

Written In Stone

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The Evergreen Cemetery

In April of '06 another cemetery added to the Alabama Historic Cemetery Register was The Evergreen Cemetery, locally known by its' folk name of 'Greasy Bottom'. When I asked the meaning behind the folk name, I was told that it was because an African American man, possibly the 'grave digger' lived down in the 'bottom' and he was always dirty and greasy looking—hence the name of 'greasy bottom'. The folk name has stuck, because when people refer to this cemetery, it's almost always called this rather than Evergreen Cemetery.

According to land records, this cemetery was also located on original Stallworth Plantation lands; and some of those earlier graves most probably belong to descendants of Stallworth slave families. The cemetery today is maintained by the City of Evergreen, and cared for by the living descendants of some of these same families. The cemetery is comprised today of over 200 or more graves, some buried almost to the edge of a pond on private property adjacent to the cemetery land. There are headstones, some elaborate and some very simple. There is one section that is known for its blue paint markings, a folk part of the cemetery that makes it quite unique. There are several slabs with no discernible markings and a few that are broken and in need of expert masonry repair.

One of the oldest identified graves is that of a James Dickson, (1825-1880). Other names common to this cemetery include Bradley, Crosby, Fountain, Jefferson, Maxwell, Randolph, Thomas and others. A survey completed as of 1982 is included in the Headstones, Volume 3 at the library; and cemetery volunteers are working on completing an up-dated version of this cemetery.

In researching who this James Dickson was, I started with the Conecuh Census of 1870, where I found James Dickson and wife, Amanda, living in the household of W. J. Ledkins, a Photographer from SC. James and his wife are listed as Domestics. He is born in AL, with wife Amanda born in VA. This household is in Evergreen Beat #4. The next census is 1880 and James Dickson; wife, Amanda; and two year old daughter, Belle living in their own household. This census was probably taken in summer of 1880, and our James is dead sometime in 1880, buried in Evergreen Cemetery. It would be interesting to find out more about James Dickson and if he has descendants living in Conecuh County. I am sure that there are other graves, unmarked ones, that existed around this same time of 1880 or earlier—not only in 'Greasy Bottom'—in others across the county and state.