

St. Paul Lutheran Cemetery, Chilton County, Alabama

To: Alabama Historical Commission

From: Ovetta Ann Barbour Owens
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Subj: A brief reason why The St. Paul Lutheran Church and Barbour School Cemetery should be placed on the AHC Historical Cemetery Registry.

The land was donated by Mr. Dan Barbour in 1897 (1 acre) and 1911 (2 acres). It was from the Bureau of Land Management ("forty (40) acres and a mule") granted to him by the President of the United States during The Reconstruction Era. The deed eventually read forty (40) minus three (3) acres for a School for Black Children. The school had many different names starting with The Barbour School. The final name was The St. Paul Lutheran Church and School. The St. Paul Lutheran School closed and The St. Paul Lutheran Church Building burned down. Due to lack of Lutherans in Clanton, the members found a Church Home in other towns.

After all these mishaps, the community just called it a Cemetery (no name), instead of The St. Paul Lutheran Church and School "Cemetery." I don't think it was on purpose just a mistake. I think it was ignorance (lack of knowledge) about the Property. People were ignorant to the actual Historical Value of the "property or land" as it's called these days. This is the site of The St. Paul Lutheran Church and School. It was a School in the 1920ties for Black Children and should be treated with the honor and respect.

I started this journey because it's a very, very, personal endeavor for me. Not only did a Barbour start this process by donating the Land. But I was Baptized in the Church that occupied this site. The people that are at eternal rest on this site, the older graves, are my Ancestors. From my Great Grandmother, Janie Wilson Oden to my sister, Debra Barbour Wilson, who recently died and was laid for her eternal rest. I would estimate approximately 90% of the people resting in The St. Paul Lutheran Church and School Cemetery are related to me (shared DNA). In recent years non-Lutherans have been buried in The St. Paul Lutheran Church and School Cemetery.

The St. Paul Lutheran Church and School Cemetery Site was started by The Barbours and The Lutheran Faith. I am the only and oldest living Lutheran that has a direct connection to this Cemetery Site. This Legacy was passed down to me by my mother, Nora Bell Barbour and I am now retired and have the ability to continue The St. Paul Lutheran Church and School Cemetery Care.

My Son, Patrick Norrell Barbour Owens and My Nephew, Terrell Nordane Barbours will continue The St. Paul Lutheran Church and School Cemetery Legacy. They are both Honest and Uprstanding Citizens. The St. Paul Lutheran Church and School Cemetery will always be in good hands.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Ovetta Ann Barbour Owens
April 4, 2026