

# Rutherford County Historical Society

PUBLICATION NO.11



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## Summer 1978

MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE 37130



TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>The State Capitol 1819-1826</u> by Alice N. Ray	1
<u>From Jefferson to Elkhorn Tavern</u> <u>The Story of Ben McCulloch</u> by Homer Pittard	7
<u>Petition of Michael Lorange, Revolutionary</u> <u>Soldier</u> furnished by Mrs. Peggy Herriage	31
<u>A Country Store (1912-1914)</u> by Jack R. Mankin	36
✓ <u>Soule College</u> by Eugene Sloan	58
Index	104



### The Cover

This sketch is a version of the First Presbyterian Church that stood in Murfreesboro on East Church Street (now East Vine) between 1820 and 1863. Alice Ray, a member of the Rutherford County Historical Society and a considerable authority on structural antiquities, developed a pencil sketch principally from descriptive materials found by Dr. Ernest Hooper in his research on the church. Artist Jim Matheny, another Society member, converted this rendering to the sharp ink sketch which appears on the cover.

The building was razed some time in 1863 during the Federal occupation of the town and was never rebuilt on this site by the Presbyterians. The most intriguing aspect of the structure was its service as the State Capitol in 1822, after the courthouse burned during that year.

Recently, the Preservation classes at Middle Tennessee State University, acting under the supervision of Dr. James Huhta, made considerable archaeological explorations in the area of the Old City Cemetery where the building supposedly stood. The "digs" resulted in the exposing of a rather distinct line of foundation stones and other data which have added considerably to the knowledge of the architectural design of the structure.

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Our thanks to Judge Ben Hall McFarlin for his continuing interest in and assistance to the Rutherford County Historical Society. Through his efforts, Mrs. Donna Newlon was assigned as secretary to the Society's office and in this capacity performed innumerable duties for the Society, including typing for this and other publications.



## PUBLICATION NO. 11

RUTHERFORD COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## OFFICERS

Directors.....Miss Mary Hall  
Mr. Robert Ragland  
Mr. William Walkup

All correspondence concerning additional copies, contributions to future issues, and membership should be addressed to:

Rutherford County Historical Society  
Box 906  
Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37130





RUTHERFORD COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PUBLICATION NO. 11

FOREWORD

This volume represents the second publication for 1978 and, following past practice, each member or family membership, receives a copy as a kind of "refund" for the Society membership dues. Thus, membership in the Rutherford County Historical Society must be regarded as one of the most compelling bargains found in any organization in the community.

The Society has lived a life of happy solvency since its founding a few years ago. This has been made possible through several low-key projects which have generated revenue over and above that needed for certain community programs and necessary expenses. Too, the wise and efficient care of the Society funds is another important factor. For this, the Society owes a great debt of gratitude to Dottie Matheny Patty. Under her close scrutiny, there is never a question at any time as to the status of the organization's finances.

Publication No. 11 is another effort to record some of the community's heritage, hopefully, for posterity. In doing so, the Society affirms one of the reasons for its founding.



## FOR SALE

THE FOLLOWING PUBLICATIONS ARE FOR SALE BY THE RUTHERFORD COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, Box 906, Murfreesboro, Tennessee, 37130:

Publication # 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 8: Out of print.

Publication # 6: Link Community; History of LaVergne; Fellowship Community; and the Sanders Family. \$3.00 + \$.50 postage

Publication # 7: Hopewell Church, 1816-1883; Stones River Presbyterian Church; Cripple Creek Presbyterian Church; Early Militia Order, Petition by Cornelius Sanders for Rev. War Pension. \$3.00 + \$.50 postage

Publication # 9: History of Dilton \$3.50 + \$.50 postage

Publication # 10: 1864 Diary; Peter Jennings; Henderson Yoakum; Early Methodist Church; and Overall Family \$3.50 + \$.50 postage

1840 Rutherford Census: With index. \$5.00 + \$.50 postage

Deed Abstracts of Rutherford County, 1803-1810. Names of land owners and other genealogical information from early deeds. \$10.00 + \$.50 postage

Griffith: A beautifully illustrated bi-centennial publication. \$2.00 + \$.50 postage

The Story of Murfreesboro. A reprint of C. C. Henderson. History of the town and county, hardbound with an index. \$5.00 + \$.50 postage

Rutherford County Medallion: Approximately the size of a silver dollar with Rutherford County courthouse pictured on one side and the center of Tennessee marker on the back. \$2.00 + \$.50 postage

### Commemorative Plates:

Plate # 2: Pictures old Tennessee College in Murfreesboro \$5.00 + \$1.00 postage

Plate # 3: Pictures the Rutherford County Courthouse about 1900, before it was remodeled. \$6.00 + \$1.00 postage

AVAILABLE FROM WILLIAM WALKUP, 202 Ridley St., Smyrna, Tennessee, 37167:

Map of Rutherford County showing roads, streams, and land owners, dated 1878. \$3.50 + \$.50 postage

Cemetery Records published jointly with the Sons of the American Revolution:

Vol. 1: Northwest portion of county including Percy Priest Lake area and parts of Wilson and Davidson Counties, 256 cemeteries with index and maps. \$10.00 + \$.50 postage

Vol. 2: Eastern portion of Rutherford Co. and the western part of Cannon Co., 241 cemeteries with index and maps. \$10.00 + \$.50 postage

Vol. 3: Southwestern portion of Rutherford County, 193 cemeteries, index and maps. \$10.00 + \$.50 postage



# Q U E R I E S

Prepared by Mrs. D. C. Daniel, Jr.

IMPORTANT: Publication of queries in this column is free to all members as space permits. Each query must appear on a full sheet of paper which must be dated and include member's name and address. Please type if possible. Queries should give as much pertinent data as possible, i.e. approximate/actual dates of birth, marriage, death, etc. Queries must refer to RUTHERFORD COUNTY, TENNESSEE FAMILIES and immediate connections. Address all correspondence relating to queries to the Society, P. O. Box 906, Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37130.

- No. 1 WEBB, OWEN, DANIEL, SEAY, HAILEY: Seeking descendants of Aaron WEBB (b. 1775, Pa.) and wife, Mary "Polly" OWEN, wed Rutherford Co. Jan. 1, 1823. Children: Amasa, Isaac Shelby (wed Mary Ann SEAY 1853), Evander (wed Mary E. DANIEL 1851), Nancy (wed William B. HAILEY 1853), Robert, David, and Lucy J. Please reply. Mrs. George F. Davis, 5752 Oak Cliff Drive, El Paso, TX 79912.
- No. 2 FELKER, BAILEY: Susan Felker, 1830 census of Rutherford County, with two sons ages 10-15, herself age 30-40, not in 1840 census of TN, in 1850 census of Oregon Co., MO in home of son John Anderson FELKER who married Louisa BAILEY in Rutherford Co in 1841 (was she daughter of Holmes BAILEY?). Descendants of John Anderson FELKER believe he married Louisa Meissner. Rebecca BAILEY Justice (married Justice 1840's) appears in 1850 census of Oregon Co., MO in household of Nancy C. FELKER near household of John Anderson FELKER (b. Sept. 4, 1819, TN, d. Sept. 11, 1894, TX). Nancy (b. ca. 1817) supposedly divorced from ? Melvin. Need any information re FELKERS and BAILEYS. Need name of Susan FELKER's husband, apparently deceased by 1830, or concerning relatives of Susan FELKER. Puzzled as to why her daughter (Nancy must have been John Anderson's sister, since he held her property in MO in his name until her second marriage in 1855) did not appear with her in 1830 census. Need maiden names of Susan FELKER or Nancy (if she was not a FELKER before marriage) or Christian name of Nancy's first husband, Melvin being surname if our family legends are true. Miss Mildred J. Felker, 607 E. Pitkin, Pueblo, Co 81004
- No. 3 TODD: TODD families descended from 5 original TODDs in Rutherford Co. by 1809 - compilation in progress to be published soon. Anyone not previously contacted, please correspond. Particularly interested in parents and relationship to other TODDs of William TODD b. April 10, 1781 N. C.? GA? married Madison Co., KY 1804, Jane Douglas, and his brother Reubin TODD b. ca. 1792 GA married #1 Polly P. (Alexander?) and #2 Jemima TODD, daughter of Aaron and Sally TODD. Both brothers reared large families in Rutherford County in the old Big Springs area. Some say they were sons of Mary Jane TODD, sister to oldest Benjamin TODD to come to Rutherford. ANY data greatly appreciated. Jean Douglas Van Meter, 2552 W. Stuart, Fresno, CAL 93711.



No. 4 DOUGLASS: Desire any information about descendants/parents of Rhodham DOUGLASS b. ca. 1775 VA, and in Rutherford Co. by 1810. At least 2 of his sons, Bryant and Joseph were also listed in Rutherford and Coffee Co census records. Desire to know other children and family background. Was Thomas DOUGLASS Rhodham's brother? 1850 Bedford Co. census shows Rhodham. Jean Douglas Van Meter, 2552 W. Stuart, Fresno. CAL 93711.

A member of our society is a genealogist: Mrs. Lalia Lester  
1307 W. Northfield Blvd.  
Murfreesboro, Tenn. 37130  
Tel.: (615) 896-9089





THE STATE CAPITOL  
1819-1826

By Alice N. Ray

The history of a town can be preserved in different ways, and Murfreesboro can certainly share in the architectural, religious, and cultural forms with its historic courthouse, many beautiful homes, and lovely churches. There is a variety of architecture that contributes greatly to the richness of the town.

A unique place in this community is the Old City Cemetery, which houses the foundation of one of the most historic buildings in this area. Not only was it the First Presbyterian Church, but the State Capitol as well. This was the kind of building often referred to in the early eighteen hundreds as a "Meeting House". During this time, there was usually a structure in each town that served for regular Sunday services and for town meetings as well. In times of trouble or emergency, people would meet there to help each other. Much can be learned about a town when we study these churches. Here people would come for every purpose, thus, they were called "Meeting Houses". "Going to meeting" became a common phrase for attending church.

The old foundation of East Vine Street is that of the First Presbyterian Church, founded in 1812 as the Murfree Springs Church with eighteen members. In 1818 the name of the congregation was changed to First Presbyterian, and a new building was erected. This new building stood until it was demolished by the Union army in 1864.

The building was constructed of hand-made brick with the exterior similar to the larger meeting houses of the period. Builders of these early structures took pride in their craft and workmanship. They used the best



materials available, and, as a result, many of these building have stood for hundreds of years.

In 1779 Asher Benjamin published a book, The Country Builders Assistant.<sup>1</sup> In this book there appeared a "Design for a Church". Up until this time, no one really knew or had any guide lines as to what a church really should look like. This design was used throughout New England, where the author was born and the book was published. Many of these buildings still stand today and can readily be recognized by the three front doors, two rows of windows on each side, octagonal bell towers, balconies, raised pulpits, and many other features described in this book. They became known as the "Benjamin Design".

The building here on East Vine Street certainly had many of the Benjamin features. In New England the buildings differed in the exterior materials, since weather board was used most often instead of brick or stone as was the custom in the south.

Since the foundation is all that remains for us to see of this historic structure, we are able to learn about the appearance from the specifications that Dr. Ernest Hooper was successful in obtaining from the National Archives in Washington, D.C. The foundation was two feet wide of hammered stone four feet high with two feet above the ground. The stone was laid with lime and sand mortar. The lime was slaked in a pit on the site. Stone was usually quarried in the general vicinity of the building site. To transport stone from the quarry to the site required a lot of labor and ingenuity. Larger stones were secured underneath wagons by log chains to avoid much heavy lifting, while smaller stones were hauled in wagon beds. Stone was hammer dressed and cut by skilled stone masons. During this period of time stone

<sup>1</sup> Sinnott, Edmund W., Meeting House and Church in New England, p. 80-89.



masons made and sharpened most of the tools that were used to face stone. A greater amount of skill was required to cut and face sills, steps, and lintels, because they had to be cut to exact dimensions.

The walls were seventeen inches thick of hand-made brick and laid with sand and lime mortar. The exterior walls were of a high grade, hard brick usually made near the site. Brick masons not only laid the brick, but they made them and built the kiln as well.<sup>2</sup> To make brick a pit was dug and clay was taken directly from clay banks and thrown into the pit with the proper amount of water. A large wheel operated on a shaft and was drawn by a horse or several laborers through this pit to thoroughly mix the clay and water. The clay mixture was then pressed into brick molds and turned out on boards to air dry. When the desired number of bricks were made, the kiln was built and fired at a very high temperature until the bricks were burned hard. This firing usually required several days and nights. The bricks nearest the fire were the hardest and were used on the exterior, while the softer ones were used for interior walls.

Windows along each side of the building were in two rows with five in each row, making ten windows on each side. These windows were eight feet high and three feet six inches wide with sills and lintels of hammer-dressed limestone. Blinds or shutters were used on all windows, as was the custom at this time.

The roof was put on of heavy material, with the rafters and beams being made of eight by ten inch timbers. Sheathing was one inch thick and was covered with cedar shingles.<sup>3</sup> Making shingles was a craft that required special tools that most often were made by the craftsman, himself. Some

<sup>2</sup> Andels, Masons and Builders Guide, Vol 1, p. 11-13.

<sup>3</sup> The Foxfire Book, Vol. 1, p. 38-52.



tools used were steel wedges, go-devils, froes, mallets, gluts, mauls, poleaxes, and broadaxes. Large trees were used for making the bolts that were cut into boards the correct length and then finished into shingles. Dressing boards to make the finished shingle required a shaving horse and a draw knife. A craftsman could rive over one thousand boards a day, and the average building required about five thousand shingles.

One of the most interesting parts of this structure was the entrances with the large stone platforms reaching six feet long and being two feet wide and eight inches thick. Steps were over four feet long at each of the three front doors. The folding doors had a circular sash, and each opening had an entablature supported by pilasters at each side. This made a very attractive entrance, similar to the Benjamin design.

Towers were traditional, and cupolas and bell towers with steeples were almost always used. The tower had a cornice, as well as the remainder of the building. The bell tower was octagon shaped.

Plaster was used on the inside walls with two or three coats usually being the custom. The final coat is very smooth and white, and it was often used this way and then painted later.

The vestibule reached across the entrance end with a partition that had two folding doors that separated it from the main part of the building. Two large columns supporting the back side of the tower were near the folding doors. Also in the vestibule were the two winding stair ways that were used to reach the galleries along each side and across the front of the building. The galleries were supported by turned columns ten feet high, and the fronts were three feet high with panel work, pilasters, and molded caps. The side galleries were laid out in steps wide enough to have pews set on each step. The front gallery was arranged for the choir and for an organ.





Pews were fitted to the space in the three sections formed by the two aisles. They had panels in the back with rounded top rails. The ends of the pews were also paneled with scroll caps, and each pew had a panel door.

Pulpits being focal points were, naturally, made very attractive, and the one here was no exception. It had a panel front and pedestal and was elevated about four feet. The pulpit could be reached by two small circular stairs on each side. The altar, stair rails, and newel post were all made of walnut.

With a building so stately and near the center of town, it seems logical that it would be selected to become the State Capitol, when the need arose. Both houses of the General Assembly could make use of this particular building, since the Senate could use the gallery for their meetings, and the Lower House could meet on the first floor.

A number of interesting acts that concerned Murfreesboro and Rutherford County were acted upon during the time Murfreesboro was the capital of Tennessee.

A special session of the Legislature was begun on July 22 and ended on August 24, 1822. An Act was passed to divide the state into districts for the election of Representatives in Congress. At this time Rutherford County was placed in the seventh district along with Davidson and Williamson Counties.

On August 17, 1822 authority was given Rutherford County to levy a property tax to obtain the amount of \$6,000 to build a courthouse. The levy was to continue for three years and was levied as follows: 37½¢ on each 100 acres of land; 75¢ on each town lot; 25¢ on each white pail; 50¢ on each black pail; twice the season price on each stallion; \$10 on each pleasure carriage; \$5 on each two-wheel vehicle; and \$10 on each ordinary where liquor was sold.



On August 23, 1822 an Act was passed to create a lottery; also on this same date, Acts concerning marriage, divorce, and some on the rights of women were acted upon. Another Act on August 23, 1822 provided for payment of expenses for certain trials. The amount of \$200 was paid to James K. Polk, clerk of the court, for his services. Not only did this clerk marry a Murfreesboro girl, Miss Sarah Childress, but he became governor of Tennessee, a Representative in Congress, and our nation's eleventh president.

In a special session of the General Assembly held from September 15 through November 29, 1823, one of the first bills to be acted upon was an Act to Preserve the Purity of Elections. In this Act a person could be fined for threatening a voter with spirituous liquors, wagering or betting anything of value, and the fine could be \$100. The first voting precinct was authorized in October, 1823. Many other Acts concerning Rutherford County were acted upon during the years the General Assembly met here. It was moved to Nashville in early 1826. While here the Acts were recorded on a Franklin Hand Press borrowed from a Nashville printing office.

This brief account of the activities carried on at the unique little "Meeting House" on East Vine Street, while it was the Capitol of Tennessee, has been taken in part from C. C. Henderson's The Story of Murfreesboro, published in 1929 by the News Banner Publishing Company in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. The book had long been out of print, but through the efforts of the Rutherford County Historical Society and the generosity of Mr. Jesse Beesley, a limited number of these books have been reprinted and are available through the Society, P. O. Box 906, Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37130.



# FROM JEFFERSON TO ELKHORN TAVERN:

The Story of Ben McCulloch  
By Homer Pittard

Ben McCulloch, a Rutherford Countian, has almost a muted enshrinement in the pantheon of heroes. He gained fame during the Texas Revolution, the Mexican War, as a Texas Ranger, and finally as a Confederate general officer during the Civil War. Yet, Texas history has made only a token curtsy in his direction. One rather petulant McCulloch admirer measured his hero alongside Davy Crockett, a Texas immortal:

"Crockett, who was in Texas but a few weeks and fought but twelve days, is known as one of the state's great heroic characters; McCulloch served Texas a quarter of a century, rendering a thousand times more service than did Crockett. The former fought one battle, the latter fought in three wars, to say nothing of Indian engagements by the score. Both died a sacrifice to the cause which the state espoused. Yet Crockett is known as, one of Texas' greatest men, while McCulloch is all but unknown."

Also, reference should be made to the fact that the Confederacy appointed McCulloch to the rank of brigadier general on May 14, 1861, the identical day that the venerable Robert E. Lee was elevated to the same officer rank.<sup>2</sup> These two led the vanguard of appointments above the colonelcy level followed some thirty days later by storied gray heroes James Longstreet, Albert Sidney Johnston, Joseph E. Johnston, Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson, and Jeb Stuart. Ten months later a minie ball ended McCulloch's military career at Pea Ridge, or Elkhorn Tavern. Despite his considerable friction at times with fellow officers and superiors, his star was on the rise. It is conjecture, of course, as to what his status in Confederate history, as well as Texas lore, would have been had he survived the four-year struggle.

Ben McCulloch was born near Jefferson in Rutherford County on November 11,

<sup>1</sup>Webb, "Exploits of the Texas Rangers", p. 24.

<sup>2</sup>Warner, Generals in Gray. (Random references)



1811. His parents were Major Alexander McCulloch of North Carolina and Frances LeNoir of Virginia. Alexander was an aide-de-camp to General James Coffee in the Creek War and the War of 1812. The Major, inheriting with his brother, a large plantation, several slaves, money, and considerable unimproved land in Tennessee, came with his brother to middle Tennessee near the turn of the century and settled along Stone's River.<sup>3</sup> He was a graduate of Yale and was described by his son, Henry Eustace, as "one of the stern men of his day; with great decision of character."<sup>4</sup> Despite his impressive educational background and generous inheritance, his penchant for the life of a wastrel and his habit of lavishing his friends with gifts and money, left scarce support for the education of his burgeoning family: six sons and six daughters. In addition to Ben, there were Henry Eustace, who was to win a modicum of fame as a Texas Ranger and Confederate brigadier; Alexander, a Mexican War participant and a colonel of militia in Dyer County; John S., a Confederate captain in the quarter-master's department; Samuel, a merchant in Florence, Alabama; and James C., the youngest brother, a rheumatic invalid who died in 1862. The six sisters were Sarah Stokes, who married Albert Keeble of Rutherford County; Mary Annie, who married William L. Mitchell of Rutherford County and died in Gonzales, Texas; Francis Olivia, who married Charles Parish of Weakley County, Tennessee; Harriet Maria, who married Nat Benton, a nephew of Thomas H. Benton, captain of a company of Texas Rangers, and an officer in the Confederate army; Elizabeth Julia, who married Robert H. Tarrant, a Methodist preacher of Dyer County; and Adelaide Delia, who married Albert C. Pierce, also of Dyer County.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Rose, Ben McCulloch, p. 14.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, p. 15.

