

Written In Stone

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Marshall Cemetery

Early families settling in the Monroe/Conecuh County areas were from the United States of VA, TN, GA, N & SC; and from the far away countries of Scotland, Ireland, England, France and Germany. What must they have thought when they first laid eyes on this virgin wilderness; with game, timber and water plentiful; rolling hills of rich soil just right for growing cotton, corn, tobacco, and other products.

Where one reads of large, antebellum plantations, with several slave families living and working there; sometimes, the ones in and around Monroe and Conecuh may have been just large farms by today's standards. There were very few actual slaveholders in both of these counties with over 100 slaves; however, many of those descendants do carry the surname of the original master of these 'plantations'. Some of the family heads didn't necessarily take the name of their own master; many times, it would be the name of someone they admired, or a neighbor of their own master. Not necessarily did they take the name because they were fathered by a slave holder; sometimes, yes, however, not always.

In researching an African American Cemetery, seeing the names interred there, I do research the original landholder, and perhaps if there were a large slaveholder, see if there could be a connection to the surnames listed. In the past weeks, researching the old cemeteries along the Old Federal Road, I've discovered many names that connect with these early settlers. In the instance of Sanders Hill Cemetery at Midway, Monroe County, I've found the names of Longmire, Marshall, McKenzie, Rabb, and Rankins. There were several unmarked graves here; and the weeds & briars have hidden many of them from sight; however, this cemetery is still in use by the descendants of those earlier families. Nearby was discovered the burial ground of John Marshall and his wife, Elizabeth Pincham—they came from Mecklenburg, VA to Monroe County with their sons and daughter in the early 1800's. One son and daughter-in-law are buried in what is commonly known as the Marshall-DuBose Cemetery at nearby Pineville. From the information so far discovered, John & Elizabeth are buried on their plantation, with possible connections to those also interred at Sanders Hill. We'll discover more together next week.