



(Above) Image of Class in Front of Living Water School, Date Unknown (Retro Glances, 1947)
 (Below) Aerial Photograph of Center Star Church and Cemetery in 1949 (University of Alabama, Historical Map Collection, Online)



10 Cotton Hill Plantation

Located west of Peets Corner at the intersection of Huntsville Brown Ferry Road and Cambridge Lane is the Cotton Hill Plantation house, dating to about 1824. The most notable owner of Cotton Hill was Luke Matthews (1796-1875). Matthews and his family arrived in Limestone County about 1820 and within 10 years he had purchased land in the area and owned 45 slaves. After his wife passed away, he moved to Madison County with his second wife

and settled on a plantation near Elko Switch in 1846, while retaining ownership of Cotton Hill. According to the slave schedules, Matthews owned 112 enslaved people in 1840, 45 in 1850, and 30 in 1860 in Limestone County alone.

Luke Matthews sold Cotton Hill to John B. McClellan in 1873 and the property has since passed through many owners. In 2014, the property was added to the National Register for Historic Places (#14001003).

(Below) Cotton Hill Plantation (National Park Service)
 (Bottom) Excerpt of the 1850 U.S. Agricultural Census Showing the Listing for Luke Matthews



18	Luke Matthews	225	173	6000	45	6	5	6	9	10	100	602	730	38	
19	James B. Stewart				40	3	3	2	8		70	409	630	30	
10	Luke Matthews	600	5		630	17	1	6	7	20	50	200	1660	6300	300

KEY

- COMMUNITIES
- CEMETERIES
- CHURCHES
- PLANTATIONS
- SCHOOLS

11 Cotton Hill School*

Cotton Hill School, likely named after the nearby plantation, was also called Bright Hope School because classes were held in Bright Hope Church. According to a history of Limestone County schools completed in 1947, the Cotton Hill School was organized in 1916 by local landowner, Mr. James Evans who began raising money for children's education after his daughter, Nellie, attended Trinity School.

James Evans, his wife Rena, and their daughter Nellie lived in a single household in 1910. John H. Evans, presumably James' brother, lived next door. The brothers each owned a farm on Mooresville Road. Land records listed "Jas Evans" as the owner of a parcel in the vicinity of the school from at least 1899-1913.

To raise funds for a school building, a vegetable garden was established, and the proceeds from selling the produce were put toward building materials. A rally was also held in the community as a fundraiser. There is no evidence that the building was actually completed as classes continued to be held in the church. In 1920, the first county teacher was employed and transferred to the school. As the community grew between 1920 and 1943, so did the school and it eventually needed four teachers as well as a schoolhouse. A site was leased and, in 1947, the trustees, teachers, and children constructed the two-room building beside the church. In 1947, the teachers were Mrs. Will Alyce Townsend, Mrs. Alyce Mae Jackson, and Ms. Emma B. Witchard.

