



Rutherford County Historical Society
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2013-2014 OFFICERS
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 Editor: Susan Daniel

QUERY - Martha Trimble Davis (ca 1805-1875 Rutherford Co) was the half-sister of Commissioner Joseph Trimble (d.1858 Rutherford Co.) . She is my 3d great grandmother. The surviving children of Martha Trimble Davis and William Davis were: Nancy E. Davis bn 1823, m. 1838 to Wm. G. Woodfin (C.P.Minister), d. aft 1880 Neshoba MS; Mary Jane Davis bn 1827, m. 1844 Albert Jefferson Calhoun d. 1867 Smith Co., TX; Joseph Trimble Davis bn ca 1830, m. Jane. According to the inventory of the property sold from Martha Trimble Davis' estate recorded on May 15, 1875, there were two family Bibles purchased by her son Joseph Trimble Davis. Does anyone still have these Bibles or family pictures? A typescript of a family history compiled by J. A. LeConte in 1934 refers to pictures of Martha Trimble Davis. Sarah Ollison, Society Member sssomi@aol.com

Sunday, January 19, 2014, BOARD Meeting - 2 pm at Ransom School.

Monday, January 20, 2014, Regular Meeting - 7 pm at Rutherford Co. Archives, 435 Rice St., Murfreesboro - Our own Bruce Johnson will be speaker. He says: "I will present a short history of the Global Positioning System, GPS, and my involvement. Just how relevant that might be depends upon how many members have cell phones with GPS or other electronic GPS products."

All meetings are free and open to the public. Membership in the Rutherford County Historical Society is open to all persons. Annual membership dues of \$25 per person/family are to be paid by September 1st of each year. Each annual membership is entitled to 6 issues of "Frow Chips". Meetings are held the 3rd Monday of each month [except November and December] at 7:00 p.m. (See Daily News Journal "Calendar of Events" for information on each monthly meeting). The November meeting is set aside for the Annual Membership Banquet. There is no meeting in December. Regular meetings will be held at the Rutherford Co. Archive, 435 Rice St.

Monday, February 17, 2014, Regular Meeting - 7 pm at Rutherford Co. Archives, 435 Rice St., Murfreesboro - Speaker: Antoinette G. van Zelm, historian at the Center for Historic Preservation. Topic: She will discuss women and their involvement in the military occupation in Murfreesboro during the Civil War. She will focus mainly on Alice Ready, Kate Carney and Emma Lane.

Web site [includes publication list]:
www.rutherfordtnhistory.org

Publications for sale:

Extra copies of Frow Chips\$4.00
 For past publications, please contact Susan Daniel (615)849-3823 (sgdaniel@comcast.net) or write the Society at the above address.

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" My Ancestral Kin" by David M. Vaughn

Rutherford County Historical Society member, David Miles Vaughn of Gallatin, TN, has written a book about his ancestors with surnames, to name a few: **Anderson, Crockett, Lewis, Kelton, Sims, Sloan, Snell, Vaughn** and more. David started this book project back in February of 2013 and had it completed in September. He had this book done for his family and cousins to enjoy what research he has been working on for the past six years. He had to keep it quiet for 3 months, since it was given out this past Christmas as a present to his family. He has printed 50 numbered hardback editions. He has some copies left for sale and also the book can be ordered with a sample viewing of 23 pages at this link: <http://www.blurb.com/books/4931083-my-ancestral-kin>, The book "My Ancestral Kin" is 180 pages with over 340 pictures.

David has loved finding and is still finding new family connections to add to his database. Since his start David has become a member of the Sons of the American Revolution from patriot William Kelton and has added his first SAR supplemental Col. Anthony Crockett. David is working on 2 more SAR supplementals for Leonard Henley Sims and Col. Robert Lewis. David is also a member of the General Society of the War 1812 and the Sons of the Confederate Veterans. David will be presenting a copy of his book at the January 20th RCHS meeting to be on permanent display at the Archives. David hopes that everyone gets a chance to stop by the Rutherford County Archives and view his book and hopefully there is something inside you did not know or some dates you need for your own research

RANSOM SCHOOL HOUSE IS OPEN ON SATURDAY MORNINGS

The RANSOM SCHOOL HOUSE is now open on Saturdays, 9-12 a.m. If you would like to come and do research using our publications, purchase any of our publications, or just take a tour of the 1920s classroom and the building itself, someone will be there to greet you and assist you. We also need members to greet visitors. For further information or to sign up, contact: Gwen Boyd - 895-0028

FROM THE PRESIDENT: Our Society will be remembered in 2013 through our publication "Frow Chips," and books written by our members adding to Rutherford County's history. Oaklands Historic Museum included the RCHS-Ransom School on their Annual Tour of Homes event, Dec. 7th. Decorating for the event began early Saturday morning. Jeff Adcock and Jonathan Fagan managed to bring a large cedar tree into the board room. The tree was decorated with old fashioned construction paper chains, icicles, paper snow flakes, glass ornaments and lights. People on the tour commented, "it reminds me of our family tree when I was young." Each room, also, had decorations from members on display. The open house started at 4 pm with the Middle TN Christian Elementary School Chorus singing Christmas carols and holiday songs. Greg Tucker and Dr. E. C. Tolbert were the docents in the school room. They talked to people about our school room, exhibit and history. Vicki Norton was dressed in 1920-1930 clothing. Some of C. B. Arnett's books were given as gifts to visitors. Hopefully a few of these books will encourage more people to take an interest in Rutherford County history. Typical questions from people on the tour were, how long had the RCHS been in the 717 N. Academy location, what hours and days is the building open. When and where does the RCHS hold monthly meetings. All of these questions are answered on our web site.

My thanks to members helping with the open house - E. C. Tolbert, Greg Tucker, Don Detwiler, Bruce & Joyce Johnson, Vicki & Russell Norton, Jeff Adcock, Jonathan Fagan and Sandra Snow. Wishing everyone a Happy 2013 New Year!
Joyce Johnson, President

A NEW ENGLAND PREACHER VISITS THE SOUTH

by E. C. Tolbert, M.D.

The Rev. Daniel Jackson was a Free Will Baptist preacher who resided with his family in Gardiner, Maine. He provides us with some valuable observations, particularly as they related to the institution of slavery, in his little book entitled Religious Experience, Call to the Ministry, and Gospel Lessons. Jackson was a frail gentleman beset with chronic throat and chest problems which hampered his travels in the South. He was a staunch abolitionist, as one would surmise, and abhorred the practice of slavery. He chose at the age of 50 to embark on his southern visit to Tennessee, and Middle Tennessee specifically, during the year 1854-1855. His book was published by Applegate and Co. in 1859, out of Cincinnati, Ohio. This book about which we write, is an onerous work which affords us wonderful insight into life in Middle Tennessee during the mid-19th century.

Billy Worley, of the Floraton Road in Rutherford County and a member of the Rutherford County Historical Society, purchased in an estate sale several years ago a box containing ephemera among which was this small book written by Daniel Jackson.

Interestingly, Mr. Jackson decided to venture on a sojourn "among slave-holders" in Tennessee. In November, 1854, he left his family and friends in Maine and proceeded on this excursion over a period of a few weeks, finally arriving by stagecoach in Nashville, Tennessee.

