HORTON – JOINER CEMETERY, 87 - 1

Summary Report



Horton - Joiner Cemetery, Redstone Arsenal, Madison Co., AL, July, 2002. (Rene Seigh in background, right.)

(When this photo was made, there had apparently been a recent fire in the cemetery.)

This cemetery is located in the southwest corner of the southeastern quarter of Section 21, Township 5, Range 1 West. It is about one half mile south of Buxton Road, on the east shoulder of Pershing Road. The view in the photo above is looking west from within the cemetery. As can be seen in the

photo, there are few tombstones. In fact, only two were found. One is for Ophelia Horton, daughter of Sofie Horton:



Horton - Joiner Cemetery, Redstone Arsenal, Madison Co., AL, July, 2002.

Per the 1900 census, Ophelia ("Ophiela") was the daughter of Yancy & "Sopha" HORTON. She was also sister of Grover and Yancy Jr. She was born Feb. 1892 and died in 1902 (per tombstone age).

To find details of Ophelia and her mother, the 1900 Madison County census records were checked until she was uniquely identified.

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1900 Madison County, Alabama Federal Census, E.D. 107, Sheet 21, Whitesburg Precinct 6. OPHIELA HORTON, dau. of SOPHA & YANCY HORTON. Ophiela was born February 1892, died in 1902.

Since the 1900 census gives month and year of birth, it is known that Ophelia was born in February 1892. Since she died at 10 years of age (according to the tombstone inscription), she passed away in 1902, and the tombstone was erected 23 years later. Her marker showed that she was not forgotten over the years, but it is unusual that there are no markers for any of the rest of her family – not even for the person who erected the monument to Ophelia. It was probably Sophia that erected the monument, since it only mentions her and not the father, Yancy Horton. However, it could be that Yancy emplaced the monument on the occasion of his wife's passing, but then one would expect that he would have set up monuments for both of them. (However, one source has indicated that there was a Sophie Horton buried in the Sam Moore Cemetery, 46-1. This could be where Ophelia's mother rests, without a marker there, either.)

With these enigmas in mind, searches of other records and census years led to additional information about the family:

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1930 Madison County AL, E.D. 18, page 5B: Yancy Horton

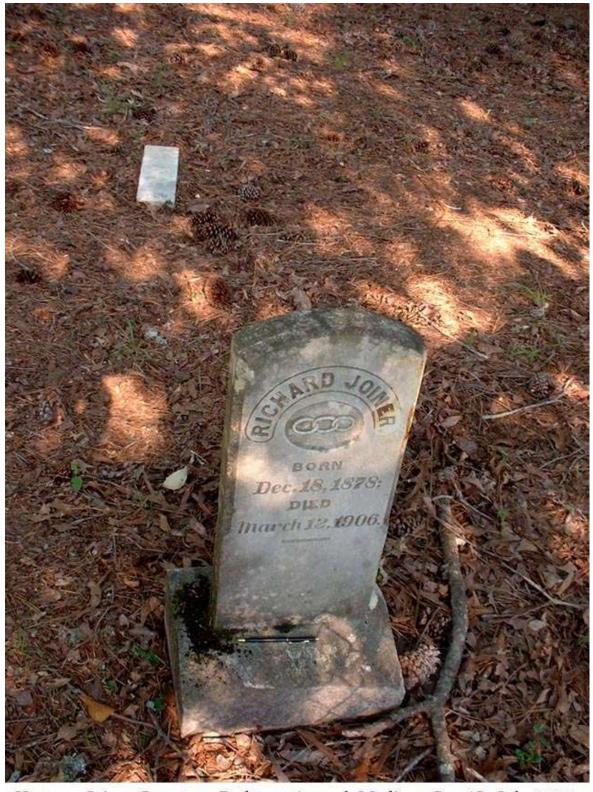
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This page of the 1930 census shows Yancy Horton at age 60, which was the same age listed for his wife Sofia. It shows also that he was 19 when he first married, while she was given as age 17 when she first married. However, the "19" is not clear for Yancy's marriage age. It may have been 17 like Sofia's age at marriage. Since they were both listed as age 60, it would indicate that they were both married first to one another, both at age 17, if the ages were correct. A comparison to the earlier census record of 1900 brings their respective ages into question, as that census showed that Yancy was born in August of 1861, while "Sopha" was born in "Jany" (January) of 1860. Accordingly, there was about 18 months difference in their ages. Since the 1900 census included the month of birth, it is considered to be more accurate on birthdates (including years) than the other censuses.

