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National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See Instructions to 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.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Vest Cemetery

Other names/site number: Woods Graveyard, Boswell Cemetery, IZ0145

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 335 Vest Cemetery Road (County Road #197)

City or town: Boswell State: Arkansas County: Izard

Not For Publication: Vicinity:

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

	<u>12-2-15</u>
Signature of certifying official/Title:	Date
<u>Arkansas Historic Preservation Program</u>	
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

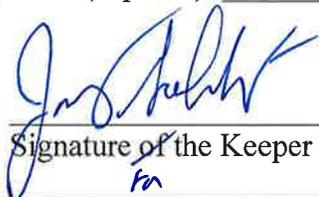
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4. National Park Service Certification

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
for

1-8-2016
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
_____	_____	buildings
<u>1</u>	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>1</u>	_____	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

FUNERARY/cemetery

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

FUNERARY/cemetery

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

N/A

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: STONE: Granite, Marble, Sandstone;
CONCRETE

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has

Summary Paragraph

The Vest Cemetery is the most significant remaining site associated with the early history of the Boswell community in western Izard County. The Vest Cemetery is located in a secluded valley at the end of County Road #197 in Izard County, Arkansas, north east of the historic community of Boswell in Athens Township. The valley contains an open field. Flat limestone glade rocks extend up a small hill behind one side of the field, while the Vest Cemetery lies past a small pond at the end of a fenced lane on the other side of this field. Less than one acre in size, the cemetery is shaped in the form of a rectangle. The first burial took place in 1875, and a limited number of new burials are still allowed in the cemetery. Approximately seventy-two graves are located in the cemetery including fifty historic burials with marked stones and four historic burials with no stones. Six non-historic burials all have marked stones. Approximately twelve graves are marked only with fieldstone markers. Many of the identified burials are related to the Vest family and their descendants, multi-generational residents of the historic town of Boswell.

Narrative Description

The Vest Cemetery is located north east of the Boswell community in Izard County, approximately one half mile from the White River in the Ozark highlands. To reach the cemetery, travel north on the gravel County Road #13 through Boswell for approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile. Turn right onto County Road #197. Follow this little road through the woods, along the top of a ridge for a short distance and then gradually go down a hill to an open field. This clearing is the old Vest family homestead. The cemetery is located at the end of County Road #197.

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A small split log cedar barn and a larger log barn are located in this cleared area.¹ The Vest Spring, which feeds the nearby Vest Branch Creek is located approximately 1/8 of a mile to the south of this clearing, in a small hollow. The Vest Spring provided water to local residents for many years.

The Vest Cemetery measures 284 feet long by 70 feet wide, and is laid out as a rectangle, oriented with the long access running from the northwest to the southeast. The entrance is at the southwest corner. Most of the graves are located in the center of the cemetery. A limited area of empty space is available for new burials along the north edge of the cemetery. The Vest Cemetery property is fenced on all sides by a woven wire fence topped with barbed wire attached to wood posts. Two wire gates, installed by the Bagwell family at the end of County Road #197 in the 1950s, form the entrance to the cemetery at the southwestern corner. A sign stating "Vest Cemetery" is located near this gate. The ground is mostly red clay with Bermuda and White Clover as the grass. One tall cedar tree is located near the center of the cemetery grounds. The cemetery land gently slopes upward from the lower southwestern corner to the north of the cemetery. There are no buildings located within the boundaries of the cemetery. The cemetery is surrounded by trees on three sides which contain White Oak, Red Oak, Sassafras, Redbud, Dogwood and Pine trees.

Within the cemetery, a "rock pen" wall made of small, stacked limestone rocks lies on the southeast side of the cemetery. This "rock pen" encloses an area approximately 23 feet long and 12 feet wide. The rock walls vary in height from a maximum of 32 inches high. The four corners of the "rock pen" were originally elongated, creating tall rock piers at each corner. Only the north two piers remain. The "rock pen" was built as a protective fence for the Cockerham family graves. Since cattle grazed year round on the open ranges in north-central Arkansas until the 1960s, graves were protected by these rock fences or pens. Rocks on the east side of the pen have deteriorated to some degree due to cattle damage, weather erosion, and crumbling cement. The remaining walls of the "rock pen" have been capped by a thin layer of cement to help stabilize the top lay of stacked rocks.

Historic Burials by Decade:

1871-1880: 3 marked
1881-1890: 1 marked
1891-1900: 2 marked
1901-1910: 6 marked
1911-1920: 6 marked, 1 unmarked (Mrs. Bruce)
1921-1930: 13 marked, 1 unmarked (Juanice Bagwell)
1931-1940: 7 marked, 1 unmarked (Glen Bagwell)
1941-1950: 7 marked, 1 unmarked (Agnes Jeffery)
1951-1960: 5 marked

¹ Both structures are associated with the historic Vest homestead, however, one is in a ruinous state and the other has had all of the original windows removed and several replacement logs as indicated on an Architectural Resource Survey conducted in 1991 by the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.

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Total Found Fieldstone Markers: 12

Total Unmarked Historic Burials: 4

Total Marked Historic Burials: 50

Total Historic Burials: 66

Non-Historic Burials by Decade:

1961-1970: 0 marked

1971-1980: 1 marked

1981-1990: 1 marked

1991-2000: 2 marked

2001-2010: 1 marked

2010 – present: 1 marked

Total Non-Historic Burials: 6

The Vest Cemetery contains a total of 72 known burials, with 66 historic known burials (50 marked with headstones). The Vest Cemetery also contains approximately twelve burials with only fieldstone markers. These burials are presumed to be historic. The tombstones present in the cemetery are made of various kinds of materials, including granite, concrete, fieldstone and marble. Different designs, shapes, and sizes of stones appear throughout the cemetery from handmade markers of concrete to commercially prepared stones. There have been no makers-marks found on any of the stones in the Vest Cemetery.

