

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

Historic name Forest Grove Cemetery

Other names/site number N/A

Name of related Multiple Property Listing N/A

2. Location

Street & number 892 Golf Road

N/A

not for publication

City or town Lexington

X

vicinity

State Missouri Code MO County Lafayette

Code 107

Zip code 64067

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide x local

Applicable National Register Criteria: x A B C D

B. K. N. DEPUTY SHPO 5-31-22
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

 entered in the National Register

 determined eligible for the National Register

 determined not eligible for the National Register

 removed from the National Register

 Other (explain :)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Forest Grove Cemetery
Name of Property

Lafayette County, Missouri
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
1	0	sites
0	1	structures
0	0	objects
1	1	Total

**Number of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register**

N/A

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: N/A

☒ **NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION ON CONTINUATION PAGES**

Forest Grove Cemetery

Name of Property

Lafayette County, Missouri

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☐ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

☐ A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ B removed from its original location.

☐ C a birthplace or grave.

☒ D a cemetery.

☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ F a commemorative property.

☐ G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

☒ STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE ON CONTINUATION PAGES

Areas of Significance

ETHNIC HERITAGE-Black

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1854-c. 1972

Significant Dates

1854, 1872

1890

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

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 # _____

____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office

____ Other State agency

____ Federal agency

____ Local government

____ University

____ Other

Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

Forest Grove Cemetery
Name of Property

Lafayette County, Missouri
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 5

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84:

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1 39.201147 -93.864093 3
Latitude: Longitude: Latitude: Longitude:

2 4
Latitude: Longitude: Latitude: Longitude:

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

1 Zone Easting Northing 3 Zone Easting Northing

2 Zone Easting Northing 4 Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (On continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification (On continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Judith Lindquist (primary author); Forest Grove Cemetery Project, Inc. (secondary author; primary contact); and Michelle Diedrich (secondary author; MO SHPO)

organization Forest Grove Cemetery Project, Inc. date March 9, 2021

street & number 6231 Blue Ridge Blvd. telephone 816-590-9800

city or town Raytown State MO zip code 64133

e-mail info@forestgrovecemeteryproject.org

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:**
 - A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
 - A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Photographs**
- **Owner Name and Contact Information**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Forest Grove Cemetery

Name of Property

Lafayette County, Missouri

County and State

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log:

Name of Property: **Forest Grove Cemetery**

City or Vicinity: **Lexington**

County: **Lafayette**

State: **Missouri**

Photographer: **Judy Lindquist (2020) and Michelle Diedrich (2021)**

Date

Photographed: **November 16, 2020 and September 22, 2021**

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 18: Fence, view northeast (2020)
- 2 of 18: Forest Grove Cemetery sign, view east (2021)
- 3 of 18: Entrance gate, view southeast (2021)
- 4 of 18: Southwest portion of cemetery, view south (2021)
- 5 of 18: Southern wooded area with markers, view southeast (2021)
- 6 of 18: Middle portion of cemetery including road segment, view northeast (2021)
- 7 of 18: Middle portion of cemetery, view northeast (2021)
- 8 of 18: Cemetery road segment, view east (2021)
- 9 of 18: Beginning of oval road segment, view east (2021)
- 10 of 18: Ornamental trees, view south (2020)
- 11 of 18: Eastern portion of oval road segment, overgrown grass, view east (2021)
- 12 of 18: Interior of oval road segment, view west (2021)
- 13 of 18: Interior of oval road segment, view southwest (2020)
- 14 of 18: Northern portion of cemetery, view northwest (2021)
- 15 of 18: Northern portion of cemetery, view northeast (2020)
- 16 of 18: Wooded edge of northwestern part of cemetery, view southwest (2021)
- 17 of 18: Northern boundary showing farmland, view north (2020)
- 18 of 18: Northwestern wooded area with markers, view north (2020)

Figure Log:

Include figures on continuation pages at the end of the nomination.

Figure 1: Locational Map

Figure 2: Lat/Long Map

Figure 3: Photo Key

Figure 4: Drone image, facing northeast

Figure 5: Drone image, facing north

Figure 6: Drone image, facing northwest

Figure 7: Metal gate visible from the southeast corner of the lawn

Figure 8: Southeast section with bench and planters

Figure 9: Sample of marker types, materials, and conditions

Figure 10: Greenwood Cemetery in St. Louis County

Figure 11: AME Church 201 N 16th Street, Lexington

Figure 12: Second Baptist Church on 12th and Main Street, Lexington

Forest Grove Cemetery

Name of Property

Lafayette County, Missouri

County and State

Figure 13: Historic Gem Barber Shop, 106 S 10th Street, Lexington

Figure 14: Historic Green Funeral Home, SE corner of 24th Street and Franklin Avenue, Lexington.

Figure 15: George H. Green, principal of Douglass School

Figure 16: Elmer Radd's Cotton Club Band

Figure 17: Bill Lindsay, baseball player

Figure 18: Kansas City Giants

National Register of Historic Places
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Forest Grove Cemetery

Name of Property

Lafayette County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Summary

Forest Grove Cemetery, established in 1854, is located at 892 Golf Road in Lexington (vicinity), Lafayette County. The African American cemetery sits on the bluffs of the Missouri River and overlooks the Ike Skelton Bridge and Missouri State Highway 13. The property is five acres in size and is just outside the northeast city limits of Lexington. A modern large swinging gate within a metal fence (non-contributing structure) on the west serves as the single entrance to the property. A single dirt road traverses the cemetery, terminating at an oval at the east end. The portion of the property with the majority of headstones is cleared with mature trees dotting the landscape. Although it has suffered through times of vandalism and low resources, the cemetery retains integrity. It is maintained thru a non-profit organization formed by the current generation of trustees. There are approximately 250 headstones at Forest Grove. They are fashioned from several materials including limestone, granite, marble, and fieldstone. Marker typology consists of traditional headstones, die on base, lawn markers, plaques, die in socket, die-base-and-cap, raised top, and vaulted pedestals. Some are in good condition while others are leaning, broken, or toppled. There are also unmarked burials, although exact locations are currently unknown. A list of over 1,200 names of possible burials at Forest Grove has been compiled. Approximately 1,000 of those names have been proven to be buried here through death certificates, headstones, family confirmations, obituaries, funeral programs, Walker-Nadler Funeral Home records, and a 1999 Boy Scout Eagle Project that mapped headstones. Although earlier burials are likely present, the oldest headstone dates to 1872. Burials reached their peak in the 1910s. As the Black population decreased, so too did the rate of burials. As of the time of this nomination, there have been fewer than 25 burials since 2000, with the most recent being in 2022.

