

Written In Stone

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Oak Grove Cemetery ~ Part II

In the past, Oak Grove Cemetery has also been known as the Maxwell Family Cemetery, so named for the Maxwell family who owned the land where the family burial grounds were located, having donated it for use by others in their community. Many of those lying buried here are indeed members from the various branches of the family tree.

Elder family members recall the cemetery as being larger, as many as 60+ graves, with many more oak trees, grave houses, and simple mounds of earth adorned with shells—indicative of possible Native American ancestry. At one time, a nearby trail led from the cemetery through the woods to various residences, to the old school, and adjacent communities.

Today, a lone oak tree stands as guardian to the nearly 30 or so graves, many unmarked, or simple indentations in the ground signifying a long-ago burial. The elders share their space with so many children, some of which died in influenza epidemics, measles, or whooping cough—long before there were inoculations available. There are veterans of almost every war buried here, as well as doctors and men of the cloth; the most recent burials having been in 2008; and the earliest known and marked burial in 1936.

The elder family members migrated from GA into AL, possibly to Wilcox Co. before coming down to Conecuh Co. In the 1850 & 1860 Slave Schedules in several counties in GA, we find possible matches to a couple of the elder Maxwell & Purifoy family members. The Purifoy/Peurifoy families appear in Oakland, Jasper Co., GA in those census years; some migrate to establish Oak Hill in Wilcox Co., AL shortly before or during the war; and then, the earliest we find the names is the 1866 Census for Conecuh County, in and around the community which becomes known as Oak Grove, Conecuh, AL. There are known to be families of these names in Wilcox Co. and many of those by this name are interred in the Oak Grove Cemetery along County Road 40 in Conecuh.