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Bozeman House one of county's oldest structures



By Wendy Richter
For the Siftings

One of Clark County's oldest structures stands a few miles west of Arkadelphia alongside Highways 26 and 51. The historic Bozeman House endures as a reminder of a bygone era. The frame, Greek-Revival home was built in the mid-nineteenth century for early settler Michael Bozeman.

Michael Bozeman was born in Georgia in 1808. His family moved to Alabama in 1819, and later, he moved further west to Clark County, Arkansas, in 1835. He often said in later life that one of his goals in coming to Arkansas was to "prove that cotton could be profitably raised this far north." And indeed he did. Bozeman built one of the most successful farming operations in antebellum Clark County, ultimately

amassing holdings of more than 9,000 acres.

Bozeman quickly became a leader in agriculture, education, and the Baptist church. He and his wife Lucy were among the handful of people who organized the Mount Bethel Baptist Church in 1936, one of Clark County's earliest. The Bozemens also began a cemetery near their residence, to be used by the family and others in the neighborhood. The oldest known, but unmarked grave, dates to 1840. It is believed that soldiers who died during the Civil War's Red River Campaign (Camden Expedition) are buried in the cemetery as well.

About ten years after their arrival in the area, the Bozemens replaced their initial home (a log cabin) with a more impressive house at a cost of about \$1,500. The house was built with timbers from large oak trees held together with wooden pegs and contained three-foot wide boards in its wainscoting. Today that home is one of Clark County's most beautiful structures. The place is especially picturesque at this time of year with its



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE CLARK COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

The Bozeman House, as it appeared about fifty years ago.

many colorful flowers and shrubs.

The cemetery located behind the historic home includes a marker with information about the cemetery, the Bozemens, and their significance to Clark County. Also on the interpretive panel are images of Michael Bozeman and some colorful jonquils depicting those so prolific around the property in

the spring. Descriptive text overlays a plat of a portion of the cemetery's burial places. The property was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1978.

On a more personal note, according to local lore, in the Bozemens' later years, they gained many pounds and became quite large in size. This obesity ultimately necessitated the

use of a two-seated buggy for transportation: Michael occupied the entire front seat, and Lucy sat in the rear one.

When Michael Bozeman died and his body was carried to the Bozeman Cemetery for burial, it was estimated that "he was followed by the largest concourse of people ever, to that time, to attend a funeral in rural

Clark County."

For additional information about Clark County history, visit or contact the Clark County Historical Museum (www.clark-countyhistory.org or 230.1360) or the Clark County Historical Association's Archives at the Ouachita Baptist University Library (www.obu.edu/archives or 245.5332).