

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Mount Zion Cemetery

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: West Fulbright Avenue

City or town: Walnut Ridge State: Arkansas County: Lawrence

Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A B C D

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau
or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

Private:

☐

Public – Local

☒

Public – State

☐

Public – Federal

☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)

☐

District

☐

Site

☒

Structure

☐

Object

☐

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> 1 </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u> 1 </u>	<u> </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

FUNERARY: Cemetery

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

FUNERARY: Cemetery

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

N/A

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

STONE: Marble, Limestone, Granite;

CONCRETE;

METAL: Cast Iron

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Mt. Zion Cemetery is a rural cemetery in Walnut Ridge, Arkansas, set on nearly three acres of land. The topography of the cemetery is somewhat rolling, with a pronounced hill on its eastern side that was likely the inspiration for the cemetery's name. At least 360 burials have taken place at the cemetery, 276 of which are still marked today. These gravestones, most of which are hewn of white or banded marble, are spread throughout the site, often in family groupings. Besides the gravestones, eight historic cast iron & wrought iron plot fences, as well as three modern plot fences, are found throughout the cemetery, and a variety of trees surround the graves ranging from a small grove of walnut trees to recently planted saplings. Due in large part to a period of neglect of the cemetery from the 1960s to 1980s, modern burials account for less than 3% of known burials in the cemetery and the historic integrity of the cemetery is remarkably intact.

Narrative Description

Mt. Zion Cemetery is a rural cemetery in Walnut Ridge set on nearly three acres of land. It is generally on higher ground than its neighboring properties, with one especially pronounced hill on its eastern

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side and one lower depression on its southern side. The ground is somewhat rolling in places, with some indentations suggesting the locations of some of the 90+ unmarked graves.

While historic photographs suggest that the cemetery used to be quite wooded, the majority of the site is currently without mature tree cover. A band of older walnut trees still exists on its western side and a thicket of trees on its northeastern side, with a few other large trees also along the northern side of the cemetery. A non-historic row of Bradford pear trees lines the cemetery's frontage with Fulbright Avenue, and twelve new trees of a variety of species were planted in 2018 to echo the historic wooded landscape of the cemetery that existed by the 1940s, as evidenced by a WWII-era aerial survey of the nearby Walnut Ridge Army Flying School that shows Mt. Zion Cemetery in the background of one of the images (see photo 5, pg 23).

The cemetery is marked by a painted wooden sign constructed in 1989, near the junction of Fulbright Avenue and Mills Street. A barbed-wire fence used to surround the perimeter of the cemetery, but was taken down in the 1980s; twisted remnants of it are still visible in the wooded area in the northeast corner of the cemetery. In May 2018, a century-old iron fence salvaged from a demolished Walnut Ridge property was installed along the non-wooded eastern side, providing a more visible entry vista from Williams Baptist University.

The gravestones at the cemetery are primarily white marble, with additional stones composed of banded marble, concrete, and light gray granite. Many of the historic monuments contain bases composed of limestone and other stones. Outliers include one cast iron marker from the early 1900s and one pink granite marker from the 1930s. The majority of the gravestones were cleaned with D/2 Biological Solution in 2016 and 2017, giving a uniformly grayscale appearance. The oldest marked stones from 1875 are found slightly southeast of the center, and between the 1880s and 1940s the locus of burials shifted towards the northern end of the cemetery, especially after the addition of an acre of land in that direction in 1904. Most of the few newer non-historic burials are concentrated near the southeast and northwest corners of the cemetery, which allowed for easier access.

Quite a few stones at the cemetery are distinctive for their Woodmen of the World markings, often including columns carved to mimic tree stumps, bases mimicking logs, and the Woodmen logo. Other societies, such as the Knights of Pythias and the Freemasons, are also represented. Carvings of traditional memorial imagery and/or memorial verses are found on most of the older stones as well. Inscriptions on stones from the 1870s to 1920s point to a geographically diverse group of carvers, including those from St. Louis and Appleton City, Missouri; Cairo, Illinois; Humboldt, Tennessee; and Little Rock and Newport, Arkansas.

Seven historic cast iron & wrought iron fences are found throughout the cemetery, manufactured by the Stewart Iron Works of Cincinnati, Ohio, and the Valley Forge Fence Works of Knoxville, Tennessee. Overall, they are largely intact, although several have been bent quite severely in places by fallen tree limbs and/or mechanized equipment. Six of these fenced plots contain a variety of spring flowering bulbs, ranging from daffodils and hyacinths to wild tulips and crocuses. Salvaged metal fencing was installed around three additional plots in 2018, in addition to the century-old east side fence installation mentioned above.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☒ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Exploration/Settlement

Art

Period of Significance

1875-1945

Significant Dates

1905-1913 (Bagley Feud Casualty Burials)

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Henry Wilson, St. Louis, MO (Stone Carver)

Reinhold Follenius, St. Louis, MO (Stone Carver)

F. Horn & Co., St. Louis, MO (Stone Carvers)

George Moody, Appleton City, MO (Stone Carvers)

Melmotte, Humboldt, TN (Stone Carvers)

Zeran Marble & Granite Works, Cairo, IL (Stone Carvers)

A. B. Drummond, Newport, AR (Stone Carvers)

F. Horn & Co., St. Louis, MO (Stone Carvers)

William L. Funston, Little Rock, AR (Stone Carvers)

F. Horn & Co., St. Louis, MO (Stone Carvers)

Stewart Iron Works, Cincinnati, KY (Fence Fabricator)

Valley Forge Fence Works, Knoxville, TN (Fence Fabricator)

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Mt. Zion Cemetery is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **local significance** under **Criterion A**, as it is the resting place of several pioneers of Eastern Lawrence County settlement as well as many of the casualties of Lawrence County's Bagley-Ridgeway Feud, and is the last vestige of the Mt. Zion community that once flourished in its vicinity. As a cemetery under **Criteria Consideration D**, it is eligible due to its primary importance relating to its association with historic events.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

