

# Written In Stone

*By Sherry Johnston*

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## **GPR: Ground Penetrating Radar**

On Saturday, April 14<sup>th</sup>, cemetery preservationists, historians, genealogists, and interested individuals all had an opportunity to experience first hand the results of GPR: Ground Penetrating Radar in locating unknown graves in a cemetery. Steven Jones, of the Office of Archaeological Resources at Moundville, University of AL presented an educational presentation of the technology available today, and how it's used in cemetery identification, location, and preservation. The machine itself gives you a reading of what one might find underground if you could peel away the layers and just see for yourself what really does lie beneath. We all came away with a greater appreciation and understanding of the valuable work that the OAR does in historical surveys, preservation and identification, not only with our beloved cemeteries; with historical buildings, sites, artifacts, and aboriginal remains of our earliest inhabitants. Mr. Jones gave us a demonstration at the Old Historical Evergreen Cemetery on US31 North/Pickney D. Bowles Lane of some unknown graves; and of particular plots that appear to be empty to our eyes, but may retain some anomaly of one kind or another hidden beneath the soil.

With all the excitement of the 1<sup>st</sup> annual cemetery workshop held this month, we've all gotten involved with several activities and events throughout our county, neighboring counties and AL. Confederate Heritage & History Month has seen several re-enactments honoring our Confederate ancestors, both at home here in Conecuh and surrounding counties. In Butler County this past Sat., descendants honored their War of 1812 soldier with a ceremony attended by several family members and interested citizens.

Several folks have dropped in over the past two weeks to give me some information on cemeteries in our area. I greatly appreciate the data and will hope to do some further exploration and research about the cemeteries. They are all in need of identification, location, and preservation. Without your help, many of them would go unnoticed and unidentified for all time. Over in Bermuda, there is an effort underway to 'recreate Bermuda', and our neighbors are in need of photographs, memorabilia, stories, newspaper clippings, reminders of our past. If you have pictures of old store buildings, schools, churches, and other historical sites, please contact me and I'll pass it on.

If you remember when graves dotted a particular hillside or pasture in your 'neck of the woods', let me know about them—they may be one of those 'unknown or uncertain' cemeteries we've been longing to discover!