According to local oral tradition, the headstones in Vest Cemetery were shipped to the little town of Boswell by way of the White River. These headstones were delivered to the Boswell Landing by riverboats before 1903 or by railroad delivery to the Boswell Depot after 1903. Most of the commercial stones are echoed by footstones featuring rounded or flat tops with initials of the deceased. The placement of the graves follows the custom observed in the Ozark Mountains, as in much of Arkansas, of placing the feet of the deceased toward the east.

Many county churches and cemeteries are located side by side in the same location, but the Vest Cemetery, the Boswell Baptist Church, and the Vest Spring are not adjacent on the same tract of land. They are located about one-half mile apart. The Vest Cemetery lies in a small valley north east of the community of Boswell, while the Boswell Baptist Church building is located on a high ridge overlooking the little town and the White River valley. The church building has served the community as a former school facility and as a place of worship. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in March 1992 under the name “Boswell School. The Vest Spring is located in the hollow south of the cemetery.

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Tombstones – Style and Iconography

The double arched tombstone of the Reverend James Jackson Vest, the circuit riding preacher, and his wife, Delaney, is unusual in design. It features both raised and incised lettering. The double epitaph on this stone reads:

FATHER
ELDER
J.J. VEST
BORN
AUG. 22, 1821
DIED
JUNE 5th
1908

Into thy hands I
commend my spiret (sic.)

MOTHER
DELANEY
Wife of
J. J. VEST
BORN
NOV. 8, 1823
DIED
JUNE 1, 1905

She died as she lived
trusting in God

A raised diamond pattern decorates the bottom on the support stone. A central arrow, pointing toward the heavens, divides the inscriptions. Also, the tombstones for Gladis Bagwell and Ora M. Freeman have both raised and incised lettering.

Three tombstones have symbols of fraternal organizations. The tombstone of Albert Harvey Vest is known as a Pedestal Tombstone with a vaulted roof. It looks like the roof top of a house. It has raised lettering. His stone has the letters H T W S S T K S standing for the phrase “Hiram The Widow’s Son Sent To King Solomon”, a masonic phrase, written in the Masonic symbols of the Masonic Lodge. Mr. Elam R. Cockerham has a Masonic Lodge symbol on his stone. Mr. Henry Whitfield Smith has a stone with the Odd Fellow’s Lodge symbol of three linked chains on it. The tombstones of Dean Jeffery (1934-1939) and Sarah Vest (May 27, 1896 – Oct. 13, 1976) are hand-made, composed of large aggregate concrete with hand written lettering.

The iconography of the commercially produced markers in the Vest Cemetery is varied, including lambs, doves, floral motifs, ivy, geometric designs and praying hands. The tombstone of Mrs. Ida Ellen Vest Smith is a very pretty white marble stone with scrollwork designs. Nancy Jane Shirley Vest has a white marble stone with a floral motif. Climey Freeman also has a flower carved on her stone. Two infant Freeman children have a picture of a bird on their stones, and Jewel Dean Jeffery, a five year old child, has a lamb pictured on her stone. Both birds and lambs are common iconography on headstones dedicated to children.

Two Confederate soldiers, Reverend James Jackson Vest and his son Albert Harvey Vest, have later marble tombstones stating their service information for the Confederate States of America. Private James Jackson Vest served in Freeman’s Regiment of the Missouri Cavalry while his son Albert Harvey Vest served as a Private in Company C of Wood’s Missouri Cavalry. The Southern Cross of Honor is carved in the top of each stone. Two World War II soldiers have tombstones citing their service. Chester Vest has a military stone for his service in the Army as a

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PFC of the 87 Mountain Infantry. He received the Silver Star posthumously for gallantry in action. His brother, Harlin A. Vest, served as a Tech 4 in the Army.

Many of the identified burials are descendants of the Reverend J. J. Vest or related to the Vest family through marriage. Two family lines are associated with Reverend J.J.'s descendants through his son Albert Harvey Vest. Each family line has five consecutive generations buried in this cemetery. The line from Albert's son, Ben, includes – Reverend J. J. Vest, Albert Harvey Vest, William Benjamin Vest, Bertie Vest Gillihan, and Doyle Gillihan. The line from Albert Harvey's daughter, Ida, includes – Reverend J. J. Vest, Albert Harvey Vest, Ida Ellen Vest Smith, Sylvester Clarence Smith, and Clarence Hale Smith. Other burials include early settlers of the area, including the Bagwells, Cockerhams, Jefferys, and Woods.

Integrity

The Vest Cemetery has retained its historic integrity over the many years of its existence. The surrounding area continues to be farmland and woodland. The cemetery itself was originally open to the surrounding landscape. A fence was added to protect the grounds from cattle. The land is well maintained and only one large tree is located within the boundaries of the cemetery. Two smaller rock pens in other areas of the cemetery were removed due to their deteriorating condition. These pens were removed during the original fencing of the cemetery in the 1950s due to the fact that they had been mostly destroyed by years of grazing cattle. The rock pens had been pushed over by the cattle and the rocks had obscured the graves. The rocks were removed so the land could be cleared and maintained. One grave was originally fenced in by short metal posts set into a low, concrete retaining wall to protect it from cattle. This small metal and concrete fence was also removed in the 1950s due to its deteriorated condition due to the grazing cattle. The headstones are in good condition and only a limited number of new burials have occurred since 1960. The existing headstones and ground are all well maintained.

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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.)

