

MT OLIVE CEMETERY HISTORICAL PRESERVATION SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Society News

PRESIDENT'S PEN

Written by Nick Nicholson, President

Happy New Year everyone, I am Nick Nicholson, Executive Director, and President of Mt Olive Cemetery Historical Preservation Society, and we sincerely hope you all are doing well in this new year. Yes 2025 is here already, and we are looking forward to another banner year. This Newsletter is our final quarterly report of 2024 (Oct-Dec), and we closed out the quarter and year in an exceptional manner as will be highlighted in the various sections of the Newsletter. We continue to increase the breadth of relationships with individuals and organizations around the Clarksville/Tennessee area and beyond. This past year has been a success because of these relationships. We sincerely appreciate you all. Thank you!!! Also, we thank you for your donations, as they help us achieve our mission. Your contributions are appreciated.

Our fall events of 2023, very successful and we thank all who participated in each event.

WWP, 2 Nov - We had about 20 Wounded Warriors show up for their annual fall cleanup. There was much to be done in the three hours that they were there. We had the weed eaters going, blowers blowing leaves, picking up fallen limbs and cutting up fallen trees. The Warriors worked hard, and the cemetery looked great for their efforts. Thank you, WARRIORS!!!

Veteran's Day Ceremony, 11 Nov – Our ceremony always started at 9 am on Veteran's Day, and the ceremony is both a sobering and celebratory event in recognition of service rendered in the US Military. Veterans Day is intended to thank and honor all those who served honorably in the military, living and dead, whether in wartime or peace. We celebrated the service of all veterans including 33 USCTs, 1 Buffalo Soldier, and 1 WWII Soldier interred at Mt. Olive Cemetery. We must never forget to honor them and their families.

Wreaths Across America, 14 Dec – This is an annual event that represents a national effort to remember the fallen, honor those that serve, and teach the next generation to value our freedom by laying a wreath on the veteran's grave site. We laid 35 Wreaths in honor of all the known Veterans buried here at Mt Olive Cemetery. Before the wreaths were laid, a roll call was rendered followed by the playing of TAPS.



WHAT'S IN THIS NEWSLETTER

- President's Pen
- Remembrance of the Month
- Preservation and Restoration Update
- African American Legacy Trail Update

The annual Gift-Wrapping Fundraiser 18-24 Dec – The secret to a successful gift-wrapping fundraiser is having enough volunteers to handle the demand. We were fortunate that many volunteers signed up and SHOWED UP!!! Because of their efforts, our Gift-Wrapping Fundraiser at Governor Square Mall was a huge success. We thank all of the volunteers who gave up time to help make the fundraiser a success. We could not have done it without you.

Annual Holiday Party 28 Dec – We like to think of our Annual Holiday Party as “A Party with A Purpose.” If you did not make it to the party, you missed a great time. We had ham, lamb, beef, and salmon for the meats, veggie tray, fruit tray, cheese tray, devil eggs, rotel, cookies, and pies. Plenty of food, drinks, and fun for everyone. Hope to see you next time!!!

Our Black History Month Program will be at Ft. Bruce/Ft. Defiance on 15 February 2024, starting at 12:30 pm. We have designed a program that aligns with the 2025 Black History Month Program theme, “African Americans and Labor”. Our program focuses on the legacies of African Americans in various labor categories that hail from the Tennessee area. The program is designed to inform influence, inspire, and impact in some measure and on some level. Labor artifacts from the Customs House Museum will be on display. Afterwards, a tour of Mt Olive Cemetery will be offered. We hope to see you at this event.

We love receiving your positive/constructive responses to our Newsletter, so keep them coming. No Newsletter would be complete without a huge thanks to our committed few in the Society who do some unbelievable work to get things accomplished!

The cemetery is open to visitors seven days a week. We ask that you respect the services of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church on Saturdays as they allow their parking lot to be used by visitors of the Cemetery.

