

941

RECEIVED
OMB No. 1024-0018
JUL 23 2001

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 Union Methodist Church Cemetery/Hays Campground Cemetery
other names/site number Hays Campground (Union Methodist) Cemetery

2. Location

street & number Union Church Road
city, town Butler (X) vicinity of
county Taylor **code** GA 269
state Georgia **code** GA **zip code** 31006

(N/A) not for publication

3. Classification

Ownership of Property:

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

Category of Property:

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

Number of Resources within Property:	<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>
buildings	0	0
sites	1	0
structures	4	0
objects	0	0
total	5	0

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

Name of previous listing: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: 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 meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets the National Register criteria. () See continuation sheet.

Richard Clowes
Signature of certifying official

7-17-01
Date

for W. Ray Luce, Division Director and
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

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

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency or bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

**Entered in the
National Register**

9/6/01

determined eligible for the National Register

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other, explain:

see continuation sheet

Keeper of the National Register

Date

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions:

FUNERARY/cemetery

Current Functions:

FUNERARY/cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

N/A

Materials:

foundation	N/A
walls	N/A
roof	N/A
other	frame grave shelters (4)

Description of present and historic physical appearance:

The Union Methodist Church Cemetery/Hays Campground Cemetery is across the road (photos 3, 5, and 10) from the Union United Methodist Church (not nominated because of recent remodeling) in a very rural area of Taylor County. The cemetery contains grave markers of various types arranged in family plots in a generally informal manner (photos 1, 2, and 14). There are approximately 200 burials in the cemetery. The gravestones are mostly upright, original markers contemporary with the burials (photos 4, 12, and 14), although some older graves have been marked in more recent times. There is at least one short obelisk (photos 12 and 13) and numerous stone and concrete grave caps. Much of the ground cover is dirt with some grass (photos 1 and 5). Most of the older lots have no delineations or coping, although more recent family lots have granite copings and granite ground cover (photo 14). Several graves have wooden shelters, two of which have four stylized picket fence-like walls and gabled roofs (photos 4, 5, 6, and 7), one which has just a gabled roof sitting upon the ground (photos 6 and 10), and a fourth which has a four-poster frame, fence-like enclosure with finials atop the posts, with no roof (photo 2). These structures are made of pine and are pegged together. The roofs are covered in cedar shakes. The two structures with walls and a roof have tombstones inside dating from 1847 and 1850 respectively (photos 8 and 9). At least one family plot has a decorative iron fence with nameplate (photo 11); several other burial plots have iron or wire fences (photos 10, 11, 12, and 13). One portion of the cemetery is an African-American burial area with marked and unmarked graves and is separated from the main part of the cemetery by a fence on the south side (photos 17 and 18); this area is marked by trees and scrub bushes rather than open expanses of ground. There is one plot in the northern part of the cemetery enclosed by modern brick posts and steel fencing (photo 15). Standing at the southern edge of the cemetery are three nonhistoric crosses. Adjacent to the cemetery are highways on three sides and a forested lot on the south side (photos 1, 2, and 15). The cemetery continues to be an active burial ground.

8. Statement of Significance

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

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions):

ARCHITECTURE
ART
SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance:

1847 - 1951

Significant Dates:

1847

Significant Person(s):

N/A

Cultural Affiliation:

N/A

Architect(s)/Builder(s):

N/A

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8--Statement of Significance

Narrative statement of significance (areas of significance)

The Union Methodist Church Cemetery/Hays Campground Cemetery is an excellent example of a small rural church-associated cemetery containing separate white and black burial area, typical examples of funerary art and sculpture in headstones, monuments, and fencing, and several extraordinary wooden grave shelters.