- 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

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT

Period of Significance

1875-1930

Significant Dates

1875, first burial

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

As the final resting place for several early settlers of the White River Valley, the Vest Cemetery is significant as the last remaining evidence of the settlement of the Boswell community in Izard County. This cemetery serves as a wonderful resource for area families and retains historical integrity and integrity of location. The Vest Cemetery is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A**, with **local significance**, for its association with and as evidence of the exploration and settlement of the Boswell community. It is also being nominated under **Criteria Consideration D** as a cemetery.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Elaboration

The Boswell Community

The unincorporated community of Boswell is located in the White River valley in western Izard County. The earliest known settlers of the area are the Langston family, who arrived in 1814.² A few years later, the Jeffery and Wood families also settled in the area. These early families were dependent on the river as a primary mode of transportation. The early families created a small community that included a local school that also served as a community event space.³ This early community was named Wideman after the creek that flowed nearby.⁴ During the 19th century, the growth of steamboat traffic on the White River led to Wideman becoming a growing port settlement.⁵

In February 8, 1901, the White Railway Company was granted a charter to build the White River branch for the St. Louis, Iron Mountain and Southern Railroad Company. The advent of the railroad into the White River valley of Izard County allowed the local farmers and ranchers greater access to bigger markets for their agricultural products as well as an influx of new settlers and laborers. The prominence of the railroad in the local agricultural economy led to the decline of steamboat traffic on the White River.⁶

² David Pittman, "Boswell (Izard County)," *Arkansas Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, <http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=6605>.

³ *Ibid.* In the mid-1930s, the old school building was replaced by a new stone-faced school built by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) (NR 9.18.1992). This building is now owned by the Boswell Baptist Church.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

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After the establishment of the Boswell train station, named after station agent Robert Boswell, a post office was opened in April of 1906. This post office was named Cook, leading to great confusion in terms of communication and travel. The community was referred to as Wideman, the train station was called Boswell and the post office was named Cook. In September of 1915, the community and post office were renamed Boswell.⁷ Train service was discontinued at the Boswell station in the 1960s. In 2002 the Boswell post office was also closed. The 21st century has seen a dwindling population in Boswell.

The Vest Cemetery is located on land that at one time belonged to the Woods family. The Woods family homesteaded this tract of land in 1857.⁸ They were farmers who made a living from the bottom fields. William Woods served as the Izard County Clerk from 1852 to 1854.⁹ His son, Squire Woods, homesteaded land in Izard County in 1860 and served as the Izard County Coroner from 1878 to 1880.¹⁰ A son of Squire and Othena Woods named James Riley Woods married Mary Adeline Vest, a daughter of the Reverend J. J. Vest.

The Vest Cemetery was first called the Woods Graveyard by early settlers around Boswell as Othena McGuffey Woods and her husband, Squire Woods, were the first two people buried there in 1875 and 1879. Four of their grandchildren were the next ones buried there in the 1800s in what is called "The Woods Row" in the cemetery. This burial place was also called the Boswell Graveyard and the Boswell Cemetery years ago before the name Vest Cemetery was used. There are no surviving properties associated with the Woods family in Boswell.

Albert Harvey Vest, a son of Reverend Vest, donated the land from his farmstead to be used as a cemetery. It has served since the 1800s as a burial ground for the Woods and Vest families who established homesteads in the Boswell area. Other family surnames of neighbors from the area are also buried here. Burials took place in graveyards established on family homesteads because travel in the Ozarks proved difficult due to the poor road conditions and terrain.

The early pioneer community of Wideman and the successor unincorporated town of Boswell contain only a few small remnants of a once thriving commercial area. Only one small abandoned ruin of a commercial building is still evident, the Cooper Store Building (Arkansas Architectural Survey IZ0082). This small store building is located along state highway 13, southwest of the Vest Cemetery. A few scattered homes are also known in the area that date from the late 19th century and early 20th century, most now in a much deteriorated condition or with significant additions. One local farmstead, built by the Sylvester Smith family was added to the National Register of Historic Places on September 9, 1992. This property was constructed during the 1920s and 1930s and is an example of later agricultural development in the area. The

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ General Land Office Records, Bureau of Land Management, Accession AR0620_.215, Doc#8316, September 1, 1857, <http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov>.

⁹ Karr Shannon, *A History of Izard County*, Little Rock, Arkansas: Democrat Printing and Lithographing Company, 1947, p. 96.

¹⁰ General Land Office Records, Bureau of Land Management, (Squire Woods) Accession AR0770_.101, Doc#17470, May 1, 1860, <http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov>. Karr Shannon, *A History of Izard County*, Little Rock, Arkansas: Democrat Printing and Lithographing Company, 1947, p. 98.

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Vest Homestead, which is located on property to directly to the west of the Vest Cemetery, includes only the ruin of a log structure and a later house with multiple additions.

The Vest Cemetery serves as the best evidence of the settlement patterns of the community of Boswell through its record of the first settlers as well as various family names, including many members of the Vest family. While some architectural resources exist in the Boswell area from after 1920, this cemetery serves as the best existent example of the early settlement patterns of the area. While the later history of Boswell was heavily influenced by small scale agricultural enterprises, the original settlement of Wideman was a popular settlement place due to the presence of an early school house. This first school was created by the early settlers of the area, including the Woods family, in order to provide a rudimentary education for the local children. A church established by Rev. James Vest also helped to spur growth in the community. The area became an early social hub for the surrounding area due to the presence of the school and church. This early school and the Vest church have all subsequently been lost. The Vest Cemetery is the best remaining evidence of the early settlement of the Boswell community from the first interment in the cemetery (Squire Woods, c. 1875) through the decline of burials during the late 1920s. As evidenced in the cemetery itself, the town of Boswell began to decline after the Great Depression and never again saw the kind of growth it had in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Squire Woods

Squire Woods served as the Izard County Coroner from 1878 to 1879.¹¹ His family settled in the Boswell area in 1820, and his father William Woods, served as the Izard County Clerk from 1852 to 1854.¹² The Woods family owned the land along the White River north of the Jeffery family at Mount Olive all the way to Piney Creek. The Woods were farmers who made a living from the rich river bottom fields on their property along the river. Squire Woods and his wife Othena had a large family.

