 1850-51 (church)  
ca. 1837-38 to 1940  
(cemetery)

Significant Dates

ca. 1850-51  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder

Unknown  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See Continuation Sheet

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Brownsville States-Graphic, "Dancyville.... Then and Now" by John Redding, November 13, 1986, Section B, page 1.

Memphis Commercial Appeal, "Trip to Dancyville", by Eldon Rourke, October 4, 1941, n. p.

Moore, Joe B., "A History of Dancyville". Unpublished MS dated October 1, 1963, in possession of Dorothy Moore, Dancyville, TN.

Moore, Doroty, "Dancyville Early History". Unpublished MS, n.d., in possession of Dorothy Moore, Dancyville, TN.

Register's Office, Haywood County, TN. Deed Book E, page 324, dated April 1, 1835.

See continuation sheet

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

Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of property Approximately 3.85 acres

UTM References

A 16 291560 3920200  
Zone Easting Northing

B \_\_\_\_\_  
Zone Easting Northing

C \_\_\_\_\_

D \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

Dancyville, TN 423NE

Verbal Boundary Description

The property in nomination occupies two tracts in Civil District 2 of Haywood County, Tennessee in the unincorporated community of Dancyville, lying west of State Highway 76 along and divided by the Dancyville Methodist Church Street. The Church property occupies 1.25 acres west of the Dancyville Methodist Church Street; the Cemetery occupies 2.6 acres to the east and north of the same street.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundaries for the properties in nomination include all property historically associated with the Dancyville United Methodist Church and its associated Cemetery, as outlined on the enclosed property tax map of Haywood County, TN.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title John Linn Hopkins

organization Preservation Consultant

street & number 974 Philadelphia Street

city or town Memphis

date October 8, 1990

telephone (901) 278-5186

state TN

zip code 38104

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The Dancyville United Methodist Church was constructed in ca. 1850-1851 in the Greek Revival style atop a high knoll facing Dancyville Methodist Church Street in the unincorporated community of Dancyville (pop. 105, 1980 Census), in the south central portion of Haywood County, Tennessee. The church occupies a site of 1.25 acres, the acreage historically associated with the church site since its original deed of 1835.

The Dancyville Methodist Cemetery once owned by the church is situated downslope from and to the east of the street. It shares a common boundary on the east with the right-of-way of State Highway 76. The Cemetery occupies a site composed of 2.6 acres, the acreage historically associated with the cemetery since its origins in ca. 1837-38.

The Dancyville United Methodist Church is one of the rare survivors of antebellum church architecture in the rural portions of West Tennessee. The structure is a simple single-story, gable-roofed sanctuary constructed with a post and timber frame and covered with wide weatherboard, measuring roughly 40' by 60'. Portions of the timber frame are hand-hewn, others appear to be cut from the log by a sash saw.

Like many churches of this period, the Dancyville United Methodist Church was constructed with the gable end facing front (east). The front facade features the traditional pair of entrance doors-- one for men, the other, for women parishioners-- each topped by an original four-light transom but containing solid replacement doors below. The gable end is enclosed to form a simple pediment with a box cornice and frieze.

The steeple of the church is one of its premier design elements. The steeple is placed near the front of the church, raised on a square stage to an octagonal bell tower with louvered shutters covering its openings. The squat octangular steeple cap quickly tapers in an ogee curve to a long, thin stem topped by a simple cross.

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The side (northern and southern) facades of the church are composed of six large window bays, each containing their original twelve-over-twelve sash lights. Each is flanked by a pair of full-length operable louvered shutters that appear to be original to the structure.

The rear facade is simply composed of two window openings, each containing twelve-over-twelve sash lights and closed shutters. Recently, vinyl siding was added to this facade as a well-meaning repair. A small gable-roofed bulkhead was built in 1955 to provide entrance to the basement of the church excavated at this time. A single multi-light multi-panel door provides access and egress from the basement at this location.

The interior of the church contains many of its original finishes and details from its construction, along with detailing added at various points in its history. The sanctuary's interior was originally developed as a single room auditorium and was provided with simple finishes, like many rural churches of this period. The structure's Greek Revival styling is reflected only in its window surrounds, which imitate a high-styled lintel and pilaster surround in simple board trim. Both walls and ceiling are covered with simple plaster finishes. A slightly raised dais served as the staging for a simple pulpit. Pews in the original interior were plank-bottom, plank-back benches arranged with two center side and two outside aisles.