The cemetery is significant in art and architecture for its collection of stone, metal, and wood grave markers, monuments, and fencing. The flat, upright stone burial markers (headstones), set on low stone bases and featuring modest detailing and inscriptions, are typical of the funerary art found in small rural cemeteries across the state. The few larger burial monuments and markers display more elaborate ornamentation including raised book-like markers, Gothic or lancet arches, and rolled shoulders, again typical of small rural cemeteries. An unusual grave marker in this cemetery is the single short obelisk. Other distinctive features of this rural cemetery are the stone or concrete burial covers or caps, and one low vaulted masonry burial cover. The white section of the cemetery is larger, more open, and contains many more marked burials. The African-American section is smaller and is marked by fewer, smaller, and more modest stone markers. It is likely that there are many currently unmarked graves in this section of the cemetery; these graves would likely have been marked historically by small stones or impermanent wooden markers. The cemetery is especially important because of the very rare surviving grave shelters/enclosures that cover four of the oldest burials in the cemetery. It is believed that these grave shelters are contemporary with the burials. Two contain gabled roofs atop four walls resembling picket fences, one is a gabled roof resting on the ground, and another four end posts connected in a frame around the grave. All are of pine and are pegged together. Each appears to surround a single below-ground grave. The grave shelters are believed to derive from earlier and more impressive European burial customs but in the United States are found only in the southeast dating from 1840 to 1890. One survey found them surviving in 124 counties from Texas to Virginia. These Victorian-era funeral structures are roughly the size of an adult grave, five by seven feet, with the gable ends marking the head and foot of the grave. Besides commemorating the dead, they also serve to protect against erosion of the grave and against roving livestock. Grave shelters are a very rare and fast-disappearing type of funerary custom in Georgia. While once widespread few still exist, and they are seldom replaced today when lost.

The cemetery is significant in social history as a community and church cemetery dating from the first decades after the original (Talbot) county's founding in 1827. The cemetery contains the remains of the original settler, Jeremiah C. McCants (1808-1866), a native of Fairfield District, South Carolina, who founded not only the nearby crossroads community, but also gave land jointly in 1840 with Robert P. Hays to the church which was used half for a church and half for burial purposes. Union Church was originally used by both Baptists and Methodists, hence the name "Union." It is this land, given in 1840, that is still being used for the cemetery. McCants and other members of his family

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8--Statement of Significance

were involved in the church, and his descendants, the Jarrell family, now have their name on the nearby community. The cemetery served as a community burial ground until the church was built after which it became associated with the church. A camp meeting site once existed complete with tabernacle and tents (cabins) in the area in the late 19th century, adding that name to the cemetery. All remnants of the camp meeting site (the campground) are now gone. Although built c.1883, the Union United Methodist Church building is not eligible for the National Register due to nonhistoric changes in the 1960s which have resulted in a loss of integrity.

National Register Criteria

The nomination meets National Register Criterion A because as a cemetery for a small, rural community, it contributes to the understanding of the broad patterns of history, the need for a community burial area. The nomination also meets National Register Criterion C because the variety of funerary monuments, especially the four above-ground grave shelters which are a rare surviving element and custom that has generally disappeared due to its fragile nature. This art form is quite rare in Georgia.

Criteria Considerations (if applicable)

The property meets Criteria Consideration D because the four above-ground grave shelters or covers are very rare and distinctive design features which add great importance to this cemetery for the information they convey about this custom.

Period of significance (justification)

The period of significance begins with 1847, the earliest known marked grave in the cemetery and runs to the end of the historic period, 1951, throughout which the cemetery was continuously used.

Contributing/Noncontributing Resources (explanation, if necessary)

The cemetery itself is one contributing site.
The four grave shelters are four contributing structures.
Total: 5 contributing properties.

Developmental history/historic context (if appropriate)

The land on which this cemetery is located is in the part of Georgia that was not available for non-Indian settlement until the 1827 Land Lottery opened the area between the Flint and the Chattahoochee rivers. The cemetery served as a community cemetery and then mostly a church

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8--Statement of Significance

cemetery. The cemetery land and its association with the nearby church is tied to two founding families, those of McCants and Hays. Information on how those families got to this area is a preface to the establishment of the cemetery.

