

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



354

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 Bethel Cemetery

other names/site number Old Bethel Cemetery; LW0180

2. Location

street & number 1.1 miles north of AR Highway 117 on Lawrence Road 225

☐ not for publication

city or town Denton

☒ vicinity

state Arkansas code AR county Lawrence code 075 zip code 72415

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.)

Catherine Matthews  
Signature of certifying official/Title

4/25/11  
Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

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:) \_\_\_\_\_

Edson H. Beall  
Signature of the Keeper

6-15-11  
Date of Action

Bethel Cemetery  
Name of Property

Lawrence County, Arkansas  
County and State

## 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private  
☐ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
1	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	1	objects
1	1	Total

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

**Number of Contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register**

## 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

FUNERARY:cemetery

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

FUNERARY:cemetery

## 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: granite; marble; limestone; concrete

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

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

## Summary

Bethel Cemetery and the adjacent site of Bethel Church and Bethel School are located in the Denton Community of Lawrence County, Arkansas. The church and school were located to the immediate right (north) of the original entrance into the cemetery. The cemetery is 1.1 miles north of AR Highway 117 on Lawrence Road 225. There are 614 burials marked with inscribed gravestones or fieldstones. Of the 433 marked with inscribed gravestones, 326 are considered historic. The remaining 107 burials marked by inscribed gravestones are considered non-historic.

Bethel Church, which ultimately became Bethel School, was a hewn log structure that was built by the Primitive Baptists during the early 1820s. The church, school and cemetery were later called Old Bethel Church, Old Bethel School and Old Bethel Cemetery following the founding of New Bethel Church at the nearby town of Smithville, Lawrence County, Arkansas. This structure was used as a school until the late 1890s.

Local tradition suggests that Bethel Cemetery was first used in 1835 when Nathaniel McCarroll, a Revolutionary War Veteran, was interred there. A cenotaph commemorating his service was placed at the entrance into the original cemetery.<sup>1</sup> The first inscribed gravestone is that of Andrew J. Bilbrey (b. 22 Oct 1857; d. 30 Nov 1858), son of John Campbell Bilbrey and Rutha Denton Bilbrey. The most recent burial was that of Ethel Angeline Flood Hanshaw Russell (b. 20 Feb 1902; d. 06 Jan 2010).

## Elaboration

Bethel Cemetery was established adjacent to Bethel Church, a Primitive Baptist Church, from which the cemetery derives its name. The cemetery contains the graves of many of the earliest families who settled in the Denton community and descendants of these families.

## Gravestones

The inscribed gravestones in the cemetery are reflective of the form, style and materials that are common to the various eras represented there. A few of them are non-commercial, but inscribed limestone or sandstone. Many of the older, 19<sup>th</sup> century commercial gravestones are made from marble and the more recent stones consist of polished marble or granite. Inscriptions on these gravestones all face the east. Most of the gravestones remain upright; however, the footings beneath some of the older gravestones have sunken into the soil so that they now lie flush with the ground.

The iconography found in Bethel Cemetery is typical of that found in other cemeteries of the same vintage in

<sup>1</sup> However, no primary documentation exists that proves where in the cemetery Nathaniel McCarroll is actually buried, or that he was buried in Bethel Cemetery at all.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 2

Arkansas and elsewhere. Generally, the detail of bas-relief images and inscriptions are easily viewed and in good condition. Many of the gravestones have the typical decorative motifs such as: Cross (An emblem of faith); Crown (The soul's achievement and the Glory of life after death); Hands clasped in a hand shake (Farewell, marriage, or the hand of God welcoming the deceased's soul into Heaven); Hand pointing upward (Ascension to Heaven); Lamb (Innocence or purity of heart); Dove (Innocence, peace, purity, spirituality, transporting the soul to Heaven); Gate (Departure from earthly life – entrance into Heaven); Open Bible or Book (The Word of God, death of a minister or teacher); and, Rose, calla lily, ivy, and other floral or plant designs (Symbolizing majestic beauty, marriage, remembrance and humility, friendship and immortality, victory and rejoicing, eternal plenty as in the fruit of life, and condolences, grief or sorrow).

Many of the older cemeteries in Lawrence County including Bethel Cemetery contain above ground structures that appear to be elevated tombs made from limestone masonry with a stone or concrete slab on the top. However, these structures did not mark graves, but rather served as biers that were used during interment services. One such structure remains in Bethel Cemetery.

### **Breakdown of Burials**

Bethel Cemetery contains 614 total burials dating from as early as 1835 to the present. However, only 433 of them are marked with inscribed gravestones. The remaining 181 burials are marked with simple fieldstones and are considered historic. These historic fieldstones, plus the historic inscribed gravestones (326), total 507, or 83% of the total burials.

### **Contributing Burials by Decade (Inscribed Gravestones)**

Prior to 1850 .....	1	1900 – 1909.....	42
1850 – 1859 .....	2	1910 – 1919.....	56
1860 – 1869 .....	9	1920 – 1929.....	38
1870 – 1879 .....	22	1930 – 1939.....	38
1880 – 1889 .....	33	1940 – 1949.....	26
1890 – 1899 .....	41	1950 – 1959 .....	18

There are 326 historic burials marked by inscribed gravestones in Bethel Cemetery. They account for 75% of the total inscribed gravestones.

### **Non-Contributing Burials by Decade**

1960 – 1969 .....	24	1990 – 1999 .....	23
1970 – 1979 .....	19	2000 – 2009.....	21
1980 – 1989 .....	18	2010.....	2



## United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places

## Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

There are 107 non-historic burials marked by inscribed gravestones in Bethel Cemetery. They account for 25% of the total inscribed gravestones.

