President Andrew Jackson

The General and Beloved Wife Rachel Buried at The Hermitage Tomb

Andrew Jackson, the seventh President of the United States and the hero of the Battle of New Orleans, is entombed in the garden of his 1,120-acre estate The Hermitage, 12 miles east of downtown Nashville. The estate, Tennessee's most famous historic site, is a National Historic Landmark preserved by The Ladies Hermitage Association since 1889.

Jackson built the Greek-inspired tomb, designed by architect David Morrison, for his beloved wife Rachel, who died in 1828 just before he assumed the Presidency. The love affair between Andrew and Rachel Jackson burned bright throughout their marriage. Rachel was the daughter of John Donelson, one of the founders of Nashville. Jackson was buried at the tomb upon his death in 1845. A small family cemetery lies nearby. The garden was designed by Englishman William Frost in 1819 and features plants and shrubs of the early 19th Century.

Nearby is the cemetery of the Confederate Soldiers Home (non-extant) and the Donelson family.

During the presidential campaign of 1828, Jackson's opponents pointed to the Jacksons' marriage of August 1791. Rachel Donelson had been married to Lewis Robards of Kentucky, who mistreated her. She returned to her family in Nashville while Robards petitioned for a divorce. Convinced that Robards had obtained such a decree, Jackson took Rachel to Natchez and they were married. The divorce decree was not actually granted until 1793, and when the Jacksons learned of this discrepancy they remarried in Nashville in 1794.

Nothing much was mentioned of this incident until a newspaperman aligned with incumbent President John Quincy Adams printed the allegations that Rachel Donelson Jackson was an adultress. Others were much more scathing, calling her a whore and a "dirty, black wench." Jackson was wounded in the heart and fought against his impulse to lash back at his accusers. "The day of retribution and vengenance must come, when the guilty will meet with their just reward," he vowed.

Jackson won the 1828 election handily and he prepared to travel to Washington City for the inauguration. He knew that Rachel hated to travel, loved her life at The Hermitage, and hated Washington and politics. Although resigned to go with her husband, Rachel was sick at heart. On December 18, 1828, Rachel suffered a heart attack and died three days later. Jackson was inconsolable and the body of his wife literally had to be pried from his arms for burial. She was buried in the Hermitage garden. "At the time when I least expected it, and could least spare her, she was snatched from me," Jackson later wrote, "and I left here a solitary monument of grief, without the least hope of happiness here below."

Jackson's life had been punctuated by hard times. His father died before he was born, and by the age of 14 Jackson was an orphan. During the Revolutionary War he was struck on the arm and on the head by an angry British swordsman. He was forced to walk home miles in the rain, sick on his feet, and took months to recover from the disease that had killed his brother.

A descendant of the Scots-Irish, Jackson was a fighter and a resolute defender of his most precious commodity—his honor. He dueled with Charles Dickinson, a crack shot, over the ramifications of a proposed horse race. They met over the state line in Kentucky, with pistols at eight paces, in the early morning. Jackson held his fire by design. Dickinson

HERE LIE THE REMAINS OF
Mrs. RACHEL JACKSON
wife of PRESIDENT JACKSON
who died the 22nd Dec 1828-
Aged 61

Her face was fair, her person pleasing: her temper amiable, and her heart kind; she delighted in relieving the wants of her fellow creatures and cultivated that divine pleasure by the most liberal and unpretending methods: to the poor she was a benefactor; to the rich an example; to the wretched a comforter, to the prosperous an ornament, her piety went hand in hand with her benevolence, and she thanked her creator for being permitted to do good. A being so gentle, and yet so virtuous, slander might wound but could not dishonour; Even death, when he tore her from the armes of her husband, could but transport her to the bosom of her God.

Historic Gravesites

Clockwise from upper left:

• The gravesite of William Bowen (1742-1804) at the Bowen-Campbell House in Goodlettsville.

