

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NR LISTED  
JUN 03 1998  
AHPP

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Black Oak Cemetery

Other Name/Site Number: WA0833

2. Location

Street & Number: County Road 243

Not for Publication: N/A

City/Town: Greenland

Vicinity: X

State: AR County: Washington

Code: AR143 Zip Code: 72701

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Public-Local

Category of Property: Site

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing

Noncontributing

1  
   
   
   
1

   
   
   
   
0

Buildings  
Sites  
Structures  
Objects  
Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Cemetery  
Property

Washington County, Arkansas  
County and State

**State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X 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 forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Clayton A. Sater  
Signature of certifying official

4-14-98  
Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_\_\_ meets \_\_\_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

**National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby certify that this property is:

\_\_\_\_\_ entered in the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ removed from the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper Date  
Of action

Black Oak Cemetery  
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**6. Function or Use**

Historic: Funerary Sub: Cemetery  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Current : Funerary Sub: Cemetery  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification:

No Style  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Materials: foundation N/A roof N/A  
walls N/A other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance:

**Summary**

The Black Oak Cemetery in the Greenland Vicinity of Washington County is located on County Road 243. The cemetery covers three acres on a wooded hilltop which is adjacent to a pasture where cattle often graze. There are estimated to be three hundred burials, spanning from circa 1843 to circa 1935 marked by a variety of monuments ranging from stylized markers within stacked rock pens to simple hand-carved rocks. The names of many pioneer families as well as a Territorial Representative and veterans from the Civil War and World War I can be found on the stones. The Black Oak School was located on the eastern edge of the cemetery at the end of County Road 243, a dirt road lined with the remains of a stacked rock wall. The foundation is all that remains of the school and the cemetery is extremely overgrown with many damaged headstones, but a small contingent of descendants of the pioneers buried there are working to clear the land and preserve the remaining monuments.

**Elaboration**

The Black Oak Cemetery is a three acre cemetery located on a hilltop in the Greenland vicinity. Entry to the cemetery is gained through a locked gate on County Road 243 demarcated by two stone piers and an arched entry. To the north of the piers are the remains of the stone foundation of the Black Oak School which was destroyed by fire probably before the turn of the century. Three hundred burials ranging from 1843 to 1935 are spread over the three acres. A line of cedar trees is thought to indicate the northern boundary of the site. A small bluff-line encircles the cemetery west to east. A spring to the west of the plot is said to have been used to water horses carrying passengers on the Butterfield Overland stage.

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Of the approximately three-hundred burials in the cemetery, only about two-hundred are visible. Concentrations of obvious sandstone markers are scattered over the plot, while some are still concealed by underbrush and layers of leaves. The first conspicuous marker encountered on the grounds dates from 1880 and is encircled by a stacked stone wall with no entrance or exit. A second similar stone wall engraved with the date "Nov. 11, 1886" holds four headstones and two trees. A cedar tree was probably intentionally planted but the second, a black walnut was probably a result of overgrowth. The headstones mark the graves of members of the Alexander family, descendants of John Alexander who was Washington County's first Territorial Representative also buried at Black Oak beside his wife, Jane. Most of the stones are mid-size sandstone and are stylized with typical funerary symbols but many are simply rocks carved in simple script.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

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

Applicable National Register Criteria: A

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): D

Areas of Significance: Exploration/Settlement

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period(s) of Significance: c.1843-1935

Significant Dates: c.1843

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: Euro-American

Architect/Builder: Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and period of significance noted above:

The Black Oak Cemetery is being nominated to the National Register under Criterion A with local significance as an important interpretive site of settlement in the Greenland area of Washington County. Black Oak dates from antebellum Arkansas to the Depression of the 1920s and 1930s and is the resting place of the first Territorial Legislative Representative of Washington County, John Alexander and his descendants, as well as other

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pioneer families of the community.

#### Elaboration

Washington County had only been organized for fifteen years when Martin Carter died and was interred in Black Oak Cemetery in 1843. The Carter family descends from the early settlers in Washington County like Elijah Carter who is listed in the county census of 1840. The family is representative of early settlement in Washington County as are many other families found in this small cemetery in the Greenland vicinity.

