

Written In Stone

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Green Street Church Graveyards – Part I

Green Street is a little community northeast of Burnt Corn, Alabama where according to the Conecuh County Heritage Book, the Brantley, Salter and Watkins families gave the name to the community. There were three men who owned and operated a saw mill, which was located between Evergreen and the upper Burnt Corn road. In the past, this community was primarily a closely settled village of white settlers; and boasted a large commissary plus a blacksmith shop. On the website for Burnt Corn, which you can find at <http://www.burntcorn.com> information provided there suggests that Green Street is a community where slave owner Enoch Salter purchased a slave and her son, Fannie McCarter Lee & Allen McCarter for about \$2000. The community today consists primarily of African American citizens.

The Evergreen-Conecuh Public Library visited the Green Street AME Zion Church in the spring of 2001 for a series of reading programs. The church was filled with children of all ages, lively and energetic. This past Saturday, I visited the community once again; however, this time, it was a silent trip, as I visited the burial grounds of some of the earliest settlers and those descendants who now lie buried in the Green Street Church Graveyards.

Coming from the Harpers' Store Community along CR9, you first come to a chain link fence under oak trees on a little hillside. There, I found about 8 graves, 7 of which are close together, with one in the extreme far corner nearer the direction of the church. All were identified except for one grave; and two of the headstones were very similar, indicating a family tie. The earliest marked grave appears to be that of Vas H. Salter, born 18 Feb 1880 and died 16 Oct 1961; his wife buried beside him, Irene (Dexter) Salter, born 26 Aug 1886 and died 5 Sept 1965. Their epitaph reads 'In Memory of Our Dad/Mom'. There were two rows in this simple family cemetery; with about 5 graves on the first row, and 3 on the second row. On the first grave of the second row, found Mattie Salter Lee, who was 89 at the time of her death, and she was a daughter of Vassar and Irene Salter. According to her obituary, she joined Greenstreet A.M.E. Zion Church at an early age, and remained a faithful member until her health failed. She had 7 children, 3 of which preceded her in death. Beside Mattie Lee, a sister, Leola Ardella Royster and possibly brother-in-law, are buried. Leola was born 21 Mar 1912 and died 12 Feb 1999. John Jefferson Royster was born 9 Jun 1908 and died 5 Apr 1996. No obituaries have been found for these two persons. In the obit for Mattie S. Lee, it states she had a son, Nathaniel Lee. In the far corner of the cemetery, I found a headstone turned over, similar to Mattie Lee's headstone, and it read Nehemiah Lee, born 5 Oct 1935 and died 17 Mar 1974. I wondered if he was related to Mattie Lee. Another grave belonged to Mrs. Panzy Salter, born 9 Feb 1909 and died 19 Aug 1970. According to her epitaph, she was 'a loving wife gone, but not forgotten.'

None of the graves in the three cemeteries for Green Street A.M.E. Zion Church were listed in the Conecuh Headstones Volume 3 of Black Citizens for Conecuh County. There will be now be a listing created for research purposes in the Heritage Section. Next week, the other two cemeteries will be featured.