

(Oct. 1990)

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 How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Golden Hill Cemetery
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Seven Mile Ferry Road N/A not for publication
city or town Clarksville N/A vicinity
stat Tennessee code TN county Montgomery code 125 zip code 37040
e

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Deputy State Historical Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
-1	0-	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
- 1-	0-	Total

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

**Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**  
0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

FUNERARY; Cemetery  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

FUNERARY; Cemetery  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation NA  
walls NA  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof NA  
other STONE; CONCRETE; BRICK; METAL  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheets.

**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.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** moved from its original location.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ETHNIC HERITAGE: African-American

ART

SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

**Period of Significance**

1863- 1951

**Significant Dates**

N/A

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Unknown; Johnson, Hiram

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References****Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):** N/A

- 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

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

MTSU Center for Historic Preservation

Golden Hill Cemetery  
Name of Property

Montgomery County, Tennessee  
County and State

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## 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreage of Property** 7.56 acres Clarksville 301 SW

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1                                   
Zone Easting Northing  
2                                 

3                                   
Zone Easting Northing  
4                                 

See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

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## 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Tammy Allison and Carroll Van West  
organization Center for Historic Preservation date May 29, 2001  
street & number Middle Tennessee State University—Box 80 telephone 615-898-2947  
city or town Murfreesboro state TN zip code 37132

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### Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

#### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

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### Property Owner

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(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Rev. Wiley Blount Moore  
street & number 816 Franklin Street telephone 931-920-5111  
city or town Clarksville state TN zip code 37040

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**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 listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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Golden Hill Cemetery, Montgomery County, Tennessee

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## DESCRIPTION

Golden Hill Cemetery is a historic African-American cemetery located on Seven Mile Ferry Road in Clarksville, Montgomery County, Tennessee. Established in 1863, the cemetery currently and historically contains 7.56 acres of land. The cemetery is located southeast of the central business district and historic residential areas in a part of Clarksville reserved for cemeteries since the nineteenth century. Greenwood Cemetery, established as the city's white cemetery, is located about one-fourth of a mile north, on Greenwood Avenue. Evergreen Cemetery, a second cemetery for African Americans, developed immediately to the west of the nominated property, beginning in 1929.

The cemetery entrance is located off Seven Mile Ferry Road. The entrance is defined by red brick gates on each side of the dirt drive into the cemetery. From the gates is a historic, tree-lined driveway that runs to the top of cemetery's "Golden Hill," and then turns west toward the adjacent Evergreen Cemetery. The exact date of the gates is unknown, but the gates were constructed prior to World War II, circa 1940. A wooded area runs along the southern boundary. The wooded area consists of a variety of trees, shrubs, and undergrowth. The wooded area covers approximately one-half acre of the cemetery, with older burials located within the wooded area. A metal and wooden fence marks the eastern boundary of the cemetery. Beyond the fence, hay grows in an open field in front of the only residential building bordering Golden Hill Cemetery. The western border of Golden Hill Cemetery is shared with the later Evergreen Cemetery and is clearly marked by a line of large, mature trees that separate the two cemeteries.

During a survey of the cemetery in March 2001, an exact count of the remaining cemetery stones was not determined. Many of the family plots lacked distinctive markers showing the location of each of the burials in the plot. Some headstones also appeared to be broken into one or more pieces, again making an exact count difficult to achieve. Approximately 200 to 250 headstones remain, with a number of graves being marked with only metal markers, which date from the 1970s to the 1990s. The overwhelming majority of the burials at Golden Hill Cemetery occurred during the cemetery's period of significance, between 1863 and 1951, with the period of greatest concentration being from 1890 to 1930. A rough estimate, based on extant markers, indicate that 80-90 percent of the burials took place before 1951, which is not surprising since the adjacent Evergreen Cemetery has established in 1929 and most of its burials date after 1951.

The oldest historic headstones are located in the southern half of Golden Hill Cemetery, near the top of the "Golden Hill," with the greatest number of family plots located around the summit of the hill. The more recent historic burials, such as those associated with the Dr. Robert Burt family, are located closer to the entrance of the cemetery on the northern border.

The majority of the grave markers from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are concentrated around the historic tree-lined drive. The oldest markers line the road in the southern section of the cemetery. Most of the individual burial markers and family plot markers face east. The family plots are most often rectangular in shape and consist of materials and designs ranging from poured concrete with decorative urns at the corners to cinder blocks turned on their side.

