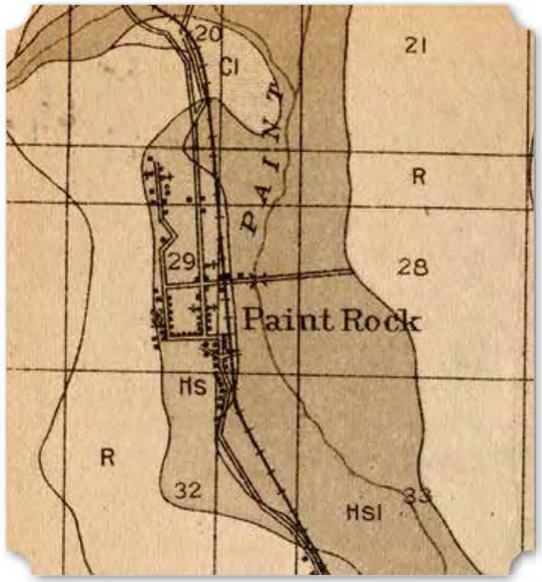

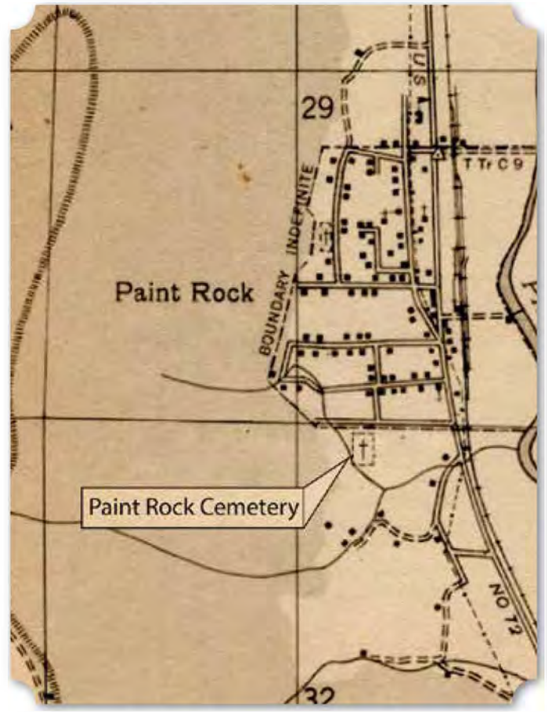

(Above) Excerpt of 1911 USGS Soil Map of Paint Rock (University of Alabama, Historical Map Collection, Online) **(Right)** 1936 USGS/TVA Topographic Map of Paint Rock, Paint Rock, Alabama Quadrangle

In the 21st century, Paint Rock is less than one percent African American, but in the early 20th century, much of the surrounding farmland was operated by African Americans and a few owned their farms. In 1900, about 23% of the total 244 households in Paint Rock were African American. The peak percentage of households of color was in 1910 when 33% of the 178 households were of color. However, the African American population dropped in 1920 and never really recovered. In that year, 38 (19%) of the 204 households were of color. There were only 13% and 17% African American households in 1930 and 1940, respectively.

The most African American landowners in Paint Rock lived in the area in 1920. While there were six landowning farmers of color in 1900 and 1910, there were 13 landowners in 1920. This number dropped off to only 9 in 1930 and 7 in 1940, however, several individuals owned their farms for more than a decade. The Smithers family had eight members who owned farms between 1900 and 1940. Everett, Sandy, George, and James A. Smithers were brothers who all owned a farm in Paint Rock in 1900. The 1860 census records them living with their mother, Prudence - all of them described as "mulatto" and free inhabitants of Jackson County. Everett must have passed away before 1910 and Everett, Jr. took over the farm by 1920. Sandy gave up his farm and moved in with his son, Earnest, who worked at the pencil mill, but took up farming by 1940. George owned his until at least 1920. James continued to own his farm until 1920, after which he passed away and his widow, Sallie Smithers, owned the farm through 1940. Jake Smithers was either the son of James or George and he owned a farm from at least 1920 to 1940.

Despite so many members of one family being free before Emancipation and owning farms, very little is known about the Smithers family. Records of James Smithers and several of his family members

(Below) Excerpt of 1900 Census Record Showing Emilie Rowan and James A. Smithers Owning Farms (National Archives and Records Administration via Ancestry.com) **(Bottom)** Excerpt of 1900 Census Record Showing E* Smithers Owning a Farm (National Archives and Records Administration via Ancestry.com)

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