

# Written In Stone

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## **Bull Hill Cemetery, Texas ~ Part III**

In looking at the official survey conducted of the Bull Hill Cemetery in Texas, the Historical Commission there had obviously surveyed it very efficiently, covering everything that looked even remotely like a marker of any kind, though no names were visible in most cases. There were several unmarked graves, indentations of older graves, funerary markers of every sort, and the newest graves of those interred there usually occurred sometime after the 1920's or so according to the records. The cemetery was closed during the 1960's, and the land where the cemetery was situated was owned by Wiley & Agnes Jones, parents of the present-day Churchill Jones. It was stated that Bull Hill ceased to be used because integration caused local African American residents to disassociate themselves from tradition associated with slavery past.

Eliza and Sam Sneed, and Pearl Paul, were the great-great-grandparents and great-grandmother of Sharon Styles, the person who started this inquiry some months ago. The death certificates for all three of her ancestors show that they are buried in Bull Hill Cemetery. The death certificate for Eliza Sneed shows that she was born in AL in 1846, and her parents were George and Harriet Jones, this being the same surname as Churchill Jones, and AL being the state from which he migrated with 60-odd slaves in 1852. This provides the evidence that both Harriet and George were enslaved by Churchill Jones in Conecuh County, AL and brought to TX to work on his plantation. About 1880, there were several different families, including the Jones, Sneed, Broadus, Paul, Stokes and Taylor families—most of them being either freed or descendants of freed slaves of the Jones and other nearby plantations—who formed a community called China Grove. These individuals erected a church that shared the name China Grove, and a school for the education of their children. Eventually, after the closure of Bull Hill Cemetery, the newer China Grove Cemetery became the final resting places of their descendants.

Saturday, July 10<sup>th</sup> at 10 AM, the remaining descendants of those interred in the old Bull Hill Cemetery, and those of Churchill Jones, will gather together in unity to celebrate the lives of their ancestors. They will unveil and dedicate the Bull Hill Cemetery and its' official Texas Historical Marker. Conecuh County has more ties to Texas through historical markers than perhaps any other state in the USA.