The eastern knoll in Mt. Zion Cemetery stands out in the barely undulating Delta landscape, and it was likely for this reason that the site was originally selected. An 1823 survey of Lawrence County shows that even before farming altered the landscape, the area around Mt. Zion was naturally higher in elevation and lacked some of the creeks and swamps that were to the west and south—today dredged and known as Big Running Water Creek, Coon Creek, and Village Creek.¹ During World War II, it was these attributes that led to the construction of the Walnut Ridge Army Airfield adjacent to the cemetery. The construction of the Hoxie, Pocahontas, & Northern Railroad in 1896 and designation of Highway 67 in 1926, located respectively 1.25 and 0.75 miles west of the cemetery, allowed for the cemetery to remain more accessible than many of its rural counterparts.²

According to Texas genealogist Blanche Keating Collie, the first burials at Mt. Zion might have occurred as far back as 1862, with the death of two-year-old Caroline Elizabeth Jones. Four other deaths in the extended Jones-Moran family over the next thirteen years might have also resulted in burials at Mt. Zion, though no grave markers are extant.³ It does seem quite probable that Mt. Zion was the site of these burials, due to several branches of the Moran family already being represented by a row of tombstones at the cemetery. This line of stones is aligned along the ridge in a more distinctively diagonal angle than the rest of the stones in the cemetery, which

Table 1: Known Burials by Decade

1860s	4?
1870s	9
1880s	58
1890s	47
1900s	42
1910s	114
1920s	26
1930s	27
1940s	8
1950s	8
1960s	3
1970s	2
1980s	3
1990s	1
2000s	2
2010s	1
Unknown	4+

¹ Joseph Harden (Deputy Surveyor), 1823 Survey of Lawrence County, Twp 17N, Range 1E, 5th PM, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, GLO Records. DM ID 6727. <https://glorerecords.blm.gov>. An interactive overlay of the survey map (completed in 1823, but approved in 1825) and a modern USGS map is viewable at www.mtzionwr.org/history.

² An assembly of historical news articles and photographs related to local rail and road transport can be viewed on the *Walnut Ridge and Hoxie Online Archive*, at <https://scalar.usc.edu/works/whoa-archive/transportation-tags>.

³ Collie's information is listed on the 1862 through 1871 memorials at <https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/55271>.

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are generally on a north/south-oriented grid. Nevertheless, an alternative location for these early graves could potentially be Colquette Cemetery, 3.75 miles to the southwest of Mt. Zion: the patriarchs of the Moran family, William S. and Caroline Moran, are buried there instead of Mt. Zion, and Caroline's burial in 1869 is the earliest recorded one in that cemetery.⁴

The first tombstones that are extant at Mt. Zion date to 1875, and include infants John H. Bagley and George W. Moran. Their respective families proved to have outsized roles in the development of the lands and community surrounding the cemetery. A community that formed one and a half miles to the northeast was named the Moran community, and for several decades included a school by that name. By the 1910s, records indicate that Mt. Zion was by then located on the Bagley farm, and the family's long prior association with the cemetery makes it possible that ownership of the surrounding lands went back decades before. According to area resident Bill McNutt, the Bagley homestead was located less than a quarter mile from the cemetery along what is now the corner of Fulbright Avenue and Avenue C.⁵ Artifacts discovered during restoration of the cemetery bear witness to its one-time agricultural surroundings: a 20 by 40 ft brick foundation, part of a weight from an agricultural scale, and a piece of metal slag that might have been from a blacksmith's shop.⁶ A sizable majority of the (post-1914) Arkansas death certificates for adult males interred at Mt. Zion list "farmer" as their occupations, with the exception of several laborers/day laborers, two carpenters, two railroad foremen, a doctor, and a merchant. The death

certificates for most adult females at Mt. Zion Cemetery list housekeeper or housewife as their occupation, with one exception being the widowed Emma Butler, listed as a laundress upon her death in 1930.⁷ It is not known if the Mt. Zion community included any commercial buildings, or if it was comprised solely of residences and farmsteads. Either way, it

seems probable that many residents did much of their shopping in nearby Walnut Ridge; news accounts demonstrate that the Bagleys, at least, frequented Walnut Ridge establishments.⁸

Table 2: List of Known Veterans at Mt. Zion Cemetery

<i>Civil War Veterans</i>
Isom Bagley (1847-1910): Co F, 13 th MO Cavalry
Solomon K. Bradford (1841-1930): Corporal, Co E, 4 th MO Cavalry, CSA
A. J. Brimhall (1848-1916): CSA
Thomas Cooper (1835-1884): Pvt, Co G, 1 st AR Battalion, CSA
William Burton Crook (1832-1894): Major, 7 th AR Infantry, CSA
Joseph D. Hardin (1831-1886): Captain, 38 th Regiment AR Infantry, CSA
Thomas C. Hennessee (1844-1895): 2 nd MO Cavalry, CSA
Joseph C. Holmes (1833-1896): Pvt, Co G, 1 st AR Battalion, CSA
Isaiah Hutcherson (1838-1888): Pvt, Co G, 23 rd Regiment TN Infantry, CSA
J. M. Melton (1844-1912): Pvt, Co L, 2 nd Regiment AR Cavalry, Union
David Hodge Parks (1843-1894): Pvt, 48 th Regiment KY Infantry, Union
John R. Poindexter (1842-1907): Pvt, Co B, Coleman's Reg. MO Cavalry, CSA
<i>World War I Veterans</i>
Richard B. F. Benton (1894-1918)
Elmer Crider (1893-1918)
William H. Jones (1895-1918): Co. K, 153 rd Infantry

⁴ Records for Colquette Cemetery are available online at <https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/2497629/>.

⁵ Correspondence with Bill McNutt, area resident, 2018.

⁶ Photos of the findings are available at <https://www.archeological-finds.mtzionwr.org/>.

⁷ Copies of known Arkansas death certificates for those buried at Mt. Zion Cemetery are available at <https://www.certificates-census.mtzionwr.org/>. Sourced from the Arkansas Department of Vital Records, 1914-1969 Death Certificates, Little Rock, AR, via Ancestry.com (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/61777/>).

