

(Above) Newspaper Clipping Covering a Celebration of Emancipation at Cedar Grove Church in 1895 (Huntsville Revisited Facebook Page)

grandson, James was the first person in the family to own land, which was deeded to him by his father. Cedar Grove and Center Grove churches, known as the "twin churches" as both were Methodist, united into a single church in Huntsville after the U.S. Army bought the land for Redstone Arsenal.

Walter Joiner, who was interviewed three times between 2000 and 2005 by Redstone Arsenal, said that the creek where McDonnell Creek and Huntsville Spring Branch met is where the churches would often perform baptisms.

9 ■ Center Grove Church*

This church is one of the Methodist churches that served the Pond Beat community on what is now Redstone Arsenal. There is some confusion as to whether this church was originally called Grange Church. According to James Love (interviewed in 2005), the church shared a preacher with the Grange Church, but other members of the community said the Grange Church was what it was called before joining the Methodist conference. Either way, the

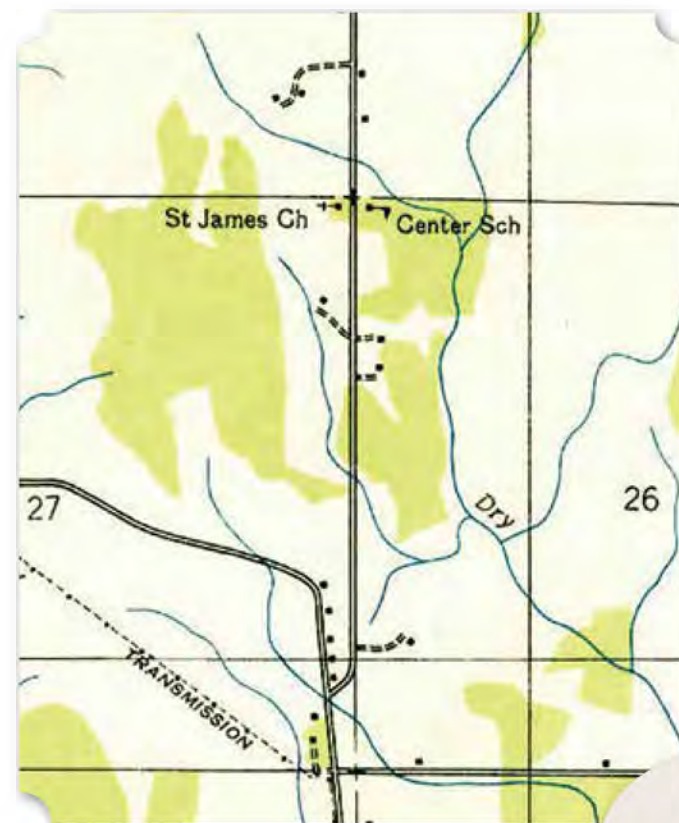
Center Grove Church was a pivotal center of the community. Many of the farming landowners have ties to the church through weddings or baptisms. Another important community center, a Masonic lodge, was located by the church. It must have stood out on the landscape as many of those interviewed about living in Pond Beat and Mullins Flat use the Center Grove Church as a reference point.

Cedar Grove and Center Grove churches united into a single church in Huntsville after the U.S. Army bought the land for Redstone Arsenal. They were known as the "twin" churches.

10 ■ Center School*

In the community of Jeff, just east of Harvest, is the Center School. It is shown on the USGS topographic

(Below) 1936 USGS Topographic Map, Jeff, Alabama Quadrangle



KEY

- COMMUNITIES
- CEMETERIES
- CHURCHES
- PLANTATIONS
- SCHOOLS

maps in both 1936 and 1958 before disappearing. It likely closed after integration began. Notable resident, Dan Tibbs, Jr. attended this school starting in 1928 at the age of six. His father, Dan Tibbs, Sr. purchased a 200-acre farm across the street from the school in 1929. The Tibbs family still owns a house on a smaller lot that was once part of the original farm.

11 ■ Conyers School (Rosenwald)*

The two-room, two-teacher Conyers School, approved in 1913, was one of nine Rosenwald schools in Madison County. It cost \$1,300 to build of which the Rosenwald Fund provided \$300, the African American community gave \$550, and the rest, \$450, came from public funds. The school was built under the direction of the Tuskegee Institute. The two acres that were required by the Rosenwald Fund were donated by Tom Conyers, an African American landowner and farmer who owned over 100 acres just south of the school.

The school was located at the county line on the east side of Gurley along Hereford Road. A one-



(Above) The Conyers School in 1994 (Huntsville Revisited Facebook Page)

room addition was added as the community grew. Sometime in the late 1940s and early 1950s, it served as the junior high school and an activity center for groups like the Boy Scouts. In 1957, the Conyers School was consolidated with several other schools in the nearby town of Brownsboro, about five miles up Highway 72 from Gurley. The school building burnt down in the early 1990s.

(Below, Left) Tom Conyers on Madison County Land Books, 1920-1932 (Index of Land Records, Madison County, Alabama) (Below) Conyers School on Madison County Land Books, 1933-1944 (Index of Land Records, Madison County, Alabama)



* Indicates a Historical, Non-Extant Resource