

# **THE CEMETERIES OF RESTONE ARSENAL**

## **Madison County, Alabama**

### **Introduction**

Due to the advent of home computer technology and internet data sharing, plus the continuous preservation and availability of court records in Madison County, there is no reason that public records of pioneers of this area should be lost or difficult to find by those who may be interested. Research regarding the pioneer families of the area that is now Redstone Arsenal in Madison County, Alabama, can be facilitated by the numerous old census, land, marriage, civil and criminal court, and probate records, plus other data that has been collected and stored on CD-ROMs provided to the U. S. Army's offices and summarized in this report.

Please keep in mind that the collected data represents material acquired by various means during private, volunteer research of the history of the area. The data stored herein is intended for non-profit, non-commercial use and educational purposes only.

It has been the objective of the compiler in undertaking this effort that the records of the lives of the pioneer families should be preserved in a format that will enable future generations to appreciate the time of the county's pioneers on this earth. Not all pioneers were "prominent" people, but even the most common or underprivileged of the area's early settlers had an influence toward the clearing of the land and the certain progression of the region toward the superb living and working conditions offered by the area today. This collection of data and photographs is dedicated to the memory of **all** of the early settlers, their families, and their slaves -- with thanks for the lives that they lived through various hardships and joys, which ultimately benefit those who live and work here today.

The hardcopy report is an excerpt of the much more massive database compiled relative to the cemeteries on the arsenal property for the Environmental Management Directorate of the U. S. Army Garrison – Redstone, at 4488 Martin Road, Redstone Arsenal, AL 35898. The Environmental Management Directorate is headed by Mr. Terry W. Hazle, Director. This effort has been undertaken with interfaces to the Natural Resources Division, managed by Mr. Danny Dunn, Division Chief. The activity on the arsenal has been accomplished with guidance and support provided by Ms. Beverly Curry, Staff Archaeologist. Ms. Curry supports the Army offices through a contract with the University of Alabama’s Tuscaloosa offices headed by Craig Remington. It was Ms. Curry who first requested, and later facilitated, the support from the undersigned to volunteer for the investigations of the cemeteries on Redstone Arsenal.

While the hardcopy report contains a general description of each cemetery that was found and investigated, it often contains only a few of the site or fieldstone and area photos. The report does include photos of all legibly inscribed tombstones that were found. It further includes a synopsis of the lives of the decedents found interred in each cemetery, along with segments of their family history or genealogy from several sources. However, the database that was compiled for the Army offices is much more extensive in most cases, and is resident on multiple CD-ROMs that were provided to the Army for their records or whatever use they may wish at any time.

It should be noted that this report focused almost exclusively upon pioneer settlement of the arsenal lands from the earliest (post-Indian era) settlers, generally throughout the 1800s. Some of the data extends into the first two decades of the 1900s, since that was the break in the storage media of the old courthouse books, from 1809 – 1919.

The account of the subsequent land ownership and use of arsenal property after 1919 was left in the capable hands of Ms. Curry. It is known that she personally interviewed numerous residents who lived on arsenal property at the time of the formation of the arsenal, along with their descendants, and she has compiled their stories. Her focus was on “living memories” and the public records in the 1900s, so it takes both her report and this report to construct a complete picture of the pre-arsenal land use and ownership.

Another appropriate note is that this is an on-going work. Additional information is in many cases already collected, but not yet processed for

photo enhancements and extraction of pertinent facts. The effort to create enhanced images and related data compilation will continue until completed. Moreover, extensive additional data is known to exist and is still to be collected for many of the cemeteries, as well as serendipitous data that may in the future be discovered. The effort of collecting and compiling such data will continue as long as the Army may wish and volunteers are available or whenever other provisions are made.

There is no representation made that this report is an exhaustive work or collection of all available data regarding the cemeteries of the arsenal or its pioneer settler families. Quite the contrary, in fact, is known to be the case. However, the report in its current form should prove quite valuable to researchers of the pioneer days of Madison County or of the families discussed herein. It is sincerely hoped that few errors were made in compilation of the data and preparation of the Summary Reports for each cemetery, but it is difficult for anyone to find all of their own typing and wording errors, especially with no “proof reader” involvement. Lastly, it is hoped that the report will be useful in its present form to all who review it in the future.

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