

WEAKLEY COUNTY SKETCHES PAST AND PRESENT

DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNTY

Weakley, a county in West Tennessee, was founded in 1823. It is bounded on the east by Henry, on the south by Gibson and Carroll, on the west by Obion, and on the north by Kentucky. It is 26 miles long from north to south, and 24 wide from east to west, containing an area of 625 square miles. The surface is level and the soil fertile. In 1829 it was estimated that at least 350,000 acres, more than half of the county, had been located. The county is drained by the Obion River and branches. The number of taxable free polls in 1828 was 471 whites and 274 slaves, and tax was received for 179,967 acres of land. Population in 1830, 4,796. Seat of Justice, Dresden, and the only village in the county. Cent. lat. 36° 15' N., Ion. 11° 45' W. The population of Weakley County at that time (broken down) was:

Year 1834	Free White Males	Free White Females	Free Negroes	Slaves	Total Weakley County
	2,048	1,895	5	848	4,796

RIVERS IN WEAKLEY COUNTY

"Obion River-An east branch of the Mississippi, in West Tennessee, watering the counties of Carroll, Weakley, Obion and Dyer. After the junction of the principal forks in the southeast corner of Obion, it flows a general southwest course, and falls into the Mississippi at the western bend, below the grand cut-off in Dyer County. It is navigable as high up as the mouth of Beaver Creek in Carroll County.

"North Fork-A large branch of the Obion River which rises in Henry County northwest of Paris, and flowing through Weakley joins the river in the southeast corner of Obion above Davidson's Bluff."

From Eastin and Morris Topographical Dictionary, 1834

STAGE COACH STOPS

In 1830, the stage coach stops in Weakley County numbered seven. They were as follows :

1. Bowers--Mail stop.
2. Cullen-Post town in Weakley, 108 miles from Nashville.
3. Dukedom-Northern post stop, established in 1833.
4. Dresden-The county seat, situated near the center. It contains 400 inhabitants (in 1830) one academy, three lawyers, two doctors, two blacksmiths, two bricklayers, four carpenters, one cabinet maker, one gunsmith, two hatters, two saddlers, two shoemakers, one silversmith, two tanners, one

tinner, one wagonmaker, one tavern, one school and one church.

5. Fleming-Post stop, established 1833.

6. Paschall-Post stop in Weakley County, established in 1833.

7. Willinghams--A post stop in Weakley County 152 miles north of west from Nashville.

EARLY HABITS AND MANNER OF LIVING

"The style of living of the early settlers was exceedingly plain and primitive. This was necessarily the case. Some families had hand mills to grind their corn while others grated it. This was before the grist mill of Course. The early supply of salt was brought from Mills Point (now Hickman, Kentucky) on horseback when there were only four men there~John Hanna, George Marr, Bush and Dobblesbres, two Dutchmen. The early pioneers lived in rude, round log cabins with dirt, or at best, puncheon floors. Their furniture was very cheap and scanty, often unskillfully constructed by them- selves with unsuitable tools, out of rough, green and unfit timber. Their beds were often straw mattresses, placed on boards on a forked deer bedstead. Their corn fields were patches of a few acres around the house, the better to prevent the ravages of wild animals. Corn was raised chiefly for bread; their stock subsisted on the range. They relied mostly on wild meat-bear, beef and venison. I t was almost impossible to keep or raise hogs or sheep on account of catamounts, wolves and bears. These flesh feeding animals were not destructive on cattle. The settlers usually had plenty of milk and butter.

As the wild animals were destroyed, or driven out, the stock of the county increased very rapidly. Stock raising soon became a leading and profitable business. Hogs, cattle, sheep and horses could live in the range all the year around. There was "mast" enough of some kind every year to fatten all the livestock

The early settlers were very friendly and unselfish. Their hospitality was openhanded, warm hearted and free. They would loan you a half of the only dollar and share with you their last loaf of bread. This they would do with an entire stranger, as well as with an old friend.

