

Written In Stone

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Pleasant Grove AME Zion Cemetery ~ Part I

There have been times when I've written a history of a cemetery without having actually visited that cemetery. It's not often that it happens, however, it happens now and then. It could be because the cemetery no longer exists on the land due to graves being destroyed, relocated or plain inaccessible due to legal reasons. Sometimes I get calls about a cemetery from someone needing to document the age of it, and as it happens, this week, we're going to feature the Pleasant Grove AME Zion Church Cemetery in Township 7 North, Range 10 East, and Section 35 of Conecuh County, AL.

According to family researcher, Frances Dailey of Illinois, this cemetery is located on property belonging to Harl and Frances Crosby. For a black man of his time, he was one of the wealthiest land owners in Conecuh County, and left a legacy of hard work, family values, and spiritual wealth for their descendants. He and Frances Betts Crosby were born in slavery, working the fields with their white masters and their families, eventually becoming a sharecropper, and owning their own farm. Mr. and Mrs. Crosby raised six children. Of these six, there were three sons and three daughters. The daughters married into the Ingram and Lee families of Conecuh County, and the family tree is documented in the *Conecuh County Heritage Book* in the Evergreen-Conecuh County Public Library.

In trying to date the establishment of this historic cemetery, we had to locate the earliest recorded burial. According to family history, this cemetery was established when the eldest son of Harl and Frances Crosby died in Conecuh County. Previously this was believed to have been when Harl Crosby died, however, we have discovered that John Henry Crosby died 10 November 1897, predating his father's death by four years. This information was found in microfilmed death records available in the Heritage section of the library.

The Historical Atlas of Alabama, Cemeteries by Location, shows that there were approximately 160 graves in this cemetery in 1999; however there have been many more burials since that time. Common names found in this graveyard include the surnames of Booker, Boykin, Crosby, Ingram, Lee, Reynolds, and Salter, as well as others. For more information on the Crosby family, visit the Heritage Section of the Library Monday thru Friday, 9 AM to 5 PM.