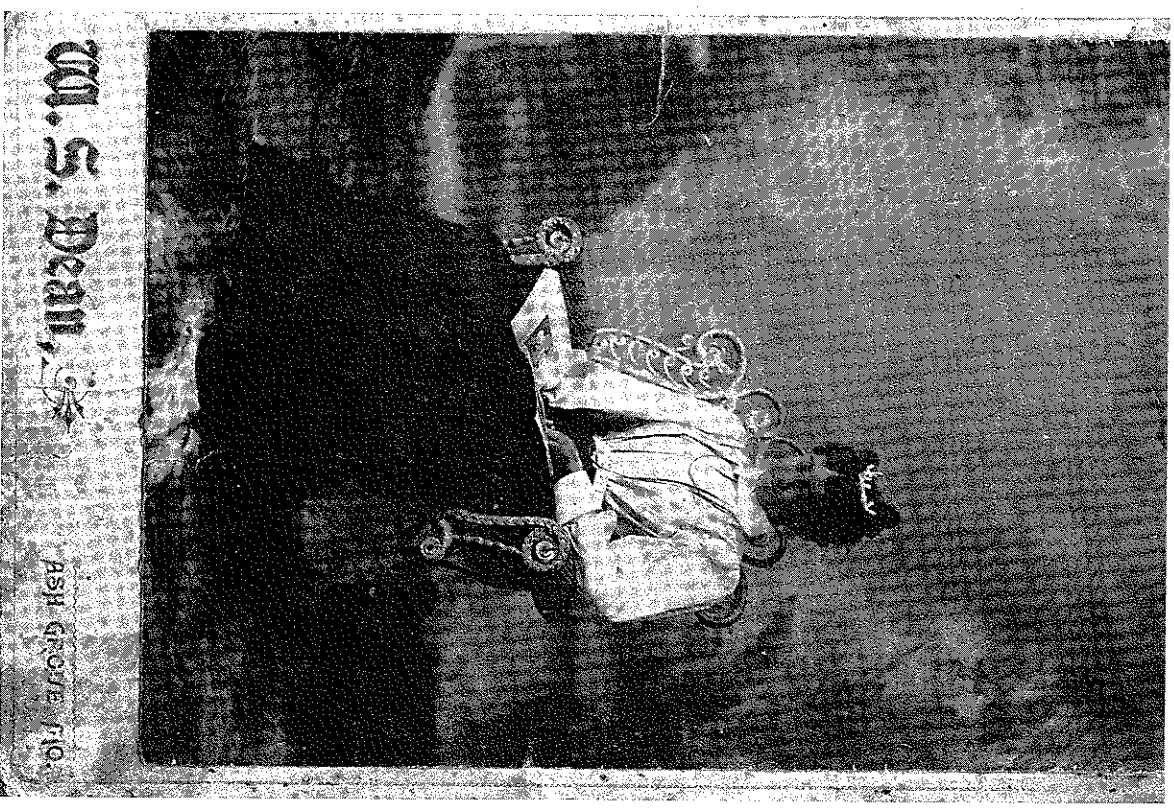


Slaves, Indians and Paupers

The Restoration of Boone Township's
Old Negro Cemetery



Detail from limestone headstone, circa 1889



W. S. Dean,

ASH GROVE FLO.

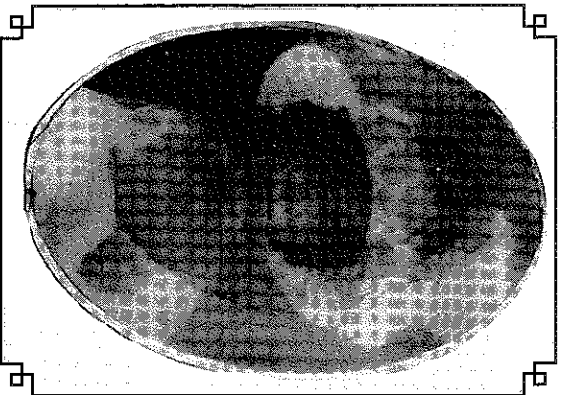
Caroline Boone Berry, circa 1875

Slaves, Indians and Paupers

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THE BERRY-WHITE LEGACY

In 1865, after the Civil War, Wallace White settled down to homesteading in Cave Springs, Missouri. A former slave and the first African-American in the Union's Missouri 6th Cavalry Troop, he had served at the Battle of Vicksburg. During the war, the troop had passed through Kentucky and happened upon the fourteen-year-old slave plowing his master's field. The soldiers dismounted and asked the young man if he wanted to join them. He immediately replied, "Deed I do," quietly unhitched the plow, climbed up on the mule and rode off, taking with him only the padlock from his chains. Sadly, after years of service, White was the only member of his troop not to receive a Civil War veteran's pension. Although his childhood and youth were spent in slavery, and he was later denied his pension on racial grounds, "Uncle Wallace," as he was known to his neighbors, was never bitter. He repeatedly told his friends and relatives to "always pray for those who persecute you and say