He stayed briefly at the Nashville Inn and had his first encounter with a black person. A young slave boy came to his room while at the Inn. The boy asked Mr. Jackson, "What country are you from?" Jackson told him that there were no slaves in Maine, and the boy asked how far away is this state and by "What point of compass it was." The boy was advised that Maine was far north. Their conversation was interrupted abruptly, and Jackson stated, "My inquirer suddenly left me and hastened from the room, as if afraid to be found in my presence. Although my sympathies were greatly excited in his behalf, I was glad to be left alone, as I might otherwise have been suspected of some secret design." He did not want to appear solicitous in the company of a rapacious landlord.

Jackson then journeyed from Nashville to Murfreesboro. His initial experience in Murfreesboro was an unpleasant one, but he would ultimately return for another more pleasant visit to the city. He said, "I arrived in Murfreesboro about dark, called for entertainment at a public house; and my soul, for about two hours, was annoyed with vulgar and profane conversation. A drunkard and eight or ten other persons, led on by the landlord himself, consumed the whole evening in disgusting, low bred, and heart-sickening talk; while I, for want of a separate apartment, must endure the fumigations of alcoholic stench, and be crucified with the clamors of corrupt society." Remember this was pre-Civil War Murfreesboro in 1853. Murfreesboro was rife with taverns, house of ill repute, and debauchery galore—not what we today would like to think of our

city as having been. Jackson, unfortunately, was in Murfreesboro only briefly and did not have the opportunity to encounter the more affluent populace of the town on this initial visit.

Jackson traveled by stagecoach about forty miles to McMinnville. He makes no mention of a stopover in Woodbury or Cannon County. Remember it had been formed in 1836. He proceeded on to "the green waters of the Cana [sic] Fork" and the home of a Mr. Muzzy where he remained for about two weeks. He became a party of the "camp ground" meetings there, and noted the worshiper's assembly and gathering into the "log meetinghouse." He observed that "the preaching clearly evinced the sincerity of the preacher, and the singing was musical, and seemed to be the simple, spontaneous effusions of pious hearts." In contrast to Murfreesboro, the people here were beneficent, good natured and friendly.

His entourage proceeded on to Sparta, "the shire-town of White County." He noted that he was "warmly greeted by the Methodist brethren and their pastor, who requested me to preach for him on the following Sabbath." He then traveled to the little known community of Greenwood and the home of a John Warren, where he remained for three weeks, "during which time they did every thing in their power to make me comfortable and happy." Jackson stated that Mr. Warren was "a planter of considerable wealth, and I found it at all times, a very easy matter to approach him on the subject of slavery. Among his slaves was a white boy; almost as white as though no African blood coursed in his veins. I asked Mr. Warren if he expected to keep that boy after arriving to the age of manhood? He replied that he had been thinking of that for some time. I told him if that boy should live to be a man, he would spill his blood, before he would be kept as a slave." The conversation ended here and Mr. Warren did not take offense at this discussion. Perhaps a rhetorical questions might follow—Could this slave boy have been a son of Warren?

Jackson's southern tour returned him from White County to "the beautiful town of McMinnville, in the center of which is the Court House of Warren County." It was here that he met John Powell, a Baptist minister.

The New England preacher was in the meetinghouse on one occasion when preacher Powell addressed the slaves in the area. "In contrasting the present condition of the slaves with their future state, the preacher told them that in the heavenly world they would be free! Just at the instant when his listening audience were about to taste the joys of freedom, it seemed that the speaker had to make an effort to smother the flame and cool down the ardor of his soul, which evidently filled their bosoms with disappointment." After the sermon the slaves were told that they might sing. "During the song, they appeared to recover from their disappointment, and in spite of chains and whips, they tasted largely of that freedom which grows spontaneously in the land of the heavenly Canaan. While singing the closing hymn, the congregation left their seats consecutively and marched in regular succession by the front of the pulpit, extending the hand at the same time, to the preacher and myself."

Jackson stated that "this meeting was a feast of fat things; it gave me more real pleasure than any one meeting I attended while south." The New Englander noted that Mr. Powell, who preached to the colored people, was a man of warm Christian feelings, and was of high moral standards, and he himself was not a slave owner, "but knowing where he was, he felt the necessity of governing himself accordingly."

While visiting in Warren County, preacher Jackson had a pleasant encounter with an unnamed planter and slave-holder. Jackson remarked, "Seeing the male and female slaves, each plowing with a horse team, I observed to him that I never saw women engaged in that kind of business until I came south." The planter asked Jackson how he perceived slavery, and he proceeded to give a critique of the practice by focusing on three major problems with the system.

The first problem Jackson felt was caused by the breaking up of the family circle, and separating them forever at public sales. He said, "On these occasions, husbands and wives are torn from each other, and their children consigned to hopeless bondage. After the husband is knocked off to the highest bidder, you will see the wife, perhaps with an infant in her arms, pleading to be sold to the same purchaser so as not to be separated from her husband. Can the whole family be sold together? No! It wouldn't pay. The dividing line is drawn forever, and they are driven off like a herd of cattle in separate droves."

Secondly, Jackson shared with the planter that many slaves were the children of their own masters. He suggested that "I would not charge all slave-holders with this sin by any means, but many of them live in connection with a wicked and filthy concubinage, rear their own children for the market, and then pocket the money. As one proof of this unholy amalgamation, look at the various shades of color, from the jet black to the whitened-out face of the delicate young lady, who is equally exposed to the auction block in case of a public sale."

Thirdly, preacher Jackson said he could not accept the fact that it was criminal for the planter to teach the slaves to read and write. He said, "They have souls like others, but are doomed to darkness and ignorance; they sometimes hear the priests talk about God, but are not permitted to read his holy word, which would be a lamp to their feet and a light unto their path."

The planter, it was said, acknowledged the truth of Jackson's statements, but contended that the evils of the system could not easily be avoided. Jackson stated that the planter accepted his analysis of the peculiar institution of slavery and was not adamant or contentious in Jackson's forthrightness regarding the practice.

Preacher Jackson concluded his visit to McMinnville and took a stagecoach to Winchester in Franklin County. It was here that he met a Mr. Graves, President of the Female College of Winchester. He was impressed with the quality of education that was rendered at this institution. While in Winchester he attended the County Court where he witnessed the trial of many cases, e.g., one man was tried for murder and was acquitted. Another was tried for shooting a Negro, but the owner of the slave lost his case. He noted that it was difficult to obtain justice at the hands of a slavocratic [sic] tribunal, for cruelties perpetuated upon the poor slave.

Jackson had made such a positive impression upon the people in Winchester that he was called to the pastorate there. "Brother Jackson the object of this meeting is to converse with you on the subject of your becoming our pastor. We are prepared to invite you to that office and to offer you five hundred dollars annually for your support." An interesting exchange ensued in regards to this abolitionist preacher from the North filling the pulpit of a southern church. The conversation by Jackson follows:

"In case I should come South and form such a connection as you

propose, what construction should you put upon it? That is, in doing so, should I in your judgment, give my sanction to slavery or should I not? The reply was, 'You would not.' We are aware that we are making propositions of a serious nature to a Northern man; one who possesses, as we suppose, Northern sympathies and Northern principles. We do not expect that you feel on the subject of slavery as we do, nor view it in the same light. Now, if you come to reside with us as our pastor, you may be social and free with us on the subject; that is, you may say to us what you please in our families and on all private occasions, but if you preach against slavery in the pulpit, you will peril your own safety and throw us all as a church, into confusion. Now, if these private liberties which we are free to give you, will satisfy your conscience, you are the man we want for our pastor; but if you must publicly preach against slavery, there is no more to be said on the subject."

