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RUTHERFORD COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Publication No. 14



Sketch by Jimmy Matheny

THE JOHN LYTLE HOUSE



Winter 1980

Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37130

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The Cover

The cover is a drawing of John Taylor Lytle's home which once stood on the Franklin Road six miles from Murfreesboro. The house was torn down a few years ago and a new home built on the same site is now owned by the J. B. McNeil family.

Appreciation is given to James Matheny for drawing the cover, County Executive Ben Hall McFarlin and Mrs. Ladelle Craddock, who were very helpful in preparing this publication for printing. The authors and persons who furnished articles used in this publication-Dr. Ernest Hooper, Jane Snell Woods, Tom L. Russell, Clarice Miller and Edna Fry are also due the appreciation and thanks from the Rutherford County Historical Society.

RUTHERFORD COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PUBLICATION NO. 14

Published by the

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FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE

THE FIRST CENTURY

Ernest Hooper

"Rev. Robert Henderson settled among us and Commenced his Labours June first 1811." This inscription on the fly leaf of the first record book of the congregation indicates that Presbyterians were worshipping in the vicinity of Murfree Spring at least ten months before the formal organization of the congregation which is recorded as follows:

April 1812

A number of persons living in the neighborhood of Murfree Spring in Rutherford County, Tennessee, being desirous that a church should be organized in that neighborhood of the Presbyterian order, met, and were accordingly organized into a church denominated the Murfree Spring Church, by the Rev. Robert Henderson. . . .

Next the record lists three ruling elders: Robert Wasson, John Smith, William D. Baird and, then, fifteen other charter members: Joseph Dickson, Margaret Dickson, Mary Dickson, Isabella Smith, John Henry, Susanna Henry, Frances Henderson, Mary Stewart, Abigail Baird, Margaret Jetton, Mrs. Samuel Wilson, Grace Williams, Elizabeth Kelton, Margaret Wasson, Jane C. Smith. Assuming that each surname represented a separate family, there were eleven families represented.¹

From 1812 to 1818 the minutes only list the names of the ministers: Robert Henderson, Thomas J. Hall, James Bowman, George Newton, and Jesse Alexander. It appears that the congregation worshipped twice a month, first in a log schoolhouse near the spring then in another near the present site of St. Paul's Episcopal Church.²

The Reverend Mr. Henderson had moved to Columbia in 1813 and, in addition to preaching, had taught school. One of his students was James



**Reverend William Eagleton, D.D.
Minister, 1829-1866**

This portrait was presented to First Presbyterian Church by the artist, Richard C. Shacklett, on January 11, 1976.

In 1829, Dr. Eagleton was laid to rest beside his wife (who had preceded him in death about two years before) in the burial plot on the plantation of their daughter and her husband, Elvira Eagleton Campbell and Samuel Campbell. The Burial Site is three miles southwest of Murfreesboro on the Midland Road.

K. Polk who was destined to have several connections with the Presbyterian Church in Murfreesboro. Perhaps, on Henderson's advice, he came to Murfreesboro and studied for a year in the academy of another Presbyterian, the Reverend Samuel P. Black. In 1819, he would return as clerk of the Senate and serve through the special session of 1822, which met in the First Presbyterian Church after the courthouse burned. In 1823, he entered the House of Representatives from Maury County. On New Year's Day 1824, he married Sarah Childress, another Presbyterian, with her pastor and his teacher, the Reverend Dr. Robert Henderson officiating.³ Greeneville College had conferred a doctorate in divinity on Henderson in 1818, the same year he returned to Murfreesboro to serve the church he had founded six years before.

Murfreesboro and the Murfree Spring congregation were born about the same time, and in October 1818 the congregation changed its name to First Presbyterian Church, Murfreesboro. By April 1, 1820 it had built a brick building on Vine [then known as Church] Street. While the minutes do not mention the construction, William Lytle's deed, of that date, mentions the church building upon it.⁴ Later (1837) the city bought land to the east and south for a cemetery. When the congregation moved in 1867, it sold its property for burial plots and the land is now included in the Old City Cemetery area.

The building was approximately forty by sixty feet with a cupola, probably capped by a dome. There were three large doors facing Vine. A vestibule had stairs on either side leading to the gallery which surrounded the east, north, and west walls of the sanctuary. The north part was the choir loft, and a pipe organ was installed about 1855. In the sanctuary

there were eight-foot pews on the east and west sides with a twelve-foot pew in the center, probably twelve or fourteen rows since the capacity was estimated at two hundred fifty to three hundred. The pulpit was approximately five by ten feet and two or three steps above the floor.⁵

There are only four references to the property in the minutes before the Civil War. We may hope that this reflected the Session's conviction that the Church was the body of believers and not the building. There is no record of the number of communicants when Dr. Henderson returned in 1818, but there were seventy when he left in 1825. He had seen the Church grow four-fold in thirteen years. A newspaper notice expressing thanks indicated that he also taught school while in Murfreesboro.⁶

The Reverend Dr. John W. Hall succeeded Dr. Henderson, and the first fairly complete report recorded was in September 1826 for the previous year. The year had begun with seventy communicants; ten had been added by letter and twenty-one by examination; ten had been removed from the roll: six by dismissal, one by suspension, and three by death; leaving ninety-one communicants, a gain of twenty-one or thirty percent. Two adults and thirty infants had been baptized. The minister had been promised \$400 per year and the congregation had given a total of \$176.50 to benevolences: \$21.00 to Chickasaw missions, \$1.00 to domestic missions, \$1.00 to Presbyterial Fund, \$133.00 to a theological seminary and \$20.50 to an educational fund. Dr. Hall moved to Gallatin in 1829.

The most remarkable pastorate in the nineteenth century began in December 1829 when the Reverend William Eagleton, D. D. brought his family across the Cumberlands from Southern and Western Seminary in Maryville and from the Grassy Valley Presbyterian Church. Dr. Eagleton had been educated

by a very remarkable minister and teacher. When Dr. Isaac Anderson concluded that he could not persuade enough ministers to come to the Southwest, he founded the Southern and Western Seminary in Maryville--forerunner of Maryville College. Young William was ordained and served the Presbyterian Church in Kingston until he was called back to teach in the Seminary. Meantime he had married Margaret Ewing, also of Blount County, in 1817. Dr. Eagleton's skill as a teacher is attested by the fact that after his son, George, graduated from Union University in 1851, he studied theology with his father for a year and was admitted by examination for the other two years of seminary training, one at Maryville and the other at Union Seminary in New York.

Dr. Eagleton was also an effective evangelist, both in the church and in the camp meetings which were so popular. The records are incomplete, but for the twenty-eight years for which we have the figures, there was an average of twenty-four additions per year and an average membership of 217. Despite the fact that this was still a frontier area and large numbers of adults were moving in, the ratio of admissions by profession to those by certificate was better than four to one, 544 to 128. This growth was even more remarkable when we note that a number of members left over a church schism about 1840, that sixty-odd were encouraged to organize a congregation at Kelton Camp Ground in 1838 and another thirty-three organized a congregation at Sulphur Springs about 1854.

The controversies which split Presbyterians in the late 1830s divided the Murfreesboro congregation briefly. The names of the two groups are confusing, but in the 1830s, the general assemblies of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. were riven by struggles between the New School group which

wished to continue the cooperation and easy fellowship with the Congregational Church, which had prevailed as they sought to evangelize the frontier, and the Old School group which objected to receiving ministers into Presbyterian fellowship unless they fully accepted the standards of the Westminster Confession of Faith. The Old School group also wished to establish denominational agencies instead of participating in the interdenominational mission boards that had been established. The Old School group secured control in the assemblies of 1837 and 1838, expelled several presbyteries and synods, and established denominational boards.

In the fall of 1839, the Synod of West Tennessee, meeting at Huntsville, Alabama, divided and Dr. Eagleton and Elder William D. Baird affiliated with the New School Synod. When Eagleton and Baird returned to Murfreesboro, they found Elders James Maney and Johnathan Currin prepared with resolutions repudiating their actions and declaring that the Church would adhere to the Old School Synod. One of the resolutions bore eloquent testimony to Dr. Eagleton's stature; it declared that the repudiation was necessary "not from any want of confidence in the ministerial qualifications or piety of our beloved pastor" but because he had withdrawn himself from the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. When the resolutions were put to a vote, Maney and Currin voted aye. Elders George Calhoon and David Mitchell voted nay. Elder Baird declined to vote, feeling it unconstitutional. This left the moderator, Dr. Eagleton, under the awkward necessity of breaking the tie, and he voted nay. Dr. Maney and Mr. Currin promptly entered a protest claiming to be the constitutional Session and entitled to the books, muniments, etc.

There is not space here to trace the fascinating effort at conciliation; we may summarize by saying that Dr. Eagleton and the three New School members of the Session regularly acknowledged the rights of the Old School members to worship in the building and offered to divide the use of the building according to the number of adherents of the two sides, which this group judged as 188 New School to 18 Old School, but no satisfactory arrangement was worked out. A congregational meeting elected Samuel Hodge and David Wendel to the Session in early April 1840, and the congregation supported the ideas of the New School church courts. It switched its support from a ministerial student who sided with the Old School party and it supported benevolences through the various interdenominational agencies.

The sentiments were indicated by a contribution of \$53.25 in January 1841 to the American Tract Society for foreign distribution. Later in the same month, it made a contribution of \$30.00 to constitute Dr. Eagleton a life member of the A.M.E.S. which appears to have been an interdenominational education society. In April of 1841, the Session proposed to call attention to the benevolence requests of Shiloh Presbytery: domestic missions, foreign missions under the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, and the education of young men for the ministry. However, it pled the number of calls for aid as an excuse for delay.

Elders Maney and Currin resumed their seats in the Session without any recorded explanation on November 10, 1841. The Minutes of November 28, 1841 do say, in reference to a protracted meeting (18 days & 19 nights):

. . . the saving arm of the Lord has been uncovered and His mercy gloriously triumphant. The [fearful] difficulties which have distracted the councils and paralyzed the energies of this

Church have been healed and we are once more an undivided and harmonious church. About 90 souls have been hopefully converted. 53 members added to this branch of Zion.

In his authoritative Presbyterians of the South, Ernest Trice Thompson cites the Murfreesboro congregation as one in which the spirit of love overcame strife and the breach was soon healed.⁷

It was fortunate that Elder Johnathan Currin returned when he did because in April 1842, the congregation faced a financial crisis. Although it had pledged to pay Dr. Eagleton \$500 a year after his first year and had, perhaps, increased the amount somewhat, it was approximately \$1,000 in arrears by 1842. In addition, David Wendell and Samuel Hodge had obligated themselves on behalf of the church for \$300 for repairs on the church building in 1838. The congregation agreed to transfer the parsonage to Dr. Eagleton when he cancelled the arrearage and assumed the \$300 debt. Johnathan Currin was the trustee holding title for the congregation.⁸ The parsonage was a two-storied frame house set back from the Readyville Stage Road on an eight acre lot between what is now East Main, North Highland, and East College and Dr. Eagleton had already bought a two acre pasture to the east taking him nearly to the Union University line.

A major role of the nineteenth century Church was discipline of its members. Twentieth century Christians are likely to see this as meddling and to scoff at people who strained at the gnat of girls attending dancing parties while swallowing the camel of human slavery. Admittedly, there were absurdities, but a study of the minutes of the Session indicates concern for the members and a potent civilizing force.