Setting

Forest Grove Cemetery is just northeast of the city limit of Lexington in Lafayette County, Missouri (Figure 1). The cemetery, which was once farmlands, is in a rural setting with the Missouri River less than half a mile to the north/northwest (Figure 5).¹ It is bordered on the west by Golf Road (formerly Country Club Road) and a drainage culvert (Figure 6), on the north and east by family farms and MO Route 13, and on the south by a private residence. Across from Golf Road to the west is an open field. The setting within the nominated boundary is wooded with a mowed lawn in the north and west portions of the property where the majority of intact headstones are located (Figure 2). The property is entered via the west through a modern **metal gate and fence** (non-contributing structure) (Photos 1 & 3). The fence is roughly 276 feet long and four feet high and simplistic in design consisting of narrow wrought iron slats. A large painted wood sign is between two of the fence posts and depicts an illustration of a tree and headstone. The sign reads "Forest Grove Cemetery Est. 1854" and is considered part of the fence (Photo 2). The fence was installed in 2015 by the non-profit group, Forest Grove Cemetery

¹ William T. Smarr, the previous land owner, is listed as a farmer in the 1850 and 1860 census.

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Forest Grove Cemetery

Name of Property

Lafayette County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Project.² A dirt and gravel road bisects the cemetery ending in an oval in the northeast portion of the property with a rusted flag pole in the center of the oval (Photos 12 & 13). The road is thought to be an original feature of the cemetery.³ Further attributes of the setting within the boundary are discussed below.

Cemetery Description

Much of the five acres of cemetery property is wooded. The woods are primarily in the northwest and southeast corners of the property, extending inward (Figures 4-6). The accessible part of the cemetery is mowed and resembles a reversed “z” on aerial images, being mostly concentrated around the unpaved drive that terminates in an oval (Figure 2). Within the oval are burials, a flagpole, and a lone fir tree (Photo 13). Directly east of the oval is taller grass where no markers appear to be present (Photo 11 and Figure 3). The topography of the site consists of gentle hills with the highest terrain in the manicured portion. The lawn, particularly north of the cemetery road and within the oval of the drive, is relatively flat (Photos 1 and 9). The ground slopes away into the trees at the south and northwest, with a steeper decent at the northern edge of the boundary (Photo 14).

Trees dot the lawn of the cemetery (Figure 5). It appears the site once had traditional plantings as evidenced by an overgrown bed of iris or lilies planted around the base of a tree in the southeast corner (Photo 4). Additionally, a small grouping of what appears to be a deliberate planting of cypress trees is just south of the oval drive along the wooded tree line (Photo 10). As mentioned, a large fir tree stands proudly at the center of the oval drive. Evergreens like firs and cypress and plantings such as iris and lilies are not uncommon in western cemeteries due to their associations with themes related to death, the afterlife, and Christ. There may have been more plantings that could have been lost over time.

In addition to the metal fence flanking the entrance, wire fencing is visible at the northern boundary (Photo 14). Likewise, there is another gate that was just visible in the southwest (Figure 7). The metal fence and corresponding gate at the west boundary is the only fencing directly associated with the cemetery; other fencing belongs to adjacent property owners. Aside from a movable small stone bench and planters in the southeast section close to the fence, there is no other furniture (Figure 8). A portable privy to the north of the drive near the entrance is visible in Photo 16 and has since been removed. The flagpole at the center of the oval drive is considered too small in mass to include in the resource count. The exact date of the flagpole is unknown, but it was in place prior to the end of the 1972 period of significance.

² Lindquist, Judy Gover, *The history, faces, and stories of Forest Grove Cemetery, Lexington, Missouri*, Forest Grove Cemetery Project, 2020. p. 5

³ E-mail correspondence between Michelle Diedrich and Pete Wilkerson, November 22, 2021.

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Forest Grove Cemetery

Name of Property

Lafayette County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

While it is difficult to discern from aerial images due to missing grave markers, the cemetery is laid out in north-south rows by sections. As common in western cemeteries, many graves are oriented to the east. The dates of graves vary throughout much of the cemetery, grouped often by family. However, there are accounts of the section east of the fir tree within the oval drive to the north boundary as being “the new section”; most of the graves in this area date after WWII.⁴ As will be discussed further in Section 8, the majority of burials took place between the 1910s and the 1950s.

The majority of known burials, over 1200, are unmarked.⁵ The mowed area features the bulk of intact grave markers, approximately 250 in total. However, burials are not restricted to the manicured portion of the site. Markers are visible in the wooded parts of the property (Photos 5 & 6) and additional marked and unmarked burials are believed to be throughout the whole of the boundary. Surviving markers are typically modest in nature. They include traditional headstones, die on base, lawn markers, plaques, die in socket, die-base-and-cap, raised top, and vaulted pedestals.⁶ They are made from a range of materials such as limestone, marble, granite, and fieldstone. They are in various states of care, some being broken, fallen, leaning/propped up, while others appear in good condition (Figure 9 and Photo 15).

Integrity

Traditionally the cemetery never was locked.⁷ Sporadic vandalism, most notably during the late 60's, snapped, tumbled, dislodged, scarred, chipped and defaced scores of headstones. Trustee Boards then and recently did what they could to deter damage and provide care over the last 30 years, but dwindling population/resources hampered what they could maintain. The current non-profit efforts have resulted in preservation and renewed care of the site. The majority of known burials, over 1200, are unmarked. The mowed area features the bulk of intact grave markers, approximately 250 in total. However, burials are not restricted to the manicured portion of the site. Several markers are missing, broken, or toppled, while others have been overtaken by woodlands, making an exact count of burials difficult. Unfortunately, this is not uncommon. In fact most, if not all, of the African American cemeteries in Missouri listed in the National Register once suffered from some form of neglect or vandalism: Sage Chapel Cemetery in St. Charles County (NR Listed 11/2/2018); Barry Cemetery in Greene County (NR Listed 11/13/2004); Greenwood Cemetery in St. Louis County (NR Listed 2/24/2004) (Figure 10); Father Dickson Cemetery in St. Louis County (NR Listed 10/6/2021). There are numerous

⁴ E-mail correspondence between Michelle Diedrich and Pete Wilkerson, October 1, 2021.

