

### 11. *Kirkland Children (No dates)*

This is a Kirkland family plot with a small marker on one grave that indicates seven children in the grave. All the children's names are on one marker with no dates and no indication as to what took these children. Matilda, Lloyd, Aaron, Zachariah Taylor, Curtis Robert, Mary Lucy, and Infant William Charles all sleep together with their history of birth and death resting with them. This is the only marker found in the cemetery that contained several remains.

### 12. *Clendinen Family Plot*

One of the founding families of Abbeville. James Augustus Clendinen (1825 - 1890) came to Alabama to make a new home for himself and his mother around 1845. He made his way to Abbeville and began a law practice. He married Miss Rosa Jane White and their first home was built on a large plat granted to James by President Franklin Pierce sometime during his term of office, 1852-1856. The family prospered and the first home was built. It later burned in 1881 but another was built in the same location and still stands today. Before the first shot was fired at Fort Sumter, James, thirty-five years of age, received his commission from the governor. He was eventually made superintendent of the Southeast Alabama Salt Company. After the close of the war, Lt. Clendinen again took up his profession of law. His practice was one of the most successful in the state. He championed the troubles of poor women after the war especially those who had lost husbands and were left with little children on small farms. Naturally, they were confused about paying taxes, debts, and other similar problems. Greedy "land-grabbers" from the North tried to take their land. Barrister Clendinen let it be known that any woman in trouble could come to their house and find a night's lodging with his family, and help at his office. He usually won their cases. The family grew and increased to ten children. Every one of them lived, which was an almost unheard of thing in those days. There was three boys, Benjamin, James and Thomas plus seven girls; Rosa, Mary Eleanor (Pet), Reba, Lawler, Pauline, Marion and Carrie. Many of the townspeople remember the Clendinen family well. Many of the family members were outstanding in their chosen professions. The four unmarried sisters were especially well-known and loved by the people in this area. They were devoted to the church and to other civic activities. Longevity seemed to be common for this family. Miss Rosa, the oldest sister, lived to be ninety-seven and Miss Reba to be one hundred and one. The magnolia tree still remaining in front of the family home was planted by Miss Reba when she was a young girl. James, the fifth child, and his wife are also buried along with his parents, sisters, and one of his other brothers, Thomas in the family plot. There are several infants also buried. Mrs. Rebecca R. Clendinen, James' mother who accompanied him to Alabama around 1845, died in 1855 in Abbeville. Her grave has never been located, but is assumed to have been on the grounds of the homesite in Abbeville. If you look southeast, past the school yard and over the tops of the covered walkways, you will see the back of the home on top of the small rise behind the school yard.

### 13. *Skipper Family Plot*

This plot is one of several in the old cemetery surrounded by a wrought iron fence. This was a method of setting boundaries for the burial of family members and is unusual because of the number

of children in this family buried here; very small children. They are the children of W.J.G. Skipper and his wife Martha Wood Skipper. There was one adopted daughter, Cora, who married W.B Parker. If you notice in this old cemetery, children are many of the interred and many are very young children. Times were hard, illness prevailed and there were no antibiotics. Children were lost quickly but are buried here with great love and quiet dignity as noted in the many family plots.

### 14. *George E. Nichols (1896 - 1946)*

His grave is located in the McClellan family plot. GEORGIA WAGR. 330 INF 83 DIV. WORLD WAR I. The term Wagr. was an abbreviation for the word wagoner which was a wagoner supply company. Mule drawn wagons were used often on the war front due to muddy conditions which hindered motorized vehicles from getting close to the front lines. Most of the mules and horses used over seas came from the native country where the U.S. Army was operating.

### 15. *Cinderella Pheobe Hutto Espy (1859 - 1928)*

What we do know is that this Cinderella was married to Robert Marion Espy and was his second wife. She is buried in her family Hutto plot as was often done with second wives as the first wife was usually buried beside the husband. We don't know for sure what our Cinderella story is but we are certainly proud to have the, as far as we know, only burial site of Cinderella in any magic kingdom. Certainly the only one in the magic kingdom of Abbeville...

### 16. *Dr. J. R. (James Robert) Vann (1871 - 1937)*

Dr. Vann was a long time respected and beloved doctor in Abbeville. He was also a successful planter, banker, and politico. He had never played football until he entered Auburn where he played for the famous coach, John Heisman in 1895. Dr. Vann is credited with introducing football to the citizens of Henry County and Abbeville.



# *A Walking Tour of Abbeville's "Old Cemetery"*



*Enjoy stories of the area's early settlers  
and prominent families as you walk  
through history in Abbeville, AL,  
Henry County's county seat.*



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# Abbeville Old Cemetery Walking Tour

## Abbeville, Alabama

By Sylvia Beasley Clark

(Enter up steps on Elm Street)

### 1. **Professor Joseph S. Espy (1844 - 1929)**

First headmaster of the Southeast Alabama Agriculture School which opened in September, 1889. It was the first free secondary school in Alabama. Professor Espy was of "almost national reputation" as an educator with a degree from Emory College. He was referred to as the renowned headmaster of Lawrenceville Academy and was a soldier of the Confederate States of America.

### 2. **Dr. B.G. McKalvin (1844 - 1934)**

(McAlevain is misspelled on the monuments; should be McKalvin) He was an unlicensed doctor and was widely known as the only medical man trained or otherwise that could break a fever. He could neither read nor write but could identify all medicines carried by the drug stores by smell, looks or taste. He could analyze compounds by percentages of each ingredient with the use of the same senses. He compounded a fever breaking medicine, which was unknown to anyone but his wife so as to assure her support throughout her lifetime. The recipe vanished upon the death of his wife. Dr. McKalvin was a soldier of the Confederate Army.

