



(Above) Drawing of Silver Hill School Done by Local Artist upon the Request of Ms. Deborah Horton Jordan (Courtesy Ms. Horton Jordan)

the local African American community and another \$300 each from public funds and the Rosenwald Fund.

The Silver Hill School was built about 1913 and was one of the early Tuskegee schools. The schoolhouse was located in the community of Mullins Flat. The land for Silver Hill School previously belonged to William A. Love and subsequently, Celia Love. The area around the school was all owned by African American families, including Everett Horton, Sledge Crutcher, Paris Bradford, Bill Berney, Moses and Everett Love, and Tom Hancock. These lands stayed in the families until 1941 when the U.S. government acquired the land for Redstone Arsenal.

60 ■ Simpson Slave Cemetery

While this cemetery on Redstone Arsenal has no visible markers, it possibly has up to 500 or more burials. The cemetery was, indeed, a slave cemetery and John Simpson owned the land. However, Simpson did not own any land in that area until 1870 and this land was adjacent to the cemetery. Historian John P. Rankin hypothesized that “if this had been a slave cemetery, then the slaves would have been owned

(before the Civil War ended in 1865) by Charity Cooper Lee, James W. Fennell, Charles G. Bowen, and/or William H. Clopton, according to the records of land ownership before 1865.”

61 ■ Timmons Plantation* and Cemetery

The Timmons plantation was once in south Madison in what was the community of Pond Beat at the turn of the 20th century, now Redstone Arsenal. The land was originally settled by John and Catherine Timmons. Their son William Hardie Timmons (1839-1906) was orphaned by age six and became a ward of several neighboring families. One of John Timmons’ 49 slaves was a young girl named Louisa. William and Louisa essentially grew up together. They married in 1865 and had at least four children together, perhaps more.

However, by 1868, anti-miscegenation laws made the Timmons’ marriage illegal. Louisa then married William Joiner and her children by Timmons took the Joiner name. William Timmons is known to have taken Annie Eliza Latham, a white woman, as a wife, but there is no record for this marriage.

William Timmons’ relationship with former slaves went beyond Louisa. In 1869, Timmons sold land to William Joiner (Louisa’s new husband), Elisha Joiner, and James Timmons, all former slaves who most likely worked the same land as slaves that they purchased as freedmen. The men bought 55 acres for \$11.60 per acres. Timmons also sold 100 acres to former slave Peter Timmons the same year for \$9 per acre, all a fair value for the land. Local historian John P. Rankin’s research has uncovered that many former slaves were able to purchase land from other plantation owners, but the price would often be at a premium much higher than that offered to potential white buyers. However, Timmons was an exception to this and often sold land at market value, not discriminating against people of color.

William and Louisa Timmons are the progenitors of many of the Pond Beat/Mullins Flat families. Members of the Joiner, Jordan, Lacy, and Burns families can all trace back to this interracial Timmons couple.

There are extensive ruins on the site of the Timmons Plantation, which were surveyed by the UAH in 2010 under the supervision of Redstone Archaeologist Ben Hoksbergen.

The Timmons Cemetery is a small family cemetery including the graves of John and Catherine Timmons, their son William and his white wife, Annie. This cemetery is arguably the most unique and substantial

(Below) Portion of an 1875 Map of Madison County, Alabama by James H. Mayhew of Strobridge and Co. Showing Timmons Land (Geological Survey of Alabama via University of Alabama – Historical Map Collection)

