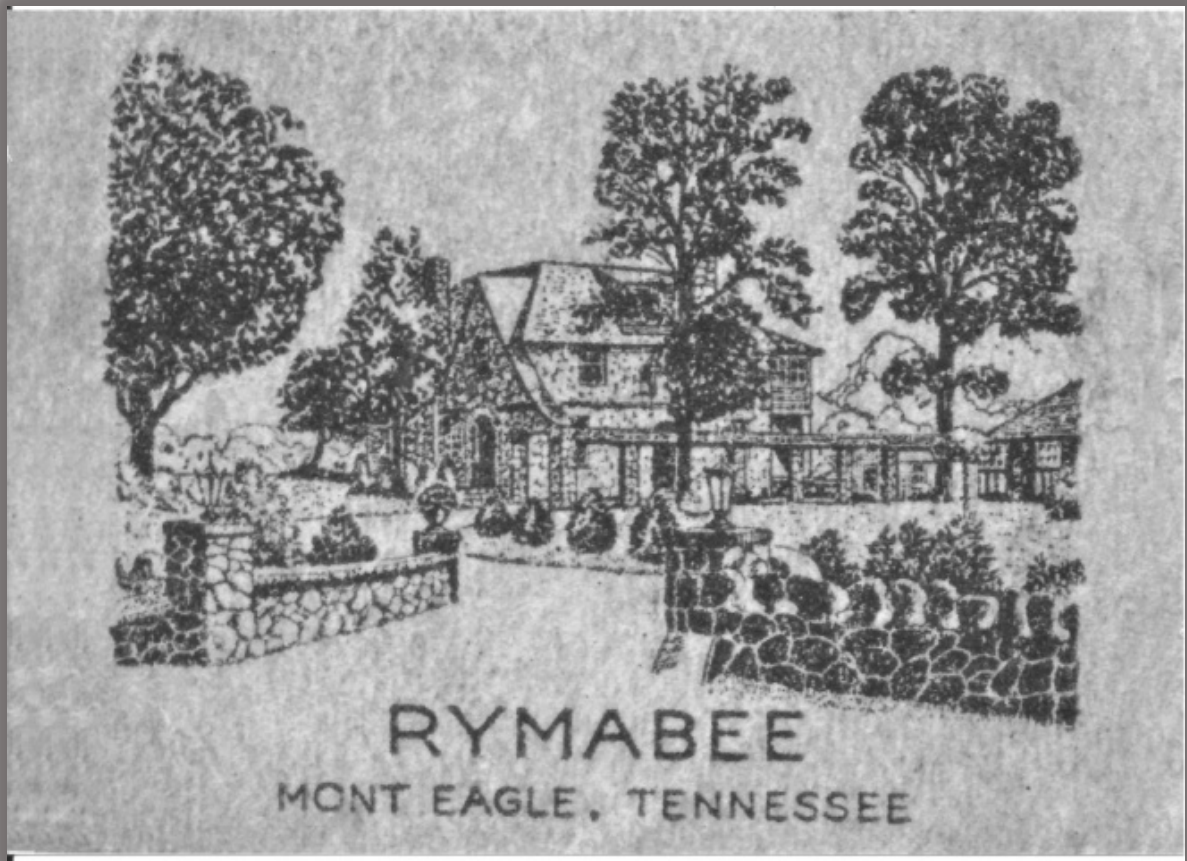


# “All Things Monteagle”

Researched, Written and Compiled (2017 – 2022)

by Jackie Layne Partin



## Part 1 of "All Things Monteagle"

### From Indian Land, Land Grants, John Moffat and Going Forward

by Jackie Layne Partin

One might ask, "Why Monteagle?" For the first seventeen years of my life, Monteagle, Tennessee simply was my dot on the map, my home! My earliest memories are floating as zephyrs around the little town, around King Street, around a little house on the right at the top of the first large hill. Now that I am nearing the winter of my life, a drive through Monteagle makes seeing my hometown difficult; it has changed, or shall we say, been swallowed by the encroaching outside world. Progress? In one way – maybe, in another, the wiping away of memories, a photo album of what once existed. Drift back with me, before our births, before our town, and find some history that possibly has hidden itself from us.