⁸ Multiple instances recorded in the clipped articles available at <https://www.bagley-ridgeway-feud.mtzionwr.org/>.

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As the Mt. Zion community and the surrounding townships grew, more land was needed for the cemetery, and an extant deed record shows that in 1904 one acre of land was added on its north side.⁹ After a record 114 burials in the 1910s, the rate of burials in Mt. Zion Cemetery dropped noticeably thereafter, perhaps due in part to the growth of Walnut Ridge's Lane Cemetery (a.k.a. Lawrence Memorial Park) into the central cemetery for eastern Lawrence County, a trend that has continued in the decades since then.¹⁰ Death certificates indicate that those buried at Mt. Zion Cemetery in the 1910s and 1920s were predominantly, if not exclusively, Caucasian; no African-American burials are known to be located in the cemetery, reflecting the broader segregation of that era as African-American burials in the vicinity were relegated to separate areas, such as Walnut Ridge's Scott Cemetery or a section of Black Rock's Oak Forrest Cemetery.¹¹

A number of noteworthy individuals have been buried at the cemetery, including at least twelve Civil War veterans and three World War I veterans (see table 2).¹² Several prominent figures are featured in the Goodspeed Publishing Company's 1889 *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northeast Arkansas*, including Thomas C. Hennessee and Claiborne S. Pinnell. Hennessee's biography tells of his storied Civil War career: "During his career in the army Mr. Hennessee has, no doubt, seen about as much fighting, and also done fully as much as any soldier at that period. He took part in the fights at Poison Springs, Marks' Mills, Jenkin's Ferry, and a great many skirmishes and fights of lesser note, but equally as hot as their predecessors. When he first joined the army, the battalion of which he was a member was composed of 476 men, and out of that number only seventy-four lived through the horrors of war to be paroled at its close. Mr. Hennessee received a gun shot wound in one of his limbs, which disabled him for a time; and, on another occasion, was wounded by one of the guards, after being taken a prisoner, while walking over a log to cross a creek.... Mr. Hennessee started in life, after the war, without a dollar, and has accumulated his fine property by industry, economy, and good management, and is now one of Lawrence County's solid men and enterprising citizens."¹³

Pinnell's biography is emblematic of the agricultural background of many of the other early settlers buried at Mt. Zion: "Claiborne S. Pinnell was reared on a farm, and as his father always lived in a very new country, where schools were not to be found for love nor money, and teachers were few and far between, his education, as a consequence, was very limited. When nine years of age he met with a painful accident, which has rendered him a cripple all his live; a colt ran away with him one day, and, stepping into a hole, threw him off, breaking his right arm and shoulder, which has prevented him from doing any hard labor ever since. Notwithstanding this fact, he has been an active man all his life; following the plow, farming and raising stock. He came to Lawrence County about thirty

⁹ Mt. Zion Cemetery Expansion Deed, 1904, Lawrence County Courthouse, Walnut Ridge, AR. Photographed copy available at <https://www.deeds-burial-records.mtzionwr.org/>. (No deed exists for the original cemetery section.)

¹⁰ Some indication of the dramatic rise in burials at Lane Cemetery in the mid-1910s is shown by the FindaGrave memorial listing (sorted by death date) at www.findagrave.com/cemetery/54702/memorial-search?orderby=d.

¹¹ A listing of African-American cemeteries/segregated cemetery sections in Lawrence County is available at https://arkansasgravestones.org/cemeteries.php?selected_cid=26.

¹² Listing compiled thanks to a combination of gravestone inscriptions and genealogical notes attached to entries at <https://arkansasgravestones.org/cemetery.php?cemID=10> and www.findagrave.com/cemetery/55271, with confirmation and supplementation where possible from the National Park Service's Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System Database, and the Arkansas State Archive's World War I Discharge Records. A deeper investigation may document additional veterans, including any potential Spanish-American War veterans buried at Mt. Zion.

¹³ *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northeast Arkansas*, 793-794.

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years ago, and bought 160 acres on Village Creek, one and one-half miles north of Walnut Ridge, and has made this his home ever since, besides owning another farm in this county, the two aggregating 240 acres. He has hunted "bar" all over the State, and about twelve or fourteen years ago he killed the largest panther that had ever been seen in that neighborhood, measuring eleven feet from both tips. Mr. Pinnell has made a lengthy trip to Oregon, and another to Texas, but looks upon Lawrence County as the dearest spot on earth."¹⁴ Pinnell's gravestone and a number of other stones in the cemetery are five to six feet tall and intricately carved, reflecting their families' increasing prosperity after decades of farming. Many of these taller gravestones are carved with Woodmen of the World motifs and insignia, indicating the significant inroads that society made in the Mt. Zion community.

Perhaps the most famous burials that took place at Mt. Zion Cemetery were those of members of the Bagley family, killed in what the *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture* describes as one of the state's "longest running and bloodiest feuds."¹⁵ The feud began with the shooting of Jesse Edward "Ed" Bagley in 1905 and continued for another decade, costing the lives of Ed's brothers John and Alf Bagley and father Isom J. Bagley (a Civil War veteran), as well as several others on the opposing side. The dramatic feud made headlines across the Mid-South and as far away as Indianapolis, Indiana; Natchez, Mississippi; and Austin, Texas. Over 200 news articles by numerous papers were published on the subject before it had run its course.¹⁶

The local community was greatly affected by the feud as well, as the front page of the October 24, 1910, *Arkansas Gazette* relates: "Stunned by the double tragedy of yesterday, half the population of Walnut Ridge today wended its way up the road to the little country cemetery [Mt. Zion] on the Bagley farm, following two improvised hearses which bore the bodies of T. F. [sic] and his son, Alf Bagley, to their graves. Father and son were shot and killed yesterday by an assassin, the father being shot down as he was returned from town where he had purchased a suit of clothes in which to bury his son. Walnut Ridge has but one hearse. The family, however, which now consists of a widow, son and daughter...insisted on a double funeral. Two vehicles were secured. The Rev. Mr. L. C. Craig, pastor of the Methodist church, paid tribute to the Bagleys, father and son, who were respected and well-to-do farmers. Farmers came from miles around to the funeral."¹⁷

At least two other burials at Mt. Zion in the 1910s were also due to murders, and both caused sensations of their own. In 1913, farmer Claiborne G. Pinnell (not to be confused with Claiborne S. Pinnell mentioned above) was shot by the town marshal of nearby Hoxie, Lou Easley. The *Jonesboro Evening Sun* stated, "It is reported that Pinnell and Dempsey [his companion] had been drinking and after leaving the lodge room, became boisterous. When Easley went to arrest him they treated him as a joke and after some words made right at him when he shot them, killing Pinnell..."¹⁸

¹⁴ *Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northeast Arkansas*, 811-812.

