

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NR Listed: 10-4-02

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 Akron Cemetery
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Approximately 2 miles south of Newark on Arkansas Highway 122 not for publication
city or town Newark vicinity
state Arkansas code AR county Independence code 063 zip code 72562

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.)

Cecilia Matthews 8/13/02
Signature of certifying official/Title 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:

<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet	_____ Signature of the Keeper	_____ Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other. (explain:)	_____	_____

Akron Cemetery
Name of Property

Independence County, Arkansas
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input type="checkbox"/> building(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-local | <input type="checkbox"/> district |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-State | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal | <input type="checkbox"/> structure |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> object |

	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)

N/A

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A

walls N/A

roof N/A

other Limestone, Granite, Concrete, and Marble

Narrative Description

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

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.)

x 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.

x D a cemetery.

[] E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

[] F a commemorative property

[] G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

Local

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Exploration and Settlement

Period of Significance

1829-1930

Significant Dates

1829(first burial)

1930(last burial)

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation (Complete if Criterion D is marked)

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

[] preliminary determination of individual listing (36

[] CFR 67) has been requested

[] previously listed in the National Register

[] Previously determined eligible by the National Register

[] designated a National Historic Landmark

[] recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

Primary location of additional data:

X State Historic Preservation Office

[] Other State Agency

[] Federal Agency

[] Local Government

[] University

[] Other

Name of repository:

#

recorded by Historic American Engineering
Record # _____

Akron Cemetery
Name of Property

Independence County, Arkansas
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acres of Property One acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>15</u>	<u>640349</u>	<u>3947683</u>	3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

SE 1/4, NE 1/4, N/W 1/4, S/W 1/4, Section 17, Township 12N, Range 4W

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes all extant resources associated with the cemetery.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Zac Cothren
organization Arkansas Historic Preservation Program date 5/20/02
street & number 323 Center Street Suite 1500 telephone 501-324-9880
city or town Little Rock state AR zip code 72201

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location
- A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Dewayne Davidson
street & number 365 East 8th Street telephone 670-799-3017
city or town Newark state Arkansas zip code 72562

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

Akron Cemetery is located in the north central part of Arkansas. It is approximately two miles south of Newark in Independence County. This cemetery is the burial place of some of the first settlers of the Newark area, and Independence County. It is quite possibly the oldest cemetery in Independence County. This community, known as Big Bottom, was renamed Akron in 1880. Akron ceased to exist around 1940. The first recorded burial occurred in 1829, although the stone has been washed away. There are seventy-four burials in this cemetery. All these burials are historic occurring between the years of 1829 and 1930. Sixty-three graves are marked and legible. Three are illegible and eleven are unmarked. Four burials are from 1829 to 1852. Forty-four burials occurred from 1852-1900. Twenty-one burials are from 1900 to 1930(nine are unmarked). The cemetery is the last surviving resource associated with the settlement of Big Bottom and the town of Akron, thus the cemetery is being nominated for its association with the early settlement of the area.

ELABORATION

Akron Cemetery is the only remaining site associated with the community of Big Bottom (Akron). Located within yards of the White River, it has withstood almost yearly flooding. A small weather-beaten painted sign with a cross atop it identifies the cemetery to passersby. The cemetery is only about thirty feet from Highway 122, with a small driveway on the west side. Shrouding this small one-acre area is a cluster of oak trees on the west and one large oak on the east. Hardwood trees are scattered throughout the cemetery. The only historic plantings viewed within the cemetery are clusters of daffodils spread about the area. Just outside the cemetery boundary, the land is used for farming. Therefore, plowed fields surround the cemetery on three sides. The cemetery is located atop a Native American earthen mound. In the early 1900s reports of Indian artifacts being found when graves were dug was quite common.

The first recorded burial occurred in 1829, although the stone has been washed away. There are seventy-four burials in this cemetery, all of which are historic. A burial has not occurred at the cemetery since 1930. Of the seventy-four graves, sixty-three graves are marked and legible, three are illegible, and eleven are unmarked. A survey of the cemetery shows there were four burials from 1829 to 1852, seven in the 1860s, sixteen in the 1870s, fourteen in the 1880s, and seven in the 1890s. The first decade of the 1900s saw sixteen burials. The amount of people being buried at the cemetery drastically declined after 1910 with only five burials taking place between 1910 and the cemetery's final burial in 1930. There are at least two instances of duplicate stones. The explanation for these duplicates seems to be that the river would wash markers away, and the family would replace them. The original stones would then surface, sometimes across the road, or even further when the water would recede. The family would then place them, usually on ground beside new marker. There are legends that the Akron gravestones would surface in Newark two miles away following a White River flood.

