

Written In Stone

By Sherry Johnston

Evergreen Courant ~ 29 March 2007

Burt Robbins Cemetery

Most family cemeteries located in the rural, back woods of our county and state are located in close proximity to where the family home place was; many times, it's just in the back yard or across the pasture where they laid the loved ones to rest beneath the old oak tree. Today, we have cemeteries that lack the familiar old oak trees; boxwoods; stately cedar or evergreen trees that hold guard over our loved ones. When you go exploring in the woods for that old home place or family burial site, watch for the old crepe myrtles; evergreens; old, rambling roses; clumps of narcissus or daylily bulbs; privet thickets; tumbled down fencing; or stones covered in moss along a perimeter. You could be on 'sacred ground' without even being aware of it.

For many folks wanting to clean or restore a cemetery, they unknowingly want to 'clean it' of bushes, shrubbery, old fencing, or other elements that make the cemetery different; not realizing that by taking away these elements, they are destroying the unique, historical significance of the cemetery itself. If you're walking in the woods, looking for a cemetery site, watch out for the young cedar, crepe myrtle or other evergreens—they might be the sprouts of older shrubbery which once guarded the burial of your ancestors. The old oak tree might have fallen years ago, and the seedling is now smack dab in the middle of your ancestors' tomb!

This past weekend, I had the opportunity to look for, locate and explore the old Burt/Robbins Cemetery located in the SW section of the county. It's on private property, beneath a canopy of tall, swaying in the breeze, blooming pines. As we walked through the woods, the scent of the undergrowth of young saplings of sweet gum trees and yellow jasmine filled the air, making for a pleasant walk in the thick overlay of decayed leaves. Young cedars, which are possibly the seedlings of older cedar trees once planted to guard the old cemetery, mark the four corners of the old 30 x 80 cemetery site. There are possibly as many as 25 graves here; though there are only about 7 marked graves. Some wooden ones are still in place, marking the place of a loved one.

Cpl. William K. Burt, 23rd Al. Inf. C.S.A., is interred here along with his wife, Martha Jane; as well as Thomas A. Robbins, and several members of his family. A son: Thomas Elijah, born 1841 at Belleville, young soldier, fought in the Battle of Seven Pines, wounded and came back home, dying in his home county, is possibly laid to rest here. Others who are buried here connect with the families of Burt, Gully, McInnis, Mixon and Robbins of Conecuh & Monroe Counties.