### Dates of Historic Burials

Local tradition suggests that Nathaniel McCarroll (b. 1765; d. 1835), the patriarch of the McCarroll family in Lawrence County is buried in Bethel Cemetery. A cenotaph acknowledging his service was placed at the entrance to the original cemetery on 12 November 1990 by the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), Jonesboro Chapter. He is the only Revolutionary War soldier known to have been so honored in Lawrence County. Regrettably, the exact location of his grave is not known. In 1781 Nathaniel enlisted as a PVT in the South Carolina Militia and served until the end of the war under the command of General Andrew Pickens. In 1807 the McCarroll family relocated from Spartanburg, South Carolina, to Caldwell County, Kentucky, and from there the family moved to Lawrence County in 1815. Walter E. McLeod stated that, "The McCarroll name in Lawrence County is as old as the county itself."

Others, many of whom were veterans of the Civil War, spouses of Civil War Veterans (see asterisked entries), and other persons of note from the Denton Community who were buried in Bethel Cemetery during the period 1858 – 1939 include:

Susan Stricklin Davis	1858*
Roswell Davis	1859
Martha McCarroll Davis	1860*
Murdock McLeod	1862
Mary Beasley McCarroll	1863
Thomas R. Walling	bet. 1870-1880 (Civil War Veteran, CSA)
Rutha Denton Bilbrey	1872*
James McCarroll	1872
Lavenia Warner Davis	1875
William Henderson McCarroll	1877 (Civil War Veteran, CSA)
Alexander McLeod	1878 (Civil War Veteran, CSA)
Mary Jane Williams McLeod	1878*
Susan Ann Davis Price	1879*
Mary Ann Winchell Goad	1887*
Mary Webb Davis	1881*
Temperance Adela Wesson James	1884*
Caroline Hargett Price	1886
Mounce Gore Bilbrey	1888 (Civil War Veteran, CSA)
Emanuel Goad	1888 (Civil War Veteran, CSA)
Barbara Matthews McLeod	1888

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 4

Eliza J. Harrison Bratcher	1890*
Jane Webb McLeod	bet. 1890 – 1894*
Innis Joannah D. Roark Richardson	1891*
George Maloy	1892 (Civil War Veteran, CSA)
Daniel Webster Walling	1893 (Civil War Veteran, CSA)
Dr. William Henry James	1894 (Civil War Veteran, CSA)
Mary Harrison Alexander Bilbrey	1899*
Joseph Levi Hillis	1901 (Civil War Veteran, CSA)
Thomas Matthews	1902 (Civil War Veteran, CSA)
Thomas Jefferson Guthrie	1903 (Civil War Veteran, CSA)
John Davis	1904 (Civil War Veteran, CSA)
Thomas McCarroll	1904 (Civil War Veteran, CSA)
James M. Davis	1907 (Civil War Veteran, CSA)
Mary McCarroll Oldham Davis	1907*
Sarah Webb Matthews	1907*
Wiley John Matthews	1910 (Civil War Veteran, CSA)
Joseph H. Walling	1911 (Civil War Veteran, CSA)
John Campbell Bilbrey	1912 (Civil War Veteran, CSA)
Jane Balfour Dean McCarroll	1912*
Cornelius Davis	1914 (Civil War Veteran, CSA)
Anna Webb Hillis Matthews	1914*
Mary M. Rainwater Guthrie	1917*
James Z. Doan	1919 (Civil War Veteran, CSA)
David C. Lee	1922 (Civil War Veteran, Union)
Sarah Ann Brady Richardson	1922*
Sarah Ann White Davis	1922*
David D. Davis	1923
Eliza A. Price Davis	1923
James M. McLeod	1926 (Civil War Veteran, CSA)
Rebecca Mary Ann Gragg Bilbrey	1927*
Elijah Jubilee Bratcher	1928 (Civil War Veteran, CSA)
Hector Murdock McLeod	1935
Lawson Edward Green Richardson	1937 (Civil War Veteran, CSA)
Louisa Davis Doan	1938*
Lucinda Lee	1939*
Margaret Jane Davis McLeod	1939

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 5

### Landscape Design

The cemetery is fenced on the north, west and south boundaries to prevent livestock from entering. The east side of the cemetery parallels Lawrence Road 225 with the main entrance extending from there. Following the severe ice storm that occurred in 2008, very few trees remain in the cemetery. However, three cedar trees, which are common to cemeteries, are located near the northern edge of the cemetery. The grounds are covered with a very durable Zoysia grass sod that was established several years ago.

The original cemetery is triangular in shape and gently slopes toward the west and has a one-lane, perimeter roadway. The narrowest point is at the east entrance marked by a large steel mesh sign and the DAR Revolutionary War memorial marker for Nathaniel McCarroll.

### Family Plots and Enclosures

The cemetery was not sectioned off into family plots; however, spaces were apparently reserved by many families that resulted in family groupings within the cemetery. Surnames of some of these family groups include: Anderson, Bilbrey, Bratcher, Davis, Doan, Goad, Guthrie, Haley, Helms, Hillis, James, Matthews, McCarroll, McLeod, Montgomery, Price, Richardson, Smith, Walling and Webb.

Unlike most of the cemeteries in the vicinity of Bethel Cemetery, there are no wrought iron or other fenced enclosures within the cemetery.

### Non-Contributing Objects

The only non-contributing object in Bethel Cemetery is the steel mesh sign at the original entrance.

### INTEGRITY

Bethel Cemetery is the final resting place of many of the earliest settlers in what can now be referred to only as the Denton Community. The cemetery is significant to the history of Lawrence County, in particular, the Western District, which encompasses the Ozark Mountain foothills area lying west of Black River. The cemetery is the only extant resource associated with Bethel Church and contains many of the area's prominent citizens. Persons interred at Bethel Cemetery were businessmen including the founder of the former town of Denton, numerous military servicemen including many Civil War Veterans and their spouses, clergy, teachers, farmers and ranchers, and other members of the community, and as such, retain integrity of association, feeling and setting. An effort is underway to repair and reset those gravestones requiring such attention.

