

PREFACE

Memphis, the largest city in Tennessee, began as a hamlet on the banks of the Mississippi River about 1819. There were many other small towns and communities in Shelby County, but the steady growth of Memphis has incorporated many of those areas, and Memphis now covers a large portion of Shelby County. Many of those small communities had one or more "local" cemeteries. Many of the early churches had their own cemeteries. In no case discovered to date have contemporary records of lot ownership or burials in those small cemeteries survived. Too often the compilers have heard the stories about "Such-and-such a family did have the records, but their house burned, etc." or "After the old folks died, the records couldn't be found, etc."

The largest cemeteries in Shelby County are Elmwood, Forest Hill, Calvary and Memorial Park. Those and newer cemeteries were organized on a formal basis, plat maps of grave areas were made, and records of lot ownership and burials were kept. The compilers have not been concerned with copying inscriptions from those cemeteries as there is comparatively little chance of loss of their records, and even less chance of damage to monuments except by wear and tear from the elements. The purpose of the compilers in beginning this series of volumes has been to copy inscriptions from cemeteries for which no contemporary records exist and to preserve inscriptions from cemeteries which are threatened with destruction.

In recent years strong efforts on the part of many persons have been directed toward establishing cemetery associations for many of these smaller cemeteries. The old church cemeteries are often being protected now. The efforts have met with varying success, but, in the meanwhile, vandalism, lack of care, and the elements have continued to take their toll. In the expansion of Memphis, many small cemeteries have been moved, others have been destroyed, and the process continues at this time. The compilers were told of the small Eckford family cemetery in the Collierville area, but were advised of the recent, deliberate destruction of the monuments. The pieces were removed, probably to be sold for rough rock material.

The earliest marked burial found to date is for 1826, but the monument contains later dates and is not thought to be contemporary with the death. Family papers indicate the grave was moved from an early city cemetery on the present site of First Presbyterian Church. Mr. Joseph S. Williams' book, Old Times In West Tennessee, published 1873, contains a statement (page 281) about no suitable rock "fit for grave-stones" being available in early days. This may be among the reasons that, with the above exception, no tombstone with a burial date before the 1830's has so far been found.

The compilers wish to thank those who have helped locate these cemeteries and provide information about them. In past years several researchers have prepared lists of cemeteries, but these lists vary in the degree of their completeness. Some show only cemetery names, and often a cemetery will have more than one name. Some researchers have copied some of the inscriptions while others have abstracted some inscriptions. Those lists and compilations are in the collection of the Cossitt-Goodwyn Library in Memphis. The compilers of this volume are unaware of any complete list of Shelby County cemeteries or of any earlier complete list of inscriptions for any cemetery that has been located. The above lists have been used with the large scale maps of the Geological Survey, U.S. Department of Interior, to locate many of the cemeteries copied for this and succeeding volumes. Some of the cemeteries whose inscriptions appear in this volume were not found on lists or maps but were shown to the compilers by neighbors or others who knew of them.

In the following compilation, a row of parentheses marks along the left side of the inscriptions has been used to indicate multiple inscriptions on one monument. A complete index begins on Page 151. Each married woman has been indexed by her married name, and by what appears to have been her name before that marriage.

The compilers are indebted to George Weatherford Edmondson, Jr., brother of Mrs. Elam, for his work in drawing the cover and inside maps for this volume.