The first and most frequent problem for discipline was intoxication. In September 1825, the Session issued its first citation for a member to

appear to answer a complaint by "common fame" of intoxication. On October 8, 1825, the member appeared and

acknowledged that he was sensible of being intoxicated . . . yet not so as to destroy his reason nor prevent him from attending to his necessary business but inasmuch as it appeared to be discovered to the wounding of the friends of Zion, to the opening of the mouths of gainsayers against the cause of Christ and to the injury of his own soul, he was truly sorry . . . and having promised to be more guarded against this sin in the future, he was restored in the spirit of love and meekness to the full communion and fellowship of the Church.

In minutes covering about forty years, there were twenty-one citations relating to intoxication. In nine cases, the admission and apology of the accused was accepted. In seven cases, the member withdrew or was suspended.

Some of the explanations are very interesting. When seven were accused at one session in December 1844, two explained that they had been overcome by hot toddy in the heat of the 1844 presidential campaign between Polk and Clay. On another occasion, the accused acknowledged his intoxication but stated that he had drunk to avoid a greater evil and did not admit to any sin in the matter. The Session was very tender with an aged member because of his infirmities and deafness, but after a year of conferences, it finally suspended him. A militia man blamed his dereliction on the inclement weather while he was on parade and the Session accepted his explanation. Several drinkers insisted that they drank for reasons of health and one admitted frequenting the dram shops, regretted the reproach on the church, and promised to abstain. In the spirit of a Scotch covenant, he added that he believed his health required his drinking and if his health deteriorated, he would notify the Session before resuming his dram.

Whatever the southern tradition, the Session of the First Presbyterian Church disapproved of dancing parties. In January of 1829, a committee waited upon James Patton who admitted that he had opened his boarding house for a dancing party. He insisted that he had only agreed to open the house that the participants might sup, but the day had been rainy and the streets muddy and it was necessary to open the house for the party or lose all the expense to which he had gone for supper as well as antagonizing his boarders. He promised not to be taken in again, and the minutes reveal an understanding Session which, "taking into account . . . the indigence and inexperience of this brother did restore him to the fellowship of the Church." The minister was appointed to confer with Col. F. N. W. Burton about his breach of church discipline in permitting his daughter to attend. There was enough concern that on June 23, 1829, the Session adopted a preamble and resolutions disapproving of dancing parties, calling on parents not to allow children under their control to attend, and accepting the responsibility for the discipline of parents who offended.

In February 1831, the Session was again concerned and, after numerous conferences, suspended James Patton on April 17, 1831 for permitting his daughter to attend a dancing party. Colonel Burton's daughter had also attended, but the Session accepted his assertion that he did not know it was to be a dancing party, he disapproved, and he would use his influence against his children attending in the future. Incidentally, it was Elder James Maney who conferred with Burton so it may be assumed that he discouraged dancing parties at Oakland. On May 15, 1845, the Session reaffirmed the position in the 1829 resolutions and requested the minister to preach on the subject of dancing. As late as April 1889, the Session

overtured Nashville Presbytery to make a pronouncement on the dance, the card table, and the theater. The Presbytery obliged with a statement to be read from the pulpits of the Presbytery.

More significant, perhaps, was the concern of the Church over the business practices of its members. In April of 1829, the Session heard evidence on three charges against Dr. J. R. Wilson: that he had intoxicated John H. Johns and defrauded him of land (Johns denied this), that he had oppressed Mrs. Massey, a widow (she deposed that he had actually assisted her when others were pressing her for payments due), and that he had deceived Mr. Robert McLin in a money transaction. The Session decided that the first two charges were disproved and that the third had not been proved, but Dr. Wilson asked that his name be removed from the Church roll.

One of the saddest incidents in church discipline, but one which illustrates the role of the Church in settling disputes among members, involved two of the three charter elders. In August 1836, a committee appointed to investigate the complaints of Elder William D. Baird that Elder Robert Wasson was spreading false reports about him, reported that Wasson claimed that: Baird had sought to collect twice for communion wine which he had purchased; Baird had refused to pay the remaining \$3.00 due on a note to Wasson after Wasson had turned over the note to him; Baird had refused to pay the interest on a note for which he had been security, even though the signer had turned over two Negroes to Baird to cover the debt and interest; and Baird had occasionally taken wood from Wasson's land. Having failed at reconciliation, the Session ordered a hearing for August 22, 1836. It lasted for four days and there were a dozen or more witnesses before Wasson requested permission to withdraw the charges and asked for

a letter of dismissal. The Session granted both and concluded that the withdrawal of the charges was evidence that they could not be proved. The hearing covers some ten pages in the Minute Book and provides considerable detail. It appeared that the main grievance was that Baird was only willing to pay 6% interest when the note had been written to bear 12%. Mr. Baird preferred a slander charge against Hiram Wasson August 24, 1836; it was continued for several months for various reasons; and May 23, 1837, Baird requested that action be suspended because Mr. Wasson's mind had been seriously affected for some months.

In the late 1850's there were realignments of the Old School and New School synods and presbyteries and the Old School groups became more conciliatory. The Presbytery of Shiloh, to which the Murfreesboro congregation belonged, voted its own dissolution and so the congregation had to form a new connection. In the Session, Dr. Eagleton, Elders Maney, McFadden and Wendel favored a recommendation to join the Old School Presbytery of Nashville. Only Elder J. M. Baird, whose father had supported Dr. Eagleton in joining the New School Synod in 1839, opposed the recommendation. The congregation voted to join Nashville Presbytery by 99 to 3 with a number of members declining to vote in the interest of harmony in the church. This led the Session to declare that it regarded " . . . the brethren who declined the ecclesiastical connexion of their own preference for the sake of the peace of the Church as having presented on the altar of the Church a grateful offering." After the Civil War began, Nashville Presbytery, including the Murfreesboro Congregation, joined in the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America, which after the War became the Presbyterian Church in the United States.

Although the official records do not indicate any hesitancy, there must have been soul-searching for Dr. Eagleton about the course of the South. His teacher, the Reverend Dr. Isaac Anderson for whom he had named his second son, had been strongly opposed to slavery. Under Anderson's influence, he had freed the few slaves he owned and sent them to Liberia through the American Colonization Society. However, for house servants, he had bought slaves and owned two at the outbreak of the war. We do know something of the feelings of the Reverend George Eagleton, who greatly admired his father. He was opposed to slavery and wished that the slaves might be colonized, but he was also bitter about the abolitionists. As late as December 1860, he was preaching against secession in the Hopewell Church at Milton. He was delighted when Tennessee voted against secession in February 1861, but furious when President Lincoln called for volunteers after the firing on Fort Sumter.⁹

In this period the Church records reveal no pressures. Just after Tennessee voted against secession, the Session was busy raising a subscription for the cause of missions under the Assembly's Board of Missions; it raised \$54 in March 1861. In the fateful month of April is recorded the last admission of a slave: "Lizzie--a colored girl belonging to Samuel Campbell was baptized and admitted to membership." Three days after Sumter, the annual report indicated 188 communicants, salary payments to the minister of \$821.85, and it hinted at Dr. Eagleton's poor health, saying he had given satisfaction and "rendered all the service that his age and infirm health would permit." There may be a further hint at this in the June 23, 1861, entry that the Lord's Supper was administered with the help of the Reverend Mr. Provine of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

About the beginning of 1862, Dr. and Mrs. Eagleton went to East Tennessee to stay with relatives in the hope that the rest would restore their health. They were away when the church building was occupied and then destroyed.

It has not been possible to determine whether services were held in the remainder of 1862. When the battle was fought along Stone's River at the end of 1862, the building was used as a hospital by the Confederates and then by the Union forces. The Union troops set up their camps south and west of the cemetery and church building. There is conflicting testimony on whether the soldiers began taking the bricks to build chimneys and huts or whether the Army officially ordered the building torn down and the materials used for government purposes. A young member, Samuel McFadden, managed to rescue the church bell and to dispose of some heavy timbers.

The Session pursued a long effort to recover damages from the government, beginning in 1865 and succeeding in collecting \$6,500 in 1899. This effort will be described later.

Although a number of baptisms are recorded in the minutes, it appears that the Session did not meet between January 2, 1862, and July 18, 1864.

Dr. and Mrs. Eagleton returned to Murfreesboro in the summer of 1864, and Mrs. Eagleton died on July 7. She was buried on the plantation of Samuel and Elvira Eagleton Campbell, southwest of Murfreesboro. Dr. Eagleton resumed his ministry as the Cumberland Presbyterian and Christian Churches offered their sanctuaries.

The Session met on July 18, 1864, and the record deserves quotation.

There has been an unprecedented destruction of property both private and public . . . and even the resting place of the dead . . . and the sanctuary itself . . . have been and still are desolated and desecrated!

The entries conclude:

Having made this sad record the Session would humbly rear an Ebenezer and render thanks to God for mercies that are still continued, and to the honor of his name acknowledge that we have never yet seen an end of the goodness of the Lord!

Dr. Eagleton presided over the Session meetings until his death March 28, 1866. He was buried beside his wife on the Campbell plantation.

Without a postor, without deacons, without a building, and with only three elders, the one hundred eighty-seven members had the faith to press on. In October 1866, they called the Reverend John Witherspoon Neil to the pastorate. Elders recalled that he

. . . was a young man but an able and eloquent preacher. He was gifted with great executive ability and was peculiarly endowed as an organizer. . . . preached eloquent and learned sermons, instructing the congregation in the duties of religion and he was unsparing in his strictures upon the derelict members.

Mr. Neil secured the use of the Circuit Courtroom and services were held regularly. The congregation chose Gideon H. Baskette, Dr. Alex Hartman, William D. Killough, William H. McFadden, Dr. James B. Murfree and Dr. James E. Wendell as deacons. They were ordained and installed December 30, 1866, and met to organize January 2, 1867.¹⁰ Mr. Neil presided, Deacon Wendell was chosen treasurer and Deacon Murfree was chosen secretary. The Diaconate proposed a system of financing which the Session approved. It included subscriptions for the Pastor's salary, special offerings on Communion Sabbaths for the needy of the Congregation, and special offerings on the third Sabbath of each month for incidental expenses. Despite the fact that the Church was planning to build, the proposal also

scheduled special offerings for the Boards of Domestic Missions, Publications, Foreign Missions, and Education.

A December 4, 1867, report--presumably for the first eleven months of 1867--shows these receipts:

building fund	\$3,138.84
pastor's salary	1,443.00
Board of Publication	61.25
Board of Foreign Missions	28.25
educational fund	50.00
Domestic Missions	122.45
incidental expenses	180.66
poor fund	109.20
total	<u>\$5,133.65</u>

In the spring of 1867, the Congregation moved rapidly. It acquired a lot on the corner of College and Spring Streets. On May 15, 1867, a Congregational Meeting authorized the pastor to name a committee of three to divide the church lot on Vine Street and sell it for burial plots. Mr. Neil named Charles Ready, J. M. Baird, and E. D. Hancock.

Two days later, a meeting described as "a meeting of the male members" passed a resolution to elect a committee of five with full power " . . . to take charge, oversight, and . . . direction of everything pertaining to the building . . . [and] to commence their work immediately and prosecute it as rigorously as possible." The meeting balloted and chose D. D. Wendel, J. M. Baird, Edwin A. Keeble, E. D. Hancock, and Dr. L. W. Knight.

The property on Vine Street was laid off and sold. The plat would indicate that the eastern half of the original lot had already been used for burials as the plat covered the western half.

The Building Committee secured the services of a Nashville architect, W. A. Kiddell, who provided the design and specifications. It let the contract for the brickwork to Arnold and January and for the woodwork to

pews to provide the minister's salary be discontinued, allowing members to choose their pews and contribute as they were able. It also recommended a salary of \$1,500.00 and housing or a housing allowance of \$300.00.

