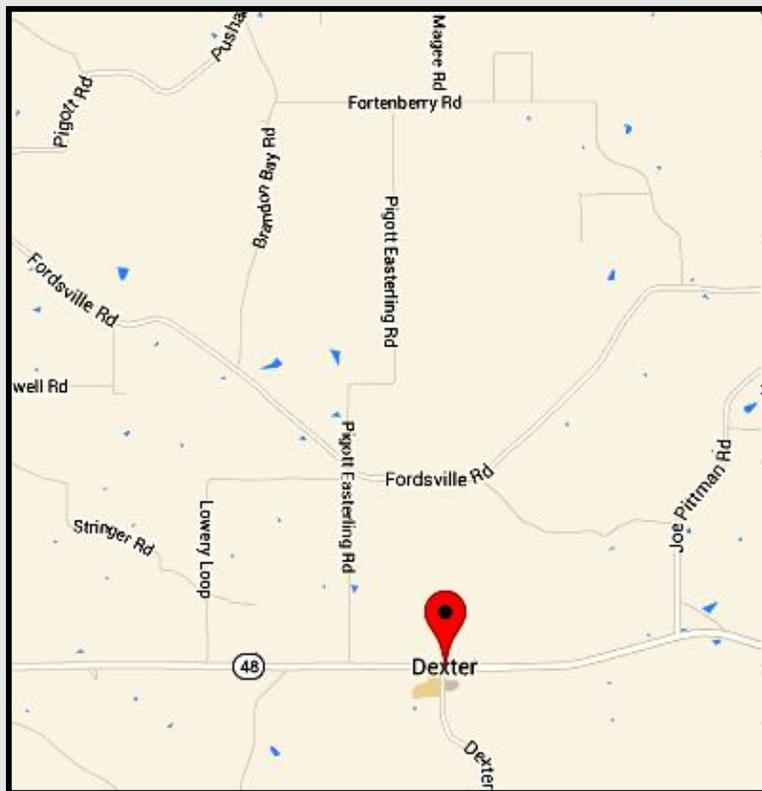


# Adventure in the Magee Cemetery

While visiting Mississippi in November, Reggie, Terry, Barbara, and I explored several cemeteries where we had direct relatives interred. In the area we were visiting, pretty much every cemetery contains relatives of some sort, so we thought we would follow those just in our direct line.

One great, great grandfather named George Washington Simmons was married to Mary Caroline Magee. She was the daughter of Fleet Magee, an early settler of the Mississippi Territory and War of 1812 veteran. That would make Fleet Magee our 3X great grandfather!



Notice the name of the road at the top of this map. One of the many Fortenberry Roads in this part of Mississippi!

There was no evidence online that anyone had posted pictures from the cemetery where Fleet Magee was supposed to be buried. The following, somewhat vague, directions were all we could find.

Cemetery notes and/or description:

Location:

Section 4, Township 1, Range 12

Go east on Highway 48 to road 1/2 mile west of Dexter. Turn left and go north one mile.

Turn right and stop at first house on left. The cemetery is across road under trees about 100 yards.

On property of Mrs. Woodrow Magee.

(Directions were written in 1976. the cemetery at this time was grown up and almost lost to the ravages of time.)

It became a challenge to find  
Fleet Magee!

Using the scanty directions, we found ourselves on Fordsville Road. Following the vague directions, we stopped on the left where a house had been and looked around. In front of us were almost impenetrable woods that were probably private property. The directions said 100 yards into the woods. We made a tentative entry into the woods and found the forest floor covered with so many pine needles that it was like walking on memory foam. Terry had hurt her foot, so Reggie, Barbara, and I fanned out to see what we could see. Due to the density of the trees and briars, we quickly were in danger of losing our sense of direction. Since our cell phones with GPS were in the truck, we were hesitant to continue!



Back at the truck, the decision was made to give up! As we turned on Pigott Easterling Road to leave, a lady our age was walking down the road. Why not ask her? What could she say? Either she knew something that could help or we could leave with a clear conscience that we tried!

She was willing to talk to us! While discussing the cemetery we were hunting, we explained that our family published the Fortenberry genealogy; her immediate response was “We have that book!”

Wow! She even said she was in the book! Can't get better than that.

