

# VanMeter Cemetery

Judsonia, Arkansas



Photo by Leroy Blair

Since the picture above was taken the cemetery has been cleaned and finced in by the River of life Church , that now own the property where the cemetery is located.

This Cemetery is also known as: None known

GPS Location: 620537-3902969

Arkansas Archeological Survey site #: 3WH0612

Number of Marked Graves: About 5

Number of Unmarked Graves: Unknown

The last complete survey of this cemetery was: By Leroy Blair

Current status of cemetery: Abanded

Point of contact for cemetery. No known contact person.

**Motorists traveling north from Searcy on Highway 67-167 had wondered for years about the "tombstones out in the field" that were visible from the highway shortly after crossing the Little Red River. Then a member of the White County Historical Society, Leroy Blair, visited the site July 20, 2000, and was surprised to find a family cemetery that was more than 135 years old.**

**The graves are of members of the A.M. VanMeter family and date back to the Civil War period. Blair found five engraved stones: A.M., his wife Elizabeth, daughters Elizabeth and Tennie, and son Joseph. All died within a 10-year period – VanMeter possibly the last burial at age 52 in 1875 and his 9-year-old son possibly the first in 1865. The stone for wife Elizabeth indicates she died at 35 in 1870. Blair reported seeing two unmarked graves. Following is his report:**

**"To get to this cemetery from Searcy take Highway 67-167 north. After your cross the Little Red River bridge if you look to the right back in an open field you can see the cemetery. Take Exit 48 off 67/167. The exit merges with Highway 385. Just past the intersection there is a dirt road turning right. Go about 300 yards just past the tree line and you will see the cemetery on the right. The property where the cemetery is located is owned by the River of Life Church. Bubbles Choate, who grew up in this area and sold this land to the church, told me that he thought there could be as many as 100 graves here. All stones are broken or fallen down. It would be interesting to know why the VanMeters all died so young."**

**At year-end 2002, the area around the marked graves had been graded and leveled in preparation for construction by the church that now owns the land.**

**Information obtained by the White County Historical Society indicates that A.M. VanMeter was married three times, outliving his first two wives. The Society was contacted by a relative, Wilma Norris Sneddon of Joplin, Missouri, in June 2002. She provided family records and research showing that A.M. was Americus Vespucius VanMeter, who was born in Hardin County, Kentucky, February 17, 1823, the son of Harriet (Allen) and Thomas Rhoads VanMeter. He married Mary Emeline Beeler, daughter of the ferry operator at Moccasin Bend on the Little Red River, in 1852 but she died the following year [see Beeler Cemetery]. And on September 14, 1853, he married Elizabeth Clarinda Andrews. They had six children in the next 13 years: Mary Harriet (1854), Joseph W. (1856), Susan Emeline (1858), Virginia Elizabeth (1863), Tennessee (1867) and Americus Vespucius Jr. (1867). A.V., Elizabeth and four of the children are buried here. Only A.V. VanMeter Jr. and Susan Emeline reached adulthood. She married Thomas B. Williamson April 4, 1877, in White County. They are listed in the 1880 census with their son Roy Williamson, age 2, along with her husband's children from a previous marriage as well as A.V. Jr, Susan's younger brother, who would have been 13 at that time. A.V. Jr. died July 1, 1891, and was buried in Evergreen Cemetery at Judsonia.**

**Elizabeth died of pneumonia in March 1870, and A.V. married again later that year but died five years later. His third wife was another Elizabeth, 46-year-old Elizabeth A. Moore, daughter of Wesley Moore of Carroll County, Tennessee, and widow of Hiram A. Taylor of Carroll County. She had married Taylor in 1852. Elizabeth (Moore) VanMeter's birth or death dates are not known, however Wilma Sneddon thinks it is probable that she is also buried here in the VanMeter Cemetery. It is known that Elizabeth (Moore) and Hiram Taylor had at least one child, Thomas P. Taylor. The *Goodspeed History of Eastern Arkansas 1890* contains a biography of Thomas P. Taylor, calling him a step-son of A.V. VanMeter. Thomas P. Taylor married Mattie Sharp and had three children. Thomas, Mattie and two of their children are buried in Evergreen Cemetery in Judsonia. Elizabeth A. (Moore) VanMeter is**

