

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NR
11-16-09

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

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 Oak Grove Cemetery Historic Section

other names/site number FA1058

2. Location

street & number East Bruce Street - approximately .3 miles east of Harkrider Street

not for publication

city or town Conway

vicinity

state Arkansas

code

AR

county Faulkner

code

045

zip code

72032

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.)

Carrie Matthes
Signature of certifying official/Title

9/13/09
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:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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.)

Name of Property

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	0	objects
	1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

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)

No Style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A

walls N/A

roof N/A

other STONE: Marble, Granite

Metal: Zinc

Narrative Description

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

Name of Property

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)

ART: Funerary art

Period of Significance

1881 - 1959

Significant Dates

1881 (first marked burial)

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

N/A

Architect/Builder

W.L. Funston

Monahan and Viquesney / Monahan and Steinert

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:

University of Central Arkansas Archives; Faulkner County Historical Society

10. Geographical DataAcreage of Property 3.5 acres**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>15</u>	<u>552095</u>	<u>3882047</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
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 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 Byname/title Written by Chris Odom/Oak Grove Cemetery Board; Edited by Sarah Jampole Marks/Survey Historianorganization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date January 28, 2009street & number 323 Center Street, Ste. 1600 telephone 501.324.9874city or town Little Rock state Arkansas 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 Oak Grove Cemetery Inc.street & number P.O. Box 2565 telephone N/Acity or town Conway state Arkansas zip code 72033-2565

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 Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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SUMMARY

Oak Grove Cemetery Historic Section is located in Conway, Faulkner County, Arkansas, very near Cantrell Field (Conway's airport). The cemetery's entrance is at the eastern end of Bruce Street which was named to honor George W. Bruce, who served as the first president of the Oak Grove Cemetery Association. The Historic Section is the final resting place of most of Conway's leading citizens from its earliest era, making this section of the cemetery historically significant for the community. About 100 Civil War soldiers, both Union and Confederate, are interred in the Historic Section, along with veterans of other wars. Bronze stars on grave markers identify soldiers of the Confederate Army.

There are a total of 3,137 burials in the Historic Section. A total of 1,849 burials have taken place prior to 1959, which accounts for 58.9% of the total burials in this section. The remaining burials in the Historic Section—1,288—account for 41.1% of the Historic Section's burials.

A group of Conway's leading citizens met on the south edge of town in a grove of oak trees on March 9, 1880. They established Oak Grove Cemetery and the first burial at the cemetery was for *Maude E. Ingram* (July 11, 1881), the eight-year old daughter of William and Agnes Ingram. Shortly after its establishment, a few persons who had been buried on the McCulloch property near Hendrix College were moved to Oak Grove Cemetery. After 128 years, the cemetery continues to be active with burials ongoing in the non-historic section.

ELABORATION

The Historic Section is being nominated comprises approximately 3.5 acres of land in the center of the cemetery. By 1945, all the lots within the cemetery's original boundary (Historic Section) had been sold, though not occupied. The cemetery association began acquiring acreage on the east side of the original section. In 1955, approximately ten acres were purchased on the south edge of the cemetery.¹ The Robinette addition, a previously private cemetery of 3.5 acres was added on the west side. Today, Oak Grove Cemetery covers 24 acres.

The Historic Section is being nominated primarily due to the fact that, for the entire cemetery, the historic and non-historic graves in the cemetery are so interspersed with each other that the sense of a historic cemetery is overshadowed. Since the original historic section contains the graves of Conway's early settlers, movers, and shakers, it is the most historically significant part of Oak Grove Cemetery.

Breakdown of Burials by Decade

The Historic Section of Oak Grove Cemetery contains more than 1,386 burials, many of which occurred between 1881 and 1959, the Period of Significance. There are some burials in the Historic Section which

¹ (Log Cabin Democrat)

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have occurred after 1960, and are considered non-contributing to the Period of Significance for the Historic Section.

While all of the burial plots in the Historic Section were *sold* by 1945, not all of the plots were *occupied* by then. In fact, burials do occur in the present day, but due to limited space, the number of present-day burials is very limited.

Contributing

1880-1889 – 82

1890-1899 – 120

1900-1909 – 157

1910-1919 – 212

1920-1929 – 311

1930-1939 – 279

1940-1945 – 225

1946-1949 – 144

1950-1959 – 319

TOTAL CONTRIBUTING BURIALS: 1,849 (or 58.9%)

Non-Contributing

1960-1969 – 390

1970-1979 – 304

1980-1989 – 283

1990-1999 – 196

2000-2008 – 115

TOTAL NON-CONTRIBUTING BURIALS: 1,288 (or 41.1%)

Landscape Design

Most burials in the Historic Section face west, and many family lots are surrounded by a concrete coping, some with the family name either etched in the concrete, or marked in raised letters. The northern half of the cemetery is relatively flat while the southern half has an increasingly steep southerly slope.

The Oak Grove Cemetery Historic Section spreads out from a tree-dotted knoll that swells from the end of East Bruce Street. The entrance to the Historic Section itself is on the north side of the cemetery. On the outskirts of the western boundary of the Historic Section is a bronze plaque, added in 2007, that gives the history of the cemetery. Also on the outskirts of the boundary is a gazebo, which was built by the Robinette

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Family, and dedicated on Memorial Day 2004. A flag pole, just south of the gazebo, and also not within the boundary of the nomination, was installed in 2002.

The Faulkner County Master Gardeners have adopted Oak Grove Cemetery as one of their service projects and, as such, engage in tree trimming throughout the year, and managing the planting around the gazebo. Additionally, in 2008, they planted oak trees (the cemetery's namesake) along the road leading west from the gazebo. Many tall, magnolia, cedar, and pine trees can also be seen in the Historic Section.

Grave Markers and Monuments

Oak Grove Cemetery Historic Section contains many beautiful monuments that are excellent representations of funerary art. There are diverse markers throughout the cemetery with the majority of these made from either granite or marble.

