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 ½ mile of the Cooper-Penland Cemetery (80-1).

| 5 So | uch | | RANGE 1 West UNITED STATES TITLE | Date of Sale | NTSVILLE MERI |
|-----------------------------|----------|----------------|--|---|---------------|
| TOWNSHIP DESCRIPTION OF THE | TRACT | AREA | UNITEDSTATES | Location or Grant | Certificar- |
| PART OF SECTION | Section | Acres 100ti | TO WHOM SOLD OR GRANTED | | or Warrant M |
| PART OF SECTION | | | | | 1 |
| Page 54 continu | ed | 10 503 | State , u Les 20 Oct | 2 Mar 1819 | |
| NET of SW | 16 | | *School R. H. Lea | 1856 Voë. D 2 Mar 1819 | 5 |
| NWE of SWE | | 40.50% | State *School H. H. Lea 20 Oct | | |
| | | 40.50% | a. v. | a mar roll | 1 |
| SEt of SWt | | | *School H. H. Lea 20 Oct | 2 Mar 1819 | 5 |
| SWA of SWA | " | 40.50% | *School H. H. Lea 20 Oct | 1856 Vol. D, | 5 |
| | 17 | 631.80 | | | |
| NET of NET | 11 | 39.48% | Nancy (T.) Graham Nancy (T.) Graham | 20 Nov 1854 | 21178 |
| SEt of NEt | | 78.97≒ | George Cook | 4 Jul 1831 | 1/61 |
| Wh of NEW Et of NWt | 11 | 78.97号 | State *River Impts J. & W. Point | 23 May 1828 | 3 |
| | 10 | 78.97₺ | | 23 May 1828 | 7 • Чето |
| Wit of NWt | | 70.572 | *River Impts John Ives | 5 Oct 1830 | · Home |
| | | 70 071 | John Ivey Francis C. Prichard | 28 Sep 1854 | oc. 1, p7 |
| Et of SEt Wt of SEt | n | 78.97% | Francis C. Prichard George Cook, Asse Charles G. Bowen | 6 Feb 1819 | 2853 |
| South West t | " | 157.95 | Charles G. Bowen | 4 Jan 1834 | 6960 |
| Els of NE's | 19 | 000,00 | John Ives | 26 May 1825 | 1851 |
| Wi of NEt | " | 81.31% | John Ives | 9 Dec 1825 | 1974 |
| North West & | " | 162.625 | Isaac Alexander Lanier, | | |
| | | | Wm. Henry Lanier & Burwell Clinton Lanier Donaldson Turner, Asse | 22 Oct 1850 | 14921 |
| South East & | " | 162.625 | Donaldson Turner, Asse | 1 Jul 1831 | 1307 |
| Et of SWt Wt of SWt | | 81.31% | William Patton, Asse William Patton, Asse | 3 Feb 1818 | 3018 |
| Page 55 | 19 | 586.97 | North and East of Tennesse | 28 Jun 1831 | 964 |
| East Half | " | 320.00 | Littleberry Robinson & | | |
| North West t | 11 | 160.00 | Rodah Horton, Asse Littleberry Robinson & | 2 Fab 1818 | . 1004岁 |
| South West part | | | Addan norton, Asse | 2 Feb 1818 | 10045 |
| mest part | | 100.97 | Entered Name unknown James Cooper | unknown | unknown |
| N's of NE's | 20 | 020.62 | | 31 May 1831 | 657 |
| SET OF NEL | | 77.575 | Francis C. Prichard | 28 Sep 1854 | 19131 |
| SWt of NEt North West t | " | 24.12 | blank John M. Lynch Benjamin Spence | 2 Jul 1855 | 24423 |
| South Fast L | | 155.16 | James Cooper Acco | 15 Dec 1832 2 Feb 1818 | 5838 1486 |
| South West & | | 133.10 | Lemuel Mead | 2 Feb 1818 | 992 |
| Et of NEt | 21 | 637.89 | James Finch, Asse | 16 Mar 1818 | 2988 |
| Wi of NEt North West b | " | 79.74 79.74 | Edmond Rives, Asse | 2 Feb 1818 | 863 |
| South Fact L | " | 159.47 | Samuel V D Store | 28 Sep 1821 | 2964 |
| South West 1 Page 56 | | | | 2 Feb 1318 21 Jun 1831 | 824 770 |
| Es of NE | 22 | 632.82 | nedu | 2 Feb 1818 | 104 |
| | | 79.10点 | State | 23 May 1828 | |
| | | WE EL | *River Impts Hugh Smith 2 | 7 Mar 1830 | *мето |
| Internation | | | | | |
| 'FACING PAG | in scri | ot appears on | the copy from the office of the Secretary E WHEN CONVEYED Number of the | | |
| 38 | Lund | TO WHOM CON | | 06 SCALL 06 ALABAMA. ERE RECORDED MEMORANI | DUM T |
| | 9 TO 100 | 7.1.55111 | Tramfer or Consumer | OL 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.