The Vest Family

The Reverend James Jackson "J. J." Vest was known by people all across north-central Arkansas, serving as a circuit riding preacher who traveled on horseback and pastored several churches from 1866 until his death in June 1908. Born in Morgan County, Alabama, in 1821 to James Vest, Sr. and Sarah Harvey Vest, J. J. Vest was licensed to preach at age seventeen in the Methodist Church in Alabama in 1838.¹³ He married Miss Delaney Kent in 1842, and they brought their six children and possessions in an ox-drawn wagon to Arkansas in 1857.¹⁴ They lived for a time in Piney Fork Township in Lawrence County. The area surrounding Piney Fork Township later became part of Sharp County. The Vests lived in the general area of the intersection of present-day Izard, Independence and Sharp counties. J. J. Vest served in the

¹¹ Karr Shannon, p.98.

¹² *Ibid.* p.96.

¹³ Lora Smith Cooper Ross, *The Reverend J. J. Vest and some of his kinfolks*. Melbourne, Arkansas: Dutton Printing Company, 1985, p.1.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* married p.1-2, moved p. 4.

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Confederate Army during the Civil War. In 1866, J. J. Vest was ordained to preach at the Polk Bayou Baptist Church.¹⁵

J. J. Vest moved to Izard County about 1873 and settled with his sons on Mill Creek near Jumbo where they operated a General Store and a Grist Mill.¹⁶ Vest organized the Saint's Rest Baptist Church in 1877 at this location.¹⁷ During the 1870s, Vest served as a United States Marshal to oversee great tracts of government timber.¹⁸ He homesteaded land in the Jumbo area in 1885.¹⁹

Deciding to devote his life full time to the cause of Christianity, J. J. Vest sold his land holdings in Piney Fork Township and divided the money equally among his children.²⁰ He and his wife Delaney moved to the community of Wideman (later named Boswell) and built a small house near his son, Albert Harvey Vest, in 1888.²¹ Living near "Harve" afforded help and watch-care for Delaney as he was away from home for several days at a time on preaching circuits.

Vest moved the Saint's Rest Baptist Church from Jumbo to Wideman, where he served as pastor in a two-story white frame building.²² Small country churches at this time traditionally met only once a month. Therefore, the preachers could pastor four different churches at the same time by riding on a circuit of various churches. Vest owned a fine horse which furnished his transportation to the various church locations, and overnight visits were necessary at his destinations. He also served as the leader at Bellview Church in Independence County; Mt. Nebo No. 2 Church at Barren Hill, and Pine Bayou Church in Pineville, Arkansas. He served as moderator for the 1881 Annual Meeting of the Rocky Bayou Baptist Association and preached in the Independence Baptist Association.²³ Some of the known services he held were located at Eutopia Baptist Church in Sharp County; Mt. Zion Church at Southside in Independence County; Union Grove at Banner in Cleburne County; and Table Rock in Stone County.²⁴ In 1965, the name of Saint's Rest Baptist Church was changed to Boswell Baptist Church.²⁵

Mr. John Quincy Wolf, a contemporary of Rev. Vest who was well acquainted with him, wrote the following synopsis of his work:

¹⁵ *Ibid.* p.13-15.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* moved p.17-18.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* p.19.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* p.18.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* p.17.

²⁰ *Ibid.* p.18.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.* p.19.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.* p. 24-25. Eutopia 24, Mt. Zion, 25, Union Grove 25, Table Rock 25.

²⁵ Boswell Baptist Church Minutes Record Book located at the home of William Cooper, Trustee of the Boswell Baptist Church, at 8224 Jumbo Road Boswell, AR 72556. Linda Carol Cooper, "Boswell from the 1980's - 2009." Unpublished Manuscript, July 2010, Copy available at the Izard County Historical Society Archival Room, 611 East Main Street, Melbourne, AR 72556.

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“James J. Vest. This pioneer preacher must have sown some good seed in his community near the mouth of Piney Bayou, for several Baptist preachers have come from that section and one church was established there. Rev. Vest was my pastor at Table Rock Baptist Church in Stone County for five years. I took my family on the train to Boswell to hear him preach on his eighty-sixth birthday. For some years he and Rev. H.H. Hilton of Baxter County traveled together and preached wherever they could get an audience.”²⁶

Reverend Vest held “protracted” meetings for one or two week periods (revivals), preached sermons, conducted baptizing services, performed weddings, and delivered messages at funeral services in many locations. He was widely known in a four county area and served two organizations of Baptist Churches: the Rocky Bayou Association and the Independence Baptist Association.²⁷ He was a Democrat, a Royal Arch Mason, and a member of the International Organization of the Odd Fellows.²⁸ He was known to his friends as “Uncle Jimmy” and to his relatives as “Grand-Sir”.²⁹

The following information about Reverend Vest is found in the *Biographical Memories of North East Arkansas* published in 1890 by the Goodspeed Publishing Company.

“James J. Vest was born in Alabama, in 1821, and is a son of James and Sallie (Harvey) Vest, the former a native of Georgia, born in 1791, and to their union, which occurred 1809, a family of eight children were born: Albert, James, John, George, William, Lucy, Martha and Nancy. The mother of these children died in Alabama, in 1827, she having been a worthy member of the Methodist Episcopal Church for many years. Mr. Vest wedded his second wife, Margaret Canady, in 1828, she being a daughter of Felix Canady, and the following children were born to their union: Henry, Martin, Jonathan and Sarah.

