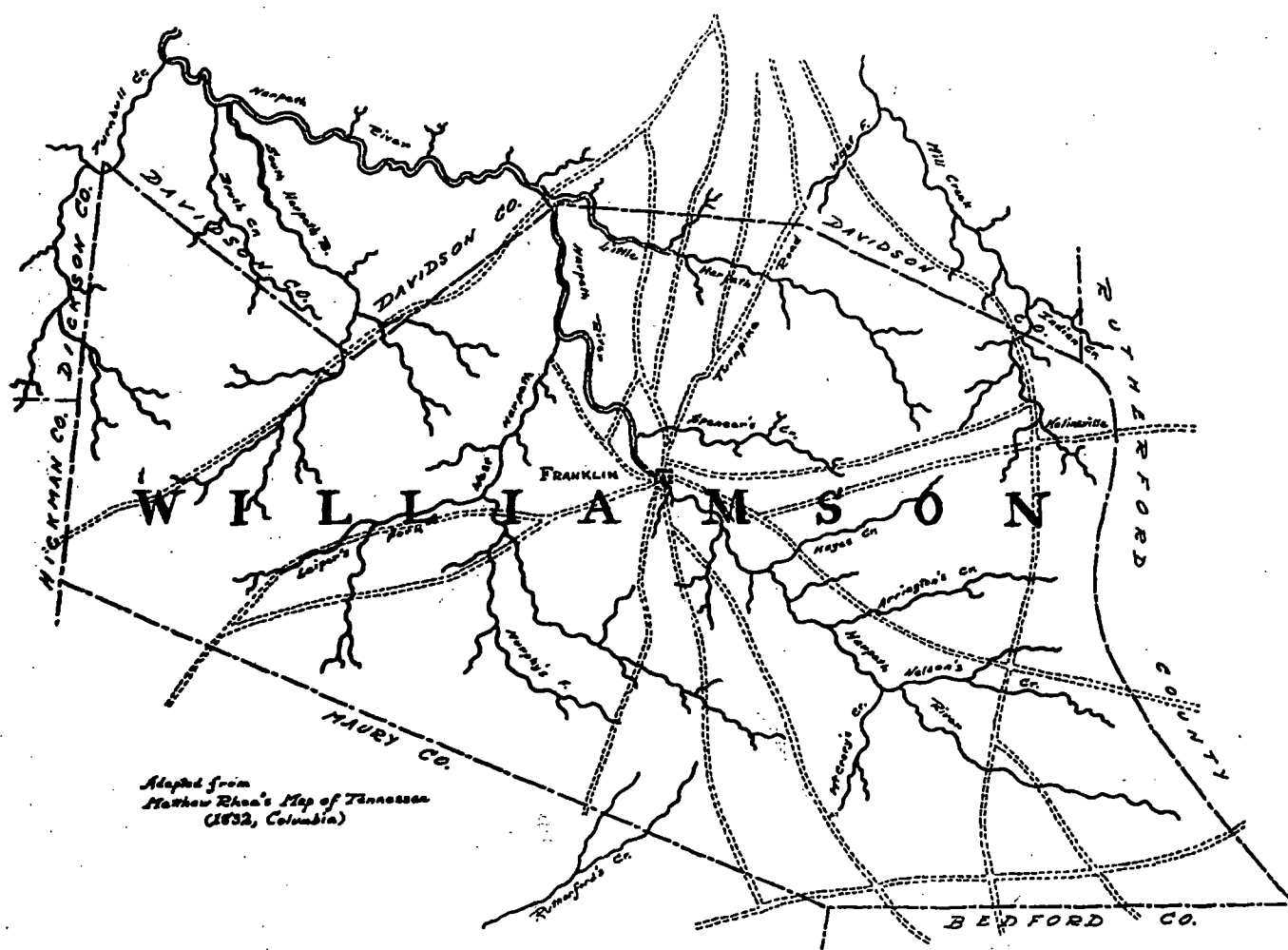


# Williamson County Historical Society

Publication No. 15



*Adapted from  
Matthew Rhea's Map of Tennessee  
(1832, Columbia)*

Spring 1984

WILLIAMSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Published by

Williamson County Historical Society  
Franklin, Tennessee  
1984

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EDITOR: T. Vance Little

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The WILLIAMSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY PUBLICATION is sent to all members of the Williamson County Historical Society. The annual membership dues are \$8.00 which includes this publication and a frequent NEWSLETTER to all members.

Correspondence concerning additional copies of the WILLIAMSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY PUBLICATION should be addressed to Mrs. Clyde Lynch, Route 10, Franklin, Tennessee 37064.

Contributions to future issues of the WILLIAMSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY PUBLICATION should be addressed to T. Vance Little, Beech Grove Farm, Route 1, Brentwood, Tennessee 37027.

Correspondence concerning membership and payment of dues should be addressed to Herman E. Major, Treasurer, P. O. Box 71, Franklin, Tennessee 37064.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Williamson County Historical Society Publication Number 15 is another in the valued series featuring highlights in the history of the County we love.

I would like to express deep appreciation to all Officers, Committee Chairmen, and Committee Members who served so effectively during the past year: Dr. William J. Darby, Program; Mrs. Clyde Lynch, Membership; Miss Ann Moran, Acquisitions; T. Vance Little, Publications; Dr. Rosalie Carter, Historic Sites; Mrs. E. M. Richardson, Projects; Mrs. Herman E. Major, Library Relations; Mrs. Kathryn H. Cotton, Refreshments; Mrs. John O. Gaultney, Publicity; and A. Battle Rodes, Nominations.

A special note of thanks to the Publication Committee chaired by Vance Little with Mrs. Clyde Lynch, and Mr. and Mrs. George F. Watson, and Mrs. Harold R. Trickey, Jr.; also, thanks to those individuals who worked diligently in preparing the articles for our enjoyment and for posterity.

The Society, as in past years, has endeavored to enhance community appreciation for the historic beauty of Williamson County in accordance with our stated purpose.

"The purposes of the Williamson County Historical Society are to discover, procure, and preserve such facts, articles or documents as relate, directly or collaterally, to the natural, aboriginal, civil, political, military, literary, industrial or ecclesiastical history of the County, or of any contiguous area which may affect or have bearing on such matters within the County."

This has been an interesting and rewarding year for all of us. Serving as President has indeed been an honor and privilege.

John O. Gaultney  
President,  
WCHS  
1983-1984

FOR SALE

The following publications on Williamson County, Tennessee, are for sale by:

Mrs. Clyde Lynch  
Route 10  
Franklin, Tennessee 37064

The following Williamson County Historical Society Publications are:

Publication #1, #4, #6, #8, #10, #11, #12, #13 - OUT OF PRINT

Publication #2: The Crockett House; The Battle of Franklin; Memories of Sunny Side School; Mt. Zion Methodist Episcopal Church; Sumner's Knob; The Tenth Tennessee's "Battle Flag" - \$5.50 + 75¢ postage.

Publication #3: The Edmondson Family; A Short History of Saint Philip Catholic Church; Green Hill; Soldiers of the War of 1812; First Inhabitants of Brentwood; Thomas Stubb; The Presbyterian Church in Williamson County; The Fates of Three Cousins - \$5.50 + 75¢ postage.

Publication #5: A Williamson Countian Reminisces: Reunion at Gettysburg; Leiper's Fork (Hillsboro); Boxmere; Old Settlers at Boxmere; The Covered Bridge at Triune; Some Recollections of Franklin; The Tennessee Years of Thomas Hart Benton; Yankee in the Garden - \$5.50 + 75¢ postage.

Publication #7: The History of Trinity Station Methodist Church; My Recollections of Old Hickory and the Powder Plant; The Frost Connection; Old Harpeth Academy, a Casualty of the Civil War; Eye-witness Account of the Battle of Franklin; Frances Was A Lady; The Wilkins Whitfield Family of Williamson County; Letter from Collin McDaniel to his sister, June 15, 1826; Some Early Settlers on Arrington Creek; Fort Granger - \$5.50 + 75¢ postage.

Publication #9: The War Memorial Public Library; The Franklin Female Institute; Drama On The Big Harpeth; Peter Hardeman Burnett "Frontier Lawyer and Governor"; Slaves on Trial: Three Williamson County Cases; Financial Institutions in Williamson County; Scenario For The Lives Of The Descendants of John G. Hall and Noah Hall, Brothers of Bedford County and Williamson County, Tennessee; Scenario For The Lives Of The Descendants Of Nathaniel Ayers Of Pittsylvania County, Virginia; Homesteading On The Harpeth River - \$5.50 + 75¢ postage.

Publication #14: The Midnight Sun Still Shines At The Harlinsdale Farm; Williamson County V. List, District 8, 1861; The Williamson County Oteys; Jamison Bedding, Inc., Franklin, Tennessee, One Hundred Years Old; Letters From Arkansas; Williamson County And The Mail To 1862; Thweatt Family Of Williamson County; A Gentleman Of The Gentry, Meredith P. Gentry; Middle Tennessee Trilobite; If The Boot Fits, It's A Durango; The O'More College Of Design, A History; The Copelands of Williamson County; Maps And Their Uses; Nan Rodgers Chapman's Legacy; Four Families Recollect Some Harpeth Presbyterian Church History - \$5.50 + 75¢ postage.

**For Sale Cont'd.:**

**Other available publications on Williamson County are as follows:**

1840 Census of Williamson County, Tennessee - \$8.50 + 75¢ postage.

1850 Census of Williamson County, Tennessee - \$10.00 + 75¢ postage.

Bible Records of Williamson County, Tennessee, Vol. 1 - \$10.00 + 75¢ postage.

County Court of Williamson County, Tennessee Lawsuits (1821-1872) - Books 2 through 8 - This book contains many important records. There are many lawsuits petitioning the court to partition property. The names of the heirs are given, sometimes even the date of death of the person leaving the property. In a few instances, the complete wills are included in the original books, even though they died in another state. - \$12.50 + 75¢ postage.

Directory of Williamson County, Tennessee Burials, Vol. 1 - The gravestone records were collected by the members of the Williamson County Historical Society and include many old graveyards from all over the county. - \$15.00 + 75¢ postage.

Directory of Williamson County, Tennessee Burials, Vol. 2 - This book has the records of burials in the Mt. Hope Cemetery in Franklin and many small graveyards over the county that were not included in the first book. - \$15.00 + 75¢ postage.

Early Obituaries of Williamson County, Tennessee - Obituaries taken from the local newspapers (1821-1900) - \$10.00 + 75¢ postage.

Miscellaneous Records of Williamson County, Tennessee, Vol. 1 - This book has many important "hidden" records that were taken from wills, deeds, minutes and lawsuits. - \$10.00 + 75¢ postage.

Miscellaneous Records of Williamson County, Tennessee, Vol. 2 - This book contains a "gold mine" of records. Most of the information is taken from loose records in our county archives. There are many depositions from lawsuits, murders and divorces that may not be found anywhere else. It is interesting reading as well as having valuable information. - \$10.50 + 75¢ postage.

Miscellaneous Records of Williamson County, Tennessee, Vol. 3 - Continuation of Vol. 2; also includes a map of the county in 1838 when it was made into districts, with a description of the area. - \$12.50 + 75¢ postage.

Miscellaneous Records of Williamson County, Tennessee, Vol. 4 - Continuation of Vol. 3 - \$12.50 + 75¢ postage.

Miscellaneous Records of Williamson County, Tennessee, Vol. 5 - Continuation of Vol. 4. All material from this book is found in loose records. - \$12.50 + 75¢ postage.

Record Book, Letters of Administration, No. 1, Williamson County, Tennessee (1838-1855) - \$8.50 + 75¢ postage.

Tax Book I, Williamson County, Tennessee (1800-1813) - This book serves as the first census of the county. The names of the land owners, number of acres and usually the location of land are given. Number of black and white poles. - \$12.50 + 75¢ postage.

**For Sale Cont'd.:**

**Will Book I, Williamson County, Tennessee (1800-1813)** - This book includes the inventories, wills, sales and settlements. It has all of the names included in the original records, including the names of the slaves. - \$8.00 + 75¢ postage.

**Williamson County, Tennessee Marriage Records (1851-1879)** - These records are taken from the loose marriage bonds and licenses. The bondsman and person performing the ceremony are given. - \$14.00 + 75¢ postage.

**Death Records of Williamson County, Tennessee** - This book contains the death records of 1881-1882 and the deaths from 1902 through 1926 which were taken from the vital statistics on microfilm at the Tennessee State Library and Archives. This list also includes the funeral ledgers of 1909-1926. Most of the time the birthplace and parents and their birthplaces are included. This will be a great help for those who are not able to find gravestones. 312 pages including index. (published in 1984) - \$17.50 + 75¢ postage.

**Middle Tennessee Crossroads** - A genealogical magazine containing three issues each year. It includes various records from Bedford, Davidson, Smith, Wilson, Lincoln, Marshall, Sumner, Rutherford and Williamson Counties. Each subscriber may place a query in the magazine free of charge. The price is \$10.00 each year including postage. Back issues are available for the last three years.

WILLIAMSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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HOMESTEAD MANOR - 1809  
 THE GIDDENS - DARBY PLACE  
 PROVENANCE AND PEOPLE

By: Elva M. and William J. Darby

The historical significance of a house or building is determined by the effect or influence of its presence, its builders, owners, or occupants upon events or cultural activities within the community or region. The history of a house, therefore, is that of the structure - in large measure, however, of the people who have dwelt in it or been associated with it, and the uses made of the property. Such is not presented as mere chronology for "If history without chronology is dark and confused, chronology without history is dry and insipid" (A. Holmes). Homestead Manor, construction on which began 175 years ago (1809), is the three-story Federal brick residence on the west side of Highway 31, approximately 1/3 mile north of Thompson Station Road. It was the second house on this farm built by the Giddens and was their permanent home from the time of its completion, 1819, until the death of their daughter, Nancy Giddens Word, in 1854.

THE GIDDENS OF VIRGINIA

The Giddens were well-to-do, early settlers in Williamson County migrating from Virginia. Francis Seymour Giddens (1753-1830), son of James Giddens, Sr. and Margaret Giddens, married Mary Pointdexter White, daughter of Moses and Elizabeth Pointdexter White of Louisa County, Virginia, October 3, 1782. They established their home on 329 acres on Harris's Creek, Trinity Parish, Virginia, bought from Nathaniel Anderson, September 11, 1780. The consideration was 100 pounds.

According to land records in Virginia, Francis Giddens acquired considerable additional land during the next several years. In 1787 they sold part of their initial holdings, purchasing 149 acres from John Pointdexter, Jr. and his wife, Elizabeth, on Goldmine Creek and Dragon Swamp. Two years later Francis Giddens bought 45 acres from Clifton Thomason and wife Mary; in 1793, 200 acres on Goldmine Creek from William Buckner; in 1797, 102 acres from John

Pointdexter and William Yancey, making a holding of approximately 825 acres. There also is recorded in 1797 a conveyance of a tract of 550 acres lived on by Moses White from the legatees of Moses White's deed to Moses White, Jr. This is signed by F. S. Giddens, Chapman White, and William White, the latter being Mary White's brothers. The following year, 1798, Francis and Mary Giddens and John White, Jr. sold to Robert Burns of Louisa County 200 acres of land on the north side of Dragon Swamp, which land adjoined those of Francis Giddens, Samuel May, and Ralph Quarles.

In this time and region of Virginia "certain families rose to splendor and the preservation of it." Some families, however, began to push westward, a movement in the latter part of the 1700's attributed to depletion of the soil due to the intensive culture of tobacco.

Francis Giddens served in the Revolutionary War - his three-cornered hat is today owned by a descendant, Mrs. Kennedy Gibbs of Thompson's Station. He repaired firearms, and on February 24, 1784, in Louisa County applied to the government for pay due him for repair of public arms. The family's patriotic service included that of Francis's two sons, James and Francis Jr., in the War of 1812, James rising to a rank of captain and serving under General Andrew Jackson.

#### THE GIDDENS MOVE TO TENNESSEE

Francis and Mary Giddens sold their land in Virginia in 1800 and with their six children (two sons and four daughters) and some two dozen slaves moved westward over the mountains to Middle Tennessee. The interrelationships of the relatively small colony of Virginians who settled in this region were such as to influence almost certainly their settlement within the immediate community. Chapman White, brother of Mary White Giddens, Francis's wife, married Martha (Patsy) Maury, the daughter of Abram Maury. Abram Maury had left Lunenburg County, Virginia, and established himself on the frontier in Tennessee in 1793, subsequently purchasing the land and laying out the town of Franklin. He was a highly successful land dealer and attracted his cousin, Richard Maury and his family, including the young child, Matthew Fontaine Maury to come to the Franklin area in the hope of improving their financial

state. It is easy to surmise that Abram Maury's acquaintanceship with the Whites and Giddens influenced their choice of a new home.

The children of Francis and Mary White Giddens are as follows:

1. Elizabeth Giddens - born June 17, 1783; married Spencer Buford, December 9, 1801; died April 13, 1832; lived at Thompson Station. Children: Amelia H., Francis, James, William C., Margaret, Thomas, and Susan.
2. James Giddens - born October 4, 1784; married Priscilla Buford, April 1806; died October 14, 1818; made their home at Thompson Station; Priscilla Buford was born July 2, 1789. Children: Louisa Augusta, Amanda, Marcus Tullus, Mary White, Sarah Elizabeth, James Monroe, and Priscilla.
3. Sarah Giddens - born September 10, 1786; married Charles Buford, October 27, 1804; lived near Pulaski, Giles County, Tennessee. Children: Mary W., Priscilla R., Nicholds C., Kinzia, Lucinda G., Gilbert, Martha, and Sarah.
4. Mary White Giddens - born October 5, 1790; married James Buford, October 8, 1812; died October 5, 1853; lived in Giles County near Pulaski-Buford Station. Children: Thomas, Albert, Louisa, William James, Margaret, John, Abram, and Edward.
5. Nancy Giddens - born 1793; married Samuel Word, December 15, 1816; died June 16, 1854; Samuel Word born April 3, 1778 and died April 16, 1831; lived at the Homestead at Thompson Station after Samuel's death. Children: Nancy, John, Margaret, and Mary.
6. Francis Giddens, Jr. - born October 11, 1795; married Rachel Gilchrist; died February 6, 1829 at the age of 34 years; lived on Duplex Road in Maury County. Children: Robert (never married), Amanda (died early), and Emily (was married three times).

Shortly after arrival Francis Giddens acquired land along Murfree's Fork. This creek, like Murfreesboro, was named after Colonel Hardy Murfree. It is one of the largest tributaries of the West Harpeth River, beginning in the vicinity of Thompson's Station. No doubt the bountiful water supply from one of the springs that feeds the creek influenced Francis Giddens to build his initial house there. It was in this place that the Giddens lived until the completion of Homestead Manor. The original log house was replaced in 1870-71 by Mrs. Nannie Lavender (Mrs. W. D.) who, having bought three acres of land there, built the present house, subsequently occupied by the Fred Kinnard family, and today by the Craig Benson family. During the razing of the log house a large old sword, some 4 1/2 feet long, was found, probably a relic of Francis Giddens' service as a Revolutionary soldier.

Francis Giddens registered his stock mark, "an underkeel in each ear and a slit in the right" August 3, 1801, in Williamson County. The Williamson County tax books reveal a progressive growth of the Francis Giddens' property. In 1802 he is recorded as owning 283 1/2 acres on Murfrees' Fork; 1803, 304 acres; in 1806 he added 377 acres on the West Harpeth and 1807-1813, 227 acres. He and his brother-in-law, Caleb Manley (husband of Nancy White, sister of Mary) and neighbors were ordered by the Williamson County Court to lay out a road dividing their plantations from the ford on West Harpeth to Murfrees' Fork and report to the next court.

#### THE MANOR HOUSE

The Giddens' new home was occupied in 1819 and regarded as the manor house of the Thompson's Station community. It was constructed of timbers and materials from the plantation, the brick from clay made and fired by slaves, the limestone for foundation quarried there, and timbers cut from the property. The lumber was yellow poplar for beams, sills, flooring, and trim; ash for flooring of the downstairs hall and walnut for flooring of the dining room and as doorplates for both parlors, the dining room, and downstairs bedroom. The crimped metal roof apparently had not been replaced until 1979. The house is of Georgian-Federal architecture, reminiscent of late eighteenth-century Virginia grandeur in keeping with the social and aesthetic aspirations of wealthy, Middle Tennessee pioneers. The dominant six-columned spacious front porch features a balustered second story. The original two-storied columns are 17 inches in diameter with Ionic capitals. In the late 1870's or 1880's a porch surrounding the house was constructed. At that time there was added a second floor porch above the back entrance, support of which was provided by small one-storied columns (photograph). Remaining portions of the added back and circumferential porch were removed during the ownership of the house by Mrs. Morton. Evidences of this in the form of a band of unpainted brick at the level of roof attachment existed at the time of occupancy by the present owners.

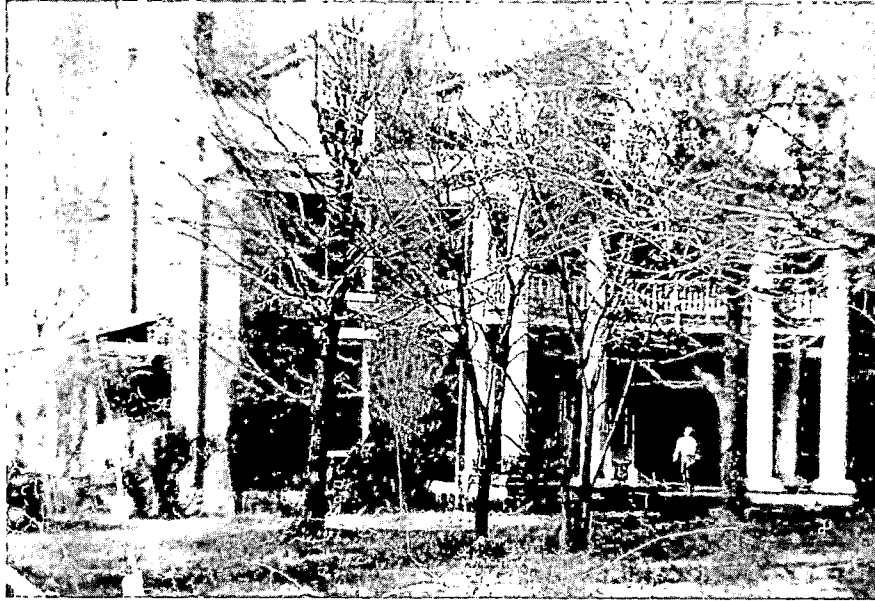
The plan of the house is the conventional four rooms and on the first-second floors, two on each side, with a front-to-back



Homestead Manor - front view, Autumn, 1982. Photo Courtesy of Robert Creighton, Nashville, Tennessee.



Homestead Manor, rear view, ca. 1930's, showing porches added in 1870's or 1880's. Photo Courtesy of Mrs. W. H. (Ann) Naff, Ormond Beach, Fla.



Homestead Manor - front view, ca. 1930's. Note light band at second floor level where portion of added porch had been removed. Photo Courtesy of Mrs. W. H. Naff.

central hall. The rooms are approximately 20 x 20 feet square, the hall some 12 feet in width. The original downstairs arrangement included two front parlors, a downstairs bedroom at the right back and the walnut-floored dining room at the left (south) back, the door of which opened to the outside to give access from the detached kitchen. The latter building was demolished in the 1920's. The second floor arrangement followed the design of the first, the major difference being that the north side consisted of a double bedroom-sitting room with floor-to-ceiling folding doors. Three of the second floor bedrooms contained double closets, originally built to house fold-away beds. These were copied from similar "Murphy" beds in Michie's Tavern, built about 1735 in Virginia and located on Black Mountain Road in North Albemarle County. This was the boyhood home of Patrick Henry and was sold in 1746 to John Michie, who enlarged it and established a tavern there. Michie's Tavern was moved in 1927 to its present site between Charlottesville and Thomas Jefferson's home, "Monticello," in Virginia.

It is of interest that Homestead Manor served as an inn for

an undetermined length of time when first constructed. Francis Giddens in 1819 was granted license as "owner and proprietor and keeper of the mails" of an "ordinary," having established a bond for \$2500 for the entertainment of man and beast south of Nashville. This place was known as "Giddens," or sometimes as "Stage-coach Inn" by travelers and drivers from the Ohio River to the Gulf of Mexico as a place where the weary traveler could find good food, plenty of provender, and large, roomy stables. A circular driveway of brick and cobblestone led from the "turnpike" to the inn, with brick walk-way from the entrance drive to each entrance of the house. These have been excavated, the walks and drives restored in the same design.

The third floor of the house is marked by six large dormers and contains, in addition to the central hall, one large room on both north and south side. The interior is paneled with old-fashioned beaded sealing. There are two large "under-the-eave" closets opening into each of the two rooms. All doors, woodwork, and stairs retain the original, artificial wood graining that was used throughout the house initially. This is similar to that which has but recently been restored in Andrew Jackson's "Hermitage." Each room on the first and second floor contains a brick, wood-burning fireplace outlined by the original poplar mantle of harmonious design throughout the home. All doors (original) are of the same design with four horizontal upper panels and two vertical lower ones.

The 18-inch limestone foundation supports 12-inch solid brick walls which surround each room, resting on its own separate foundation with no connections underneath the structure from one room to another. The stone foundation for the southwest rooms of the manor house constitute walls for the former "kitchen slave's" room which contains a beautifully designed, arched stone fireplace. This is the so-called "Alice Thompson room" concerning which the details are given later. The original plantation, of course, included numerous houses for slaves as well as their families and the initial log house as part of the property until purchased by Mrs. Lavender in 1870.

The home has been continuously occupied and no basic interior structural alterations made. When the kitchen was moved into the

house itself, it occupied the original dining room. One of the front parlors was converted to a dining room. The present owners have restored the dining room and converted the single, downstairs bedroom into a kitchen. One front parlor now serves as the living room, the other as a library with new but contemporary-designed walnut bookcases from floor to 12-foot ceiling. The house was papered throughout from early times, and fragments of the original wallpaper were found in a number of locations, particularly in the third floor where tags of the old mounting canvas and paper with seemingly endless numbers of wallpaper tacks persisted. The third floor served from the beginning as "children's sleeping rooms." This floor now houses a book filled bedroom, a book filled workroom, and the central hall serves as a painting and print gallery. The first and second floors have been completely repapered with contemporary design patterns as have certain walls of the third floor. The original beaded ceiling has been left exposed on the third floor.

The beautiful slave-made bricks of the exterior were cleaned and the lovely Flemish-bond of the front and two sides give a distinctive pattern to the exterior. An unusual architectural feature, apparently original, is the stained glass side lights at the entrance extending upward to line the entrance of the second floor from the second floor porch and thence to encompass the upper casement of all of the third floor windows plus two elliptical fanlights crowning both the front and back of the third floor hall. In 1977 Homestead Manor was awarded the architectural award of the Heritage Foundation of Franklin and Williamson County and Williamson County Historical Society. That same year, April 29, it was entered on the National Register of Historic Places.

This house today seems to reflect the solid character and unswerving honesty of its builder, Francis Giddens. It reflects as well the culture of the prosperous Virginia patriot who, like friends and relatives, migrated to Middle Tennessee as a pioneer settler.

Francis Giddens, his wife Mary, son James, and others of the family are buried in a cemetery on the property, Francis being buried north and south in keeping with his wishes. According to one story he wished to be buried as close as possible to his son,



James Giddens, and the only space near him was cross-wise at his feet. Another story is that he gave directions that he should be buried north and south instead of east and west as generally is done inasmuch as he "had always been crossed by the world."

List of Gravestones in Giddens' Cemetery West of Highway 31, South:

<u>GIDDENS</u>	<u>WORD</u>	<u>MOSS</u>
Francis Giddens, Sr. Born April 1, 1753 Died May 11, 1830	Nancy Giddens Word Born 1793 Died June 16, 1854	Wm. H. Moss Born Dec. 26, 1807 Died Feb. 10, 1895
James Giddens Born Oct. 4, 1784 Died Oct. 14, 1818	Samuel Word (Nancy's husband) Born April 3, 1778 Died April 16, 1831	Sarah Moss (Giddens) Born July 31, 1814 Died Sept. 30, 1862
Marcus Tulus Giddens Born Aug. 8, 1810 Died Oct. 1, 1821	Wm. Washington Word Born Sept. 9, 1817 Died Jan. 9, 1836	Edwin Moss Born Dec. 3, 1834 Died Aug. 11, 1853
Priscilla Buford Giddens Born July 2, 1789 Died Nov. 29, 1856 (Wife of James Giddens)	John T. Word Born 1820 Died 1851	Evelina Priscilla Moss Born Oct. 26, 1836 Died March 11, 1903
Francis Giddens, Jr. Born Oct. 11, 1795 Died Feb. 6, 1829	Miss D. B. Word Born March 20, 1846 Died 1851	Martha L. Moss Kennedy Born Nov. 25, 1838 Died Aug. 11, 1927
In Memory of Mary White Giddens Died Dec. 1834 (Wife of Francis, Sr.)	Josephine Word Quarles Born May 12, 1844 Died 1885	

\* \* \* \* \*

List of Other Gravestones Outside the Giddens' Family:

Wm. D. Lavender Born Nov. 29, 1829 Died Nov. 16, 1888	George Washburn Born June 5, 1841 Died Jan. 1, 1866 Shot down in prime of life by the hands of ruthless robbers. Son of Clark and C. M. Washburn.	Matilda L. Short Born Jan. 6, 1836 Died Sept. 9, 1895 Born in Kildare, Ireland
Joseph Lavender Born May 4, 1861 Died Aug. 30, 1899	Veteran of U. S. A. Mich. Calvary, Company K.	J. S. Short Born Jan. 6, 1836 in Kildare County, Ireland Died in Wm. County, Tennessee Dec. 13, 1904
Robert Cochran Lavender Born Aug. 20, 1862 Died Jan. 23, 1875	William H. Chappell Born June 30, 1828 Died Sept. 26, 1886	
M. P. Dunavant		(cont'd.)

Gravestones outside Giddens' family cont'd.:

Born at the gateway is "Spot Giddens Morton", little dog of Hazel G. Morton  
 Born May, 1951 Died June, 1963

\* \* \*

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF FRANCIS GIDDENS

State of Tennessee, Williamson County

March 7, 1829

...My will and desire is that my wife, Mary White Giddens, keep for her own use and benefit during her natural life of widowhood the plantation where-on I now live, and all appurtenances, together with as many Negroes and as much stock, household and kitchen furniture, and plantation utensils as she and my executors deem necessary and proper for her to keep. But being sensible of the infirmities of age and the probability of the aged being imposed upon, I deem it necessary to enjoin it on my executors and do hereby authorize them to see that there is no waste committed on my estate, but nothing in this shall be so construed as to deprive my widow of a decent and comfortable support. Should my wife, after I am gone, think proper to marry, my will is that she shall have what the law allows her of my estate, and the balance be divided as hereafter directed.

My will and desire is that the balance of my property, after my wife takes her proportion as above directed, shall be sold by my executors, and after the payment of my just debts be divided.

....I do hereby appoint my friends James Buford, Gabriel Buford, and Alexander Clark, Sr., as Executors of this my Last Will and Testament.

Witnesses: Alec Clark, Jr., Martin Price, Will Craig,  
 Williamson County Court, October Session, 1830,  
 Book of Wills, Volume A - page 439.

INVENTORY - ESTATE OF FRANCIS GIDDENS

Stock, Negroes and Plantation Appurtances

Left in the hands of the widow on the premises, the profits arising from which is for her benefit.

9 Negroes - Sary, Miriah, Sam, Ike, Jesse, Sealy, Mariett, and Miriah's two children, Lucenda and Preston  
 2 mares, 2 colts, 1 horse  
 4 milk cows and 4 calves

(cont'd.)

