

Isaac Winston died in 1863 when he was sent home from the Confederate army due to an illness. His wife, Catherine, lived at Belmont until her death in 1884. Afterwards, the house and land went to their daughters, one of whom was Ella Winston Thornton. According to the National Register nomination, in 1901, Mrs. Thornton deeded a five-acre parcel to a woman named Bertha Witkins (Watkins). Ms. Watkins was a woman of color to whom Mrs. Thornton deeded the land "as a reward of her faithful service in the past." A woman named Bertha Watkins lived in Tuscumbia in 1900 with her husband, Rush, on a farm that they rented. Ms. Watkins was 65 years old in 1900, indicating that she was most likely born a slave in 1835. In 1910, the census records Rush Watkins living on a farm he owns free of mortgage in the Tuscumbia area, however, Bertha may have passed away as Rush is then married to a woman named Rosa.

Belmont stayed in the Winston family until 1941, although they did not always live there. The manor was photographed and documented with measured drawings as part of the Historic American Buildings Survey (AL-388) in 1937. At that time, Belmont appeared to be abandoned and in need of repair. The property was listed on the National Register of Historic Places (82002003) in 1982 a decade after

(Below) 1900 Federal Census Showing Bertha Watkins and Husband Rush **(Bottom)** 1910 Federal Census Showing Rush Watkins Owning a Farm (National Archives and Records Administration via Ancestry.com)

it had been heavily vandalized. The house and 33 surrounding acres were donated to the Alabama Historical Commission the following year. The Commission restored the manor.

4 ■ ■ Bethel Colbert Missionary Baptist Church and Bethel Community Cemeteries

The community of Bethel is small. On a map, you can find it at the intersection of 2nd Street and Bethel Church Road northeast of Leighton. The road is named for the Bethel Colbert Missionary Baptist Church, which has been in this location since at least 1896. Several maps indicate the Bethel School was located across the street to the west. An 1896 Colbert County land map depicts Bethel Church and School in northeast Colbert County, a part that was once Lawrence County. The church or school is labeled on the topographic maps from 1914 through 1952. The church is still in the same location and serves the

(Top Right) Excerpt of Map of Colbert County, Alabama, 1896, Showing Bethel Church and School (University of Alabama, Historical Map Collection, Online via Geological Survey of Alabama) **(Right)** 1936 USGS/TVA Topographic Maps of Bethel School, Wheeler Dam and Towns Creek, Alabama Quadrangles



African American community. According to Mr. Huston Cobb, Jr. in an interview with local historian Butch Walker, the church used a pool in the Kittiakaska Creek as a baptizing hole in the early 20th century. Huston, himself, was baptized there in 1935 by Rev. Willie A. Ashford. Later, the church used a location near Foster's Bridge.

The Bethel Colbert Missionary Baptist Church Cemetery is located at the end of Bethel Church Road. The cemetery is also known as the (Old) Bethel Colbert Cemetery. It can be confused for the Bethel Community Cemetery or the Old Bethel Cemetery – a white cemetery near the Franklin County border. According to the sign posted for the cemetery, it was established in 1953. It first appears on the 1971 USGS topographic map. According to the Alabama Atlas, the first known interment is that of Robert E. Cockburn (1830-1888), and members of the Hurd, Pate, and Vaden families are found here. There are only 34 graves recorded on Findagrave.com, the earliest being from 1987. O. C. Stanley, Sr. (1904-1987) – recorded on the census as "Ocie" Stanley – was a farmer who owned his own land in 1940.

About a quarter mile to the southwest of Bethel Colbert Missionary Baptist Church Cemetery is the Bethel Community Cemetery. Also known as the Bethel Cemetery, this cemetery was established in 1912, per its sign. Although the cemetery was already established, it is not included on the USGS topographic maps until 1950. This cemetery is also

23	226 239	Watkins, Rush W	Head	B	M		60	M	±	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama			1-1-0-0-1-2	0	Yes	No	Yes	R	8	146	23
24		Bertha	Wife	B	F		63	M	±	8	6	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama			No	No	Yes				24
25		Mania	Daughter	B	F	May 1851	19	S		Alabama	Alabama	Alabama					Yes	Yes	Yes				25
26		Robert	Son	B	M	Dec 1873	26	M	0	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama					Yes	Yes	Yes				26

45	29 30	Watkins, Rosa W	Head	M	B	73	M	2	4	Alabama	Tennessee	Virginia	English	Farmer	General Farm A		No	No	No	No	1	7	25	45
46		Miller, Amelia A	Wife	F	B	52	M	11	7	2	Alabama	Virginia	North Carolina	English	None		No	No	No	No				46
47		Miller, Amelia A	Daughter	F	B	76	M	17	3	Alabama	North Carolina	Ohio	English	None		No	No	No	No				47	

KEY

- COMMUNITIES
- CEMETERIES
- CHURCHES
- PLANTATIONS
- SCHOOLS
- OTHER

* Indicates a Historical - Non-Extant Resource