

# OLD ABERDEEN CEMETERY

off Highway 45 at South Poplar and Whitfield Streets



Creative Monument of Mr. McFarlane (#18)

THE OLD ABERDEEN CEMETERY is thought to have started in 1838 with the burial of Abel Pierson on the property of his friend, Osborne D. Herndon. No other history is known of Mr. Pierson, who is #7 in the listed markers. Private cemeteries were common then and no record of a public cemetery can be found until 1845 when the City of Aberdeen was selling grave lots for \$5. There are 157 stones existing from burials between 1838 and 1865, excluding the Civil War soldiers. Thirty-one more stones were placed between 1865 and 1931.

Some of the most intricate and beautiful of the monuments in the Old Cemetery were sculptured in Columbus and Aberdeen by the Miller brothers, Richard and Cornelius. Their work is said to compare with the most skilled Italian artisans. They settled in Columbus in 1846 and Richard opened a branch in Aberdeen in 1853 with a Mr. Thompson. By March 1859, Richard began closing down the Aberdeen operation and it is said that his manager, Michael O'Halloran absconded with the funds late that year.

The Miller monuments here include: Mrs. Jane Martin Dalton; Mrs. Needham Whitfield's mausoleum; George C. Heard; and John T. Fortson.

THOSE PERSONS WHO HAVE DONATED TIME AND WORK TO PRESERVE THIS CEMETERY are many in number and to attempt to name them would slight those who quietly gave their labors and names are unknown today. The sign at the street names some organizations that have labored, but one unnamed organization needs recognition, and that is THE CEMETERY CARE ORGANIZATION which was formed January 27, 1922, "The Old Graveyard - We appeal to all Aberdeenians to care for our Old Cemetery that stands neglected and seemingly mocks us ... The fence is down in many places, the tombs are neglected...Many who sleep here died among strangers...Many of our Confederate Dead sleep here, and for the sake of those who fought and died for us, we should clean up the Old Graveyard." On September 12, 1924, they began raising funds for a new fence to protect the cemetery from livestock. Names of donors and the amount donated were printed each week in the Examiner. The present day fence and stile were installed in the spring of 1925. Now the City of Aberdeen is performing regular and good maintenance.

As you tour this cemetery, take particular notice of these interesting stones, many of which have appeared with articles and in books over the years. The markers are numbered consecutively beginning in the Northwest corner.

1. ELIJAH VASSAR was a veteran of the War of 1812.
2. WILLIAM McCORD KEYES served 18 months as a Company Captain in the Mexican War. At the age of eighteen he had completed the study of law and spoke six languages.
3. CHARLES GATES, SR. is the only known veteran of the American Revolution buried in Aberdeen. Only six other veterans are known to be buried in Monroe County.
4. DR. GEORGE C. HEARD'S monument has a likeness of him copied from his death mask by his brother, Dr. J. M. Heard.
5. JOHN M. STEUART was a partner in a local newspaper, the Monroe Democrat and was an early Mayor of Aberdeen.
6. ANDERSON GULLETT was a partner in the Gullett Gin Factory, an early Aberdeen industry.
7. ABEL PIERSON is the earliest known burial.
8. ROBERT SMITH seems to have been the second burial. He may have been the same Robert Smith who was a partner in the New Aberdeen Association.
9. GEORGE and DINAH DOBSON, George Dobson was a "Free Man of Color" and operated a blacksmith shop in Aberdeen from at least 1852 until 1888. During the Civil War he fought for the Confederacy, being a member of the Nathan Bedford Forrest Escort Company. This company of men rode at Forrest's side and was likely the hardest fighting unit in either army of the Civil War. George Dobson was also the personal choice of General Forrest as the man to shoe his horses. Dinah Dobson is one of two black women with markers buried in this cemetery, the other being ANICA, wife of Stanton Acker and servant of Mrs. Griffin. She is buried in the NE corner of the fenced area. Dinah Dobson died December 17, 1879, and George Dobson's second marriage was to Mrs. Elizas Dunlap September 23, 1880. She is thought to be buried on the left hand side of George Dobson.