⁵ The number of burials is a result of research conducted by Judy Lindquist via the research of death certificates, headstones, family confirmations, obituaries, funeral programs, Walker-Nadler Funeral Home records, and a 1999 Boy Scout Eagle Project that mapped headstones.

⁶ The marker typology is utilized from the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office's Cemetery Marker Survey Form. <https://mostateparks.com/sites/mostateparks/files/CemeteryMarkerForm.pdf>, accessed October 1, 2021.

⁷ E-mail correspondence between Michelle Diedrich and Pete Wilkerson, November 22, 2021.

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Forest Grove Cemetery
Name of Property
Lafayette County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

reasons for lack of care. In some cases a community may, unfortunately, undervalue non-white properties. Other reasons include changing demographics and lack of resources.⁸ In Forest Grove's case, the cemetery is in the care of African American trustees. The Black population of Lexington has declined from 28% in 1900 to just 6% as of the 2010 census.⁹ This resulted in fewer individuals in the area to care for the cemetery than there were historically.

Some markers were undoubtedly lost to time, but it is possible some burials were never marked, especially in the site's first thirty-five years as a public or "pauper's" cemetery. Thanks to recent efforts of the Forest Grove Cemetery Project, Inc., the heart of the cemetery has been reclaimed and is currently well-maintained. Of the extant markers, the majority are in good condition. The approximately 250 surviving markers convey enough of the historic materials to provide a sense of time. The cemetery is in the same rural setting. Its location on the outskirts of town and modest nature of the markers are characteristic of many Black cemeteries. In sum, Forest Grove Cemetery conveys its association as a historic African American cemetery.

⁸ Wessler, Seth Freed. "Black Deaths Matter", *The Nation*, October 15, 2015.
<https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/black-deaths-matter/>, accessed November 15, 2021.

⁹ United States Census Bureau,
https://www.census.gov/history/www/genealogy/decennial_census_records/census_records_2.html, Accessed August 2021.

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Forest Grove Cemetery
Name of Property
Lafayette County, Missouri
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Summary

Forest Grove Cemetery at 892 Golf Road, Lexington (vic.) in Lafayette County is locally significant under Criterion A: Ethnic Heritage – Black and Social History. This site served more than 80 years as the only place in Lexington where African Americans could be buried formally. Historical documents indicate that enslaved Black Americans were among the early burials there along with low wealth White citizens. A burial place since 1854, the Forest Grove Cemetery of today was officially referenced as “the Negro cemetery” in an 1872 Lafayette County Court report. It was deeded by the city to the Lexington Black community in 1890. The period of significance is 1854-c. 1972, reflecting its first use to when significant activities continued but no further specific date can be confirmed. Forest Grove Cemetery is the primary place Lexington’s Black populace was buried until well after 1970. The cemetery is one of the few surviving historic Black resources in Lexington. Approximately 250 headstones survive but up to 1,200 more burials of Lexington and the surrounding area’s Black residents are interred here. Among them are veterans, educators, builders, Masons, seamstresses, bricklayers, miners, Baptists, Methodists, musicians, Elks, smiths, barbers, domestic servants, pro athletes, carpenters and civic leaders. The cemetery meets Criterion Consideration D, as significance is related to the importance of the site in understanding Lexington’s historic African American community.

Elaboration

The earliest non-Native settlers, Gilead Rupe and family came to the area starting about 1815 from Virginia. The next 15 years saw several thousand people push into Lafayette County. Groups came also from the Carolinas, Kentucky, and Tennessee. They packed food, a few clothes and tools for farming once they arrived. By keel boat, barge, covered wagon and single horse they came...slavery was part of their baggage. ”With the transplant of southern culture into the Boone’s Lick country, the region of central Missouri, in effect became a Little Dixie.”¹⁰ Lexington was platted in 1822, a year after Missouri entered the Union as a state. It became an important transportation hub both by means of the Missouri River and the Santa Fe Trail. Boundary definitions of this region vary from seven to seventeen counties.¹¹ According to historian, Roger Maserang, it can be culturally and economically defined by seven counties: Boone, Callaway, Clay, Cooper, Howard, Saline, and Lafayette. Prior to the Civil War, Lafayette County held the most enslaved people in Little Dixie per this definition.¹²

Lexington was an agricultural, commerce, and transportation community that thrived in no small part because of slave labor. Hemp production erupted well before the Civil War and the number

¹⁰ Hurt, R. Douglas. Agriculture and Slavery in Missouri’s Little Dixie, University of Missouri Press. 1992. p.6.

¹¹ Figures based on brief internet search of a variety of websites varying from state agencies, advocacy groups, and online encyclopedias.

¹² Maserang, Roger. *Antebellum Resources of Johnson, Lafayette, Pettis and Saline Counties, Missouri*, Multiple Property Documentation Form. 1997.p.3.

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Forest Grove Cemetery
Name of Property
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N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

of slaves increased too because harvest is intense work that needs lots of hands to process. Hemp bales were shipped to markets in Franklin, Mo., St. Louis and New Orleans as early as 1820. Rope making sprang up within a decade. Hemp became one of, if not the top cash crop along the Missouri River from the capitol in Jefferson City west to the Kansas state line. It even played a key role in one of the two major Civil War battles in the community. The First Battle of Lexington, also known as the “Battle of the Hemp Bales”, took place in Lexington on September 18-20, 1861. In that battle, Confederate soldiers utilized bundles of [wet] hemp as shields as they advanced and ultimately defeated Federal troops. The second battle, aptly named the “Second Battle of Lexington,” took place on October 19, 1864.¹³

Forest Grove Cemetery’s significance can best be understood in the overall context of the Lexington’s history. Unfortunately, the contributions of Lexington’s Black populace have not been widely documented. The subsections below are intended to provide a general understanding of various aspects of African American life in the community prior discussing the cemetery directly.