<sup>5</sup>Speer, Encyclopedia of the New West, p. 281.

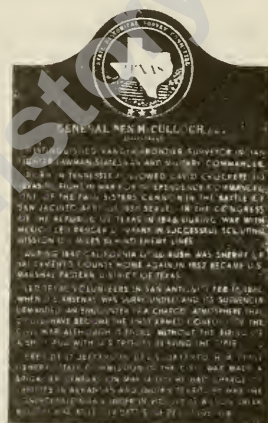






General Ben McCulloch. It is possible that this is an example of trick photography with the head mounted on a "standard" body.

McCulloch marker near Brady, Texas city limits. Brady is the county seat of McCulloch County.



Elkhorn Tavern, Arkansas--McCulloch was killed near here. Note the antlers on the roof.



Alexander worked at the surveyor's trade, and it is conjectured that he plotted the county seat of Jefferson for speculators Thomas Bedford and Robert Weakley when Rutherford County was established in 1803. He is listed as one of the petitioners for the forming of the new county on August 10, 1803 and as the first trustee of the new political entity.<sup>6</sup> Deed abstracts and other records of the period show a diversification of real estate activities on the part of the elder McCulloch. He served as witness for several real estate transfers and bought and sold land himself.<sup>7</sup>

In the fall of 1820, for some unexplainable reason, Alexander loaded his family and household furniture on the plantation wagons and ox carts and moved to Alabama. There at Muscle Shoals along the Tennessee River, he continued his surveying activities and efforts at farming.<sup>8</sup>

Ben, almost ten years of age at the moment of his removal to Alabama, augmented his one year of schooling at Jefferson with a few months at the neighborhood school some three miles from his home. Beyond this, his lessons were learned from the practicalities of the frontier life and a voracious appetite for reading. Near the McCulloch home was the favorite winter camping grounds of the Choctaw Indians. From them he learned the intricate basics of building canoes, tracking animals and humans, and, in particular, the habits and lore of Indians.<sup>9</sup> This knowledge was to serve him well when he later found himself a Redman adversary on the Texas plains.

In 1830, the McCullochs loosened their roots again and moved back to Tennessee, three miles from Dyersburg in West Tennessee. Ben, then nineteen years of age, was sent ahead with ox-carts containing most of the

<sup>6</sup>Publication No. 3, Rutherford County Historical Society, p. 55.

<sup>7</sup>Wray, Rutherford County Deed Abstracts. (Random references)

<sup>8</sup>Dictionary of American Biography, p. 5.

<sup>9</sup>Gunn, Ben McCulloch, p. 20.



household furniture, the Negroes, and livestock. Major McCulloch had calculated to arrive first, but when he arrived, Ben was waiting and had selected the site for the cabin, farm, and spring. In addition, several house logs had been cut.<sup>10</sup>

Once ensconced in his new home some twenty miles from the Mississippi, his restless and active spirits came into full flower. He built a large pirogue and began trapping in earnest, along with operating a low-key transport business. His constant hunting companion, despite the disparity of ages, was Davy Crockett who lived in the neighboring county.<sup>11</sup> In the spring of 1832, Ben left for Independence, Missouri, where he had hoped to join a trapping party. When he found there was no room for him, he switched to Galena where he found employment in the lead mines for some twelve months. Following a restless summer in Wisconsin, Ben returned to Tennessee and joined with brother Henry Eustace in cutting and marketing cypress logs. These were rafted down the Obion River to the Mississippi and then to Natchez where the logs were sold.<sup>12</sup>

Confinement to a precise occupation for any extended length of time appeared to accentuate Ben's restlessness. It was natural that he should turn his attention to Texas. On rafting trips to Natchez, he frequently visited New Orleans where he had searched for the grave of one of his kinsmen, St. John Petersen LeNoir, an uncle.<sup>13</sup> In the Crescent City, he heard tales about the struggles of Americans in the new land above the Rio Grande and, in particular, the report of atrocities by Mexican soldiers. Too, many

<sup>10</sup>Rose, Ben McCulloch, p. 34.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid, p. 40.

<sup>12</sup>Gunn, Ben McCulloch, p. 40.

<sup>13</sup>Reid, The Scouting Expeditions of McCulloch's Texas Rangers, p. 24.



Tennesseans had already left for Texas. Neighbor Davy Crockett was poised for the trek west. Supposedly, he had confided in Ben that if he were unsuccessful in his re-election campaign for Congress, he would follow the Tennessee exodus to Texas and would invite his young neighbor and some other West Tennesseans to accompany him. To complete the story, Crockett lost his 1835 re-election bid and shortly thereafter, the first of October, he left for Texas.<sup>14</sup> Fortunately or unfortunately, according to one's degree of preference for immortality, Ben could not leave his farm chores at the time. Possibly a month later, with his home obligations completed, he, accompanied by his young brother, struck out for the Crockett trail. They crossed the Mississippi at Memphis, then to Little Rock, crossed Red River at Compton, and then took the Gaine's Ferry at the Sabine to Mexico. At this point Henry Eustace was persuaded to return to the family farm in Dyer County, remain for two years, and then join his brother.<sup>15</sup> Early in January of 1836, Ben set out alone on foot for San Antonio. At the Brazos River a kind fate intervened, and he was delayed several weeks by measles. On February 23, the Alamo siege began with 169 valiants, including Crockett, facing Santa Anna's 5,000 Mexicans. Thirteen days later, the mission fort fell with all of the remaining defenders being summarily placed before the firing squad.<sup>16</sup>

In the midst of the angry outcry that followed the butchery at San Antonio, Ben McCulloch entered the portals of his destiny. He immediately joined Sam Houston's rag-tag army and thus geared himself for his role in the Revolution. He was twenty-four years of age upon his entry into Texas

<sup>14</sup>Ibid, p. 35.

<sup>15</sup>Rose, Ben McCulloch, p. 60.

<sup>16</sup>Gunn, Ben McCulloch, p. 36.







and was described as "five feet, ten inches in height, slightly thin, but muscular arms and shoulders gave him the appearance of an athlete. Sharp blue eyes illuminated his keen features."<sup>17</sup> Ben must be categorized as one of the free spirits of his time. Never affiliating himself with a religious faith, he also studiously avoided marriage, thus remaining a dedicated bachelor during his fifty-one years. Sam Houston who later became a close friend of the Rutherford Countian, concluded one of his letters to McCulloch with this warning: "Never get married."<sup>18</sup> This was obviously an imploration in jest, but the warning was possibly of no serious consequence to McCulloch, since he had already set his course. Some disposition toward shyness may have motivated Ben to choose the life of single solitude. Once when stationed in Washington, D.C., he visited White Sulphur Springs, Virginia in an effort to escape the searing heat in the nation's capital. This excerpt from a letter to his mother may imply his acceptance of the loner's role and his slightly cloaked reticence and discomfort in the company of the opposite sex: "People were there (the resort) for three reasons. These were to drink, gamble, and make love. I'm not handsome enough to marry to advantage or sufficiently dishonest to be a successful gambler. The only advantages offered me were health and knowledge."<sup>19</sup> However, there is some evidence that he was not completely oblivious to the allurements of the attractive female. Ben's patrol duties later as a Texas Ranger carried him through many of the Mexican villages. The brownskin native woman, naked to the waist by custom, were observed strolling through the streets or standing agape at the passing horsemen. A companion rider reported that "Ben McCulloch

<sup>17</sup>Ibid, p. 43.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid, p. 91.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid, p. 78.



spoke enthusiastically of the unveiled charms of the Comargo".<sup>20</sup> Probably the best explanation for his choice of life style was his restlessness and his passion for mobility. Apparently never satisfied with a task or activity for any length of time, he was forever in search of new vistas and physical challenges. One observation of McCulloch, if near the truth, probably places him in the proper perspective, thus explaining his intense individuality and the rationale for remaining single and unencumbered: "He was flamboyant, headstrong, intelligent, coarse, sometimes brutal, usually profane".<sup>21</sup>

McCulloch's first combat action came at San Jacinto on April 2, 1836, a battle that proved to be the deciding engagement of the Revolution. It was not difficult for an aggressive, outspoken, and combative young man of twenty-four to attract the attention of Houston in his tiny force of no more than 800. Ben was pulled from the line and placed in command of one of the "Two Sisters", two pieces of artillery which represented the total heavy ordnance complement of the Texans.<sup>22</sup> The battle was over in fifteen minutes with an almost complete destruction of the 1500 Mexican army with General Santa Anna among the captured. Ben's courage and ability demonstrated in directing the maneuver and fire of the "Twin Sister" resulted in his promotion next day to first lieutenant.<sup>23</sup> An unknown versifier gave some small immortalization to McCulloch's performance in the fray in a poem entitled, "Ben McCulloch at San Jacinto". Here is a sample from the nine-verse effort: "Hurrah for stout Beni and hurrah for the band/ That gave freedom

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 107.

<sup>22</sup> Rose, Ben McCulloch, p. 101.

The "Twin Sisters" were contributed by a ladies organization in Cincinnati.

<sup>23</sup> Barker, "San Jacinto Campaign", p. 237.



to Texas that day/ And hurrah for the gun which so bravely was manned/  
When the hero was passing that way."<sup>24</sup>

Ben's military life ended for the moment after San Jacinto. Bored with the inactivity of garrison and occasional patrol duty, he requested and received a furlough which led him into an exploring foray to Lavaca and Guadalupe. This was followed by a trip to Tennessee to recruit a company of troops. After returning to Texas and finding himself no longer obligated to the military, he labored for a few months as a whip-sawyer in a Houston lumberyard. Ben was soon back in Tennessee for the purpose of learning surveying from his father. After a brief "schooling" from Major McCulloch, he returned to Texas with residence in Gonzales, where he announced himself as a surveyor.<sup>25</sup> Brother Henry Eustace followed his brother to Gonzales in July, 1838, and they bunked together in a cabin two miles from the town. This continued until Henry Eustace was married in 1840.<sup>26</sup>

Surprisingly, Ben McCulloch devoted much of his time to surveying during the next few years. In 1839 when Austin was tapped for the Capital of the state, Ben surveyed and plotted the road from Gonzales to Austin. However, he always kept a weather eye out for action; the previous year he had organized a vigilante unit which later became a contingent of the Texas Rangers, a famed frontier security force which was formed in San Antonio in 1840. Elected from Gonzales to the first Texas Republic Congress in 1839, and, in the process, fighting a duel with one Colonel Alonzo Sweitzer, his opponent (in which he emerged second best with an ugly shoulder wound), he

<sup>24</sup>Rose, Ben McCulloch, p. 45.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid, p. 50.

<sup>26</sup>Gunn, Ben McCulloch, p. 60.



served only one term, the political lethargy at Austin not to his liking.<sup>27</sup> Interspersed with his sojourn at Austin was his somewhat eager role with other volunteers in subduing a band of marauding Indians near Gonzales in March, 1839. This incident, known as the Battle of Peach Creek, served as a preliminary to a larger drama: the Great Comanche Raid. The Indians, angered by the incursions by the white man, swept across the southern plains the following year in a frenzy of stealing, raping, and murdering. McCulloch, commanding a detachment of Rangers, met the band of over 1,000 warriors at Plum Creek on August 12, 1840 and virtually destroyed them.<sup>28</sup> The action at Plum Creek catapulted McCulloch into the Republic's lime-light, and thereafter he retained a high visibility in the military affairs of Texas. During the early months of 1842, there were rumors of a possible Mexican invasion of the Republic, and McCulloch was dispatched to San Antonio to aid in repelling the invaders. The Mexican troops soon retired, but the incident provided, in essence, a kind of dress rehearsal for the major conflict that was to erupt four years later.<sup>29</sup> In 1845, Ben was elected to the first legislature of the new state of Texas, possibly as a reward for his military prowess and emerging hero status. On April 24, 1846, the Mexican War "officially" began when sixty-three American dragoons were killed on the Rio Grande.<sup>30</sup>

Responding to General Zachary Taylor's clarion call, McCulloch left his desk at the Capitol and raised a company of Rangers, a highly mobile unit that traveled lightly and, most important, required no encumbering

<sup>27</sup>Smither, Journal of the Fourth Congress of Texas, p. 13.

<sup>28</sup>Rose, Ben McCulloch, p. 55.

<sup>29</sup>Gunn, Ben McCulloch, p. 80.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid, p. 81.





supply wagons. At this time, Ben was thirty-five years of age and was remembered as being "rather lean, sinewy, and a fine horseman."<sup>31</sup> David Wilkins Kendall, a journalist who was attached to the Rangers, was an ardent admirer of the Captain, and his dispatches added much to the McCulloch mystique, however minimal. He described his hero as "a man of rather delicate frame, about six feet in height, with light hair and complexion. His features are regular and pleasing, though, from long exposure on the frontier, they have a rather weather-beaten cast. His quick and bright blue eyes, with a mouth of thin compressed lips, indicate the cool, calculating, as well as the brave and daring energy of this man."<sup>32</sup> Webb added this salute: "His face was a mask and his features under such control as to give no clue of his feelings or emotions, or intentions. It was as natural for Ben to remain calm in danger as it was to breathe . . . His courage may best be described as a complete absence of fear."<sup>33</sup>

McCulloch commanded Ranger units in most of the principal battles of the war which included Palo Alto, Resaca De La Palma, Monterrey, Buena Vista, Cerro Gordo, Churubusco, and perhaps others. The Ranger companies under his command "were perhaps the best mounted, armed, and equipped, and appointed units that were out in the ranging service. . . . (They) enjoyed more of the trust and confidence of the commanding general than any other volunteer company of the invading army."<sup>34</sup> There is evidence that the Rangers performed little line duty but occupied their time principally in scouting, reconnoitering, and spying. However, at Monterrey on September 21,

<sup>31</sup> Rose, Ben McCulloch, p. 75.

<sup>32</sup> Kendall, Picayune, June 24, 1846.

<sup>33</sup> Webb, Texas Rangers, p. 95.

<sup>34</sup> Reid, McCulloch's Rangers, p. 38.



the Rangers in scouting the west sector of the fortress city, found a fatal flaw in the defense. Two limestone heights guarding the city had a minimum of armament on the steep west faces, and this became the vulnerable point that led to the storming of the works and the eventual capitulation of Monterrey on September 23. In this pivotal battle, the Rangers led the onslaught.<sup>35</sup> Buena Vista also saw the Rangers rise to the attack. At this time McCulloch held the rank of major-general in the Texas militia.<sup>36</sup>

With the fall of Mexico City in 1848, the war wound down and Ben returned to Texas as a national hero. His response to the wide acclaim was reported in this manner: "He bore his honors with modesty and shrank instinctively from any parade of himself; being at all times the plain, unpretentious citizen; yet in spite of himself, he was also the famous unique Ben McCulloch."<sup>37</sup> At thirty-seven Ben was, indeed, unique. Already he had begun to embrace some of the eccentricities that were to set him apart during his remaining fourteen years of life.

In 1846, during Ben's single-minded involvement in the Mexican War, Major McCulloch had died in Tennessee. After the war's cessation, McCulloch returned to Dyer County to assist his mother in settling the estate. Retracing his steps to Texas by the way of Huntsville to visit friend Sam Houston, he ended his military career, for the time being, after assisting General David Emanuel Twiggs in locating the United States posts or forts along the border of Texas.

Until 1849 he followed the surveying trade again with a few years of unprecedented muting of his wanderlust. During this period, his mother

<sup>35</sup>Hardeman, Wilderness Calling, p. 147.

<sup>36</sup>Gunn, Ben McCulloch, p. 67.

<sup>37</sup>Rose, Ben McCulloch, p. 116.



came from Dyersburg to Texas to establish residence near Ben and Henry Eustace. Early in 1849 his thoughts turned to the military again, and he decided to travel to Washington, D.C. in an effort to exploit his fame or prestige, if any, gained in the late war. Also, there were rumors that an Indian agency was to be formed. The Indian agency failed to develop, and his aspiration for a commission in a United States cavalry unit proved fruitless.<sup>38</sup> His ambition, however, died a slow and agonizing death, for he remained in the Capital City most of the summer and fall and almost daily appeared before various military tomes of all description to augment his credentials.<sup>39</sup> Ben's failures may have been attributable to his crude habits and his personality now bordering on the eccentric. It is possible that his persistent and gnawing appearances at the office in the War Department could have easily been interpreted in the spirit of harassment.

Disgusted, he left Washington and was in Austin by September. Gold had been discovered in California, and all roads led to the Golden State. Always drawn to the source of action, Ben made his travel preparations and arrived in San Francisco on December 1, 1849. Apparently, for some unexplainable reason, he made no particular effort to try his hand at mining gold. Records show that he left for Los Angeles in January, 1850 on a mule-buying trip.<sup>40</sup> The disposition of the purchase, if any, is not known.

By September, McCulloch was in Sacramento, possibly to be closer to the mining operations. Nearby, Sutter's Mill, the focal point of the gold madness, had long passed the boom stage. It was a "city" of some 300 canvass houses with lots in the market place ranging from \$400 to \$20,000.

<sup>38</sup> Gunn, Ben McCulloch, p. 76.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, p. 78.

<sup>40</sup> Sacramento Union, September 8, 1850, p. 2.









Sacramento, a terminus of the short-lived Pony Express, was the supply center for prospectors in the northern mines of the Mother Lode and became the Capital in 1854. It mushroomed almost overnight as a rambunctious, teeming city of saloons, fandango houses, and gambling dens, all designed to separate the gold from the miners.<sup>41</sup> Lawlessness stalked the muddy or, conversely, dusty streets, and, undoubtedly, only a lawman in the cast of a Wyatt Earp could meet the awesome challenges of this frontier town. The Sacramento sheriff was Joseph McKinney, whose most onerous problem centered in squatters who converged on the mining crossroads like a plague of locusts. The squatter regarded all vacant property as public land and at night would seize unoccupied lots, enclose the areas with "ribbon fences", and construct shanties. One night after a squatter had summarily been evicted from a lot, forty armed squatters moved to regain it. Facing them were Sheriff McKinney, the mayor, and several vigilantes rounded up for the occasion. In the street battle that followed, Sheriff McKinney and several squatters were killed.<sup>42</sup>

A special election was then held to fill the unexpired term of the lawman who had expired, a common occupational hazard of a frontier sheriff. McKinney's term had some two years remaining.

Apparently, with scarce regard for the marginal survival record for law enforcers, ten hopefuls offered themselves to the Sacramento voters. Ben McCulloch was one of these. Prior to this entry into local politics, he had found a minor government job which required the collection of a twenty-dollar tax from all foreigners entering the town for the first time. Evidently the Sacramento citizens, those who could vote, were more favorably inclined toward Ben than the Washington officialdom, for he led the ticket with 678 votes, only one more than his nearest opponent. He was sworn in

<sup>41</sup>Rolle, California: A History, p. 107.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid, p. 118.



on September 9, 1850.<sup>43</sup> The office was quite lucrative. It was reported that revenue from a variety of sources inflated the Sheriff's annual income to over \$40,000, more than the salary of the President of the United States and three times that of the California Governor and the judges of the Supreme Court.<sup>44</sup>

Although moderately successful, Ben evidenced little interest in his new elective position. Bookkeeping and other office chores were not to his liking. He appeared to be principally drawn to the operation of fourteen quartz mines in which he had made some investment. Also, he found the time to visit Tennessee during the attenuated term and then to Washington where he tried unsuccessfully to generate funds to build a mill at one of the California quartz mines.<sup>45</sup>

His term of office ended in 1852, and Ben returned to Texas. One year later, March 29, 1853, the long drought of government rejection ended, for McCulloch was appointed United States Marshal by President Franklin Pierce. His territory was the Eastern District of Texas with headquarters at Galveston. His appointment being well received by the people, he remained in the position for nearly eight years. On several occasions his duties carried him to Washington, where he continued his study of military subjects including, among others, gunnery, fortifications, cavalry, and infantry. Hearing that two regiments of riflemen were to be formed, he again sought to fulfill his long-time ambition by applying for a colonel's rank. For some reason, he failed once more, although he was offered a commission as major, which he declined. Reacting characteristically, he sat down and

<sup>43</sup>Sacramento Union, September 9, 1850, p. 2.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid, March 15, 1863, p. 2.