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Most of the stones are marble/limestone tablet style markers. A small number of obelisk style markers, constructed of limestone, are also located in the cemetery. A limestone quarry was located in Independence County in the middle of the 19th century. The availability of the material was probably the reason that limestone was the material of choice for gravestones at Akron. There are also several fieldstone markers in the cemetery. Some of the earliest burials are marked with fieldstone. There are also a few examples of concrete headstones in the cemetery. There is no clear transition from one material to another in the cemetery, but the closeness to the limestone quarry near Batesville probably accounts for the consistency of materials.

The oldest upright stone is that of Richard Holderby (1799-1842). This stone appears to be marble, or limestone. His wife is buried nearby and marked with a simple fieldstone marker that reads "M H d1848". The stones in the cemetery are not overly ornate, and seemed to have been reserved primarily for children and members of fraternal organizations. There are seven stones with Masonic emblems. Three markers have multiple children listed with one stone. Many of the children's stones are carved with images of lambs. This was common for a child's grave in the 1800s.

The orientation of the burials is typical for an American cemetery. The dead were buried with their feet facing east which is a tradition followed in most antebellum cemeteries.

Integrity

Akron Cemetery possesses a strong sense of integrity as its location still reflects its association with rural Independence County. The design of the gravestones display materials and workmanship of days gone by. Most of the gravestones are in good condition, especially when one takes into account the almost yearly flooding of the cemetery by the White River. Very little has been done to detract from Akron Cemetery's feeling and association as the last vestige of the Big Bottom settlement and town of Akron.

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Summary

Akron Cemetery, located in the Newark vicinity of Independence County, Arkansas, is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its local significance as the last remaining site in its original location associated with the settlement of Big Bottom, later known as Akron. It also meets the requirements of Criteria Consideration D: Cemeteries.

Elaboration

The history of Akron would have to begin by identifying the Native Americans who settled or passed through the area. A few tribes known to have been here were the Osage, Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Delaware and Shawnee. There are artifacts and skeletal remains, which occasionally surface, but that is about all the information that we have to document their early existence in Big Bottom.

One of the best early history books pertaining specifically to this area was published in 1902. Its title is "The History of Lawrence, Jackson, Independence and Stone Counties of the Third Judicial District of Arkansas." The author was Sallie W. Stockard, and the book contains many wonderful quotes about the early days. She had the good fortune to interview pioneers who had been in the area well before the Civil War, so her writings are very significant. Of the early Indians Stockard wrote, "It is veritably the hunter's paradise and it was with great reluctance that the Indians were induced to give way to the encroachment of the white man upon their well-earned and hitherto undisputed domain."

The only physical evidence reminding us of these earliest of residents is the Akron Cemetery. It was a Native American mound centuries before the white man began using it for his dead. A smaller mound was located across the present highway adjacent to the cemetery. While Akron Cemetery was in active use in the early 1900s, reports of Indian artifacts being found in freshly dug graves were often reported to the local newspaper.

The mound, perhaps the county's best known and most often mentioned mound, is thought to have been the work of Native Americans from the Mississippian time frame of the mid-1500s.

The Akron mound was inspected by Indian archaeologist Edward Palmer around 1882. Using his exact wording, he described the situation as, "...a large mound 7 ft. high, & 300 ft. across, of circular form. It is covered with graves of the townspeople as it is on the outskirts. In digging the graves many things have been taken, from one grave a fine carved shell and a number of beads were found and presented to the National Museum by M. A. Mull of Jacksonport. Jackson Co. Ark. A figure of clay was taken out at the same time with the shells... There is another mound near the above. It is 4 ft. high & 50 ft. across. One foot from surface found 6 inches of burnt clay brick stuff, then 5 inches of ashes and charcoal. A few important things were found - Turned over the whole mound. The base is of clay & sand."

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The engraved shell is now a part of the Palmer Collection housed at the Department of Anthropology, Smithsonian Institute. It is thought that the shell originated from the south in the Gulf of Mexico and was traded among the Indians until it reached its resting-place at Akron.

The first settlers in Akron (Big Bottom) were Jonathan Magness, and sons Perry Green, Morgan, and David G. W. in 1815. They were son and grandsons of Perrygreen Magness of N.C. a Captain in Revolutionary War. Other early settlers included Richard Holderby, (son in law of Perry Green Magness) Alfred Arnold, John Arnold, William Arnold, and Hugh Tomlinson. It is believed that most or all of these early settlers and families are buried at Akron. Visible stones include Richard Holderby, Hugh Tomlinson, and wife. There is a flat stone lying under a large oak bearing PGM. It has been documented as Perry Green Magness.