Today in **2017**, our area may have small stands of virgin timber about which only a whisper can be heard. There remain a few beautiful, undisturbed areas around our plateau where one might get the feel for what it was like when only the American Indian traveler or hunter and the lone Daniel Boone or Davy Crockett-type character came across our little space. What gave this southwestern foothill of Appalachia a breath of life before the railroad forced its way east from "Old Coal Bank," present day St. Andrews area near Sewanee, Tennessee?

We must move back, way back, way, way back in time until we get into the deep woods and rock shelters of the Cherokee Indian lands. Then come the times spent being part of White, Warren, Franklin, and Marion counties, then dealing with large land grants and heirs of those grants, then the moving of the Marion County boundary making Grundy County part of our area, then finally home, Moffat, our tiny little village on top of the lower Cumberland range. Moffat evolved on that narrow ridge where one could walk from the northern bluffs to the southern bluffs in less time than it took our gg--grandmothers to wash and hang their first wash kettle of Monday morning's laundry, or our gg--grandfathers to gather the makings for the first moonshine mash of the week. They, the places listed, shared bits of land and history to help us get to where we are today. By the time our village was founded in **1870**, the journey had covered many years of wheeling and dealing, sometimes disingenuous – removal of the Indians, stumbling and cheating through land grants, poles, chains, creeks, branches, bluffs and valley, (oh,

those crazy land grants), and at other times, ingenuity backed by educated planning and just plain hard work.

### Bostick Place

On our current Monteagle maps, we can spot a road named Bostick Ave. that turns right off Parker Street and makes a loop of sorts. John Green Bostick and his son Tandy Clark Key Bostick and several others, accepted the land grant offer from the State of Tennessee and acquired the maximum individual allowance of 5,000 acres (unless one's name was Samuel B. Barrell), portions of which spread on top of our mountain, on bluff sides, and in the valley to the North known as Pelham Valley, Coffee County at the time. In J. G. Bostick's will of **October 4, 1856**, stated as "Item 5," we read, "*This is my will and desire and I hereby give and bequeath unto my son William Bostick (after the death of my wife Eliza) all my land lying in Grundy County, Tennessee.*" John G. Bostick (1784-1857) was buried in the Winchester Cemetery in Memphis, Tennessee, but graves were destroyed and the cemetery desecrated years ago. An attempt to put "Humpty Dumpty" together again seldom works in an old cemetery; it simply makes those living feel slightly better. That bit of information was thrown in because he and others predated our town founder's interest in our little piece of Tennessee.

William Bostick obviously inherited his father's Grundy County land after **1844**, the year the new county was formed. Remember that Grundy land once belonged to Warren, Franklin and Marion counties at different times. When the grants were entered, that portion of land that became known as Monteagle lay partially in Franklin and Marion Counties, but when John Green Bostick died, his remaining, unsold, land was in Grundy County. At the time, Grundy County was not part of the particular land we came to know as Monteagle. It remains a little confusing since the Bostick land entries were made in Franklin County **1837**. Tandy's grant, entered on **Feb. 26, 1838**, covered a portion of Franklin County (at that time), crossed Hollingsworth Trace where the stage traveled in **1838**, cornered his father's grant on the bench of the mountain, ran south of Colquitt's Spring where there was an old mill—all being land obviously tied to the fringe of our mountain ridge. William Thompson also had grant land coming together with the Bostick land; the Monteagle Cumberland Presbyterian Church cornered in with Thompson/Bostick entries, and the Thompson land shared a boundary with the MSSA acreage.

