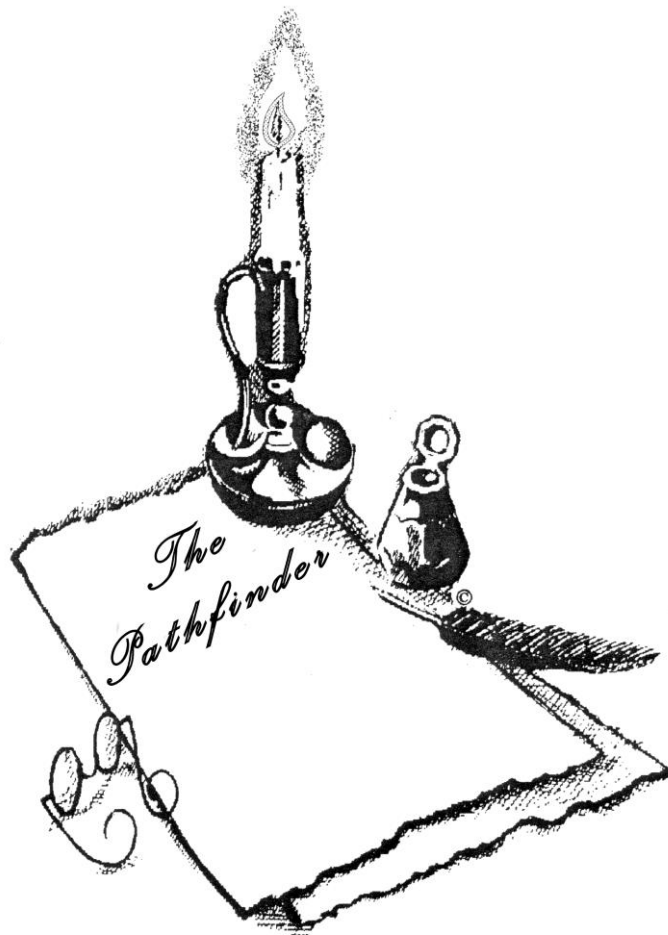


# *The Pathfinder*

A Quarterly Publication of the Grundy County Historical Society

Grundy County, Tennessee



Vol. 25 Number 4 - December 2020

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Oliver W. Jervis

The Heritage Center is expanding its facilities to accommodate additional programs as well as improved library and research center services, administration efficiencies and display expansion. On November 13, 2020, we closed on the purchase of Nelson Layne Law Offices which adjoin the Heritage Center on the north Depot Street side. The purchase includes a vacant parcel of land at the southwest corner of Laurel and Depot Streets. The vacant parcel will be used to expand our outdoor exhibit area.

The purchase adds 2,000 square feet to the existing 5,700 square feet of the existing facility. About 40% of the added space will be used to increase the size of our library and research center area. The remainder will accommodate administrative offices for our floor manager and membership operations and a teaching facility. The teaching facility will involve new and expanded program opportunity for the Heritage Center. We hope to develop the teaching facility with assistance from and collaboration with The University of the South.

The University of the South has assisted the project with donations from its renovation of Carnegie Hall on the Sewanee campus. The donations include two large wall mounted motorized projector screens, two sets of overhead track lighting fixtures, ten recessed ceiling lightening fixtures, three sections of burlap wall bulletin boards, six ceiling fans and other sundry items.

The new acquisition will involve additional operation expense for insurance, power (heat, air conditioning and lights), water and sewer, maintenance, security and other similar expenses. We budget these expenses through a building operations budget that is funded in part with contributions to an annual fund.

In a few days each member will receive an application for membership renewal for 2021. The application renewal form will include a section for contribution to the annual fund. I ask that each member consider contribution to this fund to help with our increasing building operation expenses.

We are approaching Christmas and the new year. We at the Heritage Center wish all of you a very happy and joyous holiday season.

Oliver

## Grundy County

by William Ray Turner

from <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/grundy-county/>

The Tennessee General Assembly established Grundy County in 1844 from parts of Warren, Coffee, and later, Marion Counties. It was named in honor of Felix Grundy, a Virginian who migrated to Tennessee by way of Kentucky. Grundy served in both the U.S. House and U.S. Senate and was attorney general under President Martin Van Buren.

The first County Court was held at Beersheba Springs and then at several individual homes near the present site of Altamont, which was established as the permanent county seat in 1848. The founding of Beersheba Springs and Pelham predated the formation of Grundy County.

Long associated with the economic history of the county, coal was discovered in the area of present-day Tracy City in the 1840s while Ben Wooten's sons were digging out a groundhog from beneath a stump. In 1848 a young Irishman, Leslie Kennedy, followed the construction of the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad in search of moneymaking opportunities. While hiking through the Cumberland Plateau he became interested in coal outcroppings and returned to Nashville to seek financial backing for a coal mining venture. Nashville attorney William N. Bilbo listened to his scheme and bought the Wooten land and vast tracts belonging to the Samuel Barrell heirs, before heading to New York to find developers for the coal lands. Samuel Franklin Tracy and a group of financiers traveled to Tennessee and purchased Bilbo's holdings, which they used to form the Sewanee Mining Company with Tracy as president. When the Sewanee site proved less productive than expected, the mining company extended their tracks ten miles farther to the Wooten site, which became the town of Tracy City. The first coal was shipped from the site on November 8, 1858.

After the Civil War, creditors in New York and Tennessee won judgments against the company and bought the property. Arthur St. Clair Colyar, a Tennessee attorney, became the president of the new company, which became the Tennessee Coal, Iron, and Railroad Company in 1882. Colyar recognized the need for coke in the iron smelting industry and experimented with its production. In 1873 the company erected the famous Fiery Gizzard Coke Iron Furnace at Tracy City and produced fifteen tons of iron before it collapsed. That original furnace demonstrated the efficacy of Tracy City coal and determined the economic future of the city.

In 1869 developers Eugen H. Plumacher, John Hitz, and Peter Staub established a Swiss settlement, Gruetli. Among the Swiss immigrants to the settlement were the Angst, Amacher, Bonholzer, Schild, Flury, and Scholer families.

Monteagle, first called Moffat Station, was founded by John Moffat, an organizer in the temperance movement. In 1870 Moffat purchased the 1,146 acres of forest land on the Cumberland Plateau that became Monteagle. In 1882 the Monteagle Sunday School Assembly

incorporated to promote the “advancement of science, literary attainment, Sunday school interest and promotion of the broadest popular culture in the interest of Christianity without regard to sect or denomination.” Andrew Nelson Lytle, the Vanderbilt Agrarian, did much of his writing at Monteagle, including his biography of Nathan Bedford Forrest.

The Summerfield community lies between Tracy City and Monteagle. There May Justice wrote more than sixty children's books. The community was also the site of the controversial Highlander Folk School from 1932 until 1962. This school, headed by Myles Horton, began as a training facility for labor organizers. In the 1950s, it became famous for its promotion of civil rights and the training of civil rights leaders.

In 1903 the Sewanee Coal, Coke and Land Company began mining coal in Coalmont, first called Coaldale. In 1908 the Sewanee Fuel and Iron Company bought the holdings and built coke ovens on the site. Coalmont is now the location of the new Grundy County High School and a privately operated state prison.

In 1918 the railroad was extended to Palmer, where the Tennessee Consolidated Coal Company opened up new coalmines. Pelham, located in the valley part of Grundy County, is a farming town and contains several small manufacturing businesses. In addition to these small industrial plants, Grundy County's economy includes a growing nursery industry and several hundred chicken broiler houses.

In 1972 the long efforts of Herman Baggenstoss of Tracy City led to the creation of the South Cumberland Recreation Area. It includes the Stone Door, Savage Gulf, Grundy Lakes, and Fiery Gizzard parks, which receive thousands of visitors each year.

Like so many Appalachian areas, Grundy County citizens have suffered through trying times, but continue to prosper. According to the 2000 census, 14,332 people lived in Grundy County.

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## SECESSION REPUDIATED IN TENNESSEE

### Loyal Tennesseans Asking to Return to the Union

(Transcribed from the *Memphis Bulletin*, 21 Aug. 1863 and *The Nashville Daily Union* – 16 Aug. 1863 by Jackie Partin)

Pelham, Grundy Co., Tenn, **August 6, 1863** – At a meeting of the citizens of Pelham and vicinity, A. S. Goodman was called to the chair, and W. T. Blair appointed Secretary; and, on motion, the following persons were appointed a committee to draft resolutions, expressive of their sentiments in relation to our condition as a people. Committee: E. J. Hall, John Meeks, J. W. Hale, J. C. Walker, T. T. Levan, L. D. Tucker, Samuel Lowe, J. J. Bell, J. H. Bell, S. P. Goodman, Philip H. Roberts, J. S. Lowe, Thomas Warren.

*Resolved:* That, as by an act of the General Assembly of the State of Tennessee, in the year one thousand eight hundred and sixty-one, an ordinance of secession was passed, and on the 8<sup>th</sup> of June thereafter, was said to have been ratified by the people of the State, there by uniting ourselves with the people of the so-called Confederates States, in rebellion against the Federal Government, and by said act we did forfeit our citizenship, and hence our claims to protection from said Government,

*Resolved:* That we wish to return again to allegiance to the Federal Government, and become loyal citizens of the same, that law and order may be restored before we can ask for or expect protection to persons or property.

*Resolved:* That at as early a period as is practicable, we would ask that the State be reorganized, and be allowed to vote for loyal men for Governor, members of Congress, and the General Assembly of the State.

And thereupon the citizens proceeded to a formal election, conducted after the usual manner of holding elections, and when the vote was polled, there were 117 for the Union, and none against the Union. We here give the following gentlemen's names who voted viz: Thos. Blair, James Dickerson, Nathan Cox, George Goodman, David Cox, Albert Christian, Thos. Cox, Isaac Rust, James Winton, Jr., J. M. Nunly, David Nunly, Albert Redwied, Thomas Warren, Enoch Campbell, Jacob Sanders, William Goens, Britten Meeks, William Jacobs, Rollin Davis, C. C. Nunly, Jordan Sanders, William Myers, O. C. Tallent, Isaac Sweeton, Jerry Nunly, Willis Warren, W. H. Bloid, A. J. Sanders, E. F. Hainly, James Campbell, E. J. Hall, John Warren, F. Hall, A. J. Northcutt, John Sweeton, William Brown, David Cleveland, Wm. H. Dickerson, M. A. Mullins, Samuel Parks, Anthony Burrows, John Anglive, James Thomas, William Dyer, T. B. Sweeton, James Meeks, William J. Warren, Jacob Sanders, Jr., Vincon Gibles, Patrick Troy, William Campbell, Christian Smith, Campbell Henly, Silas Sanders, L. D. Tucker, Thomas

Sanders, Stephen Kilgore, William Kilgore, James Lockhart, Jr., Isaac Meeks, Sr., James Sanders, John W. Lockhart, E. W. Hainly, William Sanders, George Roberts, Benjamin Meeks, T. T. Levan, John Burnet, William Levan, Matthew Sanders, James Gibbs, George C. Sanders, J. C. Walker, Benj Fippes, Archibald Nunly, W. Brown, Richard Pearson, James Tale, Joseph Bradshaw, Frank Cox, Charles Green, John Adams, John Thomas, Samuel Lowe, Hugh Lowe, Joseph Sweeton, William Griswold, Phelix Meeks, William Lusk, James Lusk, G. W. Bond, John Grantham, John W. Smith, Richard Baley, James Sartin, William B. Jacobs, Anderson Winston, Jno. S. Lowe, Phillip Roberts, Sen., J. R. Scott, Ily Crabtree, L. D. Sartin, John Winton, Samuel Tucker, Archibald Tucker, Jno. L Barber, Thos. Meeks, S. P. Goodman, S. P. Tipton, Poindexter Paine, Alex. Floid, James Meeks, Sen., G. W. Pain, Moses Fipps, C. H. Pearson and Robert Adams.

