

**INTRODUCTION TO OAKLAND CEMETERY
(PREVIOUSLY OAKLAND PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH CEMETERY)
MORGAN ROAD**

Although Oakland Presbyterian Church was not an early Church and its existence was short lived, some of those buried in the Cemetery – the Moore and the Doak families – were among the earliest surnames who settled the area now known today as Greene County, Tennessee.

Oakland Presbyterian was organized on April 21, 1873 by members of the Mount Bethel Presbyterian Church that once stood on today's Tusculum Blvd. Many, if not most, of the forebears of those interred in Oakland Cemetery – the Doaks, Galbreaths, Moores, Ramseys and Rankins – are buried in the ancient cemetery where Mount Bethel Church once stood. The division of the Congregation was neither contentious, nor about Church Doctrine. It simply was a matter of location. Some Mt. Bethel Church members who lived further north and east of Town simply wanted a place to worship closer to their homes.

It is said Oakland Church was begun on the farm of Anthony Moore (1803-1885) who is interred in the cemetery. Many members of his family are buried here. A deed to set-out a burial ground was recorded January 28, 1878.

Anthony (1803-1885) & wife, Nancy (1807-1879) Moore



The Church had a very brief life. Two versions of the demise of the building have passed down. One tradition cites a heavy snow accumulation which collapsed the roof. Another tradition says the Church burned to the ground when the steeple was struck by lightning. Both traditions date the destruction of the building in the 1880s.

After the building was destroyed Church services were continued in Old College Chapel at Tusculum College. Some members of the Congregation returned to Mt. Bethel Presbyterian and some members went elsewhere. It seems likely some members began to attend Shiloh Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Not only is Shiloh within only a few miles of Oakland Church and Tusculum College, some family members are buried in both Church cemeteries.

Many of the persons buried in Oakland Cemetery were closely affiliated with Tusculum College. When the Mt. Bethel Presbyterian Church building was dismantled in the first part of the 20th century, the Congregation moved the services to Tusculum College.

The first (known) reading of Oakland Cemetery was made by WPA workers in 1937 when the road to the cemetery was called Whites Mill Road. At this date, a notation of "103 unmarked graves" was included on the transcription. We now know the names of some of those interred in the unmarked graves. John and Eliza Reed Davis Moore were interred here without tombstones as well as two of their three children. Only their son Ralph Moore is buried in Oak Grove Cemetery; but Ralph's child is buried here, also in an unmarked grave.

The next reading occurred 30 years later in 1966. By that time, the land was on private land on Morgan Road. Members of the Morgan family are buried here.

The latest reading of the graveyard occurred in 1991, when the son and only child of Margaret Doak Cordova (1893-1919) and Delfido Cordova (1888-1982 North Carolina, Gethsemane Cemetery), came from North Carolina to visit his mother's grave. Margaret and Delfido had met as students at Tusculum College.

As with all cemeteries, Oakland is no exception in that it has sad stories to tell, including the early death of Margaret Doak Cordova at the age of twenty-six years. Margaret's young husband, Delfido, left the area, remarried and lived out his long life near Asheville.

Some communicable sickness surely came through the community in the mid-1880s. Julia Margaret Doak Anderson buried at least three of her children here between July and September 1886. Several other families also buried children here during this time period.

Among the most poignant of stories is that of Betty Price Morgan (1900-1935) whose death was the result of childbirth. Four of her infants are buried here, some appearing to be twin births who are in unmarked graves. Betty's obituary published in the Greeneville Sun newspaper on October 7th, said she was survived by a husband and "seven small children". At the age of thirty-five, Betty Price Morgan had born as many as eleven children.

Throughout the years, Betty's daughters returned from places afar to be buried near their mother. The last to return was Margaret Lucille Morgan Salazar who was buried in Oakland Cemetery in 2006.

References:

“A History of Mt. Bethel Presbyterian Church”, by Thomas Samuel Rankin, BA, MA, LLD

“A History of the First Presbyterian Church”, Chapter 5, by Mrs. Louise Robinson Orr And Dr. Robert Robinson Orr (a work-in-progress, to be published at a later date)

The Daddy Haynes Story – The Life of Professor Landon Carter Haynes (1857-1956) –
by Grace Haynes

Greeneville One Hundred Year Portrait – 1775-1785, by Richard Harrison Doughty

Historic Greene County and Its People

Research and Transcription of the Mount Bethel Presbyterian Church Cemetery, Greene County Genealogical Society’s publication, The Greene County Pioneer, Vol. 26 No. 2