Some of those buried at Black Oak Cemetery were part of a pioneer group of families who left South Carolina in the mid 1820s bound for the west. A contingent from the Latta family made a foray into what would become Washington County, Arkansas, known as Lovely Purchase. After the forced removal of the Cherokees in 1828 the county was officially created from the Lovely Purchase and it became legal to claim land in the area.

One of the early squatter families was that of Jane and John Alexander. John was born in North Carolina in 1777, but after his marriage to Jane Stevenson they moved to Batesville and lived with members of her family. After 1815 they relocated to northwestern Arkansas and were one of only six families living in the area that became Washington County in 1828. There was a rumor that Indians from the bordering Indian Territory were desirous of John's scalp of flaming red hair, so he moved his family east to Twin Springs. At age 52 John Alexander was a representative of Washington County in the first Territorial Legislature of 1829 and again in 1833. John also served as a Justice of the peace for Cane Hill Township. Upon his death in 1860 John was buried in Black Oak Cemetery. Thirteen years later Jane was buried beside him. Several other members of the Alexander family can be found here also, including Polly Ann Alexander, Jane and John's daughter-in-law, her brother William and Polly's daughters, Nancy and Martha. The children and grandchildren of Jane and John are buried within one of two unusual stacked stone pens. The Alexander pen is engraved with the date "Nov. 11, 1886", the year of Polly Ann's death. Their elaborate headstones contrast with the many simple rock markers engraved with initials that can be found in the plot, marking the Alexanders as well-to-do members of the community.

Besides the Alexanders, the pioneer names of Hughes, Rutherford and Cate can be deciphered from the inscriptions on the tombstones. The cemetery became overgrown due to a lack of access which was remedied by the recent introduction of County Road 243. Descendants of John Alexander and of other families buried in the cemetery have begun clean up efforts and have uncovered primitive hand carved stones as well as stylized monuments inscribed in flowing letters and religious iconography.

The Black Oak Cemetery is being nominated to the National Register under Criterion A with local significance as a important reminder of pioneer life in Washington County, and a link for families still residing in the county. The cemetery contains the graves of John Alexander, first Territorial Legislative Representative of the county of Washington, descendants of several early area families and the foundation of the Black Oak school. The Black Oak Cemetery is a testament to the varied lives of Washington County community members. Their roles as merchants, soldiers, statesmen and



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homesteaders in early Arkansas can be remembered within the grounds of Black Oak Cemetery.

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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Information supplied by Georgetta Smith and Joy Kelly, Fayetteville, Arkansas, 1997.

Shiloh Museum. *Washington County History*. Springdale: 1989. Pp. 818-819, 80.

Alexander, Gladys, "The Alexander Family Records." Washington County Historical Society, Fayetteville, AR:1956.

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 -- Specify Repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

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Acreage of Property: Three acres

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing      Zone Easting Northing

A	<u>15</u>	<u>629930</u>	<u>3849520</u>	B	_____	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____	_____

Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property lies at the Southeast corner running West on the section line 16 rods thence North 16 rods thence East 16 rods thence South to the beginning point enclosing a square of 256 rods of the Southwest quarter of Southwest quarter of Section 13, Township 15, north of Range 31.

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Boundary Justification:

The boundary includes the site of the Black Oak School and all of the property historically associated with the Black Oak Cemetery.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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Name/Title: Holly Hope/Survey Historian

Organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program Date: 04/02/98

Street & Number: 1500 Tower Bldg., 323 Center St. Telephone: (501) 324-9880

City or Town: Little Rock

State: AR ZIP: 72201

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

7156 III SE  
(WHEELER)

36°00' 94°15'

