

Moses Looney's Fort as it was in 1780.

## Sullivan County Marks Birth Of Its Government

By TERRY McWILLIAMS  
Times-News Staff Writer

The long years of fighting pesky Indians for control of the frontier were finally over. Moses Looney and his neighbors could get down to business.

They met in Looney's hewn log home, which had served as a haven during many savage attacks. On a bitterly cold, winter day in February, 1780, the group would organize a new government for the back country.

After all, North Carolina's general assembly had already given the go-ahead the year before to set up a county in honor of the Revolutionary War hero, General John Sullivan.

After an afternoon and more of work, the land surrounding the Holston Valley became Sullivan County.

Two centuries later, a group of Sullivan countians will visit the same room where the government was born, and they will commemorate those actions taken.

Organizing the event is the Sullivan County Historical Society, which will also present related activities Saturday afternoon at the Sullivan County Courthouse in Blountville.

Ol' Looney's fort had been presumed destroyed over the years, although historians knew the general area where it might have been.

About 30 years ago, however, Charles Pope and his wife were re-decorating their home on Old Island Road, when they discovered that the house in which they lived was not an ordinary one. They quickly checked with experts, and the couple was told that theirs was an important house.

Pope found documents and artifacts within its walls, one of which told how one of Pope's ancestors acquired the land by paying a 39-cent tax.

"We have no details of the land until Andrew Haupt took it over" in 1858, said Thelma Barnes, one of

the members of Sullivan County's Historical Society. "We're not sure what happened to Moses Looney."

The ceremony Saturday, beginning at 1:30 in Blountville, is relevant "very relevant" to 1980 Sullivan citizens, said Mrs. Barnes. "People are looking for their roots. People as far away as California are writing back." This event will give a chance to relate to that heritage, she added.

It also might point out that the Sullivan County government of 1980 is vastly changed from the one two hundred years earlier. "It was partly a military government, which was necessary at that time. It wasn't a time of peace," she said.

Some of the early officers in the government had military titles: Colonel-commander, lieutenant-colonel, major and more.

Dr. Linda Scott will detail the mood during that period. Scott, director of Appalachian affairs at ETSU, will talk about Sullivan County as a gateway to the west in 1780.

Peggy Rogers will sing a couple of ballads about the period immediately afterwards, then the Papes will host an open house at their "fort" on Old Island Road in the Indian Springs area near Kingsport.

How will the county respond to its 200th birthday?

"It all depends on the weather," said Mrs. Barnes. "We feel we've had a big response to this so far. We've had items for sale that have made people aware of their past heritage. People don't realize the importance of this county had in establishing land — Kentucky and Alabama were wilderness areas.

"Island Road in 1770 was one of the first roads in the area. And from Island Road, Daniel Boone cut the Wilderness Road that helped establish settlements into Kentucky."

Nearly 100,000 people passed through Sullivan County in the first 10 years of its existence, she said. "This was an important area at the time. This was the gateway."

Kingsport Times News

# Historians' Feud Centers On Old Blountville Home

By MIKE KASZUBA  
Sullivan County Bureau

BLOUNTVILLE — A simmering feud among historians is casting shadows on a restored log house, whose role as the centerpiece of old Blountville may have been exaggerated.

At its core, the struggle questions a series of findings by influential Kingsport historian Mimi Spoden that since 1972 have boosted the standing of the Anderson Townhouse in local history.

Her discoveries, a Times-News study shows, came shortly before Sullivan County paid \$10,000 for the house, some \$45,000 in tax money and gifts went to its remodeling and Mrs. Spoden saved part of it to use as her county historical office.

Mrs. Spoden denies she stretched its history and blames charges she did so on jealousies among other historians. "I think they're just after me," she said.

Regardless, it is a dispute between rival Sullivan County historians, whose world can often topple or be built by dusty history books and obscure manuscripts.

Beginning in 1972, Mrs. Spoden built the importance of the townhouse by writings — which she published as its uncontested past — that for the first time said the house was a meeting place for town commissioners and confirmed Revolutionary War hero John Anderson both built it and lived there.

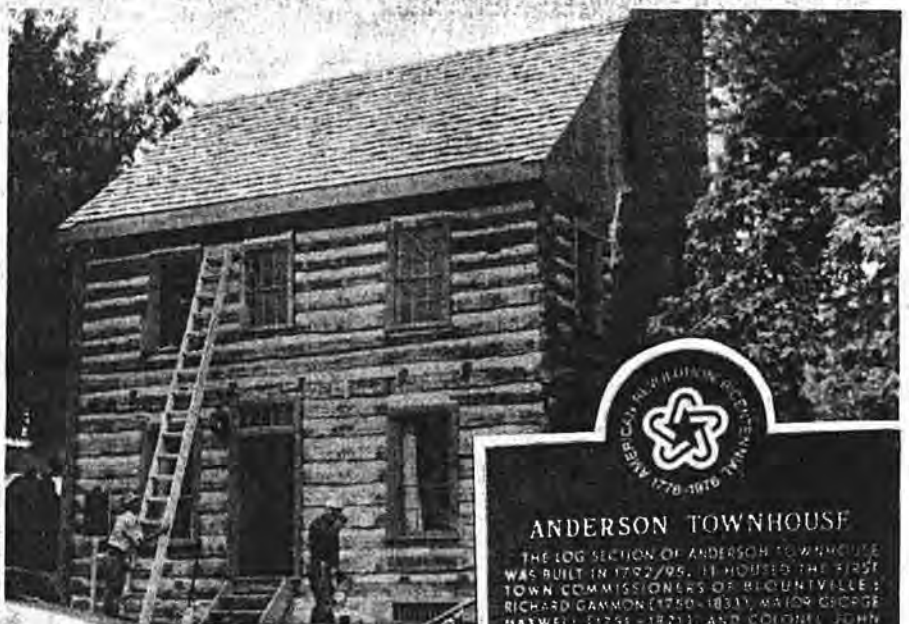
Other parts of her research labeled the house as the first built in Blountville and, at one point, names the commissioners as its builders. But her work faces these challenges:

— Another historian whom Mrs. Spoden said helped research the townhouse has said the facts do not support her findings.

"That is not my story," said Alethea Haynes, whom Mrs. Spoden credits along with herself as the major researchers. "I was the person that told them John Anderson didn't have anything to do with that house."

— Mrs. Spoden admits most of her conclusions are deductions she has made or are based on the 1940s-era manuscript by Rhea Anderson, a Blountville historian. Anderson does not in any way link the commissioners to the house.

— In making it the first house in



Times-News Photos — Mike Kaszuba

**The Anderson Townhouse (above) is at center of local historians' controversy. Plaque (right) in front of house tells one version of the old house's history.**

Blountville, Mrs. Spoden again relied on Anderson to say the house dates back to 1792 to 1795. However, land deeds to the house do not mention a structure until 1811.

Other historians use the deeds to guess the house was built sometime after 1804, the last time before 1811 the land was sold leaving a document that describes the land the townhouse stands on. Court-house land records place the first homes in Blountville by 1796.

Much of the arguing surfaced because of grumblings the townhouse was open only when Mrs. Spoden was there and that she used it as her office. She denied the charge, but promises regular hours by late July.

**ANDERSON TOWNHOUSE**

THE LOG SECTION OF ANDERSON TOWNHOUSE WAS BUILT IN 1792/95. IT HOUSED THE FIRST TOWN COMMISSIONERS OF BLOUNTVILLE: RICHARD GAMMON (1750-1831), MAJOR GEORGE MAXWELL (1751-1821), AND COLONEL JOHN ANDERSON (1750-1817). ALL THESE MEN SERVED THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION AND HELD IMPORTANT CIVIL OFFICES. JOHN ANDERSON, WHO LIVED AND WORKED AT THE TOWNHOUSE WHEN IN BLOUNTVILLE ON COMMISSIONER DUTY, WAS THE OWNER OF THE WELL-KNOWN BLOCKHOUSE ON THE FAMED WILDERNESS ROAD. IN ADDITION TO THE TOWN COMMISSIONERS, THE HOUSE HAS BEEN HOME TO A NUMBER OF PRESBYTERIAN AND METHODIST MINISTERS AS WELL AS JOSEPH ANDERSON, ONE OF THE FOUNDERS OF MODERN BRISTOL.

THE KITCHEN BURNED ABOUT 1811. SUCCESSIVE OWNERS BY 1826 ADDED THE FRAME BACK WING AND MADE GENERAL IMPROVEMENTS TO THE INTERIOR.

AS A PART OF AMERICA'S BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION THE HOUSE WAS PURCHASED IN 1974 BY THE SULLIVAN COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION WITH FUNDS DONATED BY THE HISTORICAL CLUB AND BUSINESS AND DONATED BY THE SULLIVAN COUNTY REVOLUTIONARY BIRTHPLACE SOCIETY.

Also, county officials are trying to finalize uses for the house, which at one time was promised as a headquarters to a Sullivan County historical group. "What we would like to do is tell the story of the county here," said Mrs. Spoden.

"She (Mrs. Spoden) seems to have the

More On Page 2A, Col. 1

July 15 1974

## Historians Squabble Over Blountville House

### Continued From Page 1

notion, "if you can't give the place a fancy background, you can't get a grant," said one critic.

However, Mrs. Spoden, her critics and state officials all insist the house would have gotten its grants without its revised standing because it sits within the town's historic district, a National Register of Historic Places listing.

All of Mrs. Spoden's findings on the Anderson Townhouse are contained within the 233-page "Historic Sites of Sullivan County," a book she published with the aid of local tax money. Since the book's publication, however, praise has been mixed with complaints of errors.

Because Mrs. Spoden is respected, a state historical spokesman said her research — and theories — were accepted on the townhouse without doubt. However, he admitted new findings have clouded the house's status.

"She is considered to be a very good researcher," said Herbert Harper, a state historical commission spokesman. "There again, even the best researchers make mistakes."

Mrs. Spoden said her biggest find, evidence indicating the house was a meeting place for commissioners, came when she deduced Anderson lived too far from Blountville to make a daily trip back to his home north of Kingsport. She said

Anderson built the house as an overnight home for him and the two other commissioners.

At the time, the commissioners were developing Blountville, courthouse records show. Mrs. Spoden agrees with others that Anderson did not own the house, but that it was — like the property — owned by the commissioners.

"It's widely accepted that the town commissioners met there," she said. "I'm not making it up, it's a sound conclusion."

But Mrs. Spoden is challenged even on her first conclusion, naming Anderson as an occupant of the house. And, she admits: "Other than everybody saying it was the Col. John Anderson townhouse, that is the only written reference I can give you."

Her reference, she said again, was Rhea Anderson (no relation to Col. Anderson), whose works some historians said may be based more on talks with residents than on written records. Unfortunately, few persons know what methods and sources he used.

Still, Rhea Anderson's only mention of the townhouse — on which Mrs. Spoden bases her most vital findings — comes in one paragraph of a talk to local historians.

Many historians instead have said the most detailed history of Sullivan County was written in 1909 by Oliver Taylor, a

heavily footnoted account used by libraries. Taylor does not mention the townhouse.

Experts say that sources are critical in upholding or shelving historical deductions and agree generally that a written record supercedes books by authors and legends.

"Something like a deed or a court record would be a much more stable source," said University of Tennessee history teacher Michael McDonald. "Hearsay would be the least reliable source."

Blountville historian Alma Grant admits she lacks the expertise Mrs. Spoden has, but said available records she has found support few of Mrs. Spoden's findings. Mrs. Spoden calls Mrs. Grant a troublemaker.

"How dull all of these places would be if you killed all the legend," said Mrs. Spoden. Until her history is refuted, she said it should stand. "Some people like to be absolutely right."

Mrs. Spoden said as a precaution, she warned her deductions are not fact. Yet, a plaque outside the townhouse and its history in her book state its past as fact, unqualified.

But there are holes. Taylor's 330-page book defuses claims town commissioners built the townhouse as an inn because he cites records showing a 1792 landholder

had an inn just outside town.

"What Mrs. Spoden tells about it just isn't true at all," Mrs. Grant said.

For the most part, Mrs. Spoden's findings concluding the house is the oldest in Blountville also leave doubts. Most of the doubts arise because the historian said the building date of between 1792 and 1795 is a theory.

She said she arrived at the dates in trying to support Rhea Anderson, who says the house was the first built in Blountville. "If this was the first one, it had to be built before 1795 (when land deeds show other houses stood in Blountville)," she said.

Mrs. Spoden said the earliest date — 1792 — represents the year the commissioners obtained the land where the house today stands. "It is not a theory, it is a deduction," she said. She offered no other sources for her conclusion.

But Mrs. Grant and others said land deeds for the townhouse, Lot No. 26, do not mention a house until 16 years after Mrs. Spoden said it was standing. The same historians said that if the house was used by the commissioners, it would have been specifically listed in a deed when they sold it.

"I think it's very important to me," said one historian. "I think it's very important to pass on what we know to be true and call what is legend... legend."

# History

## Blountville site to become museum

By MARY KISS  
Sullivan County Bureau

Col. John Anderson would have been proud.

If he'd been there yesterday at the Blountville Townhouse which bears his name, he'd have seen County Judge Lon V. Boyd hand a symbolic key to Rita Groseclose, granting the Sullivan County Historical Society occupancy of the 190-year-old dwelling.

Nobody can be quite sure how much time John Anderson spent at the two-story log house on Blountville's Main Street, but the Colonel would certainly recognize the old place today. Local historians say it was one of the earliest — if not the first — house in Blountville. It came on the scene between 1792 and 1795, at a time when Anderson was one of Blountville's town commissioners.

A veteran of the Battle of Kings Mountain, the Colonel might have felt a bit of pride, sitting there in the sunshine among the spectators on the Townhouse lawn, watching the Tennessee flag snap in the wind.

The words of Dr. Charles Gibboney might have had a special meaning for Anderson, a justice of the first Sullivan County Court and a representative at the First Constitutional Convention of the State of Franklin.

"Take time to give thanks for what other men have done," Dr. Gibboney advised. "Let us keep alive the fires of our fathers."

Gibboney attributed the nation's success to four key traits common to its founders.

All begin with the letter "I":

- "They had individuality — They believed in themselves and in what they could accomplish;"

- "They had the initiative to dream, to dare and to do;



Times-News photo — Terry Blevins

People gather at Blountville Townhouse for ceremonies turning over the historic site to the Sullivan County Historical Society. The building later is to become a museum.

- "They had industry, they worked with diligence and dispatch;" and

- "They had integrity, the character within that keeps us from becoming unglued at the seams."

Those who hold the reins today must make a commitment, Gibboney said, "to things honest and good and right."

John Anderson would have found honest things, good things in the Townhouse, the start of a museum.

On display for the day in an upstairs room was the stately, though furless, beaver hat manufactured around 1820 at the Edward B. Anderson Farm, site

of Tennessee's first hat factory. Rhea Dail, a descendant of Edward Anderson and chairman of the Townhouse maintenance committee, said the hattery operated for "30 or 40 years" in a log cabin on the family farm two miles from Blountville. "The men made the hats, and the women sewed the linings."

The future museum already holds a small collection of authentic items from the period in which the old house functioned as a dwelling. Displayed in a front room are a large — and operable — spinning wheel and a walnut folding desk made by a country carpenter perhaps 150 years ago. An upstairs bedroom

contains a handsome colonial bed, and a fine 18th century loom, still unassembled.

More furnishings will be added as the historical society steps into its new role as tenant and operator of the Townhouse. Rita Groseclose, SCHS president, said the society hopes residents of the area will contribute appropriate items.

"We want them to be authentic," she said.

The society wants the rooms in the two-story log section of the house to look the way it might have looked in 1795, the way Col. John Anderson would have expected it to look.

# Old Landmark Ready To Retire

## Historic Kingsley Church Is Replaced

By ELLEN CRAWFORD

One of Sullivan County's oldest landmarks, Kingsley Methodist Church, near Arcadia, is about to be retired from active duty. When workmen put the last touch on the new brick church which is being built for the congregation, the old frame building, relieved of its responsibilities, will be preserved as one of the religious and educational shrines of this section.

A fund raising campaign of \$25,000, cost of the new church, is now underway. At the second of two campaign dinners, held Friday night at the church, it was announced that \$4,500 has so far been raised. The foundation of the new building has been laid, and work on the church proper has been begun. With good weather to help, the builders, says Alvin Cain, foreman, will have the church under a roof by the time the cold finally sets in. Completion of the project is expected early in 1948.

### New Church Larger

Set on approximately two acres of land, the new Kingsley Church will be considerably larger than the old, measuring 38 by 68 feet, as compared with the old church's 42x30 feet. It will include seven rooms and an auditorium which will seat 450. Present membership of the church is 153, and the Sunday School averages an attendance of 137. W. S. Robinette is the church's present pastor.

Now more than 80 years old, Kingsley Church has not only provided shelter for thousands of Christian worshippers, but has been a beacon of learning to men and women who made their homes in what was once the wilderness of East Tennessee.

The Kingsley Church was first organized at the old Oak Grove school house, but as soon as the church was built, the congregation and the classes both moved in. The land on which the present church stands was donated in 1866 by Wesley Ketron, grandfather of Andrew Ketron, rural mail carrier, who lives near Bloomingdale. Its value was set at \$10. The church was erected soon afterwards.

### Opened Seminary

The Arcadia - Bloomingdale section was a farming area, where the farms were large — 100-acre or 1 200-acre tracts, some larger — and contact with city life was rare. Roads were poor; only one regular stage road was close by and the other roads were barely passable for wagons. Much of the country was heavily wooded.

It was in this building, and in such an isolated territory that Prof. Joseph H. Ketron, A. M., opened Kingsley Seminary on August 6, 1877, within a mile of his own old homestead. Then 40 years old, he had 14 years of teaching experience behind him, the benefit of a sound classical education, a degree from Illinois Wesleyan College, and an urgent desire to advance the cause of Christian education.

### Students From 9 States

During the 25 years he served as principal and chief instructor at the Seminary, more than 1,000 students were enrolled, some 500 of whom came from nine states outside Tennessee, even from as far away as Maryland. The curriculum was of high school level, and some studies now included in the early college years were taught at Kingsley.

The success of the little wilderness school, and the secret of the affection in which its graduates have held it lay within the character and spirit of its founder. Professor Ketron had yearned to be a scholar since the age of four, and like another product of the wilderness, Abraham Lincoln, he

was largely self-educated in his youth.

From sources collected by H. M. McNeil and Ernest Marshall, who are assisting Kingsley Church in its fund-raising campaign, a good deal of information regarding Kingsley Seminary and Professor Ketron has been obtained. A nephew, Albert C. Ketron, who now lives in Etowah, Tennessee, wrote shortly after the schoolmaster's death that as a boy he had used every spare moment for reading, rather than for play or for rest from his tasks on his father's farm.

