NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018 1423

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

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 Providence Cemetery

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Route 4, Providence Road (county road) N/A not for publication

city, town Grenada [X] vicinity

state Mississippi code MS county Grenada code 43 zip code 38901

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
[X] private	[ ] building(s)		buildings
[ ] public-local	[ ] district		sites
[ ] public-State	[X] site	1	structures
[ ] public-Federal	[ ] structure		objects
	[ ] object		
		1	0 Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number 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 [X] 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 [X] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. [ ] See continuation sheet.

Kenneth H. O'Dell — August 7, 1991

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. — Patrick Andrus — 10/2/91

[ ] determined eligible for the National Register. [ ] See continuation sheet.

[ ] determined not eligible for the National Register.

[ ] removed from the National Register.

[ ] other, (explain:)

for Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)	Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
FUNERARY: cemetery	FUNERARY: cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions)	Materials (enter categories from instructions)
N/A	foundation N/A walls N/A roof N/A other Marble, limestone, ironstone

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

That portion of Providence Cemetery being nominated to the National Register is a rectangular area 260 feet by 130 feet in size. Within this area is a concentration of early graves, the earliest dating to 1840. This historic area is located on about three-quarters of an acre in the northwest section of the cemetery. More recent graves are concentrated in the southern part of the cemetery, where they do not impair the cemetery's historic identity. Used continuously from 1840 to the present as a place of interment, Providence Cemetery is located on 2.1 acres of gently rolling terrain on the Providence Baptist Church property in a rural area about 11 miles east of Grenada, Mississippi. It is bounded by Providence Road on the north, Providence Baptist Church on the west and privately owned wooded land on the east and south. The present church building (constructed in 1975) stands adjacent to but separate from the cemetery at the top of a wooded hill and is reached by a circular drive. The graveyard is situated on a large treeless hilltop and is enclosed by a fence added in 1919 with an entrance gate near the church drive. There is no formal landscaping. The graves are arranged largely in rows, but since the cemetery is spacious, they are not close together.

That portion of Providence Cemetery being nominated contains headstones with some of the earliest dates found in cemeteries in the northern part of the state. The oldest decipherable marker is inscribed with the burial date of 1840. Inscribed markers indicate 6 burial dates in the 1840s, 24 in the 1850s, 21 in the 1860s, and one in 1870 (the end date of the period of significance) [Frances G. Martin, C.G.R.S., "Cemeteries of Grenada County, Mississippi and Surrounding Areas," Vol. I, 1987, pp. 41-45]. There are also unmarked graves in the cemetery.

The historic area of the burial ground contains examples of epitaphs and funerary symbols typical of the nineteenth century. Among the most notable grave markers are those made of native ironstone which underlies the area and which weathers to a deep red color. It is noted in a Clarion-Ledger newspaper article by Carl McIntire entitled "Slave Made Markers" that a slave prior to the Civil War became quite adept at cutting tongue-and-groove slabs from the native stone that fit perfectly. Made like tables of five pieces of stone with the headstone taller to carry

[x] See continuation sheet

7. Description

inscriptions, the slabs were cut immediately after the rock was unearthed before it had hardened completely. It was reported that this slave could neither read nor write, but was able to copy lettering and draw designs that were etched on the stone. Although the identity of this stone carver remains elusive, it is evident that he was a creative and ingenious craftsman who used the only material available to him. These markers, which date back to the 1840s, are pictured in accompanying photograph Numbers 2 and 3. Other markers in the cemetery range from ironstone, limestone and marble monuments carved with funerary symbols and wording to large, simple, unmarked mounds of native stone obviously placed to simulate tablestone monuments.

The cemetery has been operated and owned for at least 150 years by the Providence Baptist Church and will remain privately owned by that congregation. The property is maintained through church donations and funds left by deceased persons for its continued care and preservation.

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)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
Exploration/Settlement	1840-1870	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.