Slavery in Lexington

Lexington’s prosperity and early development is in large part attributed to the toils of those in the community who had no rights and received no compensation or acknowledgment for their efforts. As an example, Lexington’s earliest neighborhoods were in large part built by enslaved hands. This area, the First Addition, was laid out from 22nd Street to the Missouri River.¹⁴ Slave labor was used to make brick, and build the structures platted in 1836.

An exception to the local custom and practice of slavery rode into town that year. His name was Finis Ewing. A founder of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Kentucky, he was also a staunch supporter of the temperance movement. After establishing a church in the area, he freed his slaves. He and another early settler, James Aull, were rare opponents of slavery in that time.¹⁵

Slave labor was the key to large profits from bountiful harvests among the labor intensive hemp and tobacco plantations. Other businesses such as riverfront trade ran off slave labor as well. St. Louis provided a large market for local hemp and Lexington was a mercantile exchange port of goods to and from the Santa Fe and Oregon trails. Many families within the city limits had the enslaved in their homes.¹⁶

¹³ Civil War on the Western Border: First Battle of Lexington:
<https://civilwaronthewesternborder.org/encyclopedia/first-battle-lexington-or-battle-hemp-bales>, accessed January 17, 2022; Maserang, p. 5.

¹⁴ Sellers, Katherine Wilson, *Historical Glimpses of Lexington*, p. 1993 p 12

¹⁵ Slusher, Roger, *Images of America, LEXINGTON*, Lexington Historical Association, 2013, p. 7

¹⁶ Slusher, *Ibid*, p. 7

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N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

One of those homes that survives today is that of the Hicklin family (NR Listed 12/28/82), built in 1837 on Dover Road in an east neighborhood of Lexington. Among the separate buildings original to the property is the six-cell brick slave quarters.¹⁷ Those in bondage were wholly tied to their enslavers. Even in death, they were buried on the owner's land at least early on. As will be discussed below, it was not until 1854, with the establishment of what would be known as the Forest Grove Cemetery, that an alternative location became available.

The Lexington riverfront was crucial to the development of Lexington. It included stores, warehouses, rope walks, a flour mill, saw mill, and the landing place for Jack's ferry. "The first ferries were large flat boats, with 16 foot oars of cottonwood, rowed by negro slaves."¹⁸

Slave auctions were often held on the Lafayette County Courthouse steps.¹⁹ Additionally, companies advertised insurance policies in local papers to those who bought human slaves.

From an 1856 advertisement in the Lexington Weekly Express:

SLAVES of both sexes and all occupations INSURED on favorable terms.

\$400 to \$1,000 granted on each slave. Aug 16:3m. E. WINSOR, Agent

INSURE YOUR NEGROES

I am again prepared to grant insurance on the lives of slaves of both sexes, and of all occupations-farm hands, house servants, mechanics, factory hands, engineers, and common laborers. No increase in the rates. Women will be insured at \$400, \$500 and \$600 and men at \$600, \$700, and \$800. Aug 23m EN WINSOR Agent.²⁰

In 1860 6,374 persons were held in slavery in Lafayette County, more than any other Missouri county at the time.²¹ While Lexington was primarily pro-slavery at the time of the Civil War, there were strong feelings on both sides of the issue. Some wanted to stay in the Union, but at the same time, keep their slaves. Many men in Lexington were fighting to make Kansas a slave state. In the Presidential Election of 1860, Abraham Lincoln only received 13 votes from Lexingtonians. In September of 1861, the two sides clashed at the Battle of Lexington.²²

Four Civil War veterans are among the honored at Forest Grove cemetery. These men were "volunteered" by their owners to fight. Those owners were paid full market value before combat, (in case the man fell in action) and the same owners applied for and received even the reduced

¹⁷ Sellers, Ibid p. 12

¹⁸ Sellers, ibid, p. 13

¹⁹ Battle of Lexington State Historic Site Civil War Collections, 36-87-15-6

²⁰ Lexington Weekly Express (Lexington, Missouri) Sat. Nov. 1, 1856, page 3

²¹ Slusher, Roger. *Images of America: Lexington*. 2013. p. 8

²² Ibid., p. 8

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County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

(usually half full) wages Black soldiers were paid. None of the four fought in either battle at Lexington. Rice Anderson²³ fought with the 62nd Regiment U.S. Colored Troops in Texas²⁴; Israel Burles²⁵ fought with General Sherman in the Carolinas campaign;²⁶ Henry Colley²⁷ with the 18th Colored Infantry in Tennessee;²⁸ and Nelson Davis²⁹ with the 11th U.S. Colored Infantry.³⁰ They all returned to or came to Lexington following the War.

Building Community

Religion and Marriage:

Some newly freed people left the area, while others stayed and continued to work for their former slaveholders. At the end of the Civil War, the recently emancipated Black populace of Lexington started organizing and constructing their own places of worship as previously they were de facto members of their owner's congregations. As described in Roger Slusher's *Images of America: Lexington*:

60 [African Americans] met in 1865 at the Court House to organize the St. John Methodist Church. With their own labor, for \$3,000 they built their brick church on 12th street north of Main. Also in 1865 the Second Baptist Church was organized. They had a frame building on 8th street until they bought their present one at 12th and Main from the Christians. On October 13, 1867, the African Methodist Episcopal Church was organized. They built their large brick church on 16th Street in 1870.³¹

Prior to the war, those in bondage were not allowed to marry by law. After the war, they were forced to marry. Missouri passed legislation on February 20, 1865, which required enslaved persons who had lived together as man and wife to legalize their relationships in the presence of a Justice of the Peace. Couples were required to comply with the terms of the Missouri Act on or before February 1866, or risk criminal prosecution.³² On February 21, 1866, there was a mass

²³ Missouri State death certificate, dated March 7, 1921

²⁴ U.S. Colored Troops Military Service Records, 1863-1865, www.fold3.com/image/302327290, accessed February 2021.