Upon motion of the Chairman, S. P. Goodman, S. P. Tipton and Samuel Lowe, were appointed a committee to confer with Governor Johnson in regard to the above resolutions, and these resolutions ordered to be published in the Nashville Union and the Memphis Bulletin.

The meeting then adjourned *sine die*. A. S. Goodman, Chairman—Thos. Blair, Secretary.

**Note: Some names have been misspelled in the articles, but researchers will readily know what the correct spellings are. (Jackie Partin)**

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### Naming Patterns

Up until the American Revolution and sometimes until the 1850s, most families of English descent (and the Scots who settled in North and South Carolina) followed the following naming pattern.

First son: Father's father

First daughter: Mother's mother

Second son: Mother's father

Second daughter: Father's mother

Third son: Father

Third daughter: Mother

Fourth son: Father's eldest brother

Fourth daughter: Mother's eldest sister

First daughter of second wife was named after the first wife. (COPIED)

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## Culpepper & Hutcheson Rolling Store

by Charlotte Hutcheson Creighton



The Culpepper and Hutcheson Rolling Store was an asset to the citizens of Grundy County for several decades. It supplied Grundy County with merchandise from the Culpepper & Hutcheson General Store located in the Plainview Community of Tracy City.

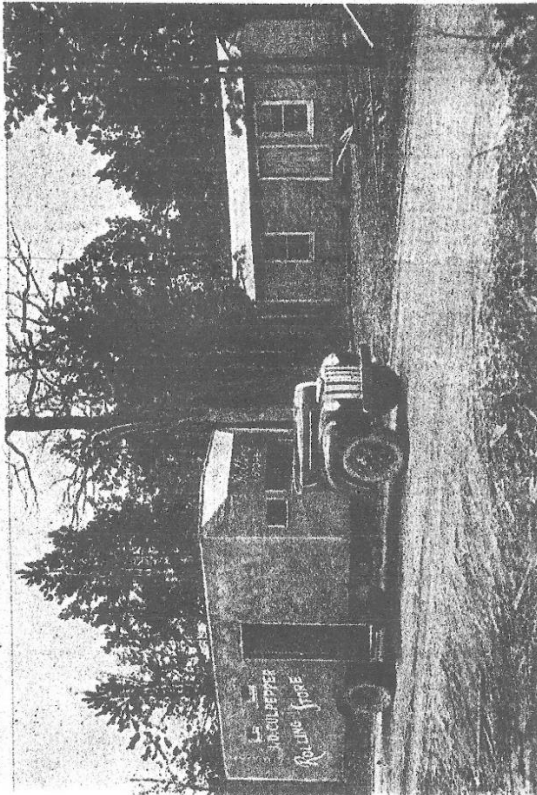
J.D. Culpepper had several rolling stores in Alabama, but he fell in love with Grundy County and brought the rolling stores to this area in 1947. Melvin & Ila Jo C. Hutcheson were proprietors of the General Store and Rolling Store that supplied merchandise during a time when there were no large chain stores, nor did a lot of people have cars or trucks to drive to stores to purchase supplies.

Customers would wait on the roadside to purchase bread, milk, candy, flour, meats and other necessities. If the customer had a special request for shoes, fabric, thread or clothing, the Rolling Store would deliver their request on the next trip.

Throughout the years there were several Rolling Store drivers and several Rolling Stores, but the larger chain stores became popular and vehicles were more plentiful, so the services of the Rolling Store were no longer in demand.

We were blessed with loyal customers who were very thankful for the service of the Rolling Store, and to this day, there are Grundy County citizens who still remember the services that were provided.





Chassis is that of a new eight-cylinder truck and the body is tin-covered

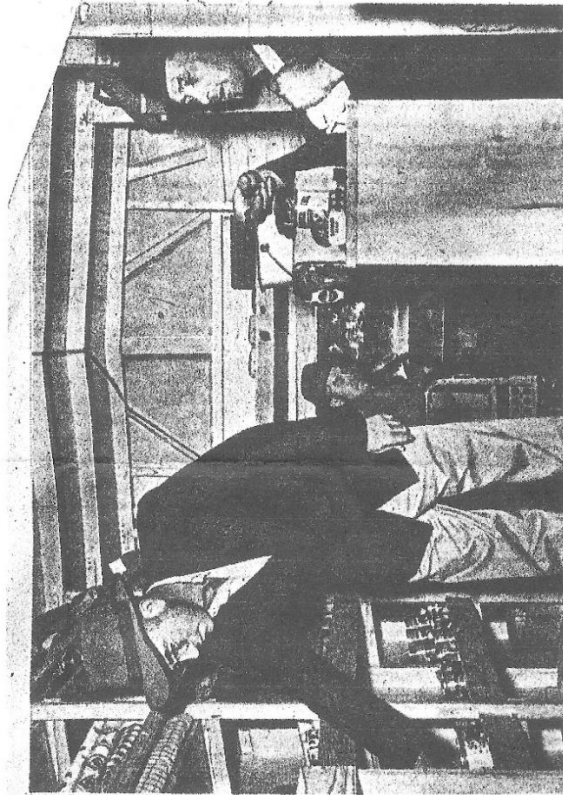
# MAHOMET GOES TO THE MOUNTAIN

An eye to utility, not aerodynamics or beauty, distinguishes a traveling store which carries wares of the world over the Cumberland Plateau

**M**OUNTAIN folk are frequently unable to go to the store, so the trick is to bring the store to the mountain folk. It was on a recent excursion to the remote stretches of Grundy County that we found ourselves being down on Culpepper's Rolling Store, laden with staples and merchandise for the mountain family, halted to one side of the road. The two-man crew of this establishment was in process of consummat-

ing a sale, and we elected to stop and see what we could see.

Culpepper's Rolling Store (J. D. Culpepper, prop.; K. F. Culpepper, driver) was mounted on the chassis of a new eight-cylinder truck. The store proper was of frame construction covered with tin, and built with more of an eye to utility than beauty or aerodynamics. It was also brand new: the yellow lettering shone brightly on the new paint, and the



Driver K. F. Culpepper is a veteran peddler, Chalmers Willborn his helper

chicken coops aft had that un-lived-in look about them.

Just inside the door there was a narrow counter, hinged to the floor at one end so that it could be raised, like a drawbridge, to permit ingress and egress. Along the sides were rows of shelves, slanting toward the walls and railed to prevent the merchandise from spilling to the floor in rough going.

And the store had the goods. There were bananas, apples, oranges, and cakes. Print cloth, brown domestic, canned lard, flour, coffee, soap, and hair tonic. There was tobacco and matches, beans and salad dressing, peanut butter, butter and cheese. Canned milk, brooms, and blue jeans. Insect powder, milk of magnesia, pans, pots, Epsom salts. There was scap treatment and borax, thread and kerosene, cow prescription and Undies for Active Girls. There was just about everything a mountain family would need.

The day (a Thursday) we browsed around in the rolling store it had been in operation only two days and the shakedown cruise had just begun. The crew was by no means unfamiliar with the parts—Driver K. F. Culpepper is a veteran of four years of peddling on Cumberland Mountain—but daily routes had not yet been established. The mountain families had had neither time nor opportunity to learn that the store would roll up to their house or such-and-such a day. Culpepper and his helper, Chalmers Willborn, were feeling their way.

Culpepper is no novice at mobile merchandising. He had peddled peaches in the summertime and candy and sorghum in the Coalmont-Tracy City-Altamont section for four or five years out of Sand Mountain, Ala. The rolling store is based at J. D. Culpepper's stationary establishment between Tracy City and Coalmont. It is one of two such vehicles, the other being in operation on Sand Mountain. \*\*\*

## Dr. John "Johnny" Kennerly Farris, Jr.

### The Grandfather I Never Knew and

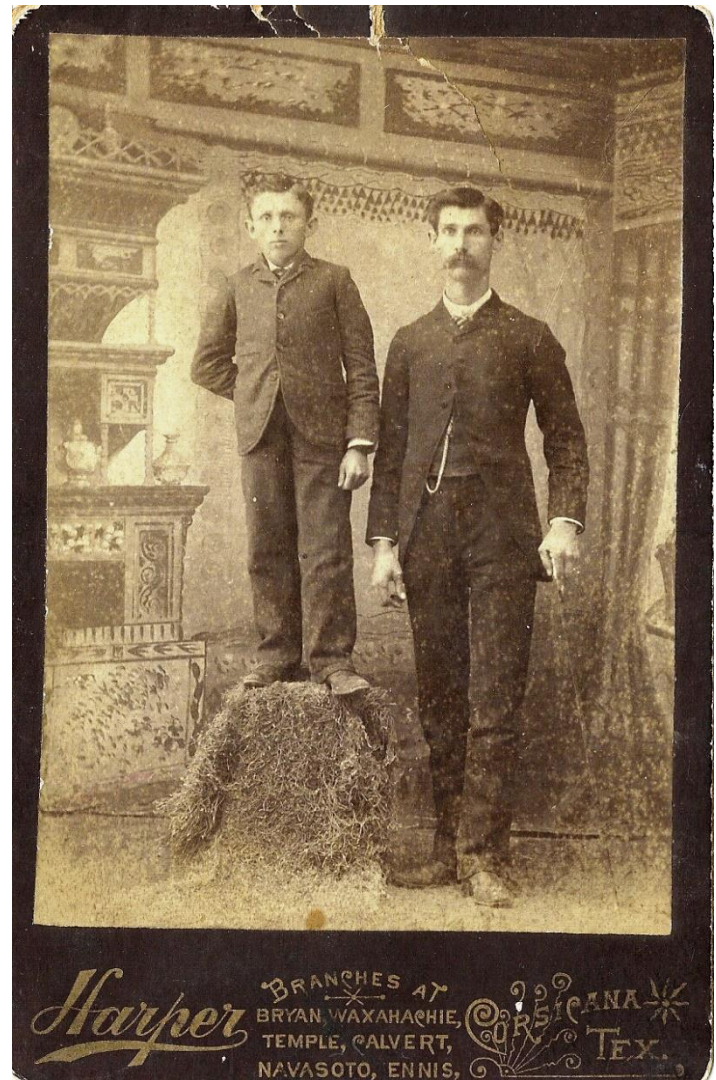
### Not So Sure I Would Have Liked

by Shirley Farris Jones

As we seek to discover ourselves and those who have gone before us, it is an uncertain journey as to just who and what we will find, which may help us to better understand not only our ancestors but our own selves as well. I never knew my grandfather, and my opinions of him were formed from those who did, some favorable, and others not so much.

