

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

JUN 12 1990

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Odd Fellows Cemeteryother names/site number n/a

2. Location

street & number Highway 82 at Henderson Street n/a not for publicationcity, town Starkville n/a vicinitystate Mississippi code MS county Oktibbeha code 105 zip code 39759

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

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

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
	<u>0</u> sites
	<u>0</u> structures
	<u>0</u> objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
n/aNumber of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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 forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Kenneth A. P. Pool

June 5, 1990

Signature of certifying official

Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- ☒ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the National
Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.
☐ removed from the National Register.
☐ other, (explain:)

Amy Federman7/24/90

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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 n/a

walls n/a

roof n/a

other gravemarkers: Stone

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Odd Fellows Cemetery is a three acre tract located on a hill overlooking U.S. Highway 82 at Henderson Street, northwest of the central business district, in Starkville, Mississippi. Local tradition maintains that this hill was the site of a Chocchuma Indian settlement, but no evidence of Indian occupation now remains at the site (information provided by Professor Richard Marshall, Cobb Institute of Archaeology, Mississippi State University). The unfenced, grassy lawn is shaded by a scattering of fairly large trees. There are numerous gravestones, most of which are modest in size and ornamentation. Most are simple headstones. The earlier stones generally are vertical slabs of marble. More recent stones tend to be granite tablets of conventional type. Many of the family plots are surrounded by masonry copings. The earliest gravestone discovered dates to 1913. The cemetery has been used continuously from about 1911 to the present as a place of interment. The earliest graves were scattered about through the cemetery, but with the passage of time, many of these graves developed into clusters of graves as relatives were buried around these first interments. Today, burials are more-or-less evenly distributed about the cemetery. Throughout the cemetery, the graves are oriented in an east-west direction, normally facing eastward.

Since 1976, the cemetery has been the object of a continuing beautification and restoration effort which has resulted in the orderly appearance of the cemetery today. There is little evidence of any formal landscaping. A Mississippi State historical marker was erected at Odd Fellows Cemetery in 1979. Today the cemetery has the fairly typical appearance of most cemeteries that continue in use -- its appearance is a blend of the past and the present through its mixture of old and new gravestones.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☒ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☒ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Ethnic Heritage/Black

Period of Significance

1911-1940

Significant Dates

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Significant Person

n/a

Architect/Builder

n/a

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Odd Fellows Cemetery is significant as the most intact historic property associated with the growth and development of the black community of Starkville, seat of Oktibbeha County, Mississippi. The black community has historically constituted a significant proportion of the population of Starkville since its beginnings in the 1830s. The cemetery represents the longstanding historical presence of the black community by effectively documenting in its gravestones the existence of generations of people for whom otherwise there might be no surviving material memorial. In addition the family plots, frequently set apart by a low masonry coping, serve to illustrate social customs in the practice of burying relatives together in clusters.

Because the black community has historically been far less economically advantaged than Starkville's white community, there are no other identified historic resources associated with the black community that could be considered eligible for the National Register. In recent decades, as the black community has grown economically, older church buildings and other structures that have served as the traditional focal points of black society have been replaced by modern construction. The homes, institutions and places of business associated with the historically influential members of the black community have either not survived (due to urban renewal) or have suffered major losses of physical integrity. An example is the barber shop of Robert Wier, the first black-owned business in Starkville, which was demolished several years ago. Most of the older housing is of sub-standard construction and will eventually have to be replaced. The efforts, both private and city-sponsored, undertaken since 1976 to restore the cemetery are indicative of the significance with which it is regarded by the community. The paucity of black cultural resources thus increases the relative significance of the Odd Fellows Cemetery (cf. NR Bulletin 15, p. 56, item 4).

☒ See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Wier, Sadye H., and John F. Marszalek
1977 A Black Businessman in White Mississippi, 1886-1974. University Press of Mississippi. Jackson, Mississippi

Deed Records. Deed Book 123, page 70
Oktibbeha County Courthouse, Starkville, Mississippi

☐ See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ 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 Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State historic preservation office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 3 acres

UTM References

A

1	6	3	3	0	7	8	0	3	7	0	4	3	0	0
Zone				Easting				Northing						

B

Zone				Easting				Northing						

C

Zone				Easting				Northing						

D

Zone				Easting				Northing						

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

☒ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes all of the parcel of land that is considered to be the Odd Fellows Cemetery.