The saga of the arrival of the McCants family to this area is recounted in a handwritten statement attributed to James "Jim" B. Hamilton, half-brother to Jeremiah C. McCants, a founder and land donor of the cemetery and the nearby (but not nominated) church. According to Hamilton:

Jeremiah C. McCants was born in Fairfield [District], South Carolina in 1808 and lived there until his father died. My mother Sarah McCants and I came from Ireland. She was [later] Sarah Hamilton and I was her only child [by Mr. Hamilton], Jim Hamilton. [Census shows he was born in 1800.] She and I settled in S.C. and she married [second] Jeremiah McCants who died and left her with four McCants boys which by my help we raised. We got out [of] money and was in a bad fix. I came to Georgia and worked out money enough to go back and get her and her boys. [Sarah McCants was still living in Fairfield District, S.C. in the 1820 Census.] We moved to Bibb Co., Georgia in year of 1819 [sic, probably c. 1821 after the land lottery opened up the area.] and remained there until the Indians were moved from Ocmulgee [River] to the other side of the Flint River, then we moved to Crawford County and lived there several years until the Indians were moved from Flint River to the other side of the Chattahoochee River. [This would be after the 1827 Land Lottery.] Then we moved to Talbot County, Georgia, where Jeremiah C. one of my mother's boys married a Miss Tabithy McCrary [in 1832 in Talbot County] and raised a large family and accumulated lots of property. He was a kind man to his family and good to the poor and needy, always ready to do good wherever he could. [He died in 1866.] "

The land they settled in Talbot County was carved into Taylor County when that county was created in 1852.

By the time of the 1850 Census, the first census to show family members, Jeremiah C. McCants, 42, his brother Andrew, 38, and their mother, Sarah, 83, as well as their half-brother James B. Hamilton, 50, (the author of the above narrative) were living next door to one another in Talbot (later Taylor) County. The Robert P. Hays family was nearby. Both the Hays and McCants families, who had each moved to the same area of Talbot (later Taylor) County by the 1830 Census, would play important roles in establishing the cemetery and the nearby church for the community.

The history of the cemetery is intertwined with that of west central Georgia's settlement patterns, specifically the founding of the crossroads community. Spurred by the removal of Indians by two treaties, 1821 and 1827, and coupled with the attraction of fertile land formed by the Flint River basin, pioneer settlers from Virginia and South Carolina purchased large lots that had been originally distributed through the land lottery of 1827. Two such pioneers were Jeremiah C. McCants and

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8--Statement of Significance

Robert P. Hays. As these two families developed the land agriculturally, control of the community was achieved through intermarriage. Vast acreage consisting of cotton, corn, and other staples led to area grist mills, cotton gins, and saw mills. The original settlers of what is now the Jarrell community looked to religion as a guiding force as well as a governing body for the community.

The settlement pattern of the Jarrell community is based on agriculture, cultivation of cotton in particular. The pioneer settlers soon exerted control over both the area and the daily life of the community's residents, religious and secular. Although not a plantation on a large scale, the community was dependent on slave labor as evidenced in Slave Ancestral Research: It's Something Else, by Mary L. Jackson Fears, which documents slave ownership by the original founders of the Jarrell community. The community was and still is largely self-contained and self-sufficient. Religion was the focus or governing force of pioneer culture. The Union Methodist Church, not nominated but across from the cemetery, originated from a desire of the original settlers to have a place of worship, establish order in a wilderness, and provide a focus for the new community.

In a deed dated March 10, 1840 (Talbot County, GA, Deed Book G (1841-1842), pp. 261-262.) Jeremiah C. McCants (see above) and Robert P. Hays deeded the five acres that became the land for the church (not nominated) and the cemetery. The deed was a joint gift from McCants and Hays to the deacons of the Union Primitive Baptist Church. This church building was said to have been used jointly for several decades by the Baptists and the Methodists, hence the name Union. They remained together until 1878 when a separate facility for Baptists was built, and a few years later in 1883 the new Methodist church, the original core structure for the present-day Union United Methodist Church, across the road from the nominated cemetery, was built. The Rev. Jim Hamilton, whose narrative was quoted above, apparently remained Baptist, while other family members were Methodists. The church's charter members included Robert P. Hays and four McCants family members: Jeremiah "Jerry" C., J. T., Bartley, and Jack. The Primitive Baptist church building existed for a number of years and was eventually demolished. The two and one-half acres in the northeast corner of Lot 23, 15th Land District, remains the site of the cemetery, the nominated property.

