

Jordan/Dunlap/Crawford Cemetery, Chilton County, Alabama

By Derric Scott

The **Jordan/Dunlap/Crawford Cemetery** is a small family cemetery in the extreme north east part of Chilton County. It has two documented names – Jordan/Crawford is what the Cemeteries of Chilton County (COCC) census book calls it; and the wooden sign and other references call it Jordan/Dunlap. It is located just off County Road 730 in the SW ¼ of the NE ¼ of Section 29, Township 24, Range 15E. It seems to be mostly the family cemetery of Francis Marion (F. M.) Jordan and his wife Mary Harris Jordan Dunlap.

F. M. Jordan was born about 1839 in Georgia. He, Mary, and son Francis were in Tallapoosa County in the 1860 Census. By the Alabama State Census in 1866, he and his family were in the part of Shelby County that was to soon become north east Chilton County. He was a Chilton County Commissioner from May 25, 1869 until his death in 1871. He was marked present at the July 8, 1871 Commission meeting and his estate records said he died 4 days later, on July 12, 1871. The most interesting accomplishment of the County Commission during his tenure was the awarding of the contract to construct the new ("1872") County Courthouse in Clanton.

In the cemetery today, the only visible and readable headstones are family members named Jordan and Dunlap, hence the latter name of the cemetery. It is unclear why the COCC included the name Crawford. However, several Crawford families owned fairly large sections of land in the immediate area. The nearby creek is called Crawford Creek as well. Since there are several unmarked graves (the COCC lists 8) it is possible, even likely, that some of them may be from the Crawford families.

Apparently disease or other tragedy struck F. M. and Mary's family in 1870. Two of their children died in the latter half of that year (after the census) and then the father, F. M., seems to have died suddenly in 1871, as mentioned above. F. M.'s widow Mary soon remarried to David H. Dunlap and he became the guardian of record for her minor children. But the tragedies kept coming. Even before the probate was finished, Mary's youngest child Sarah died and was buried in the cemetery (Sarah appeared on the early minor children lists but was absent in the later ones and she seems to obviously be the "S. M." in the cemetery). A few years later, Laura died at the age of 18 and was also buried there (Laura's birth year has some variations in the records). There is one other marked Jordan grave – "V. Jordan" who has not yet been identified. The Dunlap family soon moved out of the county.

The particular property the cemetery is on is the SW ¼ of the NE ¼ of Section 29, Township 24, Range 15E. The entire W ½ 80 acres containing the cemetery was originally obtained from the US Government in 1839 by William H. Rushing. Later it was owned by Joseph Vanderslice and then Green B. Barbour. On July 20, 1867 F. M. Jordan bought everything from the road to the Wuxahatchee Creek from Green B. Barbour and it was owned by Jordan until it was sold during his probate. The 1867 deed said it was known as "the Joseph Vanderslice place." Other references mention it as the "old Rushing place."