It follows that preacher Jackson would not accept the pastorate. He noted that the committee was open and frank on the question of slavery.

Jackson then left for Shelbyville, the popular seat of Bedford County, and there called upon a Doctor Barksdale. He took advantage of multiple opportunities to discuss the subject of slavery with Dr. Barksdale, himself an avowed slave-holder. These discussions were held in a spirit of pleasantness, "although we did not agree as to the divine authority of the peculiar system."

Finally he left Shelbyville and arrived back in Murfreesboro prior to leaving for home to New England. In Murfreesboro on this occasion he stayed briefly with the Rev. Mr. Shelton, professor of the Hebrew and Greek languages in Union University, and was also pastor of the Baptist Church in Murfreesboro. Jackson subsequently moved on to Nashville and stayed overnight, afterwards boarding a steamboat and proceeded about 200 miles down the Cumberland River to Paducah, and then boarded another boat to sail up the Ohio River and homeward, ultimately arriving safe at home in Gardiner, Maine on May 1, 1855.

In summary, this northern preacher visited five Middle Tennessee counties and found southern hospitality surprisingly at its best. It is not clear as to his selection of these counties for his itinerary. What would have been his observations if his tour had included Maury, Williamson, Robertson with its huge Wessington Plantation with a slave holding greater than 200 slaves, Sumner, and Wilson counties? The institution of slavery was to be his focus, and his analysis was candid and forthright. He apparently did not see evidence of an impending war—only some five years away. This treatise is a valuable and informative analysis of southern life and its intricacies in the mid-19th century, and how it came to deal with the slave issue. Jackson provided us with a challenging dilemma for our country and the South in particular. [Editor's Note: Billy Worley is gifting this book to the Rutherford County Archives in perpetuity.]

Ed. Note: NUMBER OF SLAVES IN MIDDLE TENNESSEE 1850-1860

Abstract of slaves from the **1850** U. S. Census Slave Schedules:

Rutherford County - 12,731

Bedford County - 7,105

Warren County - 3,312

Franklin County - 5,227

Maury County - 14,266

Williamson County - 14,304

Robertson County - 4,441

Sumner County - 8,002

Wilson County - 8,726

Davidson County - 15,867
 Cannon County - 2,445
 Abstract of slaves from the **1860** U. S. Census Slave Schedules:
 Rutherford County - 12,986
 Bedford County - 6,746
 Warren County - 2,320
 Franklin County - 3,607

Maury County - 14,656
 Williamson County - 12,395
 Robertson County - 4,864
 Sumner County - 7,700
 Wilson County - 7,991
 Davidson County - 15,696
 Cannon County - 978

RUTHERFORD COUNTY'S NOTABLE NATIVES IN THE CIVIL WAR

REMEMBER THE ALAMO: from Texas to Tennessee The McCulloch Brothers, Generals Benjamin and Henry by Shirley Farris Jones

The date of March 6 marked the anniversary of one of the most courageous, albeit ill-fated and hopeless stand-offs in American history, when fewer than 200 brave Americans attempted to hold off a Mexican army of more than 6,000 in the fight for Texas independence. Despite the odds, they managed to do the impossible for thirteen days. When it was over, approximately 189 men died in the defense of the Alamo, 32 among them from Tennessee, including Davy Crockett. And, had fate not intervened in the way of a simple case of measles, two of Rutherford County's own would have been among the casualties. These two would go on to distinguish themselves and fight another day.

Few families could boast of having two sons attain the rank of Brigadier General during the Civil War but of the twelve children born to Alexander McCulloch and his wife, Frances Fisher LeNoir McCulloch, two of their boys would do just that. Both were born near Old Jefferson in Rutherford County -- Benjamin on November 11, 1811 and Henry Eustace on December 6, 1816. In the fall of 1820, when Ben was 10 and Henry was 5, the family moved to Alabama, then a few years later, on to west Tennessee, finally settling at Dyersburg, where one of their closest neighbors was David Crockett. Ben, especially, would be greatly influenced by Crockett. When the disillusioned Crockett headed for Texas in 1835, Ben and Henry decided to share in the adventure. They were scheduled to meet Crockett's Tennessee boys at Nacogdoches on Christmas Day, but Ben was bedridden with measles and sick for several weeks, a delay which prevented them from arriving in San Antonio until after the Alamo had fallen on March 6, 1836.

Ben joined Sam Houston's Army in the Texas fight for independence and at the Battle of San Jacinto on April 21, 1836 received a battlefield commission as first lieutenant. Over the next three years he would be granted certificates for almost 1,000 acres of Texas land but left the army to come back to Tennessee, only to return a few months later with a company of thirty volunteers, commanded by Robert Crockett, David's son. After serving as a land surveyor for a time in the new Republic of Texas, McCulloch joined the Texas Rangers where he earned the reputation as a being a very good Indian fighter, favoring shotguns, pistols, and Bowie knives to the regulation saber and carbine. He was elected to the Republic of Texas House of Representatives in 1838, and then again in 1845, as a representative to the first Texas state legislature. In the spring of 1846, McCulloch was appointed Major General in command of all Texas militia west of the Colorado River and when war broke out with Mexico, was named Chief of Scouts under Gen. Zachary Taylor, promoted to Major, and became known nationwide for his daring exploits in northern Mexico. By this time, he was 36 years old and had never married. McCulloch once said of himself, that he was "*not handsome enough to marry to advantage.*"

Family members however felt his restless spirit and unwillingness to settle down in one place as the main reason.

McCulloch joined the gold rush to California in 1849 and served as Sheriff of Sacramento, California from 1849-1852, then returned to Texas as a U.S. Marshall. In 1858, he was appointed Federal commissioner to Utah, but with the coming of the Civil War, once again returned to Texas where he was commissioned a colonel and given orders to capture the Federal garrison at San Antonio. Successfully carrying out these orders, he was then appointed Brigadier General by President Jefferson Davis. His orders sent him to Missouri and Arkansas where he was in command of the Indian Territory. On August 10, 1861 McCulloch led his men to victory at the Battle of Wilson's Creek, Missouri. That next spring, on March 7, 1862, McCulloch commanded the Confederate right wing at the Battle of Pea Ridge, Arkansas, and as McCulloch rode forward ahead of his troops to scout out enemy positions, was shot by an enemy sharpshooter. McCulloch was known for his dislike of army uniforms and when carried from the battlefield, was wearing a black velvet suit, patent leather high-top boots, and a broad-brimmed Texas hat. ... He was taken to a field hospital and when told by a physician that he had only a few moments to live, he looked up and said, "*Oh Hell.*" He then turned his head and died.