Apparently the pew rentals continued through 1876. For example, on November 8, 1869, Dr. Murfree rented the pews for 1870 at public outcry. Not all of the amounts were recorded, but those recorded ranged from \$15.00 to \$85.50. The deacons had asked that sixteen pews be reserved--whether for visitors or new members was not specified. Pew number 1 was reserved for "the Pastor's use" and numbers 38, 40, 41, and 80 were reserved for "the colored people." The writer has been unable to discover how long Negroes continued as members and worshippers. Miss Campbell reports that some older Negro members continued to worship but no new ones joined.¹¹

The conclusion that the rentals ended in 1876 is based on the Diaconate's decision, March 2, 1877, to place cards in the vestibules and hotels announcing that the pew system "had been abolished and that seats were not only free to all but that a cordial Christian welcome was extended to the public generally."

The deacons had to be resourceful to manage. In 1868, they employed a Negro Sexton, Edmond Wendell at \$6.50 per month. In January 1869, they employed Col. W. H. Blanch, a member, at \$10.00 per month. In the spring of 1871, they decided to reduce the pay in the spring and summer--presumably because there were no fires, ashes, etc. When Colonel Blanch refused to accept the reduction, Deacon Lewis Maney secured the service of another Negro Sexton, S. Maney, who would accept \$6.00 per month for April through September and \$10.00 per month for October through March. The deacons regularly had to call on members to urge them to keep up their subscriptions.



The second home of First Presbyterian Church.
This building stood on the northeast corner of
Spring and College Streets until it was destroyed
by a tornado on March 21, 1913.

Two Ministers



Rev. G.W. Patterson,
1893 - 1901



Rev. E.A. Ramsey, D.D.
1884 - 1893

When one pastor wrote urging the deacons to take more responsibility, they responded that they were doing their best and suggested that Pastor and Session put more emphasis on the spiritual responsibilities of stewardship.

There were some amusing items. The Church installed gas lighting and sold its chandelier to another local Church. After about two years a committee was appointed to confer with the other Church and suggest that if it didn't want to pay the balance, it could return the chandelier and receive its \$40.00 back. Finally, it paid the \$12.40 balance. There is no explanation of whether the Diaconate rejected a proposal for lightning rods for theological or financial reasons.

Church members and ministers might suspect that many boards have "mule committees," but this Board of Deacons had both a "Mule Committee" and a "Jack Committee." Evidently some one had given the Church a mule and a jack. Since there are no earlier references, it has not been possible to determine how long it had owned the animals. When Dr. D. S. Knight notified the deacons that he could no longer "accommodate the Jack of the Church," committees were appointed to sell the two animals. In about six months the committees secured \$45.00 for the mule and \$75.00 for the jack.

To return to a more serious vein, the Deacons' Minutes reveal other things about the Church's activities. Although there was no explanation as to why the street lamp was not lighted regularly, Dr. Murfree contracted with the gas company--for 50¢ per month--to light the street lamp in front of the building on the nights when there were services. We learn that there was a Ladies Society meeting on Wednesday afternoons as early as November 1873, and a Young Men's Prayer Meeting on Thursday nights as early as February 1874.

It may have seemed odd to a congregation which had one minister, Dr. Eagleton, for thirty-seven years to have eight ministers and three stated supplies in forty-three years. For seventeen of those years, the record is limited to a few references in the Deacons' Minutes and the substitute minute prepared to summarize the 1869-1885 volume of Session Minutes lost in a fire.

The Reverend John W. Neil who led the congregation in reorganizing and in building a new building resigned on June 4, 1871, to accept a call to a Nashville church. Students can be especially grateful because Mr. Neil is the reputed author of a sketch of the history of the Church to 1867.¹²

The Reverend Henry Howard Banks of Asheville was called to the pastorate on September 17, 1871, and began his ministry in December. The substitute minute recalled him as follows:

The Rev. H. H. Banks zealously entered upon his pastoral work with great effectiveness and acceptability. Like David of old, he was small of stature, and unprepossessing in appearance, but armed with the Truths of the Gospel and imbued with the spirit of the Master, he manfully fought against the Goliath of wickedness. Physically, he was feeble, yet he was earnest, diligent, and faithful His sermons were replete with Biblical Truths, elegant, learned and instructive, while his delivery was earnest and forcible.

His health was so bad that in December 1873 the Session ". . . without his solicitation granted him a leave of absence for six months--salary to continue--in the hope that a rest from his labor would restore him to his pristine vigor." The hope was in vain, and at the end of the leave, he tendered his resignation. He died in Asheville a few years later.

The Reverend Dr. John Holt Rice served as Stated Supply Pastor from December 1873 to October 4, 1874. The substitute minute expressed special

gratitude for the preaching of the Reverend Dr. J. B. West, Principal of Soule College who " . . . preached to the congregation every Sabbath morning except when a visiting minister of our own denomination was with us."

In the spring of 1875, the congregation called the Reverend Henry Sale Yerger from Palestine, Texas, and he began his ministry in June. When the deacons wished to eliminate special offerings for benevolences and apply all the funds to paying the debt, Mr. Yerger dissented and requested the Diaconate to meet with the Session. Since those minutes are not available we do not know how the issue was settled. When Mr. Yerger tendered his resignation in the early fall of 1878, however, the congregation declined to accept it. When Presbytery requested the congregation to reconsider, it declared the pulpit vacant in October 1878.

On January 1, 1879, the Reverend Dr. John S. Arbuthnott, an Englishman who had been serving the Gallatin Church, was installed as Pastor. The substitute minute recalled him as a very effective minister and active in a revival beginning soon after his arrival and noted " . . . our church received many additions." Dr. Arbuthnott tendered his resignation and the pulpit was declared vacant August 9, 1883.

In January 1884, the Congregation issued a call to the Rev. G. S. Finley of Romney, West Virginia, but he declined the call. Then it called the Reverend John Martin Otts. The substitute minute summed up his service; " . . . not seeing his way clear to accept the call, he compromised by becoming a stated supply . . . [and] endeared himself to the whole congregation."

Mr. Otts served from May to September, when the Reverend Emmett Alexander Ramsey began a six months term as stated supply on September 20,

1884. The Congregation was so pleased with him that it issued a call on the second Sabbath of January 1885.

The Reverend Mr. Ramsey must have had boundless energy. He served as superintendent of the Sunday School and it flourished, though he did note a "scarcity of teachers" in 1886. He also preached at the Henderson School House and at McClure's School House. Apparently, members were included in the roll of First Presbyterian Church until there were enough at "McClure's Chapel" to organize the Florence Presbyterian Church. On October 15, 1893, eight members were dismissed to the new congregation.

After considering the idea for about four years, the Session decided on a plan for elders to undertake responsibility for members and on September 9, 1891, Mr. Ramsey assigned the responsibilities for families living:

s. of Main and w. of Maney to Elders J. H. Allen and Charles Ordway
 s. of Main and e. of Maney to Elders J. B. Murfree and W. Y. Elliott
 n. of Main and w. of Maney to Elders Alex Hartman and Wm. Park
 n. of Main and e. of Maney to Elders D. D. Wendel and S. H. Hodge

Earlier in 1891, Elders Murfree and Elliott had been appointed to "consider the propriety of establishing a mission Sabbath School in the western part of town in the suburb known as Riverside." On August 12, 1891, the Session decided that the way did not seem clear.

Dr. Ramsey ministered to the whole community. One day he watched the volunteer firemen at a fire and became so concerned that he took charge and directed their efforts. The city fathers were impressed and asked him to take charge officially. He conditioned his acceptance upon improvement of the waterworks. The improvements were made, and he served as fire chief until he accepted a call to the First Presbyterian Church of Memphis in March 1893. He also served as chaplain of the First Regiment of the

Two views of the First Presbyterian Church following the tornado of 1913. The view of the interior is furnished courtesy of Mary Belle Robinson, whose father, J.W. Robinson made the photograph.



State Guard and accompanied the guardsmen when they were sent to Coal Creek in the Cumberland Mountains because of a miners' strike.

No doubt, a bachelor minister--thirty-five when he came to Murfreesboro--aroused a good deal of interest in the community. He married Miss Lena Wilhoite of Shelbyville just after accepting the call to Memphis, but he died in less than five years. After his death, the Nashville American recalled that, when he preached his final sermon in Murfreesboro, the churchyard and street were filled with the overflow from the sanctuary.¹³

Dr. George W. Patterson served the church from November 1893 to April 1901. He was only twenty-seven when he and his wife came to Murfreesboro and he appears to have been especially gifted in his work with young people and in evangelism.¹⁴

Some indication of interests and attitudes in the nineties may be gleaned from minutes of the Session. In September 1891, the minister named Elder William Park to the Committee on Publication and Colored Evangelization. A presentation of the cause of Colored Evangelization was authorized for the first Sabbath of April 1892. In May 1898, Elders J. B. Murfree and W. E. Hudson were named "to look after" the Negro Sabbath School begun by some of the ladies in the church, and in July, Dr. Murfree reported that there were twenty-nine scholars and a need for Bibles and educational literature.

The Session cancelled the evening worship service on the first Sabbath in March 1893 in order to make the sanctuary available to local Jewish citizens for services to be led by Rabbi Levinthall of Nashville. Early in 1894, the Session declined to decide to participate in union

evangelistic services without full attendance, but it later decided to participate and the services were held in the summer of 1894 with the Reverend Gilbert Fife as evangelist.

In March 1899, a long effort to collect compensation for the building destroyed in the War was successful.¹⁵ On October 9, 1865 Dr. Eagleton and the elders petitioned Major General George M. Thomas for \$10,000 and submitted affidavits estimating the cost of replacement at that figure, stating that the building had been used as a hospital, commissary, and barracks and had been destroyed while the Union Army controlled it. The petition was referred to Captain E. B. Whitman, Chief Quartermaster, District of Middle Tennessee, and he made his report on December 28, 1865.

Captain Whitman admitted difficulty in getting information on the points necessary for compensation. He concluded that while the building was being used by the Army, woodwork had been removed by soldiers and citizens, that the brick walls had later collapsed of their own weight or been blown down; and that bricks had been taken by "soldiers to build chimneys, and that citizens and officers of the Society removed others." He added that the commander of the Post, Brigadier General Horatio Van Cleve, "constantly used every effort in his power to protect and preserve it from ruin." He judged the building as worth no more than \$5,000, as it stood, but estimated that it would cost \$10,000 to build a modern building of the same size.

On the critical question of the loyalty of the congregation, he was much more positive. He insisted that the minister had preached treason and rebellion and constantly prayed for God to foster the infant republic and paralyze "the arm of the Federal government. . . ." He believed that

most of those who signed the affidavits were "avowed rebels, or secret sympathizers." He added that he could not judge the current attitudes but had been informed that the few members who had been loyal to the Union had left the congregation. He concluded that he did not believe the Church qualified for compensation. His recommendation was approved by the Quartermaster General in Washington.

In February 1872, the Session and Diaconate addressed a petition to Congress asking for compensation. The petition denied that the building was burned or ruthlessly destroyed, insisting that it was used to care for sick and wounded Federal soldiers, and that later the materials were used for the comfort and benefit of the Army. It also insisted that "neither Minister, Elders, Deacons nor any leading communicants . . . held office or bore arms in the service of the Confederate Government."

Accompanying this petition was a set of specifications (six foolscap pages in longhand) for a building " . . . in all respects the same as the one occupied by the Presbyterian Congregation up to the late War." Bills for compensation were introduced to Congress in 1872, 1876, and 1886. The Claims Committee referred the matter to the Court of Claims. Lengthy depositions were taken in Murfreesboro on August 27-28, 1890 and September 14, 1891.