There were several significant early political figures that have ties to Akron, although not all are buried in the cemetery. Perry Green Magness was also one of the first to become involved in politics in the area. On March 1, 1815, he was appointed as a justice of the peace for Spring River, a settlement in the original county of Lawrence. In 1818 he was one of the three representatives of Lawrence County (Independence County was originally part of Lawrence County) to the Missouri General Assembly. In 1820, he was one of five commissioners appointed by the General Assembly of the Territory of Arkansas charged with locating a suitable place for the courthouse and jail for the new Independence County. He was appointed a justice of the peace for Black River Township in 1827. Had he not died in 1829, around the young age of 43, he might have continued the successful political career that seemed destined to be his.

Although not the first to run for office from Big Bottom, Morgan Magness, brother of Perry Green Magness, certainly had the most distinguished career. It appears his earliest public service work was in March 23, 1830, when he, John C. Saylor and Isaac Robinson were elected by the 1829 Arkansas Territorial Assembly to serve as justices of the peace.

In 1831 Magness was elected a member of the House of Representatives of the Seventh Arkansas Territorial General Assembly, a position to which he was reelected for the Eighth Session in 1833. As a member of the Whig party, he was elected to serve in 1838 to the House of Representatives of the Second Arkansas General Assemblies, winning over opponent L. L. Parks by a vote of 369-116. In 1840 and 1842, he was elected to serve in the Senate of the Third and Fourth Arkansas General Assemblies, respectively.

Morgan and Perry Green Magness' brother-in-law Benaiah (Beniah) Bateman served in the House of Representatives of the Fourth and Fifth Arkansas State General Assemblies. Bateman was a veteran of the War of 1812, having served as a private in Capt. David Mason's company of Militia Cavalry in Tennessee. He was a captain serving under Gen. Andrew Jackson at the Battle of New Orleans.

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Also in 1838, the acting governor during the general assembly appointed Richard Holderby for the Real Estate Bank. He died four years later at age 43. Richard A. Holderby was a Sargent in the 8th Arkansas Calvary during Civil War (son of Richard). Both are buried at Akron

In 1854 a Post Office was established at Big Bottom. The area grew as a small, but important commercial port and stagecoach stop on the White River. The name Big Bottom disappeared in the 1880s when the name Akron was chosen, however, Big Bottom exists today as the township where Newark is located. Akron, with its location on the main road and with its good business community, was destined to remain viable, except for one nagging problem, the White River. The river, for all the opportunities it offered, was also a detriment to the area. Akron, being on a slough with both ends tied to the White River, was easily flooded. Townspeople finally grew tired of rebuilding, digging out and replacing after frequent floods. They began to look at alternatives, and John Tomlinson provided them a good choice, his new town of Newark. In the 1880s the community began to diminish in size when the railroad passed north of the town through nearby Newark. Around the turn of the century several fires destroyed most of Akron's business district, hastening Akron's demise.

Residents slowly started leaving Akron, many moving to Newark. Akron ceased to exist as a functioning community around the turn of the century, and by the 1940s only a handful of old houses remained. Today, the only reminder of this pioneer Independence County village is the old cemetery on Highway 122 south of Newark. It is abandoned and basically forgotten. Every now and then the cemetery is temporarily reclaimed from nature through a good clearing, but, within a few years, tall brush returns to pull the cemetery and town back to the past.

There are no known photographs of any businesses or homes in Akron. However, there exists in Newark a house, which originally was in Akron. The handsome Dearing House was constructed in Akron about 1890, and bought early on by T. H. Dearing. In 1901 he dismantled the one-story house, reconstructed it in Newark, and added the second story in 1913. That house, currently owned by Dearing's grandson Terry Shipman, is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Statement of Significance

The Akron Cemetery is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A** with **local significance** as the last remaining site in its original location that is associated with the settlement of Big Bottom, later known as Akron. It is also being nominated under **Criteria Consideration D: Cemeteries**.

