### THE CEMETERIES OF REDSTONE ARSENAL

### **Project Process & Summary**

Status as of September 20, 2005 By John P. Rankin Volunteer Researcher

An effort was undertaken in the summer of 2002 by John P. Rankin as a volunteer historical researcher to document the old family cemeteries located on Redstone Arsenal. The project was initiated at the request of Beverly Curry of the U. S. Army's Redstone Arsenal Division of Environmental Management. John Rankin was solicited (and eventually agreed to volunteer) for the project as a result of his earlier similar work in finding and documenting cemeteries in and around the City of Madison, Alabama.

The approach for the effort involved personal visitation to the known cemeteries on the arsenal, as recorded on existing maps. Additional cemeteries were found or sought in accordance with reports of unmarked graves from former residents, arsenal personnel, and contract workers on the sties, or from references in old land deeds. Moreover, there were 7 nearby cemeteries documented that are not located within the boundaries of Redstone Arsenal today, but some of the people buried therein were landowners of property that became Army lands.

Each cemetery was visited to perform an initial field survey, as well as to locate and photograph obvious tombstones and fieldstones. Inscribed tombstones were cleaned and photographed in order to have a visual record of the inscriptions and styles of markers. Notes were made of the condition of each cemetery's grounds, its fence (when so enclosed), and the individual

tombstones and fieldstones. Photographs included overviews to show the condition and layout of the graves. After initial visits, most cemeteries to date have been revisited for the purpose of probing up to 6 inches beneath the ground in and around sunken grave depressions to locate any tombstones that may have been buried by debris and soil through the years.

As of this writing, 49 cemeteries within the arsenal boundaries have been located and documented, but there are indications on old maps of a few more that are know. Moreover, a total of 60 such cemeteries on the arsenal was reported in the 1959 newspaper account shown below. (In order to easily see details of the inserted digital photos here and in the Summary Reports for each cemetery, it will sometimes be necessary to select the "View" function from the Microsoft Word toolbar and then select 200%, if using a computer to examine the files and reports. If using printed hardcopy, then a good magnifying glass may be necessary.)

TIMES CHANGE, BUT THEY DON'T

# Many Cemeteries Remain In The Shadow Of Missiles

By WELDON PAYNE
Of The Tunes SLAT
Uninciped, undisturbed, immoved by all the runshing and
juring and homeing withe missile works at Redstime Arsenaltine people steep.
The atomic tremble, buildings
quake and flames roar, but the
somes, men and children who
move walked there lie quietly in
their graves.

their graves.

The sus shines, the cold air waves across the grass and all is still on the fillished. A few yards away automobiles noom after

each other.
There are about 80 complexis,
on the 40,000 acres of Arassa
property. Some are very small
once have one temberate, other have many. Some are fenced, some are old, all have been there for several

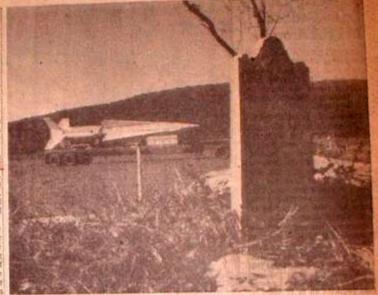
They were there before the days when you powder and other things of war were shuffled on the green fields. They were sleeping before men began their talk of going to other planets. Long before the sharp-pointed vessels were used and talk turned to this on made and talk turned to like on other earths, they had ended their life on this one and taken their places under the trees, under the grazing booves of cattle, under the steps of the winter's cold shraud and the summer's breeze.

They are the dead, Once they lived, a century ago, some of them. And they died and were put to rext.

dues and were put to real.

And their real has not been
broken by all of man's tromplugs and sciragille ploudering.

Records indicate there are 60
temperatures on the installation. At
least 43 have been located, identi-



UNDISTURBED - Just a lew yards off Palmo Road - the main thoroughfare at Redstan Arsenal-ds a complety. A Nike-Hercules anti-missile missile passing the cemetery illustrates the change which has taken place at the government installation since the person whose grave is marked by this tombstone was buried, However, despite the drastic switch of the area from a quiet country place into one of the busiest places in the country, this graveyard and about 59 others on the Arsenal property have not been molested and are, in fact, kept up by the Army, (Photo by Lt. Cecil Moughton)

## Huntsville (AL) Times Sunday, Nov. 8, 1959 lation Imperils ed and are cared for by the World Due To Death Drop

Two were found this year, One to the woodard Cemetery, which her in a pocket of the property which is lined by the Teannessee River.