And yet, these free-hearted generous men would fight, and often did fight, for no other purpose than to test their relative strength, pluck and manhood. In this they were a trifling clannish. The champion of one creek was generally matched against the stoutest man of another creek. They always fought fair--the fisticuffs--pure and simple. The pistol, the bowie knife and the Arkansas tooth-pick were unknown in these days.

! There was also a great deal of vacant land in the "Western District" as it was then called, belonging to the Federal Government, made subject to "occupant" entry, by law of the State, on proof of actual settlement. Much of this land was very valuable. It was 20 to 25 years before they obtained their titles. Valuable occupant land of 200 acres was frequently sold for a rifle gun, a cow and a calf or a pony." (From An Address by Col. John A. Gardner Delivered At Dresden, Tennessee, July 4th, 1876.)

WEAKLEY COUNTY HISTORICAL DATA

"The County of Weakley was created by an act of the General Assembly passed October 21, 1823. The act also provided that the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions and Circuit Court of said County should be held at the house of John Terrell until otherwise provided by law. By subsequent acts of the General Assembly, James Fentress, Benjamin Reynolds, William Martin and Robert Jetton were appointed Commissioners to fix on a site for the permanent seat of justice in Weakley County, as near the center thereof as practicable, and to procure, by purchase or otherwise, at least 50 acres of land for such site. And the said seat of justice should be called Dresden.

The new County of Weakley was named after Robert Weakley (1764- 1845) , a distinguished citizen from Davidson County, who at the time was speaker of the State Senate.

The first settlers in Weakley County were Reuben Edmondston and his brother-in-law, John Bradshaw, and family. They located in the fall of 1819 on Mud Creek, about six miles west of Dresden, and built the first log cabin in the County. Mr. Bradshaw raised the first patch of corn.

Between the Middle and South Forks among the early settlers were Duke Cantrell, M. H. G. Williams, William Hillis, Alfred Bethell, F. A. Kemp and Calloway Hardin. A little higher up the river were Robert Moseley, E. D. Dickson, James Hornbeak, Geton Bradshaw and Richard Drewry.

In 1823 the famous Col. Crockett settled in the southwest corner of this County .Lewis Stunston who lived in the northwest corner of the County was the first white child born within its limits.

In 1824 John Terrell cleared the land including what is now the Public Square at Dresden, and raised a crop thereon. The first settlers of the County lived in their rude log cabins, and suffered and endured all the hardships incident to pioneer life. Their first milling was done at Lumbricks Mill about 13 miles from Dresden. The first grist mills in the County (water- power) were built in the year 1824. James Craig erected the first cotton gin in the County about eight miles west of Dresden.

During the early settlement of the County, wild animals such as elk, deer, bears, panthers, wolves, wildcats and other species were quite numerous. The pioneers supplied their families with bear meat and venison. Uncle Reuben Edmonston says that he and John Bradshaw killed 85 bears the first season after their settlement in the County, and that he killed one about 200 yards distance from the present courthouse. Col. Crockett, however, was the champion bear extinguisher. The Indians left the territory of the County about the time the first settlers entered it. For a year or two after leaving, they returned during the summer months to hunt game. In the summer of 1820 they returned and made several settlements throughout the County. They all left that fall and never returned. They were peaceable and did not molest the early settlers.

The first courthouse was a brick structure, forty feet square, and was erected in 1827. After being declared unsafe, as well as too small, another was built in 1854.

The first County Court was composed of the following- J. R. Shultz, Stephen Smart, Joseph Wilson, John Webb, William Webster, John Moore, Daniel Campbell, Perry Vincent, John Terrell, Mears Warner, E. D. Dickson, Miles and J. M. Gilbert. This Court held its sessions at the house of John Terrell and Benjamin Bondurant at Dresden until the courthouse was completed.

The first term of Circuit Court was held at Dresden in November, 1827, with Honorable John C. Hamilton, judge presiding.

The Chancery Court at Paris, Henry County, had jurisdiction of the Chancery business in Weakley County until 1838. In February of that year, the first term of the Chancery Court in Weakley County was held in the courthouse in Dresden with Honorable Milton Brown, chancellor presiding.

