

From WPA Survey, 1936

Name of Cemetery: Worthington Colored Cemetery

The old, Negro cemetery, also in olden times called the Worthington Cemetery, after an old, pioneer, colored man who even before the Civil War, owned a section of land in this township. The cemetery was built on his land for his people; no one but colored persons were ever buried here. Most of them were freed Negroes before the war. It is the only colored cemetery in Defiance County.

Location, how reached:

Located on the Jennie Watson farm, one quarter mile east of state route #15 on a mud road, two miles south of the city limits of Defiance, O. and in section seven of Highland Township. It is forty rods back off this mud road to the north almost in the center of a wheat field.

Name and address of caretaker:

None, nor has there been any for forty years.

General description, size, appearance, etc.:

This graveyard should have a historical value at least to the Negro people, as it is one of the first Negro cemeteries in the north. It was started in 1855 before the Civil War and was abandoned in 1883, after the death of Worthington, the Negro man on whose farm it rested. The land is now owned by Jennie Watson and the field last year was in wheat, part of the graves is covered with a straw stack and most of the markers are buried in the ground. We had to dig some of them out to get any names and possibly we did not get to the oldest. At one time, there were supposed to be fifty or more graves, however, we only found a dozen stones. All of these but one were old white slab markers. One was a pedestal type, broken and hardly discernable. This belonged to Mr. Worthington, himself. There is no fence around the place and nothing to mark it. We found it only through the courtesy of Mr. Al. Logan of Ayersville, Highland Township, and L. E. Myres, R.R. #8, Defiance, Ohio, who told us to be sure and get it.

Name and date of first burial recorded:

Anney Champ, born in 1781 and died in 1855, was the oldest marker we could find and we dug this one up from under the ground.

Names of important people buried here:

The Worthingtons, early Negro settlers in Defiance County—present living relatives unknown—are the most important people. Mr. Myres, the authority on this article,

can remember him. He died in around 1890, his wife in 1883. His wife's name was Lizzie, but no one can remember his given name, and it was not marked on his stone. He always went by the name of Old Darkey Worthington. At one time, he was very wealthy; he had several children, but whereabouts are unknown.

Markers of unusual appearances:

White stone slabs, one pedestal marker, none unusual.

Unusual epitaphs:

None.

Is cemetery used for new burials?

This graveyard has not been used since 1890 and is almost forgotten, except by the old-timers of this neighborhood. There is only one colored man in Highland Township today and he is not related to anyone buried in Worthington Cemetery.

C. Cadwallader and C. Gish, Reporters

Consultants: L. E. Myres, R.R. #8, Defiance, Ohio and Al. Logan, Ayersville Village, Defiance County