

when they left the arsenal. Other interviews either contained a few pertinent tidbits or a significant amount of information that would contribute to the knowledge of a former community, but considering the advanced years of the person interviewed, it was highly improbable that the person was still alive. One such person would be 115 years old now. What these people said has been presented verbatim with due credit given to the publication and author of the articles.

The same method of presentation was used in providing relevant information from other publications. In most cases, such as the old newspaper articles and also a University of Alabama (UA) research report that presented an extensive history of land ownership, presenting the information was seen as a way to preserve it in a more accessible manner. The UA report, written in 1989, was printed in limited number and is not readily available to the public.

A handwritten manuscript in which a former resident tells his memories of living in Mullins Flat is contained in a correspondence file at the public library. Copying it and presenting it verbatim makes it accessible to many readers who will remember the man. It will bring back memories to them, preserve his memories, and provide insight about daily life and families in Mullins Flat. The researcher took a copy of the article and read it to two elderly former arsenal residents. They listened with avid interest throughout the 20 minutes or so the researcher read, and they nodded, smiled, and commented to each other about the people who were mentioned. It took them back in time to places they had been and people who they remembered. For those of us who have never been to Mullins Flat, it will allow us to visit the community, meet people and visit their homes, and share their experiences.

Limitations of the Study

When the first interviews were conducted, the researcher did not have the Army real estate map; a large part of the interview time was consumed trying to establish where the subjects had lived. A number of years passed between the first interviews conducted and the last because the researcher was assigned higher priority tasks. During this time the scope of work for a broader ethnoarchaeological study was written, and the focus of the interviewing changed. Many of the initial subjects could not be interviewed again. The time lapse took a toll on the elderly people who had been interviewed.

The primary limitation of the study was time: (1) The study became a priority eight months prior to the researcher's retirement date, and even then other tasks took precedence over the research; (2) the researcher had no one to assist her; (3) identifying subjects and then driving to their homes to interview them, sometimes in the rural areas outside of Huntsville, was time consuming; and (4) library and other document research that was necessary to understanding the historic context took time.