

## Absalom Harwell family

Meet this writer's 4<sup>th</sup> great grandfather, **Absalom Harwell**, as I first did, facing his desecrated headstone. Absalom, son of a Revolutionary War Patriot, and his wife Sarah moved "west" as so many of these families did – via the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama – to the newly opened lands of the Cherokee Cession. Absalom and Sarah, both in their 70s, arrived in Lafayette County with 5 of their 6 grown children: **Henry, John, Mary "Polly," Nancy, and Elizabeth** (see the Cearleys above for Elizabeth's daughter Permelia Kirkland).

The Harwells owned land, Absalom's next to son Henry's. Henry had married Betsy Vardaman in Alabama, and they raised their children in Dallas. Their children would marry into local families: **Moreland, Cearley, 2 Welches, Riley, Powell**, and their stones stand across the cemetery in varying conditions.

The Harwell sisters Polly and Nancy did not marry and they, along with sister Elizabeth, have headstones in a row with their parents and their brother John. Henry and Betsy are "known" to be buried here as well, though no stones remain. Polly's stone is engraved "Member of the Church 40 Years." Elizabeth's reads "Mrs. E. Kirkland." Census and county records led to her identification as Elizabeth Harwell Kirkland. A caveat to those reading the headstones of women that there is often more than meets the eye. And here is an observation: Polly, Nancy, and Elizabeth would all have been eligible for the Daughters of the Revolution (DAR)!

Recent repairs to Absalom and Sarah in photos at right.

Absalom's brother **Nathaniel Harwell** and family are buried in the secluded Hipp cemetery about ½ mile away.



## Say their names: each family tells a story

George and Mary **Swaim** were born just after 1800. Their family name is etched on 13 stones in Dallas Cemetery. Their daughter-in-law Sarah ran the Dallas boarding house, a large 2-story structure where fine meals were served and the first inside water in Dallas was installed. (she is buried in Dallas as Sarah Phillips, having married after widowhood)

**Rev. W. L. Mullins** and wife Martha rest in Dallas, as does their daughter Janie Mullins Latham. Janie was the wife of businessman Louis Latham, whose stone is in Pontotoc. Janie returned "home" for burial and has one of the more grand monuments. Janie's brother Henry married into