²⁵ Missouri death certificate dated February 22, 1911

²⁶ U.S. Colored Troops Military Service Records, 1863-1865, 5th U.S. Colored Infantry, p. 374

²⁷ Missouri State death certificate, dated February 23, 1931

²⁸ www.fold3.com/image/274470771

²⁹ Boy Scout Eagle Project dated 1999, Daniel Mason

³⁰ www.fold3.com/image/231397165

³¹ Ibid., p. 31

³² Goring, Darlene, "The History of Slave Marriage in the United States" (2006). Journal Articles. 262.

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marriage ceremony at the Lafayette County Courthouse. Many couples who had lived as “slave man and wife” were legally united in marriage.³³

This period also nurtured the germination of civic organization that provided for the collective good inside the Black community vis-a-vis the Jim Crow embracing nation at large. Units of The Most Worshipful Prince Hall Grand Lodge, The Knights of St. Pythias, Odd Fellows and Elks Club were started in Black communities large and small. Lexington had its own localized groups like The Progressive Matrons and The Socialite Club.

Career Opportunities:

Manual labor supported most families, Black families were no exception. The railroad (porters and waiters) and the coal mines now employed the largest numbers. By 1908 there were 46 mines and about 1,700 miners, many of them Black, in the Lexington area. Wentworth Military Academy hired Black citizens as cooks, janitors, and carpenters.³⁴ An early twentieth century Black owned business, the Gem Barber Shop (established in 1910) was operated by the Boldridge family for more than 60 years. Despite the fact that it was founded and owned by a Black family, they served white clientele. African Americans were not allowed to enter the shop until integration in the mid-1960s.³⁵

Another prominent business which thrived during the period significance is the Green Funeral Home. Established in 1937, they expanded to five plus locations in west central Missouri. Before Green Funeral Home the African American community was served by other funeral homes, including Winkler Furniture Store/Mortuary, which served everyone. Nonetheless, if you were Black and about to be buried in Lexington during the period of significance, it was at Forest Grove Cemetery.

A two-story building at 10th and Main served White clientele on the Main Street level while the Black bar patrons had to drink in the converted basement area run by Black owner. According to long time Lexington resident, Emmanuel Mason, Frog Lindsay (listed in the Negro Leagues Encyclopedia) managed the bar for African Americans for many years in the early 1900's. The building is now vacant.

The Arts, particularly music was an important part of the Black community in Lexington during the early twentieth century. Several bands were established. Among the most popular were Elmer Radd's Cotton Club Band (Figure 16), Excelsior Band, and Earl Conway and the Harlem

³³ https://digitalcommons.law.lsu.edu/faculty_scholarship/262 Missouri, U.S. Marriage Records 1805-2002 p. 319-326, accessed February 2021.

³⁴ Sellers, Ibid, p. 32

³⁵ Email correspondence between Judy Lindquist and Allan Lee, November 13, 2021.

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Bluebirds. These groups performed in segregated venues throughout the western part of Missouri. Many of the members of these groups are buried at Forest Grove.³⁶

Several prominent African American baseball players came from Lexington and are buried at Forest Grove. Most famous among those is Bill Lindsay³⁷ (Figure 17), who was considered one of the best players (White or Black) in the country at the time of his death in 1914. He and Ashes Jackson³⁸ (also at Forest Grove) are listed in the Biographical Encyclopedia of the Negro Leagues (Figure 18).

Education:

The school district of Lexington was organized in 1853, with the first schoolhouse being built in 1854. Schools had to be closed in 1861, when the Legislature of Missouri diverted school funds to expenses of the Civil War. They reopened in 1866.³⁹

In 1876 the Lexington school board established a “colored” high school with J.H. Cole as principal. The bond issue for a schoolhouse for “colored children” failed, so in 1877 the board leased a building formerly used as a carpenter shop on Main Street (exact address unknown) to be used as the “colored” school. Eventually a school was built at Fifth and Branch Streets. It housed students in grades one through eight and high school.⁴⁰ That building burned in 1939, and for three years, African American students attended school at St. John Methodist Church on 12th street north of Main. Additionally, Zion AME was utilized as an educational space. According to Mable Hawkins, whose brothers attended school at Zion AME, the elementary students met in the basement (each grade had its own table) and high school students were upstairs. The last Douglass School was at 22nd and Franklin Streets, and housed first grade through high school. Following integration of Lexington Schools in 1956, Douglass School served as the intermediate school for Lexington.⁴¹ That building burned down on November 12, 2008.⁴²

One of the principals of Douglass School, George Green, was born into slavery, and recalls being sold twice as a child (Figure 15). His last owner ignored the laws of Missouri, which stated “No person shall keep or teach any school for the instruction of negroes or mulattoes, in reading or

³⁶ St. Louis Post Dispatch, August 5, 1983; Moberly Monitor-Index, January 25, 1938; City of Lexington, Official Commemorative Book, 1972.

³⁷ Riley, James A., The Biographical Encyclopedia of the Negro Baseball Leagues, Carroll and Graf Publishers, Inc., 1994, p. 484

³⁸ Riley, Ibid, p. 418

³⁹ Bell, Leslie H., Educational Heritage of a Century, A History of the Lexington Public Schools, 1962 (Board of Education R-V School District, Lexington, Missouri), p. 1

⁴⁰ Bell, Ibid, page 18

⁴¹ Bell, Ibid, pg. 6; Kremer and Rogers, *African American Schools in Rural and Small Town Missouri: The Missouri Rivier Valley*, June 30, 1999.

⁴² Records of Lexington Fire & Rescue, 533 South Business 13 Highway, Lexington, MO 64067.

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writing, in this State." ⁴³ But he had George tutored alongside his own children. George became one of the most prominent Black educators in the state. Early in his career, he settled in Lexington and was principal of Douglass School beginning in 1886. At the time of his death in 1952, he was honored as a man who made a great contribution to the people of Lexington. ⁴⁴

Neighborhoods:

Further study is needed to better understand where African American residents lived in Lexington during the period of significance. The neighborhoods of Lexington are thought to be mostly integrated. Allan Lee, who grew up in Lexington in the 1960's and 1970's, recalls that Lexington did not have purely segregated areas of town. According to him, African Americans were spread out in many locations. However, there were higher concentrations in several areas. 24th Street had a high Black population, but it had many Caucasian citizens also. 10th and 11th Streets north of Main were primarily African American, as were 6th, 7th, and 8th, also north of Main. However, they all had White people as well. The same is true of the area on Franklin between 26th and 27th streets. The only street he recalls that was all African American was Clinton Street.

