

ELKO SWITCH CEMETERY, 20 – 1

Summary Report

This cemetery is north-northwest of Gate 9, at the northern boundary of the arsenal and on the west shoulder of Rideout Road. It is a large cemetery with no original markers. Some graves were moved west into the arsenal fenced area during construction of the interchange of Rideout Road with Interstate Highway 565. However, that area was already part of the old cemetery, judging from the depressions and other indications of burials that still exist to the west and to the south of the new fence around the cemetery as currently marked.

Some of the photos made of the cemetery in January of 2004 are shown below:



ELKO SWITCH CEMETERY, Redstone Arsenal, Madison Co. AL, January 21, 2004

View from southwest of cemetery fence toward northeast



ELKO SWITCH CEMETERY, Redstone Arsenal, Madison Co. AL, January 21, 2004

View from southwest of cemetery fence toward northeast



ELKO SWITCH CEMETERY, Redstone Arsenal, Madison Co. AL, January 21, 2004

This gate in the cemetery fence is located near the southwest corner; view is to the north, into the cemetery grounds.



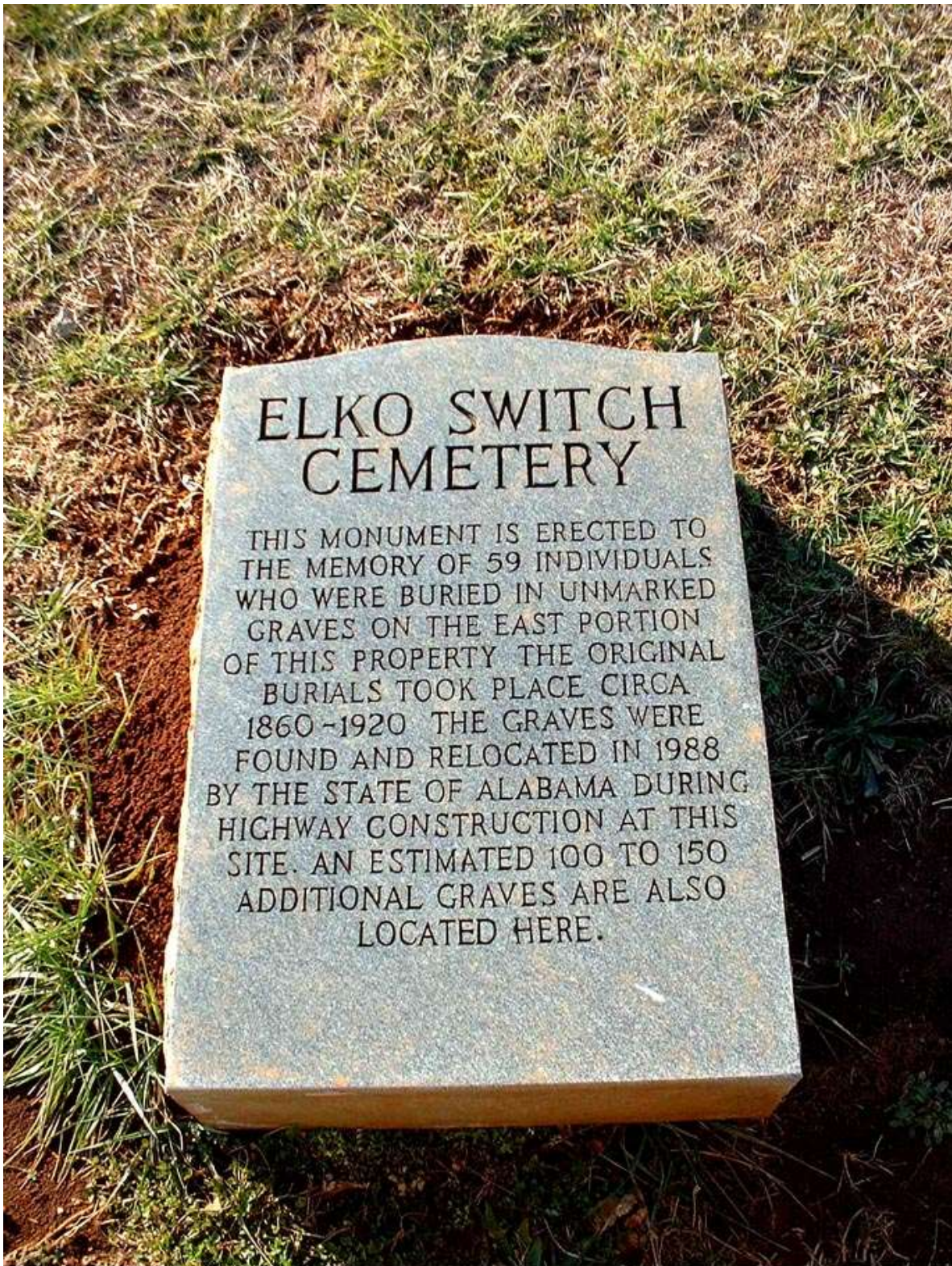
ELKO SWITCH CEMETERY, Redstone Arsenal, Madison Co. AL, January 21, 2004

New "Cemetery Monument" in center of fenced area; view to north, with exit ramp from I565 in background.