¹⁵ Larry LeMasters, "Bagley-Ridgeway Feud," *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*, Butler Center for Arkansas Studies. <https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/bagley-ridgeway-feud-9298/>

¹⁶ A timeline of the major events of the feud is available at <https://scalar.usc.edu/works/whoa-archive/bagley-ridgeway-feud-tags>, while a thirty-page article on the feud, entitled "Killed on Main," is available at <https://www.mtzionwr.org/bagley-ridgeway-feud>.

¹⁷ "Father and Son Buried Together," *Arkansas Gazette*, October 24, 1910, pg 1.

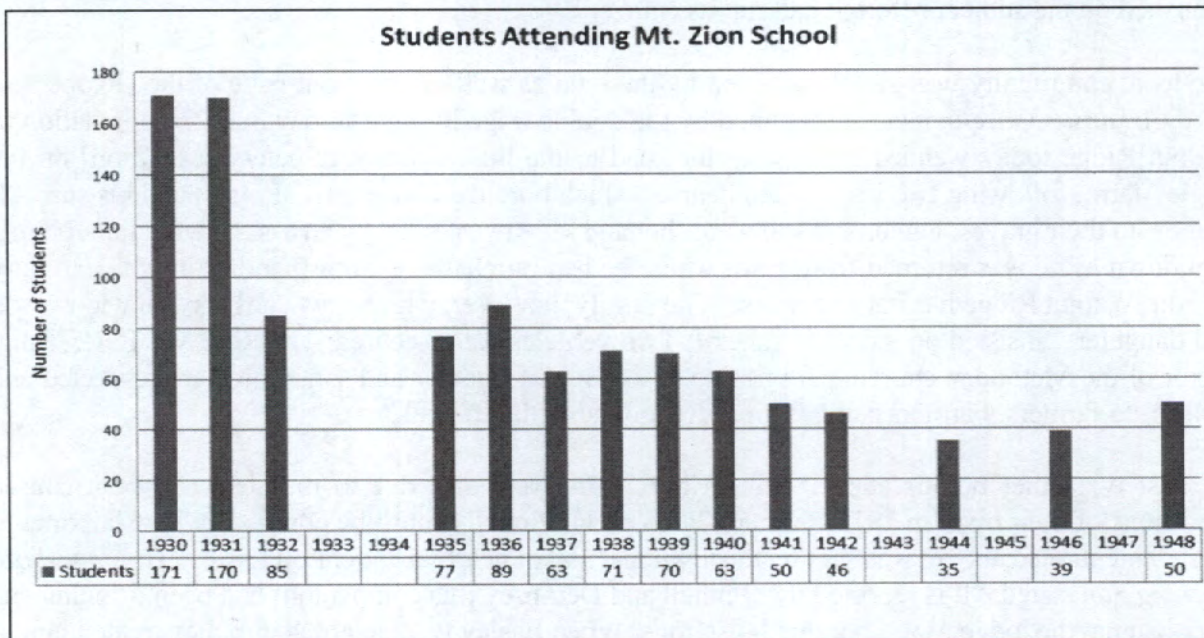
¹⁸ "Town Marshal of Hoxie Killed Two Men While Resisting Arrest Last Night = Well Known Citizens," *Jonesboro Evening Sun*, February 8, 1913, pg 1.

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Eighteen-year-old housekeeper Bettie Burleson was murdered in the middle of a cotton field in 1915 by her stepfather, who denied doing so at first. A news article written on November 2nd says that "feeling runs high here tonight and threats of lynching are freely heard on the streets.... It was said that soon after leaving Rhea's farm [site of the murder] a mob of residents of that community gathered and pursued the sheriff and his prisoner so hotly that the officer was forced to change his route as well as his destination. Nothing has been heard from him tonight. It is believed, however, that he is hiding out somewhere in the river bottoms."¹⁹ Though news accounts mention Burleson's burial at Mt. Zion, her grave is either unmarked or located under one of the cemetery's damaged gravestones.

More peaceful institutions prevailed after this violent spell. By 1920, a church was constructed on the north side of the cemetery and was also named Mt. Zion; it was listed as one of the locations of the local Methodist quarterly conference that year.²⁰ In 1948, the church was deeded to a Free Will Baptist congregation.²¹ By 1930, a school was built across the road to the west of the cemetery, and lasted through about 1948. While enrollment was 170 in 1931, it dropped dramatically after that, with only 85 students in 1932 and a low of 35 students in 1944 (see chart).²² In 2017 a cast iron school desk frame section from the school was found buried near the western edge of the cemetery.²³



¹⁹ "Girl, 18, Murdered; Stepfather Held," *Arkansas Gazette*, November 3, 1915, pg 1. News clippings related to Burleson and Pinnell's murders are available at <https://www.pinnell-burleson-rip.mtzionwr.org/>.

²⁰ "Arkansas Conference Dates are Announced," *Arkansas Democrat*, June 4, 1920.

²¹ Mt. Zion Free Will Baptist Church Deed, 1948, Lawrence County Courthouse, Walnut Ridge, AR. Photographed copy available at <https://www.deeds-burial-records.mtzionwr.org/>.