Ben McCulloch was first buried on the field at Pea Ridge, later removed with other casualties of the battle to a cemetery in Little Rock, and finally re-interred in the Texas State Cemetery in Austin.

Although perhaps not quite as illustrious as that of his brother, Henry Eustace McCulloch's career mirrored Ben's in many aspects. Like Ben, Henry was a land surveyor for the Republic of Texas and made a reputation for himself as an Indian fighter. Henry was a member of the Gonzales Texas Rangers in 1839, and was elected to the Republic of Texas House of Representatives. The campaign turned out to be both contentious and slanderous between the candidates, resulting in a rifle duel with Henry's opponent, Reuben Ross, who inflicted a crippling wound to Henry's arm. The next year issues flared up again and Henry killed Ross in a pistol fight.

Unlike Ben who remained single, Henry married Isabella Ashby on August 20, 1840, and over the coming years, they would become the parents of a dozen children. For the next couple of years, Henry served as a scout, both against the Comanche Indians and Mexico and was elected sheriff of Gonzales in 1843. The following year, he moved his family to Sequin, where he commanded a Ranger Company for several years. He was elected to the House of Representatives in 1853 and to the Senate in 1855. Like Ben, he too, received an appointment as U.S. Marshall for the eastern district of Texas and was a delegate to the Texas secession convention in January of 1861.

Henry received a commission as colonel to the Texas Provisional Army and on March 4, 1861 was appointed commander of the 1st Texas Cavalry Regiment, which was the first Texas cavalry regiment to enter Confederate service. On March 14, 1861, Henry was promoted to Brigadier General, and was soon in command of various districts throughout Texas. April of 1863 found McCulloch in Louisiana leading the Third Brigade of General John G. Walker's division, where he participated

in the Red River Campaign, the Camden Expedition, and the Battle of Milliken's Bend, an early phase of the Vicksburg Campaign. McCulloch was back in Texas during 1864 and 1865, and in charge of the Western Sub-District of Texas under the command of Gen. John B. Magruder, dealing not only with Confederate deserters and bushwhackers, but also the almost constant threat of Indian raids. More fortunate than Ben, Henry survived and returned to his home in Seguin at the end of the war, only to find it necessary to have an armed escort due to threats against his life from deserters.

The retired general worked during post-war years with the railroad for a time and also as superintendent for the Deaf and Dumb Asylum near Austin. He enjoyed his retirement, entertaining distinguished visitors in his home, giving interviews, and providing information to historical writers. There are several letters in possession of the Texas State Library written by Henry McCulloch during the 1890's which provide a good account of both his and his brother's activities during the Texas Revolution and under the Republic.

Henry McCulloch died March 12, 1895 at Rockport, Texas. He was buried in San Geronimo Cemetery in Seguin with full Masonic rites.

The two Rutherford County siblings, Ben and Henry McCulloch, were the only brothers known to serve as

WILLIAM BARSDALE

by Shirley Farris Jones

It has been said that, "based upon population, Rutherford County furnished more men to the Confederate cause than any other county in the state." At least six men born in Rutherford County rose to the rank of Brigadier General either before or during the War Between the States, including William Barksdale, Ben McCulloch, Henry Eustace McCulloch, Winfield Scott Featherston, Joseph Palmer, and Thomas Benton Smith. Of these, Palmer would be the only one to make his life long home in the county in which he was born. Others left their footprints in history in their adopted states.

William Barksdale was born near Smyrna in the Old Jefferson community in Rutherford County on August 21, 1821, the son of William and Nancy Barksdale. His early education was received attending local public schools in the community and later the University of Nashville. When he was 16, William and his two brothers were sent to Mississippi where he studied law. Barksdale was admitted to the bar in 1839 and began his practice in Columbus, Mississippi at the age of 21. However, he gave up his practice to become the editor of a pro-slavery newspaper, the Columbus Democrat.

Barksdale's military career began during the Mexican War when he enlisted in the 2nd Mississippi Infantry Regiment. Serving as both Quartermaster and Captain, he was often involved in infantry fighting as well. He decided to enter politics in 1852 and was chosen as a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in Baltimore. The next year, on March 4, 1853, Barksdale was elected as a States Right's Democrat to the lower house of the Thirty-third Congress. He served four consecutive terms in this position until January 12, 1861, when Mississippi seceded from the Union. Barksdale was a strong advocate of secession, and considered to be one of the most ferocious of the "Fire-Eaters" in the House. Some of his notoriety came about because of his accompanying Representative Preston S. Brooks of South Carolina to the Senate Chamber and standing by Brooks' side as he attacked the abolitionist Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner with a cane. This event was a result of Senator Sumner's ardent anti-slavery comments and criticism against a South Carolina Senator's "Crime Against Kansas" speech in 1856. Although Barksdale was quite conspicuous in preventing the

interference of others who were present, he was not one of members that the House tried to censure afterward.

Barksdale's service to the Confederate States began with his resignation from Congress following Mississippi's adoption of the Ordinance of Secession. When told by one of his northern colleagues that the South would not be allowed to leave the Union, he answered, "*Sir, the army that invades the South to subjugate her will never return; their bodies will enrich Southern soil.*" His first appointment was that of adjutant general, and then Quartermaster General of all Mississippi Troops. He soon entered the regular army and was promoted on May 1 to Colonel of the Thirteenth Regiment of Mississippi Volunteers, and led this regiment into battle at First Manassas in July 21, 1861. He then took his regiment to Virginia that following spring and fought in the Peninsula Campaign through the Seven Days Battle. It was on June 29, 1862 at the Battle of Savage's Station when Barksdale's brigade commander, Brig. Gen. Richard Griffith, was fatally wounded that Barksdale assumed command and led the brigade in a heroic, albeit bloody and futile charge, at the Battle of Malvern Hill. Afterward, the brigade would be known as "Barksdale's Mississippi Brigade." His bravery had earned another promotion and it was said of him that he "*displayed the Highest qualities of the soldier - Seizing the colors himself, and advancing under a terrific fire of artillery and Infantry.*" On August 12, 1862, Barksdale was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General and assigned to the brigade in which his old regiment, the 13th Mississippi, belonged.

Barksdale's Brigade was stationed at Harpers Ferry during the Northern Virginia Campaign, but did not participate in the Second Battle of Manassas. This brigade was assigned to the division of Maj. Gen. Lafayette McLaws in Lt. Gen. James Longstreet's First Corps of the Army of Northern Virginia during the Maryland Campaign and saw fierce fighting during the attack on Maryland Heights, Antietam, Fredericksburg, and Chancellorsville in May of 1863.