There are those from Lexington who remember redlining being used in the 1950's and 1960's when some new subdivisions were built. So while there were not many "only Black" neighborhoods, there were areas where only white people were allowed to live. Both Francis Street and Ussery Drive were rumored to have restrictive land covenants attached to them. ⁴⁵

The African American population in Lexington has steadily decreased since the 1910s (Table 1). One thought is that young people wished to move to larger communities where jobs were more readily available, especially after 1950. ⁴⁶ This was not usual for many small towns during the time period, regardless of race. While data does not appear to be readily available on the 1940s, it appears the Black population halved between 1930 and 1950. Further research may reveal additional factors for the population decline.

⁴³ Bellamy, Donnie D., "The Education of Blacks in Missouri Prior To 1861, From The Journal of Negro History, Vol. 59, Number 2, The University of Chicago Press, p. 1974, p. 143

⁴⁴ Bell, Ibid, p. 7

⁴⁵ E-mail correspondence between Michelle Diedrich and Pete Wilkerson, November 22, 2021.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

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Table 1: Population of Lexington 1900-2010⁴⁷

YEAR	POPULATION	AA POPULATION	PERCENTAGE
1900	4190	1170	28%
1910	5242	1319	25.00%
1920	4695	966	20%
1930	4595	912	20%
1940	5341		
1950	5074	522	10%
1960	4845	483	10%
1970	5388	458	8.50%
1980	5063		
1990	4860		
2000	4453	286	6.04%
2010	4726	288	6.10%

Extant Resources Associated with Lexington's African American History:

In addition to Forest Grove Cemetery, there are several extant resources that served the Black community in the late 1800s into the 20th century. One is the Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church on North Sixteenth Street which today is a wedding venue (Figure 11). The other is the Second Missionary Baptist Church, 12th and Main Streets, where services are still held (Figure 12). The space that formerly housed the Gem Barber Shop is now a law firm at 106 S. 10th Street (Figure 13), while the Green Funeral Home building is currently a residence located at the SE corner of 24th St. and Franklin Ave. (Figure 14).

Forest Grove Cemetery

⁴⁷ Data from the United States Census Bureau, https://www.census.gov/history/www/genealogy/decennial_census_records/census_records_2.html, Accessed August 2021. Demographic information was not available for 1940, 1980, and 1990. Research on this topic was limited to online resources due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Forest Grove Cemetery is the first widely recognized designated resting place for African American residents of Lexington, Missouri. The land was sold to the City of Lexington by William Smarr on October 18, 1854 for "a public graveyard," i.e. poor citizens.⁴⁸ By extension, this community benevolence also gave slaveholders who lived within the city or nearby, a free off-property place to bury those they enslaved. African American burial was verboten at Machpelah Cemetery, the largest existing cemetery of the 1800s. No records exist for those early years at Forest Grove, so the specific location of ancestors without a headstone is lost to the seasons. However, it is thought the first internment were white paupers and the enslaved Black individuals in the community. As previously noted, prior to the establishment of Forest Grove, Black burials likely took place on the slaveholder lands.

The property was surveyed by Byron Bliss at the behest of the City of Lexington on November 20, 1872.⁴⁹ On December 5, 1872, he presented his report of "the boundaries of the Negro Cemetery," in the East half of the Southeast quarter of Section 22, Township 51, Range 27.⁵⁰ This is the first time the grounds are formally identified as a Black cemetery. The oldest extant headstone, that of Mary and Isaac Hayden, dates to that year.⁵¹ The cemetery was transferred to the "trustees for the colored people of Lexington" for the sum of \$1.00 on October 25, 1890.⁵² This transferred all rights of the property to "the colored people of Lexington to be used as a graveyard and burying ground, reserving the right to bury in said tract hereby conveyed any of the colored paupers of the city who may die and the right of ingress and egress, to and from the ground or tract and pest house."⁵³ This was especially important as the Black community finally had autonomy over the final resting place of their families. It was at this time that the cemetery was named Forest Grove. Ownership by original deed rests among the city's Black community and by tradition its diaspora.⁵⁴

Specific burial numbers are unknown for Forest Grove Cemetery's earliest years. Through the research of death certificates, surviving grave stones, funeral programs, family confirmations, obituaries, and community projects a list of known burials has been compiled by decade beginning in the 1870s (Table 2).

⁴⁸ Lafayette County Recorder of Deeds Office; Book X, October 18, 1854. p. 26

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Lafayette County Recorder of Deeds Office; Deed dated November 20, 1872.

⁵¹ Lindquist p. 4

⁵² Lafayette County Recorder of Deeds Office; Book 100, page 202, dated October 25, 1890.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ E-mail correspondence and attachment from the Forest Grove Cemetery Project, Inc., between Michelle Diedrich and Pete Wilkerson, September 30, 2021.