ELKO SWITCH CEMETERY, Redstone Arsenal, Madison Co. AL, January 21, 2004

The new cemetery monument is separated from its base, but lying face up.



ELKO SWITCH CEMETERY, Redstone Arsenal, Madison Co. AL, January 21, 2004



ELKO SWITCH CEMETERY, Redstone Arsenal, Madison Co. AL, January 21, 2004

This appears to be a grave depression located outside the fenced area, about 30 yards southwest of the gate into the cemetery. There appeared to be a few more slight depressions that might be indicative of graves in the area outside the cemetery fence, but it would take more than visual inspections to verify that they in fact are graves. The depression above was the most pronounced found in the area.



ELKO SWITCH CEMETERY, Redstone Arsenal, Madison Co. AL, January 21, 2004

The green vegetation above is part of several clusters of Yucca plants that typically indicate grave sites, as they are not indigenous to the area. These plants are located about 25 to 30 yards northwest of the cemetery fence.

Traffic on Rideout Road can be seen in the background, with the view toward the southwest.

Considering that there are no tombstones with inscribed names in the cemetery, there is not much other than a land history investigation that could be done here. For reference, the on-line information below from www.redstone.army.mil/history/chron5/elko.html was obtained to supplement the land record research. Additional printed information was

obtained with the help of Lloyd Lanphere of the Madison Station Historical Society from the historical archives of Oakwood College in Huntsville.

From that source, Lloyd provided a copy of **ELKO SWITCH CEMETERY, AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE** by Michael G. Shogren, Kenneth R. Turner, and Jody C. Perroni (1989), as published by the Alabama State Museum of Natural History, Division of Archaeology, Report of Investigations 58.

THE "ELKO SWITCH CEMETERY"

The Alabama State Museum of Natural History's 1988-89 excavation and study of the so-called "Elko Switch Cemetery" revealed little concrete evidence about the establishment and use of this supposedly historic burial site. Despite extensive research in available written records and numerous interviews with people familiar with the pre-Army communities of Pond Beat and Mullins Flat that became part of Huntsville Arsenal in 1941-42, only one man claimed to have any knowledge of the cemetery in question. However, certain statements made by this individual (which evidently were not corroborated through independent research of *The Huntsville Times* for the 1941-42 timeframe) raise questions about the accuracy of his recollections.

The main difficulty with the archaeological team's approach to identifying this burial site arises from their focus on the age of the remains themselves. Because they were able to place the graves in a date range between 1850 and 1920, the researchers directed their historical records search to that period alone. Despite a thorough examination of the period's land and cemetery records, though, no information about this burial site could be located.

Using general information from the period, similar studies of cemeteries in other areas, historic land records, knowledge about the general time period, and sketchy information from the somewhat questionable memories of a former arsenal worker, the report's authors speculated on the origins of the unmarked, forgotten cemetery. However, their theories raised as many (if not more) questions than they answered, as the authors readily admitted in their introductory chapter (see excerpt below).

Why would property used primarily as farmland have 150 to 200 graves on it without some kind of record about such a sizeable cemetery? Why does no one from the Huntsville community remember this cemetery, especially a 96-year-old man who could provide all sorts of details about the area except the existence of this fairly large burial site? If the site was hidden in order to avoid an inconvenient 1925 local ordinance about the upkeep of cemeteries, why do several former residents have no knowledge of that fact?

The answers to these questions probably can be found in the Army's decision to build a chemical munitions manufacturing plant in Huntsville, Alabama. When the Army came to town many things about the former communities contained within the new installation's boundaries were changed—some quickly and drastically; others more slowly over a longer period of time. By 1988, when the graves were uncovered preparatory to removal and reinterment, much about the arsenal reservation bore little resemblance to the pre-Army communities or even the WWII-era installation erected so quickly in 1941-42.

