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TWO CLAY COUNTY CEMETERIES ADDED TO ALABAMA HISTORIC CEMETERY REGISTER

The Alabama Historical Commission (AHC) recently added The First Baptist Church Old Cemetery in Ashland and Ashland City Cemetery to the Alabama Historic Cemetery Register.

“The cemetery register is a prestigious listing of historic cemeteries in Alabama,” said Lee Anne Wofford, cemetery program coordinator. “The AHC considers the notable historic cemeteries in this register to be particularly worthy of preservation and appreciation, and therefore deserving of this special recognition.”

There are now 3 cemeteries in Clay County listed on the Alabama Historic Cemetery Register, which features 351 cemeteries statewide.

The First Baptist Church Old Cemetery was Ashland’s first public cemetery. While the first known burial was in 1875, there are several unmarked graves that may be older than this date. It is the final resting place for many of Ashland’s earliest settlers. Several notable citizens are buried here including Edmund A. Phillips, a signer of Alabama’s 1901 Constitution and the parents of Hugo Black, former U.S. Senator and U.S. Supreme Court Justice. The cemetery has long been associated with the First Baptist Church, which was originally known as Union Baptist Church.

Ashland City Cemetery recorded its first burial in 1887. The cemetery was operated by W.T. and Dona Deen, who are buried in the cemetery. The Deen family sold the cemetery to the town of Ashland to be used as a city cemetery. It is the final resting place of Ashland’s early settlers, community leaders, and many veterans. In addition, Governor Bob Riley’s parents, grandparents, and brother are buried here.

The Alabama Historical Commission administers the Alabama Historic Cemetery Program that gives aid to the general public, government officials, civic groups, and others in identifying, documenting, registering, and conserving Alabama’s historic cemeteries.

The Alabama Historic Cemetery Register officially recognizes and honors family and community cemeteries that were established at least 40 years ago.

Listing in the state cemetery register is an honorary designation imposing no restrictions on property owners. State law protects all cemeteries from willful desecration and destruction.

*To protect, preserve, and interpret Alabama’s historic places is the mission of the **Alabama Historical Commission, the State Historic Preservation Office.***