The first members of the Weakley County Bar were Samuel A. Warner, Henry A. Sample and A. G. Bondurant. They were soon followed by William Fitzgerald, Henry Grundy and Col. John A. Gardner. Among the early Constables were J. W. Byrd, Alfred Gardner, Warren W. Walker, Peleg Terrill and Ben Farmer. The first Sheriff was Col. John D. Calvert, followed by Robert Powell, most of whose descendants now live in or around Hickman and Fulton, Kentucky. Alfred Gardner was elected Sheriff in 1829, and held the office three terms up to 1835.

The first Representative in the lower branch of the General Assembly, after the County was organized, was Col. Julian Frazier, father of Dr. T. J. Frazier, of Ralston Station. At that time Col. John D. Love was State Senator.

The first Congressman was Adam R. Alexander, elected in August, 1825. The whole of West Tennessee then composed but one Congressional District. The celebrated David Crockett was the competitor of Col. Alexander, and although this was Crockett's first race for Congress, Col. Alexander only beat him by two votes.

Among the early school teachers of the County was Fielden Ezelle, who taught the first school in the Bradshaw settlement about the year 1828. This was probably the first school taught in the County. He was followed by William Ross, who taught in the same place. Most of the early schools were taught in primitive log cabin schoolhouses, by men who would now be considered too illiterate to transact the most ordinary business. The children of many of the early settlers had no other opportunity for acquiring an education. Later, academies were established at different points in the County, and more competent teachers employed. The first school teacher of which any tradition can be obtained was Jesse Leigh, editor of the Tennessee Patriot, who was the principal of

the Dresden Male Academy in 1838 and 1839. He is said to have been a highly educated gentleman. According to the files of his paper, he proposed to teach Latin, Greek, French and Spanish. Other prominent teachers of that period and later were Hayden E. Wells, Mr. Wyman Morrell and David Cochrane, all of whom taught in Dresden at different times. The latter is said to have been the most noted teacher in West Tennessee at this time. A fact worthy of note is stated by those who were his pupils, "he opened his school at 4 o'clock A.M. and closed it at the same hour P.M. all the year round." Part of the time during the 1840's Thomas Pierce and his wife taught the female school in Dresden. Henry Masson taught the same school later .

High schools had been well sustained both before and since the Civil War at Dresden, Gleason, Palmersville, and a point near Sharon. Professor E. H. Hatcher was the first teacher in the high school building erected in 1871. About 1885 the County was divided into 83 school districts. The following statistics were taken from the school superintendent's report in June, 1885:

Scholastic population white 8,288, colored 1 ,307; teachers employed 75 white, 30 colored. Average number of days taught during the year was 74. Average compensation of teachers per month \$35.00."

From Goodspeed History of Tennessee 1887

The pioneer preachers of Weakley County were Thomas Ross and William Hays of the Primitive Baptist Church; Gilliland Holland, Benjamin Peoples, William Conn, William Mullins and Lorenzo D. Overall of the Methodist Episcopal Church; James Ray, Richard Beard and Robert Baker of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Uncle Reuben Edmonston, one of the first pioneers, thinks that the first organized church society in the County was that of the Methodist Episcopal Church at his father's house on the North Fork of the Obion in 1823. The first Cumberland Presbyterian Church was organized in 1828, at the house of Mears Warner in Dresden, by Reverend Richard Beard who preached from the text, " As Moses lifted up." The first members of this Church were Mears Warner and wife, Levi Calvert and wife, James Fair and wife, Squire McNeely and sister, Mullins and wife, and several members of the Julin family. The first Cumberland Presbyterian Church edifice in Dresden was erected co-jointly with the Masonic Fraternity in 1842; however, this church had no organization until Reverend H. G. Dickey was its pastor in 1885. The history of the First Methodist Episcopal Church began shortly before 1830. Its first church was a log building dedicated in 1875 by Reverend Dr. Young. A prominent member among its early pastors was Reverend Robert Glenn. Reverend Joshua Butcher was the first presiding elder of the Methodist Episcopal Church when the circuit embraced all the territory in Tennessee lying between the Mississippi and Tennessee Rivers and north of an east and west line passing through Jackson. He was followed by Reverend Robert Payne. Reverend Thomas Joyner, Bryant Medlin and Finley Bynum were among the early circuit riders in this district.