Examples of funerary imagery contained on the monuments include ivy, tree stumps, scrolls, crosses, willow trees, roses, pansies, poppies, lilies, fingers pointing upward, hands, and sculptural animals such as lamb. Other sculptural forms on a few monuments include baby boots and socks.

Many obelisks are found in the cemetery's historic section. In addition to the obelisks, most of the other monuments are typical tombstones, tab in socket or die on base with rectangular arched tops. There are several die on base markers; numerous pedestal tomb-urns on top; and a handful of pedestal tomb-vaulted roof markers. Most of the arch forms are your typical segmental arch, but there are one or two very nice examples of basket arches in Oak Grove Cemetery Historic Section, and a couple of very nice examples of pointed arches in the cemetery, as well. Surprising to find was the tab in socket with Tympanum marker for *Alice Shore (1857 – 1883)*, still in relatively good shape and easy to read. This marker was one of the few graves/markers relocated from the earlier cemetery on the McCulloch property near Hendrix College.

Numerous Woodmen of the World (WoW) monuments, most of which are slightly different in appearance to one another, dot the Historic Section. Imagery such as ivy (friendship and fidelity), the Woodmen crest, most of the body of the monument covered with a cloth (attests to the soul having fled the shrouded body), doves (a number of things, including: the Holy Spirit; purity; and safe passage to heaven), Bibles (wisdom), lilies (purity and resurrection), and banners (victory and triumph) are all symbols found on these monuments. All of the WoW markers in Oak Grove Cemetery Historic Section are large in size and shape, whether the monument is for a male or a female.

Also prominent in the Historic Section are markers with Masonic symbols. Two are of particular interest: *A. J. Witt (1846 – 1910)*, and *J. F. Kincheloe (1826 – 1900)*. A. J. Witt's monument is a die on base, and of imposing size. The family name, "Witt," appears in raised letters on the curved top of the monument, and on either side of the name is a single pansy, done in relief, symbolizing remembrance and humility. The typical

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Masonic symbol of the compass decorates the upper portion of the vertical face of the monument, and to the right of the compass is an inverted triangle encompassing the "32-degree" symbol. A. J. Witt was, according to his grave marker, an important member of the Masonic Temple. J. F. Kincheloe's monument is very interesting, to say the least. Its form is unlike anything ever seen by SHPO staff in the state—that of a ziggurat—four-sided, and five actual blocks tall. The rear and sides of the marker are rather non-descript—the top three blocks are smooth-faced, while the bottom two blocks have concentric square recessed patterns. The front of the monument is informational, as it contains Kincheloe's dates of birth and death on the second from the top block (the top block is blank). The middle block, which like the top two blocks is smooth-faced, exhibits the Masonic compass. The fourth block down is blank, with the exception of the concentric squares. The base block contains two hands, shaking, which symbolizes the endurance of human feelings, such as marriage or friendship.

Even with the Victorian dressed monuments, the value of the local craftsmanship can be found throughout the historic portion of the Oak Grove Cemetery. Several of the monuments in the historic portion of the cemetery contain the marks of monument makers throughout the area surrounding Conway, Arkansas. There are a few monument makers from Little Rock, just to the south of Conway, who are prominently displayed in the historic portion. The first monument maker, W.L. Funston, grew up sculpting monument makers under his father W.P. Funston throughout the late 1800s. His stone yard and shop was located at 605-607 Main Street Little Rock, Arkansas. At this time, Funston employed his son W.L. Funston, Julius A. Viquesney, and Richard Monahan.² It is also at this time that W.P. Funston relinquished the day to day operations to his son, W.L. in 1895.³ Within the next two years the crew of W.L. Funston broke apart and became two different monument companies, the W.L. Funston Co. and Monahan and Viquesney. Funston would continue to operate well into the early 1920s, while Monahan and Viquesney disbanded in 1902 and became Monahan and Steinert.⁴ This small group of individuals was responsible for the creation of several of the monuments within this section of the cemetery while other local monument makers such as Hunter was located within Conway and J.F. Elemeno was from Morrilton. Though information is scarce for the later of individuals it is expected that due to their proximity to the cemetery that they were part of other monuments.

A couple of very special monuments can also be found in the historic portion of the cemetery because they are not constructed like the other monuments. These two rare finds, are constructed of Zinc in the form of Victorian headstones. The headstones were created by the American White Bronze Co. in Chicago, IL. American White Bronze Company was a subsidiary of Monumental Bronze in Bridgeport, CT. It is stated that all of the monuments were originally cast in Bridgeport, then shipped to the subsidiary for final casting where the pieces were fused together using hot zinc.⁵ American White Bronze would remain open until 1909

² (R.L. Polk. *Little Rock City Directories: 1893-94.* (Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, Little Rock, AR; Cincinnati, OH: R.L. Polk and Company, 1893), Micro-film, 318 & 435.)

³ (R.L. Polk. *Little Rock City Directories: 1895-96.* (Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, Little Rock, AR; Cincinnati, OH: R.L. Polk and Company, 1895), Micro-film, 212.)

⁴ ("Monthly Trade Record: Arkansas" *Granite Magazine*. XII, No. 8 (Aug. 1902): 31.)

⁵ (Culver)

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when it closed its doors after twenty-three years, while Monumental Bronze would remain open until 1914 when the US Government seized the foundry for the creation of munitions during World War I. These monuments were sold from local agents through the use of catalogs.⁶ Though the monuments were shipped in from Chicago, it still shows the will of the local people to order the monuments from their local agent.

Eliza R. Duncan (1866 – 1881) is one of the earliest burials in the cemetery, and in the Historic Section. Being one of the earliest burials, her marker is also somewhat simple: it is a tab in socket with a rectangular arched top. The face of the marker is etched with her name, and then inscribed with her familial ties. In the center of her marker is a hand with the index finger pointing toward Heaven, symbolizing a direction to spiritual matters.

