

ANDREW JOHNSON NATIONAL CEMETERY
(Monument Hill)
121 Monument Avenue
Greeneville
Greene County
Tennessee

HALS TN-6
HALS TN-6

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY

ANDREW JOHNSON NATIONAL CEMETERY (Monument Hill)

HALS NO. TN-6

- Location:** 121 Monument Avenue, Greeneville, Greene County, Tennessee Part of the Andrew Johnson National Historic Site
Latitude: 36.155617 Longitude: -82.837706 (The Andrew Johnson grave, Google Earth, Simple Cylindrical Projection, WGS84)
- Significance:** The Andrew Johnson National Cemetery is part of the National Park Service Andrew Johnson National Historic Site. It includes the burial place of Andrew Johnson, the 17th president of the United States. Andrew Johnson grew up in poverty, moved to Greeneville, Tennessee where he practiced the tailoring trade and was actively engaged in political affairs which led him to the highest office in the nation. Johnson assumed the office of the President after Abraham Lincoln was assassinated. During the chaotic aftermath of the Civil War Johnson was the first sitting U.S. president to be impeached -- for his efforts to undermine Congressional policy. He was acquitted but not re-elected to serve a full term. Johnson returned to Greeneville when Ulysses S. Grant was elected president in 1869. In 1875, Johnson was elected to serve as his state's senator -- the only ex-president to serve in the U.S. Senate. The War Department opened the cemetery on the property in 1908.
- Description:** Andrew Johnson National Cemetery is approximately 15 acres in size. The property is an oval shaped parcel of land enclosed by a concrete wall with recessed paneled sections. There are two roads within the cemetery. Monument Avenue leads up to and around the Andrew Johnson family burial plot located on a central knoll, and the other road starts at the southwest corner of the cemetery off Vann Road and parallels the southeast edge of the cemetery ending in a looped turn-around. Four narrow concrete pedestrian paths and stairs lead up to the Johnson monument from these roads.
- The cemetery is planted in lawn and a variety of evergreen, deciduous and coniferous trees that create an arboretum like setting. The ground rises 56' from the main entrance at the north to the monument. The elevation at the southwest entrance, which is near the lowest point on the property, is 118' lower than the base of the monument.
- The one primary building within the cemetery, originally the care taker's lodge, is now used as the National Park Service (NPS) administrative office. The building's design was based on a prototype created by General Montgomery C. Meigs for military cemeteries. It is a square, two-story, brick structure with shuttered windows, a pitched roof and small front and rear porches. An

ANDREW JOHNSON NATIONAL CEMETERY
HALS NO. TN-6
PAGE 2

accessible ramp has been added to access the front door. The only other building is a maintenance building that was the original stable. Both buildings and a small parking area are located just inside the main entrance. The entrance is secured by a pair of ornamental wrought-iron gates that have a presidential seal attached and an elaborately carved, brass doorknob. The gate posts are square concrete columns with recessed panels. There is a matching pedestrian gate adjacent to the vehicular gate.

From the north entrance one of the four pedestrian paths leads up to the knoll in a series of steps and landings. The path is made of concrete and edged with low curbs. About three quarters of the way up there is a rectangular landing with a flagstaff at the center. The United States and State of Tennessee Flags are flown.

The Johnson burial plot is surrounded by a 15' wide one-way drive. There is space for three cars to park at the top of the knoll. The area within the drive is oval shaped and measures 112' by 160'.¹ The land form within the driveway is a uniformly sloped knoll. There are two sets of paths and steps that lead from the drive to a brick path that surrounds the plot. A 3' wide clinker brick path surrounds the plot and follows the contour of the topography. In plan the path forms a rectangle measuring 45' x 75'. Path bricks are mostly set in sand with wide joints; a small portion of the path is set in mortar. The brick paving expands at the northwest and northeast corners to form small plazas about 8' x 12' with benches oriented to look out over the cemetery and beyond to the view of the town of Greenville. A 3' plain ornamental iron fence is located 5' inside the brick path. A more ornate circular fence is inside the rectangular fence. This fence is also 3' high ornamental iron, and the vertical elements alternate between hoops and arrow point finials. The slightly taller gate posts are highly ornamental. A plaque on its gate notes that it was fabricated by Hanson and Pettit at 128 Noble, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The circular fence is 35' in diameter. It appears that the circular fence was the original fence and the rectangular fence was added at a later date to define a larger area for descendant burials.

