

Madison County Patriots

Linda and I began the effort to photograph and record the GPS coordinates of the burial sites of all known Revolutionary War Soldiers and Patriots buried in Madison County in the summer of 2001. It was Linda's idea that this should be done and she has been with me to almost all the cemeteries that you see pictured. Also at the same time she was urging me to undertake this effort, the Tennessee Valley Genealogical Society (TVGS) wanted a map updated that was done in the 1970's identifying the location of Revolutionary grave sites. I agreed to give it a try and what you see on the following pages is the beginning of the update to the TVGS map.

Madison County has the highest concentration of Revolutionary War Soldiers and Patriots burial sites due to its early settlement, which was enhanced by the public land sales. There are at least 90 of these gravesites, although we can locate only about one third of the actual burial sites. For the other two thirds, we know they died and are buried in Madison County based on obituaries, probate records and other family records. What we don't know is exactly where the actual burial occurred. Many of these men were buried on their land at sites that have long since disappeared.

Some of the cemeteries and markers that we have visited over the last year will probably not exist in a few short years. Those in particular danger are George Jude, Richard Cavett and Robert Davie. Others, such as Samuel Davis, have been reclaimed from the woods and undergrowth and the cemeteries restored. There are no signs or other markers for most of these cemeteries and some are quite hard to find.

Linda and I would like to thank Raneë Pruitt of the Huntsville Public Library for all the work that she has done over the years identifying these men and where they are buried. Raneë has been responsible for the DAR marking several of these graves and without her work several of these sites might have already been lost. Raneë spent many hours with us going over records, identifying gravesites, and alerting us to Patriots that we had missed.

We also would like to thank Dorothy Scott Johnson. Dot is truly the cemetery recording pioneer for Madison County. Dot has published three books on the cemeteries of Madison County, all of which are a gold mine of information. Most of Dot's work was done in the early 1970's using US Government topographical maps of the county. Dot graciously loaned me all of her original research and all of her original topo maps that she carried in the field with her and recorded the location of cemeteries. All of this was done years before the GPS system was developed and I have told her many times that I don't know how she could possibly have found many of these cemeteries. Some of the cemeteries where these old soldiers are buried don't show up on government maps, but somehow Dot found them and recorded the location on her topo maps. I was able to look at the location on Dot's map and find the same location on my computerized topo maps done by Maptech, Inc. This gave me a set of coordinates to plug into my GPS, and I usually could get within 50 feet or less doing this. Without the aid of Dot's maps I probably would not have found several of the markers that you see pictured here.

I grew up across the street from Maple Hill Cemetery and have loved cemeteries all my life. They contain a wealth of history that should be preserved for future generations to enjoy. Once they are destroyed for development or neglect they and all the priceless information that they contain are lost forever.

Jim Maples