## Inventory - Estate of Francis Giddens cont'd.:

- 1 yoke of oxen  
 3 head of young cattle for beef  
 12 head of sheep  
 45 head of hogs  
 20 head of geese, all turkeys, chickens, and guinea fowls
- 5 plows, 1 cart, 1 ox yoke, 1 logchain, 3 sets of gear, 1 crosscut saw, 3 axes, 5 hoes, 3 cleavices, 3 swingletrees, 1 pair of sheep shears, 3 chisels, 3 augers, 1 hammer, 3 reaphooks, 2 potracks, 1 iron tooth rake, 3 cotton wheels, 1 flax wheel
- 6 beds, 23 chairs, 7 Windsor chairs, 1 desk, 8 bookcases, 1 sugar chest, 1 large green sofa, 1 wooden clock, 12 candlestands, 12 mirrors, 8 bureaus, 5 tables, 6 bedsteads, 6 bed boosters.
- 10 pairs pillows, 20 bed blankets, 5 coverlids, 10 colored counterpanes, 15 pair bed sheets, 9 linen tablecloths, 1 coffee and pepper mill, 16 large silver spoons, 16 small spoons, 16 knives and 16 forks (silver), 6 stone jars, 3 hogshead of flour, 700 pounds of picked cotton, 1 woman's saddle
- 1 pleasure carriage

## Property sold according to the Will of Francis Giddens

- 16 Negroes Dick, Tom Albourn, Andrew, Easter, Viney, Clarborne, Boston, Beck, Henry, Tom, Bill, Ellen, Joe, George, and Mary
- |                       |                               |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 19 Sheep              | 1 whippersnapper              |
| 10 hogs               | 1 wagon                       |
| 40 geese              | 3 sets of gear                |
| 16 head of cattle     | 1 shot gun                    |
| 19 head of horses     | 1 set of gunsmith's tools     |
| 4 beds, some feathers | 3 planes                      |
| 40 bu. of wheat       | 1 man's saddle                |
| 1 crosscut saw        | Seed cotton, amount not known |

Following notes:	David Fair	\$ 10.00
	Bed Folin	\$160.00
	R. Maddin	\$ 30.00
	Wm. Webb	\$100.00
	A. J. Hunt	<u>\$ 67.00</u>
		\$367.00

Report made to the October Session of the Williamson County Court, 1830.

\* \* \*

Captain James Giddens, Francis's son, was born in Louisa County, Virginia, October 4, 1784, and came with his father to Williamson County. In 1806 he married Priscilla Buford, the daughter of James and Priscilla Ragsdale Buford. Three of his

sisters married three of Priscilla's brothers. Francis Giddens deeded him 270 acres of land on Murfree's Fork near Thompson's Station in 1810, the year of birth of James' first son, Marcus Tullus. In 1811, at a selling of home furnishings and farm equipment of his father-in-law's estate, he purchased one cow and calf, \$6; one side-board and candle stand, \$.06; tray and chamber pot, \$.08; one pair of tongs, \$.27; gun, \$.63. He and an uncle served as surveyors. He served in the War of 1812 as captain in Captain James Giddens' company, 2nd regiment (Chattam's) West Tennessee Militia and ended his service May 10, 1814. He served under the command of General Andrew Jackson, fighting against the Creek Indians, returning to Middle Tennessee in the spring of 1814. His grave in the family plot carries an appropriate decoration.

James Monroe Giddens (1816-1894) was but two years old when his father died. He was, however, close to his grandfather, Francis Giddens, and it is apparent that Homestead Manor served as a meaningful center for all of this family, although in 1849 he purchased 350 acres of land in Maury County, four miles south of Mt. Pleasant, where he lived until his death. His son, James Monroe, Jr., served as a captain in the Confederate Army.

James Monroe Giddens was the grandfather of Mrs. Hazel Giddens Morton from whom the Darbys purchased Homestead Manor and who presently lives in White Hall, Spring Hill, a house built by descendants of Mary White's (Francis Giddens' wife) family. As previously noted, Mary's brother, Chapman, married the daughter of Abram Maury. Another brother, William, settled in Franklin, Tennessee, in 1806. His son, George Whorton White (1819-1859), a scholarly young man, graduated with honors from the University of Nashville at the age of 18, studied medicine in Cincinnati and Louisville, Kentucky, where he received his medical degree. In 1840 he began practice in Spring Hill, Tennessee, and clearly was well respected by his medical colleagues. He was called to a case in Franklin which had been misdiagnosed by a leading physician there, and which he diagnosed as the disease, Scurvy. Dr. White proved his diagnosis by the patient's rapid response to treatment with lemon juice, potatoes, tongue grass, oranges, and fresh animal broths. He recorded these experiences in a scholarly case report in the Nashville Journal of Medicine and Surgery in 1852,

which report came to the much interested attention of one of the authors (WJD). Because of my interest in nutrition, and particularly in the history of scurvy, one can imagine my astonishment when we discovered that Dr. George W. White married Margaret Ellen Word, daughter of Samuel and Nancy Giddens Word, who owned and lived in Homestead Manor!

#### THE RAILROAD AND THOMPSON'S STATION

The present community of Thompson's Station was developing at this time. The Tennessee and Alabama Railroad, constructed in 1845-1850, followed a line through Williamson County which passed through the Giddens' plantation only a few hundred yards behind Homestead Manor. Dr. Elijah Thompson, whose home was across what is now Highway 31 from Homestead Manor, gave the original land for the village of Thompson's Station. He also served on the committee to sell stock for extension southward of the railroad line. The station and village, therefore, were named Thompson's Station. This terminal was an active shipping center for the region from which hogs, sheep, cattle, grains, tobacco, and cotton were marketed. The railway, as the Nashville and Decatur Railroad, was extended to Decatur and subsequently became the Louisville and Nashville Railroad. A spur line from the track was built into the Ewell Farm in Spring Hill during the pinnacle of that plantation's operation and served to transport the Jersey cattle introduced by the Ewell Plantation. The rail line was important during the Civil War, the Battle of Thompson's Station being fought on both sides of the railroad track on the Banks farm (Homestead Manor). The diary of a Maury County soldier, December, 1861, states in part: "Six companies took the train cars from Columbia about 10:00 for Nashville, and were joined at Carter's Creek by Captain Jamieson's company. The train arrived safely at Nashville, at 2:00 that p.m., and the soldiers pitched their tents about 2 1/2 miles from the city." There are many references to a dependency upon use of this railroad during the battles of Thompson's Station, Franklin, and Nashville. This busy rail line had at one time four to five passenger trains daily and innumerable freights. Today only freight trains, four to six per day, pass Homestead Manor. In large measure these are transporting phosphate ore from the region.

A pioneer in the early development of phosphate in the region was William Buford Giddens (1851-1927), father of Hazel Giddens Morton.

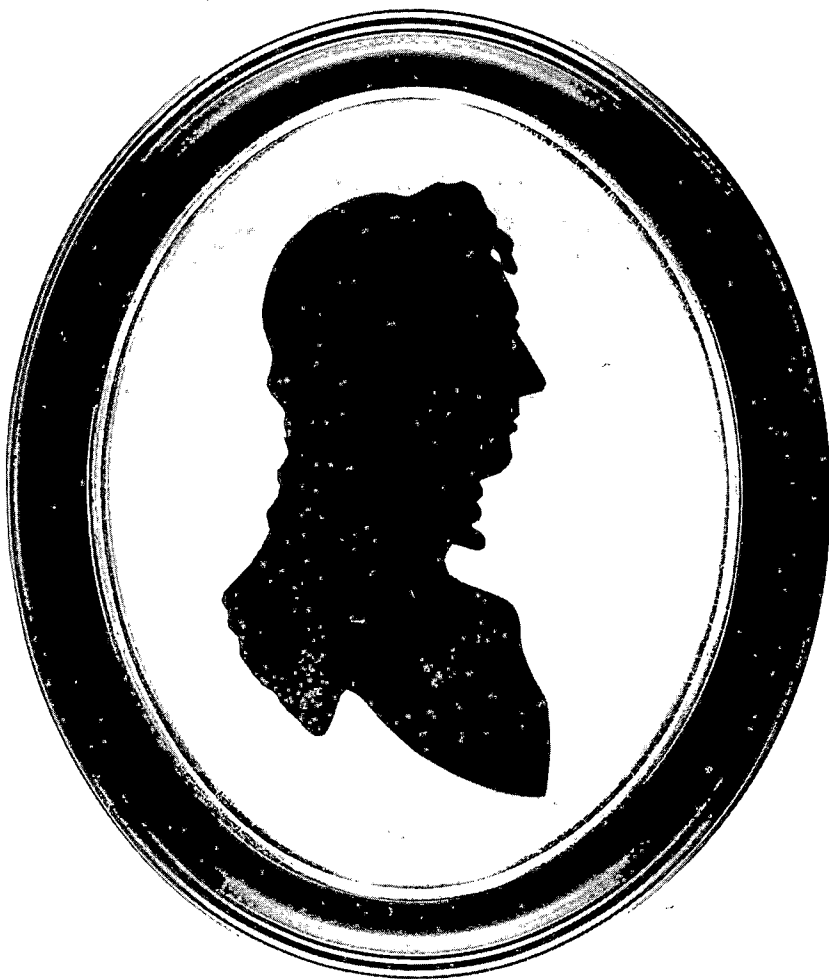
#### THE BATTLE OF THOMPSON'S STATION

During the period of the Civil War the home was owned by Thomas Banks. A historical marker at Thompson's Station Road and U. S. 31 South, just north of the Homestead Manor Farm, reads: "The Battle of Thompson's Station, March 5, 1863."

In the spring of 1863 the Federal Army, operating out of Nashville, made several foraging expeditions into this area collecting food and hay. At this site General Earl Van Doren, Confederate Cavalry Corp, defeated a Federal task force under Colonel John Coburn; he along with 1220 officers and men were captured. The outcome was decided by Forrest's Brigade which overran the Federal left several yards northeast on a flash attack. In this action Forrest's famous horse, "Roderick" was killed.

This brief account scarcely does justice to the savage battle which raged that day from Confederate lines south of and in Thompson's Station village to the entrenchments of the Union forces on the cedar covered hill on the northwest end of the present Homestead Manor farm and overlooking the village. The battle extended along the present Highway 31, engulfing Thompson's Station, the railway, through the Banks' farm (Homestead Manor) and surrounding the manor house in which the Banks family and the women and children of Elijah Thompson had taken shelter. Dr. Thompson's 17 year old daughter, Alice, having taken refuge in the cellar of the Banks' home, saw from a window the color-bearer of the Arkansas Regiment fall. Rushing from her place of safety she retrieved the flag and waved it, shouting encouragement to the Confederate troops. Alice Thompson married a young battalion surgeon, Dr. David H. Duncan, who had admired her heroic act of March 5, 1863, and for whom Elijah Thompson had served as a medical preceptor.

The manor house served as one of the hospitals for those wounded in battle. Dark stains on the stairway to the third floor, visible today, are legendary bloodstains dating from this epic. And those who during their childhood frequented Homestead Manor often recall with comments such as "The blood on the stairs always thrilled and awed me when I visited there"; "Someone told me



Silhouette of Samuel Word, 1778-1831, as a young man, son-in-law of Francis Giddens, husband of Nancy Giddens Ward. Original silhouette owned by Mrs. Howard W. (Irene) Cater, Anniston, Ala. Copy by Robert Vantrease, Nashville, Tn., this copy presently in Homestead Manor.



Nancy Giddens Ward, daughter of Francis and Mary White Giddens, with whom Mary White Giddens lived in the Manor House until her death. Nancy also lived the remainder of her life in the home. Painting by Marion Cook from old daguerreotype loaned by Mrs. Hazel Giddens Morton.

that there was a ghost which inhabited the third floor, and we called it the 'Ghost of Homestead Manor'." Descendants of soldiers who fought on either side of this battle frequently seek out Homestead Manor as one of the sites recalled by or written about in letters by their ancestors. Not infrequently they have generously shared with us the memorabilia of their forbears as well as sources of information from elsewhere concerning the Battle of Thompson's Station. Communication in some instances has continued over a period of years, thereby establishing a "sense of kinship" with not only the families of previous occupants of Homestead Manor but those whose periods of critical activity occurred on or near this property. Among these correspondents are James A. Herman, Manito, Illinois; Dr. D. G. Ostrander, Greenville, Michigan; Dr. and Mrs. John Key Donnell, Milan, Tennessee; the Mefford family, the William Naff family, Miss Winifred Hagerty, and the Kennedy Gibbs family.

Continuing evidences of the battle here are the remains of the redoubts on the wooded hill west of the L&N Railway track, miniballs, and various small metal pieces, and a cannon ball now in the hallway of the Darby home. This was identified recently by Mr. George Mefford, who visited here with his young grandson, as a cannon ball removed by his grandfather from the forked trunk of a large locust tree that lined the driveway and stood near to the home. He pointed out the remaining stump of that tree. In 1964 Homestead Manor was the Tour Site No. 20 in the Centennial observance of the Civil War in Williamson County, the sign which remains in the house today.

#### Owners of Giddens - Darby Place

Francis & Mary White Giddens	1809-1834
Francis Giddens died in 1830, his son-in-law, Samuel Word, in 1832. Mary White Giddens lived with her daughter, Nancy Giddens Word, until she died (1834). Nancy continued living there until her death in 1854.	
Charles & Mary Word Lyle	1854-1862
Nancy's daughter and her husband:	



Thomas Banks	1862-1887
Major James & Sophia Kernan Akin	1887-1902
T. J. Timmons & Nancy E. Timmons	1902-1937
W. T. Naff & Lucile Timmons Naff, daughter of Thomas J. & Nancy E. Timmons	1937-1955
Mrs. Mary C. Tanner & Miss Winifred Hagerty, sisters	1955-1959
Mrs. Hazel Giddens Morton	1959-1969
William J. & Elva M. Darby	1969-

According to Minute Book 8, page 578, the homestead was purchased "at the courthouse door" of Franklin by Major J. H. Akin and wife from Thomas Banks, et al. Banks owned the properties during the period of the Civil War and thereafter. Although it cannot be firmly documented, it appears that during the Akin ownership the circumferential porch was added.

The ownership period, 1902-1955, constituted a continuing family ownership period. Mrs. W. T. Naff was the daughter of Thomas J. Timmons and the estate was sold to Mrs. Mary C. Tanner and her sister Miss Winifred F. Hagerty by W. T. Naff, administrator of his mother's estate (Mrs. Lucille Timmons Naff). Indeed, the farm and house are still referred to by some of the older residents of the county as "the Timmons Place."

Thomas Jefferson Timmons was familiarly known as "Daddy Timmons." Clearly he was a shrewd and able businessman and an individualist. He served as the first president of the Thompson's Station Bank and Trust Company which opened in 1914 with capital stock of \$7,500, closing its doors in 1927. The small brick bank building at the corner of the present village just west of the south end of Homestead Manor farm is now used as a dwelling. A story in the older community is that one of the Thompson's Station bank depositors appeared at the bank one day with a wheel barrow containing two buckets and demanded his total deposit of \$10,000. He was given the money, even though it virtually depleted the cash on hand, but returned the money the following day.

He remarked, "I just wanted to see if it was still there." Some identify "Daddy Timmons" with this episode.

Another interesting incident is that 5400 square feet of land was annexed by T. J. Timmons through a deed from Mrs. M. L. Kennedy, March 24, 1903. This lies on the southwest corner of the farm and was desired by Mr. Timmons in order to give access to a small segment of the creek arising from the main spring at the junction of the Lavender and Giddens line. By obtaining this he assured an everflowing source of water for the "back pasture", i.e., acreage west of the railway track. In exchange Mrs. M. L. Kennedy was granted "a road leading from the right-of-way of Columbia and Franklin Pike 12 feet wide to the cemetery with the same width entirely around said cemetery and the land enclosed therein." The land area was carefully surveyed, evaluated at \$60 per acre, and it was "agreed that such excess is in favor of T. J. Timmons and that he is entitled to receive from Mrs. M. L. Kennedy the sum of \$5.53." Martha L. Moss Kennedy, who died August 11, 1927, is buried in this cemetery.

During the four years that the house was owned by the Tanner and Hagerty sisters considerable renovation occurred, including re-papering of the two original parlors. Mrs. Hazel Giddens Morton purchased the property from the sisters in 1959, returning it thereby to ownership by descendants of the original builders.

As already noted, the present owners have extensively restored the house, modernizing heating and air-conditioning systems, lighting, and plumbing as well. They have accumulated from many their recollections of memorable occasions relating to visits, occupancy, or special events at Homestead Manor. Examples of such events include the recollection of Mrs. Claire Regen of Franklin of the wedding reception there for the daughter of Major and Mrs. Akin; National Patriotic Week in 1960 was marked October 23 by a ceremony at the Giddens family burial ground honoring the three patriots, Francis, Francis II, and James. This was sponsored by the President Jackson and President Polk Societies of the Children of the American Revolution. Mary Trim Anderson of Franklin has remarked on the pleasant hours she spent playing with dolls on the third floor while living in the home; Mrs. Aloise Taft, now of Donelson, Tennessee, and her family, lived there while she was a

schoolteacher at Thompson's Station. It is evident that Homestead Manor has a special place in the history of this community.

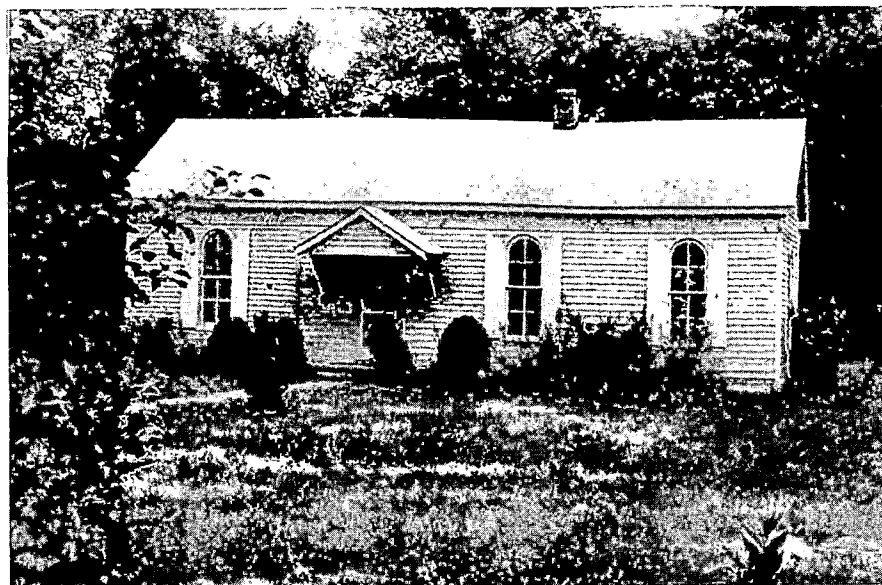
#### WEST HARPETH SCHOOL HOUSE

In 1974 another structure, full of poignant memories for many, was moved to approximately 100 yards north of the manor house: the old West Harpeth School House. This building was restored and serves as a farm and professional office of the present owner. Built in the late 1880's on the Robert Pitner farm, West Harpeth Road, it had been moved to the grounds of the Thompson's Station School on Columbia Highway at Thompson's Station Road, to serve as an annex to the old five room school house there. When it was no longer so used because of the construction of the larger brick school house (now abandoned) the building was given by the Williamson County Board of Education to the Thompson Station's Home Demonstration Club and served as a meeting house until 1970. At that time the club discontinued meeting there. In 1974 the land and abandoned brick school property was sold by the Board of Education. To preserve this building within the community, a building so full of associations for literally several generations, it was purchased by the W. J. Darbys and moved to its present location.

The restoration of both the manor house itself and of the old West Harpeth one-room school, as well as of the barn, former hen-house, and old garage carried out during the last 14 years is due to the skillful and sensitive talents of Mr. Tom Still of Franklin and his son T. L. Still, Duplex Road, Springhill. Both have contributed immeasurably to the preservation of historic Williamson County, particularly the Franklin-Thompson's Station area. Mr. Aubrey Cole has been responsible for portions of the extraordinary craftsmanship which has characterized these efforts.



West Harpeth School during use as an annex to the five-room Thompson Station School built in 1925-1926. Photo Courtesy W. Cameron Kinnard, formerly of Thompson Station, taken during the Christmas holidays, 1948.



West Harpeth School building, restored, as Homestead Manor farm office. Photo Courtesy of C. Doran and Amelia B. Lester, Altadena, Ca., June, 1983.

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## THE MAGNESS TRIALS

By: Gary Alan Webb

On Wednesday afternoon, October 24, 1810, at 1:00 p.m., David Magness shot Major Patten Anderson through the heart in front of the Bedford County Courthouse in Shelbyville, Tennessee. David and his brothers, Jonathan Magness and Perry Green Magness, were thought to have deliberately planned Anderson's assassination and were quickly indicted for the murder. It was felt that the Magnesses could not receive a fair trial in Shelbyville, therefore, the case was transferred to the Circuit Court in Williamson County. The trial was scheduled to be heard on November 16, 1810, and thus all eyes in Tennessee were turned on the little town of Franklin and the Williamson Countians who were to decide one of Tennessee's most celebrated murder trials.

A celebrated trial calls for celebrated people, and the Magness trials were no exception. The case involved many of Tennessee's well-known and distinguished citizens, and the lawyers, themselves, were enough to guarantee large crowds and plenty of excitement.

The deceased, Major Patten Anderson, was a controversial figure, and was certainly well-known throughout Tennessee. He was a close friend of General Andrew Jackson, and, like Jackson, men either liked him or bitterly hated him.

Major Anderson was descended from a prominent Virginia family, and in Tennessee he counted among his friends some of the most powerful and influential names. At the time of his death, Major Anderson was a large land owner and inspector general of the Tennessee Militia. His brother, Colonel William Preston Anderson, held the office of Principle Surveyor for the Second District of Tennessee, and was trustee of Cumberland College in Nashville.

Unfortunately, Major Anderson was also known to associate with the wrong sort of people, and at times he was overbearing and belligerent. Anderson was a heavy drinker and a mean drunk. His violent temper continuously involved him in numerous quarrels and fights.

Patten Anderson's relationship with Andrew Jackson extended beyond just friendship. They were both closely involved in a

number of business dealings, some of which brought about criticism for both men.

Major Anderson and his brother, William, were partners with Jackson in various land speculation deals. In Tennessee, huge fortunes were being made buying land at a cheap price and later selling it at a much higher price to the settlers moving in from back east. Col. William Anderson, as state surveyor, made for his brother, Patten, and Andrew Jackson a lot of money, but not without a lot of criticism. It has been said that William Anderson made for General Jackson in land speculation whatever fortune Jackson had made.

Anderson and his friend Jackson had a bad addiction which brought out the worst in both men and was a constant source of trouble for them. Both men loved cockfighting and horse-racing. Patten and William Anderson built a cock-pit and race track at Clover Bottom only a few hundred yards from Jackson's store. The Anderson brothers took General Jackson in as a partner in their gambling enterprise, and together the three men enlarged the track to include a tavern, booths for hucksters and a keelboat yard. The venture was a successful one, and attracted gamblers and sporting men from all over the southeast. But, because the partners were known to be heavy betters at their own track; there was a lot of suspicion and accusations.

Major Anderson's involvement at the track was questionable indeed. On a number of occasions he was suspected of fixing the horse races at Clover Bottom, and on at least two occasions the losers were so enraged they attempted to lynch Anderson. Both times Anderson's life was saved by Andrew Jackson. On one occasion Jackson was able to stall the crowd, giving Anderson time to escape, by clicking a snuff box behind his back to simulate the sound of cocked pistols. On the other occasion, Jackson held drawn pistols on the crowd allowing Anderson time to escape.

Unlike Patten Anderson, the Magness brothers had arrived in Middle Tennessee only a few years prior to the shooting, and were relatively unknown in Tennessee. The brothers were from old Tyrone County, North Carolina and descended from Scotch-Irish ancestors. Their father, Captain Perry Green Magness, Sr., had served as a member of the Provincial Congress in 1775, and during the American



Revolution he served as a member of the Committee of Safety for Tyron County. The Magnesses migrated to Bowling Green, Ky. in 1796 and Captain Magness died there in 1800. After settling their father's estate, the three brothers moved to Tennessee around 1806, and bought approximately 1,500 acres of land in Rutherford and Wilson Counties (near the Davidson County line) near Andrew Jackson and the Anderson brothers.

The shooting of Major Anderson was the result of bad feelings which existed between the parties for some time. The court records state that in the spring prior to his death, Patten Anderson and several men went in search of horses which Anderson had sold a man named Riggs in exchange for a land warrant for 5,000 acres. The land warrant turned out to be a forgery and Anderson wanted his horses back.

The men rode to the home of Jonathan Magness, where they found the three Magness brothers and several of the horses. Anderson claimed the horses as his, and an argument ensued. Magness explained that Riggs had left the horses in the care of the Magness brothers, and that as compensation for feeding and tending to the horses, the Magnesses were to be given several of the horses. Magness, further, told Anderson to take the horses if they were in fact legally his, but that Anderson must pay the Magnesses for the care and tending of the horses. Major Anderson became violent. He refused to pay any compensation and verbally attacked the Magness brothers. Anderson accused them of stealing the horses and threatened Jonathan Magness' life. Anderson and his friends took the horses and left without paying anything.

The Magnesses were a proud and stubborn Scotch-Irish family, and they did not take too kindly to Anderson's accusations and threats. When the parties came face to face that Wednesday afternoon in Shelbyville, the Magnesses were determined that Patten Anderson, in his high-handed fashion, would not run "rough-shod" over them. This fatal meeting was a keg of dynamite waiting to explode, and Patten Anderson lit the fuse!

The reaction in Shelbyville to Major Anderson's death was swift. David Magness had killed Anderson at 1:00 p.m. in the afternoon, but before the day was over, all three Magness brothers had been arrested, brought before the Bedford County Grand

Jury and indicted for the murder of Anderson.

The Magness brothers were worried! They felt that David's shooting of Major Anderson was justifiable homicide, but things were happening too fast. Even young Perry Green Magness, who was just 14 years old and nowhere near the shooting, had been arrested and charged with the murder. The three brothers were unknown newcomers, and Patten Anderson had many powerful friends who exercised a lot of influence in Bedford County.

The Defendants hired Felix Grundy and Jenkins Whitesides, two of the best lawyers in the state. At the time, Grundy was considered the best trial lawyer in the old South-West, and was known for his persuasive abilities over a jury. Grundy's record is probably unsurpassed in Tennessee's history. Of the one hundred sixty five (165) people he defended for capital crimes, only one was condemned and executed. Prior to the Magness trials, Grundy had served as U. S. Senator from Kentucky and as Chief Justice of the Kentucky Supreme Court. After the trial, he went on to obtain national prominence as U. S. Senator from Tennessee. Felix Grundy's brilliant career deserves more recognition in our nation's history, but unfortunately his accomplishments were overshadowed by his contemporaries Henry Clay and Daniel Webster.

Jenkins Whitesides was an able attorney, and his specialty was land law. Whitesides had been elected to the U. S. Senate in 1809, and had recently resigned in order to return to Tennessee to practice law. He was a distinguished and successful lawyer, and without a question had the largest law practice in Tennessee.

The man responsible for the prosecution of the Magnesses was Alfred Balch, a 1785 graduate of Princeton College. Balch was from Georgetown in Washington, D. C., and had only recently been appointed Solicitor General for the newly formed Fourth Judicial Circuit which included both Bedford and Williamson Counties. Balch was a capable attorney, and during the Magness trials he became a close friend of Jackson. Later, when Jackson became President of the United States, he appointed Balch Commissioner of Indian Treaties, and President Martin Van Buren appointed Balch U. S. District Judge for the Middle District of Florida.

The first legal skirmish took place in Shelbyville. On October 25, the day after the shooting, the Magness brothers, with

counsel, appeared before Thomas Stuart, Judge of the Fourth Circuit, to be arraigned. All three defendants pleaded not guilty, and their attorneys filed a petition with the court asking for a change of venue. The petition alleged that the deceased, Patten Anderson, had many connections and influential friends in Bedford County and that "the influence they possess...(had) been used and (would) be used to prejudice the defendants". The petition, further asked that the case be transferred to an adjoining county, but not Davidson or Rutherford Counties as they were not free from the influence of Anderson's friends.

Judge Stuart agreed that it would be impossible for the defendants to receive a fair and impartial trial in Bedford County, and therefore ordered the case transferred to the Williamson County Circuit Court. Judge Stuart further ordered the case to be set for trial in Franklin, Tennessee on November 16, 1810.

When Andrew Jackson and Patten Anderson's friends heard of the events in Shelbyville they thought they saw in the affair a calculated and contrived assassination. General Jackson swore that he would see to it that all three Magness brothers would hang and he immediately launched himself into the controversy.

Anderson's friends knew that as capable as Alfred Balch might be, he was no match for the defense team of Grundy and Whitesides. They decided to hire their own attorneys to help prosecute the case but were uncertain who they should obtain. Jackson was licensed to practice law and had served as a judge, but he and Anderson's friends had no delusions about his legal abilities.

Jackson, however, did stand ready to assist in hiring a private prosecutor, and it was decided that John Haywood should be the one to lead in prosecuting the state's case. Haywood was considered Tennessee's greatest and most learned jurist, as well as the equal to Felix Grundy as a trial advocate. John Haywood had come from North Carolina where he had served as State Attorney General and Judge of the Superior Court. Later, after the Magness Trials, he went on to become an outstanding Judge of the Tennessee Supreme Court and one of Tennessee's first historians.

Since the Magnesses would be tried in Franklin, Jackson and Anderson's friends hired a Williamson County attorney to assist Haywood in the prosecution. They employed Thomas Hart Benton, a

likeable young man from Leiper's Fork in Williamson County. Benton had only been practicing law four or five years, but in 1809 he had been elected state senator from Williamson County. His role in the trials was a minor one, and several years afterwards Benton and Jackson were to clash. Their friendship ended in a shoot-out at Talbot's Tavern in Nashville. Thomas Hart Benton went on to become a nationally prominent U. S. Senator from Missouri.

In 1810, Franklin, Tennessee was just a small frontier village. The population of Williamson County was just over 13,000, but in November of that year the entire county became flooded with spectators and curiosity seekers. People had traveled for miles hoping to witness the upcoming legal battle.

Emotions were inflamed to the highest pitch of excitement, and it seemed as though the whole state was taking sides in the controversy. The friends of Anderson and the followers of Andrew Jackson were clamoring for the death penalty, and to the Magness family's surprise there was a lot of public support for them. Jackson and Anderson had influence, but they also had enemies. Many people felt that Patten Anderson's death was long overdue.

The parties and their supporters began to arrive in Franklin for the trial. In 1810, there were only two taverns in Franklin. The Anderson faction took accommodations at one tavern and the Magness family took the other. The supporters tended to congregate at one tavern or the other, and in general each party remained aloof from each other.

Andrew Jackson, not to be forgotten, roared into Franklin with a number of his friends, and took accommodations at the tavern with Anderson's friends. After dinner, Jackson, half-drunk and from the piazza of the tavern, delivered a fiery speech on the case to an onlooking crowd! As a Magness supporter passed by and heard Jackson's remarks he shrugged his shoulders and said "PSHAW"! Jackson paused and none to steady on his feet, looked through the crowd for the offender. Jackson said, "Who dares to say PSHAW to me? By -----, I'll knock any man's head off who says PSHAW to me". The supporter kept walking and Jackson finished his speech.

At 9:30 a.m. on Friday morning, November 16, 1810, everyone gathered in the courtroom in Franklin for the final showdown. It had been decided that each of the Magness brothers would be tried

separately, and it was agreed that David Magness would be the first one tried. Court convened with Judge Thomas Stuart presiding over the trial, and William Smith was Clerk of the Circuit Court. Judge Stuart selected Constables Caleb Manley, Kemp Holland, John L. Fielder, and Peter Reives to help maintain order and oversee the jury. Sheriff William Hulme led David Magness into the courtroom, and the trial began with the selection of the jury.

As in any trial, the jury selection was not taken lightly. Felix Grundy's favorite trial strategy was to incite the jury against the deceased, and so it was important for him to select men whose passions were easily aroused. On the other hand, John Haywood and the other prosecutors knew exactly what Grundy was up to, and they were determined to prevent him.

After a great deal of questioning and careful consideration by the twelve attorneys, Williamson Countians were finally selected to try David Magness. They were towit: Henry Cook, James Gideon, James Hicks, Samuel McCutchen, Reuben Parks, Andrew Goff, Robert McLeland, Thomas Ridley, James Hartgrove, Richard Puckett, Thomas Berry and Thomas Walker.