Some at the graves are unmarked others are sunkers, he can be to the property which are cared from the almost congress of the manual lots are cared from the almost congress of the manual beauting actoary, Oradell, i. J., discussed the impact of physician protected from the almost congress of the property which surprotected from the almost congress of the form the almost congress of the property which are cared for the property which is a protected from the almost congress of the property of the prop

ext 100 years it doubled to two Paul R. Woodward died the day after Christmas, 1906, 10 b. lion. By 1965 it is scheduled years and three days after he reach three billion, as much in growth in 30 years as in the orewas born. Did he look at the cedin, 100. In 15 years another stars and wonder? Did he shoot firecrackers? Did he plan to be billion people will be added, and a scientist, an engineer or one in another 10 years another bilof the other professions reprelion. sented so ably within sight of The actuary pointed out that where he has lain almost by 2050 pop lation could reach 30 years? He would be nearing the billion, unless curbed end of his career now. A high level of boths was once Three months before Paul was a means of race survival in the born - on Sept. 13, 1896 - Elinor face of wars, pagues, C. Woodward died at 13 years of drouths, and families, he pointed age. She would be 76 if she had out. But now moders medical sci-lived and would have seen the ence has eliminated be effects of cotton town drop its cotton sack some of these. and head for the moon. Not long ago malalia killed But she died as a child and an two million a year, he said. Oc-S infant, perhaps her brother, Eucupation of Japan by the U.S. gene C. Woodward, died Oct. 28, armed forces brought A de-1885, seven months after his birth. crease of about one-third in its Another brother, or perhaps a de th rate, he pointed out. ast cousin, Murray F. Woodward, cry who would have been 73, next experts figured that about 90 ntillion people is all Japan ca Thursday, died Sept. 4, 1908. With others of their family they tery, the Rawlings and Lanier nc- lie today, while the earth jumps Cemetery, the Jacobs Cemetery, Jordan, Timmons . . . many around them and buildings are raised and missiles built. The others, some Negro, some white. stones say they are children, but two they would all be grey-haired the factories, past the schools with modern teaching devices, the One graveyard is called the the sleek missiles, -symbols of ON, New Market Olive Church Cemeere tery. In it one stone dates back see, on the hillsides, behind the be- to 1827. In the Burton Cemetery rock walls and wire fences, and On one stone is listed the names jects sticking out of the ground, of John Simpson, Margaret A. pointing upward like the missiles. the Simpson, Marion E. Simpson, and symbols of a life now past; rec

The above reference to the "New Market Olive Church Cemetery should be to the "New Mount Olive Church Cemetery". Reporter Weldon Payne or his editor no doubt got confused with the community by the name of New Market, located in the northeastern part of the county. It is interesting that tombstones are mentioned in this article that are no longer found in the cemeteries being discussed.

Thursday, died Sept. 4, 1908. With others of their family they tery, the Rawlings and Lanier c- lie today, while the earth jumps Cemetery, the Jacobs Cemetery, it around them and buildings are Jordan, Timmons . . . many a raised and missiles built. The otl at stones say they are children, but ye they would all be grey-haired th now.

One graveyard is called the th New Market Olive Church Ceme- a re tery. In it one stone dates back se e- to 1827. In the Burton Cemetery ro a death is recorded for 1810.

On one stone is listed the names je of John Simpson, Margaret A. pe he Simpson, Marion E. Simpson, and S. in Arthur M. Simpson. John's wife o e- was born Aug. 9, 1816, died Aug. ei- 31, 1874. Did she dream that some vn of the world's smartest men would someday walk in their backyard he - in the years ahead after her is country had fought three big nd wars?

More than a hundred Christds mases ago - on Dec. 25, 1844 ne, died Lucy Clark who was born be Nov. 29, in the last decade of the ne- 1700's, but the last digit is worn off the stone. And another Christhe mas nears and the ground above en- her is the same, but the town that she once knew has changed, and the green fields have grown in iteimportance.

