

# Written In Stone

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## **McConnell Cemetery ~ Part I**

Researching cemeteries is similar to starting a great mystery; for one has to search for clues of who, what, when and where. These clues are not always easy to spot, for you have to 'dig deep' into the interwoven lives of the characters that make up the plot.

I received a request for a lookup sometime back, and started in Escambia County and worked my way around to Covington County, and regionally until my clues led me back to downtown Brewton. When the person I was searching for died in 1907, family papers had her being buried in a cemetery called 'Urbana' and none of us had any clue as to where a cemetery by that name was located. The researchers in Escambia County forwarded the query to me, and we bandied it back and forth until we finally discovered it 'sitting right under our nose'! The cemetery is known as the McConnell Cemetery and it is located on possible City of Brewton property, behind the Brewton Middle School on the NW corner of Liles Blvd. and Sellers St. A year or so ago, Jackie M. Marky had surveyed the cemetery for the Alabama Cemetery Preservation Alliance, and has also registered it on several other online databases, so at least we now have a photographic and written survey of this 123 year old or more cemetery. When Jackie first saw it, it just looked like a rather large vacant lot except for the few headstones and slabs scattered about. There was a lot of trash, overgrown bushes, abandoned cars and general filth all about. She found at least 18 recognizable graves, and was told that at one time there were many more that could be seen; however, time and deterioration have obliterated many of these. There are at least two CSA headstones in the plot; and the earliest identified grave is marked 1884, with the latest as 1948.

Many of the ones found buried there have roots in Conecuh County soil, either having been born here, married here and lived here before Escambia County was carved out of Conecuh. The families of William H. Ellis; Gideon Mayo; Warren Ogletree; and others can be found buried here. The actual name may stem from two children of a Mr. McConnell that died in a house fire were known to have been buried here, as well as their parents at a later date. If you have information about the families interred here, please share with us, so that the history of this cemetery can be recorded.