

predominantly Black. Many Black people owned their own land and were more affluent than their White neighbors. Whether landowners, renters, or sharecroppers, the people were usually industrious, working hard for their subsistence. They recognized the importance of education. The pillars of the community have been identified. The communities that were on the arsenal do not “fit the mold” that is generally found in the literature.

- It is probable that the fact most community members were relatives or related through marriage contributed to the bond. With the exception of a few families who were more fortunate in circumstance, most people, Black and White, had a common goal. Unlike the consumer-oriented society of today, “back then” people worked hard to meet basic needs.
- Some early Black landowners did not have recorded deeds. In some cases, when they died, reputable men who had lived in the community and had known them for many years signed sworn statements to attest to the land ownership of the deceased.
- The prominent Black families of Pond Beat and Mullins Flat can trace their ancestry back to white plantation owners in the 1800’s. Some of their ancestors were free Black people when they came to Alabama from Virginia and the Carolinas.
- Understanding family histories is important in understanding land ownership and the ties that bound the communities.
- No receipts were given to Black people, so they always owed what the White business person said they owed, whether it be at the store and dealing in credit or the amount paid on a mortgage. The businesses mentioned in particular were in Huntsville.
- Three incidents of sexual abuse of Black women, two by White plantation owners and one by the son of a White plantation owner, that took place between 1920 and 1941, were reported. The women had no recourse.
- One incident of murder was reported. It was not recorded in the interview section. While the subject had volunteered this information freely during the interview, during a later meeting the subject asked that her “telling about her daddy shooting somebody” be removed from her interview, because her daughter told her it might cause trouble.

This incident took place on a rural farmstead area of the pre-arsenal land and not in Pond Beat or Mullins Flat. The former arsenal resident told the researcher that one day “a colored man (name is known but omitted) was coming across the field toward their house and he was drunk and he was mad.” Her father said to get his shotgun. Then, the subject said, “Daddy shot him dead.”