

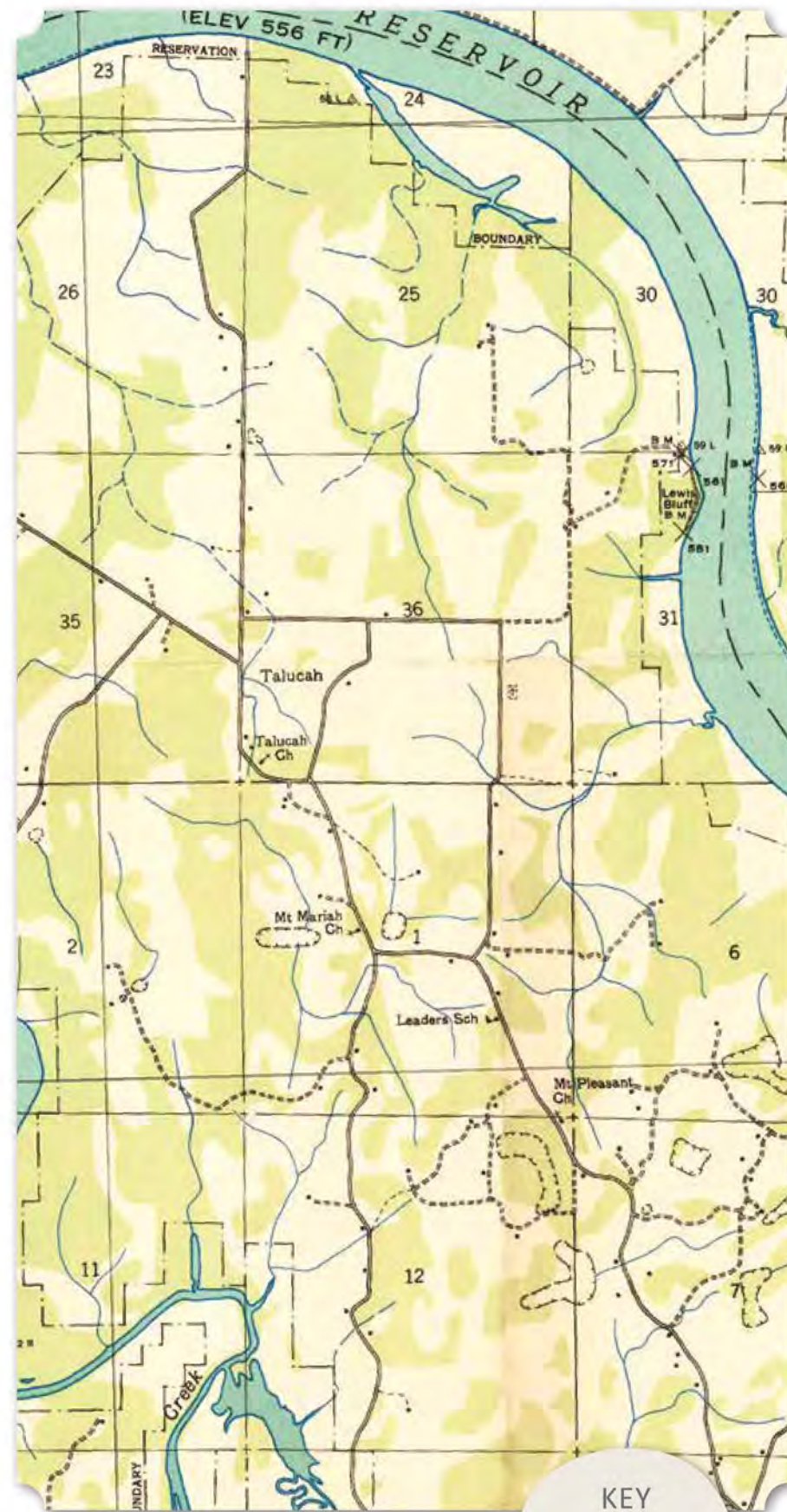
47 ■ Talucah

The community of Talucah is encompassed in the census district of Valhermoso Springs. Located in the eastern half of Morgan County, Talucah is positioned just south of a prominent bend in the Tennessee River. The census data from this district is difficult to analyze as it appears that the original district in 1900 was split to create the Lacey Springs district. Nonetheless, overall patterns emerge from the records.