The marker for *Laura Mitchell (1881)* is a fine example of Victorian funerary art, and the Victorian views of death and children. In the shape of a Latin cross, the top of the marker bears a poppy (symbolizing sleep) in relief. As the bottom of the cross moves into the body of the marker, the marker takes on the *Cyma recta* form, and the marker is a tab in socket made of marble. The face of the body of the marker provides us with Laura's name, familial ties, age/life span, and date of death. This Victorian grave marker symbolizes the atmosphere of the role of Laura to her parents during her life, and how her death represented to her parents the prominent role of children in the Victorian Era.

Lastly, *Anna Vaughan (1875 – 1899)* has a monument displaying nice funerary art. The form is that of die, base and cap, and the cap is peaked with a French vase on top. On the face of the monument, cutting from upper right to lower left is a vine of ivy, depicting friendship and fidelity. Curving from the middle of the bottom of the face, along the right side, are Palm tree fronds, symbolizing victory, martyrdom and peace. In the center of the imagery are Anna's name, dates of birth and death, and a verse.

INTEGRITY

Oak Grove Cemetery Historic Section retains a high level of integrity regarding all seven qualities: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The location, design, and setting of the cemetery have remained unchanged even as other smaller cemeteries were adjoined to the Oak Gove Cemetery. The materials and workmanship used in creating the funerary art were local artisans from the surrounding area, and even the two monuments that were shipped from Chicago, Illinois was done through a local agent. Even with the addition of modern funerary art, the feeling and view shed is uninterrupted. The historic funerary art outnumbers the modern art in every instance in the historic portion of the cemetery. The viewshed is also uninterrupted as the color and size of the modern monuments is relative to the historic monuments created by the likes of Funston Co. and Monahan and Viquesney. Despite its age, the cemetery is in excellent condition and is well maintained. The cemetery has been fortunate that it has not suffered any major damage due to vandalism. Any damage to the grave markers and monuments is quickly repaired by the groundskeeper.

⁶ (Rotundo)

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Preservation efforts are ongoing as is evident by the return of oak trees to the cemetery, continuing road improvements, and the addition of items that make the cemetery an enjoyable place to visit: the gazebo for instance. Additionally, copies of the cemetery's records, documents, and other items are archived with the University of Central Arkansas. In 2008, the cemetery's Board established a perpetuity fund with the specific task of setting aside money for future preservation projects (especially after all the cemetery's lots are sold).

In addition to occasional ceremonies to replace worn American flags at the flag pole, two annual events take place at Oak Grove Cemetery. Every April, members of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, Colonel Allen R. Witt Camp 615 gather at Oak Grove Cemetery to honor and remember their group's namesake who is buried beneath a cedar tree near the cemetery's flagpole. A history of Col. Witt's service, which included participating in the Battle of Shiloh, escaping from a Union prison ship, and having dinner with CSA President Jefferson Davis, is given and a 21-gun salute is presented.⁷ Descendants of Col. Witt attend nearly every year along with members of the public.

The second event occurs during the fall. Student actors portray various important and historical Conway pioneers in a public event entitled, *Gone, But Not Forgotten*. In 2008, drama students from Conway High School East treated guests to living history presentations of ten Conway pioneers. Each actor stood near the headstone of the person he or she depicted; visitors were led to each headstone by volunteer docents who provided historical information on each featured pioneer.

⁷ (Harris)

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SUMMARY

The Oak Grove Cemetery Historic Section, located in Conway, Faulkner County, Arkansas, reflects the outstanding examples of funerary art from the Victorian era in Conway and Faulkner County. Many of the city's leading citizens from its earliest era are buried here, making Oak Grove Cemetery Historic Section historically significant to both to the community for its leading citizens but for the artistic expressions that they left even after death. People from all walks of life are interred within the Historic Section including mayors, judges, sheriffs, educators, bankers, and businessmen and women. Even after death these individuals continue to express the activities they once took part in, for example the Masonic Lodge or Woodmen of the World, as their symbols and meaning decorate their monuments. In addition, the monuments in the cemetery, besides displaying popular funerary art of the period, also illustrate the work of several Arkansas and national monument makers, such as Funston, Monahan & Viquezney, Hunter, and American White Bronze Company.

The Oak Grove Cemetery Historic Section is locally significant and is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion C** for its display of beautiful funerary art and architecture during the Period of Significance, 1881 – 1959. The cemetery's Historic Section is also eligible for nomination under **Criteria Consideration D: Cemeteries**.

ELABORATION

Town and County History

The town of Conway began when Colonel Asa P. Robinson received a 640 acre section of land in Conway County as partial compensation for his work as the chief engineer in charge of construction for the Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad.⁸ In 1871, Colonel Robinson platted a town site in the northeast part of Section 7, Township 5 North, Range 13 West. He deeded two city blocks back to the railroad for a depot and named the town Conway Station. Robinson began to sell lots, built a house for himself and his wife, and remained very active in community affairs, once serving as mayor. On April 12, 1873, Faulkner County was formed from portions of Conway and Pulaski counties.⁹ The new county included Conway Station. On October 16, 1875, the town was incorporated as Conway and designated the county seat of Faulkner County.¹⁰ As late as 1916, Conway was the only organized municipality in the 651 square mile county although there were many small towns and communities.¹¹

Conway's population of 1,028 in 1880 increased in every decennial census afterward, reaching 43,167 in 2000.¹² Bolstered by moderately productive farm land, the resources associated with a county seat, and the

⁸ (Faulkner County Historical Society)

⁹ (Teske)

¹⁰ (Rogers)

¹¹ (Faulkner County Historical Society)

¹² (Rogers)

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establishment of three Institutions of higher education (Hendrix College, 1890, Central College, 1892, Arkansas Normal School, 1907), Conway prospered. A progressive effort after WWII to attract and support manufacturing, industrial, and public institutions produced Ward Body Works (1933), Nabholz Construction Corporation (1949), Virco (1954), Arkansas Children's Colony (1959), Arkansas Educational Television Network (1966), and Acxiom Corporation (1969). Today, Conway is home to approximately 55,430 residents.¹³

Cemetery History

A group of Conway's leading citizens met on the south edge of town in a grove of oak trees on March 9, 1880. They established Oak Grove Cemetery and elected Colonel George W. Bruce as the first president of the Oak Grove Cemetery Association. The first burial ceremony at the cemetery was for Maude E. Ingram, 8-year old daughter of William and Agnes Ingram (July 11, 1881). Shortly after its establishment, a few persons who had been buried on the McCulloch property near Hendrix College were moved to Oak Grove Cemetery. Formal rites for the dedication of Oak Grove Cemetery were held on September 26, 1881, with the Rev. William Lee and the Rev. B. Williams officiating the consecration. To provide water for flowers and shrubs, a well was dug and covered in April 1893.¹⁴

By 1945, all the lots within the cemetery's original boundary had been sold. The cemetery association began acquiring acreage on the east side. In 1955, approximately ten acres were purchased on the south edge of the cemetery.¹⁵ The Robinette addition, a previously private cemetery of 3.5 acres was added on the west side. Today, Oak Grove Cemetery covers 24 acres.

