

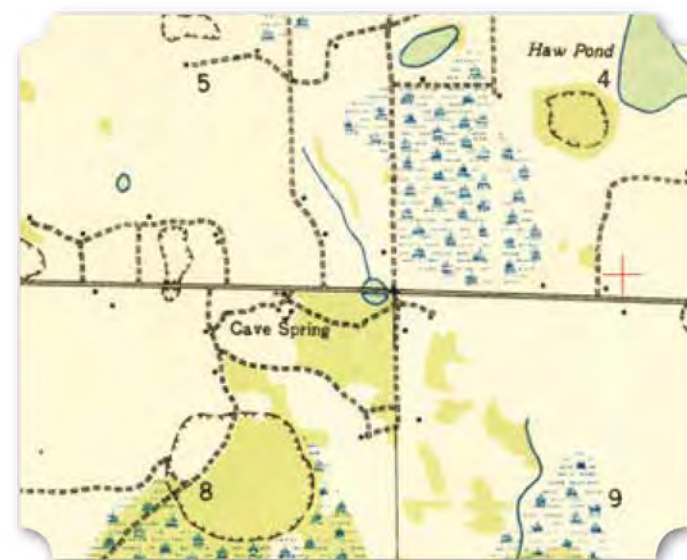
(Top) 1950/1952 USGS/TVA Topographic Maps of Bethel School and Cemetery, Wheeler Dam and Towns Creek, Alabama Quadrangles (Above) 1971/19574 USGS/TVA Topographic Maps of Bethel Church and Cemetery, Wheeler Dam and Towns Creek, Alabama Quadrangles (Below) 1940 Federal Census Showing Ocie (O.C.) Stanley Owning a Farm (National Archives and Records Administration via Ancestry.com

associated with the Bethel Colbert Missionary Baptist Church and serves the African American communities of Hatton, Bethel, and Leighton. It can sometime be confused with the Old Bethel or Bethel Colbert Missionary Baptist Church cemeteries. The Bethel Community Cemetery has about 71 graves, the earliest being Alex Stanley in 1915. Other surnames include Bates, Brown, Jones, and Nunery. According to a local historian who shared information on Findagrave.com, the cemetery has the potential for many more unmarked burials as oftentimes old graves were encountered when preparing new ones.

Interestingly, there are several markers that include the seal of the Mosaic Templars of America (MTA), an African American fraternal organization. The organization was founded by two former slaves in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1882. Little is known about the individual chapters of the MTA, however, the Mosaic Templars Cultural Center in Little Rock is using burial markers as one way to help reconstruct the historical records. According to one marker in the Bethel Community Cemetery, there was a local chapter called Bates Chamber #3200 in Leighton.

5 ■ ■ Cave Spring Missionary Baptist Church & Cemetery

Cave Spring Missionary Baptist Church and Cemetery are located south of 6th Street between South Wilson Dam Highway and Gnat Pond Road, east of Muscle Shoals. According to the *Alabama Historical Atlas*, it is an African American church organized in the early 1880s. However, the History of the Muscle Shoals Baptist Association from 1820 to 1890 published



(Left) 1936 USGS/TVA Topographic Map of Cave Spring, Leighton, Alabama Quadrangle (Left Below) 1952 USGS/TVA Topographic Map of Cave Spring, Leighton, Alabama Quadrangle

in 1891 recounts the founding of the church in November 1889. The Cave Spring Church joined the Baptist Association in 1890 with 17 members. The book also includes the biographies of the various ministers. The early ministers of Cave Spring Church were white men. It is unclear when the church was purchased by the African American community or when the accompanying cemetery was established.

The church is labeled on the 1936 USGS/TVA topographic map alongside a school. The next topographic map from 1952 indicates that the school is no longer there, but the cemetery is marked. The number of graves contained in the cemetery is unknown- only 29 of them from 2007 to present are recorded on Findagrave.com. The cemetery and church serves the African American community of Cave Spring today. It is likely that the school once served the children of color of the area in the early to mid-20th century as well. It was a common occurrence to conduct a school inside of a church and, as the center of the community, a cemetery would be established nearby.

6 ■ Cherokee

The community of Cherokee is located in the western half of the county along Lee Highway. Cherokee was originally called Buzzard Roost when it was settled in the early 1800s. The area was adjacent to the land reserved for the Chickasaw Indians and controlled

35	270	300	yes	Stanley	Ocie	Male	35	m	5	Alabama	same house	yes	no	yes	no	farmer	own	farm	all	0	0	yes	35
36				Oliver	Lucy	Female	33	m	5	Alabama	same house	no	no	no	no					0	0	no	36
37				Annie	Liza	Female	16	S	no	Alabama	same house	no	no	no	no					0	0	no	37
38				Hattie	Sam	Female	13	S	no	Alabama	same house	no	no	no	no					0	0	no	38
39				Nannie	Sam	Female	11	S	no	Alabama	same house	no	no	no	no					0	0	no	39
40				Henry	Sam	Male	9	S	no	Alabama	same house	no	no	no	no					0	0	no	40