



In the mid-1980's Mr. Albert J. Davis, of Owensboro, enumerated the cemetery. He listed it as an "unnamed cemetery (Smith)" - the latter being the property owner's name. He wrote: "The stones have all been pushed over under a tree and cemetery completely destroyed. The following names were salvaged from the enormous pile of stones":

Prots___, William	stone broken	
[broken piece]		8 - 1 - 1898
Smith, _____	3 - 25 - 1866	1 - 26 - 1885
Wiles, Sophia	2 - 20 - _____	_____
Winstead	base with the name Winstead on it	

On 17 September 1998 I visited the Bellwood Hill. Around the base of a tree at the northwest corner of the lot, about 20 feet from the labyrinth, the following fragments of several monuments were found:

1. William Prots\_[broken]\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_ 1 May 1806 \_\_\_\_\_ 19 Dec 187\_  
 [note: the above two pieces appear to be parts of the same monument, the Owensboro newspapers show that William Protsman died on 19 December 1877]
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Smith 25 Mar 1866 \_\_\_\_\_ 26 Jan 1885
4. John G.  
 [note: the above two pieces appear to be parts of the same monument, the Owensboro newspapers show that John Smith died on 26 Jan 1885]
5. Sophia Wiles 20 Feb \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_
6. Elizabe\_\_\_ (w/o Jos.) \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_

In a grownup thicket at the backside of the hill, about 40 feet from the above, some more of the remains of the cemetery were found. At least one whole monument, a tall obelisk, and parts of at least three others are here. The three sides of the obelisk that are exposed contain no inscription, there may be one on the other side that is facedown. Very large and heavy it could not be turned over. The name on the other side may be that of Milton H. Rose whose name was found at the time of the 1974 listing. The other three fragments in the pile are uniform in size and appear to be bases to three monuments. One of these may be the base with the name "Winstead" on it referred to in the prior listings of the cemetery. They appear to be the bases to three similar Winstead monuments found at a third site on the farm.

A local resident told me that several Winstead monuments from the cemetery were in a ravine west of the hill. On the north between the hill and a cornfield there is a lane. Down the lane about 300 feet there is a wooded area on the right. Lying in a small ravine about 20 feet from the lane the following three gravestones were found:

Stephen H. Winstead	May 1782	Aug 1841
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Martha Winstead  
Sarah Winstead

Mar 1787  
Feb 1798

Feb 1824  
Aug 1884

The three monuments, identical in style, are very legible and none list a day of the month. They do not appear to be as old as the recorded death dates and may date from the early 1900's.

The cemetery on Bellwood Hill had originated as the Winstead family cemetery and in later years others of the community also were buried there. A research of the deeds at the courthouse revealed that this farm in the 1800's had been owned by the family of Stephen H. Winstead for over 55 years. The following transfers of the property were located:

- 1 March 1976, James A. Smith purchased from the heirs of Joseph Bernard Smith 73.5 acres on the west side of the French Island Road. Joseph Bernard Smith died in 1941 and his widow, Mary L., in 1975. Recorded book 454-p392, see also deed books 338- p584, 311-p59, 202-p444.
- 23 July 1936, Joseph Bernard Smith purchased from the heirs of Richard C. Galloway 73.5 acres on the west side of the French Island Road, about 1.5 miles west of Sorgho, "known as part of the Bellwood farm". Recorded book 137-p326-7.
- 8 December 1933, Will of James Henry Long, of Sorgho, was recorded, written on 2 January 1932. To Richard Galloway willed 73.5 acres, 1.5 miles west of Sorgho, known as part of the Bellwood farm. Recorded Will book H-p422.
- 16 March 1909, J. H. Long purchased from Daniel O. Bellwood, & wife Margaret, 84 acres, on French Island Road, except for 10.5 acres of tract that has been sold to George W. Read, leaving 73.5 acres. Land was conveyed to Bellwood by A. S. Winstead. Recorded book 86-p216.
- 9 August 1895, Daniel O. Bellwood, & wife Margaret, of Union County, KY purchased 202.5 acres on Rhodes Creek from A. S. Winstead, of Henderson, KY. Except for 55 acres sold by grantor's father, Stephen H. Winstead, to George Huston, who in turn sold it to George Read/Reed. Said Read tract commences at intersection of French Island Road & the Henderson Road. Will give possession by 1 January 1896. A. S. Winstead inherited 1/10th share in the land from his father, Stephen H. Winstead's estate, and purchased the shares of the other heirs. Eight other Winstead heirs (brothers & sisters of A. S.) listed were: Elizabeth R. Winstead, Lucinda J. Lockett (wife of D. P.), Louisa B. Smith (w/o George H.), Thomas H. Winstead, Martha A. Winstead, Hugh B. Winstead and Frances Harrell (w/o Jonathan). The land had been the dower interest of Sallie Winstead, deceased, widow of Stephen H. Winstead. Recorded book 64-p441, see also deed books O-p181, O-p246, X-p50.