Golden Hill Cemetery contains a wide variety of grave markers. The oldest markers are small and plain, with hand-etched names and dates of death. Several markers from the 1890s and early 1900s have highly artistic themes typical of the late Victorian period. In the late nineteenth century "more elaborate markers rose." These included "three dimensional ornately carved monuments [including] obelisks, statues, table

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top stones, and cradles. Motifs were softer-angles, crosses, rosebuds, draped urns, [and] weeping willows.”<sup>1</sup> All of these monuments—except for cradles—are found at Golden Hill Cemetery.

The most elaborate monuments in Golden Hill have been attributed through oral history to stonemason Hiram Johnson. One of the most elaborate monuments attributed to Johnson is in his family plot. After Hiram’s wife, Lena, died in 1899, he created a shrine to her memory. The Johnson family plot is marked by concrete walls several inches above the ground and with urns placed at each of the four corners and along the two steps leading up to the monument. The monument itself is a large angel figure standing on top of a square stand, with the names of several of the Johnson family members etched into the base. According to oral tradition, the beautifully carved angel figure is a portrait of Lena.<sup>2</sup> (Photos 9 and 10.)

Another interesting monument attributed to Johnson is the Wheeler monument, which consists of an angel holding a cross, chiseled into the western-facing side of the monument. (Photo 13.) As part of the Wheeler family plot, this monument is dedicated to Mrs. Harriet Frazier and Mrs. Julia Wheeler. Other burials in the Wheeler family plot are either unmarked or marked with small unadorned monuments.<sup>3</sup> The Dabney family monument represents a winged cherub holding flowers and looking down toward the ground.<sup>4</sup> (Photos 3 and 12.) The Buck family monument is one of the tallest monuments in Golden Hill. An urn is located at the top of a column, with family member’s names etched into the base.<sup>5</sup> (Photo 16.) Several other monuments represent the artistic qualities found in the markers created by Hiram Johnson. The extent of his work in the cemetery is unknown beyond the larger historic monuments located in the southern section of the cemetery.

In addition to elaborate monuments, Golden Hill also contains artifacts associated with more traditional rural African-American burial grounds. Found on the top of the ground beneath several of the monuments were pieces of broken glass and pottery. According to John Michael Vlach, “Black graves are made distinct by the placement of a wide variety of offerings on the top of the burial mound. Most of these items are pottery and pressed-glass containers, but many different objects are encountered, including cups, saucers, bowls, clocks, salt and pepper shakers, medicine bottles, spoons, [and] pitchers. . . .”<sup>6</sup> The inclusion of ornaments on graves has been traced to African countries. This ritual is associated with African religious practices that included leaving household items for the dead person’s spirit to use in the afterlife. According to James Deetz, “Two themes seem to unite the American and African practices, white objects and objects associated with water. A widespread African system of belief holds not only that the spirits of the dead are white beings, but they reside beneath the water.”<sup>7</sup> Historians that study cemeteries have found that “The placing of personal items on graves is not as common as it once was. The traditional graves that remain, therefore, are important reminders of the African cultural roots. . . .”<sup>8</sup> The inclusion of this practice at Golden Hill marks the traditional nature of the African-American community even as they created monuments much like those found in white cemeteries.

The best remaining indication of the practice mentioned above at Golden Hill is on the grave of William Keese. (Photo 15.) Buried in 1933, the grave of William Keese is marked with a small concrete monument in the shape of two hearts. Still visible on the eastern side of the monument are broken pieces of pottery with a hole drilled in the bottom and a handle from a cut-glass pitcher or cup. According to Vlach, “many of the objects are associated with water or can be interpreted as water symbols. Most of the pottery and glass objects are pitchers, tumblers, cups, or bottles; all can hold water.”<sup>9</sup> The exact origin of this tradition remains unknown. However, some scholars explain the practice of placing broken household objects on graves “to appease the spirit of the deceased and to prevent the spirit from returning to the

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home.”<sup>10</sup> The extent to which this was practiced in Golden Hill is unknown. The passage of time and the poor maintenance of the cemetery make it impossible to determine if all burials were marked by this traditional practice. However, on a walking survey on April 2001, remnants of broken glass and pottery were found on several graves throughout older sections of the cemetery.