### Paid Own Tuition

Schools in those days (Professor Ketron was born in 1837) were not regularly conducted, and were of short session when they came. Young Joseph paid his own tuition out of money saved from his farm earnings. During periods when there was no school, he kept himself occupied with the books in his father's meager library. Once, learning of the existence of Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, he wrote: "If I could only manage some way to buy one of these books I should be supremely happy."

When he did make that eventful purchase, he made a practice of learning as many as 100 words and their definitions each day, in addition to his regular school and home tasks.

A soldier during the Civil War, he was wounded in 1863 at the battle of Big Black River, near Vicksburg, Miss., and hospitalized for some time. One of his brothers, John W. Ketron, was able to nurse him at this time, and another brother, Reuben, was finally permitted to take him home.

A devout member of the Methodist Church, which he had joined at the age of 12 following a meeting at Reedy Creek Camp Ground, Professor Ketron never failed to read his Bible and to pray for guidance daily, even through the trying years of his service as a soldier.

### Principal At Reedy Creek

By the time he was 18 years old, Joseph Ketron was sufficiently advanced to teach in the public schools near his home. For six years he taught in the neighborhood, taking time off to study at Fall Branch and at Rotherwood. On his return from the armed forces, he resumed his work of teaching, and in 1864 he was elected principal of Reedy Creek Academy, near Arcadia, where he remained for nine years.

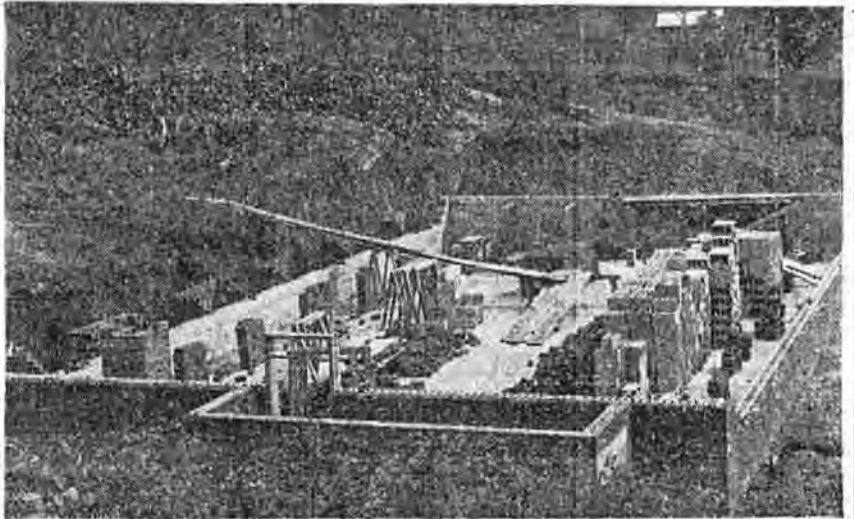
Realizing the importance of a higher education, and feeling that he could be more useful if he earned a college degree, young Professor Ketron entered East Tennessee Wesleyan University at Athens, Tenn., serving as a tutor while he advanced in his own studies. In 1875-76, he completed the required course of studies in Illinois Wesleyan University at Bloomington, Ill., from which institution he was graduated with highest honors. After one teaching session at New Market, Tenn., he returned to Sullivan County to begin the work which was to be his greatest achievement.

As his nephew records the event, Professor Ketron was "not willing that the work of the Lord in the training of the young minds of his section should go undone, and feeling that he could make the world better by working here, he chose rather to do this missionary work than to accept large financial inducements elsewhere." On August 6, 1877, Kingsley Seminary was chartered as a church school, with Professor Joseph H. Ketron, A. M., as principal.

### Bible First Course

His school was always opened and closed with prayer for Divine assistance, and in the course of study the Bible was always placed at the beginning. Each day of the regular school students read a lesson from the New Testament. Students' Prayer Meeting was a Thursday night institution during the life of the school. Deeply mindful of the necessity for Christian education, he would often say to young ministers: "If you are called to preach, I am called to teach." Or: "A call to the Christian ministry implies a call to prepare for this great work." It has been estimated that about 60 young men studied for ministry under his direction.

Other aspects of education, however, were not passed over. One of



CONSTRUCTION IS WELL UNDERWAY on the new Kingsley Methodist Church building near Arcadia. The foundations have been laid, and a roof is expected to be over the building by the time cold weather arrives. Members of the congregation are engaged in raising \$25,000 to cover the cost of the project.



KINGSLEY METHODIST CHURCH, one of the historic landmarks of Sullivan County, will be kept as a religious and educational shrine of East Tennessee, when the congregation moves into its new brick church building next year. For 25 years it was the home of famed Kingsley Seminary, operated by Prof. Joseph H. Ketron.



Prof. Joseph H. Ketron

Professor Ketron was much in demand as a land surveyor. He was also of a mechanical turn of mind, skilled in the use of carpenters' tools. When his father died, in 1896, he had general oversight of the family home and grounds, and the care of his aged and blind mother.

He died November 1, 1901, only a few hours after having examined his mail and given directions concerning the work of the school, busy to the last in the interests of the young people in his charge.

his circulars assured parents of duties of life." The same was true prospective students that "we shall of his own career. In addition to endeavor to develop the intellect, his duties as schoolmaster and to and fit students for the practical his continued intensive studies,



# Old Homes And Landmarks Of The County

## SHOWPLACE OF TENNESSEE

### Many Pioneer Homes Still Stand Today

By MRS. JOSEPH A. CALDWELL

Those East Tennesseans who plead guilty to the 'soft impeachment' agree with their silver-tongued orator, Landon C. Haynes that "the foot of man hath never trod the soil of any spot on earth where purer fountains gem the hills, or brighter streams, falling from loftier heights, thread their shining way through sweeter, greener or lovelier vales."

This beautiful country still has some of the most cherished history and homes in America—elegant and sturdy for the wilderness . . . elegant and sturdy for another hundred and fifty years. Blountville is next to the oldest town in East Tennessee; Jonesboro is the oldest of the two. It is the County Seat of Sullivan and was named for Governor Blount.

**Blountville Residences**

The first residence in the town was that of John Anderson and still stands, as a sentinel between the Presbyterian and Methodist churches.

The next house was built by John Tipton and is now owned by Lee Anderson. It has been owned by the Tiptons, Fains, Masengills and Andersons.

"Medical Grove, one-half mile from town, built in 1792 is said to be the first brick house in the section and is still occupied by descendants of the original owners. It now belongs to William D. Dulaney. Many of the Dulaney men followed the medical profession and for a century Medical Grove was not without a "Doctor Dulaney" to minister to the sick for miles around. Dr. Nat. Dr. Meigs and Dr. Will Dulaney are all within the recollection of most of the towns people.

The first building on the site of the town is said to have been one erected by James Brigham on the north side of the Main street near the bridge. The first store house was built by Walter James, who located in the vicinity about 1785.

"Anderson Hall", built about 1800, for their town house is also a brick mansion. It is now owned by Mrs. William Anderson and her family. Mr. Rhea Anderson makes his home with his mother here.

The birthplace of Oliver Taylor, historian, author of "Historic Sullivan," stands west of Anderson Hall and next door. This house was also occupied at one time by General Fain.

The Doggett property is a log house and for many years served the county as a courthouse, after the old one burned. It stands next to the Old Tavern.

Old Deery Inn, or Old Tavern—the "mansion and store building with accommodations for travelers", was built by William Deery, a wealthy Irish merchant who was an early settler of Tennessee. For more than a century and a half it offered entertainment, food and shelter to the public. It is one of the largest and most picturesque old houses in Blountville, contains eighteen rooms, a large attic and cellar, is part log chinked with limestone rock, and part clapboard. The large L-back is a three-story structure of rock. It is famous for the fine wood-carving on mantles and trim. It has recently been restored. Andrew Jackson, William Blount, John Sevier, Samuel Doak, Joseph Ithea, James K. Polk, Andrew Johnson, the Marquis de LaFayette, Louis Phillip, Williams C. Preston and many other persons prominent in the development of this country, past and present, have enjoyed hospitality at this Old Tavern. The slave quarters,



"Rotherwood", now a part of the Holston Ordnance Works of Kingsport (to be sold soon by the U. S. Government) is located on the west bank of the Holston, overlooking the two forks of the river. The original home was built in 1818 by Dr. Frederick A. Ross, a noted Presbyterian. It was burned in the Civil War. The present home was reconstructed (on the opposite side of the road) by Dr. Ross for his daughter, Rowena (Mrs. Edward Temple). The estate was owned by Joshua Phipps early in the 20th century.

old brick kitchen, log barn and other buildings, are being restored. It is now owned and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Joseph A. Caldwell as a private dwelling.

**"Old Ireland"**

"Old Ireland," the mansion of Joseph and Frances Breden Rhea, was built in 1800 and is still owned by a descendant, William Earhart. This twelve-room log house on Back Creek, in which five generations of the Rhea name have lived, is visited yearly by many of the relatives, by tourists and by students of history.

Nearby is the fine old brick home on land of Rev. Joseph Rhea built by William and Elizabeth Breden Rhea. It is owned by Philip Earhart, a descendant.

Part of the old Wendell Sturm house, down by the spring at the lower end of town, is testimony of another pioneer family.

Mr. Homer Smith's interesting house still bears scars of the Battle of Blountville, 1863. Great holes were pierced in doors and walls by cannon balls. This house was built by the Millers and was occupied by Dr. John P. Hammer during the War Between the States.

The first hats in Tennessee were made by Edward Breden Anderson at his home still near Blountville, on the road to Thomas' Bridge. (See Rhea Anderson's article, page 5, section 2.)

"Smithaven" is a large old house about three miles south of town, built by Major William Smith, famous soldier of the War

Creek recall the tragic massacre of John Roberts and his entire family, by the Cherokee Indians. William and Henry fled with their families.

Two miles west of Blountville, wealthy Timothy Acuff, Revolutionary soldier, built the first Methodist church in Sullivan County, across the road from his old home. The church, built of logs, stands today, 1946.

The Tri-City Airport is now on the original 2000-acre tract of land owned by Hugh Crawford.

Major Robert Rhea lived four miles west of Blountville. He was a Revolutionary soldier and a close personal friend of George Washington. A part of his old log house still remains on the Island Road.

**"Roseland"**

"Roseland", in Clover Bottom, home of Jonathan and Frances Rhea Bachman is visited yearly by relatives. It is the birth-place of the four famous Bachman ministers—Nathan, Jonathan W., J. Lynn and Robert. This is also the ancestral home of the late Senator Nathan Bachman of Tennessee; also the ancestral home of Mrs. Ann Bachman Phipps, mistress of Rotherwood.

Blountville was the center of religious, educational and social activities for a large surrounding area, for many generations. The Female Institute stood on the hill in the town, and Jefferson Academy for boys stood on the other. Merchants were wealthy selling their wares, John R. Fain being one of these.

Apostle of Religion and Learning in the West, he preached and taught for years. His text for the sermon he preached to the soldiers at Sycamore Shoals, before they started for King's Mountain was "The Sword of the Lord and Gideon," and strong tradition has it that in his prayer he said, "Oh, Lord, have consideration for the British for Thou knowest that we intend to bring them to Thy bosom!" In 1818 he assisted his son, Samuel W. Doak with Tusculum College.

The grand old Pemberton Oak, whose branches have sheltered the soldiers of six wars, stands on the lawn of Mr. Tom Pemberton, a few miles south of Bristol in Holston Valley. It is entered in the Hall of Fame for Trees of the American Forestry Association, and the Daughters of the American Revolution have marked it with a tablet.

Another tree listed in the Hall of Fame is Rotherwood Elm. It was known earlier, for Dr. Thomas Walker, in his Journal dated March 31, 1750, states, "We kept down Reedy Creek to Holston where we measured an elm twenty-five feet round, three feet to the ground." French explorers of the Holston country commented on its magnificence as one of the most wonderful things they saw on their journey. It still is standing, on the highway below Kingsport.

**"Rotherwood"**  
Nearby stands beautiful Rotherwood.

erwood. The first Rotherwood was built just across the way from the present one Frederick A. Ross. The site was owned by Mr. and Mrs. Anna Phipps (Mrs. Phipps was Ann P. Bachman, sister to four famous Bachman ministers). Rotherwood, now part of property of the Holston Ordnance Works, is one of the most worthy houses in Tennessee.

The old Richard Nethe house on the road toward Rotherwood is as rich in history as any other in this section. It was formerly the gay "Nethe Inn," located on Holston River. Built in 1811 by Richard Nethe, a big land and slave owner and a man of consequence in East Tennessee, the inn he and Andrew Jackson, who had stopped there on his trips to the Hermitage at Nashville, Washington; President Andrew Johnson and James K. Polk frequent guests; also Gov. William Blount, Hugh LaFayette, Generals Edmund Gaines, Bell, Gentry and C. were entertained here. Richard Nethe is buried in the garden, and the grave is marked the D. A. R.

One of the first homes in Tennessee was "Rocky Mount" which was destined to play an important part in the history of the state. (Picture and line drawing on page 7, section 2.)

There is no more history in America than along the Watauga River. Not far down the river was the site where William Blount, the first permanent settler, built his cabin in 1769, and when his son, Russell Bean, became the first white child born in Tennessee, close by we find the Duncan monument which marks the grave of the first white child who died in Tennessee, in 1770.

In 1937, Dr. S. E. Massengill erected a beautiful memorial marker just three miles from Johnson City, in memory of his fourth great-grandfather, Henry Massengill and other pioneers of this section, and on the memorial can be read some of the early history of East Tennessee.

Not far away stands the interesting old Billy Masse home, with its witching board in the floor and its beautiful wood-work. This house of 1810 was made by slaves on the plantation and was built about 1810.

In Holston Valley is the home of General Dulaney of Revolutionary fame. Not far away Beidleman's Mill, still supplying water-ground meal as in days yesterday (operated now by N. Smithson.)

**Shelby's Settlement**

The first Presbyterian church in Bristol, Tennessee, at the corner of Fifth and Shelby Streets now occupies the site settled by Evans Shelby at Sapling C (now Bristol, Tenn.) Here he built a large fort. His sons, Evans Jr., Isaac and James. Evan Shelby's remains rest in the East Hill cemetery in Bristol, and a monument marks his grave. Isaac Shelby went further west and was Kentucky's first governor. Captain James Shelby was an Indian fighter. Remains of the old fort were dug up long ago, and the D. A. R. placed a fitting monument on the site.

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The Doggett property is a log house and for many years served the county as a courthouse, after the old one burned. It stands next to the Old Tavern.

Old Deery Inn, or Old Tavern—the "mansion and store building with accommodations for travelers", was built by William Deery, a wealthy Irish merchant who was an early settler of Tennessee. For more than a century and a half it offered entertainment, food and shelter to the public. It is one of the largest and most picturesque old houses in Blountville, contains eighteen rooms, a large attic and cellar, is part log chinked with limestone rock, and part clapboard. The large I-back is a three-story structure of rock. It is famous for the fine wood-carving on mantles and trim. It has recently been restored. Andrew Jackson, William Blount, John Sevier, Samuel Doak, Joseph Rhea, James K. Polk, Andrew Johnson, the Marquis de LaFayette, Louis Phillip, William C. Preston and many other persons prominent in the development of this country, past and present, have enjoyed hospitality at this Old Tavern. The slave quarters,



Mrs. Joseph A. Caldwell is "fixing up" Old Tavern for the holiday season in the picture taken last year. New Year's open house at the Old Tavern is a celebration which has been observed annually by the Caldwell's except during the recent war years. They expect to revive "open

**"Old Ireland"**  
"Old Ireland," the mansion of Joseph and Frances Breden Rhea, was built in 1800 and is still owned by a descendant, William Earhart. This twelve-room log home on Back Creek, in which five generations of the Rhea name have lived, is visited yearly by many of the relatives, by tourists and by students of history.

Nearby is the fine old brick home on land of Rev. Joseph Rhea built by William and Elizabeth Breden Rhea. It is owned by Philip Earhart, a descendant. Part of the old Wendell Sturm house, down by the spring at the lower end of town, is testimony of another pioneer family.

Mr. Homer Smith's interesting house still bears scars of the Battle of Blountville, 1863. Great holes were pierced in doors and walls by cannon balls. This house was built by the Millers and was occupied by Dr. John P. Hammer during the War Between the States.

The first hats in Tennessee were made by Edward Breden Anderson at his home still near Blountville, on the road to Thomas' Bridge. (See Rhea Anderson's article, page 5, section 2.)

"Smithaven" is a large old house about three miles south of town, built by Major William Smith, famous soldier of the War of 1812.

John and Elizabeth Treadlebaugh Spurgeon, who came over from England were large landowners, 15,000 acres on Muddy Creek, and their house which was built in the latter part of the eighteenth century still stands.

The First Baptist Church in Sullivan County was erected by John Spurgeon on his land. He was one of the same family of the great Rev. Charles Haden Spurgeon of England.

**Pioneer Post Office**

One of the first post offices in the pioneer country was Eaton's Station (now known as Eaton's Ridge) on the highway towards Kingsport. Here, too, was the first and only mill in the settlement.

Not far away was one of the earliest Presbyterian churches. It was called Taylor's Meeting House, 1773, now known as Gunnes. It was also used as a fort and school was held there on Sunday, in the pioneer times.

The homes of the three Rhea brothers, one on Back

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Many distinguished men are her sons. General George Rutledge, Congressman John Rhea, General John Fain, Colonel Geo. McClellan of beautiful old Mount Tuckee, former Governor John I. Cox, Joseph R. Anderson, Esquire, founder of Bristol; Samuel Rhea, wealthy and influential; Rev. Samuel A. Rhea, early missionary to Persia; also Mathew and William Haynes and William H. Fain, all able attorneys—and many more prominent early citizens claim and are claimed by Blountville.

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Rotherwood, now part of the  
property of the Holston Ordnance  
Works, is one of the most note-  
worthy houses in Tennessee.

The old Richard Netherland  
house on the road toward Roth-  
erwood, is as rich in history as  
any other in this section. It was  
formerly the gay "Netherland  
Inn," located on Holston River.  
Built in 1811 by Richard Nether-  
land, big land and slave owner,  
and a man of consequence in  
East Tennessee, the inn housed  
Andrew Jackson, who always  
stopped there on his trips from  
the Hermitage at Nashville to  
Washington; President Andrew  
Johnson and James K. Polk were  
frequent guests; also Governor  
William Blount, Hugh Lawson  
White, Generals Edmund P.  
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**Blountville Residences**



"Old Tavern" at Blountville is the residence of Mr. and Mrs.  
Joseph A. Caldwell. Originally known as Deery's Inn, it was  
built shortly after 1800 by William Deery of Ireland, who gained  
wealth as a merchant and inn-keeper at Blountville.