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Bibliography

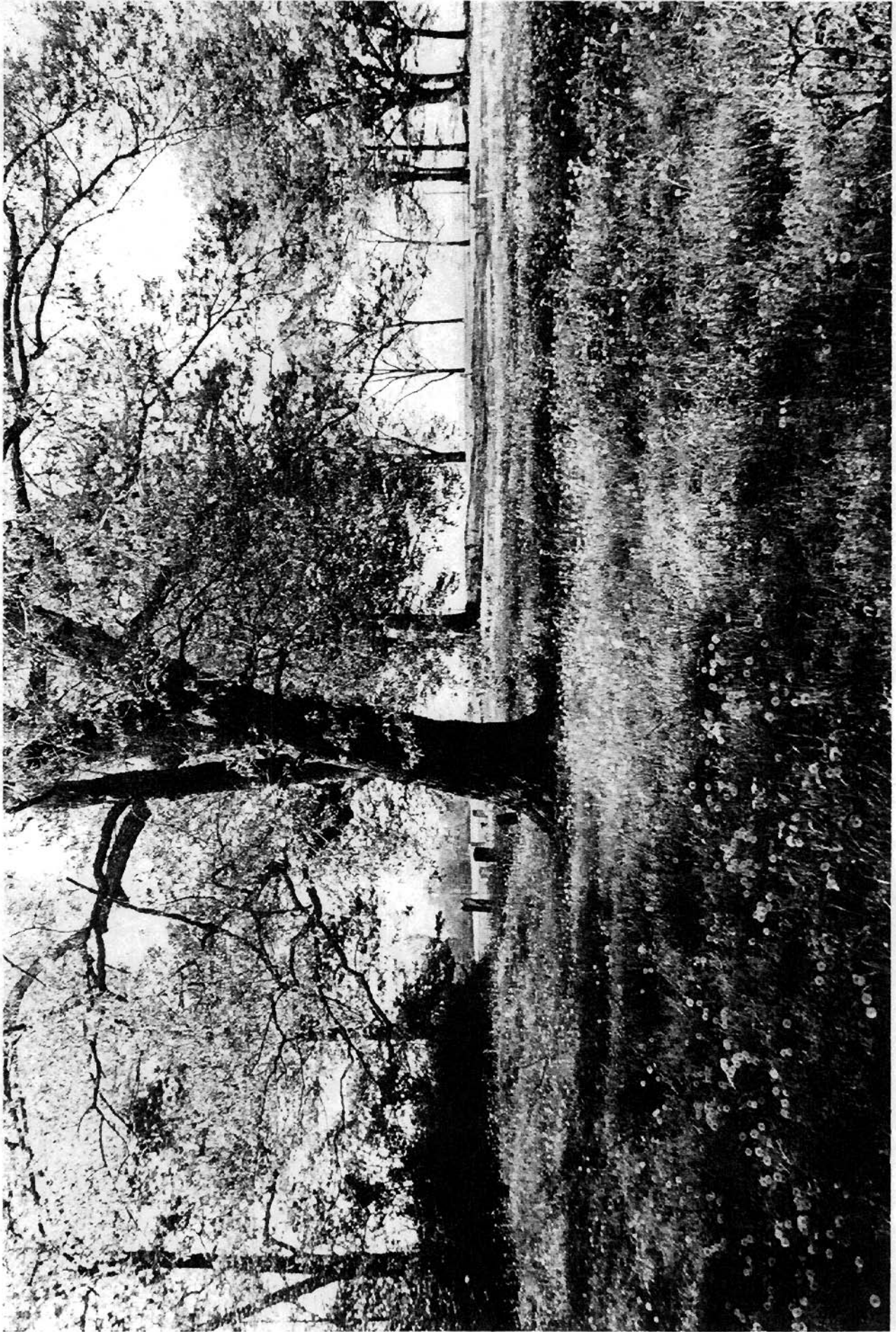
Craig, Robert "A History of Newark, Arkansas" Craig Printing Company, Newport, Arkansas, 1999.

