

SIMPSON SLAVE CEMETERY, 80 – 2

Summary Report



Simpson Slave Cemetery, Redstone Arsenal, Madison Co. AL, May 2, 2003

This cemetery is found on McKinley Range, northeast of Warehouse 8023 and just south of Test Area 1, where the Simpson Cemetery is located. No grave markers were found in the cemetery.

[Abandoned Army vehicle “standing guard” at the cemetery entrance.]

This cemetery is on the section line between the Southwest Quarter of Section 17 and the Northwest Quarter of Section 20 in Township 5, Range 1 West. It is almost a mile southeast of the Simpson Cemetery (65-3) in Test Area 1, and is shown on Sheet 14 of the October 1986 General Site Map series. It is within about ¼ mile of the Cooper-Penland Cemetery (80-1).

TOWNSHIP		RANGE		HUNTSVILLE MERIDIAN				
5 South		1 West						
DESCRIPTION OF THE TRACT		AREA		UNITED STATES TITLE	Date of Sale	Number of	Date of	
PART OF SECTION		Section	Acres	100ths	TO WHOM SOLD OR GRANTED	Location or Grant	Certificate or Warrant	Military Act
Page 54 continued						2 Mar 1819		
NE 1/4 of SW 1/4	16	40.50%	State		*School H. H. Lea	20 Oct 1856	Vol. D, p 5	
NW 1/4 of SW 1/4	"	40.50%	State		*School H. H. Lea	20 Oct 1856	Vol. D, p 5	
SE 1/4 of SW 1/4	"	40.50%	State		*School H. H. Lea	20 Oct 1856	Vol. D, p 5	
SW 1/4 of SW 1/4	"	40.50%	State		*School H. H. Lea	20 Oct 1856	Vol. D, p 5	
	17	631.80						
NE 1/4 of NE 1/4	"	39.48%	Nancy (T.) Graham			20 Nov 1854	21178	
SE 1/4 of NE 1/4	"	39.48%	Nancy (T.) Graham			20 Nov 1854	21178	
W 1/2 of NE 1/4	"	78.97%	George Cook			4 Jul 1831	1461	
E 1/2 of NW 1/4	"	78.97%	State		*River Impts J. & W. Points	1 Sep 1837	*Memo	
W 1/2 of NW 1/4	"	78.97%	State		*River Impts John Ives	23 May 1828		
					John Ivey	5 Oct 1830	*Memo	
						Same	Vol. 1, p 77	
E 1/2 of SE 1/4	"	78.97%	Francis C. Prichard			28 Sep 1854	19131	
W 1/2 of SE 1/4	"	78.97%	George Cook, Asse			6 Feb 1819	2853	
South West 1/4	"	157.95	Charles G. Bowen			4 Jan 1834	6960	
	18	650.50						
E 1/2 of NE 1/4	"	81.31%	John Ives			26 May 1825	1851	
W 1/2 of NE 1/4	"	81.31%	John Ives			9 Dec 1825	1974	
North West 1/4	"	162.62%	Isaac Alexander Lanier, Wm. Henry Lanier & Burwell Clinton Lanier			22 Oct 1850	14921	
South East 1/4	"	162.62%	Donaldson Turner, Asse			1 Jul 1831	1307	
E 1/2 of SW 1/4	"	81.31%	William Patton, Asse			3 Feb 1818	3018	
W 1/2 of SW 1/4	"	81.31%	William Patton, Asse			28 Jun 1831	964	
Page 55	19	586.97	North and East of Tennessee River					
East Half	"	320.00	Littleberry Robinson & Rodah Horton, Asse			2 Feb 1818	1004 1/2	
North West 1/4	"	160.00	Littleberry Robinson & Rodah Horton, Asse			2 Feb 1818	1004 1/2	
South West part	"	106.97	Entered Name unknown			unknown	unknown	
			James Cooper			31 May 1831	657	
	20	620.62						
N 1/2 of NE 1/4	"	77.57%	Francis C. Prichard			28 Sep 1854	19131	
SE 1/4 of NE 1/4	"	38.79	blank		John M. Lynch	2 Jul 1855	23123	
SW 1/4 of NE 1/4	"	38.79	Benjamin Spence			15 Dec 1832	5838	
North West 1/4	"	155.16	James Cooper, Asse			2 Feb 1818	1486	
South East 1/4	"	155.16	Lemuel Mead			2 Feb 1818	992	
South West 1/4	"	155.16	James Finch, Asse			16 Mar 1818	2988	
	21	637.89						
E 1/2 of NE 1/4	"	79.74	Edmond Rives, Asse			2 Feb 1818	863	
W 1/2 of NE 1/4	"	79.74	John Timmons, Asse			28 Sep 1821	2964	
North West 1/4	"	159.47	Samuel V. D. Stout, Asse			2 Feb 1818	824	
South East 1/4	"	159.47	Benjamin S. Jones, Asse			21 Jun 1831	770	
South West 1/4	"	159.47	Lemuel Mead			2 Feb 1818	104	
Page 56	22	632.82						
E 1/2 of NE 1/4	"	79.10%	State			23 May 1828		
			*River Impts		Hugh Smith	27 Mar 1830	*Memo	