"Anderson Hall," at left, and the "Lee S. Anderson Home," par-  
tially shown at right, are both old Blountville residences. Ander-  
son Hall, home of the William S. Anderson's, was built about 1800  
by Dr. Elkanah Dulaney. Others who have occupied this home  
were the Thomas Crawford's and the Charles J. St. John's. The  
Anderson's have owned and occupied this home since 1891. The  
Lee Anderson home was the second residence erected in Blount-  
ville. Built by John Tipton, it was later owned by the John H.  
Fain's. The Hon. John M. Fain, one of Bristol's first citizens, was  
born in this house. Dr. and Mrs. John D. Masengill owned and oc-  
cupied this home for a number of years. They sold it to Mr. and  
Mrs. William S. Anderson and it is still in the Anderson family.



Between Anderson Hall and Old Tavern stand two other histori-  
cal homes of Blountville. Shown above. At left is the property  
of Mrs. Sarah Doggett which once served as the county court-  
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During the War Between the States the Confederate Army camped near Paperville. Soon after the war the manufacture of woollens was started by James Martin and Jacob Nutty. The nutty brothers in about 1890 converted the old mill into a roller process mill, the first of its kind in the section.

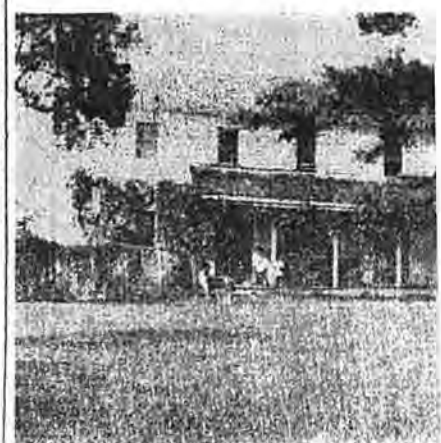
About this time William Carmack came from Washington county and operated one of the first tanneries in the area.

The town of Bristol chartered February 22, 1856, began to grow, and accordingly Paperville's population diminished.

The Paperville Presbyterian church, founded by Rev. James



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King and the Rev. Morrison, was erected in 1820 (still standing) and over the years but Bristol even was supplied with members from this church, these forming the nucleus of membership for the First Presbyterian church there. On August 29, 1858, 22 members of the Paperville church asked for letters of dismission to help organize the church in Bristol.



Golden eagle on stopover at Bays Mountain

## Injured Eagle Rescued, Will Recuperate At Park

A young golden eagle found temporary refuge at Bays Mountain Park this weekend after being rescued from an attacking band of crows in a Hawkins County woodland.

Tony Baird, naturalist at Bays Mountain Nature Center, said the eagle appeared to have a sprained wing, but seemed in good condition otherwise. He said the bird won't be put on public display and will be released to fly away as soon as it is able.

Baird said an official from the Game and Fish Commission was expected to come to the park Saturday afternoon to see the bird, and that it might be removed to a GFC wildlife area to recuperate



from its injury.

"The golden eagle is a federally protected bird, and we don't expect it to stay here long," the naturalist said. He said the bird was being kept in a separate cage in the park maintenance building, away from the visitors area "because it's very nervous when it sees people and keeps beating its wings against the cage."

He said the man who rescued the bird apparently found it on

the forest floor in a Stanley Valley woodland, surrounded by a band of crows. The man told naturalists he covered the bird with a coat and put it in the trunk of his car to bring it to the park.

Baird said the bird is a juvenile with a claw-span of about six inches. Mature golden eagles have a wing span of about seven feet.

Both golden eagles and bald eagles are extremely rare in this area, but a pair of bald eagles were reported last summer in the Roan Mountain area, the naturalist said. Golden eagles are known to migrate in very small numbers through the Appalachians.

## Pleas Heard For Probation

A Kingsport youth was denied probation, but a Church Hill man received it Friday in Sullivan County Criminal Court in Blountville.

Michael Wayne Simonds, 18, 516 Foothills Rd., was ordered to begin serving a 4-10 year term for selling cocaine.

Marshall Wallace, 42, Rt. 6, Church Hill, was placed on probation. He had been facing 3-10 years for major shoplifting.

Simonds pleaded guilty Aug. 3 to the drug charge. He was arrested during a county-wide drug sweep.

Wallace was arrested March 24 while allegedly carrying an outboard motor worth \$459 out of Montgomery Wards. Police also accused him of stealing, the same day, three other engines, a measure, wire standoffs, TV lead wire, screen guard, two clips, two muffler exhausts, and two suits.

## Local Law Court Jury Cases Open This Week

The November term of Kingsport Law Court, Part 1, opens this week with jury cases being heard by Judge Roger Thayer in the courtroom at City Hall.

**WEDNESDAY, NOV. 15**  
Donna L. Bernard a minor b n f & f Bill Bernard vs. Emmeth Sims & Fred Ford; Kenneth Kendrick vs. Jerry Hubbard; Jerry R. Hubbard vs. Kenneth Kendrick; Bobby R. Weston vs. Thomas E. Calvin.

**THURSDAY, NOV. 16**  
James E. & Louise Doran vs. N.E. McCrary; Const. Charlene & Bobby Derrick, Jr. vs. Alan Crawford.

## Guilty Plea Follows Raid

## SERVICEMEN

Private JAMES A. WHITTAKER, son of Mr. and Mrs. C. A. Whitaker Jr., 425 Berkley Rd., recently completed nine weeks of Advanced Individual Training at the U.S. Army Infantry Training Center, Ft. Polk, La.

Teamwork was emphasized while he learned to work as a member of a rifle squad, mortar squad or direct fire.

He is a 1970 graduate of Dobyns-Bennett High School.

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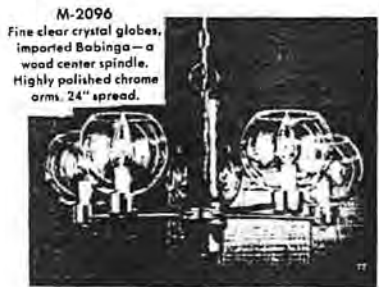
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Many are only one or two of a kind.

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Just finished redecorating your family room, dining room or kitchen? If so... don't forget to change the lighting fixtures too! A new lighting style in design complimentary to the decor will add that final touch of richness to your room and show all your redecorating at the same time. Hundreds of bright ideas are on display now. Chandeliers... chain hung and wall brackets. WHY NOT STOP IN TODAY... YOU'LL BE AMAZED HOW YOU CAN SHOW OFF YOUR DECORATING TO ITS BEST ADVANTAGE! And at a price you can afford.

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• EARLY AMERICAN • MODERN



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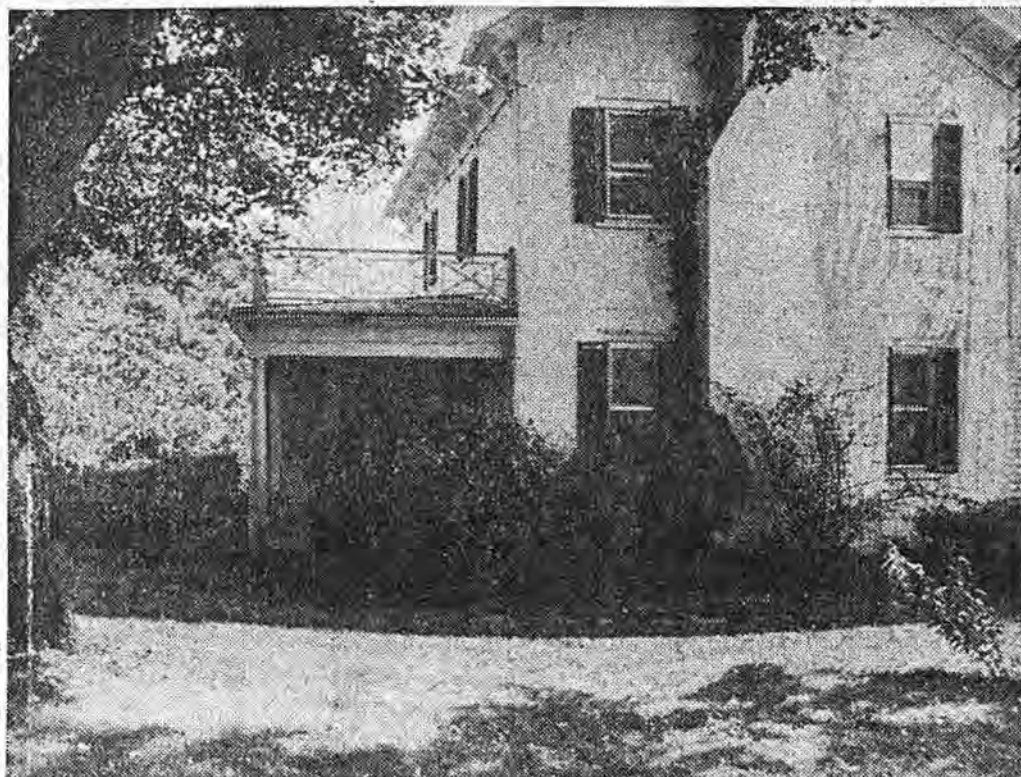


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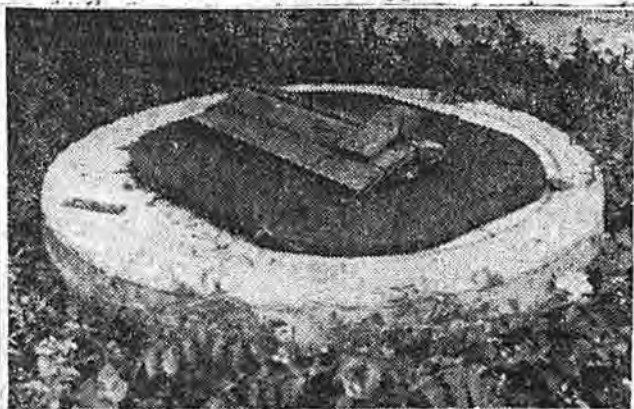
421 W Sullivan • 247-4109

# Old South Era Still Alive In Neil Miller Home

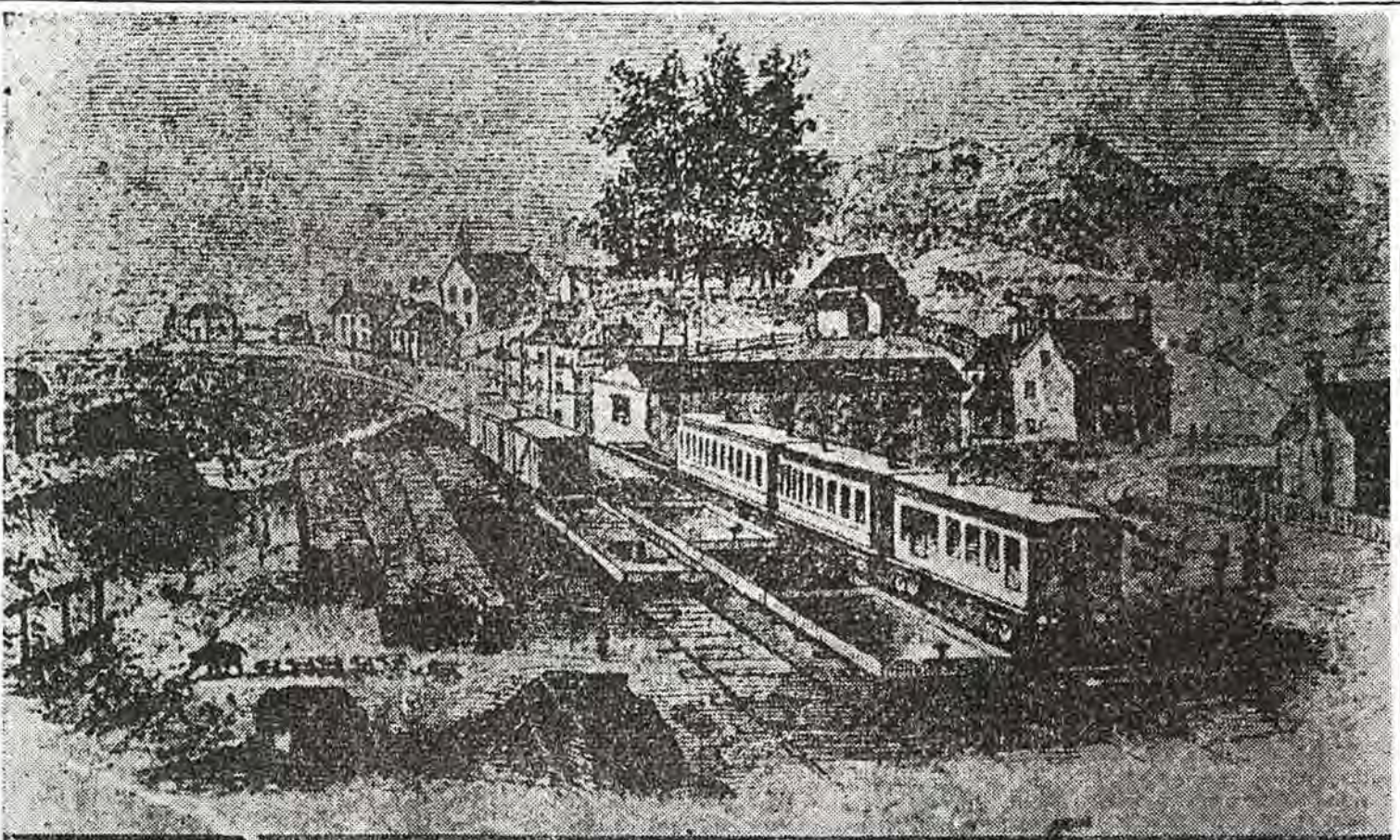


**THE ORIGINAL WING** — This view shows the original portion of "Yellow Store" built in approxi-

mately 1800. The north wing was added 50 years later.



**ITS STILL RUNNING** — This cistern, covered by a hand cut rock 4 feet, 9 inches wide, could still supply "Yellow Store" with drinking water if necessary.



BRISTOL, 1856

**BRISTOL'S FIRST RAILWAY STATION IN 1856**—The present Bristol railway station bears little resemblance to the depot, cars and track pictured in this drawing of the Twin City, made in 1856. The road seen in the upper center is now State Street. It runs toward East Hill Cemetery at the left and toward the business section at the right. The group of trees in the upper

center stands on the site of the First Presbyterian Church. The house back of the station was occupied by Dr. Pepper and the other house is said to be that of Joseph R. Anderson. A cavalcade of pigs can be seen just beyond the tracks in the lower left foreground. The stocks of wood were used to furnish power for the wood-burning locomotives.

## Bristol Observing 200th Anniversary This Year

By Evelyn Hicks Booher

Though perhaps few people are aware of it, Bristol is celebrating its 200th anniversary this year. The area now known as Bristol was first explored in 1748 by the eminent Virginian, Dr. Thomas Walker, deputy surveyor of Augusta County.

This interesting fact concerning the Twin City was recalled yesterday by Mayor Thomas W. Preston, one of this section's lead-

ing authorities on historical matters. Preston has been mayor of the Virginia half of Bristol since 1938.

At the time Walker made his exploration, the territory now occupied by this thriving, progressive city of around 35,000 population was a wilderness of trees and bushes, so it was given the name of Sapling Grove. Sapling Grove comprised 1,946 acres and was owned by the Loyal Land Company as part of a grant of 200,000 acres.

### Patten Bought Tract

According to Summers' History of Southwest Virginia, published in 1903, Walker, together with Col. James Patten, Col. John Buchanan, Col. James Wood and Major Charles Campbell, "accompanied by a number of hunters, John Findlay being of the number, explored Southwest Virginia and East Tennessee, and located and surveyed a number of very valuable tracts of land by authority of the grant to Col. James Patten. John Buchanan surveyed the several tracts of land first located in Washington County, and was on

the waters of the Indian or Holston River surveying as early as March 14, 1746."

Patten, a large stockholder in the Loyal Land Company, acquired the Sapling Grove tract, and subsequently sold it to James Tayloe of Hanover County for 12 pounds, eight shillings and six pence, equivalent to about \$50. It later became the property of John Buchanan, having been sold to him by William Campbell and William Preston, executors of James Patten. The deed giving title of the land to Tayloe was not executed until around 1799, though in the meantime several transactions involving the land had taken place.

### Mitchell Home Oldest

Isaac Barker and Evan Shelby bought the tract about 1773 for "608 pounds of current money of Virginia," according to Oliver Taylor's History of Sullivan County. James King paid \$10,000 to the Shelbys for Sapling Grove about 1809-10 and the land became known as King's Meadows. The first house to be built in what is now Bristol was that of James King, now the J. D. Mitchell house on King Street, erected in 1820.

In 1852, Joseph R. Anderson, King's son-in-law, bought 100 acres of land in Bristol, Tenn., from King and had the county surveyor lay the tract off in lots and streets. Mayor Preston now owns a copy of the map. Circulars announcing sale of the lots contained reservations forbidding "the occupant or his agent from making or selling intoxicating liquors upon the premises. This regulation is deemed indispensable to the peace and prosperity of the town."

Anderson built the second house in Bristol at the corner of State and Fourth Streets, now occupied by the Light and Power Building. He used the building as a store and residence.

vey and grade from Hiltons to Speer's Ferry. At Clinchport, the Virginia and Kentucky Railroad turned north through Lovelady Gap to Powell's Valley and thence over what is now the L. and N. route to Cumberland Gap, entrance to Kentucky.

### Walker Kept Diary

"The only court record of this railroad is on the minute books of the County Court at Abingdon, December 24, 1860, when a commission to ascertain just compensation to land owners was constituted. The commission reported on February 24, 1861."

Dr. Walker kept a diary of his exploration trips and mentions in his entry for March 31, 1749, "an elm 25 feet round three feet from the ground." This elm was the famous Kingsport Elm, a well-known landmark in the Magic City until a few years ago.

Summers' History tells of a commission set up by the Virginia General Assembly in 1779 to determine the line between Virginia and North Carolina and states that as a result of the commission's findings, Washington County was deprived of from one-third to one-half of the territory supposed to lie in Washington County.

## BRISTOL, 1856

The present depot, on State Street, toward the upper

center stands on the site of the First Presbyterian Church. The house back of the station was occupied by Dr. Pepper and the other house is said to be that of Joseph R. Anderson. A cavalcade of pigs can be seen just beyond the tracks in the lower left foreground. The stocks of wood were used to furnish power for the wood-burning locomotives.