Despite the growth in Clarksville and infrequent maintenance of the cemetery, Golden Hill retains its historic integrity. Little has changed from its period of significance. The rural nature of the property remains, with trees and open fields helping to shield it from changes over time. Oak and Hackberry trees continue to line the dirt drive that bisects the oldest section of the cemetery. These large, old trees help show the historic configuration of the graves. Traditional plants have also been planted on several of the graves, helping to outline the areas where graves are located. Flowers continue to bloom, that had been planted on graves in the early twentieth century. These landscaping features, evidence of traditional practices, individual monuments, and family plots create a sense of time and place that takes people back to its period of significance, when Golden Hill was one of the focal points of the African-American middle class in Clarksville, Tennessee.

In the last five years, various groups and individuals have taken an interest in keeping the cemetery cut and keeping up with basic maintenance. Through their involvement and interest, historians, community members, and preservationists may now step forward and look towards more comprehensive preservation of the cemetery.

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Susan H. McGahee and Mary W. Edmonds, *South Carolina's Historic Cemeteries: A Preservation Handbook* (privately printed: South Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1997), 7.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Reverend Wiley Blount Moore, Golden Hill Cemetery, Clarksville, Tennessee, 19 March 2001; and Lena Johnson Monument, Golden Hill Cemetery, Clarksville, Tennessee. Interview by Tammy Allison.

<sup>3</sup> Wheeler Family Monument, Golden Hill Cemetery, Clarksville, Tennessee.

<sup>4</sup> Sophy Dabney Monument, Golden Hill Cemetery, Clarksville, Tennessee.

<sup>5</sup> Buck Family Monument, Golden Hill Cemetery, Clarksville, Tennessee.

<sup>6</sup> John Michael Vlach, *The Afro-American Tradition in Decorative Arts* (Cleveland, OH: The Cleveland Museum of Art, 1978), 139.

<sup>7</sup> James Deetz, *In Small Things Forgotten: An Archaeology of Early American Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1977; reprint, New York: Doubleday, 1996), 209 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

<sup>8</sup> McGahee, *South Carolina's Historic Cemeteries*, 11.

<sup>9</sup> Vlach, *The Afro-American Tradition in Decorative Arts*, 143.

<sup>10</sup> M. Ruth Little, *Sticks and Stones: Three Centuries of North Carolina Gravemarkers* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 248.

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## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Golden Hill Cemetery on Seven Mile Ferry Road in Clarksville, Montgomery County, Tennessee, is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A and C for its significant association with the development of the African-American community in Clarksville and with the distinctive stone masonry work found in the older section of the cemetery. Situated on land purchased by a former slave in 1863, the cemetery is believed to be the oldest tract of land continuously owned by African-Americans in Clarksville. After its incorporation in the 1880s, Golden Hill is also considered to be the first corporate business owned by African Americans in Clarksville.<sup>11</sup>

In 1863, Stephen Cole, a former slave who purchased his freedom in 1859, bought the land where Golden Hill Cemetery was established.<sup>12</sup> Both Stephen Cole and his son, Edward, are interred in Golden Hill. Edward Cole serves as an example of one of several graves of veterans buried at Golden Hill. Several members of the local 101<sup>st</sup> Regiment of the United States Colored Infantry that fought during the Civil War are buried at Golden Hill. Established in Clarksville in 1864, the 101<sup>st</sup> served in Nashville as assistants to the Bureau of Refugees.<sup>13</sup> Typical of military burials, their markers are small with no ornamentation. The early date (1863, during the Civil War) of the cemetery's beginning also shows the impact that the occupation army of Union troops had on Clarksville's tiny free black population and its much larger population of emancipated and contraband residents in the war years. Federal occupation helped to give local African-Americans the freedom to establish their own burial ground. Cemeteries, churches, and schools were commonly the first three institutions established by freedmen communities in the turbulent years of war and Reconstruction.

Golden Hill Cemetery is a significant property associated with the establishment of a distinct African-American community in Clarksville during a period of sharp racial conflict in the town. The occupying Union forces left Clarksville in September 1865, leaving Clarksville residents to deal with Reconstruction policies. Between 1865 and 1869, racial conflict resulting in riots and Ku Klux Klan activities occurred frequently. With white Clarksvillians resisting attempts by African Americans to establish schools, the Freedman's Bureau had a difficult time aiding newly freed slaves. These racial conflicts continued throughout the 1870s, with black businesses being targeted by arsonists in 1878. These fires destroyed more than 15 acres of predominately African American owned property in the Central Business District of Clarksville.<sup>14</sup>

