



In June 2009 the City of Gladstone acquired the abandoned Big Shoal Cemetery through the Missouri Attorney General.



The Big Shoal Cemetery is located on the same acre of land that was once home to the Big Shoal Primitive Baptist Church organized by Elder William Thorp in 1823. Land for a local cemetery was donated by John

Identify the history of our area, discovering people, places and stories from the past.
Preserve these places and objects through fund raising and conservation efforts.
Share with visitors of all ages so they can take with them a greater connection to the past.

Hightower (believed to have built the log cabin home across the road, now the Atkins-Johnson Farm and Museum) before the home was sold to Jonathan Atkins in 1834. The filling of the title action was done collectively by church members, including Jonathan Atkins, since it was not filed when the land was donated. Farm families who settled this area worshipped together at the church and were buried here with early markers made from wood or a simple stone. Over time these early markers deteriorated, but many mid to late-nineteenth century gravestones remain in place.



Big Shoal Cemetery is the final resting place for a number of early settlers of Clay County from the early 1820s to 1947 when the last burial took place. Once a collection of small family farms, this region is now known simply as Gladstone, Missouri. The names of some of these early settlers include Atkins, Hughes, Faubian and Broadhurst. Others who rest at Big Shoal include veterans of a number of "wars" that had an effect on the Nation including the War of 1812, the Blackhawk Indian Wars and the American Civil War.

Cemetery History

Big Shoal Cemetery



SELF-GUIDED TOURS

What We Do...

Help us Save History

There are several ways to get involved and help us preserve the Big Shoal Heritage Area. Support and involvement from visitors like you ensure the cemetery is maintained for future generations.

- **Join the Friends** The Friends of the Atkins-Johnson Farm is a volunteer-based organization whose main responsibility is to provide increased awareness and fund raising for the farm, cemetery and museum. Members have the opportunity to work behind the scenes at the cemetery and museum enjoying several members-only events and benefits. Show your support today and get involved for as little as \$10 a year. **Join online by going to** www.atkinsjohnsonfarm.com and click the "Friends Member" Tab on the right.
- **Donate:** Mail checks to the Gladstone Economic Betterment Council (GEBC) 7010 N. Holmes, Gladstone, MO 64118 – please mark your checks "Cemetery Restoration."
- **Get in touch** (816) 423-4107 or email: ajfm@gladstone.mo.us
- **Want to dig deeper?** Visit Find-a-Grave at www.findagrave.com



Plan your visit

Big Shoal Cemetery

Visitors are welcome to tour the Big Shoal Cemetery from dawn to dusk, 7 days a week, year-round. Free public parking is located off NE 64th Street. A self-guided walking tour brochure is provided at the cemetery's informational welcome kiosk. The cemetery is public property and always free to visitors.



4109 NE Pleasant Valley Rd
Gladstone, MO 64119

Big Shoal Cemetery 4125 NE 64th St.
Gladstone, MO 64119

Museum Hours
Wednesday through Saturday
11:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Parking Information
Parking is free and located at the main entrance off NE Antioch Road.

Visitors with Disabilities
Disabled parking is provided. Walkways and restrooms are wheelchair accessible. Visitors with disabilities will have access to portions of the main floor of the farmhouse, but not the parlor, living room and foyer. Docents will be available to provide additional information on rooms with restricted access.

Pet Policy
With the exception of service animals, pets are not permitted inside the museum or on the grounds of the cemetery.



www.atkinsjohnsonfarm.com

Big Shoal Community

A thriving group of settlers made this area home from the 1820's into the 1900's. A common theme for many of the early settlers who are buried at Big Shoal is the statement that they were members of the Big Shoal Community. That is easy to understand considering the devotion of the people to their faith in God and the Big Shoal Baptist Church. When you looked beyond the church you would have seen a collection of farms. These farms were the livelihood of a migrated people who came to Clay County, Missouri from Kentucky, Tennessee and other places. These were hearty people with a pioneer spirit that came to the edge of the civilized nation and settled not far from Indian Territory. They were creative and artistic entrepreneurs, farmers, and traders who found innovative ways to make a living in a new place as they raised their families.