The Garth Heights neighborhood no longer exists, but it would have encompassed the Dancy-Garth Cemetery and presumably where the main house once stood. The only part of the plantation that remains today is a 20-acre tract in trust by the Garth Descendants, surrounding the cemetery – the rest is now suburbs that developed in the 1980s.

Most remarkable of Frank and Laura's children was Solomon Sharper Sykes. S.S. Sykes was born a slave and died a successful businessman and integral part of the Decatur community. When he passed away, in 1920, the city shut down for an hour in his honor. In the early 20th century, the southern half of Section 2, and nearly all of Section 25 of Township 5 South Range 5 West, was known as Garth Heights. Over 900 acres, this neighborhood cut from the former Sykes-Garth Plantation was detailed in lot and plat books. S.S. Sykes owned 20 acres of land in Garth Heights from at least 1916 to his death in 1920. After his passing, the land went to his heirs until it was solely owned by his wife, Ada Garth Sykes from at least 1929 to 1937. The parcel is positioned between 8th and Douthit streets on the land that was formerly his master/father's plantation, just a half mile from the family cemetery.

General Garth, Susan Elizabeth. While Mrs. Sykes has a grand monument "erected to the memory of a loving wife by her affectionate husband," Dr. Sykes fathered about five children with the slave, Laura – General Garth's granddaughter and Dr. Sykes' inheritance from his wife's family.



(Left) 1936 USGS/TVA Topographic Map, Triana Quadrangle, of Talucah

From 1900 to 1940, the population of Valhermoso Springs was consistently about 30% African American households with the exception of 1930 when 47% of the total households were African American. The total number of African American-owned farms fluctuates throughout the early 20th century. In 1900, there were 31 African American farming landowners in this area. The following decade that number declined to 21. The censuses of 1920 and 1930 recorded only 17 and 19 farms owned by African Americans, respectively, before returning to 23 farms in 1940. However, if the total number of African American households are taken into account, there is a trend of about one out of every four African American families owning a farm. Despite there only being 19 African American-owned farms in 1930, this represents about one-third of all African American households and a tenth of all households in the Valhermoso Springs district.

Prominent landowning farmers of the African American community include the Currys, Jennings, and Jacksons. These three families owned land in the area from at least 1900 to 1940, and in 1900, they collectively owned 13 of the 31 farms in their community. Another notable family is the Chatman/Chapman family, who owned eight farms in 1940. The Chatmans/Chapmans, mostly Winfrey Chapman, donated land for community centers such as the Leader's School and Mt. Mariah Church in Talucah.

48 ■ Tatum, John – Plantation*

The name "J. Tatum" was found on an 1837 map of Alabama made by John LaTourrette. This most likely refers to John Tatum, an early Morgan County landowner. John Tatum, as assignee for Edward Webster, was awarded a patent (no. 2601) in December of 1829 for "the east half of the northwest quarter of Section 5 in Township 7 of Range 5 West," containing 80 acres. Nine years later, Tatum acquired another 40 acres of adjacent land. John Tatum's plantation was home to three slaves in 1830 and seven slaves in 1840 before moving to Autauga, Alabama. This plantation was located to the north of Danville.

49 ■ Trinity

The community of Trinity is located west of Decatur near the Lawrence County border. While it is surrounded by farmland like most of Morgan County, it does have a platted town center. The community of Trinity is known to have a large African American population; however, the majority of that population does not own land. Most of the African American landowners live outside of the platted town where they tend to farms, but throughout the early 20th century, there were usually a handful of African Americans that lived in town.

The population of Trinity remained fairly steady from 1900 to 1940. Roughly half of the total households are African American through the 1930, before dropping to 39% in 1940. While African Americans comprised half of the households, unlike other communities in Morgan County, only a handful owned farms. Over the years approximately 10% of the African American households were farms, with the exception of 1920, where that jumped to 25%, before decreasing back down in 1930. A major farm owning African American family was the Liles, with various family members owning 10 of the 36 farms in 1920.