

Written In Stone

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Revisiting Cemeteries

A good crowd attended the Headstone Dedication held this past Saturday, June 12th at Old Town Cemetery, honoring Private John Allen Murphy, born 16th Dec. 1847, a private in Companies "A" & "B" of the 6th Alabama Infantry. Pvt. John A. Murphy passed away on the 30th of Oct. 1904 and is buried at Old Town beside his wife, Mary Harper Murphy. Descendants of his were on hand to honor the life he led, the sacrifices he made, as a son, a father, husband, brother and most importantly, his role as a soldier in the Confederate States of America.

It was extremely hot out there on this day; however, not near as hot as it probably was for the re-enactors and color guard from the 38th Alabama Infantry; 6th Alabama Cavalry; 4th Alabama Cavalry and Turberville's Battery who were dressed in appropriate period attire much as Pvt. Murphy would have been dressed when he was captured and sentenced to Elmira Prison in New York, so far from his Alabama home.

Re-visiting the old McIntyre Family Cemetery on US 84 East, I was reminded of the last time I was there—a briskly cold day, in which we shivered and shook, stamping our feet and thinking about soldiers who had barely enough covering to survive in the cold places of war that they traveled to in order to give us freedoms we now celebrate so easily. We talked about the McIntyre's arrival in their new home of America and the challenges they must have faced, that we cannot even begin to comprehend. Great, great, great-grandchildren were present to see where their earlier ancestors lie in an old family graveyard on a road that once was the main thoroughfare for getting around. As we now today travel by air and fast four-to-eight lane traffic in our SUVs, our trucks and cars, how they might envy us our mode of travel while we might long for their unhurried journeys into a past that brings us to our present and our future.

I will be re-visiting Magnolia Cemetery this week, as I say good-bye to a long time family friend, Mr. Odeil Pugh. He was born in 1931 and served his country during the Korean Conflict, a veteran of the Army and something he took great pride in, as well as his family, church, community and friends. We sure had some good times, Mr. Odeil, and you will be sorely missed, my friend.

Talk to these veterans now, before they are long gone—for they have so many stories to share with you—insights into human nature, the world and just how to live the life we've been given. Life is precious.