Big Shoal Cemetery

- 1 (Civil War Veteran) Ferdinand V. Thompson**
Dec. 15, 1835 – Feb. 11, 1890
Guerilla (Confederate) Sergeant, Company I,
82nd Enrolled Missouri Militia (Union)

Ferdinand "Ferd" Thompson was born in Indiana. He was the son of Jesse and Julia M. Thompson. He had six siblings. Mr. Thompson worked as a farmer. He married Rubena "Rebecca" P. Allen of Kentucky and they had five children. [Clay County Archives – Divided Loyalties]

- 2 (Civil War Veteran) William Henry Atkins**
Sept. 2, 1836 – July 9, 1902
Private, Missouri State Guard (Confederate)

William Henry Atkins, in addition to being a farmer and wagon maker, served several terms as a Clay County Judge. He was born in Missouri to Kentucky natives Jonathan Q. and Mary Atkins. His parents were among the early settlers of Clay County. The home where Mr. Atkins grew up is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Atkins-Johnson Farm, located directly across the street to the north, has been restored and is open to the public. He died at the family's farm after a wagon accident broke his neck. It was reported to be the largest funeral ever held at Big Shoal Baptist Church. His brother Jacob was also a veteran of the Civil War. [Clay County Archives – Divided Loyalties]

- 3 Elizabeth M. (Woods) Hughes**
Oldest & Youngest Burials in the
Big Shoal Cemetery

Elizabeth M. (Woods) Hughes is the oldest person buried at Big Shoal. She was 93 years, five months and 12 days of age when she passed. There are several that could be considered the youngest to be buried at Big Shoal.

Among those are Mary Ellen Hughes and Mary Olive Hughes, believed to be twins. Mary Ellen died at birth and two days later Mary Olive died July 3, 1918. Unfortunately, early deaths such as these were very common.

- 4 Daniel D. Brown**

The last burial at Big Shoal was Daniel D. Brown in 1947. Brown got an early start in life when he ran away from home in Winslow, Indiana and found himself near the Arkansas line in southern Missouri. He worked with "mule skinnners" on the Missouri Pacific Railroad. Later in life he married Minerva Malott and had two daughters. Dan Brown was not able to work long days on their 80 acre Clay County farm because he had suffered with typhoid. His passion was to be a "mule skinner" so he took his family on adventures that eventually had them participating in the Oklahoma Land Rush before returning to their Clay County farm.

- 5 Minerva White Malott Brown 1863 – 1909**

Minerva Brown married Daniel D. Brown in April 1885 at age 22 just four years after her own mother died. Minerva had two children Della Myrtle, who was born in Linden and Rhoda Bessie, who was a sickly child. Mrs.



Brown participated in the Oklahoma Land Rush in 1889 with her husband and oldest daughter. Throughout the restless wanderings of the family, Minerva not only cared for the children, she started a home restaurant where she prepared meals for railway workers while living in a tent on the Canadian River near El Minco, Oklahoma. Eventually the Brown family returned to the Kansas City area where they remained until Minerva's passing at the age of 46 from breast cancer.

- 6 Zachariah Thorp**
Jan. 22, 1809 – Aug. 26, 1893
United States Mounted Rangers 1832-1833

Zachariah Thorp was one of Clay County's first settlers and was related to Elder William Thorp, founder of the Big Shoal Baptist Church. In addition to his service in the United States Mounted Rangers, Mr. Thorp fought in the Blackhawk Indian Wars. He died in his home near Acme Springs. He had secured a reputation as a valuable citizen during his long residency in Clay County.