DAR Papers of Mary Elizabeth Self Wharton-Perrygreen Magness

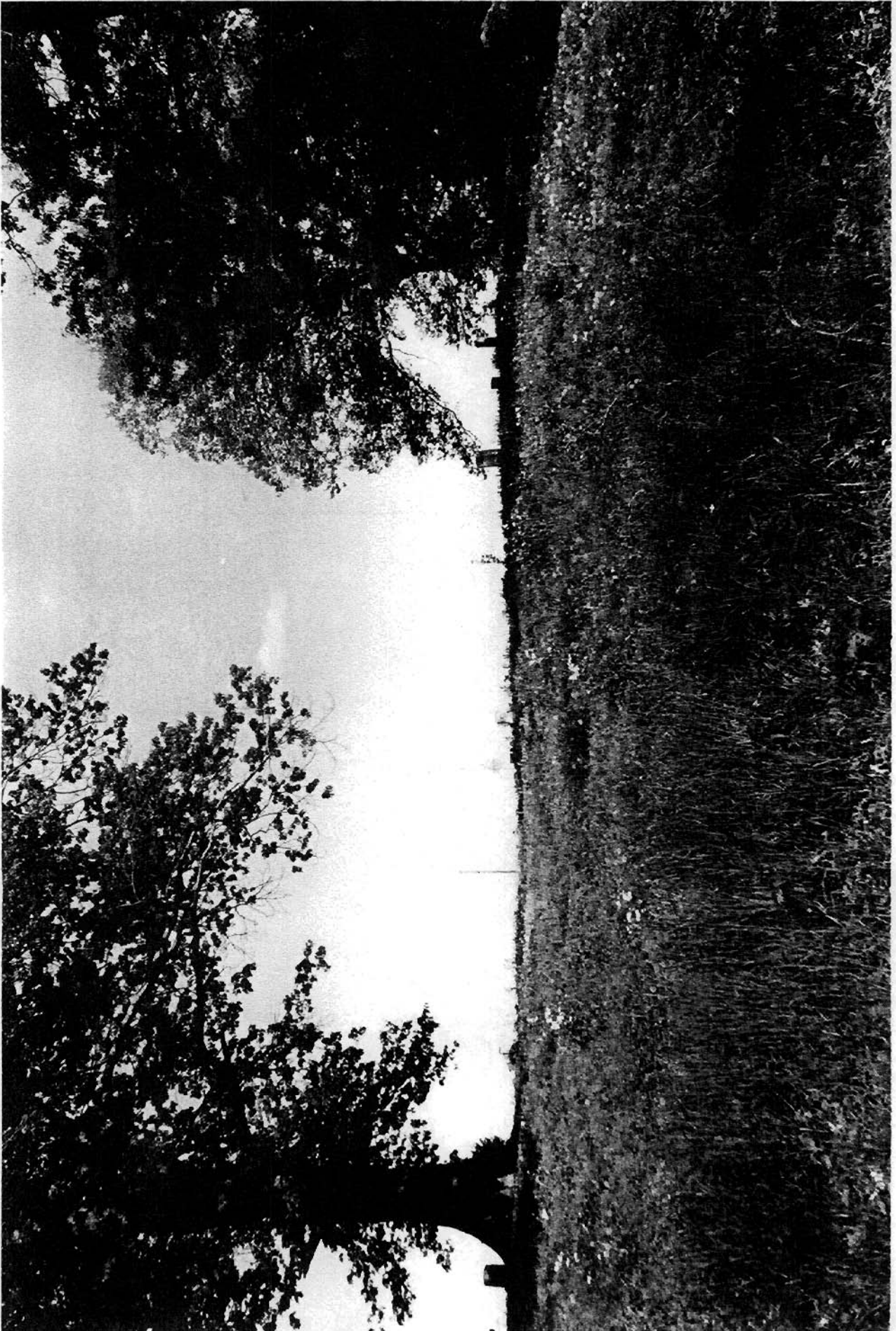
UDC Papers of Mary Elizabeth Self Wharton-Richard Ansker Holderby

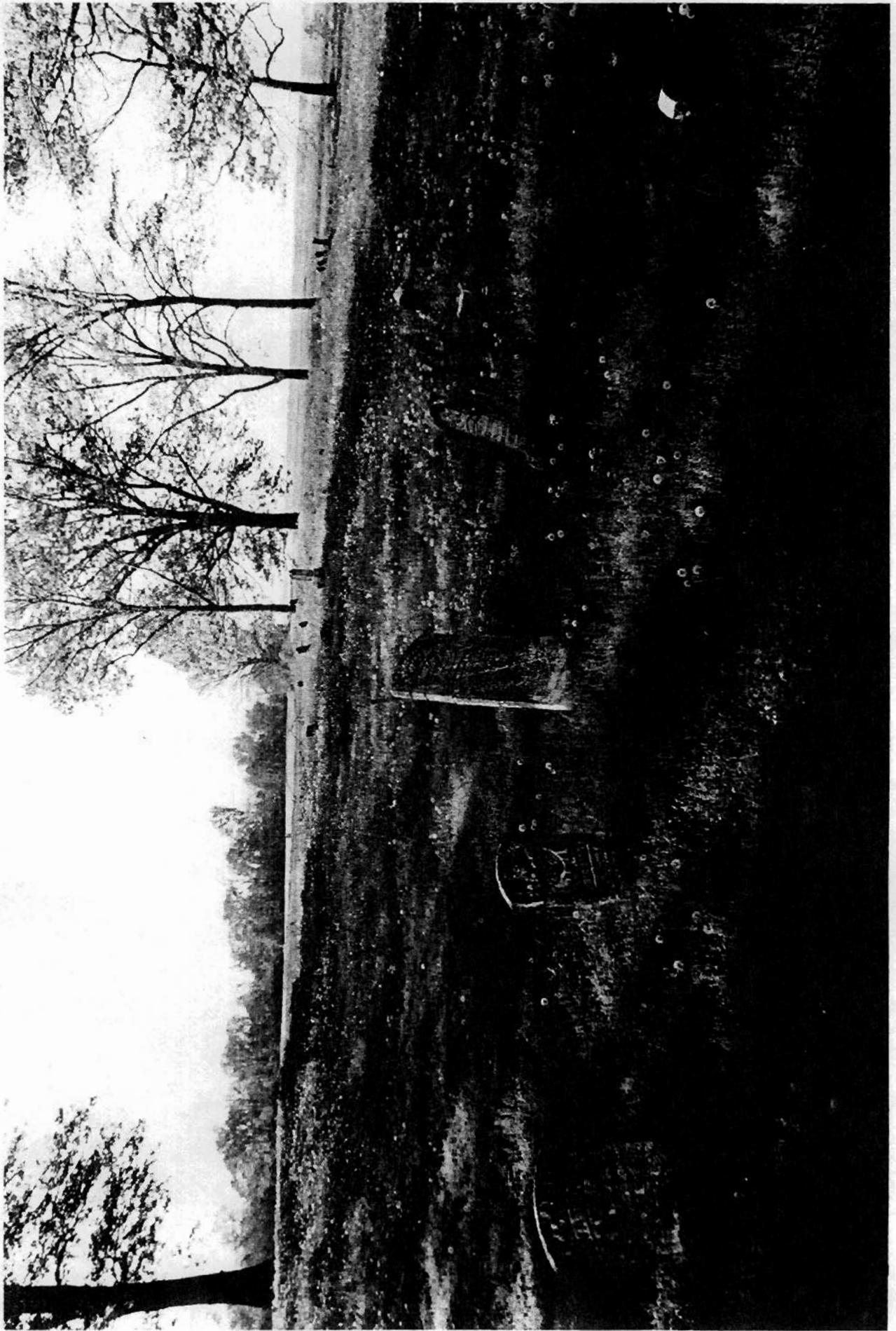
Independence County Chronicle, Volume XLII, October-January 2002 "The Richard Holderby Family" by Liz Burns Glenn

