

Written In Stone

By Sherry Johnston

Evergreen Courant ~ 30 November 2006

Johnston / Findley Cemetery

Recently, I had the opportunity to visit several cemeteries in the Johnstonville-Brooklyn communities of Conecuh County. The Historical Atlas of Alabama-Cemeteries by Location published by the University of Alabama Cartography Lab has listed in the Johnstonville area alone approximately five known cemeteries with four more back toward Castleberry on CR6 and four additional ones toward Brooklyn. There are many unknown cemeteries lying in the underbrush of old home places, forgotten by many and some are of uncertain location and those we need to identify and locate, clean, restore and preserve for future generations. The Findley Cemetery is located on private property, cared for and maintained by the Findley descendants. Their ancestors and family lie within a fence, separated from some additional graves that make me believe that prior to the Findley Family coming into possession of the land; others were buried on their family home place.

The earliest marked graves appear to be those of the Caleb & Nancy (Feagin) Johnston Family. Caleb was born 1790, arriving in Conecuh about 1818 with brother, Asa; marrying Nancy and having 6 children. Asa married Eliza Feagin, sister to Nancy; and their family cemetery lies up the road near their old home place. A son of Caleb & Nancy, Aaron Albert Johnston, probably died first, about 1843 and is buried in the Caleb Johnston Cemetery adjoining the Findley Cemetery. Just to the side of the Johnston Cemetery, lying within a small enclosure lie Edwin H. Robinson and Mary Frances (Babe) Snowden. Mary Frances was a daughter of Charles W., Jr. & Rebecca (Johnston) Snowden. Chas. & Rebecca lost four young children to a fever in 1859, and they lie here in the cemetery along with others in the Johnston Family Cemetery.

On the left going in to the ancient burial grounds, one finds possibly the descendants of the original slave families of the Johnston Family buried in a deep, woodsy thicket, and presently, work is being conducted to identify those that are buried here. We have a listing of those that had marked headstones and the names include Barnes, Jackson, Walker and Franklin. If you have knowledge of those who could be buried here, please give me a call at (251) 578-2670 and work with me to get them identified and connected to the families searching for their ancestors.

The Findley line descends from Magilbra Findley and the earliest known burial appears to be of his son, Martin Findley in 1917; however, in an unmarked grave is that of Martin's wife, and she could have died before 1900.

As a Johnston researcher, and with the census records as our documentation, we believe that this cemetery more than likely was known in earlier years as the Caleb Johnston Cemetery; today better known as the Findley Family Cemetery. Efforts are underway to have this entire cemetery restored and preserved by members of all the families represented here in this historic burial ground.