

It is assumed that since the Cooper and the Allison families who owned the land of the little cemetery were mostly wealthy, they surely would have had inscribed tombstone erected at the graves of their family members. However, there is no evidence of such markers today. Perhaps a clue is given for the Cooper and Lee / Lea graves from the records that state that Charity Allison Cooper Lea left funds to move graves from this cemetery to the Ebenezer Presbyterian Church Cemetery. It may be that other graves and markers were also moved through time.

Another possibility arises relative to the dismal reports encountered from a number of people that over the years some of the grounds maintenance contractors of the past may have uprooted tombstones and thrown them in the Tennessee River near the boat ramp at the Recreation Area. It is generally known that old, broken tombstones do tend to cause damage to mowing machines and trimmers in overgrown cemeteries, so there may be some truth in these reports. Mowing operations would certainly go much more smoothly if old tombstones were removed, but still, one must wonder about the integrity and values of anyone who would deliberately destroy historic cemeteries rather than restore them. Yet, such has been known to happen to many old cemeteries in Madison County that are not on the arsenal, and there certainly was ample opportunity for destruction of cemeteries before the Army acquired the land.

Considering the number of threats to the old cemeteries, perhaps the miracle is that so many still exist. At least those on the Army property now are much better protected in general than many of those in undeveloped civilian areas of the county.

By John P. Rankin, August 15, 2005