

The Walnut Grove Cemetery



The Walnut Grove Cemetery is arguably the most important cemetery in the southern Skeggs Creek area. By my count, there are 332 graves in the cemetery; 67 of which have readable names on the stones. Of these 67, at least 13 belong to young children.

As one would expect many, perhaps most, of the individuals buried at Walnut Grove have ties to the Cromer and Renner families.

Like almost all of the other area cemeteries, Walnut Grove was neglected for a time.

On page 3 is a diagram of the cemetery. It's not exactly to scale and I'll not promise it's exactly right. There are many completely unmarked graves that are identifiable only as very slight depressions in the ground. Some are more obvious than others, so I may have missed a few

or added a few where none should be. The area that's the most suspect contains the dozen graves below #33.

The red numbers correspond with the list of persons buried following the diagram on page 4. A "U" denotes a completely unmarked grave; "FS" denotes a fieldstone with no intelligible writing on it. This list is slightly different from that in Rockcastle County Cemetery Book. There are three marked graves presented here that aren't listed in the book; there are 10 hard-to-read markers listed that I simply couldn't find.

The green-shaded area on the diagram represents the oldest section of the cemetery. The oldest dated stone, 1852, is #34; #36 has a date of 1867. Most of the graves in this area are oriented differently from the rest—they are

rotated roughly 45 degrees counterclockwise. Some are oriented in roughly an east-west direction, this may or may not be intentional. The top thirds of the three rows immediately to the right of the green area look to be, generally, the next oldest.

Only two of the graves in the oldest section are marked. #34 is inscribed with "M A B" and a date of 1852.

The other marked grave, #36, is Sarah Doan, a child who was born and died in 1867. She was most likely the daughter of George W. Doan and Rachel Storm, #37. Numbers 38 and 39 are probably also children of George and Rachel; George is probably the fieldstone below #39.

We can, however, make some intelligent guesses about who else might be buried in those

older unmarked graves by taking a look at which families lived nearby who have members buried in the cemetery, and using 1870 as the upper limit for the date of death.

While it has proven very difficult to determine exactly who owned the cemetery property in the 1850s and 1860s, we know that Joseph Cromer's, Jacob Renner's, and Holbert McClure Sr's land met near the mouth of Long Branch in 1865. The mouth of Long Branch is about 700 feet from the cemetery. Several Renner, Cromer, Linville, Doan, and McClure families were nearby at various times before 1870, so I'll concentrate on them, although it appears the nearby Whitaker-McClure Cemetery was the family cemetery for the bulk of Holbert McClure Sr's family. Here's the list, with the approximate death dates:

- Joseph Cromer, between 1864 and 1869
- Lucy Cromer, 1845 (daughter of Joseph and Mary Linville Cromer)
- Samuel Cromer, between 1850 and 1860 (son of Joseph and Mary Linville Cromer)
- Joseph Doan, between 1860 and 1870
- Malachi Jones, 1852*
- Pauline Jones, 1857*
- Solomon Jones, 1852*
- Unnamed Jones, 1852*
- William Linville, 1840
- Louisa Renner Linville, 1842
- Emily Linville McClure, between 1850 and 1852
- Ermina Jane Renner McClure, 1858
- Abigail Parsons Renner, between 1850 and 1860
- Henry Logan D. Renner, between 1864 and 1866
- Levi Renner, between 1850 and 1860 (son of

Jacob and Abigail Parsons Renner)

- Sarah Renner, between 1854 and 1860 (daughter of Vincent and Charity Storm Renner)
- Sylvester Renner, 1846
- Unknown Renner, before 1850 (wife of Sylvester Renner)
- Unnamed Renner, 1858 (daughter of Vincent and Charity Storm Renner)
- Vincent Renner, 1858

**These four Jones children were of Malen Jones and Sarah Linville. Another son, John, who died in 1895, and one of his children are buried in the cemetery (#47 and #48).*

That's 19 people who we know died before 1870 and who lived in the general area of the cemetery at the time of their deaths. There are about 27 unknown burials in the older section of the cemetery.

I feel fairly certain that at least two of the older graves belong to Joseph Cromer and Vincent Renner.

