

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NR
11/15/00

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 Bethlehem Cemetery
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Approx. four miles southwest of Cane Hill on Arkansas Highway 45, located .3 miles down county road 442. not for publication

city or town Canehill vicinity
state Arkansas code AR county Washington code 143 zip code 72217

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.)

Cathie Matthews 9/28/00
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet

determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Bethlehem Cemetery

Name of Property

Washington County, Arkansas

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private, public-local, public-State, public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

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

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

Table with columns: Contributing, Noncontributing, Buildings, Sites, Structures, Objects, Total. Values: 1, 1.

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

FUNERARY/Cemetery

Current Functions

FUNERARY/Cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation N/A

Walls N/A

N/A

Roof N/A

Other Marble, granite, sandstone, and fieldstone.

Narrative Description (see 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.)

- Criteria A, B, C, D with checkboxes and descriptions.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- Criteria A through G with checkboxes and descriptions.

Levels of Significance (local, state, national)

Local

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Exploration and Settlement

Period of Significance

1832-1950

Significant Dates

1832 (first burial)
1910

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

(see 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.)

(See continuation sheet)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Criteria for previous documentation on file.

Primary location of additional data:

- Criteria for primary location of additional data.

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

recorded by Historic American Engineering
Record # _____

Name of repository: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

Bethlehem Cemetery
Name of Property

Washington County, Arkansas
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 15 368280 3970120
Zone Easting Northing
2 _____

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing
4 _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

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

Beginning at the Northeast corner of the of the Southeast quarter of the Northwest Quarter of section twenty-six (26) Township fourteen (14) North, Range thirty-three (33) West at a point located at the fork of Washington County Road 42 proceed southeast 400 feet along the inside of the east fork of Washington County Road 42 then proceed west along a fence line that marks the rear property line turning northeast at the ditch of the west fork of Washington County Road 42 and running 250 feet to the point of origin.

NE 1/4, NE 1/4, SE 1/4, NW 1/4, Section 26, Township 14, Range 33

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

The boundary includes all of the extant resources historically associated with the Bethlehem Cemetery.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Robert Keen Sr. & edited by Zac Cothren
organization _____ date 4/20/00
street & number 13643 Lincoln Canehill Rd. telephone (501) 824-4818
city or town Lincoln state AR zip code 72744

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 John and Linda Munyon
street & number 17166 West Munyon Telephone _____
city or town Canehill state AR zip code 72717

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Summary

Bethlehem Cemetery is located in the hilly northwest corner of Arkansas. Approximately four miles southwest of Canehill in Washington County, the cemetery is the final resting spot of many early settlers of the area. In 1827, the Bethlehem Methodist Episcopal Church South was constructed by John Bankston. At the time of its construction the church was located on the main road between the towns of Vineyard and Canehill. The cemetery is a direct result of the church which is no longer extant on this site. The first recorded burial occurred in 1832. There are eighty-seven graves in the cemetery of which eighty-one are historic. Twenty-five of the stones are marked between 1832 and 1900; twenty-six between 1900 and 1950, and six from 1950-1980. The cemetery also contains twenty-five historic unmarked fieldstones. Circa 1910 the Bethlehem Methodist Episcopal Church South was moved to the town of Morrow; thus the only thing that remains of historic Bethlehem is the old weathered gravestone of some of the county's earliest settlers. The site is being nominated under **Criterion A**, for its association with the early settlement of Northwest Arkansas, specifically the Bethlehem Community. It also meets **Criteria Consideration D: Cemeteries**

Elaboration

The two-acre Bethlehem Cemetery is located in the small community of Bethlehem in Northwest Arkansas. The cemetery is approximately four miles southwest of Canehill located off of highway 54 on county road 442 in Washington County. The cemetery is bordered to the north by a fork in the county road. The road forks to the southeast and southwest forming the eastern and western boundaries of the cemetery. The south side of the cemetery is enclosed with wire fencing that runs between the forks in the road giving the burial area a triangular shape. Fly Creek is located about 200 yards to the east of the cemetery. Trees are scattered throughout the southwest corner of the cemetery. Yucca plants and other historic plantings such as daffodils are located within the cemetery.