With the jury selected, John Haywood lead the prosecution in presenting the states case against David Magness. The prosecution contended that Magness, aided by his two brothers, killed Patten Anderson in cold blood, as part of a planned conspiracy of revenge. The prosecution was asking for the death penalty, and as part of the states proof John Casey, Stephen Bedford, William Hamilton, William Lane, James Robertson, Edward Cage, Thomas Eskridge, Samuel Eskridge, Joseph Alexander, Sr., Thomas Mitchell, Benjamin Bradford, Joseph Phillips, Edward Ward and Samuel Hogg were called to testify.

Their testimony told of the bitter feelings which existed between Anderson and the Magness brothers, and how Patten Anderson had taken the horses from the Magnesses and filed suit against Riggs in the Bedford County Court. They explained that the case was scheduled for trial on October 24, 1810, the day Anderson was killed, and that Anderson had traveled to Shelbyville on that day to prosecute his case.

Benjamin Bradford testified that, on the day Anderson was killed, he saw the three Magness brothers sitting with several other

men "on a log in the edge of the cedars, near the street in Shelbyville, apparently consulting together." When the men saw Anderson riding into town, all quickly turned their heads. Bradford further testified that David Magness was wearing the pistols used to kill Anderson.

Others testified that when Patten Anderson arrived in Shelbyville, he went a short distance from the courthouse, to the house of William Newson, and there Jonathan Magness approached him about the old grievance. Both men became very excited, and Jonathan Magness said something which exceedingly irritated and angered Anderson. Quick tempered, Anderson raised his dirk (dagger) to strike Magness, but was prevented from doing so by a friend. Anderson's friend led him a few yards away from Magness, and was trying to cool Anderson down when David Magness walked across the room and shot Patten Anderson through the heart.

Further testimony stated that after his arrest, David Magness was in the house of John Stone, and there Magness was asked why he had killed Anderson. Had Anderson insulted him or done him any injury? David Magness replied that if Anderson had not on that occasion, he had previously. It was stated that Magness then recognized Joseph Phillips and said, "You, Mr. Phillips, lived at Jefferson (Rutherford County), you know all the circumstances giving rise to this." Magness was alluding to Phillip's knowledge of Patten Anderson taking the horses and treating the Magness family badly. It was, also, stated that at no time while at John Stone's house did David Magness pretend he had killed Anderson in order to save Jonathan Magness' life.

The prosecution put on proof that Patten Anderson was not a very dangerous or quarrelsome man and portrayed him as an honest man who seldom commenced a quarrel unless it was with some person of infamous character who had offended Anderson.

After the state concluded its case, Felix Grundy and Jenkins Whitesides presented the defense's version. Both attorneys felt that the key to the trial was Patten Anderson's bad reputation for fighting. If they could prove this, then the jury could be convinced that David Magness had killed Anderson out of fear for Jonathan Magness' life. Those called by the Defense were: Lewis Newsom, John Bruce, Jordon Reaves, William Rogers, James Robertson,

Harman Newson, Nathaniel Williams, John C. Dunn, Isaac Williams, Archibald Simpson, John Griffin, Frederic Shawley, Mathew S. Montgomery, Hugh Barnett, John B. Wright, Charles Myers, Benjamin East, Jacob Hilcham, John Sadler, James Gilbert, James McQuistan, and Joseph Ake.

The witnesses for the defense testified that on the way to Shelbyville, Anderson told a friend that if he got through the day he was going to leave Tennessee and go to Illinois where he could live in peace with his neighbors. That as Anderson rode into Shelbyville, he spotted the Magnesses and remarked that he intended to kill some of the Magnesses at the risk of his own life.

Further testimony stated that in William Newson's house, Anderson told his friends that he wanted to kill "Old" Magness (referring to Jonathan Magness) before he left the house. Jonathan was standing inside the house with his back against the wall about three feet from the door. Patten Anderson approached Jonathan Magness and words quickly passed between them. Anderson said, "no rascal who has been arraigned for cow-stealing shall stand in my presence or I will kill him." Jonathan replied that if Anderson tried, it would be at the risk of his own life.

The witnesses testified that danger seemed imminent as the passion in both men increased. Patten Anderson exclaimed in a loud voice that he intended to kill every "damn" hog thief, cow thief and land counterfeiter, alluding to Jonathan Magness. Jonathan was determined not to be bullied and quickly told Anderson, "don't touch me, if you do it will be at your own risk!" Anderson was overcome with fury and said, "I'll do it and kill you too!"

In an instant, Anderson drew his dirk and attempted to plunge it into Jonathan Magness. Someone grabbed Anderson's arm and David Magness immediately fired his pistol killing Anderson.

Matthew P. Montgomery testified that when Anderson pulled his dirk, the danger seemed so great that he, Montgomery, jumped out the door for his own safety. Montgomery stated that as he jumped, he heard the pistol fire.

John Griffin testified that the Magnesses were in Shelbyville that day because they had started to take horses to the range. It was also stated that Jonathan Magness expected to receive some

money in Shelbyville that day (Jonathan may have entered the suit as a third party seeking compensation for caring for the horses). Griffin said that David Magness intended to go on to Muscle Shoals and for that purpose had brought his pistols.

As the trial proceeded, Felix Grundy conceived the idea of putting Andrew Jackson on the stand to prove Major Anderson's reputation. If this did not work, Grundy felt that surely he could cause the hot-tempered Jackson to say something that would outrage the jury. When Jackson was called, he took the stand and Grundy asked the question straight out. Did not Patten Anderson have a bad reputation for fighting, and had not Anderson made numerous enemies? Jackson knew what Grundy was trying to do and that everyone present in the courtroom knew of Anderson's reputation. In an effort not to be trapped, Jackson quickly replied, "Sir, my friend, Patten Anderson, was the NATURAL ENEMY OF SCOUNDRELS!"

As the trial drew to a close, everyone sat anxiously waiting to hear the final arguments by these great trial lawyers. Everyone knew this is where the trial would be won or lost!

In his closing argument, Grundy opened with an eulogy on Andrew Jackson. Grundy pictured Jackson as a man of unquestionable truth and honesty, but a man caught in a predicament. Jackson could not testify against his friend Anderson and yet he could not stoop to lie for him! Grundy declared that never before had Jackson been known to speak so ambiguously or be so evasive on an issue, as he was on the witness stand. Grundy told the jury that he would leave it up to them to determine what weight such testimony should have on the case.

As Jackson sat in the courtroom and heard Grundy's remarks he became outraged, and complained to Thomas Hart Benton that Grundy's tactics were unfair. Jackson instructed Benton to, "skin Grundy alive on that point!" Benton, though young and inexperienced, realized this was not the course to take. He told Jackson that, "he has got us down on that point - flat on our backs. I reckon we had better let it alone."

After hearing the final arguments from both sides, the jury retired to consider the proof. On Saturday morning, November 24, 1810, they rendered their verdict to a packed courthouse. After hearing all the proof, the 12 Williamson Countians found David



Magness not guilty of murder in the first degree. They did, however, find him guilty of simple manslaughter.

That same day David Magness stood before Judge Thomas Stuart to be sentenced. Judge Stuart ordered Magness branded in the hand with the letter M, and imprisoned for 11 months. In light of the fact that the prosecution was asking for the death penalty, this was a virtual acquittal for Magness!

The trial was over, and the Magnesses were relieved. The ordeal had lasted a week, with 42 witnesses called to testify and every point in the case contested.

Jackson and Anderson's friends were outraged, and through their efforts the Magnesses would have to repeat the same ordeal one year later. On Monday morning November 18, 1811, young Perry Green Magness appeared in Franklin before Judge Thomas Stuart to be tried for murder in the second degree in Anderson's death.

This time the Williamson Countians who were to serve on the jury were: Stephen Barefield, Ruffin Brown, Jesse Tarkinton, Andrew Roundtree, William Marshall, Richard Hightower, Mathew Johnson, William Banks, James Anderson, Robert McLemore, John Roberts and Joseph Hapell. The Constable chosen to oversee the jury was Samuel Cox.

The state alledged that Perry Green Magness had aided his brother, David, in the killing of Anderson. The defense introduced proof that Perry Green was only 14 years old when Anderson was killed and that he had not even been present at the shooting.

The parties called about the same witnesses to testify, and like the previous trial, the ordeal lasted a week. On Tuesday morning, November 21, the jury returned to a packed courthouse. Their verdict was NOT GUILTY.

Another victory for the Magness family, but Andrew Jackson and the others were not going to give up.

A year later, all the parties and witnesses once again returned to Franklin, Tennessee. This time Jonathan Magness was brought before Judge Nathaniel McWilliams, on Friday morning, May 15, 1812, charged with second degree murder in the death of Anderson.

The Williamson Countians chosen for this jury were: Jesse White, William Anthony, Thomas Old, John Edmondson, James Bradley,

John D. Hill, James Morret, Newton Cannon, Thomas Miles, William Nolen, Richard Hughes, and Sion Hunt. The Constable, Samuel Anderson, was fined \$20.00 for failing to properly oversee the jury.

Like the first two trials, this case took one week to try. On Friday morning, May 22, the jury returned to an anxious crowd, and like the previous jury they found Jonathan Magness NOT GUILTY.

Andrew Jackson was furious. He had spared no exertion to see that the Magnesses were convicted and now it looked as though he had been beaten. After the jury announced its decision, Jackson went up to one of the jury members, Newton Cannon, and shook his fist under Cannon's nose saying, "I'll mark you, young man." From that day forward, Cannon became an opponent of Jackson. Years later when Cannon served as a U. S. Congressman from Tennessee, he consistently voted against the Jackson Administration in Washington.

The Magness brothers had endured an 18 month nightmare. After three trials, a total of 36 Williamson Countians had vindicated the brothers, but regrettably the nightmare was not over.

The affair had financially ruined the Magness family. The court, however, ordered all three brothers to pay for the court cost and under an old Tennessee law it was further ordered that they remain in jail until they did so. The Magness brothers could not pay what amounted to approximately \$800.00 in court cost. All three brothers were forced to serve several years in what amounted to a debtor's prison, even Jonathan and fifteen year old Perry Green Magness who had been found innocent of any wrong doing. Jackson had finally gotten revenge!

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## HISTORY OF THE VERNON FAMILY

By: Thomas Vance Little

According to the records of the American Vernon Family Association there are two branches of the American Vernon family. One originated with three Vernon brothers of Chester County, Pennsylvania, and the other with Thomas Vernon of Cub Creek Settlement in Charlotte County, Virginia. The Williamson County Vernons descend from the latter.

The European origin of the family is not quite so clear as the American origin. The American Vernon Family Association makes something of an issue of the French origin of the family. They have established a connection with Sir Richard de Vernon of Normandy in France who came to England with William the Conqueror in 1066. He was one of the Lords to whom William granted land. The Vernons are listed in Battle Abby as officers of William the Conqueror and are among the names in the Domesday Book, published in 1086 as the First Census of Britain. Sir Richard de Vernon became the first Baron de Shipbrook of England. On this land he and his descendants prospered and multiplied mightily.

The Vernons of Chester County, Pennsylvania, were of the Quaker persuasion. As such, they could easily be descended from Sir Ralph de Vernon of France. Between 1066 and the mid 1600's it was somewhat in the order of things that religion would progress from Catholicism of the Normans to Anglicism of Henry VII. During the Reformation, it is likely that many of the Norman Vernons became Quaker, Methodist, Baptist and followers of other sects and denominations. The one thing that descendants of the Pennsylvania Vernons were not likely to have become was Presbyterian, and this is precisely what Thomas Vernon of Charlotte County, Virginia, was. The Presbyterians for the most part were Scottish and Scotch-Irish, the Presbyterian Church having been founded by George Knox, a Scotsman. It subsequently became and is today the state church of Scotland. Therefore, if Thomas Vernon of Cub Creek were Presbyterian, which he was, it is more likely that he was Celtic Scottish rather than Norman English.

On the other hand, the name Vernon is found rarely in Scottish

records and is definitely not a Scottish Clan surname. All of which is not to say that Thomas Vernon of Charlotte County, Virginia, could not have picked up his Presbyterianism anywhere along the way. Our ancestors have a way of not fitting into the mold made for them by historic facts and generalities.

In any event, the Cub Creek Settlement was founded by a group of Presbyterians, who requested permission of Royal Governor Gooch to settle on the Western frontier of the Virginia Colony. Governor Gooch was only too happy to grant the request since his English counterparts had already taken up all the best Tidwater land. He was glad to exchange this second rate Piedmont land for the protection against the Indians that the Scottish Presbyterians could provide by being in a buffer zone. In 1738 John Caldwell requested the Presbyterian Synod of Philadelphia draft a letter to Governor Gooch. The letter read in part:

We take leave to address you in behalf of a considerable number of our brethren who are meditating a settlement in the remote parts of your government, and are of the same persuasion with the Church of Scotland. We thought it our duty to acquaint your honour with their design, and of worshipping God in a way agreeable to the principles of their education....

The Governor replied as follows:

As I have always been inclined to favour the people who have lately been removed from other provinces to settle on the western side of our great mountains (where, it is to be remembered, they protected the older settlements on the seaboard from the Indians) so you may be assured that no interruption shall be given to any minister of your profession who shall come among them, so as they conform themselves to the rules prescribed by the act of toleration in England, by taking the oaths enjoined thereby, and registering the places of their meeting, and behave themselves peaceably towards the government.

The following are claimed to be the original settlers at Cub Creek in Charlotte County, Virginia, having been deeded land by Richard and William Kennon in the 1740's:

William Caldwell.....	621 acres
James Logan.....	640 acres
William Fuqua.....	400 acres

(cont'd.)

## Original settlers - Cub Creek cont'd.:

Andrew Cunningham.....	760	acres
John Caldwell.....	1,400	acres
John Stewart.....	650	acres
William Caldwell.....	300	acres
David Logan.....	1,632	acres
Thomas Cunningham.....	685	acres
James Frankling.....	567	acres
Thomas Daugherty.....	360	acres
Alexander McConel.....	717	acres
Israel Pickings.....	1,643	acres
William Harwood.....	323	acres
Thomas Vernon.....	501	acres
David Caldwell.....	584	acres
Richard Dudgeon.....	1,226	acres

The Scotch-Irish may have been given second rate land, but they never became second rate citizens. The rugged Scottish country had made them strong physically, and their religion had made them morally upright and virtuous. They later fanned out over the mountains into the Ohio, Mississippi and Tennessee Valleys and became the backbone of American democracy.

Meanwhile, back to Cub Creek. The leader of the Cub Creek Presbyterians was the Reverend John Caldwell, a prominent early Presbyterian minister and missionary. Members of this group moved into North Carolina and South Carolina, taking Presbyterianism to the hinterland. They probably immigrated to Pennsylvania first and remained at Chestnut Level, Pennsylvania, until permission was granted to enter into the Great Valley. Permission was granted by Governor Gooch in 1738. The group probably settled at Cub Creek shortly thereafter.

Prominent in the Cub Creek group were the Calhouns as well as the Caldwells. A famous product of these two families was John Caldwell Calhoun, famous Senator from South Carolina and Vice President during the administration of Andrew Jackson. True to his Scottish heritage of promoting education he founded The Citadel college in Charleston, South Carolina.

The Scottish Presbyterians were almost universally literate during a time when few others could read and write. They believed that everyone should be able to read the Bible. Accordingly, the Reverend David Caldwell founded a school in Virginia, which today is known as Hampden-Sydney College. Also Union Theological Seminary

was a product of the Cub Creek settlement.

Little is known of Thomas Vernon other than the fact that he was a member of the Cub Creek group. His wife is unknown. Records indicate that he had the following children:

1. Thomas Vernon - married ---- Gaines.
2. Isaac Vernon - married Jane Caldwell.
3. James Vernon - (more later).
4. Jonathan Vernon.
5. Rebeckah Vernon.

#### SECOND GENERATION - JAMES VERNON

James Vernon was born probably in the 1730's in Scotland and came to America with his father. His wife was Eleanor (Ellidor, Ellen). Her last name is not known, but W. A. Vernon believes that it was Caldwell. He served in the French and Indian War, going with Col. George Washington to the Ohio Valley in 1754. He was also a soldier in the Revolutionary War, according to Lunenburg County, Virginia, records.

James Vernon sold his land in Virginia in 1761 or 1771 and moved to Rockingham County (then Guilford), North Carolina. He lived there until 1797 when he and his wife sold their 313 acres of land to the Charles Galoway Company. At that time he moved to Abbeville County, South Carolina, where he died in 1802. Eleanor Vernon died in 1813.

In his will which is dated February 8, 1802, James Vernon left to his wife three Negroes named Mary, Anthony, and Rose, as well as his stock and household furniture. He left to his son Richard, "now in North Carolina," 91 and one half acres adjoining land that he had already given to his son Joseph upon the condition that Richard settle his affairs in North Carolina.

In his will James Vernon also left to his daughter Hannah, who had married John Hazelet, 91 and one half acres, where they lived. He left to his grandson John Vernon, son of Mary, 100 acres and a sorrel colt. He left to his son Nehemiah 104 acres of land "including the Mills, a Negro boy named Allen," a sorrel horse, and his Smith tools. He also directed that Nehemiah pay for his funeral. He also left a mill to his son Robert "which he now has in possession in consideration of his trouble in assisting me in Mill-work".

James Vernon appointed his sons Joseph and Nehemiah as his executors.

Eleanor Vernon died in 1813. The following is the inventory of her estate:

1 Negro Woman Rose.....	\$300.00
1 Negro Girl Deborah.....	175.00
1 Negro Girl Charlot.....	125.00
1 Negro Girl Leannah.....	80.00
1 Bed and Furniture.....	10.00
1 Wheel and Reel.....	4.50
1 Table, 1 Tea Kettle and 1 Lot Pewter..	6.00
2 Old Chares.....	.75
1 Hackle 1.50 1---- Iron and Other Small Articles.....	3.50
1 Chest \$3.00, 1 Pair Chards, and 1 Cotton Wheel \$2.50.....	5.50
1 Lot Kitchen Furniture.....	4.00
1 Wash Tub and Pail \$1.00, and 1 Bed Stead \$1.25.....	2.25
1 Book Case \$3.00, 1 Cow and Yearling \$9.00.....	12.00
	<u>728.50</u>

When James Vernon and his wife moved to South Carolina, they took their four youngest children with them and left their North Carolina land to their oldest son Richard Vernon. This fact is not borne out in North Carolina records, but Richard may have had something to do with the company which bought the land.

The children of James and Eleanor Vernon were:

1. Richard C. Vernon - (more later).
2. James Vernon, Jr. - died early and unmarried.
3. Nehemiah Vernon.
4. Joseph Vernon.
5. Isaac Vernon.
6. Robert Vernon.
7. Hannah Vernon - married John Hazelet.
8. Sarah Vernon - married James Tinsley.
9. Mary Vernon - grandson named in will of James as "son of Mary"; she could be daughter-in-law or deceased daughter who married Vernon cousin.

THIRD GENERATION - RICHARD C. VERNON

Richard C. Vernon was born in 1758 in Charlotte County, Virginia. He was the son of James and Elleanor (Elinor, Ellen) Vernon and grandson of Thomas Vernon of Cub Creek, Virginia.



Richard C. Vernon served three tours of duty as a lieutenant in the Militia of Guilford County, North Carolina, under the command of Col. Alexander Martin. During the third tour of duty, he participated in an expedition against the Cherokee Indians. On this expedition he had four horses and a wagon in service and he conducted the sick and wounded home at the conclusion of the expedition.

In 1780, Richard C. Vernon marched with Capt. Bethel's Company to Monk's Corner near Charleston, South Carolina, and there participated in the battle during which the American forces were routed by the British under Gen. Tarlton.

In August, 1780, Richard C. Vernon became a captain and commanded a Company assigned to disperse a body of about 350 Tories on the Yadkin River in Surry County, North Carolina.

Twice during the year 1781, Capt. Vernon was commissioned to raise a Company of mounted infantry for the purpose of apprehending delinquent Tories and deserters and to collect provisions for the American Troops. He served again in this capacity in 1782 until peace was declared.

Captain Richard Vernon was a Justice of the Peace in Rockingham County, North Carolina. His commission read:

*The State of North Carolina---to RICHARD VERNON, Esquire---  
Greetings.....*

*Reposing special trust and confidence in your prudence, integrity and zeal for the preservation of peace and good order, do hereby appoint you a JUSTICE OF THE PEACE for the county of Rockingham, being recommended to the said office by the Representatives in our General Assembly; and invest you with all the rights, privileges, powers and authorities useful and necessary to the just and proper discharge of the duties thereof, during your good behaviour, therein after taking the oaths prescribed by law for your qualification.*

*In testimony whereof BENJAMIN SMITH, our Governor, Captain General and Commander in Chief, hath hereunto set his hand and affixed our great seal at Raleigh, in the year of our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Ten.*

*/s/ Ben. Smith*

Capt. Richard C. Vernon was married to Catherine Barker in 1789. Most of their 13 children joined the Westward Movement during the early 1800's. Several of them settled in Williamson County, Tennessee. In 1825, Capt. Vernon himself joined that Westward Movement,

moving to Williamson County to make his home with a son who was living near Nolensville, Tennessee.

Capt. Vernon is buried in the family cemetery in Vernon Hollow near Nolensville. His tombstone bears the inscription:

"Richard Vernon a soldier of the Revolution, son of James and Ellen Vernon, born October 18, 1758, died July 24, 1840, First a private lastly a captain and was a bold and brave soldier in the sacred cause of freedom. He was worthy of all honor in life and his memory will be cherished with respect by all who knew him".

In the early 1850's there was a lawsuit brought in Williamson County Chancery Court by the North Carolina administrator of the estate of John Dagg Vernon to recover his share of the estate of Captain Richard Vernon. Testimony in the case reveals facts about the family which would not otherwise be known.

After Captain Richard's death in 1841, his son Thomas Vernon qualified as administrator of his estate. Captain Richard had died without a will. His personal estate was valued at \$1,200. He also owned 227 and one half acres of land in Williamson County that was sold pursuant to a Chancery Court decree for \$2,315. The purchaser of the property was Thomas Vernon, also the administrator of the estate.

John Dagg Vernon died in 1848, a resident of Rockingham County, North Carolina. His North Carolina administrator brought suit to recover the share of his father's estate. The reason for the suit is not apparent, but it appears that the administrator wanted the money returned to North Carolina, perhaps to satisfy creditors in that state, for as we shall see most of the family had come to Tennessee to join other relatives in Williamson County.

Thomas Vernon, as the administrator of his father's estate, resisted payment of his brother John Dagg's share to his North Carolina administrator. He testified that shortly after the death of his brother he received a letter from his brother's widow, Dolly Vernon, "expressing a desire to remove to Tennessee and asking his aid and assistance in doing so". Accordingly, Thomas Vernon, sent a wagon, two mules and hired a driver to go to North Carolina and bring his sister-in-law and her children to Williamson County.

Thomas Vernon also testified that he paid the expense for bringing Dolly and her children Nancy, John Henry, Frances, and Sarah Ann, all of whom except Nancy were minors at the time. One child, Obediah, remained in North Carolina. Thomas said that they were "entirely destitute" at the time of their arrival at his home. He also advanced them the means for their support for the first year. They moved to Tennessee in December 1848.

The lawsuit involved Thomas Vernon's attempting to deduct his expense for bringing Dolly Vernon and her children to Tennessee from their share of the estate of Captain Richard Vernon. Dolly appeared to have no objection to this arrangement, but the court ultimately ruled that the money must be sent to the North Carolina administrator of the estate of John Dagg Vernon.

Testimony in the case also revealed that James Vernon, son of Captain Richard Vernon, died in Virginia some time between the death of Captain Richard Vernon, 1841, and the death of John Dagg Vernon, 1848. It also revealed that he left surviving a widow but no children.

The following is an account of the estate of Richard Vernon filed by his son Thomas Vernon:

Estate of Richard Vernon deceased in a/c with Thomas Vernon administrator

<u>Debit</u>		<u>Credit</u>	
To Burgess Robinson note ins.....	16.50	By amount of sale.....	382.95
To Christopher Givins note ins.....	8.00	By cash in hands of Thomas	
To cash paid clerks fees heretofore	3.00	Vernon.....	512.25
To cash paid N. L. Harrison.....	2.00	By cash on hand.....	71.00
To cash paid burial expenses.....	1.50	By Leonard Vernon note.....	43.00
To cash paid John Marshall.....	5.00	By Robert Vernon note.....	39.75
To cash paid Martin Wheeler.....	5.00	By Mary Robertson note.....	51.62
To cash paid Tinsley Vernon.....	50.00	By " " " ".....	36.25
To cash paid David Guthrie.....	4.00	By Polly Vernon note.....	9.00
To cash paid Richard W. Robison....	3.50	By Burgess Robinson note.....	16.50
To cash paid J. C. Robison.....	8.66	By Christopher Givins note.....	<u>118.00</u>
To cash paid taxes 1842.....	2.85		
To cash paid postage.....	.50		
To cash paid taxes 1841.....	4.25		
To --- to administrator.....	75.00		
To clerk for making & recording			
settlement.....	2.50		
Balance due estate 3 Aug. 1842.....	<u>998.06</u>		
	1190.32		1190.32

I find a balance in the hands of Thomas Vernon as the administrator of the estate

of Richard Vernon deceased on the third day of August last of Nine hundred ninty eight dollars and six cents. Witness my hand at office the 24th day of October A.D. 1842.

Lemuel B. McConnico Clerk Williamson County Court

Another court proceeding that contains a gold mine of information on the children of Captain Richard Vernon was a proceeding before the Williamson County Chancery Court in 1871 to ascertain the heirs of James A. Vernon. Affidavits of E. M. Vernon, William A. Vernon and G. H. Lamb were taken. The decree enumerated the children of Richard Vernon living at that time or the descendants of those children who were deceased at that time. Information in the following referring to the date 1871 comes from that proceeding. That part of the proceeding relating to the heirs of James A. Vernon reads as follows:

The subscriber Clerk and Master to whom the above stated cause stands referred by a Decree made at the present term of this court, upon the Petition of E. M. Vernon and others filed in this cause, directing him to take proof ascertain and report, who, are the heirs at law and next of kin of James A. Vernon Deceased and also what amount of funds in this cause, are due such heirs and next of Kin, respectfully reports that he has taken the depositions of E. M. Vernon, Wm A. Vernon and G. H. Lamb, which are herewith filed for the inspection of the Court, and he finds from the proof therein, that the heirs at law and next of Kin of the said James A. Vernon Deceased, are as follows, towit - First, his brother Pleasant Vernon, a resident of Pikeville in Bledsoe County, Tennessee, a Sister Nellie Robinson, a resident of Rutherford County, and another Sister, Polly Vernon, a resident of Williamson County, and the children of a deceased brother Green Vernon, towit - Wm A. Vernon, Nancy Hamer, wife of Reese P. Hamer, Matilda Sloan, wife of R. D. Sloan, all of Williamson County, Marion Elliott, wife of Charles Elliott of Rutherford County, Samuel Vernon of Arkansas, Mary Vaughan, wife of William Vaughan of Texas, and Harriet Halfacre of Lauderdale County. The children of a deceased brother, John D. Vernon towit - Obediah Vernon of Dyer County, and John H. Vernon, Nancy H. Branson, wife of J. D. Branson, Fannie A. Colquitt, wife of Green Colquitt, and Sarah E. Vernon, all of Gibson County, Tennessee. The children of Edith Colquitt, a sister of the Said James A. Vernon, towit - John R. Colquitt and Green Colquitt of Gibson County, Tennessee and Henry Colquitt of the State of California. The children of another deceased brother Leonard Vernon towit - Nancy A. Brumett, wife of William Brumett and Mary P. Vernon of Rutherford County,

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Tennessee. The children of Obediah Vernon Sr a deceased brother of the said James A. Vernon towit - Matilda A. Lamb, wife of G. H. Lamb of Williamson County, and the widow and children of Obediah Vernon, Jr. deceased, of the State of Mississippi. And the children of his deceased brother Robert Vernon, towit - James A. Vernon of Hood County in the State of Texas, E. M. Vernon, J. A. Vernon, Catherine E. Vernon and Mary A. Vernon of Williamson County, Tennessee. As to so much of said decree as directs the Master to ascertain and report the amount of funds in this Cause due, and owing to the Said heirs at law and next of Kin of the Said James A. Vernon, he respectfully reports that it will be seen from the report of the former Clerk and Master, filed in the Original Cause, on the 23rd day of March 1855, and from the Decree confirming the Same, made at the April Term 1855, that there was on hand, belonging to the estate of the said James A. Vernon, for principal and interest, on the 1st day of April 1855, the Sum of \$301.26, which is to be divided among the nine brothers and Sisters of the Said James A. Vernon, or the children of such of them as are deceased, whose names and residences are hereinbefore reported.

#### CHILDREN OF CAPTAIN RICHARD VERNON

##### Pleasant Preston Vernon:

Pleasant Preston Vernon was the oldest child of Captain Richard and Catherine Barker Vernon. He was born December 9, 1789 and died December 4, 1872. He was a resident of Pikeville, Bledsoe County, Tennessee, in 1871. He also appears in the 1850 Census of Bledsoe County with a wife named Mary Price Vernon, who was 57 years old and born in North Carolina. In his household were the following children:

1. Caswell Vernon - age 21, born in Tennessee.
2. Alexander Vernon - age 19, born in Tennessee.
3. Octora (male) Vernon - age 17, born in Tennessee.
4. Nancy L. Vernon - age 14, born in Tennessee.

In a letter from John J. Vernon of Santa Ana, California, dated January 8, 1974, he says:

We visited a widowed cousin about 80, in Morristown. She was born and grew up in Pikeville, and had more pictures and data on Pleasant Preston Vernon, than you could ever hope to find in one household. As a young girl, and she still remembers, attending the last three burials in the little private Vernon cemetery. It was originally layed out for 12 graves and there are 12 burials. It is bounded by an iron picket fence. Ten of the graves are marked with a marble upright monument, the inscription on each is clearly legible. We know who are buried in the

two unmarked graves.

Another source describes the cemetery as "Wesley Chapel Cemetery, two and one half miles south of Pikeville".

#### Green Vernon:

Green Vernon, second child of Captain Richard Vernon, was born October 7, 1791, and died November 19, 1860. He appears to be the first of Captain Richard Vernon's children to come to Williamson County. He bought land in the Nolensville area and is buried on the old Jenkins farm near Nolensville. He was a millwright by profession.

#### Green Vernon's children were:

1. William A. Vernon - married first to Nancy Carmichael and second, August 9, 1846, to Sarah Ann Chadwell. His first wife died at the birth of her second child. She along with the child, who died too, are buried in the Carmichael Cemetery on Sunset Road.
2. Nancy Vernon - married November 7, 1839, to Reese Hamer.
3. Matilda Ann Vernon - married September 23, 1840, to Ryliegh D. L. Sloan.
4. Marion Vernon - married November 11, 1840, to Charles L. Elliott, and living in Rutherford County in 1871.
5. Samuel Vernon - living in Arkansas in 1871.
6. Mary Vernon - married William Vaughan April 24, 1850, and living in Texas in 1871.
7. Harriett Vernon, born 1829 - married Frederick Halfacre on January 8, 1852, living in Lauderdale County, Tennessee in 1871.

#### John Dagg Vernon:

John Dagg Vernon was born December 1, 1792, in North Carolina. He died in 1848, still a resident of North Carolina. After his death his widow, Dolly Vernon, came to Williamson County to live. Details of her move to Williamson County are recounted elsewhere in this article.

#### John Dagg and Dolly Vernon had five children:

1. Obediah Vernon - born July 15, 1826, died February 17, 1893. He was married January 29, 1850, to Eliza Jane Goolsby. He remained in North Carolina when his mother and the rest of the family came to Williamson County. He later moved to West Tennessee to the little town of Friendship where many of the Vernons lived.
2. John Henry Vernon - born March 21, 1831, died December 5, 1876, married February 28, 1866,

to Martha Jane Coleman. He was living in Gibson County, Tennessee, in 1871.

3. Nancy H. Vernon - married J. D. Branson and living in Gibson County in 1871.
4. Frances Ann Vernon - married in 1851 to her first cousin, Green Colquette.
5. Sarah Ann Vernon - living in Gibson County in 1871.

