

William B. Edwards gave the “Smith Plantation” to his daughter Lizzie when she married Henry Grantland. Henry and Lizzie had a daughter named Beulah, who married a Rice, and from that marriage was produced Grantland Rice. For those too young to recall, Grantland Rice was the foremost sportscaster and sportswriter in America during the 1930s and 1940s. The annual collegiate championship trophy for many years was known as the known as the Grantland Rice trophy, in his honor.

While the slaves in the little cemetery would not have had any knowledge of the national prominence that would come later to owners of the land that they worked, it was their effort that made the land ultimately productive and supportive of such families. The cemetery remains as a silent witness to the lives of the black families who labored and enabled this area to produce prominent persons who were influential across the entire country in future generations. Today, we can only surmise that black people from the slave populations of the Smith, Austin, and other nearby families are interred here.

Prepared by John P. Rankin, September 5, 2005