In about ca. 1888, alterations were made to "update" the appearance of the dais area, which included the installation of the present pulpit and balustraded kneeling rail, designed with detailing in sympathy with the Eastlake style. Renovations in the 1950s changed the original organization of the pulpit and rail, thus leaving the complete arrangement of the 1880s work unknown.

The majority of alterations to the original interior of the church date from 1955. At this time, a basement was excavated beneath the structure and a stair built to connect it to the sanctuary just to the north side of the

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dais. The original pews were replaced, along with a new layer of oak flooring and an oak wainscot around the outside walls. Additional work was carried out to create the glassed foyer and flanking Sunday School rooms in either corner of the rear of the church. The multi-light glass wall and its over-sized five panel doors were salvaged from a structure in Memphis built in ca. 1905-1910 and installed at this time. While these renovations did make changes in the original volume of the church space and altered some finishes, they do not significantly detract from its overall integrity.

The Dancyville Methodist Cemetery occupies an irregularly shaped and gently rolling portion of the hill side between the church and the right of way for State Highway 76. The Cemetery creates an important sense of setting for the church structure, effectively serving as its front church "yard". The cemetery is partially wooded with cedar, oak, maple and magnolia trees and is surrounded by wrought iron fence. The majority of the fence was installed in ca. 1908-1909 to replace an earlier wood picket fence. The original iron fence was extended by several hundred feet in 1989 to completely enclose the cemetery property. The new fence was carefully reproduced from the original pattern to carry out the work.

The cemetery is organized by an irregular grid of individual family plots. Within this pattern, monuments are aligned in simple rows roughly perpendicular to the topography of the hill side. A curvilinear drive meanders with the topography to loop through a large portion of the cemetery.

Monuments within the cemetery reflect nearly every period of funerary design from the 1830s to the present. Particularly notable are the range of obelisk forms, from the purely Classical shape to the capped and draped forms favored late in the nineteenth century. Carved reliefs are featured on many of the earlier, simpler markers representing both traditional Christian symbols and more



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vernacular symbolism. Numerous monuments feature the names of the stone masons and companies that produced the pieces in Memphis, Jackson and elsewhere. Monuments in the cemetery date from 1830 to the present, with most seemingly concentrated in the ca. 1870 to 1900 period.

Burials in the cemetery have included both the common and the notable members of the Dancyville community from the earliest time of its founding. Perhaps most significant among them was Burchette Douglas (1793-1849), variously a state representative and state senator from 1829 to 1842 who also served as the Speaker of the Tennessee House from 1839 to 1842.

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The Dancyville United Methodist Church and Cemetery are being nominated together under National Register Criteria C in the area of architecture as a significant example of an early surviving rural church designed in the Greek Revival style, maintained in the context of setting provided by its associated cemetery. The church features notable traits of design, proportion and workmanship that suggest the work of unknown master craftsmen. The character of setting provided by the placement of the cemetery in the front "church yard" area rather than to the side or rear is an unusual treatment in West Tennessee. In all, the property serves as an important purpose visual landmark, witness to the day-to-day history of the surrounding region since the earliest days of its settlement.

Criteria Exceptions A and D apply to this property and its nomination. Exception A applies to the church structure, which derives its primary significance from its architectural character. Exception D applies to the cemetery, which derives its primary significance from its historical association with the church and as a critical component of the church setting. Though the properties are no longer held under a single ownership, their historical association continues unaltered.

The area surrounding the Dancyville community was first occupied by settlers in the early 1820s. However, it was not until the 1830s that a true settlement was begun on the site of the present day community. The name of Dancyville was in common use by 1838 when the Haywood County Court ordered roads cut through the area to connect the community with Brownsville and Somerville, one of which was State Highway 76 as it is known today. The namesake for the village was blacksmith Isaac Dancy (died 1863), one of the earliest of Dancyville's residents and businessmen.

The Dancyville United Methodist Church occupies a tract deeded to the Methodist Episcopal Church on April 1, 1835 and recorded on June 8, 1835. The congregation was organized soon after but did not meet formally until 1837. The first sanctuary for the church was a simple log

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structure built at that time on the site of the present church.

The cemetery associated with the Dancyville United Methodist Church was first developed in the 1830s concurrently with the original church structure. No record of its deed is known to exist that can document the date that the cemetery site was established.

The earliest monument in the cemetery notes the resting place of F. B. Kerr, who died in 1830. The date of this burial seems to indicate that the cemetery may actually pre-date the original Methodist Church building by some seven years. However, since the next earliest monument is dated 1838, the suggestion is made that the cemetery was established in 1837-1838, concurrent with the construction of the original log church. If the ca. 1837-1838 date is correct for the establishment of the cemetery, then the earlier Kerr monument represents a re-burial here from another site.

