

(Left) The African American Section of Courtland City Cemetery, 2018 (Photographs by Jenna Tran)

has declined and the likelihood of many landowning African American farmers in the Courtland area today is slim.

Courtland City Cemetery

Courtland has a fairly large city cemetery that dates to the founding of the town in 1819. The final resting place of early founding families, Revolutionary War veterans, and Union and Confederate soldiers, the cemetery also features a sizable African American section dating to just after the Civil War. The earliest portion of the cemetery is on the south end, where the entrance is located today. To the immediate east is the African American section, which appears sparse, particularly on the south end; however, this is most likely where the earliest African American graves are located. The earliest African American burials are unmarked.

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* Indicates a Historical - Non-Extant Resource

Despite the history of the cemetery, it is not depicted on the 1936 topographic map, the earliest USGS map for this area. It first appears on the 1951 and 1974 maps with the simple label of "Cem."

North Alabama Baptist Academy* and Courtland Colored High School*

The North Alabama Baptist Academy was the first high school for African American children in Lawrence County. The Muscle Shoals Baptist Colored Association, formed during Reconstruction, raised funds for the academy. By 1897 a board of trustees was authorized to create and maintain a school. The two-story building served children up to the 9th grade. In 1915, there were 194 students enrolled. Some students boarded at the academy, however, that ended in 1928, when a fire broke out in the living quarters killing two students.

(Below) School Census Card for the Neal Family with a Child at Courtland School, 1934 (Lawrence County Archives, Moulton, Alabama)