²² Mt. Zion School Census Records, 1930-48, Northeast Arkansas Regional Archives, Powhatan, AR. Photographed copies available at <https://www.mt-zion-school-dist.mtzionwr.org/>.

²³ Images available at <https://www.archeological-finds.mtzionwr.org/>.

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The construction of the Walnut Ridge Army Air Field next to the cemetery in 1942 was a boon to the regional economy, yet a major disrupter to the Mt. Zion and Moran communities. While the Mt. Zion Cemetery, church, and school were left untouched, forty-five families to the east were displaced and the neighboring Moran schoolhouse was demolished after eminent domain was exercised on 3,096 acres.²⁴ The cemetery was soon in a much more prominent corridor, as a concrete access road later named Fulbright Avenue was constructed as the main thoroughfare to the air field from Highway 67.²⁵ A boundary fence was installed that bordered the cemetery on its south, east, and north sides, and an area east of the cemetery was used for scrap lumber disposal during construction of the air field. A 1942 whiskey bottle found during gravestone repairs suggests that construction workers and/or cadets might have found the cemetery to be a satisfactory drinking spot; aerial shots from the era reveal it was one of the few wooded areas in the vicinity.²⁶

Compounding the effects of the Great Depression and the construction of the air field, increased mechanization in agriculture and improved local transportation also contributed to the decline of Mt. Zion as a farming community. These trends both reduced the number of farmhands needed on area farms and made it more attractive for those remaining to move to nearby Walnut Ridge, a town of about 3,000 in 1950. A symbolic shift occurred when the municipality of College City was incorporated in 1951, in some senses a geographical descendant of the Mt. Zion community. The new city included sections of the former air field turned into the campus of Southern Baptist College (now Williams Baptist University) and other neighboring residential areas, including the cemetery.²⁷

By the 1960s and 70s, both the Mt. Zion School and church buildings were demolished, and private residences were constructed in their place. With no congregation remaining to care for the cemetery, the property quickly became overgrown, with the exception of the McNutt family plot in the far southeast corner that was maintained by a relative. In the 1980s, a first round of restoration work was spearheaded by the Southern Baptist College faculty, Circle K Club, and College City residents, including removing underbrush and dismantling the wire fence surrounding the site. Afterwards, mowing and upkeep were provided by College City.²⁸

From 2016 to 2018, Williams Baptist students and local citizens led a second round of restoration work that included repairs to fractured gravestones and broken cast iron plot fences, cleaning lichen from gravestones using D/2, and resetting toppled gravestones. A metal-detecting survey of the cemetery located seven metal grave markers from otherwise unmarked graves that had snapped at ground level, possibly dating back to the 1930s.²⁹ Harkening back to the tree-covered landscape of the cemetery in the 1940s, new trees were planted throughout, and a historic iron fence salvaged from a Walnut Ridge property was installed along the eastern boundary of the cemetery. In January 2017,

²⁴ Harold Johnson, "Walnut Ridge Army Flying School," *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*, Butler Center for Arkansas Studies. <https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/walnut-ridge-army-flying-school-2820/>

²⁵ Travis Ratermann, "Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road/LW0191," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 2016. Available at <https://www.nps.gov/nr/feature/places/pdfs/16000318.pdf>.

²⁶ Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Survey Map and Aerial Photographs, Wings of Honor Museum, Walnut Ridge, AR.

²⁷ Steven Teske, "College City," *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*, Butler Center for Arkansas Studies. <https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/college-city-lawrence-county-6108/>

²⁸ Correspondence with Jerry Gibbens, Williams Baptist University professor, 2018.

²⁹ Photos of the repair work, of before-and-after juxtapositions of the repaired gravestones, and of the discoveries of the hidden grave markers can be viewed at <https://www.mtzionwr.org/photos>.

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College City consolidated with Walnut Ridge and responsibility for upkeep of the cemetery transferred as well; a Mt. Zion Cemetery Association was established the following year due to municipal neglect and has de facto control of the cemetery's ongoing maintenance and upkeep.³⁰

Overall, Mt. Zion Cemetery remains a well-preserved example of a rural late 1800s/early 1900s cemetery—with modern burials comprising less than 3% of the total number of burials—as well as perhaps the last vestige of the original Mt. Zion community. Its inhabitants, whether known for their lives or for their deaths, had a discernable and impactful influence in the region. Thus Mt. Zion Cemetery is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places with **local significance** under **Criterion A**, as it is the resting place of several pioneers of Eastern Lawrence County settlement, many of the casualties of Lawrence County's Bagley-Ridgeway Feud, and a representative cross-section of the Mt. Zion community. As a cemetery under **Criteria Consideration D**, it is eligible due to its primary importance relating to its association with historic events.

³⁰ Further details about the association and cemetery, including a color-coded map of all known burials by decade, are available at <https://www.mtzionwr.org/>.

Mt Zion Cemetery
Name of Property

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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Mt. Zion Cemetery Expansion Deed, 1904, Lawrence County Courthouse, Walnut Ridge, AR.

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Ratermann, Travis. "Walnut Ridge Army Airfield Access Road/LW0191." National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, 2016. <https://www.nps.gov/nr/feature/places/pdfs/16000318.pdf> (accessed February 2, 2021)

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"Town Marshal of Hoxie Killed Two Men While Resisting Arrest Last Night = Well Known Citizens." *Jonesboro Evening Sun* (Jonesboro, AR), February 8, 1913.