On March 23, 1898 the Court of Claims reported to the Committee on War Claims. The report indicated that there was no evidence of disloyalty by the Church. It judged that the building was probably worth \$6,500 at the time it was seized. It pointed out that the law provided for compensation only for the value of the materials and the evidence did not disclose the value of the materials. The opinion pointed out that it was not deciding the case but submitting the facts for Congress.

A claims bill, including \$6,500 "to the elders of the Presbyterian Church at Murfreesboro," was signed on March 3, 1899.¹⁶

On March 22, 1899, Attorney John Richardson met with the Session to discuss "the claim recently allowed by Congress" and went over the contract the Session and Diaconate had entered into with him in 1889. On July 21 the Session met, gave each elder an opportunity to suggest how the money should be spent, and named a committee to report to a joint meeting of the Session and Diaconate. On July 26, the deacons joined the Session. It was announced that the net proceeds were \$4,550. The Pastor read Psalm 103 and elders and deacons joined in prayer of thanksgiving and praise.

After considerable discussion on how to use the money, including interest in providing a manse, it was decided to refurbish the building. Windows were repaired and memorial windows were installed: one to Dr. Ramsey and one to William Y. Elliott and Joseph Ewing. The portico was enlarged, the interior redecorated and new pews and carpeting installed.¹⁷

The Reverend John G. Garth served the church from December 1901 to October 1905. Perhaps the strongest evidence of congregational concern was the purchase in June 1903 of six \$50 shares in the Luebo Mission in the Belgian Congo. When Mr. Garth left, the Reverend Dr. James W. Graybill, a former medical missionary supplied the pulpit from February to September 1906.

Dr. Graybill had declined a permanent call, and the Session, on August 29, had called a congregational meeting to choose a pastor. Four days later, it rescinded the call because it had received a letter from Elder John T. Woodfin, Clerk of Session of the Murfreesboro Cumberland Presbyterian Church, proposing a union of the two congregations.

The fellowship between the two congregations was of long standing. The Cumberland Church had made its building available on numerous occasions. Ministers of the two congregations had supplied either as the need arose. The proposal, however, arose from the plan approved for uniting the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church U.S.A.--generally known as the northern Presbyterian Church. Apparently, a substantial number of members preferred union with First Presbyterian, which was part of the southern Presbyterian Church.

A joint committee from the two sessions worked out a plan which involved First Presbyterian's calling the Cumberland minister, the Reverend Reuben G. Newsome; electing all Cumberland officers to the same positions; and continuing organizations of each congregation unless the organizations decided to merge. The writer has not been able to locate the congregational meeting minutes, but the union began on October 3, 1906. Miss Campbell reports that the Reverend Mr. Newsome led the congregation from the Cumberland building on the corner of Main and Spring. They came singing "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms" and as they entered the sanctuary, the two became one in song. On Wednesday night, October 13, Mr. Newsome was formally installed.

Not only did the First Presbyterian Church receive Elders, A. J. Patterson, J. T. Woodfin, A. C. Johnson, R. T. Bell, P. A. Lyon, E. J. Reid and Deacons J. K. Poff, J. S. Nugent, Ross Nelson, and Charles Cawthon, it received their families and a host of others who became pillars of the congregation.

For several years there had been discussion of the need for a "lecture room" and classrooms for the Sabbath School. Shortly after the

merger, an annex was added to the north side of the building. It included a semi-circular basement room under the whole annex. The main floor was a semi-circular assembly room with classrooms around the circumference. There was a gallery around the assembly room with classrooms around its circumference.

The Reverend Mr. Newsome resigned in March 1909 to accept a call to the Tatnall Square Presbyterian Church, Macon, Georgia. In October 1909, Reverend Dr. J. Addison Smith arrived from Richmond, Kentucky and began a ministry that was cut short by his death in 1920, but he began a legend that lives on even in the minds of those who never saw him but know him because of their parents' affection and stories.¹⁸

Dr. Smith was erudite and eloquent but also entertaining. Apparently, his prayers were especially memorable. For some years he wrote a column "Musings Under the Maples" for the Christian Observer. We shall leave the treatment of Dr. Smith's ministry for another time because this article was planned to cover about a century and end with a bang: a tornado, better known as the "Cyclone of 1913."

On the night of March 21, 1913, a tornado came bounding in from the southwest, hitting the fairgrounds, South Walnut, the northwest corner of the Square, First Presbyterian Church and points northwest. While parts of the walls and a couple of the stained glass windows remained standing, the roof had fallen through; the pews, rafters, bell, etc. lay in a pile of rubble. The recently completed Sunday School annex suffered little damage and could soon be used for services. The organ was not destroyed and tradition has it that the organist played a hymn of praise amidst the rubble.¹⁹ The congregation, however, could join Dr. Smith in gratitude that there were no fatalities.

How the members picked up the pieces and began anew, for the second time, is another story.

NOTES

¹Minutes of Session, Murfree Spring Presbyterian Church--later First Presbyterian Church, Murfreesboro, Tennessee. These minutes are the source for the bulk of the paper; citations will be limited to other sources. Ralph M. Llewellyn, "Others Have Labored," an address at the sesquicentennial of First Presbyterian Church, April 29, 1962. (Mimeographed.) This address concentrates on the first two decades, the charter members and their descendants who were members in 1962. Two additional member descendants have been identified since then; Cecil Nelson Smotherman and Jane Smotherman LaPaglia, descended from Elizabeth Kelton.

²Annie E. Campbell, "A History of the First Presbyterian Church, Murfreesboro, Tennessee, 1811-1935," p. 2. (Typewritten.) Miss Campbell, a life-long member of the congregation was a great granddaughter of the minister from 1829-1866. Hence, she had access to the traditions of the congregation as well as being a participant in part of what she described. She will be cited as Campbell, though the writer is reluctant to refer to "Miss Annie" in that way.

³Charles Grier Sellers, James K. Polk: Jacksonian, 1795-1843 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), pp. 41-43, 59-61, 69-72, 76-79, 92-94.

⁴William Lytle to W. D. Baird, April 1, 1820, Book M, pp. 445-448, Rutherford County Register's Office, Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

⁵Campbell, pp. 3-4; Congressional Jurisdiction Case 6575, Presbyterian Church vs. U.S., Record Group Number 123, National Archives, Washington, D.C.; Alice N. Ray, "The State Capitol, 1819-1826," Rutherford County Historical Society Publication 11 (Summer 1978):1-6. The Archives collection (hereinafter cited as C. J. Case 6575) contains hypothetical specifications prepared in 1872 and sworn depositions about the building, taken in 1890 and 1891.

⁶[Murfreesboro] Courier, April 15, 1824.

⁷Ernest Trice Thompson, Presbyterians of the South: Volume One: 1607-1861 (Richmond: John Knox Press), pp. 548-549.

⁸Johnathan Currin, Trustee to William Eagleton, April 11, 1842, Book Z, pp. 235-236, Rutherford County Register's Office, Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

⁹Alden B. Pearson, Jr., "The Tragic Dilemma of a Border-State Moderate: The Rev. George E. Eagleton's Views on Slavery and Secession," Tennessee Historical Quarterly XXXII (Winter 1973):360-373.

¹⁰The passage characterizing Mr. Neil is from a "Substitute Minute," prepared by Elders Alex Hartman, J. B. Murfree, and James Wendel to cover the gap created when the Session Minute Book for 1869-1885 was lost in a fire. It was entered in the minutes on October 15, 1888. Providentially or by a remarkable coincidence, the only surviving Deacons' Minute Book before 1918 covers the years 1867-1888. Most of what follows to 1888 is based on these two sources.

¹¹Campbell, p. 13.

¹²This four page single-spaced sketch was copied by Miss Annie Campbell from a newspaper article preserved in her mother's scrap-book.

¹³Campbell, pp. 17-19; Nashville American, January 14, 1898.

¹⁴Campbell, pp. 19-21.

¹⁵There are very few references in the minutes, but C. J. Case 6575 provides documentation of the thirty-four year effort, summarized in these six paragraphs.

¹⁶U.S. Statutes at Large, Vol. 30, Chap. 426 (1899).

¹⁷Campbell, p. 20.

¹⁸"Two Mighty Oaks" is a reminiscence of Dr. Smith and of Dr. J. B. Murfree, an elder in the church. It is Chapter 10 of Elisabeth O. Howse [Ridley], Falling Stars (Murfreesboro: Mrs. G. S. Ridley, 1960), pp. 126-134. The writer would welcome stories about Dr. Smith to add to the store he is trying to record.

¹⁹The writer has not been able to determine whether the stained glass windows were saved and used in the new building. Any clues from readers would be appreciated.

"KIRKS and MONTGOMERYS"
from-
The Home Journal
Murfreesboro, Tennessee
September 22, 1903

Furnished by: Jane Snell Woods

The following was written by Alexander Montgomery Kirk, of Oxford, Florida, who intended to deliver it as a speech at a reunion of the Kirk Family held in the past July 1903. But on account of unfortunate circumstances the reunion was not held. Mr. Kirk is a native of Rutherford County, and is now 81 years of age. His article is full of interesting events and will be read with interest.

* * * *

Fellow Citizens, Ladies and Gentlemen:

This is one of the greatest pleasures of my life, to be at my old homestead, where I was born over 4 score years ago, where I spent my youthful days, and where I now have an opportunity of mingling with my fellow Tennesseans. I am glad to be in the land of my Nativity. I am glad to be near the roof under which I saw the light. I am also glad to be near the trees I was nursed and reared under. But there is a sadness hovering over me that I cannot very well get rid of. I find that the people I left here 57 years ago - 1846 - are not here today; that they have passed away, and await the morning of the resurrection. And others have risen up in their stead. Such, my friends, is life, and such is the way of the human family.

The object of this meeting is for the purpose of a reunion of the Hugh Kirk Family.

The family was a large one, eleven children born to my parents, three of whom died in infancy, eight lived to be grown.

Seven married and had families, and one-my youngest brother - never married, was killed at the Battle of Franklin during the Civil War. There are only two of that large family left, Mrs. Snell (Melissa Kirk), my youngest sister, and myself.

Mrs. Snell was the wife of James Curtis Snell, who was a member of the Mitchell Company. He was 2nd Lieutenant of the Company and died at Winchester during the Civil War.

Now, my friends, I am standing where I stood in 1846, 57 years ago and bade my parents, brothers and sisters farewell, and left for the state of Mississippi. And now after the lapse of this time I am back on the same portico. My parents have passed away, and my brothers and sisters all except the youngest sister-Mrs. Snell-and the dwelling has passed away into other hands. Those of Mr. Frank Overall, who has opened his doors and grounds and unites with us in this reunion, for which we tender him our many thanks. I find that the slaves who cultivated the fields are all gone. I find that the citizens that lived on Lytle Creek and Fox Camp Branch a distance of 10 miles and about 30 families in number have likewise all passed away, no one left except my nephew Hugh Kirk, who lives on Lytle Creek. He is still here and stands like a wall and all alone, no wife to control him, no children to squall, and no one to mourn his loss when he is gone. So you see from the above time has wrought many changes in 57 years. My friends; I have been out on a long journey for 4 score years - running from 1823-1903. Forty years of my journey have been peacefully and pleasantly spent. My path has been smooth and thornless with but few obstacles to impede it.

Prosperity attended me on every hand. But the next 40

years were rough and rugged, full of disasters, full of calamities, full of affliction, my path was full of thorns, with many obstacles difficult to overcome, besides many storms to weather. I have been tossed to and fro many ways and many directions. The hand of affliction fell upon me and I lay upon my bed 9 long weeks, with a mortified foot, as helpless as a child.