- 22 July 1843, Norborne B. Beall & others transferred a large group of tracts to various individuals that had previously been deeded to them but which had not yet been recorded. Among these was a tract of 470 acres on Green River that was deeded to Stephen H. Winstead; in the county tax lists he is first listed with this land in 1840. It was part of a 3000 acre survey patented in the name of John May and later part of the May, Bannister & Co. surveys. Recorded book G-p279.

In the tax lists of Daviess County Stephen H. Winstead is first shown as owning land in 1839, 404 acres on Green River. The following year he is listed with two tracts the one of 404 acres and another of 470 acres. The 470 acre tract included the Bellwood Hill farm. The tract of 404 acres bordered on the Green River and was west of Winstead's 470 acre tract. He purchased the 404 acres on 30 December 1837 from the heirs of Thomas McIlvain, deceased [who were listed as: Thomas McIlvain, & wife Sally, Duncan Moore, & wife Elizabeth (McIlvain), Anselm McIlvain, & wife Ellen, Hugh G. Smith, & wife Jane (McIlvain), Andrew J. Latham, & wife Levina (McIlvain), William Anderson, & wife Charity (McIlvain), Stephen H. Latham, & wife Hannah (McIlvain), Allen McIlvain, Abraham McIlvain, & wife Polly, all of Muhlenberg County, KY], recorded deed book F-p230, see also E-p318 & 329, M-419-432 & O-p50. This tract was sold by Ralph C. Calhoon to the heirs of Thomas McIlvain on 1 August 1835; recorded deed book E-p396. Members of the family of Ralph Calhoon are buried in a family cemetery, at Hambleton's Ferry (formerly Calhoon's ferry) on the Green River, one mile west of Bellwood Hill.

The Bellwood Hill farm at the time of the 1876 Historical Atlas Map of Daviess County, KY (Leo McDonough & Co., p46) was listed under the name of A. S. Winstead. The tract was shown as being 200 acres, it extended north from the Henderson Road along both sides of what is now known as the French Island Road (Highway 1554). Rhodes creek ran across the northeast corner of the tract. Aaron Shelby Winstead, a distiller, died in Henderson, KY on 8 June 1912, where he was buried in Fernwood Cemetery. His death certificate recorded that he was born in Daviess County on 10 December 1829. Stephen Hall Winstead & Sallie Barnett were entered as his parents on the same record and they were listed as being natives of Person County, NC.

Stephen Hall Winstead (1782-1841) moved to the Daviess County area between 1807-1811. He appears in the first tax list of Daviess County in 1815, the year it was formed from Ohio County. In the tax records of Ohio County he is shown in 1811-1814. In the Daviess County censuses he appears in 1820 (p353), 1830 (p201) & 1840 (p7). Stephen in "Winstead Family Data" published in Kentucky Family Records (Vol.7, West-Central Kentucky Family Research Association, Owensboro, KY, p24) is reported to have married Patsy McFarland about 1815 and Sarah Barnett between 1825-29. However, his first wife may also have been a Barnett, in the I.G.I. of the L.D.S. Church the marriage of Stephen Winstead to Patsey Barnett is reported to have taken place in Person County, NC on 12 May 1807. A son of Stephen H. born about 1818, reportedly by his first wife Patsy, was named Hugh Barnett Winstead.