CENSUS IN WEAKLEY COUNTY 1830-1960

Year Weakley County	Population
1830	4,797
1840.....	9,870
1850.....	14,608
1860	18,216
1890.....	28,955
1900.....	32,546
1910.....	31,929
1920.....	31,053
1930.....	29,262
1940.....	29,498
1950.....	27,962
1960.....	24,227

Population 1964	1964 School Children	
Dresden	1,675	840
Gleason.....	996	555
Greenfield.....	2,082	788
Martin.....	5,812	1,475
Sharon.....	1,109	472
Palmersville.....	200	284
Training School		430

OTHER TOWNS OF WEAKLEY COUNTY

MARTIN

The town of Martin was established in 1873, on lands belonging to the heirs of William Martin. The first dwelling house was erected by Mrs. Draughn, and used by her as a boarding house. During the same year several business houses came into being--dry goods: L. A. Blake, A. M. Clemons and M. P. Martin; groceries: Smith & Brooks and Dr. T. H. Bailey. Later, Dr. W. G. Trent opened the first drugstore. A. M. Clemons was the first postmaster, and held the office twelve years, being succeeded by G. C. Thomas.

In 1873 each railroad company built a depot. In 1884 they jointly built the passenger depot and telegraph office. The Martin Seminary building was erected in 1884. Professor G. A. Hays and O. V. Hays, brothers, were the first teachers. In 1874 the Methodist Episcopal Church South was

organized, and held meetings in the Seminary. The Baptist Church edifice was built in 1882. The Christian Church was organized in 1882.

The first physicians were G. W. Dibrell and C. M. Sebastian. The flouring and saw-mills of Martin Brothers were erected in 1873.

The Bank of Martin, George Martin, president, and T. H. Farmer, cashier, was opened in June 1886.

Martin was incorporated in 1874, and John L. Smith was the first Mayor. In 1878 the town was attacked by yellow fever and out of 400 cases, 52 died.

The first paper published at Martin was the Martin Exchange by H. M. Sanders, commencing in 1879 and closing in 1881. Next came the Baptist Gleaner, commencing in 1881 and closing the following year. The Martin Star was published by Ray and Kling through the campaign of 1884. The Martin Mail was established December 11, 1885 by J. B. Gilbert. Martin had a population of 1,200 in 1873.

DRESDEN

The first set of merchants in Dresden were Hays and Lampton, Kincheloe, Levi Calvert, Henry Sample and D. W. Davis. Later came James H. Moran, E. J. White, Gardner and Hughes, John McClelland, Samuel Irvine and R. C. Williams. These were followed by Malone and Ethridge, W. C. and R. F. Scott, William Landrum, Isaac Winston, G. R. Brasfield, eutlemosier, Belknap and Aydelott and J. W. Hays. The latter continued in business until 1862.

The early hotels in Dresden were the Scott Hotel and the Hampton House. During the fifties (1850) the Bank of America did business in Dresden about three years.

The early lodges were organized about 1876. Some of the early ones were, Odd Fellows Lodge, Masonic Lodge and a Lodge of the K. of H.

The first newspaper to be published in Weakley County was The Tennessee Patriot, published at Dresden by Jesse Leigh, who issued its first number December 21, 1838. This number contained the message of President Van Buren dated December 5, 1838. The third number January 4, 1839 contained the prices of that date at Mills Point as follows: tobacco 3 to 6 cents, cotton 8 to 9 cents, corn in sacks 45 to 50 cents, beans \$1.00, com meal 50 cents, flour \$3.00 to \$3.50, salt in barrels 75 cents, brown sugar 12 cents, loaf sugar 20 cents, Havana coffee 18 to 20 cents, molasses 50 cents, pork \$5.00. In the newspaper business Mr. Leigh was succeeded by Carlton & Whittlesey, and they by Wash Talbert, and he by A. W. King, who published a paper about the year 1849.