Mamie Berry, circa 1918



Uncle Wallace and his wife, Daisy, in front of their cane brake

all manner of evil against you." This attitude of generous forgiveness set him head and shoulders above many of his contemporaries, and there are still elderly local residents who assert, "Uncle Wallace was the one who taught me right from wrong." He and his wife, Daisy, are also remembered for the legendary sorghum that they pressed in their cane brake. Neighbors fondly recall the molasses cookies, served out on a white plate by Daisy, who told the children, "You can have as many as you want, but just take one at a time." White's life was chronicled by the well-known Missouri historian John K. Hulston in *A Look at Dade County, Missouri, 1905-1985*.

Wallace and Daisy raised two sons and three daughters. The oldest son, Harrison, served with Teddy Roosevelt in the Spanish-American War in Cuba. The youngest daughter, Mamie, married Luther Berry. They settled in Ash Grove, Missouri, on the forty acre farm that Luther's father, William, bought in 1872.

We know very little about where free-born William Berry came from; local oral history says that he rode into Ash Grove "driving a fancy matched team of Percheron horses with shiny, new, brass-studded driving harnesses." He married a local girl, Caroline Boone, who had been raised on the Nathan Boone plantation, and they farmed and raised Percherons. Recognizing the need for an additional graveyard, William set aside a portion of his own property as a final resting place for "slaves, indians and paupers." This became known as the "Old Negro Cemetery."

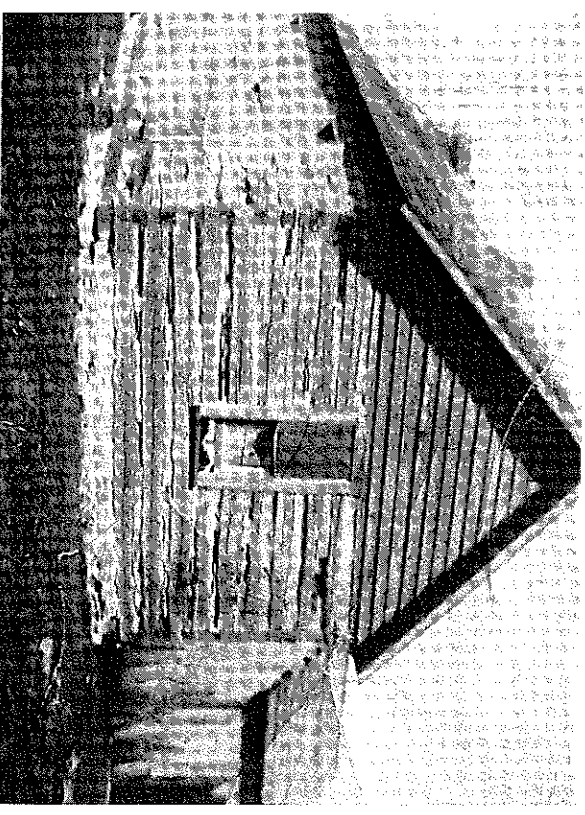


Wallace White (seated at right) with members of the 6th Missouri Cavalry



William Berry

William and Caroline raised three children. When their youngest son, Luther, married Mamie White, the young couple continued to live on the Berry farm, where they in turn raised five children. Their third son, Charles Luther, married Wanda Carlock from Greenfield, Missouri, and it is their son Karl (Fr. Moses) who inherited the farm and the cemetery, and now lives there with his wife, Magdalena and their children, Elijah and Dorothy. ☞



Wallace and Daisy's cabin

THE CEMETERY TODAY



Della Mae Berry, daughter of William and Caroline

people from all over the United States, and included clergymen from as far away as Russia and Ethiopia. At this time the cemetery was rededicated as "Holy Resurrection Cemetery."