called "Bettie" in Americus Vespucci's will (Volume B, pages 169-70), in which he also mentions his daughter Susan E. VanMeter and his son Americus V. VanMeter Jr. The will, written October 18, 1875, also mentions nieces and nephews from "my brother J.W. VanMeter and my sisters Civilla Moore and Provy Brown and Joanna Brown."

According to the Sneddon files, Americus Vespucci VanMeter was the third child of Harriett (Allen) and Thomas Rhoads VanMeter. T.R. and Harriett had married November 12, 1818, in Nelson County, Kentucky. Thomas Rhoads VanMeter was born May 28, 1794, in Hardin County, Kentucky, and died February 22, 1872, in White County, Arkansas; Harriet was born about 1800 in Hardin County and died in 1842 in White County. Birth records indicate that Thomas Rhoads and Harriet VanMeter moved to White County after the summer of 1830 and before 1835, making them among the earliest settlers here. Sneddon records show that "Tradition says that Thomas Rhoads VanMeter is buried in an unmarked grave near a clump of trees about 300 feet south of Highway 385, seven-tenths of a mile west of the intersection of the highway and Van Buren (Main) Street in Judsonia." This corresponds with the location of the graves of A.V. VanMeter and his family.

Thomas Rhoads and Harriet (Allen) VanMeter's children were:

1. Civilla Ann VanMeter, who was born about 1820, in Hardin County, Kentucky. She married Hiram Skelton Brown October 22, 1837, at Searcy, Arkansas, then widower Wesley Moore October 13, 1867, at Van Buren, Arkansas. She died October 9, 1898, in Cleburne County. Her children were Clinton P. (born in 1838), James (born in 1840), Americus (born in 1846), Tolton (1849-1889) and perhaps others who died young. Wesley Moore was the father of Americus Vespucci VanMeter's third wife.

2. Ethan Allen VanMeter, who was born June 27, 1821, and died in May 1824, in Hardin County.

3. Americus Vespucci VanMeter, who was one year old when his brother Ethan Allen died.

4. Ebenezer G. VanMeter, born in Hardin County in 1825, and died September 9, 1846, at San Antonio. Military records obtained from the National Archives by John Tisdale of Cupertino, California, in May 2002 show that Ebenezer served in the Mexican War, enlisting June 30, 1846, at Washington, Arkansas, to serve one year. But he was dead two months later. He was a private initially assigned to Company B, Capt. Danley's Mounted Regiment, Arkansas Volunteers. The White County, Arkansas, Wills & Administration Book A lists his father Thomas R. as administrator of Ebenezer's estate. Assets listed included a land warrant calling for 160 acres of land, \$80 cash, a horse, other equipment valued at \$10, and \$24 for service in the war.

5. Joanna VanMeter, born in Hardin County in 1827. She married James Monroe Brown of White County and died in White County in 1859. (See detailed information on their children below.)

6. Provy Ann VanMeter, who was born in Hardin County July 28, 1830. She married Crawford Wesley Peeler about 1849 in White County, then James Monroe Brown in February 1859 in White County. She died September 19, 1882, at Hiram in what is now Cleburne County, Arkansas. [See Hicks Cemetery.]