Somers and Guinn published *The Dresden Spy* a short time in the fifties. Henry Massey published a paper preceding the Civil War. *The Gossiper* was published for six months in 1867 by W. F. Hampton. T. H. Baker began the publication of the *Dresden Democrat* in 1876 and closed November 1882. R. Lewis, editor of *The Enterprise*, commenced publishing his paper January 19, 1883. The press of the County has been generally Democratic.

Dresden's first physicians were Jubilee Rogers, P. B. Bell, Joseph Irby and Thomas Edwards.

The business of Dresden started to decline around 1880. Before the railroads were completed through the County, it controlled the trade of a large territory, a great portion of which was drawn away by the railroad towns.

DUKEDOM

Dukedom, a post hamlet in the northern part of the County, was established about 1830 and named by Duke A. Beadles, its first merchant and postmaster. At this time, it contained three stores, one Methodist Church and some mechanics shops. Considerable tobacco was bought here with Dr. W. T. Lovelace being the principal purchaser. The population of Dukedom today is approximately 350.

PALMERSVILLE

Palmersville, a post village 12 miles northeast of Dresden, was established about the year 1842 on the lands of Smith Palmer, after whom it was named. John Palmer was the first merchant and Robert Hays the first postmaster. It contained, at this time, a grist, a saw mill, two general stores, one Methodist Church and two societies--Odd Fellows and Masons.

BOYDSVILLE, on the State line near the northeast corner of the County, was established in 1832 on the lands of Abner Boyd, after whom it was named and who was its first postmaster. He and Benjamin Blythe were the first merchants. Robert Watson was the first blacksmith. Peter Boyd, a slave of Abner Boyd, was a wheelwright who made spinning wheels. It also contained the dry goods store of W. B. Cook and grocery of E. R. Cook and James Hole, and the tobacco house of John D. Brown. The only thing that remains of Boydsville today is a grocery store.

ELM TREE was a post hamlet in the northeast part of the County, and contained a grist, saw mill and a general store. Nothing remains today.

LATHAM was a post village in the northern part of the County, and was established in the year 1834. It contained only the post office, grist, saw mill and planing mill combined. Latham has a population today of approximately 175.

Middlebury, changed in 1916 to MT. PELIA, was a post hamlet near the west line of the County. It contained two general stores and a Methodist Church. The name of the post office was Montpelier. Until 1918 Mt. Pelia had a bank and several business places.

SHARON

Sharon, a town located on the Illinois Central Railroad eight miles south of Martin, was also established in 1873, the same year as Greenfield. It contained then one hotel, the Shannon House, two steam cotton gins, two general stores, one dry goods store, one drugstore, three groceries, mechanics shop, one grist and saw mill and two churches (Methodist and Cumberland Presbyterian).

RALSTON

Ralston, on the Chattanooga and St. Louis Railroad three miles east of Martin, was established in 1860 on the lands of Alexander Ralston, after whom it was named and who was its first postmaster. A. R. House was the first merchant and first railway agent. This village contained at this time the general store of A. E. Scott Company, one cotton gin, three tobacco houses, and two churches, one owned by the Methodists and the other by the Primitive and Missionary Baptist. The only thing that remains of Ralston today is a grocery store, and the population is approximately 25 people.

GLEASON

Gleason, on the Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis Railroad east of Dresden, was established in 1850. Joseph Hamilton and Ephraim Mobley were its first merchants. They were followed by Hamilton and Moore and others. The post office was established in 1851 with Josh Hamilton postmaster. The Masonic Institute was established in 1866. The buildings were large and commodious, and could accommodate 300 pupils. The school was well sustained. The village at that time contained five stores, three churches (Methodist, Baptist and Cumberland Presbyterian), two tobacco houses, mechanics shops, Oakwood Lodge #330, F. & A. M.

