

Woodlands Contain Silent Reminders of Yesteryear

By Faye Johnson

Scattered throughout Fairfield County are silent and often forgotten reminders of the people who lived and died here in earlier days. Some are family cemeteries, some are the burial plots of churches long since vanished. Many of these resting places are in hard-to-reach places, where one may reach them only on foot.

Located in the woods about a mile off Hwy. 200 approximately five miles from Winnsboro, is such a graveyard. There may at one time have been a church nearby; the variety of names seems to preclude this being a family cemetery.

The oldest tombstone still standing and legible bears a birthdate of 1797; one nearby marks the grave of David Weir, 1798-1854. There is also a grave for Eliza Weir, dated 1811.

Old gravestones often tell a story of family tragedy and suffering. Lined up beside the graves of Thomas Wade Rawls (1834-1900) and his wife, Nancy Gunning Rawls (1836-1905) are the graves of their children; John Smith Rawls, who died as an infant in 1860; Elizabeth Utah Rawls, who died at age two years, nine months and seven days on July 25, 1868; and Eliza Jane Rawls, who didn't

make it to her twentieth birthday. She was born February, 1862 and died January 18, 1882. There is a space between the graves of John Smith and Elizabeth Utah which could be the grave of still another child.

One son and two daughters were taken in their infancy from Hugh and Jane Mulvenna, and their tiny graves are placed near those of their parents. Dates on Hugh Mulvenna's grave are 11-29-1842 to 12-19-1891.

Located a few miles from this first woodland plot is another, this one the final resting place of members of the family of Rev. James Barber. There are only three tombstones standing, although there is a depression which could be another grave. All three stones are alike, with a Tree of Life engraved at the top.

Rev. James Barber died June 4, 1868, at the age of 96, which puts his birthdate in 1772, before the American Revolution! His wife, Jane, died in 1841, at the age of 61. Their son, (we presume) Robert J. Barber, was born January 1, 1815, and died October 14, 1866, at age 51.

One of our hunter friends says that several years ago the remains of a homestead could be seen not far from this small plot.

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Forgotten Tombstone

Only an occasional hunter or forester comes across the final resting place of the Rev. James Barber, who was born in the year 1772. Dennis Marthers recently led a trek to a couple of woodland burial plots in Fairfield. (Independent photo)