Bethel Cemetery

Name of Property

Lawrence County, Arkansas

County and State

## 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 the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B.** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C.** birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance.
- ☒ **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.

### Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

Local

### Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT

### Period of Significance

1835-1961

### Significant Dates

1835 (burial of Nathaniel McCarroll)

### Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

N/A

### Architect/Builder

N/A

### 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):

- ☐ 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: \_\_\_\_\_

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 1

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### SUMMARY

Located in the west-central area of Lawrence County, Arkansas, in the vicinity of the former rural town of Denton, Bethel Cemetery is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A** with **local significance** for its association with the early exploration and settlement of that community. The cemetery is also being nominated under **Criteria Consideration D** for **Cemeteries**.

### ELABORATION

#### Historic Context

Among the first settlers of Lawrence County were Frenchmen residing at Clover Bend beginning in 1802. When they settled this site on the east side of the Black River, it was owned by the French, but in 1803 it was transferred to the United States as a part of the 800,000-square-mile Louisiana Purchase. The first incarnation of Lawrence County was created by an act of the Missouri Territorial Legislature on 15 January 1815. A total of 31 counties were ultimately carved from this original expanse of land in the northern one-half of the state; thus, the name, "Mother of Counties." The Arkansas legislature set the boundaries of current Lawrence County in 1868 when they carved Sharp County from the west side of the county.

The topography of Lawrence County is diverse. The Black River, which runs north and south through the central part of the county, serves as a convenient dividing line between the region's highlands and lowlands. To the east of the river valley, which varies in width from three to seven miles, lies land that is relatively flat and low in elevation. A bluff borders the west side of the river valley, and further west are the rolling foothills of the Ozarks. These geographic differences played a crucial role in the ultimate settlement of the county.

The hilly, western part of Lawrence County, including the Spring River and Strawberry River valleys, was settled before the lower and swampier eastern half. Pioneers arrived from places like Tennessee, Kentucky, Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia via the Military Road, constructed by the federal government in 1811. The route ran southwest from St. Genevieve, Missouri, through Little Rock, and into Louisiana. Later settlers traveled up the White and Black rivers to Lawrence County on steamboats, which began operating in the region in 1829.

The first notable settlement was at Davidsonville, located near the intersection of the Spring and Black rivers. In October 1815 commissioners of the newly-formed county chose the site for the seat of government and laid out the town on a tract of land they purchased for \$255. In 1829 the county seat moved to Jackson, now in Randolph County, before commissioners once again relocated it to present-day Lawrence County, this time to Smithville. Then, as a provision of the legislation creating Sharp County, the government briefly

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 2

moved to Clover Bend on the Black River. On November 15, 1869, voters chose Powhatan as the seat of justice by a vote of 207 to six. By 1870, Lawrence County boasted a population of 5,981, just 389 more residents than it had in 1820.

The construction of the railroad through Lawrence County shifted a majority of the settlement eastward and led to significant population growth. In 1873 the Iron Mountain Railroad announced plans to build a line through the eastern part of the county, prompting some citizens to relocate from the highlands to the flatlands, along the proposed railroad corridor. Among these people was Colonel Willis Miles Ponder, a Civil War veteran from Missouri, who founded the town of Walnut Ridge in 1875. A decade later, the Kansas City, Fort Scott, and Memphis Railroad laid track through the nearby town of Hoxie, an event that assured the economic decline of western Lawrence County. By 1887 the eastern half of Lawrence County had enough population and economic influence that the state legislature divided the county into two districts and created a second seat of government at Walnut Ridge in addition to the one already established at Powhatan. This condition of dual county seats existed until 1963 when all government function moved to Walnut Ridge, where it remains today.

Denton, a now-defunct town located six miles west of Powhatan on Highway 117, is one of the communities that experienced a slow decline after the railroad companies built tracks through eastern Lawrence County. Situated in the Flat Creek Valley in western Lawrence County, Denton sprang up at the crossroads of the Military Road and the Powhatan-Smithville Road. Settlers began arriving about 1850, some of whom would ultimately be buried in the Bethel Cemetery including W.J. Matthews (arrived in 1852), John Davis (arrived in 1854), and Thomas J. Guthrie (arrived 1854). Most of the area's new residents were farmers, growing cotton or tobacco, though some made money blacksmithing or producing sorghum molasses. Settlement in Denton slowed as the Civil War gripped the country; Lawrence County as a whole actually lost 36 percent of its population between 1860 and 1870.

The construction of the railroads in the 1870s and 1880s revived settlement in Lawrence County, and though the tracks bypassed Denton, the community continued to thrive over the next half-century. Several merchants operated in the town during this period, including Henry Moore, Will Penn, Con Sullivan, and David Davis, who became Denton's first postmaster when the federal government established a post office there on March 6, 1894. The community also boasted a gristmill, two cotton gins, two doctors, and even a milliner shop around the turn of the century. At its peak, Denton consisted of about 50 homes and businesses.

Residents of Denton also enjoyed a relatively active social life during the village's heyday. Like many southern communities, Denton was home to a number of churches representing various denominations. The first house of worship in the area was New Hope Church, built by the Primitive Baptists in the early 1820s.



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 3

Disagreement among the congregation in the 1830s led to a split, and the name of the church was changed to Bethel Church. Another New Hope Baptist Church, evidently unrelated to the previous one, was established in July 1844 and remains in operation today. The Methodists also had a church building in Denton, which was moved in from Rock Cove in 1923. The churches housed other activities besides religious services, including a singing school in 1903. Held at New Hope Baptist Church, the event was taught by a traveling instructor who trained local residents to read and sing vocal music. By 1910 Denton also boasted a Masonic lodge and Odd Fellows lodge, and in 1912 local residents formed a brass band. These were just some of the activities in which the residents of Denton participated.