While the Battle of Stones River was being fought I was carried out of my room by 2 men, placed in a vehicle in bed, hauled 14 miles away, to where my family preceded me, which was on Tuesday of the "big" fight. On Sunday news came that "Bragg was retreating." I had my teams hitched up, consisting of 3 horses, 2 vehicles and 3 servants with 2 small children, one of them an infant, my wife and myself.

My wife took charge, we steered our course in the direction of our home in Mississippi, passing through Bragg's retreating army - arrived at home on the 11th February 1863. We had a rough trip, it being in the dead of winter, sometimes raining, snowing, sleeting or hailing with roads in a wretched condition, bridges washed away and many other difficult obstacles to overcome. With an infant child and a helpless husband, yet my wife was equal to the emergency.

With heroic and courageous effort she took us safely home, walking the 2 last days of our journey to relieve the worn out animals. (She was a wife among wives and surpassed by none, ever ready at any time to do whatever she could for her helpless and afflicted husband both by night and by day. I found her near Murfreesboro in 1855; where they know how to raise good wives,

and lost her in my home in Mississippi in 1870 - leaving an infant child just 6 months old behind her.)

I remained at home until the "Fall of Vicksburg." I then gathered up my personal effects. With my wife still in charge we crossed the Mississippi River and went over into Texas. We reached the Brazos River in 1863 and struck camp. While on my journey from Stones River in Tennessee to the Brazos River in Texas I consulted every doctor who crossed my path. Invariably their answer was - "It ought to come off in order to save your life."

While riding out on the Brazos River prospecting I met an old gentleman riding a mule, and seeing me riding in bed wished to know what my trouble was. I told him I had an infected foot for which I had been in bed for 12 months. He said he would like to see it. I asked if he were a doctor. He replied, "I claim to be." I showed it to him and after examining it, I told him I had had a number of doctors to examine it and they told me it would have to come off to save my life and I would like to hear what he had to say. He replied "I see no use of its coming off, but can put you to walking in a few days", which was the best news I had heard in all my journey; of course I did not believe a word of it, but concluded as we were in camp here I would let him try, so he began the treatment.

Now, my friends, I will tell you in all candor this man who rode the mule had me walking on both feet in less than 6 weeks, with a walking cane, attending to all my business generally. I had been greatly reduced in flesh, but under this treatment I regained it until I weighed 208 pounds. He relieved me of my

suffering, which was intense, so that my sleep was sound and my slumber sweet, both by day and night. I had suffered untold misery and was reported twice as dead - but am still living. I had a pair of crutches while on my journey but having no further use for them left them on the plains of Texas. I have had 2 financial wrecks and once was covered with boils, 70 in number, almost as many, I suppose, as Job had. I had a 9 year seige of sickness, with half dozen doctors to attend me (at different times) but my troubles baffled them all, and was told they could do me no good. So I was left at sea with no hope of recovery- a physical wreck. The only alternative seeming to be - I should take charge, and be my own doctor, so I did. And by divine help I discovered a remedy. And I don't think it was more than a month until my troubles were removed. My troubles were numerous, being 5 in number - bronchial, indigestion, rheumatism, kidney and bowel trouble. I have had charge of my case nearly 7 years and if I did not know I was over 4 score years I would feel quite youthful yet. So you see, my friends, I have had a pretty rough journey, and the wonder is that I am still living, but a greater wonder is that I have anything to live on. But I have weathered through 4 score years and I think I will be able to make the balance of the trip.

I want to give you a short sketch of my war record.

I was in the army 12 months. Was in 2 days fight at the Battle of Shiloh, was in the Court Martial at Vicksburg at the time the Battle of Baton Rouge was fought. I lay on my back 9 weeks near Murfreesboro, but while the Battle of Stones River was being fought, I was carried out, placed in bed, hauled 14

miles, as stated above. I now want to say to my old comrades, the most reluctant thing I ever did in my life was to send up my application for a discharge. They had complimented me as a Standard Bearer at Corinth, Mississippi, and I didn't want to leave them, but my health would not permit. As was proven afterwards.

Now I will tell you something of my ancestors. My grandfather Jetton was born in N. C. in 1757, and I heard my mother say he was of Irish descent. He married a Miss White, but I know nothing of her nativity. There were 4 children born to them, when he concluded to move to Middle Tennessee in about 1800 and did so and bought lands on each side of the Manchester Pike (now runs) 2 1/2 miles from Murfreesboro. He built a house on the right hand side of the Pike, on a hill about 200 yards off the Pike.

There Robert Jetton, Jr., had a very handsome residence. During the Civil War the Yankees came one night firing off their pistols and frightening off the family, who escaped in their night clothing. The Yankees pillaged the house and then burned it.

My grandfather Jetton opened an extensive farm, which he cultivated for 30 years. On one occasion (?) my mother wanted to visit her parents. She took me—a boy of 6 years with her for company. When we arrived at my grandfather's, we found him sitting in the yard under a shade tree in a large arm chair, with a Revolutionary soldier's uniform on, short pants, long stockings, and knee buckles — the first and last I ever saw.

My mother spoke to him and passed a few words, and then she went on in the house to see her mother. I remained with him. In order to amuse me, with his pocket knife he whittled me a

small wagon, making the wheels out of turnips and gave it to me, which I hauled about over the yard - very proud of it.

Not long after that my grandmother died and was buried in the old graveyard in Murfreesboro about the year 1830. That left my grandfather all alone, his children all having married and left him. There was a lady named Winsett that waited on my grandmother during her illness. After a reasonable time my grandfather addressed her and she agreed to share life with him. They married very much against the wishes of the children, on account of an ungovernable temper. Not long after this, his son Isaac concluded to move to West Tennessee, and he concluded to move with him at the age of 73 years, after having tilled 30 years on his fertile plantation. This move was supposed to have been because of the opposition of his children to his marriage. He bought a farm adjoining his son Isaac. After farming several years, he became dissatisfied and moved back, leaving his second wife behind him, which showed that all was not lovely between them - caused by display of that ungovernable temper, which caused the opposition to his union with her. He came back to his son Robert's, and after he became rested he spent a week with each of his children, of whom there were 2 sons and 5 daughters. He commenced his rounds and when he got to my father's he asked if anyone in the neighborhood could write his will. My father told him a man by the name of Phillips, who sometimes did such work and he sent for him. Mr. Phillips wrote his will and the sum of \$5 was left his second wife. The will was never contested.

He finished up his work and got back to his son Robert's when he died. It looked very much like he had a presentiment

that his career was coming to a close. He was buried in the old Murfreesboro graveyard in the 81st year of his age. He was a Revolutionary soldier 7 years, further than that I know nothing of his war record.

My grandfather Kirk was born in Scotland about 1751. He emigrated from that country to South Carolina about 1772 or 73. He married a Miss Montgomery. But I know nothing of her birth-place or ancestry. He farmed in South Carolina up to 1802 when he concluded to move to Middle Tennessee, and did so buying lands near my grandfather Jetton's, and farmed there from 1802-1821, and died there and was buried in the Montgomery graveyard. When I was up there in 1902 I asked my nephew to go with me in search of his grave. When we got there we found it had been lost sight of for a number of years, all grown up in trees, saplings and bushes. We went in and found 5 vaults in a row. On one of them I found Joseph Montgomery's name and date of his birth and death. The next-his wife, the next his father James Montgomery. Joseph was full cousin of my father's and James was a brother of my grandmother Kirk.

(Continued in next issue of The Home Journal-September 25,1903)

About 10 steps away there was a headstone and a footstone and on it was written John J. Kirk died 1821 and in the 70th year of his age. So we accomplished what we went for and returned.

He was under Sumter during Revolutionary War. When Teleton captured a large part of Sumter's Company, grandfather was down on the Saluda River washing his clothes with several others. They swam the river and made their escape. Further than that I know nothing of his record.

Joseph Montgomery was born helpless in his limbs and when old enough to go to school his father had a boy take him to and back from school night and morning. Joseph was a bright boy and learned very rapidly, by the time he was grown he had as good an education as was given in those days and was said in after years to have been one of the best informed and most intelligent men in Rutherford County. His father made his will and left his property to Joseph on account of his condition. Joseph took charge of the property at his father's death. The same boy hauled him over the plantation and he supervised and directed everything and was said to have been a neat and successful farmer. Joseph concluded he needed a companion, and I suppose he did much more than the companion needed him. He found a Miss Rankin who accepted him. They married and it is said they lived happily together. Joseph was a churchgoer before and after his marriage. The boy would drive him up to the window so he could see and hear the preacher. She would get out and go into the church herself. They would be driven back home by the boy.

In 2 years Joseph died and she fell heir to the property, and with the assistance of the relatives she managed it very successfully. In 2 years more she died, and the property all went to her relatives. The 2 sisters did a great deal of talking, but Mrs. Montgomery kept the property all the same. It was an oversight in Joseph's father not making some provision for his 2 daughters. But who would have thought of Joseph's marrying? But stranger things have happened. I always thought that Joseph should have done something for the slave Stephen who waited on him from childhood until 30 years of age. But if he ever gave him anything I never heard of it.

My grandfather Kirk had a peculiar case in his family, a son-in-law by the name of Keylow became strangely affected. He was like a mad man. It took 6 men to hold him in bed, and the news spread far and near. He had a presentiment that he wanted to go to the back of the field to get something he wanted. So the nurses went with him and pulled out of a hollow tree a ball. The ball was found to be composed of hair-pins, needles and other articles. They returned to the house and the crowd examined the ball. They threw it in the fire and strange to say, Mr. Keylow began to improve, got well and hearty. Then Granmother Kirk her daughter and son-in-law moved to West Tennessee. He went with them. In about -²- my grandfather and myself visited them in West Tennessee. We rode up to his house just after dark.

We cried, "Hello!" He came out and my father asked, "Is that Capt. Keylow?" He answered, "It is Major. How do you do?" He knew him by his voice. Mr. Keylow was well and quite jovial, and also next morning when we left. And we never heard of him anymore.

My father was born in S. C. 1785 of Scotch-Irish ancestry. He went with his father in 1802 to Middle Tennessee in the 17th year of his age and then started out for himself. He bought up a large drove of horses on credit, and had to drive them through a wilderness to New Orleans, spending one night with the Indians. He made several trips and when the Battle of New Orleans occurred fought by Gen. Jackson January 8, 1815 near New Orleans. I have heard him say he had been in that city when yellow fever was raging and hearses were running all day and night hauling the

dead bodies out of the city. He kept a bottle of whiskey with asafetida (?) (asafetida ?), and always believed it prevented his taking the disease. He returned home and bought a farm from a man named Phillips, settled down to farming and married and moved to the Phillips house 250 yards from his own house.

In 1817-18 the Creek War broke out and he raised a company and enlisted under Jackson, in his campaign. After the war he resumed farming.

In 1812 he built this dwelling on whose portico we now stand, my friends, as well as I can calculate.

I was the first person born in this house February 22, 1823. My father continued farming and also ran a road wagon from Nashville to different towns, hauling goods at a profit in those days. In 1851 he died in the 66th year of his age, and was buried in the graveyard in Murfreesboro.

I have always thought my mother unsurpassed among women. She was a pious member of the Presbyterian Church, as was my father. She was a very domestic woman, of untiring energy and devotion to her family. I remember she had a shop, made lamp and often the needle by its light till 10 o'clock at night. She had a real factory consisting of a small flax wheel, 2 spinning wheels and cards, a pair of winding blades, a spool frame and a pair of winding blades and a pair or warping bows (?) and a loom. The thread was converted into cloth for about 30 people on the place. She would often barter bolts of cloth in Murfreesboro for such things as she could not make at home. She was a kind and loving mother, always giving good Christian advice. She died in 1859 in the 62nd year of her age and was buried by my father's side.