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World War I Discharge Records, Arkansas State Archives, Little Rock, AR.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☒ Other

Name of repository: Mt. Zion Cemetery Association Website (www.mtzionwr.org)

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2.8285 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

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Datum if other than WGS84:
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☒ NAD 1983

- | | | |
|--------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Zone: 15S | Easting: 685048.72 | Northing: 3999784.74 |
| 2. Zone: 15S | Easting: 685057.82 | Northing: 3999895.03 |
| 3. Zone: 15S | Easting: 685159.09 | Northing: 3999896.18 |
| 4. Zone: 15S | Easting: 685157.70 | Northing: 3999787.60 |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Mt. Zion Cemetery is an approximately 2.8285 acre trapezoid, nearly square except for a slight indent (about six degrees) to accommodate Stafford Lane. It has frontages along both Fulbright Avenue and Stafford Lane of approximately 360 feet each. The cemetery is located in Campbell Township in Lawrence County within the boundaries of Township 17N, Range 1E, 5th PM.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The selected boundaries reflect the extent of the cemetery's present-day area, and include all known burial sites in the cemetery.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Edward Harthorn, Corresponding Secretary

Mt Zion Cemetery

Lawrence County, AR

Name of Property

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organization: Mt. Zion Cemetery Association of Walnut Ridge, AR

name/title: _____

organization: AR Dept of Parks, Heritage, & Tourism, AR Historic Preservation Program

street & number: 1100 North Street

city or town: Little Rock state: Arkansas zip code: 72201

e-mail: _____

telephone: _____

date: _____

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Mt. Zion Cemetery

City or Vicinity: Walnut Ridge

County: Lawrence

State: Arkansas

Photographer: Edward Harthorn (Curator, Photos 1-5);

Mt Zion Cemetery

Name of Property

Lawrence County, AR

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Date Photographed: _____

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of ____.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning & Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C Street NW, Washington, DC.

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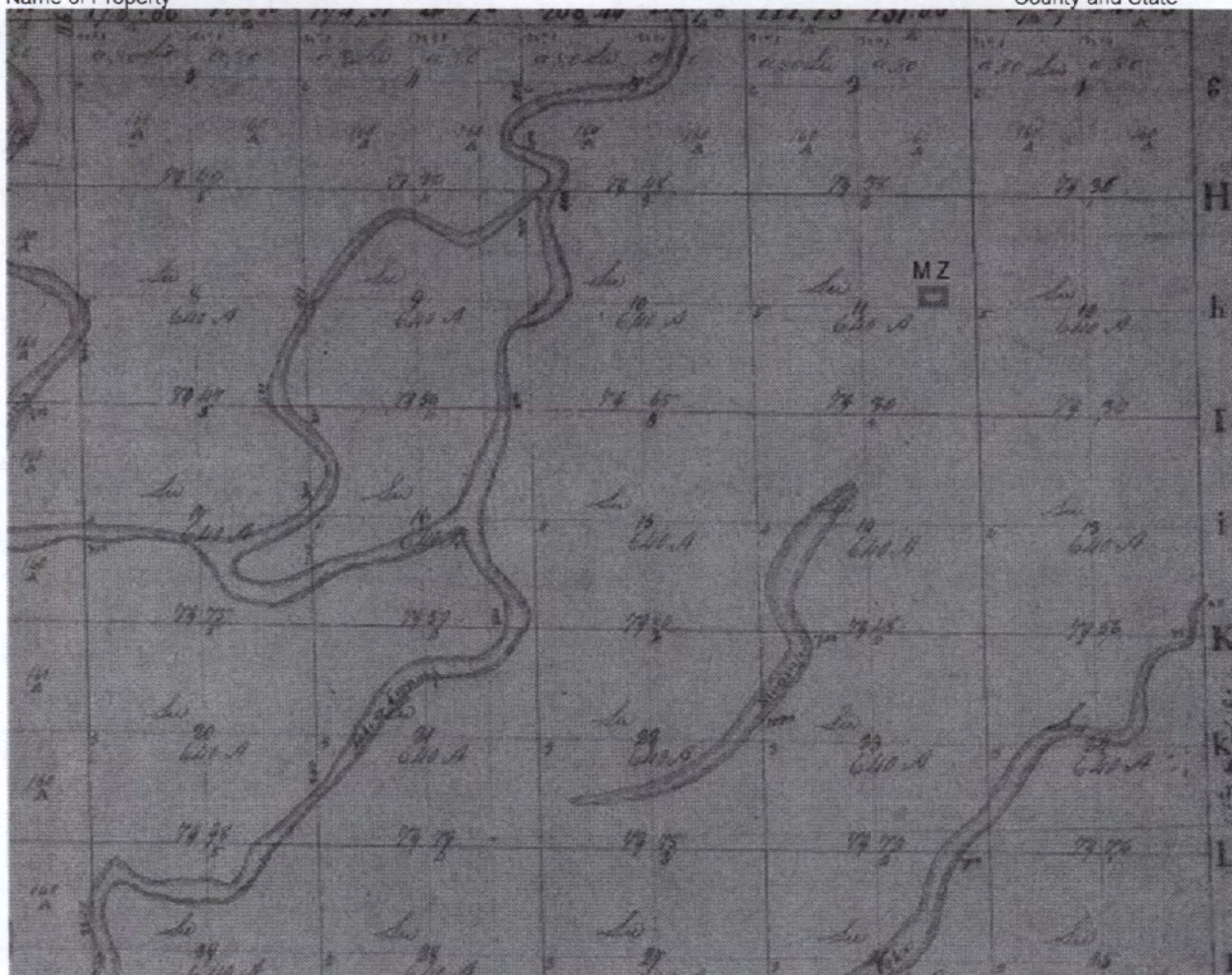


Photo 1: Detail of the 1823 General Land Office Survey of Lawrence County, with the orange rectangle "MZ" representing the approximate location of Mt. Zion Cemetery.

