

## Greenhill Cemetery

Muskogee's first cemetery was located on the southwest corner of Fondulac and Sixth streets, across the street from the Red Cross headquarters and the Education Center.

Greenhill Cemetery, at York and North streets, is owned and operated by the city of Muskogee. The land was given to the city by James A. Patterson, Capt. Frederick B. Severs, Clarence W. Turner and Samuel Sondheimer, all prominent merchants of Muskogee.

Dr. Pat Fite told me the first person buried in Greenhill was James A. Patterson, who died Sept. 27, 1894. He said as a boy he attended the funeral, and he and a group of friends rode their horses back to town after the funeral. Most of the bodies were removed from the Sixth Street site in 1904 by George H. Bloom, but Jay Fullerton said he and some of his friends watched workmen remove some of them in 1906. Some of them were removed as late as 1910. Some of them, 35, were removed to the extreme east section of Greenhill. The oldest marker in this group we have been able to determine is one of Dillard and Johnny (no last name) who were "killed by cars" (evidently railroad cars) in August 1879. They were aged 5 ½ and 7 ½. The most imposing marker is that of Maj. A.S. Strocket, born Dec. 25, 1817. He died March 9, 1882.

The cemetery is divided into three sections –Protestant, Catholic (sometimes called St. Joseph's Cemetery), and Jewish. The Catholic section is south of the entrance and the Jewish section is the southeast portion with the remainder being considered Protestant.

Near the flagpole, there is a 15 foot monument honoring the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Within the enclosure around the monument and flagpole are graves of veterans of the foreign wars.

Two years ago, I made a rather thorough study of the records of the cemetery. My purpose was to make a directory of the outstanding persons buried there, but we found the list unwieldy. In fact, the history of Muskogee could be written by giving the accomplishments of those listed. Besides, who are we to pick out the most outstanding persons, as most everyone is outstanding and distinguished to someone.

We did designate three persons who have been important in the history of Muskogee and the state of Oklahoma- Gov. Charles N. Haskell, Oklahoma's first governor; Alice Robertson, Oklahoma's first and only congresswoman; and Alexander Posey, the esteemed Creek poet, statesman, teacher and newspaperman.

An imposing monument honoring Haskell, similar to the Washington Monument but on a reduced scale, was dedicated by the Haskell Memorial Commission May 30, 1938.

The marker for Posey has the date of his birth and death, 1873-1908, as well as a verse of his poem Daffodils:

When death has shut the blue skies from my sweet daffodil,

And you roll on without my memory,

Thout reach thy tender fingers

Down to mine of clay,

A true friend still;

Although I'll never know thee til

Judgement Day.

The simple marker above Robertson's grave is a foot marker with the following inscription:

Alice Robertson

Jan. 2, 1853-July 1, 1931

First U.S. Congresswoman of Oklahoma

Missionary, teacher, who gave her life and wealth to mankind. A small metal marker indicates she was a daughter of the American Revolution.

West, C.W. "Dub". "Turning Back the Clock". Muskogee Phoenix 5 Feb. 1989, p. 5, sec. A.