

PARCEL A-17: ELKO, UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA RESEARCH, LAND HISTORY, AND THE CHANEY FAMILY WHO OWNED IT IN 1941

This section is divided into six parts. The first part presents a description of the town of Elko, which was north of Parcel A-17. The second part describes the first major research project conducted on an unknown cemetery located on the property and gives a brief summary of the findings resulting from the analysis of the burials. The third part presents the history of land ownership. Since the early White settlers bought large parcels, the history of Parcel 17 is within the larger context of land ownership in the northwest corner of Redstone Arsenal.

The fourth part presents the M.G. Chaney family and their lives on Parcel A-17; it is based on interviews with Chaney family members. Bernice Chaney lived on Parcel A-17 and later on Parcel B-61, which was purchased from M.G. Chaney by her father-in-law, Walter Chaney; therefore, Parcel B-61 is discussed in some detail as well. The fifth part introduces the McAnally family, tenants on the land of M.G. Chaney. The last part is a description of a cave that could be accessed from Parcel A-17; it was known since the days of Matthews land holding and was remembered by Bernice Chaney.

ELKO

The town of Elko was not located on the land that is now Redstone Arsenal. In September of 2005, the researcher talked with Tom Kenny, editor of *Old Huntsville* magazine, who described the town. According to Kenny, the town of Elko consisted of about two dozen houses. Some of them had dirt floors and sliding boards for windows. Elko was a farming community. Kenny said a general store was on Old Madison Pike. It was operated first by the Slaughter family and then by the Tatum family. He said in the 1930's, two houses and a filling station, operated by W. J. Layne, were on the Pike.

Elko Depot was a Southern Railway stop. Passengers were picked up and dropped off. Freight, mostly farm merchandise and fertilizers, were dropped off at the depot, and cotton was shipped out. Many people who were interviewed by the researcher mentioned catching the train at Elko and fertilizer coming into the depot there. Due to its proximity to Elko, the nearest town, the Southern Railway switch on Parcel D-17 was known as the Elko switch.

The dirt road that ran north-south along the eastern boundary of Parcel A-17 was called Elko Road. Tom Kenny stated that the name "Old Elko Road" is found as a reference point in three Deed Books: Book 281, page 614; Deed Book 291, page 749; and Deed Book 361, page 250. When the post office established a mail route, Elko Road was designed Huntsville Free Delivery Road #5. Old Elko Road, once a dirt wagon road, is now the four-lane Rideout Road on Redstone Arsenal.