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Anderson built the second house  
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He used the building as a store  
and bank, as well as a residence.

### Named Bristol In 1856

King's Meadows became Bris-  
tol, Tenn., by an act of the Ten-  
nessee General Assembly on Feb-  
ruary 22, 1856, and Anderson be-  
came its first mayor, serving until  
1859. The same year, the Virginia  
side of the city was incorporated  
as Goodson, Va. The name was  
not changed to Bristol until Janu-  
ary 7, 1890.

Another event of significance in  
Bristol's history took place in 1856:  
The coming of the first railroad.  
Then, the population numbered  
not more than 150. There were  
two freight depots and one pas-  
senger station, all destroyed on  
December 14, 1864, during Gen-  
eral George Stoneman's raid.

### First Train In 1856

Quoting from Mayor Preston's  
file of historic records: "While the  
people of Bristol were awaiting  
completion of the Norfolk and  
Western from the east, they were  
looking with equal anxiety to the  
completion of the East Tennessee  
and Virginia Railroad being built  
from Knoxville to connect with  
the Norfolk and Western at this  
point. When it looked as though  
the effort to complete this latter  
railroad had practically failed,  
Joseph R. Anderson was one of  
the first to come to its aid. In  
association with Col. Telford, Dr.  
Cunningham, Samuel Rhea and  
other prominent East Tennesse-  
ans, through their influence and  
financial backing construction was  
kept going forward until grading  
was completed and rails laid.

"The first train from the south  
came into Bristol in November,  
1856.

"As soon as the building of the  
Virginia and Tennessee Railroad  
from Lynchburg was assured, an-  
other railroad leading from Bris-  
tol was projected. The road was  
chartered about 1858 and was  
known as the Virginia and Ken-  
tucky Railroad and was for the  
purpose of connecting the Atlantic  
seaboard with the Northwest at  
either Louisville or Cincinnati.  
The route was located from Bris-  
tol to Cumberland Gap, Virginia-  
Kentucky and considerable grad-  
ing was done between Bristol and  
Speers Ferry. Grading started at  
Front Street and a line located  
about 100 feet north of Scott. The  
present Appalachian division of  
the Southern is built on this sur-

vey and grade from Hiltons to  
Speers Ferry. At Clinchport, the  
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half of the territory supposed to  
lie in Washington County.

# H. H. Smith Remembers

H. H. Smith remembers:  
 When the second Presbyterian church in Blountville existed on the southeast corner of the Anderson lot adjoining the present lot; when the third church was built on the present site about 1890; and the fourth one built about the year 1925.  
 When the third Methodist church was erected about 1900; the fourth one about 1938. (The first one was of brick 30 x 40 feet and stood on the site of Mr. Smith's law office; this church was built about 130 years ago.)  
 When the old Baptist church was located west of the old town bridge, and when the new building was erected about 30 years ago, east of the courthouse on the south side of Main street.  
 When the congregation of the Christian church worshipped in the old courthouse about 1910 and more recently, until their church building was erected in the year 1924.  
 He saw the old Female Institute torn down and the present elementary school building take its place about 25 years ago. He saw the high school buildings go up about 1931. He saw the latest two jail buildings go up, one several years before the other—some 45 years ago.  
 He remembers when Jefferson Academy on the hill southeast of the cemetery was torn down about 50 years ago.  
 And remembers when the courthouse was torn down and the present one built in 1920.  
 He remembers when teamsters from Hawkins County hauled produce to and from Bristol over dirt and often mud roads, and had to camp two or three nights on a round trip.  
 He was on the committee that helped secure the first macadamized road, beginning at Wagner hill in the west end of Bristol and extending toward Blountville. And thus a better road system for Sullivan County began.  
 And he remembers well when automobiles frightened horses and drivers "out of their wits" and when the zooming of airplanes over Blountville created as great a sensation as the shooting of Halley's comet thru the sky.

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**SMITH FLORAL COMPANY**  
STATE STREET — BRISTOL

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## Authority On History



Homer H. Smith, Blountville attorney, is known as an authority on history. He is a scholar of local historical literature, and a writer himself. A resident of the Blountville area all of his life, he remembers: (see column one.)

## Locating The Birthplace Of Rev. 'Raccoon' John Smith

"Locating the Birthplace of Raccoon John Smith" is an adventure covering three years' time, and is the experience of Homer H. Smith, Blountville. His writing on the subject was printed on the front page of The Christian Standard in 1933 and was printed in full in the Sullivan County News several years ago. Excerpts are given in this issue. "Raccoon" John Smith, a noted pioneer preacher, lived on Possum Creek, formerly Weaver's Creek, in the neighborhood of Cedar Grove School or Crumley's.

By H. H. SMITH  
 In the year 1909, Oliver Taylor of Bristol, Tennessee copyrighted a history of his native county, Sullivan County, Tennessee, the history known as "Historic Sullivan." The introduction to this history used this language with respect to a boy born in said county October 15, 1784: "For space devoted to a review of the life of 'Raccoon' John Smith, apologies will hardly be necessary. While little heard of at the present time, still I regard him as the rarest human product that ever sprung from Sullivan County soil. Born in a log cabin in Holston Valley—a poor boy and one of a large family—he lived a knockabout life in his early days and had but five months school training during his entire career."  
 From pages 165 to 175 inclusive in said history is given a biography of this remarkable man, including his famous sermon at Crab Orchard. The last paragraph of the sketch tells of his death in Missouri at the age of 84 years, and the shipment of his remains to Lexington, Ky., where they rest in the shadow of the tall shaft which stands over the grave of Henry Clay.  
 The writer of this article is a believer in the Restoration Movement of the 19th century, and knowing the important part that was played by "Raccoon" John Smith in said movement at Lex-

ington, Ky., and on until his death in 1868, has thought for several years of erecting a marker in Sullivan County in honor of this pioneer citizen and preacher. "The Life of Elder John Smith" by John Augustus Williams gives a few facts by which the writer has sought to identify the birthplace of Elder John Smith, chief of which statements are the following.  
 1. On the banks of the Holston River his father, George Smith and family, early in 1784, found a pleasant spot, a double log cabin and repose.  
 2. When John was a small boy it was one of his duties on hot summer days "to run again and again down the long grassy hill to the spring."  
 3. When John started to school he struck out a new path across the fields and over the hills, to the newly raised hut of the master, built near a spring, a pen of unhewn logs, a huge fireplace taking up one end of the house; John's bench was the half of a riven sapling, raised on rude legs with the splintered face turned up.  
 4. A Baptist Church, a member

of the first Holston Association of Tennessee, located so near the home of George Smith that the preacher was often a guest in that home.  
 5. The soil was not such that he wanted.  
 6. In the autumn of 1795, Geo. Smith sold his farm in Tennessee and took his family into Powell's Valley.  
 Where was the Smith double log house in Sullivan County on the banks of Holston River with the long grassy hill leading down to a spring?  
 Where was that Baptist Church and where was that school house over the hill by a spring?  
 About 25 years ago, George W. Morton, who was then about aged seventy-five and who resided on the Holston River approximately two miles south of old Concord Church (now Weavers), stated to the writer that the birthplace of "Raccoon" John Smith was near Island Mills, located up the Holston River northeast from Bluff City four or five miles. Still up the river about a mile from Island Mills, on the north bank of said river, there was a Baptist Church in 1829 known in the deed as "Holston Regular Baptist Church." This was the mother of several other Baptist churches in Sullivan County. There was a ford across said river at old Holston Baptist Church until some 20 years ago, when a steel bridge took its place.  
 Over the hill, on the south side of the said river, about one-half mile distant from the church, on the waters of Weaver's Creek on a piece of level ground, near a good spring, formerly was located a log house known as Crumley's school house. One who attended school there stated to the writer that the logs up to the windows were hewed, the others were unhewn. This house was about 100 yards nearly north from where Mike Webb's store house now stands. Best information is that Crumley's school house was the oldest school building in that entire section. When it ceased to exist, a frame building called Cedar Grove took its place. Cedar Grove is now a dwelling.  
 Two or three hundred yards easterly from where old Holston church now stands, there once stood a double log house, and down the hill are several springs along the river banks. Just across the river where pine trees stand there once stood a house, and it is on a long slope down to a spring at the river's bank. Farther down the river, near Island Mills, on either side, houses could have existed on the higher ground, with long grassy hills down to springs.  
 No recorded deed to George Smith could be found; hence the difficulty of finding the exact spot on which his house stood.  
 The oldest church deed found in the county was dated 1820, and the oldest school house deed was dated 1831, hence it is evident that schools and churches existed some 35 to 40 years before deed were obtainable and recorded.  
 If plates are cleaned of fat, they can be cleaned with soap.



Mr. and Mrs. C. T. Hopkins, on the occasion of the opening of the new distribution which concerns this page. One of the "Two C's" is "The Story of Two C's."

## Dan O'Dell Beloved Se At Hickory

By C. T. HOPE  
 Recollections at Hickory remain bright concerning O'Dell Sr., born at Hickory who lived to be a very old man and died in the early 1800s.  
 His house is still standing, built by his father who migrated to Tennessee.  
 Old grants, the old was used, and other are stored away in the which is now owned by O'Dell, grandson of Dan O'Dell.  
 The O'Dell were the first on Keller's creek, remembered as being citizens of the common sickness or death of O'Dells were the first their services, and the they gave the community ways free.  
 It was told to the 50 years ago, that "U was often known to invite to come in and take a drink of him or to stay over night home. It was Uncle Dan loved to feed the hungry sick and be the pillar in the community.  
 He was never known though there were people would have abused him. Uncle Dan did on these was to stand firm and the man straight in the tell him to "hit me if you to," but no man ever strike him.  
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## Hickory Tree Scribe



Mr. and Mrs. C. T. Hopkins of Hickory Tree were snapped, picture above, on the occasion of their Golden Wedding last September 15. Mr. Hopkins has written a series of historical articles of the Hickory Tree area (Route 3, Bluff City) for the News. His latest contribution which concerns a pioneer citizen, Dan O'Dell, is found on this page. One of Mr. Hopkins' most notable articles was entitled "The Story of Two Charlies." It is also reprinted here in part.

## Dan O'Dell, Beloved Settler At Hickory Tree

By C. T. HOPKINS

Recollections at Hickory Tree remain bright concerning Dan O'Dell Sr., born at Hickory Tree, who lived to be a very old man, and died in the early 1900's.

His house is still standing. It was built by his his ancestors, who migrated to Tennessee.

Old grants, the old rifle that was used, and other possessions are stored away in the log home, which is now owned by George O'Dell, grandson of Dan O'Dell.

The O'Dell were the first settlers on Keller's creek. They are remembered as being the best citizens of the community. When sickness or death occurred, the O'Dells were the first to offer their services, and the assistance they gave the community was always free.

It was told to the writer, over 50 years ago, that "Uncle" Dan was often known to patrol the old dirt road to invite passers by to come in and take dinner with him or to stay over night in his home. It was Uncle Dan who loved to feed the hungry, visit the sick and be the peacemaker in the community.

He was never known to fight, though there were persons who would have abused him. But all Uncle Dan did on these occasions was to stand firm and erect, look the man straight in the eye, and tell him to "hit me if you want to," but no man ever dared to strike him.

He always wanted to give the other person more than a chance. He has been known to sign bonds to keep men from going to jail. But in more serious instances he was strict; he would not sign bonds or loan money, and when he was asked he would say "I would rather not," and when he said that he meant he would not.

It was Uncle Dan who gave the first title to the church so that a worship house could be built. It is in the recollection of the writer that before the church was erected he extended an invitation to the public to meet and

have services at his old log house with its big fire place that burned wood four feet long. The writer can remember seeing people gather there, coming from several miles distant at night time, carrying pine torches to light the path.

Uncle Dan had three sons, William, John and Thomas, and one daughter, Mrs. Adeline O'Dell Ekins.

## Two Charlies Who Match

By C. T. HOPKINS

In Sullivan County there is a story of "Two Charlies Who Match." They were born on Hatcher's Creek in 1870, they are living in the county today, and they are good friends.

The two men are Charlie Hopkins and Charlie Carrier. Their fathers were Jim Hopkins and Jim Carrier. Their mothers were Sarah Hopkins and Sarah Carrier.

Charlie Carrier's wife was formerly Minnie Hale, and Charlie Hopkins' wife was known as Minnie Hatcher. Charlie Carrier's sister married Charlie Hopkins brother.

The fathers of the two Charlies were Civil War soldiers, Jim Car-

rier fighting for the cause of the Confederates and Jim Hopkins for the Federals. After the war they lived as close neighbors and best of friends, and both died at a ripe old age.

The two Charlies and the two Minnies are still living, the Hopkins' reside just a short distance south of Hatcher's Creek and the Carriers just a short distance north of Hatcher's Creek.

In their young days the two Charlies both worked at logging camps and covered territory from North Carolina to the Great Lakes.

It has been said that one of the Charlies can stand more cold weather in icy mountains than the other can, and this fact may be determined by asking Charlie Carrier, who is the janitor at Holston Valley high school.... You need not ask Charlie Hopkins because he doesn't know.



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J. I.

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Most thankful indeed are the mothers and fathers and families of men who are able to join them in the intimacy of the family circle on Thanksgiving this year. Yes, there will be much for which we can give thanks, and especially to those who have given their lives that we may continue to be free.





# The Edward B. Anderson Home, Built 1818

(The Edward B. Anderson home is located two miles south-east of Blountville, now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. John E. Dail.)

By RHEA ANDERSON

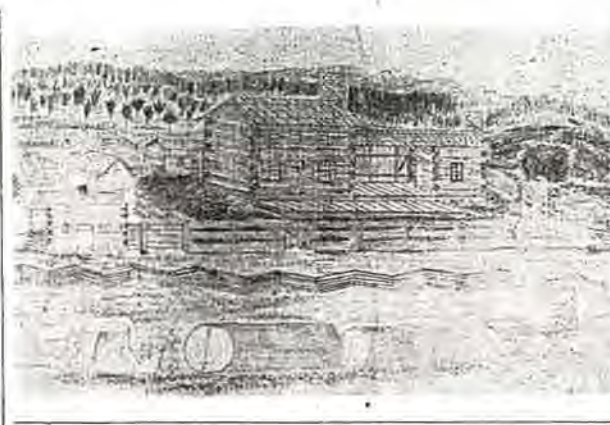
The picture of the old home as shown here was built by Edward B. Anderson in 1818 and it was to this home that he took his bride, the former Eleanor Rhea, and there established a real old southern, Christian home, rearing a family of eleven children.

The home was considered a "mansion" in its day and in its later days was one of the show places in this county, hundreds of tourists and visitors from all parts of the county having visited and "explored" it from room to room and from cellar to attic.

The above picture was drawn, from memory, by Mr. William Lynn Rhea, of Knoxville, after being away from the place for twenty years, but a camera man

could not have done a better job. Mr. Rhea wrote: "My happiest childhood days were spent here with Uncle Edward and Aunt Ellen and I remember even the door knobs and the window panes.

The home, as the picture shows, was built of beautifully hewn logs, the best the forest afforded—and consisted of eleven rooms, down stairs was the big old living room, 20 X 20 feet, with the huge fire place, in which they



burned four feet logs—and then there was room at either end for the children to play, as was often expressed. In this room there were three large windows and eight doors. At the east end of the room three bed rooms, each entered from this big room, the door which concealed the stairway, the door to the closet under the stairway, the door on the south side, leading out into the yard, the door on the west leading into "entry", and the front door, on the north side. The door knobs, locks, etc., were all brass, as were the window fixtures. The ceilings were high, and in the big sitting room was a very handsome hand-carved mantelpiece. From the west door of this room you came into the "entry"—one of the best places to "cool yourself" the writer of

this sketch has ever tried. And on the west from the "entry" you came to the guest room, a very large room with a big fire place, three windows and a door. You could have easily had a bed in each of the four corners and then have had plenty of room for a square dance of several couples. From the "entry" on the south you crossed the yard, some twenty feet, under a covered trellis, to the dining room and kitchen. These were both large rooms, the kitchen, by far, the most interesting.—In it was a huge fire place with the "good-neck" and all kinds of places to hang pots etc., and I have never seen a "bigger hearth"—on which you found the baker and oven, the boiler and all of those things which come along with the substantial early homes. There was a nice old mantelpiece in the kitchen, also. Upstairs, at the north end of the hall was a nice little bed room, on the east there were two more bed rooms and on the west there was a huge bed room. From this another little concealed stairway led you to the attic, a huge place, filled with all kinds of furniture, trunks, old documents, letters, etc.—and to me, it was "the" place of all places. In this old home was some of the most handsome antique furniture to be found in this country. Much of it handed down from generations and some of it having been brought to this country by our ancestors when they came to this country from the old country—Scotland and Ireland. The family was also fortunate in having the Dysart and Breden brothers who were fine cabinet makers and much of the furniture was made by them, their own relatives. There was the old clock, the sec-

does not show the trees and box-woods but they were there, many of them. At either end of the yard, east and west, stood two very large sugar trees, and in the front yard were a number of big trees one of which was a very large white walnut, brought by one of the sons, my own grand-father, William Rhea Anderson, on his return from California. (He had gone there during "The Gold Rush" in '49, as did his brother Joseph Rhea Anderson. Joseph R. Anderson never returned. He contacted never, died, and was buried at Big Pine, Cal.) On either side of the walk leading from the front gate to the front porch and from the porch to the side gate were beautiful box-woods and in the yard and garden there were all kinds of old time flowers. These were literally bushels of hyacinths, just the two colors, that old timey blue and pink. There were several shades of aeeheas, dark red and the pink peonies, golden brylls, snow-balls and lilacs, jounquills, and easter flowers, the little yellow rose, which comes the first thing in the rose kingdom, the hundred-leaf and the old moss rose, the rock lillies and many others of the old timey flowers. Here you also found one of the finest orchards in the county. They had all kinds of fruits, plums—yellow and red, quinces, peas, peaches, and all kinds of apples. I never shall forget a little yellow apple which my grand-father always had buried. When he put them in the ground they were so hard you could not bite them

but when that hole was opened in the spring they simply melted in your mouth, and a boy never could forget them.

Just outside the yard gate on the west—and again the picture fails to show this—were the slave quarters. There were five or six attractive, well built, log cabins were all there and I have played in them many a time—and many are the times that I have heard of those old negroes through my father, William S. Anderson, my grand-father, my great uncle, Robert Rhea Anderson, and Mrs. Josephine Evans Masengill and others. Perhaps the most interesting story concerning these slaves was that of "Reuner."