#### Samuel Vernon:

Samuel Vernon was born September 16, 1794, in North Carolina and died November 4, 1814. He apparently died unmarried and without issue.

#### Nancy Vernon:

Nancy Vernon was born March 11, 1796, and died April 6, 1864. She was married to Dennis Lark. Listed in the 1850 Census of Rutherford County, Tennessee, in the household of Dennis Lark, a farmer, age 74, born in Virginia, are Nancy Lark, age 53, born in North Carolina, and Charles H. Frensley, age 14, born in Tennessee. Also in the household was Polly Vernon, age 53, born in North Carolina, who was no doubt the younger sister of Nancy Vernon Lark. This sister, named Mary, nickname Polly, was born in 1810, which makes the age fit the one entered in the old Vernon Bible. She never married, which fits also.

#### Edith Vernon:

Edith Vernon was born September 17, 1797. She married a gentleman named Colquette. They had three children:

1. John R. Colquette - living in Gibson County, Tennessee in 1871.
2. Green Colquette - married his first cousin Frances Ann Vernon, living in Gibson County, Tennessee in 1871.
3. Henry Colquette - living in California in 1871.

#### Thomas Vernon:

Thomas Vernon was born March 3, 1799. He married Sarah Lewis and died October 6, 1865. His first wife died in 1847 and he married a second time to Rhoda Woods, December 24, 1847. In the 1850 Census one child Nancy A., age 13, is listed as being in the household. The family Bible lists "Nancy Ann Vernon, daughter of Thomas Vernon was born on the 8th day of August, 1837". She died July 28, 1864, and was never married.

Thomas Vernon was the administrator of his father's estate.

It was he who bought the 227 acres of land near Nolensville that had belonged to Captain Richard Vernon. It was he, also, who in 1848 sent to North Carolina for his sister-in-law and her children after the death of his brother, John Dagg Vernon.

In 1910 Edward Monford Vernon of Nolensville, representing the heirs of Thomas Vernon, received a letter concerning a claim filed against the United States Government for property taken by Federal troops during the Civil War. The letter reads:

Washington D. C.  
Oct. 12, 1910

Mr. E. M. Vernon  
Nolensville, Tennessee

Dear Sir:

I herewith enclose papers for use in the war claim of the heirs of THOMAS VERNON deceased. I enclose a circular letter of instructions which you should observe very closely. You must not take your evidence unless government representative is present, as otherwise it could not be used in the prosecution of the case. As soon as you have looked up your witnesses let me know at what place it will be most convenient for you to get them together, and I will file a request with the Department and one of the government representatives will notify you of the exact date he will be there. You must have all of your witnesses and a notary public on hand at that time and place. As you will be given only the one day on which to take the evidence and it must be completed at that time. You ought to have at least 3 or 4 witnesses and you must have one or more witnesses who actually saw the property taken by the army. Of course, the same witnesses may testify as to the loyalty of THOMAS VERNON and the taking of his property.

The claim as filed in the War Department was for 1 dark bay stallion, 1 sorrel mule, 1 black mule, 2 stacks of oats, February 1863, taken by Lieutenant J. H. James, Quartermaster of the 1st Tennessee Cavalry and for 1 bay mare and 1 black mare taken by Lieutenant W. J. Dunn, quartermaster of Col. Wilder's Brigade on the 12th day of April 1863.

If you desire any further information, kindly let me know and I will furnish same.

Yours,

G. H. Beack

\* \* \*

James Vernon:

James Adam(s) Vernon was born August 14, 1800. We have no



information on him other than what comes from his will and the Williamson County Court proceeding against Thomas Vernon. His will was dated December 23, 1829, and recites that he was a resident of Stokes County, North Carolina. The will was not probated until 1843, when it was probated in Patrick County, Virginia.

According to the court case James A. Vernon died sometime between the death of his father in 1841 and the death of his brother John D. Vernon in 1848. No doubt he died near the date his will was probated in 1843.

According to the Thomas Vernon case, James Adam(s) Vernon died leaving a widow but no children.

In his will James Adam(s) Vernon leaves to his father Richard Vernon "What he is owing me" and to his brother, John Dagg Vernon, "one bed and furniture that my father carried to the Western Country". He left the balance of his estate to his wife Polly or to his children should his wife have a child.

Leonard Vernon:

Leonard Vernon was born September 16, 1802. He was married to Jenneth Robertson (Robinson), May 14, 1831. He died December 7, 1870. The 1850 Census of Williamson County indicates the following children in his household:

- |                             |                          |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. John Vernon, age 17      | 5. James Vernon, age 5   |
| 2. Nancy Ann Vernon, age 16 | 6. Jane Vernon, age 3    |
| 3. Ellen Vernon, age 11     | 7. William Vernon, age 1 |
| 4. Martha Ann Vernon, age 8 |                          |

The Chancery proceeding of 1871 indicates only two children: Nancy A. Brumett, wife of William Brumett and Mary P. Vernon of Rutherford County.

Nancy Vernon Brumett was killed when a tornado struck her home in 1900. According to family tradition, she had been sitting in a chair knitting when the storm arose. She was blown out of the house across the road. She was later found with a fractured skull and broken neck. But in her hands she was still tightly clutching her knitting needles and ball of yarn.

Elleanore Vernon:

Elleanore Vernon was born September 16, 1804. She was married to Jesse Robertson July 24, 1828. She was living in Rutherford County in 1871.

**Obediah Vernon:**

Obediah Vernon was born May 17, 1806, in Rockingham County, North Carolina. He came to Williamson County as a young man and married Ellen Cyrus, February 20, 1828. He apparently died quite young, possibly by 1830 or 1831, leaving a widow with two young children:

1. Matilda A. Vernon, born January 28, 1829, married Gilbert Haywood Lamb, April 17, 1853. The author of this article is descended from Matilda Ann and Gilbert Haywood Lamb.
2. Obediah Vernon, Jr., his widow and children were living in Mississippi in 1871.

**Robert Vernon:**

Robert Vernon was born May 17, 1808. He was married to Sarah Robertson, March 20, 1830. He died August 6, 1846.

The children of Robert Vernon were:

1. Richard Vernon - born February 24, 1831, died of pneumonia September 18, 1862, at Bacon Creek, Kentucky. He was a captain in the Confederate Army. Family tradition has it that he was buried near a school house in Bacon County and that his grave was marked with a cedar slab. The Union soldiers used the cedar slab for target practice. Before it was destroyed it was hidden and later replaced by a young school boy. After the war his brother, James Adam, made a trip to Kentucky by wagon to get his brother's body and brought it back to Nolensville for burial.
2. Thomas Vernon - went to Texas.
3. Edward M. Vernon - born January 26, 1835, died April 17, 1914; married September 18, 1867, to Martha Jane Darsey.
4. James Adam Vernon - born 1839, died 1925; married Sarah E. McArthur. He was a member of Company B, 20th Tennessee Regiment during the Civil War. He was captured by the Union army and spent 18 months in prison at Rock Island, Illinois. It was he who went to Kentucky to bring his brother's body home.
5. Catherine Vernon - born July 21, 1844, died December 27, 1890, and buried in the Vernon Cemetery. She never married.
6. Mary Ann Vernon.

While a prisoner at Rock Island, Illinois, James A. Vernon wrote the following letter to his sister, Catherine E. Vernon of Nolensville:

Rock Island, Ill.  
December the 1st, 1864

Miss Catherine E. Vernon,

Kind sister I take the present oppertunty of writing you a few lines to let you know how I am geting a long and I am happy to enform you that my health is verry good all of your acquaintance that is here is well. I have not had aney letters from home since yours of the 14th of November though I am exspecting one ever day I have nothing new to write to day I have one vine ring which I will enclose in this letter I will oneley send you one this time and if you get this I will send sis and Mary stevens one apeace as soon as I heare from you if you should not get this I will keep them until I can see some one going to Nashville or perhaps I will have a chance to come home this winter I hope we will be released I will write to Monk next week and give him a statèment for a pertission George V----llin will send his at the same time him and Janett Allin can get them up and have them signed by men that is known to be loyal and I think it would be the best to get some one to go to the war department and at tend to it there has bin men released heare by doing that and that I think is the shorest plan tel Monk he can send me some money the express maile is coming in regular and we are allowed to buy vegatables and it is a great advantage to health to have such things on account of scruvy I will close for the present tel tom and sis to write to me you all must write regular give my Love to the Family and Friends

Your Brother, James A. Vernon

The inspector will please seal this letter after inspecting it

\* \* \*

Mary Vernon:

Mary Vernon was the youngest of the Vernon children. She was born November 20, 1810, died November 2, 1891. She is buried in the Vernon Cemetery. She apparently never married.

James A. Vernon also answered a Civil War questionnaire, which is on file at the Tennessee State Library and Archives. This questionnaire furnishes information about his father Robert Vernon, son of Captain Richard Vernon.

James A. Vernon said in the questionnaire that his father, Robert, was a wood workman by profession and that he "dyed" when James A. was but seven years old. He owned no slaves. They lived in a log house with a hall and two rooms with "good stone chimneys". He said that his mother was left a "wider" with eight children. She "don cooking Spinning and weaving".

When asked what kind of schools he attended, he replied, "We had the old blue Back Speller Rithmatick some geogry..."

In respect to his military service, James A. Vernon said that he enlisted in Company B of the 24th Tennessee Regiment in 1861. He fought in the Battle of Shiloh and stayed six months in Decatur County, Mississippi, recovering from wounds received in the Battle. He then rejoined his company in Mobile. He fought in the Battles of Murfreesboro and Chickamauga. He then crossed the Cumberland Mountains into Kentucky and took part in a raid on Federal troops at Mumfordsville. He was wounded, taken prisoner and exchanged at Vicksburg.

In the "fall of 63" he was captured on Graysville Road in Georgia and sent to prison at Rock Island. After the war he said, "My ole uncle sent me the money to come home on".

At the time of the questionnaire James A. Vernon was 83 years old. He further said, "There aint but 3 of us living that I no H. P. Hogan, John Lad, J. A. Vernon".

#### THE VERNONS OF RUTHERFORD COUNTY

Relatives of the Richard Vernon family lived some miles away from Nolensville across the Rutherford County line, near Mechanicsville. That family was Doctor Tinsley Vernon and his wife Ann Barrygrove (Bargrove, Hargrove) Cox.

Tinsley Vernon was born circa 1770. He was the son of Richard and Martha Tinsley Vernon of Culpepper County, Virginia. They with their three sons Richard, Tinsley, and Anthony moved to Rockingham, North Carolina in the late 1700's. In the early 1800's Tinsley Vernon migrated to Rutherford County, Tennessee, and his brother Anthony migrated to Lexington, Kentucky.

Tinsley Vernon was a physician by profession. He is listed in the 1810 Census of Rutherford County and again in the 1820 Census as the owner of 12 slaves.

The children of Tinsley and Ann Barrygrove Cox Vernon were:

1. John C. C. Vernon - born March 8, 1808, died December 6, 1833. He is buried in the cemetery at the site of the Vernon home, and his tombstone is (cont'd.)

## Children of Tinsley and Ann Vernon cont'd.:

2. clearly marked with the dates of his birth and death. Richard T. Vernon - born January 1, 1813, died February 7, 1819. He too is buried in the family graveyard with a clearly marked tombstone.
3. William Rousseau Cox Vernon - born January 14, 1805, died March 5, 1859, in Natchez, Mississippi. He married Rowena Crane September 4, 1836. She was a teacher at Washington, Mississippi. He died of burns suffered in a steamboat explosion on the Mississippi River.
4. Barrygrove Vernon - born 1806, died 1866. He apparently never married.

Mrs. Betty McGehee of Natchez, Mississippi, has done a considerable amount of research on the Tinsley Vernon family. In an undated letter she states that she has in her possession 28 letters written by William R. C. Vernon between 1840 and 1845 to his wife during her visits to his parents in Tennessee. The letters were addressed to Hardiman's Crossroads, Williamson County, and Mechanicsville, Rutherford County. She also has two letters written from Barrygrove Vernon to his brother W. R. C. Vernon written in 1858 and 1860.

While it is not clear exactly what the relationship between Captain Richard Vernon and Dr. Tinsley Vernon was, it can be assumed that they were cousins. This assumption is based on the fact that Dr. Tinsley Vernon's son W. R. C. Vernon in his letters to Tennessee mentions "Cousin Green Vernon and family" and "Cousin Lark's family". Both references are the children of Captain Richard Vernon.

#### THE BARKER CONNECTION

It will be remembered that Captain Richard Vernon married Catherine Barker. We have no precise knowledge of her lineage. It is to be noted, however, that one Leonard Barker owned land adjacent to that of Captain Richard's father's land in Rockingham, North Carolina. This Leonard Barker would appear to have been related to Catherine although the records reveal no hint of that relationship. It is also to be noted that Captain Richard and Catherine Vernon named one of their children Leonard, and the name Leonard is still in the Williamson County Barker family.

There were Barkers in Williamson County in the earliest days. They

lived in the Thompson Station area. They were neighbors to and married into the Loftin, Coleman, and Dodson families. The progenitor of Williamson County Barker family appears to have been one George W. Barker, born 1790, died May 8, 1860. He is buried in the Barker Cemetery.

The Barker Cemetery is on Thompson Station Road. In this cemetery are buried two infant children of Green and Frances Colquette. They are the two first cousins who married, both being grandchildren of Captain Richard Vernon and his wife Catherine Barker Vernon.

Copies of three letters have come into the possession of this writer that establish a connection between the Barkers of Thompson Station and the Vernons of Nolensville. The first of these letters is from Emma A. Barker to Nancy A. Vernon of Nolensville. At the time that the letter was written in 1854, Emma appears to be still living at Thompson Station, Williamson County, Tennessee.

The letter reads:

Tennessee Williamson County  
Oct the 22 1854

Dear Cousin

With pleasure i embrace the present opportunity of writing you a few lines in answer to yours which came to hand a few days since i was pleased to hear from you all and to learn that you was all well. This leaves us all in the enjoyment of moderate health and i do most humbly trust when these few lines reach you they may find you all likewise.

I have nothing verry interresting to communicate only we are invited to a large wedding which is to come of Tuesday night i will now give you their names. Miss Nannie Steel to Mr. Paul Dodson your relations are all well that reside in this Neighbourhood except Cousin J. R. Colquett and he was thrown from his horse 2 weeks ago and verry badly hurt though he is now improving. Cousin Nannie you stated that if we would go out there that you would come home with us. I am verry sorry that we cannot pay you a visit this fall but you must not let that hinder you from coming for i know you can get company if you will try. Brother Williams wifes funeral will be preached the fourth sunday in November and if you cannot come before that time you must be sure to come then and tell Cousin Tommy and Cousin Rhoda to come also and all the rest. Cousin Sallie said she was going to write to you and said she thought she could plan out a way for you to get company I do not know wether she has written or not for she has been staying with Fanny this week and i have not heard from her.

Give my love to all who take any interest in inquiring after me. Tilda sayes you must receive her undefiled love that faydeth not away you will please excuse my short and uninteresting

letter as my head is so full of wedding that i cannot get my thoughts collected.

Adieu for the present

To Nannie A. Vernon

Emma A. Barker

NB write me on the reception of this and be certain to say in your letter that you are coming soon

\* \* \* \* \*

Emma A. Barker, the writer of the letter, was the daughter of George W. Barker. She was 24 years of age in 1850 according to the Census, making her age 28 in 1854 at the time the letter was written. The recipient of the letter was Nancy A. Vernon, daughter of Thomas Vernon and his first wife Sarah Lewis. Emma A. addresses Nancy A. as "cousin", thus establishing a relationship between the Barkers and Vernons.

Brother William is no doubt William B. Barker, who married Ellen Dotson in 1834. Tilda is no doubt Emma's sister Matilda. Presumably, Cousin Tommy and Cousin Rhoda are Thomas Vernon and his wife Rhoda; he being the son of Captain Richard Vernon and father of the recipient of the letter. Cousin J. R. Colquette was the son of Edith Vernon Colquette.

The next letter is also from Emma A. Barker, but this time her sister "M. C." (Matilda C. Barker) joins as co-writer. Again, the letter was written to Nannie (Nancy) A. Vernon. This letter was written in Gibson County, Tennessee. So, it can be concluded that the Barkers moved to West Tennessee between the dates of the two letters, 1854 and 1857.

On the envelop it is written: "Through the politeness of Mr. Ed Vernon". He may have been Edward M. Vernon, son of Robert Vernon. If so, he was visiting in Gibson County and returning home. He lived near Nolensville throughout his life.

Saturday Morning Nov 1857

Dear Cousin

It is with pleasure I take my pen in hand to address you in answer to yours which came to hand a few days since it afforded me

much sincere pleasure indeed to hear from you and also to see that you had condescended once more to write to your unworthy cousins. we received your appology for not writing to us but we do not think it sufficient you will have to come down and let us be face to face Well Nanie as regards health we are all tolerable well at present though we have had some sickness and we lossed a little negro some 2 weeks ago and Brother Will family have been quite sick but are thought to be improving a little.

Nan Tilda sayes she has not made the trip she commenced and had to stop but she sayes they stuck a pin where they left off but she is fearful that the pin will loose out and then it will all be to do over again and as to myself I will in all probability be able to tell you more than I can write when I come and I hope that will not be long first you must come soon and be certain to write please excuse me for the present I am so cold

Yours Affectionately

M. C. and Emma A. Barker

\* \* \*

The next letter, dated February 9, 1853, is unsigned and addressed to Miss Matilda Ann Vernon. The identity of Matilda Ann Vernon is clear. She was the daughter of Obediah and Ellen Cyrus Vernon. The identity of the writer is not so clear. She addresses Matilda Ann as "sister", but the records do not reveal that Matilda Ann Vernon had a sister. Matilda Ann's father died when she was a baby. She may have been a half sister. "Uncle Lazars" was no doubt Lazarus Cyrus, a brother to Matilda Ann's mother, Ellen Cyrus Vernon.

The writer appears to be living with her grandparents. She refers to "Grand Mouter" and "Grandfather". Presumably, they are the Cyrus family as are Aunt Thurs and Uncle David, who have not been identified.

State of Tennessee Gibson County february the ninth 1853

Dear Sister it is with grate plasure that I resume my seat to writ you a few lines to inform you that I have not forgotten you though it seems like you have forgotten me I have lost all confidence in you ever writing to me anny more but I will write to you againe probaly you Will think enough of me write me a letter. I have been in the district 3 years an you never have written me but one letter an I dont record you weld have written that if uncle Lazars had not have ben coming here. Sister I do think hard of you an I cant help it but we will blame the subject. We are all well at this time and hope when these lines reach you



they may find you enjoying the same health if you wont writ to me I am not marid yet but I dont now how longue it will be before I do but I am about half way opposed to it and you I believe you are but dont you marry out thare just let me tell you my dauty(?) to and sister borbirds me to reamin silent espesly one whome I esteen dear as life I think if you will come out here better than to marry Mr. lambut you need not take any exceptions at any thing I say.

Aunt Thurs(?) thinks you are a longue time sendeing her curch(?) cards Sister let me ask you one more sende me my yearrings (sic) if you please for I want them very bad send them please Grand Mouter wants to see you very bad an says you must come to see her Grandfather says he wants see you an he weld be gld you weld come out here brouther says he wants to see you all so uncle David an family sends there lov an bests respects to you an says you must write to him if you cant send me my yearrings sende aunte Thurs(?) she gave them to me if you will send them I will clouse my letter by saying farewell. You must excuse my bad writing.  
Addressed to Mis Matilda A Vernon

\* \* \*

The writer chides Matilda Ann about getting married. She mentions somewhat disparagingly "Mr lamb". Indeed in less than three months Matilda Ann did in fact marry her Gilbert Haywood Lamb. They were the ancestors of the author of this article.

## BATTLE OF FRANKLIN.

NOV. 30, 1864

By: Joseph Nicholas Thompson\*

*Contributed by Mrs. Jane Gray Buchanan.*

About the 15th of Nov 1864, Hoods army arrived at Tuscumbia where they stayed about ten days to rest and receive Rations and clothing via Bostin and Corinth (Boston was as far as they ran tranes) I received a furlow to stay at home until the army moved across the Tenn. river I arrived at home in a distitute and tattered condition, as we were just out of the memorable campane from Dalton to Atlanta fighting and in close contact with the Federals almost every day, we lived during that campaine in the rifle pits Hood next crossed the Tenn River two or three days before I heard of it and I at once got a mule and with my old cook and faithful servent started to South Florence. I arrived there to find all the army crossed over and orders for no one to cross as they were taking up the pontoon bridge. (the Pontoon bridge was put across about 200 yards above the R.R. bridge to the Island and there over from the Island to the other bank!)

I persuaded the guard to allow us - (I met at the river two Missouri soldiers belonging to the 3rd Mo Regt named Fitzgerald and Duncan) to try to get over. We finally got over and were the last men to cross of Hoods army as they commenced moving the bridge at once - We camped that night 9 miles south of Florence it was biter cold and we were very uneasy about the Tories, as they were a great many in that neighborhood and we learned of there torturing and killing Jim Wilson near that place. a short while before we found a empty double cabin and after building a big fire and eating our supper we went to sleep to be awakened about 12 o'clock by a nois on the porch like some one trying to get in, we thought of course the Tories had us, but we got our guns ready and on opening the door there stood an old army mule trying to protect himself from the cold wind.

I caught up with my Regt the 2nd day after crossing the river and we saw nothing of the Federals until we reached Columbia. our Regt was in the front and were the first to get into Columbia

about day light on the 28th of Nov. we did police duty in town until ordered across the river to flank and try to surround the Federals at Spring Hill. Hood made his greatest mistake and blunder there. Hood had two corps Cheatham and Stewart who with Forrest if properly handled could have cut off and captured all of Scofields corps but it was not done and hence the terrible slaughter at Franklin. We followed the Federals closely from Spring Hill until we reached the High Hills 2 miles south of Franklin where they were posted in a strong position their artillery commanding the whole front - Our Corps and Stewarts! was in the advance and Loring's division and Scotts Brigade of which our Regiment the 35 Ala was in front. we moved to the left of the Federal lines and tried to get in there rear and on their flank but they fell back to their lines of Brestwork around Franklin - They had on there front and south of Franklin Their lines of Brest-works- after driving back their skirmishes we reached the open country in front of their works, and at once went into line of battle at and near the McGavock House. Our Regiment was on the extreme right and as we moved out towards the works we could see them dark with there Blue coats and bright guns altho 1000 yds from us, with only a thin grove of trees between us- was an open field with no obstructions, the R.R. crossed it about 100 yards in front of the Brest-works but was no protection to us. We moved out every man at his front, and our Captain Sam Stewart a South Ala boy in a perfect glee, as he said we had an open field and could see who would go the farthest; and he says I know that Co. B. will not be behind in anything and will return there already high standing in the Regiment- Orders were for us to move slow as our line was nearest the works and they wanted the left of the Division to swing around so we could strike the work simultaneous. Fetherstones Brigade on the right, Scots on the left, and Adams in the rear as a support - that was the formation of our division (Loring) We had not gone far before the artillery opened on us, They just shot struck one hundred yards in our front, there second went over us and the thirds burst just above our Regiment, and I remember casting my eyes down the Reg- and seeing almost the entire right bow to it - after that they had found the range and almost every shot left a gap in our lines. We were still ordered to move slow but their opening on us with grape and

cannister was too much for us, and we raised a shot and sprend forward in a run -, we were now about 200 yds from them and still they did not shoot except with their artillery, but we could hear them cheering behind their works, but could not see them - and we went until we got about 50 or 75 yds from them when they rose as a blue wave and a wall of fire rose that swept our ranks like hail. Many fell then but on we went up to them and when we got to their works we found that we could not get to them on account of a osage orange hedge in front of their works, so thick that we could not pull it away or cut it. Poor Capt Stewart the last I saw of him was his trying to cut a path through the hedge with his sword he fell with four bullets in him - I soon saw that nearly all of our Co was killed or wounded and when Dick Bernard by me I told him that we had better fall back on the reserve and reform - we ran about 50 yds back and were reforming when I was wounded by a cannon ball taking off my right foot. the same ball passed through two other men and wounded Beaumont and myself - We were in a very exposed place but could not move and the dead and wounded were all around us. Gen. Adams of Miss. who had the reserve rode so close to me that I thought his horse would slip on me, he rode his horse on top of the works the horse was killed on top and he (Gene. A.) fell into the trenches among the federals-

Our Company B had twenty one men in the fight and lost 4 killed and 13 wounded- In 186 after the war I visited the Battle field of Franklin and almost the first graves I saw to know was the graves of my two companions who crossed the Tenn. River with me-

## BIOGRAPHY

\*Joseph Nicholas Thompson was born in Franklin (now Colbert) County, Alabama, on 22 March 1844. He was the son of Lawrence Thompson (1785-?) and his wife, Rebecca Brigham, (1807-1856). She was the daughter of Joseph and Rebecca (Haynes) Brigham of Sudbury, Massachusetts. Lawrence Thompson, along with his brothers, James, Thomas, and Joseph Thompson, all came from Orange County, North Carolina, about 1800 to Davidson County, Tennessee, then on to Williamson County, Tennessee. The brothers, Lawrence and Joseph Thompson, were early Franklin, Tennessee, businessmen before becoming large land-holders and planters in Franklin County, Alabama and in Lauderdale County, Alabama, in the 1820's.

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PRISON LIFE AND EXPERIENCES IN WARTIME PRISONS  
 DURING  
 THE CIVIL WAR 1861 AND 1865  
 AT  
 CAMP CHASE, OHIO, CITY POINT, VIRGINIA, AND POINT LOOKOUT, MARYLAND  
 BY: Joseph Nicholas Thompson\*

*Contributed by: Mrs. Jane Gray Buchanan*

To write my prison experience, it is necessary to state how and why I was captured by the Federal Forces. I was a member of Co. B, 35th Ala. Reg. of Infantry. This Company was organized at Lagrange, Franklin (now Colbert) County in March, 1862, and was composed mostly of Cadets of the Lagrange Military Academy at that place -- boys from 15 to 18 years old, most of the older cadets having already (in 1861) joined the Confederate Army. In Gen. Hood's move around the Federal Army, (who had captured Atlanta) in their rear and then on in to Tennessee, toward Nashville -- to try to compel the Federal forces to retreat and give up their "March through Ga." On the 30th of November, 1864, Gen. Hood arrived at and fought the Battle of Franklin, the Federal forces having retreated before the advancing Confederates and taken a stand in their strong and well fortified breastworks around Franklin, Tenn. This battle was the most destructive and bloodiest battle (to the Confederates) fought during the Civil War for the time engaged, 14 Generals killed and wounded and over 4000 other Confederates dead and wounded. The writer of this was severely wounded near the Federal Breastworks, his right foot being shot off by a cannon ball. He was moved back about midnight to the field Hospital at the McGavock House, where on the next evening his leg was amputated. Never was there such hospitality shown by any place in the South as was showed by all, and I have been told there was not a house in the town and in three or four miles that was not thrown open to the care of the wounded. The writer of this was carried to the home of Mrs. Curran (Curran) and received from her and her three daughters such kind and loving attention, that he believes to this day it saved his life. On the 15 and 16th of Dec. 1864 was fought the Battle of Nashville with a complete defeat of the Confederate Forces. On the 17th the Federals occupied Franklin and captured of course all the wounded confederates that were not

able to follow the retreating army. So I fell in their hands a prisoner of War. There was another wounded Confederate who had lost an arm with me at Mrs. Currin's, but when our retreating Army passed through, he got up and followed them and I know got out safe and made a good and useful citizen and served his County (Morgan Co., Ala.) as one of their County officials afterwards...On the 19th a Federal surgeon came to Mrs. Currin's and came into the room where I was, and remarked to her, that she was taking care of a wounded rebel and he would send up two Federals for her to care for. So he sent up two wounded Federals, a Lieutenant Fitzgerald of a Pennsylvania Regt. and a private of the 10 Tenn Federal Regt., and I learned later that he was deserter from the Confederate Army. Both of them had been shot through the knee. A few days after they amputated the Tenn. Federal's leg and it (was) pitiful how he scaed and cried that they had let the confederates shoot him and now they were going to kill him. He only lived a few days. Lieut. Fitzgerald was a splendid social fellow and we got along finely, and we got quite chummy. But the death of the Tenn. soldier had a bad effect on him, as their wounds were similar and his surgeon was insisting that he have his limb cut off, but he refused. But soon it had to be done or he would lose his life. So they moved him to Nashville Hospital. So I was once more alone and could enjoy the visits of my friends. About the 1st of Jan. I was getting so well, that my friends tried to get me a parole. I had two young Lady friends, Miss Leonora (?) Hamilton and Miss Sallie House, two splendid Southern girls. (NOTE: It is believed by Mrs. Buchanan that Miss Leonora Hamilton and Miss Sallie House were relatives of Mrs. Mary H. (Hamilton) House Thompson, widow and 4th wife of John Thompson of Glen Leven of Davidson County, Tenn. Sallie was likely the daughter of Mary H. (Hamilton) House Thompson by her previous marriage to House, and Lenora possibly was Mary H. H. H. Thompson's niece. Mary H. Hamilton House Thompson was the daughter of Joseph D. Hamilton and his wife, Sarah B. Morgan, of Russellville, Ky.) They went to Gen. Schofield, commanding the department in Tenn. and asked him to parole me and even promising to give any amount of Bond that I would not violate it. He asked them the nature of my wound and they told him I had lost a leg. Why, says he, don't you get him to take the oath of allegiance. That was too much for them to stand, so they gave him some straight southern talk until he ordered them out, so the parole business failed. Next I got word from a Confederate Scout of Gen. Forrest name DeGräffenreid who lived near Franklin and knew every foot

of ground around there. He promised to have a horse just out side of town and he was to come in to pilot me out but the night set for it was so bad a blinding snowstorm that that also failed. But still another chance came up a few days after. One evening Mrs. Curran came up to my room and with her was a young lady, Miss

Gray *(NOTE: Miss Gray was probably the daughter of Alexander W. Gray and his wife, Mariah Thompson. Maria was a generation older but a 1st cousin of Joseph Nicholas Thompson. Maria's father was James Thompson, and Joseph Nicholas Thompson's father was Lawrence Thompson, brother to James Thompson.)*

After introducing me Mrs. Curran went out and Miss Gray came up to my bedside and told me that she had come to take me out in the country and then I could get with some of the scouts and make it South But how are you going to get me out of town! I asked her. Why, she said, I have a pass for myself and friend, and I have in this bundle a dress of mine, which you can put on and a hat and veil You can then get in my buggy and I'll take you out all right. But I said, if you are caught helping a prisoner to escape; You would be arrested sent to Nashville and placed in prison. I know it she said, and am willing to take the risk I thanked her, but told her I would rather go to a Northern prison and suffer or even dye than have her to risk it A few days after the Federals brought around a guard with gun and kept in my room until they moved me to Nashville. I learned from the guard that the wounded prisoners were escaping every night and hence they were going to take us all north to prison Before I left Franklin my friends and relatives in Nashville had furnished me with suitable clothes and some money but when I reached Nashville the clothes and money was taken away from me and I never saw the clothes again, A part of the money I got a credit for when I arrived at Camp Chase. They would not allow a prisoner to have any money but if he had any or any was sent him it was placed to his Credit with the prison Sutter and you could trade it out with him and only in small amounts and at very high prices And they kept only the plainest of food but no meat. I was in the Nashville prison Hospital about a week, but was not allowed to see or communicate with any of my friends or relatives, tho they called to see me. From Nashville we were started to Camp Chase Ohio but stopped in Louisville two days. We reached Columbus the latter part of Jan., 1865. Camp Chase is 4 miles west of Columbus. We reached Columbus early one Sunday



morning. There was not ambulances enough to carry us all out, so they started us out on foot. It was very cold with snow on the ground at least 10 or 12 in. deep. All of the prisoners were suffering from wounds, many on crutches. Some blind and others with arms off and all very weak from recent wounds and illness. The ambulances were filled up and started out to the prison, The "BC" walked out on the road and when the ambulances returned they were filled up at the head of the line. We met with no sympathetic looks or words but much abuse and rejoicing over our helpless condition. I remember when we had got out of town we passed a house and a woman came out to the edge of the road and I never heard such vile and bitter words fall from a woman, before or since. She shook her broom at me and said she was sure I was the ---- Rebel who had killed her son and started towards me, but one of the guards stopped her. When we had gone still farther on the road, this guard said to me, that if I knew any one near here that I might fall out and he would not see me. I thanked him and told him I knew no one within 300 miles of that place. He then told me of the horrors of Camp Chase, and said that we wounded men could not stand it and would all dye. We all finally got the prison late in the evening, hungry, cold and wore out. The prison was in three separate divisions, but all surrounded by a cloce (closed) plank fence twelve feet high with a walk around outside about five feet from the top for the guards to walk on with sentry boxes about every 50 yards to protect the gard from rain and cold. The barracks were made of inch plank undressed and the joints covered with 3 in. strips. The floors were of plane plank but open. The inside of these buildings which was about one hundred feet long and 30 feet wide on each side was built up the bunk for the men to sleep in sections to hold 12 men. These sections or beds were of plane plank made like boxes, the lower beds held about 2 feet from floor the next about 5 feet and the top ones 7 feet. Generally 2 men slept together. As we had no bedding (we) slept on a blanket and covered with another. There was a narrow walk in the middle and I suppose each building held at least 150 or more men. There was, I suppose, about five thousand prisoners there. When I was there Prison No. 1 and 2 was the gen. prison. No. 3 was used for the prisoners who wanted to take the oath of allegiance or those who would join the Federal forces and go out west to fight.

