



(Above) 1972 USGS Topographic Map of Bailey Cemetery, Pruittton and Center Hill, Alabama Quadrangles

The church appears on the 1914 Muscle Shoals topographic map as “Baileys Church,” and it is also sometimes written as Baileys AMC Chapel. The 1936 TVA map shows “Bailey Chapel School” and “Bailey Cemetery” in this location. Many of the rural African American schools of North Alabama were consolidated in the 1950s, and by 1952, the school is no longer present on topographic maps. “Bailey Chapel” and “Bailey Cemetery” remain. No maps of

this area were made until 1988. By then, the church is gone and only “Bailey Cemetery” remains. However, a 1972 map of the adjacent area, Bailey Springs, depicts a church in the current location of Bailey Springs AME Church, indicating that the church moved to the west side of Shoal Creek in the 1970s.

The Bailey Cemetery has at least 297 graves and is still in use. The earliest known interment is Phoebe Grant (1824-1878). Common family names include Allen, Bailey, Hammer, Harden/Hardin, Harrison, and Rowlett. Several landowning farmers are interred here, including Sam Brooks (1889-1961), who owned a farm in Killen from at least 1910 to 1930; Jennie Gordon (1861-1925) who owned a farm in 1920; John A. Harrison (1885-1955) and Willie Harrison (1886-1942), who owned farms from at least 1930 to 1940; and Charles Hardin (1904-1995), who owned a farm in 1940.

In a 2017 interview by the Florence African American Heritage Project, Ms. Pathsenia Cole said her great-great uncle, Amos Bailey (1824-1904) donated the land for Bailey’s Chapel Cemetery. Bailey was most likely born a slave in Virginia and came to Alabama

(Below) Excerpt of 1920 Census Record Showing Sam Brooks Owning a Farm (National Archives and Records Administration via Ancestry.com) (Bottom) Excerpt of 1930 Census Record Showing John A. Harrison Owning a Farm (National Archives and Records Administration via Ancestry.com)

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|----|----|-----|---------|----------|------|---|---|---|----|---|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-----|--------|------------|----|
| 88 | | | Francis | Wagoner | | V | W | 1 | 0 | | | Alabama | Alabama | Alabama | None | | | | | |
| 89 | 7m | 107 | Burba | Janet | Head | 0 | F | M | 30 | M | | yes | yes | Alabama | Alabama | Alabama | yes | farmer | owned farm | 07 |
| 90 | | | | Hurstade | Wife | | F | B | 29 | M | | yes | yes | Alabama | Alabama | Alabama | yes | None | | |
| 91 | 7m | 110 | Mathney | John L | Head | 1 | R | M | 28 | M | | yes | yes | Alabama | Alabama | Alabama | yes | farmer | owned farm | 07 |
| 92 | | | | Luck | Wife | | F | W | 30 | M | | yes | yes | Alabama | Alabama | Alabama | yes | None | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----------|---------|----------|------------|--|-----|---|----|----|-----|----|-----|-----|---------|---------|---------|--|-----|--------|-------------|-----|----|----|
| 92 | 60 | 60 | Harrison | John | Head | 0 | | yes | M | 24 | 45 | M | 20 | no | yes | Alabama | Alabama | Alabama | | yes | farmer | own farming | yes | no | 15 |
| 93 | | | | H.V. | wife-H | | | x | F | 14 | 40 | M | 15 | no | yes | Alabama | Alabama | Alabama | | yes | None | | | | |
| 94 | | | | Spencer | son | | | x | M | 12 | 12 | S | | yes | yes | Alabama | Alabama | Alabama | | yes | None | | | | |
| 95 | | | | Gennie | Daughter | | | x | F | 9 | 9 | S | | yes | yes | Alabama | Alabama | Alabama | | yes | None | | | | |
| 96 | | | | Edna | Daughter | | | x | F | 5 | 5 | S | | no | yes | Alabama | Alabama | Alabama | | yes | None | | | | |
| 97 | | | | Kennedy | Henry | son-in-law | | x | M | 85 | 85 | Wid | | no | yes | Alabama | Alabama | Alabama | | yes | None | | | | |

KEY

- COMMUNITIES
- CEMETERIES
- CHURCHES
- PLANTATIONS
- SCHOOLS

with his master. In February 1864, he enlisted with the Union Army in Clifton, Tennessee and was assigned to Company A of the 40th USCT. In 1880, Bailey is included in the agricultural census as owning 70 acres of improved land and 130 of unimproved land in eastern Lauderdale County. Amos Bailey was not found in the 1900 census records, but he is buried at Bailey’s Cemetery. Ms. Cole also relayed that Amos’ father, Thomas Jefferson Bailey, had owned “over 1,000 acres of land at one time...he has so much land that the government came to him sometimes and told him that he had to sell some of it.” That land was in east Lauderdale County, presumably some of the land that Amos Bailey inherited.

5 Bethel-Lauderdale Missionary Baptist Church, Cemetery and Bethel School (Rosenwald)*

Bethel-Lauderdale Missionary Baptist Church and Cemetery are located on the edge of Sinking Creek, east of the community of Smithsonia about 10 miles west of Florence on the south side of County Road 2, also known as Gunwaleford Road. There are two USGS topographic maps from 1924. The original labels “Bethel School,” with only a symbol for the church. The other map appears to be a revision and labels

“Bethel Church” and depicts a school. The 1935 map depicts the church, school, and cemetery at Bethel Church.

The Bethel School was one of seven Rosenwald schools in Lauderdale County. It was a two-room, two-teacher type school built under the direction of the Tuskegee Institute around 1913 to 1915. The school cost a total of \$950 to construct with \$350 coming from the surrounding African American community, \$300 of public funds, and another \$300 from the Rosenwald Fund. Smithsonia and Oakland had their own schools, as well as nearby Shiloh School, which speaks to the density of the community of color around Smithsonia, Woodland, and Oakland.



(Above) 1936 USGS Topographic Map of Bethel Church, School, and Cemetery, Sinking Creek, Alabama Quadrangle