

While in Kentucky, Derrickson "had fallen in love with a little slave girl named Tillie Young," the obituary read. "After reaching this country he found life without his sweetheart would be a lonesome and dreary one indeed, and he mourned her more day by day."

A Crawfordsville man named Alf Burk loaned Derrickson \$450 to buy Young's freedom. The couple met and married in Indianapolis, moving to Darlington in 1852. She died in 1909.

"The earliest date that I have found that somebody was buried there was 1878," White said. "That was one of the Shads."

Guinn, who died in 2001, listed a James L. Shad and a James Shad being buried in the cemetery in January 1878.

Thorntown librarian Karen Niemeyer said the 1836 date on the cemetery sign could indicate when the site was first used for a burial.

Thorntown was founded in 1828, and some people could have been buried at the cemetery between then and the late 1860s, Niemeyer said.

Jane White may have been the last of 30 persons known to be buried at the cemetery. She died Aug. 18, 1935, about age 100, according to the History of Boone County Cemeteries, published in 2004 by Marilyn S. Walker.

A story in the May 1980 issue of *Boone Magazine*, reprinted from the September 1975 issue, said "an attractive marker" with gold letters on a royal blue background had been placed in the cemetery by the Society for the Preservation of Our Indian Heritage. That sign – and *Boone Magazine* – is gone.

The fate of the sign is unknown. "It just disappeared," White said.

An attempt has been made to place the cemetery on the National

Register of Historic Places, White said.

"S. Harden, in his 1914 volume makes no reference to the cemetery, but he does quote on page 45 that Thorntown 'has the prettiest girls of any town in the state,'" Niemeyer said. "However, on page 460 he discusses the cemeteries of the county in a rather poetic request that 'yonder dear neglected spot' be groomed and treated carefully, something Teresa and Jim Carter have been doing for the colored cemetery."

The Carter farm is just north of the cemetery. Teresa Carter said they maintained the cemetery for years, but it's now being done by the company that does mowing for Old Mill Run Park, a nearby campground.

It was not until sometime in late 1869, that Thorntown's black community established the cemetery, buying the land for \$25 from Elias C. and Hannah Barker, according to the *Boone Magazine* story.

One of those buried at the cemetery is Thomas "Tom" Rule, who died in 1914 at the age of 64, and was a lay preacher in the black community, the magazine said.

A photo taken in 1896 showed Rule with Grace Lang, then 5, and two other children, whose first names are unknown, but whose last name is Gregory.

Lang was the mother of Martha Jane Ottinger; Rule was a hired hand at the farm of Ottinger's great-grandfather, Niemeyer said. Rule lived across the road, at what is now 6916 W. 650 North, where a couple named Elton and Leah Williams recently lived, Niemeyer said.

"Tom worked as a hired hand at the farm where Jerry and Alma Smith now live, and lived across the road," Niemeyer said. ☼



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