DAVID CROCKETT

LIFE OF DAVID CROCKETT written by himself settled near the junction of South and Rutherford forks of Obion in Weakley County and was elected to the Legislature the same year on a majority of 247 votes.

A few years following David Crockett wrote a book and we have been fortunate enough to locate one and have copied some interesting bits of it-it makes interesting reading. The book-rare indeed-is owned by Jim Corbitt in Martin, Tennessee.

Crockett lived in Weakley County several years before settling in Gibson County.

" After returning from the Legislature, I determined to make another move and so I took my eldest son with me, and a young man by the name of Abram Henry and cut out for the Obion. I selected a spot when I got there, where I determined to settle; and the nearest house to it was 7 miles, the next nearest was 15, and so on to 20. It was a complete wilderness, and full of Indians who were hunting. Game was plenty of almost every kind, which suited me exactly, as I was always fond of hunting. The nearest house to me (7 miles) was on a different side of the Obion river, belonged to a man named Owens; and I started to there. I had taken one horse along, to pack our provisions, and when I got to the water, I hobbled him out to the graze, until I got back; as there was no boat to cross the river in, and it was so high that it had overflowed all the bottoms and low country near it.

We now took water like so many beavers, notwithstanding it was mighty cold, and waded on. The water would sometimes be up to our necks, and at others not so deep; but I went, of course, before and carried a pole, with which I would feel along before me, to see how deep it was, and to guard against falling into a slough, as there was many in our way. When I would come to one, I would take out my tomahawk and cut a small tree across it, and then go ahead again. Frequently my little son would have to swim, even where I could wade, but we worked on till we got at last to the channel of the river, which made it about 1/2 mile we had waded from where we took water. At last we came in sight of the house, which was more pleasing than ever; for we were wet all over and mighty cold. I felt mighty sorry for my little boy to see him shaking like he had the worst sort of an ague, for there was no time for fever then. As we got near the house, we saw Mr. Owens and several men that were with him, just starting away. They saw us and stop'd but looked much astonished until we got up to them, and I made myself known. The men who were with him were the owners of a boat which was the first that ever went up the Obion river; and some hands he had hired to carry it about a hundred miles still further up, by water, tho it was only about 30 by land, as the river is very crooked.

We turned back to the house, where I found Mrs. Owens a fine, friendly old woman; and her kindness to my little boy did me a lot of good. The old gentleman set out his bottle to us, and I concluded that if a horn wasn't good then, there was no use for its invention. So I swig'd off about 1/2 pint, and the young man by no means bashful in such a case; he took a strong pull at it too. I then gave my boy some, and in a little time felt pretty well. I left my son with the old lady, and myself and my young man went aboard the boat with Mr. Owens and the others. The boat was loaded with whiskey, flour, sugar, coffee, salt, castings, and other articles suitable for the country; and they were to receive \$500. to land the load at McLemore's Bluff, beside the profit they could make on their load. We staid all night with them and had a high night of it. In the morning we went on with the boat to where a great harricane had crossed the river, and blowed all the timber down into it. We found the river was falling fast and we couldn't get through the timber without more rise; so we drop'd down opposite Mr. Owens again, and waited for more water.

The next day it rained rip-roriously, and the river rose pretty considerable, but not enough yet. So I got the bootsman all to go out with me to where I was gonna settle and we slap'd up a cabin in little