July 2 found Barksdale's Brigade at the Battle of Gettysburg, arriving with McLaws's Division well after midnight, having missed the first day of battle on July 1. At that point, General Lee's plan called for Longstreet's Corps "*to maneuver into position and attack northeast, up the Emmitsburg Road, to roll up the Union left flank.*" The planned attack placed Barksdale's men directly at the tip of the salient of the Union line across from the Peach Orchard. Barksdale repeatedly requested permission from both McLaws and Longstreet to charge "*that little battery across the way,*" referring to the 9th Massachusetts Battery but each time was told to wait. He insisted that "*Give me just five minutes, and that battery and it's guns will be ours.*" Finally, Barksdale called all of the commanders of his regiments together and gave them the orders he had helped formulate with Longstreet and McLaws. Referring to the Federals approximately 600 yards ahead, he told his men: "*The line in front must be broken. To do so, let every Officer and man animate his comrades by his personal presence in the front line.*" In what a Union colonel would later describe as "*the grandest charge that was ever made by mortal man,*" Barksdale's men burst from the woods and crushed the Federal front of U.S. General Graham's brigade at the Peach Orchard. Barksdale, riding a fine white charger, was "*in front, leading the way, hat off, his wispy hair shining.*" He had broken the Union line and gone as far as Plum Run, capturing one mile of enemy held territory, but his men were unable to hold their position or advance to stronger ones because reinforcements from Generals Wofford and Semmes were not forthcoming. It was in the area of Plum Run that Barksdale was first wounded in his left knee, but stayed in command, and then hit by a cannonball to his left foot, which nearly took the foot off. With the third shot, a bullet wound to his chest, he was mortally wounded and knocked off his horse. He told his aide, W. R. Boyd,

"I am killed! Tell my wife and children that I died fighting at my post." His troops had no choice but to leave him on the field where he fell and he died the next morning, July 3, 1863, in a Union field hospital. William Barksdale is buried in Greenwood Cemetery, Jackson, Mississippi.

BROMFIELD RIDLEY, JR.

by Shirley Farris Jones

Bromfield Ridley, Jr. was born on January 31, 1845 at "Fairmont", the plantation home of his parents, Bromfield Lewis Ridley, Sr. and Rebecca Thompson Crosthwaite Ridley, located in the Old Jefferson community of Rutherford County. Before the Civil War, his father served as chancellor of the Fourth Chancery Division, and was a prominent planter and jurist. Being a very strong secessionist in his political sentiments, Bromfield Ridley, Sr. was forced to leave Rutherford County after the fall of Fort Donelson. The Ridley's were considered to be among the wealthiest families of the area and young Bromfield, Jr., along with his four brothers, grew up enjoying the status and comforts afforded those of the Southern aristocracy. And, like so many other young men of the day, Bromfield, Jr. attended the Nashville Military Institute prior to the Civil War.

Bromfield Ridley, Sr. enjoyed intimate friendships with many of the state's most influential citizens and had been a colleague of General A. P. Stewart at Cumberland University in Lebanon, Tennessee. When his sons joined the Confederate Army, they appear to have enjoyed privileges not typical of the ordinary soldier.

At the time of the Battle of Stones River, Bromfield was a mere lad of seventeen, and at that time saw himself

as one of what was known as the 'Seed Corn of the South,' too young to be called on for service, the limit being eighteen. I would go along with the soldier boys 'bearded like the pard, jealous in honor, seeking bubble reputation at the cannon's mouth,' and join in the revelry --raids in progress about the State insane asylum, dashes on the chicken road, also about Nolensville, the Hermitage, around Nashville, Lebanon, Gallatin, and other places.(1)

And, it was during the Battle of Stones River on one of these such "outings" that he and four or five other boys, not members of any command, engaged in "picking up" some 212 Federal stragglers and turned them over to the Confederate pickets at Black's Shop.

I had brothers in Morgan's cavalry, stationed at Black's shop, the intersection of the Murfreesboro and Lebanon and Jefferson and Milton pikes, and a brother in Braggs army, and my father's home was, of course, the rendezvous of many on our side. Wharton's cavalry was near Triune, in front of Hardee. Wheeler was below Lavergne, while John Morgan was at Black's shop watching approaches from Lebanon.(2)

And when Bromfield compiled his journal with his thoughts of the battle and in particular the day of Breckinridge's Charge at McFadden's Ford he would remember his Mother's concern for her husband and sons:

... about three o'clock on Friday the firing of artillery and small arms was more terrific than usual. A fearful battle was evidently in progress. It turned out to be Breckinridge's fatal charge ... that he was driving one or two lines into the river ... when fifty-two pieces of artillery opened up and almost decimated his ranks. On that Friday, my dear mother made her way to Murfreesboro through the Confederate pickets to look after husband and sons, and reached there, after passing through long lines of cavalry mounted, and ready for the conflict.(3)

Bromfield obviously had great admiration for the "Thunderbolt of the Confederacy" when he wrote:

On December 8, 1862 ... we received the news that General John Morgan had taken his own command and Hanson's Kentucky brigade and captured 2,000 prisoners at Hartsville. Morgan returned a lion, and my young heart leaped with joy when I went up to Black's shop and saw the 2,000 blue coats filling by. Every tongue was in his praise, and the Confederate congress congratulated the brilliant achievement.(4)

It was not surprising that Bromfield would join up with Company F, Ward's Regiment, Morgan's Cavalry and follow the regiment through the battles of Milton, Carthage, Lancaster, Ky., Snow Hill, Grassy Creek, Ky, and McMinnville. Then, in July of 1863, when the Confederate Army was encamped at Tullahoma, young Ridley was ordered to report to Major-General A. P. Stewart, as an aid-de-camp. He would remain with Stewart throughout all of the campaigns under the general's command until the end of the war. Stewart would later say of him: *He served with me, very creditably, to the end of the war, or 'the surrender' as it is usually termed.(5)*

After the war, Ridley returned home and attended Cumberland University School of Law in Lebanon. Following graduation, he made his home in Murfreesboro where he was a junior partner in the law firm with his father. He served as Murfreesboro City Alderman from 1878 to 1881, and then on December 4, 1879 married Idelette DeBur Lyon. In 1892 Bromfield Ridley was one of three innovative citizens who established the Murfreesboro Street Railway. Unfortunately, the company, consisting of eight cars, 24 mules, terminal barns, and three miles of track, lasted only about a year. But Ridley believed in the recovery of the post-war years and in the future of Murfreesboro, and was not intimidated by the failure of the street car venture. That same year, he and his two business partners started the Murfreesboro Water Works, and sometime later, began the laying of sewer lines within the city.

In 1906, Ridley published Battles and Sketches of the Army of Tennessee, and he would say of his writing: *The journal is that of a boy, and the sketches where written by the author are as impressions made upon a boy.(6)* He continued to practice law in Murfreesboro until his death on January 12, 1917 and is buried in Evergreen Cemetery.

Notes on Bromfield Ridley, Jr.

1. Ridley, Bromfield L. BATTLES AND SKETCHES OF THE ARMY OF TENNESSEE. Originally Published: Missouri Printing & Publishing Co., Mexico, Missouri, 1906. Reprinted 1995, Morningside House, Inc., Dayton, Ohio., p. 149. 2. Ibid., p. 148. 3. Ibid., p. 354. 4. Ibid., p. 149. 5. Ibid., p. xi. 6. Ibid. Prefatory Note.