I figured out very quickly that he was a rather complex man, loving, kind and generous, while, at the same time, petty, self-absorbed, and just plain mean. But he loved his family and was quite devoted to his siblings. Although well educated, and certainly brought up in a family where good manners dictated protocol, he none-the-less could be extremely rude, unpleasant, and cantankerous. Possibly, because of his size, he liked power over other people.

Johnny was known to be both short in stature and short in temper. Unknown to him or to the family until the 1990s, it is believed he inherited a rare genetic disorder, X-linked spondyloepiphyseal dysplasia tarda, resulting from intermarriage within families centuries before, with the possibility of being passed down from mother to son every third generation. Unlike dwarfism, the signs and symptoms are not present at birth, but usually appear when the male child reaches puberty and the bones of the spine simply stop growing. The height is usually between 4'10" and 5'6" with a barrel chest, a short trunk and neck, making the arms



*Johnny Farris while teaching in Ennix, Texas,  
with his friend, Mr. McGill*

appear disproportionately long. None of Johnny's brothers were likewise afflicted and were considered handsome men.

John K. Farris, Jr., "Johnny", was the third child, and second son, born to Dr. John Kennerly Farris, Sr., and his wife, Mary Elizabeth Austell, on December 10, 1865 at the Austell farm in Prairie Plains. Five more children would follow, two boys, and three girls. Of these eight children, the oldest son would live to see 49, and the others, except for one, would die of tuberculosis before age 25, which also claimed their mother. Only Johnny would live to the ripe old age of 72.

As a boy, Johnny attended the local academies in the Hillsboro area and, after graduating college in Bowling Green, KY, began his teaching career in Texas. But this was not his first choice, as his love of medicine and desire to follow in his father's footsteps was apparent, yet he received no encouragement to do so, and his younger brother Rice was the first one in the family to receive a medical degree. Unfortunately, while in medical school Rice contracted tuberculosis and passed away in 1895, shortly after his graduation in 1894.



*Johnny Farris's graduation from medical school*

While in Texas Johnny became very serious about a young lady named Rutha, and when this romance ended abruptly in 1892, he came home to Tennessee. He continued to teach school, but also studied medicine and assisted his father, whenever possible. He was finally able to follow his dream, entering medical school in 1896, where he was given the nickname of "Fetus" by his peers. Although he worked hard and was an excellent student, he was kind of a social misfit and a loner. And, he was known for his ill temper and bad moods. Johnny earned his medical diploma from the University of Nashville Medical Department in 1899, receiving the same gold watch that had been given to Rice, five years before. That same year, on October 5, 1899, he married a lovely 21 year old neighbor girl, 13 years his junior, Mary Emma Neese, whose fiancée had mysteriously disappeared several months prior. It is the opinion of the writer that both fathers strongly encouraged

this union, and they may have been happier about the marriage than either the bride or the groom. Four children would be born to Johnny and Mary over the coming years: Rice, Ruth, Sue Mary, and Malcolm. Johnny favored two of the four, Ruth, and Malcolm, my father, and they adored him. When the Spanish flu pandemic hit the country in 1918, Daddy, the youngest, was a very sick little four year old boy, and three other doctors had given up on his chances of survival after double pneumonia set in. My grandfather refused to give up, and my father slowly recovered against all odds. Both my Dad and my Aunt Ruth saw Johnny as a loving and protective father, a viewpoint not particularly shared by their siblings. He continued the practice of medicine until suffering a stroke in 1929, which left him both paralyzed and blind. The depression years were on the horizon, and times were especially hard in Coffee and Grundy counties. There was very little money. And, all of the accounts receivable on his books amounted to nothing. Daddy was a teenager and my Aunt Ruth Farris began her almost forty year teaching career, becoming the sole provider of the family. Johnny died on April 1, 1937.

Although I never knew my grandfather, over the years as I have presented programs, been at book signings, and attended various activities in the Coffee County area, I have had the pleasure to meet people who did know him. And some who had heard of him through their own family experiences. One told me how Dr. Johnny had to climb up on the bed to treat their grandmother. At that time I had no idea why he was so short. I had heard he "had a fever which stunted his growth." And then I began to hear of some other folks in the area, either directly or indirectly connected to the same Austell line, that had the same "fever." So, when I was asked to contribute DNA in the 1990's regarding a possible genetic deficiency in this family line, I was happy to do so. I was also happy that my son is 6'3"!!

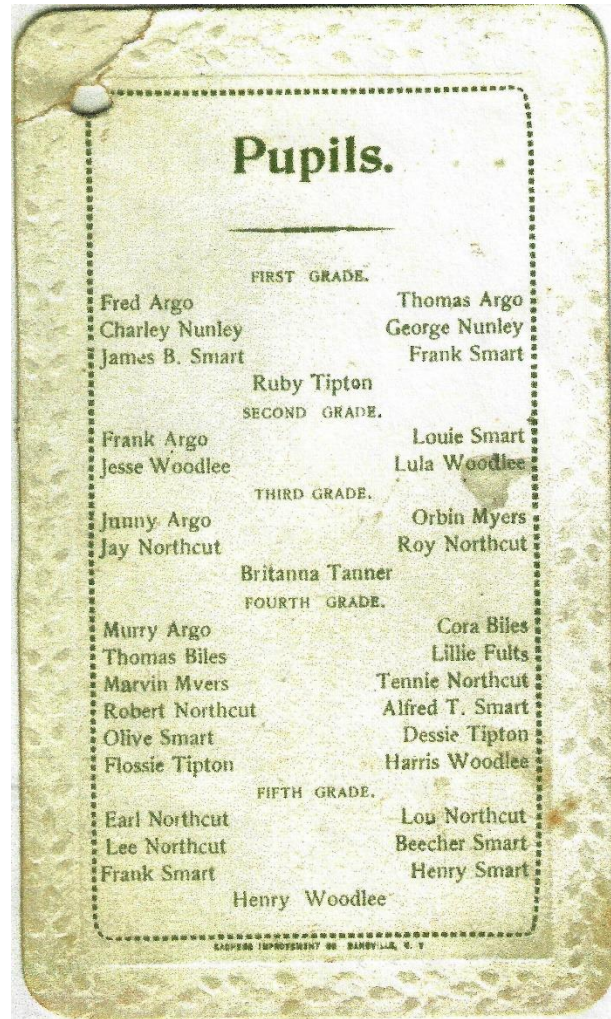
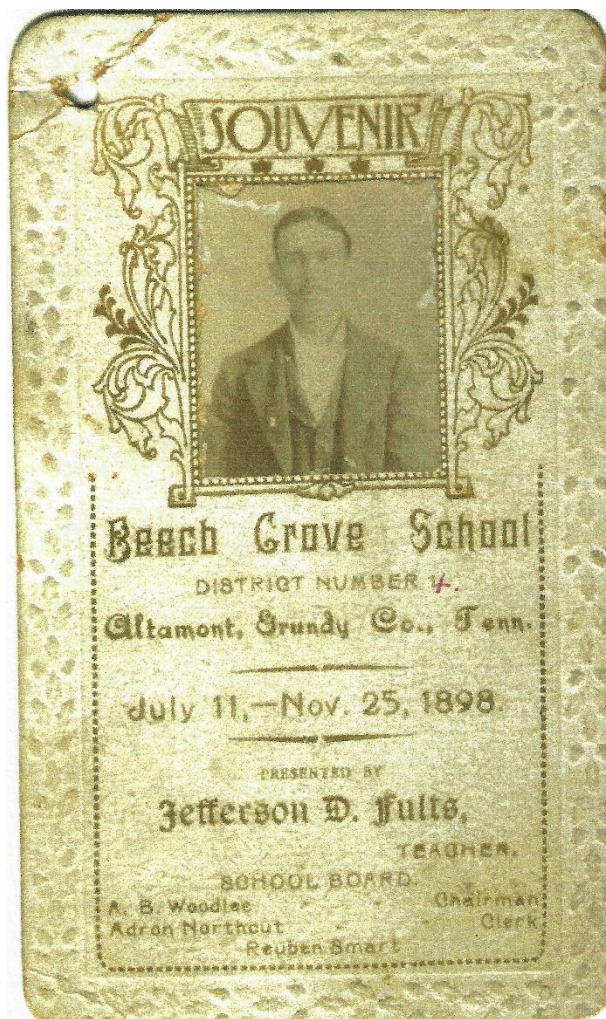
I recall "Cousin" Earl Elliott telling me about chopping wood and chopping his toe along with it. "Uncle Johnny" sewed the toe back on and it served him well for the next 95 years, he said.

And "Cousin" Stanley Neese told me about his favorite coon dog that "got split wide open but Johnny put the insides back together and sewed him all up and he lived to be an old dog, despite being kinda stiff." And, someone else had a mule that got all tangled up in barbed wire, but Johnny worked with that mule all day long until he got him out, and then stitched up what needed to be done.

Despite the use of automobiles in the early 1920's, some of the back country roads in the area were so bad that only a horse and buggy would get you there, so while some of the other doctors would not come to their patients in need of medical care, that didn't stop Johnny. You could always count on him to take care of you. And not everyone would pay. Someone told me a story about one of their relatives who had a baby every year, and being "poor as church mice" didn't make a difference. By the time number 19 had arrived, the family was running out of names. Although practically illiterate, they wanted a good name for this new child. My grandfather said

something to them about having so many children with no food to eat, and no shoes on their feet, which made the proud father a little angry. So, as he was giving Johnny 3 apples and 3 sweet potatoes for delivering this child, he took back one of the sweet potatoes! Johnny was filling out the paper work for the birth certificate and decided they could name him "Amos". That name was already in use, so Johnny just changed a couple of letters and named him "Anus". The father thought that was a nice, different, name and gave him back the sweet potato. I shall end this story on that note!

As I came to know a little more about my grandfather, I also developed an empathy and better understanding for him. There was a lot of sadness and unpleasantness in his life. Fate dealt him a cruel hand. But, despite all, he gave back to his community, and I came to appreciate and respect his dedication to the medical profession, and to all of those he served, with or without pay, or even a sweet potato!



