

In the 1850 census Houston & Charity (Cooper) Lee had 25 slaves, while James W. Fennell was not found with any slaves, but his close relative Isham J. Fennell of the same part of the county had 64 slaves. The 1860 census showed Isham J. Fennell with 74 slaves, some whom may have been occasionally loaned out to work James Fennell's land, and may have been buried with their kinfolk in the "Simpson Slave" Cemetery.

From these records, it would seem that if this is a slave cemetery, then the Clopton slaves may have been the first to be buried there. However, there were few Clopton slaves, compared to the size of this cemetery. The Fennells had the most slaves, but they also had many more parcels of land, so it would be unrealistic to expect that all of their slaves were buried here. The Cooper family lived closest to the Simpson Slave Cemetery, and they had at least 25 slaves, so it is likely that the majority of slaves buried here would have been Cooper slaves, concerning the burials before the Civil War ended. None of these families (not even combined) had enough slaves to fill the cemetery, even through the entire period of 1809 – 1865.

After the Civil War was concluded and the slaves emancipated, the white George Scruggs family from Triana, living among many black families, came into ownership of much of the land around the cemetery by the 1883 – 1902 period. However, even if the cemetery had been included in their holdings of the area, it would still be quite probable that they would have allowed continued burials of black families whose ancestors were in the cemetery.

The only basis for assuming that the cemetery is actually a slave cemetery is the total lack of tombstones. While that is a pretty good basis, it must be remembered that many known tombstones have disappeared from cemeteries on the arsenal lands over the years. Accordingly, it is possible that there may have been tombstones here at some time in the past. However, since none are evident today, all that can be done is to assume that the cemetery was instituted for slaves and contains only black family burials. If that is the case, it still may be more appropriate to call it the **Cooper Slave Cemetery**, since it is so close to the Cooper – Penland Cemetery (80-1), and since the Cooper family owned the most slaves known to be in that immediate area prior to the Civil War. **There remains no evidence that the Simpson family owned the land around the cemetery during the time when they owned slaves in the county.** The only theory developed for "Simpson" to be included in the name of the cemetery is that often people