Children by Stephen H. Winstead's first wife, Martha/Patsy (1787-1824), are reportedly: Margaret (15 January 1816 – 24 August 1896), married Benjamin B. Rafferty; Hugh Barnett (c1818 - post1870), married Jane Rafferty; William M. (16 May 1821 – 23 February 1879), married Emily Crabtree; & Frances A. (1824/25 – post 1880), married Jonathan R. D. Harrell. Other daughters of this union not reported in the Kentucky Family Records article are possibly Catherine and Elizabeth. Catherine Winstead (born 1810-15) married Raleigh Cotton (or Colson) Taylor, in Daviess County, KY in 1827. On her marriage it is recorded that her father, Stephen H. Winstead, gave consent for her to marry. In Daviess County in 1835 an Elizabeth Winstead (born 1810-15) married Andrew J. ?Wilson/Walden, consent was given by her father, who was not named on the marriage record (at the time the only adult Winstead male in the county was Stephen). Catherine & Elizabeth may have died young without issue since they are not named in the deeds as heirs of Stephen H. Winstead.

The 1912 death certificate of A. S. Winstead and the History of Daviess County, Kentucky (Inter-State Publishing Company, Chicago, 1883, p480) record that Stephen's second wife, Sarah, was a Barnett. Sarah Winstead (1798-1884), Stephen's widow, was a daughter of Andrew Barnett & Agnes Harralson (see "Barnetts Of Caswell County, N.C. And Ohio And Daviess Counties, KY.", Kentucky Family Records, Vol.10, p51). She is listed in the Daviess County censuses in 1850 (p412) & 1860 (p844), & Henderson County, KY 1880 (p416). Stephen H. Winstead & Sarah Barnett had the following children: Martha Ann (c1827 – post 1886), married Joseph W. Funk; Aaron Shelby (1829-1912), married America T. Worsham; Lucinda (11 April 1832 – 20 March 1913), married David P. Lockett; Thomas H. (12 December 1833 - post1860), married Mary Board McCracken; Louisa B. (c1835-), married George H. Smith; Elizabeth R. (c1837 – 28 May 1860), married Robert B. Nunn; & ? Francis Marion (c1841 - died at age of 2 years). Stephen H. Winstead at the time of his death owned 8 slaves. One of his former slaves, Rachael Winstead, born about 1825, died on 6 June 1924 and was buried at the Little Flock Baptist Church Cemetery, a short distance west of Bellwood Hill (see Winstead family vertical file, Kentucky Room, Daviess County Public Library, Owensboro, KY).

In the "Ancestral File" of the L.D.S. Church it is recorded that Stephen Hall Winstead, born on 17 May 1782 in Caswell County, NC, was the son of Coutance Winstead & Katherine Hall (daughter of Stephen Hall). The same source traces the Winstead line back to Stephen H.'s 3rd great-grandfather, Daniel Winston, who was born about 1645 in York, England and died about 1671 in Lancaster County, VA (1.Daniel & Elizabeth- 2.Samuel & Elizabeth- 3.Samuel- 4.Samuel & Elizabeth Coutance- 5.Stephen Hall Winstead). The submitter of this lineage was listed as Rosemary Nichols Hollis, 2000 Cypress Point Dr., Corona, CA 91720.

While the Winstead family still owned Bellwood Hill others of the Sorgho community, who have no apparent family relationship, started to be buried there. These included William Prottzman, John Smith, Milton H. Rose and Sophia Wiles.

William Prottzman's farm was shown as being near the northwest corner of A. S.

Winstead's land in the 1876 Historical Atlas Map of Daviess County, KY (p46). He was born on 1 May 1806 and may be the son of Peter Protsman & Sarah Leaman, who were married in Nelson County, KY in 1799. Peter is listed under the name of Spurtsman in the 1810 census of Ohio County, KY, in the area that became Daviess County in 1815. Sarah was the daughter of John Leaman, whose will was recorded in Nelson County, KY in 1814. Sarah's brothers, John & David Leaman, were among the first to settle in Daviess County, moving there in 1804; John Layman was listed near Peter Spurtsman in the 1810 Ohio County census. William Protsman married Mary Kelly in Daviess County on 6 May 1834. Born about 1815 and died during the 1860's she was the daughter of George T. Kelly & Jane Field (see Daviess County deed book M-p127). William Protsman was enumerated in the Daviess County censuses of 1840 (p22), 1850 (p387), 1860 (p839), & 1870 (p247). William died on 19 December 1877. The Owensboro Messenger of Wednesday, 26 December 1877 reported that "Mr. William Protsman, an old and respected citizen, died last Wednesday of rheumatism of the heart. He was in his 66th year." Two pieces of his tombstone were found on Bellwood Hill.