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Name of Property

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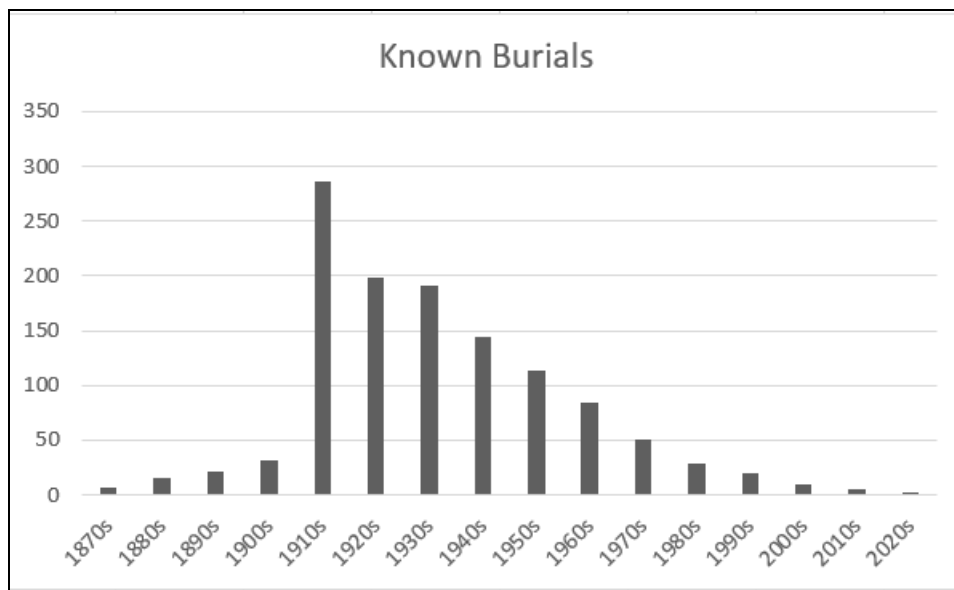
County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Table 2: Known Burials by Decade

Year	Known Burials
1870s	6
1880s	16
1890s	21
1900s	31
1910s	286
1920s	199
1930s	191
1940s	144
1950s	114
1960s	84
1970s	50
1980s	29
1990s	20
2000s	10
2010s	5
2020s	3



The frequency of burials mostly coincides with the population data in Table 1 above; at its highest when Lexington's population was at least 25% African American. The cemetery was the primary place for burials of African Americans in Lexington and the surrounding area until at least 1970, if not well beyond.⁵⁵ Other local cemeteries appear to be predominantly white during the period of significance. These cemeteries include Machpelah Cemetery (est. 1849); "Old Catholic Cemetery" (est. 1860); Memorial Park (est. 1920); and Memory Gardens (est. 1957).⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Preliminary searches suggest the earliest Black burial in another Lexington cemetery may have been as late as 1975, but further research is needed assess if and when African Americans began to be buried in other local cemeteries. Email correspondence between Michelle Diedrich and Judy Lindquist, November 29, 2021.

⁵⁶ Beard, Tom and Ross, Shirley. Draft National Register nomination for Machpelah Cemetery, on file at the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office. 2022. p. 19.

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Forest Grove Cemetery meets Criterion A: Social History and Ethnic Heritage as it played a vital role in Black society in Lexington, being the primary place of burial for the dead. African American religious institutions utilized the cemetery for funerary rites and, in particular, there was a direct relationship with Green's Funeral Home, a local Black business. Those from all walks of life were buried in the cemetery. As previously discussed, veterans, musicians, and sportsman are buried here. Additionally, local civic leaders, miners, farmers, teachers, housewives, laborers, and many more are represented in Forest Grove.

As depicted in Table 2, burials nearly halved between the 1960s and 1970s. The population was fairly consistent between these decades, with only a slight decrease from 10% to 8.5% of Lexington's total population. The precise reason for the decline in burials is currently unknown. Integration does not appear to be a major factor during the period of significance, as there are no known burials of African Americans in other Lexington cemeteries during this time frame. However, more study on this topics is needed.⁵⁷ Whatever the case, Forest Grove Cemetery continues to be utilized, albeit at a less frequent rate, up to the present.

Conclusion

Forest Grove Cemetery served as the primary burial place for Lexington's Black residents, from its inception as a potter's field in 1854 to at least the early 1970s. Over those years, Lexington's Black population declined from approximately 28% to less than 10% of the city's overall population. Many small American towns felt the same type loss in that time period. What has not changed over time is the importance of Forest Grove Cemetery as a place of grounding and remembrance to the Black community of Lexington. The location of the earliest burials, including those of enslaved ancestors are unknown however, accounts exist for over 1200 burials; 250 of them have surviving markers. Those at rest in Forest Grove Cemetery provide a glimpse of the breadth and depth of people of Lexington, Missouri through its Black community. The cemetery meets Criterion Consideration D for cemeteries since significance is derived from the social and cultural importance in telling the history of Lexington's Black community (Criterion A: Ethnic Heritage Black and Social History). This valuable resource survives today thanks to local non-profit efforts that have restored the cemetery to its current state so future generations may appreciate its historic value.

⁵⁷Preliminary research revealed an African American, Alonzo Lee Hannon, was buried in Lexington Memory Gardens in 1975. Email correspondence between Judy Lindquist and Michelle Diedrich, November 29, 2021 and January 16, 2022. Find a Grave, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/78270615/alonzo-lee-hannon>, access date January 16, 2022.

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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Correspondence

Pete Wilkerson email to Michelle Diedrich, including attachment narrative from the Forest Grove Cemetery Project, Inc., September 30, 2021.

E-Mail correspondence between Pete Wilkerson to Michelle Diedrich, October 1, 2021; November 22, 2021.

E-Mail correspondence between Judy Lindquist and Allan Lee, November 13, 2021.

E-Mail correspondence between Judy Lindquist and Michelle Diedrich, November 29, 2021.

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Boundary Description

A modern description of this property could not be located. The description below is from an 1854 deed transferring the land to the City of Lexington.

Part of the east half of the southeast quarter of Section 22, Township 51, Range 27.
Beginning at the southwest corner between lands once held by A.J. Sightner and Benedict Thomas, thence north with Thomas line 36 poles then east 22 poles and 8 links, thence south 36 poles to the southern line, thence west with said line 22 poles and 8 links to beginning, containing 5 acres, which land is purchased for a public graveyard.⁵⁸

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the land historically associated with the cemetery.

⁵⁸ Deed from William Smarr and his wife to the City of Lexington. Lafayette County Recorder of Deeds Office; Book X, October 18, 1854. p. 26.

