

## **INTRODUCTION TO HOLT-MOORE-FORTNER CEMETERY**

**Originally located on the Valentine S. Hardin farm on Old Wilson Hill Road off the Kingsport Highway  
Relocated 2010 behind the Greeneville Airport fence on the Kingsport Highway**

Seldom does the opportunity arise to document through archeology, a cemetery that is almost two hundred years old. Because of a runway expansion by the Greeneville-Greene County Municipal Airport, an old cemetery within the bounds of airport property had to be relocated. The Tennessee Historical Commission as well as archaeological consultants were brought in.

This cemetery is known in recent times as the Fortner-Moore Cemetery located on the farm of Valentine Sevier Hardin Senior (1892-1972 buried Bradburn Hill) on Old Wilson Hill Road off the Kingsport Highway. The earliest readable tombstone in this cemetery is for Betsey Paxton Holt who died on March 14, 1820. Her tombstone is still very readable.

The Holt-Moore-Fortner Cemetery began as a family graveyard on the 376-acre farm on Lick Creek owned by David (1764-1837) and Betsey Paxton (1774-1820) Holt. The Holt family was in Greene County by 1798 living in the Capt John Harmon tax district.

One hundred years later, by 1916 the cemetery was called the Moore Graveyard, as is stated on the death certificate of Peter Bashor (1823-1916) who is buried in the cemetery. At the time of the Buford Reynolds survey in 1966, the cemetery was referred to as the Fortner-Moore Cemetery. Only seven tombstones were readable in 1966, three were Holt family members and two were Fortner family members. The remaining two readable tombstones were for Susan (1822-1897) and Peter (1823-1916) Bashor. Peter Bashor was the last person interred here that is known.

Upon the removal and re-interment of the remains in 2010, thirty-one graves were identified, one without remains. This 2011 review of the Holt-Moore-Fortner Cemetery is a "reconstruction" of who is or may be buried in the cemetery. This "reconstruction" is based on family relationships, when family members died, where they lived at or near the times of their death, and the lack of tombstones or other documentation of burial in any other location. Fifteen names appear on the list, or approximately fifty percent of those who were buried in the cemetery.

The mid-1960's naming of Fortner-Moore Cemetery is enigmatic. There are no persons of the Moore surname known, or even suspected, to be buried here. The most likely explanation is the very close relationship between the David Holt (1764-1837) family to that of the well known Moore Family associated with Tusculum College, who for generations have been buried at the Mount Bethel Presbyterian Church Cemetery on today's Tusculum Blvd.

Named in David Holt's Will is his daughter Nancy Paxton Holt Moore (1807-1879), the wife of Anthony Moore (1803-1885). They are buried in Oakland Cemetery, the successor Church to Mount Bethel Presbyterian. An unmarried daughter, "Polly" Holt, was also named in the Will. "Polly" is believed to be Mary R. Holt (1812-1880) who in 1842 married Jeremiah Moore (1807-1845). They are buried in Mount Bethel Presbyterian Church Cemetery.

The three sons of David Holt named in his Will (John Paxton Holt, David Rice Holt and Joseph Milton Holt) all left Greeneville after their Father's death and before 1840. In his Will, David specified the farm was not to be sold as long as the family remained on the farm; but in the alternative event, the farm was to be sold at public auction or privately, and the proceeds were to be divided among the heirs.

The Jacob and Elizabeth Fortner Family lived on or near this land by 1850. The neighboring farm was owned by Mary R. Holt Moore (1812-1880), the widow of Jeremiah Moore (1807-1845) and their son John Leonidas Moore (1843-1922), who are all buried in Mount Bethel Presbyterian Church Cemetery.

The Moore families did not leave Greene County, and they remained closely affiliated with Tusculum College well into the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. It is probably for this reason, the cemetery was called the Moore Graveyard in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century; and by the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, became known as the Fortner-Moore Cemetery.

#### References:

The Greeneville Sun, Volume 130, Number 339, February 3, 2011

The Will of David Holt

Historic Greene County and Its People, pages 106 (Fortner) and 242-43 (Moore)

Transcription of Mount Bethel Presbyterian Church Cemetery, The Greene County Pioneer, Volume 26, Number 2, November 2010

Greene County Marriages

Burgner's Orphan Court Records: David R. Jewell (1839-1913, buried Oak Grove Cemetery), the son of Seyburn and Lucy W. Holt Jewell

Greene County Tax Lists

U. S. Census Records

Death Certificate for Peter Bashor, January 17, 1916 (buried Fortner-Moore)

Death Certificate for John Leonidas Moore, May 17, 1922 (buried Mount Bethel Presbyterian Church Cemetery), naming parents Jeremiah Moore and Mary Holt Moore,

informant Jere A. Moore (1874-1947 buried Mount Bethel), a President of Tusculum College and son of John Leonidas Moore