

Harris Cemetery

Sixteenth Section, Arkansas



Photo by Leroy Blair

This Cemetery is also known as: Old Weir Cemetery.

Legal description: NW, SE, SE, Sect.9, T6N, R8W

GPS Location: 604032-3890650

Arkansas Archeological Survey site #: 3WH0632

Number of Marked Graves: About 20

Number of Unmarked Graves: Unknown

The last complete survey of this cemetery was: January 30, 2001 By Leroy Blair.

Current status of cemetery: This cemetery is no longer in use.

Point of contact for cemetery. No known contact person .

This cemetery is located off Highway 267 out in a field north of Sixteenth Section Church in White County. It was in poor condition when it was first listed September 13, 1962, by a member of the White County Historical Society, Mrs. W.H. Collison of Bald Knob, and Mr. and Mrs. Delbert Strayhorn of Sixteenth Section. Their report was published in the 1972 edition of the Society's annual White County Heritage.

The cemetery appeared abandoned when a Boy Scout troop took on its restoration in the spring of 1986 as a project to achieve Eagle Scout status. The Beebe News published an article on the effort on April 10, 1986:

"Eric O'Brien's Eagle project to restore the abandoned cemetery near 16th Section chapel, off Highway 267, was completed Saturday, March 22, 1986. There are approximately 21 graves dating back as far as 1874. The most recent grave was December 2, 1917. Mr. Franklin Strayhorn, who lives near the Cemetery said it has been about 30 years since anyone took care of the graves. Those who assisted were Robert Osborn, former scoutmaster and current scouting coordinator for White River District, Brian Osborn, Jim Osborn, Elmer White, current scoutmaster, Pat White, Tim White, Donna White, David Bryant, Ronnie Busbea, Robbie Burton, Leanna Sherwood, Wallace Crain, Willard Crain, former scoutmaster, Brian Crain, Irene Crain and Eric Crain. If there are any relatives of those buried there living in the area, it is requested that they try to take care of the cemetery and not let it become overgrown again."

This is likely a family cemetery and there are some family ties between the Lewis, Harris and Weir families. The cemetery was called "Harris Graveyard" when the last burial was made here.

When Linda Harris of Memphis visited the cemetery in 1995, she reported, "The cemetery is off of the highway [267] several hundred yards, in the center of a pasture. One must drive as far as they can toward the cemetery [off of the highway] to an orange locked cattle gate, climb the gate then walk to the grove of trees that is in the center of the pasture. This grove of trees can be seen from the highway. Some times of the year the large tombstone of Ben W. and Mary Ellen Lewis can be seen from the road."

Mrs. Harris pointed out that Mary Ellen Hastings Lewis (pictured) was the last person known to have been buried in the Cemetery on December 2, 1917. And on her death certificate, signed by her son-in-law, Dr. V.W. Weir, the place of burial is listed as "Harris Graveyard."

Leroy Blair of the White County Historical Society visited the cemetery January 30, 2001, and found it "fairly clean but showing signs of vandalism." It was fenced with barbed wire. Blair said the cemetery is about 10 miles south of Searcy and about seven-tenths of a mile south of Weir Cemetery. He noted some broken stones and other changes and found three graves marked with rocks and five marked with red bricks.

Another Society member, Mary Reynolds of North Little Rock, provided information in April 2002 indicating that Miles Burton and three of his children were buried here in February 1860 and now lie in unmarked graves. These are the earliest known burials here. Mary Reynolds was raised in Beebe and is a great-granddaughter of Miles Burton, who came to White County from Tishomingo County, Mississippi, in the 1850s. In August 1860, six months after Miles Burton's death, Probate Court records show his widow Mahalia still had eight children in her household between the ages of 3 and 20.

If you have corrections or additions to this list or other information on this Cemetery Contact the White County Historical Society, P.O. Box 537, Searcy, AR 72145. Or phone 501- 278- 5010

Following is a list of known burials in this cemetery.

Burton, Henry Bradford – January 3, 1838 – February 8, 1860 – Son of Miles & Mahalia – (Unmarked) per family - Harris Cemetery,

Burton, John Merida – November 29, 1842 – February 23, 1860 – Son of Miles & Mahalia – (Unmarked) - Harris Cemetery,

Burton, Lucy Catherine – February 8, 1841 – February 26, 1860 – Daughter of Miles & Mahalia – (Unmarked) - Harris Cemetery,

Burton, Miles R. – 1815 – February 11, 1860 – Husband of Mahalia E. - (Unmarked) - Harris Cemetery,

Goad, Bertha V. – 1890 – 1891 – DS with Jossie Powell Goad - Harris Cemetery,

Goad, Jossie Powell – 1855 – 1892 – DS with Bertha V. Goad - Harris Cemetery,

Harris, R.D. – January 1, 1823 – February 22, 1895 – Co.C, 47th Tenn. Cav.C.S.A. - Harris Cemetery,(Pioneer Obit)

Harris, Senie – April 18, 1865 – September 18, 1875 - Harris Cemetery,

Harris, Susan Elizabeth – October 28, 1835 – August 31, 1879 – DS with W.D.E. Harris - Harris Cemetery,

Harris, Wesley Dewitt Edgar – June 30, 1861 – September 13, 1874 – DS with Susan E. - Harris Cemetery,

Leehy, Mary S. – October 10, 1878 – August 8, 1900 – Wife of William Leehey - Harris Cemetery,

Lewis, Ben W. – September 28, 1828 – September 15, 1893 – DSwith Mary – 46th Tenn Inf - Old Weir Cemetery, 16th Sec., AR – (Pioneer Obit)

Lewis, Charles Boda – 1901 – 1905 – TS with Iro & Lee Other Lewis - Harris Cemetery,

Lewis, Iro – 1895 – 1902 – TS with Charles Boda & Lee Other Lewis - Harris Cemetery,

Lewis, J.W. – October 25, 1858 - April 29, 1876 - Harris Cemetery,

Lewis, Lee Other – 1910 – TS with Charles Boda & Iro Lewis - Harris Cemetery,

Lewis, Mrs. M.E. – October 23, 1826 – December 2, 1917 – DS with Ben W. Lewis - Harris Cemetery,

Weir, Georgia D. – July 26, 1898 – March 1, 1902 – Daughter of Dr. & Elvira Weir - Harris Cemetery,

Weir, L.D. – February 9, 1896 – May 28, 1896 – Son of Dr. & Elvira Weir - Harris Cemetery,

Weir, Ollie E. – March 11, 1898 – April 29, 1898 – Son of Dr. & Elvira Weir - Harris Cemetery,

Legend: Copyright-Aug.23, 2016-Paul V. Isbell-Webmaster:

Most of the cemetery information listed was collected by Leroy "Lee" Blair Former member of the White County Historical Society Board of Directors. Now working at the White County Historical Society office on the square in Searcy. WCHS P. O. Box 537 Searcy, Ark. 72145.

If you have any additions or corrections to the burial listing please contact the Historical Society. Phone 501-278-5010 or Email me at lblblair74@gmail.com or wchs1962@gmail.com

I will be posting more burials later. The Searcy Daily Citizen donated all their Micro Film and Ledgers dating back to 1953. After reviewing them, if I find a death of a person that we do not have I will to add to the cemetery listings.

There are some graves listed as unmarked that may have had a tombstone set since the listing was made.

I may have missed some graves when I prepared the listing. Some cemeteries are very hard to get an accurate listing due to how some graves are scattered

The following Abbreviations are used in the listings.

FM-Funeral home marker DS-Double tombstone TS-Triple tombstone

(Obit)-means that the Historical Society has, or has access to the Obituary for this person.