Like many of the small, rural communities of western Tennessee, Dancyville enjoyed modest growth in the 1840s and 1850s as a small trade center for the surrounding cotton plantations in both Haywood and Fayette counties. To a large degree, the potential for its growth to a major town was cut short with the establishment of the basic network of railroads through the region in the early- to mid-1850s. At that time, though, the community was able to boast three churches, a Masonic lodge, three academies, five doctors and a number of shop keepers and tradesmen. The community's petition for incorporation was approved in 1854 by the Haywood County Court.

Perhaps one reflection of the growth and optimism for the community in the 1850s is manifested in the form of the United Methodist Church building itself. According to local tradition, the original log church burned in 1850 and was replaced by the existing structure within the next year.

The construction of the Greek Revival temple-form church without a portico shares architectural characteristics with some of the few other surviving rural

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antebellum churches in the general region. Contemporaries include the brick and stucco Emmanuel Episcopal Church (1843; Part LaGrange Historic District, Fayette County, NR 1/2/75) and the Mount Carmel Presbyterian Church of Covington (ca. 1854, NR 7/12/84). All of these share the basic pedimented gable end form of the Greek Revival style, but were built without steeples. The steeple of the Dancyville United Methodist Church is staged in a traditional manner with an octagonal bell tower on a square base. However, the treatment of the spire appears to be a unique form in this region and time. The octagonal, ogee-curved shape of the spire is reminiscent of the flower of a morning glory; its framing and roofing required the skills of an extremely talented and imaginative craftsman.

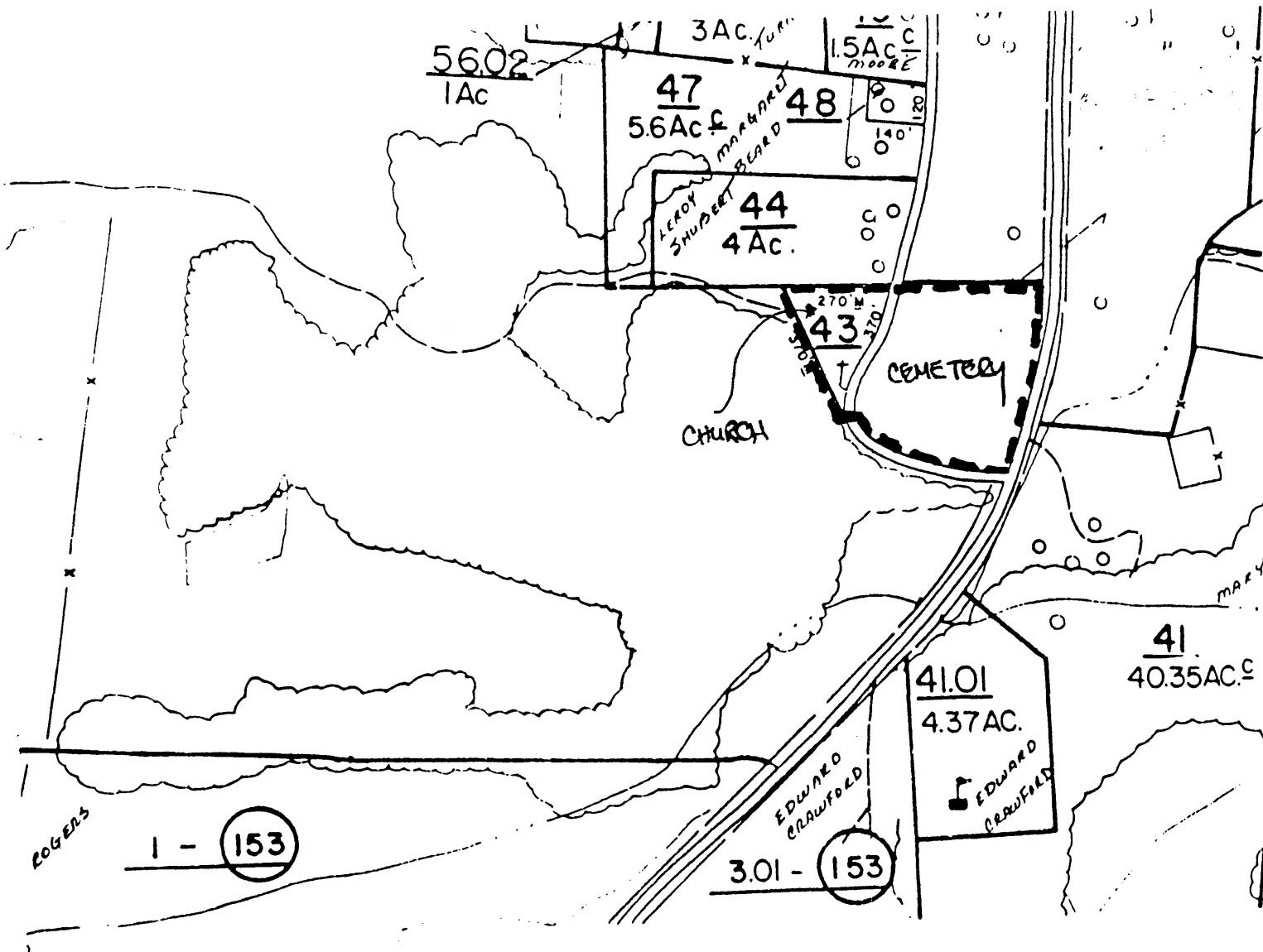
The cemetery so long directly associated with the Dancyville United Methodist Church was legally separated from a common ownership in 1968. At that time, the Dancyville Methodist Church Cemetery Association was created to manage the use and upkeep of the cemetery in perpetuity. Though subdivided, the two properties remain intrinsically linked by a common location and history that will continue as long as the two features remain intact.

