

Written In Stone

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Milledgeville Cemetery ~ Part I

A person born after the establishment of the interstate roadway systems in Alabama finds it doubly hard sometimes to imagine what the surrounding roadways and countryside might have looked like prior to the road system created. That is even more so in primarily rural counties like Conecuh alongside I-65 north and south.

If you're traveling from Evergreen going toward Owassa, you've got several roads that appear to have no connections to the other side of the interstate until you familiarize yourself with the old road names and some of the newer E-911 names that may or may not have any root of the old name left at all. Such is the case of CR 22 and CR 29, which both go over the interstate. Owassa was once known as Gravella or Gravilla, also called Gravel Station located approximately 4 miles northeast of Evergreen. The community once boasted of six general stores, a saw mill, post office and a railroad depot. There was a school and several churches in the area, and with people moving back and forth, there were deaths as well. Cemeteries cropped up near old homesteads, churches, and these are sometimes unmarked, unplotted and unnamed. Perhaps the church that once stood in one place was moved further down the road, and the cemetery was left wherever it was established, making one wonder the origin of the cemetery, especially when there is no sign indicating the name of it.

According to the Alabama Atlas of Historical Cemeteries, the cemetery located on CR 22, just after you've turned to the left off of CR 29 at the Olive Branch Baptist Church corner, is listed as # 54-NE and unknown. According to information gleaned from obituaries for some of those buried here, this cemetery would be locally known as the Milledgeville Cemetery. The listing for those buried here in this cemetery is not in the Conecuh Headstone Book, Volume 3, Black Citizens of Conecuh County. It might have been an oversight in not having the information published; however, it just proves that with this cemetery just outside the city limits of Evergreen, just imagine how many more lie forgotten along the roadsides, in the woods and pastures of our county.

Milledgeville Cemetery is located just before you cross the overpass over I-65 and you can hear the traffic very clearly; and as one walks among the graves, you're on a downhill slope, making one wonder if there were any graves lost when the I-65 roadway was built. It's composed of about 50+ graves, with the earliest known headstone belonging to John Salter, born at Gravella, Alabama in 1875 and died 10 April 1897. I discovered a John Salter, born to Young and Julia Salter living in the 1880 Conecuh Census at Belleville. He was four years old at the time and it gave his father's place of birth in AL and his mother's in VA. I found Young and Julia Salter in Conecuh County as early as 1866 on the census records.

Next week, we'll discuss some of the other families who are buried here that not only had roots in just Conecuh County—some of them originated in Lowndes County and VA as well.