

Other owners of record for the land around the cemetery to the time of the Civil War included William Weeden (of Huntsville's Weeden House fame), John and William Read (partners in business with James Clemens, the Founder of the nearby town of Madison, plus father of U. S. Senator Jeremiah Clemens), and the relatively unknown Phillips, Meade, and Tillinghast families.

If the little cemetery is a slave cemetery, then slaves owned by any or all of these men could have been buried there through time. Another theory is that the larger cemetery to the northeast (on the grounds of the U. S. Space & Rocket Center) could be the slave cemetery, and this smaller one could well have been used by some of the pre-Civil War property owners. If they were abusive slave holders, then after emancipation and subsequent black ownership of the land, the former slaves could have destroyed all reminders of their owners by removing or shattering any tombstones for them.

Of course, it is not at all known that such an event ever occurred, but it is theoretically plausible. For example, it is known that according to wording in Madison County Deed Book R, page 12, John Withers had a family cemetery in Section 12 of T4-R2W, just about a mile and a half west of this cemetery. Today no signs of such a cemetery have been found on old maps or by observation when touring the land. All indications of the family cemetery for this very prominent pre-Civil War landowner of the area and father-in-law of the 8<sup>th</sup> Governor of Alabama are gone. It would not be at all reasonable that the wealthy and influential Withers family never erected any monuments to John Withers. However, it would make sense if such monuments were deliberately removed or destroyed well after the Civil War, when former slaves acquired control of the property.

That is the way the story of the Ward Mountain Cemetery ends today – with only conjecture. Nothing definitive is found in the old deed records to prove the origins of the cemetery or its subsequent usage. However, it is definitely known that the land was owned at various times by many who were historically quite prominent in the area and even in national politics.