

McMurray Cemetery

By Dave Hallemann



This family cemetery was located in T41 R6 S17 NE corner of the SE¼ of the SE¼. It was reportedly moved to St. Louis at an unknown date. It was located in the side yard of 204 Dunklin Drive in Herculaneum as remembered by Durwood Lawson and Bill Haggard.

38° 16' 40" N / 90° 22' 35" E

The cemetery is named for the J. W. McMurray Family who purchased the tract on 28 July

1870 as recorded in Book 3 at Page 535.

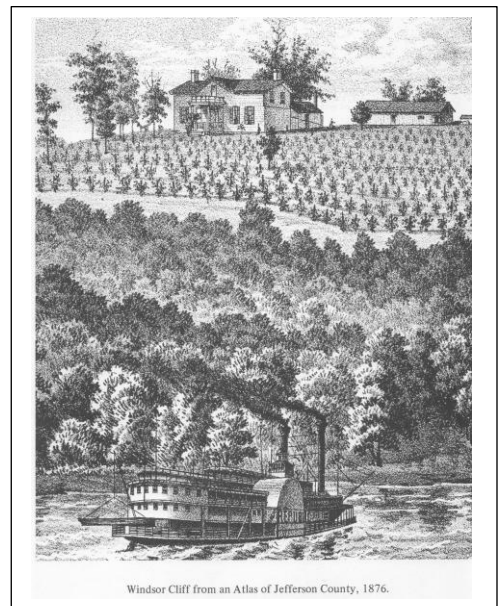
This tract of land was first entered into record 8 February 1850 as Land Patent #17974, issued to Henrich C. Werth for the SE¼ and the E½ of the SW fractional ¼, T41 R6 S17 containing 40.20 acres.

On 13 December 1858, to comply with a court order, James E. Marshall executor of H. C. Werth, deceased, sells 34.55 acres on the court house steps to Charles Rankin, as recorded in Book P on Page 105.

1st October 1860, Chas. S. Rankin and wife Sarah A., sell the tract to David W. Bryant containing 30.20 acres consisting of the SE fractional quarter and the E half of the SW fractional quarter of Township 41 Range 6 Section 17. Transaction being recorded in Book R on Page 578.

According to historical accounts David Windsor Bryant builds his historic home, Windsor Cliff, in 1858. According to the deeds he never owned the land until 1860. I suspect he bought it in 1858 from Charles Rankin or Rankin bought it on the courthouse steps for Bryant. Bryant possibly taking two years to pay it off.

In the 1850 Census David Bryant, 18, is living with Chas. Rankin. Rankin is listed as a merchant, and Bryant a clerk.



"Windsor Cliff" from 1876 Historic Atlas.

On 3 October 1855 David W. Bryant was married to Eliza Howe by D. L. Myers, minister, as recorded in the marriage records at Hillsboro.

In the 1860 Census David Bryant 29 farmer, and Eliza 25, are listed with Martha Blake 10 recorded as living with them.

According to a letter received from DNR (*see below*) from J. W. McMurray to Mr. A. Wedell Herod, “soon after David Bryant built Windsor Cliff, his wife died there and was buried in the Old Herculaneum Grave Yard [*Rankin Cemetery*].” Also according to the letter “Mr. Bryant had my father (the late) Robert E. McMurray, put a fence around the cemetery lot...”

27th May 1870, David W. Bryant sells to Andrew S. Greenleaf, for \$4500 “Tract of land known as ‘Windsor Cliff,’ being the S part and the SE fractional quarter and the E half of the SW fractional quarter of Township 41 Range 6 Section 17 containing 30.²⁰ acres...” recorded in Book 2 at Page 240.

Two months later on 28th July 1870, Andrew Greenleaf sells the same tract to J. Wilson McMurray for \$5500, transaction recorded in Book 3 Page 535.

This puts this tract in the McMurray hands where was to remain for almost 100 years.

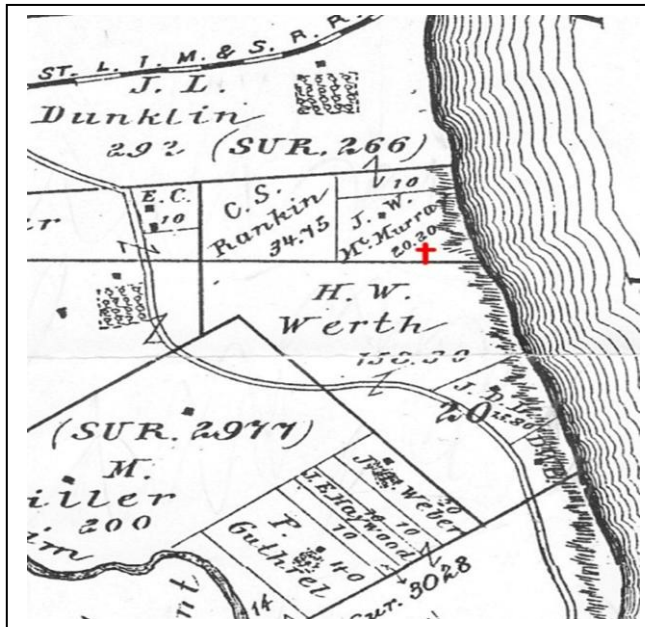


Robert E. McMurray Home in 1968 as it appeared in the book “Historic Sites of Jefferson County” page 38, gone today. As can be seen by comparing to the 1876 Atlas this is the same building as Windsor Cliff. This home was located at 130 Dunklin Drive.