JOSEPH PALMER

by Shirley Farris Jones

While Rutherford County can boast of having five men born in the county who would earn the rank of brigadier general either before or during the Civil War, there was only one who would make Murfreesboro his lifelong home. Joseph B. Palmer was the only general to serve in the Confederate Army who was living in the county at the beginning of the war. He fought in two battles for his hometown and was one of the most, if not the most, frequently wounded general on either side, being wounded six different times in battle. When the war ended, Joseph Palmer was commanding all of the Tennesseans still in Confederate service, and was one of the few generals, perhaps the only one, who took all of his men back to their home state. Characteristically, no general of the Civil War better represented his native state more ably than did General Joseph B. Palmer of Tennessee. It was said of him by his peers that "He was a man of ability, of courage and of convictions. "His whole life was clean and admirable."(1)

Joseph Benjamin Palmer was born on November 1, 1825, the son of William and Mildred Johns Palmer, in the Walter Hill area near the Stones River. After his parents separated, and his mother's death in 1831, young Joseph was reared by his maternal grandparents, Joseph and Elizabeth Johns. On January 1, 1844, nineteen year old Joseph enrolled in Union University. After attending school there for two years, finances did not permit his continuing until graduation; he was however accepted into the law office of Hardy Murfree Burton, where he "read" or studied law until he was admitted to the Rutherford County legal bar in 1848. He was soon able to open his own office when only twenty-two years old, and was known to be a good lawyer, both professionally and morally. He became interested in politics and was soon a leader of Whig party. At age twenty-four, he was elected to represent his district in the Tennessee General Assembly. Hard working and very conscientious, he was elected to a second term. At age twenty-eight, on February 14, 1854, Joseph married Ophelia Maria Burrus, later described in *Prominent Tennesseans* as "one of the most beautiful women that Tennessee ever produced." (2) Sadly, their marriage lasted less than two and a half years before her untimely death. Their only son, Horace, was less than a year old, and his grief-stricken father would remain a widower for the next thirteen years. A year before his wife's death and no longer a state legislator, Joseph had been elected Mayor of Murfreesboro and served four consecutive years, 1855-1859. The 1860 Census shows Joseph Palmer, lawyer, living with his four year old son, Horace. He was the owner of nine slaves, and these, along with the rest of his personal estate, was valued at \$14,000, in addition to real estate appraised at \$1,200; thus, Joseph Palmer was a fairly wealthy man. (3)

Although pro-Union and strongly opposed to secession initially, that philosophy changed with the firing on Fort Sumter and Lincoln's subsequent call for each state to send their quota of troops to stop the rebellion. Joseph Palmer chose loyalty to his state above loyalty to his nation, as was the case with so many nineteenth century men, and in so doing, turned his back on a very successful law practice and comfortable lifestyle, including parenting of his young son. In April 1861, Joseph began with the organization of Company C, 18th Tennessee Infantry, and on May 20, 1861, was commissioned Captain. After training at Camp Trousdale, along with companies from other parts of the state, Regiments were being formed and on June 11, 1861 the 18th Tennessee Volunteer Infantry Regiment, including Company C, Palmer's men, along with nine other companies, was officially organized. This was primarily a Middle Tennessee outfit. Capt. Palmer was elected unanimously as its commander and commissioned as Colonel Joseph B. Palmer, a rank he would retain for nearly three and a half years. (4) Palmer was well-liked and quite respected by his men and despite his lack of formal military training, under his capable leadership the 18th Tennessee Infantry became an outstanding fighting unit. After the war, General Palmer wrote a condensed history of the regiment and in his own words stated:

The regiment was organized on the 11th of June, 1861, at Camp Trousdale, this state, by the election of Palmer as colonel. It consisted of ten companies and among the captains were: M. R. Rushing, W. R. Butler, B. F. Webb, B. G. Wood, all of this county. On Colonel Palmer's staff were R. P. Crockett, captain; Thomas Wood, commissary with rank of captain; Dr. John Patterson as surgeon, and other Rutherford countians. The first battle in which the regiment participated was at Fort Donelson, which, after hard and stubborn fighting and much suffering, surrendered to the Federal forces on February 16, 1862.

Col. Palmer and his field officers were imprisoned at Fort Warren, Boston Harbor. All of the officers and men were

exchanged in September, 1862. The regiment was organized, when Palmer was again elected colonel, and W. R. Butler, lieutenant colonel. This regiment was attached to the command of General John C. Brown. ...

After Colonel Palmer was breveted to the rank of brigadier-general, it was known as Palmer's Brigade. It was surrendered at Goldsboro, North Carolina on May 2, 1865. At the battle of Murfreesboro General Palmer was wounded three times, in the famous but devastating Breckinridge's Charge, once by a Minnie ball through the calf of the leg, once through the shoulder and a shell wound on the knee. But he did not leave the field till the close of the engagement, and then brought off his regiment in good order.(5)

The Battle of Stones River December 31, 1862 - January 2, 1863 was devastating to both to Palmer and his men. Palmer's Brigade suffered 425 casualties over the three days of fighting; 49 men killed, 324 wounded, and 52 missing. The 18th Tennessee reported 19 killed, 108 wounded, and 8 missing, the majority of which occurred on January 2. This totals 135 casualties of the 430 fit for duty at the time, a casualty rate of more than 31 percent.(6) Bragg's Army began its sad retreat from Murfreesboro on January 4, 1863, leaving the wounded Palmer "in the neighborhood of Allisionia"(7) and his hometown in the hands of the enemy for the duration of the war.

Following his recovery from wounds received at Murfreesboro, Palmer would rejoin his men in time for the Battle of Chickamauga on September 19, where he would again be severely wounded, once again in his right shoulder. This left him temporarily unfit for active field duty, and he was appointed to district command in the Dept. of Tennessee on November 18, 1863. He resumed Brigade command on June 27, 1864 in the Army of Tennessee and participated in the Atlanta Campaign. Palmer fought during the Battle of Jonesborough, and was wounded on September 1, 1864.

Following a lengthy and painful recovery, he once again rejoined the field of battle and was commissioned a brigadier general on November 15, 1864.(7) Palmer fought in the Battle of Franklin on November 30 and then the Battle of Nashville on December 15-16. He was part of the army's rear guard during the retreat from Nashville, after which what remained of the pitiful Tennessee regiments of the Army of Tennessee were consolidated and placed under Palmer's command. He would lead them on thru the 1865 Carolinas Campaign. Palmer participated in the Battle of Bentonville, was once again wounded, but stayed in command until April 26, 1865, surrendering on May 1 along with Gen. Joseph E. Johnston and paroled from Greensboro, North Carolina. (9)

Palmer returned to Murfreesboro and resumed his law practice. He married Mrs. Margaret Mason, a widow he had met during the war, on June 10, 1869 and they would make their home on East Main Street in a fine, new brick home. Joseph Palmer died on November 4, 1890 and is buried in Evergreen Cemetery.

Notes on General Palmer

1. Neff, Robert O. Tennessee's Battered Brigadier: The Life of General Joseph B. Palmer, CSA. Hillsboro Press, Franklin, TN, 2000. Comments from one of his associates, unidentified, in Bench and Bar, p. 354. 2. Ibid. 3. Ibid. 4. Ibid. 5. Henderson, C.C. The Story of Murfreesboro, originally published by The News-Banner Publishing Company, Murfreesboro, TN 1929. Reprinted: 1977: The Franklin Publishing Co., Franklin, TN. 6. Pittard, Mabel. Tennessee County History Series: Rutherford County. Memphis State University Press, Memphis, TN, 1984. 7. Neff, Robert O. Tennessee's Battered Brigadier. Allisionia is a small community located near Eagleville. 8. Ibid. 9. "Some Information about the Petitioners for

Pardon", Confederate Amnesty Papers , Rutherford County Historical Society Frow Chips, Vol 39, Issue No. 2, November/December 2009, p. 7.

