

Written In Stone

By: Sherry Johnston

Evergreen Courant ~ 12 November 2009

Pleasant Grove AME Zion Cemetery ~ Part II

Researching cemetery and church histories involve lots of paperwork, field work, and telephone calls, emails, friendly conversations with so many different people in the communities in which they are located. Resources such as maps from the local communities are keys to the research involved. The one thing that depresses me when I am out researching these historical places is to find that the roads on which they are located on are no longer known or identified as what they were in the resource materials available to me. The new E 911 address changes affected everything, including the locations of the cemeteries. If your church or cemetery physical address has been changed in the past few years, I would urge you to submit those changes to our library for our record keeping.

Pleasant Grove AME Zion Church was established when Harl Crosby saw a need for a place of worship for the families who lived in the Callihan district of Conecuh County. At the time, the nearest church was the Old Western Baptist Church. The lot for the cemetery was donated by the Crosby family after the death of their son, and Mr. Crosby built a small grave house over his son's grave which stood for many years. According to the Crosby family, people would bury their loved ones in the woods near the church, or their homesteads, and finally, the land was secured as a graveyard and those in the community finally had a gathering place for their family members.

Members of the Thomas Wallace or T.W. Sumpter family can be found buried in this cemetery. Hannah and Tom Sumpter came from SC and raised a son, Tom Wallace or T.W. He married and had several children, many of whom can be found in the old cemetery. Many of them don't have birth or death dates on their gravestones, and we're looking for information about the Sumpter family to include in our cemetery files. A preliminary history has been started on each of the family surnames to be found in this cemetery as well as others, so if you have family history, we'd love for you to share with our archives department those in your own family research. Other surnames found here include Andrews, Averette, Armstrong, Betts, Booker, Boykin, Bradley, Carter, Chapman, Coker, Cook, Crosby, Cunningham, Dailey, Davidson, Fantroy, Fowler, Grimes, Gross, Hall, Hawthorne, Henry, Ingram, Kind, Lee, Lett, McCants, Mitchell, Rankin, Reynolds, Salter, Sanford, Thompson, Watts, and Wesley.