the Indians. Great inducements were offered the prisoners to join -- bounty, good food, and a pledge not to send them south to fight the Confederates. We prisoners called these men who went in Prison 3 "Rasorbacks". A great many went out, many to relieve themselves of the hunger and cold in the prison. We got for breakfast a cup of weak coffee and a slice of lightbread for dinner a cup of pea soup a slice of bread and sometimes a piece of polk 1 in. square and for supper a cup of weak tea and slice of bread not enough in all three meals for one. Many of the prisoners took the oath to escape the suffering from hunger and cold, not only at Camp Chase but at other northern prisons and afterwards made their way South and joined their comrades and made good soldiers until the last, for I have met and know many who did. My own suffering while at Camp Chase I look back upon as a nightmare. I have no words to express it! I was fortunate when I reached there, to meet with one of my Company, Steve Harmon and we at once went together and bunked together. He had one blanket and I another, and he helped me greatly as I was still very weak and feeble from the loss of my leg and exposure and could do but little for myself. But after two weeks, he informed me one day that he had received a letter from his mother then a widow living in Ky. that he must take the oath and come home to support her and her younger children and that she was poor and in need. So he packed up his clothing took his blanket and departed. I tried in every way to persuade him. I appealed to his Honor and to his being such a good soldier and seeing that did no good, I tried abuse, but nothing could change him. So I was alone. The prison was full of ragged and starved men. The whole burden(?) of their talks and thoughts were of something to eat and warm fires, and to add to my suffering I had but one blanket, only the clothes I had on, the intensely cold nights, and in the day my weak condition and on crutches, I could not get near the stove for the stronger would crowd the weak out. We had only one stove in each building and that was only allowed fire in it during the day. All lights were put out at dark and we were expected to be in bed. To add still further to my physical and mental suffering the two men who slept in an adjoining berth broke out with small pox. The others in my section moved out, and I was left alone and all seemed to think that my time would come

next, so avoided me as much as possible. This treatment, suffering through the long cold nights, and starvation commenced to tell on me and my only prayers were that the good Lord would take me, to end it I commenced to lose strength so that I could not get around. We had to go out of our barracks and some distance off to a pump to get water. I got so weak that I could not get to the pump to get any water and I would have perished if it had not been for the weak coffee, tea and soup that was given us. Some of the prisoners who were not wounded made some money in making rings and other trinkets. They would get tafucha buttons and hollar rubber tubes. Out of the buttons, they would make finger rings, and out of the tubes they would make watch chains. Some of the rings were quite pretty with wreath and flowers on them made of silver. They would get a silver dime or coin and beat it out thin and then shape into wreaths and interlay in the ring. At last after two months of suffering there came an order to parole all the disabled prisoners for exchange. We were to be sent to Baltimore, Md. and then by ship around to Petersburg, Va., where an equal number of Federal prisoners were to meet us. How I got to the office to sign my name to the Pay Roll of Exchange, is still a mystery to me, but I suppose I must have been helped and piloted there by some sympathetic comrade. The only thing I can remember about it is that I was told to sign my name where pointed out to me which looked like a blank sheet of white paper. I was so weak that I was losing my sight. I suppose they carried me in to Columbus in an ambulance with about 800 other disabled Confederates and had nothing but what I had on, had not changed my clothes for two months and my blanket I left behind as I could not carry it and besides it had become so badly infested with what we used to call "Bodyguards" (The World War vets called them "Cuties"). There is one thing I must tell of at Camp Chase. The little we were allowed or had every man got it and no more. If a man stole anything he was found out. He could not escape and the Federals let the prisoners punish him as they decided. The punishment was decided by a committee of prisoners was very brutal and cruel. But it was necessary as no prisoner had much and that was considered secret. I saw men stripped, placed on a barrel and whipped with a leather belt. I saw another stripped and placed under a pump and water pumped on him for five minutes. If a man stole provisions from

the Commissary, the Federal guard would arrest him and the officer of the day would punish him. Their chief punishment was to ask the half-starved prisoner how many pieces of bread or how many crackers he could eat and he would invariably place it an enormous amount. Then it was placed before him, and a guard over him and if he failed he was whipped and made to continue the meal. I heard of one case where it proved fatal. We were placed in box cars at Columbus as many as could be packed in. One of the doors was locked, and at the other sat a guard. The door just opened enough for him to get fresh air. At first it was close and for a while was more comfortable than we had been used to but owing to our being packed as close as sardines the condition became unbearable and the guard would not let ---- near the door but would drive us away with curses and threats of the bayonet. There was a tall Confederate with us by the name of Fluellon. He was from Texas and had lost his arm. He begged the guard and by argument to let him get a breath of fresh air, but he refused and stuck his bayonet into him. That night we made the run through West Va. and arrived the next morning at Baltimore where the Federals came around to relieve the guards. The guard in our car was not there and I suppose they thought that he had deserted. Fluellon told me afterwards, that that night he layed down just behind the guard, and he expected that he must have dreamed about the guard sicking his bayonet into him and must have kicked him out of the door. Our reception at Baltimore was quite different from what we received at Columbus Ohio. The ladies, soon after we reached there commenced gathering and the Federals had to place there guards some distance from the train to keep them back. They came with baskets full of provisions and after some dilay the gards brought us lots of good things to eat for which we were inded thankful. After a delay of several hours we were loaded on a large steamer put down in the hole of the vessel and moved out on our way to Petersburg Va to be exchange. But when we reached fortress Monroe we were stopped and turned back, as the fighting around Petersburg was so severe that we could not reach the Confederate lines (so the Federal said) but we learned that the prisoners that we were to be exchanged for had (not) arrived at Fortress Monroe. We then were sent back to Point Lookout Md. Point Lookout is situated where the Potomac River

empties into the Chesapeake Bay. The Potomac River is seven miles wide at its mouth and the Chesapeake Bay sixteen miles wide at that point. The prison was on the point fronting on both river and bay and was in three or four stockades with twelve foot plank fences around them and guarded by Negro troops. We were unloaded there and placed in the Hospital prison and put in tents as there was not room enough in the barracks as there were a great many sick there. I was fortunate the next day after reaching there to meet a cousin of mine E. T. Thompson of the 12th Miss. Regt. He had a position as a clerk in (the) Quartermaster's Dept. of the Hospital and he at once got me a position. I kept the dead list. Every morning the doctors of the several wards would bring in a list of those who had died and I would register their names in a book kept for that purpose -- for which labor I was allowed double rations, a qt. of soup for dinner and two slices of bread, also a double ration at breakfast and supper. Besides we had clean single beds and a separate office building. There was five of us in this office. Briley, who was at the head clerk, he from Miss., Miller and Willis from Md., and my cousin and myself. We had also a prisoner, who made up our beds and wated on us, all prisoners. So my position there was quite different from what it was in Camp Chase. I had no money as what I had when I left Nashville had been taken from me and I could not get any of it back, although I made complaint to the prison authorities for it. I had an Aunt who lived in Mass. and I wrote to her for some. She sent me fifteen dollars and wrote me a scorching letter about fighting against my country etc. I was pretty hurt about it and wanted to send it back, but my cousin persuaded me to keep it. He said it would do us more good then refusing would hurt her. So I had a credit with the scutter(?) I also wrote to a friend in New York a Miss Carrie Barton who had faught school at my Father's when my Sisters and I were found(?) She wrote me a sweet sympathetic letter and offered to do anything she would be allowed for me. Quite a amusing adventure hapenned to me some weeks after hearing from Miss Barton. The Sargent of prison came in one day and told me I was wanted at Headquarters. So I followed him out to the gate and he ordered a Negro guard to take me to the Headquarters of the Prison (to see) Maj. Brady. So off we stanted. I in front and he following. After walking a long distance, I stopped and asked him where he was

taking me. He grinned and said To Headquarters I asked where it was! He said he did not know. I told him that I was not going to walk all over the point in the sand and for him to go and find Headquarters. Yes Sir he said with a broad grin and off he went. In about 1/2 hour he came back and said he had found the place. He was a good natured black negro. So I got to Headquarters and was ushered into Maj. Brady's presence. He had a chair placed in the middle of the office and told me to sit down. (He) asked me who Mrs. Semore was. I told him I did not know. He then wanted to know how and why I was writing to people outside for assistance. I told him I had not done it. He then handed me a letter and asked me to read it. It was from a Mrs. Semare who was before her marriage a Miss Barton a sister of Miss Carrie Barton who I have mentioned above. I had never seen her but her sister had written her about my being a prisoner at Point Lookout and asked me to write him for anything I might need, and if he could do so he would furnish it. He had some position in the Quartermaster's Department in the Federal Army. I explained it to Maj. Brady. He was very ruf about it and said he did not allow outsiders to fill orders for the prisoners. I was a Point Lookout through April and May and until June 15th when we were paroled and gave transportation to the nearest point to our homes. My Cousin and I being from Miss and Ala could be sent by ship to Mobile, but we decided that we would prefer to go up to Petersburg, Va. and then through dry land, as we did not like the life by sea and the long voyage crowded down in the hole of a ship. On the morning of the 15th of June we started. First they made us kneel down under a large American flag that was stretched out over our head so that (it) would cover about twenty of us at a time. The oath of allegiance was read to us and then each one of us had to sign it. Then we were marched down to Maj. Brady's office where he approved it and gave each one of us our parole. I still had a credit of about seven dollars at the scutters(?) I gave my book to the clerk and asked him to tell Maj. Brady to send me the balance due me. He carried the book in and after a while as he did not send the money I repeated my demand to the clerk and remarked that I did not want to be robbed. So he went in and out came Maj. Brady, cursing and abusing us and said he had sent it out to me. I denied

it and he accused me of lying. Then my Cousin took it up and gave back as good as Maj. Brady gave. Maj. Brady got madder and cursed us in the most vile language and said that not half whipped and were vile rebels and that he would put us back in prison that he had paid the bal and ordered a file of soldiers up, had us stripped, our clothes searched, did not find anything, and then made the soldiers get down and scratch up the sand for ten feet around where we stood, still found nothing. Then turned went inside and sent the money out. Maj. Brady's acts were nothing but a bluff to rob us and he would have certainly sent us back into prison, if I had demanded the money, before we got our signed parole. He was a mean man, and after the war, was implicated in the great Star Rent swindle that created such a scandal. So for once more we were landed at Petersburg, Va. We just stopped in North Carolina to visit some of our relatives at Leasburg and after a stay there of a week or ten days very pleasantly spent we started home, but it took us three weeks or more to make the trip, so many of the roads were torn up. We had to walk and make our way very slowly as I was on crutches.

During the administration of Governor Johnson and Felks(?) I was President of the State Board of Pension examiners. At one of my stays in Montgomery, the Proprietor of the Hotel, told me there was a young lady there who wished to meet me. I went up into the parlor, and she soon came. I was introduced and she said at once that she was from the interior of New York and understood that I was an ex-Confederate, and wanted me to tell her about our side of the war. So I told all about our being unprepared for war, no resources to draw from, hardly any guns, etc. Then I told of our hardships, no clothes no shoes and the soldier's suffering etc. She then (looked) me straight in the face and said, What about Anderson(ville)? I told her the Federal soldiers in Anderson(ville) got the same rations that we the Confederates got -- 1 lb of beef and a quart (?) of corn meal a day, and that the Confederates ----- had offered to buy medical supplies for their prisoners, pay with cotton but they would not do it and even refused to exchange and I said the Federals could not eat the corn bread like a Confederate, but wanted light bread. I also met a gentleman and his wife at the Louisville Reunion (U. C. V.) (?) in 1898. He was in the Hall when the Veterans were holding their meeting. He asked me to

point out the various Confederates on the platform. I did so and told him who they were. After a long talk he turned and introduced me to his wife and thanked me and he said, I live one hundred miles north of this place. My Father was a Federal soldier. I have been taught all my life that the Confederates were a rough, ignorant and illiterate people. I came here to see for myself. I'll tell you, Sir, that I have been taught wrong for I have never seen a finer more intelligent and well behaved body of men in my life.



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## THE SOUTH AND THE CONFEDERATE LEGACY

By: Louis J. Baltz, III

I am most privileged to speak to you on the sacred ground which is the resting place of so many noble defenders of the South. James Jackson Kilpatrick wrote as recently as April of 1983 that "the South of the Confederacy could claim one distinction: Ours was the only region of the United States to have known that most un-American of experiences. We had known defeat. Moreover, we had known defeat in a shameful and inglorious cause."<sup>1</sup>

It is most distressing that after years of writing in defense of the South that Kilpatrick would surrender to the Yankees a single point much less than to state that the cause of the Confederacy was "shameful and inglorious". The cause of self-government was neither shameful nor inglorious to the patriots of 1776 nor should such a cause be considered so for the Southern patriots of 1861. The South has suffered in history because her noble pursuit of self-government was fatally coupled by economic conditions to the preservation of slavery.

The late historian Clifford Dowdey wrote in 1957 that "because the moral purpose of fighting to free the slaves is nobler than fighting to retain humans in chattel slavery, with its military victory the North inherited a moral superiority. Thus, while the victor was writing history, he naturally explained his victory in terms of morality and blamed the South's defeat on its own sins. It lies in the realm of psychiatrists to explain why the physically victorious North must go on endlessly defeating the South morally, but certainly no defeated people in the world's history have ever been subjected to so much analysis by their conquerors. As a hazard, the analysis and judgments continue because the Southern States did not learn through physical defeat that their conquerors were superior in every way, and the Union part of the United States was compelled to explain the inferiority of a defeated people within its midst who rejected its values".<sup>2</sup>

Defeat in the Civil War was a disaster for the South. It wiped out centuries of Southern development and civilization and, for the time being, the dream of political independence. "Appomattox did not produce a new nation, thenceforth and forever

indivisible", wrote Richard Harwell. "Appomattox was a bitter defeat. The end of the War brought back to the Union eleven beaten States. After two years of steadily ebbing fortunes the Confederacy had been driven to surrender. But there were few who would admit error in their course in fighting the war. The Southern States bowed to might. They were not persuaded to a new conviction. Re-union came later...A decade of Reconstruction added insult to injury. There was no Marshall plan...to help the South back to its feet after the destruction of the sixties".<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, it was seen that "the powers of the Union used the helplessness of a region to establish, as they hoped, a permanent exploitation of its resources and people, while the moralists explained why the South had to lose for its sins. By today (while humanitarians beam benevolently on distant masses of people) the explanation of the South's wickedness has become a habit".<sup>4</sup>

According to Lewis Rubin, "the South learned from the Civil War something that most Americans have never had to learn: That defeat is possible, that it is possible to do one's best and to lose".<sup>5</sup>

But the War is what sets us apart from the rest of the United States. The South learned that war could mean sacrifice without victory. It was a war that was brought home.

I am reminded of a story that was related to me of a professor of history from Ohio who had married a Southern girl. He had no love of the South, a place he did not understand. They had a son, and the professor had been trying for some time, without success, to interest him in history. Then the boy spent the summer with his grandparents in Chattanooga; and when he returned home to Ohio, much to the chagrin of his father, all he could talk about was the War and how the "damn Yankees had broken into the smoke-house and stolen all the hams".

These are the stories and experiences that keep the war and the South alive for all of us. We all can relate with pride to some family sacrifice which brings our problems of today into perspective and gives us an indication of our character as a people. It also gives us an idea of what could have been and what still can be.

Referring again to Harwell, he wrote, "What would have been different if the South had won the Civil War is hard to say.

Georgia, for example, was economically a stronger state in 1860 than it would become for another sixty years. Cotton was a tremendously important product for eighty years after the War, and its control would have given an independent South great influence. Slavery most likely would have run its course to a planned end that would have avoided the evils of sudden freedom. The Confederacy might have found in Richmond, Atlanta, Birmingham, or Nashville a city about which its social, political, literary, and commercial life could revolve with less of the taint of provincialism than in a society which directs too many lines to Washington and New York. H. L. Mencken, high priest of American liberal thought in the twenties, speculated 'If the War had gone with the Confederates... New Orleans, today, would still be a highly charming and civilized ...city, with a touch of Paris and another of Port Said. Charleston, which even now sprouts lady authors, would also sprout political philosophers. The University of Virginia would be what Jefferson intended it to be...Richmond would be, not the dull suburb of nothing that it is now, but a beautiful and consoling... capital'."6

But if the Confederate legacy is a legacy of defeat, what does such a legacy hold for the future when the very existence of the South as an identifiable region is at stake?

Some people would have us believe that there is no South. In Richard Reeves' book American Journey, John Seigenthaler, publisher of the Nashville Tennessean, states that "there is no 'South' anymore. That's all a game. There are no regions left in the country...It is absolutely insane to talk about the values of the frontier or agrarian society. What we do here is try to bring in industry from the North".7

Seigenthaler believes that agrarian values are incompatible in the face of industrialism in the South. On the contrary, our agrarian values give our industries their own flavor as they exhibit a higher productivity at a smaller cost than any industries in the North. The very agrarian values that Seigenthaler denigrates were no small factor in the decision of the Nissan Corporation to make their largest foreign capital investment in the South with the construction of an ultra-modern truck plant. It is significant that no Northern sites were among consideration when the final sites

were presented. The agrarian values which constitute the Southern work ethic are also those which provide an opportunity for industrial growth and economic prosperity while other regions of the country have suffered severe recessions.

Northerners flock to the South in ever increasing numbers to find jobs and to escape the decaying society and cities of the North. If they would attempt to learn some of the ways of the South they would find that they would also be preserving one of the reasons for their being down here in the first place. But instead, the vast majority attempt to push their ways and attitudes on our people, cities, and governments to make them more like the very place that they left. Atlanta, Washington (which used to be a Southern city), and half of Florida, are examples of the turbulent North-east made over. We must resist these ways and keep our identity as Southerners.

Historical and civic associations, such as the United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Sons of Confederate Veterans must take the lead in accepting the challenge issued by John Crowe Ransom in his essay, "Reconstructed but Unregenerate":

It is out of fashion in these days to look backward rather than forward. About the only American given to it is some reconstructed Southerner, who persists in his regard for a certain terrain, a certain history, and a certain inherited way of living. He is punished as his crime deserves. He feels himself an anachronism, and knows he is felt by his neighbors as a reproach...I wish now that he were not so entirely taken for granted, and that as a reproach he might bear a barb and inflict a sting.<sup>8</sup>

The South must be willing to "bear a barb and inflict a sting" and show the rest of the country that the South's individuality is good for the nation as a whole. We must always remember that even as a nation united we are still made up of fifty individual States, not governmental districts for the administration of the national government. The South can preserve its heritage and be a guide to those in other sections, such as the American West, who have seen their frontier traditions threatened by a rapidly changing society.

Professor M. E. Bradford of the University of Dallas wrote in Why the South Will Survive, guidelines which are ultimately our charge for the South in the 1980's:

"...let us preserve the iconic things - buildings, monuments,

gardens, rites, celebrations, and stories - which have defined for us for over three hundred years as a people apart, and which carry in themselves the seeds of restoration as a context for the tradition. Objections to these reminders of an earlier South or to an attention to its history must be resisted, at every turn and with every resource. Those who would destroy the icons and erase that memory are not Southerners as we define the species here, but instead serve chiefly to recall to us why we have never agreed to be 'absorbed' by the deracinated abstractions of the Union at large. The Romans taught their sons to look backward in order to prepare for the morrow. Roman literature kept alive that of the Republic and the authority of its example for centuries after the elevation of Augustus...With these priorities observed, our descendants may know that 'we have not loosely, through silence, permitted things to pass away as in a dream'."9

## NOTES

1. James Jackson Kilpatrick, editorial, The Nashville Banner, April 19, 1983, pg. A-8.
2. Clifford Dowdey, "The Case For The Confederacy", The Lasting South, ed. by Lewis D. Rubin, Jr. and James Jackson Kilpatrick (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1957), pg. 31.
3. Richard Harwell, "The Confederate Heritage", The Lasting South, Rubin and Kilpatrick, pg. 17.
4. Dowdey, "Case For The Confederacy", pg. 32.
5. Lewis D. Rubin, Jr., "An Image Of The South", The Lasting South, Rubin and Kilpatrick, pg. 8.
6. Harwell, "The Confederate Heritage", pgs. 24-25.
7. Richard Reeves, American Journey, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), pg. 127.
8. John Crowe Ransom, "Reconstructed But Unregenerate", I'll Take My Stand, by Twelve Southerners, (New York: Harper & Row). Reprinted Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1976; pg. 1.
9. M. E. Bradford, "Conclusion", Why The South Will Survive by Fifteen Southerners, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1981), pgs. 222-223.

## RIGGS CROSS ROADS

Compiled by Elizabethine Mullette Gaultney

This article is prepared using Chapter IX from the published book, MORE ABOUT THE RIGGS FAMILY 1590-1973.

...with the cognate Ogilvie, Haley, and Brittain Families, descended from Edward Riggs born about 1590.

The book is written by Clara Nichols Duggan and Helen Katherine Duggan.

... so beautifully and lovingly written by my cousins and published in limited edition by Benson Printing Company, Nashville, Tennessee in 1974.

Approval from the author has been given to lift this Chapter of the book, and I have added information and data, printed in italics, which should be interesting to readers of our Williamson County Historical Society publication. Those interested in further genealogical information about the Riggs, Haley, and many other allied families should refer to the above book by the Duggan sisters.

*Tucked away in the beautiful hills of the southeast corner of Williamson County, Tennessee is the old community of Riggs Cross Roads, settled by David Riggs and his six sons. He also had four daughters who came to this county with their families. They came through the mountains from Surry County, North Carolina at various times from 1800 to 1814. David's father, Timothy Riggs of North Carolina, a Revolutionary patriot was the son of Samuel Riggs of New Jersey. Timothy was the first of the Riggs family to move South. Samuel's father was Edward Riggs (III), born in Roxbury, Massachusetts, a part of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. He was the son of Sergeant Edward Riggs (II) of the Pequot Indian War and one of the founders of Newark, New Jersey in 1666. Edward (II) was the eldest son of the immigrant, Edward Riggs (I), born about 1590 in England and landed in the Boston Harbor early in the summer of 1633 with his wife, Elizabeth, and six children.*

*In the Genealogy of Frederick H. Waldron From The Time Of Settlement Of New Amsterdam (New York) Through The Waldrons, Whitneys & Rigges published in 1909, New Haven, Connecticut by Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor, the Rigges Chapter discloses - "Edward Riggs and his family came from England to New England about 1630 (See "History of Derby" pg. 755). It is stated that he was born in Yorkshire, England. He married in Essex County, England, 1618 (record of his marriage is in Essex County parish church and*



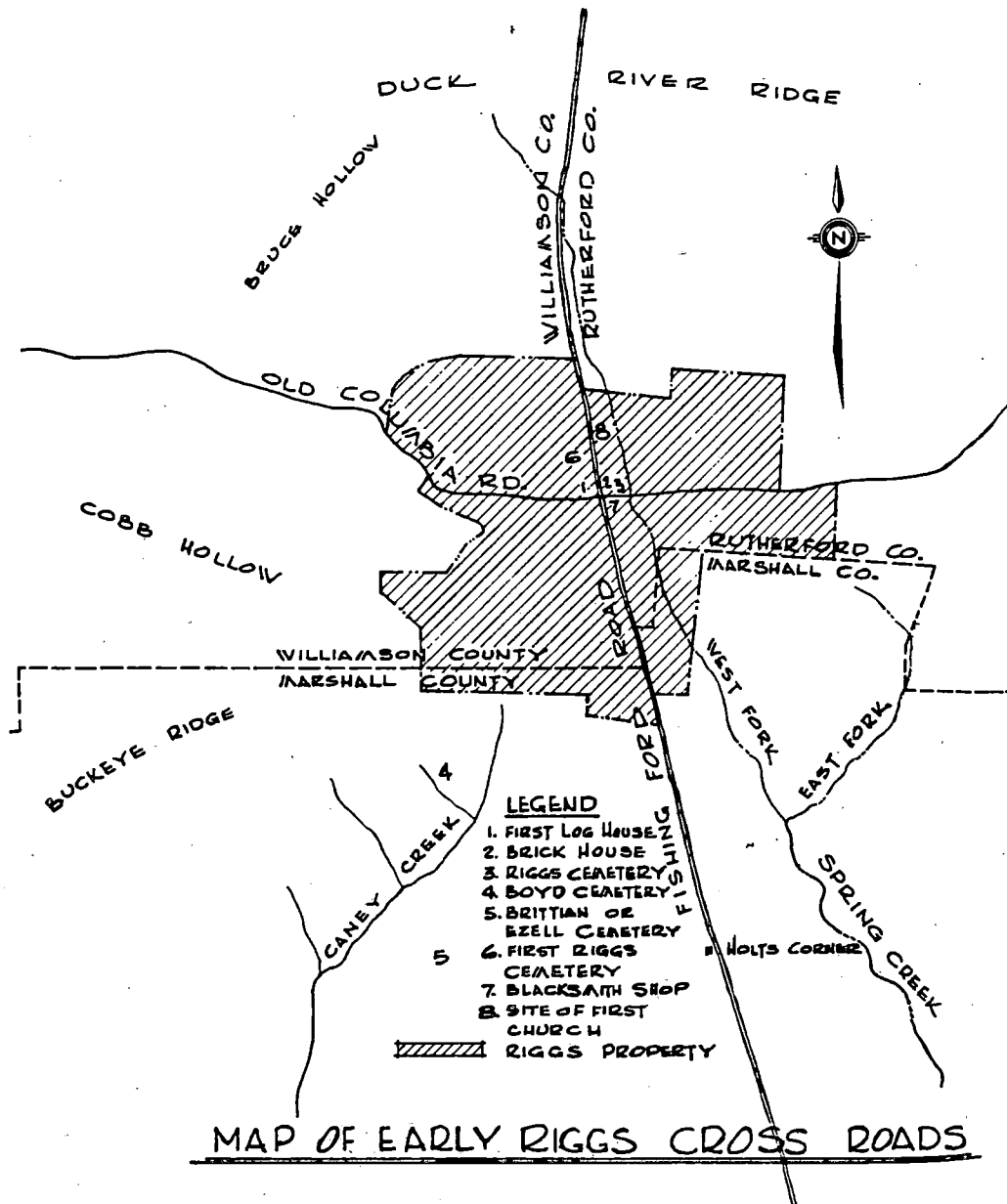
the baptism of his children)."<sup>1</sup>

When David Riggs and his sons settled on the land in Williamson County, later known as Riggs Cross Roads, it was largely an untouched wilderness of trees and canebrake through which the Indians and buffalo roamed.

The family was fortunate in that their land had an abundant supply of water provided by several springs, and a stream called Spring Creek which flowed through the place and on into Duck River. This creek is fed by three large springs at its head, which accounts for its name. It has two forks, the Riggs land being on the west fork. The east fork rises in Rutherford County and is also fed by springs. In the fall of the year, in times of the most severe drought when the creeks have stopped running, these springs will rise enough without rain to start the creeks running again in Holts Corner, which is about two miles south of the head of the creek.

The 555 acres of land on which David settled, and on which taxes are officially recorded in 1811, is in the southeast corner of Williamson County surrounding what is now Riggs Cross Roads. This land is near the adjoining counties of Rutherford, Bedford, and Marshall, the latter county having been cut out of Bedford in 1836. David eventually acquired land in all of these counties. There is a tradition that from a rail fence on the Riggs place one could spit into three counties: Williamson, Rutherford, and Bedford. It can be assumed that David and his sons bought their land in Tennessee after having sold their land in North Carolina. It is probable that the property at the Cross Roads was purchased gradually in small tracts. There are numerous tax deed records of land transactions by David and his sons in Williamson, Bedford, Marshall, and Rutherford Counties. The absence of other deeds may be attributed to the inadequate courthouse records of the early times or to confusion regarding the identity of the county in which the land was located.

David built his loghouse on this new land in the northeast corner of what is now Riggs Cross Roads, about one and one-half miles north of the present Holts Corner. The Cross Roads is at the intersection of the new Horton Highway (U. S. 31-A) and the Flat Creek Road. The present U. S. Highway 31-A was first called the Fishing Ford Road, was later called the Nashville-Huntsville Road, and prior to the Civil War became the Nolensville Pike. Goodspeeds



Drawn by Dan Fuller

History of Tennessee states that the Nolensville Pike was built in 1841 and was 15 miles long. The Flat Creek Road was previously called the Columbia Road. David and his son, Gideon, were active in the marking and clearing of this vital roadway and others in the vicinity. This is attested by many entries in Williamson County minute books.

The Fishing Ford Road ran north and south by Riggs Cross Roads, and its importance in the development of the whole area from Nashville to Huntsville, Alabama, and on to Florida is told by W. N. Lloyd in the Winter 1973 issue of the Marshall County Historical Quarterly. He says, in part: "Fishing Ford Road is probably, if not certainly, the oldest traveled thoroughfare in Tennessee. Long before there was white permanent residence in that section of our country now known as the State of Tennessee, of formerly the State of Franklin, this was a primitive but well used trail".

The immense stock of game in Middle Tennessee created a north south animal trail in lines of easiest passage from one salt lick to a watering place to a ford across the larger rivers. This trail was used by the northern and southern tribes of Indians in commerce and war with each other, as well as travel to the fantastic neutral hunting grounds in Tennessee for major sources of meat.

The North Carolina and Cumberland Gap routes led to the Fishing Ford Road route and stopped there. At the influx of settlers, the Creeks, particularly, used the trail for raids on the settlements. The Americans were wanting to go West in their expansion, and used the trail more for commerce than for settlement. At this time the Cherokees, Creeks, and Choctaws were too powerful for the meager settlements to involve in a full war, and the intelligence and education of these nations tended more to harmony.

When the Creeks gave an excuse for military opposition, Jackson recognized the route as the only possible overland method of transferring an army to the South. He also eyed it as means and place of recruitment, for as word spread of his southern advance, hunters could wait or assemble along the trail.

I do not know the route Fishing Ford Road, and its connections took through Kentucky to the Ohio, but I am sure it followed, as in Tennessee, the animal trails of buffalo, elk and deer from watering place and salt lick to each other to a ford along the Ohio.

It followed each ford most directly in its path to the South. The road then followed from a ford east of Nashville, along what became known in Civil War days as the Nolensville Pike, where even in my Mother's lifetime stage coaches stopped at Nolensville for water and a change of teams. The trail followed south to Chapel Hill and crossed the Duck a few miles to the east at a ford, which was later bridged. From this ford, it led to the Big Spring at Farmington and from there along its present course to Old Belfast, just north of the present town of Belfast. From there it is marked south for some miles to Elk Ridge, between Belfast and between Petersburg and Delina, and on to the Elk River, west of Fayetteville, at Harmes, Tennessee. The old route may still be seen by the tree line, where it ends, crosses a farm, and picks up south of the farm on another road leading in the direction of Harmes. The route is marked on state maps of Alabama to Horseshoe Bend where Jackson defeated the Creeks.