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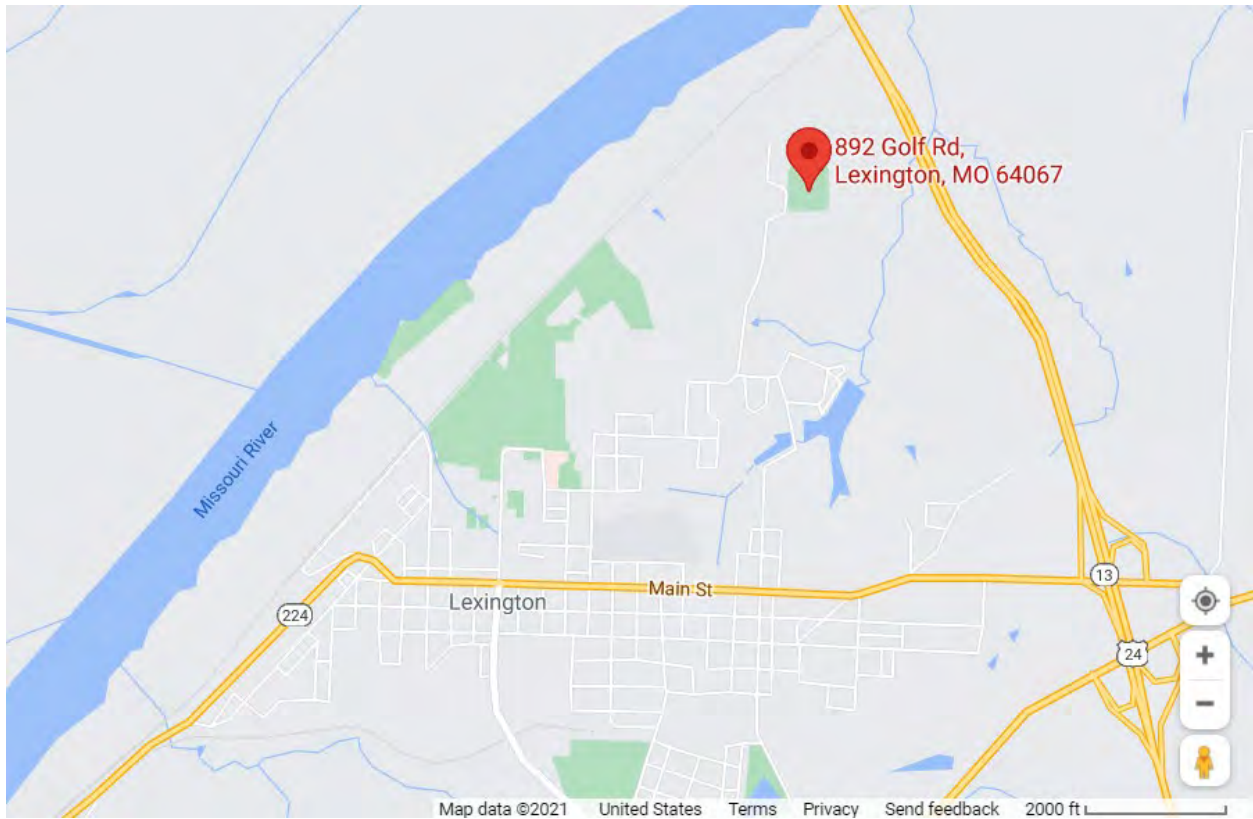
Lafayette County, Missouri

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Figure 1: Locational Map
Source: Google Maps. July 9, 2021.



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Figure 2: Lat/Long Map 39.201147 -93.864093
Source: Google Maps. March 2, 2022.



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Figure 3: Photo Key

Base: Google Map

Not to scale. Photo number locations indicate where the photographer was standing with the line representing the direction of the photo (outward from the number).



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Figure 4: Drone image, facing northeast. September 16, 2019
Image provided by Pete Wilkerson



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Figure 5: Drone image, facing north. September 16, 2019
Image provided by Pete Wilkerson



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Figure 6: Drone image, facing northwest. September 16, 2019
Image provided by Pete Wilkerson



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Figure 7: Metal gate visible from the southeast corner of the lawn. September 22, 2021
Source: Michelle Diedrich.



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N/A

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Figure 8: Southeast section with bench and planter (circled). November 16, 2020
Source: Judy Lindquist



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Figure 9: Sample of marker types, materials, and conditions. November 16, 2020
Source of individual images: Judy Lindquist



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Figure 10: Greenwood Cemetery in St. Louis County. Photo depicts some of the neglected portions of the cemetery as of 2002.

Photographer: Brett Rogers, 2002. Image from the Greenwood Cemetery National Register nomination (NR Listed 2/24/2004). <https://mostateparks.com/sites/mostateparks/files/Greenwood%20Cemetery.pdf>
Accessed, November 15, 2021.



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Figure 11: AME Church 201 N 16th Street, Lexington
Source: Google Maps



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Figure 12: Second Baptist Church on 12th and Main Street, Lexington.
Source: Google Maps.



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N/A

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Figure 13: Historic Gem Barber Shop, 106 S 10th Street, Lexington.
Source: Google Maps.



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Figure 14: Historic Green Funeral Home, SE corner of 24th Street and Franklin Avenue, Lexington.
Source: Google Maps.



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Figure 15: George H. Green, principal of Douglass School.
Image courtesy of Lexington Historical Society.

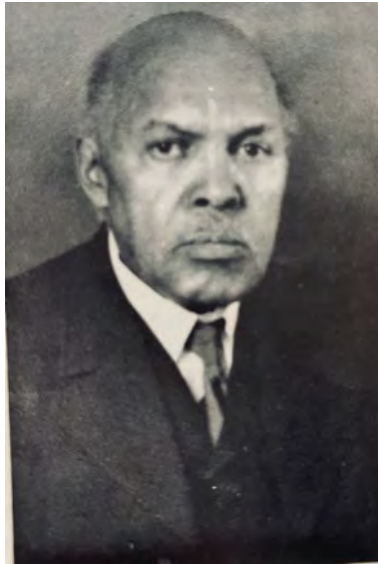


Figure 16: Elmer Radd's (seated third from left) Cotton Club Band.
Image courtesy of Lexington Historical Society.

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Figure 17: Bill Lindsay, baseball player.

Source: Wikipedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bill_Lindsay_\(pitcher\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bill_Lindsay_(pitcher)). Accessed March 2, 2022.



Figure 18: Kansas City Giants: Ashes Jackson back row far left.
Image courtesy of Ashes' granddaughter Brooks Walker.

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N/A

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Forest Grove™
CEMETERY EST. 1854