The cemetery's earliest marked grave is dated 1847. The cemetery holds over 200 burials, both white and black. Among these are many people associated with the community's founding as well as that of the nearby church: Martha J. Hamilton (1818-1852), wife of the Rev. J. B. Hamilton, whose narrative is quoted above, members of the Hays family, including Robert P. Hays (1800-1884), his wife, Elizabeth Hays (1804-1881), and their son, the Rev. James R. Hays (1828-1890), a Methodist minister. Many members of the McCants family are also buried here. Jeremiah C. McCants (1808-1866), his wife, Tabithy (McCrary) McCants (1816-1854), as well as his mother, Mrs. Sarah McCants (1765-1858), whose modern tombstone indicates she was born in Ireland. Also buried there are the McCants's direct descendants, the Jarrell family, whose current descendants are sponsors of this nomination.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8--Statement of Significance

The name Hays (Hayes) is associated with the cemetery due to its association with the former religious campground nearby. The campground site (which is not part of this nomination) was on seven acres of land given for that purpose by Robert P. Hays (Hayes), hence the name associated with the campground. Mr. Hugh McCants indicated that this land was given in 1870. Information states that the first camp meeting held there was on the first Sunday in September, 1874 and a camp meeting was held here annually afterwards until 1895 or 1896. In 1875 the campground leaders built a tabernacle, or central meeting facility, the centerpiece of most camp meetings. This as well as the members' tents, or cabins, are all gone. None of the campground buildings was on the property now designated the cemetery and none of the structures survives.

Many references in the Butler, Georgia, newspaper, as abstracted for the years 1876-1896, refer to burials known to be in this cemetery as being at Hays Church (1881), or someone joining at "Hays Church" (1887), buried "in the cemetery at the campground" (1887), "Interred at Union" (1893), "Remains buried at Hays Campground" (1896). It is due to the intermixture of these two names that both the names Union and Hays are part of the official name of this cemetery. The community around the cemetery was also known as Union and that community name was often found in the newspaper as well. The "Union" community was shown on Bonner's 1847 "Map of Georgia."

The Union United Methodist Church building, originally built c. 1883, is not included within this nomination, but is tied to the history of the cemetery. The church building remained a small, simple country church until the early 1960s when the congregation decided to enlarge and refurbish it. Dennis and Dennis, architects, of Macon, were hired. The resulting changes have rendered the church ineligible for the National Register at this time. The church uses the cemetery as its burial ground.

Over the years the cemetery has been a site where a variety of funerary customs were practiced. These include the erection of a variety of grave markers, and many different types of markers still survive. Several historic iron fences remain around individual or family plots, as do some metal markers.

Four remaining wooden grave shelters, one of the most fragile resources found in Georgia cemeteries, can be found here. Two of these retain wooden picket-fence-like walls with hipped roofs. One of these has the grave of William McCants who died at age one month in 1847. The other is that of George R. McCants who died in 1850 at age 42 and was a brother to Jeremiah C. McCants. These two shelters are next to each other and are very similar as are the tombstones inside. Nearby is a shelter that contains only the outside walls, with no roof. Also nearby is a shelter that consists of just a hipped roof resting on the ground.

These grave shelters were a Victorian funerary custom that was prolific from 1840 to around 1890, the simple structure mimicking the grander mausoleums of the cities. The shelter was the size of an adult grave, five feet by seven feet. The shelter was also practical, protecting against erosion and

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section 8--Statement of Significance

roving livestock. A survey by the Historic Chattahoochee Commission in its book The Architectural Legacy of the Lower Chattahoochee Valley in Alabama and Georgia (1978), edited by D. Gregory Jeane, gives a lengthy essay on grave shelters. Since this organization worked only with counties that border the Chattahoochee River, they identified shelters only in Harris and Stewart Counties in Georgia, and Henry and Russell Counties in Alabama. Harris County is the closest to the nominated cemetery. A more comprehensive survey might indicate how many shelters survive today.

The African-American burials, including many early ones of slaves, are located on the western side of the cemetery beyond the fence in an area that is not fully cleared. Many of the early African-American graves had less substantial markers.

The cemetery remains an active cemetery. The cemetery continues to be a burial spot for both black and white families from several area churches as well as for family members who may have moved away but are returned here for burial.

9. Major Bibliographic References

The Butler Herald, 1976 Special Edition, article on churches in Taylor County which includes most of the facts found in "History of Union (Camp Ground) Methodist Church" an undated, three-page typed history dating from c.1941.

Garrett, Mildred B., transcriber. "Hays Camp Ground Church Cemetery (Union Methodist Church)." The Georgia Genealogist, County Records, Taylor County Cemeteries. These inscriptions were recorded in 1972 and published later in this loose-leaf periodical out of Athens, Georgia.