MARY KATE PATTERSON

by Shirley Farris Jones

Spying wasn't just for the boys! It was dangerous business for everyone involved -- male or female -- and the punishment for anyone caught could be imprisonment or worse, such as banishment or hanging. The American Civil War was the first war in which women could take such an active role without the fear of losing their status as "ladies" and they were involved in just about every aspect of the war effort. Without a voice and without a vote, ladies made their presence known, proving their worth alongside their male counterparts in ways never before imagined. It was quickly recognized that there was a lot more beneath their bonnets than just a bunch of pretty curls.

Mary Kate Patterson was born on October 15, 1844 in Warren County, Kentucky. She was the daughter of Dr. Hugh Patterson and his wife, Eleanora. The family, which included four boys and two girls, moved to Tennessee circa 1850 and actually lived in Davidson County on Nolensville Road in a community known as Rashboro. The area was so near the Rutherford County line that when the LaVergne Post Office was established in 1857, it would be the one to handle their mail. Although not a direct native per se, Kate's ties to Rutherford Countians would go far beyond mail delivery.

As a young girl, Mary Kate attended the old Elliott School in Nashville and the prestigious Nashville Female Academy. She was described as being "vivacious ... with flashing brown eyes and bouncy dark brown curls." (1) As with so many other young people of the 1850's era, her education was interrupted by the Civil War.

During the War, Mary Kate's brother, Everard Meade Patterson, served with the Coleman Scouts, and it was thru this association that she would meet her future husband, John G. Davis, brother of Sam. The Patterson home was oftentimes used as a headquarters for the group. A raised or lowered shutter could signify an all-clear or danger to those watching while a lighted lamp placed in a certain window at night would also bear its own message.

Since Mary Kate's father was a doctor, he was able to obtain much needed medical supplies, such as quinine and morphine, for the Confederacy. Mary Kate and her cousin, Robbie Woodruff, made frequent trips to Nashville, and wearing voluminous riding habits, were able to conceal large quantities of the drugs. And she also had a special built buggy with a false bottom:

In the large seat of my buggy I would often bring out cavalry saddles, bridles, boots, spurs, gray cloth, and I smuggled medicines such as quinine, morphine, etc. I have brought \$500 and \$600 worth of medicine out at one time around my waist. Quinine and morphine were very high.(2)

Mary Kate used her charm and beauty in obtaining information, newspapers, and medical supplies from Union soldiers in Nashville. She felt that it was imperative to maintain good relations with the Federal officer in charge:

I always keep on the good side of the Commanding General and could get passes when I desired to do so (3) thus allowing her to pass through Yankee lines at just about any time. She once stated, I went to Nashville very often so I always kept posted; had many confidential friends there, always ready to help me when asked.(4)

But if there was only a short time for her to acquire urgently needed supplies, Mary Kate would make the seven to nine mile journey to Nashville on horseback.

The Patterson home often served as a meeting place for the Coleman Scouts. A raised or lowered shutter could either signal all clear or danger while a lighted lamp placed in a certain window would send its own message. It was during one of the Coleman Scouts rendezvous at the Patterson home that Mary Kate met and fell in love with John Davis, older half-brother of Sam Davis. She and John were eventually married on February 25, 1864, and it has been said that if ever young Sam had a serious love interest in any girl, then it would have been Kate's cousin, Robbie Woodruff. Kate developed a warm friendship with Sam, and even had a pair of fine boots made for him in Nashville, never dreaming that these boots would "walk" him up the gallows to his death.

On the night of November 14, 1863, Sam tossed a pebble against a window of the Patterson home and told Mary Kate that he would be spending the next few days in "Rains Thicket" and gave her a list of much needed supplies he needed her to acquire in Nashville for General Bragg. He asked her to bring breakfast and horse feed to him the next morning and requested that Robbie Woodruff come along as well and spend the day.

We found him up, looking as bright as if he had slept all night, and, oh, he did enjoy his good warm breakfast, for we rode fast and had his coffee in a jug to keep it warm. Two of my little brothers brought our dinner and we spent a nice, pleasant Sunday together -- the last he spent on earth but one.(5)

Enjoying a brief interlude from the war that Sunday of November 15, the three young people had a pleasant day during their time together. On Monday, Mary Kate and Robbie went to Nashville on their "shopping" expedition. Sam had the items she had procured, including three "wash balls" of soap, a tooth brush, Louisville and Cincinnati newspapers, and a notebook in his possession when captured. But Kate's identity was safe and went to the grave with her young friend that fateful Friday, November 27, 1863.

When the Davis family received news that a young soldier bearing a strong likeness to that of Sam had been hanged as a spy, the family feared the worst. John Davis was quite sick with typhoid fever and the ever-loyal friend of the family, the fearless Mary Kate, was appointed the task of determining if this was their son. In her typical heroic and courageous manner, Mary Kate went to Major General L. Harrison Rousseau, requesting a pass to immediately go to Pulaski to be near the bedside of a dear aunt who was dying. Although advised to wait until morning, Mary Kate and her cousin nine year old, Willie Woodruff, set out immediately, crossing the swollen Duck River in darkness. While in Pulaski, Mary Kate and Willie stayed in the home of a Dr. Batts and his family, which ironically overlooked the very gallows where Sam Davis was hanged. It was this sad news that Kate brought back to the Davis family, and a few days later, John Kennedy and Sam's youngest brother, Oscar, returned to Pulaski to claim Sam's body.

This was not the first tragedy that would test Kate's strength. Just a little over four years later, on February 27, 1867, her beloved husband, John Davis, was killed in a steamboat explosion, along with Capt. Shaw. Kate would wed two more times, next to a Mr. Hill, who died young, the third time, on December 30, 1884 to a former Confederate soldier, Colonel Robert Kyle, of Texas. They made their home in Rutherford County near LaVergne.

Mary Kate Patterson died on July 6, 1931, at the age of 93. Her dedication to the South and to the Confederacy never diminished. She visited Confederate veterans in rest homes and made monetary contributions far beyond what she could afford. She was the first woman to be buried in Confederate Circle at Mount Olivet Cemetery in Nashville.

Notes for Kate Patterson

1. Dunn, Marion Herndon. "The Unsinkable Mary Kate," p. 1. Internet site: <http://tennessee-scv.org/Camp1293/unsinkable.htm> 2. "Samuel Davis' Sister-in-Law", Conf. Vet. Magazine, Vol. IV, February 1896. Internet site: <http://tennessee-scv.org/colemanscouts/marykatecv.htm> 3. Ibid. 4. Ibid. 5. Ibid.