**This is where it gets interesting/different from some other cemeteries. This is one individual operating a cemetery for blacks, not an organization or a church or community. Was this for profit? Subscription? Is there any info on how or why this was done? What changed when Page took over, since he is considered the founder of the cemetery?**

During the 1880s, Stephen Cole sold the cemetery to J.W. Page.<sup>15</sup> One of the most prominent members of Clarksville's African-American community during the 1880s and 1890s, John W. Page served his community as a grocery store owner, real estate investor, and Sunday school superintendent at St. Peter's AME Church (NR 4/6/82). Like his other ventures, Page operated the cemetery as a profit-making business and he sold shares in the cemetery to raise money for its development. Although exact attribution of the road system and the planting of ornamental trees is impossible, oral tradition is that these improvements to the cemetery during place during Page's initial years of ownership. Certainly the tradition of placing the larger, more ornate monuments on the hilltop in the middle of the cemetery dates to Page's acquisition of



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the property. Taking advantage of ward voting during the 1892 election, Page was elected as city councilman from the Ninth Ward, becoming the first African American to serve in political office in Clarksville.<sup>16</sup> Page served in the City Council for seven years, before the elimination of ward voting by whites who wanted to keep African-American power in city government to a minimum.<sup>17</sup> It was during Page's ownership that the cemetery became a corporation. Golden Hill is distinctive in that it was the first black-owned corporation in Clarksville.<sup>18</sup> Upon his death, Page left the cemetery real estate to his wife, Mattie E. Page.<sup>19</sup> Interned in Golden Hill, Page's monument memorializes him as the "founder of Golden Hill Cemetery."<sup>20</sup>

As it developed fully in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, Golden Hill, like other African-American cemeteries, represented independence for African-Americans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. According to John Michael Vlach, "For black Americans the cemetery has long had special significance. Beyond its association with the fear and awe of death, which all humans share, the graveyard was, in the past, one of the few places in America where an overt black identity could be asserted and maintained."<sup>21</sup> The establishment of a separate cemetery showed African-American autonomy, while also displaying the racist beliefs that often surfaced in the white community that relegated different races to separate facilities. Cemeteries remained segregated because many believed that even in death, minorities represented "a dirty, vile, degraded, unredeemable humanity."<sup>22</sup> In Clarksville, for example, the Greenwood Cemetery to the north was served as a city trolley line (that ran where Greenwood Avenue is today). The trolley line, however, stopped at the white cemetery gates and blacks would leave the line and walk the remaining quarter-mile or so to Golden Hill Cemetery.

In an era of Jim Crow segregation and racially motivated violence, African-American cemeteries generally represent positive aspects of the community. Often associated with churches, the cemetery represented a definite break from antebellum traditions that did not allow African-American autonomy. "The church, while decrying the violence of the era, also promoted a 'basic optimism' among African Americans, an optimism grounded in the eventual integration of society and Christian redemption."<sup>23</sup> The cemetery, according to Vlach, also enhanced African Americans "sense of ethnicity as well as satisfying their personal need to communicate with their deceased family members."<sup>24</sup>

The best way of linking Golden Hill Cemetery to these significant trends in African-American culture is through the distinctive stone carving of Hiram Johnson, who carved several outstanding gravemarkers and monuments from the 1880s to the early twentieth century.

According to the Montgomery County census, in 1880, Hiram Johnson was a 24 year old black male who was living in the household of Samuel Hodgson, a white Clarksville merchant. Hiram's occupation is not marked on the census record.<sup>25</sup> However, having lived in the household of Samuel Hodgson, merchant and owner of the Clarksville Marble Works, Hiram likely learned the art of stonemasonry with the Hodgson family. Established in 1852, the Clarksville Marble Works imported marble from Italy and red and gray granite from Scotland, giving Hiram a wide variety of stone types to work with. According to Ursula Beach, a former Montgomery County historian, "Monuments and statuary were carved upon order by Samuel Hodgson and his artisans or executed by craftsmen in Italy."<sup>26</sup> No further indication of Hiram Johnson's occupation was found. He was not listed among other African-American stonemasons during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, linking him to the Hodgson family substantiates oral histories that say he was a master stonemason that worked in both the black and white cemeteries.