<sup>45</sup>Rose, Ben McCulloch, p. 75.



wrote an open letter to the National Intelligencer in which he chided the President for bypassing him in the appointment.<sup>46</sup> Whether Pierce ever had the "letter to the editor" brought to his attention is not known, but some of the sharp edge of disappointment may have been dulled when McCulloch was reappointed Marshal for the Eastern District.<sup>47</sup>

In 1858 President James Buchanan appointed McCulloch and L. W. Powell, former governor of Kentucky, as the two commissioners to Utah. There were grave problems in the Mormon territory, for Brigham Young had literally forced Federal troops and their officers out of the territory by the simple expediency of refusing to sell supplies to the military. Acts of violence were being committed against troops and Federal property, and two military installations, Fort Bridges and Fort Supply, were burned by the Mormons. Young, as a result, remained in virtual control of the territory. The journey to Utah by the two commissioners was not a diplomatic mission but one of conveying a proclamation ordering the Mormon leader to desist and to use his influence to reestablish law and order. McCulloch, in light of past performances, was not equipped personally for the niceties of diplomacy, but, for the purpose of the Utah jaunt, he appeared to be a logical choice. On May 27, 1858, the message was forthrightly delivered at Camp Scott and, after two days of conferences, the matter was settled.<sup>48</sup>

During the interim preliminary to the impending sectional conflict, Ben returned to Washington where he was recorded as purchasing an interest in what he described as "an apparatus to bore wells."<sup>49</sup> What practical use he

<sup>46</sup>Gunn, Ben McCulloch, p. 91.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid, p. 80-81.

<sup>48</sup>Otis, The Utah Expedition, p. 266.

<sup>49</sup>Gunn, Ben McCulloch, p. 86.



subsequently made of this new acquisition is not known. Also, during this period, he resigned his marshalship and was successful in securing an appointment for brother Henry Eustace to complete his unexpired term. There were strong efforts made to persuade Ben to become a candidate to replace United States Senator Sam Houston who was to become Governor of Texas. McCulloch vehemently declined. Late in 1858, Houston devised a visionary plan to invade Mexico, establish a protectorate over the country, and thereby, hopefully, reduce slavery to a secondary issue, at least temporarily. In order to pursue this bizarre plan, he called in several of his friends, including McCulloch, for assistance. Ultimately, Ben and two other Houston representatives in search of funds, met with London bondholders in New York City.<sup>50</sup> The idea was soon set aside, for war clouds were now hanging menacingly over the country. At the time of Abraham Lincoln's inauguration, McCulloch was in Washington, and a myth persisted that "he was making arrangements, at the head of a body of secessionists, to take possession of the city; but, owing to the precautions of General Scott, the idea was abandoned."<sup>51</sup>

With the coming of the Civil War, Texas cast her lot with the Confederacy, much to the dismay of Governor Houston. Although secession had not been officially declared, the State's Committee on Public Safety was deeply concerned about a Union pocket of resistance at San Antonio. Ben was advanced to the rank of colonel and instructed to capture the garrison at San Antonio. With only 400 men, he moved and occupied the city in February, 1861; and, the hero of Monterrey, General David Emanuel Twiggs, seventy-one years of age at the time, surrendered without firing a shot, not only the

<sup>50</sup>Rose, Ben McCulloch, p. 90.

<sup>51</sup>Davis, An Illustrated History of Sacramento County, p. 34.





garrison but all of the personnel stationed at the various posts in Texas, over 2700 troops in all.<sup>52</sup> It must be conjectured that the first significant engagement of the Civil War might have been triggered at San Antonio predating the firing on Federal troops at Fort Sumter, seventy-five days later. The atmosphere was highly charged in the garrison town, and McCulloch's little band was thirsting for combat. A defense was at first ordered, but General Twiggs, the "Bengal Tiger" of many stirring engagements in the Southwest, was now old and tired, and the order was countermanded. McCulloch's fame in Texas and Confederate history may have been greatly enhanced if this "early Sumter" had occurred. Following the events at San Antonio, Ben was employed by Texas to purchase 1,000 Colt Revolvers and 1,000 Morse Rifles. He was successful in locating only the revolvers and, returning from his assignment, he was appointed brigadier general by President Davis on May 11, 1861, after McCulloch had declined a colonel's rank.<sup>53</sup> His command, with headquarters at Fort Smith, Arkansas, embraced the military district including the Indian Territory west of Arkansas. The assignment was specific: "To guard the Territory against invasions from Kansas and elsewhere."<sup>54</sup> This initiated the new brigadier's brief service of less than a year as a Confederate general officer.

McCulloch, subsequently stationed near Wilson Creek, Missouri, was soon to experience his first full-scale engagement. Union Brigadier-General Nathaniel Lyon began a movement from his position in southeast Missouri to attack the forces at Wilson's Creek. Sterling Price's army combined with McCulloch's to face Lyon. On August 10, the battle opened with the Confederate

<sup>52</sup>Gunn, Ben McCulloch, p. 96.

<sup>53</sup>Warner, Generals in Gray, p. 200.

<sup>54</sup>Rose, Ben McCulloch, p. 175.



line being driven several miles from its original position. Only the tenacious stand and counterattack by McCulloch saved the day, and Wilson's Creek became a Confederate victory.<sup>55</sup> As was his custom, Ben's abrasive personality usually ran afoul of his fellow officers, this time the target became the imperious Price, an individualist in his own right. Price had the audacity to sharply censure McCulloch for not pursuing the Federals toward Volla and refusing to cooperate with Price in an advance movement into central Missouri.<sup>56</sup>

Ben, never one to buckle under any criticism, angrily turned over his troops to Price and left for Richmond to plead his case with President Davis. The description of him as he appeared on the streets of the Confederacy is in full accord with his habits as a loner and practicing eccentric.

"His face was nearly concealed by a brown beard and mustache. Keen, gray eyes looked with a piercing glance from beneath shaggy eyebrows; a brown felt hat placed firmly on his head; black and white checked overcoat, pants of blue army cloth, the inside half of the legs being lined with buckskin, and hands encased in soiled buckskin gauntlets, with not a mark or ornament to betoken his rank, or attract attention. An observer would have little supposed him to be the famed and dreaded Ben McCulloch."<sup>57</sup>

There is no way of knowing just how much or to what degree Davis was impressed with his picturesque petitioner, but an organizational change was made in the Missouri and Arkansan troops. General Earl Van Dorn was assigned to the department with both Price and McCulloch serving under his command.

It was March, 1862 before there was further sustained action. General Sam Curtiss, commander of the Union Army of the Southwest, in February succeeded in driving both Price and McCulloch from Missouri into northwest

<sup>56</sup>Gunn, Ben McCulloch, p. 110.

<sup>57</sup>Rose, Ben McCulloch, p. 190.



Arkansas. Van Dorn marshalled both armies into a unit for an attack against Curtiss at Pea Ridge near Elkhorn Tavern. The battle opened on March 7 and throttled down near the close of the next day with disastrous results for the Confederates. Ben McCulloch was killed in the first day's engagement near Elkhorn Tavern shortly after eleven o'clock in the morning. Riding in advance of his troops, he was shot by a sharpshooter who was later identified as Peter Pelican, a private in Company B. thirty-sixth Illinois. Pelican removed a gold watch from the body and later, in camp, displayed the watch and substantiated the report that he had mortally wounded the brigadier. To the end in character, Ben, when carried from the battlefield, was clothed in a suit of black velvet, patent leather high top boots, and was wearing a light colored broad-brimmed Texas hat. Another description had him attired in a dove-colored coat, sky-blue pants, and Wellington boots.<sup>58</sup> Whatever sartorial habiliments were present during Ben's last moments, it can be assured that they bore little resemblance to what would be regarded as typical officer attire. McCulloch did not die on the battlefield as several sources have reported but in a field hospital. This description of the last moments possibly depicts the typical McCulloch:

He died of his wounds about 11 o'clock the same night, though he insisted that he would recover, repeatedly saying with great oaths that he was not born to be killed by a Yankee. A few minutes before he expired, his physician assured him that he had but a very brief time to live. At this, Ben looked up incredulously and saying, "Oh, Hell!" turned away his head and never spoke after. I presume, if Ben be really dead (he is dead, as the order of his funeral has been published), the Southern papers will put some very fine sentiment into his mouth in his closing moments; but the last words I have mentioned are declared to be correct by a prisoner. They are not very elegant or dramatic, but quite expressive, and in McCulloch's case decidedly appropriate.<sup>59</sup>

Texas and the Confederacy needed heroes, and McCulloch was the first and most noted to fall, therefore, he became the initial candidate for the state

<sup>58</sup>Sacramento Union, April 19, 1862, p. 1.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid, April 24, 1862, p. 3.





and national pantheon. So, after a battle that saw three regiments of "Confederate" Indians, plied with pre-battle whiskey, murder and scalp both friend and foe; a numerically larger Gray army outfought and defeated; and a legendary Westerner, "Wild Bill" Hickock, serve as a scout for the opposing Union Army, it was fitting, in the wake of such a bizarre, if not epochal occasion, that the body of one of its principals should be carried over 400 miles for proper eulogy and enshrinement. Major John Henry Brown left Fort Smith, Arkansas on March 10, in an army ambulance with the embalmed body of McCulloch. On April 9, he arrived in Austin. Along the way, authorities in several of the county seats and large towns requested that the remains lie in state for brief periods and that time be allowed for ceremonies and eulogies.

The final rites for Tennessean-Texan Ben McCulloch at Austin is described as follows:

The remains of General Ben McCulloch, the hero of Wilson's Creek, the pride and boast of the army of the West, were on Thursday, with all the usual pomp and ceremony attending such occasions, laid by the side of Burleson, Hemphill, and McLeod. The body laid in state in Representative Hall from four p.m. on Wednesday, until four p.m. on Thursday last. About eleven o'clock, after prayer from Rev. Mr. Phillips and Bishop Gregg, Captain John Henry Brown, who acted as aid to General McCulloch in the action in which he lost his life, entertained the large concourse of citizens that crowded the Representative Hall, with an address, narrating the thrilling incidents of the battlefield, and portraying the military accomplishments, patriotism, heroism, and noble single-heartedness of our Ranger General.

General Henry McCulloch being present, remarked, in a voice tremulous with emotion, whose accents reached the hearts and filled the eyes of all present, that his brother had, in his will, commended his soul to God, and bequeathed his body to his State. The procession at McCulloch's funeral was a mile long.<sup>60</sup>

As it has already been indicated, Texas may have given only a quiet salute to the memory of one of its transplanted heroes. In 1856, while Ben

<sup>60</sup>Ibid, June 7, 1862, p. 3.





was a United States Marshal, McCulloch County was formed. Located in the central plains, the political entity was not completely organized until 1876. The county, until the early 1890's, was a central staging point for marauding Comanche Indians. Also range problems and mob violence took a heavy toll of its citizenry during this period. Today, McCulloch County regards itself as progressive with ranching, farming, manufacturing, and mining serving as the principal economic bases. An historic marker outside Brady, the county seat, relates the essentials of McCulloch's career.<sup>61</sup> In the Texas Ranger Museum in Waco, there is scattered reference to Ben. In one exhibit case is a razor purportedly lifted from the brigadier's body shortly after he died at Elkhorn Tavern. In a conjunctional exhibit, housed in another building, a few pictures of McCulloch are on display, and a mechanical sound-visual presentation focusing on Texas Rangers has a few commendatory references to his contributions.

Rutherford County does not know Ben McCulloch and for good reason. When he was born near the forks of Stone's River in 1811, Jefferson was still the county seat, but Jefferson no longer exists in the sense that it existed in 1811. Also, the Alexander McCulloch family left the county for Alabama in 1820 when Ben was only nine years of age. Alexander's brother, Henry, may have remained at Jefferson for an Alexander McCulloch, possibly Henry's son, is listed as local militiaman, first lieutenant, in 1829.<sup>62</sup> Too, Beer's 1878 Rutherford County Map shows a McCulloch farm in the Jefferson area.

<sup>61</sup> Spiller (Correspondence), October 27, 1977.

<sup>62</sup> Publication No. 3, Rutherford County Historical Society, p. 64.



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PETITION OF MICHAEL LORANCE OF RUTHERFORD COUNTY  
FOR A REVOLUTIONARY WAR PENSION

Furnished by Mrs. Peggy Herriage  
Pilot Point, Texas

State of Tennessee

Circuit Court, April Term, 1833

Rutherford County

On this 6th day of April, 1833, before James C. Mitchell, one of the Circuit Courts of the State of Tennessee now sitting at Murfreesborough for said County of Rutherford, personally appeared in open court Michael Lorance, resident of said county of Rutherford & state aforesaid, aged eighty-three years, who being first duly sworn according to law, doth on his oath, make the following declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the act of Congress passed June 7th, 1832.

That he entered the service of the United States, about the month of June 1780, immediately after the battle of Ramsours, in a volunteer company which went in pursuit of Col. Bryant who had collected a company of Tories on the Yadkin River in North Carolina. The company of whiggs started from Third Creek, a branch of the Yadkin, thence down to the Pedee River, thence returned home. Bryant made his retreat into South Carolina. Applicant can not recollect the names of his officers in this pursuit of Col. Bryant, in which he served at least one month.

About the month of September 1780 shortly after Gates' defeat, he again entered service under Col. Davis in Capt. Joseph Dickson's company. He believes the regiment contained about five companies. He remembers Captains Coldwell and Cowen. They rendezvoused about 3 miles below Salisbury, North Carolina, thence they marched to Charlotte, Mecklenburgh County, thence to Six Miles Creek where they remained a few days, thence to the Waxaw settlement in South Carolina, and remained there about two weeks. The British under Cornwallis had left Charlotte a few days before Col. Davis arrived there and made their way through the Waxaw settlement to Campden. The Americans returned home. In this campaign, Applicant served at least two months.

Sometime in February 1781, soon after Morgan had defeated Tarlton, he again entered service again at Batle's Ford on the Catawba River, North Carolina under Gen. Davidson in Capt. Cowen's company. From Batle's Ford, they marched down to Cowen's Ford where Gen. Davidson was killed in opposing the passage of the British under Cownwallis. The Americans were scattered at this place & collected again above Second Creek where they destroyed a bridge to prevent the crossing of the British. The British came to the place & were fired upon by the Americans. The British went below & crossed the creek at some ford. The Americans were again dispersed. Under Generals Davidson and Locke opposing Cornwallis' pursuit after Morgan, applicant served at least three weeks.





About the first of April, 1781, applicant again entered service under John Read, Capt., Daniel Carter, Lieutenant, in Rowan County, North Carolina, thence they marched to the Congaree River in South Carolina where they joined Gen. Sumpter in Col. Wade Hampton's regiment, thence to Orangeburgh then in possession of the enemy. The British fired on the Americans as they approached the town, but soon surrendered as prisoners to Sumpter to the number of 100 or 150 men. From Orangeburgh the Americans marched in the direction to Ninety Six, got in three or four miles of that place, when an express arriving that Gen. Green had left Ninety Six. They changed their course, crossed Bread River at the fish dam ford, joined Gen. Green. Applicant then recrossed at the ford with a detachment of about fifty men under Maj. Rutherford, march in direction to Ninety Six to Saluda River, thence down the Saluda on one side, while a party of the British marched down on the opposite side. The Americans crossed the Saluda about two miles above its mouth, made a circuit and surrounded the enemy at the head of the Congaree where they made forty or fifty prisoners. Thence they returned to Sumpter on the Congaree, joined Green & went down to the Eutaw Springs where the battle was fought well known in history.

Then applicant under Maj. Moore went to Georgia, swam their horses across the Savannah about 3 miles below Augusta, thence down to Ebenezer & joined Col White, thence down towards Savannah then in possession of the British. They ranged in the neighborhood of Savannah about three months but without any engagement. In this campaign applicant served ten months at least. In all the service aforesaid, he served as a private.

Applicant never received any written discharge from service, and knows of no person living by whom he could prove his service, nor has he any documentary evidence whatever to prove the same.

In the several campaigns before mentioned, he was a volunteer, never served except as a private & was always in the cavalry and furnished a horse.

Applicant represents that on account of palsy & inability to speak the English language intelligibly together with old age & defect of memory, he fears the circumstances of his services, their duration, & the names of more of his officers are not so fully set out as the rules of the War Department require. He believes that he served several months longer than he has stated above. But he could not precisely state the length of his services & thereupon does not claim a pension for more than the services before stated amounting in all to one year, one month, & three weeks to which he can safely swear.

As to his character for veracity & their belief of his services as a soldier of the revolution, applicant refers to his present neighbors Nace Overall, Robert Overall, William Northcut, Jordan Williford, Arthur Totty, Robert Thompson, & James Tucker, to all of whom he is well known & who can testify as to his character for veracity & their belief of his services aforesaid.

Applicant was born in Germany on the 18th of November 1749, as appeared from his father's record which applicant brought to America with him & lost it during the Revolutionary War. Applicant lived in Germany until he was about twenty-eight years old, when he was sent with a regiment of Germans over to America to aid the British in subduing their colonies.





He landed in New York on Staten Island 3rd of June 1777, remained in the British service about one year, deserted them in Rhode Island, escaped over to Gen. Sullivan's army as a deserter made himself known to Sullivan who permitted him to pass on to Pennsylvania. He made his way to Spring House Tavern 18 miles from Philadelphia where he resided 18 months as a barkocper. Thence he moved to Rowan County, North Carolina in 1780 where he resided about seven years & where he was residing when he entered the service of the United States. The County of Iredell was in the meantime laid off & comprehended his residence. Thence he moved to Mecklenburgh County, North Carolina, where he lived until the year 1812 when he moved to Rutherford County, Tennessee where he has ever since & now resides.

He hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension or annuity except the present, and declares that his name is not on the pension roll of any of the agency of any state or territory.

Sworn to and subscribed the  
day and year aforesaid.

s/Wm. ?  
Clerk

his  
Michael X Lorance  
mark

We Nace Overall, a clergyman and Jordan Williford both residing in the County of Rutherford & state of Tennessee, hereby certify that we are well acquainted with Michael Lorance who has subscribed and sworn to the above declaration; that we believe him to be eighty-three years old, that he is believed & reputed, in the neighborhood where he resides to have been a soldier of the Revolution, and that we concur in that opinion.

Sworn to and subscribed  
the day and year aforesaid  
s/Wm. ?

Clerk

s/Jordan Willeford

s/Nace Overall

(On the outside of document)  
West Tennessee #13820

Michael Lorance of Rutherford Co. in the State of Tennessee who was a private in the company commanded by Captain Dickenson of the regiment commanded by Col. Davis in the North Carolina line for 1 year, 1 month, and 21 days.

Inscribed on the Roll of West Tennessee  
at the rate of 57 dollars 03 cents per annum  
to commence on the 4th day of March, 1831.