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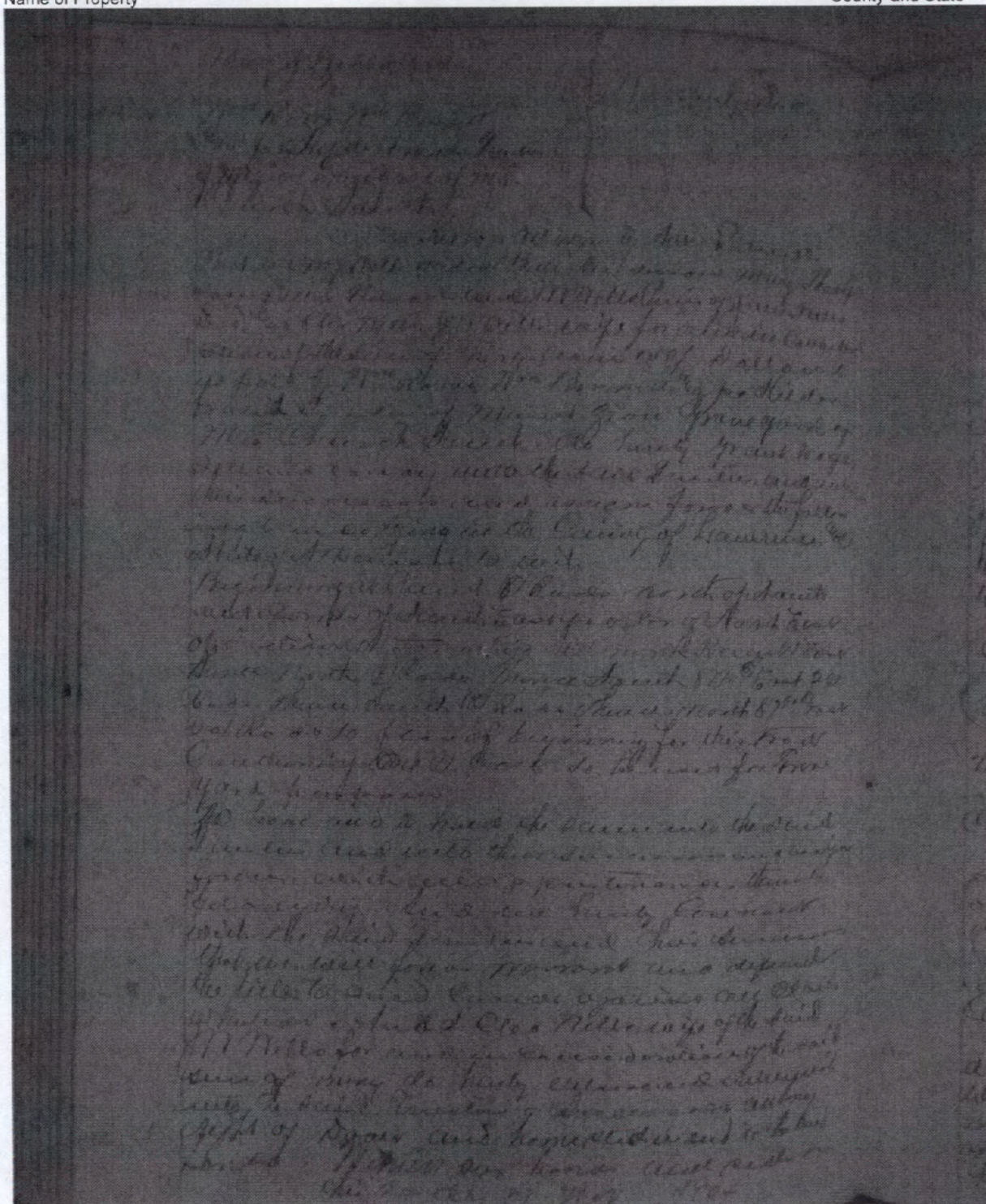


Photo 2: Photograph of the 1904 deed for a one-acre expansion of Mt. Zion Cemetery (transcribed version available at <https://www.mtzionwr.org/photos>)

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Photo 3: Approximate boundaries of the one-acre 1904 cemetery expansion, overlaid on a custom Google Map of the cemetery showing color-coded interments by decade. Map viewable at www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1WRl8fYZxiMPHa9KPHxq-KboA8LcUSVwG.

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Photo 4: A copy of a historic photograph of the Mt. Zion School that was once located across from the cemetery, date unknown. Courtesy Lawrence County resident James Whitlow.