389000m E

389

390

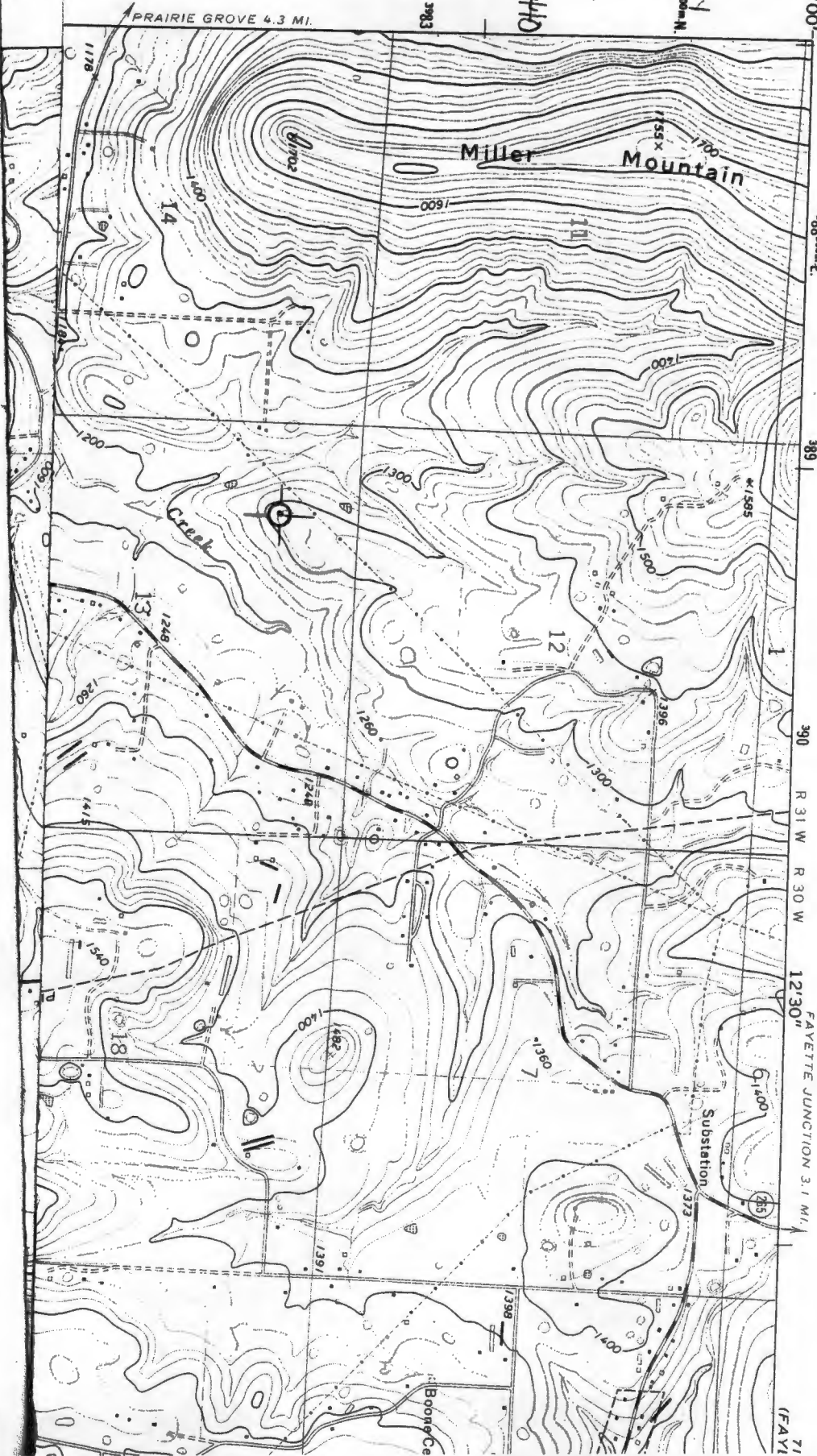
R 31 W R 30 W

12°30'

FAVETTE JUNCTION 3.1 MI.

71 (FAV)

Black Oak  
CMEFAK  
See Illinois Vicinity  
Washington Co.  
Arkansas  
UTM:  
5/389220/398240



PRAIRIE GROVE 4.3 MI.

