

# **Mystery on the Swashin**

## ***SOLVED***

**B**ack in 2000 I wrote an article on Swashin Baptist Church titled “Seek and ye shall find ‘Mystery on the Swashin’”. It dealt with how we located “New” Swashin Baptist Cemetery and Church on the James P. Cape property southeast of De Soto.

In the research for that article I learned that the 2 acres for the “New” Church, School and Cemetery was donated in 1867 by the Reverend James P. Cape and his wife Laura (Breckenridge) who was at that time the minister. The acreage was cut out of their 274 acres in Township 39 Range 4 Section 14 and the “New” Church erected as a frame church.



*Swashin Baptist (Old) Cemetery 1843-1867 was located to the right of the downed cedar tree. De Soto is in background. Little remains of this pioneer cemetery that at one time had a wrought iron fence around it.*

Upon contacting Don Wideman at William and Jewell College where the Baptist Archives are kept, I learned that records show that James Williams and Washington Stephens organized the church 17 July 1843.

Knowing that “New” Swashin Baptist Church and Cemetery was from the years 1867 to its demise in 1940s and removal of the church to Bates Creek Camp, I wanted to know where the “Old” Swashin Church and Cemetery from the years 1843, when it was organized, until 1867 when the “New” Church was built.

We had no idea where the possible location could be.

Then one day David Belleville gave the De Soto Library a copy of a graveyard he recorded in 1964 alongside the driveway to his father’s house. He referred to it as Swashin Cemetery.

A bit of background here; his father Rudy Belleville talked to the Jefferson County Historical Society on many of the old cemeteries in the county. Rudy mentioned a “Cape” graveyard alongside of his driveway. Also Laura Dickinson 86, contacted me about a cemetery along side of Rudy’s driveway “1/2 way up hill to Rudy’s house with 12 graves”. I had not had time to pursue these leads and knowing that Rudy’s driveway “now” came off Hgy E to his house in a totally different area, I felt a cemetery alongside the “new” driveway would be as Rudy said a “Cape” family cemetery. I did not know of the old driveway at this time.

Old Swashin Baptist Church

David's priceless list contained the following monuments he recorded in 1964; undoubtedly more pioneers are buried in this pioneer cemetery.

- BOLEY, Angelina A, 1835-1857
- CAPE, Barbara M., wife of J. C. Cape, 1831-1864
- CAPE, Sarah C., Daughter of James P. and Laura Cape, 1849-1862
- PINSON, Leander W., 1816-1854
- STAPLES, Frances M., Wife of Chas. Staples, Feb. 27, 1827-1851
- WILLIAMS, James L., Jan. 30, 1798-1865
- WILLIAMS, Margaret H., 1824-1849

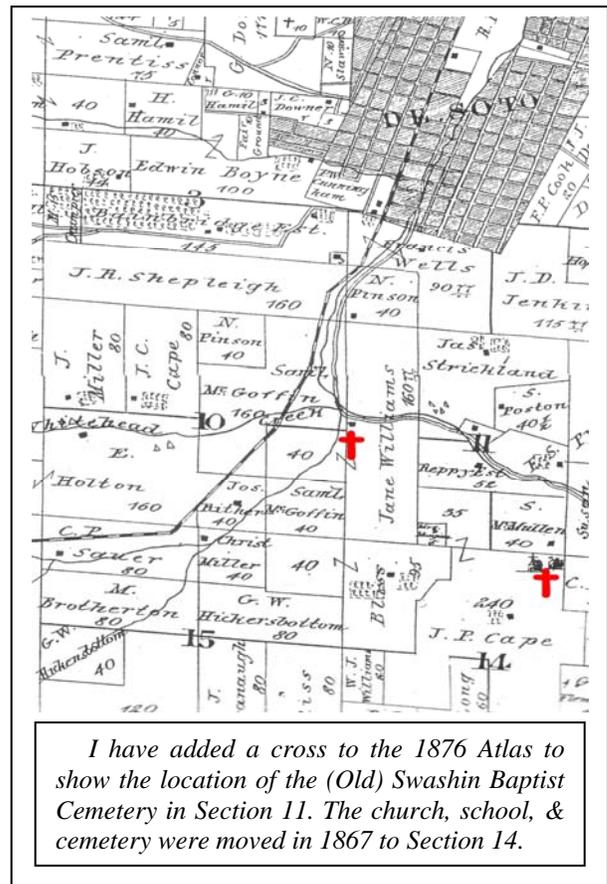
*(see pictures below for corrections and additional information)*