Certificate of Pension issued the 22 day of June, 1833  
and Wm. Ledbetter, Murfreesborough

Arrears to the 4th of March	\$114.66
Semi-anl. allowance ending	
4 Sept.	<u>28.51</u>
	\$143.17

Recorded by:  
Daniel Boyd, Clerk  
Book E Vol. 7 Page 84

Revolutionary Claim Act, June 7, 1832



State of Tennessee  
Cannon County

TO WIT:

Before me Thos. Elkins a justice of the peace in and for the county aforesaid, this day personally appeared Mary Ford, aged sixty-five, who first being sworn deposeeth & saith that she knew Michael Lorange and Esther Lorange in Mecklenburg County and state of North Carolina. She knew them from her earliest recollection to the time of the death of said Michael which occurred in Rutherford County seven years ago, the eighth day of Feb. last. (1834) She remembers the time when they were married in North Carolina. They were married in one half mile of where affiant was staying at the time. She was at the house of her brother, and taking care of the children while the older part of her brother's family were at the wedding. After the wedding was over, the married couple and the company came over to her brother's to play and dance. They lived together as man and wife from that time till his death as aforesaid. The time of their marriage she cannot exactly remember. The enclosed list of the ages of their children she believes to be correct. She has written her name at the bottom of it. She remembers that the oldest child was born in about ten months after the marriage; and affiant was about ten years old, when they married. Affiant moved to Tennessee about thirty-eight years since, the said Michael & Esther came out some seven years after that; she has, with that exception, been living near them all the time since their marriage. The widow Lorange now resides in Rutherford County, some fifteen miles from affiant. Said Michael was a pensioner of the United States when he died.

s/Mary Ford

Subscribed and sworn before me this 24th Sept.,  
1841, and I certify that said Mary Ford is a  
person of respect, ability, and worth of credit.

s/Thomas Elkins  
Justice of the Peace

State of Tennessee  
Cannon County

I, Rezin Fowler, Clerk of the County Court of said County of Cannon certify that Thomas Elkins who has attested the above deposition, is and was at the time of attesting the same, a justice of the peace for our said county, duly elected and qualified, that the foregoing signature purporting to be his, is genuine.

The testimony whereof I have hereunto  
set my hand, and affixed my private  
seal, having no seal of office, this  
25th Sept. A.D. 1841.

Rezin Fowler  
Clerk of County Court



## MICHAEL and ESTHER Moore LORANCE'S Children

John Lorange was bornt September 23, 1787

Anny Lorange was bornt August 5th, 1789

Egther Lorange was born February 18, 1792

Michael Lorange was bornt October 31, 1794

Fohraim Lorange was bornt April 29, 1797

Catharine Lorange was bornt December 16, 1799

Jimmy Ervin Lorange was bornt January 11, 1802

George W. Lorange was bornt August 13, 1805

Mary Lorange was bornt January 31, 1809

s/Mary Ford



## A COUNTRY STORE (1912-1914)

(Selection from Jack R. Mankin's "Autobiography" written for his children in which he describes his brother's store and offers some nostalgic impressions of life as he remembers it in the surrounding communities of Mankinville and Dilton.)

When I was a child--some eight or nine years old--Papa<sup>1</sup> bought a country store for my older brother Hendrick to run, Hendrick being at that time about nineteen or twenty years old. The store was located on the Manchester Pike at the corner of the little country road that wound and meandered through the farms, across the branch, on to cross Lytle Creek and finally to end in the Bradyville Pike at Dilton. On its winding way it passed the "Walker place," where I was born, and by Cousin Oscar's,<sup>2</sup> although his house set far back from it and was approached by a long driveway. At the road end of his driveway was one of the most fascinating inventions my young mind had ever seen, namely, a "patent gate." It had long arms sticking out on each side of two tall posts and dangling from the arms were ropes that could be reached from the buggy seat. When one of these ropes was pulled, wonder of wonders, the gate opened! Aladdin's magic lamp was no more improbable or exciting! After driving through and stopping, the other rope was pulled and the magic gate closed itself. If children in this day are thrilled and awed by rockets and computers, I was just as thrilled and awed by this wonderful

<sup>1</sup> Dr. John Benton Mankin (1860-1926).

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Oscar Mankin.





gate. The road passed by Frank Overall's place and the church<sup>1</sup> where I grew up before losing its identity in the Bradyville Pike.

But back to the store. It was a long, narrow, and high wooden building sitting up on cut stone piers. It had a porch, or unloading dock, all the way across the front. The front door was in the center of the platform porch, and a large, heavily shuttered window was on each side of the door. I think the width of the store was twelve feet and the length was fifty feet. It was divided into one large room at the front, which was the store proper, and a smaller room on the rear for storage. Somewhat more than halfway back in the store proper was a large, pot-bellied, coal-burning stove. This was the social center of the farming community during the winter, that is, for the older male members. The women were too busy with their interminable work to have any time for socializing. That would have to wait until Sundays, the summer "protracted meeting," and possibly hog-killing time.

The store, facing the west, was about one-fourth mile north of where we lived--an easy walk, but a dark, cold one on a winter night. Of course there were no street lights--there was no electricity nearer than "town,"<sup>2</sup> which was about four and one-half miles away.

As one entered, he viewed the store from a central aisle. There were shelves up to the ceiling on both the north and south

<sup>1</sup> The Dilton Church of Christ.

<sup>2</sup> Murfreesboro, Tennessee.



walls, running about two-thirds of the way back. In front of the shelves were two heavy wooden counters on each side of the center aisle with a narrow passageway between them and between them and the shelves. The counters were hollow where heavier items, such as buckets of candy, were stored under them. Part of the tops of the counters were taken up with glass show cases displaying the most enticing articles and those that were particularly attractive which might stimulate sticky hands and lead to shoplifting. By and large, however, the people were honest and did not need to be deterred from stealing by glass cases. Inside the cases were cookies placed there maybe with some intent of keeping flies off of them, but more likely to keep samplers' hands off, for sampling and eating on the spot was not stealing. Most of the residents of the community did not bother much about flies at this time. The cases displayed pocket knives, fishhooks and lines, spools of thread, chewing gum (not Long Tom, it was out of date by this time), papers of pins, needles and thimbles, rickrack, bias tape, boss balls,<sup>1</sup> and other small items. Of course, what excited my child's mind was the candy, the chewing gum, and cookies.

No description of this country store would be complete if it omitted the "punch board," a gambling device that was quasi-legal at that time though later banned by law. It consisted of a board about twelve by sixteen inches with holes about one-half inch apart each direction, making a total of about 660 holes. Each

<sup>1</sup> A small ball of darning thread that came in a ball about an inch in diameter in black, white and brown.



hole had a roll of paper in it with a number on it. Both sides of the board were then covered over with a colored paper. On the front side, as I remember, there were three colors across the board. One was for 25¢ punches, the next and larger for 10¢ punches, and the third and largest for 5¢ punches. Below it in a show case were the enticing prizes which could be won. The top prize was a handsome watch perhaps worth \$25 at retail price. It was of course among the numbers in the 25¢ punches. I can't remember all the prizes, but they were attractive and desirable and calculated to whet the greed of the prospective customer. The merchant had a chart, which he kept out of sight, of all the winning numbers. Of course, like all gambling devices, they were rigged to pay a profit to the "house."

When anyone came in the store, particularly males, this attractive display of wanted items and the punch board on top of the show case fairly shouted, "Stop. Try your luck. You might win a watch or a ten dollar bill." This subtle salesmanship along with an inherent desire to get something for almost nothing broke down the resistance of many and they would lay down their money, the merchant would give them the punch for punching out the numbered paper, and then the agonizing decision as to which one (within the chosen and paid for color) to punch had to be made. After due deliberation, the punch was made, the paper unrolled and the number checked against the merchant's list. If it was a winner, the prize was taken out of the showcase and delivered at once. If it was a loser, as most of them were, he had a lesson in economics to the effect that wealth comes from productive work



and not from chance. At the same time the merchant had reinforced his knowledge that, as Barnum<sup>1</sup> said, "A sucker is born every second."

Eventually all the punches were gone, all the prizes given out, and the merchant pocketed a neat profit from a minimum of effort and risk.

Most of the merchants in these country stores had a trace of New England skepticism about them and this led them to "ring" the coins they received in payment. At this time all the coins above the nickel were made of silver and if dropped on a hard surface would give out a clear, bell-like tone. The proprietor on receiving a silver coin, particularly a dollar or half dollar, would flip the coin in the air and let it fall on the hard counter top. If it "rang true," which most of them did, he accepted it and put it in the cash drawer; if it didn't "ring true," he refused to accept it. This was a routine thing and no local customer took it as a challenge of his honesty. Of course, this test, while it is probably more needed now than then, would be worthless at the present. Our modern, "two faced" coins have about as much music about them as a frog landing in thick mud. The ring they make is a dull "plunk"--still another instance in which beauty and romance have fallen victim to "progress." Alas, how much we sacrifice on the altar of practicality.

Under the counter on the north was the cash drawer. Cash registers were not yet in vogue, at least, not in the boondocks. Under the drawer were several keys like typewriter keys. If one

<sup>1</sup> P. T. Barnum





pressed the right combination of these keys, the spring-loaded drawer would slide open and ring a bell. Presumably this was to warn the proprietor if an unauthorized person was "dusting" the till.

In the shelves on the north wall and behind the show case was the drug section, loosely defined. It held patent medicines such as Cardui, Beef Wine and Iron, Sloan's Liniment, Sarsaparilla, Black Draught--what an awful dose it was. It was a finely ground black powder made of roots, barks and vegetable matter, and was used as a laxative. Also, there were Doan's Kidney Pills, Calomel, Castor Oil, Iodine, and small bottles of turpentine--which was used as an antiseptic. Two other drugs that are now rigidly controlled were paregoric and laudanum, both of which contained opium, the latter in considerable amount; but then anyone who claimed to have a toothache and who had the money or the credit could get them. Presently drug users would probably look on those as the good old days, although the merchant, as a matter of principle and also because he personally knew all his customers, would probably have stopped short of selling any of them a dangerous amount. And by the same token none of them ever considered taking it by force. In those pre-World War I days, force was a little-used item. Both the merchant and the customer had a mutual respect for each other. That was one of the features of "the good old days" I would like to have back.

I failed to mention that on that drug shelf was vermifuge, which was one of, if not the vilest tasting concoctions ever devised by man. If we could just make every politician whose words and



acts get us into wars take two doses of vermifuge before he threatened, I believe it would usher in the golden age of peace! Its merits were alleged to be that it would rid children of pin-worms. I guess it would, but there must surely be some easier way. Aunt Louella<sup>1</sup> gathered Philip and me up one day and gave us a dose of it. The memory still puts a bad taste in my mouth.

Next to the medicine section was the tobacco. There was a great variety of smoking, chewing tobacco, and snuff. Among the chewing varieties I remember Brown's Mule, Spark Plug, and Picnic Twist. The first two were plug tobaccos, that is, tobacco leaves treated with molasses and pressed into sheets. And near them stood the inevitable tobacco cutter to cut as much off a plug as the customer wanted. As I remember about a fourth of a plug of Brown's Mule sold for a nickel. I guess the plugs were scored to indicate where to cut. Picnic Twist, though, was a different breed of cats. It was pure tobacco twisted into a twist that looked like an overgrown periwinkle. It was dry and strong. Some advanced tobacco users crumbled it up and smoked it in their corncob pipes. When one got to the place that he could use Picnic Twist, he had arrived, because his system must be almost saturated with nicotine before he could stand it! While it may not have been as strong as I described, it nonetheless had a tendency to separate the men from the boys! If my memory serves me right, Papa chewed Brown's Mule very sparingly. Then there were the snuffs in nickel and dime cans. There were two brands, Bruton's

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Welcom H. Mankin.



and Garrett's Scotch Snuff. They were probably both made by the American Snuff Company in Memphis. Snuff was used, if at all, by the women who before this time had given up smoking pipes and had not yet got to cigarettes. My Grandmother Hendrick dipped snuff; Mother did not. Most of the men smoked or chewed, or both. But cigarettes were in high disfavor with the older men; they called them coffin tacks, and subsequent research indicates they were just about right. As for cigarettes, those shelves did not hold any ready rolled. They were beginning to catch on in town, but the country people who smoked cigarettes at all rolled their own, partly, I guess, because they were cheaper. There was a rather strange notion among the cigarette smokers that it was the paper, specifically cigarette paper, that was harmful, not the tobacco. To get around that, they rolled them in pieces of brown or white paper sacks, which added three or four times as much paper as the very thin cigarette papers. Some few of the more audacious owned a book of L.L.F. cigarette papers. Whether it was because they were not socially approved or because they were illegal, I do not know, but they were kept pretty well concealed. I think Hendrick generally used L.L.F.'s. The initials were locally reputed to mean "last leaf first." Actually, I think they were the initials of the French firm that made them. Among the cigarette tobaccos that were on the shelves were Bull Durham (way out the most popular), R.J.R., and Prince Albert. The first two came in little flattened cloth bags; the third in a red tin, as I presume it still does. Of the pipe tobaccos I can only recall Our Pride, which came in a round cloth bag with a red and white label, and Tuxedo, and Prince Albert, which were packaged in tins.



Really experienced cigarette rollers could roll one in one hand after the tobacco was poured in the paper, including striking the kitchen match (Diamond brand, no less). I learned how to roll a very presentable cigarette, but I never advanced to become a one hander!

Among the other tobacco supplies were some cheap cigars. The one that fastens itself on my memory was Virginia Cheroots or "threefors," meaning three for a nickel. The box had a picture of a big sow rooting and under it cheroots. Even in those days of cheap products and cheap labor, I can't imagine that three for a nickel cigars could have had much quality. They could probably just as well have been named "El-Ropo." It is likely that Fleur-de-Melba and King Edward also graced the shelves and touted their virtues at five cents each, which were treats for the more affluent only. Pipe smoking and cigar smoking were not considered to be harmful; they had not yet been associated with lip, throat, and tongue cancer. Today they are still regarded as less harmful than cigarettes, but not helpful to the health.

But back to the drug shelves. There were bottles of Grove's Tasteless Chill Tonic guaranteed to cure malaria. And it probably would, too, if one could stand the taste for sufficient time to take enough doses. Little cans of Gray's ointment were there. The ointment was supposed to be a specific for boils. It was as black as axle grease and had a peculiar odor. It was almost as adhesive as glue. Aspirin had not come into vogue and there was little or nothing to console one with a headache, but, fortunately,





there were not many headaches either.<sup>1</sup> I suppose the more leisurely pace removed the tensions that now cause us so many pains, or rather, the tensions never built up to the point of pain.

Immediately behind the drug and tobacco shelves the groceries began. There wasn't much rhyme nor reason about the arrangement; soap and spaghetti might be side by side. But there was sure to be found somewhere in the shelves cans of sardines (cheap American variety which sold for five cents), Nigger Head Oysters, Club Salmon in tall cans, pork and beans, bottles of pepper sauce, a meager selection of spices including black and cayenne pepper, maybe whole cloves, allspice, stick cinnamon, and whole nutmegs. Since country people canned their own fruits and vegetables, not many of these were sold. There were round cardboard boxes of Quaker's or Mother's Oats (not the quick-cook kinds, for they had not appeared yet), Kellogg's Corn Flakes, Post Toasties, sometimes Grape Nuts and Cream of Wheat. Grits came as hominy flakes in large burlap bags lined with a cotton bag. They sat against the counter in the center aisle along with one or two hundred pound bags of coffee (whole beans), a hundred pound bag of sugar, from which the merchant dipped it with a scoop and weighed it for the customer in a small paper bag. On second thought, I believe the sugar was kept in a bin under the counter. Large bags of dried beans--pinto, navy, and maybe large butter beans--sat along the counter in the center aisle on the north side. The south side

<sup>1</sup> Acetanilide was used by some for headaches but occasionally induced unpleasant side effects. It was never popular like aspirin or some of the other present-day pain relievers.



of the aisle was taken up largely with kegs of nails, staples, and horseshoes, some opened, some unopened. You might think that rats and mice would bother these bags that were sitting on the floor. The fact is that they probably did, but no one worried a lot about it, unless it was the merchant who lost a little of his wares and who had to clean up the mess.

There wasn't much of an assortment of soap; usually to be found was Octagon, Fels Naphtha, perhaps Ivory for the elite, and Grandpa's Wonder Tar Soap that the women prized highly for washing their hair. It came in a yellow cardboard box. The bar was rounded and was almost as black as tar. It lathered freely, having a tantalizing odor of pine tar. Along with the soaps were Faultless Starch and cans of Merry War Lye, used variously for making your own "lye soap" and for putting in pig swill, presumably to rid them of intestinal worms; but, I suspect, given just because we had always done it this way! It certainly makes one have a high respect for a pig's innards to think that it could stand a dose of lye! Along with these items too was Twenty Mule Team Welding Borax, used by the housewives as a water softener and by the nearby blacksmith as a flux in welding iron, which was to me then, and still is, an amazing process.

Conspicuously missing from this section, as compared to a modern grocery, was toilet paper. The law of supply and demand prevailed here, for there simply wasn't any demand for it. The people used sheets of old Sears catalogs, newspapers, or even sometimes freshly shelled corn cobs. You might infer from this that people were tougher then than they are now. If you did,



your inference would be totally correct. They were tougher both physically and morally.

On the back counter on the north side sat the cheese cutter. It was a circular platform some fourteen inches in diameter with a heavy knife hinged over it. The platform could be rotated a fixed distance at a time. This amount of arc represented the value of a nickel's worth of cheese, which was a segment of the circle of the cheese. The cut of cheese was wedge shaped. If a dime's worth was wanted it could be ratcheted twice, or multiples for another multiple nickel's worth. The cheese itself was about fourteen inches in diameter and five inches thick and of little better quality than the kind we now describe as mousetrap cheese. A cheese this size came in a wooden box of the same shape. The cheese itself weighed about fifty pounds. I didn't bother about it at the time, but I suppose the ratchet was adjustable to take care of the varying price of cheese. When not in use the knife was left standing vertically and the hoop (the box the cheese came in) was placed over the cheese on the cutter platform. I suppose that the purpose was to keep the mice from getting their share. Flies probably got their share off the standing knife. As far as I remember, no one ever bothered to take the knife off and wash it, but I also never knew of any case of illness being traced to the cheese cutter.

On the center end of this same counter was the indispensable roll of wrapping paper in its stand with a guide to tear the paper off by. Most things were not prepackaged and had to be either wrapped and tied with string or put in a paper bag and tied with



string. There were no staplers and no tape. Cellophane and polyethelene had not even been dreamed of at that time. The string was on a ball or spool in a container on the ceiling and the end of the string hung down so that it could be reached. Some of the string, I remember, had a red thread and white thread twisted together; other was all white.

In addition to the burlap bags of beans, coffee, and hominy flakes, in the middle aisle there might be a barrel of apples in season or even a box of oranges. If this seems awfully crowded to you, just remember that there was seldom more than one or two people in the store at a time except for the "hangers-on," who were either sitting around the stove in the winter or on the front porch in the summer. The porch, which juttet out almost to the road, was a good place to see who was passing and what they were hauling and to enjoy good-natured talk about them. There wasn't any continual flow of traffic as there is now; there was an occasional buggy carrying one or two people, a few farm wagons, and sometimes old man Ab Wharton<sup>1</sup> walking along with his hands clasped behind his back and his wife following some five or six steps behind him. Many of the people who passed were Negroes who often heralded their approach by singing, particularly at night. We almost knew them by their voices, most of which were rich and melodious.

Behind the northeast counter there was a barrel of salt pork. It was, I think, taken from the jowls of the hogs and was almost

<sup>1</sup> Not his real name.





pure fat. This must have been the same kind that the army bugle-call ditty referred to as "porky, porky, porky, without a bit of lean." It was a staple among the poorer people who could not afford to raise their own hogs. I don't remember what it sold for per pound, but I would guess not more than ten cents, perhaps even less. This salt pork, hominy, and corn bread, along with dried beans, were the main constituents of the diet of the very poor. There were no food stamps, no welfare programs, no subsidies. In those days, except for a little help from the somewhat better off neighbors, you were on your own, and if worst came to awful worst, it was the poorhouse for you. There were several people in the community, both whites and blacks, who had a daily battle with the wolf at the door. It is almost superfluous to say that tuberculosis was rampant among them and that the death rate was inordinately high. They were caught in the poverty syndrome and there was very little hope of ever getting out. Let it be noted, however, that not many of them were ever suspected of stealing. By and large, they accepted "what can't be cured must be endured," and suffered with a dignity that puts to shame our modern complaining. And suffer I'm sure they did, sometimes being actually hungry. In the Dilton neighborhood, there were one or two cases of pellegra, which is specifically a disease of dietary deficiency.