## All Things Monteagle - Part 7

Jackie Layne Partin

### Let's Eat

Automobiles and Greyhound buses had finally found John Moffat's little town. The Dixie Highway/Hwy 41 crowded the town with traffic. Eateries and magnificent hotel accommodations made the cars and trucks slow down. Often the travelers chose to stay and sit a spell. Monteagle had become a wonderful little town that took care of all the needs of weary travelers. Back in **1906** one could visit Charles Buford Payne's "ice cream parlor;" in **1948** Petersen's Ice Cream Parlor opened serving their special frosted malts, but the youth of Monteagle only enjoyed stopping in for that delightful treat for about a year when in **1949** the newly remodeled house burned. During my childhood Lacys' Drugstore with Soda Fountain served items to cool down those who suffered the long, slow climb up Hwy. 41 behind a large, slow, transfer truck long before most vehicles had air conditioning. Oh, my goodness, food! Choices, choices, choices! All the meals were old style, real food with no additives, cooked with a touch of Granny's love— wrung the chickens' necks, scalded and plucked their feathers, that kind of loving touch, though not to the chickens. One could eat at the original Diner, Harvey's Cafe, Clara's Restaurant, Lassater's Café that even had an outdoor restroom facility, Tubby's BBQ, City Café, Monteagle Hotel Dining Room, and on, and on, and on, I could go. And if that didn't work out, if one could find my mother, Clara Layne, and tell her that you were hungry, she would give you a homemade yeast roll, maybe two or three with real cow's butter, churned by me or my siblings. By the way, when Mama died, her rolls were never to be tasted by another person; Mama made them without a recipe, and her three daughters never got the hang of that wonderful secret style of making yeast rolls. I did not know that life was good in the **1940s** and **1950s**; I know it now.

Speaking of eating in the old school lunchroom brought to mind Miss Veda Mae Condra who talked with me at length in **2009**. From the WWII era until she became unable to do waitressing, she was on the job greeting those travelers coming through Monteagle. Her first waitressing job was on the MSSA where she greeted patrons with a smile and my uncle, Bonnie Rowen Layne, greeted her with a frown, for he was the dishwasher. Then she went to



*Miss Veda Mae Condra at her home in Monteagle (1925-2012)*

Clara's (Shoemate) Restaurant on the side of the mountain on Highway 41; there she worked with my mother, Clara (Meeks) Layne, and two of my father's sisters, Wilhelmenia (Layne) Mullins and Artie Mae (Layne) Lappin. Veda Mae followed Clara Shoemate to the Diner but stayed put when Clara moved to the Mabee rock house, originally called "Rymabee," now High Point Fine Dining. She worked for Harvey Thomas at the original Diner. Later she moved to the Holiday Inn where she worked seventeen years. Pop's Happyland and Lockhart's restaurants were her last work places. Some readers may be too young to remember Miss Condra, but mention her to someone older and see if he or she can recall that soft-spoken, wonderfully hard-working waitress pouring the first cup of coffee in the mornings.

**[NOTE:** For the researchers of the Mabee house, it might be interesting to know that when the original Mabees came to Monteagle, their first home was built on the same spot where High Point stands today. In **December 1931**, Ms. Irene (Mabee) Gipson prepared a dinner party for several guest "*...the occasion being a farewell to the old Mabee home, which is to be torn down and replaced with a new one made of mountain stone.*"

I wouldn't trade the wonderful couple of hours spent with Miss Condra on that day for anything. She was the daughter of Edward Lafayette "Fate" and Rhoda Lee (O'Dear) Condra. She never married and might well be the first person who did not seem to be annoyed by my constant interruptions. She allowed me to do most of the talking, and she did it with a smile. How kind of her!!

### **Early Roads and Trails to Moffat, Tennessee**

At this part in our story, let's name some old roads or well-traveled paths up from Pelham Valley to Moffat/Monteagle before the town's beginning and afterwards:

(1) **Nick-A- Jack Trail**—My Layne family's homestead cornered in the Trail on the first bench under Forrest point. It was up this trail that the Union soldiers, Major Gen. William S. Rosecrans' Army, marched being forced by Forrest's batteries stationed on the point named for him to turn left into Hollingsworth Cove: "*...following the Nickajack Trail across the Cumberland Mountain.*" And "*The road that Rosecrans took is out this direction...There is a man coming up the road now, we will ask him about the pass...this here's the old Nickajack Trail...an I thought the Yankees wouldn't never git through comin' long up the pass. Ther' was many a one, I kin tell you.*" And, "*...the Yankees took the route over the other side of the grounds, up the Nickajack trail.*" Hollingsworth Cove is now known as Layne's Cove.

Dear reader, wipe away all the images you may have in your mind of a "road or trail," coming up the mountain from Pelham, wandering through Bostick/Thompson acreage, and going off south to Battle Creek. I am going to say it in plain, mountain language, there ain't no such

images in our heads that can even relate to the roads and trails of the Civil War years in our area. Trails and roads were formed by back breaking work done by men and women throwing stones to the side of an area that was easiest to traverse. Our plateau was a menace to any traveler, especially if one was traveling on foot. And forget any roads going off the south side of Moffat/Monteagle until the Dixie Hwy. was built.

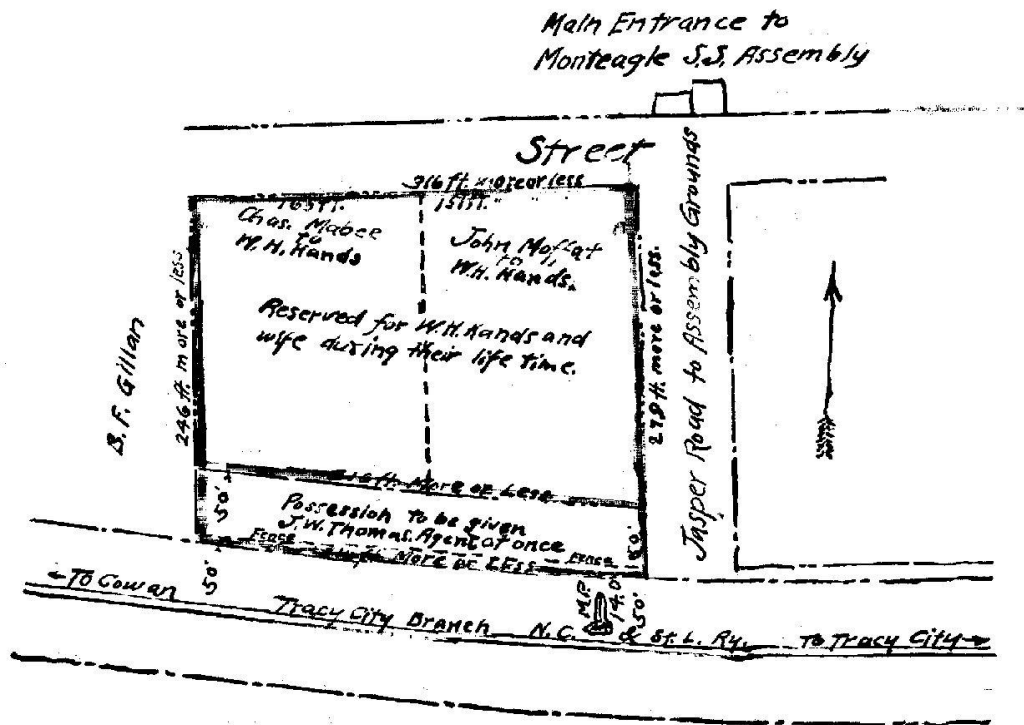
**(2) Stage Road**—I crossed it on foot while walking R. M. Payne’s Toll Road. It was also known as the Braggs Defeat Road. “...*the ragged, foot-sore, weary Confederates winding their way round the base of the mountain up the **old stage route** between Nashville and Chattanooga, just west of the Assembly ground, and the army of Rosecrans pressing them closely in the rear.*” And “*Forrest placed his batteries here...commanding the valley and protecting the rear of Bragg’s army as it filed up the **old stage route** on the other side of the grounds...*” Gen. Braxton Bragg’s Army left memorials on our exterior, i.e., Bragg’s Point and Bragg’s Defeat Road.

**(3) Braggs Defeat Road**—Originally this road was called the old Nashville and Chattanooga Road. It was just another name for the Stage Road that came up under Sunset Rock near the Wakeland/Kraft home; it was also known as the County Road: *The Nashville American, Mar. 20, 1908, pg. 3, “...The evening was one to be remembered for the first large company ever entertained on that beautiful highway, **the county road (the one Gen. Bragg traversed so many years ago, and known in antebellum days as the old stage road from Nashville to Chattanooga)** ...”* Folks, if you are reading this, then you are reading history probably unknown to you. Keep your eyes open and your brain functioning.” Bragg’s Point is also known as Sunset Rock. If you are older, as I am, then as a child you probably sat on Sunset Rock and stood on Forrest Point without ever knowing the history behind either.

**(4) Moffat Mountain Road**—This name is found in old deeds and was probably a name given by John Moffat to the old Stage Road/Braggs Defeat Road. Mr. Moffat could still have been in Canada during our Civil War. He may not have known anything about Bragg and Rosecrans armies crossing his future town’s acreage.

**(5) Jasper Road**—This road is found in several old deeds and on maps and appears to come out of the future entrance to the MSSA. It pre-dated the names Monteagle Avenue and Assembly Avenue; in actuality, this road was present before there was a Moffat/Monteagle. The Stage Road had to continue on from Trussell Cove, cross the plateau and go off into Battle Creek, and this may well have been its route. (**Note:** I believe that the Jasper Rd. of olden days came up from Pelham, across land **now** owned by the MSSA, continued South in the direction of what is now known as Laurel Lake Rd. It went on until it left the mountain in the area of Dripping Springs and headed toward Battle Creek. Many have searched and wondered how Civil War soldiers got across our plateau and down the south side of the mountain. The Jasper Rd. spoken of in these old deeds may have been the way and may simply be the old Stage Road. The road where I grew up, King St. was also called the County Road. (—Jackie Partin)





(6) **Hardbarger Road**—It came up from Hollingsworth/Laynes Cove to the back of the Assembly and continued on to Summerfield. It was probably named after Samuel Hardbarger. See:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59c69c542278e73c826f3226/t/5a060079e4966b917733c765/1510342779773/Hardbarger+Road.pdf>

(7) **Payne's Toll Road**—This road was built by Robert Marion Payne and was stacked out of the mountain side from Big Spring/Wonder Cave to near the MSSA in Monteagle occasionally utilizing sections of the old Stage Road. Author Claudia Lewis wrote in her book, *Children of the Cumberland*, "Yet here, in this clearing on the mountain top, is still to be found a generous excerpt from old times, alive and real. Until 1924 there was only a one-way horse-and-buggy dirt road up the mountain—and it was a toll road." My husband Grady Ward Partin, our son Stan, friend David "Rocky" Layne and I walked Payne's Toll Road several years back. A Robert M. Payne, R. M. Payne, Toll Road token was found during our little adventure. See page 40:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59c69c542278e73c826f3226/t/59c74f2b2994ca741bddbc96/1506234175245/Monteagle+Compendium+Vol+3.pdf>



**Payne's Toll House Cornerstone**



**Stacked Out of the Mountain Side**

(8) **Dixie Highway**—This was the first real effort of a highway up and down Monteagle mountain in the **1920s**. This road was in the planning stages in **1915** and extended from Chicago to Miami. Monteagle Mountain was the last section to be completed on that Highway, and we folks born and reared in Monteagle know why.

(9) Later roads: **State Highway 41**, (often constructed on the Dixie Highway) which just a few years after its construction was taken over by the State Highway system, and lastly:

(10) **I-24**—Interstate 24 was constructed between **1962—1968**. Portions of Monteagle were taken and the topography of Monteagle was changed causing confusion for families currently searching for the old folks' homes places.