• The 3,500-year-old Egyptian mummy at the Tennessee State Museum.

• Bishop H.N. McTyeire tomb at Vanderbilt University.

• Mass grave marker for Tennessee Confederates at the McGavock Cemetery at Carnton Plantation in Franklin.

• Artillery overlooking the Stones River National Cemetery in Murfreesboro.

• Architect William Strickland's tomb at the Tennessee State Capitol.

City Cemetery Walking Tour Map

Enter at Gate on 4th Avenue South and Oak Street

CITY CEMETERY

EST. 1822

Final Resting Place of the Founders and Notables

The Nashville City Cemetery at 1001 Fourth Avenue South and Oak Street opened in 1822 as the city's first public cemetery. It is the oldest public cemetery in Middle Tennessee. The previous burial grounds had been located at the public square and the Sulphur Spring Bottom.

Originally four acres, the cemetery was expanded gradually to its 27 acres. Alpha Kingsley, a captain in the U.S. Army and owner of a boarding house, laid out the cemetery grounds and served as the first sexton from 1822-46. Assisting him was Mrs. Louisa Grundy McGavock.

City Cemetery is laid out with streets and street signs much like a miniature city. Some of the streets can be driven but are very narrow (no tour buses are allowed inside the cemetery). There are numerous monuments and crypts to examine, and interpretive signage tells visitors much about the persons buried here. City Cemetery is open daily, 9-5; gates are locked dusk to dawn. A list of rules and regulations are posted near the administration building.

Among the 20,000 persons buried at City Cemetery are four of Nashville's founders (James and Charlotte Robertson and John and Ann Robertson Cockrill), four Confederate generals (Felix Zollicoffer, Bushrod Johnson, Richard Ewell, and Samuel Read Anderson), the man who named the American flag Old Glory (Captain William Driver), Union Navy Commodore Paul Shirley, Tennessee Governor William Carroll, 15 mayors of Nashville, and two of the original Fisk Jubilee Singers (Mabel Lewis Imes and Ella Sheppard Moore).

During the Civil War more than 14,000 soldiers were taken to Nashville's 25 military hospitals, which served much of the Western Theater. W.R. Cornelius was the official undertaker in Nashville and buried soldiers from both sides in the open field southwest of the cemetery. After the war, the U.S. soldiers were moved to National Cemetery and many of the Southerners were moved to Mount Olivet Cemetery.

Neglected over time, the cemetery was declared a public nuisance. In 1868, a local newspaper called the cemetery a ruin—"robbery, murder and lust have held their horrid orgies in it and even now nightly desecrated by being the rendezvous of lascivious love."

Preservation efforts at the cemetery over the years have been sporatic. After the Civil War, the newly opened Mount Olivet Cemetery, out in the countryside, became the place to be buried. Many burials at City Cemetery were relocated there. Calvary Catholic Cemetery opened alongside Mt. Olivet; Catholics had been buried in the southwest section of City Cemetery but the construction of railroad tracks cut the tract off from the main parcel, and the burials were reinterred. In 1879 squirrels were released to control the growth of oak trees, and ten years later a wire fence was erected from remnants of the condemned Cumberland River suspension bridge. Restorations occurred in 1946 and 1958.

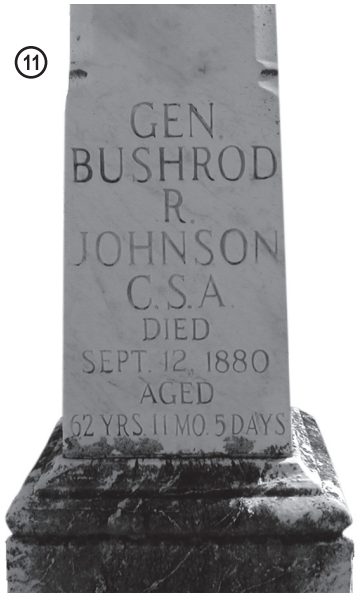
The Nashville City Cemetery Association has actively been working to restore the City Cemetery and provide information about the burials there. In 2007 the Nashville City Council appropriated $3 million for renovations. Tombstones, markers, and vaults have been repaired and cleaned, the roads repaved, new lighting and restrooms installed. The Keeble administration building has been renovated. Working with the NCCA are the Metro Historical Commission and Master Gardeners of Davidson County.