At first glance I became excited as I had looked for "Old" Swashin for about 4 years and had totally no idea where it was located. Looking at the list the first thing I noticed is that all the burials were within the correct time period, 1843-1867.

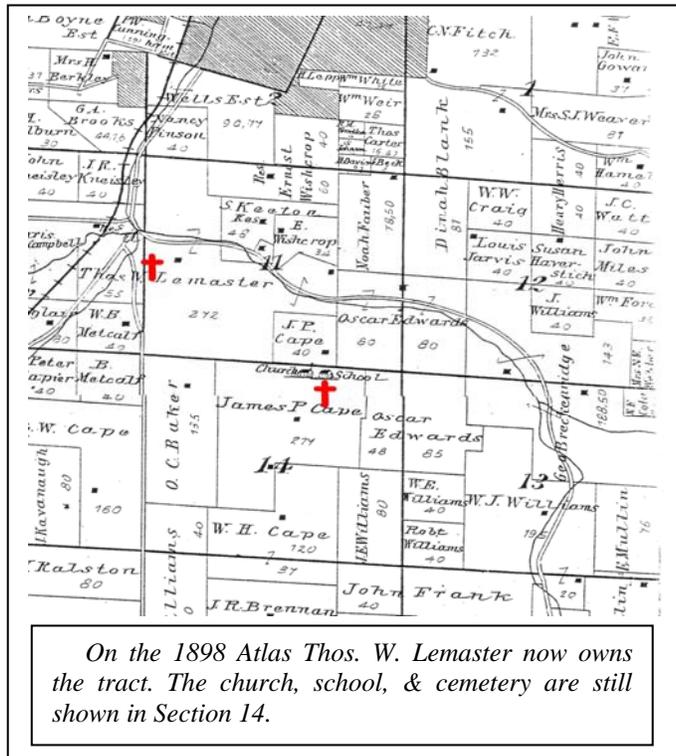
James P. and Laura Cape had a daughter, Sarah, 13 years old, buried here. Remember Reverend James P. and his wife Laura were the ones who donated the land for the "New" church. In *History of Jefferson County Baptist from the days of John Clarke, 1798-1949* by Mrs. Etta Whipple, on Page 32, "Brother Cape was ordained to the full gospel ministry, July 16, 1861, by the Swashin Church.

James P. Cape was ordained a minister in 1861 and his daughter dies in 1862 and he donates land for the "New" church in 1867. I feel certain that he would have buried his daughter in the church cemetery, the "Old" Swashin Cemetery.

I immediately called David Belleville to ask more questions about this site. He related that in 1964 he recorded the cemetery and did historical research in the area. He never located where the church sat on the tract but the old James Williams house was located to the left just after turning off Hgy E. He felt that the church was between the Williams House and the cemetery site, although he found no indication of this. The Williams house had burned down, but David found the cistern and items' indicating this was the location of the home site.



Old Swashin Baptist Church



This tract was first entered by Charles Staples as Certificate #571, issued on the 20<sup>th</sup> May 1824, for the W½ of the NW¼ T39 R4 S11, containing 80 acres.

On 17<sup>th</sup> August 1842, James L. Williams purchases for \$250.<sup>00</sup> from Elijah Nelson and wife Lucinda, James Staples and his wife Caroline, and Samuel Harrison and wife Jane, their "...1/2 interests in 80 acres situated being on the Joachim Creek being the W½ of the NW¼ S11 T39 R4...which land was patented by Charles Staples, now deceased, as vacant land...all being the proper heirs..." as recorded in book L page 86.