Mr. Vest from earliest boyhood was reared to a farm life, and received his early education in the common schools of Georgia. He served as a captain in the Alabama State Guards, State Militia, and in 1833 was elected to the office of constable of Morgan County, Ala., and after remaining in office for several years he was (in 1838) elected sheriff of the same county, holding the position until 1840. Two years later, he was elected to represent Winston County, Ala., in the State legislature, and died in this county in 1868, followed by his wife two years later, and they lie side by side in the Old Mount Nebo Cemetery, Ala.

James J. Vest received his early instructions in farming from his father, and in 1857 removed to Izard County, Ark., from which state he enlisted in the Confederate Army in 1862, under Gen. Price, and after serving for a short time in

²⁶ Ross, *The Reverend J. J. Vest and some of his kinfolks*, p 25.

²⁷ *Ibid.* p.24.

²⁸ *Ibid.* p.33.

²⁹ *Ibid.* p.33.

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the infantry, he joined the cavalry, and was a participant in all the principal battles which occurred west of the Mississippi River. He surrendered at Jacksonport on the 25th day of June, 1865.

When a young man in his native state, he studied for the ministry, and in 1838 was licensed to preach in the Methodist Church, and was a minister of that denomination for several years. In 1865 he was ordained to preach in the Baptist Church, and although he was the owner of a tract of land, he has divided it among his children, and devotes his time to the cause of Christianity. He is a stanch Democrat, a Royal Arch Mason, and also belongs to the I. O. O. F.

His wife, who was formerly a Miss Delaney Kent, and whom he married in 1840, was born in the state of Alabama, and she and Mr. Vest are the parents of the following family: Albert, James, William, Martha and Mary living, and John, Malviney and Sallie deceased.”³⁰

Delaney Vest’s death on June 1, 1905, ended a sixty-three-year marriage. Reverend J. J. died on Friday, June 5, 1908, at the age of eighty-seven after preaching on the previous Sunday.³¹ They are the first generation of the Vest family to be laid to rest in the Woods Graveyard, now called the Vest Cemetery. Vest was buried by his wife and son. Presently, five consecutive generations of two family lines of Reverend Vest’s descendants are buried in the Vest Cemetery.

The descendants of J.J. and Delaney Vest buried in Vest Cemetery include his son and daughter in law, Albert Harvey and Nancy Jane Shirley Vest. Albert and Nancy Vest were farmers who raised cotton as well as cattle and hogs near Boswell.³² Albert and Nancy’s daughter and son in law, Ida Ellen Vest Smith and Henry Whitfield Smith, are also buried in the local cemetery. They both farmed in the Boswell area as well as raised cattle. They are also known for their early steam engine powered cotton gin and grist mill that was used by many members of the local community.³³ Ida and Henry also donated the land for Rev. J. J. Vest’s Saint’s Rest Baptist Church, established in Boswell in 1907.³⁴

Ida and Henry Smith’s son and daughter in law, Sylvester Clarence “S.C.” Smith and Edna Elizabeth Combs Smith, are also buried in the Vest Cemetery. This is the fourth generation of Vests that are interred in the cemetery. Sylvester served as a Depot Agent for the Missouri Pacific Railroad Company for several years in southern Missouri and north-central Arkansas. He was also a partner and editor of the *Calico Rock Progress*, a local weekly newspaper, from 1930 to 1932. Sylvester also shipped eggs to Little Rock from his farm for the Marion Hotel, enabled

³⁰ *Biographical and Historical Memories of Northeast Arkansas*. Chicago: Goodspeed, 1889. p. 978.

³¹ Ross, *The Reverend J. J. Vest and some of his kinfolks*, p.33-34.

³² *Ibid*, p.41.

³³ McNeill, Ermile, “Widely Known and Beloved Pioneer My Grandfather Henry W. Smith” *Izard County Historian*. Volume 7, No. 3, July 1976, p.26.

³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 25.

Vest Cemetery

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by the connecting train schedule from Boswell to Little Rock.³⁵ The S. C. Smith Farmstead was listed on the National Register of Historic places in 1992 (NR 9.8.1992). The fifth consecutive generation of Vest descendants to be buried in Vest Cemetery includes Clarence Hale Smith, the two year old son of S.C. Smith and Edna Combs Smith who died of spinal meningitis.

Two of the Vest descendants buried in Vest Cemetery were also World War II veterans. Pfc. Chester W. Vest died on April 24, 1945, of wounds he received while fighting with the 10th Division in Italy on the Po River. A former Missouri Pacific Railway employee, Chester Vest entered the service in 1943 and received his basic training at Camp Hood, Texas. He was deployed overseas in January of 1945 and was only 35 years old at his death. He was awarded posthumously the Silver Star in October of 1945.³⁶ Chester Vest's brother Harlan Ardell Vest, also a veteran of World War II, is buried in Vest Cemetery as well. He served in the European theatre in the United States Army as a Tech 4 in the Culinary Arts Department. Both Vest soldiers were the children of William Benjamin Vest and Nona Banning Vest. Their great grandfather was the Reverend J. J. Vest.

The Cockerham Family

The Cockerham family was a well-respected family in the Boswell area. Mr. Elam R. Cockerham was born in 1849 in Alabama and moved to the Bowell area after the Civil War.³⁷ He and his wife, Susan Godwin Cockerham, also reared a large family. Mr. Elam Cockerham was a faithful member of the local Methodist church for fifty years. In 1878, he was made a member of the Masonic Lodge at LaCrosse and later became a member of the International Order of Odd Fellows Lodge.³⁸ On April 12, 1923, Clarence Cockerham, son of Elam and Susan, was killed in a railroad motor car wreck on the Huff Creek Bridge at Boswell.³⁹ Clarence was an employee of the Missouri Pacific Railroad Company at the time of the accident. Mr. and Mrs. Cockerham and Clarence Cockerham are all buried within the rock walls of the Cockerham family plot in the Vest Cemetery.