Providence Cemetery is locally significant in the area of exploration and settlement (Criterion A), dating from the very early period of settlement in what is now Grenada County. Although cemeteries are normally considered ineligible for the National Register, Providence Cemetery warrants recognition because of its exceptional age, dating from the early period of settlement of the area and being one of the few identifiable historic properties to survive from that period (National Register Bulletin 15, page 55, guideline 2). The period of significance begins in 1840, which is the date of the earliest inscribed tombstone in Providence Cemetery. This cemetery is one of the first established in the area. There are six recorded burials and inscribed markers showing burial dates in the 1840s, which is more than any other cemetery in the county (Frances G. Martin, C.G.R.S., "Cemeteries of Grenada County, Mississippi and Surrounding Areas," Vol. I, 1987). The date of 1870 was selected as the end of the period of significance because that is the date Grenada County was established and indicates the end of the earliest exploration and settlement of this area. (Although it may be determined in the future that the cemetery is significant for folk funerary art, it is not being nominated on that basis at this time as sufficient information for evaluation has not yet been compiled.)

The land on which Grenada County was settled was originally part of the Choctaw Indian lands which stretched across Mississippi, Alabama and Tennessee. The first known white inhabitants of the area came in 1818 when the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions established an Indian mission at the now extinct town of Elliott. As white settlement increased in Mississippi in the early 1800s, the Choctaws ceded or sold large tracts of their territory. They first ceded the central and southern areas of the state and by 1830 there were 19,000 Choctaw Indians concentrated in the north central section of Mississippi. In the early 1820s the Mississippi Legislature passed laws to deprive the Choctaw of their tribal laws and place them under the jurisdiction of the state. This caused much dissent among the Choctaw. Some members of the tribe felt that moving west to reservations would be in their best interests while others wished to stay on the ancestral lands.

☒ See continuation sheet

The Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek in 1830 settled the issue, with the Choctaw agreeing to move west to reservations and selling the rest of their territory in Mississippi. Those Choctaw who wished to remain were granted sections of land which they could settle or sell. The land office opened in October 1833 for the legal sale of the land which later became Grenada County. Land speculation was the most important attraction to the area; however, settlers also came who intended to make homes here, especially planters who were continually looking for new lands. Navigable rivers such as the Yalobusha, Yazoo and other streams, which connected with the Mississippi River and thus provided a good means of bringing supplies into the area, interested permanent settlers. Persons from south Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, North Carolina, Virginia and Maryland were the predominant settlers.

In 1833 a group of speculators purchased land to be subdivided into the towns of Pittsburg and Tullahoma along the Yalobusha River. In 1834, the town of Pittsburg was platted with 35 blocks subdivided into 249 lots. Sale of lots in Pittsburg began in 1835 with the first houses and businesses constructed that year.

Tullahoma was founded by a group of investors in 1833. The town was surveyed and lots put up for sale at public auction in 1834. The original survey contained over 250 lots south of the Yalobusha River. The Tullahoma Town Company sold 201 lots between 1833 and 1855, when it ceased business. Most sales occurred in the years between 1835 and 1839 when the town was established and the earliest homes and businesses were constructed. Descriptions of the early appearance of Tullahoma suggest that no notable buildings were erected for several years. Most early buildings were one-story frame structures, none of which have survived to the present in their original form.

After two years of co-existence the two rival communities of Pittsburg and Tullahoma, separated only by a section line, were joined together to form the town of Grenada.

Grenada County was created in 1870 by an Act of the Mississippi Legislature, with a larger portion of the new county being taken from Yalobusha County and smaller areas from Carroll, Tallahatchie and Choctaw Counties. These four older counties were created in 1833 from Indian lands secured by the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek. Grenada was chosen as the county seat, since it had become the largest trade center in the area and had outgrown other towns in population. It would be difficult to arrive at an exact population figure for Grenada County prior to 1870 since this area was then composed of parts of four counties. The census of 1870 listed 3,929 white persons and 6,642 free colored persons living in the county.

The rural settlement of Providence was located approximately 11 miles east of Grenada. The three main roads were then Graysport, Middle and Providence Road, where Providence Cemetery and Providence Baptist Church are located. Providence Baptist Church was organized in 1838. In 1841 the church had 91 members, and in 1842 it is reported to have had a roll of 134, of which there were both black and white members. The present church building was constructed in 1975. Also located on Providence Road was the Providence Academy, which issued a catalog in 1842 listing a faculty of 3 and a student body of 35 boys and 31 girls.

The names of prominent families and persons instrumental in establishing this part of Mississippi appear on many tombstones in the cemetery. Some examples appear below:

--H. G. Taylor, who worked to establish Grenada County and its government, along with his wife, children, and other family members.

