



# WARREN COUNTY GENEALOGICAL & HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

# Newsletter

**December 2020**

201 Locust Street

McMinnville, Tennessee

## WCGHA OFFICERS



**President:**  
Cheryl W. Mingle



**Vice President:**  
Marion Rhea Speaks



**Secretary:**  
Donna Sullivan



**Treasurer:**  
J.B. Brown



**Past President:**  
Ann Brown

*Our office is located at  
201 Locust Street  
in the lower level of the  
County Administrative Building*

**Due to Covid-19  
A DECISION  
WAS MADE  
BY A MAJORITY OF OUR  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
TO CANCEL  
MEMBER MEETINGS  
AND KEEP THE OFFICE  
CLOSED FOR THE  
REMAINDER OF 2020**

My continued prayers and concerns for all of you



Cheryl Watson Mingle, WCGHA President

## Committee And Chairs

### Membership:

*J. B. Brown*



### Circulation Manager:

*Debra Wilcher McBride*



### Programs:

*Marion Rhea Speaks*



### Bulletin Editor:

Position Open

### Newsletter Editor:

*Doyle Speaks*



### Publicity:

*Ann Brown*



### Refreshments:

*Christine Bouldin*



### Research:

*Bonita Mangrum*



*Mary Oaks*



### Office:

*Evelyn Wade & Ann Brown*



### Historian:

*Brad Walker*



*Come Visit Us*

**Due to Covid-19  
Our office is  
Presently closed**

**Our normal  
hours are**

**Monday  
&  
Friday**

**9 a.m.-3 p.m.  
931-474-4227**

Email:

[wcgaha.tn@gmail.com](mailto:wcgaha.tn@gmail.com)

On the Web:

[www.tngenweb.org/wcgatn](http://www.tngenweb.org/wcgatn)

On Facebook:  
Warren County  
Genealogical & Historical  
Association

and

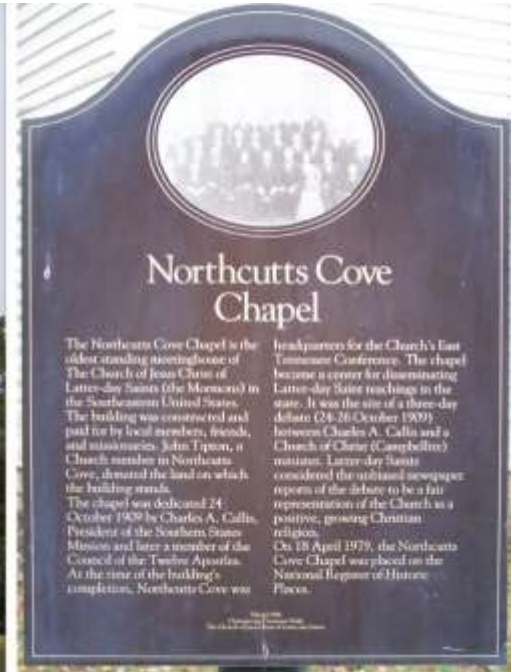
WCGHA's Old Warren  
County, TN Family  
History/Photos

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is located at  
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Building**

# History of Our Older Churches

## The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints

The Northcutts Cove Chapel of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in Warren County, was constructed in 1909 by local members of the church. It is the oldest Mormon Church in Tennessee and one of the oldest in the Southeastern United States. For many years it served as the headquarters for the Eastern Tennessee Conference of the church. Although not used for regular services for some time, the chapel has been used for weddings and other special occasions. The church is listed in the National Register of Historic Places by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service of the U.S. Department of Interior.



The present building is located on the 70S By-pass in McMinnville.

*By Doyle Speaks*

### History of the Church in McMinnville

In 1875 Tennessee became the focal point of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Days Saints missionaries with headquarters established in Chattanooga. By 1908 the Mormon movement had reached into the south-eastern part of Warren County and the Altamont area of Grundy County. With this growth the need for a permanent meeting

house became apparent and land located in the Warren County area of Northcutts Cove was sold to the church by John Tipton for the sum of \$1. Members of the building committee were Rubin Smartt, Henry Smartt, Beecher Smartt, and Bill Tanner who organized the community project and had the chapel ready for dedication on October 24, 1909.