Eugene S. Whitteaker

Eugene "Pin" Whitteaker was a bachelor who lived with his brother's family until his death in 1925 at the age of fifty. He was buried in the Vest Cemetery in the area known as "Woods Row" due to the predominance of graves from the Woods family. He was employed by Mr. Henry Whitfield Smith to operate the steam locomotive engine that powered his farm equipment.⁴⁰ The steam engine was installed on a concrete slab near Mr. Smith's big barn along the Vest Spring

³⁵ Betty McCollum and Sue Chrisco. "Lora Smith Cooper Ross", *Down Memory Lane V*. Volume 5, Carroll Hayden: April 2003, p. 41.

³⁶ "Silver Star Award Presented Posthumously." *Calico Rock Progress*. November 2, 1945.

³⁷ Cockerham Obituaries, 3 November 2003 from Vera Reeves (Roots Web: ARIZARD – L).

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.* Lora Cooper Ross, "Boswell", *Izard County Historian*. Volume 7, No. 3, July 1976, p.10.

⁴⁰ Personal Interview with Lora Cooper Ross as recorded in the Vest Cemetery Information Notebook about Burials located at the home of Linda Carol Cooper, Treasurer of Vest Cemetery, Association, 219 West Street, Melbourne, AR 72556.

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Creek and the creek water was used in the machinery. The engine was used to power either a saw mill or a cotton gin owned by Mr. Smith. A steam powered saw created lumber for the local community and the gin was used by Mr. Smith as well as other farmers in the area.

L. C. Snapp

Mr. Snapp made his home in the Boswell area until his death in 1945. Mr. Snapp was a skilled carpenter and served as the job foreman of the WPA construction of the new Boswell School building in 1934.⁴¹

Ceborn Doyle Gillihan

Mr. Gillihan served as the caretaker of the cemetery for over fifty years. He started mowing the cemetery grounds in the mid-1950s as a young man and cared for the site until October of 2003 when his declining health forced him to cease. Doyle Gillihan was one of several children who attended school in the new rock school building construction on the top of the hill at Boswell in 1934. He started first grade in 1940, and he related many memories of his school days and teachers to the participants of the Dinner-on-the-Ground events after the local church services.⁴² Doyle Gillihan was a great-great-grandson of the Rev. J. J. Vest. Gillihan's mother was Bertie Vest Gillihan, the daughter of Benjamin and Nona Banning Vest.

The Vest Cemetery Today

The Vest Cemetery Association maintains the Vest Cemetery. The Board of Directors and the officers are all Vest cousins, descendants of the Reverend J. J. Vest, mentioned above, a circuit riding preacher, who is buried here. The directors include J. W. Vest; Clovis Vest; Thurl Vest; W. J. "Bud" Cooper; and Waylan Cooper. The Secretary is Mary Cooper Miller and the Treasurer is Linda Carol Cooper.

A caretaker is hired by the board to maintain the property by mowing the grass regularly. The board also helps in the clearing of fallen limbs and in maintaining the wire fence and of cleaning the headstones. The cemetery is funded only by donations.

The Vest Family Reunion is held each June in IZARD County with local and out-of-state relatives attending. Descendants of people buried in this remote, quiet, and peaceful location now live in many locations, and some relatives occasionally visit the little cemetery and leave silk bouquets on the graves of their loved ones to show love and remembrance.

Family surnames of people and their descendants who lived in this area since the 1800s appear on the roll of the Vest Cemetery. The area was a close knit location in the Ozark Mountains. A minister, a newspaper editor, a construction foreman and stonemason, a depot agent, railroad workers, farmers, businessmen, military servicemen, husbands/fathers, wives/mothers, and

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

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children are all represented as the cemetery retains integrity of association and feeling. As the final resting place for some early settlers of the White River Valley, the Vest Cemetery is significant in the history of Boswell in Izard County and serves as a wonderful resource for area families and retains historical integrity and integrity of location.

Statement of Significance

As the final resting place for several early settlers of the White River Valley, the Vest Cemetery is significant as the last remaining evidence of the settlement of the Boswell community in Izard County. This cemetery serves as a wonderful resource for area families and retains historical integrity and integrity of location. The Vest Cemetery is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion A**, with **local significance**, for its association with and as evidence of the exploration and settlement of the Boswell community. It is also being nominated under **Criteria Consideration D** as a cemetery.

Vest Cemetery
Name of Property

Izard, Arkansas
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9. Major Bibliographical References

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

Allen, Desmond Walls, *Index to the Sharp County Record Newspaper Evening Shade, Arkansas 1877-1883*. Conway, AR. Rapid Rabbit Copy Company.

Biographical and Historical Memories of Northeast Arkansas. Chicago: Goodspeed, 1889.

Buford, Cathy, "Boswell Properties Nominated to Register of Historic Places." *White River Current*, Calico Rock, AR. (March 12, 1992): p. 3.

Cooper, Linda Carol. "Boswell History." *Izard County Historian*, Volume 12, No. 3, July 1981.

Cooper, Linda Carol. "Boswell from the 1980's – 2009." Unpublished Manuscript, July 2010. Copy available at the Izard County Historical Society Archival Room, 611 East Main Street, Melbourne, AR 72556.

Grave Markers, Vest Cemetery, Boswell, Arkansas.

<http://genforum.genealogy.com/mcguffey/messages/150.html>.

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Miller, Mary Cooper. *Coopers of Izard County, Arkansas*. Batesville, AR. Batesville Printing Company, 1995.

Pittman, David. "Boswell (Izard)." *Arkansas Encyclopedia of History and Culture*. Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, Central Arkansas Library System.
<http://www.encyclopediaofarkansas.net/encyclopedia/entry-detail.aspx?search=1&entryID=6605>

Ross, Lora Cooper. "Boswell" and "Early Settlers – The Vest Family," *Izard County Historian*. Volume 7, No. 3, July 1976.