While Denton remained a healthy community through the 1930s, it would eventually fade from the map. Because of the community's distant location from the railroad and any major highway, the economy stagnated and many of the younger residents moved to larger communities in search of employment. Denton's decline was evident on April 30, 1954, when its post office was officially closed. Only a handful of people remained in the community until November 21, 1979, when Everett and Loma Moore became the last residents to move away.

### Cemetery History

The church-school site and cemetery are located within the bounds of Sampson W. Dodson's homestead [Township 17, Range 2W, Section 19] of 1853. Mr. Dodson sold this parcel and other parcels within Section 19 to Murdock McLeod in about 1858. The land ultimately became the property of Murdock and Barbara Matthews McLeod's son and daughter-in-law, Hector Murdock and Margaret Jane Davis McLeod. The property was later deeded to Hector and Margaret McLeod's daughter and son-in-law, William Grundy Smith, Sr. and Nellie Copeland McLeod Smith.

**Bethel Church.** A log church building, which was later called Bethel Church, was erected by the Primitive Baptists during the early 1820s. Reverend David Orr of Missouri was preaching at this church as early as 1823 and preached there for several years. In 1828 the church was organized (or reorganized) by Reverend Orr and given the name New Hope Church (The name "New Hope" was later used for a nearby Baptist church founded in 1844). During the 1830s, a segment of the congregation ("the missionaries") separated from the church and those who remained changed the name to Bethel Church. Bethel Church and Bethel Cemetery became known as Old Bethel Church and Old Bethel Cemetery after the founding of New Bethel Church at Smithville, Arkansas. John Campbell Bilbrey, J. H. Walden and Amos J. Bratcher were the principal persons involved in establishment of New Bethel Church. New Bethel Church was under the aegis of The Pilgrim Rest Association of Primitive Predestinarian Baptists.

**Bethel School.** The Bethel Church building stood for many years after the Bethel Church congregation disbanded, serving as a school until about 1899. A complete record of the names of teachers who taught at



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 4

Bethel School or the students who attended there was not kept. However, according to Mr. Farris Herren, a well-known local teacher and family historian, some of the teachers were George Thornburg, Mrs. Elvira West James Raney, Mollie McBryde, Maggie McLeod Peacock, John C. Eaton, Margaret Jane Davis McLeod, Jasper Newton Hillhouse, Willis Benton Matthews and Nathaniel Augustus Moore. Mr. Herren published a group photograph of Mr. Moore and his Bethel School students that was taken during the late 1890s and may have been the last school conducted there.

**Bethel Cemetery.** The majority of the persons whose names appear in the list of historic burials were members of prominent pioneer families who settled in the Denton Community. The following is further discussion about some of these families:

**James McCarroll**, son of Nathaniel and Martha McCarroll, his wife, **Mary Beasley**, several of James and Mary's children and their spouses, and many other descendants of Nathaniel McCarroll are buried in Old Bethel Cemetery. Three of James and Mary's sons, Thomas, John Rhea, and William Henderson, were Civil War veterans. The surnames of other families associated with these members of the McCarroll family were: Brady, Davis, Dean, Johns, McGhee, Miller, Mitchell, Oldham, Thompson, and Webb.

**Reverend Ozias S. Denton** and his family came to Lawrence County in the late summer or early fall of 1850. The family was enumerated twice during the 1850 decennial census. The first enumeration occurred during August in White County, Tennessee, and the second during October in Lawrence County. Ozias Denton was a Primitive Baptist and brother of Isaac Denton, the famous "Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit" Baptist minister in White County, Tennessee. Ozias died in September 1852 and his wife, Susannah Walling Denton, died in September 1858. The surnames of other families associated with this Denton family include: Bilbrey, Bowman, Davis, Goad, Goddard, Pennington, Sparkman, Walling, Webb, Wiles, and Wood.

**Murdock and Barbara Matthews McLeod** came to Lawrence County in 1857 from Harnett Co., North Carolina. They settled initially in the Clover Bend area on the east side of Black River then relocated to the Denton Community in 1858 after purchasing the property held by Sampson W. Dodson. Three of their sons, Alexander, James, and Simon, were Civil War veterans. The surnames of other families associated with the McLeod family were: Barnett, Christian, Davis, Dodson, Estes, Guthrie, Judkins, Smith, Webb, and Williams.

The **Davis brothers, Roswell and James M.**, and their families came from Middle Tennessee to Lawrence County in the fall of 1852. Roswell and Lavenia Warner Davis' two eldest children, John and Elizabeth, married children of James and Mary Beasley McCarroll. John married Martha McCarroll in March of 1853 and Elizabeth married John Rhea McCarroll in December of 1852. After the death of his first wife, Susan

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 5

Stricklin, James M. Davis married Mrs. Mary M. McCarroll Oldham, in 1859. Mary was the second oldest daughter of James and Mary Beasley McCarroll, whose first husband, Thompson M. Oldham, had died in 1850. James M. and Susan Stricklin Davis' daughter, Louisa, married the Civil War veteran James Z. Doan. The surnames of other families associated with these members of the Davis family were: McCarroll, Denton, Webb, Price, Richardson, Smith, Goff, Pettyjohn, Doan, Flippo, Ketner, York, Hastings, Lawson, Buchanan, Anderson, Faulkner, Bilbrey, Goad, Helms, Field, Puckett, and Guthrie.