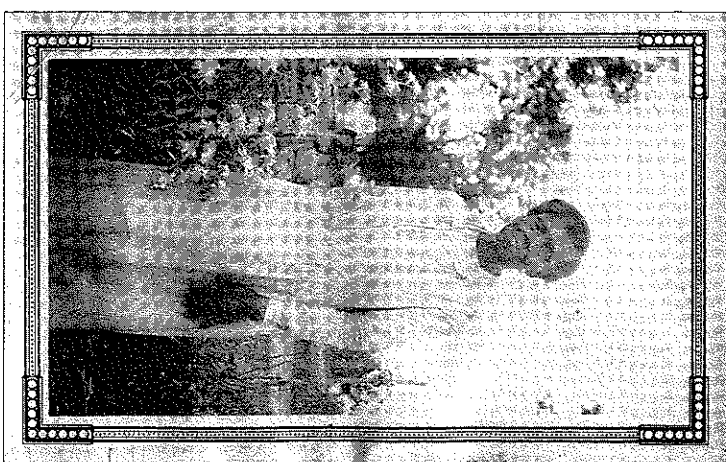
Local and national historical groups are greatly interested in the site, which is already recognized by the Missouri State Historical Registry as one of the nation's oldest African American-owned cemeteries. Both the Ozarks Genealogical Society (OGS) and the Underground Railway Association have expressed their concern for the graveyard's preservation. The history of the Berry Cemetery and a list of those known to be buried there was presented as a paper by the OGS and later chronicled in the Society's publication, *Greene County Cemeteries, Vol. II* (1988).

Covering over an acre of ground, the cemetery lies in the northwest corner of the Berry farm. A small rise in the field behind the house and barns leaves the cemetery peacefully isolated, with neither houses nor road in sight. Shaded by old, over arching walnut trees, the rocky soil is broken by a fresh-smelling carpet of wild grasses. In the spring, the cemetery blossoms with periwinkles and daffodils planted by the family many generations ago. Sunlight plays in dappled pools over the grave-stones, and the restful site has a soothing effect on visitors, who often remark on the peace that fills the little enclosure.

The cemetery includes 48 marked African American graves, as well as a few Native American burial mounds. We assume that many of

the Native Americans buried here were from the local Osage tribe, but little is known about them. There are also a number of Anglo-Americans buried in the cemetery, mostly transients without families or friends to claim their remains. Sadly, many markers have been lost, making identification of some of the graves difficult.

In addition to his plans to enlarge the existing cemetery boundaries to protect many of the unmarked graves, Fr. Moses is particularly concerned about the rapid disintegration of the remaining limestone gravestones and markers. Because of the increasing acidity in local rainfall, the past few years have seen a marked deterioration of their inscriptions. Historians have advised Fr. Moses to preserve the stones as quickly as possible, to prevent further destruction. ☞



Fannie Murray, former slave, born 1852

PLANS FOR RESTORATION: CEMETERY AND HERITAGE MUSEUM

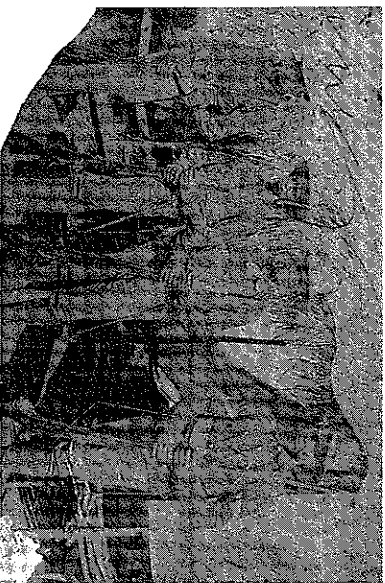
Along with enlarging the cemetery boundaries, replacing the present barbed wire fence with wood or wrought iron, and landscaping the area to make the graves accessible while maintaining their natural setting, there are plans for the creation of the Ozarks African American Heritage Museum outside the cemetery enclosure. The museum will not only shelter some of the century-old tombstones (which will be replaced with hand-crafted wooden markers designed by a local Native American artist), but will also display many artifacts from Ozarks African American families. Extensive collections from both the White and Berry families have already been donated to the museum. Family treasures have also

been offered to Fr. Moses from other African American families in Missouri and Arkansas.

These artifacts include the very slave chain padlock that Wallace White brought with him when he joined the Union Army in Kentucky. There are also other items from slavery times and shortly after, including quilts, household items and numerous historic photographs. A particularly fragile series of charcoal portraits of ex-slaves is in urgent need of preservation, as it is well over a hundred years old.