Ross, Lora Smith Cooper. *The Reverend J. J. Vest and some of his kinfolks*. Melbourne, Arkansas: Dutton Printing Company, 1985.

Shannon, Karr. *A History of Izard County*. Little Rock, Arkansas: Democrat Printing and Lithographing Company, 1947.

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“Silver Star Award Presented Posthumously.” *Calico Rock Progress*. November 2, 1945.

Wolf, John Quincy. *Life in the Leatherwoods*. Fayetteville, Arkansas: University of Arkansas Press, 2000.

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): IZ0145

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property >1

Vest Cemetery
Name of Property

Izard, Arkansas
County and State

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| A. Zone: 15 S | Easting: 585309 | Northing: 3989358 |
| B. Zone: 15 S | Easting: 585330 | Northing: 3989367 |
| C. Zone: 15 S | Easting: 585290 | Northing: 3989443 |
| D. Zone: 15 S | Easting: 585272 | Northing: 3989437 |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

A tract of land located in the NW1/4 of the NW1/4 of Section 15, Township 16 North, Range 10 West of the 5th Principal Meridian of Izard County, Arkansas, bounded by the following UTM points, starting at a point A (Z: 15 S, Easting: 585309, Northing: 3989358) and traveling northeast to a point B (Z: 15 S, Easting: 585330, Northing: 3989367), then traveling northwest to a point C (Z: 15 S, Easting: 585290, Northing: 3989443), then travelling to the southeast to a point D (Z: 15 S, Easting: 585272, Northing: 3989437), then returning to point A.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

This boundary includes all of the property historically associated with this cemetery.

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11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Linda Carol Cooper, Publicity Chairman
organization: Izard County Historical and Genealogical Society
date: October 16, 2015

name/title: Callie Williams, National Register Historian (Form Edited By)
organization: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program
street & number: 323 Center Street, Suite 1500, Tower Building
city or town: Little Rock state: AR zip code: 72201
e-mail calliew@arkansasheritage.org
telephone: 501-324-9880
date: October 16, 2015

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

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

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.

Vest Cemetery
Name of Property

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Photo Log

Name of Property: Vest Cemetery

City or Vicinity: Boswell vic.

County: Izard

State: Arkansas

Photographer: Callie Williams, National Register Historian, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

Date Photographed: January 21, 2015

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

1 of 18: (AR_IzardCounty_Boswell_VestCemetery_0001)
Overview of cemetery, camera facing north.

2 of 18: (AR_IzardCounty_Boswell_VestCemetery_0002)
"Woods Row" section of cemetery, camera facing northwest.

3 of 18: (AR_IzardCounty_Boswell_VestCemetery_0003)
Overview of cemetery, camera facing southwest.

4 of 18: (AR_IzardCounty_Boswell_VestCemetery_0004)
Overview of cemetery, camera facing southeast.

5 of 18: (AR_IzardCounty_Boswell_VestCemetery_0005)
Cockerham family plot, camera facing northwest.

6 of 18: (AR_IzardCounty_Boswell_VestCemetery_0006)
Detail of grave, Olen Von Vest, camera facing east.

7 of 18: (AR_IzardCounty_Boswell_VestCemetery_0007)
Detail of grave, Gladis Bagwell, camera facing east.

8 of 18: (AR_IzardCounty_Boswell_VestCemetery_0008)
Detail of grave, Dean Jeffery, camera facing west.

9 of 18: (AR_IzardCounty_Boswell_VestCemetery_0009)
Detail of grave, Whitaker Pen, camera facing west.

Vest Cemetery

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10 of 18: (AR_IzardCounty_Boswell_VestCemetery_0010)
Detail of graves, David Freemand and Climey Freeman, camera facing west.

11 of 18: (AR_IzardCounty_Boswell_VestCemetery_0011)
Detail of graves, Nancy Vest and Albert Harvey Vest, camera facing west.

12 of 18: (AR_IzardCounty_Boswell_VestCemetery_0012)
Detail of graves, James Jackson Vest and Delaney Vest, camera facing east.

13 of 18 (AR_IzardCounty_Boswell_VestCemetery_0013)
Detail of grave, Sarah N Vest, camera facing west.

14 of 18: (AR_IzardCounty_Boswell_VestCemetery_0014)
Detail of grave, Chester W Vest, camera facing west.

15 of 18: (AR_IzardCounty_Boswell_VestCemetery_0015)
Detail of grave, H W Smith, camera facing west.

16 of 18: (AR_IzardCounty_Boswell_VestCemetery_0016)
Detail of grave, Ida Ellen Smith, camera facing west.

17 of 18: (AR_IzardCounty_Boswell_VestCemetery_0017)
Detail of grave, L C Snapp, camera facing west.

18 of 18: (AR_IzardCounty_Boswell_VestCemetery_0018)
Detail of grave, Ora M Freeman, camera facing west.

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.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 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.