Davy Crockett and Sam Houston reportedly joined him along this road, as well as ancestors of many people still living near by in the vicinities made accessible to the road.

Jackson's later war, against the Seminoles, followed the same route to Alabama and hence to Florida, and he was always able to pick up volunteers along the route.

Historically, the road was by far more famous, and valuable to the development of Middle Tennessee than the Natchez Trace of later commercial value. It still holds the possibility of cheap and easy reconstruction to a historic monument which will be far more used for recreational travel to Huntsville than the Natchez Trace.

The road was mainly kept in development and usage by its sections being diverted into turnpikes in Davidson, Rutherford, Bedford, and Lincoln Counties, when roads or trails so maintained by individuals or companies became to be known as "Pikes". Goodspeed, Ramsey and Haywood in their histories of Tennessee mention the Fishing Ford Pike in each of the counties.

"The history of Middle Tennessee really lies along its forgotten route. Along it lay the commerce, the settlements, the inns, the cemeteries, and the REAL HISTORY of Middle Tennessee. I would like very much to see its restoration and historic marking before it becomes only a legend".<sup>2</sup>

In Williamson County Minute Books are found the records below:

"David Riggs, Senr., William Legate, Jesse Canady, John Tillman, Francis Tillman, John Smith, Harden Tillman, James Stephens, George Allen, ---- Wilson, and Joseph Moon are sworn for the purpose to view, mark and lay off the Fishing Ford Road commencing at the Duck River Ridge and leading on to the County line at or near William Legates and report thereof into our next ensuing county court".<sup>3</sup>

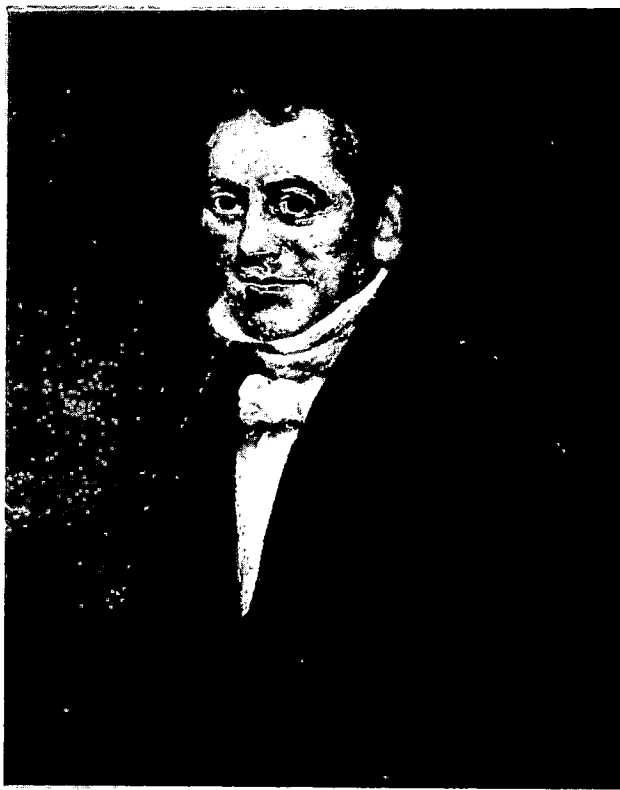
"George H. Allen, John Smith, David Riggs, James Stephens and John Ogilvie reported. The Road now marked off leading from the top of the ridge to intersect the road at the county line leading to Columbia, Tennessee, it is ordered by the court that Gideon Riggs oversee the clearing out and keeping the said road in repair, and that the hands resident within the bounds beginning at the said ridge and all the hands on the west of the Fishing Ford Road in the bounds of Captain Hookers Company of Militia work thereon under his direction".<sup>4</sup>

In John Weakley Covington's article "Eastern Williamson County", he states: "The exact route that Fishing Ford Road took in going from the Cumberland crossing southward has not been documented, but I do know it crossed Williamson County's southern border into early Bedford County (now Marshall County) near present day Riggs Cross Roads. Gideon Riggs established a post office in 1834 at this point, which he operated most of the time until 1872." This article also states: "The Williamson County line has been changed several miles to the South so that the very early Riggs family and others could remain loyal to Williamson County."<sup>5</sup>

During these early times, transportation to and from Nashville was largely by wagon and horseback. A wagonload of farm products would be taken to Nashville for sale, and the wagon returned with needed supplies.

According to Mr. Wilbur F. Creighton in his book, Building of Nashville, Nashville companies began to operate stagecoach lines in the early 19th century as fast as suitable roads were constructed. We do not know the exact date that a scheduled stagecoach started operating between Nashville and Chapel Hill, with Riggs Cross Roads as a way station. However, Paul Ogilvie knows that his great-uncle Alfred owned this line from 1895 to 1905, and that his grandfather, Rufus Ogilvie, Sr. drove the coaches.

The stagecoaches were put out of business by the railroads. Though they have passed from the scene in the face of progress, they served their young country well.



GIDEON RIGGS

Although the land at the Cross Roads was first settled by David, b. 1749, he did not remain there long. Sometime between 1816 and 1820 he moved to Bedford County and was succeeded by Gideon as owner of the Cross Roads. Gideon continued to develop and expand the property. At the time of his death in 1871, the property in the vicinity of the Cross Roads consisted of about 1,000 acres, and there were five log houses on the place in addition to the stately brick house in which he lived. The village compound also contained a post office, a blacksmith shop, and a church.

*Gideon Riggs was a leader in the establishment and advancement of his community, and judging by pioneer standards, he became a man of means with estates in Tennessee and Arkansas. He became a Mason in 1848. The lodge book of Chapel Hill Lodge No. 160 of Free and Accepted Masons states: "Gideon Riggs was elected to receive first degree of Masonry on December 15, 1848" and "In March 9, 1849, G. Riggs received the sublime degree of Master Mason". He was an officeholder in the fraternity at various times from 1848 to 1854.*

*He served in the War of 1812 in Captain Robert Cannon's Company, 2nd Regiment (Col. Benton's) Tennessee Volunteers as a private. There is an old conch shell*

now in the possession of his great-granddaughter, Miss Agnes Fuller of Holts Corner, which he is believed to have brought home as a souvenir from New Orleans after the war.

On July 20, 1815, after Gideon returned from the war and at the time David Riggs (his father) removed to Bedford County, he bought 165 acres of the homestead land at Riggs Cross Roads from his father for \$500. His brothers, Zadock, Edward, and Joel had lands adjoining Gideon's, as did James Sheppard and John Boyd (who was married to one of Gideon's sisters, Rebecca), and the Samuel Graham land grant. Now the Cross Roads was beginning to become a settlement.

Gideon built a small structure over the spring which was below his house and lined its wall and floor with sandstone. The spring provided plenty of water and also cooled the milk, butter, and watermelons in the summer.

In More About the Riggs Family it is related that Mr. C. A. Dean of the Flat Creek Community gave the following information to Gideon's great-great-granddaughter, Mrs. Embree Blackwell (formerly Norma Jean Barnes, daughter of John Ernest and Rubye Riggs Barnes), who now lives on Riggs Road just north of Riggs Cross Roads with her husband, also a Riggs descendant, ---"Gideon Riggs deeded over 100 acres of land in what is now known as Cobb Hollow, Williamson County, to James (Jimmy) Dean, my grandfather, for making the bricks used to build the brick house of Gideon Riggs at the Cross Roads. James Dean made the bricks on the Riggs farm and his brother-in-law, Mr. Redd, built the two chimneys". In addition to the outbuildings and smokehouse, a cook's house and a kitchen were built at the back of the brick house. This house was on the northeast corner of the Riggs Cross Roads.

What would a farm in 1850 be producing and raising in Williamson County, Tennessee? The list is long and varied.

In the Tennessee State Library and Archives, the Agriculture Schedule for 1850 in Williamson County shows what various farms were producing and how much in a report for September, 1850. Below is a report of Gideon Riggs farm for his acreage in Williamson County only:

Name of Owner, Agent or Manager of Farm	Acres of Land		Cash Value of Farm
	Improved	Unimproved	
G. Riggs	300	100	4,000
Value of Farming Implements & Machinery	Horses	Asses & Mules	Milch Cows
600	12	18	16

Working Oxen	Other Cattle	Sheep	Swine	Value of Livestock	
4	35	80	150	3305	
Wheat, Bushels of	Rye, Bushels of	Indian Corn Bushels of	Oats, Bushels of	Sweet Potatoes, Bushels of	
140	20	1500	300	75	
Butter, lbs. of	Value of Homemade Manufactures		Value of Animals Slaughtered		
50	50		100		

There are other columns listed in the report which I found most interesting. Few of the farmers had produced the following things: G. Riggs did not produce these. Ginned Cotton, bales of 400 lbs. each; Wool, lbs. of; Peas and Beans, bushels of; Irish Potatoes, bushels of; Barley, bushels of; Buckwheat, bushels of; Value of Orchard Products in dollars; Wine, gallons of; Value of Produce of Market Gardens; Cheese, lbs. of; Hay, tons of; Clover Seed, bushels of; Other Grass Seeds, bushels of; Hops, lbs. of; Dew Rotted, tons of; Water Rotted, tons of; Flax, lbs. of; Flaxseed, bushels of; Silk Cocoons, lbs. of; Maple Sugar, bushels of; Cane Sugar, bbl. of 1000 lbs.; Molasses, gallons of; Beeswax and Honey, lbs. of.<sup>6</sup>

Gideon gave power of attorney to J. B. Boyd on February 16, 1854 for the management of his affairs at the Cross Roads. That same year he left for Conway County, Arkansas with his third wife, Catherine Holden Riggs, and their children to claim his land from service in the War of 1812. He returned to the Cross Roads in 1865, and lived there until his death.

Gideon Riggs married first, Mary "Polly" Reynolds, March 6, 1816, daughter of Richard Coleman and Prepare Riggs Reynolds. Their children were Mira Marzee Riggs, b. December 19, 1816 and Overton C. Riggs, b. December 7, 1818.

After the death of Mary Reynolds, he married Sophia Campbell of Campbellsville, Kentucky in Bedford County, Tennessee.<sup>7</sup> Their only child was Mary Campbell Riggs, b. January 22, 1830.

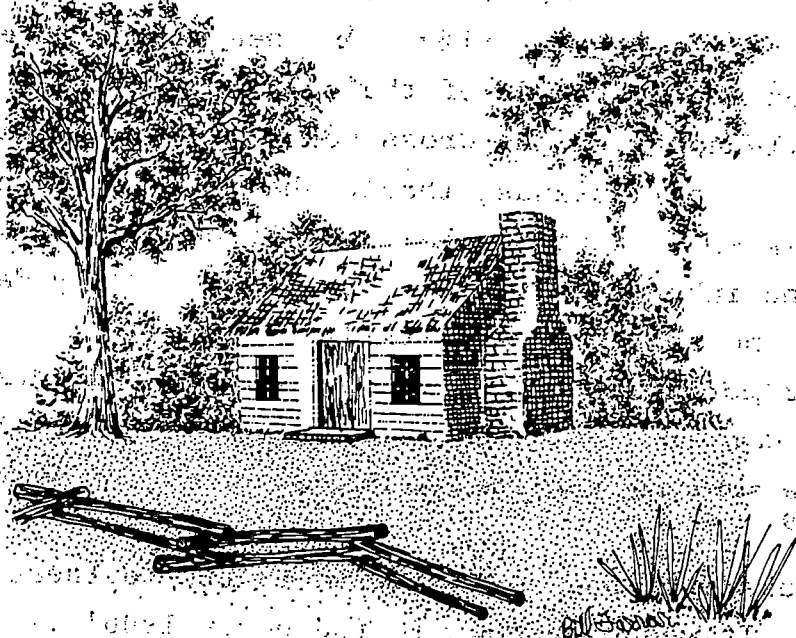
His third wife was Catherine F. Holden. To this union two children were born: Catherine W. Riggs b. November 18, 1841 and Gideon Wright Riggs b. October 17, 1845.

The 1850 Williamson County, Tennessee census shows:<sup>8</sup>

G. Riggs	Age 60	Male	Born N. C.
C. Riggs	33	Female	Ireland
O. Riggs	12	Male	Tenn.
C. Riggs	8	Female	Tenn.
G. Riggs	5	Male	Tenn.



One of these the  
 lot of the Cross Road  
 In 1813 Jordan  
 the site of the old cabin  
 it is no



Log cabin at the Cross Roads, often the first home of the young married couples of the family. Sketch by William Farrar.

You will notice in this census that Gideon and Catherine Riggs have a 12 year old male child listed in their household. This is the first time I have seen any record of this child.

The first log house was the one built in the northwest corner of the Cross Roads and occupied by David. Later, it was occupied by Gideon until he built his brick house across the road from it, between 1830 and 1840. The original log house then became the home of his daughter, Mary Campbell Riggs Haley. This house had two sections with a dogtrot between them. It was replaced by the present two-story frame house about 1910.

It was in this house that my cousin, Marjorie Haley Rainey Hutton lived during her childhood. The house and that portion of the original Riggs-Haley farm today are owned by Dr. Joseph L. Willoughby of Franklin, Tennessee.

Although sometimes occupied by family members, especially the newlyweds, three of the other log houses were evidently built for tenants or possibly for slaves, as Williamson County Courthouse tax records show that Gideon paid taxes on nine slaves in Tennessee.

One of these three houses was located about one-fourth mile east of the Cross Roads. This house was on that portion of the land later inherited by Gideon's grandson, Jordan Riggs. In 1913 Jordan built a two-story, white frame house near the site of the old cabin, which was later torn down. The new house is standing, but it is no longer owned by the Riggs family. Another of the three structures was located on the west side of the Fishing Ford Road about one-fourth mile north of the Cross Roads. The remaining log cabin, a tenant house, still stands, though shakily, on the north side of the Flat Creek Road about one-half mile from the Cross Roads. It is on the land inherited by Gideon's daughter, Mary Campbell Riggs Haley, but is no longer in the family.

*On a Topographical Sketch of the Country Adjacent to the Turnpike between Nolensville and Chapel Hill, date of map not given, but is most likely about 1836, there is shown a store right at the intersection of present day Flat Creek Road and Riggs Road.<sup>9</sup>*

The blacksmith shop was situated in the southeast corner of the Cross Roads. It was torn down in the early 1900's.

*Marjorie Hutton and her cousin, Helen Duggan, remember the very large anvil, and people coming there to shoe their own horses and then going on. There was no blacksmith to do the work at that time.*

After their marriage in 1867, Gideon's daughter, Catherine Wright Riggs, and her husband, Thomas Chesley Brittain, built a large two-story log house a few hundred yards southwest of the Cross Roads on the land later inherited from Gideon by Catherine's son, Oliver Riggs Brittain. In 1898 Oliver replaced this log house with the present large, two-story frame house. At this same time, Oliver built the log tenant house which now stands on the south side of Flat Creek Road, just west of the Church of Christ.

In 1884, Thomas C. Brittain built a tobacco factory on the back of the property at the Cross Roads, and his son, Oliver Riggs Brittain, later added a tobacco warehouse facing the pike. More about these successful enterprises may be found earlier in this book in the section about the Brittains. The tobacco buildings do not stand today.

The post office at Riggs Cross Roads was established on January 7, 1834, and discontinued October 8, 1872. Gideon Riggs served as postmaster from January 7, 1834 to March 15, 1854 and from February

27, 1866, until his death on November 17, 1871. The foregoing information was furnished by the U. S. General Services Administration, Washington, D. C. The intervening time when Gideon was not postmaster was the period when he was in Arkansas. During his absence the office was held by Stephen Jordan, brother of his daughter-in-law, Nancy Jordan Riggs, and Joseph F. Brittain. At its beginning, the post office must have been operated from Gideon's home, as some of his living descendants remember seeing the letterbox fixtures in the old house before it was torn down.

The Post Office Directory to Post Offices in the United States for 1857 lists fifteen post offices in Williamson County including Riggs Cross Roads with Joseph H. Brittain as postmaster. His annual compensation is shown as \$36.83, being the third highest shown in Williamson County.<sup>10</sup> Gideon and his family were in Arkansas at this time.

George F. Watson's interesting article published in Williamson County Historical Society Publication Number 14 confirms that Riggs Cross Roads was an active post office in 1840 with Gideon Riggs as postmaster, located 694 miles from Washington, D. C. and 31 miles from Nashville.<sup>11</sup>

Mary Campbell Riggs, daughter of Gideon and Sophia Campbell Riggs, was born January 22, 1830 at Riggs Cross Roads. She attended a girls' preparatory school in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. There is a legend that when she was about sixteen years of age she climbed from an upstairs window to elope with Wyatt Ambrose Haley. She rode behind Wyatt on horseback to Allisona, where they were married by Will Nunn, J. P. on November 19, 1846.

Wyatt Ambrose and Mary Campbell Riggs Haley's children were:

Gideon Wyatt Haley b. July 22, 1852	Thomas Davidson Haley b. February 12, 1858
Benjamin Robert Haley b. May 28, 1853	Valeria Campbell Haley b. June 17, 1860
Betty Haley b. September 22, 1855	Margaret Sue Haley b. August 17, 1862

Wyatt Ambrose Haley was born October 10, 1824 in Charlotte (or Albermarle) County, Virginia, the son of Wyatt (William) Haley, and went to Williamson County, Tennessee as a boy with his brothers, Robert Henry, William N., Benjamin and sisters, Mary Morris Haley and Ann Elizabeth Haley in 1832 and settled near College Grove. An account of his estate is recorded at Williamson County Courthouse, County Court, November, 1864 term. His father, Wyatt (William) Haley's will was probated in Marshall County, Tennessee in January, 1856.

Wyatt (William) Haley was the son of Ambrose Haley, born 1758 and married Mary Woodward on December 24, 1782 in Lunenburg County, Virginia. Ambrose Haley has recently been proven a Revolutionary War patriot through the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution. His parents were John (ca. 1710-1781) and Mary Haley.<sup>16</sup>

Thomas Davidson Haley, listed above, inherited part of his mother's share of Gideon Riggs' estate, and lived there until his death, in the white frame house built in 1910 on the northwest corner of the Cross Roads. Marjorie O. Haley is his daughter. Wyatt Ambrose and Mary Campbell Riggs Haley were the grandparents of Bertha Denny Mullette.

Marjorie Hutton has recalled the story of her father, Thomas Davidson Haley of the Cross Roads, who said the Yankees at the Cross Roads during the Civil War forced him to catch chickens for them to make into stew. He was then a child of about six years. At one time they ripped feather beds open, supposedly looking for something valuable, and left them by the road with the feathers blowing about.

During the Civil War, the Yankees made a devastating march through the Cross Roads area. They burned the rail fences and took the horses and cattle. They found and stole the silver and money which had been buried. Some years later lightning struck the brick house and it had to be torn down. It was replaced with a simple frame cottage. Of course, things were never again the same at the Cross Roads. Yet, despite these tragedies there did follow a short, golden period of relative stability, from about 1900 to the First World War (1914). Those days provide nostalgic recollections for the authors. Then it was that as children they found excitement and enchantment at the Cross Roads, where they spent many of their summers.

The 35 mile trip from their home in Nashville to visit their grandmother and other relatives at the Cross Roads was made on the stagecoach, which departed before daylight from Flat Rock (now called Woodbine) at the edge of town on Nolensville Pike. A stop for change of horses and lunch, or dinner as it was called, occurred at the hotel in Nolensville. The meal cost 25 cents. The fare on the stagecoach was \$1.00. After several rest stops for water from springs along the way, we arrived at the Cross Roads around four or five o'clock in the afternoon.

*My mother, Bertha Denny Mullette, daughter of William Green and Margaret*

In The War of Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Series I-Volume XXIII in Two Parts published by Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 1889, the following from Volume 23, Part II are included:<sup>12</sup>

CHAPEL HILL, *March 9, 1863* Page 676

General LEONIDAS POLK,  
*Headquarters Shelbyville, Tenn.:*

GENERAL: The only item of news since my last, at 10 this a.m., is contained in inclosed note\* from my picket outpost at Riggs' cross-roads; it is corroborated by some citizens coming in since. Maj. [W.A.] Johnson, of my regiment, has gone out to investigate the matter, and engage the enemy if they advance on us. I send this via Unionville, that Colonel [A.A.] Russell may know all that I do of the enemy's movements.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,  
P.D. RODDEY,  
*Colonel.*

WAR DEPARTMENT, *May 27, 1863.* Page 365

Major-General ROSECRANS, *Murfreesborough, Tenn.:*  
Have you anything from Grant? Where is Forrest's headquarters?

A. LINCOLN.

366 KY., MID. AND E. TENN., N. ALA., AND SW. VA. [CHAP. XXXV.] Page 366

MURFREESBOROUGH, TENN.,  
*May 27, 1863—10.15 p.m.*

President Lincoln,

*President of the United States:*

According to our latest news, Forrest's headquarters were at Spring Hill yesterday, and moved to Riggs' cross-roads, 18 miles southwest of here, to-day. The latest from Grant we have is of the rebel dispatch last night, saying that Johnston had crossed the Big Black north of him with 20,000 men. They were not jubilant at 2 o'clock to-day, when our provost-marshal was on their front, talking to Dr. Avent, Bragg's chief surgeon.

W.S. ROSECRANS,  
*Major-General.*

TRIUNE, *May 27, 1863—3.40 p.m.* Page 366

Brig. Gen. JAMES A. GARFIELD:

I have the following information from very reliable sources:

The rebels have two divisions of infantry, with artillery in proportion and five brigades of cavalry, in addition to Forrest's cavalry command of 5,000 strong, between Riggs' cross-roads and Spring Hill, advancing cautiously. The brigade reported to have gone south went from Shelbyville to Fayetteville, and from there to Columbia. Forrest moved his headquarters to Riggs' cross-roads to-day. The rebels have three pontoon bridges across Duck River, between Chapel Hill and Columbia. Johnston's dispatch to Bragg yesterday stated that he had nearly annihilated Grant's army, and that Vicksburg is entirely safe. Friday's fighting Grant had the advantage. Saturday's was without result. Sunday and Monday Johnston beat Grant.

J.M. BRANNAN,  
*Brigadier-General, Commanding.*

Haley Denny, related many times the above story and how exciting the stagecoach trips and visits to Riggs Cross Roads were. She especially enjoyed the trip in August during wheat threshing time, and recalled the bountiful table of foods of all kinds. On one of her return trips to Nashville from the Cross Roads as a young lady, she took her young cousin, Marjorie O. Haley (now Mrs. Hutton) whom she had been visiting, on her first stagecoach trip to Nashville.

The story of "the night the stars fell on the old stone block house when Grandmother lived at the Cross Roads" has been handed down through the generations. The old stone block house was just below the present Embree Blackwell, Jr.'s home on Nolensville Pike at Riggs Road. It no longer stands. Accounts of this phenomena may be read in the "Western Review" newspapers of Franklin, Tennessee in its November 13, 1833 and December 13, 1833 issues, which quotes in the November 13th issue from the "Charleston Mercury". I quote, in part: "From four o'clock in the morning until daylight the heavens presented a most singular and uncommon appearance. The whole vault of heaven was lighted up by a succession of the most brilliant meteors. They shot to every corner of the horizon". The "Charleston Mercury" reported "very large meteors, the largest one from the east, one of an enormous size which was nearly extinguished when I reached the door". And, "for never did rain fall much thicker than the meteors fell to the earth".<sup>13</sup>

Then the happy times really began - playing with our cousins, enjoying good food, picking blackberries and swimming in the creek afterwards, sliding down haystacks, and even helping with the chores, though often only with some prodding. We played around the spring house which Gideon had built below the house at the Cross Roads. Ripe berries hung from the mulberry trees surrounding the spring and fell at our feet to be eaten. The trees around the spring are gone, but the walls of the springhouse in this once lovely place still stand and can be seen from the highway near the cemetery.

The wheat threshing was one of the big events of the summer. The hands were fed bounteously. Ham, fried chicken, every vegetable that grew in the garden, and numerous cakes and pies were put on the table. The table had to be set not once, but twice and often three times, in order to get everyone fed.

The Cross Roads was a social center of the community. There, relatives and friends came for dinner after church on Sunday and stayed for the afternoon to exchange news and ideas as well as.

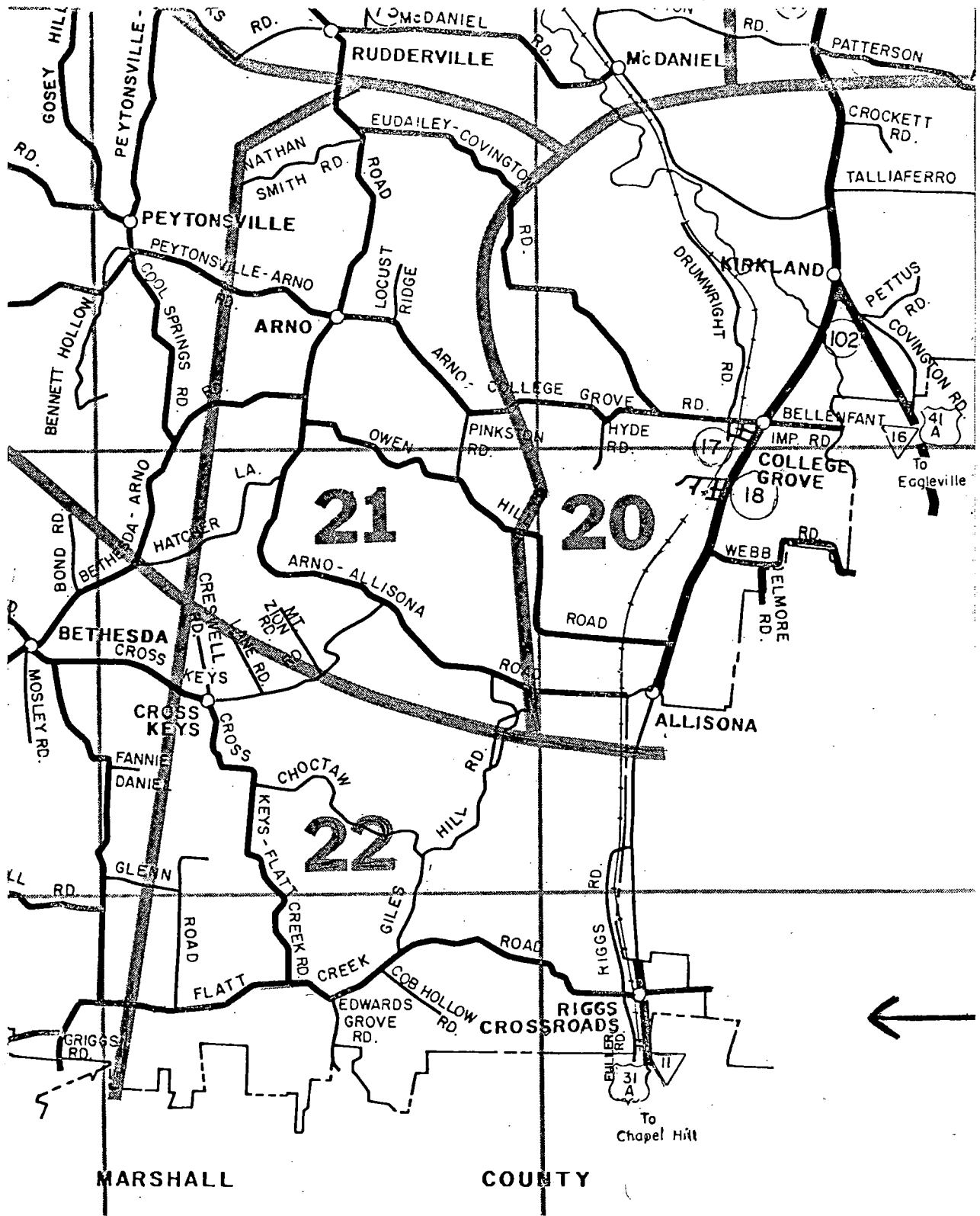
gossip. The influx of relatives from the city who came to visit in the summer was welcomed for the stimulus they brought, notwithstanding the extra work their visits required. These memories of the Cross Roads are a dear possession of many family members still living.

*The authors of this book, Clara and Helen Duggan, when visiting their grandmother, Nancy Jordan Riggs, in the old brick house at the Cross Roads, enjoyed hearing her play the piano, especially the piece "Chapel Hill Serenade". This was a fond memory of my Mother, too. I have a very old copy of this which I treasure highly.*

The picture at the Cross Roads has changed now. The Industrial Revolution has had its effect and taken its toll. First, there was the construction of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad, completed in 1914, which cut a great swath through the middle of the farm. The railroad right-of-way came directly through the church at the Cross Roads, necessitating the relocation of the church, to its great disadvantage. A church building was erected on the Flat Creek Road on the Brittain farm, part of Gideon's original land. The present house was left standing only a few feet from the deep cut of the railroad and its beautiful location was irreparably marred.

The next step "of progress" was the construction of U. S. Highway 31-A in the 1930's, which took another wide swipec through the farm since its route deviated from that of the old Nolensville Pike. The homestead cottage at the Cross Roads still stands facing the old Nolensville Pike, which is now designated as Riggs Road on the General Highway Map of Williamson County, Tennessee, January 1970. The turnoff from U. S. 31-A through the railroad underpass to the south portion of the old pike carries a sign "Fuller Road". The house is caught in a web of these roads and the railroad, and its former claim to beauty and dignity is completely gone.

The great depression of the 1930's, with its many years of declining farm prices, had a disastrous effect. Many of the younger members of the family could no longer "make it" on the farm, so they moved to the cities, where they have done well. The original land that was owned by Gideon has been subdivided into six parts, each with a residence. Only three portions of the old farm now





remain in the ownership of the Riggs family, as follows:

1. The homestead cottage at the Cross Roads belongs to Ollie Cathey Riggs, the widow of Aaron Gambill Riggs, who was the great-great-grandson of David Riggs, the settler.
2. The Fuller House and fifty acres belong to Allen Fuller, a great-great-great-grandson of David.
3. The Brittain House and the farm of about 300 acres are owned by the heirs of Leonard Brittain, deceased, great-great-grandson of David.

*It is sad to know that the two story white frame, which replaced the original red brick house, burned to the ground in January, 1981, leaving the two tall chimneys standing. When they were pulled down, the original corner-stone with date on it was saved. The Brittain house and farm diagonally across from the homestead place was sold several years ago, and is no longer in the Riggs family.*

Thus, the history of the family has dramatized the changes in the social and economic fabric of our country during the past 165 years as a simpler past has gradually merged with an ever more complex present. Times are changing again. Prices of farm products and farm land have risen. If one of Gideon's descendants had his farm today in its entirety, he would be a rich man.

#### THE CHURCH

An account of the establishment of the Church of Christ at Riggs Cross Roads was given at its Centennial Observance on October 1, 1972, by W. Douglas Harris, minister. He wrote that efforts to construct a building for the Church of Christ in the vicinity of Riggs Cross Roads had started before 1872, when a series of gospel services was being conducted in late September under a brush arbor, located about one-half mile northeast of the present building. After the first meeting, the weather turned unfavorable and was about to force the meeting to close. Brother Tatum, great-grandfather of Mr. Harris, asked the leaders of the two denominational churches in the community about using their buildings to continue the meeting, but was refused. As he was returning home he happened to meet Gideon Riggs, a neighbor who was not affiliated with any church. Upon learning of the refusal of the other churches, he offered Brother Tatum \$100 and the land on

which to erect a building. The offer was accepted and, according to the old records in our possession, the church met in its new building for the first time on May 5, 1872. Regrettably, this was after the death of Gideon on November 8, 1871.



CHURCH OF CHRIST  
AT  
RIGGS CROSS ROADS

Hal Manier (Donald Harold Manier) of College Grove, in researching the history of Promise United Methodist Church (On Nolensville Pike, between Riggs Cross Roads and Holts Corner) for a book titled Promise United Methodist Church: A Legacy of Faith by Joe Watkins, Nancy Sweeney and Hal Manier, published in 1979, noted that Gideon Riggs was a Trustee for the Methodist E. P. Church. Other Trustees were William Clark, James F. Warren, Madison R. Hughes, E. B. Kittrell, Joseph B. Boyd, and William C. Moore. Alfred S. Ogilvie deeded property to the church trustees. The deed is recorded in Marshall County, Tennessee, Deed Book K, page 13, dated September 11, 1841, and recorded August 20, 1850, witnessed by Joseph H. Brittain, William M. Hughes, Henry B. Terry, and Bannister Royster.<sup>14</sup> Alfred S. Ogilvie was married to Mira Marzee Riggs, daughter of Gideon Riggs.