10. OSBORNE D. HERNDON owned this the south 1/2 of Block 84, and is thought to have lived here until his untimely death of typhoid fever in 1839 at age 29. He was one of the three Trustees of the Town of Old Aberdeen.
11. POTTER'S FIELD is the brushy area to the southeast of the drive-in gate and is the burial place for the destitute, friendless, homeless, or criminal. It is bounded by the road, open field to the east, and fence to the north.
12. MRS. NEEDHAM WHITFIELD has the only mausoleum in the cemetery. Legend has it that she is buried by her request, sitting in her favorite rocking chair. The ornate cast iron fence has lambs resting under weeping willow trees.
13. THE CONFEDERATE DEAD. In 1908, 90 unknown headstones and the wrought iron fence were installed by the Robert E. Lee Chapter #116 the United Daughters of The Confederacy. An exception to the unknown stones is M Roth, 1914, CSA, 84 years. In 1962 during the Civil War Centennial observance, through the efforts of Robert Reedy, Robert H. Moore, who died 14 May 1862, and Augustus Davis, who died 10 August 1862, were identified and the flat Veterans Administration stones were placed. Moore and Davis were both Privates with Co. E, 27<sup>th</sup> Regiment Texas Cavalry. In 1991 a computerized data base of Confederate soldiers was searched and 60 more CSA soldiers were identified as being buried in Aberdeen. VA upright markers were obtained and placed by Emory A. Morgan and other members of the present day 14<sup>th</sup> Miss. Inf. Regt. N-SSA. Stakes indicating the identity of the soldiers were originally placed, but soon rotted. They did enable, however, some families to locate graves and place markers.

The fence installed in 1924 does not enclose the entire original Old Cemetery. The Sharpley Bottom Road was moved to its present position about 1916 and the road is now over graves; civilian graves from near the Oddfellow Entrance gate to about half way to the first curve; and then War of Succession graves to the top of the hill where the road turns East. These military graves go under the Oddfellows fence and under the service road, but not into the Oddfellow grave sites. There are about 950 military graves in the immediate area of the Civil War Dead wrought iron fence, and approximately 2,000 military graves within the 1924 fence. The graves extend north of the fence over half way to Hwy 45; east of the fence to the railroad right of way fence; and there are 885 to 890 military graves in the open ground across the street from the stile. In all, there could be as many as 6,000 Civil War graves in the area of the Old Cemetery. Sick and wounded were brought into Aberdeen during the entire war as there were always private hospitals available and after the Battle of Corinth, a military tent hospital was set up on Poplar Street at Commerce Street. After Jackson was burned, Aberdeen and Natchez became the largest cities in Mississippi.

## 14. THE CONFEDERATE MONUMENT AND DECORATION DAY

Decoration Day for Aberdeen continued for a long time. In 1868, the Ladies Memorial Association was formed by Mrs. Gen. John Gregg and Mrs. Samuel J. Gholson to conduct Memorial Day services, to raise funds for a Confederate monument, and to assist soldiers and their families.

In June 1897, the Robert E. Lee Chapter # 116 United Daughters of the Confederacy was organized. Some of the ladies were members of both organizations. The two groups pooled their resources for construction of the Confederate monument which now stands facing the Confederate plot in the Old Cemetery. It was unveiled on December 1, 1900, at the intersection of Commerce and Hickory Streets in downtown Aberdeen.

Because it was considered to be a traffic hazard, the monument was moved in 1960 by the State Highway Department to the lawn in front of the Armory at Commerce and Matubba Streets. Later the National Guard moved to a new armory leaving the monument in an inappropriate place. Then on October 12 and 13, 1995, the Miss. National Guard and the city of Aberdeen co-operated to move the monument to the place of honor where it stands today.

15. PVT. JOHN WALLACE was probably a member of the party of Federal soldiers that looted and burned the Issac Jarman home on February 18, 1864, killing Mr. Jarman in the process. Wallace himself was wounded. A short time later he was killed by Mr. Jarman's son. The military records show Wallace as a deserter. The stone is in a symbolic location as his grave is at an unmarked location in this cemetery.
16. ENSIGN WILLIAM E. HOGG was the Flag bearer of the 8<sup>th</sup> Mississippi Cavalry at Brices Crossroads on June 10, 1864. He was mortally wounded there and brought to Aberdeen where he died on June 18, 1864. He was the only child of Thomas Jefferson and Elizabeth Reasons Hogg of Calhoun County, Mississippi. Mrs. Hogg also lost two of her four brothers in the Civil War.
17. BURIAL TRENCHES. "In the early spring of 1866, Major S. A. Jonas, Mrs. LaFayette Houghton, and Mrs. Caledonia E. Kidd, made a sad pilgrimage to the Confederate plot where they decorated the twenty-one unmarked mounds 'mostly Texans' as well as the graves of soldiers whose names were known, on both sides, north and south." This intriguing statement was made in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century at a UDC meeting by a lady who was not yet born in 1866, but of an age to know the above named persons well. The Confederate plot is referred to, but the wrought iron fence enclosing the identified plot was not installed until c1900. Unknown graves both north and south are referred to and the newspaper articles regarding the Confederate memorial Day also mention the unknown and northern graves. Recently there burial trenches were discovered, and the soil surface is still not level. One of these burial trenches contains eight men and their feet are to the north, inferring they may be Northerners. The other two burial trenches contain six men each, with their feet to the east or west as was convenient to

the burial details. There is a single civilian grave between these three trenches.

