

# Sulphur Springs Colored Church & Cemetery

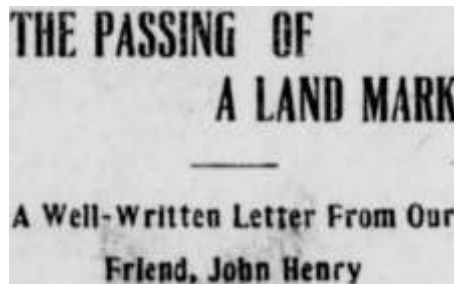
By Jerry Long



Sulphur Springs is on Highway 69 in Ohio County, Kentucky, about eight miles northeast of Hartford. During the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 1900's Sulphur Springs was the site of a popular health resort that was established around both fresh water and white sulphur springs. A post office was established here on 26 March 1872 and was discontinued in 1907. The town once had a drug store, two grocery stores, a church and a 20-room hotel. Today only a few houses remain. No documentation of any burials or remaining grave markers in the Negro cemetery at Sulphur Springs could be found.



**Hartford Republican, Hartford, KY, 2 October 1908, p.1:**



A curious interest attaches to ancient and well-known land marks, and so perishable is the work of human hands that a sort of reverence clusters about those solitary objects that have withstood a wasting lapse or years.

In the passing of these old objects about which some community interest has centered our sadness comes, perhaps, from the mute reminder that time lays at last a withering hand upon us all.

I was moved to these reflections while passing recently the deserted grounds of the colored church and school near Sulphur Springs. On account of a shiftless colored population these old buildings were recently torn down and moved to Dundee, an observer to whom these old buildings had been a roadside mark since his boyhood, that vacant and deserted lot, marked now only by clay monuments over the dead, presented a remainder at desolation and decay.

When the negroes' bands were broken a little band of them, flushed with the joy of freedom, hewed from forest trees the timbers for their little church which they raised upon a stony hillside on the Sulphur Springs and Hartford road, and it was their sole meeting place in the

northern end of the county. Here for a half a century the poor but earnest and honest negroes met to worship in their humble way their master; here they made a school to teach their children and here they brought their dead for burial.

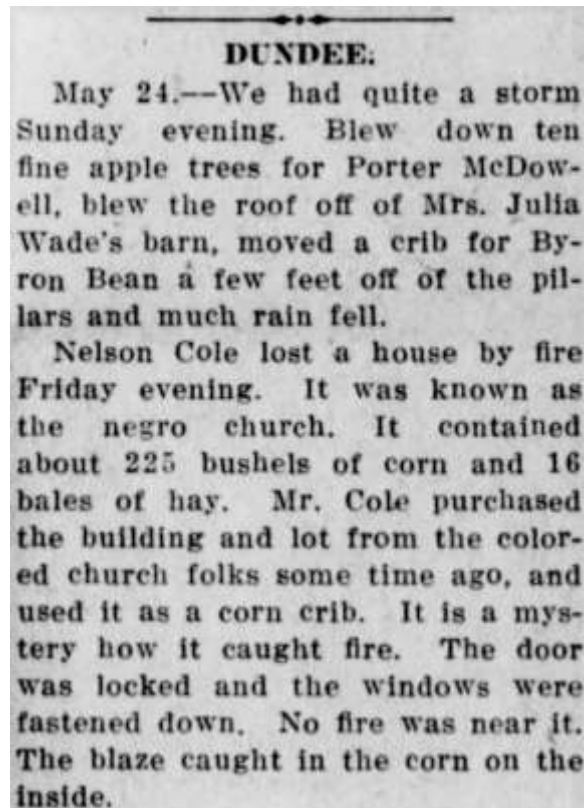
Much that is good may be said for these colored people who had their meeting place here. No serious crime was ever laid to their charge. A murder, indeed was once committed on their church yard but all the parties to it were whites. The colored folks were nearly without exception church members, and if their worship was crude and their enthusiasm sometimes extravagant they were in earnest in their way. Many is the highway traveler who has paused before this solitary church and gazed into the starry heavens while the earth drank up the night-song of praise these simple but earnest negroes were wont to sing. Here youth dreamed and fancy took from and love developed and piety ripened with age and went down into unmarked graves. But bye and bye time raised its had leveled the old buildings and carted them to serve n changed necessity, and there remained only vacant ground a cluster of graves and a wealth of memories to our brother in black.

J. H. THOMAS

[John Henry Thomas, author of the preceding article, was a native of the Sulphur Springs neighborhood of Ohio County, KY. The son of Henry Lewis Thomas & Sarah Matilda Dockery, he was born 3 May 1865 and died 6 March 1933. He died in Louisville, KY, where he was buried in Calvary Cemetery. He was editor of the Hartford Republican newspaper for twenty years.]

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**Hartford Herald, Hartford, KY, 26 May 1915, p.8:**



**DUNDEE:**

May 24.--We had quite a storm Sunday evening. Blew down ten fine apple trees for Porter McDowell, blew the roof off of Mrs. Julia Wade's barn, moved a crib for Byron Bean a few feet off of the pillars and much rain fell.

Nelson Cole lost a house by fire Friday evening. It was known as the negro church. It contained about 225 bushels of corn and 16 bales of hay. Mr. Cole purchased the building and lot from the colored church folks some time ago, and used it as a corn crib. It is a mystery how it caught fire. The door was locked and the windows were fastened down. No fire was near it. The blaze caught in the corn on the inside.

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Hartford Republican, Hartford, KY, 28 July 1899, p3:

Rev G. J. Bean will preach the funeral of Mrs. Basil Acton (colored) at the Sulphur Springs colored church the second Sunday in August.

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