Sometimes in the winter months when hogs were being killed, the merchant might have "a few sets of bones" for sale at ten cents a set. A set consisted of a pair of ribs and a backbone. He might also have some fresh faces and jowls which, I think, sold for ten cents each. This fresh meat was a welcome addition to the diet of the very poor and furnished them some much needed protein and



vitamins. A novelty, and maybe even a revolting kind of novelty, in this and other country stores was the sight of rabbits hanging by a string from a hook in the ceiling. The merchant had bought them from local hunters for ten cents each and sold them, I guess, to the more affluent for about twenty to twenty-five cents each. They had been "drawn" (innards taken out), but the skin and head were still on them. H. K. Mankin and J. B. Preston used to be local nimrods who picked up a little spending money this way. No doubt they invested a substantial part of it in Bull Durham, while most of the rest went for jellybeans. The older, married hunters used their rabbits to supplement the families' diet. It should be noted that a shotgun shell sold for about three cents. But they didn't always use a shotgun. Often they would kill them while sitting with a .22 rifle. The shells for it cost about one-half cent each. When there was a snow on the ground, they would track them to their burrows and kill them with a club.

Under the northeast counter was one or more stands (50 lb. metal cans) of hog lard which the merchant had bought from local farmers and which he sold retail to those who did not produce their own. There was also shortening manmade from cotton seed oil which the local people called compound lard. Generally speaking, only the poor would use it as it was considered of inferior quality and sold at a cheaper price. Some of us have lived to see that position reversed, since pure hog lard doesn't find much of a market now. Then, as now, it had a tendency to get rancid as weather warmed.



Considerable of the business of the country store was carried on as barter. Women would bring in eggs and butter or chickens and trade them to the merchant for staples such as coffee, sugar and flour, thread, and calico. We children, too, engaged in barter with the local merchant as from time to time we could wangle an egg from our mothers. With almost drooling anticipation, we would rush to the store with our egg to trade it for some goody we wanted. But just what goody? There were so many enticing choices. There were chocolate drops, jellybeans, cookies, fishhooks, and boss balls, and we just had one egg to spend, worth roughly one cent. The merchant waited understandingly while we wrestled with this momentous choice. Finally we decided, the deal was completed and we went away as happy as if we had made a shrewd deal on a new Rolls Royce. The merchant usually gave us more than value received. He was our neighbor and friend, not just a dealer and salesman.

Frequently, too, some adult would bring in a live hen and trade her for some staple such as sugar, coffee, or lard. Ready cash was scarce and barter took its place. The merchant had a coop outside the back of the store that he kept the chickens in until he took them from time to time to sell to the poultry wholesale dealer in town.

Part of the business was done on a credit basis also. Things would be charged until the fall crop was gathered when the customer and the merchant would have a settlement. If one's credit was questionable, he would have to get some more acceptable person, usually a landowner, to "stand" for him, that is,



guarantee payment. The poor then, as the poor have always been, were "on the short end of the stick," and occasionally there was a grasping merchant who would gouge them. Hendrick was not that kind. He had more of a tendency to be softhearted and let them gouge him, for often his outgo was more than his income. Businesses do not prosper that way, nor did his, but I venture to say that he laid up a lot of shekels where "moth and rust doth not corrupt nor thieves break through and steal." I doubt seriously that he ever knowingly cheated anybody, but I don't doubt that he gave long weight to the poor.

To the east of the counter toward the back of the store, there was a barrel of vinegar lying in a cradle with a wooden spigot in it. Vinegar was drawn out into the customer's jug or jar.

Somewhat near the northeast corner of the store was a hanging platform to hold the cloth bags of flour and meal. The purpose, of course, was to keep the rats and mice off it, not necessarily for sanitation but to keep them from gnawing holes in the bags and wasting the contents. A customer might be more concerned about the bag's being a half pound short than he was about any germs the rat or mouse might distribute; anyhow, cooking would kill the germs!

There was some variety of flour but small quantities of each. Flour came in twenty-four and forty-eight pound bags. I only remember the name of the one brand that Mother used, Dainty, I think it was, made by Ransom's mill near Murfreesboro. I believe there were both plain and self-rising flours. Mother used plain





flour and made her biscuits (which we had twice a day) with buttermilk and bicarbonate of soda. The meal--the brand escapes me--came in twenty-four and forty-eight pound cloth bags also. The bags were prized for making cup towels and underwear for us children after the printing had washed out.

Among her other duties, Mother made underwear and shirts for us. When I think of all the things she did, it makes me ashamed of what we call work now, nor is it any surprise to me that she wore out and died in sixty-two years. There was no electricity nor much gasoline to lighten her load. She did have a gasoline iron that gave her a desperate headache nearly every time she used it, probably from carbon monoxide fumes. It was a cantankerous piece of equipment as temperamental as a movie actress. When it was good, "it was very, very good, and when it was bad it was horrid!" I doubt seriously that Underwriters' Laboratories would put their seal of approval on one now, and probably didn't then. But in the summertime, as bad as it was, I guess it was better than heating the wood-burning kitchen stove to heat the sadirons to do a big family ironing including shirts, sheets, and table cloths. Incidentally, she kept a green cedar bough to put the iron on occasionally to keep it from sticking to starched clothes so badly. I suppose the heat extracted oil or wax from the cedar needles. Country people were not botanists, but they knew many practical things about trees and herbs.

Across the back wall of the store, hanging on hooks or pegs, were work harnesses for horses and mules. Among them were trace chains, collars, hames, hame strings, clevises, backbands, curry



combs, and maybe singletrees and doubletrees. Other farm items were kept in the back storage room.

In addition, the back room contained the coal oil (kerosene) barrel with a hand-cranked pump on it. Coal oil was one of the necessities of life in those days before electricity reached the rural areas. We had at our house a metal, one-gallon can with a small spout to get our supply of kerosene in. It could be poured from the can directly into the lamps without benefit of a funnel. Since the small spout didn't have a cap, the merchant would usually stick a potato on it so that I would not slosh it out as I carried it home. Other people got theirs in a glass jug with a cork in it for a stopper. They also had a loop of heavy cord or small rope attached to the handle to carry it by. I suppose carrying a gallon of oil by one finger for a mile or two got rather tiresome.

The shelves on the south side toward the back were devoted to shoes, men's and women's and children's. They were mostly work shoes. The men's shoes were high top, lace-up, with hooks about halfway. As I remember the women's shoes, they had eyelets all the way up and reached almost to mid-calf. No ankle was going to be exposed to public view! The clothes then not only protected the property; they also obstructed the view.

Immediately to the west of the shoe shelves were the dry goods. The selection was not impressive. It consisted of several different calico prints, maybe some gingham, unbleached and bleached domestic, some Indian head, hickory stripes for shirts, overalls, work socks, garters, black ribbed cotton



stockings in weights for women and boys in short pants, elastic banding, spools of thread, safety and straight pins, hairpins, huck toweling and various other kindred items. The wants of the community had not been whetted to such a keen edge by advertising as they have been now; therefore, the canny merchant stocked accordingly. Somewhere along this side of the store was sole leather and "sprigs," which the industrious bought and used to half-sole their own work shoes. I often thought how unfortunate it would be if a piece of this sole leather got mixed in with the Brown's Mule! They looked somewhat alike. The half-soling jobs were crude, but they served the purpose and postponed the day of judgment on buying a new pair of shoes, a momentous decision to make.

It is nearly impossible for us to envision now the tranquility, the sense that tomorrow was going to be very much like today, the slowness of the tempo of living, the simple pleasures, the almost all pervading calm that enveloped those days, especially before World War I. We who lived in those days and now have the long perspective needed to assess them can't help but conclude that 1914 was a turning point in history. Life before that time and after it are almost as different as life on separate planets would be. As one example, violence was rare and was frowned upon by all but those who committed it, and the punishment meted out for it was both swift and harsh. Divorce, too, was looked upon almost as a scandal and divorcees were not glamorized. Shoplifting was practically nonexistent.



One of the simple pleasures I remember with nostalgia was the mournful, sweet sound of the steam locomotive whistles in the dead of night. When we lived at the Gamewell place there was a switch on to a sidetrack of the N.C. and St. L. Railroad about a mile and a half from our house, and in the still of night we could clearly hear the whistles. Remember, there wasn't much background noise, for there were few automobiles and most of them went to bed at dark; there were no radios, no televisions, and for all practical purposes, no airplanes, so it was quiet when night fell except for an occasional passing wagon or buggy in the early hours or the lilting, half-happy, half-sad voice of a Negro singing as he walked along the pike. So, late at night--I think about midnight--when the Dixie Flyer passed through, the freight that met this fast passenger train from Chicago to Jacksonville at that siding had to get off. We could hear it coming to a halt while the switchman threw the switch, then a short toot from the tenor pitched whistle, then the puff --- puff --- puff -- puff -- puff -- puff - puff - puff of the steam exhaust as the locomotive labored to get the heavy train moving again, the low rumble of the moving train then when it got on the switch (siding), the clangor of car couplings bumping together as the brakes were applied, then silence while the freight lay there waiting for the Dixie Flyer to pass. It usually wasn't a long wait until the Flyer came roaring and clacking and its deeper-throated baritone whistle sounding out an "all's well" to the waiting freight as it thundered by and was soon gone. Then the freight with two short toot-toots began its laborious chuff --- chuff --- chuff --





chuff -- chuff - chuff - chuff as it started, then a slowing of the chuffing as it slowed for the switchman to throw the switch and run and catch the caboose then faster chuff-chuff-chuff-chuff-chuff until the individual chuffs were lost to the growing roar as the train gained speed. It didn't have far to go, though, until it came to the Rucker crossing and there the engineer really expressed himself on the whistle, almost playing a tenor solo with the W-H-O-O, W-H-O-O, WHOO, W --- H --- O --- O --- O with a diminuendo toward the end of the last WHOO trailing off into the still night as clear as the note of a violin and as plaintive as the wail of a banshee. It was a thrilling pleasure that younger generations have been deprived of. "Progress" drove the steam locomotive to the bone yard, the raucous diesel horn displaced the melodious whistle, and music gave way to noise. Perhaps Longfellow had the tenor-pitched steam whistle in mind when he wrote "and the night shall be filled with music", at least, he well could have. I'm sure efficiency has been increased by the change from steam to diesel, but the soul went out of railroading with the demise of the steam whistle. Shall man live by efficiency alone or is there some nobler goal? Is it necessary to swap beauty for ugliness in the name of progress? The passing of the steam whistle is typical of the passing of many of those charms that set the pace of peace and calm which prevailed in the entire community.



## SOULE COLLEGE

by Eugene H. Sloan

Traditional Southern education for women in cultural studies and social graces has long been associated with Murfreesboro.

A Female Academy was organized in 1825 by F. N. W. Burton, Dr. W. R. Rucker, M. B. Murfree, and Dr. James Money. Misses Mary and Nancy Banks were employed as teachers.

The Female County Academy was founded in 1829 and continued in successful operation until after 1850.

Mrs. E. S. Bowles opened a school, Murfreesboro Female Seminary, in January, 1835.

Midsylvania Female Academy, "located five miles southeast of Murfreesboro, Tennessee" was granted a charter in 1834.

Reorganizations and consolidations resulted in the establishment of the Tennessee Baptist Female Institute and Eatons College for Women in 1853.

Soule College, the most long lived and prestigious of all these efforts to provide private schools for girls, was the outgrowth of a meeting held July 14, 1851 at the urging of a local Methodist minister, Rev. Thomas Madden.

Dr. J. R. Finley was named president of the proposed school, which was named for Bishop Joshua Soule of Nashville.

The school opened work in the "old Female Academy" in September, 1851. This gave credence to the Soule College Alumni Association claiming the school was founded in 1825.

Work on the new building on Lebanon (North Maple) Street was begun on July 3, 1853 and was ready for occupancy in November. The three-story building cost \$25,000. Dr. S. D. Baldwin, pastor of the Murfreesboro Methodist





Bishop Joshua Soule for whom the college was named.





Church, had succeeded Finley as president. He continued as president until 1856 when C. W. Callendar, a professional teacher, was elected president.

The Soule College site, four blocks south of the Court Square on Lebanon (Maple) Street had been a Methodist church with a grave yard located south of the church building. Middle Tennessee Electric Membership now occupies the area.

Thomas Robertson acquired the church property and used it for the manufacture of cotton gins. He conveyed it to the trustees of Soule College.

A study of the real property involved in Soule College as recorded in Deed Books and Trust Deeds records in the Rutherford Courthouse reveals interesting changes in street names, real estate ownership, and the fluctuating value of property over the years.

Apparently the original tract, which included an old Methodist church, with the possibility of an adjacent cemetery, embraced about four acres.

On April 8, 1874 there was a conveyance to Joseph B. West from D. D. Moore the tract with no metes or bounds description other than a statement, "the Soule Female College grounds were bounded on the south by Walnut Street, east by Lebanon Street, west by Railroad Street, and north by John C. Spence."

In the transfer by the F. W. Snead et al to A. M. Overall on September 10, 1907, the property was described as "4 1/2 acres more or less" bounded on the east by Maple Street, west by Walnut Street, south by Burton Street, and north by the property of James Moore.

Just two years later in April, 1909 the conveyance gave more minute descriptions. The south boundary was owned by P. A. Lyon and Mrs. C. P. Campbell, indicating that some of the Soule property had been sold for private development. This is further indicated by the more minute linear bounds of 370 feet along Maple Street and 300 feet westerly to Walnut Street. This was the first conveyance mentioning insurance. The new owners (Miss Hopkins and Mrs. Hyde)





were to keep the property insured for \$5,000 to protect mortgage holders.

In April, 1909 Martha A. Hopkins et al transferred the property to G. B. Giltner, H. O. Parker and B. L. Sims for the purpose of building a "white high school" financed by a bond issue. An interesting clause in this deed conveyed "war claims" to the School Commissioners. The property lines defined in this transfer begin, "at the P. A. Lyon northeast corner, running with the Maple Street line north 363 feet to James A. Moore southeast corner, thence Moore's south boundary in a westerly direction 314 feet to the east side of Walnut Street thence southerly 363 feet to Mrs. C. P. Campbell's lot, thence easterly 314 feet along the Campbell, T. L. Richardson and Lyons north boundary to the point of beginning."

The charter of Soule was granted in 1854. Trustees were L. B. Carney, B. W. Avent, D. D. Wendel, Levi Wade, W. R. McFadden, Joseph Watkins, Willian Spence, W. S. Huggins and W. F. Lytle.

Soule College had many scholarly, highly dedicated, and widely recognized administrators in its sixty-five years of service to education in the South.

Dr. J. Randolph Finley, who was a moving force in its incorporation, resigned the presidency of Soule Female College in a formal letter addressed to the Board of Trustees December 1, 1852. He suggested that the vacancy be filled by Rev. T. W. Randle or the Rev. S. D. Baldwin.

The Board accepted his resignation "since he had already received a transfer to the Pacific Coast Conference". The Board voted to release "Dr. Finley of his subscription of stock and commend him for his indomitable energy and vigilant care to the institution". He was also complimented for his scholarship, rapport with the community, and "extraordinary architectural skill in drafting the plan ..... and supervising to most speedy completion without fee or reward the beautiful, spacious and well-constructed college buildings."



Some of the frustrations experienced by the Rev. Mr. Finley were revealed in the research compiled by Frank Bass in his thesis for the Master of Arts degree at Peabody College in 1941.

Quoting from the Louisville and Nashville Christian Advocate, July 26, 1851, and the Minutes of the Board of Trustees Minute Book of 1851, Bass wrote:

"It seems that schools always have had many difficulties and Soule Female College was no exception. School was opened in the old Female Academy, but owing to disagreement with trustees of that institution, plans had to be rushed for a new building. It had been agreed in the beginning of the movement for the school that fifteen thousand dollars be raised by a joint stock company for the erection and furnishing of the building. During the winter of 1851-52, events moved rapidly towards plans for erection of a suitable structure for housing a 'Female Institute of high grade and liberal charter'."

Bass continued his account:

"On December 3, 1851, Dr. Finley and Rev. S. D. Baldwin were appointed a committee to draft a plan for a building. At the same time, in order to speed up the collection of funds, T. W. Randle was appointed agent for the collection of such funds, and he was allowed 2½ per cent on \$10,000, including the subscription already obtained, and 5 per cent on whatever sum he may obtain over \$10,000."

On December 17, 1851, the committee for drafting a plan for a building made its report, and it was approved by the Board. At the same meeting, a committee was appointed to see the Trustees of the Murfreesboro Female Academy and ascertain their view in reference to subscribing the present ground and building as stock in Soule Female College. In a short time, this committee made a favorable report, and a building committee was appointed.

The appointment of Rev. T. W. Randle as agent for the College must have been temporary, because on January 30, 1852, the Board received an application for this job from Rev. S. S. Moody. On February 3, the Board passed a resolution to the effect that:

"Rev. S. S. Moody be employed as a traveling agent, whose duty it shall be to collect funds for the erection of the building;



and to use his best energies to obtain pupils for the school provided he will do so for ten percent, upon the amount of his subscription. His pay to be retained out of said subscription: and that the secretary address Mr. Moody and ascertain from his views upon the subject."

On February 18, Mr. Moody appeared before the Board and accepted the proposition. This appointment was approved by the Annual Conference, according to the minutes of the Annual Conference of the M. E. Church, South, 1851-52.

This Board meeting brought the first disagreement among the members. Dr. Avent moved that the Board proceed to make contracts "for the brick work of the building, and for such wood work, and painting as will preserve the same." All of the Trustees present voted for the motion except William Spence, and the following week the brick work was awarded to William Summerhill, who had made his bid in these words:

"To the committee of the Female Institute: I will erect the brick work of the whole building of the Female Institute, after the manner and form of the drawing in the town of Murfreesboro: the brick to be measured and counted according to the ruler of brick work for SEVEN DOLLARS AND FORTY CENTS, per thousand, counting the openings out."

The contract for the wood work was given to Green Clay, who had made the following proposition:

"I will furnish lumber, nails, locks, hinges, and do all the carpenter work belonging to the Soule Female College according to the plan as exhibited by Dr. Finley, and either cover the roof with good cedar shingles, or with the composition, such as, the railroad depot at Murfreesboro is covered with, (except the observatory) for the sum of NINE THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS.

School was in session, plans were well under way for the new building, but it seemed that there was some doubt as to the ultimate completion of plans. According to the 1852 Minutes of the Board of Trustees, Clay was awarded the contract for wood work but agreed to take a per cent of his contract in stock. In October, 1852, the Board made a special call upon the stockholders for the first installment of twenty-five per cent upon their subscriptions. Apparently, there was some difficulty with collections. In spite of all handicaps, however,



plans went forward, and President Finley, in announcing plans for the first commencement season stated that:

"The corner stone of the new and commodious college edifice, which is about to be erected by the Board of Trustees, will be laid by the Fraternity of Masons, on Saturday, the 3rd of July next."

Although no description of the interior arrangement of the building in 1851-52 is available, there is an excellent delineation of its appearance appearing in an advertisement for a Chancery Court sale in the Murfreesboro Monitor of August 22, 1868:

"For elegance, unity of design, and adaptation to educational purposes this College edifice has but few superiors, if any. The form of the house is that of a massive Roman cross, three stories high, 135 feet long, and 115 feet wide. The brick work is executed in the finest style--the wood work on the exterior is tastefully adjusted. A fine battlement cornice extends entirely around the eaves, with a frontispiece facing the street. On the right of the main entrance on the first story, are two family rooms, each twenty feet square, and opposite are parlors corresponding in size. This entry intersects a passage, from which doors open into a chapel, laboratory, apparatus, and dining rooms. In the same wing are the library and the Juvenile and Preparatory departments. The Study Hall is 50 feet square, well lighted and thoroughly ventilated. From this hall, glass doors open into the various recitation rooms. The dormitories are twenty-six in number, twenty feet square on average, and all fourteen feet high. The windows are large, opening full length on hinges, and protected from without by Venetian blinds. There is a beautiful lawn in front and on either side of the building, well set in blue grass, and pleasantly shaded. All necessary out-buildings, cisterns, etc., on the premises."