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The monuments Hiram Johnson carved help relate information about the African-American community of Clarksville during the era of Jim Crow era segregation. According to John Michael Vlach, “The fact that gravestones function in a social system is an important proof that these items have a traditional basis. Resulting not only from an individual’s skill but also from collectively maintained attitudes, the gravestone represents communal sentiments. . . .”<sup>27</sup> Johnson’s monuments represent the beliefs upheld by members of the African-American middle and upper classes in Clarksville. The elaborate detail on these monuments makes it easy to distinguish between prominent, wealthy community members and less wealthy members. One of the most elaborate monuments attributed to Johnson is in his family plot, with a full size depiction of his wife, Lena, who died in 1899. Other significant Johnson-carved monuments are the Dabney family monument, which shows a full size winged cherub holding flowers; the Wheeler family monument, which consists of an angel holding a cross chiseled into the stone; and the Buck family monument, which is tall obelisk topped with a classical urn.

The work of Hiram Johnson at Golden Hill Cemetery is physical evidence of class similarities between the white and black middle class of Tennessee towns in the late nineteenth century. Both groups embraced Victorian iconography in their homes, their interior furnishings, and in this case, in the gravestones that marked their places of burials. Similarly embellished Victorian markers are found at Greenwood Cemetery. The difference between the two cemeteries lies in the relatively few large, ornate markers at Golden Hill Cemetery compared to the many Victorian markers at Greenwood Cemetery. These artifacts of material culture confirm that census data and tax lists from those years point out—there was a black and a white middle class in turn-of-the-century Clarksville, but the white middle class was much larger in numbers and more wealthy in possessions than the African-American middle class.

Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, prominent members of the African-American community were interred at Golden Hill. Nace Dixon was elected to the City Council in 1899. He held that office for 14 years, only being removed when his stance in favor of Prohibition caused local Democrats to band together to have him defeated in the next election.<sup>28</sup> Another political leader interred in Golden Hill is Samuel Dabney, the first African-American constable in Clarksville. In addition to political leaders, outstanding community members were also interred there. One of the most prominent figures in both the white and black communities was Dr. Robert T. Burt. Dr. Burt receives credit for being the first physician, black or white, to establish an infirmary that evolved into the first hospital in Clarksville. Dr. Burt’s infirmary was unique in that both black and white doctors used the facilities, seeing both black and white patients. (Home Infirmary, NR 8/24/78, no longer extant.) Also interred at Golden Hill is Dr. Sylvester Jefferson, one of the first African American dentists in the town.<sup>29</sup> (See Photos 17 and 18.)

Military veterans are buried in Golden Hill. Several regiments of Union troops were organized in Clarksville during the last years of the Civil War. In 1863, African-American laborers helping fortify Union strongholds in Nashville and Clarksville were organized into several Union regiments.<sup>30</sup> Included among the burials at Golden Hill are four identified Civil War veterans including members of the 101<sup>st</sup> Regiment, 13<sup>th</sup> U.S. Colored Heavy Artillery, and 16<sup>th</sup> U.S. Colored Infantry. (See Photo 19, for gravemarker of John Cokely.) Since many of the Civil War era graves are found in the southern section of the cemetery where intact monuments are difficult to locate because of the overgrown nature of that section of the cemetery, there may be more veterans buried in the cemetery. Twelve World War I veterans are also buried at Golden Hill showing the significance of Golden Hill well into the twentieth century.

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In 1929, after Mattie Page's death and interment in Golden Hill, the executor of her estate sold the Golden Hill property and 80 shares of stock in the cemetery to William Keese. <sup>31</sup> Keese, a local undertaker, kept the property until his death in 1933, with his estate being willed to his wife Jennie Keese. <sup>32</sup> In 1947, Jennie Keese conveyed the property to Albert Roberts for \$1.00. <sup>33</sup> Reverend Wiley Blount Moore, the current owner, purchased the property in 1996. <sup>34</sup>

Currently attempts are being made to clean-up Golden Hill after years of neglect. Reverend Wiley Moore is responsible for the expenses incurred from the clean-up and finding people to work in the cemetery. Reverend Sterling Johnson has brought local newspaper attention to the cemetery. Recognition of Golden Hill is an important first step toward community awareness of the resources available in Golden Hill. Listing on the National Register will bring attention to the important contributions African Americans made to the development of Clarksville during the era of Jim Crow segregation and help spark interest in restoration of such an important landmark.

<sup>11</sup> "Kids in Control" of Clarksville, Tennessee. *It's a Black Thing! A Compilation of Historical Facts about Clarksville-Montgomery County Citizens of African American Descent* (Clarksville: privately printed, 1997), 51.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas H. Winn, "Clarksville," in *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History & Culture*, ed. Carroll Van West (Nashville: Tennessee Historical Society, 1998), 175.