The mission of the museum is to serve not only as a minority voice, but as an outreach to all of its neighbors and visitors—an opportunity to learn about the unexplored byways of our common Ozarks heritage. Besides housing artifacts and displays about the African American presence in the Ozarks, the Heritage Museum will also invite local historians, crafts people and naturalists to offer lectures and workshops on aspects of African and Native American life. The museum grounds will include a small picnic and campfire area for outdoor presentations.

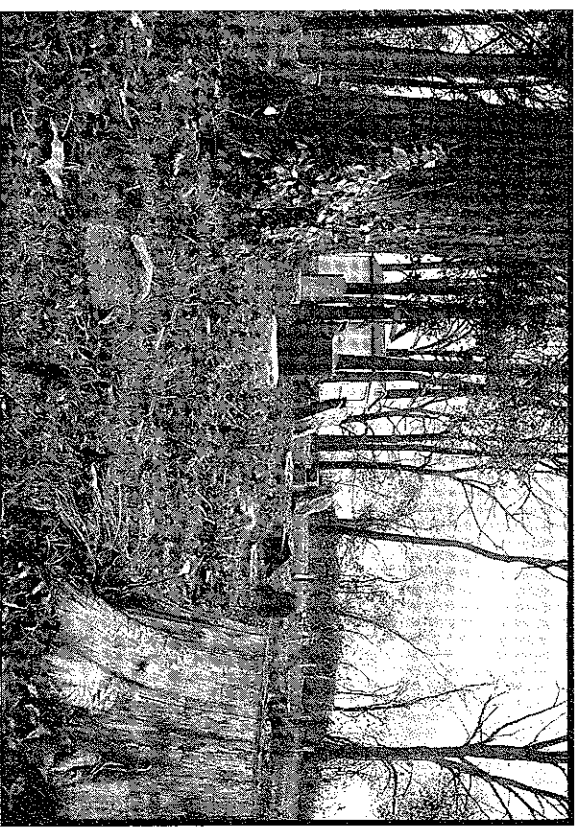
Various community groups and generous individuals have already lent their efforts towards the cemetery restoration. In 1999, a group of inner-city youth from Kansas City helped out as part of a summer camp experience. Ash Grove churches have donated labor in clearing brush and planting flowers. Jim Porter, an amateur historian from Ohio, responding to newspaper articles about the cemetery project, traveled to Ash



Harrison White, far right, with fellow Buffalo Soldiers in San Juan during the Spanish-American War

Grove to photograph the gravestones and solicit donations of preservative chemicals.

We greatly appreciate any assistance offered, in whatever form. All donations will contribute to the important work being done at the historic site, and even very small ones are cherished. ☺



The Berry Cemetery, formerly the "Old Negro Cemetery"
photograph courtesy of Eric Perukhin

from **Greene County, Missouri Cemeteries - Vol. II**

Read by Ozarks Genealogical Society -- 28 March 1986

[The original document is available for reference at the cemetery.]

BERRY CEMETERY

Yokum, Lewis Frank 1893-1966; Effie 1890-1967

Reaves, Leo 1911-1978

James, Charity 1842-1914

Simmons, Enoch 1886-1900; Ralph 1885-1904; Jasper 1882-1908

Berry, Millard 1920-1959; Mamie; Della May 1891-1917; Wm. H.

1848-1917; Caroline M. 1850-1914; Hubert 1879-1904; Birtie

1882-1902; Sarah 1873-1894; Drucella

Boyd, A.

Herron, Susan V. 1860-1912

Walls, J. A. & Vine; Joe; Bob; Chas.; Baby; Press

Harvey, Maude Lee 1881-1924; Rev. H. 1851-1918; Sarah A. 1857-1906

Hudleston, Rachel A. 1821-1902

Harvey, Luile E. 1876-1889; William E. 1883-1889

Mason, John d. 1888

Jones, R. S. 1854-1892

Decks, Elizabeth d. 1905

Perryman, Jocy Bell 1881-1882

Oliver, Alma L. d. 1884

Berry, Luther 1893-1951

Allen, George

Bray, John 1880-1958

Carlock, Bobbie Darnell

Danforth, Nelson b. 1851

Ellison, Mollie, b. 1865

Murray, Fanny, b. 1852

Reaves, Leo 1911-1978; Cassie

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All donations are tax-deductible.

Please note "Ozarks Museum" on checks, payable to

OZARKS RESOURCE CENTER

PO Box 1226

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