### 3. **James J. Tiller, Sr. (1855 - 1942)**

Mr. Tiller served as chief of police for 56 years. He was the longest serving and oldest police chief in the United States, dying while still on active duty at the age of 86. He served from 1886-1942.

### 4. **Sarah Sellers Oates (1807 - 1892)**

Sarah Sellers Oates was born in North Carolina and came into Pike County, Alabama around 1834 with her parents. She married William Truxton Oates and became the mother of eight known children, four sons and four daughters. She and her husband were poor dirt farmers. William Calvin Oates was her first born and went on to become the governor of Alabama. It was said that she had good "intuition" and could vision or see things that others could not. Gov. Oates referred to his mother as a prophetess and a clairvoyant. She walked three miles at night carrying her infant son, William Calvin Oates, in her arms while her husband carried his guns and ammunition as they were fleeing from Indi-



ans that had killed their neighbors. She was a faithful member of the First Baptist Church of Abbeville. She was a woman of strong constitution, a faithful wife and a caring mother, who exemplified admirable spirit of a hard working and fearless pioneering woman of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Wiregrass Alabama.



### 5. **Captain James Wilson Stokes (1828 - 1901)**

In a speech given at the old Southeast Alabama Agriculture School, the then Governor William C. Oates stated that Captain Wilson was the man who ordered the last shot to be fired in the Civil War in the trenches at Phenix City, Alabama.

### 6. **George Newman (1826 - 1869)**

Corporal, CO "B", 6<sup>th</sup> ALA INF REG/Lieutenant, Henry Mounted Rebels/1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant, CO E, 6<sup>th</sup> ALA CALVARY, CSA. George Newman was born in Chesterfield County, South Carolina. He came to Alabama when he was 18 years old and settled in Abbeville. Soon after arriving in the county he became a clerk in a store and a few years later he went into the mercantile business for himself. Still later he began farming. At the outbreak of the Civil War, George entered the military company known as the Henry Grays as a first lieutenant and served until the surrender. He carried two 50-cent pieces in his pocket all through the war and when he came home after the war he gave the two pieces of money to his wife and told her to always keep them and she would never be broke. She kept them and a short time before she passed away she told her daughter, Mrs. Mollie Martin, to always keep the two coins. Mrs. Martin in turn gave them to her daughter, Mrs. Eva Martin Carter who later passed them to her twin grand daughters to wear in their shoes at their weddings. The family still has the coins in their possession. His son, Robert Newman, was Abbeville's first banker and founded the Bank of Abbeville in 1897 and in 1916 was instrumental in establishing Alabama's first peanut oil mill which was located on the site of the Westpoint Stevens textile plant in Abbeville.

### 7. **A.C. Gordon (1811 - 1889)**

Brigadier General Alexander Curry Gordon is one of 10 generals from Henry County, Alabama. He came to Henry County with his uncle, James Hughs from Washington County, Georgia in 1817 after his father was killed by Indians and his mother had died. He and his half brother would play around his uncle's store in Franklin which was Henry County's first town across the Chattahoochee River from

Ft. Gaines, GA. They strayed too far from the store one day and were abducted by a roaming band of about fifty Indians. General Gordon learned the Indian language and was given an Indian name - Crazy Bear. Two years later his uncle learned about them from a trader and traveled down the Chattahoochee on a pole boat and ransomed the boys for \$50 in silver. General Gordon was an officer in the War of 1836, the C.S.A., 6<sup>th</sup> ALABAMA INFANTRY REGIMENT and a Mason. He formed the very first Confederate Army unit in Henry County called the "Franklin Grays" or "Henry Grays". He was a very wealthy man at one time but the war and his generosity broke him and he died almost penniless. His family has copies of his application for presidential pardon (amnesty) after the Civil War. His family is believed to be the first family buried in this cemetery.

### 8. **Carolyn Bagby Gordon (1839 - 1844)**

She was the 5 year old daughter of General Alexander Curry Gordon and is believed to be the first burial in the cemetery. Her tomb is most unusual as it is a metal sarcophagus-like structure that is very rusty and very small.

### 9. **Richard Hudspeth (1776 - 1852)**

Richard Hudspeth was born in Virginia and married Mary Sims in 1801. She was from North Carolina where they moved then moved from there to Tennessee where their first son, William, was born in 1802. William was a slave trader and never came to Alabama. Richard and Mary had ten more children after William with the last born in 1825. They lived in Georgia for a few years then crossed the river and came into Abbeville. At the time, they were the only Hudspeth family to settle here. His firstborn son William had several children but his great grand daughter, Grace Moore was very notable and became an opera singer known as the "Tennessee Nightingale". She was reported to be analogous to Janis Joplin and a rebel of her time. She broke many rules of convention and even shocked the small town where she grew up. She left her mark however on the world and such a mark it was that Elvis is said to have named his beloved "Graceland" after her. Richard's grave is the earliest marked birth date grave in the cemetery.

### 10. **Cynthia Edna Roberts (1906 - 1993)**

Mrs. Roberts was a kind and gentle woman as evidenced by the tribute to her which is stated on her tombstone. It declares that she was "sister, mother, teacher, missionary to the Seminoles". It is the only marker that has been found in these burial grounds that designated the interred as a missionary.