Most of Conway's leading citizens from its earliest era are buried here, making Oak Grove historically significant to the community. About 100 Civil War soldiers, both Union and Confederate, are interred along with veterans of other wars. Bronze stars on grave markers identify soldiers of the Confederate Army. A white iron gate was constructed at the entrance to Oak Grove in 1996.¹⁶ A flag pole flying an American flag was installed near the center of the cemetery in 2002. A gazebo was built nearby by the Robinette family and dedicated on Memorial Day 2004. A bronze plaque with a history of the cemetery was added in 2007.

Oak Grove Cemetery remains active and is administered by a seven-member Board of Directors appointed by the Conway City Council. Any citizen of Conway is eligible and terms are for five years. The Board is charged with day-to-day upkeep, preservation of the cemetery and its records, and the sale of lots. The cemetery is supported by the lot sales, a voluntary tax collected by the Faulkner County Tax Collector, and donations.

¹³ (Rogers)

¹⁴ (*Log Cabin Democrat*)

¹⁵ (*Log Cabin Democrat*)

¹⁶ (Oliver, *Yesterdays*)

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Located within Oak Grove Cemetery Historic Section are many wonderful grave markers and monuments that are good representations of funerary art during the Period of Significance spanning the years 1881 – 1959. Ranging in size from small to very large, the markers in the Historic Section are very diverse regarding the funerary art each displays, and the form of each marker. Marble and granite were utilized to create the grave markers and monuments. Oak Grove Cemetery Historic Section is comprised of several family plots scattered throughout, most of which are enclosed with elaborate coping.

A majority of the older monuments found in the Historic Section display examples of funerary imagery, including: birds, books, flowers, clasped hands, fingers pointing upward, ivy, lambs, Masonic compass and square, open book or Bible, roses, tree stump with ivy, and urns draped with cloth. The Victorian era in decorative art and funerary architecture covered the period 1837 to 1901. Larger urban cemeteries of the era were filled with bi-columnar and cross vault monuments, obelisks of all sizes, fanciful mausoleums, coping and elaborate iron fencing. Graceful iconography engraved on various gravestone materials like sandstone, limestone, bronze, marble and granite can be found in cemeteries of large city centers.

The symbolism behind these funerary images creates a picture unto itself. For instance, fingers pointing upward are a symbol that the soul has risen to the heavens, while ivy is associated with immortality and fidelity because ivy is eternally green even during harsh conditions. Also in funerary art, ivy represents attachment and friendship because of ivy's ability to cling to a support and a symbol of the Trinity due to its three pointed leaves. The funerary art sculpted as a lamb is indicative of a child or infant's grave and symbolizes innocence. The lamb also symbolizes Christ in almost every Christian religion. The open Bible or book in the purest form is a device for registering the name of the deceased; however it also references the heart as it is open to the thoughts and feelings.¹⁷

The urn draped with a cloth creates a more typical scene in nineteenth century cemetery, especially in funerary art. The cloth itself has several meanings to it. The first is that the cloth could be a more practical accessory to the urn, while the second is a more philosophical meaning in which it symbolizes a veil between the earth and the heavens. Tree stumps were another very popular funerary object. "They were derived from the Victorian rusticity movement."¹⁸ The main time period for these objects is between 1880 and 1905. It is believed that the tree stumps were often seen in groups suggesting either they were purchased from a catalogue or a local monument dealer.¹⁹

Other funerary art found throughout Oak Grove Cemetery is the use of fraternal order symbol. The most common fraternal order symbol with Oak Grove is the Masonic Compass and Square. This art work not only showed that the deceased were a member of the order, but also the symbolism of the order itself. The square and compass represents the interaction between mind and matter. The obelisk form was used on graves of people with high social standing and its shaft with pyramidal top was utilized to represent Ra, the Egyptian

¹⁷ (Keister)

¹⁸ (Keister, 65)

¹⁹ (Keister)

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giver of life. Two such forms are used in Oak Grove on a small scale, as is a single column-type monument; also an indication of the person's place in society.²⁰

The cemetery is also significant for the number of Arkansas and national monument makers that are represented within the historic section of the cemetery. The first monument maker, W.L. Funston, grew up sculpting monument makers under his father W.P. Funston throughout the late 1800s. At this time, Funston employed his son W.L. Funston, Julius A. Viquesney, and Richard Monahan.²¹ Within the next two years the crew of W.L. Funston broke apart and became two different monument companies, the W.L. Funston Co. and Monahan and Viquesney Marble and Granite. Funston would continue to operate well into the early 1920s, while Monahan and Viquesney disbanded in 1902 and became Monahan and Steinert.²² This small group of individuals was responsible for the creation of several of the monuments within this section of the cemetery while other local monument makers such as Hunter in Conway and J.F. Elemino in Morrilton. There is at least one national monument maker from Chicago, Illinois represented in the cemetery. The American White Bronze Co. was a subsidiary of Monumental Bronze in Bridgeport, CT. It is stated that all of the monuments were originally cast in Bridgeport, then shipped to the subsidiary for final casting where the pieces were fused together using hot zinc.²³ American White Bronze would remain open until 1909 when it closed its doors after twenty-three years, while Monumental Bronze would remain open until 1914 when the US Government seized the foundry for the creation of munitions during World War I. These monuments were sold from local agents through the use of catalogs.²⁴ Though the monuments were shipped in from Chicago, it still shows the will of the local people to order the monuments from their local agent.