Winding to the close of my remarks I wish to say that my ancestors, my grandfather and my grandmother and their descendants never had any one in jail or the penitentiary for any crime as far as we have any account of them.

Postscript

Before closing, however, I wish to mention the short and prosperous career of Col. Robert Jetton, who was a son of my grandfather Jetton. He was quite an important character in and around Murfreesboro, and would be called in these times and days "a hustler". When grandfather Jetton concluded to move to West Tennessee Col. Robert purchased his father's landed property, and this in connection with his own made a magnificent plantation. It was but a few years before he had this plantation stocked with laborers and made abundant crops. He also owned landed property in West Tennessee. He was Colonel in Gen. Jackson's army during the Seminole and Creek Wars. He represented Rutherford County one term in the legislature. He contracted and had the brick made and built the first Courthouse that was ever built in Murfreesboro. He contracted for the delivery of mails all over middle portion of Tennessee and owned the stage line. He also contracted and built a large portion of the Nashville and Murfreesboro turnpike. He was engaged for a number of years in the mercantile business, also owned a tan yard and a blacksmith shop and 2 furnaces and did work for the surrounding county. He also owned a gin and did all the ginning for the surrounding neighborhood. He also kept a horse mill so when the water was too low he could grind with it and attend it himself, although a wealthy man. I remember being there on one occasion when a boy his hopper was

about 10 feet above the ground with elevated steps. He took a bushel bag and carried it up the steps, and emptied it in the hopper and when ground brought it down, put it on the horse for me and started me home.

The largest reception I was ever at in my life was at his house. His son, Robert married a niece of ex-President and Mrs. Polk. Polk was governor of Tennessee at that time, and he and Mrs. Polk were there on that occasion. And I think all the carriages in and around Murfreesboro were there that night.

The first piano I ever heard in my life was there that night, and I was greatly impressed with the music. None but the most wealthy could afford pianos at that time. He died at 55 years in the very prime of his life, and was buried in Murfreesboro in the old grave yard.

My friends, we are all here for a short time and like the bird will soon pass away and be forgotten. The preacher of olden times said, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit and no profit under the sun of all our labors." We struggle and we toil to lay up treasures on this earth. We build our fine mansions and furnish them most elegantly. We have every want supplied, we lean back and promise ourselves long lives and happiness but the dread disease of sickness comes upon us. And we are then prostrate upon our beds. Medical aid is summoned but they fail to give relief. And we linger along a few days and pass away. A coffin or casket is provided for us, and we are carried out of the mansion feet foremost, to some lonely spot, and a hole is dug in the earth, and we are placed therein. The dirt is heaved upon us. And others rise up in our stead and we sink to oblivion,

and perhaps strangers occupy the fine mansions we build.

Hugh and Alexander (Montgomery) are Montgomery family names. There was the name Hugh however in some of the earlier Kirk records.

Mary is an old Kirk name as is Eleanor. The family did keep the Scottish Custom of keeping family names for hundreds of years.

The KIRK cemetery was found in 1978 between Elam Road and U. S. 41. The cemetery is 1/2 mile east and behind the Seventh Day Adventist church on Elam Road. It is about 100 feet out in a pasture from a line fence. John Kirk's grave was found along with Alexander Nisbett and his wife. The base stones and pieces of other markers indicate other graves there.

Hugh Montgomery, Sr.

Son: Hugh Montgomery, Jr.

Dau: Mary Eleanor Montgomery

Wed-John Kirk Sr. 1751 - 1821, Scotland & Tennessee

I. Hugh Kirk - born 1785 South Carolina

died 1850 in Tennessee

Wed: Jane Jetton born 1786 South Carolina

died 1859 in Tennessee

A. Mary Kirk

Wed: Mr. Alfred Lowe - Mid Tennessee

1. Mary Lowe

Wed: P. A. Lyon

a. Alfred Lyon

b. Adeline Lyon

Wed: A. J. Brandon, Jr.

2. Melissa Lowe

Wed: A. J. Brandon, Sr.

a. A. J. Brandon, Jr.

3. Mattie Lowe

Wed: Mr. -----Pinkard , 1st

Ellen Pinkard

Wed: Dr. J. P. Lyon , 2nd

Melissa Lyon

Wed: Jim Nisbitt

a. Alene Ross Nisbitt *

b. Sara Lyon Nisbitt *

c. Helen Nisbitt *

B. Elizabeth Kirk

Wed: Mr. -----Templeton

a. Ellen Templeton

Wed: Mr. ----Walton

C. John J. Kirk 1820 - 1861

Wed: Nancy Parker

a. Mary Jane Kirk **

Wed: William Ossie Snell

b. Fannie Kirk

Wed: T. B. Osborn ***

c. Hugh Kirk---never married

D. Alexander Montgomery Kirk

Wed: Sarah Brothers

a. Lizzy Kirk

b. William Kirk

c. Sally Kirk

d. Roberta White Kirk

e. Montgomery Kirk

All born in Washington County, Miss.
and moved to Florida

E. Franklin Kirk

Wed: ?

- F. Hugh Kirk
Killed at Franklin, Tennessee
Never Married
- G. Melissa Kirk
Wed: James C. Snell (Curtis)
(Half brother to William Ossie
Snell--above)
- a. Etna Snell
Wed: Jim Johnson
- b. Florence Snell
Wed: Mr. -----Napier
- c. James C. Snell, Jr
Wed: Dora Butler

**

- * Mrs. Ramsey Snell can supply information
- ** Refer to Jane Stone's "SNELL " book for our long line-
Ramsey Emmett Snell, 92 and Mary Kirk Snell Ransom, 88,
are still living----1979
- *** Mrs. John Osborn, Murfreesboro can supply this line.

A HISTORY of the RUSSELL HOMEPLACE

By- Mr. Tom L. Russell

A cedar log house and its surrounding land was the home and livelihood of several generations of Russells that descended from Pinkney H. Russell (1816-1891) who migrated from North Carolina prior to 1845 to Wilson County, Tennessee. The house and land was located just South of Spring Creek and in the fifth district of Rutherford County, Tennessee. It was the homeplace of the writer, a location of many fond memories. Below is a brief history of the place so near to the great-great-grandson of Pinkney H. Russell, Thomas L. Russell.

In the year 1789, the state of North Carolina granted to Stephen Brooks of Pitt County, N. C. several hundred acres of land in Tennessee. Some of this land lay in what was to later be Rutherford and Sumner Counties, Tennessee. Land that was to later be the site of the Russell Homeplace was part of the grants to Brooks.

Some time thereafter Brooks sold the land to a Richard Evans of Pitt County. Evans in turn sold the land to Alexander Evans in 1817-2,560 acres (640 acres in Sumner County and the rest in Rutherford) for the price of \$5,000.00 or about \$2.00 an acre.

Later Alexander Evans sold the land to several men by the names of John Barber, Joseph, Levi, William and Nathan Lannom whose descendants still live in Rutherford and Wilson Counties.

In November of 1834 Laban Benthall, a hatter and perhaps

skilled in other trades, purchased part of the above land from John Barber and Green B. Lannom, and heir of Joseph Lannom. The land Benthall obtained included the site of the Russell homeplace. Benthall's boundary began where Fall Creek emptied into Spring Creek, went south 1749 feet, then east 4092 feet, then north 2359 feet and finally west 2275 feet to Spring Creek and down the creek to the beginning of the boundary line. No dwellings or stipulations was mentioned in the deed as was to come later.

In October of 1836 Benthall sold the same land to Thomas Rose with an exception of the way that the upper or northern boundary ran. In the 1836 deed Benthall mentions (1) a dwelling, (2) the reservation of one acre of land for the purpose of building a meeting house for public worship and a school for teaching children, and (3) a hatter's shop which was located above Spring Creek Bridge. Benthall went to Dyer County in West Tennessee apparently with Elisha Sanders of the first district of Rutherford County, for the 1850 Census Benthall is listed under the household of Elisha Sanders and a widower.

In March of 1872 William Rose, son of Thomas Rose who died and was buried on what was to be the Russell homeplace, sold the land to Patton A. McPeak who lived on Fall Creek, south of the purchased land. This sale involved only 81 acres, Rose either keeping some of the land or having already sold some of it since the acreage had been cut in two. Again the dwelling and reservation of one acre of land to build a meeting place for public worship was mentioned. Another reservation was stipulated in this deed--that of a family graveyard 32 feet by 40 feet.

This cemetery was located behind or north of the house with a vegetable garden in between the two. Later Russells and other persons would be buried west of the plot stipulated by the Rose family as a "family graveyard."

Mr. Ed Arnold, long time resident of the community, recalls that one of the young men of the Rose family was killed by another community resident in an argument--reason being unknown. Most assuredly he was laid to rest along with his parents and perhaps other members of the Rose family, a family which had come from North Carolina.

From the above deeds and descriptions contained therein, it appears that Laban Benthall built the cedar log house on the Russell homeplace, a home for them from about 1878 until 1958 when the house burned. He would have built the home sometime in 1835. The structure was made up of three rooms, one being a kitchen setting away from the two other rooms, and half rooms or pens over the front two rooms. A hall or breeze-way divide the kitchen and two front rooms.

The latter's shop built by Benthall could have been the same structure used by W. D. Cook for a blacksmith shop since both shops or businesses were located near and above Spring Creek Bridge.

In January of 1878 William D. Cook and Wilson H. Russell, son of Pinkney H. Russell, purchased a fifteen acre part of the Russell homeplace--the part where the cedar log house stood. This purchase was made from Patton A. McPeak, wife Martha and David F. Hunter and wife Rebecca Rowlett. (David F. Hunter was a brother of the wife of William D. Cook, Margaret Ann Hunter).

Seven months later, Wilson H. Russell and wife Jennie O. Cook, daughter of William D. Cook and Margaret Cook, became the parents of a baby boy who was named William Pinkney Russell.

In February of 1879 McPeak and wife sold to Wilson Russell 61 acres of land joining the 15 acres purchased earlier by Cook and Russell. This part contained the one acre reserved for the meeting place of public worship. According to family stories and a map of Rutherford County, a doctor's house or cabin stood across the road from the main house. In the early 1900's, this cabin was moved next to this acre reserve. William P. Russell was to raise his family in this cabin, it being located south of the main house and near the public road on the east side.

William (Bill) Cook must not have felt the need for additional acreage since he was a blacksmith and not a farmer like his son-in-law, Wilson Russell who made the purchase alone this time. Four years earlier, March of 1874, Wilson Russell had written to a friend, W. B. Pafford, then in California. Russell spoke of hard times and scarce money, and then spoke of his farming activities of sowing oats and cleaning up some land for cotton.

Bill and Margaret Cook, Wilson and Jennie Russell continued to live together in the three room dwelling until Bill and Margaret died near the turn of the century. Bill and Margaret had only one child, Jennie who gave birth to several children, three of which lived to adulthood. They were William Pinkney who married Bertha Townes, Carrie who married Will Bridges and Jesse who died before marriage. Jesse died in 1912; her funeral was held in the front lot of the homeplace under the shade of a huge oak tree. Jennie had died in 1894.

During the Cook-Russell occupation a front porch was added along with a dining room on the East side of the kitchen. Such was the structure for as long as the house would stand.

At the death of Wilson Russell in 1934 the homeplace became the living place for William P. Russell, the only son of Wilson. William's family was to live in the main house until his death in 1944 when the oldest son of William, Clarence Wilson Russell, would buy out his brothers and sisters, namely, Robert Reed, Shirley Martin, Hollis Miller, Wyman Townes, Helen Virginia and Marion Elizabeth Russell.