Continuing from the letter, “The iron railings around the graves at the south side of the McMurray property on the bluff was the burial site of the Grandmother of Mr. J. W. McMurray and his baby sister. Mr. McMurray moved them to St. Louis several years ago.” (*This appears to be in conflict as the McMurray letter is dated 1958, however both Mr. Lawson and Mr. Haggard remember seeing the monuments and fencing in the early 1960s. Unless the McMurray letter meant they were moved to St. Louis, while alive, from some other location.*)

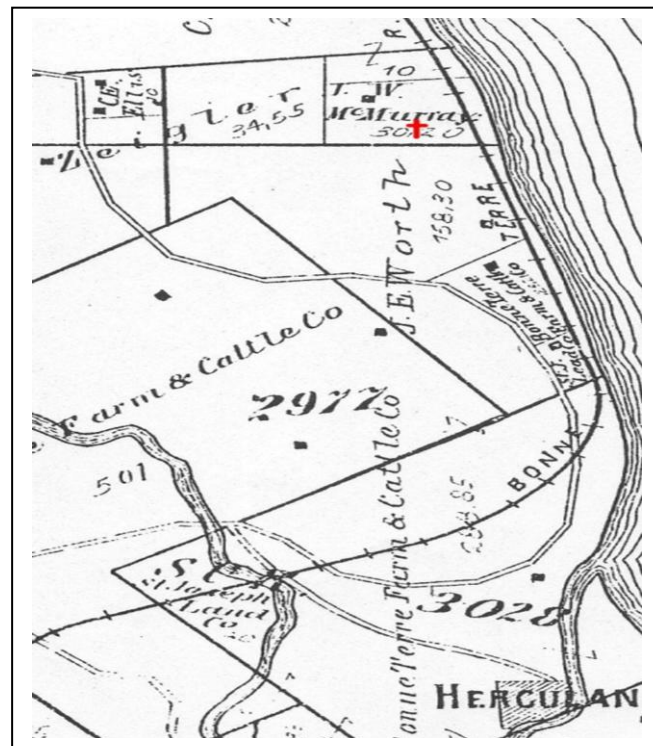
I could not locate a deed “excepting out” the cemetery. If as the letter suggests the bodies were moved to St. Louis, there would be no need for an exception, however Mr. Lawson remembers seeing them dig up the graves in the early 1960s. Where the bodies could have been reinterred could not be ascertained. I offer this article on my research as a glimpse into the history of the area and to let future researchers know that the cemetery was moved.

With this information I think we can put an “official” name of **McMurray Cemetery** to this graveyard.



As can be seen in the picture at left, in 1876 J. W. McMurray is now in possession of the property. The cross I added to the photo to denote the approximate location of this cemetery.

In 1898 J. W. McMurray is still in possession of this tract and adjoining lands. As before I added the cross to show location.



The below letter was obtained from DNR with the help of Ken Smith.

S O P Y

6836 Smiley Ave.,
St. Louis, Mo. April 12, 1958.

Mr. A. Wendell Herod,
Herculaneum, Mo.

Dear Mr. Herod:-

I often think of our pleasant get togethers
at the St. Joseph Lead Company and at the Scottish Rite
gatherings.

The land and place that we have on the Bluff
including the low part on the West never was for sale, but
we have had many offers. Our old house is now One Hundred
years old. It was built by David Windsor Bryant in 1858,
his wife died there soon after and she was buried in the
Old Herculaneum Grave Yard. Mr. Bryant had my father,
(the Late) Robert E. McMurray put an iron railing around the
Cemetery lot. Mr. Bryant was related to the Fletchers and
Austin families of Early Herculaneum.

Sincerely

s/ J. W. McMurray

P. S. The McMurrays purchased our place on July 28, 1870.

(Note the Above J. W. McMurray is an Uncle of the present owner.)

P. S. (By HerOd) - Mrs. Bryant was buried in the Old
Herculaneum Cemetery by the Colored
church in down town Herculaneum.

The Iron railings around the graves
at the South side of the McMurray
property on the Bluff was the burial
site of the Grand Mother of Mr/ J. W.
McMurray (above) and his baby sister.
Mr. McMurray moved them to St. Louis
several years ago.

Copyright © 2011 Dave Hallemann

This article may be used for personal, historical, and genealogical purposes only, if the author is given credit. It may not be sold or included in any other publication or on any website without written permission of the author.