Unfortunately, the archaeological study apparently never took into account the profound impact that this change of land ownership had on the people living in the area as well as on the remains of those who had once called this part of Madison County home. Nor did the study's principal investigators and researchers stop to consider that perhaps the Alabama Highway Department was not the only governmental entity that needed to relocate graves in order to complete a large-scale construction project.

During the course of another research project undertaken in 1994, the MICOM Historical Office unexpectedly uncovered information in the local newspaper, *The Huntsville Times*, that strongly suggests that it was the Army which created the supposedly historic "Elko Switch Cemetery." The available written records are still sketchy, but this interpretation of the known facts does fit the collective memory of there being no such cemetery prior to the Army's arrival.

As the following excerpts from the local newspaper and the Sparkman papers indicate, the Army originally intended to move not only the living but the dead off of its newly acquired reservation. When that plan proved impossible to implement, the Army decided to consolidate over 2300 graves on Huntsville Arsenal (a separate facility from neighboring Redstone Ordnance Plant) into one large cemetery set apart from the main administrative and manufacturing areas of the post. Pearl Harbor and subsequent legal complications concerning contracting precluded the completion of this plan as first envisioned, but some graves directly in the path of the original construction probably had to be moved. Although the original Quartermaster Corps contracts and Chemical Warfare Service records pertaining to the construction of Huntsville Arsenal are no longer available locally, it is reasonable to assume that some sort of removal/reburial arrangement was made with at least one of the two contractors who built the installation.

The Army made known publicly what it wanted to do with the graves on Huntsville Arsenal. Government officials probably began to implement these plans, at least to the extent necessary to accommodate the arsenal construction program. Because access to the arsenal was severely curtailed during WWII (as well as after the war), few people in the local community knew about the relocation of the graves to the reservation's northwest corner. The cemetery location work and public notices remembered by Mr. Driver (see report excerpts below) might well have been part of the Army's gravesite relocation plan.

With the war's end in August 1945 and the later departure of the Army Chemical Warfare Service from Huntsville, most of the people and records that could have shed some light

on the "Elko Switch Cemetery" left, too. The Army Ordnance Corps officials who eventually took over Huntsville Arsenal may also have never known about the relocated graves. Certainly by 1965, when the graves were rediscovered by an earlier road construction project, authorities were once again aware of their existence.

"Old cemetery excavated; reinterment on arsenal," *The Redstone Rocket*, 3 Feb 88, p. 1.

Remains of 59 burials found in an unmarked and unrecorded cemetery in the I-565 right of way near Gate 9 will be reinterred on Redstone Arsenal following a historical examination.

The two-acre cemetery is located partly on Redstone Arsenal and partly on a right of way ceded by the Army to the state of Alabama.

An archaeological team from the University of Alabama located and opened the graves for the Highway Department and has taken the contents to Tuscaloosa for further study.

They believe tentatively that the cemetery was active in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, on the basis of coffin hardware, viewing windows, nails and other evidence. A couple of coins dated 1916 were found in one grave. Coffins were wooden and had disintegrated except for a few that were partially intact.

The cemetery is on land purchased by the Army in 1941 but does not appear on property records. It was discovered in 1965 during construction of the interchange at Rideout Road and Highway 20.

The part of the cemetery that is within Redstone Arsenal contains about 150 graves, a determination made by scraping away the topsoil layer. The 59 graves removed from the right of way will be relocated onto the arsenal with the others after researchers are through trying to determine who was buried there and when.

Excerpts from: Shogren, Michael G., et.al., *Elko Switch Cemetery: An Archaeological Perspective*. Performed for the State of Alabama, Alabama Highway Department, Montgomery, Alabama, Project I-565, Huntsville, Madison County, Alabama. The University of Alabama, Alabama State Museum of Natural History, Division of Archaeology, Report of Investigations 58, April 1989.

p. 1 Background to the Study

In 1965 the Alabama Highway Department inadvertently encountered several unmarked graves during construction of Rideout Road, approximately 1000 feet north of the Redstone Arsenal Gate No. 9, on the border between the southwest limits of the city of Huntsville and Redstone Arsenal. The undisturbed balance of the cemetery lies entirely on Arsenal property. Due to the graves being unmarked, not readily apparent and virtually unknown, impact was quite severe in some spots on the east periphery of the cemetery. Upon realizing what they had run into, officials halted operations. The soil was mechanically replaced to an adequate depth to protect the impacted remains. At this time the decision was made to relocate the highway 50 ft to the east to prevent additional impact.

The Alabama Highway Department notified this office in late 1987 of its intentions to redesign the interchange of Rideout Road and U.S. Alternate 72, thereby subjecting the remaining portion of the cemetery east of the Arsenal fence line to impact and destruction....

