

However, the school's most notable alumni may be Leighton-born singer Percy Sledge who would have graduated in the late 1950s. The last class graduated from Leighton Training School in 1970 when schools were integrated. Following desegregation, the school was converted into Leighton Middle School. Low enrollment forced the school to close its doors in 1994. The school has sat vacant ever since and in 2010 much of the campus was demolished, including the original Rosenwald building.

**Mt. New Home Baptist Church & New Home Cemetery**

The town of Leighton contains several other historically significant places associated with the African American community, particularly in the northwest quadrant created by the crossroads of County Line Road/Main Street and Old Highway 20/ Joe Wheeler Highway. Mt. New Home Baptist Church is located just southwest of the Leighton School on the north side of Wheeler Highway. There is little information on the church, which was built sometime after 1963. The church is not labeled on any historical or current topographic map. The church may have a cemetery associated with it, New Home Cemetery. According to the *Historical Atlas of Alabama*, the

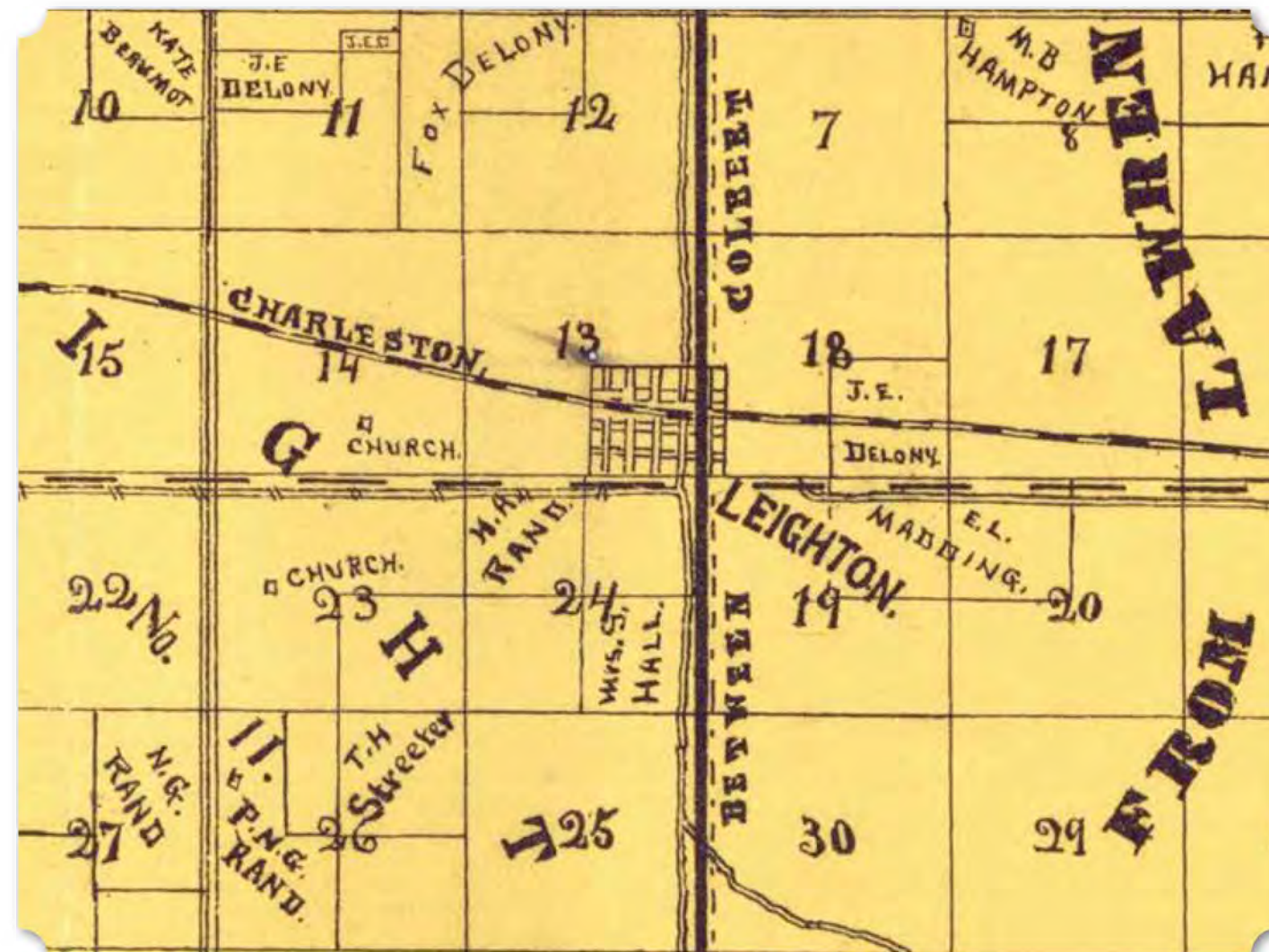
location of the New Home Cemetery is not known and could not be located on any historical maps. However, the *Atlas* states that the cemetery dates back to at least 1886, is inactive, and used by African American members of the community. The cemetery was recorded by the WPA in 1933, which documented 39 graves dating from 1812 to 1930.