or no time. I got from the boat four barrels of meal, and one of salt, and about 10 gallons of whiskey. To pay for these I agreed to go with the boat up the river to their landing place. I got also a large middling of bacon, and killed me a fine deer, and left them for my young man and my little boy, who were to stay at my cabin till I got back; which I expected to be about 6 or 7 days. In the morning I started about daylight, intending to kill a deer, as I had no thought they would get the boat through the timber that day. I had gone but a little way before I killed a fine buck, and started to go back to the boat; but on the way I came on the tracks of a large gang of elks, and so I took off after them. I had followed them only a little distance when I saw them, and directly after I saw two large bucks. I shot one down and the other wouldn't leave him; so I loaded my gun and shot him too. I hung them up and went again after my elks. I pursued on till I found I was about 4 miles from where I had left the boat, and I was as hungry as a wolf for I hadn't eaten all day. On my pursuit of the elks I found two more large bucks. I took a blizzard at one of them and up he tumbled. The other ran off a few jumps and stop'd; stood there, I loaded again and fired at him. I knocked his trotters from under him and then I hung them both up. I pushed on again; and about sunset I saw 3 other bucks. I down'd with one of them, the others ran off. I hung this one up, having killed six that day. I pushed on till I got to the harricane about where I expected the boat to be. Here I hollered as hard as I could roar, but could get no answer. I fired off my gun and the men on the boat fired too; but quite contrary to my expectation, they had got through the timber, and were about 2 miles above me. It was now dark, and I had to crawl thru the fallen timber the best way I could; and if the reader don't know its bad enough I am sure I do, For the vines and briers had grown all through it, and so thick, that a good fat coon couldn't much more than get along. I got through at last and once more fired off my gun, which was again answered from the boat, which was still a little above me. I moved on as fast as I could, but soon came to water. I halted and hollered till they came to me with a skiff. I got to the boat without further difficulty but the briers had worked on me at such a rate, I felt like I wanted sewing up all over. I took a pretty stiff horn, which soon made me feel much better. I was so tired I could hardly work my jaws to eat.

In the morning, myself and a young man went to get the bucks I had killed-We only returned with three as we had all we wanted; We left the others hanging in the woods.

We got up the river quite well, but very slowly; and we landed on the eleventh day, at the place the load was to be delivered at. They here gave me their skiff and myself and a young man named Flanius Harris, who had determined to go and live with me, cut out down the river for my cabin, which we reached safely enough.

We turned in and cleared a field and planted our corn; but it was so late in the spring, we had no time to make rails, and therefore we put no fence around our field. There was no stock, however, nor any thing else to disturb our corn, except the wild varmints, and the old serpent himself, with a fence to help him, couldn't keep them out. I made enough corn to do me, and during the spring I killed 10 bears, and a great abundance of deer. But in all this time, we saw the face of no white person in that country, except Mr. Owen's family, and a very few passengers who went out there, looking at the

country. Indians tho, were still plenty enough. Having laid by my crop, I went home, which was a distance of 150 miles. When I got there I was met by an order to attend a call-session of our Legislature. I attended it, served out my time, returned and took my family and what little plunder I had, and moved to where I had built my cabin.

I gathered my corn and set out for my Falls hunt. This was in the last of October, 1822. I found bear very plenty, and all sorts of game and wild varmints, except buffalo, there were none of them. I hunted till Xmas, having plenty of meat for my family. I ran out of powder, I had none either to fire Christmas guns, which is very common in that country. I had a brother-in-law who had now moved out and settled about 6 miles west of me on the opposite side of Rutherford's fork of the Obion river, and he had bought me a keg of powder, but I had never gotten it home. There had just been another of Noah's freshes and the low grounds were flooded with water. I knew the stream would be wide, yet I was determined to get my powder. I told this to my wife and she opposed it with all her might. I insisted, because we had no powder and were out of meat. She said I would freeze to death or get drowned, but I didn't believe this so I took my woolen wrappers and a pair of moccasins put them on tied up some dry clothes and started. But I didn't know how much a body could suffer and not die. This is some of my experience in water and I relate to you.

