

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE GOSHEN CEMETERY

In 1851 President Millard Fillmore deeded the area of Goshen and Mayfield as a land grant to Rev. James A. Mayfield after he had homesteaded it for seven years.

Both communities had acreage set aside for campgrounds shared by worshipers of the Methodist—Episcopal (South), Baptists, and other protestant religions. During the summer months, revivals were held at these campgrounds.

Somewhere between 1851 and 1853, James A. Mayfield deeded 40 acres of land to James M. Burk and wife Sally, and they in turn apparently sold 11 acres of that portion to the Methodist—Episcopal (South) for campgrounds of which James Mayfield was a trustee.

The property evidently changed hands again, and on the 26th of June 1880, B.F. Clark, and his wife, Martha A. Clark, sold a deed to the property (for the sum of \$13) to board of trustees consisting of Moses Dutton, James Culwell, Alexander Neill, Hezekiah Culwell, John Dutton, William Phillips, and Ina A. Neill for the Methodist—Episcopal Church (South).

This deed would have included the land used for the cemetery.

The residents and church members personally maintained the cemetery grounds and over the years donations were received and placed in a savings account to help defray the costs of maintenance.

In 1968, this group of citizens formed a trust and called themselves the Goshen Cemetery Association. They transferred \$6,400 into a trust account with the First National Bank of Fayetteville as Trustee.

On November 11, 1975, surveying of the cemetery area began in preparation of deeding the property to the Goshen Cemetery Association. On September 28, 1977, the Association filed an application for tax-

exempt status as a non-profit corporation, it was approved by the Arkansas Secretary of State and a Washington County Circuit Judge.

The arch signage above the Goshen Cemetery gate was purchased from Costales Iron in April of 1979 for the sum of \$566.50.

On May 31, 1979, the Goshen United Methodist Church deeded 3.52 acres to The Goshen Cemetery Association for the sum of \$1. The Quitclaim Deed was filed at the Washington County Courthouse on July 28, 1981, recording the transfer of the property. The deed was signed by Darrel Tisdale, President, and Lorraine Hash, Secretary of the cemetery association.

In 1985, the Goshen Cemetery Association Trust, with First National Bank as Trustee, was dissolved and the assets transferred to the Goshen Cemetery Association, Incorporated.

The activities of the Goshen Cemetery Association, Inc. include overseeing the maintenance of burial sites, mowing, trimming, and general upkeep of the grounds. They receive donations, disburse funds, and supervise the investments.

The Goshen Cemetery Association is a non-profit 501(c) organization and relies primarily on donations for the upkeep and maintenance of the property.

Tax exempt donations can be mailed to:

The Goshen Cemetery Association

P.O. Box 131

Goshen, AR 72735

For more information about the cemetery, contact Russell Gayer, President/Historian (479) 225-8657, or Charles Langham, Vice President (479) 530-5597.

The oldest death-date on a monument in the cemetery belongs to Thomas R. Neill, who passed away on August 10, 1861. The cemetery

also includes over fifty unknown graves that are marked with a stone or simply a depression in the earth. It's possible that some of these graves may pre-date Mr. Neil's death.

The earliest born date is that of Reverend William Sherrod who was born April 1, 1788 in North Carolina. Rev. Sherrod was a circuit riding preacher who also fought in the War of 1812.

Another notable citizen buried at the Goshen Cemetery is Sgt. Benjamin F. Little, Company D 1st Arkansas Cavalry, a Union soldier, who was born in Tennessee in 1839 and died in 1909. Mr. Little's family lived in the West Fork area prior to the Civil War. He became the first Republican sheriff of Washington County, having been appointed by Union Major General Gillem in 1868 and serving as sheriff until 1872.

Cemeteries are very revealing as to the birth and death rates, family names, and as comes to light, an epidemic illness of some sort when whole families die in a short space of one another in the same year.

In 1912, James Mayfield's second wife, Matilda, age 74, his daughter, Susan, age 43, and her son, Allen, age 20, died. Others in the same year were Nancy Coldwell, age 69, and Sarah Jane Howard, age 62. Six in one year.

In searching for a reason, some heard tell of epidemics of diphtheria, some say grip (a type of flu). Others say smallpox, some say typhoid. All of these were prevalent when no serums were available.

Oddly enough, there is but one burial for 1880, the year of the big cyclone. James Coldwell, age 77. I think we can safely assume no one was killed as the result of the cyclone, judging Mr. Coldwell old enough to have died of natural causes.

A total of 26 soldiers of the Civil War are buried here, including James Knox Polk Tisdale, born 1839 (making him 26 years old at the end of the war) died in 1928. Mr. Tisdale was a member of Company D 24th Indiana Infantry (Union) and came to Goshen after the Civil War. He was

a grandfather of James Darrel Tisdale who served in WW II and as Goshen Postmaster for many years.

John Fitzpatrick, born 1927 (age 38 at the end of the war) died in 1909 at age 82.

James "Reb" Gayer, born 1839 (age 25 at the end of the war) died May 7, 1921 at age 81. He served in Company F, Missouri Cavalry, General Raines Division – 4 years service.

Seems like in olden times, if you could survive wars, cyclones, and epidemics you could live to a ripe old age.

We have two World War I soldiers in the Goshen Cemetery. Floyd Whillock, who died February 1, 1920, and Ernest E. Jewell, 1891-1968, Pvt. Company E, 28th infantry.