The first faculty consisted of Professor J. R. Finley, J. Hoffman, Jane Raymond, Julia Knapp and Jane Wolf.

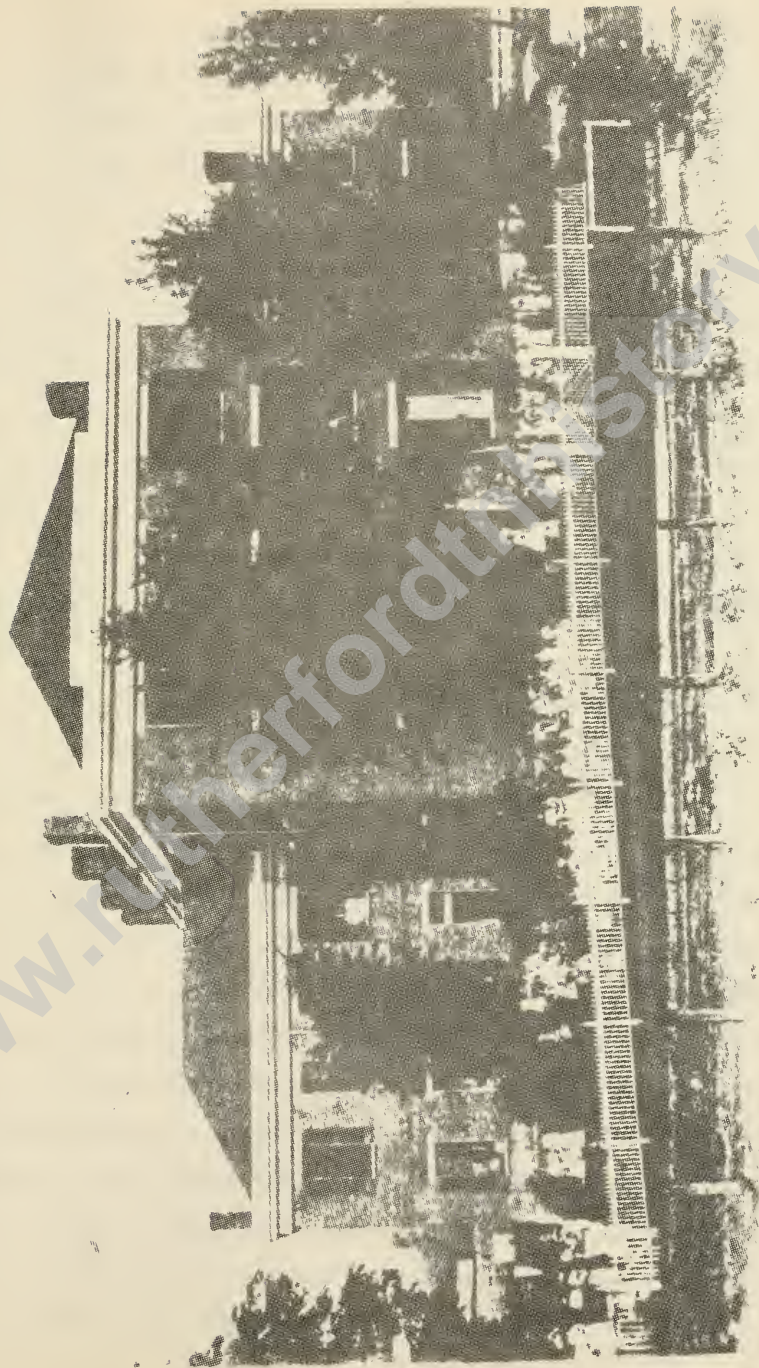
Little is known of Dr. Finley's work in the Pacific Coast Conference after leaving Murfreesboro. That he returned to the South is evidenced by his being listed as president of the Tennessee Conference Female Institute in Athens, Alabama in 1885.

The first class graduated in 1854. It was composed of Amanda (Barlow) Meadors, Adelaide (Cooper) Malone, Georgiana Thompson (Gill), Keeble Thompson, and Sue F. Dromgoole of Murfreesboro. Miss Dromgoole's sister, Will Allen, became one of Tennessee's most famous writers.









Faculty and student body of Soule College in 1903. Faculty members on upper front steps.



The class of 1855 had 15 members including Kit Lytle (Mrs. Doc Ledbetter) and Anna Murfree. "Kit" must have been a popular pre-civil war name. The only two members of the 1856 class were Kit Barlow and Kit Hall (Mrs. Thomas Fletcher).

Mattie, Sallie, Lizzie, Lottie, Annie, and Nannie were other popular contractions of given names of the period. Mattie Ready (Mrs. John Hunt Morgan) had Mattie Pea, Mattie Woods, and Mattie Horton as classmates.

The school suspended operation February 1862 but was reopened in January 1866, and in June graduated a single girl, Jennie Ford (Mrs. Benjamin Sawrie), of Nashville.

Conditions had apparently returned to some degree of normalcy by 1867, when there were five graduates. There were ten girls receiving diplomas in 1868.

In the decade between 1870 and 1880 the influence of Soule College had extended to list graduates from Texas, Florida, Indian Territory, Georgia, Arkansas, Illinois, and Kentucky.

Hard times must have hit the school in the mid 1890's. The class of 1894 had only Eugenia Neilson of Murfreesboro graduating. The year before Miss Neilson had been a "Laurel-crowned Student". There were two graduates, Stella Cross and Lizzie Bates of Smyrna, in the 1895 class. Maggie Bock received an "English diploma" in 1896. There were no graduates in 1897.

In 1898 one of the largest classes to date was graduated. The class included students from Korea, Cincinnati, Ohio, from Port, Oklahoma, and Tennessee students from Martin, Cross Plains, Smyrna, Sweetwater, Jackson, and Bellbuckle. The Holloway sisters, Nell and Anna Eliza (Mrs. Richmond Jones), were graduates from Jefferson, Tennessee. Elodie Ross, Smyrna; Ivie Mai Smith (Mrs. Guy McFerrin), Rosa Moore (Mrs. Tom Cannon), Adele Kimbro and Neina Childress were among the Murfreesboro girls who were members of this class.



Dr. Samuel Davies Baldwin, then pastor of the Methodist Church in Murfreesboro, was elected to fill the unexpired term of Dr. Finley and was re-elected in May 1853. He was to receive an annual salary of \$1,200 and a "comfortable house to live in".

A native of Worthington, Ohio, Baldwin had been graduated from Woodward College. He was described as a "Knight Templar, critic, autor, preacher, pastor, revivalist and scholar". He had preached at Mt. Pleasant, Clarksville, Lebanon and Edgefield in Nashville. His last pastorate was at McKendree Church in Nashville, where he died in 1881.

Dr. Baldwin was a nationally known author and lecturer. Among the books he wrote while president of Soule College was Armageddon. The Seventh Trumpet and The Millenial Empire also attracted national attention. His theories on The Revelation of St. John was summarized on the title page of Armageddon, which reads:

"Armageddon: Or the Overthrow of Romanism and Monarchy; the Existance of the United States Foretold in the Bible; It's Future Greatness; Invasion by Allied Europe; Annihilation of Monarchy; Expansion into the Millenial Republic and It's Domination Over the World."

Since his writing and lecture tour to the principal cities in America came to occupy so much of his time, Baldwin surrendered his administration in October, 1856.

Professor C. W. Callendar had been named vice-president in 1855, possibly assuming the immediate executive duties. He was a native of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania but had been associated with a Washington College at Hendersonville, Tennessee before coming to Soule College. The school prospered under his administration, reaching an enrollment of 100 in 1857. The next year Callendar,





the first professional education to head Soule College, went to Franklin to establish a girl's school there.

Callender was succeeded by the Rev. George E. Naff who came to Soule from the presidency of the Tennessee Female College in Athens, Alabama.

A description of the 1859 commencement at Soule College was typical of such exercises. The Sunday, June 19, commencement sermon was delivered at the Methodist Church by Dr. Summers. "The examination exercises" were conducted by a Conference Committee on Monday. Wednesday, June 22, was the formal commencement day. Each graduate read an original poem, essay, or delivered an address. President George E. Naff presented diplomas to each graduate. Mrs. Naff presented a gold thimble to Fannie S. Allen of Athens, Alabama for "having the neatest room during the preceding year". The "station preacher" presented a Bible to each graduate. This Bible presentation tradition seemed to have been renewed at various times during the subsequent years. Petty Bostic of Triune gave the valedictory address and two Murfreesboro girls, Martha J. Cox and Bettie S. Hoover, appeared on the program at the 1859 commencement.

President Naff made valient efforts to keep the college in operation as the War Between the States approached. The school had an enrollment of 192 pupils at the close of the school year in 1861. In August of 1861, the school was advertised as one "of safety and easy access from the South". Opening on September 2, the Christian Advocate reported that the school was prepared to "retain our reputation as a school of faithful and thorough instruction . . . in healthful and comfortable quarters". Charges for 10 months was "about \$175".

An example of the struggle to keep the school open as Federal armies moved South, the Christian Advocate reported that: "For the past few months





women with "missions" have been migrating northward like geese in the spring-time . . . Soule College is erect and flourishing".

But the vicissitude of war caused the school to close in February of 1862, after the fall of Forts Donelson and Henry. The school was used as a hospital by both Federals and Confederates during the war. There are former students of Soule College living in Murfreesboro who state that as late as 1917, there were blood stains ingrained in the floors of some of the rooms. Before the war was over, the fences were destroyed, furniture carried away, and the building defaced.

Six months after Appomatox, the Rev. James R. Plumer, a Methodist preacher from Maury County, collected a faculty consisting of Mrs. E. M. Eaton, Jo Eaton, Betty Wharton, Mrs. M. Henderson, Anna Ransom, R. T. Steinhagen, Mrs. H. Keeble, with Mrs. Plumer as "matron". On January 1, 1866 the school reopened and was described as having "no school marms" from the North. The faculty were all "Southern magnolias".

An interesting excerpt from a letter written by a visitor at the 1866 commencement described the Soule College as "alive with girls--well fed, well-taught, and well behaved". There were 146 students, 114 of which were boarders, in the 1866 enrollment.

Fiscal problems continued to vex Soule under the Plumer administration, until it was necessary to foreclose in a Chancery Court sale as recorded in Book 22, page 33 of the Rutherford County Register's office. The Rev. R. D. Moore took charge of the school in the fall of 1868.

Records of the Christian Advocate and Tennessee Conference reports indicate that the number of boarding students doubled in 1868-69, and that there was an equal increase in students of music.



Moore's administration from 1868 until 1874 reflected a modernization of the physical plant and curriculum. A reading room was established with "an extensive stock of suitable and tasteful books and selections of weeklies, monthlies and quarterlies of America and Europe".

Physical plant improvements were made. Gaslights were installed throughout the building. Apparently the toilet facilities of the school were installed, as "modern city improvements including furnace heat for the recitation room and study hall" were advertized. "Sleeping apartments were more cheerfully warmed by grate fires", according to the 1870 advertisements for the school.

In an advertisement in the July 9, 1870 Christian Advocate, Moore wrote:

"Having conformed our curriculum to the standards of good male colleges, procured the services of some of the ablest and most experienced professors in the country, as teachers of that curriculum, especially designed as a finishing school for young ladies of the South."

For one of the few times in the history of the school, the men faculty members made up almost half the staff. The Rev. D. D. Moore was professor of "moral philosophy", Rev. W. H. Bass A.M. taught Latin and Greek, and the Rev. Lorenzo Lee, A.M. taught mathematics and modern languages. Kate S. Carney was in charge of the academic department. Other faculty members were Sallie R. Thompson, Mrs. R. K. Keeble, Mrs. G. T. Henderson and Willie Lea.

A diploma from Soule College hangs in the foyer of Linebaugh Library. Apropos to the prevailing collegiate diplomas of the period, it is lettered on a verticle 14 x 20 sheet of paper with a light blue ribbon in the lower left corner, in lieu of a seal. It reads:



SOULE FEMALE COLLEGE  
Murfreesboro, Tennessee

To All Whom It May Concern GREETINGS

Be It Known That

MISS SALLIE RAMSON

of Bedford, Tennessee

Having passed successfully the prescribed course  
of English and Mathematics study has been thought  
worthy of this

DIPLOMA OF GRADUATION

by the President and his associates in consideration  
of scholarship and purity of character, June 13, 1870

D. H. Moore  
Mrs. H. A. Peabody  
E. N. Eton  
Joe Easten  
Kent Craig  
\_\_\_\_\_ Dixon  
Gassie E. Deason

In 1873 a visiting committee from the Conference reported that attendance at Soule College was not as large as it had been, and that free schools had been established in Murfreesboro. These and other factors may have induced Dr. Moore to sell the college and grounds to Dr. Joseph B. West on April 8, 1874 for \$12,000. The transfer is recorded in the Rutherford County Register's Office, Book 22, page 333.

Dr. West had been president of Clarksville Academy before he came to Murfreesboro for a four-year tenure (1874-78) as president at Soule College. In 1876 the Rev. John R. Thompson purchased a one-half interest in the school for \$6,500. The enrollment dropped to fewer than 90 pupils in 1878, and T. A. Z. Adams was brought in to serve as president for one year. The next Year J. R. Thompson became the chief administrator at Soule College.



John Ransom Thompson, a native of Rutherford County, graduated from Union University and received a law degree from Cumberland University at Lebanon. He later taught at Union University and then practiced law at Shelbyville. In 1859, he joined the Tennessee Conference and was licensed to preach.

In 1879 he became president of Soule College, and over a ten-year period increased the enrollment to 175 and established the strongest religious code the school had experienced.

Bible study was required of each student, and ten minutes of each day was devoted to memorizing Bible verses. On Saturday nights the boarding students learned and recited the Sunday School lessons for the next day. Dancing was prohibited, and Sunday was set aside for a period of meditation with no callers being permitted. Revivals were held and pupils converted--30 in 1884. In a later report the statement was made that all the 175 students and the faculty members were Christian.

Mrs. Thompson supervised the boarding students with a discipline that "is strictly Christian and is exercised in the spirit of kindness". Thompson was twice married--first to Martha Lou Goodrich, who died in 1867. In 1873 he married Mrs. Addie Hill Swan, a native of Paris, Tennessee.

It is difficult to evaluate just how strongly the Methodist doctrine was taught the pupils of Soule College before 1900. There are many references to religious practices. As early as 1857, a report stated that eight of the nine graduates were "professed followers of Jesus".

In 1871 the college reported:

"Almost every young lady of the College is a church member. Many were converted during the past year. One of the chief aims of this college is true piety, both by precept and example. Any young lady who enters here will be surrounded by the pure and sacred influences of a well-regulated Christian home."





At some time during the more than a decade of John Ransom Thompson's administration, W. P. Henderson had acquired a one-fourth interest in the school. In July, 1889 Thompson conveyed his interest in the school for \$8,000 to John G. Paty. Henderson sold his interest together with personal property listed in The Rutherford County Register's office Book 30, pp 621-622 to Paty. The personal property inventory ranged from four pianos to fruit jars. It included "22 small feather pillows, 13 bed comforts, 14 mattresses, 13 wardrobes, seven sideboards, eight bureaus, and 40 chairs."

Z. C. Graves, who had been associated with Mary Shap College at Winchester, was secured as president of Soule College by Mr. Paty. Graves remained in charge until Miss Virginia Oceania Wardlaw came from the Price School in Nashville. She was a "charter graduate of the Wellesley College and had taught in Virginia before coming to Nashville." Miss Wardlaw and her sister, Mrs. Mary Snead, operated the college until the oldest of the three sisters, Mrs. C. W. Martin from New York, joined in the operation in 1903.

During the Wardlaw administration much emphasis was placed on concerts, lecturers, and visiting teachers. Piano, violin, organ, guitar, and voice were offered in music. There were offerings in expression and drama. During one graduation period, there were four "commencement concerts".

Although Soule College continued to operate until 1917, if any one year could be designated as the apex as opposed to the nadir of 1897, it would be the class of 1904. In February, 1903 Mrs. C. W. Martin, a sister of Miss Wardlaw, acquired title to the school property for \$9,000. Two months later the title was transferred to Miss Wardlaw for \$4,000 and the assumption of a mortgage note for \$5,000 held by Miss Carmine Collier. The school then launched a program that attained wide scholastic recognition.



Miss Wardlaw's progressive ideas were apparently implemented by professional enthusiasm, as she introduced dressmaking, bookkeeping, type-writing, and commercial law into the curriculum. The Visiting Committee early in her administration complimented the "practical manner in which the sciences are taught in well-equipped laboratory in which pupils are required to perform experiments". Geological field trips were conducted by Professor Safford, the State Geologist.

"Latin and Greek are read with a fluency we have never seen equaled in a female institution", the visiting committee reported.

Miss Wardlaw brought visiting lecturers from Vanderbilt. She introduced the use of the stereopticon in the study of literature and history. French and German were taught. Constitutional history for seniors was added to a four-year course that covered conventional United States history, English, French, and modern European history. Civil government and political economy placed emphasis on "application of principles to personal and home affairs".

The humanities were further emphasized by courses in ethics, aesthetics, and Bible. The mathematics courses included arithmetic, algebra, plane and solid geometry, trigonometry, analytical geometry, and calculus. Physiology was designed to be practical with "resident physicians adding lectures on eye, ear, brain, digestion, circulation, and respiration". The pupils dissected animals to study the vital organs of frogs, chickens, rabbits, and other small animals.

The faculty included Miss Virginia O. Wardlaw, Mrs. Mary Ward Snead, A.M., Mrs. Alice Foxworthy Glascock, Albert Charles Snead, Rev. C. S. Ware, Mrs. William Brown Hamen, Miss Myrtice Jarrell, Miss I. M. Smith, Miss Anna E. McFadden, Miss Elizabeth Gailbraith, Prof. Frany J. Strahn, Miss Abbie Speer, Miss Margaret Hatcher, Miss Katherine Jones, Miss Alemeda Hughes, and Sadie Fry.



The course of study outlined in a 1904 catalog stated: "A knowledge of Latin and Greek is essential to a critical appreciation of the English language". The study of these languages began in the "academic" class for Latin and the sophomore class for Greek. The method of instruction was described as "eclectic, embracing features of the inductive and analytic". French and German offerings were available but not required.

The study in English classes required "etymological and syntactical principles of the language". Much essay writing, the study of parliamentary law, argumentation, letter writing, book reviewing, journalism, criticisms, and exhaustive reading in literature (including the Bible) were among the requirements.

Miss Wardlaw published a collection of the work of her better students entitled, Original Work of Miss Wardlaw's Pupils. Included in this book was a poetic version of the Book of Ruth, a dramatization of the Book of Esther, and six poems based on The Idyls of the King.

Rules established by the Wardlaw administration included "Simplicity in style and material of dress", the limiting of "pin money" to a definite sum for a definite time, and a prohibition of "Sunday callers".

That students other than those of the Methodist faith were enrolled is suggested by the request to parents to provide "a Bible, a Hymn Book of their own church, and the sending of copies of their own church papers" to the students.

The girls were required to have "one hour of recreative exercise each day in the open air, in good weather". Regular walks were varied with "tennis, basketball, croquet, and other out-door games", according to the catalog.

The 1904 commencement was held in the Soule Chapel on May 25. Dr. H. C. Tolman of Vanderbilt University delivered the commencement address with Dr. J. P. McFerrin awarding diplomas to 28 women, five of whom received the



Bachelor of Arts degree. Certificates in Teaching of music were awarded 13 young women. Four qualified for certificates to teach elocution.

The 1903-1904 school year provided Soule College women with ten major social events, the attending of 13 off-campus affairs, and 68 lectures, recitals, concerts, dramatic productions, dinners, and entertainments. These included a reception for the Confederate veterans reunion, a reception for the students from Webb School and the senior class from Mooney School, and an affair honoring former Governor Robert L. Taylor.

The names Wardlaw and Snead mean little to the present generation in Rutherford County. Three quarters of a century ago these names were synonymous with distinction in education in the South. In the period 1910-1913 the names were spread in headlines of newspapers over the world in a bizarre Svengali horror--a puzzling mystery that has never been solved.