A number of years prior to the Civil War, Mr. Samuel Rhea, of Blountville, one of the wealthiest men then of our county, had a colony of negroes brought over from Guinea and they were divided out among Mr. Rhea's family. Reuner was the "prince of his tribe" and made a faithful servant, winning a warm place in the hearts of all of his master's family and relations. Old Reuner had a favorite in his master's family in the name of "Mas" Robert (Mr. Robert R. Anderson) and it is told for a true story that he saved "Mas" Robert's life during the Civil War. Young Robert Anderson, then a Confederate soldier, was at home on a furlough and had gone on some errand on the farm. A Union man came along and was cursing and abusing Mr. Anderson and they were just ready to come to blows, but just as the Union man was ready to strike, Old Reuner slipped up behind him and knocked him cold.

After this colony of negroes was separated and placed in new home, after being brought to this country, some were dissatisfied, so Mr. Rhea, being the fine Christian gentleman that he was, gathered up the dissatisfied ones and sent them back to their native land. Many of them remained here, however, and among the number who remained were Reuner and his family. Reuner lived to be very old and was "retired" in old age. In his last years he wanted to be a preacher and at least dressed himself as such, wearing his white vest and long-tailed coat. He always kept a supply of brooms, home-made baskets, and walking canes on hand to sell to the "white-folks" who came to visit and was always on hand when any of them needed a "shine." Many of Old Reuner's descendants

No foolin' . . .

We'll really talk

**TURKEY!**



**JACK TRAYER'S**

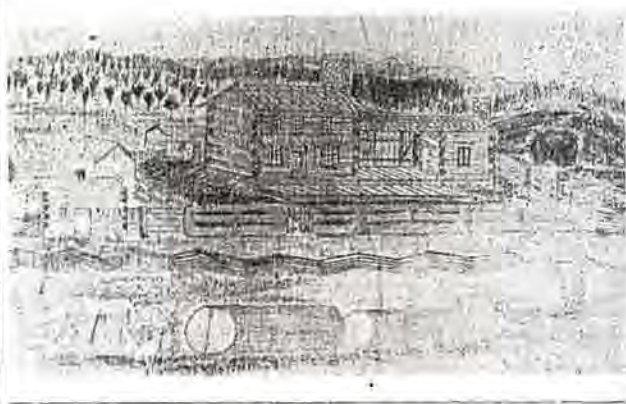
"Food as you like it"

MOORE and SYCAMORE STS. — BRISTOL, VIRGINIA



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does not show the trees and box- woods but they were there, many of them. At either end of the yard, east and west, stood two very large sugar trees, and in the front yard were a number of big trees one of which was a very large white walnut, brought by one of the sons, my own grand-father, William Rhea Anderson, on his return from California. (He had gone there during "The Gold Rush" in '49, as did his brother Joseph Rhea Anderson, Joseph R. Anderson never returned. He contacted over, died, and was buried at Big Pine, Cal.) On either side of the walk leading from the front gate to the front porch and from the porch to the side gate were beautiful box-woods and in the yard and garden there were all kinds of old time flowers. These were literally bushels of hyacinths, just the two colors, that old timey blue and pink. There were several shades of aeeheas, dark red and the pink peonies, golden brillis, snow-balls and lilacs, jounquils, and easter flowers, the little yellow rose, which comes the first thing in the rose kingdom, the hundred-leaf and the old moss rose, the rock lillies and many others of the old timey flowers. Here you also found one of the finest orchards in the county. They had all kinds of fruits, plums— yellow and red, quinces, pears, peaches, and all kinds of apples. I never shall forget a little yellow apple which my grand-father always had buried. When he put them in the ground they were so hard you could not bite them

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East of the residence, and shown in the picture, you see an interesting little log house. This was known as "The Hatter Shop." Mr. Edward B. Anderson was a graduate apprentice and owned and operated the first "hatter shop" in Tennessee. This little house, not so small either for it had three nice rooms, was his office and sales room. The main shop stood just across the road from this building and is not shown in the picture. For many years, or until Mr. Anderson's death, all kinds of fine hats were made here and were sold on all the markets here, in the East, and elsewhere. Recently a lady wrote me that she noticed an article in the archives in Nashville reading this: Mr. Edward B. Anderson of Blountville, Tennessee, has made a donation of twelve dozen hats to Maryville College.

The last of this famous old home was torn away in 1934 and a new brick residence erected in its place.

The property is still owned by the family, Mr. and Mrs. John E. Dail now residing there. Their sons, John Hugh Dail and Rhea Anderson Dail represent the seventh generation who have lived



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Rhea Anderson, above, a life-resident of the Blountville area has compiled a book on the old homes of this section, as well as other historical material.

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 ... an! Delight your own  
 ... a gift of fine furs from  
 ... ficent fur coat, or prize  
 ... ly blended... Whatever  
 ... ll find it in our superb

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KINGSPORT, TENN.

# WINTER

... IT'S THE SEASON for freeze-ups  
 and cracked radiators. ... YOU CAN  
 sidestep every winter hazard by a  
 check-up at...

## BLACKBURN'S

### Service Station and Garage

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East Blountville — Telephone 4833

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— BRISTOL —

# History Of Sullivan County

Author Was Former School Superintendent

The late Dr. J. E. L. Seneker of the Walnut Hill section between Bristol and Blountville dictated the following history of Sullivan County to his daughter, Lorena (now Mrs. J. Frank Johnson of the Blountville area) who has contributed the work for this issue of the News.

Mr. Seneker, author and educator, is of German, French and Irish descent. Educated at the Jefferson Academy, Blountville, he was a teacher, studied medicine, traveled extensively and wrote Burlesque on Fustian, Tennessee History. He was superintendent of Sullivan County schools from 1892 to 1914. He was married to Louisa M. Dulaney on April 30, 1878.

By J. E. L. SENEKER  
(February 25, 1910)

Sullivan County, though second in the State as to organization, ranks really first as to exploration and settlement, as fully attested by records preserved and reliable traditions. Many of the records I have seen, and as a boy I learned not a little of the early history of this section of the country from persons whose parents were among the early pioneers.

In 1863 when the Battle of Blountville was fought, the courthouse and most of Sullivan County's records from 1780 were destroyed.

Oliver Taylor, whose ancestors were prominent in Tennessee's early history, has collected authentic dates and written a very unique and interesting book, "Historic Sullivan", from which I glean many of the facts here presented.

Many believe and erroneously teach that the territory now included in Sullivan and Hawkins counties was originally a part of Washington district. With the exception of a narrow strip on the southern boundary, it never was. It was claimed and recognized as belonging to Virginia until the Virginia-North Carolina line was run in 1779, when it was found to be in North Carolina.

## County Founded in 1780

In 1780 Sullivan district was duly organized and named in the honor of General Sullivan of Revolutionary fame. One Hawkins county was cut off or partitioned from Sullivan in 1787, and soon thereafter the county seat was located in its present site and named Blountville in honor of William Blount, whose official residence while governor of Tennessee was at William Cobb's (Rocky Mount) near Piney Flats.

In 1784 representatives from Washington, Sullivan and Greene in convention organized the State of Franklin. Davidson, the only other county at that time, was not represented.

This section of the country was comparatively well known prior to 1750. The first path-finders were Dr. Thomas Walker and the Byrd expedition in the Reedy Creek valley, Daniel Boone thru the eastern section, and Stephen Holston for whom Holston River was named.

To John and Thomas Sharpe, who in 1765 permanently located with their families in Holston Valley, are authentically due the credit of being the first settlers in what is now Tennessee. Soon after, Joe Martin who was with Walker, made his home near Kingsport, and Thomas Henderson, John Womack, the ancestor of Davy Crockett, and others were not far behind.

## Explorers Sought Homes Here

The glowing accounts of fertile valleys, rippling streams, majestic forests, mineral wealth and healthful climate, which were sent back to eastern Virginia and

Pennsylvania by these first pioneers, soon brought many homeseekers from those congested sections. Among them were families of wealth, culture and high social standing. Some came across the mountains from North Carolina.

In 1771 Evan and Isaac Shelby located and built a fort, and also opened a general store where the hustling, growing city of Bristol now stands, balancing on the state line of Virginia and Tennessee. Not a few who became prominently identified with other parts of the state were the first residents here.

Among the first settlers may be mentioned the ancestors of the Kings, Thomases, Rheas, Dulaney, Rutledges, Massengills, Taylors, Snodgrasses, Snapps, Senekers, Coxes, Bachmans, Bushongs, Andersons, Easleys, Cowans, Pyles, Boothers, Akards, O'Dells, Fahns, Gaines, Rollers, Crosses, Cawoods, etc.

No other section can recount hardships more trying, adventures more thrilling, privations more extreme or love of home and country more sacred than stands to the credit of Sullivan County's first settlers. Many participated in the romantic adventures, and many were victims of the bloody tomahawk wielded by the Cherokee Indians.

## Indian Battle at Kingsport

Except near Kingsport against Drugging Canoe, no general combat with the Indians took place in Sullivan County, but many there were who left their homes and did valient service under the banners of Sevier and Shelby, and of Jackson. Fully and well was Sullivan County represented among the heroes of the Battle of King's Mountain.

The church membership of the first settlers was principally in the Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist and Lutheran churches.

Prior to 1777, the Presbyterians erected at Gunnings the first church built in Tennessee. Long was it known as the Taylor's Meeting House.

The first Methodist church in Tennessee was Acuff, near Blountville. Devout and stirring divines were Rev. Cummings, Father Eakin and Rev. Lambert. Later able ministers coming here included Dr. A. J. Brown, Dr. D. Sullins and Rev. G. A. Caldwell.

## Professional Men

In the aesculapian field, perhaps Dr. Elkanah Dulaney, who came among the first, may be justly placed at the head of the list. After him may be mentioned Drs. Dulaney, Delaney, Butler, Rhea, Emmert, Murphy, Enson, Patton, and Parrott.

Prior to the establishment of King College at Bristol, Jefferson Academy and the Masonic Institute at Blountville were institutions high in the educational

line, and were well patronized from near and far. Perhaps no teacher ever so successfully assisted young men's thinking and reasoning for themselves as did Dr. J. D. Tadlock, who for many years was present of King College. Among other leading teachers were George Wilhelm, Archimedes Davis, J. H. Ketron. Dr. A. J. Brown, Rev. T. P. Summers, Rev. John R. King, Rev. W. B. Gale, J. H. Seneker, William Dailley, James P. Snapp.

Editors we have galore at Bristol, Bluff City, Blountville and Kingsport. John Slack was perhaps the most conspicuous figure in the journalistic field. His sons, Charles and Mursey are now able journalists—well known throughout the state.

In the legal field William Blount and William Cocke were among the first. John Netherlanw, one of the state's ablest advocates, lived at Kingsport. Matt Haynes, William Deadrick, C. J. St. John and John Fain lived at Blountville.

Politically, Sullivan County has ever weighed heaviest on the Democratic side, and was in 1861 dubbed "Little South Carolina."

The official life of Sullivan County stands by no means in the background. Note the following: one president, six U. S. senators, seven congressmen, one secretary of the treasury, one minister to Russia, one supreme judge, two chancery judges, four circuit judges, two attorney generals.

Many there are whose names are not found on history's pages, but lost to view amid the gath-

ering mists of obscurity. Valiant heroes in the ranks whose daring tide-turning achievements were prime factors on victorious battlefields. Men and women in private life whose noble deeds of kindness, charity and humanity were of priceless value and profit to their fellow men and their country. Their names and what they did are as worthy to be handed down to posterity as the biographies of at least some to whose credit little of importance attaches other than being there as civil or military officer. Had a commissioned officer with half a dozen trained soldiers done what Keelan did single handed at Straw Plains, he would have been classed greater than Leonidas. As was said of Burns, Keelan asked for bread and they gave him a stone.

## Industrial Beginning

Physically and topographically, Sullivan County is like Gaul only different. There are mountain gorges, hills and dales, and broad alluvial bottoms. Iron is the most abundant and most important mineral. James King and John Sevier opened a furnace on Beaver Creek as early as 1784.

Several furnaces and forges were built and operated for many years. The most important, perhaps, was the Bushong furnace. The first nail factory in the state was located at Pactolus. The Cain pottery on Reedy Creek was among the first in the United States to make glazed earthenware. F. A. Ross operated at Kingsport the first cotton factory in the state.

Roads at first were located along lines of least resistance, around enclosed lands and over

steep grades; and to we waded, dragged, pushed, getting there the load worth little the cost of the trip.

Rather suddenly realized that chiefest needs were better roads. Presto, Macadam—road nearly half a million began to radiate from and Bristol to all points compass in the county. Land has greatly enhanced value, fields abandoned and reclaimed, and the soil is the store.

We have abundant water, building material for vast herds of adapted to the growth fruit and vegetables, factories, fine scenery, health restoring springs for the invalid by everything "in loco" Sullivan County the and the garden spot state—the Switzerland ica.

## WILLIAM KING

The late Miss Minnie Abingdon has written published by her sister, Baugh, concerning King, for whom William high school at Abingdon od.

King, a native of Ireland Abingdon in 1891 "to fortune as a peddler" succeeded — by establishing stores along his line of by operation of the S (Saltville). In 1799 he to Mary Trigg, and built brick house in Abingdon still stands opposite t



DR. J. E. L. SENEKER  
Born May 13, 1840—Died April 15, 1916



AN OLD PIONEER HOME 100 YEARS AGO.

The old Seneker home which stood between Bristol and Blountville in the Steele Creek section was an early one in the county. The above drawing, including the inscription, has been published by her sister, Baugh, concerning King, for whom William high school at Abingdon od.

Perfect as love itself...  
the beauty of an Art-Carved  
Ring by Wood... and the radiance  
of the diamonds chosen by experts  
steeped in the century-old traditions  
of Wood quality. Remember, when you  
are choosing this lifetime purchase,  
to look for Art-Carved within the ring.



Trade Mark Reg.

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steep grades; and to the market  
we waded; dragged, pulled and  
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the load worth little more than  
the cost of the trip.

Rather suddenly people realized  
that chiefest among our  
needs were better roads; and  
Presto, Macadam--roads to cost  
nearly half a million dollars be-  
gan to radiate from Blountville  
and Bristol to all points of the  
compass in the county. Farming  
land has greatly enhanced in  
value, fields abandoned are be-  
ing reclaimed, and conservation  
of the soil is the slogan.

We have abundant water power,  
building material, grazing  
land for vast herds of cattle, soil  
adapted to the growth of cereal,  
fruit and vegetables, sites for  
factories, fine scenery for tour-  
lists, health restoring mineral  
springs for the invalid and near-  
ly everything "In loco" to make  
Sullivan County the workshop  
and the garden spot of the  
state--the Switzerland of Amer-  
ica.

**WILLIAM KING**

The late Miss Minnie Baugh of  
Abingdon has written an article,  
published by her sister, Miss Ethel  
Baugh, concerning William S.  
King, for whom William King  
high school at Abingdon is named.

King, a native of Ireland, came  
to Abingdon in 1801 "to make his  
fortune as a peddler", and he  
succeeded -- by establishment of  
stores along his line of travel and  
by operation of the Salt Works  
(Saltville). In 1799 he was married  
to Mary Trigg, and built the first  
brick house in Abingdon, which  
still stands opposite the court-



AN OLD PIONEER HOME 100 YEARS AGO.  
*Edward G. Seneker, Bristol, Va.*

The old Seneker home which stood between Bristol and Blount-  
ville in the Steele Creek section was an early one in the county.  
The above drawing, including the inscription, has been in the  
family for many years. It was given to Dr. J. E. L. Seneker to re-  
mind him of his childhood homestead and the wood-chopping  
duties he so often performed there. Dr. Seneker was the son of  
Dr. and Mrs. James King Seneker and the grandson of Elijah G.  
and Katherine Susong Seneker, also of George and Sarah Pyle  
Ashong.

Carved  
and the radiance  
by experts  
century-old traditions  
remember, when you  
g this lifetime purchase,  
carved within the ring.

*Art-carved Rings*  
by  
**WOOD** 1940  
FLOVED BY BRIDES FOR ALMOST A CENTURY  
Trade Mark Reg.



house. He died in 1808. In his will  
he left \$10,000 to Abingdon Acad-  
emy, now William King high  
school.

**S** YMBOL

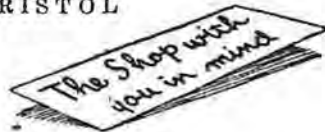
of superiority..

our label. It's our own award to  
a fashion for excellence of qual-  
ity, fashion dependability.

**PARAMOUNT DRESS SALON**

Exclusive Dresses

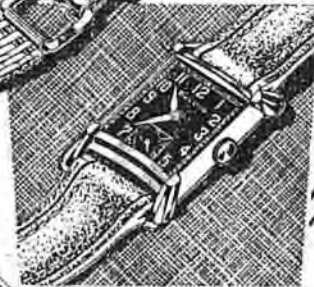
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OF FINE WATCHMAKING



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AMBASSADOR  
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proudly presents  
*"The Excellency Group"*  
by **BULOVA**

### Mount Tucker



The home of J. Mack Thomas commands one of the most beautiful settings in Sullivan County. It is located near Blountville on the Bristol highway. Surrounding the home are many trees, which are in bloom in the spring, colorful in the autumn, and picturesque also in winter snow and summer greenery.

## Home Of Colonel McClellan Recalls Romantic History

Mount Tucker was the home of Colonel George Rutledge McClellan and his wife, Adeline Anderson McClellan. Colonel McClellan was born at White Top on Beaver Creek, September 3, 1816, the son of U. S. Senator Abram McClellan. He was educated at Washington College.

His military career included three wars. At the age of 20 he commanded a regiment under General Richard G. Dunlap in the Cherokee War of 1836. He saw service in the Mexican War of 1848 being in command of the Fifth Regiment, Tennessee Volunteer Infantry, which was made up entirely of East Tennesseans. In the Civil War Colonel McClellan commanded the Fourth Tennessee Battalion Cavalry (Confederate) and served under General Zollicoffer and General John B. Forrest. Colonel McClellan also was active in public affairs,

representing Sullivan County in the State legislature as both representative and senator for several terms, serving as county court judge for twelve years, railroad commissioner under Governor Marks and as Deputy Internal Revenue Collector during Cleveland's administration.

George McClellan was married on February 22, 1844 (by the Rev. P. Wood) to Adeline Powell Anderson, the daughter of William Anderson and Jane Rutledge Anderson. Their home, Mount Tucker, was started at this time. The construction of the main portion of the house was completed sufficiently to permit occupancy by 1846.

#### Building Operations

The original house was two stories in height, of frame construction, with a one-storied wing in the rear, containing a dining room and kitchen. All structural members were heavy, hand-hewn timbers. In those old days all lumber was processed on the site. Nearby trees were cut down, sawed into boards by hand, cured and dressed, and kiln dried. Only the bricks, window glass and the hardware had to be brought in by wagons from distant points. The lime plaster had to be buried in the ground for six months in order to cure it properly. One unfortunate happening marred the building operation. The six mantelpieces and other trim were placed in the kiln for the final drying, and the kiln caught on fire, burning up all the mantels except one.