On the next pages, Book L page 87-89 James L. Williams buys up the remaining heir's interest to the tract.

Late in 1865 James L. Williams passes and is buried here. This is verified by his monument recorded by David

Belleville. His wife Jane Williams is listed on the 1876 Atlas as owner of the tract. No deed "excepting out" the cemetery could be located.

Jane William passes on January 15, 1877 and is buried in New Swashin Cemetery per her monument recorded there.

According to *History of Jefferson County Baptist from the time of John Clarke*, by Mrs. Etta Wipple, page 38, "In 1843 Elder (James) Williams, assisted by Rev. Washington Stevens, organized Swashin Baptist Church, two miles south of De Soto, and became the first Pastor of that church." It would be natural for the Pastor to be buried in his church cemetery on or next to his own land.

The monuments were reportedly removed sometime after 1964, cattle were turned out in the field and all traces of this cemetery are gone. Had it not been for the efforts of David Belleville to record those monuments this cemetery, like so many others, would have been lost to history.

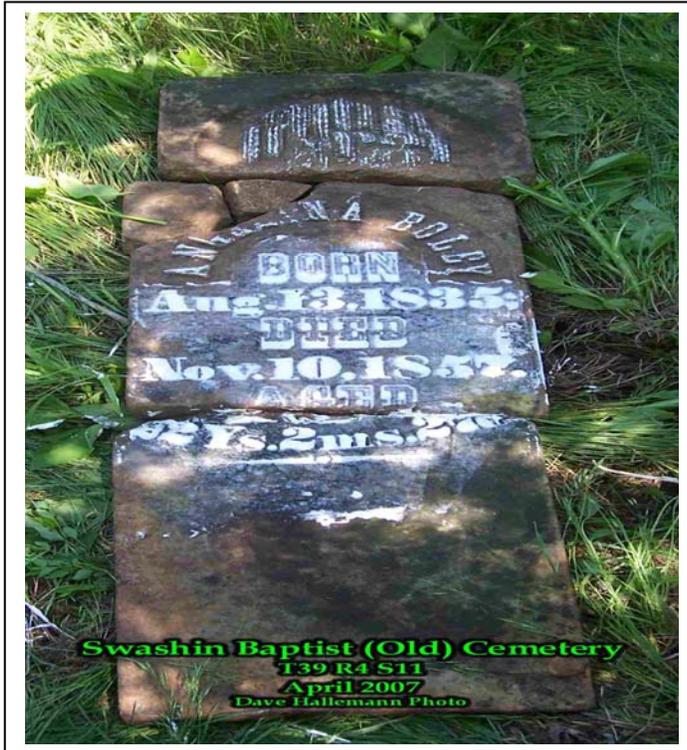
With the above information ends my searching of 4 years for this site.

I think we can put an official name of "**Old Swashin Cemetery**" on this location.

Mystery, Solved.

Old Swashin Baptist Church

In April 2007 Carole Goggin and I revisited Old Swashin Cemetery. We were under the impression that all the monuments had been destroyed. At this time we were also working on New Swashin and Denise Belleville, Rudy's granddaughter told us her Uncle David Belleville had stopped to see what was left at Old Swashin and had uncovered some of the old monuments. After we finished with New Swashin we turned our attention to Old Swashin. Below are the monuments we located after probing this cemetery.



(Weeping Willow)

**Angelina Boley**

Born

**Aug. 13, 1835**

Died

**Nov. 10, 1857**

Aged

**22 Ys. 2 ms. 27 ds.**

In God I Trust  
In memory of

**Sarah C.**

Daugh. Of  
James P. & Laura E.