A Living History Tour of the cemetery is conducted by the NCCA each fall. A wealth of information can be found at www.thenashvillecitycemetery.org.

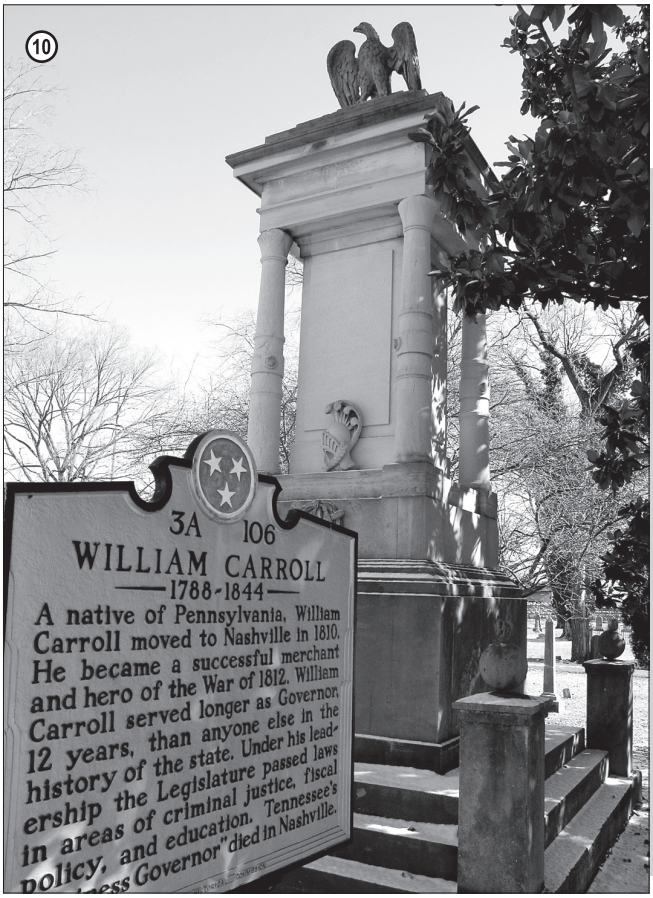
Nashville's Oldest Burial Ground

The monument to Nancy Maynor, wife of painter Pleasant Maynor, was designed by Prussian immigrant Adolphus Heiman, one of Nashville's best-known architects. The monument was one of his first Nashville commissions. A butterfly graces the monument, which shows the signature A. Heiman.

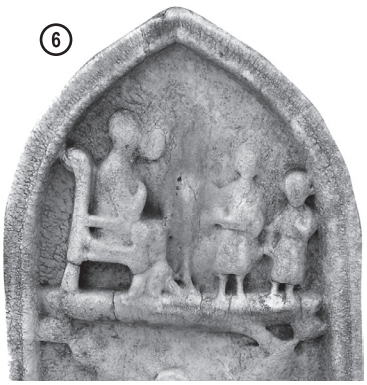
The rock and lantern monument to Ann Rawlins Sanders, who died in 1836 at the age of 21. There is a romantic legend that she committed suicide after a lover's quarrel, and her lover marked her grave with a stone and a lantern, because of her fear of the dark. There is no explanation how this false legend began.



General Bushrod Rust Johnson was a professor at Nashville's Western Military Institute before the Civil War. His wife was buried at City Cemetery in 1858. During the war, he was captured at Fort Donelson, and was the hero at the Battle of Chickamauga, leading Longstreet's troops through the gap in the Union lines. He was buried in his native Ohio upon his death in 1880. In the 1970s his remains were reburied at City Cemetery with full military honors. He now lies beside his wife.



