

# Written In Stone

By Sherry Johnston

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## Abner McGehee Cemetery

This past Saturday, November 3<sup>rd</sup> in Montgomery AL, about 40 folks descended on the State Capitol Auditorium for the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Alabama Cemetery Preservation Alliance Workshop held jointly with the Alabama Historical Commission and the Montgomery Genealogical Society. ACPA is a protégé of the Montgomery Genealogical Society (MGS); and an annual statewide cemetery workshop is sponsored by these three groups interested in cemetery preservation. This year, we were proud to present Wendell Mitchell a certificate for his assistance in getting the Access Law for Cemeteries on Private Property passed in Alabama. Mr. Steve Jones, from the UA Moundville Park was on hand to give a presentation about Ground-Penetrating Radar (GPR); and Mr. Craig Remington from the UA Cartography Lab. presented a short feature on the Historical Maps Project which one can access online. After the ACPA Business meeting, the participants met at the Abner McGehee Cemetery located in Hope Hull, AL for a demonstration of proper cleaning techniques by Mr. Charles Thomas of Eagle Eye Masonry, of Jefferson County, AL.

Abner McGehee who owned over 10,000 acres in Montgomery County in 1822 was a devout Christian. On his plantation he built the first Methodist Church about a mile southwest from the present church on Wasden Road placing it near the location known as the *Abner McGehee Burying Ground*. He named the church the Hope Hull Methodist Episcopal Church in honor of Mr. Hope Hull, a distinguished revivalist. The L&N Railroad named the depot "McGehee's Switch" in honor of Abner McGehee but his name for the church as "Hope Hull" is what the community is called today. At one time, the cemetery was enclosed with an ornamental wrought iron fence; however, that fence has long disappeared and the City of Montgomery replaced it with a chain link fence. After years and years of neglect, the Pintlala Historical Association through the heroic efforts of Ethel Tankersley Todd (not a descendant or related) reclaimed the *Abner McGehee Burying Ground*.

One of our own, the late Mrs. Mary McGehee Stuart, and family are descendants of this Abner McGehee, who is reputed to be one of the founders of Montgomery, our state capitol.