Virginia O. Wardlaw was of distinguished ancestry, descended from the royalty of Scotland. Her ancestral family included church dignitaries, surgeons, bankers, judges, Revolutionary and Civil War military and civil leaders. She was a "charter student" at Wellesley College at Massachusetts and came to Nashville with her sister to teach at the exclusive Price School.

Her parents were John Baptist Wardlaw and Martha Eliza Goodall Wardlaw. There were four daughters, Caroline (Mrs. R. M. Martin), Mary (Mrs. Fletcher Snead), Virginia, and Bessie and two sons, Albert and John, in the Wardlaw family.

The Rev. John B. Wardlaw was for four decades a prominent Methodist clergyman in southern states. In the early 1890's he and Mrs. Wardlaw moved to Murfreesboro, where he died in 1898. The widow, Martha Eliza Wardlaw, moved to a room at Soule College.

Miss Virginia Wardlaw, a brilliant woman, according to the testimony of those who knew her, locally and professionally, was a woman of fine character





and gentle demeanor. Her sister, Mrs. Mary Snead, was a teacher-overseer-assistant principal at the school. Two of Mrs. Snead's sons, Albert and Fletcher, taught at the school. One son, Fletcher, was to play a strange role in the events between the 1904 and 1907 period.

A third sister, Mrs. Caroline B. Martin came to the school from her home in New York City. Weird tales began to develop among the impressionable students at the college and among the black servants. Occult powers were attributed to Mrs. Martin.

Dr. C. C. Sims in his History of Murfreesboro alludes to the bizarre situation that developed in the last few years of the Wardlaw-Snead administration.

Teachers were frightened, and students left the school or failed to return. The situation worsened until 1907 when the College, in severe financial straights, caused the sisters to turn their operation over to local leadership and leave Murfreesboro.

The three sisters and their mother next appear in East Orange, New Jersey where Ocey Martin Snead was found dead in a bathtub in November, 1909. On December 22, 1909 Virginia Wardlaw, Mrs. Snead, and Mrs. Martin were indicted for murder and the trials set for the following spring in Newark, New Jersey. The sensational affair was extensively covered by reporters of the area press.

In June, 1910 the mother of the three sisters, Martha Eliza Wardlaw, died. Virginia Oceana ~~Wardlaw~~ died two months later in the House of Detention at Newark, either of heart disease or self-imposed malnutrition. Mary Martin was found sane by the trial judge and charged with the homicide of her daughter.

Martin's trial in January, 1911 resulted in her plea of non vult to a charge of manslaughter. She was sentenced to a seven-year prison term.



Two years later she was removed to the New Jersey State Hospital for the Insane, where she died January 20, 1913.

Fletcher Snead has been described as a handsome, blonde young man in his early twenties, while a resident-teacher at Soule College. He had three separate wedding ceremonies with his first cousin, Ocey Martin. There was considerable speculation that Ocey was really the daughter of Virginia Wardlaw, who had been reared by Caroline Martin to avoid a scandal. This innuendo was vigorously denied by Mrs. Snead in a lengthy article in the Murfreesboro News Banner in 1930.

Alvin Harlow published a book, Mysteries Not Quite Solved, in which he recounts some of his findings in a chapter entitled, "Three Sisters in Black".

The Shadow and the Web by Mary Allerton (Estelle Noble Gowan), the popular author of children's books, used the Wardlaw-Snead story for the basis of her first novel as a mystery writer. The plot and descriptions of life in an imaginary Female Academy offers an interesting picture of what it may have been like at Soule College about 1905 to 1907.

Factually, the soundest work that has been done on the story is The Three Sisters, written by Norman Zierold. It contains pictures of the Wardlaw family and a good brief of the legal maneuvering of the Martin-Snead-Wardlaw defense.

After leaving their quarters at Soule College, the Wardlaw family moved to the house of a Mr. Street located opposite the present site of Citizens Central Bank. According to Mrs. N. C. Beasley, who lived next door, the neighborhood children were frightened by the elderly women, clothed in black and heavily veiled who could be seen wandering about at night.





Soule College as it appeared around 1916. See contrast photograph on pg. 65.



Virginia Oceania Wardlaw



Ocey Martin, neice of Virginia Wardlaw.



Following a few months residence in the Street house, the women moved to the upstairs rooms of the Searcey house located on the present site of the Murfreesboro Electric Department at the corner of College and Walnut Street.

A great aunt, Oceana Seaborn Pollock, was owner of Montgomery College in Christiansburg, Virginia. As the clan scattered, Virginia went to Christiansburg to head that college. The Snead boys, Fletcher and John, went to Lynnville, Tennessee where they operated a saw mill and married sisters. Mrs. Martin returned to New York City where she had been principal of an elementary school before moving to Murfreesboro in 1902. Mrs. Snead went to Georgia "where she had relatives" to teach school. Bessie Spindell, the fourth sister, lived near Christiansburg. John Snead later went to Christiansburg to teach in the college and there died in a fire under mysterious circumstances. Fletcher's wife in Lynnville divorced him, and he, subsequently, married Ocey Snead.

The denouement of this strange chronicle of Wardlaw clan appeared in the Murfreesboro News Banner in 1930 under the banner headline:

### THREE HEIRS TO JEWELS ARE NOW FOUND LIVING

Mary Snead Places Blame for Bathtub Murder on  
"Irresponsible" Mrs. Martin

The last chapter in the Wardlaw-Snead-Martin mystery was written yesterday when the last of three immediate heirs to the Wardlaw diamonds were made known, and Mrs. Mary Snead placed full blame for the death of Ocey Snead on her "irresponsible" and "insane" sister, Carolyn Martin.

In less than one week after news broke that the jewels of Virginia Wardlaw were reposing in the First National Bank vault here, Mary Snead, a material witness in the famous murder case







of 1909, was found living in Oakland, California, and word of the diamond find brought from her a complete statement that not only exonerated her and Virginia Wardlaw, but threw light upon the many sinister happenings that led up to the weird tragedy of twenty-one years ago.

A brother and sister of Mary Snead were also found, the three living apparently unknown to each other in different sections of the country. Statements were refused by the brother, Albert Wardlaw, living in West Palm Beach, Florida, and the younger sister, Mrs. R. S. Spindle, living in Christiansburg, Virginia.

But Mrs. Snead, a principal in the trial of 1910, spoke after twenty years of silence, and told how, out of pity, the insane Mrs. Martin was taken into Soule College to live with her two sisters, and how her increasing insanity resulted in strange happenings credited erroneously to all three sisters. And how the tragic death of Ocey Snead brought about by her irresponsible mother, completely crushed the well-meaning sister, Virginia, and caused her suicide. Said Mrs. Snead: "I was so happy when I learned that the diamonds were found, but I had rather never see them than to have their discovery reopen that chapter of my life."

"Yet, I think it is better that the simple truth should be told, and all the nightmare of rumor and legend cleared away at last."

"My sister, Virginia Wardlaw was an angel on earth. She was good, almost too good for this world. Her school, Soule College, in Murfreesboro was successful with 300 boarding pupils. It was her pity that led her to take Mrs. Martin and her daughter, Ocey, a sweet lovely child, into the school to live. The bare truth is, that Mrs. Martin was insane and had been so for years.



She should have been put into an asylum long before. She was the only one of the three of us who was queer, but she caused so much trouble with her increasing insanity that Miss Wardlaw had to give up the school. I imagine that such gossip arose from Mrs. Martin's queerness, which gave rise to all sorts of superstitions about the place where she lived. We never wore black mits nor dressed peculiarly except Mrs. Martin."

"The marriage between my son, Fletcher, and Ocey was not forced but was voluntary on both sides. Mrs. Martin had a very strong personality and will, but no occult or hypnotic powers. The terrible mistake was in keeping her with us instead of having her committed to an institution. When the tragedy of Ocey's drowning in the bathtub occurred, all three of us, Mrs. Caroline Martin, Virginia Wardlaw, and myself were held because we were all members of the household. I absolutely know that Virginia was not guilty of the murder of which she was accused. She was the best woman in the world, but horror of it all simply crushed her. She could not bear it, and that is why she killed herself before she came to trial. It would be quite true to say that the shock is what really killed her."

"I was never brought to trial. I was held as a material witness, but I was able to prove that I was in New York at the time of Ocey's death. I do not call it a murder. Mrs. Martin, the girl's mother, was absolutely irresponsible and had been so for a long time.

"Fifteen years ago I came to California to join my son, who has a teaching position here. The baby of Fletcher and Ocey is dead. Virginia Wardlaw is dead, and Caroline Martin died insane before the expiration of her sentence for the murder of which she



was convicted. And now after nearly a quarter of a century, that act of restitution has shown that after all, the past cannot die, unless this explanation will lay its ghost at last and forever," said Mrs. Snead.

The recovery of the jewels is in itself a mystery which has puzzled bank officials who declare that they have no idea how the diamonds got into the safety deposit vault where they were found and identified as the property of Virginia Wardlaw.

"I cannot say exactly what happened as a matter of probable fact, but I believe that I know," Mrs. Snead said.

"I believe that I know who stole them from a secret drawer in my sister's desk at Soule College in 1906. I will not reveal that person's name, because she, too, is a member of a fine Southern family in educational work, and I have no desire to bring pain upon her. She had access to my sister's desk and knew where she kept the diamonds, some of which were family heirlooms. I believe that they were stolen out of spite and that her conscience finally impelled her to attempt to restore them to the family in this strange way. Miss Wardlaw never rented a safety deposit box at the bank, and no members of our family has rented one in Murfreesboro. All our connections with Tennessee were severed when we left there for New Jersey. My explanation, and this is only inference and reasoning, is that the woman who took the jewels so long ago must have rented a box in my sister's name and placed them there. That is the only way I can account for their discovery and for the fact that they were identified by the bank as Virginia Wardlaw's property."



Mrs. Snead did not comment on what course she would follow in establishing her claim to the diamonds.

Thus endeth the uncanny story of the three "black" sisters who terrorized a populace with strange antics that hinted of black magic which led to the weird bathtub murder of the daughter and niece that mystified the country.

There are those who take the statements of Mary Snead as the true story about a deranged woman. This would account for the circumstances that brought tragedy into the lives of two benevolent sisters and caused Carolyn Martin's death in an insane asylum while paying the penalty for her daughter's death.

The post-Wardlaw era began July 8, 1905 when N. D. Overall bought the property from the Wardlaws for \$8,000 and became "Regent" of the college. Miss Alice Glascock was hired as the "Principal".

In 1906 Miss Martha Hopkins and Mrs. Ada B. Hyde rented the school from Overall. Three years later the women bought the building for \$11,300.

Among the innovations of the new administration was a course in "Pedagogies" designed for those who wished to become teachers.

As early as 1899 the school had laid much emphasis on encouraging practical journalistic training in original literary efforts which were published in "The Crimson and Gold", a monthly journal. Other original works of students appeared in Miss Wardlaw's Book of Essays. In 1910 and 1911 yearbooks, The Gleaner, were published. Martha Ordway was editor of the 1911 volume. Miss Ordway later became a teacher at Ward Belmont College.

Athletics were emphasized in "Physical Training" classes, with basketball, tennis, and croquet being played. A "match game" of basketball with a YWCA team was open to the public. The "public", however, was limited to "ladies and children". For the first time in its history, the school







MRS. J. H. HARKIN



MRS. A. D. K. HARKIN

The last administrators of Soule College.



The members of the 1910 senior class pictured from top left downward were Maud Campbell, Robbie Ring Hoover, Carrie Moore; Second Row: Louise Leach, Minerva Bond, Tempe Swope; Bottom Row: Margaret Gill, Secretary; Aline North, Treasurer; Laura Glendenin, Vice President; and Nadine Overall, President.



adopted a uniform--white middy blouse and dark blue or brown coat suit with matching hat.

Altie McKaig Todd of Murfreesboro was a "boarding girl" who said she had the best of two worlds. Her father would bring her good things to eat from the farm, while she enjoyed the conviviality of living with three girls in a big 10-foot square room. The older girls in the room taught her to "do her hair" and the proper method of dress and deportment.

At "recess", according to Mrs. Todd, a black woman brought in a basket of sandwiches which the girls could buy. She and another "boarding girl" had roller skates and a bicycle which they could use on the sidewalk for the block in front of the Soule College.

Social activities for the girls were increased. Properly chaperoned, the students watched the Mooney School football games. On Wednesday afternoons Stanley Overall invited the young ladies to enjoy the facilities of his skating rink.

"Teachers and pupils enjoyed the half hour intervening between supper and study hour. Everyone gathered in the library around the open fire. All kinds of games were played--flinch, muggins, proverbs, and charades being favorites," according to the memory of another boarding student of the Hyde-Hopkins era.

In addition to Mrs. Hyde and Miss Hopkins, the members of the last faculty at Soule College were Margaret Rhea Darn, science; Roxana Whitaker, ancient languages and mathematics; Elizabeth Thompson, primary and kindergarten; Martha Quarles, assistant academic department; Daisy Leuhon Hoffman, music; Gertrude Richards Schumacher, voice; Jennie Mai McQuiddy, expression and physical training; Mme. Lorene Gobel, art and modern language; and Catherine Reeves Bell, home department.

In February, 1917 the two women gave up the struggle against the competition with public schools, Tennessee College, and the Normal. The city



of Murfreesboro bought the property for \$4,000 and the assumption of some debts. The classes were moved to a house at 442 North Church Street and the boarding students to the Church of Christ minister's building on East Main Street. The final commencement was held in the Grand Theatre building on May 27, 1917.

When Mrs. Hyde and Miss Hopkins took charge of the school, every resident pupil for the first time was required to wear a school uniform--a brown or dark blue coat and hat for winter; the uniform skirt, white waist and hat for spring. To insure uniformity, the uniforms were ordered by the school. The rules also provided that each young lady have "a simple white dress for school entertainments". Underscored in the catalog was the strict rule that on "no occasion are low neck and short sleeves permitted."

Every resident pupil and teacher was required to furnish "a comfort, a pair of blankets, a white counterpane, two pair of sheets, two pair of pillow cases, towels, six table napkins, napkin rings, toilet soap, over-shoes and an umbrella".

Board, literary tuition, furnished room, fuel, lights, and laundry cost \$275 each session, with additional fees for "optional studies". These fees included \$70 for individual piano lessons, \$60 for voice or violin, \$50 for expression, \$50 for art, and \$25 for foreign languages.

There were literary societies at Soule as early as 1858. During the 1909-1917 period, organizations at the college included the Aletha Literary Society, the Thespian Literary Society, the Studio Club, the Dramatic Club, the Mozart Club, Choral Club, Y.W.C.A., and athletic teams and social activities.

The Murfreesboro Home Journal of the period had reports of basketball games between the "resident pupils and town pupils" to which only women and children were admitted.







STAR BASKET BALL TEAM, SOULE COLLEGE.



CRESCENT BASKET BALL TEAM, SOULE COLLEGE.

Rival athletic teams of 1903.







The Alethea Literary Society of 1911.

High drama at  
Soule College.  
Thespian Society  
production of  
"Blue Beard" with  
Augusta Higgins  
and Ethel Haney.





There are reports of "old-fashioned candy pulls, games, and charades." Description of a "delightful reception" given by the young ladies and faculty October 25, 1907 was reported in the Murfreesboro Home Journal:

"The spacious old parlors of historic Soule presented a charming scene with huge fires glowing in the grates, the mantels banked in flowers and autumn leaves. The young ladies were gowned in light colors. The Seniors were assisted in receiving by Miss Hopkins and Mrs. Hyde. All kinds of games were played, flinch, muggins, proverbs, and charades being the favorites. Delightful refreshments were served."

Mrs. Leiper (Richardson) Freeman, and the Licker sisters, Mrs. Ethel Haney and Mrs. Esther Maxwell are among present residents of Murfreesboro who recount many experiences of life at Soule College.

Mrs. J. D. McFarlin recalls her experiences at Soule College. Mattie Lowe and her sister, Elizabeth, boarded with an aunt who lived in Murfreesboro. They spent the weekends at home. Each Monday morning they would get up before daylight for a two-hour ride in a buggy driven by their mother to return to the home of the aunt.

As a former teacher, Mrs. McFarlin is in an especially strong position to evaluate the work of Soule College in its later years.

"The curriculum was more advanced than children would encounter today in the comparable grade and much more advanced than the "public school" children of that time could expect", she said.

The college work was probably equivalent to the first year of college today. Scholastic standards were very high. The grading system was of the E (Excellent), S (Satisfactory), and U (Unsatisfactory) type.

"Moral influence was outstanding", Mrs. McFarlin declared. The teachers used the honor system which was meticulously observed by the students.

In the "Our Family" compilation of Fount Henry Rion, genealogist, is a description of the effect of the Federal occupation of Soule on the neighborhood.



"Grandma's (Mrs. Fountain Jefferies Henry) home at that time, was a comfortable little brick cottage located diagonally across the street from Soule College. She had a large brick underground cistern filled with rain-water, the only source of water other than the 'town pump'.

Grandma told of the desolation as she stood on the porch, helpless, holding the baby in her arms, and my mother by the hand, as she watched everything she owned in the world being carried away." (Mrs. Henry's husband was with the Confederate army in the retreat from Murfreesboro in early Jan. 1863)

Virtually all the moveable assets of the College were destroyed by the contending armies or by vandals.

After the war, each dormitory room appeared to have been furnished by double beds, two wardrobes, a study table, lamps, and at least four chairs. This bare furnishing was supplemented by various amenities, including some type of toiletry accomodation. Mrs. Knox McCharen recalls that her mother obtained some of the rugs or carpets at a dispersal sale when the school was closed.

Mrs. Priscilla P. Weathersby of Clarksville has an eight-page handwritten essay on "Ireland" compiled by her grandmother, Pearl Frost. Such an essay was apparently one of her requirements for graduation from Soule College in 1879. Mrs. Weathersby also possesses an autograph album signed by classmates of Pearl Frost.

Mr. and Mrs. Walter King Hoover have many mementoes of Soule College students, including receipts signed by Miss V. O. Wardlaw for \$8 tuition paid by Anne Overall. A report card of Carmine Collier, signed by "John B. Thompson, President", of Soule College in 1908 indicates the grading system was based on points—180 points indicating perfection and below 100 points unsatisfactory grades.

Andrena Briney owns a picture of the entire student body of 1903 standing in front of the imposing building. A white fence surrounds the property.





One amusing incident is recalled by Mrs. McFarlin about 1908 or 1909 on April's Fool Day. The girls decided to "cut classes", but they dared not face the wrath of teachers should homework be unprepared. So the girls slipped in early and left their homework on the teacher's desks and left quickly. Later they learned the teachers had decided not to have classes on that day.

A horseshoe hanging by the classroom door was used when one wished to be excused to the bathroom. As one student replaced it, another would take it without disturbing the class or raising a hand in embarrassment.

Bishop L. Gailor was the commencement speaker for the class of 1908. The following year when Mrs. McFarlin graduated, Sawney Webb was the speaker. Mrs. McFarlin remembers that Bishop Gailor spoke for only 20 minutes, but she considered that address superior to that of the Webb School head.

Such joyous nostalgia remains in the minds of alumnae still living, yet they marked the beginning of the end. A decade later the headline in a Murfreesboro newspaper read: "Soule is not dead, but lives!"

The single significant sentence "impressively uttered by Miss Hopkins in her closing remarks before presenting diplomas" to the five last graduates of Soule College must have left a lasting impression on sympathetic minds of those who witnessed the finale of the sixty-fifth commencement.

The commencement was formally inaugurated on Friday morning, May 18, 1917 with Class Day at the Grand Theater. There was the usual baccalaureate Sunday morning service at the Methodist Church, with the Rev. Mr. Morgan stressing the necessity of "earnest, honest toil, service to the world and loyalty to the Savior".

Sue Gill Riggs, a member of the last class who lives in the Murfreesboro Chelsea Apartments, has preserved the class day and commencement programs, newspaper clippings of the events, and one verse of the class poem she delivered at the closing exercises. Recognizing the Soule College claim to





have been founded in 1825 as the "Female Academy", Miss Riggs recited:

For 93 years has Soule stood here  
Watching the sunrise from year to year  
Facing the rain, the wind, the snow  
Seeing the seasons come and go.