Marjorie Hutton tells about attending this church and Sunday School with her parents. Her father, Thomas Davidson Haley, who lived on the original David

Riggs land, inherited by his mother from Gideon Riggs, was a leader in this church and Superintendent of the Sunday School for many years. Her fond memories of the Cross Roads include going to Promise Church for the Christmas tree party every year, in the black surrey with the cream colored fringe around the top. Her parents were in the front with as many children as could pile in the back of the surrey, and away they went to the Christmas tree party at Promise Church where every child received a bag of candy. One year it snowed very hard and there being no curtains on the surrey "we were terribly excited and loved every minute".

A record of early church finances is included in Mr. Harris' account.

Financial records of the early years are interesting, in that they reveal the scarcity of money. There are entries in the records where only five cents was contributed on several occasions. This is understandable in the light of history. It was immediately after the War between the States and the South was in Reconstruction. There just wasn't any money in circulation. In 1890 they started a separate fund for the support of preachers and the total contributed was \$30.00. They must have been one of the earliest churches in the Restoration Movement to have Sunday School as early as 1872. In 1888 they began doing some mission work. They sent \$13.25 to a congregation in South Chattanooga, and in 1889 sent two \$5.00 contributions to the church at Triune, Tenn., in addition to sending \$3.00 to some Indian mission. These were large contributions in those days.

The original building, a white, frame, split-level structure, typical of the country church architecture of the time, was not unlike the present church building. The lower level of the church, which nestled into the gentle slope of the land on which it rested, was used for an elementary subscription school, attended by the children of the Cross Roads and others in the community. Through the succeeding years many of the Riggs family have been members and strong supporters of the church, continuing to the present generation. After the congregation was forced to abandon its old building because of the encroachment of the railroad, Oliver Riggs Brittain, grandson of Gideon, deeded approximately one acre of land for a new building. The deed was recorded July 14, 1911, in the Williamson County Courthouse. This is the location

on which the building stands today.

### THE CEMETERY

The family cemetery at the Cross Roads has luckily survived the encroachment of the highway and the railroad. It is located at the intersection of U. S. Highway 31-A and the Flat Creek Road, about one mile north of Holts Corner. It is reserved for and dedicated to descendants of Gideon Riggs.

The family takes pride in its maintenance, and a family gathering is held there each Mother's Day. A bronze plaque in memory of Gideon has been placed in the right-hand side of the stone entrance. The plaque and entrance were designed by Dan Fuller and constructed under the supervision of Harold (Buster) Fuller, great-great-grandsons of Gideon. The plaque bears the following inscription:

IN MEMORY OF  
GIDEON RIGGS 1790-1871  
AND HIS WIVES

MARY REYNOLDS 1798-1825  
SOPHIA CAMPBELL 1801-1836  
CATHERINE F. HOLDEN 1815-1865

ALL THEIR GRAVES ARE HERE EXCEPT CATHERINE F. HOLDEN'S WHICH IS IN ARKANSAS. HIS FARM INCLUDED APPROXIMATELY 1,000 ACRES HEREBABOUTS, WITH BRICK HOUSE ABOUT 100 FT. NORTHWEST OF HERE.

ERECTED 1969 BY HIS DESCENDANTS

Tombstones in the family cemetery give the following information:

ERSKINE L. ALLEN  
Feb. 15, 1884 - July 15, 1884

ANNIE F. ARNOLD  
B. March 10, 1891 - D. Dec. 27, 1969

GLENN ARNOLD  
B. Aug. 29, 1884 - D. March 19, 1972

JOHN ERNEST BARNES  
Nov. 16, 1895 - Jan. 20, 1957

RUBY RIGGS BARNES  
Oct. 20, 1901 -

EARL RIGGS BARNES  
June 23, 1923 - July 27, 1952  
(Tenn. S1 Navy, WWII)

CATHERINE W. BRITTAIN  
Nov. 18, 1841 - Aug. 10, 1870

SARAH T. DEFREES  
Wife of John Defrees was bornd  
Sept. 24, 1780 & departed this  
life August 17th about 2 oclock  
p.m. 1826 with feavor

GIDEON R. DEFREES  
born Aug. 27, 1805, departed  
this life Aug. 1, 1822 about  
1 o'clock p.m. with the nervis  
feavor. Age 17 years

JAMES McCROSKY DUGGAN  
Mar. 3, 1868 - Feb. 29, 1948

LILLIE MAY RIGGS DUGGAN  
Mar. 20, 1870 - Aug. 13, 1912

CLARA NICHOLS DUGGAN  
July 23, 1900 -

HELEN KATHERINE DUGGAN  
Feb. 6, 1902

BETTY HALEY ESTES  
Sept. 22, 1855 - Apr. 9, 1875

CLARA HALEY EZELL  
Aug. 11, 1890 - Mar. 25, 1972

RICHARD W. FINN  
1886 - 1963

ORA HALEY FINN  
1886 - 1943

JOHN G. FULLER  
Feb. 3, 1822 - June 28, 1879  
married Anne E. Stewart  
Feb. 7, 1855

WILLIAM ADOLPHUS FULLER  
1855 - 1929

MARY CATHERINE FULLER  
1868 - 1960

ROBERT E. FULLER  
1894 - 1972

ANNIE BRATTON FULLER  
1886 - 1945

VERNON FULLER  
1889 - 1952

HAROLD FULLER  
1892 - 1960

OCIA BARNES FULLER  
1898 -

NANCY KATHERINE FULLER  
June 22, 1907 - Nov. 17, 1956

NANCY ELIZABETH FULLER  
1924 - 1933

LINDA FULLER  
1937 - D.

AGNES J. FULLER  
October 4, 1904 -

RALPH FULLER  
July 28, 1900 -

NELLIE F. FULLER  
May 1905 -

FRANK T. GOOCH  
June 29, 1903 - Aug. 18, 1967

MARY ELIZABETH EZELL GOOCH  
October 10, 1908 -

WYATT A. HALEY  
Aug. 25, 1824 - May 18, 1864  
An honest man, the noblest work  
of God.

M. C. HALEY  
Jan. 22, 1830 - Aug. 10, 1900  
A loving wife, a mother dear  
lies buried here

BEN R. HALEY  
May 28, 1853 - July 16, 1940

VICTORIA F. HALEY  
Dec. 2, 1868 - Feb. 9, 1943

GIDEON WYATT HALEY  
1853 - 1898  
(NOTE: Haley Bible shows 1852 - 1897)

THOMAS D. HALEY  
Feb. 12, 1858 - Feb. 11, 1934

MARY A. HALEY  
Oct. 27, 1866 - Jan. 20, 1954

ERNEST D. HALEY  
Aug. 20, 1894 - Dec. 24, 1925

WYATT A. HALEY  
Sep. 4, 1888 - Nov. 19, 1940

EMMA TANNER HALEY  
Oct. 16, 1893 -

WILLIAM THOMAS HALEY  
Son of W. A. and Emma  
Apr. 19, 1913 - Jan. 18, 1914

ELIZABETH NEWCOMB  
1836 - 1914

THOMAS F. NEWCOMB  
1854 - 1935

Sacred to the memory of  
RICHARD C. REYNOLDS  
born Novr 27th 1771 or 2  
departed this life the 8th  
of Novr 1825 in the Evening  
with a breast complaint  
Aged 54 years

SPENCER G. REYNOLDS  
born Augt. 16th, 1805 depd  
this life the 16th of July  
1815 at 5 o'clock in the  
morning with a brest  
complaint  
Aged 20 years

GIDEON RIGGS  
Mar. 8, 1790 - Nov. 17, 1871

MARY REYNOLDS RIGGS  
Mar. 10, 1798 - Dec. 22, 1825

Sacred to the memory of  
OVERTON C. RIGGS,  
only son of Gideon Riggs,  
who was born Dec. the 7th  
1818, and departed this  
life, Dec. the 30, 1835.  
Aged 17 years

Sacred to the memory  
of SOPHIA CAMPBELL RIGGS  
Jan. 22, 1801 - June 18, 1831

GIDEON WRIGHT RIGGS  
Oct. 17, 1845 - May 19, 1879

N. A. RIGGS  
Dec. 28, 1842 - May 12, 1924

EARL HOLDEN RIGGS  
Nov. 24, 1877 - Dec. 7, 1951

NANNIE GAMBILL RIGGS  
Feb. 15, 1882 - May 29, 1952

GIDEON E. RIGGS  
1906 - 1971

AARON RIGGS  
1908 - 1954

OLLIE CATHEY RIGGS  
1906 -

BETTY ANN RIGGS  
1933 - 1933

ROBERT EMMETT RIGGS  
Dec. 20, 1871 - June 16, 1957

MINNIE LAURA VAUGHN RIGGS  
June 25, 1878 - Oct. 3, 1943

JORDAN RIGGS  
1874 - 1938

ADA LEE JONES RIGGS  
1877 - 1963

MINNIE TUCKER RIGGS  
Died Jan. 27, 1901

JAMES EDWIN RIGGS  
July 28, 1914 -

ORA RUTH BENNETT RIGGS  
Sept. 26, 1917 - March 26, 1965

KAREN RIGGS  
Jan. 15, 1901 - June 25, 1901

RAYMOND FORREST RIGGS  
Jan. 1, 1911 - June 28, 1973

ELIZABETH SHEPARD WATSON  
Sept. 16, 1832 - April 31, 1897

*In Bibb Cemetery located on top of a high hill in a grove of trees on the west side of Riggs Road and northwest of the present Riggs Cemetery, there are several graves. The grave of Nancy Bibb, wife of Henry Bibb and daughter of John and Rebecca Riggs Boyd, has a flat stone marker about two and a half feet by five feet long. The dates are difficult to read. There is another marker standing about forty inches above the ground, about two feet wide with a round top, which has "M. R. Deceased September 20, 1814 in 66 year" cut into the stone.<sup>15</sup> This is probably the grave of Miriam Wright Riggs. David Riggs married Miriam Wright in North Carolina in 1771. He married his second wife, Sophia Dempsey in 1815.*

*A few excerpts from "The Review-Appeal", published in Franklin, Tennessee, from More About the Riggs Family, as quoted in the obituary of Gideon Riggs follows:*

"Gideon Riggs died in Williamson County, Tennessee of pneumonia, after a brief illness of five days, in the 81st year of his age".

"All that kind nursing, ceaseless vigile and medical skill could do, was done, to prolong a life which had been so eventful, and one in which all felt so deep an interest; but despite the most strenuous efforts of physician and friends, about twelve o'clock, Friday night, November 17, 1871, his spirit returned to the bosom of the God who gave it".

"He was liberal to the poor, as a husband he was tender and affectionate -- as a father, kind and indulgent".

"Like a gallant old sailor, whose bosom has felt and braved the fury of many a storm, conscious of having nobly done his duty, and of having willfully wronged no man, gallantly did he battle with the billow and breeze till summoned to anchor hard by those bright isles of the summerland".

A few days prior to his death the writer had an interview with him. During the conversation something was relative to the great future just opening before him. Distinctly, and with much emphasis, he remarked: "I know that I cannot stay much longer here, but I feel ready to go any hour; and I have tried to do my duty, have intentionally wronged no one, enjoy the luxury of a good conscience, and am not afraid to die....."

The last will and testament of Gideon Riggs is recorded in the County Court Records of Williamson County, Tennessee, Will Book 15, page 185 and probated December Term, 1871. Refer to More About the Riggs book for a copy and also the Inventory and Account of Sales.

Although Riggs Cross Roads is greatly changed from former time, every hill and byway there still stirs the memory. We are grateful that the Cross Roads is not a relic of the past, but a living, active community. Many Riggs descendants live in the vicinity, although few of them bear the Riggs name.

Today our nation is troubled and in turmoil. As a part of this great country the Riggs family is confronted with problems never faced before. It is our prayer that our family may remain strong and hold fast to those ideals and eternal values which have sustained it through previous generations.

Before we began this book, we knew that relationships with our kin had greatly enriched our lives. Now we feel close to every relative mentioned in this book. We wish we could have known them all. Some day we will.

## END OF BOOK

Since this book was published the following have been buried in the Riggs Cross Roads Cemetery:

Clara Nichols Duggan  
July 23, 1900 - March 21, 1982

Ralph Fuller  
July 28, 1900 - Feb. 15, 1984

Minnie Spears Newcomb  
1894 - 1977

Bobby R. Riggs  
Nov. 3, 1935 - July 13, 1982

Eunice N. Riggs  
Jan. 10, 1915 - June 7, 1980

James Edwin Riggs  
July 28, 1914 - Sept. 10, 1981

Ollie Riggs  
1906 - 1980

\* \* \*

In conclusion, I would like to express my personal thanks and appreciation to Helen K. Duggan for granting permission to use her book, More About the Riggs Family 1590-1973, and to Mrs. Embree Blackwell, Sr., Mrs. John F. Hutton, Miss Agnes Josephine Fuller, Hal Manier (Donald Harold Manier), Benjamin Wyatt Haley, Robert Dan Fuller, and William Thurston Farrar, who have assisted with additional information and facts used in this article. E.M.G.



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THE HISTORY OF OLD GLORY CHAPTER  
DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Franklin, Tennessee

By: Mrs. Frances Anderson Gibbs

Old Glory Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, celebrated its 86th birthday in October 1983. It was organized at the home of Miss Susie Gentry only seven years after the National Society of Daughters of the American Revolution was founded on October 11, 1890.

The choosing of the name, Old Glory, for the Chapter was explained in a letter written in 1936 by Miss Gentry to Mrs. Warren Hollinshead:

"I want you and the National Society, DAR, to know why I, as organizing Regent of Old Glory, gave it such a name. When John Paul Jones had his famous fight with the 'Sarapis' the flag staff was struck, and the flag was 'heading' downward to the sea when a heroic, gallant sailor made a plunge for it, saying, 'Old Glory shall never be lowered on land or sea.' and rescued it. Most people so confuse history that they think it was named for William Driver's Federal Flag that he carried around the world (and hoisted) in the War Between the States. It was my mother's family of Jones that John Paul had lived with and liked enough to take the name, Jones."

"Our Glorious Banner! The hope of the Free!" was chosen as the motto of the Chapter.

The fifteen charter members were: Miss Susie Gentry, the first Regent; Mrs. Macon Bostick Beckwith, Mrs. Estelle Mosely Bostick, Mrs. Leighla Perkins Cochran, Mrs. Jennie Kendrick Collins, Mrs. Hattie McGavock Cowan, Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Bradley Fentress, Mrs. Martha Jones Gentry, Mrs. Lucy Henderson Horton, Mrs. Ophelia Wood House, Mrs. Loulie Cochran Perkins, Miss Mary Lou Reese, Mrs. Bettie Whitaker Thomas, Miss Martha Pearl Wall and Mrs. Ann Eliza Bradley Winstead.

When the National Society was formed many projects were initiated, but of prime importance was the promotion of education, history, and patriotism. The January minutes of 1909 tell of Old Glory members being asked to contribute to a fund to be used for the completion of the monument on the Capitol grounds in Nashville in honor of the Revolutionary soldiers buried in Tennessee,

particularly those who fought at the Battle of King's Mountain. During the same year the minutes told of the Chapter's increased activity in patriotic education and prizes were being offered to the school children for the best historical essays. That project continues to the present time.

It was in 1910 that the Chapter placed a marble tablet to the right of the front door of the courthouse. It was inscribed with the names of sixty-three men who fought in the American Revolution and are buried in Williamson County. In recent years a few names have been added to the tablet. During 1910 the members were asked to make a donation of \$8.00 to finish paying for the commemorative tablet to Commodore Maury that had been placed on the wall of the public school at Five Points. It was then proposed that tablets similar to that of Commodore Maury be placed in memory of Gideon Blackburn, a pioneer preacher and teacher, and Bishop Otey, a pioneer preacher.

At the June 11, 1911 meeting Mrs. Lucy Henderson Horton announced that nine dozen flags, at a cost of forty cents a dozen, had been placed in the schools of the county. She also said that lectures on patriotism would be delivered twice a month in the Franklin Public School. Mr. Fred J. Page, Superintendent of Williamson County schools, had assisted the Chapter in the placement of the flags in each school. He also had encouraged the teachers to lead the pupils in giving the salute to the flag, as well as teaching them to love and respect the flag. Mr. Page had also written a book that was being used in the public schools. He had dedicated the book to Old Glory Chapter. In appreciation of Mr. Page's interest and co-operation in furthering the cause of patriotism the Chapter gave a standing vote of thanks to him.

When the fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of Franklin was observed, Old Glory Chapter co-operated with the U. D. C. Chapter, Starnes Camp and McEwen's Bivouac in the celebration that included both the Blue and Gray soldiers who had fought in the battle.

Mrs. N. B. Dozier was serving as Regent in 1916 when the Chapter met in November at the Old Cemetery to dedicate to the Town of Franklin the massive stone columns, the tablet of Georgian marble, and the handsome iron gates. Mrs. T. J. Wallace had served as chairman of the cemetery committee responsible for erecting the gates and putting the cemetery in good condition. The restoration began about

eighteen months prior to the dedication. In her speech Mrs. Wallace stated that when it was learned that a gateway to the cemetery from Fourth Avenue was needed, the Chapter decided to make it a memorial gateway, sacred to the old soldiers and the old inhabitants buried there. Four Revolutionary soldiers are buried there: Guilford Dudley, David Squires, Moses Priest and Miles Priest. Mrs. Dozier thanked the city officials and private individuals for their generosity which made it possible for the work to be done.

At the March 1917 meeting Miss Susie Gentry called attention to the fact that in August 1830 a preliminary discussion between the representatives of the Chickasaw Indians and the United States took place in the Presbyterian Church which was then located at the corner of the Old Cemetery. The discussion concerned the sale of the Indian lands and the Treaty took place on August 17, 1830 at the Masonic Hall.

Some other important activities of Old Glory Chapter that took place over a period of years were:

The procurement of some good copies of the American's Creed, one placed in the public school with the permission of Prof. Haun, Principal, and the others placed in several public places.

The raising of \$150.00 to be used to complete the dormitory at Lincoln Memorial University where the mountain children could receive a Christian education.

A scholarship to be given to a deserving Battle Ground Academy student.

The endorsement in 1923 of the "School Calendar" that had been prepared by Supt. Page, "since it was very instructive and would enable school children to learn many patriotic items".

Requesting all women to interest themselves in cleaning the screens of objectionable films.

The celebration of National Defense Day on September 12, 1924 in co-operation with the American Legion at the public school auditorium.

Encouraging the members to have old Bible records typed and sent to John Trotwood Moore at the State Archives.

The announcement by Mrs. Webb, the Regent, in 1925 that a marker had been erected at Holly Tree Gap to commemorate the passing that way 120 years earlier of four Williamson County pioneers, George Neely, Andrew Goff, William and David McEwen.

Independence Week was to be celebrated on June 28, 1926

at which time the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia was to be rung in celebration of 150 years of Independence. At the same time in Franklin all the bells in schools and public buildings, as well as the fire alarm, would be rung for fifteen minutes. During the ringing of the bells a parade would be formed at the home of Mrs. Webb (at the corner of 5th Avenue, North and Fair Street) headed by the Mayor, representatives of Old Glory Chapter, the U. D. C. members, the American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary.

Much of the information for this article was based on minutes that only began in 1908, eleven years after Old Glory Chapter was organized. All the activities for the next thirty years were too numerous to be listed, but the reading of those minutes has created a deep appreciation for the effort made by Old Glory Chapter in promoting patriotism, history and education in Williamson County.

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## THE WELL WITCHER OF ARNO

By: Katharine Shelburne Trickey

Some communities are lucky enough to have their own real live water finder while others have to dig a well with no help at all and hope it fills up with pure, cool water. Now take the Arno community --- those people are the lucky ones because they have Roy Harper, a man who can locate water 99 times out of 100.

Roy was born not knowing, in some mysterious way, that he had a talent for finding water. The whole thing got started back in 1946, right after he married Novella. The young Harpers, with Roy fresh out of the Navy, bought a place over on Lewisburg Pike and found they had to have a well. The Harpers had heard of a young black man living close by who was said to be right good at locating the very spot where water could be found. The neighbors called the black man a water witcher or dowser.

The next day the witcher came to their farm and using an elm stick shaped like a Y, found water for Roy and Novella. Later that same day, Roy's mother and his wife went off berry picking and, since Roy was left to his own devices and had no one watching, he decided he would see if he could find water.

So, just for the heck of it, Roy cut a twig from an elm tree in the backyard, shaping it like a Y. Then holding on for dear life, he walked across the yard. Suddenly he felt the stick being pulled toward the ground with such a force it was impossible to hold it out straight. Although he was scared to death, Harper finally looked down and it was then he saw that he too had found water at exactly the same place the witcher had found it. Needless to say it was a very good well the Harpers had over on Lewisburg Pike.

Young Harper didn't use his water talent very much at first. Maybe he was a little afraid to. He and Novella were pretty busy raising a family and earning a good living. Roy did find out that an aunt on his mother's side, Louise Rainey, could find water too. But she was the only other family member so blessed. Not even his father, J. C. Harper, could find a single puddle.

For years Roy worked as a welder for the TVA and, when asked, would find water for his neighbors during weekends. His job as a

welder came to a red hot end when Roy became ill and had to have open heart surgery. Since his forced retirement, Harper has enjoyed the reputation as the "witcher with the mostest" --- mostest water that is.

"I guess it is sorta remarkable how the water finding works," Roy explained. "The first thing you have to do is to cut you a stick. A lot of people swear that only an elm stick --- and always the same one --- can do the trick, but I don't agree with them. I have tried elm many a time but the pulling is always so hard the handle of the Y breaks off in my hand and cuts it all to pieces. I have learned to use an apple or peach switch and find it doesn't cut me up so bad. Another thing I do is use a fresh twig each time. The fresh wood seems to latch onto the water much easier."

"There's a trick to finding out in what direction the water is running. Take hold of the two handles of the Y, placing one handle on top of the other with the hands out flat and the stick evenly balanced. The point of the stick will then move in the direction of the water."

"Now you know which way to go. So next you hold the stick in both hands as a farmer would grab onto plow handles. Make sure your hands are gripping that stick real hard and pulling slightly outward. Then start walking and when that Y starts to point downward and your hands begin to shake and hurt and even blister, you have found water."

Some people believe the whole idea of water witching is nothing but superstition, but if that is true why is Roy so busy finding streams of tasty water when all other methods have failed. What people wouldn't have given back in the early 1800's while traveling over hot dry deserts to have had someone with his nice wet talent.

Here in Middle Tennessee, one man dug two dry wells until he called Harper to come help and he found water only 45 feet deep. Over at Murfreesboro, Roy found not only water for a whole group of condominiums but also enough to install a fountain as well. That particular stream was said to have produced beaucoup gallons of water a minute. At the Cedars State Park, Witcher Harper found five different wells scattered throughout the park.



It has been estimated Roy Harper has found water for over 1000 wells in Middle Tennessee alone. He has found water for churches, industries, real estate developments and for many private citizens in Williamson County and the surrounding counties. The price a person pays for this incredible service is very small. All Roy asks is enough for his expenses.

Herman S. Clark, a well digger of some note, has followed Harper's water directions many a time.

"I consider Roy one of the best there is," said Clark emphatically. "It is true here in Middle Tennessee water can be found 94% of the time if you drill far enough. But drilling can get pretty costly when you have to go down past China. I have seen wells, not found by Roy, go down as far as 900 to 1200 feet. But when the next fellow got smart and called in Roy, he only went down 85 feet to find really good water. So right there you can see the difference in knowing where the water is and not going around digging any old place. People can save a lot of money by finding the right spot."

Clark remembered at least 15 of Roy's wells between Arno and Bethesda were no deeper than 125 to 300 feet. That's good because after 300 feet the cost of digging is more. The chances are greater that the well equipment will be damaged past 300 feet.

In a world where heat pumps have become increasingly popular for both heating and cooling a house, people having wells are in high clover. It seems well water is pretty consistantly 62 degrees which is good for heat pumps and their owners. The constant water temperature causes the cost of running a heat pump to be considerably less.

Roy Harper is quite a man among men. Certainly, he isn't too tall, only about 5'8" with a thatch of white hair and sparkling blue eyes. But the service he performs makes him a giant.

Man, if he has to, can do without food for days at a time, but he can't live 24 hours without hurting real bad for water. Witcher Harper uses his gift of water to better the lot of many needful people and those people are mighty thankful.

Long may Roy live and long may he serve as witcher for water. The people of the Arno community are real proud he calls Arno home.

THE STEPHENSON FAMILY  
OF  
WILLIAMSON AND MAURY COUNTIES, TENNESSEE

By: Susan McDonald Roberson

The name Stephenson means "son of Stephen", and was spelled with a "ph". Sometimes "v" is used and sometimes it is spelled Stee'nson and Stinson. All these variations are used for and by different families of the same name and origin, the most frequent origin being Scotland.

Ancestral roots of the Stephenson Family lie in the hills of southeast Scotland or the "lowlands" as the Scots call it. It is an area not far from the border between Scotland and England. There have been several books done on various Stephenson Families in America that are probably related to the Stephensons of Williamson and Maury Counties. One book tells of a Henry Stephenson, born 1689, who was a shepherd in Ricalton, Scotland. Ricalton is located in Oxnam Village of Roxborough County Parish, about six miles from the city of Jedburg, Scotland. Henry's eldest son, Robert (born 1723) moved to Ballymoney in County Antrim, Ireland. Another of Henry's sons, James, also went to Ballymoney and in 1785 migrated to Fairfield County, South Carolina. There is also an account of a John Stephenson who was most likely a brother to Henry, who also reared a family about the same time and in the same county as did Henry. The names of John's children are common to the Stephensons in other families of the same name.

The Stephensons of Williamson and Maury Counties can be traced back to Lancaster District, South Carolina, which is bordered to the southwest by the above mentioned Fairfield County. The Stephenson Family came to America in much the same manner as most "Scotch-Irish". They were Scotsmen who went to Ireland and settled in the Ulster Plantation. They left Ireland and came to America via Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. From there they went to Augusta County, Virginia where they lived for a period of 2 to 3 years and eventually settled in Lancaster District, South Carolina. In 1787 Lancaster County, South Carolina was formed from parts of Anson County, North Carolina and Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. It is for this reason that early records regarding

anyone from Lancaster County, South Carolina may be found in the two aforesaid counties of North Carolina.

It is impossible to determine from exactly where in Ireland the Stephensons departed for America. Most passenger arrival records document the period between 1820-1945. There are no records at the National Archives relating to immigration during the Colonial Period. The earliest lists are dated 1798 and since our ancestors were well established in South Carolina by this time, there are no records to document exactly when and from which port they departed for America.

The earliest known ancestors are John Stephenson, Sr. (1718-1785), and Jean (White?) Stephenson (1733-1796). They were said to be of "Scotch-Irish" extraction, and composed a part of that large body of Presbyterians that migrated to Virginia and the Carolinas during the 1730's. It is known that they lived in Augusta County, Virginia for awhile before moving to Lancaster District, South Carolina where they settled near the Old Waxhaw Presbyterian Church, where they remained the rest of their lives and in whose cemetery they are buried. Their tombstones read:

John Stephenson - lay elder of Waxhaw Congregation  
who died 17 July A.D. 1785 - age 67 years.

"Our eyes look upwards to the hills, whence our  
returning Lord shall come. We wait his  
chariot's awful wheels, to fetch our longing  
spirits home."

Jean Stephenson - who died July 7, 1796 - age  
63 years.

"My soul come meditate the day, and think how  
near it stands. When you must quit this  
house of clay & fly to unknown lands."

During the American Revolution, John Stephenson, Sr. was too old to actually fight in the war, but he did his patriotic duty by furnishing supplies for the Continental Army. The Archives in Columbia, South Carolina show: Under Accounts Audited #7355 John Stephenson furnished supplies for continental and militia use in 1780 and 1781. Interest on the indent was collected by James Stephenson in 1785, by Thomas Stephenson in 1786, by Hugh White and Thomas Stephenson in 1787, Moses Stephenson in 1788, and James Stephenson in 1789.

The children of John Sr. and Jean (White?) Stephenson were:

- I. Elizabeth Stephenson (1753-1811) m. Thomas Crawford (? -1821).
  - A. Jane Crawford (1777-1818) m. (1) Wm. R. Foster (2) ---- Dunlap.
  - B. Eliza Crawford m. ---- Dunlap.
  - C. John Crawford m. ---- ----.
    1. Thomas H. Crawford m. ---- ----.
  - D. Elizabeth Stephenson Crawford m. George Douglas Blair. (1788-1858) (1787-1876)
    1. Thomas W. Blair (1812-1854) m. Catharine C. Neeley.
    2. James H. M. C. Blair (1815-1884) m. Sarah Ann Jones.
    3. Rev. George H. Blair (1820-1853) m. ---- ----.
- II. James White Stephenson (Jan. 26, 1756 - Jan. 6, 1832) m. (1) Elizabeth James (d. 1793) (2) Mrs. Mary Fleming (d. 1830).
  - A. Alicia Stephenson (b. Sept. 1792) by Elizabeth James.
  - B. John James Stephenson (1811-1838) by Mary Fleming.
- III. Moses Stephenson (1759-1802) m. Elizabeth Dunlap (1763-1850).
  - A. John White Stephenson (April 17, 1785 - Oct. 20, 1847) m. Mary McClelland (Oct. 26, 1789 - Mar. 9, 1824).
    1. Jean Elizabeth Stephenson (Sept. 23, 1807 - Feb. 4, 1864) m. Robert Luther Frierson (Jan. 1, 1803 - March 13, 1857).
    2. Samuel Haywood Stephenson (May 10, 1810 - April 22, 1884) m. Sarah Elmira Frierson (July 27, 1815 - Nov. 8, 1893).
    3. Clotilda Grace Stephenson (Feb. 22, 1812 - Aug. 27, 1838) m. David Caldwell Brown (Jan. 21, 1810 - June 3, 1882).
    4. Mary Elvira Stephenson (Sept. 10, 1814 - Jan. 28, 1897) m. George Whitfield Mayes (Mar. 27, 1811 - July 26, 1874).
    5. Sarah Caroline Stephenson (Sept. 22, 1816 - Feb. 19, 1865) m. James Hervey Frierson (Oct. 30, 1814 - July 30, 1867).
    6. Frances McClelland Stephenson (June 4, 1820 - April 30, 1849) m. William Stuart Fleming (April 23, 1816 - July 13, 1896).
  - B. Samuel Stephenson (Nov. 28, 1787 - April 4, 1838) m. Susanna Coffey (June 10, 1789 - July 1, 1865).
  - C. Jane F. Stephenson (Mar. 17, 1790 - Sept. 3, 1827) m. ---- ----.
  - D. Sarah Stephenson (Mar. 15, 1792 - Oct. 10, 1861) m. Samuel Dunlap (Nov. 10, 1795 - Sept. 16, 1869).
  - E. James White Stephenson (Feb. 25, 1797 - March 22, 1880) m. (1) Jane F. Riggs. (2) Matilda Dean.

IV. John Stephenson, Jr. (1764-1802) m. -----.

- A. Sarah Stephenson m. Felix Kirkpatrick.
- B. Dr. James W. Stephenson (Mar. 4, 1792 - Sept. 1847)  
m. (1) Jennet Wilson Stephenson (2) Jemima Joanna  
Stephenson.
  - 1. Sarah Harriett Stephenson (See V-B).
  - 2. Amanda M. Stephenson (See VI-A).
  - 3. Emily Jane Stephenson (See VI-A).
  - 4. James White Stephenson (See VI-A).
  - 5. Louisa Anne Stephenson (See VI-A).
- C. Moses Stephenson (May 8, 1794 - ?) m. Mary ----.
- D. John Stephenson m. -----.
- E. Selina Cathy Stephenson (1799 - 1804).