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A few yards from the Ordnance Guided Missile School where troops from all over the world come to train and learn about missiles, a graveyard holds a stone of a person who died March 7, 1860. This person was born in 1773, but there is no name to say who he or she was. Perhaps it was a school teacher, or an outstanding science student or a farmer.

ious And near the intersection of nue Mills and Martin Roads, one of at the streets which stays the busenti-jest with military and civilian ville traffic lies the body of a sold-He ier, Cpl. Joseph Beasley, Co. C. am- 12 USCI. No dates are on his headstone.

There are others . . . an old slave graveyard, the Fennil Ceme-

, some white. . . drive past t the schools ng devices, the ing cattle, see -symbols of you will also es, behind the re fences, and ne smaller obof the ground, te the missiles, now past; recdead.



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Huntsville (AL) TIMES Sunday, Nov. 8, 1959 Page B-9 tery, the Rawlings and Lanier Cemetery, the Jacobs Cemetery, Jordan. Timmons . . . many others, some Negro, some white. You can see them . . . drive past the factories, past the schools with modern teaching devices, the pastures with grazing cattle, see the sleek missiles, -symbols of a future life-and you will also k see, on the hillsides, behind the rock walls and wire fences, and under the trees, the smaller obes jects sticking out of the ground, pointing upward like the missiles, ad symbols of a life now past; recfe ords of men now dead.

Microsoft Word documents describing the historical significance (plus records of the lives of the interred people) have been prepared for the 49 cemeteries that have been explored. These cemetery "Summary Reports", plus the associated report for one of the closely related "off-site" cemeteries, comprise an aggregate of 1613 pages of text and graphics. Altogether, the 990 photographs and associated thousands of images of data that was digitally recorded for the project to date are stored in 175 computer folders containing 4,560 files consisting of 1,592 million bytes of disk space. This magnitude of data requires more than two totally full CD-ROMs to contain it, so the complete data file is now on a 3–CD set.

Each cemetery has a name taken from the list supplied in the year 2002 by Ms. Curry to reflect the designations used by the Army offices. Generally, each cemetery is named according to association with the known landowner family or names inscribed on tombstones, plus a numeric designation that contains the arsenal area number and a sequence number within that area.

Data obtained during research was sometimes associated with more than one cemetery. In such cases, it was often duplicated in the computer file folder for each involved cemetery. However, sometimes the common data was left in generic folders, to be available as needed for any particular cemetery. Likewise, sometimes the data was left in a single cemetery folder and then used from there to insert the image into a different cemetery's Summary Report.

Each photo was made with a FujiFilm "FinePix" digital camera, with 2.2 megapixels. These images were then downloaded into a computer, and Adobe PhotoDeluxe version 2.0 software was employed to enhance the quality of the images and to trim, rotate, or resize the images as needed. The file density for each photo was converted (after enhancements) to 150 dpi in order to optimize file size and still allow clarity when printed.

Usually the detail of census images downloaded from internet sources was enhanced, trimmed, and annotated as well. When inserted into Summary Reports for the cemeteries, the census images are often difficult to read without magnification due to page fitting restrictions. When viewing the images with a computer, it is quite simple to set the "View" at 200% to facilitate review. When viewing hardcopy (printed) images, it may be necessary to use optical magnification devises for clarity.

Census records were in many cases searched by using on-line sources before "every name" indexes were available. Some of those searches were obviously unsuccessful without "every name" capability, but where these obstacles were noted, the some of the research has been repeated recently with the provision of "every name" indexes. Of course, even with that capability, there are often obstacles in census index searches due to interpretations of old handwriting and differences of given names or initials used from one census to the next. "Most likely" match-up was made whenever possible in these cases, using the data beyond the name fields for clues.

It will be noticed that census records are often red-lined, not only for the person of immediate interest, but also for the neighbors that provide clues to location. As more and more research has been done for early Madison County pioneers, it becomes fairly routine to know approximately where they lived. Each known pioneer can then be a "place marker" for neighbors as the additional families are researched.