To impress upon the reader just how confusing land deals can be, please read the following note, then do as I did and take another read: *Republican Banner Steam Press*—**Aug. 7, 1858**, "*There will be a grand pic-nic at Tracy City in Franklin county on next*

Wednesday, the 11<sup>th</sup> inst. The object is to give everybody a chance to examine the site selected for the University of the South. Many distinguished men from Southern States will be at Tracy City and it is expected that it will be an unusually interesting occasion. There will be an immense multitude there and the preparations to receive them are on the most liberal scale. Tracy City is in the neighborhood of Beersheba Springs, and is accessible by railroad from Nashville. We hope our city will be well represented on the occasion..." One would suppose that the writers for the *Republican Banner* in 1858 would have known in what county Tracy City laid – Marion or Franklin? This possibly is one of those county line movements – so fast that the tax collectors couldn't keep up with the constituents of each county.

**Note: Colquitt Spring** was near the town of Moffat, Henley land, Austell tract, and the Moffat Mountain Road. This would be somewhere below the MSSA on the northern side of the Monteagle plateau. This information can be found in a deed (Book G – pg. 370) made to William Levan by John and Lydia Moffat. Susan (Layne) Levan, aka Sukey Levan, William's wife, lived just above Sukey's Bend now known as the horseshoe curve/bend on old Hwy. 41. I'm guessing that Colquitt Spring was between Sukey's land and the back of the Assembly. And because of the water table changes throughout the years, the spring may be lost to us forever.

#### Added Notes Concerning the Mountain District Grants and the Bosticks' Deeds

*"Mountain District: made on the basis of Tennessee Acts, 1827, Ch. 4 which established a register's office in Sparta for new region called the Mountain District; this new land office apparently replaced those of the old Third Surveyor's District, which were closed; purchase grants at \$.01 to \$.125 per acre up to 5,000 acres; these grants covered counties of White, Franklin, Warren, Marion, Bledsoe, Overton, Fentress, and Jackson and were designed to dispose of remaining surplus public land on the Cumberland Plateau (and, from the state's standpoint, get it onto the tax rolls); this district, perhaps more than any other, was subject to gross fraud and speculative abuse in the issuance of grants."* (One type of land grant in Tennessee)

Ms. Lillian Ey, a great researcher, sent me some local grant information for John G. and Tandy Bostick, plus Bazel Summers grant entry.

For John G Bostick (Bosticks on the TSLA database)

Grant NO. 6586 for 5000 acres on Jan 8, 1839

Entry 2315 on Feb 14, 1837 Franklin County

Surveyed Nov 26, 1838

Mentions headwaters of Elk River, an old mill, Hollingsworth Trace (I have learned that some entries refer to Hollingsworth Trace as "the big road"),

and something that looks like Colquits or maybe Calgrets Spring.  
Mountain District Grant Book L Page 197

For Tandy Bostick  
Grant NO. 6590 for 5000 acres on Jan 8, 1839  
Entry 2316 on Feb 14, 1837 Franklin County  
Surveyed Nov 26, 1838  
Mentions same landmarks as John Bosticks plus John Bosticks grant.  
Mountain District Grant Book L Page 198

For Bazel Summers  
Grant NO. 8806 for 2000 acres on Oct 20, 1842 described as located in Coffee County  
Entry 2220 on Oct 4, 1836 Franklin County  
Surveyed Dec 6, 1839  
Mentions only waters of Elk River and the rockhouse  
Mountain District Grant Book T Page 59-60

## Part 2 of "All Things Monteagle"

### Bostick Place and Samuel "Sam" Gilliam

by Jackie Layne Partin

On **Oct. 12, 1858**, an ad was published in the *Nashville Union and American* newspaper: "*Chancery sale—By virtue of a decree of the Chancery Court of Altamont, pronounced at the September term, 1858, on the premises, a valuable tract of land known as the **Bostick Place**, in Grundy county, and in civil district No. 6, and situated in the vicinity of the Great South-Western University, Said land is bounded on the south by the lands of S. T. Roberts, on the east by the lands of Lovel D. Sartin and James Sartin, on the north by the lands of James Winton; and contains some 330 Acres, and will be surveyed before the day of sale. A portion of said land cleared and the balance well timbered, with Poplar and wild cherry growth. Terms—On a credit of one and two years, except \$250.00 to be paid in cash, bond with good and approved security will be demanded of the purchaser, and lien retained for the payment of the purchase money. The biddings to open at \$11.00 per acre. Robert Sanders, C. & M.*"