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
				VOL	PAGE

This data shows that Charles G. Bowen in 1834 purchased the SW/4 of Section 17, and **James Cooper** bought the NW/4 of Section 20 in 1818.

INDEX TO LANDS																					
Section 20		Township 2		South of Range 1		Madison County, Alabama.															
S. W. JONES & SONS																					
BOOK	PAGE	Kind of Sale	GRANTOR	GRANTEE	DATE OF INSTRUMENT	DATE FILED	N. W. 1/4				S. W. 1/4										
							16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23							
4	150	D	Dysons, Benjamin & Mary	Timmons, John	1858																
1	173	Agmt	Cooper, Charity	Lee, Houston B.	1860																
3	173	Agmt	Lee, Houston B.	Cooper, Charity	1860																
1	172	D	Cooper, Charity	Fennell, James & Tr	1860																
4	457	D	Finch, Henry & Sophia	Smith, Hugh et al	1867																
4	484	D	Smith, Hugh et al	Lynch, John W	1867																
1	197	D	Timmons, John by Est	Wright, William et al	1869																
1	200	D	Hesson, James by adm	Wynnon, John	1869																
1	071	D	Griffin, Joseph & C	Griffin, William	1874																
77	312	D	Lee, Charity by Sheriff	Fennell, James & Tr	1867																
11	275	Agmt	Lee, Charity by Mgt	Bradley, Joseph C et al	1869																
100	504	D	Wall, G & C & Belle F	Scruggs, George F	1863																
100	480	D	Wall, G & C & Belle F	Scruggs, George F	1863																
100	481	D	Adkins, E & C & A	Scruggs, George F	1863																
100	183	D	Fennell, A & Elizabeth	Scruggs, George F	1863																
17	9	Mtg	Scruggs, Geo F & Sarah H	Schiffman, Solomon	1860																
100	10	D	Wall, G & C & Belle F	Scruggs, George F	1863																
101	183	D	Fennell, F & by Adm et al	Scruggs, Sarah H	1863																
102	208	D	Wenter, W H & S	Scruggs, George F	1870																
54	176	Mtg	Scruggs, Geo F & Sarah H	McDonnell, Archibald, Sr	1860																
103	395	D	Scruggs, Geo F & Sarah H	Wenter, William W	1860																
56	401	Mtg	Scruggs, Geo F & S	McDonnell, A Jr	1861																
104	114	D	Scruggs, Geo F & Sarah H	Proctor, Albert G	1891																
55	164	Mtg	Scruggs, Geo F & Sarah H	Proctor, Robert E	1898																
77	221	D	Proctor, A G & Wm	Scruggs, Geo F & Sarah	1894																
66	297	D	Scruggs, Geo F & Sarah H	Kenny, W L et al	1890																
67	300	Mtg	Taylor, David E & Wm L	Sanley, James A	1900																
66	114	D	Landon, J E	Taylor, Wm L et al	1900																
69	454	D	Landon, John W & Mary E	Landon, Maria W	1901																
69	484	D	Baker, Wm E et al	Landon, Mattie L et al	1901																
74	291	Mtg	Green, C C & Charity	Mcnelly, J D & Br thier	1901																
69	456	D	Scruggs, Geo F & S	Proctor, Albert G	1902																
69	465	D	Taylor, Wm L & S et al	Green, Christopher C	1902																
67	454	D	L. Le. Rebecca et al	Taylor, Wm L et al	1902																
67	454	D	Green, C C & Charity	Went, John C	1902																
60	240	D	Green, C C & Charity	Benderam, William W	1902																
60	273	D	Conroy, W L & Belle L																		