3983

Miller Mountain

Creek

Substation

Boone Co





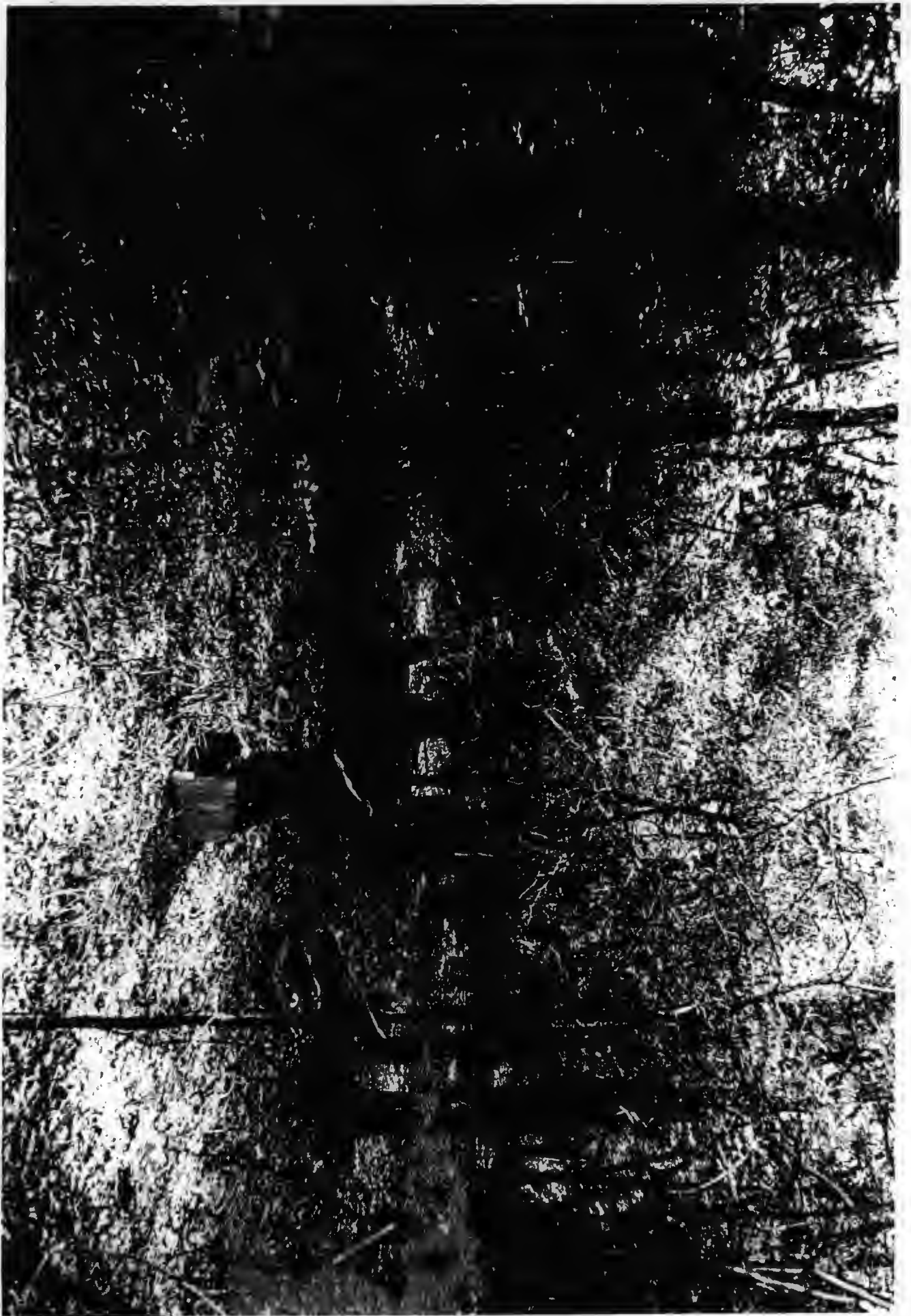


Black Oak Cemetery  
Washington Co, Arkansas  
Photo by Holly Hope  
October 29 1997  
Negative on file at AHPP  
View of John Alexander's Gravestone