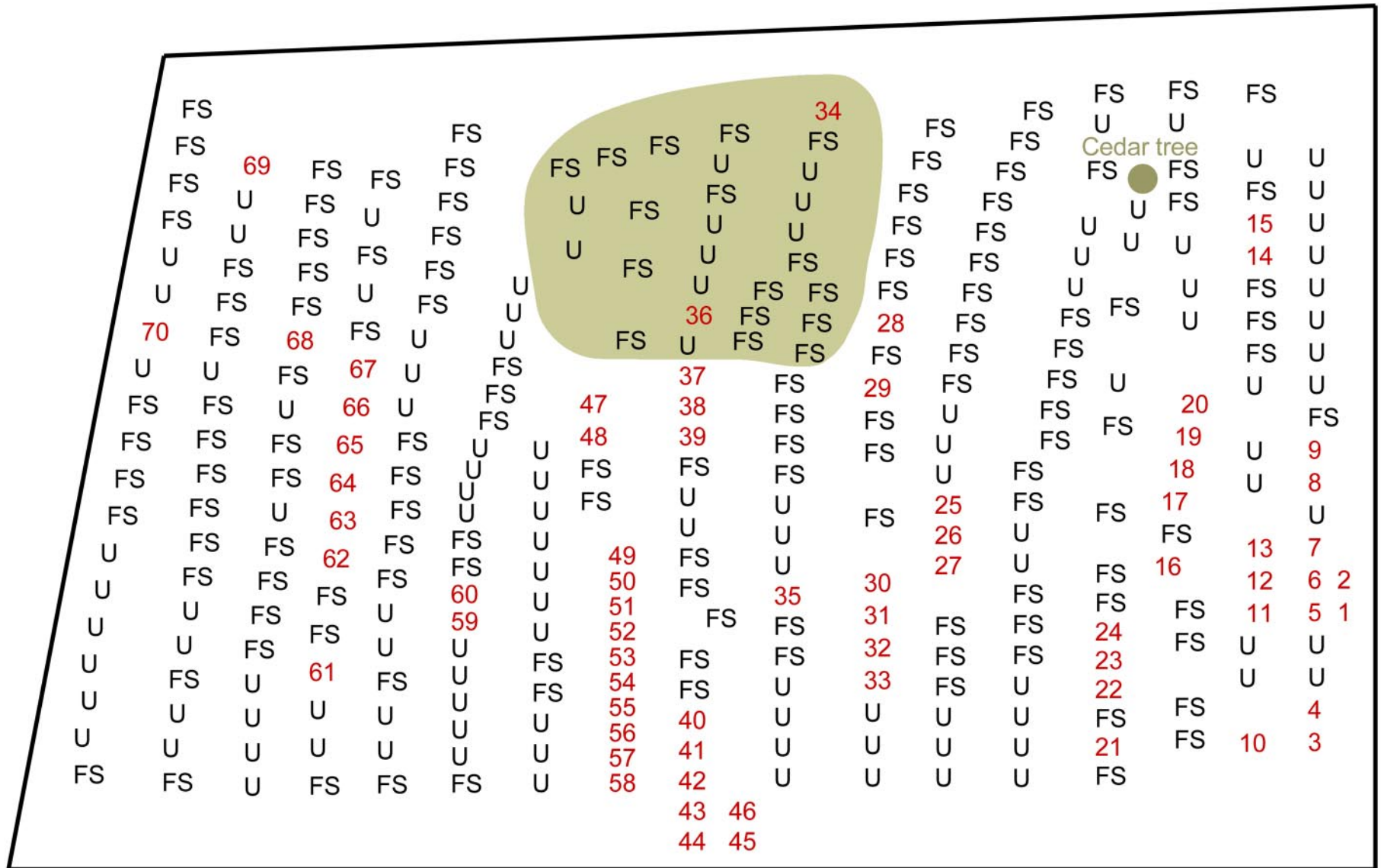
It's hard to say with any certainty at all who the first person buried here may have been, but I personally believe (no hard proof, just supposition) that the cemetery was started by the Cromer/Linville clan as a family cemetery. Both Joseph Cromer and his in-laws, William and Louisa Renner Linville, lived in Laurel County for a time in the late 1820s and early 1830s. They were back in Rockcastle by 1834. I think it's likely that Joseph bought the land near or including the cemetery from Holbert McClure when they moved back and that the Linvilles lived on the property with him. In the 1840 census Joseph and Louisa are listed next door to each other in this general vicinity. In 1850 Joseph is almost certainly within shouting distance, at

the very least, of the cemetery. From the census and tax list information, it appears William died in the spring of 1840. I think he is a likely candidate for the first burial in the cemetery, followed by Louisa a couple of years later and then by Joseph and Mary Linville Cromer's young daughter Lucy in 1845.

Considering the familial connections and proximity of the Cromers, Linvilles, and Renners, it's not hard to understand how it could become much more than a simple family burying ground.

There are many candidates for the remaining 239 unmarked graves. A large percentage of them probably descend in some way from the Jacob Renner Jr and Joseph Cromer families. There's no reason to think Jacob himself isn't buried there, too, along with his brother Adam and many other friends and relatives.

