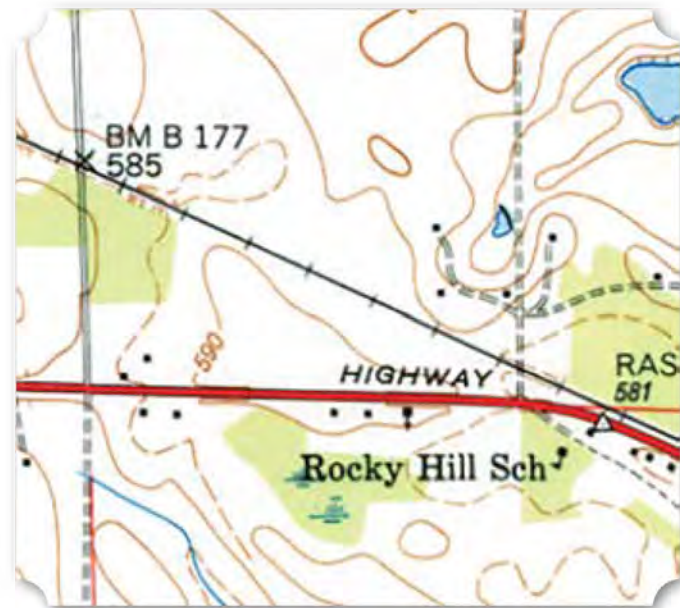


(Below) 1951 USGS/TVA Topographic Map of Rocky Hill, Courtland, Alabama Quadrangle (Bottom) 1974 USGS/TVA Topographic Map of Rocky Hill, Courtland, Alabama Quadrangle



Rocky Hill Castle*

Rocky Hill Castle was an impressive plantation house built for James Edmonds Saunders about 1860. Saunders had a plantation, named Rocky Hill, since the mid-1820s in the early years of Alabama statehood. Originally from Georgia, Saunders came to Lawrence County with his wife and father. His father,

“You either made two dollars and 50 cent a hundred or three dollars a hundred [pounds of cotton]. I made good money because when you pick 900 pounds and you take that home, I didn’t even know I could afford to buy land back then. But I could have bought land. But... no one ever said the price of land.”

- Ms. Carolyn Wilson

(Top) Photograph of Rocky Hill Castle, Lawrence County, Alabama. Historic American Buildings Survey, 1935 (Library of Congress) (Above) Photograph of Rocky Hill Slave Cabin, Lawrence County, Alabama. Historic American Buildings Survey, 1935 (Library of Congress)

Turner Saunders established his plantation four miles away in Town Creek and called it Saunders Hill. The estate had about 640 acres when James Saunders built Rocky Hill Castle. The house was nearly complete in 1861 when construction was interrupted by the Civil War. The Confederate army used it as a field hospital, which led to decades of ghost stories.

The manor passed through many hands before being sold out of the family in the 1920s. It was purchased for the farmland, not the house, and the building went empty. The derelict house was demolished by the next owner in 1961. Prior to its demolition, it was documented for the Historic American Buildings Survey in the 1930s.



Rocky Hill School*

The Rocky Hill School was one of four Rosenwald schools built in Lawrence County in the early 20th century. Like most of the schools in the county, Rocky Hill was built under the direction of the Tuskegee Institute sometime in the mid-1910s. It was a one-room, one-teacher type school that cost a total of \$1,650, with \$800 donated by the African American community, \$450 from the county funds, and \$400 from the Rosenwald Fund. Rocky Hill School is included in the school census records from at least 1930 to 1958.

The school is labeled “Rocky Hill School” on the 1936 and 1951 USGS topographic maps. It was located on the south side of Joe Wheeler Highway and the railroad tracks in close proximity to a church and the old Rocky Hill Castle. By 1974, the school and the building are no longer on the map, likely due to integration in 1971, when most African American schools closed.

“They had four classes there... first through the fourth. We only had two teachers - Miss Robinson and Miss Fuller. I remember them so well. They were so sweet. We used to draw our water from the well. I think I have the pot thing that went down into the well. That was the most exciting thing you could do is run out and fetch the water and pass out the coats.”

- Ms. Carolyn Wilson