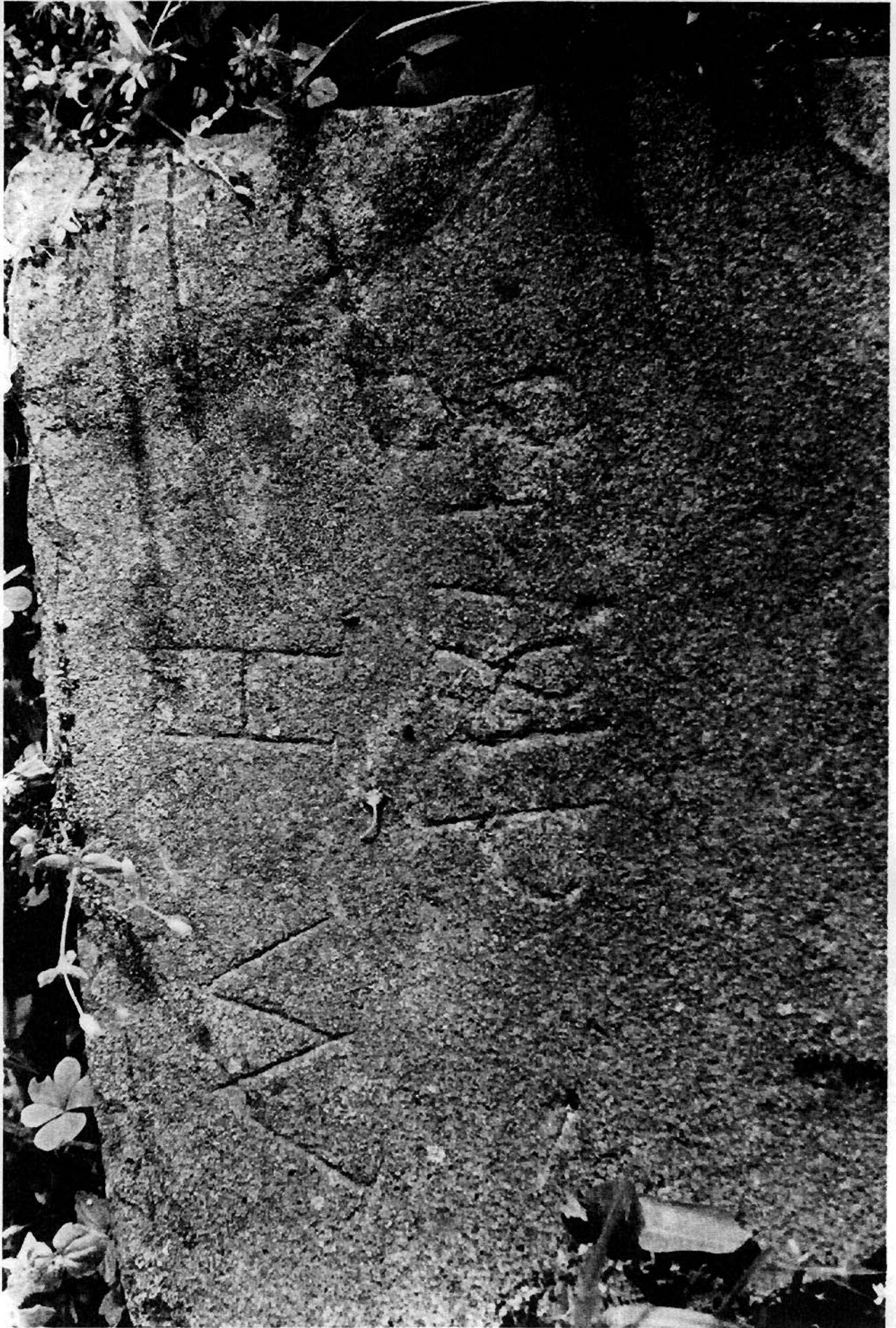
PG Magness, Jr. by DeKalb County, Tennessee Historian Thomas Webb. TnGenWebsite.Org Genealogy Website