<sup>12</sup> Jill Noelle Cecil, "Historic Cemeteries Struggle to Maintain Place in Local History" *The Leaf-Chronicle*, 3 February 2000.

<sup>13</sup> *It's A Black Thing*, 73 and 74.

<sup>15</sup> Conversation with Wiley Blount Moore, Golden Hill Cemetery, Clarksville, Tennessee, 19 March 2001.

<sup>16</sup> *It's A Black Thing*, 61; and "Black History Month, looking back. . . Political Triumph," *The Leaf Chronicle* 11 February 2000.

<sup>17</sup> Winn, "Clarksville," 175.

<sup>18</sup> *It's a Black Thing*, 60.

<sup>19</sup> Will of John W. Page, June 21, 1911, Minute Book 43, Page 281, Montgomery County Archives, Clarksville, Tennessee.

<sup>20</sup> Monument of John W. Page, Golden Hill Cemetery, Clarksville, Tennessee.

<sup>21</sup> John Michael Vlach, *By the Work of Their Hands: Studies in Afro-American Folklife*, with a foreword by Lawrence W. Levine (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991), 109.

<sup>22</sup> David Charles Sloane, *The Last Great Necessity: Cemeteries in American History* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 187.

<sup>23</sup> *Powerful Artifacts: A Guide to Surveying and Documenting Rural African-American Churches in the South* (privately printed: Center for Historic Preservation, Middle Tennessee State University, 2000), 33.

<sup>5</sup> Vlach, *By the Works of Their Hands*, 112.

<sup>25</sup> Montgomery County Census Records, 1880, 13<sup>th</sup> District of Clarksville, Montgomery County Archives, Clarksville, Tennessee, 375.

<sup>26</sup> Ursula Smith Beech, *Along the Warioto: A History of Montgomery County, Tennessee* (Nashville: McQuiddy Press, 1964), 275.

<sup>27</sup> John Michael Vlach, *By the Work of Their Hands: Studies in Afro-American Folklife*, with a foreword by Lawrence W. Levine (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991), 113.

<sup>28</sup> Winn, "Clarksville," 175.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Jill Noelle Cecil, "City Rich with Heritage," *The Leaf-Chronicle* 3 February 2000.

<sup>31</sup> Deed Book 72, Pages 436 and 437, Montgomery County Archives, Clarksville, Tennessee.

<sup>32</sup> Probate Book U, Page 395, Montgomery County Archives, Clarksville, Tennessee.

<sup>33</sup> Deed Book 100, Page 205 and 206, Montgomery County Archives, Clarksville, Tennessee.

<sup>34</sup> Property Tax Map, Clarksville Tennessee.

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## GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

### Verbal Boundary Description

The property is on Seven Mile Ferry Road within the city limits of Clarksville, as defined in the attached tax map, parcel 28.

### Boundary Justification

The nominated boundaries contain all of the acreage of Golden Hill Cemetery because the property has not been expanded or decreased since its period of significance. The nominated boundaries contain all of the historical acreage associated with the cemetery .

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## PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs by: Carroll Van West  
MTSU Center for Historic Preservation  
Box 80, MTSU  
Murfreesboro, TN 37132

Negatives: Tennessee Historical Commission

Date: February 2001

Dirt Drive through the cemetery, facing North  
1 of 19

Family plot, facing South  
2 of 19

Family plot, gravemarkers, Dabney Monument, facing South  
3 of 19

Gravestones, facing East  
4 of 19

Gravestones, facing North  
5 of 19

Gravestones, facing Northwest  
6 of 19

Southern section, facing East  
7 of 19

Family plot, gravestones, facing West  
8 of 19

Lena Johnson Monument, facing South  
9 of 19

Lena Johnson Monument, facing West  
10 of 19

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Family plots, facing West  
11 of 19

Dabney Monument, facing Northwest  
12 of 19

Wheeler Monument, facing East  
13 of 19

William Keesee Monument, facing West  
14 of 19

Family Plot and Gravemarkers, facing Northeast  
15 of 19

Buck family monument, facing Northwest  
16 of 19

Dr. Sylvester Jefferson monument, facing west  
17 of 19

Burt family plot, facing northwest  
18 of 19

John Cokley, USCT, marker, facing west  
19 of 19