Clarence Russell who married Miralee Wright in 1938 and had lived part of the time in the main house and part of the time in the log cabin heretofore mentioned, was to raise his family at the Russell homeplace and in the same log home built by Laban Benthall in 1835. Clarence and Mira's children were Thomas Lee, Kenneth Wilson, Rebecca Ann and Jennie Lynn. The old log house was home for them until 1958 when it was destroyed by fire. Thus, four generations of Russells or five generations of the same family had found home at the same place in the same house in the fifth district of Rutherford County, south of Spring Creek just a few hundred yards and east a few hundred yards of the public road called Lamar Road.

Today, 1979, the knoll on which the house stood is part of the south shore of the Percy Priest Lake which backs up into the Spring Creek bed. Some of the maple trees of the yard and one pear tree still stand. A new growth of trees and honeysuckle vine cover the garden which was north of the house and the family graveyard of the Rose family, gradually returning things

to a natural environment which Laban Benthall found on this knoll in 1834. Gone but not forgotten because the Russell homeplace holds many dear memories to one of her sons, Thomas L. Russell, and I know for others as well.

JOHN TAYLOR LYTLE

by

Clarice Miller

The driveway of the J. B. McNeil's home six miles out the Franklin Road from Murfreesboro, Tennessee, winds around in a curve, skirting the house. On either side of the driveway, the smooth, emerald grass is shaded by huge trees with knarled trunks that speak of olden times. There are pecan, maple, spruce, boxwood, and a magnificent magnolia which stands quite close on the right hand side of the house.

The modern home is built on the site of the original home place of John Taylor Lytle, oldest son of Captain William Lytle. The Captain had given sixty acres of land north of "Murfree Spring Branch" in 1811 for a permanent seat of justice for the county. This was part of the original grants to William and Archibald Lytle after service in the Revolution War, as well as other grants purchased by them.¹

William Lytle's family migrated from Pennsylvania to North Carolina, then to Middle Tennessee. He visited the region in Tennessee and returned to "Hillsborough, North Caroline, by 1786 . . . for he married Ann Taylor that year. She was a girl of sixteen or seventeen and

¹C. C. Henderson. The Story of Murfreesboro, 1929. News Banner Publishing Co. p. 28.

he was a man of thirty-one." William continued to buy land grants from Revolutionary veterans who did not wish to come to Tennessee. After his brother, Archibald's death, William had 26,441 acres. He probably left North Carolina for the West in 1798 or 1799.²

After they arrived in Middle Tennessee, William's wife was referred to as Nancy. According to Andrew Nelson Lytle, they chose a "site on level land, by a creek, with rising ground to the south and east and rolling hillocks to the west. To the north lay a cedar grove." Here they built their home on the site of the present Carnation Plant, which is no longer in use. William Lytle died in 1829 and is buried near the original home site. The house according to Andrew Lytle, was two story of hewn cedar logs, weatherboarded on the outside, and had ceilings of poplar painted light blue. Nancy Lytle was the leader of fashion and patron of all balls and parties in Murfreesboro. She died in 1825.³

When, in 1811, the Legislature appointed a committee to choose a new site (instead of Jefferson) for the seat of county justice, at least four locations were eagerly proffered by the owners, the Rucker place, the Black Fox Springs, the Captain William Lytle land, and the Ready place . . . "Captain Lytle enhanced his

²Andrew Nelson Lytle. A Wake for the Living. Crown Publishers, Inc. New York. @ 1975.

³Ibid.

offer far beyond the others." He staged a large reception and banquet presided over by his wife, Nancy. The committee accepted Lytle's offer. The lytle property of sixty acres on a slight elevation, appeared to be well adapted to meeting the criteria for a central location. Lytle at first declined to suggest a name for the new county seat, and the General Assembly, on October 27, 1811, designated the town as Cannonsburgh in honor of Newton Cannon. Shortly afterward, Lytle suggested it be named Murfreesborough in memory of his friend, Colonel Hardy Murfree.⁴ It later became Murfreesboro.

"John Taylor Lytle was the Captain's oldest son. He was named for his mother's father and in his youth was a wild one . . . He finally got religion and built a church house on his farm (given to him by his father, Captain William Lytle) and made slaves and family attend with the zeal only the saved can manifest."⁵

His house, according to Andrew N. Lytle, six miles out from Murfreesboro, was still standing some few years ago. It was a frame and unlike the usual country house of the region. The living room was paneled halfway up and papered the rest. Across a narrow hall was the dining room. The kitchen and out houses were mostly gone. The house was commodious enough.

⁴Homer Pittard. Griffith.

⁵Andrew Nelson Lytle. A Wake for the Living.

"There were large dressing rooms upstairs attached to the bedrooms. In the yard is a great stone brought for his tomb. Since it was unsuitable, it was dropped and, Andrew Lytle says, he supposes it still lies there. At the entrance to the drive is a buggy house, with handmade snake hinges."⁶

Mrs. John Grooms of Murfreesboro, a descendant of John Hartman, who purchased the Lytle place, has a picture of the Lytle house made in approximately 1916, or about two years before Frances Hartman (Mrs. Grooms' mother) was born in 1918. Frances Hartman married an Odom, which is Mrs. Grooms' maiden name. John Hartman's son, Jack, lived there until his marriage. His daughter, Ida Mildred Hartman, who currently works at the Murfreesboro Post Office, was instrumental in locating the picture of the Lytle home place.

The large twenty by sixteen inch tinted photograph in an oval frame of stained wood shows the house as Andrew Nelson Lytle described it. In the picture is a pump house next to the dwelling with a latticed porch. It is now enclosed in concrete at the McNeil farm. The foundation of the barn, seen in the picture, is now found back of the current McNeil barn.

The large lawn in front of the home in the picture has no trees except the magnolia at the right hand corner, of the house and two large stumps. That same magnolia

⁶Ibid.

www.rutherfordnhistory.org



THE JOHN LYTLE HOME PLACE



THE CRYPT - Mrs. McNiel stands at the west side of the crypt where the tombstones are piled.



The small cemetery near the crypt. Notice the double gate to allow room for pallbearers.



The McNiel home today on the site of the former John Lytle home.



The stones from the buggy house near the road were laid under the old magnolia tree at the corner of the McNiel home.

is still there. It is a magnificent old soldier of a tree showing the scars of many cold winters, wind, and snow. Limestone slabs surround the magnolia's foot.

Mrs. McNeil says the slabs came from the front yard near the driveway entrance. She had thought they were the foundation of a slave cabin until she learned of the buggy house mentioned by Andrew Nelson Lytle which stood by the entrance to the driveway.

The McNeil's became curious and interested in the crypt found back of their home and to the right side. It contains John Lytle's grave with his second wife, Mary. She was a widow when he married her, Mary Ward Sills Turner.

Andrew Nelson Lytle says⁷ "John Lytle's first wife was Tabitha Morton. . . Tabitha is buried in the Lytle burying ground on the original homeplace (at the site of the Carnation Plant).⁸ This is set apart in a lonely spot, although at the time no doubt a place had been reserved by her for her husband's repose. As such things go in a hard country, he lies by his second wife, in the rear of his dwelling on the Franklin Dirt Road. He built a tomb out of limestone rock, and he and my ancestress lie there. The lightning struck the top and through the crack it is possible to see the two skulls

⁷Ibid., p. 130-131.

⁸Information given by Andrew Nelson Lytle in a letter to the author of this article.

The old magnolia at the east corner of the McNiel home, which can be seen in the old picture of the Lytle home.



This old tree, probably planted by John Lytle, was recently blown down by a storm. It measures 75 feet high and 15 feet around the trunk about 2 feet from the ground.

ANDREW NELSON LYTLE
THE LOG CABIN
MONTEAGLE, TENN. 37356

Sep. 16, 1978

Dear Miss Miller:

Tabitha is buried in the Lytle cemetery, at Carnation site. I understand a storm blew the headstones down, but that they have been fixed. I'm pretty sure about this, because John is buried by his second wife. I remember she awaited him in vain.

Tabitha
You have my permission to quote.
If you quote too lengthy passages, you might have to get permission from the publishers.

Sincerely Yours

Andrew Lytle
Andrew Lytle

leaning towards each other, with the constant grimace of silence and privacy. He had chiseled into the stone a curse on anyone who may disturb or move his bones."

The four or five inch crack is in a right angle, and the only thing that can be seen now is something resembling a silver knife. Mr. McNeil jokingly tells visitors, "Old John gets up sometimes in the night and wanders around, but he doesn't bother me and I sure don't bother him."

The engraving on the vault reads, "Molest not the dead, nor spoil his resting place." Mr. McNeil says he has no intention of harming it in any way. He and John get along well together.

Mr. and Mrs. McNeil asked to have the burying ground researched. Mr. E. K. Johns and Mr. H. G. Wray did the investigation of the vault and cemetery. A copy, loaned by the McNeils, of the result of their research follows.

Since it is called Lytle-Blanks Cemetery, it is assumed that it was a community cemetery. The 1878 map (found in Murfreesboro Historical Society) mentioned in the research shows the home called "Rosydell" with Captain John Lytle in residence. This must have been John Taylor Lytle's son, who was called Jack. According to Andrew Nelson Lytle's family tree, he married Helen King.

Mr. & Mrs. J.B.McNeil &
E.K.Johns &
H.G. Wray, June 1972

LYTLE-BLANKS CEMETERY (Sheet 1 of 2)

Rockvale Quadrangle. On Highway #96, 0.8 of a mile East of the intersection of Windrow Road (now named Coleman Rd.) The cemetery is about 400' south of Hwy. 96 and about 100' west of the J.B.McNeil home. A large old house once stood where the present home now stands.

Large vault about 12' x 12' and about 5' high with a flat roof. The walls are of finely cut limestone blocks 8" thick, and the roof of solid limestone pieces 8" thick, 3' wide and 12' long. At one end (east) are these inscribed slabs:

John Lytles Tomb
Built 1835

John Lytle
July 9, 1788
Aug. 31, 1841

Molest not the
dead, nor spoil
his resting place

On the west side is this inscribed slab

In memory of John & Mary Lytle
John Lytle July 9, 1788-Aug. 31, 1841
Mary W. Lytle Jan. 11, 1800-Nov. 30, 1847

About 40' southwest of the Lytle vault is a small iron fence enclosing four graves:

Martha S. Floyd
Mar. 30, 1861
Nov. 9, 1897

James M. Floyd
Nov. 15, 1893
Feb. 5, 1894

M.A.W.
No dates

Drury S. Floyd
June 18, 1897
Oct. 13, 1897

There were nine broken tombstones stacked on the west side of the Lytle vault and have been stacked there for a long time but the inscriptions are well preserved.

Martha G. Lytle
Aug. 26, 1822
Aug. 18, 1825

James E. Webb, Esq.
Sept. 6, 1794
July 9, 1873

Mary J. Webb
wife of
Harvey Haynes
Apr. 6, 1820
June 5, 1897

Ingram Blanks
Dec. 18, 1755
Dec. 12, 1825

Martha Ann
wife of
James E. Webb
Mar. 1, 1794
Oct. 3, 1872

Harvey H. Haynes
Apr. 11, 1815
Mar. 18, 1863

Martha Blanks
wife of
Ingram Blanks
Mar. 6, 1756
June 9, 1826

Mary E. Vaughan
Feb. 9, 1847
Nov. 9, 1891

LYTLE-BLANKS CEMETERY (Sheet 2 of 2)

Broken and part missing:

_____ Burns, wife of

_____ Burns, dau., of

_____ h Webb

Nov. __, 1848

Sept. 5, 1879.

