

Written In Stone

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Old Beulah Cemetery – Part 1

One of Conecuh's oldest, and most historic cemeteries, has been documented in several places; in Family, Church, and State histories. The earliest pioneer families of Ashley, Baggett, Boykin, Hunter, Jay, Jones, Miller, Morrow, Mosley, Taylor and Travis have connections to this fine, old cemetery located in the southernmost section of Conecuh, not far from the second county seat of Sparta, AL.

Beulah Church was established as a Baptist congregation constituted in 1818 by Rev. Alexander Travis, of SC. The Beulah Church was one of the oldest, largest, and most respectable churches of the state, according to Hosea Holcomb; and a member of the Beckbe, then Bethlehem Association. In 1824, 8 churches in the association were located in Conecuh County.

According to a Montgomery Advertiser writer in 1986, the "headstones, grave markers and monuments of Old Beulah Cemetery look like pieces of fine sculpture grown old with age." In the writings of yet another noted historian, Mr. Peter Brannon in 1938, suggests "that those who rest there must have been families well able to give them decent burials." Mr. Brannon said the markers in Beulah would "do credit to many rich cemeteries in the State."

Shafts, table monuments, box tombs and other such evidence suggest that "J. Turner", a monument maker of Mobile, furnished some nice ones and there are others that were direct importations from Italy. Carvings in the sides of several markers are baskets of flowers, so realistic that if they were in color, they might fool the birds and bees nearby. Lilies of the valley, roses, bluebells, and weeping willow trees, so intricate and detailed, they could pass for fine art if in a museum. Though not all are as elaborate, they all stand proof of the steady and sure hand of the chiseler.

Next week, read some of the epitaphs inscribed on the stones and "meet" the families interred in majestic, Old Beulah Cemetery.