John Smith was born on 25 March 1866. His family was enumerated in the 1880 census of Jefferson County, KY (p210); in the household were John Weams (34, b. KY), wife Julia, and sons, John (14) & William (8). John Smith was a stepson of John Wemes. His mother, Julia Merritt/Marrit, born in Louisville, KY, married a Smith between 1860-65, and John Wemes, between 1866-69. By 1885 the family had located on Rhodes Creek about two miles north of Sorgho. John Smith died at the young age of 18. The Owensboro Tri-Weekly Messenger on 29 January 1885 carried a dramatic account of his drowning while skating on Rhodes Creek on January 26th. Two pieces of his tombstone were found on Bellwood Hill. His stepfather died between 1885-1900. His mother, Julia E. Wemes (24 January 1848 – 7 August 1923), and half-brother, William E. Wemes (28 April 1870 – 1 January 1914), have monuments in the Sorgho Baptist Church Cemetery, a short distance from the Bellwood Hill.

Milton H. Rose was a doctor and postmaster at Sorgho. The village of Sorgho, about one mile south of Bellwood Hill, grew up around the Daviess County Sorgho Sugar Company, established there in the winter of 1868-69 (see History Of Daviess County, KY, 1883, Inter-State Publishing Co., Chicago, pp185 & 776). The factory produced sugar from locally grown sorghum. A post office called Sorghotown was established on 15 July 1869 and the Sorghotown Voting Precinct was formed on 12 May 1874. In 1883 the post office name was shortened to Sorgho. The Sorgho Baptist Church was organized on 27 March 1884 and its first meeting house was erected in 1889. J. F. Kimbley sold 1 acre to the trustees of the church on 28 October 1888 (deed book 56-p148). A burial plot a short distance north of the church did not officially become the Sorgho Baptist Church Cemetery until 1901. Rev. William H. Dawson, pastor of the church during 1886-1902, wrote in his diary that on 15 November 1901 he "assisted in laying off the Sorgho cemetery" (see "The Life Beautiful", Being Extracts from the Diary of W. H. Dawson, Messenger Job Printing Co., Owensboro, KY, 1908, p69). The population of Sorgho was listed as 100 in the Kentucky Gazetteer And Business Directory For 1895-96 (p293). At the time a hotel, two general stores, two doctors and three blacksmiths were located there. The same source lists Dr. Milton H. Rose as being one of the doctors. Dr. Rose was born

in Marion County, KY on 6 July 1826, to Dr. Joseph Rose & Nancy Simpson. Milton H. Rose located at Sorghotown about 1872. He was appointed the 3rd postmaster of Sorghotown on 12 August 1881 and served until 20 April 1889, during his tenure the name was changed to Sorgho. The 3 Aug 1898 issue of the Owensboro Inquirer reported that Dr. Rose died at Hopkinsville, KY on 2 August 1898 and “his remains were brought to the city on the Texas train, and were taken to Sorgho for burial”. In 1974 “Milton H. Rose” was listed as one of the names found in the cemetery on Bellwood Hill, his death date was interpreted to be 1 August 1896 and in a second listing in the 1980’s the death date of 2 August 1898 was found on a monument for which no name could be identified.

The name of Sophia Wiles was found on one of the broken monuments on Bellwood Hill. The only thing else on the fragment was the first part of a birth date, February 20. Her identity could not be learned. She was not found in any of the Daviess County censuses. Listed in the 1870 Daviess census (p245) near Birk City, about one mile northwest of Bellwood Hill, is the residence of George (25), James (23) & John Wiles (21). The 1876 Historical Atlas Map of Daviess County, KY (p28) reports that James Wiles came to the county in 1860 and George W. Wiles came in 1862. Two imposing obelisk monuments stand alone on the side of 5th Street Road a short distance from Birk City marking the graves of James M. Wiles (24 February 1843 – 27 October 1900) and his son, Louis Allen Wiles (24 February 1880 – 24 January 1905).

