

Facts about the Mendenhall Cemetery

The Mendenhall Cemetery consists of approximately nine (9) acres of land and is divided into nine (9) sections. (See aerial picture of the Mendenhall Cemetery.) Sections A, B and C are located in the old cemetery owned by the City of Mendenhall. Sections D, DM, E, EM, F and W are owned by the people who purchased burial plots in the cemetery.

The Mendenhall Cemetery West is owned by the Mendenhall Cemeteries Association, Inc and has space for 650 or more burial sites. The Association owns no other property in the cemetery. Grave sites in Mendenhall Cemetery West are laid out in rows designed by computer instruments. Each grave has a number identifying its location.

At present, there are 1633 people buried in the Mendenhall Cemetery, each having a grave marker to certify his/her burial. Others are known to be buried there, but have no burial marker.

There are 247 known military veterans (Spanish-American War, Civil War, World War I, World War II, Korean and Vietnam War) buried in the cemetery.

There are four known Civil war Veterans buried in the cemetery. They are G. W. Brown (1842-1919), Joseph May (1840-1919), R. V. Overby (no dates) and Elisha Edwards (1840-1925). G. W. Brown, a Confederate soldier, was captured by the "Yankee" twice during the Civil War, once at Point Lookout, Maryland and later at Appomattox, Virginia.

There are three Spanish-American War veterans buried in the cemetery. They are Dr. Samuel L. Knight (1871-1952), Brown S. McPherson (1864-1904) and Joseph Dent Wagoner (1880-1934).

There are two female military veterans buried in the cemetery: Vera Drummond (1903-1973) and Elizabeth Richardson (1897-1977). Both served in the Women's Army Corp during World War II.

There are two known military servicemen buried in the cemetery that were killed in action during World War II: Billy Earl Hales, killed in France in 1945, and Benjamin F. Mason, Jr., killed in the battle of Leyte Gulf, Philippines Islands in 1944.

Major General John L. Franklin (1926-2002) is the highest-ranking military serviceman buried in the Mendenhall Cemetery. He served 39 years in the U.S. Army and the Mississippi National Guard.

The first person known to be buried in the cemetery was Elizabeth May (1817-1863). Her burial confirms that people have been buried in the Mendenhall Cemetery for the last 145 years. This includes the time the May family owned the cemetery. The earliest date of birth of any person buried in the cemetery is William May (1814-1883).

The oldest person buried in the cemetery is Richard Stanley Berry who was 104 years old (1897-2002).

The first person buried in an above-the-ground tomb in the cemetery was Willie Ervin (Billy) Haynes (1930-1956). He served in the Marines during the Korean War.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry O. Middleton were the first people known to have prepared for their future burial by having their graves dug and lined with concrete sides and bottoms several years before their deaths.

Harry R. "Moon" Mullins (1913-2000) was a highly rated professional boxer in the late 1939's and was thought by his fans to be a future contender for the heavy weight championship of the world against Joe Louis. He had to give up boxing due to medical problems. He served as a captain in the U.S. Air Force during World War II.

Leslie W. Magee, Sr. was born in 1880 and applied for a teacher certificate from the State Education Department to teach in Simpson County Schools when he was only 13 years old. He passed the test and received the certificate in 1893 but was not allowed to teach until he was 18 years old. Later, he was the principal of several county schools. A new law was passed in the late 1930's requiring all teachers to have a high school diploma; Mr. Magee did not have one. Since he had a large family by then, he could not afford to pay for more education. After that, he worked for many years in various county offices in the Simpson County Courthouse.

The Honorable Albert Q. May, the person most responsible for establishing a cemetery for the people of Mendenhall, was a well known and beloved citizen in the area as well as in the State of Mississippi. He was elected as State Treasurer of the State of Mississippi.

The first person buried in the newest section of the Cemetery, Mendenhall Cemetery West, was Charles Rushing, Jr. (1938-2005). The second was long time Mendenhall resident, Watts Williamson (1919-2006).

An interesting epitaph engraved on the headstone of Callie Lorine Dampeer, buried in the cemetery reads: "I told y'all I wuz sick."

One grave marker in the cemetery has no name, but these words are engraved on it: "AS YOU ARE NOW, I USED TO BE, AS I AM NOW, YOU TOO WILL BE."