The land above was in Burroughs/Burrows Cove. The mention of the University in the vicinity was an effort to enhance the value of the land although some Bostick land was adjacent to those grants around the not-so-much-a-school school in **1858**. Instead of what we see today (**2017**) as the University of the South, back then there were many

exciting talks and lectures, fancy picnics, ample planning, and gatherings of money, possibly all causing planners to be oblivious to the great coming war, the Civil War, or if you prefer, the War Between the States. Around **1837** an inclusive Bostick Place covered not only our future little portion of the plateau and valley but much more acreage—confusing to a kitchen granny to say the least! I often wonder if the American Indians had been treated fairly by immigrants, if they could have done a much better job with the division of the land that is now known as Middle Tennessee; in other words, would they have shared, kept promises, been fair in their business dealings? Did they have a “good old boys’ club, or was integrity innate?

Several land grants cornered or shared borders on our portion of the plateau, the sides and valleys. The Bosticks’ grants shared one side and a couple corners; Charles Christian’s 1250 acres lay on both sides of “*Holdworths road*” [Hollingsworth]. William Thompson’s grant was hiding in the bushes; Basil Summers’ land grant circled with the wagons in the midst of our area; actually, his wagons may have turned up at times circled with the Bosticks or vice versa. Names such as Moffat, Steger, Hord/Whitworth, Henley, Gilliam, Bell, Maupin, Austell, and others kept the court scribes busy with all the payment defaults, lawsuits, counter-suits, subpoenas, etc., in our village land dealings, especially in the **1870** and **1880** decades. Off to a rocky start, wouldn’t you think?

According to his death certificate, Samuel “Sam” Gilliam (**Nov. 30, 1842-Mar. 1, 1923**), son of Harris and Nancy (Reid) Gilliam, and husband of Mary Ann “Mollie” Buckner, died in Pelham, TN, and was buried at **Bostick Place**; this is my proof that such a place existed, or was so called, before the names, Moffat Station, Moffat, Monteagle Springs, Mount Eagle, Mt. Eagle, Monteagle, a game of musical chairs, losing one, then another, as the time rolled on. How on earth was so much confusion brought about in the naming of one’s town? Sometimes the name Monteagle belonged to the large hotel, and at other times it was tacked to the actual town.

No one knows where Samuel Gilliam is buried, but we have presented two possible places, 1) Burrows Cove at Bostick Place, or 2) Bostick Avenue in Monteagle. Either place would have been loved by Sam. Just about all we retrieve from Sam’s death certificate is that there was an area of land called Bostick Place where he was interred.

Samuel Gilliam lived at the foot of the mountain near Trussell Cove and owned land all around the northern side of the mountain and some on the sides of the plateau. He farmed extensively, built a good farm for himself and worked hard at other jobs. On **Mar. 24, 1886**, we read in *The Daily American*, “*The barn and stable of Capt. Sam Gilliam, keeper of the Monteagle Assembly grounds, was destroyed by fire...and everything it*

contained lost. Mr. Gilliam was absent at Jasper, the county seat, attending court. At 10 o'clock Mr. Gilliam saw everything safe, the stable boy being sick. It is estimated a loss of about \$2,000, a valuable span of mules, considerable corn and feed. It is supposed to be the work of an incendiary. Mr. Gilliam's home is about three miles from Monteagle at the foot of the mountain." From this article, we see that Sam Gilliam was the "keeper" of the Monteagle Assembly grounds, probably the first one hired by the new Chautauqua. This meant he spent a great deal of time on the plateau.