Our newly discovered cousin is named Paulette Pigott Stogner. Her mother's maiden name is Fortenberry. Paulette is a descendant of Calvin Kennington Fortenberry, brother to our Burrell Taylor Fortenberry; and, she is our fourth cousin once removed.

She did not know where the cemetery was but she said her brother would probably know. She immediately called him and he told her that yes, the graves were back in to woods.

Yeah! Maybe we would be successful after all! Paulette said she would take us to a starting point on Fordsville Road and we could see what we could find. Instead, she walked with us and actually was the first to spot the cemetery.

**Mississippi House of Representatives**

**Bill Pigott**  
District 99 - Lamar, Marion, Pike, Walthall  
**Republican**

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**Legislative Experience:**  
2008-present

**Education:**  
Dexter High School  
Pearl River Community College  
Mississippi State University,  
B.S.

**Occupation:**  
Farmer

**Committee Membership:**  
· Agriculture - Vice-Chair  
· Conservation and Water Resources  
· Corrections  
· Forestry  
· Interstate Cooperation  
· Youth and Family Affairs

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92 Pigott Easterling Rd  
Tylertown, MS 39667  
(601)303-0988 (C)



Representative Pigott is a member of the Farm Bureau, Mississippi Cattlemen's Association, Mississippi Beef Council, and the ADA of Mississippi.

Representative Pigott was born on October 13, 1946 in Tylertown, Mississippi and is married to the former Doris Revette. He is of the Baptist faith.

As you can see above, Paulette's brother, Bill, is the District 99 Representative.

**Though this is a photo of us after coming out of the “briar patch,” in order to appreciate our adventure, one must see the state of the woods we entered. Look across the road where Reggie is walking. She is coming out of the most cleared area. Each of us carried quite a few briars imbedded in our hands!**



**Left to right: Barbara, Andie, crossing the road – Reggie, and Paulette**

**As we walked further into the woods, Paulette spotted a “relatively” open spot. Imagine our surprise to see above ground tombs instead of headstones!**



The remains of the headstone for Fleet Magee sat in scattered pieces on top of a huge pile of moss covered red bricks. I fit them together to take this picture.



**Fleet Magee Died May 26, 1847 Aged 60 This would make his year of birth around 1787.**



**What you see here are many, many bricks covered with moss. Trees and briars are growing everywhere. Records seem to indicate that quite a few people are buried here including Fleet Magee's parents, Jacob and Mary (Scott) Magee.**

**Jacob was born about 1760 and died March 27, 1816. That was a year before Mississippi even became a state! Mary was born about 1763 and died in 1836. Their graves may have been within some of the mounds of bricks.**

**There are the remains of two moss covered brick tombs that look a lot alike. One had the pieces of Fleet Magee's headstone. It is likely the other belongs to his wife, Mary Rebecca Pigott ( born about 1801 – died after 1850 census) said to have been buried here too. She was the daughter of John Pigott, Jr. and Martha Warren. She would be my 3X great grandmother.**



There were a total of three intact tombs. This one belongs to Fleet Cooper Magee, son of Fleet Magee. Born January 18, 1825 Died: January 5, 1879