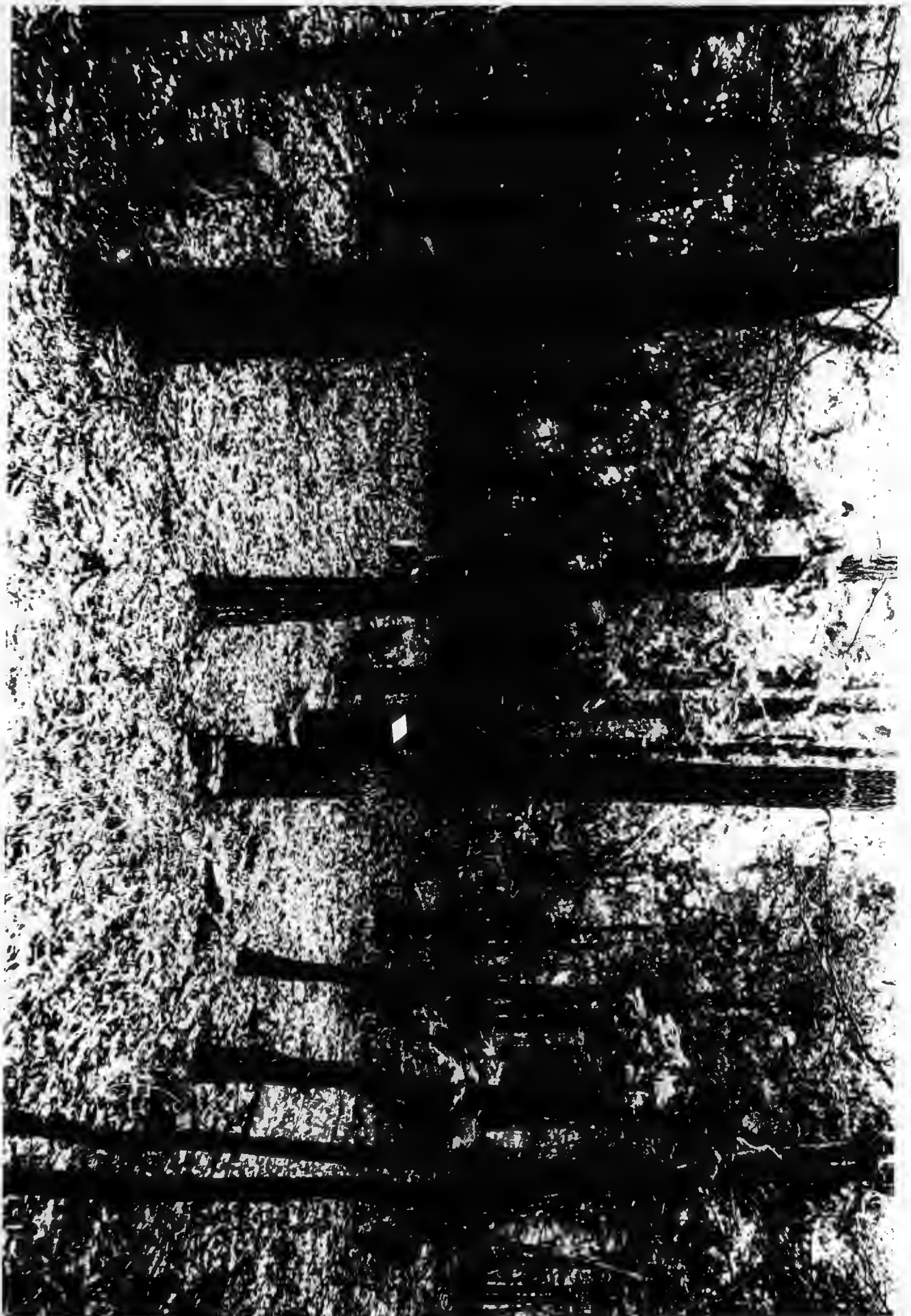
Black Oak Cemetery  
Moulton Co., Arkansas  
Plots by Holly Hope  
October 29, 1997  
Negative on file at AHPP  
View of inscription on eastern stone pair







Blast Oak Cemetery  
Wilmington Co. Arkansas  
Photo by Holly Hope  
October 29 1997  
Negative on file at AHPP  
View from North



Black Oak Cemetery  
Washington Co, Arkansas  
Photo by Holly Hopp  
October 29, 1997  
Negative on file at AHPP  
View from South