An infant son of Mr. & Mrs. Alfred Smith may have been buried on Bellwood Hill on 15 March 1912. The Owensboro Messenger reports that the infant died the day before and was buried at the Bellwood Cemetery at Sorgho. However, the infant, a male aged 1 y. 6 m. & 7 d., was listed as being buried at the Sorgho Cemetery on its death certificate (1912 – certificate #6527). The child’s parents, Lennie Walker Smith (1887 – 25 May 1913) & Alfred Smith (15 November 1879 – 22 August 1949) and grandparents, Owen N. & Amelia E. (Johnson) Walker were buried in the Sorgho Baptist Church Cemetery.

The family of Daniel O. & Margaret (Byrne) Bellwood were living on the Bellwood Hill farm at the time of the 1900 census (p191). Their land extended on both sides of the French Island Road. The section on the west side of the road, with the Bellwood Hill Cemetery, they sold in 1909. On the other side of the road they continued to reside, where they were listed in the 1910 (p69) & 1920 (p67) Daviess County censuses. On the east side of the road the Bellwood Mine was opened in 1906, where three men lost their lives as the result of a tragic accident that occurred on 24 January 1906 (see “Disaster Near Sorgho”, by Grady Ebelhar, The Daviess County Historical Quarterly, Vol. X, October 1992, Daviess County Historical Society, Owensboro, KY, pp85-87). Other parts of the Winstead tract of 202.5 acres the Bellwoods sold in 1905 (13.1 acres, book 86-p286), 1907 (50 acres, book 82-p440), 1908 (10.5 acres, (book 86-p419) & 1936 (50 acres, Commissioners deed book N-p438). After retiring from farming Daniel O. Bellwood (1853 – 16 September 1922) moved to Owensboro, where his death occurred. He was buried at the St. Peter’s Catholic Church Cemetery, at Stanley. His wife, Margaret (1853 - December 1941) was interred at San Diego, CA, where she was residing with a son. They had eight children: Samuel M., Henry Eugene, John Walter,

Robert O., William T., Mary Elizabeth (Weikel), Louis E. & Nora (Hoskins). No members of their family had been buried in the cemetery on Bellwood Hill.

[Published in Kentucky Family Records, Vol. 23, West-Central Kentucky Family Research Association (Utica, KY: McDowell Publications, 1999), 14-20.]

### **Addenda:**

The Owensboro Semi-Weekly Messenger of 16 January 1883 (p4) reported that Mrs. Mrs. M. H. Rhoads [sic] of Sorghotown died on 14 January 1883 at the age of 54 and was buried at Winstead's cemetery. Her surname was misspelled. This is Dr. Milton H. Rose's wife, Lucebra Baxter Rose; daughter of William Baxter & Elizabeth Briscoe. She was born on 23 November 1832 and married Dr. Milton Herbert Rose in 1854.

Owensboro Daily Tribune of 3 October 1895 (p4) reported that little son of J. D. Arnold died on 1 October 1895 at their home on the Fifth Street Road and was buried at the Winstead Cemetery.

In July 1999 Grady Ebelhar and owner of the Bellwood Hill property moved the gravestones and set them on the site of the original graveyard.

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## **A Labor of Love**

Newspaper - September 20, 1997 | Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer (KY)

Author: Karen Owen | Page: 5B

SORGHO - The flame-haired woman walked with her head down, intent on the rock path beneath her feet.

Around and back, the trail twisted and turned, always pulling her toward the center of a big circle.

She left a prayer request there, weighing down the paper with a small rock, then allowed the path to carry her the rest of its curving half-mile back to where she had started.

She finished her meditation by leaning several minutes against a majestic oak tree, her face pointed toward a corn field.

Watching from her nearby home, Clarice O'Bryan wasn't sure who was walking the sandstone labyrinth in her backyard, but she was unconcerned.

Such seekers are the people O'Bryan wants to serve with her new version of an ancient meditation tool.

The labyrinth is like life, said the 62-year-old massage therapist. "When you think you ought to be close to your goal, you're not.



"Then when you think you're lost and are never going to get there, you're there." O'Bryan became inspired to build a labyrinth - which, unlike a maze, has no dead-ends - after taking a Celtic cultural tour of Great Britain last year.

"No matter what your belief is," said O'Bryan, "I think we can come together and have a common spiritual experience." She likes the idea of a labyrinth, she said, "because I feel like it's unifying." O'Bryan prefers not to call her beliefs "New Age," but she does practice several alternative health or mind-expanding skills she calls "old age, surfacing in a new way." "Every ancient religion had labyrinths," she said.