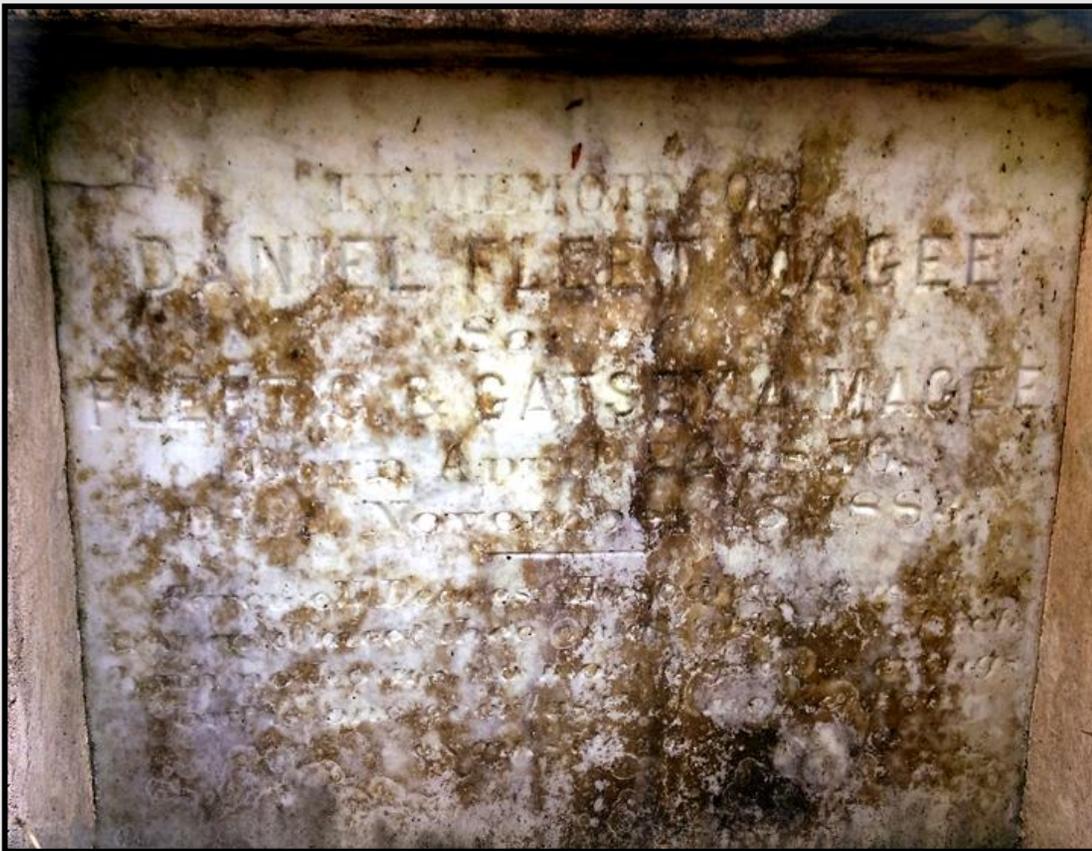


**Tomb belonging to Gatsy Schmidt Magee, wife of Fleet Cooper Magee  
Born December 8, 1826 Died August 7, 1900**



**Tomb of Daniel Magee, son of Fleet Cooper and  
Gatsey Magee**

**Born April 22, 1856  
Died November 15, 1888**



**View looking down the side of Daniel's tomb.**

**Two of Fleet Cooper Magee's grandsons are buried near his tomb. These two graves were the only ones with typical headstones that were visible.**

**On the left and still whole but almost unreadable:**

**Lucius E. Magee, son of Charles Winson and Sarah Magee. Born: July 6, 1871 Died: December 24, 1874.**

**Broken headstone on right:**

**Theodore F. Magee, son of Edward E. and Laura Magee. Born: February 25, 1876 Died: January 16, 1879.**



**This view shows a headstone (?) on top of some mossy bricks. We were afraid to touch anything very much, so we left this, and many other possible graves, undisturbed. If you look at the background, you can see the thorn forest we had just walked through.**