The snow was about 4 inches deep when I started, the water was about quarter of a mile off and it looked like a ocean. I put in and waded till I come to the channel where I crossed on a high log. I took the water again and waded till I got to a deep slough, that was real wide, I had crossed it on a log but now there was no log to be seen. I knowed that the water was about 8 or 10 feet under that old log and about 3 feet over it, after thinking a little, I cut a sapling to lodge against the one that stood on the island, then cut me a pole crawled along my sapling till I got to the one it was lodged against. I then felt about with my pole till I found the log underneath, then I crawled back and got my gun and again made my way to the place of lodgement, climbed down the other sapling so as to get on the log. I then felt my way along with my feet in the water, about waist deep, but it was mighty ticklish business. I did get over but by this time there was little feeling left in my feet and legs, being in the cold water so long. I went but a short distance before I came to another slough, over which there was a log but it was floating on the water. I thought I could walk it but when I got to the middle, it turned over and I went in up to my head. I waded out to dry land and put on my dry clothes but still I had no feeling, I was so cold. After a while I got to my brother-in-law's house not having smelt fire from the time I left home. I stayed all night and hoped to go home next morning but was too cold. I staid all night again and in the morning they insisted I still couldn't get home. The river was frozen but not enough to bear me. I went hunting and killed 2 bear and pursued a he-bear all day but didn't kill him. The next morning was bitter cold but I knowed my family was without meat so I had to leave or die trying. I took my tools and powder' and cut out. The water was a sheet of ice, I got put and it broke with me 80, I took my tomahawk and broke my way along for a considerable distance. When I got to where the ice would bear me, I mounted and went ahead, but soon it broke again and I waded on till I came to my floating log. I found it tight this time and I

knew it wouldn't fall. I crossed over this without difficulty and then I got to my sapling and log under water. The current was not frozen here so I had to wade just as I did before. By this time I nearly frozen. I followed a trail that I learned had been made by my young man, who had been sent by my distressed wife to find out about me. Th believed me dead. When I reached home I was mighty nigh it but I had my gun powder and meat and thats what I went for ."

GEORGE KNOX LETTER

A letter written by George S. Knox to Dr. P. B. Stubblefield of No C'arolina in 1856 makes good reading. This letter was made known b W. W. Knox, his son, and was found in the files of the State Archives ., Nashville. The letter is as follows.

"No one in this generation can imagine the hardships and privations our forefathers had to encounter in this wilderness as it was 120 years ago making it the finest country in the United States. They could not have built their homes, stables and barns and hundreds of other things one could not do by himself had it not been for the great spirit of cooperation and the Golden Rule.

"Thousands upon thousands of feet of as fine timber-yellow poplar, oak, ash and gum as ever grew in Weakley County was cut down, sawed up and rolled into great heaps and burned. No market for it in this country then, after the land was cleared it was another big job to break it, get the rOots out and in shape to raise a crop. After it is ready for planting check it off drop corn by hand and cover with a hoe. After a few years when some of the stumps disappear, they would sow some grass to be cut by hand; some wheat sown and cut with a cradle, few years later when more stumps dis- appear a mowing machine could be used and a reaper. That would cut the wheat and the men tied it into bundles, later, as conditions permitted, more wheat, more oats and more livestock was raised and made easier living.

"I can remember in the days when my black mammy would cook great big fat biscuits in an oven in the old stick and dirt chimney as is cooked in other ways today. I remember when the first cook stove, sewing machine, coal oil lamps, grease lamps, and candles were used in pioneer days. Then and during and several years after the Civil War , the spinning wheel, the reel and loam were in action. But few wore store bought clothes in those days. The farmers had beef clubs. They saved the tallow for candles, the hides they would tan and make their shoes. Mr. Blakemore ran a tan yard at Dresden, so those who couldn't tan their hides carried them to the tan- yard. After five years of hardships in the war returning home on crutches and empty sleeved, poor health and discouraged. Mostly broken down war horses the soldiers left and took the best on the farm; very little feed for stock, and little food for the family. No clothes, only what the womenfolks spun, wove and made. I can assure you they were very pretty.

"The descendents of the pioneers were honorable men who make their word their bond; were good sons, good husbands, good fathers, good neighbors. The women were modest and virtuous; made

good daughters, good wives, good mothers. I don't think I ever knew of a divorce suit in my earlier days.

"I hope you good people will be charitable in your opinions of my writing-it is tabulated from memory for nearly 80 years itinerary."