The cemetery contains eighty-one historic burials, fifty-six are marked headstones and twenty-five fieldstone markers. There have been six burials since 1950. A survey of the cemetery shows there were seven burials in the 1830s, one in the 1840s, two in the 1850s, three in the 1860s, two in the 1870s, six in the 1880s, and four in the 1890s. The first decade of the 1900s saw several burials at Bethlehem totaling eleven in all. The amount of burials in the cemetery began to slow down after that decade. There were only three burials in the 1910s. The 20s, 30s and 40s saw four burials each. During the past fifty years there have been only six burials; five of which occurred in the 50s and 60s. The unmarked fieldstones are probably the oldest graves, however there is little means of putting the exact dates of these burials. The decline in burials after 1910 is a direct result of the church being moved to the nearby town of Morrow in 1910.

The majority of the headstones are sandstone, or marble, with some of these having granite bases. There are a couple of examples of granite markers and one example of a concrete marker. The most unusual stone in the

cemetery is a head and shoulders style sandstone marker. These style stones are usually traced to people with ethnic backgrounds from the British Isles, especially Scotch-Irish. Another type of marker indicative of this cemetery is the narrow tablets made of marble. Used since ancient times, this is the most universal type of marker used to mark the head of the dead. Most tablet-markers are arched; however, a few are cut evenly across the top. The transition from fieldstone to sandstone and then to marble markers show economic development in the area due to the availability of commercially manufactured stones that had been unavailable in the area up until the later part of the 1800s. The grandest headstone in the cemetery marks the grave of Benjamin Hayles. This commercially manufactured tombstone is a five foot tall; clipped obelisk with an urn finial resting on its top. Scattered throughout the cemetery are a number of smaller obelisks shaped markers. These upright four-sided pillars are associated with the Egyptian revival style, popular during the late 1800s. Most of the obelisks in this cemetery are relatively short in height. Another very popular style headstone in the cemetery is the pulpit marker. Since the cemetery was the burial ground for many members of the Bethlehem Methodist Episcopal Church South, the use of the religion oriented pulpit marker is valid. The cemetery also contains three stone ledger grave markers.

Popular funerary imagery in the form of open scripture carvings on top of the pulpit stones which represents Gods word was revealed to the person. There are several stones that feature the gates of heaven, which symbolize the departure from life and the entrance into heaven. The clasping hands image is also popular, and symbolizes the embrace of a new life, as well as, closeness or marriage. Flowers are another image carved on some of the stones. Flowers symbolize the life of man, frailty of life and are a symbol of impermanence. The bouquet arrangement of the flowers featured on the headstones in Bethlehem Cemetery represent condolences or grief.

Of special interest, a non-historic granite headstone with copper plating marks the 1886 burial of Rev. T.H. Tennant. Reverend Tennant died at age 114 and is the oldest man to ever live in Washington County. According to Methodist Church records in London, England, Tennant was the oldest Methodist to ever live.

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 pre-Civil War cemeteries.

The cemetery contains some historic plantings. Some color is added to the site with the blooming of the daffodils in the spring. Yucca and native wildflowers are also scattered throughout the site

Statement of Integrity

Bethlehem Cemetery possesses a strong sense of integrity as its location still reflects its association with rural Washington County. Bethlehem's historic plantings and gravestone designs display the original materials used and workmanship employed during its period of significance. Few changes have been made to detract from Bethlehem Cemetery's feeling and association as the last vestige of the historic Bethlehem community and as one of Washington County's oldest public burial grounds.

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SECTION 8

Summary

Bethlehem Cemetery located in the vicinity of Canehill in Washington County, Arkansas, is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A** for its local significance as the last known remaining site associated with the founding of the Bethlehem community, and also as one of the first public burial grounds established in Washington County. It also meets the eligibility requirements of **Criteria Consideration D: Cemeteries**- because it dates to the community of Bethlehem's original 1820s settlement and it has attained significance from its association with that very early period.