The Oak Grove Cemetery Historic Section contains many outstanding Victorian Era monuments made primarily of marble that are fantastic representations of that period. Several of the markers are decorated with the symbols and sculptures that are indicative of the time period 1878-1901. The cemetery contains numerous children's markers that depict the stylistic transition of the pre-Victorian Era into the Victorian Era when children's markers became very symbolic with distinctive style and form as opposed to being smaller versions of adult markers. Several of the markers for children are representative of the more elaborate three-dimensional sculptures, such as lambs, and baby boots, that conveyed the sanctity of childhood, and its separateness from the adult material world of insincerity. Oak Grove Cemetery Historic Section contains several markers that represent the essence of the Victorian time period when children were the embodiment of innocence. These Victorian grave markers symbolize the atmosphere of the role of the child in that time period and how the death of a child solidified the prominent role of children in the Victorian Era.

SELECTED BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF THOSE BURIED IN THE OAK GROVE CEMETERY HISTORIC SECTION

²⁰(Keister).

²¹(R.L. Polk. *Little Rock City Directories: 1893-94.* (Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, Little Rock, AR; Cincinnati, OH: R.L. Polk and Company, 1893), Micro-film, 318 & 435.)

²²("Monthly Trade Record: Arkansas" *Granite Magazine*. XII, No. 8 (Aug. 1902): 31.)

²³(Culver)

²⁴(Rotundo)

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Stonewall Anderson (1864-1928)

Stonewall Anderson was president of Hendrix College for eight years (1902-1910). He was the first Hendrix president to secure significant out-of-state funding. Earlier he was the pastor at Conway's Methodist Church. After his presidency, Anderson was secretary to the General Board of Education, the predecessor of the Rockefeller Foundation.²⁵

George Washington Bruce (1838-1919)

George W. Bruce was born in South Carolina, but moved to Georgia following the death of his father in 1841. He enlisted in the Confederate Army, took part in the second Battle of Manassas, advanced to the rank of colonel, and was captured by the Union and held in a Federal prison until the end of the war. After moving to Conway in 1873, Bruce became instrumental in establishing both Central Baptist College and Hendrix College. He also practiced law and tried the first murder case in Faulkner County; his client was acquitted.²⁶ Bruce became the first president of the Oak Grove Cemetery organization on March 9, 1880. He was elected to the State House of Representatives in 1881 and served as mayor of Conway from 1917-1919.²⁷ The street on which Oak Grove Cemetery was built was later named Bruce Street in his honor.

George T. Clifton (1844-1890)

George T. Clifton served in the Confederate Army and participated in battles at Shiloh and Vicksburg. He moved to Conway in 1866²⁸ where he became a businessman who invested early in the future of Conway by buying 100 acres of land adjacent to Colonel Robinson's platted town. Part of this area is now the Clifton subdivision. Clifton Street, a major residential thoroughfare, is named for the Clifton family.²⁹

William Cole (1873-1959)

William Cole was a community leader who helped create, organize, and maintain many early Conway organizations and institutions that continue to exist today. Additionally, he served as Conway's mayor from 1922 to 1926. While his father, W. D. Cole, Sr., was instrumental in getting Arkansas Normal School (today's University of Central Arkansas) located in Conway, Cole worked with other civic leaders in 1929 to help keep Hendrix College from moving away. He served on the city's light-utility committee and signed the proposal to create the Conway Corporation, also in 1929. He served as director and vice-president of the Faulkner County Bank & Trust and helped direct the organization of the Faulkner County Hospital; he served as its president in 1927. By 1958, he had become the president of the Conway Chamber of Commerce. As president, he concentrated his efforts to create Lake Conway, a recreational fishing lake located just outside of the city. Throughout his lifetime, he also operated Cole & Co. Grocery store located in downtown Conway.³⁰

²⁵ (Britton)

²⁶ (Gatewood)

²⁷ (Faulkner County Historical Society)

²⁸ (Faulkner County Historical Society)

²⁹ (Britton)

³⁰ (Allen)

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John D. Dunaway (1842-1916)

John Dunaway served with the 5th Arkansas Infantry in the Civil War and was wounded in the Battle of Murfreesboro (KY). He, his wife, and eight children moved to Conway in 1892. He participated in the 1874 Arkansas Constitutional Convention and was later a state senator from 1886-1890.³¹ His grandson, Oscar Lee Dunaway, built the historic Dunaway Home on Center Street in Conway (*NR listed 07/19/1996*).³²

Guy "Big Dan" Estes (1888-1944)

Dan Estes enrolled at the University of Arkansas in 1909 where he decided to play football for the first time in his life. Coach Hugo Bezdek saw promise in Estes and his six-foot three-inches, 240 pound frame. He lettered with the Razorbacks four times and eventually graduated in 1914. Shortly before World War I, Estes came to Arkansas Normal School (today's UCA) as a math professor and coach of track, basketball, baseball, and football. He soon joined the Army and served at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, and on the Mexican border. After the war, he returned to the Normal School where he was known for interesting pre-season football camps including having his team hike 30 miles to Thornburg in Perry County where they would train and camp for 2 weeks. Estes retired from his coaching duties in 1933, but continued to teach math and served as the Dean of Men. During World War II, he performed pioneering work in civil aeronautics on the UCA campus as the coordinator for the first pilot training unit which helped prepare and train pilots to fly during the war. As an avid wildlife enthusiast, Estes helped stock Lake Conway along with most lakes and rivers in Faulkner County for the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. In 1964, Estes was named to the Arkansas Sports Hall of Fame; in 2001, he was inducted into the UCA Hall of Fame. The football stadium at UCA has been named Estes Field in his honor.³³

John William Firestone (1851-1933)