V. Thomas Stephenson (May 5, 1766 - April 16, 1848)

- m. Jennet Wilson (Jan. 19, 1764 - Jan. 19, 1831).
- A. John Elihu Stephenson (Sept. 20, 1795 - July 24, 1856).
- B. Jennet Wilson Stephenson (July 31, 1797 - ?) m. Dr.  
James White Stephenson (Mar. 4, 1792 - Sept. 1847).
  - 1. Sarah Harriett Stephenson (Jan. 1, 1819 - Feb. 11,  
1848) m. David Caldwell Brown (Jan. 21, 1810 -  
June 3, 1882).
- C. Sarah Elizabeth Stephenson (June 26, 1800 - ?)  
m. Edward Levingston Frierson (March 4, 1798 - ?)
  - 1. Thomas Stephenson Frierson (May 11, 1821 - Nov.  
19, 1822).
  - 2. Mary Jane Frierson (Sept. 25, 1823 - ?).
  - 3. Eugenia Witherspoon Frierson (Nov. 16, 1827 - ?).
  - 4. Selina Amelia Frierson (May 17, 1830 - ?).
  - 5. Charles C. Frierson (Feb. 1838 - ?).
  - 6. Sarah Dickey Frierson.
- D. Selina Grace Stephenson (Aug. 26, 1803 - ?) m. Good-  
low W. Buford (Sept. 16, 1794 - ?).
  - 1. Livinia Olivia Buford (Aug. 1, 1824 - ?).
  - 2. Jennet Wilson Buford (April 18, 1826 - ?).
  - 3. Hamden A. Buford (June 17, 1828 - ?).
  - 4. Sarah Eunice Buford (July 4, 1830 - ?).
  - 5. Thomas Philemon Buford.
  - 6. John Elihu H. Buford.
  - 7. W. Goodlow Buford.
  - 8. Julia Buford.
- E. Lavinia M. A. Stephenson (March 18, 1806 - ?)  
m. Thomas R. English.

VI. Nathaniel Stephenson (June 12, 1771 - 1845) m. Elizabeth  
McCorkle (Oct. 3, 1781 - 1852).

- A. Jemima Joanna Stephenson (Feb. 6, 1804 - Aug. 10,  
1873) m. Dr. James W. Stephenson (Mar. 4, 1792 -  
Sept. 1847).
  - 1. Amanda M. Stephenson (1829 - ?) m. William N.  
Johnson.
  - 2. Emily Jane Stephenson (Jan. 27, 1829 - 1912) m.  
John Calvin Odil (1825 - 1904).
  - 3. James White Stephenson (May 25, 1833 - Dec. 21,  
1900) m. Margaret Elizabeth Williams (Nov. 27,  
1844 - Nov. 26, 1909).

4. Louisa Ann Stephenson (1838 - 1913) never married.
- B. Eliza J. Stephenson (May 25, 1808 - July 15, 1812).
- C. Archibald John Cal. Stephenson (Oct. 3, 1815 - ?).

The eldest son of John and Jean Stephenson, the Reverend James White Stephenson, was a well known Presbyterian Minister. After completing his schooling at Mt. Zion College in Winnsboro, South Carolina, he became the principal of a school near Old Waxhaw Church. One of his pupils was young Andrew Jackson who would one day become President of the United States. Andrew Jackson's father is also buried in the cemetery of Old Waxhaw Church. After fighting in the Revolutionary War, James White Stephenson prepared for the ministry and was licensed in 1789 by the Presbytery of South Carolina. He then accepted a post as the pastor of the Bethel and Indiantown Churches in the Williamsburg District of South Carolina.

The original settlers in Tennessee came from Williamsburg District, South Carolina. They came in a kind of colony, led by Squire John Dickey, who brought about twenty families with him. They first came to Williamson County, Tennessee in 1806 and in 1807 moved to Maury County, Tennessee where they purchased about 5,000 acres of the General Greene Survey for \$3.00 an acre. The land was apportioned according to the amount each family had contributed toward its purchase. This was the founding of the Zion Church Community and the first church built in Maury County. Among the settlers were the Dickeys, Friersons, Flemings, Mayes, Armstrongs, Fultons, Witherspoons, Dobbins, Mathews, Blakelys, and Stephensons, all well known names in the history of Maury and Williamson Counties.

Reverend James White Stephenson was called as pastor to the newly formed Zion Presbyterian Church in 1808. He came to Tennessee with his family which included his nephews James W. and Moses D. (children of his brother John, Jr. who died in 1802). James W. and Moses D. are referred to as his adopted sons on a family register in records of Zion Presbyterian Church in Maury County.

The nephew, James W. Stephenson, referred to as Dr. James W. Stephenson, was married twice, both times to his first cousins. He married (1) Jennet Wilson Stephenson, daughter of Thomas and Jennet Stephenson. They had one daughter, Sarah Harriett who

married David Caldwell Brown. After Jennet's death, he married (2) Jemima Joanna Stephenson, daughter of Nathaniel and Elizabeth McCorkle Stephenson. Nathaniel and Elizabeth Stephenson were among the first group of settlers to come to Maury County.

Nathaniel Stephenson and family lived in the Zion Community 1806-1821. In 1821, they moved to Alabama State, somewhere on the Black Warrior River in Greene (now Hale) County, Alabama. They went to join Thomas Stephenson and family and Paul Fulton and family who had moved there the previous year 1820 to establish a new church. It was while they were there that Jennet Wilson Stephenson, first wife of Dr. James W. Stephenson, died and was buried.

Nathaniel Stephenson and Dr. James W. Stephenson moved back to Maury County sometime before 1826 when Nathaniel's daughter, Jemima married Dr. James W. Stephenson on April 22, 1826 in Williamson County. Nathaniel settled in the Port Royal area of Maury County. This is located just east of Spring Hill, Tennessee. Much of the family business was conducted in Williamson County as they lived closer to the county seat of Franklin than to the Maury County seat of Columbia. Nathaniel resided there until his death sometime in 1845. His wife Elizabeth resided with her daughter Jemima Joanna Stephenson where she is listed as living in the 1850 Census of Tennessee. She died sometime between 1850-1860 as she does not appear on the 1860 Census of Tennessee. I believe both Nathaniel and Elizabeth are buried in Kedron Cemetery near the site of the Old Jackson College in Maury County, but neither have a tombstone. This cemetery is located behind what is now called the Tennessee Experimental Farm, an Agricultural Extension of the University of Tennessee. We recently visited there and had to travel about three miles behind the farm on a gravel road, go around a fifty acre cornfield on a grassy tractor road, walk 1/2 mile and climb three fences to get there.

Dr. James W. Stephenson, husband of Jemima Joanna Stephenson, was probably a Medical Doctor. Every reference to him in all the county records concerning the settlement of his estate refer to him as Dr. Among the items listed in the inventory of his estate were one mortar and pestle, a lot of medicine bottles and instruments, and 28 books of various kinds. These may sound like the

tools of a Pharmacist, but every genealogist that I have consulted said that during the 1800's an M.D. mixed his own prescriptions. Dr. S. R. Bruesch, a leading expert on early graduates of U. S. Medical Schools, also reached the same conclusion. Dr. Bruesch also stated that very few physicians in those days could make a living just from the practice of medicine. Most also farmed, operated mills or general stores, practiced law or were involved in several activities.

Also listed in the inventory of Dr. James W. Stephenson was 1,500 - 2,000 pounds of seed cotton and 9 negro slaves. While the Stephensons were not rich, this proves that they were fairly well-to-do and educated people, at least by the standards of those days. They definitely believed in education because on every Census Record listing the Stephensons, none were listed as not being able to read and write. This is also evidenced by the original records found in which each one could sign his or her name instead of "making their mark" as people who could not read or write had to do. There are two hand written wills found, one for Jemima Joanna Stephenson and one for her daughter Louisa Ann Stephenson, which show their knowledge of grammar and good penmanship.

Dr. James W. and Jemima Joanna Stephenson had four children:

1. Amanda M. Stephenson, b. 1827, m. Dec. 16, 1854 in Williamson County to William N. Johnson. They had one child:
  - (a) William Nathaniel Johnson, b. about 1859. Amanda must have been dead by 1873 when her mother, Jemima J. died as she is not mentioned in her mother's will but her son, William N. Johnson is a beneficiary of the will. Amanda's brother, James White Stephenson, was named as the guardian of William N. Johnson.
2. Emily Jane Stephenson (Jan. 27, 1829 - 1912) m. John Calvin Odil (1825 - 1904).
  - (a) Mary Leon Odil (May 26, 1859 - 1915) m. John Franklin Parks (Nov. 20, 1859 - 1935).
  - (b) John Stephenson Odil (April 11, 1861 - ?) m. Charlie Campbell.
  - (c) Harriett Eliza Odil (1863 - 1938) m. J. Sam Parks.
  - (d) Anna Odil (1868 - 1947) m. George Fitzgerald (1874 - 1942).
  - (e) Eleanora Jane Odil (Mar. 25, 1870 - Nov. 1, 1941) never married.



3. James White Stephenson (May 25, 1833 - Dec. 21, 1900) m. Margaret Elizabeth Williams (Nov. 27, 1844 - Nov. 26, 1909).
  - (a) Emma Joanna Stephenson (Aug. 20, 1869 - May 30, 1956) m. William Harlow Huffman (Dec. 26, 1872 - June 3, 1959).
  - (b) Lena Susan Stephenson (Sept. 30, 1873 - Dec. 10, 1910) m. William Harlow Huffman (Dec. 26, 1872 - June 3, 1959).
  - (c) Ella Downing Stephenson (May 12, 1878 - Sept. 2, 1965) m. Wiley Wenton Huffman (July 8, 1875 - Dec. 8, 1945).
4. Louisa Ann Stephenson (1838 - 1913) never married.

Prior to her death in 1873, Jemima Stephenson listed on the 1870 Census, real estate valued at \$9,000 and personal property valued at \$1,200. Her will dated August 10, 1873 states: "I give and bequeath to my son James W. Stephenson, my daughters, Emily J. Odil and Louisa A. M. Stephenson, and my grandson William N. Johnson, all my property both personal and real, the land to be divided according to quantity and quality so that the shares are made equal in value."

Williamson County Court Records, November Term 1873 state:

"Said land consists of one tract lying partly in Williamson and partly in Maury Counties, contains 204 acres, more or less and is bounded on the north by lands of James Kennon and Benjamin Grigsby, on the east by lands of Holland heirs and others, on the south by lands of James Wells, and on the west by lands of Robert W. McLemore."

Jemima is listed in "They Passed This Way" by Marise P. Lightfoot & Evelyn B. Shackelford, Volume II, p. 194 shows:

1. Mrs. Stephenson - widow of Dr. Stephenson, died a few days ago at Spring Hill. Dated August 15, 1873.
2. Mrs. Jemima Stephenson, died August 10, 1873 of flux, at Spring Hill, wife of late Dr. James W. Stephenson.

Jemima is buried in Kedron Cemetery, located in back of Tennessee Experimental Farm. Dr. Stephenson has no marker, but there is an unmarked grave on Jemima's right where I believe him to be buried. Their unmarried daughter Ann is buried on Jemima's left. Their other daughter, Emily J. Odil and her husband, John Calvin Odil, are buried there also.

James White Stephenson was the third child and only son of Dr.

James W. and Jemima J. Stephenson. He was born May 25, 1833 in Maury County. Like any loyal southerner during the Civil War, he enlisted in the Army of the Confederate States of America. He enlisted at Thompson Station (Williamson County) on September 22, 1862 for a period of three years. He was assigned the rank of private in Company G of Holman's 11th Tennessee Cavalry and received \$24.40 every two months for the use of his horse.

Holman's 11th Cavalry was formed about Feb. 25, 1863 by the consolidation of Holman's Battalion of Tennessee Partisan Rangers with a part of Douglas' Battalion of Tennessee Partisan Rangers and the addition of other companies of Tennessee Cavalry which had served in General Nathan Bedford Forrest's 3rd Regiment of Tennessee Cavalry. They were transferred back to their original command about July 1863. It was then consolidated with the 10th Regiment of Tennessee Cavalry in February 1865.

James W. Stephenson - Private, resident of Williamson County, Tennessee, appears on a roll of Prisoners of War of Company G, 10th and 11th Tennessee Regiments of Cavalry, Confederate States of America (CSA), commanded by 1st Lt. D. S. Chaney. On May 4, 1865, Lt. General R. Taylor, CSA, surrendered them at Citronelle, Alabama to Major General E. R. S. Canby, USA. They were paroled on May 10, 1865 at Gainesville, Alabama.

After being paroled and discharged from his military service, James White Stephenson returned to farming in Maury County, Tenn. On Oct. 13, 1868 in Maury County, he married Margaret Elizabeth Williams. She was born Nov. 27, 1844 and was the daughter of Johnston D. and Susan Wells Williams.

James White and Margaret Williams Stephenson had been married for 32 years when James died on Dec. 21, 1900. In 1906, Margaret applied for a Confederate Widows Pension which was granted #1117. She drew her pension until her death on Nov. 26, 1909 in Maury County. James White and Margaret Williams Stephenson are buried beside her parents in Spring Hill Cemetery. This cemetery is located just off Highway 31 South in Spring Hill, Tennessee and is not very far from where their farm was located and where they had spent all of their married life.

James White and Margaret Williams Stephenson had three daughters:

I. Emma Joanna Stephenson

Emma was born August 20, 1869 in Maury County, Tennessee. She married William Harlow Huffman on March 25, 1911 in Williamson County, Tennessee. She and Harlow had no children but Emma raised the children born to Harlow and her sister Lena. Emma and Harlow were affectionately known as "Ma" and "Pa" to those same children and grandchildren. She died May 30, 1956 and Harlow died June 3, 1959. Both are buried in Mt. Hope Cemetery in Franklin, Tennessee.

II. Lena Susan Stephenson

Lena was born September 30, 1873 in Maury County, Tennessee. She married William Harlow Huffman on August 12, 1900 in Williamson County, Tennessee. William Harlow Huffman was born December 26, 1872 in Wythe County, Virginia. They had five children:

- |                            |                       |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. James Clyde Huffman     | 4. Eva Mae Huffman    |
| 2. Margaret Louise Huffman | 5. Thomas Guy Huffman |
| 3. William Howard Huffman  |                       |

Lena died December 10, 1910 at Thompson Station, Tennessee and is buried in Spring Hill Cemetery near her parents.

III. Ella Downing Stephenson

Ella was born May 12, 1878 in Maury County, Tennessee. She married Wiley Wenton Huffman on September 29, 1901 in Williamson County, Tennessee. Wiley Wenton Huffman was born July 8, 1875 in Wythe County, Virginia. They had six children:

- |                            |                           |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Margaret Gladys Huffman | 4. Charles Fowler Huffman |
| 2. James Wilmer Huffman    | 5. Earl Horace Huffman    |
| 3. Mary Leona Huffman      | 6. Marvin Lee Huffman     |

Ella died September 2, 1965 and Wiley died December 8, 1945. Both are buried in Mt. Hope Cemetery in Franklin, Tennessee.

These three women, the only children of James White and Margaret Elizabeth Williams Stephenson, all married brothers. Two of them were married to the same brother. James and Margaret Stephenson probably never dreamed that their family would grow to be the size it is today. As of this writing, their descendants total 235 and include:

- 3 children
- 11 grandchildren
- 46 great-grandchildren
- 101 great-great-grandchildren
- 72 great-great-great-grandchildren
- 2 great-great-great-great-grandchildren

**JAMES WHITE STEPHENSON FAMILY**



**Seated: JAMES WHITE STEPHENSON, MARGARET ELIZABETH WILLIAMS STEPHENSON  
Standing: ELLA DOWNING, EMMA JOANNA, LENA SUSAN STEPHENSON**

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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## JOHN BELL ALSO RAN

By: Katharine Shelburne Trickey

John Bell, lawyer, statesman, Secretary of War, candidate for United States president and best of all a native of Tennessee, has been ignored by most historians and long forgotten by his fellow Tennesseans. Bell was the first native Tennessean to ever strive for the highest office in the land -- the presidency of the United States. Andrew Jackson, James Polk and later Andrew Johnson were all born in other states and were adopted sons of Tennessee.

Some people have even hinted the fine hand of the infamous Bell witch could have had something to do with John's presidential defeat. No one can say for sure whether or not the Williamson County John Bell was related to the Robertson County John Bell, who was the target for many of the pranks of the Bell witch. Even witches can make mistakes at times so this one could have put the hex on the wrong John.

Most historians agree that after the death of Andrew Jackson and up until the War Between the States, the most influential and intellectual man in public life was John Bell. To put the icing on the cake, he was also a compelling orator and referred to as a politician's politician.

John was born on a farm in the Mill Creek area on Nolensville Road on February 15, 1796, the son of Samuel and Margaret Bell. His father was a blacksmith and young John helped his father in the shop until he was fourteen. He then had the chance to enter Cumberland College, which later became the old University of Nashville. During his school days, John was described as a plodder and was accused of having trouble making quick decisions. The problem of indecision was not a problem in later life. From the beginning it stemmed from his uncanny ability to see clearly both sides of a question and to find merit in each side. The ability to see both sides of a question was a big help to him when he became a lawyer. In that way he could often anticipate his opponents arguments.

Bell first went into law practice with J. J. White in Franklin, Tennessee, at the rather tender age of twenty. A year later in 1817, he soared to represent Williamson County in the State

Senate and was elected. People claimed he won the election by the forceful speech he had given on the fourth of July of that year. That speech began his political career and his reputation as an outstanding orator.

After serving only one session in the legislature, Bell did not try for a second term but returned to his law practice in Franklin. He probably saw it was a mistake to become heavily involved in politics until he had been seasoned a bit by age. Or, since he had fallen deeply in love with Sally Dickinson of Rutherford County, maybe he wanted to carry on a heavy courtship. At any rate he and Sally, the granddaughter of Colonel Hardy Murfree, were married on a cold 10th of December in 1818.

The young Bells left Franklin in the early 1820's and moved to Murfreesboro, about the same time the state capitol moved from Nashville to Murfreesboro. In 1822, the capitol moved back to Nashville and with it the John Bell family. While in Nashville, they lived at what is now the corner of Church and 6th Avenue. It was then Bell entered law practice with Henry Crabb. Their office was on the public square which was the hub of activity in early Nashville. Anyone who was anyone was sure to pass through the square at least once a day.

In 1826, at the age of thirty, Bell decided he was ready to venture into politics once again. He decided to belong to the Democratic-Republican Party and a year later threw his hat in the ring for the United States Congress against Felix Grundy, who was not only a close friend of Jackson's but considered at the height of his brilliant career.

After defeating Grundy, Bell served a total of fourteen years in the house. The first year Bell was a member of the Tennessee delegation, he served with James K. Polk and Davy Crockett, the man who continually moved his residence west until he met his death at the Alamo.

During his Congress years, Bell opposed Jackson over the removal of bank deposits from the United States bank. This was one of the reasons John later left the Democratic-Republican party and joined the Whig party.

While in Congress, Bell was the chairman of the Indian Affairs Committee and was present when the Cherokees were driven

from their ancestral land.

By the year 1834, both sadness and joy had entered the Bell family. John was elected to the powerful position of Speaker of the House but two years before that he had lost his beloved wife Sally. They were the parents of five children: Mary, John, Jr., David, Fanny and young Sally.

The next year, 1835, brought more mixed emotions to the family. John lost his Speaker's seat to another Tennessean, James Polk. Polk and Bell were arch enemies and had not spoken for a number of years. Jackson was the cause of a lot of their dislike.

On the bright side, that same year John gained another wife, Jane Erwin Yeatman, the daughter of Andrew Erwin of Bedford County and the wealthy widow of Thomas Yeatman, a merchant, banker and promoter of the iron industry. They were married on October 25, 1835 and later had two lovely daughters, Jane Erwin and Ann Lorrain.

The new Mrs. Bell had met her husband earlier that year on a warm sunny day in May -- May 23rd, to be exact. It all took place at the Vauxhall Gardens, a park on the southern boundary of Nashville. This park was THE place to go for political rallies because there was plenty of space and, if the speaker got dull, there was a cute hand-propelled railroad train for the entertainment of the most bored constituent.

On this particular day Yerger of Lebanon and Peyton of Gallatin presented John Bell, the speaker, as the "Bell of Democracy pealing the death knell of personal slander at home." After his flowery introduction, Bell, in one of the best speeches he was to ever deliver, proceeded to defend himself against the people who were trying to destroy his relationship with Andrew Jackson.

Actually, the rift between the two was already pretty well established. John was backing Hugh White of Knoxville for the United States presidency in the election of 1836 even though Jackson had already hand-picked Martin Van Buren, the "Little Magician," to follow him in the White House. In a way, Jackson probably felt beholden to Van Buren since widower Martin was the only member of his cabinet to back him during the Peggy Eaton foray.

"Little Van" as Van Buren was often called, was as different



in appearance from Jackson as any man could be. Not only was he a dapper dresser, but he rolled around Washington in an eye-stopping olive green coach with silver mounted harness and liveried footmen.

When Bell made his plea for unity in Vauxhall Gardens, his Sally had been dead for several years. It just happened that Jane Yeatman, a Nashville widow, was in the audience.

According to Jane, a second husband was the furthestest thought from her mind, but she did remark aloud to her companion words to the effect she would hardly refuse a marriage proposal from a man such as John Bell. Bell was a big man and considered quite handsome despite his large ears and the bruised pouches under his eyes, which gave him a rakish look.

Naturally, Widow Jane's remarks reached the high ears of John Bell, as, woman-like, she had intended them to. In October of that same year, Jane became Mrs. John Bell and began helping her new husband finance his political career.

The next year, 1856, Van Buren was elected president, much to the glee of Andrew Jackson. There was a bit of a cloud to Jackson's happiness, however. Van Buren didn't carry either Tennessee or Georgia -- Hugh White did. Jackson blamed Bell for the loss of both states and never did forgive him which finalized the breach between the two men.

In 1841, President William Henry Harrison appointed Bell Secretary of War. At Harrison's death, one month later, John found himself out of a job when incoming president, John Tyler of Virginia, appointed a new secretary. The fact Bell left when Tyler came to office probably helped his political career. At least he didn't have to be associated with a president noted for his "do nothing" administration and the royal parties given by his second wife.

President Harrison had been Bell's kind of man. He, as Bell, had changed from a Democrat to a Whig. William H. had run against Van Buren in 1836 and lost. But this time the country was ready for a change and so the slogan, "Tippecanoe and Tyler Too," was eyed favorably by the people.

Standing bareheaded without a topcoat in a raw wind, Harrison was inaugurated on March 4, 1841. On April 4th, one month later,

he died of pneumonia, the first president to die in office.

"Honest John", one of the nicer nicknames given to Tyler, had his whole cabinet resign with the exception of Daniel Webster. Tyler left Washington after his term was through and went back to Virginia. He died in 1862 as a member of the Confederate Congress, in revolt against the United States.

John with Jane's help and her blessing, re-entered politics in 1847 and was elected to serve in the United States Senate until 1859. That meant John had a front seat in Washington and could keep close observation on the crazy quilt of American politics just before the War Between the States. In the Senate, Bell was recognized again as an orator of note. John Calhoun remarked that Bell's speech on the Mexican War was the best ever given on the subject.

In 1860, another presidential election was coming up and the country was in a turmoil. There were threats of secession in the south and threats of military occupation by the north to prevent the southern states from seceding. The major parties had picked their candidates for president. The Democrats were backing Stephen Douglas and the Republicans had chosen Abraham Lincoln as their candidate. Many people couldn't back either man so a group of concerned citizens got together and decided to do something about it.

They met in Baltimore, Maryland, in early May of the year 1860, and called themselves the Constitutional Union Party. Their choices were John Bell of Tennessee for president and Edward Everett of Massachusetts for vice-president.

This new party didn't like the platforms of the other parties so their planks were short and to the point --- support for the union, support of the Constitution and the enforcement of all laws.

Although John Bell owned slaves, as did most Southerners, he firmly believed in the Constitution and the unification of the country. Believing as he did, he gladly accepted the nomination of the Constitutional Union Party. Although most people believed the ticket was not a very strong one, Lincoln was worried and said he was afraid Bell was rather dangerous when it came to the border states.

Carrying the campaign to his home state was a pleasure for

Bell. Maybe it was a good thing he didn't know that on September 25, 1860, when he spoke before a large hometown audience, he would have achieved the high point of his career.

This day of days had all the political trappings. A parade began on the public square and trailed from town to Watkins Park where all the speeches were to take place. At the head of the parade were three marshalls, all riding "steel gray chargers."

Next came five military companies representing the pride of middle Tennessee. Three of the companies were the Union Guards of Columbia, the Bell Stars of Murfreesboro and the Bell Ringers of Franklin. The music was performed by none other than William Horn's Silver Band.

After the band came at least a dozen carriages carrying important party people, including John Bell and John Crittenden of Kentucky who had come down to pledge his support.

An important but very loud feature of Bell's parade was a two thousand pound bell mounted on a furniture van. This bell was rung often -- too often according to some of the folks there. The thrill "bongs" could be heard for miles around.

A banner firmly affixed to the van read, "Bell and Everett -- Patriots upon whom the nation can look with pride, and say, 'These are our jewels'."

Also included in the parade right behind the Silver Band were staunch members of the Bell and Everett clubs, ladies in carriages and, last in line, thousands of walkers and horsemen.

After speeches by Crittenden and Bell, in which they praised the union and pledged to save it, people sat back and relaxed, ready to eat. This is what all the children had been waiting for and some of the grown-ups too -- a picnic dinner. For as far as the eye could see, there were clouds of white table cloths accompanied by the clatter of cutlery and crockery. This day had encompassed Bell's finest hour.

Later, during the presidential race, Stephen Douglas, a northern Democrat, and Bell hit upon the idea to combine their strength in certain northern states to try to block the Republican Lincoln. The plan was a failure and when the final vote was tallied, Lincoln won with 1,866,452 votes. Douglas was second with 1,375,157; third was Breckinridge, a southern Democrat, with

849,781 votes; and Bell came in last with a count of 588,879.

Bell carried the states of Tennessee, Virginia and Kentucky. He was also the only presidential candidate to carry his own county. When the election of 1860 was over two things had come to an end -- there was no more Constitutional Union Party and there was no more political career for John Bell.

After the election, Bell did travel to Washington to see Lincoln. There were no tapes kept of their meeting but it is believed that John spoke strongly to the incoming president, urging him to use caution, to give up the United States southern forts and, above all, to prevent the meeting of United States and Southern armies.

When Fort Sumter fell and Lincoln put in a call for troops from the states both in North and south, Bell knew he could no longer support the Union. With a sad heart and a sense of betrayal, John pledged his support to his state of Tennessee and the south. He was not alone in the conflicting emotions surrounding his decision -- great men of the south such as Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson and Jefferson Davis pledged their allegiance with their states and the south.

After the War Between the States was over Bell and his family moved to Stewart County to be close to his iron mines and furnaces. It was here he died on September 11, 1869 at the age of seventy-three. By his request, the body was carried to Nashville to lie in state in the Tennessee State Capitol.

In the long line passing by the casket was Andrew Johnson, one of Bell's strongest political enemies. When Johnson reached the body, he stood for some time and then walked on. Perhaps Andrew, who had left the office of president in March of that same year, was remembering how he and Bell had both stood firm for the Union and how, with the onset of war, Bell went with his state while Johnson stayed with the Union.

Today, John Bell is almost the forgotten man. Books listing the presidential candidates for each election omit any mention of his name. Instead he is placed in a catch-all column entitled "also ran."

Edward Everett, Bell's running mate is best remembered as the speaker of the day when Lincoln gave his short Gettysburg Address,

well remembered by school children today. Everett's bid for the vice presidency has been lost in the darkness of the past.

Throughout his political career John Bell was referred to as the "Great Apostate" by his friends and as a prominent member of the "Triumvirate of Traitors" by his enemies. Bell was always a controversial man -- people either loved him or hated him. So which is it -- was he a saint or was he a traitor?

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BALTZ, LOUIS J., III, was born in Nashville and raised in Brentwood, Williamson County. He is a graduate of Father Ryan High School and a graduate of Memphis State University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Public Administration. He is a member of the Confederate Historical Society of Nashville as well as the Sons of Confederate Veterans where he serves as Associate Editor of the Confederate Veteran magazine. Mr. Baltz is presently the Director of Public Works for the City of Brentwood.

BUCHANAN, JANE GRAY (Mrs. Joel R. Buchanan, Sr.) was born in Waverly, Tennessee, and is a graduate of Ward-Belmont School and Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. After receiving her degree in chemistry from Vanderbilt, she has been employed at Union Carbide in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and at the Technical Information Center in Oak Ridge from which she retired in 1983. Hobbies other than genealogy include gardening, music, travel, and working with the American Field Service foreign student exchange program, for which she has served for several years as State Travel Co-ordinator. She is a member of various historical societies, including the Williamson County, East Tennessee, and Tennessee Historical Societies.

DARBY, ELVA MAYO (Mrs. William J. Darby) and her husband, Dr. William J. Darby, are transplanted Arkansans via Ann Arbor, Michigan, New York City, and Chapel Hill - Durham, North Carolina. Elva was born in Clarendon, Arkansas, graduated from Little Rock High School, Arkansas State Teachers College (now University of Central Arkansas), Conway, where she was Editor of the college newspaper, The Echo. She has taught in Arkansas public schools and in Special Education, University of Michigan Hospital, Ann Arbor. She has long been an active member, and often an officer, of various Vanderbilt University organizations: Vanderbilt Medical Center Auxiliary, Vanderbilt Aid, Garden Club, and Woman's Club. Other community groups in which she is a member include The Ladies' Hermitage Association, Tennessee State Museum Association, Friends of the Williamson County Public Library, Carnton Association, and The Heritage Foundation. Active as a member of the Williamson County Historical Society, she is a former Vice-President and past President, as well as an earlier contributor to the Journal. Also, Elva is currently Secretary of Pioneers' Corner Association and of Thompson Station Home Demonstration Club. The Darbys have made their home at Homestead Manor since 1969.

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GAULTNEY, ELIZABETHINE MULLETTE (Mrs. John Orton Gaultney) was born in Helena, Arkansas and graduated from Central High School in Memphis. She has been a student of music and studied art in New York. She has lived in Little Rock, Arkansas, Atlanta, Georgia, and Bronxville, New York where she has been active in church life. She is a member of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Colonial Dames of America Chapter VII, Daughters of the Colonial Wars, the Society of New England Women, the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, and the Ladies' Hermitage Association, and has served as an officer in several of these and other organizations. Her interests have been in her church, music, art, genealogy, and garden clubs.

GIBBS, FRANCES ANDERSON (Mrs. William Moss Gibbs), a native of Perry County, Tennessee, received her B. S. from George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, Tennessee. She was a librarian in the Franklin, Tennessee city schools and the Williamson County Public Library from which she retired in 1978. She is a member of Colonial Dames of the Seventeenth Century, Daughters of the American Revolution, United Daughters of the Confederacy, and is a charter member of the Williamson County Historical Society.

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ROBERSON, SUSAN McDONALD (Mrs. Robert E.) is a native and resident of Davidson County where she graduated from Glencliff High School. After graduation, she attended MTSU in Murfreesboro, Tennessee and studied English and Music. Currently a homemaker, she has four children, ages 9, 7, 5, and 4. Susan became interested in genealogy about five years ago when she tried to fill in her Family Bible and discovered that she didn't know the names of either her or her husband's great grandparents. Her quest for these names led to the recent publication of her first book, The Stephenson Family: Past and Present. Susan's husband, Robert Edward Roberson, is a descendant of the Stephenson, Huffman, Wells, Williams, and Roberson Families of Williamson County.



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WEBB, GARY ALAN is a native of Nashville, Tennessee. He served four years in the United States Marine Corps and is a Vietnam veteran. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Tennessee and a Doctor of Jurisprudence degree from the Nashville YMCA Law School. He has practiced law in Nashville, and has served as director of the Historic Belmont Association and of the Nashville Chapter of the University of Tennessee Alumni Association. He holds membership in the American and Nashville Bar Associations, the Tennessee Historical Society and several county historical societies, and the Society of Genealogists in London, England. He enjoys history and genealogy and has lectured on international genealogical research, and has taught at Watkins Institute. He is currently residing in London, England..

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