Diagram of the graves at the Walnut Grove Cemetery



List of Persons Buried at Walnut Grove Cemetery

(Numbers correspond to the diagram on page 3)

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|--|---|--|
| 1. Joseph William Cromer, 1875-1957 | 33. Green A. McClure, 1870-1933 | 66. Martha J. (Perciful) Doan, 1855-1916 |
| 2. Valinchia C. (Pitman)Cromer, 1880-1948 | 34. M A B, 1852 only date | 67. Lula Doan Marlow, died 1920 |
| 3. S. D. Mink, 1900-1925 | 35. Calvin Cromer, 1924-1925 | 68. Homer Doan, no dates |
| 4. Joe W. Mink, 1921-1944 | 36. Sarah Doan, born and died 1867 | 69. Miranda (McClure) Sowder, 1853-1931 |
| 5. R. Hester Logsdon, 1897-1946 | 37. Rachel (Storm) Doan, 1831-1903 | 70. Luley May Sams, 1894-1895 |
| 6. Jonas Pitman, 1841-1937 | 38. Margaret C. Doan, 1871-1875 | |
| 7. Rachel W. (McQueen) Pitman, 1841-1913 | 39. S[?] F or P [?] D, no dates | |
| 8. Martha E. Hammock, 1865-1928 | 40. Steve W. Kirby, 1897-1925 | |
| 9. Carie Cromer, 1904-1905 | 41. Nathan Doan, 1879-1936 | |
| 10. Myrtle Mink, 1929-1930 | 42. Sammy L. Doan, 1918-1919 | |
| 11. Ophia Hammock, 1903-1928 | 43. Martha A. (Rowe) Kirby, 1873-1949 | |
| 12. Maggie Kirby, 1879-1940 | 44. William M. Kirby, 1873-1972 | |
| 13. Winnie Kirby, 1907-1910 | 45. Burgess L. Kirby, 1911-1972 | |
| 14. Barbara Ann (Renner) Kirby, 1852-1934 | 46. Rosa Kirby, 1910-1990 | |
| 15. James William Kirby, 1854-1945 | 47. John Jones, 1846-1895 | |
| 16. Carter Lee Doan, 1938-1940 | 48. Infant son of John Jones, 1873-1874 | |
| 17. Mahala N. (Doan) Cromer, 1876-1914 | 49. Charity Helen Renner, 1882-1900 | |
| 18. Herman Cromer, 1903-1907 | 50. Rebecca Jane Renner, 1877-1900 | |
| 19. Samantha J. (Renner) Cromer, 1846-1918 | 51. Mary Ann (Linville) Renner, 1844-1935 | |
| 20. Jarvis Jackson Cromer, 1836-1901 | 52. Elisha Renner, 1842-1925 | |
| 21. Johnny B. Crowder, 1939-1941 | 53. Martha M. (Renner) Boone, 1866-1925 | |
| 22. Rosa Lee Crowder, 1908-1941 | 54. Louella Renner, 1875-1941 | |
| 23. Benjamin Franklin Cromer, 1868-1950 | 55. Henry Wilson Renner, 1880-1949 | |
| 24. Rebecca (French) Cromer, 1874-1918 | 56. John Logan Renner, 1873-1954 | |
| 25. Delia Cromer | 57. Lucy Ann Renner, 1871-1958 | |
| 26. Armilda J. (Doan) Cromer, 1858-1916 | 58. Sarah Angeline Renner, 1887-1970 | |
| 27. William Bramblet Cromer, 1862-1932 | 59. Sarah M. (Cromer) Doan, 1867-1963 | |
| 28. Nancy Mink, 1881 only date | 60. Isaac W. Doan, 1864-1926 | |
| 29. A R D M H, 1880 only date | 61. Hattie L. Swinney, 1886-1916 | |
| 30. Lessie Jane Cromer, 1919-1921 | 62. Johnnie B. Doan, born and died 1899 | |
| 31. Samie McClure, 1893-1917 | 63. William French, 1879-1908 | |
| 32. Elizabeth Caroline (Cromer) McClure, 1870-1928 | 64. Mary J. French, 1879-1905 | |
| | 65. Andrew J. Doan, 1851-1925 | |

We know the following people are buried at Walnut Grove, but either don't have stones or were missed in the previous inventory:

1. Joseph M. Doan
2. Nathan Doan (has a stone but is not listed in the cemetery book)
3. Sammy L. Doan (has a stone but is not listed in the cemetery book)
4. Elizabeth Ann Renner Cromer
5. Myrtle Mink (has a stone but is not listed in the cemetery book)
6. Homer Doan (has a stone but is not listed in the cemetery book)
7. Jacob H. Renner, died 26 April 1921. The newspaper account of his funeral says he was "laid to rest in the family burying ground near the Walnut Grove Church." His father was William Smith Renner; grandfather was Jacob Renner Jr.