**Cape**

Born

**July 4, 1849**

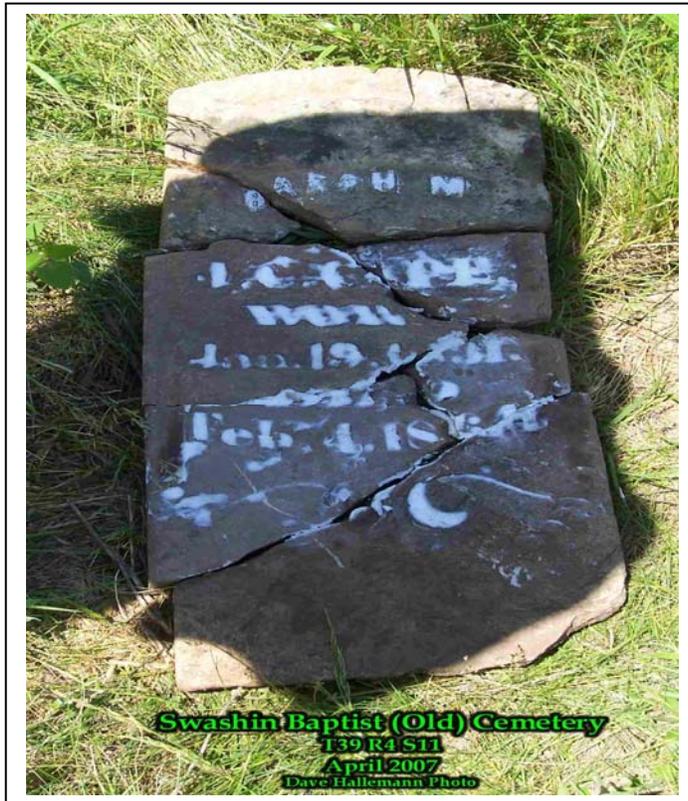
Died

**Apr. 1, 1862**

Aged

**12 y. 8 m. 26 d.**





**Sarah M.**

Monument broken into 7 pieces  
possible missing pieces here

**J. C. Cape**

Born  
**Jan. 19, 1831**

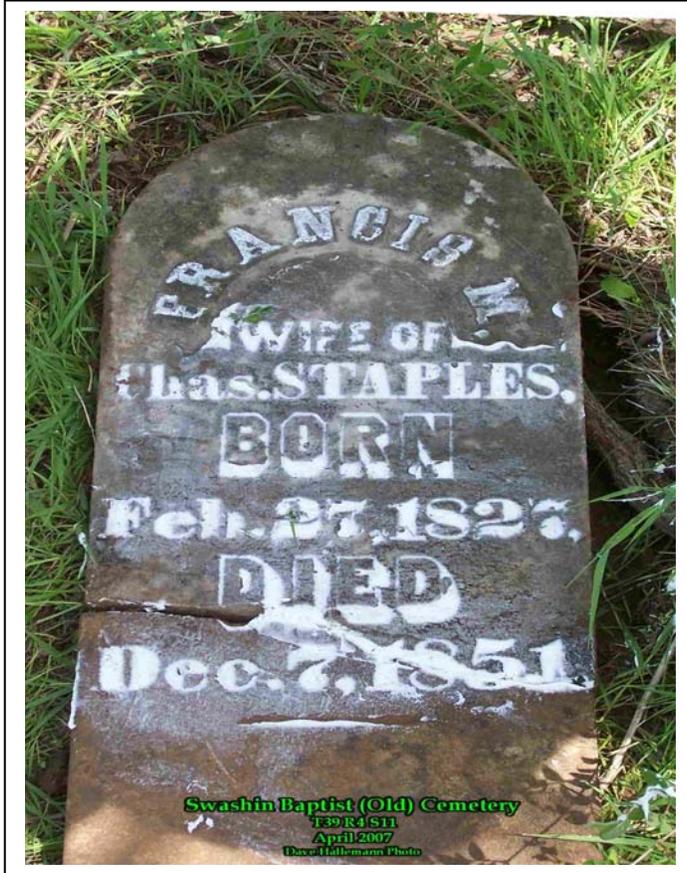
Died  
**Feb. 4, 1864**

**Leander W. Pinson.**

Born  
**Jan. 16, 1816**

Died  
**Mar. 19, 1854**





**Francis M.**

Wife Of  