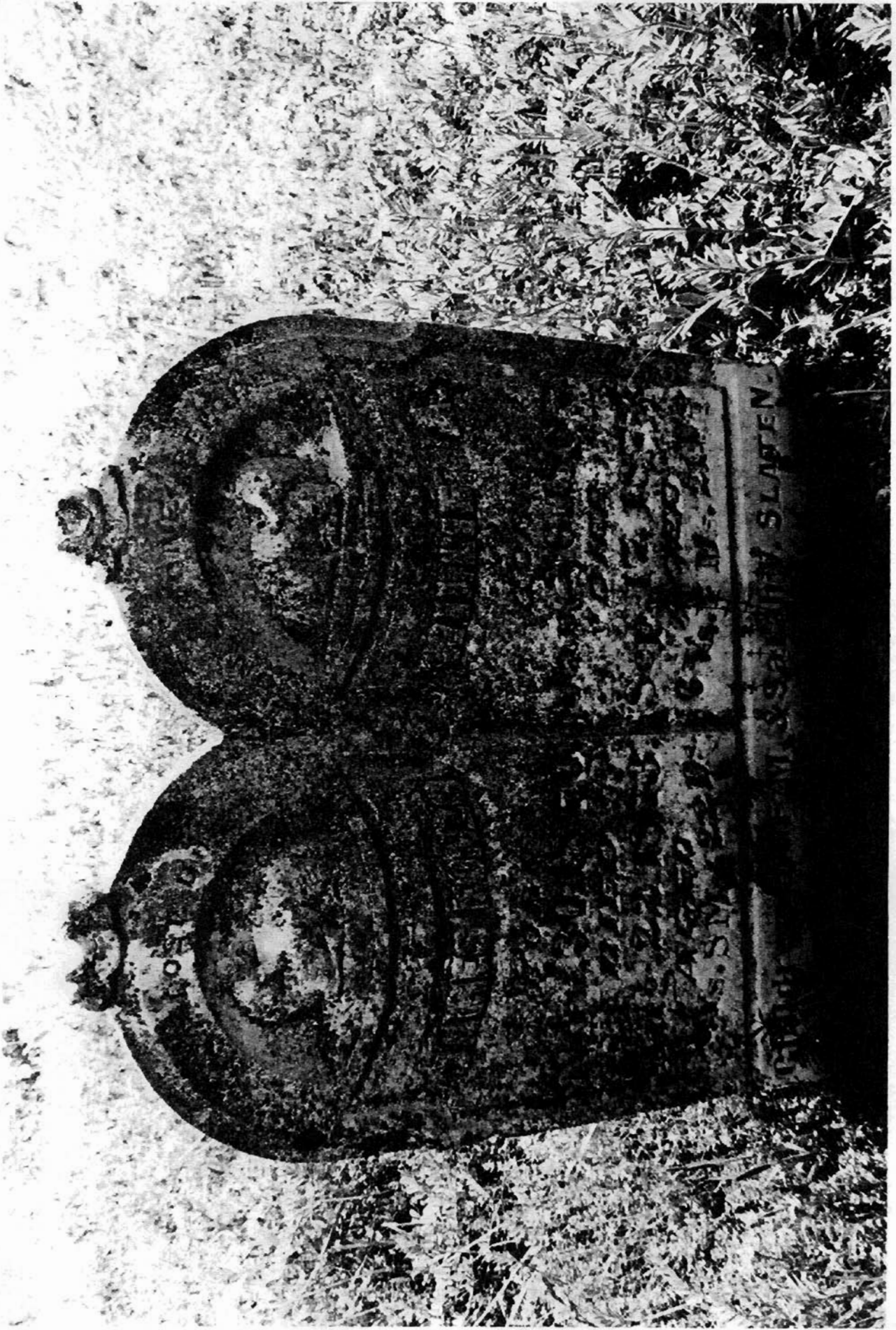












W. S. SLAFEN



In memory of

WILLIAM M.

