

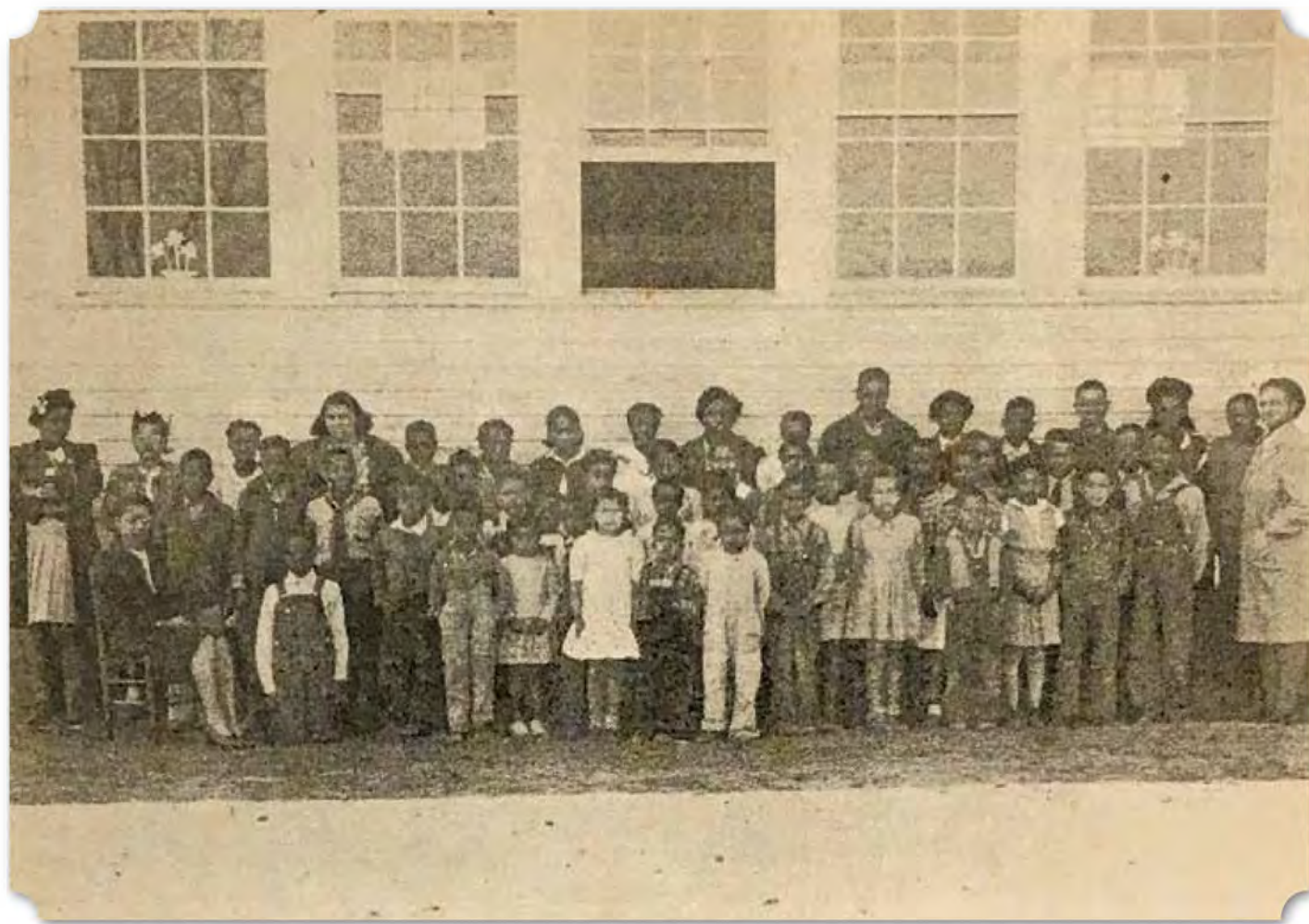
district known as Georgia, along with the communities of Coxe, Ripley, and parts of Oakland. Between 1900 and 1940, the population of Georgia increased from 298 to 408 households. But this population increase does not appear to be due to an increase in African American households. The peak number of African American-owned farms in the area was 21 (7%), in 1900. Through the following three decades the number of African American landowners continued to decline until by 1930, they made up only 2.2% of all Georgia households. Possibly due to the efforts of the TVA and the many changes to the area, the number of African American farming landowners rebounded in 1940. That year there were 15 farms (3.6%) owned by African Americans.

Of the 21 farms owned by African Americans in 1900, four families had two or more members who owned farms. Most of these families were a parent and one or more children or siblings. Surrey and Harriett Farrar appear to have been brother and sister, Ed and Dublin Coleman might have been father and son, as were Mack and Richard Binford, while Mallissa Allen was the mother of James S. and Sherman Allen – all African American farm owners. Other landowners in the area include Hence and Governor Yarbrough, great grandparents of Col. James L. Walker. By 1920, the Farrar family is the only one in the area that owned multiple farms. Farrar family members owned five farms that year.

**(Below)** 1950/1952 USGS/TVA Topographic Map of Little Elk Community, Cairo and Rogersville, Alabama Quadrangles

**Little Elk Church and School\***

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the community of Little Elk was centered around the



**(Above)** Image of Class in Front of Little Elk School, Date Unknown (Retro Glances, 1947)

church and school. The Little Elk Missionary Baptist Church had its beginnings either before or just at the end of the Civil War. The Little Elk School began in 1865 and classes were held in the church. Although the church and associated cemetery did not appear on topographic maps until 1950, their location was labeled as the Little Elk School in 1936.

The Little Elk Missionary Baptist Church Cemetery adjacent to the church contains about 120 graves. The oldest of the burials was Unity Smith (1899-1936). Common surnames are Yarbrough (24 family members), Smith (17), and Freeman (11).

Among the early 20th-century African American landowners in the Little Elk community were Jordan

Townsend (1865-1960) and his wife, Beulah, who owned a farm in 1930. Joe Weaver, Sr. (1883-1976) and his son, Joe, Jr., who lived next door, owned a farm by 1940. Two of Joe, Sr.'s wives, Mattie Yarbrough Weaver (1886-1940) and Mary Etta Trotter Weaver (1880-1963), are buried with him in the Little Elk Missionary Baptist Church Cemetery. Mattie Weaver's brother, Huston Yarbrough (1892-1982) also owned a farm in the area in 1930 and is buried here as well.

Because the Little Elk School held classes in the church on a bluff overlooking the river, it was at times referred to as Church Hill School. In 1939, either a separate two-room frame building was built for use as a school or two additional rooms were added to an existing building. In 1947, Mrs. Louise Lockhart and Mrs. Minnie B. Yarbrough were the teachers.