U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

WASHINGTON CO, ARKANSAS

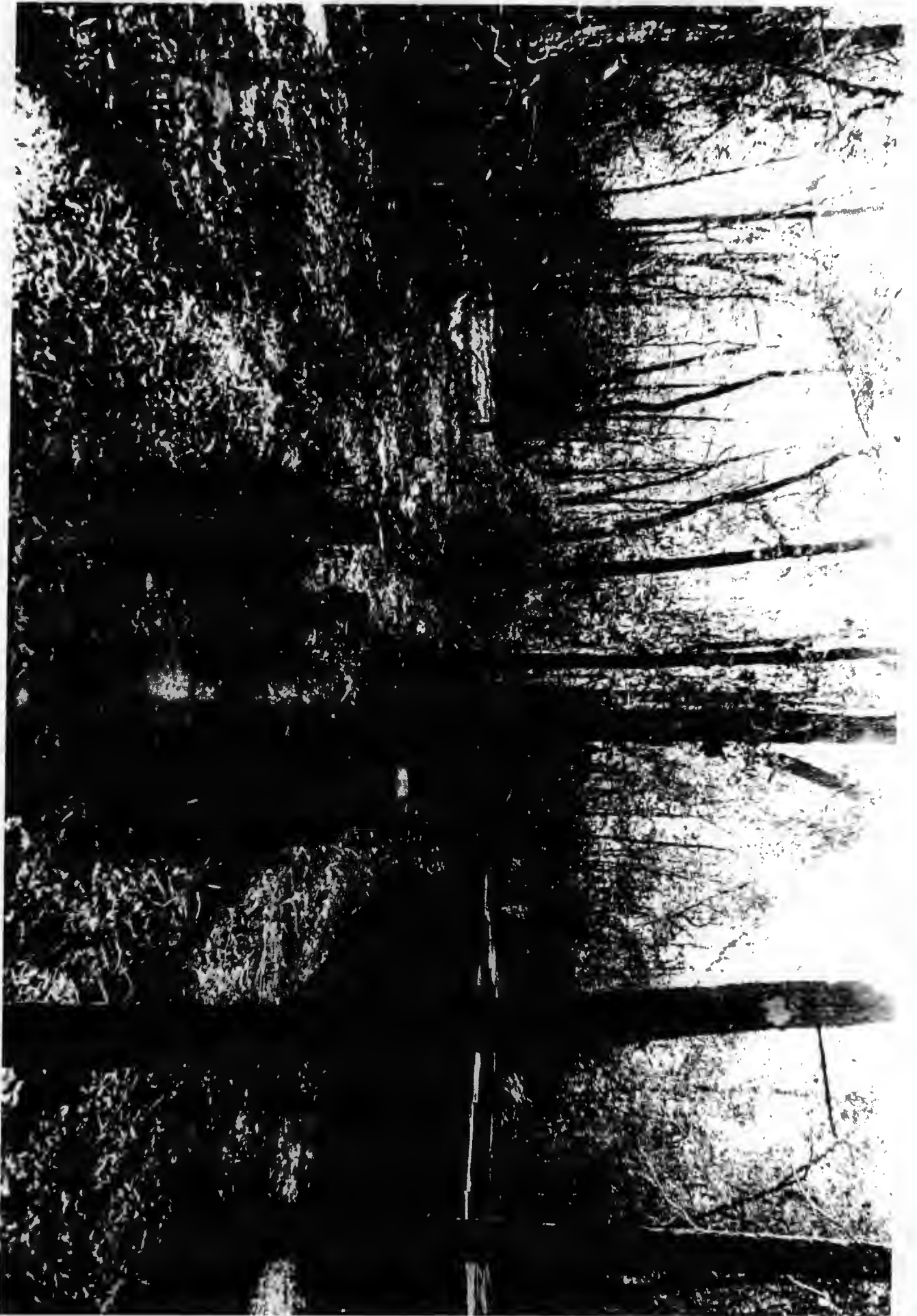
Photo by Holly Hope

October 29, 1997

Negative on file at AHP

View of Stacked Stone pen to South





Black Oak Cemetery  
Washington Co. Arkansas  
Photo by Holly Hlope  
October 29, 1997  
Negative on file at AHPP  
Yam <sup>A</sup> now west



Dick and Beverly  
Wilmington Co, Arkansas  
Photo by Holly + Hope  
October 29, 1997  
Negative on file at AHPP  
View of School Foundation