Husband of

LUCIE P. TOMLINSON

BORN

Feb. 25, 1848

DIED

Jan. 25, 1877

AGED

29 Years 10 Mos.

WIFE OF
L. SUMNER
BORN
DIED
AGED 22
Yrs. 10. Mo 13



DR. J. A.
WILLIAMSON
BORN
1811
DIED
1886

WILLIAMSON



SARAH

WIFE OF W.

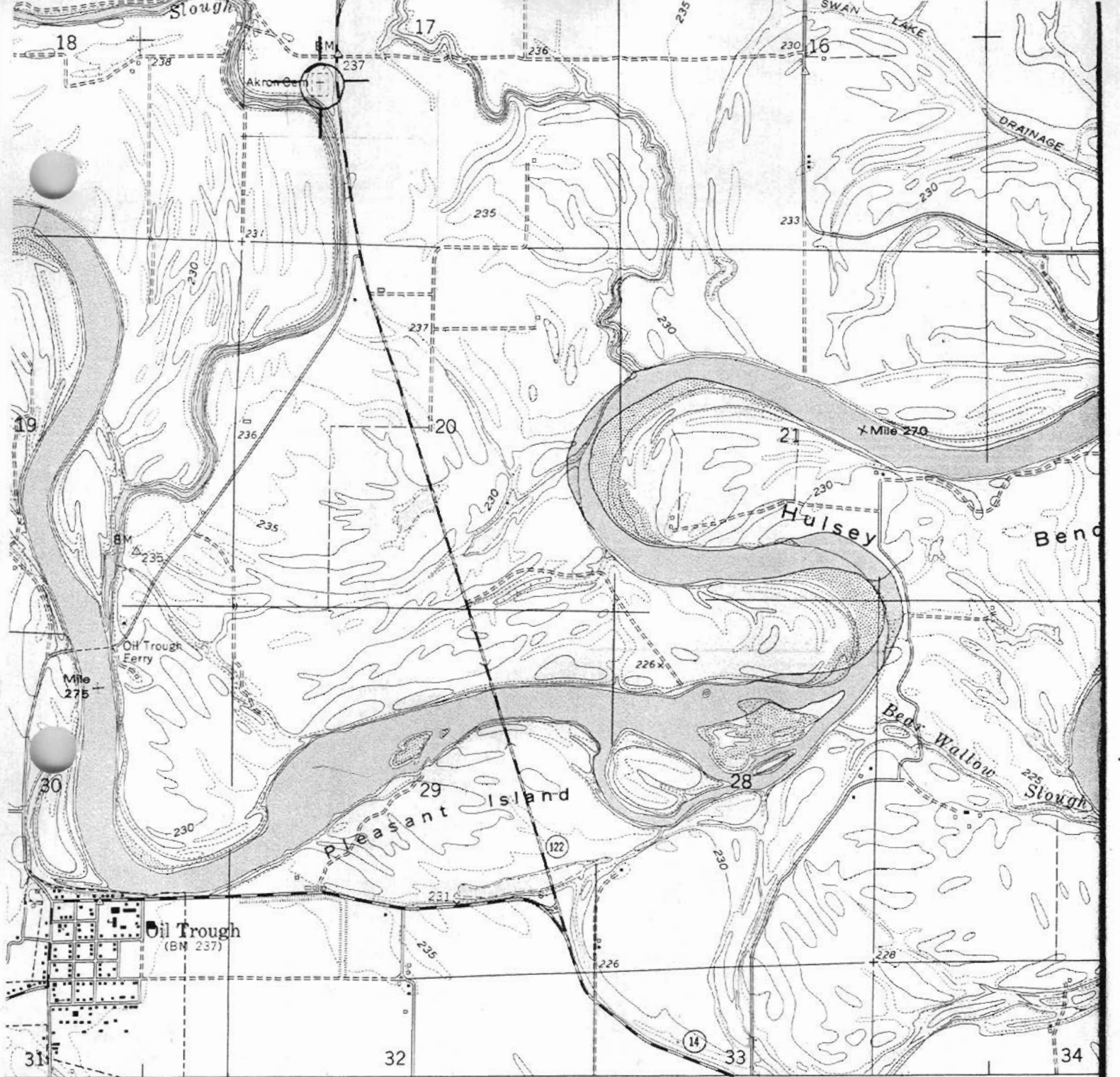
TOMLINS

BORN

1855

DIED

1913



39 27'30" 40 (OLYPHANT) 7755 III SW ELMO 2.3 MI. NEWPORT 9 MI. 42 25' 34

Akron Cemetery
 Newark Vic., Independence Co., AR
 ITM: 15 / 640349E / 3947683N
 4 MILS

SCALE 1:24 000

0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET

0 5 1 KILOMETER

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

AGNET ER O

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

Revisions
 photograph
 This info