

Creek Stand AME Zion Church Cemetery Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places



Photo left: September 2011 group. At the rear of the photo is the historic marker that was erected to honor the cemetery's 2009 listing to the Alabama Historic Cemetery Register. Photo right: Group who attended AHC meeting on 4/23/2015 to support the Creek Stand cemetery National Register nomination. Both photos were taken by Dr. C. Van West, Director, Middle Tennessee State University Center for Historic Preservation.

On April 23, 2015, the Alabama Historical Commission (AHC) National Register Review Board met in Montgomery, Alabama at the AHC office to review properties and sites for which nominations to the National Register of Historic Places had been submitted. A nomination for the Creek Stand AME Zion Church cemetery was among the sites that were considered by the Review Board.

The Creek Stand cemetery nomination was researched and written by Dr. C. Van West, Director of the Middle Tennessee State University Center for Historic Preservation (MTSUCHP).

Back in 2008, Dr. West and others surveyed numerous sites in Macon County with connections to the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) Syphilis Study (aka The Tuskegee Syphilis Study). They visited the Creek Stand church and cemetery because the church was a designated round up location during the study. Round up locations were the sites where USPHS workers met with study subjects to conduct "examinations." These sites were documented by Dr. West and his group in a National Parks Service multiple property submission (MPS). The MPS documentation of a particular site is not a National Register nomination or listing, but it establishes the viability of properties and sites for meeting National Register criteria. The original Creek Stand AME Zion Church building no longer exists but it was documented as a round up location. The Creek Stand cemetery was included in the MPS because it contains interments of Syphilis Study subjects.

In 2011, Dr. West was invited by Shari Williams to meet with the congregation of the Creek Stand AME Zion Church to explore the possibility of writing and submitting a National Register nomination. Dr. West and his group from MTSUCHP visited in the fall of 2011 and again in January 2012 to interview church and community members and to survey the cemetery. He submitted the first draft of the nomination to the AHC last spring. The cemetery was nominated not only for the connection to the Syphilis Study but also for its significance to ethnic heritage and African American social history. The AHC National Register review board voted to approve the nomination for further consideration by the National Parks Service (NPS). We are hopeful that in the next 45-90 days, we will receive favorable news that Creek Stand cemetery will be listed to the National Register.

Dr. West also presented a nomination of the Shiloh cemetery in Notasulga, Alabama to the review board on April 23. He previously submitted nominations of the Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church and the Shiloh Rosenwald School for National Register consideration. The church and the school are listed to the National Register.

Dr. West is to be commended for his effort, dedication, and success to achieve national recognition of Macon County's historic properties and sites.

For more information on the Middle Tennessee State University Center for Historic Preservation, visit <http://www.mtsuhistpres.org> and www.facebook.com/pages/MTSU-Center-for-Historic-Preservation/185270448160408