

Written In Stone

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Evergreen Courant ~ 15 October 2009

Gonzalez Methodist Church Cemetery ~ Escambia Co., FL

Northwest Escambia County FL can trace its roots back to the Spaniards with the first settlers in the area arriving when it was Spanish territory. Spanish Land Grants were land claims filed by Florida settlers after the transfer of the territory from Spain to the US in 1821. It was in 1790 that Spain started offering land grants to encourage settlement in the sparsely populated area. Many families, originating from the Carolinas, VA, GA & AL took advantage of this land grant & claimed ownership of land validated by the US.

Two Henderson brothers: David & William, Jr. received such a claim to land just north of Muscogee, a village established as a lumber town, once a thriving community is known today only in history books. Though the Old Muscogee Cemetery is the site of many early settlers, many of them moved across the way to Gonzalez, and the families of Henderson can be found at Gonzalez Cemetery.

The property on which the church and cemetery are located was donated in 1876 by the Roberts & Shepard families, the latter having a daughter who married into the Bowman clan, of Bowman Cemetery in Escambia County, AL.

Another family found interred at Gonzalez UMC Cemetery had strong roots in Bellville & Burnt Corn of Conecuh County, AL. John S. Watson and family started off in Conecuh; however, by the 1910 Census for Gonzalez Precinct, he had relocated his family to Florida. Farming was the occupation listed for Mr. Watson. His ancestors are buried in Conecuh County, AL while his descendants are in Escambia County, FL. This is the way of many more families, as we research the museums of stone throughout the southeast.