☐ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jackson Elliott and Richard Cawthon
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**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Odd Fellows Cemetery, Starkville, Oktibbeha County, Mississippi

Section number _____ Page 1

The cemetery appears to have been established about 1911 in which year the parcel of land that it occupied was purchased by Lodge No. 2948 of the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows of America, a white organization which donated the land for use as a black burial ground. It soon became the main cemetery for the black community of Starkville. Over the decades the Odd Fellows Cemetery has become the last resting place for the most prominent leaders of Starkville's black community including the educator E. W. Hazen and businessmen N. F. Daily, Charles Alexander, and Robert Wier. The life of Robert Wier was memorialized in a biography that was written by his wife, Sadye H. Wier, and published by the University Press of Mississippi. Because the Odd Fellows Cemetery has been continuously used since it was founded in 1911 without any significant temporal changes in burial practices, its period of significance, which in practice extends to the present, is for National Register purposes arbitrarily closed at 1940, this date being fifty years previous to the date of this nomination.

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Odd Fellows Cemetery, Starkville, Oktibbeha County, Mississippi

Section number 10 Page 1

The property on which the odd Fellows Cemetery is located is defined as being a part of Lot 27, Block 16, Ward 1, according to the A. L. Goodman map of the City of Starkville, Mississippi. Beginning at a point on the north right-of-way of U.S. Highway 82, said point being the southwest corner of said Lot 27, run thence North along the west side of said Lot 27 a distance of 30 feet to the point of beginning, from the point of beginning run thence in an easterly direction along the north line of Lots 27-A, 27-B, 27-C, and 27-D, a distance of 305 feet to a point on the east line of said Lot 27, being the northeast corner of Lot 27-D, thence run north along the east line of said Lot 27 for a distance of 429 feet to the northeast corner of said Lot 27, thence run west along the north line of said Lot 27 for a distance of 310 feet to the northwest corner of said Lot 27, thence run south along the west line of said Lot 27 for a distance of 255 feet to the point of beginning.



Odd Fellows Cemetery

Starkville, Oktibbeha County, Mississippi

Photo by Jack Elliott

January 1990

Negative: Miss. Dept. of Archives and History

view to northeast

photo 1 of 2



Odd Fellows Cemetery

Starkville, Oktibbeha County, Mississippi

Photo by Jack Elliott

January 1990

Negative: Miss. Dept. of Archives and History

view to west

photo 2 of 2.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Odd Fellows Cemetery

Name of Property
Oktibbeha County, Mississippi
County and State

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number ____ Page ____

Amendment to National Register of Historic Places Nomination
Odd Fellows Cemetery
Starkville, Oktibbeha County, Mississippi

The Odd Fellows Cemetery located on Old Highway 82 in Starkville, Oktibbeha County, Mississippi was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on July 24, 1990. The Mississippi Department of Archives and History, the State Historic Preservation Office, recently learned of a mistake in the nomination. The purpose of this amendment is to correct the error.

In Section 8, the nomination states that the land for the cemetery was purchased in 1911 by "Lodge 2948 of the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows of America, a white organization which donated the land for use as a black burial ground." That statement is incorrect. The deed records for Oktibbeha County confirm that the land was purchased in 1911 by the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows of America.¹ However, the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows was a group founded for African Americans in 1847 in New York after receiving a charter from the British G.U.O.O.F.²

Therefore Section 8 of the nomination should be amended to read:

The cemetery appears to have been established about 1911 in which year the parcel of land that it occupied was purchased by Lodge No. 2948 of the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows of America, an African American organization which used the land for as a black burial ground.

4. State/Federal Certification:



H. T. Holmes, State Historic Preservation Officer

Date

3.7.2012

9. Bibliography

Stevens, Albert. *The Cyclopedia of Fraternities*. New York: E.B. Treat, 2000.

11. Form Prepared By

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March 6, 2012

¹ Oktibbeha County Chancery Clerk Deed Books, Bk123, p. 70

² Albert Stevens. *The Cyclopedia of Fraternities*. (New York: E. B. Treat, 1907), 114.