This was the beginning of the transition of our quaint little village-type town to a fast pace, fast eats, fast vehicle fill ups and repairs, and the opening of the doors of our plateau to the Continental U. S. A., and the World beyond.

To be continued.

Did you know that River Edge Road in Pelham was once called the Old Baptist Road?

Did you know that Coalmont was originally named Coal Dale?

Did you know that Grundy County was formed January 29, 1844, out of Coffee and Warren Counties?

## ***It's a Matter of Pride***

*by Jackie Layne Partin*

Before December 14, 1927, when Sally (Layne) Brown passed from this earth to her body's final resting place, she had no doubt where she would be laid to rest. Her beloved husband, Thomas, had preceded her in death by twenty-seven years and was buried at the Burkett's Chapel Cemetery in Marion County. One might say her funeral procession would have had less than two miles to travel—as the crow flies. Thomas and other long lost relatives and friends were awaiting her arrival on that cold day in December.

Sally Layne, the daughter of Abraham and Rebecca (Kilgore) Layne, was born around 1832 in Marion County. Yes, she was a distant cousin to me and probably to 100% of every other Layne in Grundy, Marion and maybe even Sequatchie Counties. As she grew older, she stayed near one or more of her sons, finally ending up living in Grundy County near the edge of Bryant's Cove with her son, Isaac Brown.



Thomas Brown, husband of Sally (Layne) Brown

Isaac Brown and his family had a beautiful log house and well-kept gardens near what we know today as the end of Poplar/Popular Springs Road near Tracy City. The family's playground was the huge cove named after the Bryant families who lived in it. The old wagon road passed alongside the Brown homestead tippy-toeing down the steepness of that side of the cove into the huge gulf. It then waded across the swift running, cold headwaters of the Little Sequatchie River, and finally, but carefully, chose its meanderings toward the top of the other side of the Cove. It eventually came out in the Burkett's Chapel area. Maybe it was just a little further than the two miles—as the crow flies.

The Cove was a flurry of activity. Spotted all around were one-room sawmill shacks brimming over with individual families. The father of each worked as a logger. Coal miners who lived in Tracy City got to Palmer much faster and cheaper when traveling by foot on the old road through Bryant's Cove. One would never be lonely on that beaten path. Families didn't starve down in that cove; they had a mind of common sense. Working like little ants, growing food in the spring, summer and fall and storing firewood from all the logging debris allowed the little settlements to survive the cold winters. The children attended the Dripping Spring School and life was completed with spiritual uplifting from whoever was on the trail and stopped by with his Bible.

Fast forward to the year 2013 where we invade a discussion between a husband and wife about where they want their lifeless bodies to be placed for rest. Being passed their seventieth birthdays, it seemed to them a very good time to make decisions about death and dying that might just be so unpleasant for the children and/or grandchildren left behind to do. Remembering that young people do not think in terms of death, the couple decided to go all the way, ie. buy two lots, choose a double headstone, and let the undertaker know exactly what the desires for preparations and burials would entail.

Sally Brown had known for twenty-seven years where her corpse would be placed. She knew the old road would be ready for her journey down into the cove and many friends along the way would see her safely to the other side. But the present day couple wasn't just quite sure what to do. The man's parents left two vacant lots right next to them and his baby brother for his use. That certainly would help on the money issue. But he just did not like that cemetery—as though he would know a thing about his burial anyway. So the wife suggests that her parents also left several burial lots in their plot, and it was perfectly okay with her remaining siblings for them to use two free lots there. The husband withdrew into some sort of thoughtful mode as if he needed to think really, really long and hard before announcing his thoughts on that offer.

Unbeknownst to Sally Brown, the water in the Little Sequatchie River was so high at her death and time of necessary burial that it was impossible to get her body across to Burkett's Chapel Cemetery. Her death certificate declares that she was buried at the family cemetery which lay between the Isaac Brown house and the edge of the gulf. I do not know who is buried there, but a well-placed fieldstone indicates at least one other family member was interred there, and some believe there are more interments without markers. Sally (Layne) Brown's little ninety-five-year-old tabernacle for her soul joined those relatives that December day, and God bless her, she put up no fuss about the decision.

Finally, the male figure in our present day couple, being certain there was a good amount of space between him and his wife and speaking softly said, "I don't think I want to be buried with your family."

"Why?" asked the wife. "Well, *it's a matter of pride!*" he said. "What?" asked the wife. "Well, I just don't want people to think that my wife made this decision for me. I just don't want to be buried with your family."

In 1927, a necessary compromise was made by Sally Brown's family. Even to this day, some say that a genuine all-out-effort was not made to get her body to the side of her husband. However, I like to think of Sally as being the "tie that binds" one side of Bryant's Cove to the other. *Compromise* and *binding ties* would be good ideas for our present day couple to consider.

Several weeks later, the current couple again entered into the discussion of their burials. The husband asked his wife what she thought about being buried at a certain cemetery on the

other end of the county away from both of their families. She was quite agreeable because at this point in all the discussions that they had had, she really didn't care where she was buried even if it meant that she would have the dirt placed over her head in one cemetery, and her husband had the same done in another cemetery. They would still love each other, but just agree that disagreement on final resting places was just not that important.

The lots were bought, the double stone was ordered, and the non-funerals were paid for. As the elderly couple drove away from the old cemetery, the wife quietly looked back reading the names on the stones. It was then that she realized the memorial stones for her husband's grandparents, great-grandparents, aunts and uncles, first cousins, and on and on were staring her in the face. What a compromise!

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## Beersheba Springs

Herschel Gower

Beersheba Springs, a historic resort village in north Grundy County, began attracting visitors after Mrs. Beersheba Porter Cain of McMinnville discovered a large chalybeate spring in 1833 and suggested that the water, with its high iron content, contained medicinal properties. Several freestone springs gave visitors a variety of water, and the altitude of two thousand feet provided lowlanders a respite from fevers and other summer ills.

Early accommodations consisted of several log cabins and a tavern built by George R. Smartt and Dr. Alfred Paine of McMinnville. They formed the Beersheba Springs Company, which the Tennessee state legislature incorporated in 1839. Although residents staged balls at the resort as early as 1837, Beersheba Springs did not achieve social prominence and attract visitors from the deep South until the 1850s, when ex-slave trader John Armfield acquired the property. Armfield incorporated several cabins and built a two-story porticoed hotel with a fine view of the Collins River Valley. In the rear, two quadrangles of cabins opened onto two courtyards separated by a cross row. The hotel featured a large dining hall with a ballroom above it. Armfield imported chefs and musicians from New Orleans to entertain his guests and compete with the fashionable Virginia watering places. He also built twenty cottages for affluent friends, who enjoyed the last great social season in 1860.

In 1875, the hotel brochure advertised Beersheba as a quiet family retreat rather than a fashionable resort. This description characterizes the community today. The family-owned Armfield cottages are passed down from one generation to the next. Families have added other cabins—several are constructed of logs hauled from other sites—and the rustic atmosphere prevails.

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## **An Interesting Paper**

Transcribed from the Nashville, *Daily American*, (June 28, 1888)

### ***The Origin and Growth of a Great Enterprise***

### ***The Tennessee Coal, Iron & Railroad Company***

### ***General Manager Shook Tells Some Interesting Facts and Draws Some Wise Deductions***

*At the annual meeting of the Tennessee Historical Society, held at Sewanee recently, this letter from Mr. A. M. Shook was read:*

*Dr. Telfair Hodgson, Sewanee, Tenn.:*

*I regret very much that I cannot be with you Friday, especially as I am expected respond to the sentiment, the Tennessee Coal, Iron & Railroad Company Twenty-two years' service for this company has taught me how little is known of its work and origin.*

*About the time the subject was being agitated of building the Nashville & Chattanooga Railroad from Nashville to Chattanooga a young Irishman by the name of Leslie Kennedy, while traveling through this country, became interested in the coal fields of the Cumberland plateau north of Sewanee. Through his influence W. N. Bilbo of Nashville, was induced to take an interest in procuring the lands and securing a railroad to this coal field. The lands at this time had absolutely no value. Men would not buy them even at 12 ½ cents per acre and pay taxes upon them. It was therefore very easy for Bilbo to obtain large tracts of these lands at very low prices which he did, acquiring some by gt., others by purchase.*

*After he had taken such titles as he could get to these lands he went to New York and enlisted S. F. Tracy, and in 1852 the Sewanee Mining Company was chartered by the Tennessee Legislature. The building of the road from Cowan to Sewanee was commenced in 1853, and finished to what is known now as the "Old Coal Bank" in 1855. The parties building the road encountered much ridicule and but little sympathy for the reason that but few people had any confidence in the success of their undertaking. Maj. A. E. Barney located the line up the mountain, and it is said he was supposed to be crazy, as no sane man would think of attempting to build a railroad up Cumberland Mountain. After the road was completed ten miles and the shipment of coal commenced it soon became evident that the quantity of coal existing at this point was very limited, and the line was projected to Tracy City, and work on this extension commenced in 1856 and was completed to Tracy City in November, 1858.*

*It is supposed that Leslie Kennedy first applied the name "Sewanee" to this coal, as it was he who opened the mine for the company. It is eminently proper that this question should be discussed at this place on this occasion, as it is a fact that the Sewanee Mining Company, now the*

*Tennessee Coal, Iron & Railroad Company, produced its first ton of coal within two miles of where your meeting is now being held.*

*The Sewanee Mining Company encountered many difficulties in the early development of the property. The two principal ones were want of demand or the product, and lack of knowledge of the business. The war soon came on and the owners abandoned the property, and it was worked first by the Confederates, and then by the Federals without regard to the pure interests of the company, since when the war closed, it not only found the property run down, but the mines that had been opened were robbed by having been worked in such a manner as to render them almost valueless.*

*In 1866 the company was reorganized and the name changed to the Tennessee Coal & Railroad Company. This company began the work of rebuilding and developing the property without money and without credit. It struggled along for several years, gradually increasing the output as the demand would take it, until 1870 when it became evident that some provision must be made by which a market could be created for the large amount of fine coal that they were making. Up to that time there had been no market except for domestic coals. The want of demand for the product very much discouraged the officers of the company, with the exception of then President, Col. A. S. Colyar, who with unwavering faith always maintained that the demand would come; and on one occasion when the subject was being discussed with a view to determine whether the property should be abandoned or whether it should continue to be worked, Mr. Colyar said no, we will keep on. I expect to see the time when this company will mine and sell 300 tons of coal per day.*

*In order to find a market for the product of the mines it was evident that some arrangement should be made by which the fine coal could be utilized. There was no way to do this except to manufacture it into coke. Then the question arose, would the coke make iron? In order to test this question an experimental furnace was built at Tracy City of the smallest size and crudest type, but it answered the purpose for which it was intended, and this furnace, the "Fiery Gizzard," was the first coke furnace built in Middle Tennessee, and the first iron ever made with Sewanee coke, and the first coke iron ever made from Birmingham ores was made in this furnace by the Tennessee Coal & Railroad Company. The construction of coke ovens was then commenced and pushed rapidly completion, and coke sold to the Bartow Iron Company of Georgia. That company, however, soon failed, and the Chattanooga Iron Company, which was the next furnace started, was induced to buy the coke. This was followed by the Rising Fawn Iron Company. This gave the company what was then considered a very large market for its products.*