- 7 (Civil War Veteran) Clarington "Matt" Fugitt**
April 6, 1834 – Dec. 28, 1915
Company A, Third Missouri Infantry under
Colonel Grooms

Clarington "Matt" Fugitt was born in Missouri to Hiram and Nancy (Brown) Fugitt. His parents were natives of Kentucky. The family came to Missouri with Daniel Boone. Clarington had six siblings. His brother David was also a Civil War veteran. [Clay County Archives – Divided Loyalties]

- 8 (Civil War Veteran) Thomas J. Hamilton**
1831 – Aug. 14, 1862
Lieutenant, Guerilla (Confederate)

Thomas J. Hamilton's parents were Mary and Jesse Hamilton. He had two brothers, Presley and James. Mr. Hamilton was a farmer. During the war he was involved in a skirmish and was killed near Barry on August 14, 1862. Mr. Hamilton's brother Presley was a Confederate Guerilla. Presley and Thomas Hamilton are listed on the Clay County Veterans Memorial as killed in action during the Civil War. [Clay County Archives – Divided Loyalties]

- 9 (Civil War Veteran) William Lycurgus Thompson**
May 21, 1833 – April 4, 1891
Guerilla (Confederate) Private, Company I, 82nd
Enrolled Missouri Militia (Union)

William Lycurgus (Kirk) Thompson worked as a farmer and a surveyor. He was a son of Jesse and Julia M. Thompson. He had six siblings. Mr. Thompson died at his home west of Liberty near Acme Springs. [Clay County Archives – Divided Loyalties]

- 10 Richard S. (Lee) Barnes**
Aug. 7, 1791 – Jan. 5, 1861
War of 1812

Richard Barnes volunteered at Harrodsburg, Mercer County, Kentucky on August 23, 1812. He served as a private in Captain Peter Jordan's company, Lieutenant Colonel Joshua Barbee's Seventh Regiment, Kentucky Volunteer Militia. He was discharged May 1, 1813, however, he again volunteered August 13, 1813 and served until Nov. 19, 1813 as a private in Captain Robert McAfee's company, Colonel Richard M. Johnson's regiment of Kentucky Mounted Volunteers. Private Barnes was involved in the Battle of the Thames in which the Shawnee War Chief Tecumseh, was killed. He married Elizabeth Atkins Oct. 15, 1818. They moved to Clay County in 1823 where for many years he was a Deacon of Big Shoal Baptist Church, frequently serving as the Moderator. Barnes was appointed Constable for Clay County in 1827. Mr. Barnes had seven children, six of which were married at the time of his death.



Unmarked Grave

Some well-known burials have become unmarked graves. We may have information on the individual's life when they were alive and recorded their burial in the Big Shoal Cemetery, but the gravestone no longer remains intact. As you walk the cemetery, you will notice circular markers in the ground with the words "potential unmarked grave". These plaques mark the location of unmarked graves discovered using ground penetrating radar and GPS coordinates.

Some Unmarked Graves at Big Shoal

Unmarked Grave

Frances Atkins unknown-1828

According to local family records, Frances Atkins was buried in Big Shoal in 1828, making this the first recorded burial. However, local researchers acknowledge that there is no conclusive proof of this. Before carved stones were used as markers, simple wooden markers were used and have long since deteriorated leaving nothing behind on the surface. Frances would have been among the first burials at Big Shoal.

Unmarked Grave (Civil War Veteran)

James Thomas Price Sept. 28, 1842 – Nov. 7, 1924 Company F, Shelby's Brigade, Third Missouri Calvary (Confederate)

James Price was born in Missouri to Thomas and Mary (Elliott) Price of Kentucky. During the war, Mr. Price fought for the Confederate cause while serving under Upton Hayes. After the war, Mr. Price married Nancy Elizabeth Mosby Feb. 27, 1866. He later married Matilda Jane Brown Aug. 4, 1878. Mr. Price had two daughters: Mary and Nancy.

Unmarked Grave

Lou Dale, wife of Lee Dale Mar. 15, 1883 – Jan. 24, 1903

Having given birth to twins, a boy and a girl, two weeks earlier, Mrs. Dale passed on Jan. 24, 1903. She would have been 20 years old on her birthday. At the time of her death the two children were still alive. The cause of death is unknown but might have been related to complications of childbirth. Mrs. Dale, the adopted daughter of J.G.D. Housman, came to Clay County from Virginia when she was 15 months old.