

Cokes Chapel Cemetery 8/30/09 by Lib Bodd

Cokes Chapel Cemetery was started at some time after 1833. The first burials, listed in "Coweta County, Georgia Cemeteries" were Sarah Bailey, who died and buried in August, 1839, Captain George Smith, Oct., 1844, William and Marietta B. Peebles, who both died + buried July, 1853, through the years until the present, 2009.

It compliments the church with its history. "It contains the remains of blacks and whites, Yankees and Rebs, prominent families of Coweta County history and veterans from the War of 1812 through W.W. II." Quote from Newnan Times-Herald article 1974.

Grass was kept mowed by the men of the church. The center of the cemetery stands out because it has no Tombstones - no apparent graves. In the very back, there are unmarked graves. It has been told that these are graves of slaves and in the "empty" center there are unmarked graves, thought to be graves of Civil War soldiers, north and south.

In the first 100 years, anyone in the community could use this last resting place. In the 1950's, Edgar Smith made a map of the cemetery. Lots were drawn and church members chose their lots. Later, the Trustees voted to limit the cemetery to church members. If there is room in a family lot, non-members can use the space.

In the 1990's, a prayer gazebo was built on the back side of the cemetery. This project was led by Tony Beam and the Prayer Committee.

In 1997, a large wooded area was cleaned, enlarging the cemetery & the road was improved that winded around the church property.

In the summer of 2006, scientific tests were done on the cemetery and many unmarked graves were found and markers were placed over these spots.

In March, 2009, Eagle Scout, Sean McCully restored the section of cemetery where slaves were buried.

Buried at Cokes Chapel is Capt. George Smith, who was in War of 1812, also his son, Rev. George Edward Smith, local minister in ME Church South.

There is a Tombstone for William Thomas Overby, a young southern soldier who was captured in Virginia, hung and buried. His crime was refusing to "talk". There are 2 large stone boxes with no engraving on them. It is thought these were the graves of 2 Southern soldiers who died at the home of a Cokes Chapel member, where they had stopped, sick, on their way home to D.C. and the family buried them at Cokes Chapel.

by Lib Todd
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(as requested for the CC
Messenger)