| Tan. | na | | Section 17 Township | South of Range | I west | Madis | on County | Alabama. | | |
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| - | - | Rof fr | Walling. William | Report, San Dilly | 1/04 | | | | | 939 |
| - | 551 | D | State George | Printett, Frances G | 1558 | I de E | 1 | | | |
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| 5 | - | 2 15 5 | lres. Incy | Clark, James & | 1658 | | | | | |
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| L. | 554 | 9 | Scenn, then 2 by Marghall | Ployten, William i | 1644 | | | | | |
| î | - | or ir | Fointy, Jacobs 3 | Printerd . Frances C at al | 1660 | | | 4 | AD THE | |
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| 4 1 | EL. | ite | Pinpess, Leary 0 | Acinally, J & a Brother | 1099: | | 1 | 1 | - | |
| E 1 | 56 | 2 | Authory Residen | -impoon. Harry 0 | 7495 | | - | 1 1 | | |
| 5 3 | E | 55 | driner, Fruite & Alex | Deriem, Thomas er- | 1689 | | - | | | |
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| | 10 | | Sentman, 2 h | Explor. 916 A st st | 1900 | | - | | | |
| | | ore. | Taylor. Ola & & David H | Baustey, Jones A | 1900 | | 100 | | | |
| | | Lee | Green, C G a Courity | Scionly, 2 H & Synther | 1901 | | | | 1000 | |
| | | | Spacker, Sett M & Arrie 4 | Luniann, John * | 1951 | | - | | | |
| | 80 H | Labor # | Jordan, Strin & | Aunkin, Aulia * | 1901 | 1 | | | | |
| 0 | - | and the same | Appler, Aris + ot al | -medicanutile 4 at al | THEL | | | | | |

This land record index shows that the SW/4 of the 17th Section passed from Charles Bowen to William H. Clopton in 1844. It was not until 1870 that John Simpson is shown acquiring the land of the adjacent NW/4 of the 17th Section. There is no index record to indicate Simpson ownership of the land at the time when slaves could have been held, at least in the 17th Section. However, land in this nearby area did involve the Simpson and related families after 1870 until 1918, as indicated by the continuation page of the INDEX TO LANDS for this section through the year 1919, as shown below:

| _ | | 1000 | - | | O W JONES & BOI | T MATE O | | sare roa | 9.6 | y www. | -ww | |
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| 90 | 454 | | | Lyle, Sebecca * et al | Tarlor, Ola L at al | 1900 | | 49 | - | 4491111 | | |
| 89 | 465 | 100 | | Taylor, Gla 2 4 D F | Great . Christopher C | 1400 | | н | - | | 11119 | |
| WI. | 220 | | | Simpson, A M st al | Prooter, Albert " | 1905 | | - | | 11 | 3 11 11 11 | |
| 64 | E15 | | | News, John C * Isabell | Low, Sident's | 1904 | | -121 | - | | 11111 | |
| GE | 860 | - | | Steroon, Arthur # | Simpson, Henry C | 2904 | | - | - | | - | |
| 32 | MO | | | Sinrom, Arthur & | Singe on , Earry C | 3014 | | | -49-01 | - | 100 | |
| 90 | 564 | Wig. | | Sass, John C & Isabell | Graham, Christopher | 1905 | | - | 444 | 1 | 1111 | 150 |
| 14 | 680 | | | Les, Savard | News, John C | 1906 | | -14 | - | 1100 | 1111 | 110 |
| 104 | 450 | 2 | | Simpson, A H | Simpson, Henry C | 1911 | | | 4 | 1 | - 7 | |
| 104 | 451 | 2 | | Proctor, A G + I M | Simpson, Henry C | 1911 | | | 400 | T X | | |
| 14 | 225 | Ktr | | Mess. John C . Isabella | Les. John 4 . | 1925 | | 4,1 | 200 | (1-4-1)(1) | | |
| 101 | 000 | 3 | | Crebe . H E & Ollie H | Manning, # 2 | 1914 | 15. | | | 11-14-19-10 | | |
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| 20 | 187 | Nue | | Crobs, H Holows & Cills | Seno , 2 0 | 1914 | | | | 12446 | 41.00 | |
| 09 | 330 | 3 | | Puller, I I Jr & Grace | Lavy, Balla 2 | 1914 | | | 7 | | | |
| 44 | 402 | Etc | | Marming, # P & Minnie S | Pulley, Mrs. Sollie 4 | 1917 | | | | | | |
| 49 | 603 | 410 | | Dimmon, Arthur M | Atuesr. J A | 1918 | | | | | | |
| 10 3 | 216 | 2 | | Simples, So T at a 1 | Murchree, Rabert | 1918 | | | | | 1 34 | |
| 0 3 | TIE! | 2 | | Pincoln, -1ex S | Burphree, Bobert | 1916 | | | | - 4 | 4 | |
| 14 3 | ale: | D | | Wels, I C & Mary & e tel | Maprhes, Robert | 1918 | | | | + | | |
| 15 1 | SLO | 3 | | Stagor. J & Adar | Murphres, hebert | 1918 | | | | v | 7.0 | |
| 6 3 | RIS. | 2 | | Proctor, - M h Athert G | Murphras, Nobert | 1918 | | | | 1133 | | |
| 6:2 | 518 | 2 | | Murphren, Nobt & Mabel | Auge, L f of al | 1916 | 31 | | | 1 | 1133 | |
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| 1 6 | 4 | Sign is | 45 | Second , Jan et al | | 1019 | | 1 | 7 | 1 | | |
| 1 8 | 17 | Mag & | 45 | Fuller I a Gree a | Sugg. L C et al | 1919 | | | 100 | (4) | 7 | |
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| | 97 | te. | | Moon, b b a Pelle | Morten, Vencey | 1 24 | 20 1 | ER. | 10 | v | 1 18 | |
| | | 215 | | | Pette, Tancred | 7 15 | 20 7 | 19 | 20 | 1111111 | | |
| | | | | Scaning, a S & M. nate I | Hoose Flusher 3 | 2019 | | | | | | |

This continuation page, along with the previous page, shows that the land of the SW/4 and adjacent quarters was owned or mortgaged at various times Jacobs, Jordan, Sugg(s) / Scrugg(s), and Horton families.

The INDEX TO LANDS page shown below reveals the land transactions that involved the NW/4 of Section 20:

| | | - | Section 10 Township | South of Range | inns . | Madis | on County | Alabama. | | |
|------|-------|--------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|---------------|-----------|----------|
| F | - | 3 | DRANTOR | GHANTEN | DATE OF THE PROPERTY. | sate mus | NEN | NWA | BW's | *** |
| 1 | 200 | 3 | Species, Succession to there a | Timeson, John | iopa | I LIS | - | | | mt aw 90 |
| - | 172 | Agul | Course, Phirity | Les, Sonstan C | 1990 | 100 | | 109.00 | 100 | F100 |
| + | 272 | Ages | Lee . Reseign 6 | Googles, Sharity | 1540 | | | | 100 | 1000 |
| + | 175 | D | Googer, Clarity | Faccolt, June 1 2r | 1640 | 0.310 | 111111 | 1134 | 1335 | 100 |
| + | 457 | 20 1 | Finch, Juny & Sophie | Reith, Rights at 14 | 2567 | 8 11 10 | 100 | of the | EL CO | 1000 |
| - | 404 | 2 | Baith, Costay at al | Synahi, John W | 2007 | 100 | | HEIM | Block. | BEE: |
| 1 | 197 | 2 | Pinsons, John by Rey | Wright, Silling wher | 2300 | 1200 | + | N. S. S. S. | 11111 | 17.7 |
| 1 | 200 | 2 | Plantan. Janua by name | wolgook, Poke | 1660 | 4 100 | 3 | A DESCRIPTION | 5193 | 1000 |
| 1 | 675 | 2 | Griffin, Joseph & C 4 | Priffin, William 9 | 1684 | | | 7 7 | 980 | S COLUMN |
| 37 | 012 | 57 | in , Charles by Maries | Fencell, Jens Cater | 1467 | | | | 1000 | 8466 |
| 11 | 275 | Awgat | Low, Charley by hope | Bredley, Joseph & Assens | 1669 | 1 | | - No. | Marie Co. | STATE |
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| 12 | 9 | Mtg | Springs . See F & Sarch S. | Sent firms, Edicara | 2886 | 455 | 4 10 | 70 | | 4 |
| inte | 20 | 2 | Seil, 4 m C m Bolls 4 | Garages, Searge J | 3486 | 1111 | 3,339 | 100 | 100 | -140 |
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| 255 | 支付数 | 5 | Quatre, No 2 a a 2 | Surveys, Surga 2 | 3.090 | | | 9 | 15100 | |
| 84 | 136 | What . | Appares . Oor F h malite 2 | Appendit orghibale, or | 1690 | | 1100 | 7 | | 1254 |
| - | 295 | 3 | Sgruggs . Ges # 4 Sarah K | Custer, Fillies M | 1890 | 157 | 999 | E-14-58 | - | |
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| 77 | 232 | 5 | Surveys . Geo J & Surah D | Englay a E at al | 1950 | Q Cal | 4 | 100 | | 7 1 1 |
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| 67 | 200 | Mig | ientus, / h | Fautor, Dis 1 st si | 1000 | 1013 | 7 | 11 110 | 110 | 100 |
| 66 | 224 | 2 | Johnson, John V & Dary E | Landson, Maria M | 1902 | 1 10 | 2 | 18 19 | 1 | |
| 09 | 454 | | Appher, Arte - et al | London , Reithe E al. of | 1953 | 15 | 7 | - | 1000 | 10 30 0 |
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| 74 | 201 | ME | Press, C C & Charley | Fractor, Albert 9 | 1774 | | 6 | 100 | | |
| 10 | 659 | 2 | derage, 9m F a a a | | 1902 | 7 | 7 | - | | |
| 00 | 465 | 2 | Taylor, Cla L = 3 - at al | Taying . Ole L at al | 1902 | 2 | - | | 1000 | |
| No. | and i | 5 | Liv. Telemon " at al | Sect, John 6 | 1988 | 1000 | 17 | ALC: UNKNOWN | - | 70 M S |

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 SCHEDULE of the whole number of persons within the division

| 1 | 2.22 | - | _ | _ | _ | _ | _ | | PRE | E W | UTE | PER | EONE | , Die | LUBI | NG I | EAD | e or | | IILIE | PENALI | _ | _ | _ |
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| 7 | Angle House | 1,9, | 92 | 4 | 44 | /34 | 79 | 40 | 25 | 10 | 11 | - | - | | /24 | 94 | 69 | 75 | 95 | 72 | 54 | 32 | 9 | |
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| , | David Bradford | | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | | | 1 | | | | 1 | |
| 5 | Davia Bradford | 1 | | 2 | 4 | 2 | | | 1 | | | | | | | 1 | | - 1 | | | 1 | | | |
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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:

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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 landower 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