

# Written In Stone

*By Sherry Johnston*

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## Buford Cemetery

About 2 1/2 miles from Downtown Evergreen, located off the Owassa Road, lies an old, sometimes forgotten and very neglected family cemetery. This cemetery is not only old; it is also historic in the fact that it belongs to one of the earliest families to arrive in America circa 1637 to VA and to Conecuh as early as 1819. With this in mind, this family would be among one of the earliest family groups in Conecuh County. Descendants of this family served their country well; being members of the earlier county and city governments; serving in many wars throughout the history of this nation; and raising sons and daughters who also became leading citizens and are still today through the many descendants of these same families.

The Buford Family, as mentioned earlier, did arrive in The New Colony and call Virginia home as early as 1637--making the first patent of land in America. William Buford and his wife, Ann, raised six children--five sons and one daughter. A son, William, married Grisselle Clements, daughter of a Captain Peyton Clements, and they in turn raised nine children, one of which lies buried in the old family burying grounds in Conecuh County.

How, one would ask, does a family from VA end up in Conecuh? The second William appears to have relocated to NC, and then on to GA where he dies about 1797, with sons. Mitchell and Leonard, obtaining passports from the GA governor to travel through the Creek Indian Nation about 1802. Mitchell Buford and his wife, Nancy Smith, are in Conecuh about 1819, settling on rich, fertile soil, building up their home and farm, and family about 2 1/2 miles northwest of present day Evergreen. He and his wife had six daughters and one son. Mitchell was born about 1776 in VA; died in 1844 in Evergreen; and his wife, Nancy was born 1775 in VA and died a year later than her husband in 1845. They are both buried in the Buford Family Cemetery--with their headstones marking the spot; though now both of these lie flat on the ground--perhaps as a result of damaging trees and limbs. Two of their daughters, who also married men of early pioneer families, also are buried along with their parents in this old family cemetery. Matilda married Little Berry Chapman (L.B.) and Mary Ann married Ezekiel Salter.

Today, the locals call the cemetery the Chapman-Salter Cemetery; and it is hidden by underbrush, overgrowth and trash discarded by local residents. There are several other family plots of earlier Conecuh County families, such as Lundy, Guice, Coleman, Thomas, Fagan, and Salter. Some are plain and simple; while others are surrounded by ornate iron fencing, with elaborate marble headstones, and carvings of oak leaves and acorns, and beautiful verses. Some of these same families can be found in other communities across Southern Alabama--in Monroe and Wilcox Counties, you may also find Burfords buried--one is in Possum Bend, Wilcox County, where the senior Buford's will was executed at the home of his only son, Leonard.

If you wish to know more about this family and the allied families buried in the old Buford Family Cemetery, aka Chapman-Salter Cemetery, please visit the Evergreen Public Library and look over the family histories.. If you would be interested in preserving and restoring this cemetery, along with others, contact your ACPA County Representative at (251) 578-2670 or

email me at [canebrakesociety@yahoo.com](mailto:canebrakesociety@yahoo.com) and remember to take care of your family cemetery. One day, someone may want to know the history of it. It's your history to tell.