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## **LEE COUNTY'S OLD MT. OLIVE CEMETERY ADDED TO ALABAMA HISTORIC CEMETERY REGISTER**

The Alabama Historical Commission recently added Old Mt. Olive Cemetery, also known as the Simeon Whatley Gravesite 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 four cemeteries in Lee County listed in the Alabama Historic Cemetery Register, which features 252 cemeteries statewide.

According to documentation submitted by Mr. Marcus Whatley, this cemetery is associated with Mt. Olive Baptist Church, which was founded in 1843. The first burial here was in 1841. This church is still active today. Its first pastor was William Cadenhead. One of the founding members who requested official Baptist affiliation was Elizabeth Driver. Both Cadenhead and Driver are buried here. Other burials include Simeon Whatley, his wife Catherine, two of their sons and one daughter. Simeon Whatley had five sons who fought in the Civil War. One of his sons, Thomas Jefferson Whatley is buried here and a Civil War marker identifies his grave.

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, Alabama's state agency for historic preservation.*

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