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# Historic Sites Survey



State of Mississippi  
Department of Archives & History  
P. O. Box 571, Jackson, MS.

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

Hillcrest Cemetery is laid out on an undulating twenty-four acre knoll three blocks south of the Courthouse Square. Clusters of cedar, holly, linden and magnolia trees frame the original twenty acre parcel of land and shade its closely-spaced family plots. The old section of the cemetery, developed between 1837 and 1910, is laid out in a loosely-defined grid plan, outlined by the distinctive cast and wrought iron fences which bound the individual plots (Photo #65). The north end of the cemetery, opened in 1910, is characterized by level, graded terrain, the uniformity of the size and design of monuments; and the absence of the ornate fences, boxwood, and fine examples of funerary art which distinguish the old section of the cemetery. Hillcrest Cemetery is bounded by a simple wrought iron fence on the north, south, and west sides. Five wrought iron gates mark the entrances to the narrow, paved roads which meander through the cemetery. A four acre section was added to the cemetery in 1970 but is not considered part of the historic resource and is therefore not included.

## ALTERATIONS:

N/A

## OUTBUILDINGS:

None

## LANDSCAPE FEATURES:

See description

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Hillcrest Cemetery derives its primary significance from its outstanding collection of cast and wrought iron fences, many of which were manufactured by the Jones-McIlwain Iron Works in East Holly Springs before the Civil War. Before it was reincorporated as the Confederate Armory in 1861, the Jones-McIlwain Iron Foundry, believed also to have been known as the Holly Springs Iron Works in the early 1850s, specialized in the manufacture of decorative cast and wrought iron fences, gates, and architectural details. (No records exist and documentation has been largely conjectural, based on research done by Leslie Frank Crocker as recorded in Crocker, "An Early Iron Foundry in Northern Mississippi.") Cast iron work on many Holly Springs residences, especially elements #1, 50, 91, 103, and 110 and fences bounding elements #20, 42, and 109, as well as the fences surrounding many of the older plots

NAME: Hillcrest Cemetery

STREET NO: Center Street

TOWN/VIC: Holly Springs

COUNTY: Marshall

BLOCK/LOT: N/A

PRESENT OWNER: City of Holly Springs

ADDRESS Holly Springs, Mississippi 38635

PRESENT USE: Cemetery

FORMER USE: Cemetery

DATE: Original 20 acres - 1837; 4 additional acres - 1910

STYLE: N/A

ARCH/BUILDER: N/A

SOURCE OF DATE: Deed Books

ENVIRONMENT: Parklike setting bounded by residential neighborhoods

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

NEIGHBORHOOD

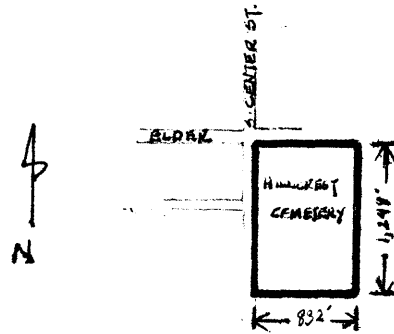
LOCAL

STATE

NATIONAL

PHOTOS

NEG #



PHYSICAL CONDITION:

Excellent

THREATS:

Vandalism

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

Beginning at the Southeast intersection of Elder Avenue and South Center Street, south along Center Street 1,248 feet, east 832 feet, north 1,248 feet, west 832 feet to point of beginning.

ACREAGE: Approximately twenty-four acres

UTM REF:

A	<u>1</u> <u>15</u>	<u>2</u> <u>7</u> <u>5</u> <u>9</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>8</u> <u>4</u> <u>9</u> <u>4</u> <u>8</u> <u>0</u>
	ZONE EASTING		NORTHING
B	<u>1</u> <u>15</u>	<u>2</u> <u>7</u> <u>6</u> <u>2</u> <u>2</u> <u>5</u>	<u>3</u> <u>8</u> <u>4</u> <u>9</u> <u>4</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u>
	ZONE EASTING		NORTHING
C	<u>1</u> <u>15</u>	<u>2</u> <u>7</u> <u>6</u> <u>2</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>8</u> <u>4</u> <u>9</u> <u>0</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u>
	ZONE EASTING		NORTHING
D	<u>1</u> <u>15</u>	<u>2</u> <u>7</u> <u>5</u> <u>9</u> <u>6</u> <u>0</u>	<u>3</u> <u>8</u> <u>4</u> <u>9</u> <u>0</u> <u>7</u> <u>0</u>

in Hillcrest Cemetery have been credited to the local foundry (Hamilton, "Holly Springs, Mississippi, to the Year 1878," p. 97. Also, The Commercial Appeal, Memphis, 18 October 1936).

Early fences in the cemetery, like that which surrounds Fort Daniel Place (#42), are characterized by the use of fairly delicate, twisted wire, embellished with simple cast iron bosses (Photos #67 and 68). Later fences are executed in heavier cast iron designs, frequently employing Gothic motifs (Photo #69). Most of the fences are well preserved, although several of the gates have been lost.

Fence designs, as well as many of the monuments, illustrate the rich iconography associated with the Victorian cult of death. Expressions of death, mourning and fidelity are variously represented in a cast iron lyre fence (Photo #71), a cast iron willow gate (Photo #72), marble and granite obelisks, and most poignantly, a marble dog. Rustic stone tree trunks and branches, symbolic of the Woodsmen of the World organization, are found throughout the cemetery.

Hillcrest Cemetery was donated to the town by William S. Randolph, one of the first settlers of Holly Springs, in 1837 (Pruitt, "It Happened Here," p. 101). Locally known as the "Little Arlington of the South," the cemetery is dotted with the graves of thirteen Confederate generals, war heroes and the townspeople who died during the Yellow Fever Epidemic. Historically, most of the community's black residents have been buried in the south end of the cemetery, although many are interred in other areas.

Despite some damage caused by vandals in 1980, the landscape features and monuments of Hillcrest Cemetery are well preserved and have maintained a high degree of integrity.

FORM PREPARED BY:

DATE

Pamela G. Guren, Architectural Historian  
Mississippi Department of Archives and History

January, 1981