Thank you all

Nick



Remembrance of the Month

Written by Phyllis Smith, Historian

Charity and Eddie Headspeth

Charity Headspeth was born Charity Medley to Warisk Medley and Elvira Vass on April 23, 1884. She was raised by her paternal grandparents Anthony and Rose Medley in Stewart County, Tennessee. The 1870 Stewart County census listed the family living in District 2 of Stewart County with a post office of Indian Mound. Anthony Medley, aged 60, was working as a farm laborer. Rose Medley, aged 50, was also working as a farm laborer as was the couple's daughter, Morning Medley, aged 27. Charity and her brother Henderson were both listed as three years of age which was incorrect. On October 18, 1879, Charity's aunt, Morning, married William Murrey in Stewart County and established her own household.

By the time the 1880 census was taken, Anthony Medley had died, and the family moved to Dyers Creek in Stewart County. Rose, aged 78, was listed as the widowed head of household and was keeping house. Charity, aged 20, had no occupation listed and Henderson was listed as 10 years old. On June 17, 1886, Charity married Joseph V. Headspeth and established her own household. Less than a year later, on February 14, 1887, Charity's brother, Henderson, married Mary Medows in Stewart County.

Joseph rented six acres from Nathan Brandon on November 1, 1886 on the north side of and on the Cumberland River opposite the Evins house in Stewart County. The lease would expire on January 1, 1888. Joseph was required by the rental agreement to build a good comfortable cabin on the land. The rental agreement did not list a rental amount so perhaps the cost of building the cabin was the rent. On January 2, 1887, Joseph Headspeth stole a hog valued at ten dollars from Nathan Brandon. A Grand Jury heard the evidence on the theft and returned a true bill. Sheriff Turner arrested Joseph in Katawn, Kentucky on July 1887. According to Jim Long, Stewart County Archivist, Joseph was sentenced to a stint in the penitentiary for the theft.

While the rental agreement for the six acres of land expired on January 1, 1888, apparently Joseph and Chastity did not renew the lease or leave the land because in September 1888, Nathan Brandon sued them for unlawful detention of the six acres of land. Brandon and the Headspeths settled out of court and Brandon paid the court costs. On June 22, 1889, Charity brought charges against Joseph for assault and battery. Joseph was arrested and scheduled to appear before T. J. Brandon, the Justice of the Peace. No outcome for this case was recorded but soon after the Headspeth family moved to Clarksville.

The 1900 Montgomery County, Tennessee census listed the family renting 417 Lee Street. Joseph, aged 55, was working as a furnace laborer and Charity, aged 35, was working as a laundress. According to the census Charity had nine children but by 1900, only two were living. Two daughters were listed, Lulu, aged 14 and Eddie, aged 3. Also living with the family was Charity's mother, Viney Murray, aged 60. Viney was widowed and listed as having birthed six children but only three were living by 1900.

It is unknown what happened to Mary Medows Medley, but on April 6, 1902, Henderson married Lizzie Fletcher in Montgomery County. Eight years later, the marriage seems to have been unsuccessful because Henderson was listed as living with his sister in the 1910 census and his wife is not listed.

By 1910 Joseph was dead because Charity, aged 38, was listed as the widowed head of household and was working as a laundress. The family was renting 422 Lee Street. The census indicated that Charity had seven children but only two were still living. Eddie was twelve years old and Jennie was eight and both were attending school. Charity's mother, Elvira Murray, aged 60, and brother Henderson, aged 34 were living with her. Henderson was working as an iron furnace laborer. Lulu had either died or married and established her own household. No further record of Lulu has been found.

The 1920 census shows some changes and a puzzle. The family is now living at 513 Kellogg Street. Forty-eight-year-old Charity and twenty-two-year-old Eddie were working as cooks for private families. Jennie, aged 18, was working as a laundress. Henderson was listed as living with the family but all the information on him was their mother's information. He is listed as a widowed eighty-seven-year-old female. It is unclear whether Henderson is living with them and the census taker made a mistake or Charity's mom is living with them and the census taker wrote the wrong name.