Her classmates were Jean Marie Faircloth, Ollie Mae Harrell, Mary Lytle Kelton, and Josephine Ramsey. Miss Ramsey was the class valedictorian. Miss Faircloth gave the salutatory. Miss Harrell was the class historian, and Miss Kelton, the author of the class will.

The Murfreesboro News Banner reporter wrote:

"The five beautiful girls in garments of spotless white . . . occupied the center of the stage. Mrs. Hyde and Miss Hopkins, the guiding geniuses of the school, sat at the left front, and Mr. R. W. Vickers, master of ceremonies, and the Rev. H. J. Mikell of Nashville, were on the right front."

There is little review of the Reverend Mikell's address, other than the statement that it was of "high literary merit whilst presenting a lesson of great value". Musical numbers by Mrs. Gertrude Richards Schumacher and Mrs. Will C. Hoffman "gave great delight and occasioned prolonged applause". The invocation was by Rev. G. Dallas Smith.

The closing remarks by Mrs. Hyde and Miss Hopkins occupied lengthy coverage in the Murfreesboro News Banner. Mrs. Hyde thanked all the friends and patrons of the school. "For more than half a century Soule has closed her doors until the fall--but on March 26th we went out and closed the doors of that grand, historic old building. Not one stain has ever been upon the fair name. Here's to the daughters of Soule, may your lamps shine bright as you shed your light . . . May the Master shower you with His love", she stated.

Miss Hopkins called attention to the graduates heritage and touched on the troubled war years when she said, "Class of 1917, you will enter the greatest University in the world--a University that knows no nationality, no race, no creed. I bid you be strong. I would not wish you all sunshine



and brightness, for that would lessen your appreciation for the fulness of joy. Shun not the struggle, take it, 'tis God's gift! Be strong in the power of his might, and all will be well with you".

Two tender and responsive sentiments live among the stories of this graduation. One is a newspaper story of a note penned to a sheaf of roses presented to Jean Marie Faircloth that read, "To Jean on her first real turn in the road. May she continue as she has ever been, a comfort and dependence to her mother."

There is the episode story of the member of the class who had no near relative to share her graduation joy. A Murfreesboro resident sent her a bouquet. The denouement occurred many years later when this woman received a present mailed from Neiman-Marcus in Dallas. Such a gift continued to come each year until this Murfreesboro Soule alumna, who had remembered a girl who was graduating without the traditional roses, died only a few years ago.

According to Barbara Prentice, a librarian at Morris Harvey College, the 1916-17 catalog lists both Mrs. Hyde and Miss Hopkins as members of the faculty at the Charleston, West Virginia institution. This suggests that the two women left Soule College in 1916 instead of 1917 as indicated by Murfreesboro records and the memory of local people. This same catalog credits Mrs. Hyde as holding the A.B. degree from Soule College and having "had courses at Peabody College". She taught logic and history at Morris Harvey until 1920.

Miss Hopkins also came to Morris Harvey, according to the same catalog, in 1916 and taught Bible and preparatory English until 1920.

Dr. Leonard Rigglesman, president of Morris Harvey from 1932 to 1964, stated in January 1978 that he remembered Mrs. Hyde and Miss Hopkins when he was a student at Morris Harvey. He recalled that in the 1930's the two





Last classes of Soule College were held in this building located on Church Street in the spring semester of 1917.



Jean Marie Faircloth (MacArthur) as she appeared in a Soule College dramatic production.





women were teaching in a small school at Paintsville, Kentucky, called Mayo College.

Soule College had a very active alumnae organization. As early as 1873,

The Christian Advocate reported that:

"At four o'clock a large assembly of the college alumnae met in the college for their annual reunion. It was like reviewing one's youth to meet with the happy band of former classmates, to witness attachment for their beloved Alma Mater. A beautiful address was read by Miss Maggie Muirhead (listed in Frank Bass's history as a member of the 1870 class)."

A complete list of graduates was preserved by the Alumnae Association through the class of 1910. Louise Richmond Freeman has supplied the names of the class of 1915, of which she was a member. Other members of the 1915 class were Sophia May Bell, Hilda Margaret Creech, Susie Mae Harrell, Ora Lee Haynes, Bessie Lee Hoover, Mamie Mullins, Virginia Patience, and Remina Woods.

Sue Gill Riggs lists other members of the 1917 class as Jean Marie Faircloth, Ollie Mae Harrell, Mary Lytle Kelton, and Josephine Ramsey. Miss Riggs report card dated May 21, 1917 was signed by Mrs. A. B. Hyde and lists grades in Bible 92, ethics 94, history 90, grammar 98, trigonometry 83, and French 96.

In comparison with modern college requirements, it is difficult to evaluate just how much Soule deserved the designation of a "College". Certainly its courses included some courses still measured as college credit by modern standards. In a 1916 advertisement, the school offered courses ranging "from primary through one and one half years of college work". According to the evaluation by N. C. Beasley, dean emeritus at Middle Tennessee State University, Soule credits for transfer varied from year to year with individual students. Students were accepted at Peabody College and Randolph-Macon College. At least one other institution accepted credits up to two years following completion of one year acceptable resident at the transfer school.







Primary Class of 1909

by 1911 when this picture was taken, the Primary Class members had changed from high button shoes, black cotton stockings and hair ribbon bows to white uniform dresses, the appearance of modish white stockings, and Buster Brown hair bobs.





The changing scene in Murfreesboro is dramatically revealed in reading the yearbook advertisements in the Gleaners of the first decade of the twentieth century. Professional men were not adverse to complimenting the young ladies of Soule with free legal advice, dentists provided the best of care, and the "joys of walking" were encouraged by shoe store merchants.

"Early to bed and early to rise, mind your own business and advertise" was an encouraging admonition introducing the advertising section of the yearbooks.

Sam Nirshbrunner, Hackmen advertised rubber-tired busses that met all trains. For those not sophisticated enough to ride the rubber-tired busses, there was "livery stable" accommodations by H. H. Good, Butler and Company, the Murfreesboro Livery Company, and Sam Hunt, whom one could call at Phone 10 or 100 and "save a dime".

There were mercantile establishments and professional people whose names are still seen around town. Among those were Ridley and Richardson, attorneys; J. H. Crichlow, insurance; W. R. Bell, jeweler and optometrist; Woodfin and Moore, funeral directors; Leatherman's Women's Wear; A. L. Smith, druggists; Christy and Huggins, coal and Coca Cola. This firm promised to "please you winter or summer".

Somewhat unusual for a girl's boarding school was a full page suggesting the use of Ox Fertilizers for sale by Spain and Hudson. Misses E and M Earhman used old English type to persuade the students to "Come Here and Buy Your Graduation Hat". E. H. Tatum had a competitor's plea to "buy your summer frocks for seashore and summer resorts".

The attorneys who offered legal services included E. H. Hancock, Ridley and Richardson, Z. T. Cason, Jesse W. Sparks, A. L. Todd. E. H. Hancock was also among the attorneys whose announcements graced the Gleaner. D. E. Logan, W. W. Jones, and L. H. Tate were dentists whose advertisements were listed.





The Jordan Hotel with F. W. Miles as proprietor advertised rooms for \$2.00 per day, with bath \$2.50.

Vickers Drug Store advertised Joy's cut flowers, while the Kerr Drug Store suggested it had the "best soda fount in town" and urged the use of Geny's cut flowers. R. F. Overall appealed to the girls to buy "Hay, Oats, Corn and Bran" while shipping "timothy, clover and millet hay". Perkins-Crichlow suggested one call phone 3 for "custom sawing".

Covington & Company paid for a full page in the Gleaner to boast that it was a "one price house" where one could select from the stock "larger than any before shown in Murfreesboro."

Among the other champions of the Soule yearbook staff were J. T. Rather, cotton, lumber, livestock; J. G. Smith and E. M. Littler, men's wear; W. T. Gerhardt, merchant tailor; Clayton and Draper, fine shoes; Lytle and Manson, produce house; Liveley's Art Studio; Frank Farris, staple and fancy groceries; Hooper Shoe Company; Henry Fleming of the Gilt Edge Grocery; Home Journal Printers; C. H. Byrn, hardware; H. H. Morton, real estate; Logan and King, real estate and insurance; J. M. Naylor and Ellis Rucker, grocers; Lewis Maney, confectioner; Blumenthal and Becker, jewelers; Butler, Hooper Co., men's furnishings; Baker Lumber Co; E. C. Cannon and Son, dry goods; J. B. Matthews, grocer; H. C. Turner, grocer; W. Goldstein, dry goods; Spain and Hudson, hardware; A. G. and W. H. Tompkins, poultry; Avent's Drug Store; W. G. Batey, insurance; King and Ragland, wholesale groceries; Campbell and Gannaway's Home Steam Laundry; J. B. and J. W. Gannaway, groceries; Ransom Brothers, millers; Baker Lumber and Manufacturing; Knox, Overall and Co., furniture and leather goods; E. H. Tatum, dry goods; P. R. Miller, funeral directors, Cohn's Cafe; and Mrs. W. H. Haynes, milliner. The First National Bank listed deposits at \$5,000,000 with F. O. Watts, president. Other officers were D. S. Williams, vice-president; E. A. Lindsey, 2nd vice-president; J. M. Ford, advisor; Randell Currell, cashier; Frank



K. Houston, assistant cashier, and J. R. Johnson, assistant cashier.

The students were urged to visit the "swellest refreshment parlor in the South" where they could get "dainty lunches, candies, and ice cream" at the Ocean. Apparently the chief rival of the Ocean was the Gilt Edge Grocery where Henry Fleming insisted, "College Girls can buy something good to eat". Lewis Maney challenged both with his suggestion that telephone orders would receive prompt attention for "table delicacies and everything good to eat", including Lawney's chocolates and bon-bons. He also had two phones to answer calls!

There were numerous Nashville firms represented in The Gleaner advertiser. The Methodist Publishing House apparently supplied the books and stationery for the school. B. H. Shief Jewelry; Parrish (\$2.98) Shoes located on 421 Union Street; Phillips and Buttorff; Starr Piano Co., Royal Shoe Co. (\$2.50), 314 Union Street; Ambrose Printing Co.; Standard Printing Co.; Jaccard Solid Gold Jewelry of St. Louis may have furnished designs in jewelry and stationery for clubs and literary societies, as well as programs and commencement invitations for the college.

Cumberland Telephone and Telegraph Company took a full page to insist on everyone getting Cumberland Telephone service. "We have exchanges in every important city in southern Indiana and Illinois and the entire states of Tennessee, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Louisana", according to the advertisement.

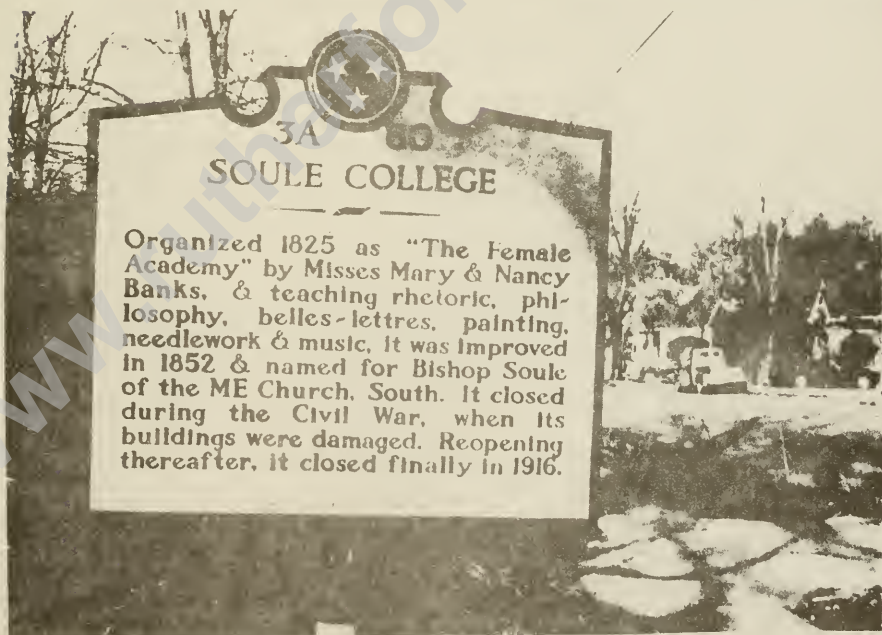
In his thesis, Frank Bass paid tribute to the "long existence which had influenced the lives of many fine people". Bass concludes, "Though the buildings were torn down, the property sold (to the Murfreesboro School Board for the location of the old Central High School Building), the memory of Soule College still lives in the hearts of many, and they like to join in the Toast to Soule".







Staff members of the 1910 Gleaner posed in a way that a glimpse of the study hall wall with its art work is revealed.



The Tennessee Historical Association marker on the north boundary of the Middle Tennessee Electric Membership Corporation marks the Soule College site in 1978.



Here's to the days we've spent at Soule,  
Here's to the days to come,  
Here's to the hours we've spent in work,  
Here's to the hours of fun;  
Here's to her fame through all the earth,  
Spreading from pole to pole,  
Here's to the College we all love best,  
Here's to our dear "Old Soule".



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Original materials and interviews contributed by Miss Catherine Clark, Mrs. Leiper, Sue Richardson Freeman, Mrs. Annie Mary Beasley, Mrs. J. D. McFarlin, Mrs. Jean Faircloth MacArthur, Miss Sue Riggs, Miss Bertha Licker, Mrs. Ethel L. Haney, Mrs. Esther L. Maxwell in the form of letters, report cards, diplomas, pictures and personal recollections.

The Alumni Office of Morris-Harvey College.

Photographs by Gene H. Sloan, Dr. Bealer Smotherman.



Index for Publication No. 11

Adams	71	Clayton	99
Allen	68	Coffee	8
Allerton	78-103	Cohn	99
Ambrose	100	Coldwell	31
Anna	14	Collier	73-91
Avent	61-63-99	Cooper	64
		Cornwallis	31
Baker	99	Covington	99
Baldwin	58-59-61-62	Cowen	31
	67	Cox	68
Banka	58	Craig	71
Barker	30	Cresch	96
Barlow	64-66	Crichlow	98-99
Barnum	40	Crockett	7-11-12
Bass	70-96-100-103	Cross	66
Bates	66	Currell	99
Batey	99	Curtiss	26-27
Beasley	78096-103		
Becker	99	Dann	86
Bedford	10	Davidson	31
Beer	29	Davis	25-26-30-31
Bell	86-96-98		33
Beesley	6	Deason	71
Benjamin	2	Dickson	31
Benton	8	Dixon	71
Blumenthal	99	Draper	99
Bock	66	Drumgoole	64
Bostic	68		
Bowles	58	Earthman	98
Boyd	33	Easten	71
Brigance	30	Eaton	69
Briney	91	Elkins	34
Brown	28	Earp	21
Bryant	31	Eton	71
Buchanan	23		
Burleson	28	Fairolcloth	93-94-95-96
Burton	58		103
Butler	98-99	Farria	99
Buttorff	100	Finley	58-60-61-62
Byrn	99		63-64-67
		Fleming	99-100
Cannon	66-99	Flemming	100
Callender	60-67-68	Fletcher	66
Campbell	60-61-99	Ford	34-35-66-99
Carney	61-70	Fowler	34
Carter	31	Freeman	90-96-103
Cason	98	Frost	91
Childress	6-66	Fry	74
Christy	98		
Clark	103	Gailbraith	74
Clay	63	Gailor	92





Ganewell	56	Keeble	8-69-70
Gannaway	99	Kelton	93-96
Gates	31	Kendall	17
Gerhardt	99	Kerr	99
Gill	64	Kimbro	66
Giltner	61	King	99
Glascock	74-84	Knapp	64
Cobel	86	Knox	99
Goldstein	99		
Good	98	Lea	70
Goodall	76	Leatherman	98
Goodrich	72	Ledbetter	33-66
Gowan	78	Lee	7-70
Graves	73	Leiper	103
Green	32	Lenoir	8-11
Gregg	28	Licker	90-103
Gunn	30	Lindsey	99
		Little	99
Hackman	98	Lively	99
Hall	66	Locke	31
Hamen	74	Logan	98-99
Hampton	32	Longstreet	7
Hancock	98	Lorance	31-33-34-35
Haney	90-103	Lowe	90
Hardeman	30	Lyon	25-60-61
Harlow	78	Lytle	61-66-99
Harrell	93-96		
Hartje	30	Madden	58
Hatcher	74	Malone	30-64
Haynes	96-99	Maney	99-100
Hemphill	28	Manson	99
Henderson	6-70-73-103	Mankin	36-42-50
Hendrick	43-52	Martin	73-76-77-78
Henry	90		79-80-81-82
Hickock	28		84
Hoffman	64-86-93	Matthews	99
Holloway	66	Maxwell	90-103
Hooper	2-99	McArthur	103
Hoover	68-91-96	McCulloch	7-8-10-11-12
Hopkins	60-61-84-86		13-14-15-16-17
	87-92-93-94		18-19-21-22-23
Horton	66		24-25-26-27-28
Houston	12-13-14-18		29-30
	24-100	McFadden	61-74
Hudson	98-99	McFarlin	90-92-103
Huggins	61-98	McFerrin	66-75
Hughes	74	McGharen	91
Hunt	98	McKinney	21
Hyde	60-84-86-87	MoLeod	28
	93-94-96	McQuiddy	86
		Meadors	64
Jackson	7	Mikell	93
Johnson	30-100	Miles	99
Johnston	7	Miller	99
Jones	66-74-98	Mitchell	8-31



Money	58	Riggs	92-93-96-103
Moody	62-63	Rion	90
Moore	32-60-61-66	Robertson	60
	69-70-71-98	Rolle	30
Morgan	31-66-92	Rose	30
Morton	99	Ross	66
Muirhead	96	Rucker	58-99
Mullins	96	Rutherford	32
Murfree	58-66		
		Sawrie	66
Naff	68	Scott	24
Naylor	99	Schumacher	86-93
Northcut	32	Searcey	80
Neilson	66	Shief	100
		Sims	61-77-103
Ordway	84	Sloan	58-103
Otis	30	Smith	66-74-93-98
Overall	32-33-37-60		99
	84-86-91-99	Smither	30
		Smotherman	103
Parish	8	Snead	60-73-74-76
Parker	61		77-78-80-81
Parrish	100		83-84
Patience	96	Soule	58-59
Paty	73	Spain	98-99
Pea	66	Sparks	98
Peabody	71	Speer	30-74
Pelican	27	Spence	60-61-63
Perkins	99	Spiller	30
Phillips	28-100	Spindle	81
Pierce	8-22-23	Spindell	80
Pittard	7	Steinhagen	69
Plumer	69	Stuart	7
Polk	6	Starr	30-100
Pollock	80	Strahn	74
Powell	23	Street	78-80
Prentice	94	Sullivan	33
Preston	50	Summer	68
Price	25-26	Summerhill	63
		Sumpter	32
Quarles	86	Swan	72
		Switzer	15
Ragland	99		
Ramsey	93-96	Tarlton	31
Randle	61-62	Tarrant	8
Ransom	52-69-71-99	Tate	98
Rather	99	Tatum	98-99
Ray	1	Taylor	16-76
Raymond	64	Thompson	32-64-70-71
Read	31		72-73-86-91
Ready	66	Todd	86-98
Reid	30	Tolman	75
Richardson	61-90-98	Tompkins	99
Ridley	98	Totty	32
Riggleman	94	Tucker	32



Turner	99
Twiggs	18-24
Van Dorn	26-27
Vickers	93-99
Wade	61
Walker	36
Ware	74
Wardlaw	73-74-75-76 77-78-79-80 81-82-83-84
	91
Warner	30
Watkins	61
Watts	99
Weathersby	91
Weakley	10
Webb	17-30
Wendal	61
West	60-71
Wharton	
Whitaker	86
Williams	99
Williford	32-33
White	32
Wolf	64
Woodfin	98
Woods	66-96
Wray	30
Young	23
Zierold	78-103

## DATE DUE

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DE 10 '94	
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WE 27 '95	
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MAR 21 '99	

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