*In 1880 the company built the Sewanee furnace at Cowan, Tenn., and in 1881 was again reorganized and the name changed to the Tennessee Coal, Iron & Railroad Company, the Sewanee furnace having been sold to this company.*

*In 1882 the company acquired the property then known as the Southern States Coal, Iron & Land Company Limited by purchase. It was then the largest private corporation in the South, and continued further to develop the property by increasing the output at Tracy City, finishing up and putting in blast the second blast furnace at South Pittsburg. It also secured the building of a railroad from Victoria, Tenn. to Inman, Tenn., and opened up there a vast field of fossiliferous ore, which they have used since in their furnaces both at South Pittsburg and Cowan.*

*In 1886 the property of the Pratt Coal & Iron Company, which consisted of the Pratt Mines, Alice furnace and the Linn Iron Works, were all acquired by this company. These properties combined constitute what is known as the "Tennessee Coal, Iron & Railroad Company." At the end of the present year the material and product of this company's mines and furnaces will aggregate 10,000 tons daily. Aside from the fact that it will give employment to more than illegible,000 men, it will bring back and distribute in the State of Tennessee and Alabama from the consumers of its products more than \$10,000 daily.*

*The building of the railroad from Cowan to Tracy City, made Sewanee, Monteagle and Tracy City. The work in Sequachee Valley made South Pittsburg, Victoria, Inman and Whitwell. The work in Alabama made Pratt Mines, Coketon, Ensley, Redding, Hillman and Alice, so that a large number of people both in Tennessee and Alabama, have felt and are feeling the vitalizing effects of its operations. While this is true, its product, before it was brought to day-light, and before the conception of this company, had practically no value. In other words, the value of its product is all given it by labor.*

*The only considerable item of expense incurred by this company in putting its products on the market, whether in the shape of coke, coal, ore or pig iron, outside of the labor employed, is the powder used for blasting the coals and ores in the mines. For this reason it can be truthfully said that the value of the products of this company add to the wealth of Tennessee and Alabama not less than \$10,000 per day; at least, that amount will be distributed amongst its employees.*

*The transportation companies upon whose lines the various properties of this company are situated, have been liberal in assisting the company in the development of its immense fields of coal and ore, and they are to-day realizing large returns upon the investments they have made in that direction. This question furnishes much for thoughtful reflection as to what extent the manufacturer and the transportation company are mutually in the building up and developing such properties. They help each other; they help the section in which they are located; they help the entire State.*

*The magnitude of the undeveloped property even at this time is so great that it may be truthfully said that we have but commenced, but entered the threshold, as it were, of the development. This is not only true as to the quantity of the raw materials that are being brought to daylight, but it is also true as to the knowledge of the business. It is necessary that our coal should be mined with more care; that the impurities should be taken out; that our coking plants*



*should be improved; that more skill should be employed in raising our ores and in the manipulation of the materials at the furnaces, in order to get the best results, and more scientific labor should be called. The iron must be dephosphorized and desiliconized. These apply to the entire coal and iron business of the South, and will furnish a vast field for the employment of the best talent of our young men. It promises more for themselves and more for their country than any other field of labor that now presents itself.*

*Have we not reached a point when the time has arrived that Technical Schools should be established where the young men of the South can be taught how to locate coal mines and ore mines, build and operate a blast furnace – in fact do everything from prospecting for the coal and ore until the finished product is loaded on the cars – not only in an intelligent way but do it scientifically. The days of “main strength and awkwardness” have past, and we are now in an era where skill and science, directed by intelligence only, can and will succeed. Give the young men of the South an education in this line equal to the best that can be had in Germany, or even in our sister States of the North so that they may have an even chance in the race for success in this line of business.*



**Amelia Fehr (born 4/13/1841) and John Heubi (seated) on their wedding day. Amelia was the daughter of Jakob Fehr and grandmother of Sheila Ferguson Dickerson. Standing are believed to be witnesses John and Emily Smith.**



## **Gibbs' Bend**

### ***The J. O. Gibbs Story***

Jackie Layne Partin (2016)

I tell you folks, at my age there is quite limited, almost nil, short-term memory left in my head, but I keep remembering things from my long-term memory that were stored there certainly not by accident. Does the reader remember the inside vest pocket of Ben Cartwright of the Ponderosa where he easily and conveniently placed rolls of money, deeds, wanted posters, etc.? His vest always looked brand new; even after fourteen years of wear, it never frayed. Well, I have one of those unique pockets, a mental one. Being reared a Monteaglean, stories from other parts of Grundy County and those counties adjacent to it must be told to me, or I must read about them somewhere or pull them out of my perpetually new, vest pocket. So it is with the **J. O. Gibbs** story.

As I recollect, the first time I heard of "**J. O.**" was when someone told me that if one goes to the Coalmont Elementary School with his/her back to the school entrance and visually follows the big TVA power line over to the other side of the gulch, then looking on toward the top of the ridge one can find the J. O. Gibbs field. That meant nothing to me until I later heard that the J. O. Gibbs family was **buried** on their own land. At the time "buried" meant a lot to me because volunteers with my scant guidance were looking for all burials in Grundy County in order to publish an all inclusive book of Grundy County cemeteries/burials. During these several years of effort, the name Virginia Vincent Gibbs of **Gibbs' Bend** was sent to the committee so that a search for his grave could be undertaken; the area of Clouse Hill was suggested as the place to look for the **bend**. His grave and those of other Gibbs relatives needed to be recorded in the book.

**Gibbs' Bend** was not known to anyone on the book committee, but lately (2016) in a conversation with Bailey Campbell who lives in the Bonnie Oak community, **Gibbs' Bend** was mentioned by him. I nearly fell out of my chair, so I stopped him in the middle of his story. He explained that he knows exactly where the bend is/was and described why it was so named. On the road, Wheeler Town Road, leading to **Parson Point**, there was a huge hollow, and in order to get around that hollow, a large bend in the trail or wagon road skirted the end of it. This was an area that formerly belonged to another county but became a portion of Grundy County upon its formation in **1844**. Several acres in that area fell into the Gibbises' hands upon the emergence of progenitors, James and Hannah Gibbs. Some names on different deeds throughout the buying and selling were Jordan Sanders, G. W. Gibbs, James Gibbs, Virginia Vincent Gibbs, J. O. Gibbs, Jerry Nunley, and others in no particular order.

The senior James Gibbs was born ca. **1797** in North Carolina or possibly the new state of Tennessee since it gained statehood in **1796**. Since we do not know his exact birthday, one day he may have been a North Carolina baby and the next day a Tennessee baby without even having his cradle moved. He married a lady named Hannah, born ca. **1803**. Before Grundy County came into existence, James and Hannah lived in Warren County, TN in **1830** and **1840**; they paid taxes there in **1838**.



**Above is the best understanding I have of where Gibbs Bend is/was located.**

The clearing for the TVA power line is obvious in the map above—running east to west. East comes off the mountain and west goes down into Payne’s Cove. The name, Parson Point, in the Gibbsees timeframe indicated the owners of the land on the side of the mountain and the point of descension onto Parson land. An old wagon road had been traveled for years by folks who needed to descend into Paynes’ Cove from the Coalmont/Freemont area, or ascend to the plateau to teach school at Dick Sanders School or the Bonnie Oak School. Roy Mayes rode his old mare up and down this road/path every school day to teach the children at the Bonnie Oak School. Two other teachers known to walk or ride up the same trail to teach at the Dick Sanders School were Clercy and Mamie Hamby. I am not a map expert and certainly not a degrees °/poles expert as pertaining to deeds, but I think I am in the right area for **Gibbs Bend**.

Following is an important deed wherein the old James Gibbs home place in Grundy County is mentioned, *“to wit: on the head waters of Elk River at the head of Paynes Cove of Cumberland Mountain beginning at a large rock called the unmoveable rock containing 300 acres more or less, and is the same land conveyed by Jacob Sanders To G. W. Gibbs (George W. Gibbs—jackie), deed date \_\_\_\_, and recorded at Altamont, Tenn. In Book \_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_; excepting and reserving from this conveyance one hundred acres of land known as the **James Gibbs old home place** and particularly described in a deed from Jacob Sanders to whom the 300 acre tract above described was granted by grant no. 8807 from the state of Tennessee to James Gibbs and recorded at Altamont, Tenn. And reference is here had to said deed for a complete description of the land reserved. The land hereby conveyed being known as the Whiffin tract of two hundred acres.”*

Another version of the deed pertaining to the same area is shown below. Above we have the land called the James Gibbs old home place and below it is called the G. W. Gibbs old home place. The important words in this version are **Gibbs bend!**

*On the North side of the head waters of Paynes Cove, on top of Cumberland Mountain in the Second Civil District of Grundy County, Tennessee, beginning at a rock called the unmovable rock at the top of the mountain where the old road leading from the G. C. Sanders' place to Jesse Parson's place on the side of the mountain, descends the mountain, and on the north side of said road, running... to the bluff of the mountain; thence with the bluff of the mountain to the point of beginning, containing 300 acres, more or less, and known as the **G. W. Gibbs old home place** in what is known as **Gibbs bend**, upon which tract of land the said G. W. Gibbs and family built and lived for many years.*

Without the book volume or page number, it is difficult to follow the 300 acres. Since I am looking for the proof of the existence of James and Hannah Gibbs house place in that area, I think these two versions are quite adequate for my purposes. A recent trip to Coffee County, TN Archives turned up no relevant deeds that may have preceded the forming of Grundy County in 1844, but it did allow me to be treated with lots of help and kindness while I searched. The important bit of information would be the hint that Gibbs land came down into 20<sup>th</sup> century Grundy County.

Hannah Gibbs gave birth in Warren County to several boys and girls: George W. Gibbs (ca. 1823), James Gibbs, Jr. (ca. 1825), Virginia Vincent Gibbs (ca. 1828), Louisa Gibbs (ca. 1832), John Harrison Gibbs (ca. 1832), William T. Gibbs (ca. 1835), Mary “Polly” Gibbs (ca. 1837), and Nancy Gibbs (ca. 1838). The older Census records of **1830** and **1840** seem to allow for Hannah having at least two more children, a male and a female who may have died young. If one goes by Census records, ages usually change from one decade to another. Often even dates on tombstones are

wrong because someone in the younger generation who loved an ancestor well enough to buy and install a burial stone, did not himself/herself always know the true dates of birth and possibly death. So the information I write in a story may certainly be off a few years or even a few children. Hopefully what I do write will at least give clues to finding one's family heritage. Let's mention a few of these children as we go through this work.