The monument of William Carroll (1788-1844), a Pennsylvania native and successful Nashville businessman who served longer than any other man as Tennessee's governor. As successor to Andrew Jackson as leader of Tennessee's militia, he was instrumental in victories against the Creek Indians at Horseshoe Bend in 1814 and against the British at New Orleans in 1815. In 1819 he brought the first steamboat, the *General Jackson,* to Nashville. As governor he was known as a "champion of the people" and the first governor to lead the General Assembly in issues of reform.



School teacher Pamelia Kirk's tombstone depicts a seated teacher and her pupils.

City of the Dead

Mt. Olivet Cemetery

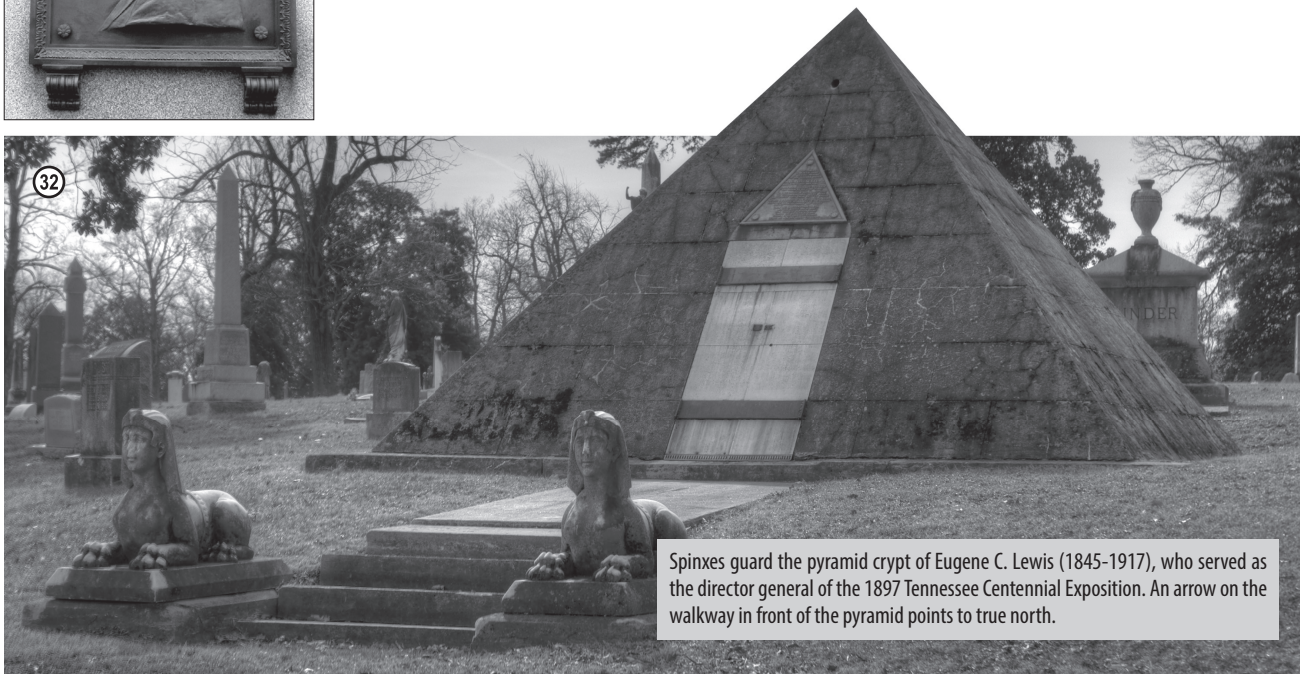
Mount Olivet Cemetery was created in 1856 to serve as the final resting place for Nashvillians after space at the Old City Cemetery had become limited. Today there are 190,000 people buried there, including many prominent local citizens. Visitors can view crypts, vaults, monuments, statues, cherubs, angels, maidens, Christ figures, interpretive signage, and a variety of funerary artwork on this hilltop Victorian-era cemetery. Located at 1101 Lebanon Road, two-and-a-half miles east of downtown, Mt. Olivet Cemetery is a modern facility with a historic past. Rules of decorum apply.