NOTE: On 1878 map this place is named "Rosydell" and lists
Capt. John Lytle as living there.

In 1820 Census, Ingram Blanks had 33 slaves

The McNeils have lived on this farm for eight years, the fifth family to live there. First the John Lytles and heirs, then John Hartman purchased the farm from the Lytle heirs. Later his son, Jack Hartman, lived there, and then August Leeman purchased and tore down the house and built a new (the current) home. The Hugh Samples came next and the McNeils purchased the farm from the Samples.

John Lytle gave the land in Murfreesboro for the United Methodist Church on College Street at Church Street. The following information was furnished by Mrs. Lody Lytle Houston (Ivan) Brown:

The organization of this very popular branch of the church in this country dates back to about 1812. At that time there was held a camp meeting at the Windrow Camp Ground at which there were many professions of religion. Other camp meetings now held at which itinerant ministries of the Methodist faith were present and worked with that zeal that was peculiar to the pioneer ministries of that faith. Rev. Robert Paine, who became bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church, was a circuit rider over a district embracing Rutherford County. During the season of the General Assembly, he preached in the courthouse and many members were present and took a part in the exercises, among them Felix Grundy, the distinguished lawyer and statesman. A class was organized at a house on College Street in 1821.

The charter members are: Benjamin Blankenship and wife, Edward Fisher and wife, Thomas Montague and wife, John Lytle and wife, Martin Clark, Willis Reeves, John Jones, William Ledbetter, G. A. Sublett, D. Henry Holmes, Dr. W. R. Rucker, Levi Reeves, J. D. Neugent and David Hammis. Preaching was furnished by traveling preachers at first and services were held either in the courthouse or in a private dwelling until the year 1823. In 1823 John Lytle deeded a lot, near where Soule's College, now stands for the purpose of having a church erected thereon. The lot was deeded to

John R. McLaughlin
Samuel McLaughlin
Simpson Simons
Benjamin Rucker
S. Ogden
A. Childress
Edmond Jones
as Trustees

A brick house, one story high, with gallery for Negroes, and bell, was completed at a cost of about \$1,800.00

Goodspeed p 839-840

Warranty Deed of John Lytle to Methodist Church Trustees
Dated January 11, 1823,
Registered July 3, 1832

Register's Office for Rutherford County, Tennessee
Deed Book 5, page 574

The progress of the church was slow until 1828 when the first conference met in Murfreesboro, at which

a great revival was begun and the church was greatly strengthened. John Lytle, Mrs. Wasson, and the Rev. John Lane deserve mention for their zeal and piety; also Captain Jones who conducted the first public prayer meeting at the old Bradley Academy in 1818.

Goodspeed p. 839

Archibald Lytle m. Ann?

Robert

m. 1 and 3 Sara?

m. 2 Janet Mebane (my ancestress)

5 other children

Andrew m.?

Archibald

William

b. 1755-d. 1829

(founder of

Murfreesboro)

m. Ann Taylor b. 1770-d. 1825

7 other children

John Taylor Lytle (my great-great-grandfather on distaff side)

great-granduncle on sword side)

b. 1788-d. 1841

m. 1 Tabitha Morton (3 children)

m. 2 Mary Ward Sills Turner

William Franklin Pitt Lytle (my

great-grandfather on sword side;

great-great-granduncle on distaff side)

b. Murfreesboro 1805-d. 1863

m. 1 Violet Henderson

m. 3 Sophie R. DeShields

m. 2 Mary Patterson Logan (my

great-grandmother)

10 children

Ephraim Foster Lytle m. Judith Searcy

(my great-grandfather) b. 1824-d. 1868

Kate m.

Robert Lytle

other

children

Mammy)

John m. Helen King

other children

Ada

(Cousin

Ada Colville)

Julia

(Aunt Lady)

Robert m. Lillie Belle Nelson

Foster

(my father)

Andrew

Polly

John

Robert

(my grandfather)

(Aunt Kit Ledbetter)

b. 1838-d. 1873

m. Kate Lytle (Mammy)

Robert (my father)

Foster

Margaret

b. 1841

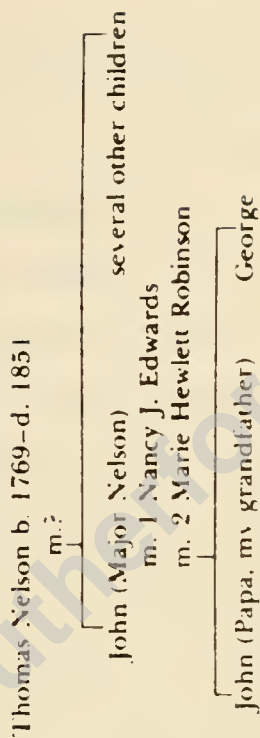
Evander

b. 1843

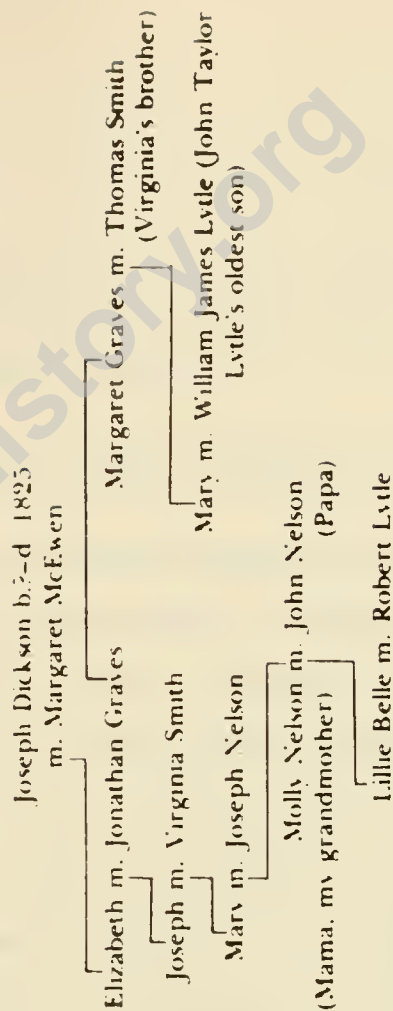
m. Kathern

Bibb

My Grandfather John Nelson's Descent



My Grandmother Molly Nelson's Descent



REVOLUTIONARY PENSION RECORD of John M. Leak

Furnished by Mrs. Edna Fry

STATE OF TENNESSEE)
) Circuit Court, October Term 1831
RUTHERFORD COUNTY)

On this day October 21, 1831 personally appeared in open court before the honorable Thomas Stewart, Judge, now sitting for said county, John M. Leak, a resident of the county and state aforesaid, aged seventy five years; who being first 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. He states that he was born in Amherst County, State of Virginia in the year 1758, and in January 1777 (this he is not certain) he entered the service of his country, from the county of Amherst as a substitute in the place of William Johnston. Declarent was then in his seventeenth year. His Captain was David Shelton. He was marched to the barracks in Albermarle County to aid in guarding the prisoners then at that place. Declarent remained in service one month; was discharged and returned home.

In April of the same year declarent was drafted and called out under Capt. John Deggs from the county of Amherst, and rendezvoused at the Barracks in Albermarle upon the same duty and after a service of one month was discharged and returned home. Declarent thinks that Col. Taylor of the regular Army commanded at the barracks.

In November of the same year declarant entered the service as a substitute for Josias Dodd from the county of Amherst, and was attached to Capt. John Christian's Company, and again marched to the Barracks in Albermarle to guard prisoners; and was in service one month, was discharged and returned home.

Declarant was again drafted from that county of Amherst and was attached to Capt. Richard Ballingers company. He cannot recall the year but believes that it was the same year or about the time that Arnold burnt Richmond, or the public stores at that place.¹ And in the month of January, was marched to Albermarle old court house and there joined a company commanded by Capt. Joseph Tucker. The corps was transported in canoes down the river within eighteen miles of Richmond and was there disembarked and marched down to the city. When the detachment reached Richmond, Capt. Ballengers company was ordered to Hoods Fort and Capt. Tuckers to Williamsburg. Capt. Ballengers command was conveyed to Hoods Fort by water. The duty of the corps on its arrival at the Fort was to guard it. Declarant remained in service three months; was discharged and returned home, and he reached home the last of May, and declarant believes that this last tour of service was performed in the year 1780.

The tenth of August 1781 declarant was again drafted in the county of Amherst and entered the service under the command of Col. Daniel Gaines. The corps was two hundred

¹ The stores at Richmond were burned Jan. 5, 1781

strong and was marched by the commanding officer to Richmond and from there to Williamsburg, where we halted one day. The French had reached that place, and the corp under the command of Col Gaines was halted, until they passed in front and the whole command then moved on to York. While stationed at York declarent was detached part of the time to drive a wagon for the purpose of transporting bread from Williamsburg for Gen. Lawson's brigade. After the capture of Lord Corn Wallace, declarent was (?) and marched with the Army to Pages Wharehouse in (Parmanky ?) and at that point was discharged and returned home. In the last campaign declarent was in service three months and ten days. Declarent recollects that one (Mifsous)? was the Quartermaster and that Thos. Low was the deputy quartermaster. Declarent was never in any battle. Declarent recollects of seeing at Albermarle Barracks Col. Taylor and Lee and of Hardin of the regular army. And at York he saw Genl. Washington, The --- Steuben, and he recollects a Frenchman, a slender young man called the Marquis. He saw Genl. Wayne, who commanded the New England troops.

Declarent has no record of his age; he was born in 1758-Amherst County-State of Virginia, and remained there after the war until the year 1795, and then moved to Rock-bridge County, and in 1811 moved to Knox County, State of Tennessee and in 1821 to Wilson County, and for the last three years declarent has resided in Rutherford County, Tennessee where he now lives. Declarent never had but one discharge, and that was from Capt. Ballinger which has been

destroyed. Declarent is acquainted in his neighborhood with Wm. Davis, William Walker, Thomas Nevil, (Edmond) Thompson, John Edmondson, William Thompson, Joseph Cannon, Nimrod Thompson, all of whom declarent believes will testify to his character for veracity and their belief of his service as a soldier of the revolution. And in the neighborhood where declarent moved from Wilson County where he is better known, he can name John Sneed, William Holland, Lemuel -----, James Ewing, Nelson (Bayan), Mathew -----, Wm. Davis and Rich. Hanneh all of whom would testify to their belief of declarent serving in the war of the Revolution and to his character for vericity. Declarent has no documentary evidence in his possession by which he can prove his said service, and he knows of no one now living by whom he can prove them.

He hereby relinquishes every claim whatsoever to a pension annuity except the present, and declares that his name is not on the pension roll of the Agency.

Sworn to and subscribed this day and year aforesaid.

his
John M. x Leak
Mark

We William Walker, Thos. Cannon and Joseph Cannon residing in the neighborhood of John M. Leak, Hereby certify that we are well acquainted with said Leak, who has subscribed and sworn to the foregoing declaration, That we believe him to be seventy five years of age; that he is reported and believed 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 this day and year aforesaid.

William Walker
Theophilus A. Cannon
Joseph Cannon

A letter attached to the pension application from the Pension office at Nashville, Tennessee dated Nov. 14, 1840

Sir,

At the request of Mr. Mask Leak, the adm. of John M. Leak, his father, who was Pensioner under the act of 7th June 1832 and who died on the 24th day of August last, I enclose to you the preceeding of the court in the case on which he expect to draw the areers of the pension due the deceased under the act of the 19 June 1840.

As I have not been furnished with any form or instructions under the provisions of the above mentioned act I have declined making any payments to admins. or executors until I shall be furnished with such form or instructions, by the proper department as will enable me, to correctly, to make such payments.

Very respectfully
J. M. Smith

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