

Written In Stone

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Russell Cemetery ~ Part I

All I want for Christmas is the name of a cemetery in Conecuh County, AL. It's like every year when I would write my 'Dear Santa' letter, I'd start off with 'all I want for Christmas is..' and these days it sounds a lot differently because I am asking readers and historians to help me name cemeteries, of all things!

On a rainy, drizzling dreary Sunday afternoon last month, I ventured into the piney woods behind a fellow offering to show me an old family cemetery. I kept thinking I'd see a cottage nestled in a clearing, and Hansel and Gretel would come out—it was so deep into the forest that we went; fairy tales kept coming to mind, as we wandered deeper and deeper into the forested glen of long-leaf pines, briars, holly, sassafras, and scrub brush of every species! Except there never was any clearing to speak of, and it was hard going, as so much timber was still on the ground from general timber loss we could barely find our way because the old landmark signs were long ago destroyed. However, we did eventually discover parts of the old burial ground, and located a much rusted metal funeral home marker to identify the long ago burial of one gentleman by the name of Mark A. Lane. This gentleman died in 1933 and according to his obituary, he was buried at The Russell Cemetery near Georgiana, AL. His first wife and their son are buried alongside him, their slabs beneath years of decomposed matter. The only headstone still standing is that of a very young child, a daughter burned to death, born in 1888 and died in 1896. She was the young daughter of Susan (Jones) and John D. Wilson, of Mixons Beat in Conecuh County.

Isabella Lane was just a young wife and mother to a very young child when she died in 1891. Isabella was the daughter of David and Margaret Kendrick, of Mixons Beat; the granddaughter of Josiah and Jane Kendrick, who came to Alabama from GA & SC, one of several early settlers to the Fork of Sepulga area of Conecuh in the first stages of its' development. Isabella was born about 1867, married Mark A. Lane Nov. 23, 1886, gave birth to a son, named David Lane, on July 6, 1888, and she died 9 December 1891 in Mixon Beat, aged 24 years, 12 months and 24 days. Cause of death for Isabella is listed as pulmonary—influenza, perhaps? David Lane died March of 1905 and his cause of death was listed as heart disease. His place of burial is simply given as Sepulga, as was Isabella K. Lane's burial place. In the 1880 Conecuh Census, Isabella is at home with her parents, several siblings and a cousin named Isaac Russell. We know there were several Russell families living in this area of Conecuh, alongside the Butler County line. We want to know if there are Russells buried in this cemetery, and of others who are not listed as buried at Concord, Piggotte, or other cemeteries close by. This Russell Cemetery perhaps holds the remains of many of our earlier settlers to the Fork of Sepulga area.