Are these the graves that were the subject of the sad statement above?

In 1866 wooden stakes still existed identifying the graves of the known. There is thought to be a minimum of 5,500 Civil War dead buried here, both inside and outside the present day fence that was installed in 1925.

18. GRAHAM MCFARLANE and his deceased son are represented on the marker by the two cut roses, while the full grown rose and the five buds on the bush represent his wife and their five living children.
19. JANE MARTIN DALTON's stone depicts St. John's Episcopal Church of 1857, before the roof was raised and the crenelated edging was removed. She is credited with founding the church and making the building possible. St James Church in Livingston, Alabama, was also her creation.
20. DR. EDMUND HEWITT, a popular local dentist, died while "bathing" in the Tombigbee River. Several poems were written about his passing, including one by "Hinda" first wife of Reuben Davis.
21. MARY POINTS burned to death in 1852 when her skirts caught fire. Her stone is in Stories in Stone and other books.
22. JOHN T. FORTSON's stone has several Masonic symbols carved on it. Note the pragmatic verse on the south side.
23. MRS. FANNIE E. RICHEY became the last burial in the Old Cemetery when she was placed beside her husband in 1931.
24. AUSTIN POLLARD, who build Ten Acres requested to be buried as close to his home as possible, so he was placed in the southwest corner of the Cemetery.



The resting place of Mrs. Whitfield & her rocking chair (#12)

Brochure Sponsored By:  
Aberdeen Visitors Bureau 1/800-634-3538  
&  
Tombigbee Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, Aberdeen, Mississippi