J.W. Firestone arrived in Conway in 1871 as a brick mason. He was one of the 32 original signers of the incorporation papers for Conway Station in 1875. Firestone made the bricks for the first brick building erected in Conway, the Cole Building, which was located at the corner of Front and Main streets. He also supplied bricks for most of the older homes in Conway and many of the buildings on the Hendrix College campus. Several of his descendants were also brick masons.³⁴

Jo Frauenthal (1858-1944)

Jo Frauenthal was a prominent businessman and leading citizen. He came to Conway in 1875 from Louisville, Kentucky. After arriving, he kept the books at a general merchandise store owned by his cousin, Max Frauenthal. Another cousin, Leo Schwarz, emigrated from Germany in 1876.³⁵ The store was in Conway's first brick building located on Front Street (where American Management Corporation is currently) and it was in operation for over 80 years, becoming the city's largest retail store. Max Frauenthal

³¹ (Faulkner County Historical Society)

³² (Art in Architecture: Historic Homes of Conway, A Self-Guided Tour)

³³ (Bryant)

³⁴ (Faulkner County Historical Society)

³⁵ (Faulkner County Historical Society)

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sold his interest in the store to Jo Frauenthal and Schwarz in 1892. In 1908 Frauenthal was elected as the president of the Board of Trade (precursor to the Chamber of Commerce) where he oversaw the creation of the Faulkner County Fair and a waterworks improvement district that tapped into Cadron Creek. He later served on the Conway City Council and as president of the Faulkner County Board of Education and the Conway Chamber of Commerce. He was also involved with building many of the churches, schools, and colleges in Conway.³⁶

Ida Baridon Frauenthal (1868-1947)

Ida Frauenthal was the wife of Jo Frauenthal. She was the daughter of a local preacher and the niece of Asa P. Robinson. She served as the president of Arkansas's Federation of Women's Clubs was a member of Arkansas's Defense Board, and did committee work to select a flag for the state. Baridon Hall on the University of Central Arkansas campus and Baridon Street are named in her honor in recognition of her work support in the campaign to attract Hendrix College to Conway. He was on the school board, served on the for women. The Frauenthals owned a home on a 40 acre estate that had 5,000 square feet and 22 rooms. It was considered the finest and most palatial home in Conway for many years.³⁷ The Frauenthal house is still standing and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (12/22/1982).

Daniel Osbon Harton (1849-1935)

D. O. Harton was in the mercantile business during Conway's early days. He provided generous financial support for the Methodist Church Board for 50 years, and was on the Bank of Conway's Board of Directors. His spacious house on Robinson Avenue is included in the Asa P. Robinson Historic District and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (01/29/2001).³⁸ Harton Street, near Hendrix College, was named in his honor by the Board of Trustees in recognition for his financial contributions and personal involvement in moving Hendrix to Conway.³⁹

Maude E. Ingram (1872-1881)

Maude Ingram was the first person buried in Oak Grove Cemetery after it was organized. She was the daughter of William and Agnes Ingram and was interred on July 11, 1881.

Rev. F. S. H. Johnston (1857-1927)

Rev. F. S. H. Johnston served as pastor of the Methodist Church three different times. He helped Hendrix College raise funds to reach their first million dollar endowment. He is credited with guiding the construction of approximately 50 Methodist churches in Arkansas, including two in Conway.⁴⁰

³⁶ (Phillips)

³⁷ (LeMaster)

³⁸ (Spatz)

³⁹ (Britton)

⁴⁰ (Britton)

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John Elijah Little (1858-1928)

John Little came to Faulkner County in 1883 as an overseer on the Adkisson plantation. After marrying Lollie Trundle, Little bought property on the Arkansas River that became a 3,200 acre plantation, Lollie Plantation, one of the largest in Central Arkansas. Lollie died in 1892, and Little then married Sammie Glenn. The plantation began to prosper and Little used prisoners as well as black and white tenant farmers to work the land. At one point, the plantation had a general store, post office, church, school, and even its own baseball team. Little's agricultural and farming operations took place over four decades and he was known as one of the first to introduce alfalfa hay to this part of the nation. In 1897, Little and his wife built a house on Western Avenue. A fire destroyed the home in 1918, but it was quickly rebuilt. The new home was very modern for its time and had Conway's first walk-in shower. Four of the five bedrooms also had their own lavatories and every bedroom had large walk-in closets, something that was not common at the time. The house is still standing and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (01/26/1999).⁴¹ In his later years, Little served as vice-president of the Faulkner County Bank and Trust Company. In 1907, he helped bring the Arkansas Normal School to Conway and he later served on the Hendrix College Board of Trustees.⁴² In 1914, Little donated 640 acres to Hendrix and in the early 1920s, he gave the southeast corner of Western and College Avenues to the Faulkner County Hospital.⁴³

Alexander Copeland Millar (1861-1940)

Alexander Millar graduated from Central College in Missouri in 1885 and soon afterwards began teaching at Neosho Collegiate Institute (NCI). In 1886, he was elected president of NCI and the next year he became president of Central Collegiate Institute in Altus, Arkansas. He played a key role in changing the school's name to Hendrix College and moving it to Conway in 1890. Millar was very involved in the Methodist church and was ordained as a minister in 1888. While at Hendrix, he also served as the chairman of Arkansas's first Good Roads Convention and was later appointed to the Arkansas Forestry Commission. Millar returned to Central College as a professor in 1902, but quickly returned to Arkansas two years later when he became an associate editor and business manager for the *Arkansas Methodist*. Governor Donaghey appointed him to serve on the first executive board of the Arkansas History Commission. Millar returned to the presidency of Hendrix from 1910-1913 during which time he composed the song "Hendrix, O Hendrix."⁴⁴ He also served as editor-in-charge of the *Arkansas Methodist* from 1915-1940.⁴⁵ Millar even sought the Democratic nomination for lieutenant governor in 1928. During his last years, Millar preached, visited churches in Arkansas, and fought for Prohibition and moral behavior.⁴⁶

John A. Pence (1854-1940)

John Pence came to Conway Station in 1878 to make his new home. At the time, Pence said that Conway was very typical of a "Wild West" town with many saloons. Having been trained as a cabinet maker and a

(Arkansas Historic Preservation Program)

⁴² (Faulkner County Historical Society)

⁴³ (Arkansas Historic Preservation Program)

⁴⁴ (Strickland)

⁴⁵ (Britton)

⁴⁶ (Strickland)

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carpenter, he immediately began building houses on Faulkner Street and Locust Avenue. He soon owned a furniture store which also doubled as an undertaker's business. In 1932, Pence stated that he had sold a total of 7,039 caskets during his career.⁴⁷ He eventually became Arkansas's oldest undertaker. He handmade his caskets out of rough pine or oak to exact specifications for people all over central Arkansas. In 1880, when Oak Grove Cemetery was established, he charged \$16.00 for a casket.