The land upon which Mount Tucker was built was part of the original land grant of approximately ten square miles which General George Rutledge received for his services in the Revolutionary War. General Rutledge was the grandfather of Adeline Anderson McClellan.

#### Legend of Dan Tucker

There are many romantic stories associated with Mount Tucker. Colonel McClellan named his home after one Dan Tucker who was one of the first white inhabitants of that area. Dan Tucker was an old hermit who had lived in a log cabin in the center of the only clearing for miles around. He was a man of mystery during his lifetime, and it was believed he was a wealthy miser. After his death many people searched the area for his hoard which was supposed to be buried nearby in an old iron kettle, but to no avail. Mount Tucker was built about two-hundred yards from the site of Dan Tucker's cabin. His legend of buried treasure fascinated the Negro slaves for many years, and the field hands whose duty it was to cultivate the field upon which Dan Tucker's log house had stood, always would plow the ground as deeply as they could in the never ending hope of uncovering the iron kettle. Excitement ran high one time when the plow struck an old rusty iron lid, but feverish excavation by the slaves failed to reveal any kettle beneath.

During the Civil War Mount

### Once Enclosed To



One pair of the twin sets of iron gates at the entrance to the Caldwell Tavern in Blountville, the residence of General Caldwell, is pictured above. These gates are identical to those at the United States Capitol building, and the Capitol, its Architectural Art and History. The other set of gates hangs at the Smithsonian, D. C. In the early 1900's the gates, hung at the entrance of the J. Clifton, Va., and were brought to Blountville, Mrs. Caldwell being the daughter of M.

Tucker served as headquarters for both Union and Confederate officers, whichever side happened to control the area at the time. It is told of Mary, one of the McClellan daughters, that as a girl during the occupation of Mt. Tucker by Union officers, she hid under her mother's bed and deliberately listened to plans to burn the bridge at Bluff City—to cut off General Zollicoffer's army and to take the salt mines at Saltville. As soon as she dared Mary crept from her hiding place and repeated the plot to her mother. Thereupon, one of the Negroes was mounted and dispatched, by back roads, and the story then reached the ears of General Zollicoffer. Of course, he and his army crossed the bridge immediately and surprised the Union army.

Due to the ravages of time and war, the original Mount Tucker has been torn down, and by its side stands the present Mount Tucker, home of Mr. and Mrs. J. Mack Thomas, Mr. Thomas being a grandson of Colonel McClellan.

During the building of the present home, an attempt was made to preserve as much as possible of the original plan. The entrance way and door and mantels throughout the house are from the old house. Though some of the box-woods have been transplanted, the same ones surround the home that were planted by Adeline McClellan, back in 1849. The box-woods were a gift of her cousin, Priscilla Rutledge Maxwell, of Nashville, and George McClellan carried them in saddlebags, all the way from Nashville to here.

Mack Thomas inherits the Thomas love of fine live stock, and his farm is now stocked with Aberdeen Angus cattle, Hampshire hogs and some of the best saddle horses to be found.

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December 14, 1946

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use here is America's last great frontier, challenge the minds and hearts of men of action.

use here are vast and scarcely developed resources demanding only vision, courageous leadership and earnest labor to convert them to use and

use here are millions of fertile acres sufficient bounty to fill the larders of the nation with rich products and with nourishing foods from

use here is a newly awakened giant beginning to feel the power latent in its farms and woodlands, its businesses and industries and the energy of its people.

use here is a friendly, kindly people who dreamed new dreams, seen new visions, gained new skills; who are determined that these things shall not again be lost and that their future shall be one of prosperity and economic greatness.

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### We Must Make Room for New Furniture

Beautiful  
3-Piece

Living Room Suit

\$100.00



### Mount Tucker



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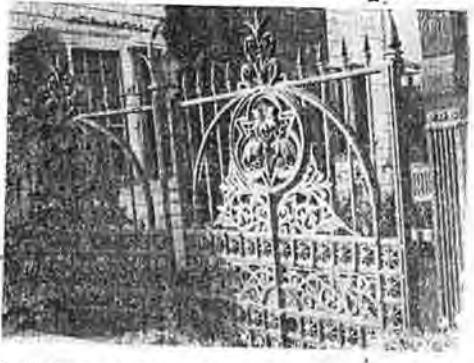
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### Once Enclosed The Capitol



One pair of the twin sets of iron gates which now stand at Old Tavern in Blountville, the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph A. Caldwell, is pictured above. These gates originally came from the United States capitol building, and according to "The National Capitol, Its Architectural Art and History," by Hozleton, the Capitol parking was enclosed in 1875 and earlier by nine sets of identical gates, those in Blountville being two of the sets. Another set of gates hangs at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D. C. In the early 1900's the gates, which are now in Blountville, hung at the entrance of the J. Cloyd Byars' farm at Arlington, Va., and were brought to Blountville in 1942 by the Caldwells, Mrs. Caldwell being the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Byars.

## Colonel McClellan Romantic History

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Mr. Thomas has a notable following as a saddle horse breeder, and has shipped horses to Iowa, Utah, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama and other states this past summer.

### Arcadia School

(Interesting notes on the the history of Arcadia school were compiled by students.)

Arcadia school, located in the 10th civil district of Sullivan County, is one of the oldest, it being first established as Reedy Creek Academy.

Professor Joseph Ketron, one of its first teachers, ranked third among educated men of the United States. His classes consisted of young men and women from practically all of the southern states. Every day, during the lunch period, Professor Ketron would memorize a page of Webster's Dictionary. He had mastered the entire dictionary by the end of his nine years' teaching here.

This two-story building was also the meeting house. The upper floor was used as a lodge of the Young Men of Temperance, and the school became known as Temperance Hall. The bundles of seven sticks used by the Sons of Temperance are also an object lesson to students of the school now. If you untie the bundle the sticks can be broken one by one, but if left together they cannot be destroyed. The bundle is in possession of a resident of this community.

Of special pride to this community is the bell that still is hanging in the school belfry. This bell was brought from Boston in a wagon, and used in the first building. Its sweet tones can be heard in every nearby hill and valley.

## WHEENERS

### South

frontier, challenge, action.

developed resourceful leadership to use and

es sufficient information with foods from

giant begins farms and industries

people who decisions, gain these things are shall be

, homeland and better

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**Beautiful**  
3-Piece  
**Living Room Suit**  
\$100.00



# Hanging Of William Mays At Blountville Graphically Recorded In 1897 Paper

One horror in local history is the killing of G. D. Masengill (1897), prominent Sullivan Countian, of Bluff City, and the subsequent execution of William Mays, convicted of the murder. The hanging of Mays is the only one the County Seat has witnessed, and recollection of it is yet vivid in the minds of older Blountville and County residents. A graphic account of this was given in Bristol's "Dalley Times" on Thursday morning, November 10, 1897, the headlines and contents given here. Only the front page of the newspaper was available for copy, and in the continued portion was possibly given more detail as to the background and trial of the case.

### GAVE UP LIFE

WILLIAM MAYS, WHO MURDERED G. D. MASENGILL, HUNG YESTERDAY

### EXONERATES COLE

William Mays, who shot and killed George Dallas Masengill, on his mountain farm above Bluff City, on the 15th day of last June, was hung at Blountville, the county seat of Sullivan, on Wednesday, November 17, at 2:20 p. m. Mays spent Tuesday night—the one prior to his execution, restlessly. He was guarded in the court house at Blountville, and slept very little, rolling and tumbling nearly all night. His wife and two small children were with him.

Early Wednesday morning, religious services were conducted with the prisoners by Revs. J. R. Lauritzen, E. H. Cassidy, J. C. Carson and C. H. Barker, the latter of Mendota, during which Mays professed to be a changed man, and ready to die. Rev. Cassidy asked him: "How do you feel as you approach the last hour?" to which he replied, "All right."

At 10:15 another service was held at which Mays was told that he could not be forgiven of his crime unless he confessed to committing it. To this he would not answer, but looked around toward the scaffold. Later all persons were put out of the court house to allow Mays to make his confession privately. He was taken into Esquire James A. Cole's office where, in the presence of Sheriff Abram McClellan of Sullivan County; Sheriff J. C. Groner of Knox; Attorney Charles A. Brown, and Revs. J. R. Lauritzen, E. H. Cassidy, and C. D. Houchen he made and swore to the following statement.

### Mays' Confession

"I killed Mr. Dal Masengill up thar on his farm. I led his horse down thar for the purpose of decaying him. Godfrey Bolling told

me on one occasion that Mr. Masengill would be a witness against me in a tanbark matter of suit. Cole had nothing to do with the killing of Masengill. I state this in the presence of death.

Mays was asked "when did you tell Cole about killing Masengill?" "I didn't tell him at all." "Did Cole accuse you of the killing before you were arrested?" "No. Cole did not know of the killing before or after it was done. Cole is innocent. I did the killing myself. No one else was present."

"What time of day did you kill him?" "About three o'clock in the evening." "Did you tell Cole what you were going back for on the ridge?" "I did not. I went back to cover up the deed."

"Mr. Masengill saw me approaching him at the time I killed him. Mr. Masengill told me that he was hunting for his horse and asked me if I had seen him. I told him I had not. I shot Mr. Masengill, I think, from the front (in the mouth.) Masengill did not say a word after I shot him. I think Cole ought to be released. He is entirely innocent of the killing."

At 1 o'clock, the rear window on the west side of the court house leading to the gallows was taken out, and Mays, who was sitting with his back toward it talking to Rev. Lauritzen, turned around and looked unconcernedly at the gallows. About this time, Rev. Cassidy joined the two and stated that he thought that Mays wanted to make another confession — Mays called Sheriff McClellan and stated his desire to do so. The sheriff took a drink of coffee and asked Mays if he did not want to eat dinner first. He replied that he did, and it being brought, Mays took a quid of tobacco from his mouth and ate heartily for fifteen minutes, after which he smoked a cigar and requested that S. M. Jones and Noah Thomas be allowed to go upon the scaffold with him when he was hung, which request was granted.

At 1:30 Mays, the minister named above, and the sheriff went into Esquire Cole's office where Mays made, and swore to a detailed statement.

At 2 p. m., they returned to the court house; and the preachers gave Mays their parting words. His wife put her arms around his neck and kissed him good-bye, as also did his little girl, during all of which Mays exhibited not the least sign of emotion or of being affected. Mays was again conducted to the clerk's office by the ministers who prayed and counseled with him, reading passages of scripture and singing: "What can wash away my sins?—nothing but the blood of Jesus."

He was conducted to the scaffold located as above stated, he walking up the steps to, through the window, and down on the other side, and with a brisk, firm and steady stride, yet with



Kitty perches where once camped Civil War soldiers. The spring shown is one of more than 2 "Sunset Springs" farm, owned by Mr. and Mrs. E. L. King of Piney Flats, Route 2.

a down cast, stolid look upon his countenance. At this juncture his wife was led out of the front door of the court house.

### Upon the Scaffold

Arriving upon the scaffold, Sheriff Groner conducted Mays to the sides of the enclosure, where for a few moments he viewed the crowd in a listless and indifferent manner. Finally he waved his hand to the crowd and said: "I bid all of you good-bye," and turned and took his stand under the gallows, when Rev. Lauritzen took him by the hand and said, "good bye, may the Lord go with you and keep you. Be strong in the Lord and in His strength," and then offered fervent prayer, beseeching the Lord to have mercy upon, to protect and comfort the poor dying man, and give him eternal life, closing by repeating the Lord's prayer:

Deputy Sheriff Hill then handcuffed Mays, and tied his feet together, and slipped a black cap over his head. Sheriff Groner adjusted the noose of the rope about Mays' head and neck. Then Rev. Lauritzen read Christ's reply to the supplication of the dying thief, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, today thou shalt be with me in Paradise," and added, "Lord have mercy and save him, through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ."

Mays was then asked by Sheriff Groner if he had anything to say, and shaking his head in the negative, Sheriff McClellan with hatchet in hand struck the fatal blow that severed the rope holding the trap door, which swung down, and back under the victim, and he fell like a shot arrow, the fall breaking his neck, and died without a struggle.

It was 2:20 p. m., (eastern time) when the drop fell. Ten minutes later his pulse ceased to beat and in six more minutes he was pronounced dead, and was taken down and placed in his coffin.

## HISTORIC SPRING

## Old Harpers Magazine Give Negative Publicity To A

(Editor's Note: Fashionable folks of 1857 write "down" this area in an old edition of Harper's New Monthly Magazine. The article below is the second in a series entitled "A Winter in the South," and though the author's name is not given, the journeymen were evidently of "Mr. Broadacre's" kin. The town of Jonesboro apparently was their only stop that did not make a negative impression. The writing follows in part.)

Pursuing their journey westward from Abingdon, our travelers arrived about sundown at the town of Bristol, and put up at the Magnolia, a very good hotel located within a short distance of the depot. This straggling, half-finished village, which has lately sprung up at the terminus of the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad, lies partly in Virginia and partly in Tennessee. The locality was formerly called King's Meadows, and owned by General Evans Shelby, whose house and tomb are both to be seen a short distance from the hotel. Shelby's dwelling was a rude log building, characteristic of the times in which he lived, and the tomb, which, with two others occupies a little eminence shaded by a group of trees, consists of a coffin-shaped slab of iron.

### Sketch on Shelby

Shelby was one of those hunting-shirt soldiers and statesmen whose romantic feats of hardihood and heroism illumine the pages of our colonial and revolutionary history, and whose practical wisdom guided the frontier communities through anarchy and war to triumphant peace and orderly government. He marched with Braddock to the fatal field, where terminated the career of that obstinate and unfortunate officer. He led the van under Forbes when Fort Du Quesne was taken. He was a captain in the bloody battle of Point Pleasant, led a famous expedition against the Indians at Chickamauga, and was finally appointed a general of Militia by the State of Virginia. Gallant sons grew up around him whose exploits were not inferior to his own, and whose names equally shine in our early annals. So much for the historic associations of Bristol. There is, however, nothing particularly romantic in its present condition.

Non-Romantic Early Bristol There are now to be seen straggling railway tracks, trains of empty and loaded cars, engines puffing and fuming, vast piles of wood, machine shops and taverns. There are ware houses

chewing tobacco, speculating land and pork, insolent drivers, gaping country babbling politicians, carefree groes, who if they had enough would laugh at masters, but wanting that, their fill at one another. too were our amiable f withdrawn as much as p from the crowd, preferring past to the present . . .

The railroad terminates at the line dividing the states of Virginia and Tennessee. I shortly be connected with great lines of trade and leading to Mississippi and Gulf of Mexico, by a road r progress connecting Bristol Knoxville, and will then b great thoroughfare between North and South. At present is an unfinished gap of se miles, over which the travel carried in old-fashioned coaches. This formidable j our friends commenced at th pointed hour next morning.

### Journey to Blountville

They arrived at Blountville eight or nine miles from starting-place, about day, and got out at a hostelry of unpromising appearance. In course of time, however, the



Visit our Self-Service Record Department for Classical, String, and all latest and popular recordings --

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**ET PCTT**



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**Journey to Blount**  
They arrived at Blount eight or nine miles from starting-place, about and got out at a hostelry unpromising appearance. course of time, however,



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BRISTOL CITY, TENN.



HA  
ELECT

## HISTORIC SPRING



Archaeologists where once camped Civil War soldiers. The spring shown is one of more than 20 on "Springs" farm, owned by Mr. and Mrs. E. L. King of Piney Flats, Route 2.

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ce. At this juncture his  
led out of the front door  
urt house.

pon the Scaffold

upon the scaffold,  
oner conducted Mays to  
of the enclosure, where  
w moments he viewed  
in a listless and indif-  
f-ner. Finally he waved  
to the crowd and said:  
of you good-bye," and  
d took his stand under  
ws, when Rev. Laud-  
him by the hand and  
d bye, may the Lord  
you and keep you. Be  
the Lord and in His  
and then offered fer-  
er., beseeching the Lord  
ericy upon, to protect  
rt the poor dying man,  
him eternal life, closing  
ing the Lord's prayer.

Sheriff Hill then hand-  
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and slipped a black cap  
head. Sheriff Groner ad-  
nose of the rope  
ys' head and neck. Then  
tizen read Christ's re-  
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f, "Verily, verily, I say  
today thou shalt be  
n Paradise," and added,  
er mercy and save him,  
ur Lord and Savior, Je-

as then asked by Sher-  
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shaking his head in the  
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a hand struck the fatal  
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ing his neck, and died  
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2:20 p. m., (eastern  
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TS

MPANY

## Old Harpers Magazine Gives Negative Publicity To Area

(Editor's Note: Fashionable folks of 1857 write "down" this area in an old edition of Harper's New Monthly Magazine. The article below is the second in a series entitled "A Winter in the South," and though the author's name is not given, the journeymen were evidently of "Mr. Broadacre's" kin. The town of Jonesboro apparently was their only stop that did not make a negative impression. The writing follows in part.)

Pursuing their journey westward from Abingdon, our travelers arrived about sundown at the town of Bristol, and put up at the Magnolia, a very good hotel located within a short distance of the depot. This straggling, half-finished village, which has lately sprung up at the terminus of the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad, lies partly in Virginia and partly in Tennessee. The locality was formerly called King's Meadows, and owned by General Evans Shelby, whose house and tomb are both to be seen a short distance from the hotel. Shelby's dwelling was a rude log building, characteristic of the times in which he lived, and the tomb, which, with two others occupies a little eminence shaded by a group of trees, consists of a coffin-shaped slab of iron.

### Sketch on Shelby

Shelby was one of those hunting-shirt soldiers and statesmen whose romantic feats of hardihood and heroism illuminate the pages of our colonial and revolutionary history, and whose practical wisdom guided the frontier communities through anarchy and war to triumphant peace and orderly government. He marched with Braddock to the fatal field, where terminated the career of that obstinate and unfortunate officer. He led the van under Forbes when Fort Du Quesne was taken. He was a captain at the bloody battle of Point Pleasant, led a famous expedition against the Indians at Chickamauga, and was finally appointed a general of Militia by the State of Virginia. Gallant sons grew up around him whose exploits were not inferior to his own, and whose names equally shine in our early annual. So much for the historic associations of Bristol. There is, however, nothing particularly romantic in its present condition.