Hamilton, James B. "McCants Family History." 2 page, handwritten document attributed to J. B. Hamilton, half-uncle to Jack and Polk McCants. (Hamilton was born in 1800 and lived past 1850.)

Hay, Guelda L and Millie C. Stewart. Cemeteries of Taylor County, Georgia. Warner Robins, GA: The Central Georgia Genealogical Society, 1990. (Lists the inscriptions in the cemetery, which they call "Hays Campground (Union Methodist) Cemetery.")

Jarrell, Dr. Harold G. Correspondence with consultant and the staff, 1997, 1998.

Jones, Roger Ann. "Church Has Survived 3 Wars," The Atlanta Journal, February 4, 1968.

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

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

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

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2.5 acres

UTM References

A) Zone 16 Easting 756760 Northing 3614180

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated parcel, the cemetery, is delineated as parcel 24 on the enclosed Taylor County Tax Map No. 39.

Boundary Justification

The nominated parcel, the cemetery, is all that parcel of land, 2 and one-half acres, that has been associated with the cemetery since 1840.

11. Form Prepared By

State Historic Preservation Office

name/title Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., Historian
organization Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources
street & number 156 Trinity Avenue SW, Suite 101
city or town Atlanta **state** Georgia **zip code** 30303
telephone (404) 656-2840 **date** May 29, 2001

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

name/title Charlton Hudson
organization N/A
street and number P.O. Box 22
city or town Lincolnton **state** Maine **zip code** 04849
telephone 207-338-1638

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

(HPD form version 02-24-97)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Photographs

Name of Property: Union Methodist Church Cemetery/ Hays Campground Cemetery
City or Vicinity: Butler vicinity
County: Taylor
State: Georgia
Photographer: James R. Lockhart
Negative Filed: Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Date Photographed: May 1999

Description of Photograph(s):

1 of 18: Cemetery, southwestern view with grave shelters in center, rear, and highway in background; photographer facing northwest.

2 of 18: Grave shelter without roof, with church at far right corner of photograph; photographer facing north.

3 of 18: Southwestern edge of cemetery with grave shelters in upper left; photographer facing north.

4 of 18: Three of grave shelters at southwestern edge of white section, black burial section behind trees at far left; photographer facing northwest.

5 of 18: Three grave shelters at southwestern edge of white section, showing coping and roadway; photographer facing northeast.

6 of 18: Closeup of two grave shelters with tombstones inside, and third with roof only in rear; photographer facing northwest.

7 of 18: Right (eastern) Grave shelter with tombstones in side; photographer facing northwest.

8 of 18: Inside of Grave shelter photographed in no. 7, above, tombstone in rear is of the burial enclosed and is that of George R. McCants who died in 1850. Other burial markers are placed here for safekeeping. The photographer is facing northwest.

9 of 18: Inside of the left (western) Grave shelter shown in no. 6, above, with tombstone being that of William G. D. McCants who died in 1847 at age one month. This is the oldest, originally marked grave in the cemetery, if the tombstone is original. The photographer is facing northwest.

10 of 18: Grave shelter with only a roof remaining; photographer facing northeast.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Photographs

11 of 18: Burials, with some graves and lots fenced in with original fences, located slightly east/northeast of the three grave shelters in the immediate previous photographs; photographer facing northwest.

12 of 18: Burials slightly east of the ones shown in photograph 11, above, with highway in background; photographer facing northwest.

13 of 18: View of same burials and fences as in the previous photograph no. 12, with church in the background; photographer facing northeast.

14 of 18: More modern graves further east of the one above; photographer facing north.

15 of 18: Easternmost part of cemetery, with most modern graves and road/boundary of cemetery land on the right; photographer facing north.

16 of 18: Westernmost part of the white portion cemetery, showing large portion of cemetery grounds without any burials/any marked burials, see photograph no. 1 for close up of the area in the distance; photographer facing northwest.

17 of 18: African-American portion of cemetery on far western edge, showing fence and heavy undergrowth; photographer facing northwest.

18 of 18: African-American portion of cemetery, slightly west of previous photograph, with fence on far right and highway in rear distance; photographer facing north.

