

The Woodward Family was Present in Madison County in Early Times

The Woodward family was present in Madison County in early times. There was a notice in an early Alabama newspaper that Charles C. Woodward was postmaster of "Woodwardville" in Madison County in 1842, and both the 1850 and the 1860 census records for Madison County show Eli and Hannah Woodward in the same household. Eli was shown as age 50, born in Tennessee, in the 1850 record, while Hannah was shown as age 74, born in North Carolina. The 1860 census showed Eli as age 60, born in Tennessee, and Hannah was listed as age 87, born in South Carolina around 1773.

Eli and Hannah were among the pioneers of the area, with Hannah most likely being the mother of Eli. Moreover, according to their ages, Eli could have been a brother of the 1842 postmaster Charles C. Woodward and of John S. Woodward. John S. Woodward, born in Tennessee in 1813, appears in the 1850 census as the father of a family that included John W. Woodward (born 1853) by the 1860 census, after John S. Woodward had died. John W. Woodward lived on the pre-arsenal lands and eventually owned the area where the family cemetery is located.

However, the only Madison County government land patents in the Woodward name were taken by Eli and by Wilson Woodward. The private land transaction deed and mortgage index by G. W. Jones Inc. shows no Woodward land acquisitions in the area where the cemetery is located on Redstone Arsenal until 1905.

The fact that the Woodward family was burying members in the cemetery on what is now RSA many years prior to 1905 suggests they lived there before they owned the land. They may have been sharecroppers, farming the land for others until they could afford to purchase it. The census records show their presence in the area among known landowners in that section, township, and range in 1860, when Susan Woodward appeared as head of a household with children. Susan's children who controlled the land and are known to have lived in the area afterward were Charles C., John W., and Clinton C. Woodward. Their neighbors in the 1860 census included Nancy T. Graham, Margaret L. Fynch/Finch and plantation owner William H. Timmons.

The 1850 census of Madison County also shows a Woodward family in the area. The family was headed by John S. Woodward, shown with wife Susanah (Susan). Marriage records of Madison County show John S. Woodward married Susan Bell in June of 1840. This indicates he left Tennessee, the state of his birth and moved to Alabama by 1840.

In the 1880 census, Susan is listed as head of household again, with sons Clinton, John, and Charles shown at ages that match the 20 years from the 1860 record. Yancy Horton is living nearby; the census sheet shows that it was for Township 5, Range 1W, which is the general location of the Woodward Cemetery. The census records were inconclusive for exploring Susan's Bell family origin. However, her sons Clinton and John Woodward both married Bell girls, and there were only a couple of possibilities for the right Bells in the 1880 census records. Her son Charles C. Woodward on 1/11/1882 married Bettie Butcher, a cousin of a neighbor in the 1870 census.