

# Smyrna Black Cemetery

Searcy, Arkansas



Photo by Leroy Blair

This Cemetery is also known as: None known

GPS Location: 604291-3901486

Arkansas Archeological Survey site #: 3WH0736

Number of Marked Graves:

Number of Unmarked Graves:

The last complete survey of this cemetery was:

There has been Obituaries that were printed in the newspaper posted since the last survey was made.

Current status of cemetery: Abanded

Point of contact for cemetery. No known contact person.

**The existence of a black section of the Smyrna Cemetery was known but not documented until Leroy Blair of the White County Historical Society visited the cemetery January 7, 2001. Charley Edwards of Searcy had told Blair about "an old cemetery that is in the woods between Highway 36 West and Smyrna Cemetery." When Blair visited the area, he "was surprised at how many graves are there. I found more than 100 deep depressions that I am sure are graves. They are all in rows that appear to line up with the rows in Smyrna Cemetery... I was told all of those buried here were black."**

**Blair found the stones for the three names listed below. He also found the foot stone for a grave with "M.A." on it. The base for the head stone was there but the stone was gone. He found one grave with a funeral home marker so old nothing was legible on it. He also found a grave marked with a small marble stone with no information on it. This grave "had some flowers covered by a gallon jar ... looked like it had been there a long time."**

**In the spring of 2003, work parties under the direction of Linda Rockwell of the Department of Community Corrections launched a cleanup in the black cemetery, cutting underbrush and small trees. They found remnants of an old "hog wire" fence that separated the black cemetery from the main Smyrna Cemetery. Society board member Bill Leach said he was told that the black graveyard was overgrown when the 1941 burial occurred there. He pointed out that the grave is located near the highway because it was easier to clear away enough brush to find a spot for a burial. After visiting the black graveyard, White County Historical Society president Ron Busbea made the following comment: "It is remarkable to me that just a few feet from a major highway a large graveyard could remain so hidden. We have the responsibility to preserve history-all history, good or bad-for, as this graveyard illustrates, when we choose to ignore our past, it becomes overgrown and obscured."**

**Following is a list of known burials in this cemetery.**

**Cowan, Charles – June 28, 1920 – September 16, 1941 – DS with Marchell Cowan - Smyrna Black Cemetery - (Obit)**

**Cowan, David – No dates listed – (Unmarked grave) - Smyrna Black Cemetery**

**Cowan, Marchell – March 26, 1913 – November 26, 1935 – Sons of Mr. and Mrs. Dave Cowan - Smyrna Black Cemetery**

**Williams, Roosevelt – August 25, 1908 – November 13, 1908 – Son of Julius & Nannie Williams - Smyrna Black Cemetery**

**Charlotte Stuart – 1835 in Mississippi – after 1870 – (Unmarked grave) - Smyrna Black Cemetery**

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**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](mailto:lblblair74@gmail.com) or [wchs1962@gmail.com](mailto: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.**