Vest Cemetery, Boswell vic., IZARD County, Arkansas



Google earth

feet
meters

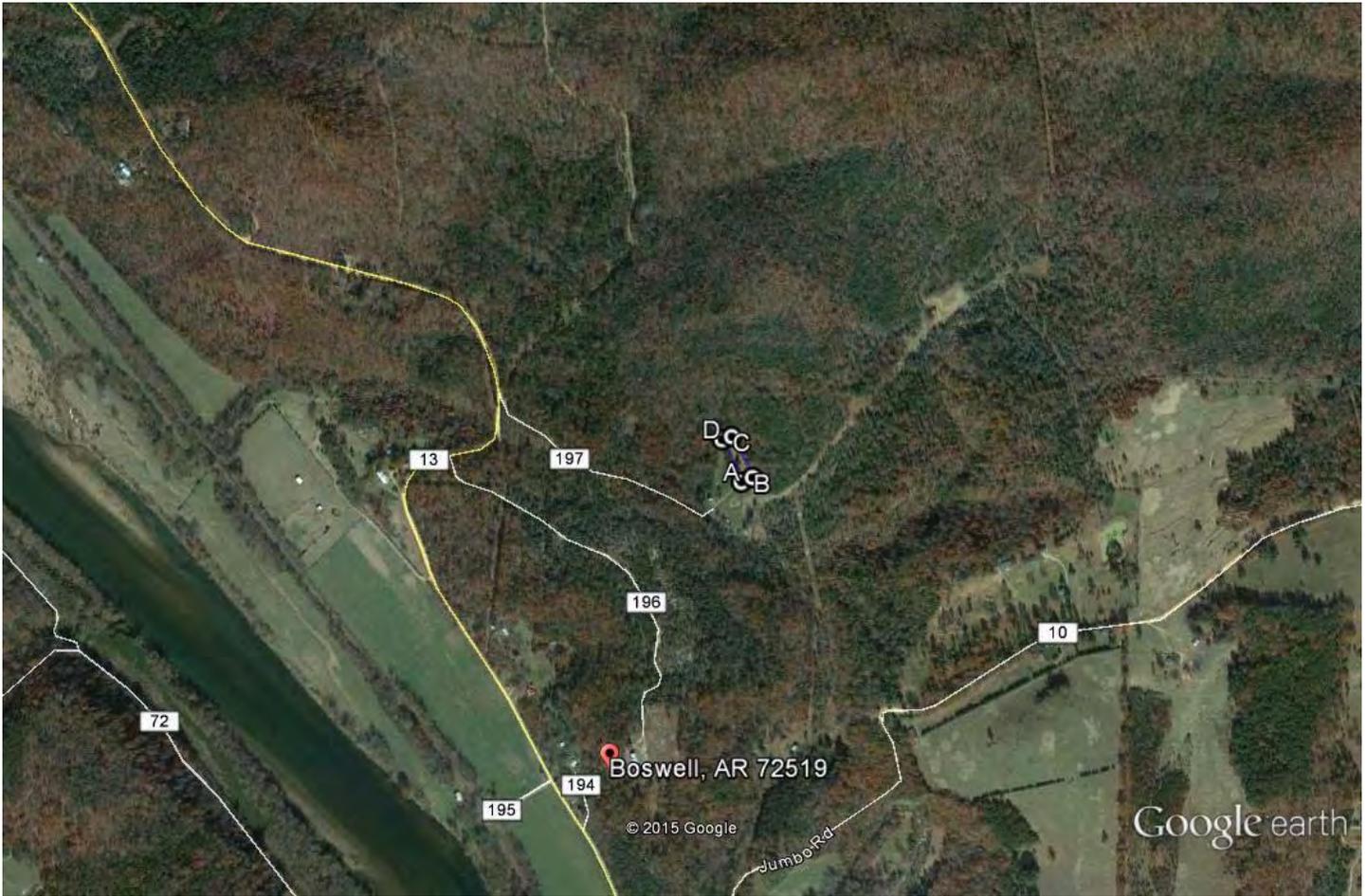


UTM

A -	Z: 15 S	Easting: 585309	Northing: 3989358
B -	Z: 15 S	Easting: 585330	Northing: 3989367
C -	Z: 15 S	Easting: 585290	Northing: 3989443
D -	Z: 15 S	Easting: 585272	Northing: 3989437

NAD 1983

Vest Cemetery, Boswell vic., IZARD County, Arkansas



Google earth



UTM

A -	Z: 15 S	Easting: 585309	Northing: 3989358
B -	Z: 15 S	Easting: 585330	Northing: 3989367
C -	Z: 15 S	Easting: 585290	Northing: 3989443
D -	Z: 15 S	Easting: 585272	Northing: 3989437

NAD 1983











ΔΔΔ ΔΔΔ
OLEN VON VEST
SEPT. 21, 1933
NOV. 28, 1939

Gone, but not forgotten



WALTER
WELLS
MAY 15 1911
DIED
OCT 13 1912
Suffered from
cancer of the
throat



WILLIAM
EUGENE
BONNER
BORN
MAY 18 1864
DIED
MAY 18 1944

FREEMAN
STANLEY
DIED
OCTOBER
18 1870

Mrs CLINEY
DIED
FEBRUARY
28 1870
NOV
19 1870

MOTHER
MAY 20 1845
OCT 16 1928

GRAVE

GRAVE

VESTIGE
JAN 1845
OCT 1875
MOTHER
87 DAYS


PVT
JAMES JACKSON VEST
FREEMAN'S REGT
MO CAV
CSA
AUG 22 1821
JUN 5 1908

ELDER
J. J. VEST
BORN
AUG. 22, 1821
DIED
JUNE 5, 1908
into thy hands I
commend my spirit

DELAWEY
Wife of
J. J. VEST
BORN
Nov. 8, 1823
DIED
JUNE 1, 1905
She died as she lived
Trusting in God



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CHESTER W
WEST

ARKANSAS

PFC

87 MOUNTAIN INF
WORLD WAR II

JULY 11 1909

APRIL 24 1945

REST

H. W. SMITH
OCT. 4, 1866
NOV. 8, 1930

I have fought a good fight
I have finished my course
I have kept the faith

IDA ELLEN
SMITH

MAR 26, 1873

MAR 15, 1941

She died as she
lived - A Christian

L. C. SNAPP

1867—1945

GRANVILLE

WIFE OF
L. R. FREEMAN
BORN FEB 2 1892
DIED JAN 23 1948

Rest in peace
Lord of all things
with the spirit that they may
rest in peace and
their souls follow them