The associated family data collected for the cemeteries typically includes digital photos of land records, probate records, wills, census records, and data from sources such as family books, published genealogies, postings from the internet about family histories, and newspaper or court records. However, the vast majority of the data collected focused on the 1800s, with some selected inclusions up to 1920, since that is where the Madison County land record indexes change volumes. [It has been agreed throughout the effort that Ms. Curry would cover the 1900s with her own work, based upon interviews with living persons (and their descendants) who resided on the property before it became part of the arsenal.]

The sheer volume of the digital photos of these records has required many hours of enhancement processing, and some of that effort has not yet been completed, even for many of the digital photos that are already made. After processing, these records will be added to future productions of updates of the master CD-ROMs for the Army. Additionally, if any particular item significantly alters the applicable knowledge base regarding any cemetery, then the Summary Report for that cemetery will be updated as appropriate in the future.

The 7 additional cemeteries outside of the arsenal grounds that have been investigated as being closely related to arsenal land history include the **Jamar – Owen Cemetery** (just west of Gate 7 on Martin Road), the **Jordan's Chapel Cemetery** (on the grounds of Morris Elementary School, south of Bob Wallace Avenue, on property that once was a part of the arsenal), **Triana Lakeside Cemetery** (near the town of Triana, on Lakeside Drive), **Old Triana City Cemetery** (in the center of Triana), the **Watkins – Rowe Cemetery** (located near the southeastern corner of the International Airport), the **Wiggins Cemetery** (located near the northeastern corner of the International Airport), and the **Wiggins Slave Cemetery** (located east of the mid-point of the International Airport). Cemeteries outside the eastern boundary of the arsenal are typically already well documented as being within the metropolitan area of Huntsville, and they were not specifically

included in this project. Of the 7 cemeteries that were included in this report, but located physically outside of current arsenal boundaries, only the Jordan's Chapel Cemetery has been fully documented with a narrative report for this project. The Jordan's Chapel Cemetery report consists of 63 pages of text and graphics. The Jordan's Chapel Cemetery is perhaps one of the most historically significant of all of the cemeteries addressed by this project, as it is the burial place of a prominent pioneer prearsenal landowner and American Revolutionary War patriot, Bartholomew Jordan, for whom Jordan's Chapel was named. Jordan's Chapel was the second or third oldest Methodist Church in north Alabama, and its location was lost in antiquity until this effort was undertaken.

## Summary Reports have been prepared and/or supporting data delivered on CD-ROM to the Army office for the following cemeteries:

- Andy Cowan Cemetery, 63-1 (13 pages)
- Austin Groves Cemetery, 67-2 (43 pages)
- Burton Morton Cemetery, 71-1 (32 pages)
- Clark Cemetery, 65-2 (36 pages)
- Cooper Penland Cemetery, 80-1 (12 pages)
- Dickson Rankin Cemetery, 87-2 (40 pages)
- Elko Switch Cemetery, 20-1 (24 pages)
- Emeline Inman Cemetery, 62-1 (60 pages)
- Fennil / Fennell Cemetery, 56-1 (35 pages)
- Green Grove Cemetery, 61-1 (14 pages)
- Hancock Cemetery, 62-2 (17 pages)
- Horton Joiner Cemetery, 87-1 (19 pages)
- Indian Creek Cemetery, 62-3 (10 pages)
- Jamar New Mt. Hope Church Cemetery, 82-1 (14 pages)
- Jamar Owen Cemetery [no number; not on arsenal; no report]
- Joiner Lacey Cemetery, 89-2 (25 pages)
- Jones Cemetery, 37-5 (18 pages)
- Jordan Cemetery, 45-1 (30 pages)
- Jordan Jacobs Cemetery, 54-1 (29 pages)
- Jordan Lanier Cemetery, 51-1 (26 pages)
- Jordan's Chapel Cemetery [no number; not on arsenal] (63 pages)