### Non-Romantic Early Bristol

There are now to be seen straggling railway tracks, trains of empty and loaded cars, engines puffing and fuming. Vast piles of wood, machine shops and taverns. There are ware houses

chewing tobacco, speculators in land and pork, insolent stage-drivers, gaping country folks, babbling politicians, careless negroes, who if they had sense enough would laugh at their masters, but wanting that, laugh their fill at one another. There too were our amiable friends, withdrawn as much as possible from the crowd, preferring the past to the present . . .

The railroad terminates just at the line dividing the states of Virginia and Tennessee. It will shortly be connected with the great lines of trade and travel leading to Mississippi and the Gulf of Mexico, by a road now in progress connecting Bristol with Knoxville, and will then be the great thoroughfare between the North and South. At present there is an unfinished gap of seventy miles, over which the traveler is carried in old-fashioned stage-coaches. This formidable journey our friends commenced at the appointed hour next morning.

### Journey to Blountville

They arrived at Blountville, eight or nine miles from their starting-place, about daylight, and got out at a hostelry of very unpromising appearance. In the course of time, however, they sat

down to a better breakfast than they anticipated, and this slight circumstance produced a general glow of cheerfulness.

Thus invigorated, the Squire and Larkin went out, in spite of the continued rain, to search for a carriage that would carry them to Natural Tunnel. In a short time they succeeded in making a satisfactory arrangement, and at ten o'clock the hackman drove up with a vehicle resembling a tin peddler's cart, but roomy enough, and drawn by a pair of powerful and handsome grey horses. Just at that moment the clouds broke away, and the sun blazed out cheerily upon the muddy vil-  
lage . . .

### Disgruntled Correspondent

"Blountville, Tennessee  
Nov.—(1857)

"My Dear Maria,—As we can not get away from this uncomfortable place until to-morrow morning, I gladly seize the opportunity of communicating with a sympathizing friend, who can understand the troubles and annoyances to which I have been subjected since Mr. Broadacre set out on this wild-goose chase. You know I am not in the habit of fault-finding or complaining, yet why Mr. B. is dragging us to and fro through this rocky, half-civilized country, I can not imagine. The pretense of ill-health, with which he set out, has long since been forgotten, for he has become robust and feeds like an ox. I am tired hearing of scenery and charming prospects where I see nothing but rocks, dead trees, and mud; but I suppose I must endure it patiently. During our short sojourn in Washington and Richmond I saw a great deal that pleased and interested me. There were the "Dutchess" skirts—novelties just from Paris. I also met with several political celebrities. Their arrival caused great excitement among the fashionables; they are made of gum-elastic, and are as light as a feather (Ed. Note: the authoress is evidently referring to fabrics here.) . . .

"We have just returned from a visit to the Natural Tunnel, which has fatigued me excessively, and we had a terrible fright with our dear little Bettina, who would have fallen over the rocks but for Leonore, who behaved most charmingly on the occasion. Mr. Broadwater, in the fullness of his heart, recanted all he had ever said against Fashions and French. Now undoubtedly he is a kind soul, but he exercises me very much with his obstinacy and "gaucheries." I sometimes think he behaves so on purpose to vex me. What do you think of his carrying Tiny on his back down Pennsylvania Avenue, or of his playing saw mill with her in the parlor of the Exchange in Richmond, before I don't know

how many James River grantees? Then he habitually pours his coffee into his saucer, blows it furiously to cool it, and makes rings on the table-cloth with his cup, and has a most peculiar and abominably unfashionable way of blowing his nose. But, after all, it is better to support our trials with fortitude, and I humbly trust I shall have strength to do so. I am consoled here with the idea that the people won't observe these peculiarities, for they dine without napkins or finger-bowls, and use two-pronged forks with one prong broken off.

"As we were coming from Bristol to this place in the stage Leonore accidentally broke her camphor bottle, when the man who sat in front of her hastily raised the curtain and thrust his head out into the rain. The odor was rather excessive, but not unpleasant; however, we opened the windows, and, wishing to say something apologetic, Leonore asked "vis-a-vis" if he liked the smell of camphor. "No, ma'am, I don't," replied he, with polite bow—"I'd as lief smell a skunk—hit's flung me into a darned sweat—but hit's no matter, ma'am"

"Mr. Broadacre and all of them pretend to be delighted with the country and all they see. Mr. Broadacre always did bear other people's troubles with the most provoking philosophy; but in attempting to make up the fire this evening he found his match in an obstinate chuck. He persevered with it until he smutted the carpet all over, burned his boot, and pinched his thumb, and when I took advantage of the opportunity of advising him to keep cool, he threw the tongs out of the window and left the room.

"Please write without delay, and direct to Knoxville. Give me all the news about the weddings, and how they were dressed, and whether that match we spoke of when I last saw you is likely to come off. Love to all.

"Betty Broadacre."

### 'Substantial Jonesborough'

From Blountville our travelers started in the stage-coach for Jonesborough, twenty-one miles distant . . . The country through which they passed contained nothing particularly worthy of remark, except the light wooden bridge across the Holston and its picturesque surroundings . . .

The first impression of Jonesborough was generally satisfactory. It had an old-fashioned substantial air, as if the people who built it intended to live there the rest of their days. The town is snugly and modestly nestled in a deep hollow, which the adjacent hills are crowded with neat private residences and several academies of some architectural pretensions. It contains about fifteen hundred inhabitants, and is the oldest town in East Tennessee.

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# Massengills Among First To Migrate To Tennessee

The Massengills (Masengills) comprise a prominent family in the development of Sullivan County, and history of this family is recorded in "The Massengills, Massengales and Variants—1472-1931" by Dr. S. E. Massengill of Bristol, assisted by numerous other members of the family.

The book was dedicated to Henry Massengill Sr., early settler of

Tennessee. Portions of the account dealing with Sullivan County members are given below.

Henry Massengill, Sr., in 1769 was one of the first settlers of Tennessee and the territory west of the Alleghany Mountains. He first bought land in the Watauga section from the Cherokee Indians.

The plantation of Henry Massengill joined on the west the land of William Bean, the first permanent white settler in what is now Tennessee, Bean's place lying on the west side of Boone's Creek, where the Bean marker is situated, and the Massengill tract lying on the south side of Boone's Creek. The last tract, which was sold to Hal Massengill, son of Henry Massengill, Sr., and upon which he lived, is now owned by W. M. Bowman, and is used as a dairy farm.

Hal Massengill was the only child that remained in Sullivan County and all of the family in this county are his descendants, and mostly of his second marriage to Elizabeth Emmert.

Hal Massengill, the second son of Henry Massengill of Watauga, was born in Southampton County, Va., October 17, 1758, and died in Sullivan County, Tenn., September 23, 1837.

He evidently placed great faith in the development of the Watauga section, for he was industrious in taking up land grants and in buying land. The records show that the various grants he received from North Carolina, and his purchases, totaled over 1800 acres. He was engaged in farming and was the proprietor of a

## Pioneer Monument



The Massengill monument representing the family of Henry Massengill who settled upper East Tennessee in 1769 stands at the intersection of the Bristol-Johnson City and Johnson City-Kingsport highways. It was erected in 1937.

hauling salt from the saltworks (now Saltville) in Virginia, and trading and boating as far as Natchez, Miss.

The present brick house opposite the Massengill graveyard and later owned by Devault, then Wexler, & others, is said to have been built upon the foundation of his home. It is likely that the land of the Massengill graveyard, in which he is buried, was given by him. Late in life he moved to the Massengill mill property, on the Holston River two miles south of the present Bluff City, and made his home with his son, Felty D., where he died. The records show that Hal owned the old Cobb residence, but it is not thought that he ever made it his home.

He enlisted in the Revolutionary Army in May, 1777, and served a total of two years and three months on the frontier and in North Carolina as a private.

Hal Massengill and his first wife, Penelope Cobb, daughter of Wil-

liam Cobb, had six children: William, Michael, James, Lucretia, Alice, and Susan. Penelope died September 1, 1810, aged 49 years old. Hal Massengill and Elizabeth Emmert, daughter of Jacob Emmert, had three children: Felty Devault, John and Joseph. Elizabeth was born in Sullivan County in 1790 and died September, 1875.

Felty D. Messengill, born April 30, 1815, and died March 30, 1894, lived at the Massengill mill property of the Holston River two miles below Bluff City, being engaged in milling, farming and boating. His parents spent their last days at his home. He married first Deborah Webb, daughter of Nathan Webb. Their children were Joseph F., James W., George Dallas, John Talbot, Benjamin Franklin and Asey Elizabeth. F. D. Massengill's second marriage was to Martha Latture Mauk and their children were Mary Porter, Martha Emma and Walter Clark.

John Massengill, second son of

Hal Massengill, was born September 1816 and died in February, 1895 and lived near Piney Flats. He was married first to Mary Scott who died a few months afterwards. His second marriage was to Nancy Smith, and their children were Felty, George, Elizabeth and John David. He was married a third time to Mary Jane Calbough of Piney Flats. Their children: Henry H., Deborah, Michael D., and Alexander; also, Harriet, Susan and Charlie, who died young of diphtheria.

Joseph Massengill, the third child of Hal and Elizabeth Massengill, moved to Carter County, and was married to Rachel Webb, sister of his brother Felty's wife. Sara Jane Massengill, daughter of Joseph Massengill, married Peter Booher and lived at Big Creek in Sullivan County. Their children: Florence, Joseph, Kate, Alice, James and Amanda.

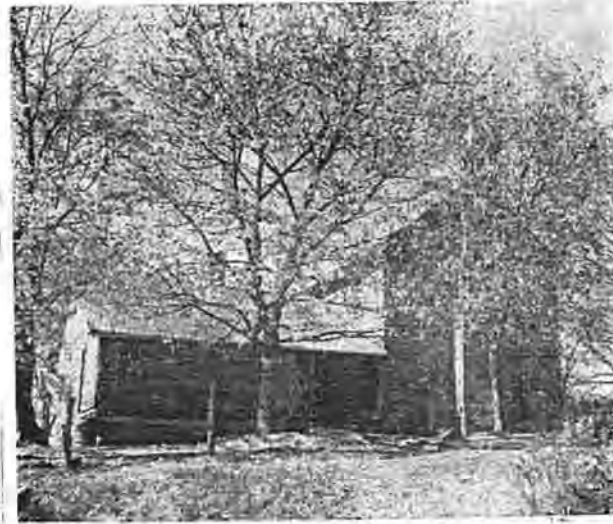
Dr. John D. Masengill, son of John and Nancy Masengill, was born May, 1844 and died January, 1919. He is buried in the Blountville cemetery. He served as a Confederate soldier, attended old Jefferson Academy at Blountville, was graduated at the Baltimore College of Physicians and Surgeons. He was married to Josephine Evans, daughter of Major Sam Evans, and their children are the late Norman H. Massengill, Dr. S. E. Massengill, of Bristol; the late Mrs. Homer H. Smith and Miss Kate Masengill of Blountville.

Henry H. Massengill, oldest child of John and Jane Masengill, was born June 18, 1833. He was first engaged in the mercantile business at Bluff City with G. D. Massengill, but later moved to Blountville, where he was engaged in farming and in mercantile business. He married Maggie McClellan of Bluff City, the grand-daughter of Abraham McClellan who was captain in the Confederate Army. Their children: Charles Henry Massengill, Harry Edward Massengill, Jean Elizabeth Masengill, (Mrs. Floyd Holt) Raymond McClellan Masengill and Hugh Clifton Masengill.

## The History Of Piney Flats

Two years ago students of Mary Hughes grade school at Piney Flats were awarded for writing and compiling an excellent history of Sullivan County. The portion dealing with Piney Flats is reprinted, except

## Rocky Mount



When Governor Blount came to the Territory in 1791 he established his government at the home of William Cobb, which later became in possession of the Massengill family after Cobb moved from Sullivan County in about 1798.

The residence and surrounding grove was used officially by Governor Blount, and was the first capital of recognized government west of the Alleghany Mountains.

Originally a log structure, the home has been weatherboarded, and is occupied by tenant farmers.

William Deery, among the first settlers of the county, the builder of Old Tavern at Blountville, said of Mr. Cobb: "Mr. Cobb was a wealthy farmer, and emigrant from North Carolina, no stranger to comfort and taste not unaccustomed to what, for the day, was style. Like the old Virginia and Carolina gentlemen, he entertained elegantly with profusion rather than with plenty, without ceremony and without grudging. Like theirs, his house was plain, convenient, without pretensions or show."

A part of this house is still standing and is about 175 years old.

Some of the other early settlers of Piney Flats were: Shells, Massengills, Wolfes, Hughes, Fords, Millers and Smiths.

Piney Flats was first known as Shell's Crossroads. It was named in honor of Rev. Andrew Shell, a pioneer preacher. Later the name was changed to Piney Flats because of a flat strip of land that was not cleared of the pines.

Rev. Shell was the pastor of Shell's Chapel, erected in 1873. He was the first postmaster, and the post office was located in his home. As postmaster he received \$20.01 from October 1, 1855 to March 31, 1860.

The Southern Railroad was completed from Knoxville to Bristol about 1858. Andrew Shell with the help of others graded the path for the railroad. A "free" ride to Knoxville on a flat car

store. It was located where the A. D. Browder house stands. The first doctor was Dr. M. M. Martin. He visited the sick by traveling on horse back. The first telephone line was built about 1895, and the switch-board was in J. B. Wolfe's home.

About 1918 Mr. Wolfe organized the Piney Flats Electric Light & Power Company, the power generated by a dynamo at Hyder's Mill on the Watauga River.

The first school in Piney Flats was Shell's Chapel. During 1874 to 1894 the school was in session. The first teacher was Mr. George McKamey.

The grounds for Mary Hughes school were donated in May 1894 by Samuel D. and Mary Hughes, pioneer citizens of Piney Flats. At the time the school was built, the taxes collected were small and the county had little money for improvements. In the year 1894 S. M. Warren, J. N. Arrants, A. M. Shell, W. R. Shell and sev-

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...nting the family of Henry Mas-  
tennessee in 1769 stands at the  
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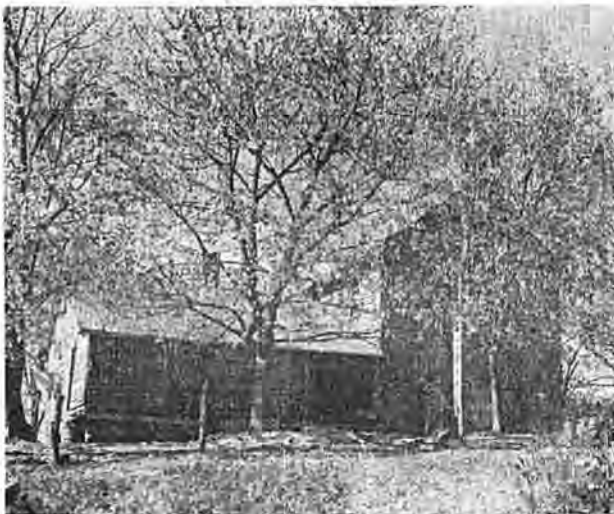
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**The History Of Piney Flats**

Two years ago students of Mary Hughes grade school at Piney Flats were awarded for writing and compiling an excellent history of Sullivan County. The portion dealing with Piney Flats is reprinted, except that concerning Rocky Mount, the home William Cobb, which is given elsewhere on this page. Local persons who furnished first-hand information for this account were J. A. Anderson, R. S. Shell, Walter Hughes, George Campbell and Mary Wolfe.

One of the first settlers of the section was John Calbough from Holland. At the time of his arrival, this section was a part of North Carolina. He cleared the land and built a house of logs.

**Rocky Mount**



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The first depot was built on the opposite side of the track from the present one. Oscar Scott was the agent. The present depot was built about 45 years ago.

The furniture factory known as Wolfe Brothers and Company, manufacturers of dresses, tables, chairs, church pews and caskets, was started by John Bunyan Wolfe about 1880. The factory is still in business with R. S. Shell as president.

J. M. King owned the first

store. It was located where the A. D. Browder house stands. The first doctor was Dr. M. M. Martin. He visited the sick by traveling on horse back. The first telephone line was built about 1895, and the switch-board was in J. B. Wolfe's home.

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The grounds for Mary Hughes school were donated in May 1894 by Samuel D. and Mary Hughes, pioneer citizens of Piney Flats. At the time the school was built, the taxes collected were small and the county had little money for improvements. In the year 1894 S. M. Warren, J. N. Arrants, A. M. Shell, W. R. Shell and several others worked on the new school building. The brick was made on the ground where the auditorium now stands. In the fall of 1896 school opened with two teachers in one room. W. R. Page was the first principal.

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# Samuel Doak

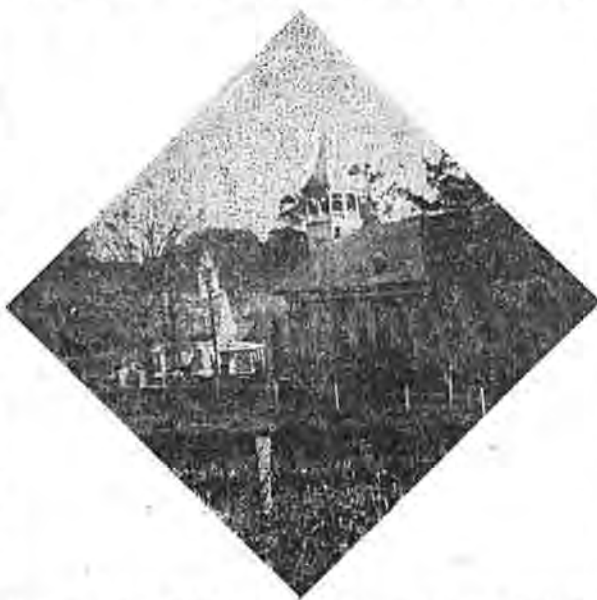
(The founder of Washington College, from Bristol News, Tuesday, October 22, 1872)

Samuel Doak, a son of Samuel Doak and Jane Mitchell, was born in Augusta County, Virginia, in August, 1794. After graduating he assisted the Rev. Dr. Smith in his school at Pequa, Pa. Shortly after this he became tutor in Hampden Sidney College and pursued his theological studies under Dr. J. B. Smith, the president, and afterwards with Rev. Wm. Garham of Timber Ridge. He was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Hanover, October 31, 1777, soon after he removed to Holston, in what is now a part of East Tennessee. Here he was in the midst of danger from savages. On one occasion his wife was appraised by the barking of the dogs that the Indians were near. Taking her infant in her arms she stealthily fled to the woods, and from her hiding place she saw the house and all it contained burned by the savages.