## Men From Monroe County Units

Name	Unit	Death Date
Pvt Thomas J. George	Co. A 5 <sup>th</sup> Miss Inf	March 24, 1862
Pvt J. A. Standifer	Co. A 5 <sup>th</sup> Miss Inf	March 20, 1862
Pvt James R. Sharp	Co. 111 <sup>th</sup> Miss Inf	September 1, 1864
Pvt William E. Boast	Co. 114 <sup>th</sup> Miss Inf	September 25, 1862
Sgt Thomas Briscoe	Co. 114 <sup>th</sup> Miss Inf	February 13, 1863
Pvt Mitchell Kahn	Co. 114 <sup>th</sup> Miss Inf	July 15, 1861
Pvt Mitchell M. McKeon	Co. L 24 <sup>th</sup> Miss Inf	February 13, 1862
Pvt John Young	Co. G 41 <sup>st</sup> Miss Inf	June 16, 1862
Pvt C. J. Benson	Co. C 43 <sup>rd</sup> Miss Inf	November 3, 1863
Pvt R. H. Clark	Co. K 43 <sup>rd</sup> Miss Inf	June 25, 1862
Pvt Alfred Fulton	Co. K 43 <sup>rd</sup> Miss Inf	June 27, 1862
Pvt Andrew H. H. Peden	Co. K 43 <sup>rd</sup> Miss Inf	June 26, 1862
Pvt W. B. Barnes	Co. F 38 <sup>th</sup> Tenn Inv	?
Pvt Stoley M. Bradley	Co. G 27 <sup>th</sup> Texas Dismtd Cav	July 5, 1863
Pvt Emmet Brant	Co. D 2 <sup>nd</sup> Mo Cav	July 20, 1862
Pvt James W. Brown	Co. E 9 <sup>th</sup> Ky Mtd Inf	May 3, 1862
Pvt Heyran P. Burford	Co. E 9 <sup>th</sup> Ark Inf	September 22, 1863
Pvt Benjamin Burns	Co. 17 <sup>th</sup> Ky Mtd Inf	October 1864
(died or wounds received at Sulphur Trestle, Ala Sept. 1864)		
Pvt Samuel Clement	Co. G 22 <sup>nd</sup> Miss Inf	June 18, 1862
Pvt D. L. Colquett	Co. K 25 <sup>th</sup> Ala Inf	May 18, 1862
Pvt J. T. Cooper	Co. A 20 <sup>th</sup> Tenn Cav	August 17, 1864
Pvt C. L. Crawford	Co. H 2 <sup>nd</sup> Ala Cav	May 3, 1863
Pvt Augustus Davis	Co. E 27 <sup>th</sup> Texas Dismtd Cav	August 10, 1862
Pvt Calhoun Estes	Co. C 27 <sup>th</sup> Texas Dismtd Cav	July 10, 1862
Pvt James M. Fals	Co. D 25 <sup>th</sup> Ala Inf	June 22, 1862
Pvt Zachariah Franklin	Co. C 24 <sup>th</sup> Miss Inf	May 17, 1862
Pvt John Giddens	Co. F 27 <sup>th</sup> Texas Dismtd Cav	July 11, 1862
Cpl William C. Gracy	Co. C 41 <sup>st</sup> Tenn Inf	July 29, 1863
Pvt A. M. Green	Darden's Miss Battery	1862
Pvt W. T. Griffing	Darden's Miss Battery	June 3, 1862
Ensign Wm. R. Hogg	8 <sup>th</sup> Miss Cav	June 18, 1864
Pvt Joseph D. Kent	Co. C 25 <sup>th</sup> Ala Inf	May 16, 1862
Pvt William B. Kerr	Co. G 2 <sup>nd</sup> Mo Inf	1862
Pvt Thomas A. Ketcherside	Ark Battery	July 20, 1862
Pvt William Kurtebone	Co. E 1 <sup>st</sup> La Inf	July 25, 1862
Pvt John S. Lang	Co. # 49 <sup>th</sup> Ala Inf	June 29, 1862
Pvt William H. Lewis	Co. F 10 <sup>th</sup> Texas Dismtd Cav	July 1, 1862
Pvt J. Love	Co. E 25 <sup>th</sup> Ala Inf	1862
Pvt D. A. McComb	Ala Engineer Corps	Jan. 11, 1864
Cpl W. G. W. McMichael	Co. 132 <sup>nd</sup> Texas Cav	July 12, 1862
Pvt William R. Monahan	Co. G 34 <sup>th</sup> Ala Inf	1862
Pvt Robert H. Moore	Co. E 27 <sup>th</sup> Texas Dismtd Cav	May 14, 1862
Pvt John J. Morrison	Co. H 36 <sup>th</sup> Tenn Inf	May 30, 1862
Pvt James J. Phillips	Co. E 26 <sup>th</sup> Ala Inf	May 19, 1862
Pvt James M. Phillips	Co. D 50 <sup>th</sup> Ala Inf	May 18, 1862
Pvt Samuel Pipkin	Co. E 7 <sup>th</sup> Tenn Cav	April 5, 1864
Cpt David P. Rogers	Co. 132 <sup>nd</sup> Miss Inf	February 18, 1864
(Post Commissary at Aberdeen, killed in skirmish with 8 <sup>th</sup> Ill. Cav at Aberdeen)		
Pvt James P. Roberts	Co. B 3 <sup>rd</sup> Texas Cav	June 21, 1862
Pvt Josiah O. Roberts	Co. H 25 <sup>th</sup> Ala Inf	July 12, 1862
Cooper Shelton	Hospital Steward 2 <sup>nd</sup> Mo Inf	October 15, 1862
Pvt William Sprabury	Co. 132 <sup>nd</sup> Tex Cav	May 18, 1862
Pvt Thomas A. Smith	Co. F 1 <sup>st</sup> La Inf	1862
Pvt Thomas E. Smith	Co. F 1 <sup>st</sup> La Inf	1862
(Possibly same man as Thomas S. Smith)		
Pvt William H. Tison	Co. V 2 <sup>nd</sup> Texas Inf	August 2, 1862
Pvt Alfred M. Wilkerson	Co. H 44 <sup>th</sup> Tenn Inf (consol)	June 3, 1862
Pvt Richard Sparkes Wilkes	Co. E 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tenn Inf	September 1863
Pvt B. F. Williams	Co. D 2 <sup>nd</sup> Ala Inf	July 1863
2Lt James B. Williams	Co. H 25 <sup>th</sup> Ala Inf	July 20, 1862
Pvt John L. Williams	Co. A 25 <sup>th</sup> Tenn Inf	July 15, 1862
Pvt J. T. or T. J. Williams	Co. D 25 <sup>th</sup> Ala Inf	July 30, 1862
Pvt John H. R. Wright	Co. G 10 <sup>th</sup> Texas Dismtd Cav	July 1, 1862
Pvt Levi Wright	Co. K 27 <sup>th</sup> Texas Dismtd Cav	May 12, 1862