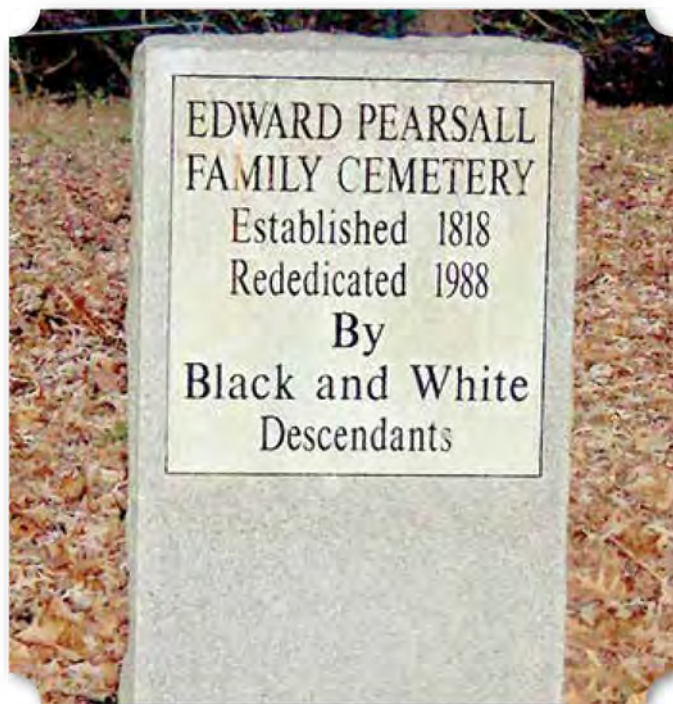


Pearsall Cemetery

The Pearsall Cemetery contains the graves of black and white descendants of Edward Pearsall (1785-1853). Pearsall, originally from North Carolina, came to North Alabama by 1840 when he and his household of nine others were recorded on the census for Franklin County. That year Pearsall owned 47 slaves. By 1850, Pearsall owned a total of 62 slaves. After Edward Pearsall passed away in 1853, his estate appears to have been divided among his family. The 1860 slave schedule records his wife, P. (Parthenia), with 16 slaves; his son, N. G. (Nathan Gregg) with 5 slaves; and daughter, Mary A., with 12 slaves. Whether the Pearsall descendants of color are biologically related to Edward Pearsall is not clear.

While the cemetery was established by at least 1842 with the burial of Sarah Pearsall Gregg (1795-1842), Edward's sister, the large cemetery most likely has many unmarked graves. According to a sign posted

(Below) Monument Placed at the Edward Pearsall Family Cemetery (Findagrave.com via User Kemu, 2009)



outside the cemetery, the Pearsall Cemetery was active until 1900 before the grounds went unused for several decades. In 1988, the cemetery was rededicated and interments resumed. The majority of the more recent interments are from the African American community.

While few of the burials are properly recorded, one descendant, Sam Pearsall (1891-1968), grew up on a farm in Sheffield that his father and mother, Sampson and Henrietta Fitzgerald Pearsall operated, in 1920. By 1930, Sam and his wife, Ophelia, owned a farm in the Muscle Shoals area. Other surnames included at this cemetery include Burns, Burt, Hale, Horrison, and Mayes.

The Pearsall Cemetery is located on the west side of Ford Road north of 2nd Street in northeast Muscle Shoals in an area called Listerhill. The 1936 USGS/TVA topographic map is the earliest map to record the Pearsall Cemetery as a small plot. The 1953 USGS topographic map is the first to label "Pearsall Cem."

Preuit Oaks Plantation

The Preuit Oaks Plantation is located to the southeast of Leighton on the east side of County Line Road in what used to be Lawrence County. This area, known as the "Town Creek Triangle," was prized for its levelness making it prime cropland. The land of Preuit Oaks was originally owned by Aldridge Myatt, whose daughter, Mary Curtis Myatt married a wealthy planter in 1833 named Dr. John S. Napier (1817-1889). The Napiers most likely built the 1847 plantation house which was purchased in the 1850s by William Richard Preuit (1808-1882) of North Carolina.

William Preuit is difficult to locate on the federal census, possibly due to the various spellings of Preuit. According to the National Register nomination, Preuit's real estate was valued at over \$15,000 in 1850. A decade later, Preuit Oaks produced 600 bales of cotton on 1,500 acres with 66 slaves. By the time

Preuit passed away in 1882, his estate was pared down to 400 acres, which he passed on to his son, P. Pryor Preuit.

The plantation was included in the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage in 1978 and in the National Register for Historic Places (NRHP) in 1986. The NRHP nomination describes how the significance of Preuit Oaks is centered on the completeness of the plantation complex, which demonstrated the self-sufficiency of an isolated plantation. In 1986, the plantation house, ten supporting wooden structures, a family cemetery, and a slave cemetery survived. The outbuildings included a circa 1850 slave house and a cook's house, which was most likely used by a slave or former slave. The slave cemetery was not mentioned in the Alabama Register nomination form.

Many of the outbuildings are no longer present at Preuit Oaks. The slave cabin was demolished sometime in the early 2000s. Although the family

cemetery is marked on topographic maps, recorded on Findagrave.com, and easily identifiable from aerial images, the slave cemetery is the only cemetery recorded in the National Register nomination. The slave cemetery is briefly mentioned in the text and included on the sketch drawing, however, there were no photographs of the slave cemetery. It is not noticeable on aerial views, although it may be located within the wooded areas.

The main house, some of the outbuildings, and sense of the changing landscape can be gleaned from the topographical maps. Preuit Oaks is depicted on the 1924, 1936, 1952, and 1971 USGS/TVA maps. The plantation is located in close proximity of Mount New Home Church, cemetery, and a former school for the African American community.

(Below) The Kitchen at Preuit Oaks Plantation, 1986 (National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form)

