

# Written In Stone

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*Evergreen Courant ~ 08 April 2010*

## Jerusalem Number 2 Baptist Church Cemetery ~ Part I

Jerusalem Number 2 Baptist Church Cemetery is located along the L & N Railroad on Willie Rogers Road, a grassy area separating the church and the railroad, with about 26 graves dotting the area. Of the 26 or so graves, there are numerous unmarked slabs denoting the burials of family and church members. According to the cornerstone of the white block church, it was rebuilt in 1960 when Rev. C.F. Sheppard was the pastor. Though the church is now concrete block, it would appear that it might have originally been of wood frame structure with a steeple still in place atop the roof. Beautiful stained glass windows shone in the late afternoon sun as a freight train rumbled past the afternoon I surveyed this cemetery.

Though the rows aren't evenly scaled, there seem to be 7 rows of graves; two of them are angled toward the road, instead of a straight row as the previous 5 rows. I found many members of the Rogers/Rodgers family buried here, as well as Briggs; Cunningham; Jacobs; Mason; and Watts buried at this cemetery. The earliest identified grave is that of Armstead Cunningham, who was born near Burnt Corn 13 October 1877 and died 19 February 1966. A footstone at his family burial plot along with his wife, and a daughter indicate that they were beloved parents and a beloved sister. The reverse side of the footstone gives one of my favorite Bible verses: 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 4:7—“I have **fought** a good fight, I have finished my course, and I have kept the faith”. How many times have I found this verse as an epitaph, praying that one day, it would also ring true for myself. Reading more about Armstead (Tom) Cunningham and his family, I found other similarities, especially with his wife, Odell Blackmon Cunningham, which in her obituary, it states that upon the death of her beloved ‘Tom’ she became a single mother, raising her children, and involved actively in her church and community. She was raised by her grandmother, one of 12 children, with a twin brother whom she loved dearly. She worked long, tedious hours at various jobs, to raise her children in a godly manner. She died the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2000 and was laid to rest beside her husband at Jerusalem Cemetery.

There are others buried here who deserve just as much recognition, and we'll feature them in next week's column. One of them is Deacon Willie D. Rogers, of "Willie Rogers' BBQ" fame, and his family members, along with many others who worshipped at Jerusalem No. 2 Baptist Church alongside the tracks.