The **Walling brothers, Thomas R. and Joseph H.**, grandsons of the Revolutionary War veteran, James Walling, and Mary White Walling, were both veterans of the Civil War. In about 1840 Thomas married Martha Nancy Denton, daughter of Ozias and Susannah Walling Denton, in White County, Tennessee. After Martha Nancy's death Thomas married Charity Ann Caton in 1855. Joseph married Nancy (last name unknown) in Tennessee prior to their relocation to Lawrence County. After Nancy's death he married Mrs. Irene Douglas in 1885. In 1870 Daniel Webster Walling, son of Thomas R. and Martha Nancy Denton Walling, married Martha Barr in Independence County, Arkansas. The exact date of Martha Barr Walling's death has not been determined; however, she may have died in Jackson County, Arkansas, during the birth of their son, John M. Walling, on January 12, 1875. In July 1878 Daniel married Sarah E. Diffie in Sharp County, Arkansas. Sarah died on January 23, 1933, and was buried in Lawrence Memorial Park Cemetery, Walnut Ridge, Arkansas, adjacent to their daughter. The surnames of other families associated with the Walling family members were: Sparks, Lowery, Barr and Goad.

**Valentine T. and Caroline Hargett Price** moved from Union Co., North Carolina, to Smith County, Tennessee, during the late 1840s, then to Lawrence County, Arkansas, soon thereafter. The three youngest of their twelve children were born in Lawrence County. Valentine Price died in 1864 and was buried on the family farm near Lynn, Arkansas. Caroline Hargett Price died in 1886 and was buried in Old Bethel Cemetery. The surnames of other families associated with the Price family were: Davis, Rider, Goodwin, Chaney, Wasson, Moore, Field, Holt, Nelson, and Ketner.

**David D. "Dave" Davis** was three years old when his mother, Martha McCarroll Davis, died in 1860. Dave was kept by his grandmother, Lavenia Warner Davis, until his father returned from the Civil War. He was then reared to maturity by his father and stepmother, John and Sarah Ann White Davis. In 1878 Dave married Eliza A. Price, the youngest child of Valentine T. and Caroline Hargett Price. The surnames of other families associated with this Davis family were: Matthews, Guthrie, Borah, Ellis, Wells, Pettyjohn, and Woodyard.

The **Richardson brothers, Horatio Thomas Jackson "Jack" and Lawson Edward Green**, were sons of Drury and Amanda Eliza Miller Richardson. In 1874 Green married Innis Joannah D. Roark. After Joannah's death in 1891, he married Sarah Ann Brady. In 1868, Jack married Sarah C. Davis, daughter of Roswell and

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

Lavenia Warner Davis. The surnames of other families associated with these members of the Richardson family were: Massey, Matthews, Justus, Phillips, Barnett, and Watson.

**Thomas Jefferson Guthrie**, son of Thomas and Mary Canterbury Guthrie, married Mary M. Rainwater in 1856. Mary was a daughter of the widely acclaimed Methodist minister, Rev. W. Hugh Rainwater, and Sarah W. Thomas Rainwater. The surnames of other families associated with the Guthrie family were: McLeod, Bush, Phillips, King, Matthews, Watts, Pettyjohn, James, and Davis.

**John Campbell Bilbrey**, son of Laird and Nancy Alvina Copeland Bilbrey, served in two Civil War units, first serving with the rank of sergeant. He served with the rank of lieutenant in the second unit. In 1851 John married Rutha Denton, daughter of Ozias and Susannah Walling Denton. Together, they had 12 children, five daughters and seven sons. After Rutha's death in 1872, John married Mrs. Mary Ann Harrison Alexander, whose first husband, James Calvin Alexander, and son, John H. Alexander, were casualties of the Civil War. John Campbell Bilbrey's half brother, Mounce Gore Bilbrey, son of Laird and Edy Gore Bilbrey, married Rebecca Mary Ann Gragg in Tennessee prior to their relocation to Lawrence County. Mounce and Rebecca's only child was Margaret Dee Bilbrey Baker, wife of James Polk Baker. Surnames of other families associated with these members of the Bilbrey family include: Thompson, Mays, Kendall, Price, Justus, and Davis.

One cannot depart from a discussion of pioneer families in the Denton Community without mentioning the surnames, **Matthews and Webb**. In 1854 Wiley John Matthews, son of John Leroy and Nancy Poer Matthews, married Sarah Webb, daughter of John B. and Mary Pearson Webb. After Sarah's death, Wiley married his sister-in-law, Anna Webb Hillis, the widow of Civil War veteran, Joseph Levi Hillis. In 1857 Cornelius Davis, son of Roswell and Lavenia Warner Davis, married Mary Webb, the twin sister of Jane Webb McLeod. In 1860 Jane Webb married James McLeod, son of Murdock and Barbara Matthews McLeod. In 1878 Hector Murdock McLeod, the youngest child of Murdock and Barbara Matthews McLeod, married Margaret Jane Davis, daughter of Cornelius and Mary Webb Davis. The surnames of other families associated with these Matthews and Webb families include: Guthrie, Rainwater, Morgan, Grundy, Pickett, Walling, Moore, McAlister, Bowman, Darter, McCarroll, Miller, Denton, Richey, and Stewart.

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Bethel Cemetery is the final resting place for many early, pioneering families who settled in the area east of Smithville, Lawrence County, Arkansas, known as the Denton Community. Interred in Bethel Cemetery are businessmen including the founder of the former town of Denton, numerous military servicemen including many Civil War veterans and their spouses, clergy, teachers, farmers and ranchers, and other members of the community, including the spouses, mothers, fathers, siblings, children, and other descendants of these

Bethel Cemetery  
Name of Property

Lawrence County, Arkansas  
County and State

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

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families. Bethel Cemetery is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A** with **local significance**, for its association with the early exploration and settlement of that community. The cemetery is also being nominated under **Criteria Consideration D** for **Cemeteries**.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 1

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 2

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Bethel Cemetery

Name of Property

Lawrence County, Arkansas

County and State

**United States Department of the Interior**

National Park Service

# **National Register of Historic Places**

## **Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 3

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### **Web Sites Consulted**

<http://www.arkansasgravestones.org> Last Accessed December 5, 2010

<http://www.ancestry.com/> Last Accessed December 3, 2010

<http://www.gravestonestudies.org/index.htm> Last Accessed December 2, 2010



Bethel Cemetery  
Name of Property

Lawrence County, Arkansas  
County and State

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 4.5 acres

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 15 658902 3996669  
Zone Easting Northing  
2