Common surnames in the New Home Cemetery are Bates, Fennel, Jones, and Mullins. There are a few members of the community buried here that owned a farm in the early 20th century. Mr. Bose (Boke) Jones Fennel (1858-1913) owned a farm in the Leighton district in 1900; Mr. Mat Bates (1853-1924) owned a farm in 1910; and Mr. Riley Preuit (died 1926) owned a farm in 1920.

**Galilee Missionary Baptist Church & Cemetery**

To the immediate west of Mt. New Home Baptist Church is Galilee Missionary Baptist Church and Cemetery. According to the nomination form for the Leighton Training School, local African American children were taught classes in this church as early as 1892. The presence of the church in the late 1800s

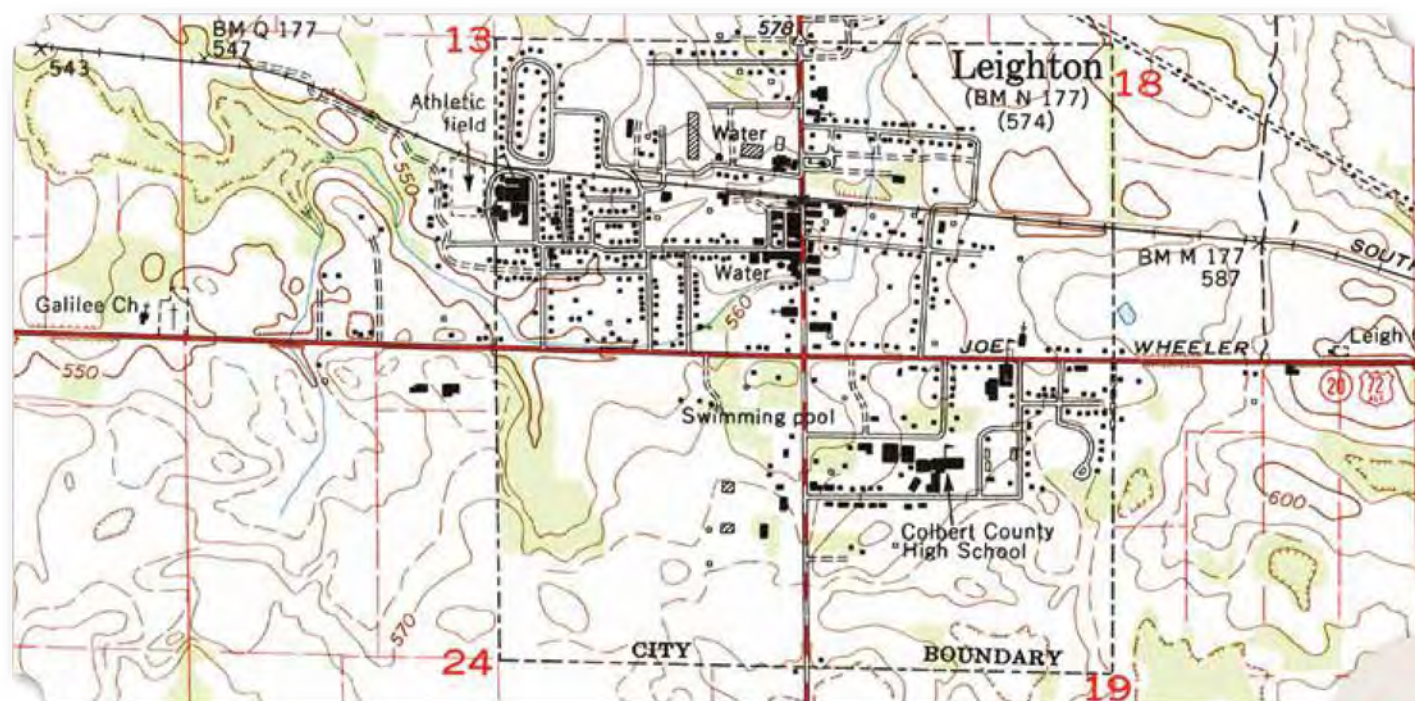
(Below) 1971 USGS/TVA Topographic Map of Leighton, Leighton, Alabama Quadrangle



(Above) Excerpt of Map of Colbert County, Alabama, 1896, Showing Leighton (University of Alabama, Historical Map Collection, Online via Geological Survey of Alabama)

is confirmed by an 1896 map of Colbert County on which the Galilee Church is one of the only marked features around Leighton.

The Galilee Missionary Baptist Church Cemetery, also known simply as Galilee Cemetery, has at least 83 interments including the families of Barnett, Bates, Hughes, King, Lewis, Mullins, and Stanley. The oldest grave known is that of Bob Randolph from 1919. Others interred at the Galilee Cemetery include the Vinson family with Richard "Dick" Vinson (1862-1925), his wife Lizzie (1857-1944), and their daughter, Margaret Vinson Hankins (1902-1990). Richard Vinson owned his own farm near the old county line in Leighton from at least 1900 to 1910. Authur Neloms (1887-1965) and his wife, Susie (1891-1974), owned a farm northwest of Leighton in the Brick census district from at least 1930 to 1940. Their grandson, Arthur Curtis Neloms (Nelons) (1932-1953) is also laid to rest at the Galilee Cemetery.



\* Indicates a Historical - Non-Extant Resource