**Chas. STAPLES**

Born  
**Feb. 27, 1827**

Died  
**Dec. 7, 1851**

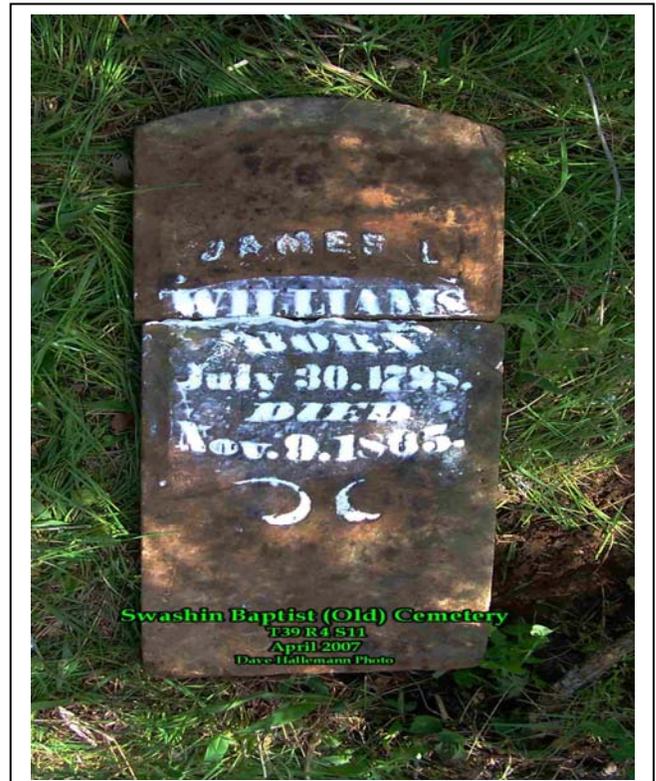
Footstone F. M. S.

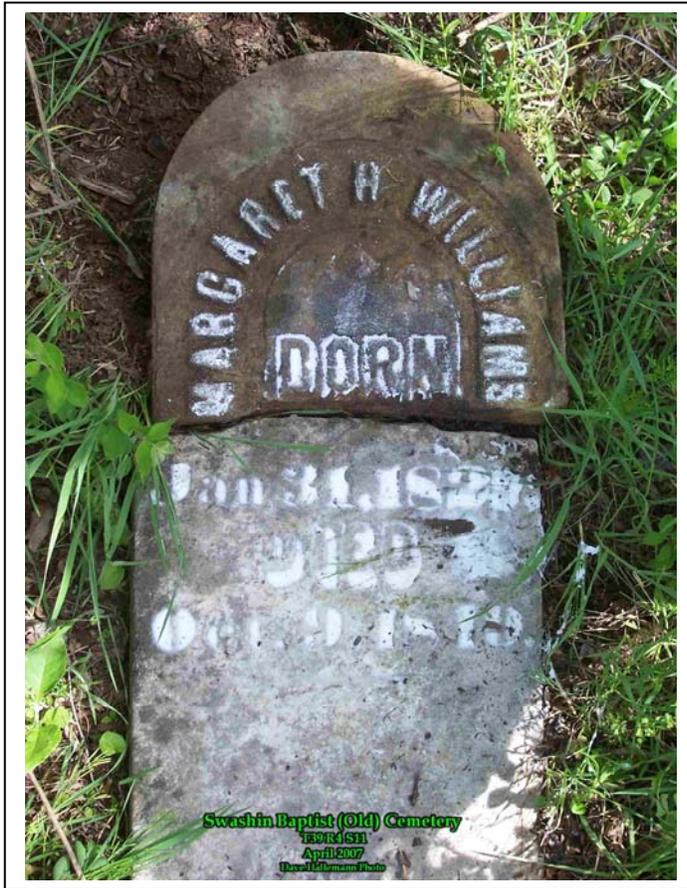
**James L.**

**Williams**

Born  
**July 30, 1798**

Died  
**Nov. 9, 1865**





## Margaret H. Williams

Born  
**Jan. 31, 1829**

Died  
**Oct. 9, 1849**

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