In *The Nashville American*, **14 Sep. 1896**, we read about a wonderful man, Mr. John W. Thomas, who had "... agreed to give a certain percentage of the amount taken in by the road (railroad—jackie) in travel thereto for a term of years. When the water supply at that place was so inadequate as to threaten a dissolution of the company and abandonment of the mountain, Mr. Thomas came to its relief by expending more than \$10,000 in providing a pumping station and tank for the purpose of bringing water from the valley below, and this water is now furnished free to the whole village." Looking back to the start of Mr. Thomas' efforts, we read on **April 27, 1888**, work was to begin soon on the new waterworks for the MSSA. "The locating party for the new waterworks arrived here yesterday. R. C. Morris, Chief Engineer, W. C. Robinson, B. L. Blackie, of Nashville, and J. N. Shern, of Murfreesboro. Work will begin at once." Later, on **May 12, 1888**, in the same newspaper, we have these words, "The work of the main-laying for the water supply is going rapidly forwards. Capt. Sam Gilliam has it in hand. The line can be traced by the ditching across the valley to the great spring from 'Table Rock.'" Two large white tents in the valley at the farthest point look like tiny envelopes. The view now is very beautiful." And in the **Aug. 12, 1888** issue of same paper, A. S. Colyar writes from his vantage point at the Corzelius/Monteagle Hotel that the "the greatest improvement here is the supply of water. The hotel and grounds are well supplied, but it has cost fifty thousand dollars to do it." Good old Sam Gilliam did everything in his power to get that water up to those MSSA residents.



**The caption on the postcard photo reads: The Water Tanks, Monteagle, Tenn.**

Keeping good sturdy tanks and operational equipment for the MSSA was an ongoing task as seen ten or more years later when we read that *"The Pumping engine and the new water tank arrived Monday morning. Engineer Robinson took the engine down to Big Spring this morning. As soon as that is placed and in order, he will set up the tank, and the pumping will begin at once. This will be a great convenience to the large number of families already settled on the assembly grounds."* Big Spring Cave is tantamount to "Wonder Cave," as it was later known. It was two miles from the big spring to the two water tanks at Table Rock at the back of MSSA.

Under Monteagle news on **January 30, 1889**, we find that *"hunting has claimed attention from everyone with a gun. Plenty of game, easily tracked and good returns in furs and meat are the rewards. A fine deer was shot on the farm of Capt. Sam Gilliam, in the west cove, by J. Trustle."* Even the rich gloried in wild game. My Uncle Alex Benson Layne told me that during WWII the forest around Monteagle was void of wild game. People were often in dire straits during the food rationing years of the war.





**Samuel Gilliam**  
**(1842-1923)**

In 1908 Sam Gilliam was in the process of suing the Monteagle Assembly wherein he alleged that his spring was polluted by seepage from the Assembly Grounds' sewage. Sam won his case, but an appeal was probable, seeing that the MSSA board claimed that the septic tank in use at the time had solved the problem of "*scientific disposition of all the sewage, which was eventually carried off into Elk River.*" The lawsuit was later dismissed. This record, as well as applicable deeds, indicates that Mr. Gilliam owned land near the back of the Assembly, on the side of the mountain, and at the foot of the mountain; this would have been why he believed that his well was polluted by sewage.

The reader can easily understand that Sam busied himself with profitable and enjoyable matters sprinkled with some negativity. My effort in this portion of research is to put Sam Gilliam in the territory of **Bostick Place**, a place near and dear enough for him to choose as his final resting place. Could he possibly be buried on the top of the plateau where he spent a lot of his time? He was a descendant of the Bostick family, some of whom are buried at the Willis/Austell/Bostick Cemetery on the Grundy/Coffee County line? His wife and son are buried at the Church of Christ Cemetery in Pelham Valley. But that cemetery is not called "Bostick Place." We will touch on Moffat/Monteagle burial grounds later on in our work.

Maybe we should have called our little ridge “Bostick Place,” just as the Tracy City area was formerly called “Wooten Place” before Mr. Benjamin Wooten sold out to the Sewanee Mining Company, Inc., and Summerfield was so-called in honor of its grant holder, Basil Summers. First the Indians sheltered here; then we might say the Bostick heirs were near, sprinkled with some Thompsons, some Trussells, and many Summers families who actually stayed put; they hung around from the time of the acquisition of a grant. Then John Moffat stepped from the train, and we finally had the cornerstone of our town, or did we?