John Hugh Reynolds (1869-1954)

John Reynolds was born near Enola in Faulkner County in 1869. He graduated from Hendrix College in 1893 and went on to earn his MA degree from the University of Chicago. He returned to Hendrix as a history and political science professor and eventually served a four-year tenure as the college's vice president. He was hired by the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville in 1902, and while there his interest in Arkansas history led to his organization of the forerunner of the Arkansas Historical Association. In 1905, he authored a textbook, served as the Arkansas State Teacher's Association president, and drafted the legislation that established the Arkansas History Commission. Reynolds returned to Hendrix as its president in 1913, and served in that capacity until 1945. Under his leadership, Hendrix received accreditation from the North Central Association, its endowment reached \$1,000,000, and he secured funds from the General Education Board of New York for a new science building.⁴⁸ Reynolds was known for his ability to recruit and retain quality faculty which helped Hendrix's national recognition increase. Outside of Hendrix, he was elected as a delegate to the Sixth Arkansas Constitutional Convention. In 1950, the science building he helped fund was named in his honor by the Hendrix Board of Trustees. The Morrilton School district named one of its elementary schools after Reynolds in 1957.⁴⁹

Francis Edward Robins, Sr. (1880-1949)

Frank Robins was born in the home his family owned at the corner of Caldwell and Center streets in Conway on December 19, 1880. In 1894, Robins' father obtained the local weekly newspaper, *Conway Log Cabin*, in a swap for two of his sawmills. Six months after this, Robins' father passed away, but Robins began to work in the newspaper shop where he learned the trade and furthered his education. Robins' mother eventually married another newspaper owner, J.W. Underhill, who ran the *Conway Democrat* weekly newspaper. In 1901, the two newspapers were combined under the new name: *Log Cabin Democrat*. Robins became the editor and manager of the new paper in 1902, and by 1906, he had purchased Underhill's heirs' interest in the paper. From that time until 1990, the Robins family owned and operated Conway's city newspaper; Robins' son (Frank, Jr.) and grandson (Frank, III) both eventually ran the paper. In 1908, Robins turned the *Log Cabin Democrat* from a weekly into a daily paper. The *Log Cabin Democrat* has become the longest running business in Faulkner County. Robins was also instrumental in forming Conway Corporation, the operator of

⁴⁷ (Oliver, Yesterdays)

⁴⁸ (Baker)

⁴⁹ (Faulkner County Historical Society)

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the city's Municipal Electric System in 1929. He served as the chairman of its board for many years.⁵⁰ The Robins house is still standing and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (05/20/1994).

Asa Peter Hosner Robinson (1822-1898)

Asa Robinson came to Arkansas in 1869 as the chief engineer in charge of construction for the Little Rock and Fort Smith Railroad. Having received a 640 acre section of land as compensation from the railroad, Robinson platted a town site in the northeast part of Section 7, Township 5 North, Range 13 West in 1871. He deeded two city blocks back to the railroad for a depot and named the town Conway Station. After establishing Conway Station, Robinson had the post office changed from Cadron Gap to his new town in 1872. When Faulkner County was established the following year, Robinson was influential in having Conway Station named as the county seat. He soon began selling and donating lots of land to the new town's early pioneers. Conway Station was incorporated as a city on October 9, 1875, and the name was shortened to Conway. As more people came to Conway, Robinson sold additional lots to merchants, doctors, and railroad officials who built on Front Street. Many of his deeds stated, "no intoxicating drinks, except under license, would be sold; no trees were to be cut within the front of the premises; and a fence would be built on the street lines within three months." Robinson soon became involved in the town's politics and served on the city council and as mayor. As the town grew, he donated land for churches and education. Later in life, he also served as the president of the Conway School Board. Robinson and his first wife, Lucy, built a home on 320 acres which they called Prairie Vue. Its location, on today's College Avenue, was commemorated with a historical marker in 1968. Over the years Robinson has become known by many as the "Father of Conway."⁵¹

Ellen Grisard Smith (1867⁵²-1951)

Ellen Grisard and her family moved to Conway in 1883, where her father became a merchant. She attended Conway public schools and went to college in Searcy, Arkansas, and Russellville, Kentucky. Before her marriage in 1889 to Samuel Smith, Grisard became a public school teacher. Smith soon became very active in Conway civic affairs. From 1897-1936, she was president of the Women's Missionary Society at First Methodist Church in Conway. In the 1920s she served on the Board of Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. In 1921, she was elected to the Conway Board of Education and served until 1939. While on the school board, Smith was instrumental in getting an elementary school established on the east side of Conway. This school opened in 1925, and was named in her honor. Smith was also a charter member of the Conway Memorial Hospital board and served as its chairman from 1924-1944. Smith loved to drive (even though her husband didn't drive) and travel; she and her husband toured Europe in the 1920s. She routinely picked up hitchhikers, particularly soldiers, during World War II on the condition that they not smoke in her car. Upon her death, she was recognized by many as being a leader and worker for more than 50 years in three important community activities: church, public health care, and education.⁵³

⁵⁰ (Faulkner County Historical Society)

⁵¹ (Faulkner County Historical Society)

⁵² (Meriwether)

⁵³ (Meriwether)

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Samuel Gallatin Smith (1864-1948)

