

A PARTIAL LISTING OF ARKANSAS COMB GRAVE CEMETERIES

I) 7 Comb cemeteries visited by Ric & Janie Finch, Dec. 2012

<u>Cemetery Name</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Adair Cem.	Newton	2 combs, husband & wife
Buttram Cem.	Benton	1 comb
Hail's Burying Ground	Franklin	12-13 combs
Holmes Cem.	Boone	8 combs, 1 possible ex-comb
Love Cem.	Crawford	1 comb
Union Cem.	Fulton	1 comb
Witts Springs Cem.	Searcy	2 children's combs

II) Additional comb graves can be seen at these cemeteries

Bolton Cem	Crawford	5 combs, documented by Abby Burnett
Camp Cem	Fulton	1 cement or concrete comb
Denton Cem.	Sharp	Possibly 10-11 combs originally
Leetown Cem.	Benton	Probably just one comb, 1 yr old Robt. Braden
Magness Cem.	Cleburne	2 or more combs
Morgan Hill Cem.	Franklin	1 comb
Newberry Chapel Cem.	Crawford	1 comb
Rowland Cem.	Boone	5 combs, probably all made of limestone
Salem Cem.	Crawford	1 comb
Saline Cem.	Pike	Three combs, possibly more

III) General observations: Most of these comb cemeteries are found in the NW quarter of Arkansas, mainly in the Ozark Mtns. Union Cem. and Denton Cem. are exceptions, being found in the north-central area of the state. And Pike County, home to Saline Cem., is located in the SW quadrant of the state. None of the dated combs seen in Dec. 2012 pre-date the early combs of Tennessee, and none post-date the late combs of Tennessee. One can speculate from this limited sample that the custom of comb graves was in practice in Tenn. before it was introduced –likely by the “Tennessee diaspora” described by Jordan-Bychkov (2003) – to Arkansas, and that it never became as dominant a practice in Arkansas as it was in the Tennessee comb region. The comb grave cemeteries in Arkansas are spread over a wider area than the relatively narrow geographic belt containing the Tennessee combs. This is consistent with the notion that the custom was brought to Arkansas as part of the Tennessee diaspora. It also hints at the likelihood that many more comb grave cemeteries remain to be discovered in Arkansas.

IV) Additional descriptions & information:

Adair Cem.: Newton County, within the bounds of the Buffalo National River & WMA. Google maps gives location correctly. To access one must walk approx. one mile down a gated 4WD road. GPS: Lat N36 deg 3.919 min Long W93 deg 11.691 min

Two combs (one collapsed), made of sandstone. Combs are relatively crudely constructed, but feature finely carved limestone (possibly marble) headstones.

Sara Adair, dec. 1874, headstone features farewell handshake; comb collapsed.
John Adair, dec. 1878, headstone features farm implements; comb intact

Other headstones in this cemetery are well done and replete with symbols, e.g., a Confederate soldier who died during the war has a headstone that features crossed muskets and a flag with CSA.

Buttram Cem.: Benton County, on Lee Town Road, between town of Pea Ridge and Pea Ridge Battlefield. Google maps gives location correctly. Near Leetown Cem.

One single comb, constructed of thick sandstone slabs. Partial inscription on triangular support stone at head (presumably) of grave says: John Dyk-- Last letter hard to make out, could be s or possibly e.

Denton Cem.: Described thusly: The Denton Cemetery is located 1 1/2 miles northeast off Ash Flat of Hwy. Junction 167-62, almost one mile north of the home of Mr. and Mrs. Bobby Williams. This cemetery is located in a wooded area not far from a small stream called Denton Creek by many, others call it Hackney Creek. There is not a road that leads to this cemetery and only five or six markers are legible; however, there are about sixty-five to 70 field rocks which mark unknown graves.

The unique Denton family monuments are made of large, limestone rocks and have a pyramid shaped tee-pee of limestone, flat rocks placed over the grave from headstone to footstone. The large flat limestone monuments are about three and a half feet in height with a circular cut at the top of the marker.

There are only two to three completely standing markers and about ten to eleven unmarked, broken, tee-pee structured rocks over certain graves.

Hail's Cem. or Hail's Burying Ground (so listed on Find A Grave website): Franklin County, approx.. 3 miles south of Arkansas River, a short distance east of Hwy 309 on a gas well service road. GPS: Lat N 35 deg 27.423 min Long W 93 deg 48.819 min

Owner Phone: Mr. Joe Bond, 2128 Hwy 309, Ozark, AR 72949
Tel: 479-667-3110 Can also be contacted via wife's e-mail:
rlbjeb@hotmail.com

Owner very friendly and helpful, unlocked gate to road and showed us the cemetery. Says the name "Hail Burying Ground" or "Hail Cem." may not be the original name of this graveyard.

Numerous graves (described on internet as approx.. 40), of which 12 to possibly 13 are or were once comb graves. About 4 combs are still more or less intact; five have only one side slab visible (remaining slab may be collapsed and/or buried), and about 4 combs are totally collapsed. Counting what appear to be side slabs lying completely flat, with no associated triangular end stones, as collapsed combs, there may have been as many as 13 combs originally.

Combs are constructed of sandstone and are moderately crudely constructed. No dates or inscriptions were seen on any of the sandstone side slabs or endstones. A few commercial markers with inscriptions and dates remain. Dates: 1866 and 1882.

See: <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=cr&CRid=2400780>

Also: <http://freepages.nostalgia.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~tuckersolutions/nostalgia.html>

Mr. Bond stated that he knows or has heard of at least two other cemeteries in this vicinity that supposedly have combs.

Holmes Cem.: Boone County, on Bellefonte Rd., south of small town of Bellefonte. Google maps gives location correctly.

Eight combs plus one isolated triangular stone that could mark the former presence of a ninth comb, but this is uncertain.

Six combs are normal combs, but two sit on top of stone boxes. All the combs (and the boxes with the two combs) are made of very finely worked crystalline limestone. Some of the limestone is pink colored. Probably the limestone was sold as

a marble. All of the stone cutting is very fine workmanship, with neatly decorated margins and well cut inscriptions. Work of a master stonecutter.

Dates of death on the eight combs range from 1855 to 1871.

Leetown Cem.: Near Buttram Cem. See this website:

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~artt/benton/tentgraves.htm>

Said to be located within the bounds of the Pea Ridge Military Park.

Love Cem.: Crawford County, just north of town of Alma. Google Maps gives the location accurately.

One single comb of sandstone. With headstone: Moses, husband of Elizabeth Ford, 1870

Morgan Hill Cem: Franklin Co., 1 child's comb, 1896

Union Cem.: Fulton County, on Hwy 9, just north of the Fulton/Izard county line, in the community of Union. Google maps does not appear to know this locality.

One single comb, made of nicely dressed limestone (though not as finely crafted as the combs of Holmes cemetery). Has a footstone with the initials B.E.B.. A very crude or broken stone at the opposite end appears to be the remnants of a headstone.

Witts Springs Cem.: Searcy County, located at junction of state highways 16 & 27 & 377

Two very small combs, for infants or small children, rather crudely made of sandstone. Lie side by side and likely were siblings. No inscriptions or dates seen. Grave markers on one side of the combs are in the 1900s whereas many of the graves on the opposite side of the combs are in the 1800s. Combs likely date from the late 19th in the opinion of this observer, but could be from early 20th century.