The white marble Johnson monument is a 28' high draped obelisk topped with an eagle. The base of the obelisk is flanked by paired urns with eternal flames. A copy of the constitution is engraved on the front of the monument. When standing at the monument one has a view of the Great Smoky Mountains in the far distance framed by cemetery trees. President Andrew Johnson (1808 – 1875), his wife Eliza McCardle Johnson (1810 – 1876), and their children are buried within the circular fence. This includes sons Robert, Charles and Andrew “Frank” Jr. and daughters Martha and Mary. Mary Johnson married Col. Daniel Stover, the second great granduncle of the author. Other descendants –

¹ Dimensions taken from Google Earth so are approximate.

grandchildren and great-grandchildren are buried in the area between the circular and rectangular fences. See the park service website for a layout and names of everyone buried in the plot.

Plants at the knoll include two sheared boxwood 3' high and 5' diameter at either side of one of the paths between the drive and brick path. Two similarly sheared crape myrtle (*Lagerstromia indica*) flank the other path. There are three mature trees – a recently planted pine, a multi-trunk cedar and a large deciduous shade tree. Within the circular fence there are three peonies.

The site is in excellent condition and is well maintained..

History: At age 66 Andrew Johnson suffered a stroke and four days later on July 31, 1875 died at the home of his daughter Mary Johnson Stover in Elizabethton, Carter County, Tennessee. His body was returned to Greeneville and was buried on August 3, 1875 on "Signal Hill".² Family tradition says that it was his beloved former slave Sam who knew where the President wanted to be buried – on a portion of land Johnson owed that overlooked the town of Greeneville and had views of the mountains.

When Johnson's eldest daughter, Martha Johnson Patterson died in 1901, a provision in her will deeded the land to the United States. Congress accepted this donation on July 12, 1906 and the War Department began developing the property as a new national cemetery. The cemetery opened in 1908. The war department maintained the property until 1942 when it was designated as a National Historic Site and responsibility for maintaining the property was transferred to the National Park Service (NPS).

The caretakers lodge, stables building and other improvements were constructed by the War Department. The site was listed on the National Register of Historic Properties #66000073, on Oct. 15, 1966. As of 2012, the Andrew Johnson National Cemetery was one of only two national cemeteries maintained by the NPS that continue to accept new burials.

Sources: Interpretive material at the site and at the Andrew Johnson National Historic Site Visitor's Center on Depot Street and College Street in Greeneville, TN.

Andrew Johnson National Historic Site, National Park Service. Web. Accessed May 2012. <<http://www.nps.gov/anjo/index.htm>>.

A Short History of the National Cemetery – Andrew Johnson National Historic

² It was known as Signal Hill because it was the highest point in the area and was used as a vantage point for signally allied troops.

Site, NPS.Web. Accessed May 2012.
<<http://www.nps.gov/anjo/cemeteryhist.htm>>.

The Johnson Family Burial Plot, Andrew Johnson National Historic Site, NPS.
Web. Accessed May 2012. <<http://www.nps.gov/anjo/cemetery-plot.htm>>.

Stover genealogical records assembled by the author.

Historian: Chris Pattillo, Historic Landscape Architect

444 17th Street, Oakland, CA 94612, (510) 550-8855, PGAdesign.

Date: 27 May 2012



Andrew Johnson family burial plot at the top of the knoll (Chris Pattillo, April 22, 2012). The perimeter brick path, bench, rectangular ornamental iron fence, the 28' Johnson monument and other family monuments can be seen.



Base of the Andrew Johnson monument with detail of the circular ornamental iron fence (Chris Pattillo, April 22, 2012). One can see the Great Smoky Mountains in the distance – one of the reasons Johnson wanted to be buried at this site.



Detail of perimeter brick path, bench, and rectangular ornamental iron fence with a view of the hills in the distance (Chris Pattillo, April 22, 2012).



Stairway to the monument from the Administrative Office near the north entrance (Chris Patillo, April 22, 2012). Flagpole and Andrew Johnson monument at the top.



Stairs looking down from the monument towards the Administrative office and north entrance (Chris Pattillo, April 22, 2012). The parking and red buildings upper left are the old stable buildings now used for maintenance.



Main entrance at the north corner of the property (Chris Pattillo, April 22, 2012). The Caretakers lodge, now used as the NPS Administrative Office can be seen as well as a portion of the enclosing concrete wall and cemetery beyond. Monument Hill is behind the NPS sign.



One half of the vehicular gate at the main north entrance to the cemetery including one of the concrete gate columns (Chris Pattillo, April 22, 2012). The original stable, now the maintenance building can be seen through the fence.