WILLIAM LEDBETTER, JR. and THE RUTHERFORD RIFLES

by Shirley Farris Jones

William Ledbetter, Jr. was born on April 21, 1831, the son of William Ledbetter, Sr. and Eliza Welborn Ledbetter. The Ledbetter family would have to be included among the earliest and most prominent Rutherford County citizens, settling here in 1815 when Isaac and Nancy King Ledbetter arrived from Brunswick County, Virginia. William Sr. was a very successful planter and plantation owner, serving as mayor of Murfreesboro in 1825 and 1827, later as Circuit Court Clerk, and then State Senator. He was also appointed President of the Planters Union Bank in Murfreesboro. William Jr. grew up enjoying the advantages of an affluent family lifestyle and attended Union University prior to the Civil War. On May 6, 1857, he and Mary Catherine Lytle were married.

In early 1861, when all of the unrest and talk of secession began in Rutherford County, both William Ledbetter Jr. and Sr. were among the leaders of the secessionist movement. And, William Sr. was granted a \$7,500 advance by The Tennessee Legislature to build an armory in Murfreesboro crafting "Harpers Ferry" rifles for the Army of Tennessee. Somewhere between 240 and 480 of these rifles were produced by the Ledbetter Armory during the war.(1) How many would actually find their way into the hands of local men serving the Confederacy is not known.

On April 23, 1861 a group of men gathered at the Rutherford County Court House intent on organizing a military company. All of the men were of good character and many were descendants of the earliest settlers of the area. They would come to be known as the Rutherford Rifles, which would become Company I, First Tennessee Infantry Regiment, with William Ledbetter, Jr. serving as its captain, and George Maney commanding. Many of the names of men who were part of this company then, in addition to Ledbetter, are very familiar to present day Rutherford County, i.e. Murfree, James, King, Anderson, Avent, Bass, Batey, Becton, Beesley, Blair, Brothers, Butler, Carney, Cates, Crichlow, Crockett, Davis, Hall, Halliburton, Haynes, Holloway, Jarrett, Jetton, Jenkins, King, McFarlin, Miller, Mitchell, Morton, Ransom, Rucker, etc.

And some were not from Rutherford County:

There were four Germans in Company I, Ledbetter's, all of whom made valiant soldiers and splendid citizens of Murfreesboro after the war. They were: Fred Crass, who came here in 1856, Adam Bock and George Walter and a young German named Loeb, all of whom came here a short time after the arrival of Crass. /The first three mentioned died in this city, greatly loved and respected by the community on account of their sterling traits of character. (2)

The men spent about a week in daily drills before departing the Murfreesboro Depot on May 2, 1861 when hundreds of citizens turned out for a farewell parade. They arrived in Nashville at 11:00 a.m. that morning and marched around the square to the tune of "Annie Laurie."(3) July would find them training at Camp Cheatham. They were mustered into Confederate service on August 1, 1861 and would prove themselves to be one of the most outstanding companies from the county, seeing action at Shiloh, Murfreesboro, Chickamauga, Kennesaw Mountain, the Atlanta Campaign, and then in Hood's invasion to re-take Tennessee. Alfred Horsley of Columbia, Tennessee had this to say of the Rutherford Rifles:

The Butlers of our regiment were fine soldiers. Jack, captain of the Railroad Company, and Joe, his brother, lieutenant, refined and handsome as a woman, but brave as Caesar, literally shot to pieces at Perryville, Doc [William Ledbetter, Jr.] in stature like a Roman gladiator, shot at Missionary Ridge. For years we had seen his grand Apollo-like form in the front of the Rutherford Rifles, rendered more majestic by comparison with the diminutive form of captain "Doc" Ledbetter. No matter how dark the night or how long the march, when the 'imminent perilous edge of battle' was in sight, the Rutherford Rifles always had a long battle line and "Doc" Ledbetter was at the head. I often recall him and his company, as they appeared before battle. I think ... the Rutherford Rifles was the best company in the 1st Tennessee Regiment. Sam Davis who died at Pulaski rather than betray a confidence was a member of the Rutherford Rifles. ... If all the men in the Southern army had been like the Rutherford Rifles, we could have camped on the shores of Lake Erie instead of the Chattahoochie. My memory is a picture gallery in which is seen this splendid company of men at the moment of battle -- all others looking like skeletons, but the Rutherford company of men, a long line of tall, majestic men. Caesar would have placed them in his "Tenth Legion" or Napoleon in his "Old Guard." The Ransoms, the Wades, the Kings, the Bezles (Beazles), the Jarrats were all grand men, but like Saul, "Doc" Ledbetter rose proudly preeminent above them all, and poor Hardy Murfree, the best of men, his memory is worthy to be honored with the tears of all good and brave men. All honor to Rutherford County.(4)

Spencer Akin, General Agent with the Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis Railway, wrote a letter to family members and said this of Capt. Ledbetter:

He was a glorious man in a glorious cause, a true soldier and an honest gentleman, a steady comrade and friend.(5) And, Capt. Ledbetter said of himself that he was the oldest captain in the First Tennessee Volunteers (he was 30 years old at the time of his enlistment), that he was the smallest in stature (five feet six inches tall), that he had the largest company in the regiment, and more men than any other company that were over six feet tall.(6)

Capt. Ledbetter would lead his men ably and nobly throughout the war, suffering wounds first at Atlanta on July 22, while leading his company in the charge on Union earthworks south of Bald Hill, and then again just four months later at the ill-fated Battle of Franklin. He was captured by Union Forces on December 3, 1864 near Versailles, Kentucky and the next month, January 1865, would escape while en-route from Louisville, Kentucky to a Fort Delaware Federal prison.(7)

He escaped by jumping from a rail car into an icy river, recuperated with locals who protected and nursed him to health, and rejoined the Confederates, only to surrender May 4, 1865 in Athens, GA.(8)

There were approximately 150 young men in the Rutherford Rifles who went to war in 1861, and four years later, of those from Murfreesboro, only eleven would return home.

Capt. Ledbetter was paroled but upon his return home, found that his father had died during his absence, and his house, which was located on the Salem Pike (Hwy. 99) and still standing today, confiscated by Yankees to be later auctioned in bankruptcy. Sadly, *the family was forced to live in an un-partitioned room above the Planters Union Bank on the Murfreesboro square, hanging sheets to provide some semblance of*

privacy. (9) This was the same bank where his father had served as President before the war.

Ledbetter turned his life to public service after the war, serving as City Alderman from 1871-1875 and City Treasurer from 1874-1875. He died on July 15, 1906 and is buried in Evergreen Cemetery.

Notes for William Ledbetter, Jr.

1. Fagan, Jonathan. "Rutherford Rifles Fire True," article in Murfreesboro Post newspaper, July 17, 2011, p. 15. 2. Henderson, C. C. THE STORY

OF MURFREESBORO. Originally published by The News-Banner Publishing Co., Murfreesboro, TN, 1929. Reprinted 1977 by The Franklin Publishing Co., Franklin, TN., p. 84. 3. Fagan, Jonathan. 4. Wray, Henry G., editor. "The Rutherford Rifles," Rutherford County Historical Society Publication, No. 5, Spring, 1975, pp. 43-44. 5. Pittard, Mabel. "The Rutherford Rifles," Rutherford County Historical Society Publication, No. 31, Summer, 1988, p. 6. 6. Ibid. 7. Ibid. 8. Fagan, Jonathan. 9. Ibid.

IN MEMORIAM

Victor G. Ristvedt, Jr. (1955 - 2013) member & past Board member of the Rutherford Co. Historical Society.

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