In 1930 the family was still living at 513 Kellogg Street and paid rent of \$8. Charity, aged 53, and Eddie, aged 30, were working in a tobacco factory. Jennie, aged 28, was working as a laundress. Three children were living with them. All three were Jennie's children. Bennie, aged 10 and daughters Elgie, aged 5, and Charity Mae, aged 3 months. No marriage license has been found for Jennie in Montgomery County.

Charity's last appearance in the census was in 1940. The family was now renting 110 Dickson Alley. Charity, aged 76, was not working outside the house. Eddie, aged 30, was listed as crippled, unable to work. Jennie, aged 39, was working as a cook with an income of \$156. Elgia Minor Chilton, aged 15 and Charity Mae Chilton, aged 10, were attending school. Bennie Joe Headspeth, aged 20, was working as a cook with an income of \$70. A new granddaughter, Bertie Will Milam, aged 10 months, was added to the family. Charity's family was well-to-do enough to afford to hire a cook, Lori Ella Ellis, aged 22, and paid her \$64. They also had a boarder, Ben Stone, aged 23.

Bennie Joe had to register for the WWII draft at 21 years old. His draft registration card revealed that he was born on February 18, 1919 in Clarksville and Jennie Headspeth was his mother. Unlike his sisters, he did not take his father's name. He was drafted and left for the induction center at Fort Oglethorpe in Georgia on May 26, 1943.

Eddie Headspeth died on July 14, 1943 of Pulmonary Tuberculosis. She had been born on July 11, 1897 and was 46 years old when she died. She was buried in Mt Olive Cemetery by Nace Dixon's Undertaking firm on July 16, 1943.

Charity Headspeth died on April 17, 1947 of Bronchial Pneumonia. Although her obituary listed her burial at Evergreen Cemetery, she was buried in Mt Olive Cemetery next to her daughter, Eddie.

Jennie Headspeth moved to Farrockaway, NY where she died on May 29, 1969. Her obituary stated that she was a retired employee of Clarksville Laundry. Her body was returned to Clarksville where she was buried in Foston's Memorial Gardens.



Elgie Minor Chilton married Oscar Ramey. She died on June 14, 1962 of Terminal Nephritis and was buried in Golden Hills Cemetery by Foston Funeral Home. Her death certificate lists Charlie Chilton as her father. Charlie Chilton was listed living on Ford Street in the 1920 census. He was married but living alone. The 1930 census listed him still on Ford Street but divorced. He was the head of the General Quarles Boyd Elks Club and died on March 20, 1973. No mention is made of any children in his obituary.

Bennie Joe Headspeth remained in Clarksville and was an electrician. He died on April 19, 1985 at Clarksville's Memorial Hospital and was buried in Foston Memorial Gardens by Hooker Funeral Home.

Charity Mae Chilton married a Batson and moved to Auverne, NY where she died on September 2, 2000. Her body was returned to Clarksville and she was buried in Foston Memorial Gardens by Foston Funeral Home.

Bibliography

"Bennie Headspeth." The Leaf-Chronicle. April 22, 1985.

"C. E. Chilton." The Leaf-Chronicle. March 21, 1973.

"Charity Mae Batson." The Leaf-Chronicle. September 7, 2000.

"Elgie Minor Ramey Obituary." The Leaf-Chronicle. June 16, 1962.

"41 Negro Men Leave for Induction Point." The Leaf-Chronicle. May 26, 1943.

Montgomery County, Tennessee Census (1900,1910,1920,1930,1940).

Montgomery County, Tennessee Marriage Index, 1799-1953.

"Mrs. Charity Headspeth." The Leaf-Chronicle. April 18, 1947.

"Mrs. Headspeth." The Leaf-Chronicle. June 1, 1969.

National Archives at St. Louis; St. Louis, Missouri; Draft Registration Cards for Tennessee; Records of the Selective Service System, 147; Box 129.

State vs Joe Hudspeth, Stewart County, Tennessee Circuit Court Minute Book 9, p 491.

Stewart County, Tennessee Census (1870, 1880).

Stewart County, Tennessee Circuit Court Minute Book 9, p 447.