Extensive research has yielded scant information about the cemetery, the deceased or living relatives of the deceased. This fact enabled us to excavate and analyze methodically and carefully without the pressure of a tight reinterment deadline.

Historical
Background

The historical background of the cemetery, unfortunately, proved to be an enigma. Despite extensive research by Ms. Jody Perroni...and a media

p. 3 outreach campaign, only a few bits and pieces of relevant information were recovered. The fact that a cemetery of this size and age

has resisted all efforts at identification and appears to be totally unrecorded and virtually unknown is strange indeed. One possible explanation is derived from information secured by Ms. Perroni via personal communication with Mr. Bill Driver of Huntsville, who responded to the media exposure. Mr. Driver was responsible for the location, identification and fencing of all cemeteries on Redstone Arsenal property in 1941. Mr. Driver hired a man named "Shorty" (he could not recall his last name) to help locate the cemeteries on the proposed Arsenal grounds. Shorty was seventy-nine years old in 1941 and knew the location of most of the graveyards on the Arsenal property that are presently protected. The project cemetery was not visible in 1941 according to Mr. Driver; however, Shorty knew there was a graveyard somewhere on the Chaney farm (the project area). Shorty informed Mr. Driver that the markers had been removed more than twenty years before (ca. 1920). Mr. Driver recalls Shorty mentioning that the cemetery may have been used in the early 1800s. The field was under cultivation in 1941 and the graveyard was not visible. It was never fenced off because the exact location was not known. Mr. Driver remembers Shorty stating "It was a good size graveyard."

In view of Shorty's recollections, coupled with the fact that the County of Madison (wherein lies the cemetery) passed a cemetery ordinance in 1925, an interesting theory is posed. Because the ordinance required marking and maintenance of existing cemeteries (which would devalue the property) it is conceivable that the landowner or a tenant knew beforehand of the imminent passing of the ordinance. By removing the tombstones and plowing the area the individual would not only escape these inconveniences but also acquire several more cultivatable acres. Another possibility is that the acreage was simply needed for cultivation and no protest was made. We know the cemetery was used as

least as late as 1916 (1916 nickel recovered from Burial No. 1) and we are reasonably sure that the markers were removed and the field plowed sometime prior to 1925. This presents another question. Why was there no movement or protest to avoid destruction of such a recent cemetery? Even though sharecroppers moved frequently, it is highly unlikely that all relatives of the deceased moved away in such a short period of time. According to Ms. Perroni, Mr. Driver researched archives and sponsored newspaper stories in 1941. These efforts failed to identify the cemetery and there were no responses from friends or relatives. A search for a map recording of the cemetery, as well as an "old store just north of the cemetery" near Elko Switch on the Southern Railway, turned up nothing. Although the landowners of the property have been identified, there is no record of the cemetery in related documents nor, apparently, were there any churches in the vicinity.

Background for the cemetery is obviously sketchy at best, making precise dating difficult to the say the least. A date range of 1850 to 1920 is suggested based on the above information and artifact analysis. This range is for the excavated (eastern) portion of the cemetery only. Shorty reportedly made the comment that the cemetery may have been used as far back as the early 1800s. No evidence of burials that early was recovered from the investigated area of the cemetery, although the unexcavated portion may

p. 4 date to that period. A rough temporal distribution pattern is recognizable in the excavated area, with the earlier burials clustered in the center and later burials on the periphery; however, the pattern is not absolute due to the lack of definite dating mechanisms. If this pattern continues into the unexcavated areas it would seem likely that any pre-1850 graves would be located west of the Arsenal fence line. The highest elevation of the gently

sloping knoll of the project area is just to the west of the fence line and would be a likely spot for the first burials to have been placed. Subsequent burials would be placed radiating outward from this spot and down the gradual slope. Excavating the remainder of the cemetery, of course, would be the only way of eliminating conjecture, although sufficient data have been collected to provide sound argument for this theory....

p. 244 M.G. Chaney and his wife, Bertie Chaney retained possession of the property until the U.S. Government bought their tract for the purpose of installing Redstone Arsenal. M.G. Chaney deeded two acres of the southeastern corner of the property to the State of Alabama for a school. This school, Chaney School, appears on the 1936 Madison 7.5' TVA quadrangle. Personal communication with Cecil Chaney, grandson of M.G. Chaney, revealed that M.G. Chaney resided in [what is now called] the Goddard House during the time he possessed the property. Cecil Chaney attended the Chaney School for a number of years, and also lived with his grandfather off and on from 1924-1942. Cecil Chaney recalls the **southwest quarter of Section 7, Township 4 South, Range 1 West** was almost always cultivated, and during his childhood he "roamed all over those fields." He does not recall a cemetery (Cecil Chaney, personal interview, 8 March 1988).

