

## GOOD HOPE CEMETERY GOOD HOPE, MISSISSIPPI

In the early 1900's newly freed blacks acquired farm and timber land in Newton County in rural Hickory, Mississippi, an area now known as Good Hope Black Settlement.

This group of freed men and women, according to the laws of the Mississippi Black code, and what they were "allowed" to do, set out to redefine community and family life.

The early settlers of Good Hope, the Salters, Johnsons, Dawkins, Chapmans, Browns, Gaddis', Rileys, Currys and other families suffered many inconveniences and endured great daily hardships.

Slowly as the number of settlers increased the settlement gradually began to resemble a rural community, especially as schools and businesses were established.

Shortly after the turn of the century the black residents of Good Hope settlement were no longer allowed to worship with the exslave owning families.

And in 1908, with the assistance and perhaps the blessing of the white congregation, Filmore Johnson and others were instrumental in establishing Good Hope Black Settlement Baptist Church and Good Hope Church Black Cemetery.

The church cemetery is approximately 100 years old, however, all documentation and oral history indicates that the area may have been used as a burial ground as early as 1880

Yet Good Hope Church Cemetery is not the only burial place for the community's ancestors. Several yards behind the church, what is known by the black community as the "White Good Hope Church", lays The Colored Cemetery. Where many of the community enslaved ancestors are buried.

By the early 1920's the cemetery was set amidst a different landscape. It was at the "heart" of the community, not far from the small farm houses, out buildings and fields. When someone became sick and died, neighbors and family and friends rallied around to help. Some cooked and cared for the children and other helped to dig the graves and all would help to decorate it with flowers and other things.

This picture of the 100 year old cemetery has suffered terribly from the ravages of time, vandalism, and neglect. As a result many headstones are missing or badly weather worn. Many are broken and still others lay flat and in need of professional conservation work. Grave sites have been overlooked for many years by the descendents who lovingly laid their ancestors to rest.

*We can not allow this "unredeemable resource" to be lost forever.*

Research is being undertaken by Larry Salter and Joyce Salter Johnson in conjunction with Dr. Harold Graham of the Newton County Historical Society.

## Goals

1. Locate and identify as many as possible all unmarked graves
2. Restore existing headstones
3. Replace missing headstones
4. Apply for listing of Historic Good Hope Black Settlement Cemetery (HGHBS) on the Mississippi Historical Commission's registry of historic place

## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

### **THERE ARE SEVERAL WAYS TO GET INVOLVED**

1. Become a family supporter of Good Hope Church Black Settlement Cemetery. The Good Hope Church Black Settlement cemetery is under the auspices of the

#### **Salter/Saulter foundation Inc.**

**144 So. Hancock St.**

**Unit #1**

**Madison, Wi 53703**

a 5013c not for profit organization and is tax deductible to the extent of tax law governing charitable institutions.

2. If you have experience and are interested in donating your time to help make this project successful, please consider some of the following activities.

- FUND RAISING
- GRANT WRITING
- FINANCIAL FOR NON-PROFIT
- CEMETERY RESTORATION
- ON SITE RESEARCH
- CLEANING AND REPAIRING GROUNDS
- UP KEEP OF GROUNDS
- PLANTING AND MAINTAINING SHRUBS, TREES, AND FLOWERS

In August 1, 2008 Historic Good Hope Black Cemetery will be 100 years old. Please plan to be present to help celebrate its centennial anniversary.