### Part 3 of “All Things Monteagle”

#### John Moffat’s Doomed Dream

by Jackie Layne Partin

**June 8, 1870**—*Republican Banner*, “Mr. John Moffat, a Scotch Canadian, a man who is well known in Canada and throughout the Northern States as a temperance lecturer, literary and scientific man, has determined to make Tennessee his future home. Besides taking \$10,000 of stock in the Tennessee Coal and Railroad Company, he has bought about 3,000 acres of land on Cumberland Mountain, on the line of this railroad, on which he proposes to locate a large number of small farmers – educated and practical farmers – under an organization, which will afford facilities in transportation that individual effort, could not secure. Mr. Moffat concluded these contracts some weeks since, has made his payments, and is now building his house. He is now here on his way north to prepare for bringing out the first lot of settlers...”

From the above news article, the reader would get the idea that John Moffat had all his ducks in a row – but did he? Six days earlier on **June 2, 1870**, Coleman F. Hord and wife Virginia L. (Thompson) Hord sold two tracts of Grundy County land to John Moffat, founder of the village of Moffat. The land was destined to become part of the future town of Monteagle, Tennessee. One tract contained 332 acres and the other 1,429 for a total of 1,761 acres. John agreed to pay for the land in installments, the last due two years later on **June 2, 1872**. He paid the initial notes but could never garner enough money, or concern, to pay the last note, \$656.25, which amount with interest had grown to \$849.85 by the year **1877**. By **1880**, the interest and court cost sum totaled \$1,025.32.

John Moffat had been subpoenaed to appear for a hearing in the Grundy County Chancery Court held in Tracy City. He acknowledged receiving the subpoena on **Nov. 9, 1876**. A special lien was placed on the two tracts of land for the \$849.85 owed, and the time given for payment was “the first Monday of July next.” The decree was rendered on **April 11, 1877**.

Meanwhile Coleman F. Hord had died in **1874**, and in **1876**, Virginia married Edward Morton Whitworth, and the court continued pushing on this original bill/decree while other cases against Moffat came rolling in. The whole decade in the 1870s was filled with lawsuits against Moffat; he had made somewhat of a disgrace of himself in the little village that carried his name. Not only Virginia but Elizabeth Hooper, Jane Maupin, Harris Gilliam, Harris Bell and many in the Henley clan, all heirs of Campbell Henley, a Bostick heir, sued Moffat and each other until the beautiful little village appeared to become a scene out of the wild, wild west, hopefully without the guns.

The sale by the Whitworths allows for the year **1869**, or even earlier, for John Moffat to have made his decision to put down his roots right here on our little plateau. John had formed a good relationship with Peter Staub who, during the same time frame, had managed to plant a Swiss Colony in Grundy County. John had a dream of doing the same thing, only forming a Scottish Colony on the southwestern end of the county. There is some evidence that John Moffat's real estate buying extended into Basil Summers' grant and east to what we know as Pigeon Springs. He became a busy, busy man traveling over the country looking for skilled tradesmen to help him built his little village, form a large cattle farm, build a shoe factory and use his cow hides in the boot and shoe business. For the most part he got some mighty good families to move to this area and help him fulfill his dream. However, "mighty good families" will not "hack it" when money in hand is a prerequisite.

John Moffat drilled with too big of an auger. "...Mr. Moffat, like a good many other men, had more brains than money, and more enterprise than economy...A. S. C." This quote probably can be attributed to Arthur St. Clair Colyar. No doubt John was full of energy, zeal, and desire to accomplish his dream, but had he been in this country and local area long enough to form tight relationships with monied people who were looking for secure financial ventures, men ready to dive with him right into the dream and ride on the billowy-soft clouds?