- Lacey Cemetery, 75-2 (18 pages)
- Lacy Cemetery, 75-1 (70 pages)
- Landman #1 Cemetery, 34-1 (27 pages)
- Landman #2 (Slave) Cemetery, 34-2 (17 pages)
- Lanier Cemetery, 46-3 (28 pages)
- Lanier Slave Cemetery, 46-2 (6 pages)
- Lipscomb Cemetery, 61-2 (39 pages)
- Looney Cemetery, [Number not yet assigned] (45 pages)
- Lynch Cemetery, 80-3 (11 pages)
- Lynch Cemetery, 89-3 (16 pages)
- Madkin Cemetery, 37-2 (11 pages)
- Matkin Cemetery, 37-3 (13 pages)
- McDonnell Cemetery, 37-6 (21 pages)
- Moore Landman Cemetery, 46-1 (51 pages)
- Pet Cemetery, 35-1 (132 pages)
- Powhaton Toney, 67-1 (41 pages)
- Rawlins Lanier Cemetery, 37-4 (19 pages)
- Simpson Jones Cemetery, 65-3 (54 pages)
- Simpson Slave Cemetery, 80-2 (19 pages)
- Smith Cemetery, 72-2 (20 pages)
- Smith Slave Cemetery, 72-1 (17 pages)
- Timmons Cemetery, 89-1 (139 pages)
- Triana Lakeside Cemetery [no number; not on arsenal; no report]
- Triana Old (City) Cemetery [no number; not on arsenal; no report]
- Unknown Cemetery, 52-1 (40 pages) ["Poplar Hill Cemetery"]
- Unknown Cemetery, 83-1 (24 pages) [Jamar-Owen Plantation Cem.]
- Unknown Cemetery, 88-1 (18 pages) [Alex Joiner Cemetery]
- Unnamed Cemetery, 62-4 (37 pages) [Boardman Cemetery]
- Unnamed Cemetery, 65-1 (33 pages) [Horton-Jacobs Cemetery]
- Ward Mountain Cemetery, 20-2 (10 pages)
- Watkins-Rowe Cemetery [no number; not on arsenal; no report]
- Wiggins Cemetery [no number; not on arsenal; no report]
- Wiggins Slave Cemetery [ no number; not on arsenal; no report]
- Williams-Scott Cemetery, 37-1 (16 pages)
- Woodward Cemetery, 88-2 (32 pages)

Of these cemeteries, the Lanier family cemeteries are perhaps the most historically noteworthy, as one of them (the Jordan – Lanier Cemetery, 51-1) contains the grave of Rev. William Lanier, who was another Revolutionary War soldier buried on the arsenal. His immediate family and Lanier relatives formed a sort of dynasty in pre-Civil War days, owning a large portion of the land that became the arsenal. Additionally, the Timmons Cemetery holds the story of an extremely prominent family that faded away with time, almost in a typical Tennessee Williams type of tale. Furthermore, the investigation into the Smith Cemetery unfolded the story of Hughy Smith and those who owned the land after his death. Hughy's descendants all married well and produced influential citizens of the area in the 1800s. However, none of them stayed on the old plantation where his cemetery is located on the arsenal. The land ownership passed first to William Edwards in a courthouse auction, and then William bestowed the Smith Plantation lands upon one of his daughters when she married Henry Grantland. One of Henry Grantland's daughters married Boling Rice, and they became the parents of Grantland Rice, who in the mid-1900s was America's foremost sportscaster and sportswriter. In fact, for many years the annual collegiate football championship trophy was named the Grantland Rice Trophy. It was Grantland Rice who coined the term "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" for the linemen of Notre Dame's football team in the 1900s.

There are, of course, many more fascinating family stories to be associated with the cemeteries of Redstone Arsenal. Most are yet to be written, but there are probably none that will exceed the human interest of the Jacobs family pioneers of arsenal lands. Jacobs descendants are buried in many of the arsenal cemeteries, but it was investigation of the Jordan – Jacobs Cemetery that revealed the story of this extensive family of free blacks and mulattoes who came here from South Carolina around 1822. Apparently, they were free back in South Carolina (probably granted freedom for service during the Revolutionary War), and some of them arrived in Madison County in the company of the earliest Kennamer and Lemley families to come here. They initially settled in the New Hope area of the southeastern part of the county before taking land where the arsenal is today. The Jacobs family was obviously accepted in the pre-Civil War white society, and they established several communities or small towns on the pre-arsenal lands. These settlements included Mullens Flats, Silverhill, Pond Beat, Green Grove, and others.