The paths became popular in Europe during the Crusades when pilgrimages to the Holy Land were too expensive and dangerous, she said. Instead, Christians fulfilled their vows by making spiritual pilgrimages through labyrinths built in cathedrals.

These days the concept is enjoying a renaissance, O'Bryan said.

Her Labyrinth of Sacred Oak Grove is near the crest of a low hill topped by a long-abandoned cemetery. Joy Fitzgerald, a local restoration biologist who has done much of the installation work on the labyrinth, thinks the hill may be an Indian mound as well.

The meditation area is 60 feet in diameter and has 32 tons of sandstone from Muhlenberg County and the Shawnee National Forest area of Illinois.

Artist Gary Bielefeld did the design. O'Bryan's son, Shane Smith, made a limestone sculpture for the center symbolizing body, mind and soul. O'Bryan decorated some of the rocks with stained glass symbols of different religious groups.

Fitzgerald said the labyrinth's coils remind her of the cap of an acorn, the spirals of a mollusk, even the shape of a human's inner ear. "I know every one of these suckers intimately," she said, stomping on the path's stones.

Her four months on the project, fitting rocks together like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, were hot and grueling but "it's been a labor of love far beyond any expectation I had." She learned during the project "not to look at how far you've got to go," said Fitzgerald. "Celebrate how far you've come." There is no right way to meditate in a labyrinth, O'Bryan said, but many people go in with an "intention," the idea of letting go of something negative in one's life while coming back out with something good.

"A woman was here the other day who had a history of not being able to trust men," she explained. "She walked it with the intention of letting go of mistrust." The labyrinth "suppresses left brain thinking and opens up right-brain creativity," she said. Also, "I think some people just make it magical for themselves." Her visitors to the labyrinth so far have included an American Indian and Ursuline nuns, O'Bryan said. What one does with the path "depends on your orientation. I respect all of them." O'Bryan is going to open her labyrinth at 2504 Kentucky 1554 to the public Sept. 28, and plans to allow visitors in 4-6 p.m. on Wednesdays and 2-4 p.m. on Sundays. Guests are asked to make a donation to help offset expenses.

O'Bryan won't say how much she's spent on the project, only admitting that it's in "thousands." "I put it on a credit card and trust its going to be paid for," she said.

Ellen Foster, the red-haired woman who had walked the labyrinth earlier, said she was making her second visit there.

O'Bryan has been her "spiritual facilitator" for a long time, said the Mount Vernon, Ind., woman.

On her first labyrinth visit, "I came with a heavy question. I walked away with the answer," she said.

This particular day, "The crisis is over, but I just came for balance, peace."

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## **Book includes several of the area's `sacred sites'**

Newspaper - September 15, 2002 | Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer (KY)

Author: Karen Owen | Page: 3C

Several little girls in pigtails and starched white cotton dresses stand in front of the old Mount St. Joseph Academy, bows poised above their violins.

The turn-of-the-century photograph of a youth orchestra is one of several from the Owensboro area included in "A Benediction of Place: Historic Catholic Sacred Sites of Kentucky and Southern Indiana" by the Rev. Clyde F. Crews.

The recently published book includes all the cathedrals in Kentucky and southern Indiana, several cemeteries, colleges, convents and monasteries.

"There's quite a spread on the motherhouse at Maple Mount," Crews said, referring to the headquarters of the Ursulines of Mount St. Joseph.

The 252-page book also has pictures of St. Meinrad Archabbey, the big statue of Christ overlooking the Ohio River at Troy, Ind., and the stained glass windows on display at the Owensboro Museum of Fine Art.

The Bellarmine University church history professor also included the Labyrinth of Sacred Oak Grove near Sorgho. Although it is not a strictly Catholic site, he included it because Clarice O'Bryan's path harks back to the meditation tools used in Europe during the Middle Ages, Crews said.

Crews became interested in doing a book on the state's sacred sites through his research into Kentucky and Louisville history.

He took many of the photographs for the book himself. Others were made by photographers Dan Dry, John Nation and Patrick Pfister.

Crews defines a sacred site as "a place that evokes for people a sense of God, a new energy and purpose."