Remember, John carelessly allowed his real estate venture to fail, go under, with the Whitworth debacle. His less than zealous investors slithered away, turned, looked back and saw a sincerely good man turn to a pillar of salt. That last payment could have saved him from all kinds of trouble. He had little land for all practical purposes and seemingly little money even though he worked as the Tennessee Commissioner of Immigration. He had made no answer to the court after his subpoena, being equal to a confession of wrong. What on earth was John thinking? What made him sell land that he did not own and continue selling it for years after having all of this matter brought to his attention? What a quagmire; what a mess of title confusion; what an embarrassment coupled with angry, confused locals, those to whom he had already sold land, namely: Baxter and Lappin, (**1871**); Winston (**1872**); Mabee and Shetters (**1873**); Tucker, Schaerer, Graenicher, Voight, and Lappin, (**1874**); Honeycut, Sutton, Mabee, Tucker, Rapine,

Graenicher, Porter, and Mitchell (trust), (1875); Onley, Mabee, and Honeycut (1876); and possibly other instances. Lots for the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, a Cemetery, and the Shoe and Leather Company also were among the ones set aside or conveyed by John. A deed for fifty acres more or less with grantees being Mrs. Hattie B. Kells and Mrs. Maria Louise Yerger has interesting information, "...being a portion of an entry made of J. G. Bostick in the year 1837 and sold to Moffatt by Harris Bell and other heirs of said John G. Bostick..." was registered in 1874 in Grundy County, TN. However, M. L. Yerger's name was listed with the lands afore mentioned.

At the **April 1877** term of Chancery Court, the decree was recorded and presented to the court by the Grundy County Clerk and Master, R. B. Roberts, wherein land not already sold by John Moffat would be auctioned off at the clerk's office in Tracy City, and if that did not make up the amount Moffat owed the Hord/Whitworths, not forgetting the interest accrued, then the land already conveyed by Moffat, starting in a numbered fashion already compiled by the court, would be sold, one tract at a time. All of this was to take place on the same day. Of course, before the sale could take place, ads had to be prominently placed in Monteagle and Tracy City as to the particulars of the sale. John Moffat's name, the good name he worked so many years to build was blemished.

*"In selling the unsold land, the master will sell all the land, included is the Moffat purchase of Hord and wife, conveyed in trust to Deft. Steger being the 17 acres on which the hotel is located and the same is hereby classified and decreed to be sold as land unsold by Moffat, it appearing to the court by the admissions of all parties that said parcel of land was conveyed by Moffat to O. D. Mabee and that on the **22 February 1875**, Deft. Mabee conveyed the same to Deft. Steger for the benefit of John Moffat and after the executions of said trust deed Deft. Mabee conveyed absolutely to Moffat all his rights to the land."* (Decree Excerpt)

On **October 10, 1877**, the Whitworths transferred their right, title, interest, claim and any judgment the claim might bring to T. M. Steger; one might assume he was the Whitworths' lawyer, and his attorney fees were eating away at any money that might be collected from Moffat. *"That Whitmore and wife had transferred their interest in said decree in the cause last above mentioned to T. M. Steger. It is ordered by the Court that Whitworth and wife be divested of their Interest in said decree and that the same vest in T. M. Steger."* **February 7, 1880**, the Clerk and Master did as the decree instructed, sold the land at public auction with Thomas Maddin Steger coming up with \$3,900.00 to close the deal. This bid put 1,429 acres of land, a hotel, and any other appurtenances into the highly, respected Davidson County lawyer's hands.

In **1880**, Thomas Maddin Steger acquired, on the steps of the courthouse, most of the Whitworth land that Mr. Moffat had not already conveyed in the **1870s**. Later Mr. Steger put his land into the care of a new resident of our village, Egbert Welles Holcombe, who sold it for him. Some still living today (**2018**) bought land from descendants of the Holcombes. Other real estate dealers gnawed into these large grants and remnants

thereof aiding in the downsizing of the Indian lands into villages like Moffat, the original name of our town. Several thousand acres were whittled down until my parents could buy in 1943 five acres more or less from Holcombe descendants. When I left Monteagle behind in 1960, it was a small town loved by all its citizens. Its journey from Indian lands to Moffat Station/Monteagle covered approximately forty years, more or less. Of course, the town is now (2019) nearly 150 years old.