--Joseph Collins, wealthy businessman, land owner and planter from Alabama who came to this part of Mississippi in 1833 seeking new lands, along with his wife, Sarah, and son, Moses, and other family members. Moses Collins' grave is the oldest inscribed tombstone in the cemetery, with a burial date of 1840.

--John S. King, extensive land owner who gave the land for the church and cemetery, along with other family members.

--Three children of W. M. Aldridge who helped organize the county government and was a member of the first grand jury.

--The wife, two children and other family members of W. C. Chamberlain, who was commissioned by the Southern Railroad Association to build and manage the first respectable and higher quality inn in Grenada.

--Dr. Jasper N. Wall, an early physician, with his wife and other family members.

--B. F. Johnson, an early land owner, along with several family members.

--W. G. Moore, son of Jennie Moore, who was the wife of a Grenada mayor and dentist.

--The wife and family members of C. C. Campbell, principal of the Providence Academy, as listed in the catalog of 1842.

As stated earlier, there are six recorded burials and inscribed markers showing burial dates in the 1840s, which is more than any other cemetery in the county. It is possible that many of the unmarked graves and tablestones of slabs of ironstone date back to this time. There are also 24 markers inscribed with burial dates in the 1850s, 21 with burial dates in the 1860s, and one in 1870 (the end date of the period of significance). Tombstones erected during the following one hundred years are numerous and indicate continual use. The oldest graves are located in the northwest section of the cemetery--the area being nominated to the National Register--while more recent graves are concentrated in the southern part where they do not significantly impair the cemetery's historic identity.

That section of the cemetery being nominated to the National Register contains examples of epitaphs and funerary symbols typical of the nineteenth century. Among the most notable of the old headstones are examples of rare primitive tablestones improvised in tongue-and-groove fashion by a local slave craftsman. These markers are made of ironstone unearthed in this locality and date back to the 1840s. Emblems, designs and lettering were carved into this rock. Other markers range from gravestones carved with funerary symbols and word-ing to large, simple, unmarked mounds of native stone obviously placed to simulate tablestone monuments.

The city of Grenada has been surveyed, but a county-wide survey has not yet been conducted. The only extant property in Grenada County known to pre-date the establishment of Providence Cemetery is the Kitty Avent House in Grenada, built in 1835 but extensively altered with the addition of front rooms, a two-story porch, metal siding and the replacement of the windows. The Moore House, 655 White Circle in Grenada, dates to circa 1840, but it has also been greatly altered and now appears as a Neo-Classical Revival residence. Other identified properties in Grenada County that were constructed before 1870 are as follows:

--Moore-Whitaker House, 201 Margin St., Grenada. Built in 1857, this Greek Revival house retains integrity.

--Golloday-Bondurant House, 501 Margin, Grenada. Built c. 1855; intact.

--J. C. Stokes House, 100 College Blvd., Grenada. Built 1852, moved c. 1987. Intact except for the removal of chimneys and replacement of windows.

--Walthall House, 73 College Blvd., Grenada. Built 1856, but the Eastlake porch added about 1880 gives the house a later appearance.

--Morrison Heights, College Blvd., Grenada. Built as a one-story cottage c. 1854 but c. 1900 a second story was added, and c. 1920 a two-story porch was added. The house is now Colonial Revival in style.

--Eggleson House, 315 College, Grenada. Built c. 1860 but remodeled c. 1900 into the Colonial Revival style.

--Parker House, 501 Monroe, Grenada. Built c. 1850 but extensively remodeled c. 1890.

--Jones House, 751 Main, Grenada. Built c. 1860 but altered c. 1940.

--Evergreen Plantation, four miles north of Grenada. Listed in the National Register in 1977. Built c. 1855, the main house suffered fire damage in December of 1983 and is now in ruins.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Daigre, Barbara A. The History of Grenada County. ____: Inter-Collegiate Press, 1985.

Deboo, Dr. Philli, Chairman of the Department of Geological Sciences at Memphis State University at Memphis, Tennessee. Interviewed by Margaret Miller, October 10, 1990.

Hathorn, J. C. "A History of Grenada County," 1970.