The Furman Monument is the largest in the cemetery, its eight columns depicted as caryatids—female figures similar to the Erechtheum's porch of maidens in Athens. The monument, which is 18 feet tall, was built by Mary J. Furman in honor of her late husband, Francis Furman (1816-99), a wealthy merchant. She also bequeathed money to Vanderbilt University to build Furman Hall in 1907. • At right is the Daniel Hillman monument.

John Bell of Nashville served as Secretary of War and U.S. Senator before running for President in the 1860 election won by Abraham Lincoln. An anti-secessionist, Bell won the vote in Tennessee, Kentucky, and Virginia on the Constitutional Union Party ticket. Although he later sided with his native South, he played no part in the hostilities.

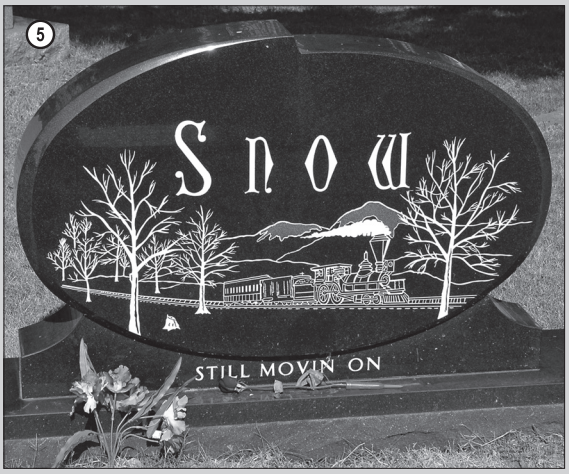
The Victorian Gothic vault bordering Confederate Circle holds the mortal remains of Adelicia Acklen, the mistress of the Belmont estate, along with two of her three husbands, nine of her ten children, and one grandchild. Adelicia Acklen was said to be the richest woman in America.

William B. Bate served as a Confederate general in the Civil War and as Tennessee Governor from 1882 to 1886.



Spinxes guard the pyramid crypt of Eugene C. Lewis (1845-1917), who served as the director general of the 1897 Tennessee Centennial Exposition. An arrow on the walkway in front of the pyramid points to true north.

The impressive monument of Earl and Louise Scruggs tells the stories of their lives together, their accomplishments, and depictions of the stages of their lives and careers.



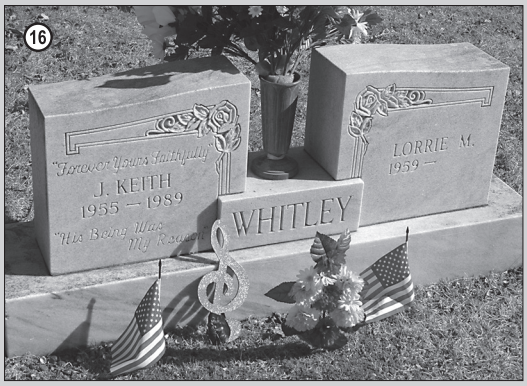
Clarence "Hank" Snow (1914-1999) was a native of Nova Scotia, Canada, and known as the "Singing Ranger." He played on the Grand Ole Opry for 46 years and his song "I'm Moving On" was the top country song of 1950 and holds the record for most consecutive weeks at No. 1.

Billy Walker, the "Tall Texan," was a well-loved regular of the Grand Ole Opry and had six No. 1 hits and 32 in the Top Ten. Due to a last-minute emergency, he narrowly avoided the 1963 airplane flight that took the life of Patsy Cline. He and his devoted wife Bettie died in an auto accident in Alabama in 2006.

