

# Written In Stone

*By Sherry Johnston*

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## **Earlier Town Cemeteries / Stallworth Deeds**

This week, let's talk about a cemetery located in the heart of downtown Evergreen. This would be better known as The Evergreen Old Historical Cemetery located on US31 North/US84 East or Perryman Street across from the Old Evergreen City School Playground. This cemetery is located on about 6 acres, more or less, boundaries of the above named highway or street on the one side, Shipp Street, Cemetery Street and a dirt lane named for General Pinckney D. Bowles on the other sides.

This cemetery is featured in a book entitled the same name by Miss Elizabeth d'Autrey Riley, a native of Monroe County with deep roots in Conecuh County. She was also a niece of Dr. Benjamin F. Riley, who wrote *The History of Conecuh County*, 1881. The first known cemetery of Evergreen is located on South Main Street, also known as Brooklyn Road [CR42] across from the Tri-County Medical Center. This land was once part of the Calloway Hodge Stallworth Plantation, as the Stallworth families owned thousands of acres of land in what we all know today as downtown Evergreen. The story goes that as more people began to settle nearer the railroad in Evergreen, instead of where the original county seat was at Sparta, there became a need for more burial space for those citizens who passed away while the town was growing. One of the Stallworth wives saw the need and stepped up to offer some of their land for the present day Evergreen Old Historical Cemetery. It is known that those Stallworth descendants who were originally buried in the First Cemetery on South Main Street were removed to the present cemetery once it was established. However, there are still several graves located in the First Cemetery, of which we may never know who was actually left in the oldest burial grounds.

Records have been found in the old courthouse showing where the Stallworth Family deeded the land for this cemetery to the Mayor and Town Council of Evergreen on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of June 1876. The Stallworth Family reserved for themselves and their heirs space for their descendants in this cemetery. Many of the Founding Fathers and their families lie in this historical cemetery, as do descendants of others who called Evergreen and Conecuh County home.

We have several others who deserve recognition, among them are the Orphans of the Louise Short Orphans and Widows Home which was located in Evergreen in the late 1800's through the early 1920's, before being removed to Troy AL and becoming known as the Baptist Orphanage. One section of the old cemetery is known as "Paupers Field", where those who were found dead with no identification on them were laid to rest, or perhaps they had no family to give them a proper burial. Another gentleman who is laid to rest in the old cemetery is Phil Samuel, who lived in a two-room home that his friends had built for him on US31 North. The City extended the Old Evergreen Cemetery on the north side of the ravine and it included Mr. Samuel's home; however, as long as Phil

lived, the city never made him move, so when he died, the city buried him right at the side of his home. The steps to his old home are the steps you now see right there on the side of US 31. His grave is marked with a photo inscribed on his headstone, though with the vandalism of today, it is dented with BB holes. There are many more that we could tell you about; however, it would be long and lengthy to cover everyone who is there, so I would suggest that if you want to know a little about the history of your town, that you choose to walk among those who are at rest in the Old Historical Evergreen Cemetery, dotted with stately Cedar trees and boxwood, ornate monuments of marble, and simple slabs, brick work and iron fencing. If you are interested in helping to maintain and preserve this cemetery for future generations, please contact me at [canebrakesociety@yahoo.com](mailto:canebrakesociety@yahoo.com) or call me at (251) 578-2670.