The aspect of the Horton marriage having been at the age of 17 for them would place it in about the year 1877, for a birth year of about 1860. However, the age of 60 in the 1930 census would mean a birth year of 1870, placing the marriage in the year 1887. A check of the on-line marriage index posted on the Madison County Records Center's web pages reveals only one Horton male who married a woman named "Sophie" or variant spellings thereof. That record was for W. L. Y. (for Yancy?) Horton, who married Sophy Wall per license issued 30 January 1883, according to Marriage Book Volume 12, page 500. Both were noted as "Colored" in the index, so this is very likely the true date of the marriage. Ages are often inaccurate in old census records, so the marriage date establishment from census data should be seen as only an approximation. The courthouse record should be accurate.

Another interesting item in the 1930 census page was that Maria Jacobs, listed as a sister-in-law of Yancy Horton Sr., was enumerated in the household. Her age was also given as 60, which would possibly make her a twin of Sophia, unless she was a sister-in-law by marriage to one of Yancy's brothers, rather than a sister of his wife. Also in the 1930 record, Yancy Horton Jr. was living next door. He is the son that appeared in the 1900 Horton household. Yancy Jr. likewise has a son named Yancy in his household, so the family apparently perpetuated the use of the name for generations.

The other tombstone in the cemetery is for Richard Joiner, a man who died young:



Horton - Joiner Cemetery, Redstone Arsenal, Madison Co., AL, July, 2002.

Per the 1900 census, Richard was born Dec. 1879, the son of Felix & Millie JOINER.

He was also the brother of "Nathanuel" and Lavert (or Savert?) JOINER. He died at age 26.



Horton - Joiner Cemetery, Redstone Arsenal, Madison Co., AL, July, 2002. (Footstone for Richard Joiner, whose headstone backside is in background.)

A check of the marriage record index as posted on the web pages of the Madison County Records Center shows no listing for Richard Joiner to have ever married. In fact, the census of 1900 shows that he was still living with his parents as a single man at age 20, born in December of 1879:

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Of course, as is not uncommon, there is a discrepancy in that the tombstone for Richard Joiner shows that he was born in December of 1878, not 1879 as the 1900 census stated. In any event, he died "before his time". His family was also shown in the 1880 census:

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In 1880 Richard was listed as age 4, meaning a birth year of 1876, so the discrepancies continue. At least, it is apparent that he must have been the firstborn child of his parents, Felix and Millie. The Madison County Records Center's web pages show that Felix Joiner ("Colored") took out a marriage license to wed Milly **Graham** ("Colored") on 17 December 1873, per Marriage Book Volume 7, page 104. Accordingly, before the Civil War and emancipation, Milly may have been one of the slaves of the James Graham family associated with the nearby Dickson - Rankin Cemetery (87-2), for which a separate Summary Report has been prepared.

Beverly Curry of the Army's Environmental Management offices interviewed several members of black families who lived in the Pond Beat area, which is where the Horton – Joiner Cemetery is located. (The neighbors in the census records already shown indicate some of the families who may well also be buried in the cemetery, without markers.) Her notes provide some insights into the lives of Ophelia and Richard and the neighboring families. The content below is from an e-mail sent by Beverly to John Rankin on October 27, 2004:

The Silver Hill school in Mullen Flat was built as a church but also used as a school. Cedar Grove Mountain had a church. Made of logs. Then they built a new church--Cedar Grove Church in Pond Beat. The old Cedar Grove Church was near the Community Cemetery in Pond Beat (Joiner-Horton Cemetery). It was called the Community Cemetery because it wasn't necessary to go to that church to be buried there. Info from: Pearl Higgenbotham, born Feb. 13 1919. Pearl's parents were Yancy (Savoy) Horton, Jr. and Pearl Cowan Horton. Yancy Sr. was born in 1861 and his wife was Sophy Everette,born in 1860. Jack Sr.'s father was Jack Horton, a "slave master." Amanda Jacobs came here at the end of Emancipation. She says she came from NC. She joined up with Jack Horton who was white and he left her 40 acres when he died. To Jack and Amanda were born two boys and a girl: Yancy, Sr, Everette, and Celia. Celia married Dorvis Love. From my interview notes, Feb. 2001

Another way to understand the lives of Richard Joiner and Ophelia Horton is to review the material that has already been published or archived. The article below from the *Redstone Rocket* newspaper provides some explanations of the community locations and the interwoven families:

Mullins Flat, Pond Beat were unique communities

BY ED PETERS

The locale today is world famous, owing to missile and space activities.

It was not always thus. Before the Army came, the Redstone Arsenal area contained the farm communities of Mullins Flat and Pond Beat.

The homely names fit the circumstances of these places. There was no electricity, no plumbing and no telephones. Sharecroppers worked on thirds and fourths. Roads were so rough that "it took four mules to pull an empty wagon," remembers Earl P. Lacy, 79, a former resident.