Martin, Frances G., C.G.R.S. "Cemeteries of Grenada County, Mississippi and Surrounding Areas," Volume I, 1987.

McIntire, Carl. "Slave Made Markers." Clarion-Ledger (Jackson, MS), date not recorded.

Providence Baptist Church. "History of Providence Baptist Church," Compiled by History Committee Katherine Harbin, Irene Floyd, Jenner Rose Carpenter, 1980.

[X] 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:

- [X] State historic preservation office
- [ ] Other State agency
- [ ] Federal agency
- [ ] Local government
- [ ] University
- [X] Other

Specify repository: Grenada Public Library

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property less than one acre

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
A	16	257420	3733400	B			
C				D			

[ ] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description The cemetery is situated in the state of Mississippi, county of Grenada Township 21 North, Range 6 East, Section 1 and encompasses the eastern section of the property of Providence Baptist Church on Providence Road. The portion of the cemetery being nominated is that which dates from 1840 to 1870 and is a rectangular area on the northwestern side of the cemetery. The point of beginning is at the northwestern corner of the cemetery at a fence post and runs south 260 feet along the fence line, thence turns 90 degrees to the east and runs east 130 feet, thence north for 260 feet, [ ] See continuation sheet thence west for 130 feet to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes that area of the cemetery containing graves dating from 1840 through 1870. That portion of the cemetery containing more recent graves is excluded.

[ ] See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mrs. Margaret Miller (edited by Brenda Rubach, MDAH)

organization _____ date October 30, 1990

street & number 6245 Lochlevin Cove telephone 901/685-7884

city or town Memphis state TN zip code 38119

Chairman of Cemetery Committee: Mr. Winford Worsham
Route 1, Box 400
Gore Springs, MS 38929
601/226-1983

★U.S.GPO:1988-0-223-918

Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson. National Register file. Grenada County. Grenada Multiple Resource Area.

United States. Source Material for Mississippi History, Grenada County, Volume 22. Compiled by WPA Statewide Historical Research Project. 1936-1938.

United States. Map Guide to the U.S. Federal Censuses, 1790-1920, by William Thorndale and William Dollarhide. Copyright 1987.

United States. U.S. Bureau of the Census. The Statistics of the Population of the U.S. at the Tenth Census, June 1, 1880. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1883.

The following information is the same for all photographs:

1. Providence Cemetery
2. Grenada vicinity, Grenada County, Mississippi
3. Margaret Miller
4. October 4, 1990
5. Mississippi Department of Archives and History

Photo 1 -- (6) cemetery overview, view to northeast

Photo 2 -- (6) ironstone marker with etched design and lettering made in tongue and groove fashion, view to east

Photo 3 -- (6) ironstone marker showing etched design, view to west

Photo 4 -- (6) gravestone of Margaret M. Johnson with tree of life emblem and inscribed burial date of 1858, view to east

Photo 5 -- (6) marker of Margaret E. Bowen with clasped hand emblem and burial date of 1862

Photo 6 -- (6) marker of William S. Johnson with burial date of 1845, view to east

Photo 7 -- (6) marker of child of J. W. and R. E. Stephens with burial date of 1846, view to east

Photo 8 -- (6) tombstone of John S. King with burial date of 1842, view to west

Photo 9 -- (6) tablestone monument with tree of life and open Bible design, view to west

Providence Cemetery
Photo 1 of 9

1948

Providence Cemetery
Photo 2 of 9

Providence Cemetery
Photo 3 of 9

MARGARET M.
Wife of
THOS. W. JOHNSON
BORN
Feb. 5, 1834
DIED
Nov. 11, 1858

Providence Cemetery
Photo 4 of 9

MARGARET E.
Dau't. of
T.P. & M.C. BOWEN
Born
AUG. 28, 1846,

Providence Cemetery
Photo 5 of 9

WILLIAM S. JOHNSON
BORN
March 26, 1818
DIED
June 13, 1845

Providence Cemetery
Photo 6 of 9

J.W. & R.E.
STEPHENS.
1846

Providence Cemetery
Photo 7 of 9

JOHN S. KING
BORN
MARCH 11, 1816
DIED
Nov. 2, 1842
Aged 26 yrs. 2
mos. 21
Days

Providence Cemetery
Photo 8 of 9

Providence Cemetery
Photo 9 of 9