Elaboration

When Arkansas became a territory in 1819, controversies over Indian relocation left the western part of the state unattractive to new settlement. That same year explorer Frank Pierce traveled up the White River into northwest Arkansas. However, it would be six years before settlements began forming in the county. Northwest Arkansas was an important area of growth in the late 1820s after Indian affairs were settled. Even before the land around Canehill had been removed from Indian hands people had begun settling the area.

In 1826 a group of six families led by Hugh Simpson settled near Canehill. The pioneers settled on Indian land and shortly after soldiers from Ft. Gibson rode in and destroyed their crops in an attempt to force them off of the land, but this effort failed. Shortly after the soldiers had left the families returned to their land. These settlers built the Bethlehem Methodists Episcopal Church South in 1827, a year before Washington County was officially open to settlement. Bethlehem Cemetery is a direct result of the church. According to local Historian Robert Keen, this was the first church and first public burial ground in the county. All evidence up until this point supports this.

By the time the county was officially opened in 1828 the small community of Bethlehem had already formed along Fly Creek between the towns of Canehill and Vineyard (later called Evansville). The influx of white settlers was tremendous. Some of the first families to settle the area were the Simpsons, Carnahans and Pyeatts. All three of these families are represented in Bethlehem Cemetery. The Simpson family was in the first group ever to settle the area. The Pyeatts and Carnahans arrived together in 1828. They moved to the area from Crystal Hill near present day Little Rock. The leader of the group was John Carnahan, who in 1812 preached what is believed to be the first Protestant sermon ever in Arkansas. His wife Jane died on January 1, 1832 and was the first person to be buried at

Bethlehem Cemetery. The next two burials were both children of the Pyeatt families: the first in 1833 and the second in 1834.

Two of the cemetery's older burials have an interesting pioneer story behind them. In 1831 Jacob and Benjamin Hayles along with their sister Leah moved into the area around Bethlehem. On August 26, 1835, Indians raided their home killing both Jacob and Benjamin. Leah hid in the well and escaped death. Both brothers were buried in Bethlehem Cemetery, as was Leah at the time of her death in 1880.

Small, David, Whittenburg and Blake are other prominent names in the cemetery. Most of these people were small farmers and very active in the local church. (One such person was Reverend Thomas H. Tennant who at age 114 was according to Methodists records the oldest Methodist to have ever lived.)

The town of Bethlehem was never more than a small community, but the people who called it home were some of the counties original settlers. Many of these people and their descendents are buried at Bethlehem Cemetery. The original church building was a log structure and was replaced in 1876 with a frame structure. In 1910 that building was moved to the nearby town of Morrow where it remained until it was torn down in 1953. It is not surprising the amount of burials fell off sharply after the church moved in 1910. Out of eighty-seven total burials only six are non-historic (post 1950).

Today all that remains of the little community of Bethlehem are a few modern-day farms and residences. Nevertheless, the history of the settlement of Bethlehem can be traced through the burials at Bethlehem Cemetery by viewing the monuments of the settlers and landowners that helped to found and build the community of Bethlehem. The lasting legacy of the community is Bethlehem Cemetery.

Bethlehem Cemetery is being nominated to the **National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A with local significance** as the final resting place of some of Washington County's earliest families and the only remaining site associated with the settlement of the Bethlehem community. It is also being nominated under **Criteria Consideration D: Cemeteries**.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bolton, Charles. *Territorial Ambition: Land and Society in Arkansas 1800-1840*. University of Arkansas Press, Fayetteville, AR, 1993.

Dameron, Logan D. "Historical Church Register for Bethlehem M.E. Church, South", Section of Methodists. Church Record. St. Louis, 1876.

The family histories of Tennants, Pyeatts and David families, provided by James Gibson.

Goodspeed Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northwestern Arkansas, Goodspeed Publishing Company Chicago, 1889.

History of Washington County. Shiloh Museum, Springdale, Arkansas, 1989.









FRANCIS
INS
1830

LOWER CENTER









