

Richland Cemetery

November 2013 Cemetery of the Month

This cemetery is located behind Richland Church of Christ just south of state highway 48 (Whitehall Pike) about a mile and a half east of Whitehall. The church is one of the oldest in the county, formed in 1926 on land donated by Thomas Nesbit (then 57 years old), who came from Nicholas County, Kentucky the year before. The church files for Richland Church of Christ at the Monroe County History Center contain an interesting history of this frontier pioneer and the church he founded. Thomas, his wife, and six children and in-laws, formed the nucleus of the original church. Thomas led the church until his death in 1861 at age 92. David Byers shared leadership of the church in Thomas' declining years and for many years thereafter. The present church building, which is still in use, was constructed in 1848.

A sign at the entrance to the well-maintained cemetery indicates that it was founded in 1837. The cemetery stands on a grassy knoll south of a small creek behind the church. It is surrounded on three sides by forest with its open side facing north overlooking the Richland Creek valley and the church below. Most of the stones are in good condition, several having been repaired. A modern stone notes the burial place of church and cemetery founder Thomas Nesbit. Another stone shows the site of the first log building in the area. This was presumably the two-room log structure built by the Nesbits when they arrived to found the church. The stone lists the last names of "early followers": Abram, Baker, Burks, Bray, Byers, Coffee, Foster, Mathers, Morris, Nesbit, Renard, and Rice. Several of these names appear on nearby stones. Many of the stones, including a few tree-stump stones, are elaborately carved. Several Civil War veterans as well as veterans of later wars are buried here. The cemetery is still active with stones bearing dates in the 21st century.

-- Bob Dodd