*Continued on page 4*



# Latter Day Saints

*Continued from page 3*

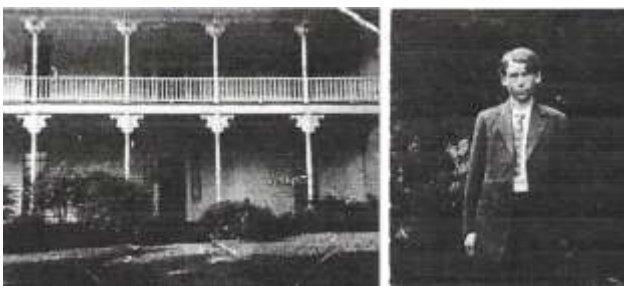
Northcutts Cove Chapel was a vibrant community with members attending the church from the Altamont area as well as those from the southeastern area of Warren County.

In 1949, Elder J.B. Lewis, a missionary from



**A large crowd attended the October 24, 1909 dedication of the Northcutts Cove Chapel.**

Oregon, was instrumental in getting families from Van Buren County and those in McMinnville together for Sacrament Meetings in the home of Oscar and Ethel Rhea. Their large 2-story colonial home was located on Rebel Hill where the Warren County Senior High School was later built, currently the middle school, and approximately 20 members met in the Rhea living room for about nine months.



**The home of Oscar and Ethel Rhea located on Rebel Hill in McMinnville. Oscar Rhea is in the photo to the right.**

In the Fall of 1950, a block building located on the east side of town near the Beersheba Street Bridge was rented for their meetings. In the next four years their attendance increased with more families coming in from Northcutts Cove, Smithville and the southern part of White County.

Realizing that they were growing, Oscar Rhea, Reverday J. Grissom, Sr. and Leard Hitchcock purchased land on North Spring Street on Rebel Hill. This land was offered to the Church for the purpose of erecting a house of worship. The offer was accepted and the land deeded to the church.



**The first church built in McMinnville was located on North Spring Street.**

For a period of 2 years, the congregation worked hard to raise enough money to build a chapel and excavation was begun on August 14, 1956. Waymon Curtis, a local building contractor, was the builder. Oscar Rhea, who was a prominent lumberman in the area, provided much of the lumber for the building. The building was completed at a cost of \$22,000.00 and was dedicated on May 5, 1958. The congregation continued to grow and this new building served their members for a period of some 10 years.

During 1969-70, the church began to grow to the extent that a new facility was considered. Expansion on the North Spring Street location was not possible due to a lack of space. Land was purchased in 1972 on the 70S By-pass and by 1976 enough money was raised to start construction on the new building. However, the building on Spring Street sold before the new building was complete. For 6 months the McMinnville Civic Center became their temporary home. They moved into the new building on Christmas night, 1977. With steady growth over the next few years, it wasn't long before an addition was needed. It was dedicated on November 9, 1984.

The large and vibrant congregation in McMinnville was instrumental in Warren County being chosen for a new building to be used as a regional convention center.

*Continued on page 5*

# Latter Day Saints

*Continued from page 4*



**The huge building serves as a meeting place for 7 separate wards in this area of Tennessee. It was dedicated in August 2004 and is located on Hwy 55 west of McMinnville.**

## Early history of the church

The LDS Church, originally called the Church of Christ, was formally organized by Joseph Smith on April 6, 1830, in western New York. The name was eventually changed to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, when most churches were competing for new converts, Joseph, at the age of 14, became confused as to who had the right answer and he decided to go to a secret place and seek the right answer from God. He was surrounded by a bright light in which two heavenly “personages” (God the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ) appeared to him and revealed that the beliefs of all the present religious denominations at that time were incorrect.

In 1823 he had a visit from the angel Moroni who tells him a book, written on plates with appearances in gold, was buried in a nearby hill. After receiving these tablets he publishes the 588 page book called the Book of Mormon that becomes the second Bible for Mormons.

In 1830 the first four missionaries head out to spread the message of the Book of Mormons. In 1831 the church moved to Kirkland, Ohio and eventually built their first Temple there. A conflict in the community caused Smith to relocate the group to Far West, Illinois and later to Nauvoo, Illinois. While in Nauvoo, Illinois, Smith introduced polygamy to his closest associates which later became major problems with early settlers.

On June 27, 1844, Joseph and his brother Hyrum were murdered by a mob in Carthage, Illinois while being held in jail on charges of treason. Hyrum was Joseph’s designated successor and their deaths

caused a succession crisis and Brigham Young assumed leadership.