Though the stature of Dancyville as a growing, progressive community has slowly waned since the loss of its incorporation following the Civil War, the community remains proud of its continuing role as a small farming trade center in the Haywood County of today. Its past is equally cherished, as demonstrated in the continuing use of the church to serve as a house of worship for Methodists in the area surrounding Dancyville. Its tradition as a site of continual worship has earned the Dancyville United Methodist Church the distinction of being the oldest house of Methodism surviving in West Tennessee, as recognized by the Memphis Conference of the United Methodist Church.

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DANCYVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH AND CEMETERY  
Dancyville Community, Haywood County, Tennessee

Portion of Haywood County, TN Tax Map 148  
Compiled January 1969 with Revisions

Scale: 1" = 400'

National Register Boundary: 



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Dancyville United Methodist Church  
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The tax map for this nomination has the scale 1" = 400'. This scale tax map is prepared by the Tennessee State Board of Equalization for rural areas. In the past, the Tennessee Historical Commission has used this scale map for nominations and has found that the 1" = 400' adequately meets our office needs. The Tennessee Historical Commission does not have the facilities to prepare maps to the scale preferred by the National Park Service. To supplement this map, the nomination includes a detailed verbal boundary description.

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Photograph List  
Dancyville United Methodist  
Church and Cemetery  
Dancyville, Haywood County, TN

Photographed by: John Linn Hopkins  
Date: August and October, 1990  
Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission

View of the front (eastern) and side (northern)  
facade, facing generally southwest.  
Photo 1 of 16

View of the church steeple and cemetery from  
Dancyville Methodist Church Street, near the intersection  
with State Route 76, facing generally northwest.  
Photo 2 of 16

View of the Dancyville Methodist Cemetery from State  
Route 76, facing generally west.  
Photo 3 of 16

View of the church steeple and side (northern) facade,  
facing generally southeast.  
Photo 4 of 16

View of the front (eastern) facade and side (northern)  
facade of the church, facing generally southwest.  
Photo 5 of 16

View of the side (northern) facade and rear (western)  
facade, facing generally south.  
Photo 6 of 16

View of the side (southern) facade, facing generally  
northeast.  
Photo 7 of 16

View of the front (eastern) facade and side (southern)  
facade, facing generally northwest.  
Photo 8 of 16

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Panoramic view of the interior of the church structure, beginning in the rear, southeastern corner, and continuing to the first window bay of the southwestern corner.

Photos 9 through 15 of 16

View of the S. A. Miller monument and others contained in the Dancyville Methodist Church Cemetery, facing generally east.

Photo 16 of 16



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Church-

Attn.: Rev. Dossie F. Wheatley  
Brownsville District  
Memphis Conference of the United Methodist Church  
1489 East Main Street  
P. O. Box 314  
Brownsville, TN 38012 Phone: (901) 772-9882

Cemetery-

Joe B. Moore, Jr., President  
Dorothy Moore, Secretary  
Board of Trustees  
Dancyville Methodist Cemetery Association  
54 Dancyville-Eurekaton Road  
Stanton, TN 38069  
Phone: (901) 548-6423