

	Mullins Flat*	Pond Beat
Total Households Displaced#	359	238
Percentage Households Black†	~51%	~78%
Percentage Households Renting†	~70%	~84%
Percentage Renters Black†	~51%	~80%
Total Acres Acquired by US Government§	21,232.51	11,292.04
Percentage Acreage Black-owned	19%	35%

*Includes communities of Elko, Union Hill, and Spring Hill

#Based on houses shown on 1936 USGS quadrangle maps as well as archaeological data

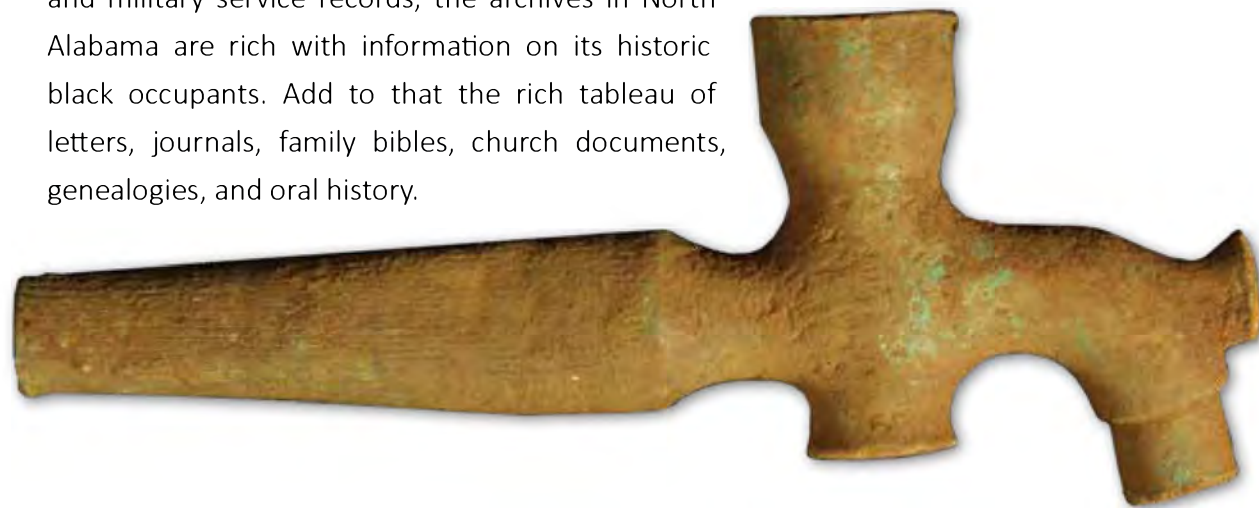
†Based on 1940 Federal Census for Madison County Precinct 4 Route 4 (Mullins Flat) and Precinct 6 west of Highway 38 (Pond Beat)

§From 1941-1942 – excludes land previously acquired by US Fish & Wildlife Service and TVA

Filling a Void

Precious little of this history has been written down. With a few noteworthy exceptions, local African American history has been largely over-shadowed by the history of wealthy white planter families and later by the history of the Space Race and the accompanying technological and economic boom.

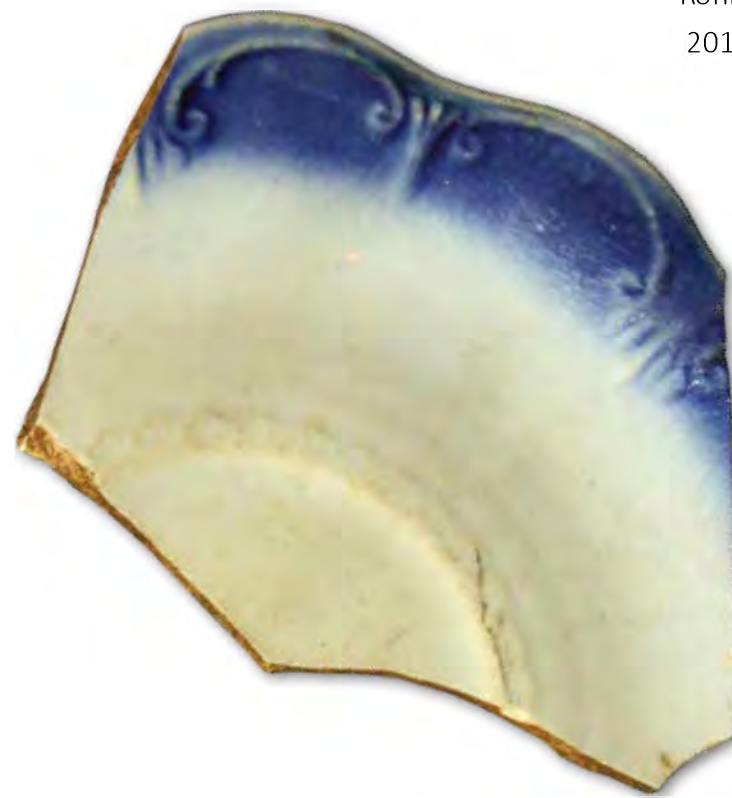
Much of this history survives only in the stories of those who experienced it, yet, there is no lack of primary source material. From tax records, slave schedules, and probate records, to Freedmen’s Bureau and census records, newspaper articles, court proceedings, real estate documents, and military service records, the archives in North Alabama are rich with information on its historic black occupants. Add to that the rich tableau of letters, journals, family bibles, church documents, genealogies, and oral history.



To mitigate the loss of three African American rural homesteads and their significance for the history of black landownership in the South, we have tried to pull together some of this information to create a picture of the historic black experience across the Middle Tennessee Valley and make the public aware of this rich history. This is not a deep analysis or a comprehensive history, but we hope it is a good overview and jumping off point for future researchers, genealogists, and the interested public. We hope in some small way, to contribute to the historical narrative of North Alabama and make it more equitable and representative of the diverse peoples and cultures that have contributed to our on-going story.

-Benjamin J. Hoksbergen

Cultural Resource Manager/Installation Archaeologist
Redstone Arsenal



Works Cited

Curry, Beverly S.

2006 The People Who Lived on the Land That Is Now Redstone Arsenal. Huntsville History Collection.

Kroulek, Orion S., James A. Morgan, Lawrence S. Alexander, et al.

2019 NHPA Phase III Data Recovery at Sites 1MA1161, 1MA1162, and 1MA1165, Three Historic African-American Farmsteads on Redstone Arsenal, Huntsville, Alabama. Submitted to North Wind Resource Consulting, Greenville, South Carolina, by Alexander Archaeological Consultants, Wildwood, Georgia. Special Collections. Huntsville-Madison County Public Library.

Oubre, Claude

1978 Forty Acres and a Mule: The Freedmen’s Bureau and Black Land Ownership. Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press.

Rohr, Nancy

2015 Free People of Color in Madison County, Alabama.