Within 2 years after Smith’s death, Brigham Young began moving the Mormon pioneers to Nebraska and then in 1847 to the Utah territory. Young incorporated the LDS Church as a legal entity and initially governed both the church and the state as theocratic leader. He publicized the practice of plural marriage which is a form of polygamy.

By 1857, tensions grew between the Mormons and other Americans and the U.S. Army peacefully invaded the Utah territory and Young agreed to step down from power and be replaced by a non-Mormon territorial governor. Brigham Young died in 1877. It took until 1890 for the church to stop new polygamous marriages. In 1896 Utah was admitted as a U.S. State and in 1904 the church outlawed the practiced of polygamy, and adopted a policy of excommunicating its members found practicing such. Salt Lake City, Utah is the home of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and as of 2019 it had a membership of over 16 million members and is now the fourth largest religious organization in the United States.

*This article excerpted in part from:*

*Information from the Magness Library Genealogy Department, provided by Cheryl Watson Mingle, Library Genealogist*

## **HISTORY OF THE McMINNVILLE WARD**

*Contributions by*

*Emma Grisson Hitchcock, Mary Grisson Hitchcock, Joyce Rhea Scott, Polly Buckner Smith and Eugene Wilson.*

*Compiled by Deborah Miller Hitchcock*

*(Thanks to Mimiam Crawford for this copy)*

*The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints  
From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*

***The decision to hold a WCGHA meeting in January has not been made primarily because we do not know if there will be access to the Administration Building.***

***Our primary concern, as always, is for the safety of our members and the public.***

***You will be notified as soon as this decision is made.***

# Cemetery Cleaned for a Birthday Present

*Grandchildren and friends proudly pose for a picture in front of the Womack Cemetery after it was cleaned-up as a*



*birthday present for WCGHA Circulation Manager Debra McBride. Pictured, l-r: are granddaughter Kayla Triplett, grandson David McBride, WCGHA Secretary Donna Sullivan, granddaughter Marli McBride, granddaughter Maci McBride, Debra McBride and Barbara Pearsall.*



*Before*

*The cemetery located on Roy Foster Rd. is on private property and is leased to a local farmer.*

*The ornate fence around this scenic cemetery is in need of repair, some only minor.*



*After*

Find a Grave has a listing of deceased under the name Ransom Pickney Womack Cemetery, however according to Warranty Deed Records, Book 342, pages 64-71, it is referenced as Womack Cemetery. There are at least 4 "Womack Cemeteries" in Warren County, TN.



# Cemetery Art



This beautiful stone is located in the Oak Grove Baptist Church cemetery located in the Centertown area of Warren County.

Name: Pvt. Luther Vance Lance  
Birth Date: 8 Sep 1889  
Birth Place: Cannon County, Tennessee, United States of America  
Death Date: 26 Sep 1918  
Death Place: Fort Dix, Burlington County, New Jersey, United States of America  
Cemetery: Oak Grove Baptist Church Cemetery  
Burial or Cremation Place: Centertown, Warren County, Tennessee, United States of America  
Father: Eugene Cicero Lance  
Mother: Lucy Tennie Carr Lance



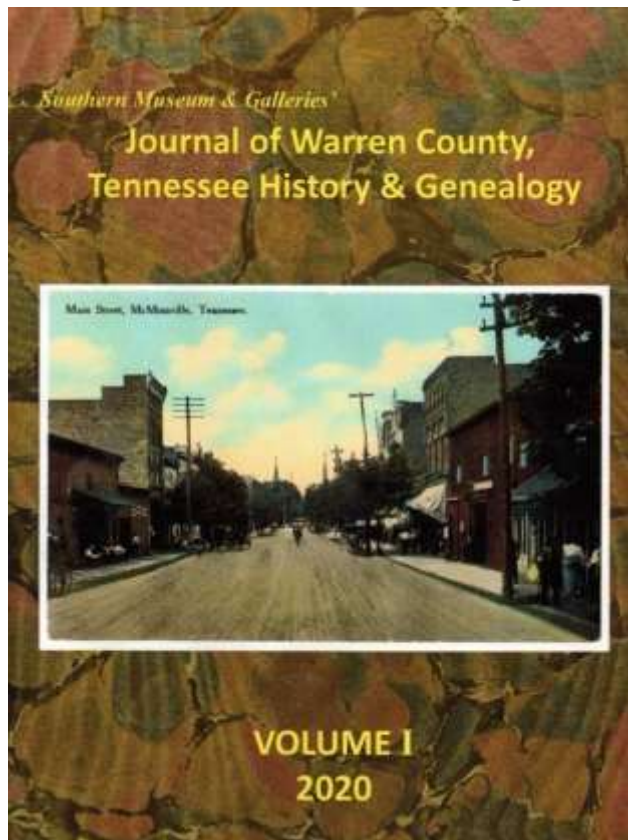
## Community Volunteers Clean Crisp Family Cemetery