One of the more interesting oddities that run counter to traditional Southern stories is the fact that the black or mulatto Jacobs families "took in" white families who were in desperate times on occasion. One example is found in the 1850 census, when Hughy Smith's daughter Mary and her four children by Pleasant Austin (deceased by 1850) were enumerated in the household headed by mulatto Rebecca Jacobs:



Jordan - Jacobs Cemetery, Redstone Arsenal, Madison Co., AL, June, 2002.

Elle / Ellie / Ella Jacobs was the son of Isaac Jacobs and his wife Betty. They were married in Madison County on Dec. 23, 1878. Per the 1900 census records, Ellie Jacobs was born in March of 1884. Isaac was born in January, 1847, and Betty was born in June, 1859. There was another Isaac Jacobs (b. Aug. 1845) in Madison Co., and it is often impossible to differentiate between the two in earlier censuses. They were cousins, part of a group of Jacobs families from SC that came with matriarch Fanny Jacobs, b. 1778 SC. It is likely that the other Jacobs families were headed by her children: Burrell (b. 1801/1810, SC), Unity (b. 1817, SC), Thomas (b. 1801, SC), Isaac (b. 1803, SC), Oliver (b. 1808, SC), and Rebecca (b. 1807, SC). All of these families were listed as Mulatto, and they were obviously free, in order to be named in the census records of 1850. In that year, the family headed by Mulatto "Becka" (Rebecca) Jacobs included 4 Jacobs children, including one of the two Isaacs that could be Ellie's father. Her household also included the white family of Mary E. Austin (b. 1812, SC). Mary had 4 of her children with her in Rebecca's household. Judging from the ages and birthplaces of the Jacobs children, the families came to Madison County by 1822. One other likely child of Fannie's was David Jacobs, listed in the 1850 census as age 43 (b. SC), but enumerated last in the household headed by George W. Jacobs at age 25. This indicates that David was somehow incapacitated.

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1850 Madison County AL census page 448-A2: Families of Isaac Jacobs & Becka Jacobs from South Carolina

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1850 Madison County AL census page 448-B

Mary had first married Pleasant Austin, who owned land adjacent to the Smith Plantation and to the Jacobs holdings. Pleasant died before the 1850 census, and Mary didn't go home to live in the house of her father, apparently choosing instead to live with "Becka" Jacobs and her children. In 1852 Mary married again, this time to William Parker, and moved out of the Jacobs household. It is also interesting to note in the census records that some Jacobs children were named "Stanhope", apparently after Stanhope Smith, who was a brother of Mary and son of Hughy. Stanhope was a physician, so he may have delivered the Jacobs babies, and their names may have been given in respect and gratitude for that service. It was Stanhope who inherited Hughy's plantation, but Stanhope refused to remain on the land and be a farmer, so he eventually moved into Huntsville and Morgan County.

The Looney Cemetery is another with great historical significance, as the Looney family was headed in Madison County by Absolem Looney, who was another Revolutionary War soldier. Absolem assumed the defaulted debt for John Hunt's land where the old Huntsville Airport was located, on the west end of Airport Road. John Hunt, of course, was the recognized first settler of the town of Huntsville. Two of Absolem Looney's sons took land within the arsenal boundaries, and one of them operated a mill at the confluence of the Indian Creek (today known as Huntsville Spring Branch) with Price's Branch (also known as Hurricane Creek in the early 1800s) that has now become known as Indian Creek. His mill and surrounding property was bought by Thomas Fearn and his brother to complete the Indian Creek Navigation Company's plan to transport cotton to the mill site ("Looney's Landing"), from whence it was transferred to paddle wheeled steamboats for shipment to New Orleans markets. The Looney Cemetery is thought to have been located by using tips from old time residents and by field inspections that indicate possible grave sites, but the use of ground penetrating radar and/or archaeological excavations may be necessary to conclusively prove the existence of a cemetery at the assumed site.

As can be seen from this highly abbreviated overview, there are many items of great historical significance associated with the land that became Redstone Arsenal. While much has already been discovered, very little of the total available information has been compiled into these **Summary Reports**, and more remains to be discovered or proved with additional research. It is intended that the reports will occasionally be updated as time allows and information is further compiled.

Submitted by John P. Rankin, 103 Madison Avenue, Madison, AL 35758; (256) 461 – 8142; jprankin@knology.net

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