

Written In Stone

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London Baptist Church Cemetery

Just like Brooklyn, the town in New York that has towns across the nation so named, there are possibly equally as many towns named London in the US. In Conecuh County, there is an unincorporated community long known as London Community, located about 6 miles west of Castleberry on County Road 6. In the 1900's this community was a bustling place; as farmers were raising strawberries and as many as 3,000 acres were planted in these red rows of berries; with 150 carloads of berries shipped in 1918 bringing the community a profit of about \$125,000.00. This area of Conecuh—the Castleberry/London area—was known as the Strawberry Capital! Today, some of those descendants of the early settlers to Castleberry & the London community still raise strawberries; not necessarily for shipping afar—just to their table and those of their neighbors. Every April there is a Strawberry Festival held in the historic downtown area of Castleberry; with strawberries, arts, crafts, and entertainment available.

Residents of the London community go to Castleberry to get their mail, or get it on rural delivery; their children either attend schools in the town of Castleberry; Evergreen; or some attend the Brewton schools in nearby Escambia County. London is a peaceful, relaxed village; dotted with farms, homes, barns, a few cattle grazing in the fields, and the friendliest people you'll ever find.

The London Baptist Church was established about 1912; and children attended school in the first church until a proper school was built about 1926. The cemetery at the church is listed separately as the "old grave-yard" and the "new grave-yard", with family names familiar to the area still today. One can find Henderson, Oliver, Darby, Holland, Poole, Waters, Baker, Garrett, Miniard, and others buried in the old and new cemeteries at London Baptist Church. The earliest recorded grave appears to be that of Myrtle Blanch Holland Darby, wife of James Richard Darby. She died in June of 1932; and he in 1958 with both buried in the old cemetery. However, there is an infant child of theirs buried there, and it would be an earlier grave, with no dates inscribed. There seems to be a couple of children born circa 1912, 1914, & 1916 that I have no further info on which may or may not be that particular infant. The recorded graves indicate that as of 1981, there were 40 graves in the old section with 56 graves or so in the new section, bringing the total to at least 96 or so graves. I would guess that number is much higher today.

The cemetery and church are located in T4N, R10E, S20, and in the Atlas of Cemetery Locations by County, its Map Number is #92-SW. It is maintained by the London Baptist Church, with most of the graves marked; with few unmarked graves present.