**We battled some serious thorns!**

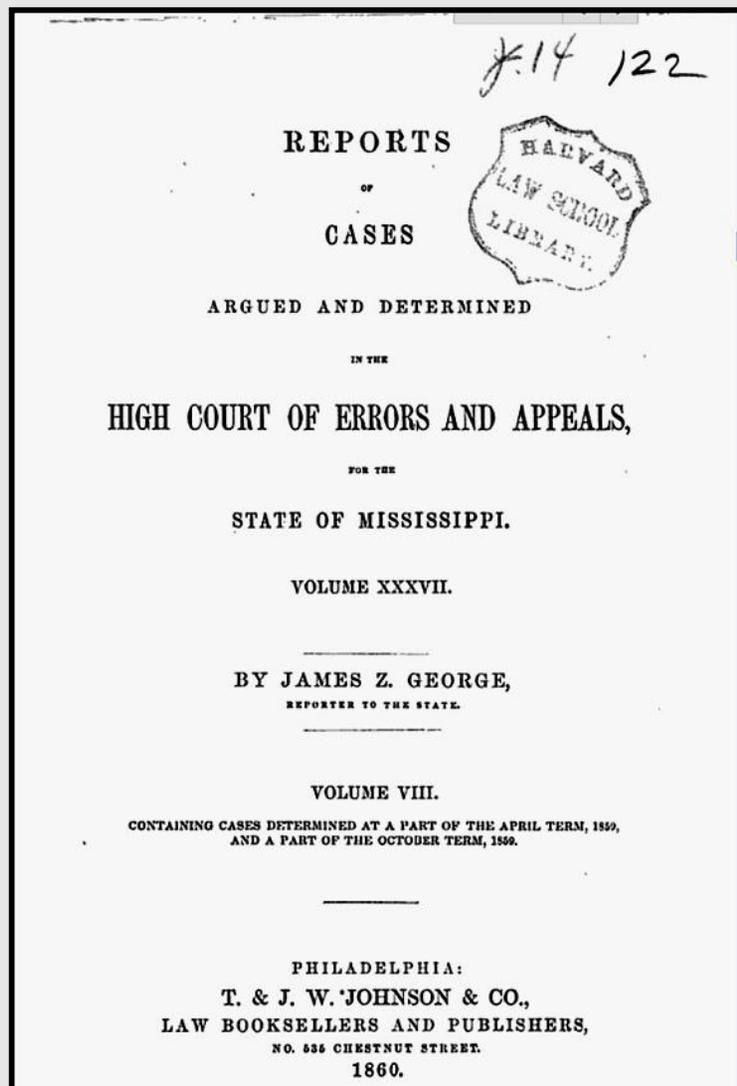
**This image is a small section of the previous photo.**





## **Beautiful old tree**

**This tree is located directly across the street from our entry point into the woods. It would have been in the front yard of the original home and it looks to be at least 200 years old. This means it would likely have been there during the time Fleet Magee lived on the property.**



Google has a digitized copy of a book located at the Harvard Law Library from the High Court of Errors and Appeals published in 1860. (See image on left for bibliographic information.)

In it is found an interesting series of judgments concerning the very land (9 2/3 acres) on which the Magee Cemetery is located. Magee v. Magee pages 138-155.

In September of 1855, Jackey Magee filed an "action of ejection" against Rebecca Magee and her son, Leonard Magee. Note: Jackey was the brother-in-law of Rebecca (Pigott) Magee and uncle to Leonard. Rebecca and her husband Fleet Magee were my 3X great grandparents. Jackey (plaintiff) was trying to get back land he claimed was originally his from the heirs of his brother, Fleet Magee. The first verdict was found for the plaintiff (Jackey Magee). A retrial was immediately requested.

In March of 1858, the case once again went before a jury. All the evidence was presented by both sides again, but this time the jury found a verdict for the defendants (Rebecca, widow of Fleet and their son, Leonard Magee).

At this point, it went to the High Court of Errors and Appeals (Mississippi Supreme Court). This 17 page document was difficult to read due to the legal phrasing and the fact that it was from the 1850s. If you would like to read the documents and see what you think – go to [www.books.google.com](http://www.books.google.com) and type in Fleet Magee. It is the first book that comes up.



**At the time we visited the cemetery, we were not aware of the controversy over this property! Two excerpts from the court records are shown here because they talk about the exact road and cemetery we visited.**

**“The defendants then introduced Daniel Smith, who testified, that Fleet Magee was in possession of the premises in controversy a great many years before his death. There is a graveyard on it, and Fleet Magee is buried there; that Fleet Magee made all the improvements on it; he built stables and a crib, and planted fruit trees on it, and exercised acts of ownership over it, as he did over his other lands. ....” page 139**

**“The land in controversy lies in front of the dwelling-house in which Fleet Magee resided in his lifetime, and in which the defendants now reside. It is separated from the yard by a lane and road, which are located on the township line.” page 140**

**This information tells us that Rebecca Pigott Magee and her family were living on the property in the 1850s. Fleet Magee died in 1847. It is strange that Jackey Magee never sued for the property while Fleet was alive. One wonders why not!**



This cemetery is very neglected and should be brought to the attention of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. They have a program for using funds to protect abandoned cemeteries. According to their guidelines, this cemetery meets several important criteria. See: <http://mdah.state.ms.us/new/preserve/abandoned-cemeteries/>

1. It is a cemetery that has had no burials for over 50 years. The last burial was in 1900.
2. It contains a veteran. Fleet Magee served for the TERRITORY of Mississippi during the War of 1812 and is buried here. He was with the 13<sup>th</sup> (Nixon's) Regiment of the Mississippi Militia. (Note: Our Willis Simmons served in this Regiment too. As mentioned earlier, Willis's son, George Washington Simmons, married Fleet's daughter, Mary Caroline Magee.)
3. Fleet Magee served as a representative to the Mississippi Legislature from 1836 to 1838.