*Chris Cope, owner of Crisp Spring Market, recently organized people from the community to help clean-up the Crisp Family Cemetery. They have done an outstanding job of cleaning the cemetery and we're happy to add it to the preserved cemetery list.*



*For more photos on this project check out the Crisp Spring Album on Warren County Genealogical & Historical Association on Facebook.*

## Chris Keathley Publishes New Journal



Congratulations to fellow WCGHA member, Chris Keathley, on publication of Vol. 1, "Southern Museum & Galleries' Journal of Warren County, Tennessee, History & Genealogy." With articles and memorials from the 1920's, the Journal offers glimpses into local life 100 years ago. It's for sale at Keathley's Southern Museum and at the Vintage Market, both on Main Street, and in Falcon Rest's Victorian Gift Shop. Chris dedicated the book to his friend, artist Monty Wanamaker, with whom he opened the museum in 2001. They collaborated on many local history books before Monty's passing a couple of years ago.



The Southern Museum and Galleries is located on Main Street in McMinnville.

Hours are Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, 11 am to 1:30 pm.



## From the Facebook files of



## WCGHA's Old Warren County, TN Family History/Photos

This is an on-going series of photos from *WCGHA's Old Warren County, TN Family History/Photos*. The Public Group site was organized several years ago and is co-administered by Cheryl Watson Mingle, President of the Warren County Genealogical & Historical Association along with Ann Brown, Past President.

You're invited to join our Facebook group, comment and submit photos and history.



**Hillcrest Restaurant 1955**

Submitted by Cheryl Watson Mingle  
September 11, 2020

**WCGHA's Old Warren County, TN Family History/Photos**  
**MONTHLY INSIGHTS**  
**November, 2020**

4,720 Group Members (+13 this month)

Gender: 68% Women – 32% Men

19 Posts	262 Comments	1,235 Reactions
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**Top Post**

**Top Contributors**

Tommy D. Fairbanks  
Melinda Stubblefield Hughey  
Ricky Burks  
Florence Denton

Cheryl Watson-Mingle: Southside School, Faculty 1972-1973  
<https://www.facebook.com/WarrenCountyGenealogicalHistoricalAssociation/photos/oa.1369874283129282/1500629373333185/>

Comments: 62

Likes: 98

Shares: 11

Reactions: 206

Don't forget to follow our Facebook page at  
Warren County Genealogical & Historical Association  
for information about our Association, upcoming events, and posts and links relating  
to genealogy and history

**FROM YOUR EDITOR:**

After completing the November edition of the Newsletter, my wife and I experienced a 14-day quarantine from the Covid-19 Virus. Dealing with a positive test result is a challenge I don't care to experience again.

My wife Marion experienced a very mild case and I'm thankful for that. She was very much in need to give the care that I needed for a period of 10 days or so. My symptoms were a flu-like illness with a lack of appetite and little, or no energy. That energy level is yet to fully return.

Fellow WCGHA member Mary Oaks and her husband General have been re-cooperating from the virus as well. Similar symptoms were experienced by them. We send our prayers for a complete recovery.

For this month's History of Our Older Churches I chose the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. I was fortunate to meet church member Miriam Crawford while out for a photo shoot of the Regional Convention Center. She provided a great deal of information on the church in McMinnville. Along with information provided by Cheryl Watson Mingle from the Magness Library Genealogy Department, I was able to write the story for this issue.

I'm very happy to report we had two Cemetery Preservation projects in the county. The stories are included in this issue.

Please be vigilant of the need to keep clear of the Covid virus. Stay home when possible, wear masks when you must congregate and let's help put a stop to the spread of this virus that is so dangerous to a lot of people.

My wish is that you all have a Very Merry Christmas and a much better New Year.

Doyle Speaks, Newsletter Editor  
[Speaksanddm@aol.com](mailto:Speaksanddm@aol.com)