Ten percent of Kentuckians are Catholic, Crews said. "Catholic sites for the most part are

distributed along the (Ohio) river and clustered in the 'Holy Land,' " or the area around Bardstown, he said.

That area was settled by Catholics from Maryland. Only 1 percent of Americans during the colonial period were Catholics, and most of those lived below the Mason-Dixon Line, Crews said.

He limited his book to only sites associated with Catholicism because of the sheer volume of good places to photograph, he said. He hopes other religious traditions will develop something similar on their own sites. "This is in some ways an invitation."

"A Benediction of Place" is published by Bellarmine University Press and sells for \$39.95. Copies can be ordered through Amazon.com or the Bellarmine University Bookstore by writing 2001 Newburg Road, Louisville, KY 40205 or calling (502) 452-8111.

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## **KET films peace walk at labyrinth Ceremony marks 'balance' as the seasons change**

Newspaper - September 24, 2002 | Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer (KY)

Author: Karen Owen | Page: 1A

About 20 people celebrated the autumn equinox Monday evening by walking a labyrinth and praying for peace.

On a perfect fall afternoon, Clarice O'Bryan and her friends let Kentucky Educational Television videotape their prayer service at Sacred Oak Grove near Sorgho.

"I would call it a Christian event respecting and honoring all religions," the labyrinth's owner said before the program.

The footage will be part of the "Kentucky Life" program on KET sometime between January and June, said Valerie Trimble, field producer for the show.

The television program will feature several labyrinths - or meditative paths - around the state. The paths circle back and around in a manner similar to mazes, but without dead ends.

A group in Danville is trying to raise money to install one on property donated by a church there, Trimble said.

Sacred Oak Grove is distinctive for its natural setting, she said.

The labyrinth is 60 feet in diameter and has 32 tons of sandstone rock.

"I love it," Trimble said. She noticed when she arrived Monday, "It pulls you toward it."

She and senior videographer Michael Follmer watched as participants in the equinox ceremony, some draped in colorful shawls, gathered around an altar set with pumpkins, gourds and candles.

A few feet away stood tombstones from an old graveyard, most too worn to be legible.

The grove is decorated with a hammock, benches and a cross, a picture of Jesus and emblems of other religious faiths.

"I love the inclusiveness of it," Trimble said before the ceremony. "We want to get all the representations of different religions."

"People throughout history have remarked at this time and had celebrations," O'Bryan's husband, Ron Mayhew, told the group. "This was originally the Thanksgiving."

The autumn equinox is the time when day and night are the same length or are "totally in balance now," as O'Bryan put it.

It's a time when people look back at what they've "sown" during the year, in the fields as well as in their lives, Mayhew said.

It's a good opportunity for our nation to do that as well, he said.

"That's very important to me right now that we're on the brink of war," O'Bryan said before the ceremony.

"We could change the world one person at a time if we found peace within ourselves," she said.

Participants took turns reading aloud prayers for peace from Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Judaism.

"Blessed are the peacemakers..."

"Oh God, take us from the unreal to the real..."

"Come, let us go up to the Mountain of the Lord..."

"May all beings today plagued with sufferings of body and mind quickly be freed..."

Then four people stood back to back, facing different directions of the compass.

"In honoring the four directions, we honor our planet and all people, all life on our planet," O'Bryan said.

Then she "smudged" or passed a smoldering bundle of burning sage over each person before he or she began walking the intricate trail of the labyrinth. Mystical instrumental music played in the background.

"Ritual is so important because when you bring the body into your prayers, the subconscious says you are really serious now and it cooperates with us," O'Bryan said.

One woman slipped off her shoes to walk on the rough-hewn stones.

Incorporating movement into prayer "makes perfect sense to me," said Anniessa Williams of Greenville, who was making her first visit to the labyrinth. However, "I'm not good at walking on uneven ground, physically."

O'Bryan's 87-year-old mother, Mary O'Bryan, walked the labyrinth with the help of a cane.

"I think its wonderful," she said afterward. "You just feel different when you come out. It takes a lot off you, a lot of burdens."

Doris Haraganof Owensboro visits the labyrinth often. Each step for her was "a prayer for a different person in my life."

"It kind of mesmerizes you," she said. "It gets you into a meditative state."

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The Labyrinth of Sacred Oak Grove, Daviess County, KY