**7. Jasper VanMeter, born about 1835 in White County, Arkansas. He married Mary Hutches January 31, 1856, in White County.**

**8. Joseph Warren VanMeter, born March 4, 1837, at Judsonia. He married Amanda M. Laughan January 17, 1866, in White County and died January 22, 1903. He is buried in Evergreen Cemetery.**

**According to researchers/authors Anthony Christensen and Lincoln Johnson, Joanna (VanMeter) and James Monroe Brown had the following children:**

**Civilia Ann Brown, born September 14, 1842, at Hiram. She married Louis Hilger February 20, 1866, and their children were: James Louis Hilger (1866 – 1953), John Philip Hilger (1868 at Little Red – 1898), Arthur Napoleon "Pole" Hilger (August 8, 1870, at Little Red -), Cordelia Ann Hilger (1875-), Elsie Mae Hilger (1878-) and Ida Elizabeth Hilger (1879-).**

**Evaline Brown, born 1844 at Hiram.**

**Provy Ann Brown (1847 – died before 1860).**

**Hiram Newton Brown, born in 1850 at Hiram.**

**Mary Brown (1855 – died between 1860 and 18670).**

**It should be noted that many variations on the spelling of the VanMeter family name are found in early records of White County. This includes**

**Van Meter, VanMeter, Vanmeter, Van Metre and others. There are many in the Evergreen Cemetery, including Americus Vespuccius Jr., that are spelled Van Meter. In his will, A.V. Sr. spelled it VanMeter.**

***If you have additional information on the VanMeter family or this cemetery, contact the White County Historical Society, P.O. Box 537, Searcy, AR 72145.***

**VanMeter, Americus Vespuccius – February 17, 1823 – December 2, 1875 (this is the death date on the stone; Sneddon family records show he died October 25, 1875)**

**VanMeter, Elizabeth Clarinda (Andrews) – December 27, 1834, in Tennessee – died March 5, 1870 – second wife of Americus Vespuccius VanMeter**

**VanMeter, Joseph W. – January 17, 1856 at Judsonia – August 20, 1865 – son of Americus Vespuccius and Elizabeth Clarinda (Andrews) VanMeter**

**VanMeter, Mary Harriet – November 20, 1854 at Judsonia – died before 1870 – daughter of Americus Vespuccius and Elizabeth Clarinda (Andrews) VanMeter – unmarked grave**

**VanMeter, Tennessee "Tennie" – December 16, 1867 at Judsonia – July 26, 1873 – daughter of Americus Vespuccius and Elizabeth Clarinda (Andrews) VanMeter**

**VanMeter, Thomas Rhoads – May 28, 1794, in Hardin County, Kentucky – February 22, 1872 – husband of Harriet (Allen) VanMeter – son of Elizabeth (Rhoads) and Jacob VanMeter Jr. – unmarked grave**

**VanMeter, Virginia Elizabeth – October 6, 1863 at Judsonia – April 22, 1868 – stone is barely legible – daughter of Americus Vespuccius and Elizabeth Clarinda (Andrews) VanMeter**

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

**VanMeter, Americus Vespuccius – February 17, 1823 – December 2, 1875 (Sneddon family records show he died October 25, 1875) - VanMeter Cemetery – (Obit)**

**VanMeter, Elizabeth Clarinda (Andrews) – December 27, 1834 – Died March 5, 1870 – Second wife of Americus V. VanMeter - VanMeter Cemetery – (Obit)**

**VanMeter, Joseph W. – January 17, 1856 – August 20, 1865 – Son of Americus Vespuccius & Elizabeth Clarinda VanMeter - VanMeter Cemetery**

**VanMeter, Mary Harriet – November 20, 1854 – Died before 1870 – Daughter of Americus V. & Elizabeth C. VanMeter – (Unmarked grave) - VanMeter Cemetery**

**VanMeter, Tennessee "Tennie" – December 16, 1867 – July 26, 1873 – Daughter of Americus V. & Elizabeth C. VanMeter - VanMeter Cemetery**

**VanMeter, Thomas Rhoads – May 28, 1794 – February 22, 1872 – Husband of Harriet (Allen) VanMeter – Son of Jacob VanMeter Jr. – (Unmarked grave) - VanMeter Cemetery**

**VanMeter, Virginia Elizabeth – October 6, 1863 – April 22, 1868 – Daughter of Americus V. & Elizabeth C. VanMeter - VanMeter 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.**