

## Dallas, Mississippi: Stories from the Saints

“Never,” I was warned, “go out to Old Dallas alone. It’s not safe.”

I’ve been returning, unafraid, for nearly 20 years, drawn by that inexplicable feeling of being some place you know. Dallas is a spot on the map now, almost a ghost town but not quite. The town sprawled in the southeast corner of Lafayette County bounded roughly by now CR 442 and 444, with the main route of access being Mucaloon Road (now CR 489). Mucaloon Road allowed the citizens of Dallas to easily travel to businesses, church, school, post office, and friends and family.



Mucaloon Road also allowed the people of Dallas to move their congregation and church, then called Independent Baptist Church and now Union Baptist Church, in the 1930s after too many tumultuous years of lawlessness. The town was essentially extinct by 1935. The children of Dallas school were sent to Spring Hill school by 1925. Mucaloon Road was bisected by a private lake by 1940 and gated at the south end.

There are still a few family names on the tax map of the former Dallas, MS, descendants whose families never fully left and are rightly proud of their roots. Many more descendants moved “to town” or to other areas of the county or kept pushing “west.” Many of the same surnames appear from the 1850 census to the 1950 census of Lafayette County.

And who is left in Dallas to tell the stories of nearly a century of being a real town? The silent souls lovingly and mournfully buried in the unmarked Dallas Cemetery, now known as Old Dallas Cemetery. Their lives exist vaguely now through the memories of those who descend – and they exist vividly in physical documents: census, marriage licenses, probate, deeds, photos, and oral histories.

**There is an adage: No one is truly dead until their name is spoken for the last time.**

Let’s walk through Old Dallas Cemetery and speak the names.

### **Noah Rayburn**



Thank you, Noah, for the land on which the cemetery sits. A chancery court search for an owner of the site returned “no owner.” The last discovered owner was one Noah Rayburn in 1839.

Noah and wife Eliza, lying nearby, moved to MS from Tennessee by 1820. They were in Lafayette County by 1839 latest.

Sons **John T.** and **William Clark Adam** Rayburn are buried here with stones as well, along with their families. Son Noah died 1864 at West Point MS in battle. John T. took over from his father as postmaster of Dallas. W.C.A. served with the Confederate troops and was injured by a minie ball through his eye. Before his death by consumption (per the 1880 mortality schedule), W.C.A. wrote a touching will, leaving his