

# Smithers

A funeral was held Tuesday, November 21, 1972, for Ernest Smithers, 88, in the Pleasant Grove Missionary Baptist Church with the Rev. W. P. Pettey officiating. Burial was in Paint Rock Cemetery.

A resident of Paint Rock, he died Thursday, November 16, at his home.

He is survived by his wife, Mrs. Elizabeth Smithers; and a daughter, Mrs. Catherine Brock, of Springfield, Ohio.

are recorded in the tribal enrollment applications ledger from the turn-of-the-20th-century. James A. Smithers applied for Cherokee tribal membership for himself and three of his children. The records note that he and his family were rejected on the basis that "no ancestor ever enrolled. No ancestor party to treaties of 1835-6 and 1846. Shows no connection with Eastern Cherokees." Apparently, whatever information lead Mr. Smithers to believe he had Cherokee ancestry was not sufficient for the tribal government. His rejection lead to the rejection of his daughter, Ellie Smithers, three of his brothers, George W., H. C., and Sandy A. Smithers, his sister, Emily Rowan, and two nieces, Josie Shepard and Mamie Conyers.

(Left) Obituary for Ernest Smithers (1884-1972) (Findagrave.com, User Annette Bradford) (Below) Excerpt of 1900 Census Record Showing George Smithers Owning a Farm (National Archives and Records Administration via Ancestry.com) (Bottom) Excerpt of 1900 Census Record Showing Handy Smithers Owning a Farm (National Archives and Records Administration via Ancestry.com)

## Paint Rock Cemetery

Death records and location of burial could not be identified for most of the Smithers family. Earnest (Ernest) Smithers (1884-1972) had an obituary in the *Jackson County Advertiser* on November 22, 1972, which says he was buried at the Paint Rock Cemetery but he has no marker there. The Paint Rock Cemetery is still in use by the Paint Rock community. A sign indicates that it was established in 1918; the earliest marker dates to 1920. It is the city cemetery and its over 700 graves belong to both the white and African American communities.

## Pleasant Grove Baptist Church & Cemetery

More of the African American landowning community can be found at the Pleasant Grove Baptist Church Cemetery. Also known as the Rhyne Cemetery, this old African American cemetery is associated with the Pleasant Grove Baptist Church across the road. Located down County Road 237 off of U.S. 72 on the north side of Paint Rock, the cemetery has at least 57 marked graves and probably numerous unmarked

graves. The first known interment is John Williamson (1896-1909) and the last known interment is B. E. Williamson (1903-1982). Other surnames common here include Kelley, Massey, Owens, Smithers, and Williamson.

Landowning farmers laid to rest at the Pleasant Grove Baptist Cemetery include Jake Smithers (1879-1956) and his wife, Carrie Smithers (1883-1964), the son of either James A. or George W. Smithers. Creed Conyers (dates unknown) owned a farm in Paint Rock from at least 1920 to 1940. Antney Kelley (1866-1943), recorded as Anthony Kelly in most census records, owned his farm from at least 1930 to 1940, and probably until his death. Finally, Rich Hunter (dates unknown) was another landowning farmer in 1940.

## Clay Cemetery

Clay Cemetery is located northwest of Paint Rock and just east of the Jackson County line in the town of Gurley, which is mostly in Madison County. It appears on the 1936 USGS topographic map as a symbol with no name but on the subsequent maps in 1950

51	198205	Smithers Geo	Head	B	M	Aug	1844	55	M	27	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Farmer	0	yes	yes	yes	0	7	7	100
52		Nancy	Wife	B	F	May	1855	45	M	27	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama			yes	yes	yes				
53		Auburn	Son	B	M	Apr	1874	22	S		Alabama	Alabama	Alabama			yes	yes	yes				
54		Joe	Son	B	M	Aug	1877	20	S		Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Farmer Laborer	4	yes	yes	yes				
55		Osir	Daughter	B	F	May	1884	16	S		Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	at school	4	yes	yes	yes				
56		Aloy	Son	B	M	Aug	1890	9	S		Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	at school	4	yes	yes	yes				
57		Geo.	Son	B	M	July	1891	8	S		Alabama	Alabama	Alabama		2	no	no	yes				
58		Willie	Grand Son	B	M	July	1892	7	S		Alabama	Alabama	Alabama		1	no	no	yes				
59		Keenan Geo	Boarder	B	M	Apr	1884	16	S		Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Laborer. Cadet	2	no	no	yes				

78	184197	Smithers Handy	Head	B <th>M <th>Mar <th>1854 <th>46 <th>M <th>20</th> <th>Alabama</th> <th>Alabama</th> <th>Alabama</th> <th>Farmer</th> <th>0</th> <th>yes</th> <th>yes</th> <th>yes</th> <th>0</th> <th>7</th> <th>7</th> <th>91</th> </th></th></th></th></th>	M <th>Mar <th>1854 <th>46 <th>M <th>20</th> <th>Alabama</th> <th>Alabama</th> <th>Alabama</th> <th>Farmer</th> <th>0</th> <th>yes</th> <th>yes</th> <th>yes</th> <th>0</th> <th>7</th> <th>7</th> <th>91</th> </th></th></th></th>	Mar <th>1854 <th>46 <th>M <th>20</th> <th>Alabama</th> <th>Alabama</th> <th>Alabama</th> <th>Farmer</th> <th>0</th> <th>yes</th> <th>yes</th> <th>yes</th> <th>0</th> <th>7</th> <th>7</th> <th>91</th> </th></th></th>	1854 <th>46 <th>M <th>20</th> <th>Alabama</th> <th>Alabama</th> <th>Alabama</th> <th>Farmer</th> <th>0</th> <th>yes</th> <th>yes</th> <th>yes</th> <th>0</th> <th>7</th> <th>7</th> <th>91</th> </th></th>	46 <th>M <th>20</th> <th>Alabama</th> <th>Alabama</th> <th>Alabama</th> <th>Farmer</th> <th>0</th> <th>yes</th> <th>yes</th> <th>yes</th> <th>0</th> <th>7</th> <th>7</th> <th>91</th> </th>	M <th>20</th> <th>Alabama</th> <th>Alabama</th> <th>Alabama</th> <th>Farmer</th> <th>0</th> <th>yes</th> <th>yes</th> <th>yes</th> <th>0</th> <th>7</th> <th>7</th> <th>91</th>	20	Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Farmer	0	yes	yes	yes	0	7	7	91
79		Earnest	Son	B	M	May	1885	15	S		Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Farmer Laborer	6	no	no	yes				
80		Shelby	Son	B	M	Mar	1887	11	S		Alabama	Alabama	Alabama	Farmer Laborer	6	no	no	yes				