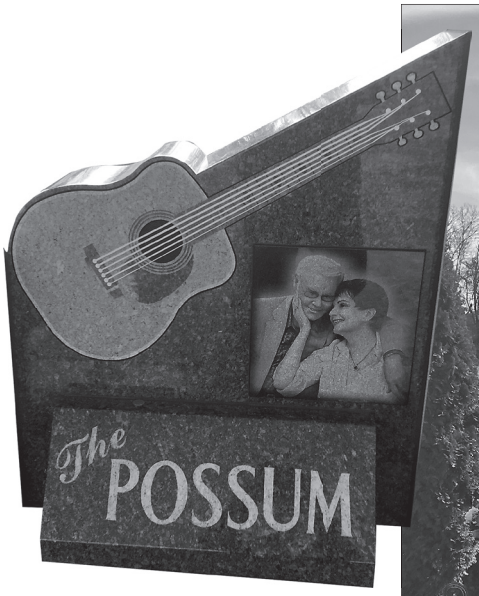
The gravestone of Jimmy Martin, the "King of Bluegrass," contains a complete biography. He was known for his "High Lonesome" sound in his hit songs of the 1950s and 1960s.

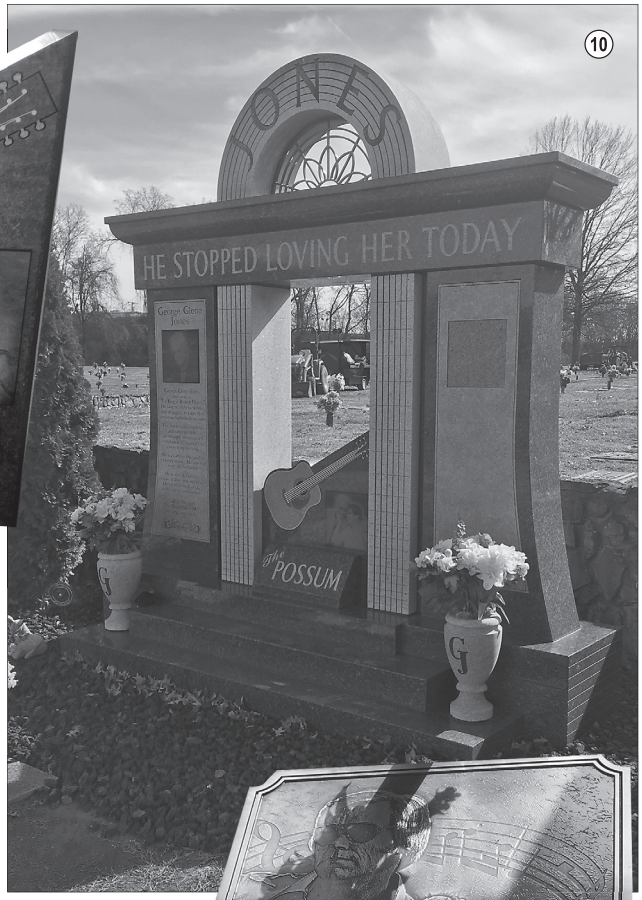
Country Music Stars

Pete Drake (1932-1988) was an outstanding pedal steel guitarist, playing on hundreds of recordings, including those of Elvis, George Harrison, and Bob Dylan. His style of "talking guitar" crossed the gap between country and popular music. He is a member of the Country Music Hall of Fame.