In 1942, the U.S. Government purchased the 700-acre tract from M.G. Chaney, as well as 35,000 acres that surrounded this tract (mostly south and east). A review of maps and documentation in the History Division, Redstone Arsenal, indicates that a cemetery was never recorded in this area. The project area has been left in open pasture since the U.S. Government purchased the property from M.G. Chaney. Gate 9 of Redstone Arsenal is approximately 0.4 mile south of the historic cemetery. A fenceline separating Rideout Road

and the property runs north-south through the cemetery. No other improvements have been made on or near the project site.

Results of Findings

The results of the historical research study do not provide identification of the cemetery or of any person interred there. The research does provide insight into the economic and social conditions of the project area during the time the cemetery was used. The cemetery may have been a burying ground for the area's black/mulatto plantation employees, and, later for farm laborers, sharecroppers and tenants....

The study did not reveal much about the landowners of the project area between 1895-1924. It is assumed the property was in cultivation, and renters or tenants worked and lived on the farm. The historic cemetery was certainly in use during this period, although there is no documentary evidence at this time.

pp. 280-5 C. Personal Communication

It is estimated that approximately 40 people were personally contacted during this study. A list of the people who were intensively interviewed follows. The names of people who were casually interviewed and recommended sources are also included. Interviews were conducted by telephone, in person, and by mail. All efforts toward identification of the cemetery were negative. Nevertheless, useful information on socioeconomic conditions and community life was collected....

2. James Record, Historian, Madison County, Alabama

...He told me about a 1924 County Commissioner's Act that required burial permits for county cemeteries. Mr. Record was not aware of the project cemetery.

3. Dorothy S. Johnson, Certified Genealogist,
Huntsville, Alabama

...Ms. Johnson has no record of the project's
historic cemetery in her files.

4. Ed Peters, Public Affairs, Redstone Arsenal,
Alabama

...He was not aware of the identification of the
historic cemetery.

5. 1st Sergeant Tommy Johnson, Pastor, St.
Luke Missionary Baptist Church

...He provided names of people who are
presently associated with many of the churches
that were once established in Mullins Flat and
Pond Beat, two communities that existed prior
to the installation of Redstone Arsenal. He was
not aware of the cemetery.

6. Reverend Wayne Snodgrass, Progressive
Union Missionary Baptist Church & Deacon
George Green, Center Grove Methodist
Church, Huntsville, Alabama

...Neither of these men knew of the historic
cemetery.... Cedar Grove and LaGrange
churches used a cemetery within "walking
distance, on a hill not far just west of the
church." This cemetery is probably the Moore
Cemetery on Redstone Arsenal. Pine Grove
and Gaines Chapel had a cemetery north of the
church. The historic cemetery is not associated
with any of these churches.

7. Aaron Burns

...Mr. Burns remembers Elko Switch as a stop
on the Memphis and Charleston Railroad where
fertilizer was unloaded and cotton was shipped.
It was also a commuter stop into Huntsville. The
road up to Elko Switch was dirt and in 1909 was
called Rural Free Delivery No. 5.... In order to
get to Elko Switch from Mullins Flat one had to

walk or ride north on this road. The historic cemetery is located next to what would have been RFD No. 5. Mr. Burns does not recall a cemetery in this location.

8. Emma and Ovoy Horton, Huntsville, Alabama

...They were untiring in their efforts toward identification of the cemetery. Both grew up in the communities of Pond Beat and Mullins Flat. Mr. and Mrs. Horton are relatives of Aaron Burns.... Neither Emma nor Ovoy Horton recall the historic cemetery.

9. Cecil Chaney, Huntsville, Alabama

...His teacher, Ms. Leotra Estralanger, was also contacted. She does not recall a cemetery in the area. Cecil Chaney never heard anyone talk about a cemetery nor did he ever see a cemetery during the time he spent at his grandfather's farm. In his opinion, "the cemetery was likely before his grandfather's time and had been abandoned."

10. Lawrence Hundley, [former director, Royal Funeral Home], Huntsville, Alabama

...Mr. Hundley was asked if he knew of the project's historic cemetery, and does not recall it. His knowledge, however, of black cemeteries in this area is extensive. He has "buried people in Triana, Mullins Flat, and Pond Beat." When asked about a possible identification of the cemetery he replied, "that many landowners buried their people....everyone had a gravesite on their farmland."