But the locale in its own way was as unique then as a farming area as it is today as a center of high technology and high achievement. When the Army bought the land in 1941, much of it was in the hands of people who had been born to slave women or were only a generation or two removed from those who had been. They farmed their own land, owned their own stores, shops, mills and gins and put up their own money so so they could have schools for their children.

The holdings of some of the Mullins Flat and Pond Beat families, notably the Jacobs and Hortons, were extensive, amounting to hundreds and even thousands

On Saturday, July 4, there was a reunion here of the the Jacobs and Hortons, along with the Lacys, Joiners, Burns and others whose roots go back to families in the Mullins Flat and Pond Beat communities - families that accompanied white settlers into the area and worked the land first as slaves who could legally own nothing and then as free people who worked hard and prospered on farms of their very

Before Redstone Arsenal was established, the nearly-40,000 acres that it now covers encompassed two communities that were separated by Huntsville Spring Branch, which flows east-to-west across the arsenal. Mullins Flat was to the north and Pond Beat extended southward to the Tennessee River.

Virtually all was creek- and river-bottom land that

was fertile and productive.

Some of the larger farms had many tenant sharecroppers who gave one-third of their corn and hay crops and and one-fourth of the cotton harvest to the land owner as rent.

While the rural poverty that pervaded the Tennessee Valley was here also, relatives, neighbors and churches helped the poor get along.

The folks who lived in Mullins Flat and Pond Beat

are getting old. They and their children and grandchildren are intensely interested in assembling and preserving a record of the unique communities to remind people that there is a rich history here that has nothing to do with missiles and space.

The old-line families are compiling genealogies and histories and sorting out the complex lines of cousins and double cousins that developed over the years in the close-knit Mullins Flat and Pond Beat communities.

Their Fourth of July reunion was the first time all of the families had assembled together in the nearly half--century since their communities broke up. More than 500 people attended from all parts of the United States. Some hadn't seen each other in 30 years or longer.

On Saturday, they came to Redstone Arsenal to eat a barbecue lunch and visit and photograph their old home places and the cemeteries where their ancestors are buried. Saturday night there was a dance at a local motel and a buffet dinner "that was supposed to have been a sit-down banquet but so many people came we had to change plans and have a buffet," Geraldine Horton Taylor, one of the reunion's principal organizers, said with a laugh.

She said the Horton family had a reunion in 1979 and in the course of researching the family history, lines of kinship to the Jacobs, Burns, Joiners, Lacys and others were traced and the families decided this year to all have a reunion together. "If you start with Jacobs, you will pull in all these families," she noted.

She said the family lineages have been treated as somewhat of an embarassment over the years but that her father, Ovoy Horton, urged his children to take pride in theirs and learn all they could about it.

"Daddy talked about it all the time and wanted us to know about our relatives and how we came about," the daughter related. "Some said to leave it alone and keep it quiet but he always wanted us to talk about it."

The Horton lineage, she said, has been traced back to Amanda Jacobs Horton, servant of Jack Horton, whose name she took and by whom she had three children: Everett T., Yancy, and Celia, who received parcels of their father's land and later figured prominently in the affairs of the Mullins Flat and Pond Beat communities.

"When you think in terms of these black families and you go back and look, that's the kind of thing you're going to find," she remarked.

In another e-mail written September 25, 2002, Beverly Curry informed John Rankin of more details from her interviews:

Ovoy Horton was mentioned a rocket article. I have interviewed his wife. He worked for Kershaw and Butler, the construction contractor who built the first buildings here for the Army and continued to work for the arsenal. His wife has a photo of him at a test stand. Ovoy was the son of James Horton, Grandson of Everett Horton, and Great Grandson of Jack Horton. His Grandfather 's brother, Yancy Horton, was the one who donated the land for the black school in Pond Beat (on Buxton Road). The school, Horton School, was a "Rosenwald school". Julius Rosenwald, once a president of Sears & Roebuck, was a rich philanthropist. He wanted to help rural blacks to get an education, but to help them in a manner that required community commitment and involvement. So he devised a plan to match his contribution to what the community raised. Donating the land counted in the match. I scanned a photo of the groundbreaking for Horton School. According to interview info from another Horton family source (Pearl Higgenbotham), Yancy (born 1845) gave "the first acre of land" to build the school. Yancy and also his father were called "Savoy".

CEMETERY: Pearl H. recorded in her small notebook that the following names under the heading of Horton's Cemetery:

Deceased daughter of Ophelia Horton, died age 11, 1925.

Madkin Mts. in Silver Hill, Sam Moore Cenetery:

- 1. Maria Russel Ernest
- 2. Sophia Horton
- 3. Maria Jacobs

Langford Horton--age 9 mo (note: on the small note book, to the far right, across from this line and the one above is a note saying Berton {Buxton?) Rd Cemetery, Pond Beat)

Jacobs

Joiner

David Bailey Sr--neighbor, last buried

King

Bell

Pecola (writing uncertain) Turner

Fannie Robinson

Boby Boy Roh...

