

Free Springs Cemetery, Chilton County, Alabama

By Derric Scott, June 26, 2025 from various sources.

The Free Springs Cemetery was the graveyard for the Free Springs Baptist Church.

According to the book, Baptists of Bibb, the church started in 1898 and was received into the Shelby Baptist Association. There is a mention in the April 27, 1899 Banner of the church in the "Mars Hill" community column. In 1904 the Free Springs Church moved to the Bibb Baptist Association. The highest membership was in 1902 with 62.

Some of their convention delegates were P. A. Wood, W. L. (Weyman Leggett?) Brown, D. R. Hatcher, Prim, Arledge, T. J. Headley.

The Baptists of Bibb said that the church had not been heard from since 1917 and was assumed extinct. A newspaper article from the Free Springs community on October 5, 1944 said that the church and school were gone.

The grave of Sarah Wilson, wife of Elisha C. Wilson, is said to be the second oldest known grave in Chilton County. Since the church seems to have started in 1898, obviously the cemetery was used as a family or community cemetery well before the church began.

The cemetery is located on the top of a hill with a ditch/gulley on one side. Ms. Becky Crowson, a nearby neighbor who has cared for the cemetery in years past, said that at one point a property owner was going around the lower part of the hill removing the markers and tossing them in the gulley, until he was stopped (these may have been later, plain wooden, markers). There were approximately 75 graves marked at some earlier point, however the Cemeteries of Chilton lists approximately eight that were identifiable.

Sarah Wilson

Sarah Moore married Elisha C. Wilson on January 24, 1833 in Bibb County, Alabama. Sarah died only 3 short years later, on September 21, 1836. A later census of Elisha Wilson's family lists a son, William, born about 1836 - so it's possible that Sarah died from complications of childbirth.

PROPERTY

It should be noted that these very early dates (1830s) are well before the land is obtained from the US Government by Philip J. Weaver and William Johnson in 1854. Also, everything was in Bibb County at the time, before the creation of Baker/Chilton County in December of 1868.

No record of the church owning the property has yet been found.