Stewart County, Tennessee Circuit Court Minute Book 10, p 26.

Stewart County, Tennessee Deed Book 32, p 335 & 336.

Tennessee Death Records, 1908-1958; Tennessee State Library and Archives; Nashville, Tennessee.

Tennessee Marriage Records, 1780-2002; Tennessee State Library and Archives; Nashville, Tennessee.

Untitled Article. Stewart Breeze. July 22, 1887, p 4.

Preservation and Restoration Update

We thank Mr. Robert Reynolds (US Army, Retired), Outreach Specialist, for the Wounded Warrior Project, and the Wounded Warriors themselves for their extraordinary support during our Fall Mt Olive Cemetery WWP cleanup operation. It was a huge success.

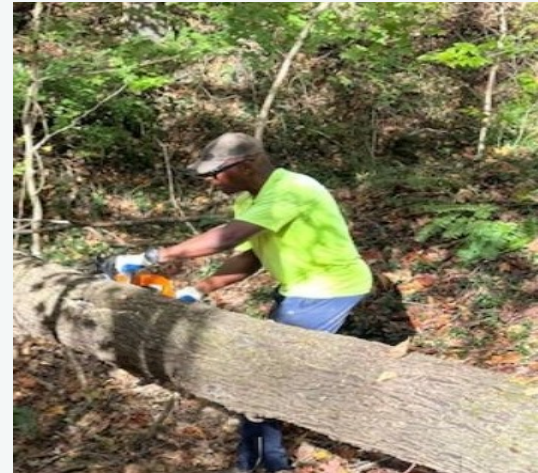
Here are the details of the cleanup operation.

WHO: Wounded Warriors

WHAT: Mt Olive Cemetery Fall Clean Up Community Service Project

WHEN: Saturday, 2 November 2024 from 2pm till 4pm CST.

WHERE: Mt Olive Cemetery, 931 Cumberland Dr



Veterans Day Ceremony



MOCHPS Christmas Gift Wrapping



Clarksville/Montgomery County African American Legacy Trail

Written by Terry Morris, Director of African American Legacy Trail

Happy New Year!!!

2024 proved to be a great year for MOCHPS and the African American Legacy Trail. With the help of many community members, sponsors, friends and each other, we showed up and showed out, right out of the gate Thank you!

This year we have several challenging strategic goals:

Continue our momentum after launching the 2nd edition brochure, the A.R. portion of the trail, starting a google ad campaign to draw awareness and winning an award for educational impact in our community!

Continue to film, record and catalogue our first countywide, county funded African American Oral history project for future generations to learn how we came to be a great community! This project is about sharing beautiful stories of family, friendships, forging ahead and following ones owe will to thrive and survive. Please share with us your story or your family's story, won't you?

Double the traffic and views of the trail's several web incarnations which reached upward of almost 100K, inside and out of the county! Our County Deputy Historian and creator of the trail, Shana Thornton, is continuing her conversations and efforts in the community to support this project and see that it reaches its intended purpose: documenting what must be preserved – African American history.

Gaining new sponsors for the Augmented Reality feature of the trail. The goal of raising enough money through this avenue, namely for an endowment fund and/or scholarship opportunities will undoubtedly be my number one priority for the year ahead of us.

Where there is a will there is a way! Excitingly, our members and the board will celebrate this summer when the MOCHPS Historian, Phyllis Smith, is announced as an honoree at this years' APSU Military Alumni Chapter Dinner! These honorees are showcased for their service to our country and our community. The opportunity to create an endowment and raise funds will be aided by the many who support this great cause and honorees every year. We are blessed to have such an opportunity and the support that comes along with this organization. Phyllis is more than worthy for her tireless efforts over her career to tell the stories of the U.S.C.T. and many others buried in Mount Olive.

Lastly, let me thank each of you again for supporting our mission at MOCHPS with your time, talent and your tender. Your thoughts and prayers are felt and heard. Your messages and emails are received with joy. Help us make 2025 a great year to educate all about those interred at the cemetery and the rich history and stories on the African American Legacy Trail. See you on the trail!