This data shows that Charity Cooper Lee, the widow of James Cooper, lost the land of the NW/4 of Section 20 to James W. Fennell and others by 1867 and 1869, as a result of a Sheriff's sale for her bankruptcy. The bankruptcy was probably a result of the Civil War, but **any slaves buried as such in the cemetery would have been before the Civil War**. Of course, the cemetery would not cease being a cemetery just because the former slaves were emancipated during the war, so it could well have continued in use by black families whose ancestors were there – whether the black families owned the land or not. The **INDEX TO LANDS** reveals that eventually the NW/4 of Section 20 was under the ownership of George F. & Sarah H. Scruggs until at least 1902, when A. G. Proctor (who was married to a Simpson family member) purchased some of the land.

If this had been a slave cemetery, then **the slaves would have been owned** (before the Civil War ended in 1865) by **Charity Cooper Lee, James W. Fennell, Charles G. Bowen, and/or William H. Clopton**, according to the records of land ownership before 1865. The latter two were owners of the land in Section 17, but there was no census record (with slaves or otherwise) found for Charles Bowen in 1830 or 1840 Madison County. He sold the land in 1844 to William H. Clopton, who did have 5 slaves counted in the 1840 census, but there was no listing for Mr. Clopton in the 1850 slave census. Of course, the Clopton name in Huntsville is widely known in association with Ann Bradshaw Clopton, who in the early 1900s grew to worldwide fame for her paintings on spider webs. Ann was the wife of J. Blount Clopton. The 1840 record for William Clopton is shown below:

1840 Madison County, Alabama

by the Marshal of the *Madison* District

NAME	SLAVES										TOTAL	NUMBER OF PERSONS IN EACH FAMILY EMPLOYED IN						FAMILY OR IN
	MALES					FEMALES						Males	Females	Children	Persons of 18 Years of Age	Persons of 15 Years of Age	Persons of 10 Years of Age	
	Under 10	10 to 15	15 to 20	20 to 25	25 to 100	Under 10	10 to 15	15 to 20	20 to 25	25 to 100								
1	2	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	22	1	13		4	1		
											5		1					
											4							
											8	4				1		
											5					1		
											6		1					
5	4	1				2	2	2			36	9						
6	2	2	2	1		4	2	4			34	9	2					
	3	2	1			1		2			13	7						
											6		1					
13	12	13		1		20	18			1	89	40						
1	1					1		1			10	1				1		
3	1			1		1	1				13	5						
1			1	1		2	2		1		17	4						
											6							
23	18	13	15	4		17	11	20	7	3	136	70						
3	4	2	2			5	4	2	1	1	30	10						
											3	1						
1	2	1				1	3	1			11	6						
13	5	2	3	1		13	5	4	2	2	57	16						
							1				4	1						
1				1		1		1			10					1		
											8	2						
		2									9	2						
18	11	5	6	1		12	21	11	8	3	99	32						
											3	1						
3	7	2				1	5	2			20	13						
	1					1	1		1		3	2						
2	1	1						1			4	1						
											4	1						
											8	1						
											5	1						
10	412	284	189	58		407	284	249	133	31	3985	1007	17	96		5		
12	74	47	21	12		86	78	53	23	10	687	238	1	17		3		

Slaves

Total Household

William H. Clopton

Charity Allison Cooper, widow of James Cooper, inherited his slaves when James passed away, and later she married Houston H. Lee. Likewise, the Fennell family had numerous slaves prior to the Civil War, so these families would have had the majority representation of any slave burials in the cemetery. The census records below provide some insight into the slave counts held by these families of Cooper / Lee, and Fennell:

(No. 4.) **SCHEDULE of the whole number of persons within the division**

NAMES OF HEADS OF FAMILIES	FREE WHITE PERSONS, INCLUDING HEADS OF FAMILIES																																					
	MALES													FEMALES																								
	Under 5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-25	25-30	30-35	35-40	40-45	45-50	50-55	55-60	60-65	65-70	70-75	75-80	80-85	85-90	90-100	100 and over	Under 5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-25	25-30	30-35	35-40	40-45	45-50	50-55	55-60	60-65	65-70				
<i>Sample</i>	270	185	145	88	247	132	107	97	70	5	1									243	177	150	146	203	134	90	59	17										
<i>A. H. Lee</i>					1																																	
<i>Samuel P. Jones</i>		1	1						1													1																
<i>William Smith</i>	1				2																		1															
<i>John Morris</i>	2		1		1																2																	
<i>James B. Jones</i>	1	2				1															1		1															
<i>James H. Fennell</i>	1				1																1																	
<i>William H. Cook</i>	1				1																																	
<i>Plasance & Austin</i>			1			1															1	2																
<i>Lucy Smith</i>				1	1				1																													
<i>John Simmons</i>	1								1												1																	
<i>Thomas Simpson</i>	2	1	1						1																													
<i>George Loxman</i>			4	2	3	1																				2												
<i>James Dickson</i>														1																								
<i>James Ransom</i>				1	1																																	
<i>Rebecca Parry</i>																																						
<i>Isaac Williams</i>				2				1													1	1	1															
<i>John King</i>		2						1													2																	
<i>Thomas January</i>								1													3																	
<i>Thomas Walton</i>	3								1													1																
<i>William Cook</i>								1													2	3																
<i>John D. Cutler</i>			2	2	1	1			1																2													
<i>John W. Loring</i>	1				1																1	1																
<i>John S. M. Cutler</i>	1																																					
<i>John January</i>	2																								2													
<i> Peyton Spence</i>		1	2	1		1															1																	
<i> Mary Lee</i>	1	1	1																			2																
<i> Charity Cooper</i>			1		1																1																	
<i> James E. Clarke</i>						1																																
<i> William S. Turner</i>	1				2																																	
<i> William Rice</i>														1																								
	374	243	178	109	266	121	106	89	77	7	1									373	199	175	149	221	124	93	63	18										
	18	8	12	10	17	9	4	4	1	1											12	7	5	3	12	16	2	2										

1840 Madison County, Alabama

by the Marshal of the *Northern* District

SLAVES.											TOTAL	NUMBER OF PERSONS IN EACH FAMILY EMPLOYED IN				
MALES					FEMALES					Slaves		Apprentices	Children	Male persons in families	Female persons in families	Persons in families of color
Under 10	10 under 20	20 under 30	30 under 40	40 under 100	Under 10	10 under 20	20 under 30	30 under 40	40 under 100							
633	452	327	13		665	597	597	311	63	6471	239	20	179	11	26	
7	6				9		9		1	43	32					
										5	1					
										4	2					
										7	2					
										8	1					
2	1				1	1	1	1		15	6					
3	3	6	1	1	7	3	4	2	1	34	18					
					1					7						
6	8	4	2		9	6	4	1	1	45	21					
4	7	10	3	1	9	5	2	1	1	51	37					
										6	1					
										13						
6	2	2	1		1	3	2	1		23	11					
	1									4	4					
										3						
										7	1					
										7	2					
										7	1					
										7	1					
										6	1					
										7						
										11	5					
										5	1					
										3						
										5						
										7	1					
										7						
2	1	7	2		3	1	4			35	14					
	2				4	2				10	5					
	1	4		1	1	1	2			14	10					
			1		1				1	6	2					
449	607	496	337	86	707	615	631	347	68	6865	2451	20	180	13	29	
34	34	44	10	3	47	25	29	6	5	395	161	1	1	3		

James W. Fennell

Charity Cooper

In the 1850 census Houston & Charity (Cooper) Lee had 25 slaves, while James W. Fennell was not found with any slaves, but his close relative Isham J. Fennell of the same part of the county had 64 slaves. The 1860 census showed Isham J. Fennell with 74 slaves, some whom may have been occasionally loaned out to work James Fennell's land, and may have been buried with their kinfolk in the "Simpson Slave" Cemetery.