11. Richard Fletcher Pride, Tuscaloosa, Alabama

Mr. Pride is the son of William Thomas Pride, M.D., a prominent physician in Madison County from 1895-1921.... Richard Pride remembers hunting on the Davis' farm, but does not recall "seeing" a cemetery. He was also asked about

the likelihood of the historic cemetery being used as a community burial plot for indigents, paupers, etc., at one time and whether he remembered his father mentioning a connection with the hospital. He recalls nothing of this sort.

12. Marguerite Lacy, Historian, Lakeside Methodist Church

...She has authored several manuscripts of local and regional black history. She is the historian for the Lakeside Methodist Church, a black church which dates to the mid-nineteenth century. She is not aware of the cemetery and there is no mention of it in her files and records.

13. Many people who were born and raised in the Mullins Flat and Pond Beat communities, but were displaced in the 1940s, were contacted.... [N]o one knew the identity to the historic cemetery....

Additional information uncovered during extensive research on the WW2 origins

of Huntsville & Redstone Arsenals:

"Will Move 2,300 Graves In County," *The Huntsville Times*, 20 Jul 41, p. 2.

Bodies of more than 2300 persons buried in Madison County on land to be purchased by the government for the huge war chemical plant will have to be removed to other locations, according to M.K. Williamson, land appraiser of the War Department....

"Most Houses In Arsenal Area Will Be Utilized,"

***The Huntsville Times*, 17 Aug 41, p. 3.**

Problem to be solved by construction quartermaster concerning "removal" of hundreds of graves in numerous small cemeteries scattered throughout area. "Work to be done by

contract, but the method to be followed in reburial has not been determined." Some of cemeteries & number of churches in area among oldest in Madison county.

"Progress Seen Upon Barracks In Plant Area," *The Huntsville Times*, 21 Aug 41,

p. 2.

There are 31 known cemeteries, 7 for whites & 24 for coloreds, within the area (**NOTE:** they must be talking about Huntsville Arsenal alone). These cemeteries contain 2,357 graves, according to the report of the appraisers. Just what disposition is to be made of the graves has not been determined, it was unofficially announced today.

"Men Required To Join Union To Land Jobs," *The Huntsville Times*, 3 Sep 41,

pp. 1 & 4.

The commission adopted a resolution approving the removal by the War Department of approximately 2,500 graves in 34 cemeteries in the arsenal area.

Lieutenant R.H. Munn, acting executive officer of the Chemical Warfare Service, told the commission that **plans are being made to establish a national cemetery off the Madison pike, on the northern boundary of the reservation.**

All markers & monuments will be moved along with the graves, and the government will give "perpetual care to the cemetery."

Working out plan "whereby descendents of persons buried in the area may have the graves moved elsewhere' but at no additional cost to the government." County attorney said commission approval unnecessary, but chairman issued resolution thanking Army for request.

Now, therefore, be it resolved, that we, the Madison **County Board of Commissioners grant our approval to the site selected for a National Cemetery for these sacred remains to be transferred to, as being located on Madison Pike, northeast corner of section No. 8 on the Sarah F. Wilson property. (NOTE: this is in the area where the first administrative buildings for Huntsville Arsenal, were located. This area is no longer part of the installation.)**

"Around \$600,000 Paid For Farms," ***The Huntsville Times*, 26 Jan 42, p. 3.**

Many tracts on which final papers not closed include cemeteries & church--
condemnation proceedings under way.

"No final decision reached regarding removal of graves in numerous cemeteries, a majority of which are for colored persons."

"Originally, the plan was to remove all graves into a single cemetery to be located in the **northwest corner** of the reservation, but legal complications have arisen, and the question is still under study by the Justice and War departments."

Telegram, Harold T. Pounders, Secretary to John Sparkman, to Merle Freeman, Office of Congressman John Sparkman, n.d., Senator John Sparkman Papers, University of Alabama.

Ascertain from War Department how contract will be let for removing graves at Huntsville. Also whom should interested parties contact.

Telegram, Merle Freeman, Office of Congressman John Sparkman, to Harold T. Pounders, Florence, Alabama, 25 July 1941, Senator John Sparkman Papers, University of Alabama.

Reurtel understand from General Somervell's office War Department does not employ any people for purpose of removing graves on defense projects. Contract is made with contractor to furnish his own men, material, etc. for that work. As yet, contractor for Huntsville project not designated.

- [Redstone Arsenal Complex Chronology IIIB: 1988](#)
 - [Redstone Arsenal Historical Information](#)

The G. W. Jones & Sons "Index to Lands" for Madison County Section 7 of Township 4 South, Range 1 West is inserted below. The **Elko Switch Cemetery** is located in the **Southwest Quarter** of this section.

