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MORGAN COUNTY'S SYKES CEMETERY ADDED TO ALABAMA HISTORIC CEMETERY REGISTER

The Alabama Historical Commission (AHC) recently added Sykes 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 10 cemeteries in Morgan County listed on the Alabama Historic Cemetery Register, which features 351 cemeteries statewide.

Sykes Cemetery was the primary burial place for African Americans from the early 1900s until 1965, when the Sterrs Memorial addition was added to the Decatur City Cemetery. Alabama's 1901 Constitution made it illegal for African Americans to be buried in white cemeteries. J.J. Sykes purchased this property in 1901 for a “negro cemetery.” This cemetery is the final resting place for former slaves, physicians, ministers, educators, business owners, farmers, military veterans dating back to the Civil War and many of the area's African American residents. The inscriptions on many of the historic grave markers document the uniqueness of the cemetery, as well as local African-American history.

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**.*

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