

free), it indicates that “white” is understood in this census.

The former slave who bore two children to white William Timmons and then married a Joiner (per Beverly’s notes above) was named Louisa. She is almost certainly the Louisa Joiner shown in the 1870 census (see page 11 of this Summary Report) as the wife of William Joiner, one of the three co-owners of the land of the Lynch Cemetery. Her relationship with white landowner William H. Timmons may well have led to the sale of the land to the black families, perhaps in order to help provide for his two children by her. “Pearlie” Jacobs Ward may very well have been one of the two women shown in the 1880 census as wives of an Alex Joiner (see pages 27 and 28 of this Summary Report). One was named “Prudie” (close to “Pearlie”?), and the other was named “Trudie”. If the correct one was Prudie, her children were listed as Bettie, Mary, and Elen. The names could be a match with the notes of Beverly Curry, if Bettie is “Bessie”, Mary is perhaps Mary Louise, and Elen is perhaps Nina Ellen Joiner. Of course, that would also require that Percy, Claudie, and Gussie were either born earlier and not part of the 1870 household, or that they were born later. However, the family of William Joiner is not found in the 1880 census listing, so the connection remains speculative.

On the whole, the story behind the Lynch Cemetery, with respect to the Joiners and the Timmons families seems to point to a period of transition in the old South. The underlying land transactions came at a time when the white plantation owners were learning to “get a life” without the unpaid support of slaves. Likewise, the former slaves were having to do many things in order to sustain themselves and to maintain family groups. Just as prior to the Civil War some white men fathered children with their slaves (giving rise to the Mulattos in the old South), immediately after the Civil War, it was probably still necessary for some former slaves to continue such relationships in order to have adequate food and housing. It is sometimes difficult for us today to understand the rationalizations for life of those times, but only through attempts to comprehend the lives of the past can we begin to grasp the history of our pioneers in the area. The mystery of the Lynch Cemetery and its name origins can help to focus attention on some of the details that will help to build our understanding.

Prepared by John P. Rankin, August 30, 2005