



The cover over the burial of John Timmons. Photograph by John P. Rankin, December 2002.

The Cemetery Where Claudie Joiner is Buried

Walter said his father, Claudie Joiner, a World War I veteran, is buried in a cemetery south of the plantation, down toward the river. Walter described walking south down a dirt road to get to the cemetery. A row of “shanty houses was along the road, along the east side of the hill,” and “whoever had the place” had built a long building with several doors for storing cotton. The shanty houses were the old slave quarters. Tenant farmers lived in them.” Walter said: “The land was all swampy. Every year it would be flooded. Sometimes you couldn’t get a wagon in the road.” Walter said the last ones buried there were Jim Turner, Aaron Tate, and Joe Walker.

Walter said the old cemetery that they went to used to belong to the plantation. It was in the middle of a field, about a half-acre that “they plowed right up to.” He didn’t know a name for the cemetery. He couldn’t recall it being called a name. It was not associated with any church. He knew it was a community cemetery “used during slave times.” [Lizzie Ward (born in 1900) called it the “Timmons Cemetery,” saying her mother Pearl Jacobs was buried there. Lizzie was Walter Joiner’s aunt.]

Burial in the cemetery continued after the end of slavery. Walter said that most of the people buried there would belong to the Timmons or Joiner family. This would be consistent with the finding that many emancipated slaves continued to live in the vicinity of the plantations.