INDEX TO LANDS											
Section 7		Township 4		South of Range 1 West				Madison County, Alabama.			
BOOK	PAGE	Kind of Land	SEC No.	GRANTOR	GRANTEE	DATE OF INSTRUMENT	SEC 7/2E	SEC 7/1E	SEC 7/4E	SEC 7/3E	SEC 7/1W
							20	21	22	23	24
F	405	D		Thompson, Wm & Henrietta	Manning, James	1820					
E	249	D		Byrd, Wm & Lydia	Collier, Salling & Syatt	1822					
1A7	148	D		Collier, Syatt	Collier, Salling	1823					
1A7	201	D		Tillinghast, Daniel H & M	Phillips, William S	1824					
E	771	D		Gray, William Sr	Gray, William Jr	1824					
1A7	406	D of Tru	at	Phillips, William S	Tillinghast, Daniel H	1825					
F	101	D		Phillips, Wm H & Eliza	Head, Richard H	1826					
E	107	D		Head, Richard H & Francis	Manning, James	1828					
O	596	D		Gray, Thos & Mary A	Gray, William	1828					
F	553	D		Gray, Wm H & Eliza by Jdn	Gray, William Jr	1835					
Q	121	D		Manning, Jas W & Sophia	Love, Bartley H	1836					
Q	261	D		Manning, Jas W & Sophia	Manning, Peyton W & Geo F	1837					
E	55	D		Gray, Wm & Jane	Love, Bartley H	1838					
E	55	D		Gray, Catherine	Gray, William	1838					
F	551	D of Trust		Manning, Geo F & Peyton W	Moore, Benjamin W Jr	1843					
V	261	D		Love, S M & Sarah A	Ward, Samuel	1844					
V	220	D		Manning, Geo F et al	Low, Bartley H	1844					
V	755	D		White, Thos W & Susan W	Matthews, Luke	1845					
E	247	D		Love, Bartley H	White, Thomas W	1845					
CC	505	D		Frandon, W M & Breasa C	Brickell, Robert C	1852					
VF	506	D		Matthews, Luke & Lucy A	Matthews, John H	1873					
16	466	MEG		Matthews, J P & Lucy B	Holding, William H	1884					
19	576	MEG		Matthews, Elliot H & P W	VanValkenburg, Charlotte	1886					
30	527	MEG		Matthews, Jas P & Lucy B	White, James B	1888					
38E	215	D		Matthews, Jas P & Lucy B	Javis, Elizabeth	1892					
38E	471	D		Malby, David D & Annie D	Madison, County of	1901					
331	34	D		McDonnell, A & Lillian et	al Jancy, Mattie R	1915					
331	38	D		McDonnell, A & Lillian et	al Jynn, Helen	1918					
						1917					

The original purchasers of the land in this area are given in Margaret M. Cowart's book "OLD LAND RECORDS..." page image below:

DESCRIPTION OF THE TRACT		AREA		UNITED STATES TITLE	Date of Sale Location or Grant	Number of Certificate or Warrant	Date of Military Act
PART OF SECTION	Section	Acres	100ths	TO WHOM SOLD OR GRANTED			