3  
Zone Easting Northing  
4

☒ 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 T. J. Helms, Old Bethel Cemetery Assoc., Inc.; edited by Clint Pumphrey, National Register Historian  
organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date 2/10/2011  
street & number 323 Center St., 1500 Tower Building telephone (501) 324-9789  
city or town Little Rock state AR zip code 72201

## 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 Patrons of Old Bethel Cemetery Association, Inc.; Mrs. Ann Burrow, Chairperson of the Board  
street & number 401 Lawrence Road telephone (870) 528-3810  
city or town Black Rock state Arkansas zip code 72415

**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.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 1

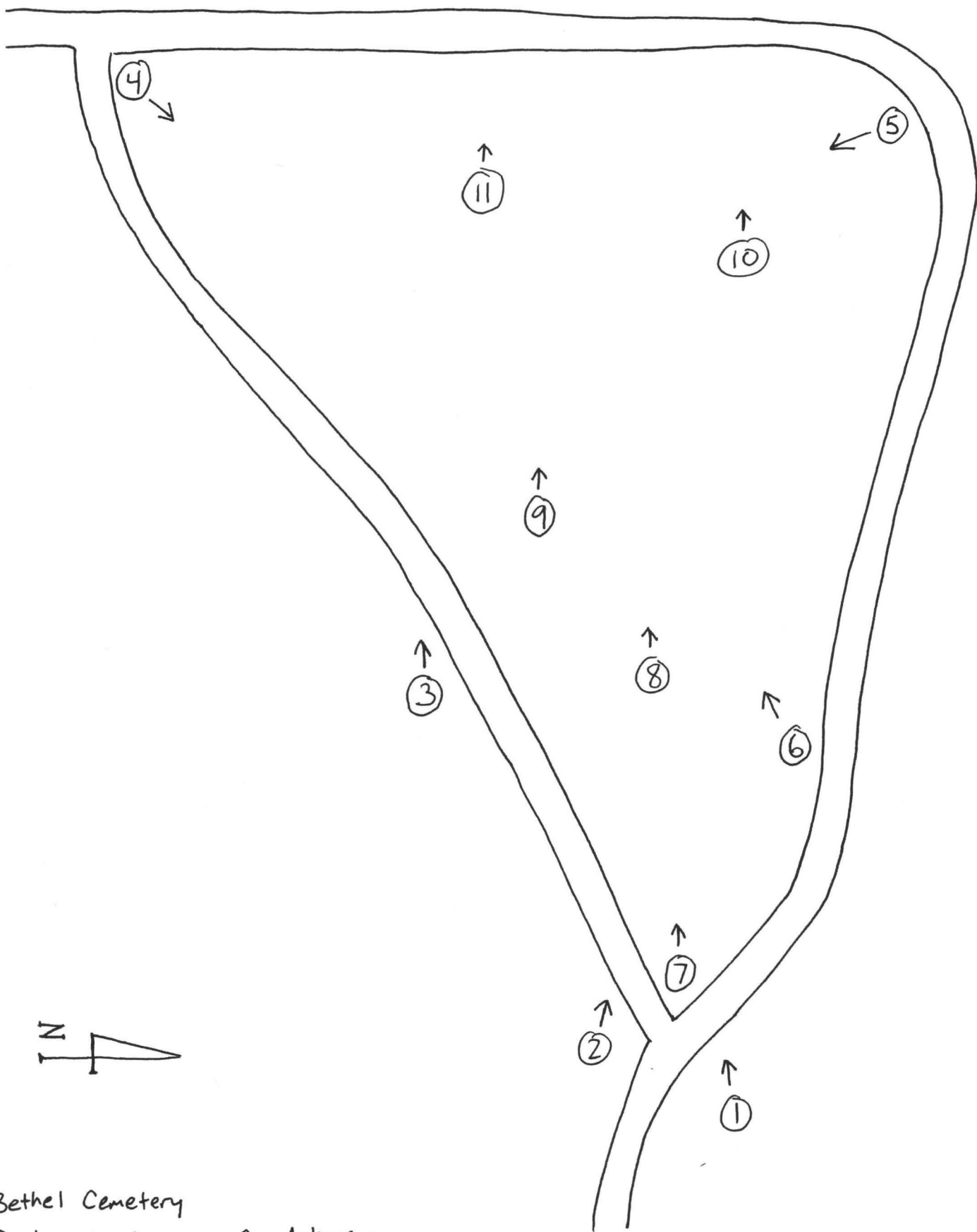
### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTIONS

Today, Bethel Cemetery, consisting of approximately 4.5 acres, is made up of four (4) parcels:

- (1) The "Old Bethel Church Land" of three acres (parcel 001-05238-000-E located within Township 17, Range 2W, Section 19) is designated as tax exempt property by the Lawrence County Tax Assessor. Further, this parcel is declared to be public property by Arkansas State Code (A.C.A. 18-15-1407) in that the cemetery has been open for public use for a period of at least fifty (50) years.
- (2) Warranty Deed dated 29 July 1946 from H. V. and Bamma Baldrige to Old Bethel Cemetery: "A tract of land ... beginning at the Northeast (NE) corner of Bethel Cemetery as now located, thence south a distance of thirty five (35) yards to the Southeast (SE) corner of said Cemetery, thence Easterly a distance of One Hundred Eighty Six (186) yards to a point on the County Road, thence North a distance of Twenty (20) yards to a point on the line where the land of H. V. Baldrige joins that of W. G. Smith, thence West a distance of One Hundred Eighty Six (186) yards to the point of beginning."
- (3) Warranty Deed dated 23 April 1953 from H. V. and Bamma Baldrige to Old Bethel Cemetery: "A certain strip of land 20 ft. wide running North and South along the West side and joining Old Bethel Cemetery, Being a part of the NW SE of Section Nineteen (19) Twp. Seventeen (17) N Range Two (2) West containing (0.20) Twenty Hundredths of an acre (more or less).
- (4) Warranty Deed dated 13 May 1953 from W. G. and Nellie Smith to Old Bethel Cemetery: "A certain strip of land 20 ft. wide running North and South along the West side and joining Old Bethel Cemetery, and a certain strip of land 20 ft. wide running East and West along the North side and joins Old Bethel Cemetery, Being a part of the NW SE of Section Nineteen (19) Twp. Seventeen (17) N Range Two (2) West containing Two Tenths (0.2) of an acre (more or less).

### BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The above boundaries include all land historically associated with Bethel Cemetery.



Bethel Cemetery  
Denton vic., Lawrence Co., Arkansas

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY Bethel Cemetery  
NAME:

MULTIPLE  
NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: ARKANSAS, Lawrence

DATE RECEIVED: 5/03/11 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 5/27/11  
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 6/13/11 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 6/18/11  
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 11000354

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N  
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N  
REQUEST: N SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

☒ ACCEPT ☐ RETURN ☐ REJECT 6.15.11 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Entered in  
The National Register  
of  
Historic Places

RECOM./CRITERIA \_\_\_\_\_

REVIEWER \_\_\_\_\_ DISCIPLINE \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.





1. Bethel Cemetery
2. Lawrence Co., AR
3. Clint Pumphrey
4. January 19, 2011
5. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, Little Rock, AR
6. east of cemetery, looking west
7. #1





1. Bethel Cemetery
2. Lawrence Co., AR
3. Clint Pumphrey
4. January 19, 2011
5. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, Little Rock, AR
6. East face of sign + cenotaph, looking west
7. #2



1. Bethel Cemetery
2. Lawrence Co., AR
3. Clint Pumphrey
4. January 19, 2011
5. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, Little Rock, AR
6. Southeast of cemetery, looking west
7. #3





1. Bethel Cemetery
2. Lawrence Co., AR
3. Clint Pumphrey
4. January 19, 2011
5. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, Little Rock, AR
6. Southwest corner of cemetery, looking north east
7. #4





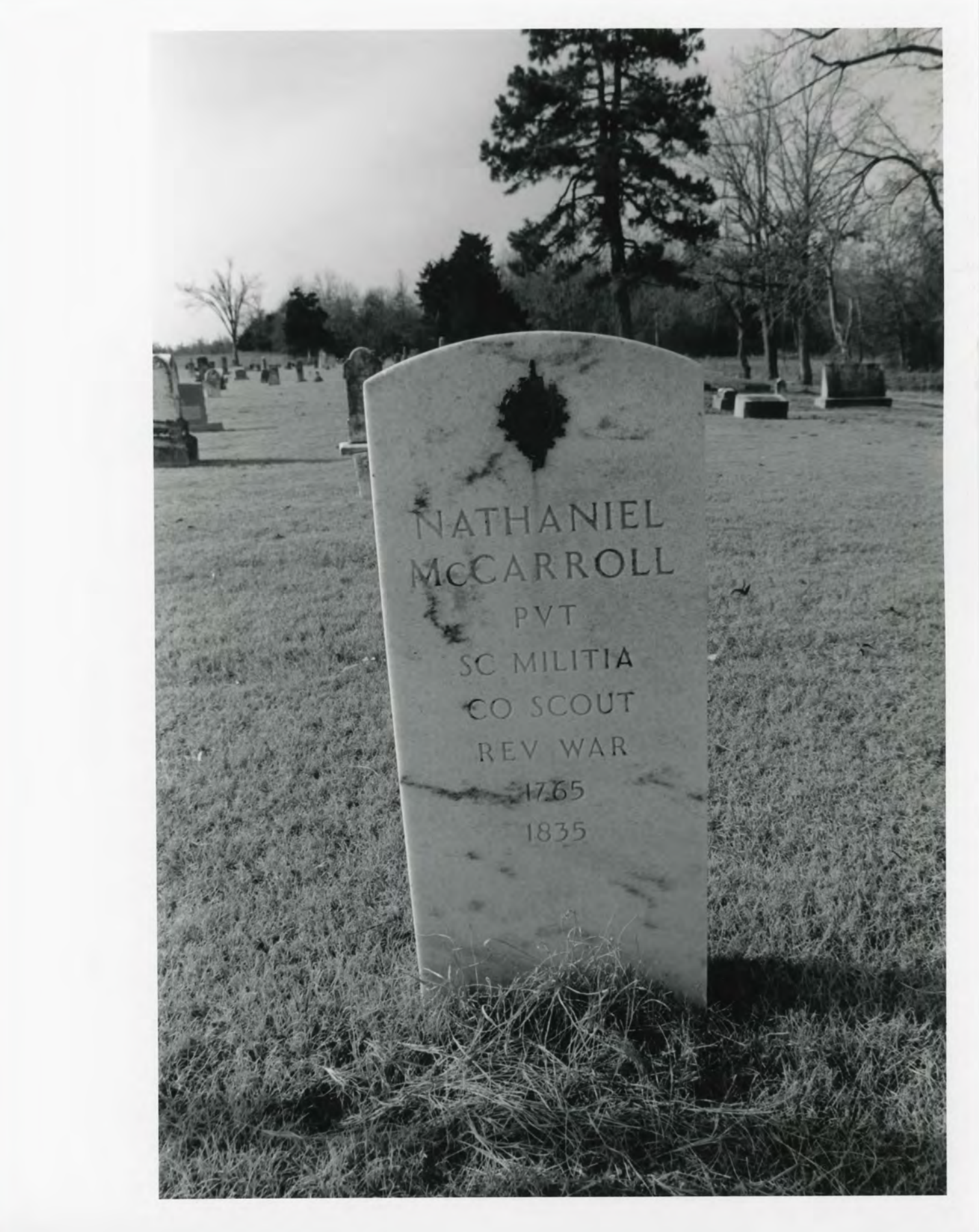
1. Bethel Cemetery
2. Lawrence Co., AR
3. Clint Pumphrey
4. January 19, 2011
5. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, Little Rock, AR
6. north west corner of cemetery, looking southeast
7. #5





