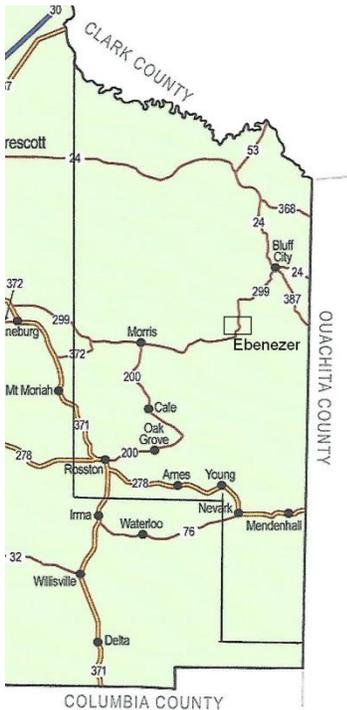


EBENEZER



Ebenezer dates back to the 1850's when the area was first settled by our pioneer ancestors who had left their homes in the eastern states in search of a better life for their families. It took a lot of courage for them to make a move of several hundred miles, much as it took courage for their fathers who made the decision long ago to leave their homelands in Ireland, Scotland, and other parts of Europe and make the long, difficult journey by ships to the United States. Life expectancy in those days was much shorter than today and the days were filled with hard work. Families were large and farming was the main occupation. It is amazing how much some of these early settlers accomplished and we should appreciate their sacrifices.

The name Ebenezer is a Biblical name and comes from the story of the Israelites, led by Samuel, doing battle with the Philistines as recorded in I Samuel, chapter 7.

I Samuel 7: 12

Then Samuel took a stone, and set [it] between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.

We don't know the person responsible for naming this location Ebenezer. They may have named it for a similar place back east that was named Ebenezer or some of these early settlers may have remembered the story of how the Lord helped Israel in the battle with the Philistines and wanted to give the Lord credit for helping them in their journey to their new homes in Arkansas. Just as Samuel had placed a stone marker to mark the place where the Lord helped the Israelites defeat the Philistines, our families place stones at this place called Ebenezer to remember their loved ones who are buried here.

These early settlers established a Methodist Episcopal church at this location as a place of worship and as deaths occurred, the most likely place to develop a cemetery would be near the church. Ebenezer is shown on an 1865 map of Ouachita County and is marked with a cross symbol indicating a church. In the early 1900's, a school was located across the road from the church.

The oldest marked grave in Ebenezer Cemetery is that of William B. Hackette, son of Dr. M. B. Hackette, Jr. and Mrs. E. A. Hackette. The child died in 1859 and was only three months old. There are many unidentified graves marked with sand rocks and some of these graves could be even older. An unusual grave not far from the Hackette plot is surrounded by huge sand rocks stacked three high. The person buried

there is unknown, but must have been a prominent person of that time. The family went to a great deal of trouble to mark this person's final resting place with these huge stones. The nearest place where those type stones can be found is about two miles from the cemetery in the Rocky Hill community.

Ebenezer is shown on the 1865 map of Ouachita County. It was at this location that Civil War soldiers turned eastward on their march toward Camden in 1864 just before the Battle of Poison Springs. Military reports from that march show that the soldiers camped near Ebenezer at Dr. Rook's plantation.

The population of the Ebenezer community declined following World War II. Many people gave up farming and moved to nearby cities to find work.

The cemetery is all that's left of the Ebenezer community. It is the final resting place for about 500 people and is still active today. The vacant church building was moved from that location in the 1970s.

Written by Jerry McKelvy