Page 37	1	639.60					
North East 7/8	"	159.90		LeRoy Pope, Asse	26 Aug 1809	5	
North West 7/8	"	159.90		LeRoy Pope, Asse	26 Aug 1809	8	
South East 7/8	"	159.90		David Moore, Asse	26 Aug 1809	6	
South West 7/8	"	159.90		David Moore, Asse	26 Aug 1809	7	
	2	640.40					
North East 7/8	"	160.10		John Brahan, Asse	18 Sep 1809	756	
North West 7/8	"	160.10		John Brahan, Asse	18 Sep 1809	755	
South East 7/8	"	160.10		William Lientz	18 Sep 1809	514	
South West 7/8	"	160.10		Peter Bass, Asse	17 Oct 1809	224	
	3	640.40					
North East 7/8	"	160.10		Thomas Bibb, Asse	2 Nov 1809	527	
North West 7/8	"	160.10		Leroy Pope, Asse	26 Aug 1809	659	
South East 7/8	"	160.10		Robert Lanford, Asse	17 Feb 1810	250	
South West 7/8	"	160.10		Robert Lanford, Asse	18 Sep 1809	133	
				*Patent #1128733, Certificate #250 issued Robert Lanford Same-spelled Lanford. *New & perfect patent Robert Lanford Assignee of Robert Beaty April 19, 1950. Patent #1128733 Cert. No. 250 (prior)			
				*Also by US Gov't to Robert Lanford, assignee of James R. Rodgers, on 2 Oct 1957, Patent #1175477.			
Page 38	4	640.00					
North East 7/8	"	160.00		Leroy Pope, Asse	26 Aug 1809	661	
North West 7/8	"	160.00		Leroy Pope, Asse	26 Aug 1809	660	
South East 7/8	"	160.00		Hugh Rogers	12 Jan 1811	232	
South West 7/8	"	160.00		Mary McCain, Asse	8 Jan 1811	442	
	5	642.80					
North East 7/8	"	160.70		Vincent Glass, Asse	28 Oct 1811	651	
North West 7/8	"	160.70		John Craig, Jr.	12 Jul 1813	712	
South East 7/8	"	160.70		Samuel Ward, Asse	13 Feb 1813	1503	
				Same-also Samuel Ward assn of John Ward (assn of C. Denale) Apr 19, 1963 1231644			
South West 7/8	"	160.70		John Silvers & Benjamin Fox, Asse	18 Mar 1811	562	
	6	642.72					
North East 7/8	"	160.68		David Spigle	12 Dec 1814	459	
				Same-also David Spigle 13 Oct 1961 1223364			
North West 7/8	"	160.68		Egbert Harris, Asse	18 Sep 1809	423	
South East 7/8	"	160.68		Henry W. Rhodes, Asse	3 Jul 1811	1161	
				Same-also Henry W. Rhodes assignee of David Maxwell 13 Oct 1961 1223365			
South West 7/8	"	160.68		Egbert Harris, Asse	18 Sep 1809	422	
Page 39	7	639.60		East of Indian Boundary Line			
		.32		West of Indian Boundary Line			
North East 7/8	"	159.90		David Maxwell	19 Sep 1809	94	
North West 7/8	"	159.90		William Thompson, Asse	18 Sep 1809	810	
South East 7/8	"	159.90		William Gray, Asse	26 Aug 1809	80	
South West 7/8	"	159.90		William Thompson, Asse	18 Sep 1809	809	
Entire frc W. of Bdy.		.32		James Manning, Asse	2 Feb 1818	857	
	8	645.60					
North East 7/8	"	161.40		James Crip (Criss?), Asse	6 Feb 1811	465	
North West 7/8	"	161.40		William Gray, Asse	18 Mar 1810	177	
South East 7/8	"	161.40		James Dunsmore	15 Oct 1810	19	
South West 7/8	"	161.40		Wiatt & Bolling Collier, Asse	11 Mar 1811	540	

Information in script appears on the copy from the office of the Secretary of State of Alabama.

FUND	STATE TITLE	WHEN CONVEYED	Number of State Transfer or Conveyance	WHERE RECORDED		MEMORANDUM
	TO WHOM CONVEYED			VOL.	PAGE	

Note that William Thompson as the “assignee” of another first bought the land of the southwest quarter of Section 7 (T4-R1W) in 1809. James Manning bought one third of an acre of land as a “fractional portion” of the section “west of the [Old Chickasaw Indian] Boundary” in 1818, on the first day of legal sale, 2 February. According to the G. W. Jones “**INDEX TO LANDS**”, James Manning acquired the rest of the southwest and the northwest quarters of the section in 1820 from William Thompson. It is interesting to note that William Gray (Sr.) and David Maxwell purchased the other quarter sections of land in this township and range. Both of these pioneers are connected to the Gray Cemetery, which is about 200 yards west of Balch Road and about a quarter mile south of Gillespie Road in the town of Madison. William Gray was a soldier of the American Revolutionary War, having come from Ireland with his bride Eleanor Wardrobe, who was of Scottish nobility. William died in 1834 at the age of 79. He and Eleanor and several of their family are buried in the cemetery in Madison. David Maxwell had a daughter who is also buried in the Gray Cemetery. Her name was Margaret A. Maxwell, and her tombstone tells that she was the daughter of David & Margaret Maxwell. She died September 16, 1835, at the age of only 6 years, 2 months, and 26 days. The Gray Cemetery is believed to have become the “church cemetery” for the old Providence Presbyterian Church, but it was on land owned by the Gray family and no doubt was initially the family cemetery.

Since there have been no records found to date to identify any of the people buried in the Elko Switch Cemetery on the arsenal, nor even any deed references to it in land transactions, it appears that nothing more definitive can be written about the cemetery at this time. Perhaps by more exhaustive examination of land records and County Commissioners’ minute books in the future something may be found to reveal more of the history of this large but unknown cemetery. For now, we simply must “put it to rest”, along with its interns.

By John P. Rankin, August 17, 2005