

Written In Stone

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Bethel West Cemetery ~ Part II

Researching the Hanks family members buried at Bethel West, I came across Margaret A. Hanks, a widow in the 1900 census in Precinct # 1 of Mixons Beat, Conecuh County, with two daughters, Mary and Ollie. All are listed as having been born in MS; and living in MS after the war, several families of Hanks, Dean, and Stokes, many of these later or earlier found in Conecuh County, AL. Margaret was listed as having had 4 children, with only 3 living by the 1900 Conecuh Census. By the 1910 census, Mary had obviously married, living with her mother and sister, was a Mary Smith and two young children. Buried at the cemetery is a Mary E. Smith, born 17 Nov 1879 (MS) and died 27 Nov 1973 (AL). Beside her is a John H. Smith, born 23 Feb 1873 and died 3 May 1904. In Conecuh Marriages, Volume 1, Mary Hanks married John H. Smith on 25th Oct 1900. John died just four years later, and Mary became a young widow with two young children.

Studying John H. Smith; he is found in the 1900 census living with his mother, Margaret Blackman, step-father, Wesley Blackman; along with his grandmother, Catherine A. Smith. They lived close to the B. Seymour Lane family, who served as Enumerator for the 1900 Census that year, as well as the Morgan and Tisdale families that we also find living in the Fork of Sepulga and Mixons Beat communities of Conecuh County.

Another soldier found buried at Bethel West, and there are many more; was John H. Stokes, of Company G of the 36th Alabama Infantry. He was born about 1836 and in the 1880 census, can be found in Old Texas, Monroe County, AL He died about 1906 according to his tombstone. His wife, Elizabeth, A. Stokes was born May 4 1826 and died Jul 10 1903. They were possibly also in Vicksburg, MS after the war.

An unusual name for Conecuh was Leysath. There are two found at Bethel West, husband and wife. Walsh Leysath was born in 1858 and on the 1880 census in Starlington, of Butler County; he is with his mother, Elvira Leysath. She is listed as having been born in SC. Mrs. Leysath is listed as a widow in the 1880 census in Butler County; by 1900, Walsh shows up in Starlington with wife, Kate P. and five children. On the headstone of Walsh's wife, she is listed as being Kate Parker Leysath, born 23 Feb 1869 and died 26 Nov 1936 and they were married about 1886. Children of Walsh and Kate are listed as Pearl, Fannie Maud, Julian, Mabel, and Lois in the 1900 Census, and in the 1920 Census, only two are listed: Lois and Paula. On the 1860 Butler County Census, there is a J.M. Leysath, father, born 1829 in SC with three sons and wife, E. Leysath. By 1900, only William A. Leysath, single, is listed as living with his mother, Elvira, a widow, in Starlington, Butler County, AL