After residing in Holston a year or two, Mr. Doak removed to Washington County, and purchased a farm, and put up a small church edifice and a building of logs for a school house. The literary institution which he here started was the first ever established in the Valley of the Mississippi. In 1785 it was incorporated, with the name of Martin Academy and in 1785 it became Washington College. From its incorporation as an academy until 1818 Mr. Doak continued to preside over it and the elders of his congregation

Kate Sevier,  
In native soil to make her sepulchre!  
Ye sons and daughters of heroic blood,  
As long as flows of time the ceaseless flood,  
In golden words and deeds let honor be  
The bonny heroine of Tennessee!

# New Bethel---Oldest Church In County



Steeple of New Bethel Church (in foreground) and New Bethel School are shown above. The church is the oldest in Sullivan County. Its present pastor is the Rev. Leo Hall of Piney Flats.

formed a part of its board of trustees. While Mr. Doak was attending a meeting of the General Assembly in Philadelphia he received a donation of books for his college, which he carried in a sack upon a pack horse 500 miles through forests and mountains, and this constituted the nucleus of the library of Washington College.

In 1818 he resigned the presidency and removed to Bethel in the same State, and opened a private school which he called Tusculum which has since, under his son, grown into Tusculum College. Mr. Doak was also successful in his ministry. Several powerful revivals occurred in connection with it; and many churches were founded by him. He was dis-

tinguished for his talents and his usefulness, and may be considered the apostle of Presbyterianism in Tennessee. His style of preaching was original, bold, pungent, and sometimes pathetic. He died October 8, 1830.

# State Line Fixed

In 1890 the state line controversy at Bristol was brought to the attention of the Supreme Court of the United States, which decided in favor of the compromise line of 1802 and delegated a commission to retrace this line. This work was done in 1901-02, and on January 28, 1903, Tennessee ceded to Virginia the northern half of State Street.

# Doak Organizes Church In 1782

The oldest church in Sullivan County and one of the oldest in the state of Tennessee is New Bethel Presbyterian church, founded in the year 1782 by the Rev. Samuel Doak, D. D.

Old Concord or Taylor's Meeting House, now Weavers, comprised the oldest organized group of worshipers, though records on the founding are not available. However, the Rev. Joseph Rhea, Presbyterian minister, was in this section as early as 1771, and he is thought to have laid the foundation of Old Concord.

New Bethel celebrated its Sesquicentennial in 1932 with hundreds of persons attending over a wide area, including 75 persons who had been present at the celebration 50 years before.

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The Rev. Hodge in his historical sermon said, "We are unable to give any connected and continuous account of the condition of the church during the latter part of the 18th century, and the first part of the 19th century. The people were busy in laying the foundation of a commonwealth under circumstances of peculiar hardship."

He referred there to the campaigns of Coles. Campbell, Isaac Rhea and Sevier who figured in the Battle of King Mountain, and frontiersmen's battles against the Cherokees.

"The Cemetery at New Bethel by Mrs. L. W. McCown of Johnson City was included in 15 minutes of the Sesquicentennial."

"A great number of graves marked with the old sandstone and limestone rocks, and containing no legible inscriptions today. There are soldiers of practically every war since the Revolution buried at New Bethel and effort has been made to name those graves together with the majority of those of pioneer families of the community," states Mrs. McCown.

Of the graves recorded the following soldiers were listed: Revolution, 6; War of 1812, 3; Cherokee removal, 2; Mexican, Civil, Confederate, 32; Civil Union, 9; World War I, 3; Unknown wars, 1 (Finley Allison)

"The oldest marked grave New Bethel," states Mrs. McCown "might be called the Unknown Traveler. The story goes that the year 1790 an unknown stranger passing through was found dead on the morrow. His saddle bags was found stone (now about 3" x 6" x 1") with the two letters 'I. G.' upon it. He was buried in the church yard, using his rock as a marker. In later years, as was being lost to sight, Nathian Gregg, a hero of the Confederacy, reset the rock within marble slab, and erected it above his grave. Today we read, 'I. G. d. 1790.'"

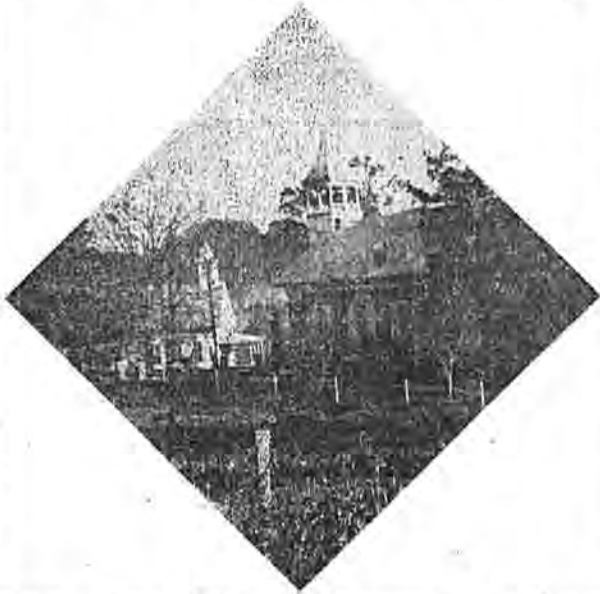
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# Doak

## New Bethel---Oldest Church In County



Steeple of New Bethel Church (in foreground) and New Bethel School are shown above. The church is the oldest in Sullivan County. Its present pastor is the Rev. Leo Hall of Piney Flats.

formed a part of its board of trustees. While Mr. Doak was attending a meeting of the General Assembly in Philadelphia he received a donation of books for his college, which he carried in a sack upon a pack horse 500 miles through forests and mountains, and this constituted the nucleus of the library of Washington College.

In 1818 he resigned the presidency and removed to Bethel in the same State, and opened a private school which he called Tusculum which has since, under his son, grown into Tusculum College. Mr. Doak was also successful in his ministry. Several powerful revivals occurred in connection with it; and many churches were founded by him. He was distinguished for his talents and his usefulness, and may be considered the apostle of Presbyterianism in Tennessee. His style of preaching was original, bold, pungent, and sometimes pathetic. He died October 8, 1830.

In 1890 the state line controversy at Bristol was brought to the attention of the Supreme Court of the United States, which decided in favor of the compromise line of 1802 and delegated a commission to retrace this line. This work was done in 1901-02, and on January 28, 1903, Tennessee ceded to Virginia the northern half of State Street.

## State Line Fixed

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## Doak Organizes Church In 1782

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Welcome

few years later, to the addition of over one-million square miles to the Territory of the United States. Returning to this country, he was, during the War of 1812, given command of the United States defense in the New York area with the rank of Brigadier General. In 1813 he was made Secretary of War in the cabinet of James Madison.

James Armstrong, father of John, sold one-half of his lot No. 24 in Abingdon in 1789 to James Blair who moved to Kentucky a few years later. His son, Francis Preston Blair, born in Abingdon in 1791, became editor of a newspaper in Frankfort, Ky. He was taken to Washington by President Andrew Jackson to edit the Washington Globe, the mouthpiece of Jackson and his administration. He continued to edit the Globe for some years until President James Polk was persuaded by John C. Calhoun that such an organ of publicity was no longer needed. Blair returned to Kentucky, helped organize the new Republican Party and was chairman of its first National Convention. It is interesting to note that the sons of Francis Blair rose to eminence in Missouri.

General Francis Preston, a celebrated lawyer, a member of Congress, a Brigadier General of Militia married a daughter of General William Campbell and moved to Abingdon in 1810. His home is now the central building of Martha Washington Inn. He, with his wife, three sons and six daughters formed a most distinguished family; more illustrious than any other family I have been able to find in all history. For the purposes of this talk, I shall mention but two of these children, William Campbell Preston and Thomas L. Preston.

William Campbell Preston was born in Philadelphia in 1794, while his father was a member of Congress. He began the practice of law at Abingdon. On account of ill health he later traveled and studied two years in Europe. Returning to this country, he resumed practice in South Carolina. His natural talent and gift of speech soon made him famous. He was elected U. S. Senator from South Carolina, where he held his own with Calhoun, Clay, Webster and other great men in the long and bitter Nullification Debates, and earned the sobriquet of "The Golden Tongued Orator of the South."

Thomas L. Preston continued to live in the Preston home in Abingdon for several years after his father's death. He was elected to the Virginia House of Representatives and later on was appointed Minister to Spain where he served with distinction. Returning to the United States, he became professor of Languages at the University of Virginia. When the railway was being built from Norfolk to Bristol there was much contention as to where the station at Abingdon should be located. Thomas L. Preston settled the question by donating three acres of land to the railway for a depot.

original house was torn down thirty years ago to erect the present home of Mrs. J. W. Cummings, the front and back parlors were still papered with wall paper brought by Mr. Hopkins on his return from Portugal, and it was in perfect repair.

I spoke awhile ago of Judge Peter Johnson who came to Abingdon in 1810. His son, Joseph E. Johnston, was at that time four years old. He graduated at West Point in 1829, being a classmate of Robert E. Lee. He served in the U. S. Army in the Seminole and Mexican Wars. At the beginning to the War of the Rebellion, he resigned his commission of Brigadier General and entered the Confederate service. Lee, who had attained the rank of Lieut. Colonel in the U. S. Army, was given preference over Johnston by the Confederate authorities. Johnston resented this preference so effectually that the assignment of Lee to a command was delayed for more than a year, during which time Johnston with bitter animosity in his heart commanded the Army of Virginia. In 1862 he was severely wounded, and upon his recovery was assigned to the command of the Departments of Tennessee and Mississippi.

Let me mention Judge Robert W. Hughes who married Peter Johnston's granddaughter, and who lived at Hughes' Bridge, the Bradley Kreger Farm. He was reared by a daughter of General Francis Preston, Mrs. Carrington. He became a newspaper editor in Richmond; and during and after the Civil War when newspapers in Richmond one after another ceased publication on account of lack of patronage and money, Hughes edited successively three papers in Richmond, the Examiner, the Republic and the Journal. After the War, President Grant appointed him United States District Judge, which position he held until his resignation on account of old age. He was author of biographies of General Joseph E. Johnston and of General John B. Floyd; and, also, five volumes of Reports of U. S. Circuit and District Courts. He was one of the first advocates of Free Silver, publishing a volume in his advocacy entitled "The American Dollar." Gen. Harvey later used many of the arguments advanced by Hughes in didactic of William Jennings Bryan on a free silver platform.

I have very briefly outlined the careers of eleven or twelve men. Three of them were governors of Virginia; three of them were Cabinet officers under various presidents; three were generals in the Federal Army; two were Confederate generals; three represented this country in foreign service; and four of them were United States Senators. It is not well for us, facing the problems of today, to recall the ideals and achievements of our ancestors? "There were glads in those days!"

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# Rocky Mount museum director never stops learning about job



Times-News photo — Ken Murray

Angela Honeycutt greets guests and prepares to transport them back to the year 1791 at the Rocky Mount historic site and museum in Piney Flats.

By ROD FRANKLIN  
Johnson City Bureau

PINEY FLATS — Alvin Gerhardt's position as director of the Rocky Mount historic site and museum keeps him busy all year with research, teaching, travel and fund raising.

Rocky Mount's is the the only museum in Tennessee which employs a first-person "interpretive" technique to make visitors think they have stepped back to 1791 for a visit with the Cobb family and William Blount, who lived here as George Washington's appointed governor of what was then known as the Southwest Territories.

Following a short slide show or a viewing of the displays, visitors are treated to an authentic taste of early American life by volunteers who play out their roles in costumes and talk in period language.

On rare occasions — like when Ned Ray McWherter was in the area last year to announce his candidacy for governor — Gerhardt himself will participate.

"Of course, I talked 1791," the Virginia native joked. "He talked in 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989 and 1990."

The museum has been using the interpretive technique full time for about two years. Gerhardt, who has a degree in museum administration from a university in upstate New York, wants to ensure that the Rocky

Mount experience is as authentic as possible.

A good deal of the time that goal can be achieved only through meticulous research.

The year 1791 was selected for the interpretive function of Rocy Mount because there is more historic documentation for that year than for the other two years that Blount resided on the hilltop near Bluff City.

"(For) 1791 we had more facts than any other year," Gerhardt explained, "so we picked 1791. And now we continue to do all our research trying to find out in 1791 what happened."

"In other words, if you came through today, we would actually talk as in Jan. 14, 1791, so if the governor was here on Jan. 14 you would probably see him. If, according to the records, he's in North Carolina, Mrs. Cobb would probably refer to the fact."

Gerhardt has learned more than a few tricks through his years of historic research. For example:

"You can trace families. Not by names. But you can trace them by the types of foods they cooked, easier than you can by names sometimes. Because the daughter always cooks like her mama did."

Geneology and written references are used to trace the authenticity of artifacts. This must be done fairly often, because people and families are anxious to give the museum items which they swear were



Times-News photo — Ken Murray

Rocky Mount museum director Alvin Gerhardt logs in plenty of time during the year doing research, teaching, traveling and raising funds for the historic site.

used by people whose names history has preserved, Gerhardt says.

He tells of getting offers from a number of individuals who said their piano was the first to be hauled across these mountains in an ox cart.

"I've been offered that six times by six different people," he said. "Six different pianos."

There was another man who claimed to own a cannon used in the famous local Battle of King's Mountain. Gerhardt sent photos of it to a colleague, and then telephoned for the truth.

Close, but no soap.

Running a museum, Gerhardt said, "is a business, and this is where so many museums make a mistake. You cannot spend more than you take in."

Last year Gerhardt made 39 trips out of the area. Some were for speaking engagements. Some were to other museums for research purposes. Some of the travel involved fund-raising work. He estimates 50 percent of Rocky Mount's \$213,000 budget last year came through private donations.



**KINGSPORT  
TIMES-NEWS**

Sunday, July 1, 1979



Times-News Photo — Earl Carter

**Mrs. Virginia Caldwell, Deery Inn caretaker since 1940, hopes \$4,500 federal grant will be the first step toward restoring the historic Blountville structure.**

# KINGSPORT TIMES-NEWS

Sunday, July 1, 1979

## Old Deery Inn Is Opened For Tours

By MARGARET LONG  
Times-News Staff Writer

A \$4,500 federal grant has made possible the partial restoration of a piece of Blountville's history, and as a result, the Old Deery Inn is open for public tours for the first time.

To justify the grant, Mrs. Virginia Caldwell, whose home is the inn, has invited the public to tour the historical site this summer.

The old inn will have a new roof on one of its outbuildings because of the grant from the National Historic Preservation Fund, but to Mrs. Virginia Caldwell, caretaker of the inn and resident of the mansion since 1940, the money means much more.

"It's a first step," said the 78-year-old woman, who originally lived in the Inn with her husband, the late Judge Joseph Anderson Caldwell. "Hopefully there will be more money to follow after this."

Old Deery Inn, located immediately east of the Sullivan County Courthouse on the north side of Main Street, is individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

But Mrs. Caldwell is having some trouble keeping the place up.

According to her, the building was ignored for some time.

"But everybody's into restoring now," she quipped. "I did it back when I was the crazy old lady going around collecting things. Now I'm with the 'in' group."

The condition of one of the outbuildings, the iron works, is just one example of how badly the inn needs repairs.

The iron works building was originally owned by a Col. James King, the "father of the gentlemen of King College fame," said Mrs. Caldwell. "He heired it. Later, Gov. Blount joined him in the enterprise."

Today, the decaying roof is protected with a covering of rubberoid while it awaits repairs.

Up until Mrs. Caldwell recently received the \$4,500 grant, she had never received any monetary assistance from either the historical society, the state or the federal government.

In the terms of her grant, the state promised to match the money received from the government. But

in order to get the state money, Mrs. Caldwell must go ahead and make repairs, then seek reimbursement.

It would cost nearly \$35,000 to put matching roofs on all the buildings, estimates Mrs. Caldwell. "The state knows I don't have the money to do it," she said, "but they still want the building saved."

The inn, characteristic of the early Holston country, has 18 rooms, two attics, three cellars and 12 outbuildings.

The inn building itself consists of three sections — the two-story hewn log house (the home of the original settler, Walter James), the two-story brick frame store building (used for a time as a post office), and the three-story "stone house" built by William Deery, which is constructed of three stories of rock limestone.

"Walter James lived here and ran the store in front of the house," said Mrs. Caldwell, "from 1795-1802. I think Mr. (William) Deery (an Irish immigrant) must have built the stone house later because the Irish were big with rock."

Judge Caldwell and his wife purchased the house from a family by the name of Pearson, who owned and operated the restaurant and store.

"The judge was in town on business," said Mrs. Caldwell, "and he took too long. I spotted the house then, and I had to have it."

"I thought to myself... elegant... this has been a wonderful old house!"

"Mr. Pearson said if he could find somebody fool enough to buy it he'd unload it on someone. And I guess I convinced Joe we were fool enough."

They bought it just in time, according to Mrs. Caldwell. One more winter of snow and exposure and the building would have been gone. "This has been a complete restoration," she said proudly.

After reconstruction of the Inn, Mrs. Caldwell set about to bring outlying pieces of history from Sullivan and neighboring counties under her historical umbrella. She began buying up historic sites set for demolition, and erecting them on her acre of land surrounding the inn.

These 12 buildings have been complete preservations.

Fine craftsmanship is illustrated in all rooms of the inn and outbuildings, from the thick oak floors to the high, gilded mantels decorated with elaborate scrollwork inside the house, to the 30-inch wide logs constructing the Granny Cabin.

The outbuildings include the original hand-fired brick building used for slave quarters and carriage house.

There is also a springhouse, a 40 foot hewn log barn, the Granny Cabin, the hand-fired brick weaving house (formerly used as a kitchen), and the James King hewn-log house which was first used as the old Beaver Creek Iron works near Bristol, the target for immediate repairs.

Today, the site of the former iron works is filled with a huge collection of Indian artifacts, nearly all of which are from the Southwest Virginia and Upper East Tennessee area.

As for Mrs. Caldwell, she seems quite at home in her surroundings.

"I am an early American woman," she admitted, "and I would have made a grand pioneer."

The hard work of singlehandedly maintaining the inn and outbuildings has begun to take its toll on Mrs. Caldwell. "Year after year, I think I'm completely exhausted," she said, "but I wouldn't miss it for anything."

The family still smokes and cures their own meat in the smoke house (probably the former slave quarters) and makes apple butter.

At Christmas time, there is the burning of the greens and Mrs. Caldwell drags the sleigh into the front portion of the house.

Today, Mrs. Caldwell is struggling to keep the Inn open, admitting visitors. The Inn will be open 120 days through the end of the summer. She is not allowed to charge admission, but may accept contributions from visitors.

Reservations must be made with Mrs. Caldwell for tours.

It is a sure bet that whether or not the Inn gets all matching roofs, Mrs. Caldwell will continue to make the quaint surroundings her home.

The building is getting shabbier and shabbier, she admits. "But I'm getting older and older."