**George W. Gibbs** stayed in Grundy County for a few years. Around **1845** he married or chose a helpmate. In **1846** she gave birth to Nancy Jane, and in **1849** she had a son, Isaac Coleman. I had no results in my searches for the family in the **1850** Census. It certainly would be helpful in finding out more about George's first marriage. His wife may have died at her son's birth but certainly before **1856** when George was with his second wife, Cynthia (Nunley) Gibbs, another Tennessee lady. Marriage licenses for either marriage evade me. However, there were many common law marriages and unregistered marriage licenses back in those days. After the birth of George and Cynthia's little Susan, they moved to Denton, Texas with the three children. Cynthia's second child was Martha Ann, the couple's first Texas born child. More children came along later and George supported them through farming.

In Denton County, George registered to vote on **August 16, 1867**. In **1870** Denton, TX, George W. and Cynthia were still farming with the house full of children. Even Nancy Jane who had married John Ewing still lived with her parents. In the **1880** Census record, George and Cynthia still lived in Denton and probably died there, but their burial places are not known to me.

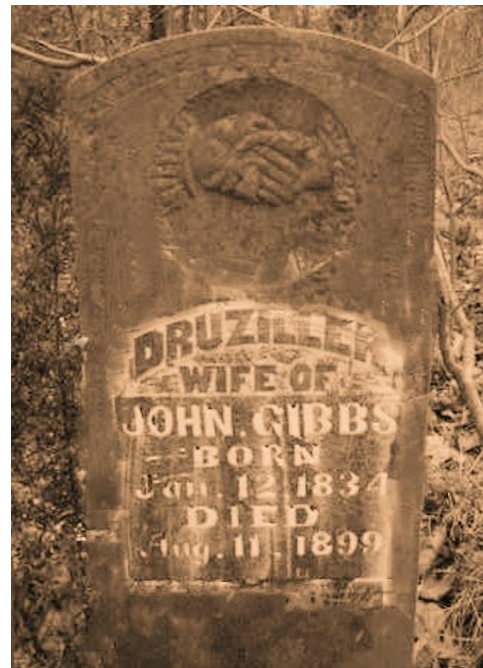
While searching for George W.'s burial place, I found that his first child Nancy Jane (Gibbs) Ewing Roark was buried in the Rosemont Cemetery in Wichita Falls, TX. I went straight to her death certificate to see if her mother's name was given; it came as no surprise to me that her father's name was given as George, but the mother was not known.

**James Gibbs, Jr.** I assume, stayed in Grundy County through **1850** living at home with his parents and his remaining siblings. The **1860** Census has no mention of James or a wife although during the two decades between **1850** and **1870**, he married around **1854**, fathered daughters: Mary (b. ca. 1855), Sarah (b. ca. 1857), Dorothy Idilla (b. ca. 1859), and Luella (b. ca. 1865). Then his wife died. Before he left Grundy County around **1877**, he had married again to a much younger woman named Elizabeth. Their son Hugh D. Gibbs was born around **1878** in Osage, Carroll County, Arkansas. It was here around **1882** that Elizabeth gave birth to another son, John D. Gibbs. In the **1910** Census record, when James' age was given as ninety-years-old, he was a widower and living in Dry Fork, Arkansas with his son John D. in Osage. James Gibbs, Jr. died on **March 3, 1916**.

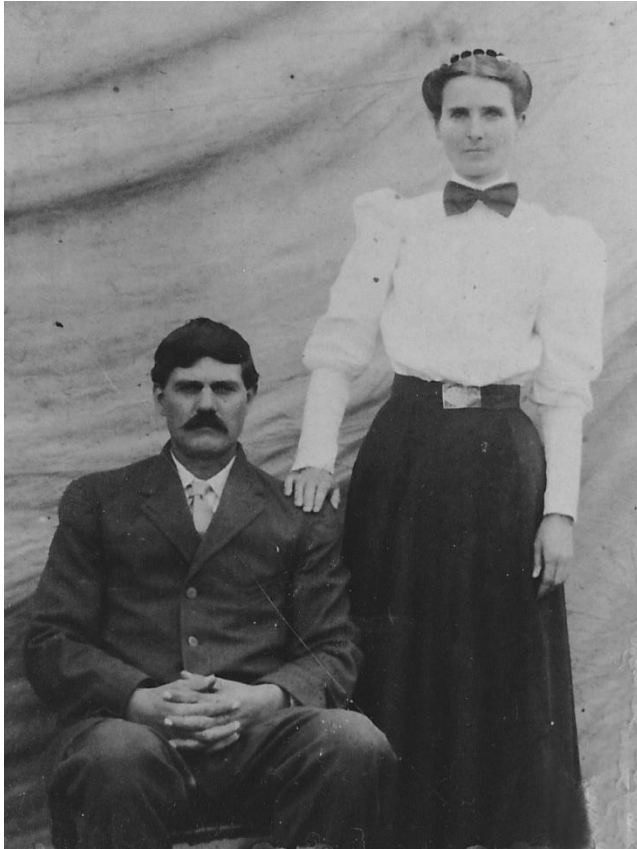
**John Harrison Gibbs** married Drucilla Armstrong in Warren County on **Nov. 20, 1852**. The couple moved to Osage, Carroll Co., Arkansas right after their son William S. was born around **1859**. Two other children, Martha F. and John H. were born in Tennessee before they moved away. Then the family grew larger until in **1880**, there were eight more children born: William S., Eliza, James, Granville Greeley, Rinda, Isaac Alexander, Mary, and Mellie Isabell. Drucilla died **Aug. 11, 1899**, in Delmar, Carroll Co., Arkansas and was buried in the Gibbs Cemetery. Her husband John H. Gibbs died **Dec. 18, 1905**, and was buried beside his wife. There are seven interments in the small cemetery including their son Granville Greeley Gibbs and his wife Janie. Four graves are Gibbises and three are former Warren County, Tennessee citizens, William Daniel Fultz and two of his brothers, Ephraim and James. They are sons of William F. and Susannah Fultz who were living in Osage in **1860**. (Photos below courtesy of *Bobby and Carol Babin Estes via Find A Grave*)



**JOHN HARRISON GIBBS**  
**SERG CO A HARRELL'S BN AR**  
**CONFEDERATE STATES ARMY**  
**JUL 27, 1829—DEC. 18, 1905**



**DRUZILLER**  
**WIFE OF JOHN GIBBS**  
**BORN Jan. 12, 1834**  
**DIED Aug. 11, 1899**



**Bee Benton Bell**  
**with his wife,**  
**Mellie Isabell (Gibbs) Bell;**  
**Mellie is one of**  
**many**  
**grandchildren of the elder James**  
**and Hannah Gibbs of**  
**Grundy Co., TN**

**William T. Gibbs**, born ca. **1836**, married Mary Ellen Martin on **Aug. 5, 1859**, in Grundy. Her father had already passed away before **1850** leaving her mother nine children at home to rear. The young couple was still living in Grundy County in **1860**. Admittedly, this couple seemed to have dropped off the face of the earth, but that may be just a weakness on my part in research. So for now, we will leave them in happy marital bliss until we learn differently.

**Louisiana** “Louisa” (b. ca. 1831), **Mary “Polly”** (ca. 1837) and **Nancy** (1838) stayed in Grundy County. Even in death, they stayed put at Gibbs Bend with their parents. Maybe later in the story I can give a clue as to what happened to them.

On **Sept. 6, 1850**, **Virginia Vincent Gibbs** (25) was living alone in Grundy County working as a laborer. His future bride, eighteen-year-old Mary “Polly” Sanders, daughter of Jacob and Martha (Yates) Sanders, lived near Vincent. This made a link between Vincent and owning “land.” He started young in acquiring land from Jacob Sanders who had years earlier received a large land grant. Jacob also sold to Vincent’s brother George W. Gibbs. From the ages given of the children in the **1860** Census, it appears the young couple took up married life soon and the babies came rather quickly. In this Census their children were listed as Malinda Gibbs (1850), Carry A. Gibbs (1853), Nancy Gibbs (1857), and **James** Gibbs (1859). The given name “James”

was a thought of endearment toward the elder James Gibbs and was used throughout the generations.

Virginia Vincent Gibbs volunteered to fight in the Confederate Army. On **December 9, 1861**, Pvt. Vincent Gibbs was mustered into Co. B, 44<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Tennessee Infantry, by Lieut. T. W. Hunt, at Camp Trousdale. His enlistment time was for twelve months. At the muster roll for the period of **Dec. 9, 1861** through **Jan. 12, 1862**, Vincent was absent without leave. According to the Park Services records, Vincent Gibbs died in the Battle of Shiloh, aka Battle of Pittsburgh Landing, which lasted from **April 6, 1862** through **April 7, 1862**. Company B of the 44<sup>th</sup> TN Infantry was certainly in that fight with heavy losses. The Confederate and Union dead for the most part were buried in mass graves where they fell in battle. However, a few years later, the Union dead were disinterred and buried in what is now known as the Shiloh National Cemetery. Since the Confederate soldiers were considered enemies of the United States, they were not allowed to be buried in the National Cemetery. With this information, one can assume that Virginia Vincent Gibbs died on **April 6 or 7, 1862** near Shiloh Church in Hardin County and was buried in one of the mass graves on the battlefield.

Ironically, Vincent was assessed forty-four cents on 200 acres of land on **June 7, 1862**, in the U. S. IRS Tax Assessment. This could have been done before the assessor got word that Vincent had been killed two months earlier in battle. Of course, his family would have still owed the money.

For the interest of researchers, I will touch on Vincent and Polly's first child **Malinda**. It is her descendants that I and most people of Grundy County know or remember in the Gibbs families. According to one of Malinda's great-granddaughters, Ruth (Sanders) Stiefel, Malinda had a short relationship, not marriage, with John **Hobbs** that resulted in the birth of her first child, Robert Lee **Gibbs**. Mrs. Stiefel's mother Hester (Gibbs) Sanders handed that story down to her children. Malinda did not give him the surname of his father, but instead, she gave him her maiden name. Robert Lee **Gibbs'** death certificate, wherein John Hobbs is given as his father, supports Mrs. Stiefel's information. Around **1888** Robert Lee married Arcena Meeks, daughter of Crip John and Polly (Cope) Meeks, and sister to my grandfather George Mack Meeks. Together Robert Lee and Arcena had two children, Nora Gibbs and Luke Grady Gibbs. Luke was a small baby when his mother died in **1893**. I don't know where she is buried, but my best guess would be near her parents in Payne's Cove Cemetery.





**L to R: Fannie (Parsons) Gibbs; her stepson, Luke Grady Gibbs; husband, Robert Lee Gibbs; son Lois Gibbs; and her stepdaughter, Nora Gibbs**

After the death of Robert Lee's first wife, he married Fannie Josephine Parsons, daughter of Thomas and Josie (Nunley) Parsons. Several children were born to Robert and Fannie starting in the **1900** Census with son Lois Lindsay Gibbs. Fannie had taken on the responsibility of rearing stepdaughter Nora Gibbs and stepson Luke Grady Gibbs. I have heard so much "good" history on Luke Grady Gibbs that Fannie must have done a wonderful job in rearing her him. His descendants speak only of Fannie as their grandmother since Arcena died so young; they never knew her. Fannie and Robert Lee lived in the Sanders Crossing community in the area of the former Desmer Church homestead, currently the Rose family property. Previous owners to Robert Lee Gibbs were not Gibbsses, so I looked elsewhere for **Gibbs' Bend**.