From these records, it would seem that if this is a slave cemetery, then the Clopton slaves may have been the first to be buried there. However, there were few Clopton slaves, compared to the size of this cemetery. The Fennells had the most slaves, but they also had many more parcels of land, so it would be unrealistic to expect that all of their slaves were buried here. The Cooper family lived closest to the Simpson Slave Cemetery, and they had at least 25 slaves, so it is likely that the majority of slaves buried here would have been Cooper slaves, concerning the burials before the Civil War ended. None of these families (not even combined) had enough slaves to fill the cemetery, even through the entire period of 1809 – 1865.

After the Civil War was concluded and the slaves emancipated, the white George Scruggs family from Triana, living among many black families, came into ownership of much of the land around the cemetery by the 1883 – 1902 period. However, even if the cemetery had been included in their holdings of the area, it would still be quite probable that they would have allowed continued burials of black families whose ancestors were in the cemetery.

The only basis for assuming that the cemetery is actually a slave cemetery is the total lack of tombstones. While that is a pretty good basis, it must be remembered that many known tombstones have disappeared from cemeteries on the arsenal lands over the years. Accordingly, it is possible that there may have been tombstones here at some time in the past. However, since none are evident today, all that can be done is to assume that the cemetery was instituted for slaves and contains only black family burials. If that is the case, it still may be more appropriate to call it the **Cooper Slave Cemetery**, since it is so close to the Cooper – Penland Cemetery (80-1), and since the Cooper family owned the most slaves known to be in that immediate area prior to the Civil War. **There remains no evidence that the Simpson family owned the land around the cemetery during the time when they owned slaves in the county.** The only theory developed for "Simpson" to be included in the name of the cemetery is that often people

will refer to a cemetery in terms of the current landowner of record, or at least the one of recent memory. Accordingly, when people living in the 1940s were asked whose cemetery this was, they would have recalled who owned the land at that time (the 1940s) and in the generation immediately preceding. Such “living memories” could well have associated the cemetery with the Simpson family, but any slaves buried here as such would not likely have been owned by the Simpsons.

All that can be done now is to show the remaining area photos of the cemetery:



Simpson Slave Cemetery, Redstone Arsenal, Madison Co. AL, May 2, 2003
Entrance Gate



Simpson Slave Cemetery, Redstone Arsenal, Madison Co. AL, May 2, 2003



Simpson Slave Cemetery, Redstone Arsenal, Madison Co. AL, May 2, 2003



**Simpson Slave Cemetery, Redstone Arsenal, Madison Co. AL, May 2, 2003
(Interior of cemetery)**



**Simpson Slave Cemetery, Redstone Arsenal, Madison Co. AL, May 2, 2003
(Interior of cemetery)**



**Simpson Slave Cemetery, Redstone Arsenal, Madison Co. AL, May 2, 2003
(Interior of cemetery)**



**Simpson Slave Cemetery, Redstone Arsenal, Madison Co. AL, May 2, 2003
(View to northeast from gate area)**



**Simpson Slave Cemetery, Redstone Arsenal, Madison Co. AL, May 2, 2003
(Grave depression photo #1)**



**Simpson Slave Cemetery, Redstone Arsenal, Madison Co. AL, May 2, 2003
(Grave depression photo #2)**

This is a large cemetery that could hold maybe 500 to 1000 graves, if full. However, there are few obvious grave depressions to be seen under the leaves. Yet, the irregularity of the forest floor seems to indicate that the soil was disturbed throughout the area, as if not all of the dirt was returned to gravesites. The surrounding forest floor outside of the fence does not display the same irregularities. Therefore, it does seem likely that the cemetery is nearly full, and that it was used for many years. Unfortunately, the exact identities of the persons buried therein went to the grave with them and with the passing of the living memories of those who might have recalled the names of the deceased. It is conjectured that the majority of those buried herein would have surnames of Cooper, Fennell, Jacobs, and Jordan, with some distinct possibilities for Scruggs, Clopton, and Bowen, as well as Horton.

Prepared by John P. Rankin, September 4, 2005