

One other interesting aspect of the investigation into the history of Eldred Rawlins in Madison County is that he was the defendant in numerous lawsuits – mostly filed over debts that Eldred failed to pay on time. Whether the suits were indeed filed against the same man who was married for a time into the Lanier family or perhaps against a son by an earlier marriage is not yet known. Certainly the nature of the character of the early landowner, bank cashier, friend of William D. Lanier, witness to many deeds, and husband of Ann Lanier Rawlins would not be in keeping with that of a “ne’er-do-well” who reneged upon his debts over a considerable period of time. Still, the census records consistently show only one Eldred Rawlins / Rawlings / Raulins / Rollins / etc. that could fit for Ann Lanier’s husband. Furthermore, some of the Circuit Court records of these lawsuits show that William D. Lanier was in partnership with the Eldred Rawlins who was the defendant, so it is almost certainly the same person who married Mary Ann Lanier (1803 – 1823).

Since Eldred Rawlins moved away from Madison County and died out of the state of Alabama, it is considered very unlikely that he would have been buried in the Rawlins – Lanier Cemetery on the arsenal. This is especially so, since the parcel of land that contains the cemetery was sold by Mary J. Dickson Lanier in 1832 to William Brandon, and since Eldred didn’t die until around 1856, per the Limestone County probate court records.

As a final note, the other known grave (per Dorothy Scott Johnson’s recording of observations of Mr. Bob Drake in 1969 of an old tombstone) in the Rawlings – Lanier Cemetery is for a child, William Dickson Lanier. Mr. Drake’s input said that the inscription on the old stone showed a birth date in July of 1830 and a death date in the same decade. The epitaph is obviously that for a deceased child. Of all the Lanier families living in the area, only that of William Dickson Lanier fits the profile for having a child of that age who died in that period. This child would have been William Dickson Lanier, Jr. He was not mentioned in the Last Will and Testament of his father, dated December 7, 1837, and recorded in Probate Record Book 8, pages 207-8, since he had already passed away when the will was written.

William Dickson Lanier (Sr.) was the first child of Isaac Lanier (1767 – 1827) by his second wife, Mary J. Dickson. William D. Lanier was born in 1798, and he married Lucy Ann Caldwell in Madison County on February 24, 1829. When William Sr. made out his will at the age of 39, apparently