If you would like to learn more about Fleet Magee and his relatives, please visit this wikitree site managed by our cousin Allan Thomas.

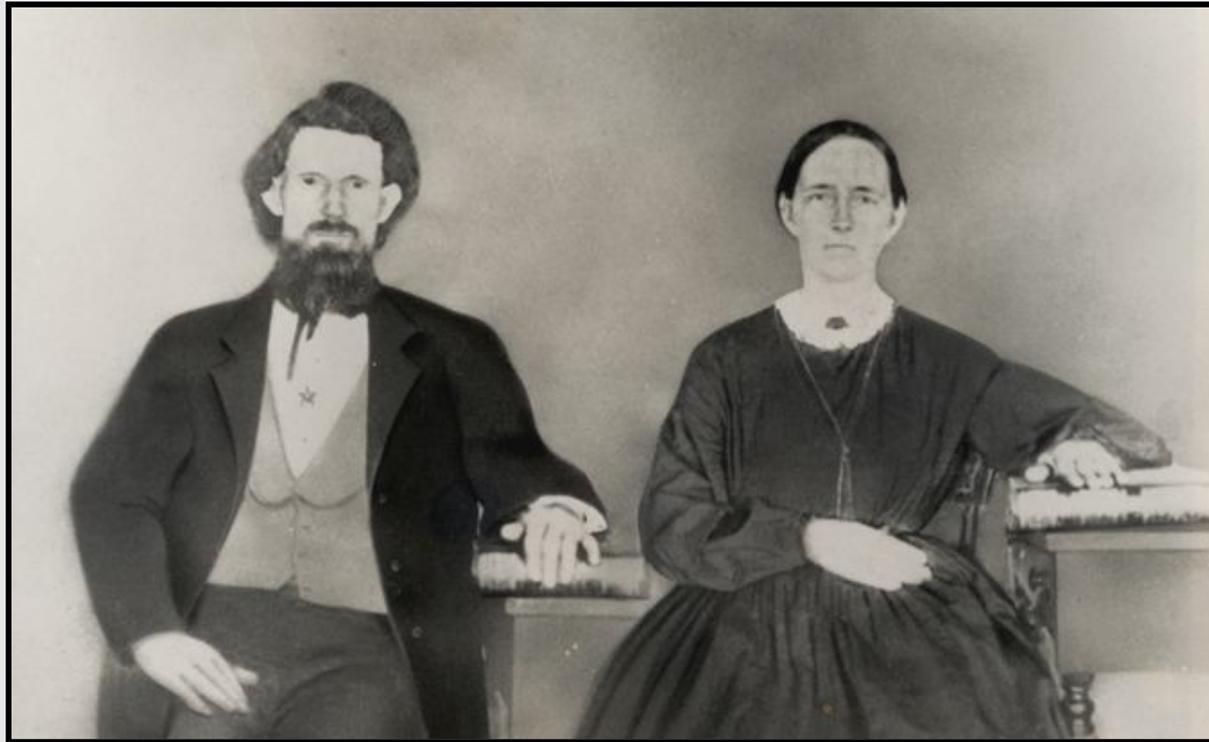
<http://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Magee-353>



Also, please be aware that like many family cemeteries, this one is on private property.



**What a wonderful genealogical adventure we had!**



**George Washington Simmons was born in 1820 and died in 1872. He was married to Mary Caroline Magee (1829-1918). They were my grandmother's grandparents and are buried at the Magnolia Cemetery in Pike County, Mississippi. The Magee Cemetery discussed here contains the graves of Mary Caroline's grandparents (Jacob and Mary Magee), parents (Fleet and Rebecca Magee), and her brother (Fleet Cooper Magee).**

**If you look deeply into the palm of your hand, you will see your parents and all generations of your ancestors. All of them are alive in this moment. Each is present in your body. You are the continuation of each of these people.**

**Quote from Thich Nhat Hanh**