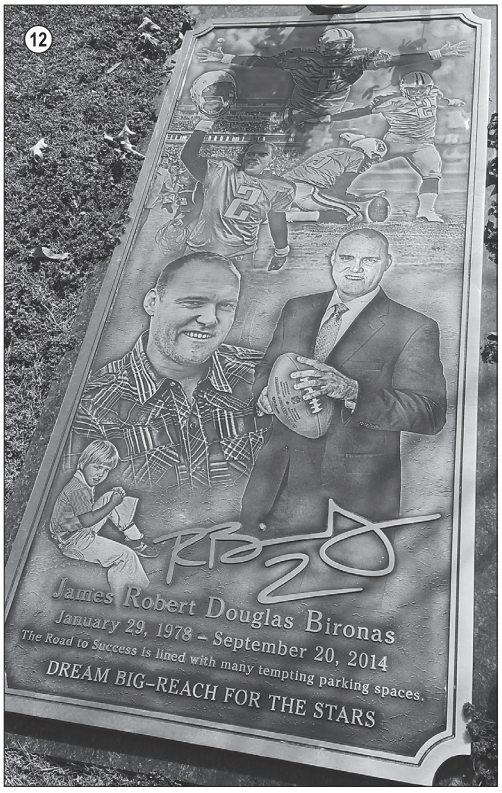
J. Keith Whitley (1955-1989), a native of Kentucky, learned to play guitar at age six and later as a teenager formed a bluegrass band with friend Ricky Skaggs. Ralph Stanley hired them for his band. Whitley would go on to release several hit albums and songs and became a very popular performer. Tragically, Whitley died of alcohol poisoning at age 33. The burial plot includes a place for his widow, Lorrie Morgan, the daughter of singer George Morgan, who is buried nearby.

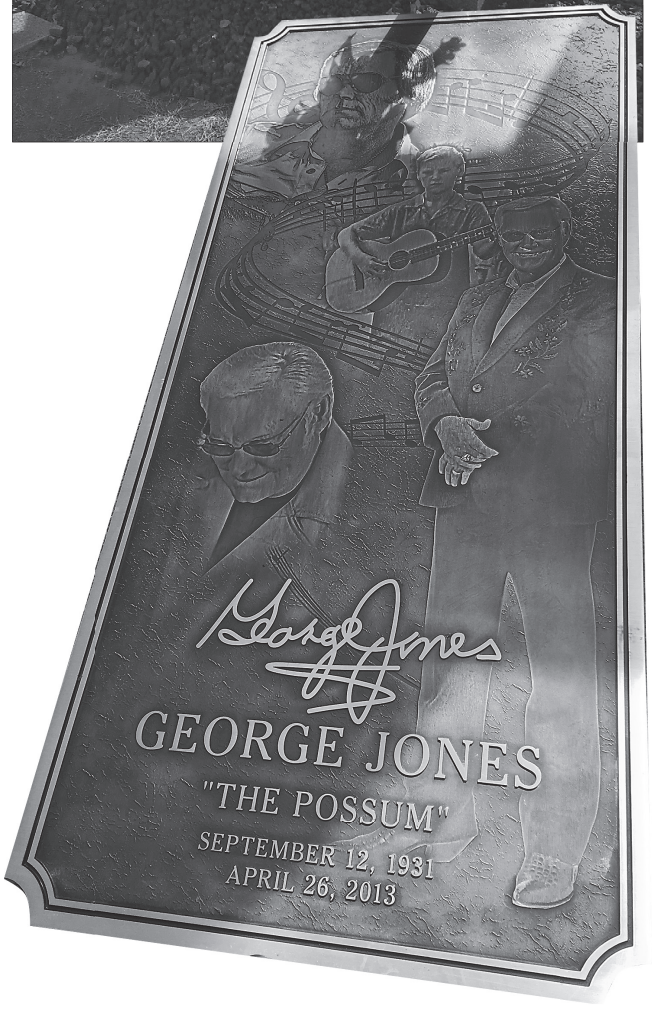




George Jones, one of the greatest vocalists and songwriters of all time, was also known as The Possum. His monument can be found at the Garden of the Grand Tour.

Rob Baronis was an All-Pro placekicker for the Tennesssee Titans.





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