Samuel Smith was one of Conway's first merchants. He owned both a prosperous general store at Front and North Streets and a cotton sale barn. He married Ellen Grisard in 1889, and the two built a home located on the southeast corner of Caldwell and Mitchell Streets. In May 1916, Smith received a franchise from the Ford Motor Company to open an automobile agency. He founded one of the first car dealerships west of the Mississippi and the first in Conway: Smith Ford which is still in operation.⁵⁴ He later built the Conway Theatre next door to his dealership and served as a founder of the Faulkner County Bank. During World War I, the Smiths were told that their son Theodore had been killed in action in France. After a memorial service was held, news arrived that their son had in fact only been severely wounded and he eventually returned home to Conway. In 1923, the Smiths' home burned, but they rebuilt on the same spot with the help of Little Rock architect Charles L. Thompson. This house is still standing today and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places (12/22/1982).⁵⁵

David Yancy Thomas (1872-1943)

David Thomas was born in Kentucky on January 19, 1872, and was the youngest of nine children. He came to Conway, Arkansas, as a Latin and Greek professor at Hendrix College in 1898. He had previously earned degrees from Emory College, Vanderbilt University, and Columbia University. In 1902, he shifted to teach history and political science at Hendrix. He met Sarah Janney while in Conway and the two wed in 1905. Following his stay at Hendrix, he served as a professor at both the University of Florida and Arkansas. From 1912-1940, he was the chair of the history and political science department at the University of Arkansas. Over the course of his lifetime, Thomas authored or co-authored seven books, five of which focused on Arkansas. During his early years of research, he remarked on how hard it was to find Arkansas source material to support his projects. He thus became an advocate for the preservation of Arkansas archival materials. In the 1930s, he convinced Governor Donaghey to set aside money to purchase old newspapers and documents for the university library. Thomas was also a social critic who represented Arkansas on the University Committee on Southern Race Questions. He condemned lynching while investigating the 1919 Elaine Massacre. In 1920, he helped develop a civics course for women since they were just getting the right to vote. The University of Arkansas Board of Trustees forced Thomas into retirement in 1940; a year later he began teaching at the University of Texas-Austin. Between these two jobs, Thomas created one of his most enduring legacies: "the re-establishment of a statewide organization to support the publication of an Arkansas history journal." Because of his efforts, the Arkansas Historical Association (AHA) was organized in February 1941. While in Austin, he continued to edit the *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* (AHQ) for its first four issues before his death. Because of his work to re-establish the AHA and the AHQ, his tenure at the University of Arkansas, and his numerous scholarly books and articles, Thomas is now considered one of the "most influential academic historians in the field of Arkansas history."⁵⁶

Allen Rufus Witt (1830-1903)

⁵⁴ (Meriwether)

⁵⁵ (Meriwether)

⁵⁶ (Besom)

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Allen Witt and his family moved to Van Buren County in 1842, and he attended the state university in Fayetteville. From 1857 to 1859, he served the state as its Land Commissioner⁵⁷ and when the Civil War started, he joined Company A of the Tenth Arkansas Infantry. He participated in the Battle of Shiloh and because of his heroic efforts, was promoted to the rank of colonel. During the siege of Port Hudson, Louisiana, Witt was captured and imprisoned with several of his fellow officers.⁵⁸ After the fall of Port Hudson, Witt was being transported up the Mississippi River to a Federal prison when he jumped ship and escaped. He returned to Central Arkansas and formed the Tenth Arkansas Cavalry, "Witt's Cavalry," with many of his fellow Port Hudson veterans serving under him. This regiment began fighting what is now considered to be guerrilla warfare as they nibbled "at the fringes of the Union army."⁵⁹ After several small skirmishes, Witt's forces joined with General Price's men as they attempted to retake Missouri, but they were soundly defeated, especially when they attempted to cross into Kansas. By February 12, 1865, Witt had relocated his men to Lewisburg, Arkansas, where on that day a Federal cavalry detachment dealt a final blow

to the unit. The regiment ceased to exist following this last encounter.⁶⁰ Following the war, Witt returned home to Van Buren County and over the next few years he was elected as a state senator, served on the 1874 constitutional committee, and was a chancery clerk. He moved to Conway in 1877, and soon opened a drug store in the downtown area. From 1884 to 1889, he served as Conway's postmaster general.⁶¹ When Witt died in Little Rock in 1903, his body lay in state at the Old State House before it was brought to Conway on a specially commissioned train. Once the train arrived in Conway, many people followed the hearse on foot as it made its way from the train depot to Oak Grove Cemetery.⁶² The Knights of Honor and the Ex-Confederate Camp conducted the funeral with Col. George W. Bruce helping to retell many of Witt's wartime deeds and his contributions to Conway and Faulkner County.⁶³

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Oak Grove Cemetery Historic Section displays a wide variety of incredible funerary art, on a multitude of monument forms, and marker shapes and styles. The cemetery illustrates this through monuments that reflect artworks that are representative of the stylistic type and period spanning the Period of Significance, from 1881 to 1959. Through these works of art, period symbolism and design is exhibited in a manner that also honors Conway's historically significant community members.

The Oak Grove Cemetery Historic Section is locally significant and is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion C** for its display of beautiful funerary art and architecture during the Period of Significance, 1881 – 1959. The cemetery's Historic Section is also eligible for nomination under **Criteria Consideration D: Cemeteries**.

⁵⁷ (Faulkner County Historical Society)

⁵⁸ (Parsons)

⁵⁹ (Dirck)

⁶⁰ (Dirck)

⁶¹ (Faulkner County Historical Society)

⁶² (Harris)

⁶³ (Faulkner County Historical Society)

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

From UTM Coordinate 15 S 552050, E 3882058 proceed south five hundred feet to UTM 15 S 552045, E 3881912, then proceed east three hundred eighteen feet to UTM 15 S 552140, E 3881910, then proceed north four hundred eighty feet to UTM 15 S 552143, E 3882055 then proceed west three hundred ten feet back to UTM 15 S 552050, E 3882058.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The above boundary includes all land historically associated with the Oak Grove Cemetery Historic Section.