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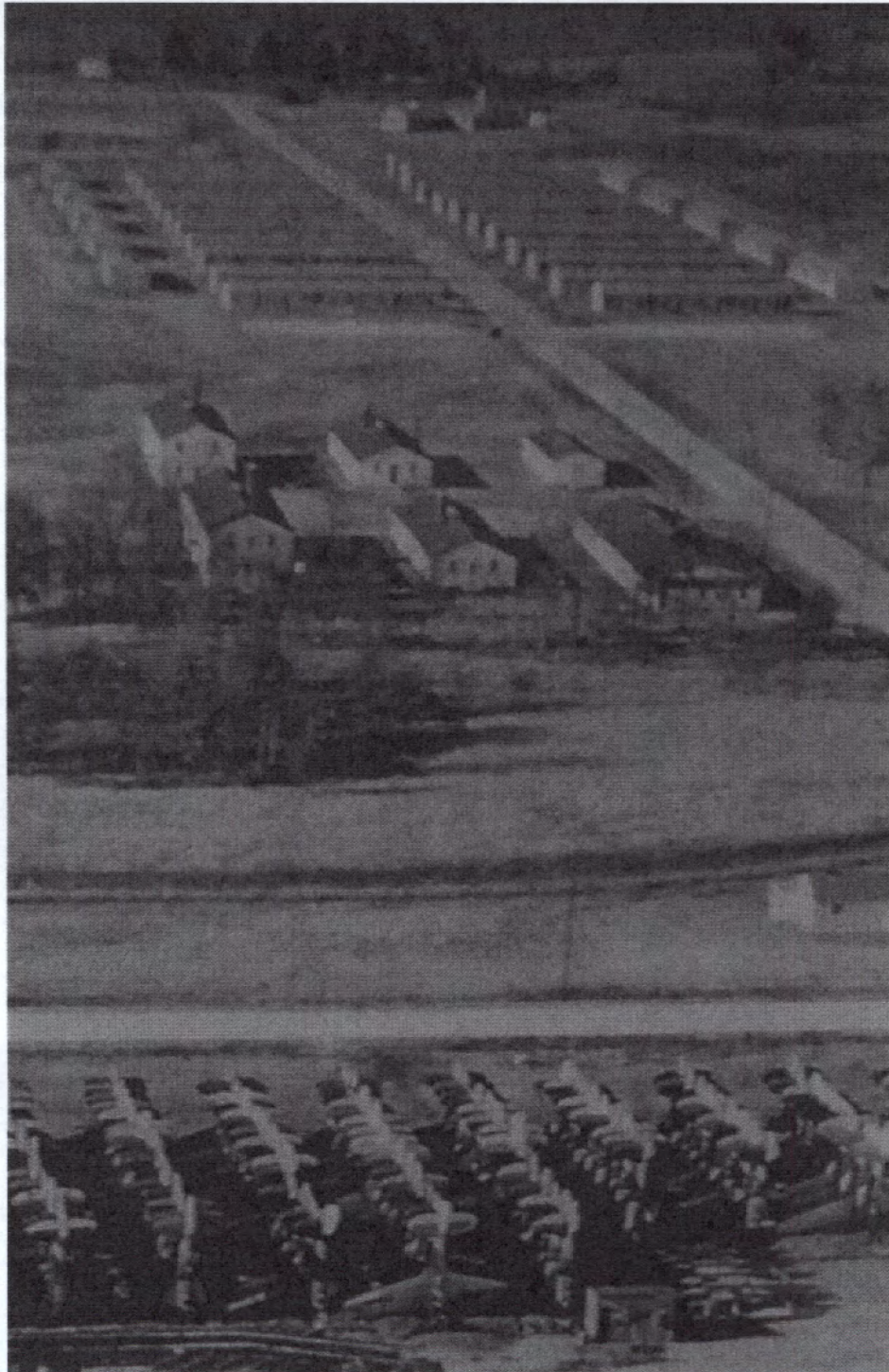
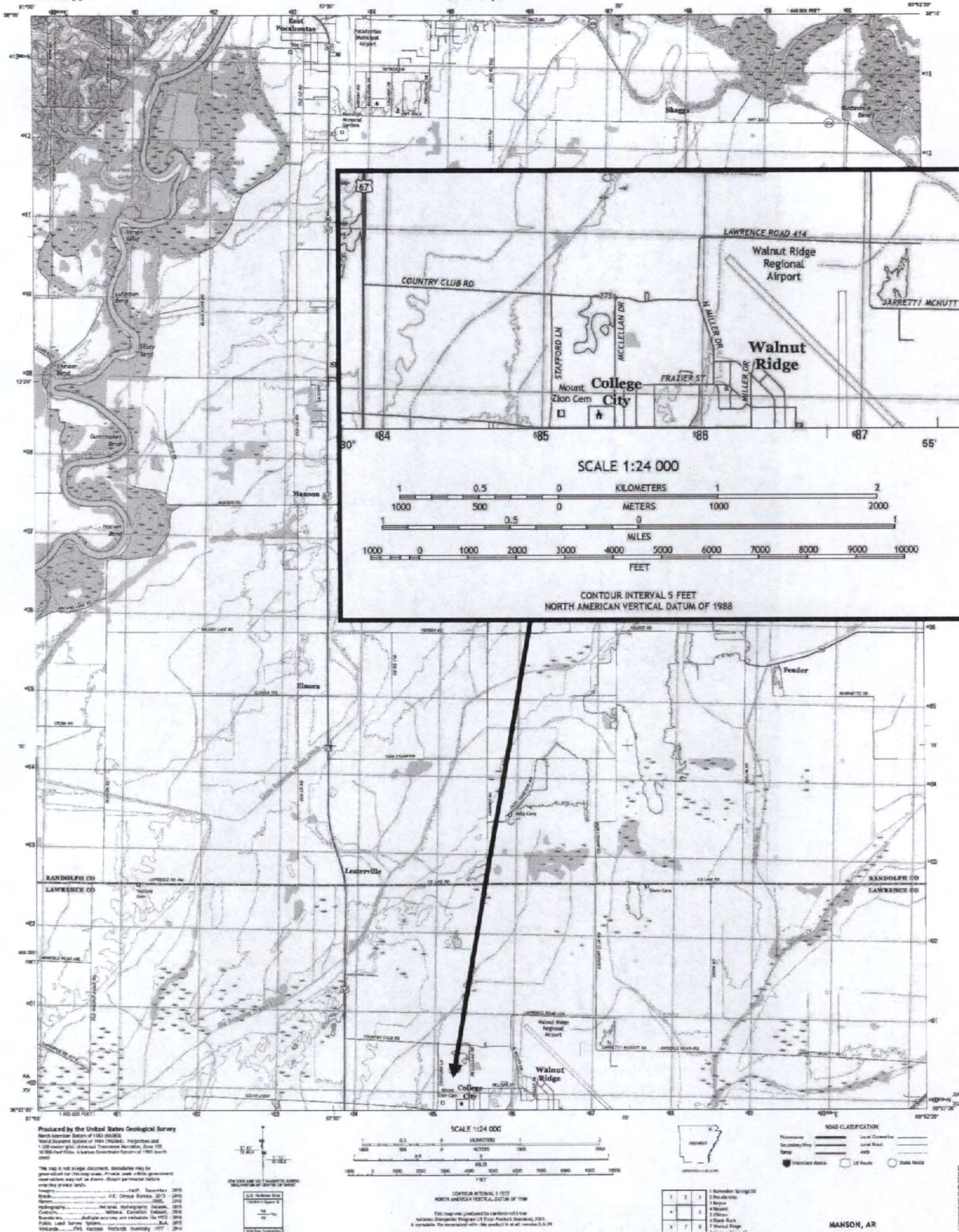


Photo 5: Detail of a post-WWII aerial image showing Mt. Zion Cemetery in the distance (at the end of the road at top of photo, amid the grove of trees). Courtesy Wings of Honor Museum.





|-----263 Feet-----|

Mt. Zion Cemetery
Walnut Ridge, Lawrence County, Arkansas

UTM 15/685101/3999830



North



|-----1198 Feet-----|

Mt. Zion Cemetery
Walnut Ridge, Lawrence County, Arkansas

UTM 15/685101/3999830



North