1. Bethel Cemetery
2. Lawrence Co., AR
3. Clint Pumphrey
4. January 19, 2011
5. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, Little Rock, AR
6. north of cemetery, looking southwest
7. #6





NATHANIEL  
MC CARROLL

PVT

SC MILITIA

CO SCOUT

REV WAR

1765

1835

1. Bethel Cemetery
2. Lawrence Co., AR
3. Clint Pumphrey
4. January 19, 2011
5. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, Little Rock, AR
6. east face of cenotaph, looking west
7. #7





LULU M. MCARRELL  
WIFE OF  
JAMES MCARRELL  
BORN

JUNE 7, 1801.

DIED  
JULY 24, 1863.  
AGED  
62 Y., 1 M., 17 D.

*Asleep in Jesus' blessed sleep,  
From which none ever wake to weep.*

By the Rev. J. C. Smith,  
Pastor of the Methodist Church,  
St. Louis, Mo.



1. Bethel Cemetery
2. Lawrence Co., AR
3. Clint Pumphrey
4. January 19, 2011
5. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, Little Rock, AR
6. east face of tombstone, looking west
7. #8





1. Bethel Cemetery
2. Lawrence Co., AR
3. Clint Pumphrey
4. January 19, 2011
5. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, Little Rock, AR
6. East face of fieldstone, looking west
7. #9







1. Bethel Cemetery
2. Lawrence Co., AR
3. Clint Pumphrey
4. January 19, 2011
5. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, Little Rock, AR
6. east face of tombstone, looking west
7. # 10





1. Bethel Cemetery
2. Lawrence Co., AR
3. Clint Pumphrey
4. January 19, 2011
5. Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, Little Rock, AR
6. east face of tombstone, looking west
7. #11



Bethel Cemetery  
Denton vic., Lawrence Co.,  
Arkansas  
UTM Reference:  
15/658702/399669



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS, USC&GS, and USCE

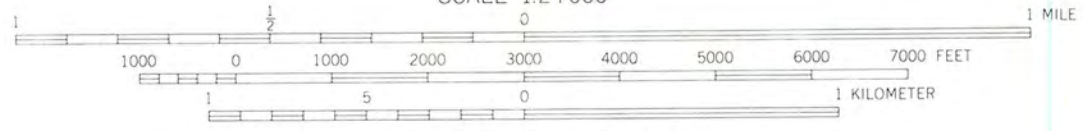
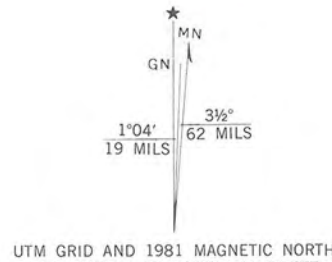
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial  
photographs taken 1963 and planetable surveys 1966

Polynomial projection: 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid based on Arkansas coordinate system, north zone  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,  
zone 15, shown in blue

To place on the predicted North American Datum 1983  
move the projection lines 5 meters south and  
11 meters east as shown by dashed corner ticks

There may be private inholdings within the boundaries  
of the National or State reservations shown on this map

Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs taken  
1980. Map edited 1981. This information not field checked



CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET  
DOTTED LINES REPRESENT 5-FOOT CONTOURS  
NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092  
AND ARKANSAS GEOLOGICAL COMMISSION, LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72204  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

ROAD CLASSIFICATION  
Heavy-duty ——— Light-duty ———  
Medium-duty ——— Unimproved dirt ———  
U.S. Route ——— State Route ———



EATON, ARK.  
SW/4 POWHATAN 15' QUADRANGLE  
N3600—W9107.5/7.5

1966  
PHOTOREVISED 1981  
DMA 7756 II SW—SERIES V884





## The Department of Arkansas Heritage

Mike Beebe  
Governor

Cathie Matthews  
Director

Arkansas Arts Council

\*

Arkansas Natural Heritage  
Commission

\*

Delta Cultural Center

\*

Historic Arkansas Museum

\*

Mosaic Templars  
Cultural Center

\*

Old State House Museum



### Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

1500 Tower Building  
323 Center Street  
Little Rock, AR 72201

(501) 324-9880

fax: (501) 324-9184

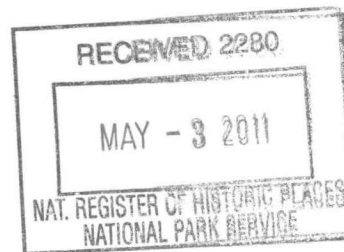
tdd: (501) 324-9811

e-mail:

[info@arkansaspreservation.org](mailto:info@arkansaspreservation.org)

website:

[www.arkansaspreservation.com](http://www.arkansaspreservation.com)



April 25, 2011

Ms. Carol Shull  
Chief of Registration  
United States Department of the Interior  
National Register of Historic Places  
National Park Service  
8th Floor  
1201 Eye Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20005

RE: Bethel Cemetery – Denton vic., Lawrence County, Arkansas

Dear Ms. Shull:

We are enclosing for your review the above-referenced nomination. The Arkansas Historic Preservation Program has complied with all applicable nominating procedures and notification requirements in the nomination process.

If you need further information, please call Ralph S. Wilcox of my staff at (501) 324-9787. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

Cathie Matthews  
State Historic Preservation Officer

CM:crp

Enclosure