Otto Turner

John Crimes

Pearl said "our cemetery was mostly on Frank Jacobs side, but it was at the end of that road by the school. The road that divided the land went down to the school, and was off the only main road that went through Pond Beat that took you

all the way to Whitesburg Drive. NOTE: Today, part of this route is along Buxton Road, but then the road was changed. This is evidenced in looking at the 1928 road map versus the arsenal map today.

SILVER HILLS--Pearl said there was a church and a school over in Mullins Flat. Was an original church (called Cedar Grove Church) on the mountain, then they built a church in Pond Beat and called it Cedar Grove Church. The original church was near a community cemetery--now called the Horton/Joiner. Nothing but trees and rocks where the church was today. (This is straight from my notes--I don't know if this connected to Silver Hill--or whether she skipped back to talking about Pond Beat again, which is what it seems like.)

Cowan Cemetery- "that cemetery was in a different community--but it was on Papa's (Andy Cowan's) land."

Pearl's mother had two siblings: Joseph and Oscar Cowan. Others had died before that.

JACK HORTON: Pearl's great grandfather was a white slave owner. Amanda Jacobs was a slave that came to his farm after the Emancipation Proclamation. Amanda and Jack had three children together, one being Yancy Horton Sr. (Pearl's grandfather) and another boy, and a girl named Celia. After Jack Horton died, he left Amanda Jacobs 40 acres, and then she married a guy named Sheffield. Amanda Jacobs was not from Pond Beat, but Pearl doesn't know where he was from.

PEARL's mother said Pearl's birthday was Feb. 18, 1919, but SS Office said had to be Jan. 18, 1919.

I HAVE THE HORTON FAMILY TREE.

Also in interviewing Pearl H. I learned that in 1928 the Cedar Grove Methodist church was moved from a mountain which was known as Cedar Grove Mountain to that area in Pond Beat--became one of the nicest in Pond Beat.

From an e-mail sent by Beverly to John Rankin on September 26, 2002:

From an interview with L.W., granddaughter of William Timmons (she is now deceased): Williams Timmons had a white wife named Annie Latham. However, LW's also had a relationship with a slave named (sounded like Lu-iza, Louise-a). They had a son named Alex Joiner. Alex Joiner married Pearlie Jacobs. "Pearlie wasn't white, but was set aside as a free nation." (Indian?) The colored cemetery was down towards Leeman's ferry, in the pine. There was one little stone in the colored cemetery--that of Claudie Joiner. He was a World War I veteran. [Claudie's siblings were Bessie, Percy, Louise, Nina, and Gussie.] The last ones buried in

the colored cemetery were Jim Turner, Aaron Tate and Joe Walker. Also LW's mother. LW was two years old when her mother died, so that means her mother was buried there about a hundred years ago, Since LW was 99 when I interviewed her over two years ago. Timmons (colored cemetery) was "higher up" (from the river) than the Jacobs cemetery.

After WWI, Claudie and Percy Joiner bought some Timmons land, near the big house. Lonnie Wilson owned the Timmons house when Lizzie left the arsenal. He came from across the river on the other side from Leeman's ferry. Hardin School was the schoolhouse for that locality.

There is much additional data of the Horton and Joiner families and their neighbors on the CD-ROM provided to the Army offices for this cemetery. To illustrate some of the more unusual types of information collected in that file, consider the tax list records below, which show particular details of exactly where the people lived and about their possessions:

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HORTON land holdings per 1922 Madison County AL Tax List, Huntsville Beat 1.

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Of course, there are many more records still uncollected at the courthouse and Records Center archives, such as tax lists for additional years (going back to 1856) and various court records. For now, the data presented above indicates several more burials that were known in the Horton – Joiner Cemetery than those indicated solely by tombstones. The Horton portion of the namesake of the cemetery goes back to some of the early settlers of Madison County, as shown in the census record below:

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1830 Madison County, Alabama, page 123: Carlen / Carten Lewis & Richard Horton families.

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1830 Madison County, Alabama, page 145: James Lewis, Mary L. Lanier, William Watkins, John Horton, John Matthews, Judith Matthews, Harris Toney, William J. Adair.

John Horton was among the many pioneers of arsenal lands, and his slaves eventually took the surname, remaining to farm the land as either paid employees or as sharecroppers after emancipation until they became landowners themselves. Today many public records still exist to tell the story of this group of hardy souls that kept the arsenal lands productive and built several communities before our government required their land for national purposes. As with all such research, much more remains to be learned, but already much is known about these early families, some of whom rest peacefully beneath the soil in the Horton – Joiner Cemetery.

By John P. Rankin, August 23, 2005