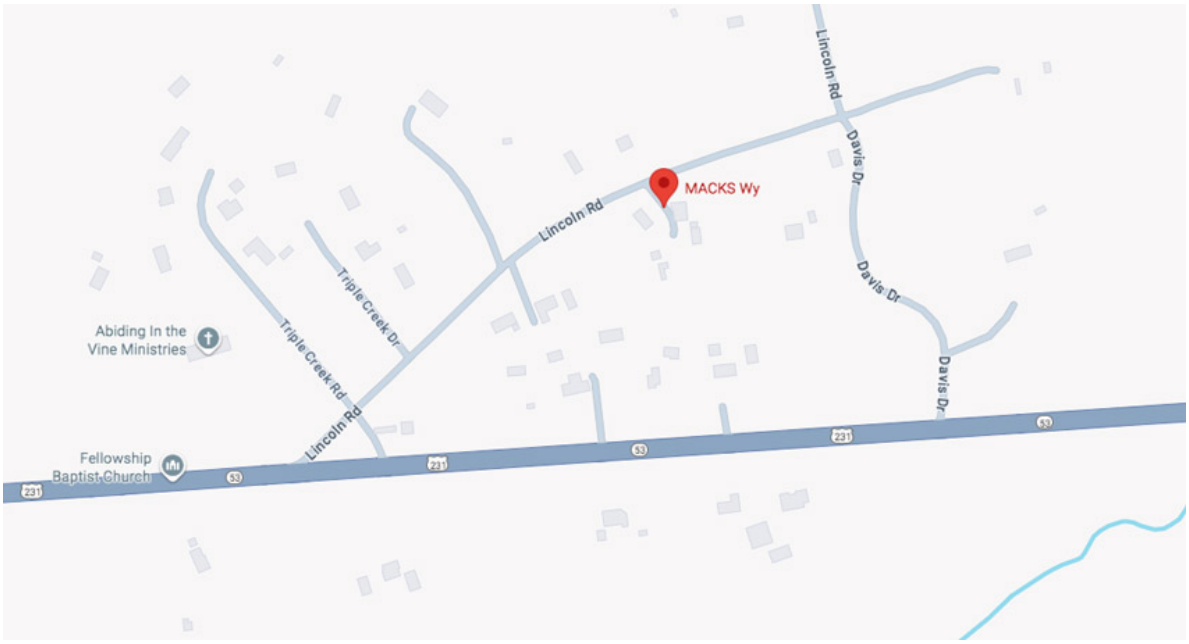
News



The fatal dog attack occurred on Macks Way in Cleveland, Alabama. The red map pin shows the approximate location.

One dead and two injured in Cleveland dog attack

By Kristin Yarbrough
Sept. 27, 2025
Published in the Blount Countian on Oct. 1, 2025

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A woman died and two men were injured in a dog attack on Macks Way in Cleveland. The attack occurred before dawn on Tuesday, Sept. 23, while the caretaker was walking the dog.

The dog reportedly turned on the caretaker, causing “severe and deep lacerations” in the man’s hands, said Sgt. Jason Paul of the Blount County Sheriff’s Office. Sandra Wolfe Schaefer Weems and her husband, who were conversing with the caretaker, attempted to intervene.

All three were hospitalized with serious injuries, Paul stated. Weems, a 61-year-old resident of Cleveland, died on Friday. A fourth person shot and killed the dog to end the attack, Paul said. The dog tested negative for rabies.

The caretaker had been pet-sitting the dog during the dog owner's incarceration in Jefferson County Jail, Paul stated. The sitter reported that the dog had shown no aggression during the six weeks that he had cared for the dog. No criminal charges are expected, Paul said, due to the nature of the attack.

The woman's death is the sixth known dog attack fatality in Alabama in 2025 and the first in Blount County. Across the United States, the CDC reported an average of 43 deaths per year from 2011 to 2021.

The dog in the Cleveland attack was identified as a pit bull. However, a study of 10 years of dog attack fatalities by National Canine Research Council found breed identifications to be frequently inaccurate and not a reliable predictor of individual behavior.

Researches did identify potentially preventable favors, finding that in over 75% of analyzed incidents, owners had "kept dogs isolated from regular positive interactions" and victims had a compromised ability "to interact appropriately with dogs." Other highly correlative factors included failure to neuter the dog (84%) and a lack of familiarity between the victim and the dog (85%).

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