On **April 21, 1924**, J. O. and Lucy Gibbs deeded 200 acres from the 300 acres of land that had stayed so long in the Gibbs family to Jerry Nunley; Hallie Gibbs witnessed the sale for her parents. Unbelievably, J. O. sold 200 acres for \$20. 100 acres of the 300 were kept down through the years because the original old James and Hannah Gibbs home place was on that part of the land. From my years of researching families in our area, one of the last pieces of property

to be sold outside of the family usually is the section that holds the old home place and a few family graves. In this case, **Gibbs' Bend** would have been the last physical evidence that James and Hannah Gibbs ever lived at District 6/7 Grundy County.

Using the Census records from **1850** up to **1940**, the last online published Census, I was able to walk right along with the Gibbs family in Grundy County as it moved toward and into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. At times, obstacles and surprises got in my way, but forward I went. None of the cemetery volunteers or my friends admitted that they ever told me the story I am about to write. Dear Reader, I don't just make up this "*stuff*", (as one friend called my writings), or "*junk*", (as one not so friendly called my stories), and absolutely no intervention was made in the dark of the night.

### Two Versions of the J. O. Gibbs Mystery

**Version One:** Years ago, the J. O. Gibbs' family made lemonade in a metal pan. They drank, and some of the lemonade was left over; it remained overnight in the metal pan. The next morning, they drank what was left. Who all drank and how much each drank is unknown, but the story in my vest pocket tells me that the whole family drank the lemonade then died; when the bodies were found, they were buried at the Gibbs home place. Lemons in the wilderness, enough to make that much lemonade and some left over for the next day-- none of this fits my knowledge of what it was like to be poor and living in the wilderness in the **1870s-1880s** in Grundy County. Even in my youth, **1942-1960**, there was hardly a time when anything palatable was left after a meal, so I have doubts that in that day, in that wilderness, there would have been anything left to finish off the next day, especially a luxury drink like lemonade. The thing I don't doubt is that something tragic happened to James and Hannah's family.

**Version Two:** Someone "had it in for" the Gibbs family, and the well that was used for drinking water was poisoned. This sort of vengeance did happen at times; murdered victims were dropped into wells, and sometimes, one would accidentally fall into the well and not be found in time to be saved. Combining the two stories we might come up with a single situation that the water was poisoned, the Gibbises did not know it, and they made their lemonade with bad water, or to make it simpler, they drank poisoned water. Again, unless I could find an unusual disappearance of a Grundy County, TN, Gibbs family, my story would be flimsy.

My first goal was to set out searching until I found **a J. O. Gibbs**. This would make me feel better about sharing my story. If I had no main character, then I probably had no story.

**1850:** The Gibbs children still at home were James (b. 1825); Louisiana, aka Louisa (b. 1831); John (b. 1833); William J. (b. 1836); Polly, aka Mary (b. 1838); and Nancy (b. 1839). Mom and Dad, James (53) and Hannah (48), were still brooding over their growing children. Two sons, George W. and Virginia Vincent, had left home by **1850**.

**1860:** James (62) and Hannah (57) had their family household number reduced to just daughters in the house. All of their sons had either married and moved on or passed away. But Louisiana (29), Nancy (23), and Mary/Polly (20) just seemed to be content to remain unmarried and live on in the wilderness with their parents. They had some good neighbors in the George Carroll “Uncle Dick” Sanders and the Jesse Parsons family, a very large family. Now I can relate to these two names since Dick Sanders was a gg-grandfather of my husband. And I connect Jesse Parsons to “Parsons Graveyard” and Parsons Point that overlooks Payne’s Cove although Jesse is not buried there. Neighbors in those days were sometimes miles away as were most of the families that lived out the Wheeler Town Rd.

**1870:** Something changed on **September 18, 1867**, when Nancy Gibbs gave birth to a little boy whom she named **James Gibbs**. The family then looked like this: James Gibbs (72), Hannah (67), Louisiana (40), Nancy (33), Polly (30), and of course, let’s not forget the small three-year-old boy, James, son of Nancy, although not listed as her son in any Census record. The little fellow kept his mom’s maiden name, but Nancy did give him a middle name which I recognized immediately as fittingly being my “**J. O.**” **James Odom Gibbs** was his full name; he became known as **J. O. Gibbs** all around Wheeler Town, Bonnie Oak, Coalmont, Tracy City and Palmer. I had found my main character in the right family.

Now I needed to find the family with an unexplained reduction in the number of people in the household.

**1880:** Grandma Hannah (77) and young James (12—grandson) were all **alone**. Where did everyone go? A reduction of four from the household between 1871 and 1880—wouldn’t that support my story? Did James’ mom Nancy and her two old maid sisters all find husbands between **August 9, 1870** and **June 7, 1880**? Doubtful!!! What happened to Grandpa James? Was elderly Grandma Hannah the only one who wanted to help the young boy? Let me hasten to say that this is the only Gibbs family that I could find in Grundy County in the right area that fit the need for the loss of several family members in the same period of time. Whether they died by drinking tainted lemonade or poisoned drinking water doesn’t matter; their deaths alone lend credence to the whole Gibbs family mystery.

The cemetery book committee did not find the graves, but if we had known where Gibbs’ Bend was, we may have found fieldstones for James, his three daughters, and possibly other

family members. A friend of my husband remembers the fieldstone markers from his youth, but he doubts that any evidence would be available now because of four-wheeler trails, mining, logging, construction of large TVA power lines, and general, everyday destruction of property.

The story handed down in the Campbell family is that Hannah and her young grandson came to the Bonnie Oak community to visit. The weather was cold, so they stayed overnight. When they returned home, they found their loved ones dead. Understandably, after the tragedy, Grandma Hannah brought her young grandson out of the wilderness to the Bonnie Oak vicinity to be closer to other people. J. O. could attend school at the Bonnie Oak School. According to the locals, the hollow behind the Meeks/Roberts burials on the corner across from the Sweeton Hill Methodist Church is known as the "**J. O. Hollow**". Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Howell, who will be 99 years of age on Oct. 16, 1916, concurs with the locals. (*Note: Sadly Mrs. Howell passed away not long after I spoke with her about J. O. Hollow. She died on May 16, 2016.*) The hollow is where Hannah and J. O. settled leaving behind the tragedy of what happened at the old house place. Living so near the Parsons Graveyard, (the earliest section of what is now known as the Bonnie Oak Cemetery), when Hannah died, it was there that she was probably buried. However, she may have asked to be carried back "home" and placed with her husband and daughters.

James Odom Gibbs grew up having only attended part of the first grade. On **September 20, 1889**, he married Lucy Bell Argo, daughter of John and Sarah "Sallie" (Hobbs) Argo. On **June 24, 1890**, they had one child, a baby girl, Hallie Emma Gibbs. J. O. was able to care for his wife and rear their daughter on meager coalminer pay/scrip, every penny of it earned by back-breaking efforts. At some point a coalmining mishap caused J. O. to step on a large nail that caused his foot to become so enlarged that he could never again wear a shoe. He walked on it by keeping it wrapped in layers and layers of cloth. He had to work, so he asked men to help him push his coal car out of the mines. Bailey Campbell's father Celo Campbell worked with J. O. in the mines. Celo commented to his family that J. O. never missed a day of work.

Lucy (Argo) Gibbs died in **1931**. She was buried at the Hobbs Hill Cemetery amongst many of her Argo relatives.

J. O.'s death certificate gives his mother's name as Nancy Gibbs, but it lists no father. This probably means that J. O. was not a Gibbs, and Hallie being his only offspring, for genealogical purposes, it really doesn't matter who his father was. He died a widower in Palmer, TN on **March 23, 1950**, at the age of 82, and daughter Hallie Gibbs, unmarried, was the informant on the death certificate. His body was placed to rest beside his wife; there is one unmarked concrete block to the side of J. O and Lucy. His obituary reads: **James Gibbs, 83, dies at Palmer;** "*James O. Gibbs, 83, died Thursday afternoon, March 23, at his home in Palmer. Mr. Gibbs is survived by one daughter, Miss Hallie Gibbs. Funeral services were held Sunday morning at ten o'clock at the*

*Hobbs Hill Methodist Church with Brother John Scissom officiating.”* I find it strange that his parents were not mentioned or more family history given. Maybe Hallie knew nothing of her Gibbs ancestry beyond her father.



**Lucy B. Gibbs**  
**(1867-1931)**

**J. O. Gibbs**  
**(1867-?)**

**The absence of a death date on the stone indicates that J. O. bought the stone, and Hallie never put his death date (1950) on it.**

A fellow researcher, David Patton, was too young to remember J. O., but he does remember *Aunt* Hallie Gibbs. His memories are of her snow-white hair and the fact that she lived in poverty, often moving around Palmer, living in little rooms behind unrelated families' homes. Mrs. Elizabeth Howell remembered seeing Hallie, a heavy woman, walk the roads around Coalmont. She never married, and David believes she lived lastly on the Wideman family homestead in a small house in the back.

Hallie Gibbs loved cats. Twenty or thirty usually pushed their way up to the feeding bowls while Hallie looked on with contentment. One day she rode a bus from Palmer to Altamont to grocery shop. The friend who went with her noticed that she had a habit of testing one grape or one strawberry and on and on. Whether she felt that was a fair way to shop was not known. As for her death and burial, David thinks maybe she died in the **1960s** and was buried in the Palmer Cemetery.

When the last member of a family passes away, there usually is a small treasure box, somewhat like a shoebox, left on a shelf or under the bed. Hallie Gibbs probably had one that may have had old family photos or notes on the tragedy in her paternal great-grandparents' family. Anyone with knowledge of James Odom Gibbs, please share with me. I never like to leave a story without an ending. And, if possible, the graves need to be found and listed for future generations.

Lastly, my mystery story seems to have merit. Something happened to this family between **1870** and **1880**. Because of extensive power line work in that area of Wheeler Town Rd. and Parson Point, it is doubtful that any of the mentioned Gibbsses' graves will still be identifiable with field stone markers and the recognizable rows in which families buried their loved ones. Probable burials on the family compound would have been the elder James Gibbs and his wife, Hannah, and daughters, Louisana, Nancy, Polly, and maybe others relatives.

While researching for this little story, I noticed that there was no actual history about James and Hannah Gibbs toward the end of their lives; there was only silence or perhaps confusion. Even local Gibbs descendants are in the dark about their ancestry. Maybe my little mystery story will help them understand why they could not find some of the answers in order to fill in gaps in their family history.

The Gibbsses were difficult to find from one Census record to another. My answer to these problems usually goes something like this: "They lived so far up a long rocky, muddy path or on the side of a mountain that the Census taker just skipped a few families hoping no one would notice." If guilty, much to their chagrin, I notice, I notice a lot!



Two yoke of oxen used by Roy Layne, born Aug. 15, 1897 – died Aug. 28, 1961, son of Isaac Henderson and Texann (Meeks) Layne, Pelham, Tennessee

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