## **Part 4 of "All Things Monteagle"**

### **Moffat's Station**

by Jackie Layne Partin

The John Moffat stories about his train trip from Cowan to the mountain top, stepping from the train, walking across the wilderness from bluff to bluff, enjoying what he saw, tacking a sign on a tree naming the train stop *Moffat's Station*, and buying much of the land from the Bostick heirs, have been told over and over with variances. A little wooden shed, Moffat's Station, was built next to the railroad tracks where it boldly told the crew and passengers that the pinnacle in the clouds, or should we say fog, notorious fog, had been reached. One wants to believe that Moffat made his eye-opening trip on a bright, sunny day with blue skies covering the whole scene surrounding him.

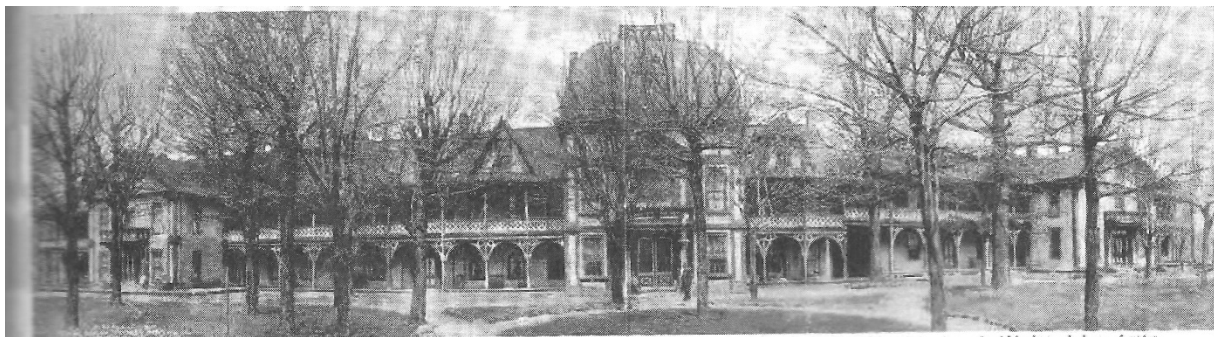
*"Moffat, June 22, 1878 – Why not? If a special from Tracy, with its coal and its convicts, or from Sewanee, with its knowing mule, its base-ball and its very stale political items, palephonic reports from the pow-wows of defunct Indians, etc., be of interests to the public, why not from Moffat, with its – with its – well, with its superior location and future importance? As for news, we flatter ourselves we have something later as well as more interesting, than the article current at Sewanee. In Instance: Blackberries, cherries and plums – the finest you ever saw – are now in order: whortleberries are just coming in; the Monteagle has been through a course of repair and improvements and is now open. (Summer visitors who would like to share in the whortleberry crop may put this and that together.) Recently some good people of Tracy decided that their Sunday-school scholars ought to have a picnic – get out and see nature minus the coal; and, in order to give them the best possible view of her fair face, a point near Moffat was selected. So, today we expect to see an excursion train out. We understand the Moffat Sunday-school expects to have a picnic about the fourth of July." (25 Jun 1878 – The Daily American) Wow! What a busy, busy description of what lay ahead for the new village of Moffat.*

Whortleberries, what were they? Mama always sent us out to pick "huckleberries," a small roundish blueberry-type. Back in the day, we picked them from low bushes, but there was a taller version that bore berries later in the year. Today's

blueberries are hybrid and fill the bucket quickly, but one *must* remember *picking huckleberries*, in order to have had the experience of going berry picking; blackberries were easy picking; dew berries were difficult since they grew on runners on the ground. Gooseberries grew in Clouse Hill when I was a child; they were a transparent-type of berry with a color of the green grapes we see in stores today. Picking was tedious for little hands, but our tiny hands devoured them quickly in the cold, winter months when Mama opened a quart jar for our dessert or made jams and jellies to spread on hot, lard-and-buttermilk biscuits. She choked the dough off into large pieces, then flatten a bit with the back of her fingers and spread hot bacon grease on the top for a golden biscuit.

There seemed to be confusion in the first decade of our little town over what the name of the village was to be – Moffat or Monteagle. An advertisement in a **July 15, 1877** newspaper announced that “*MONTEAGLE, Moffat, Marion Co., Tenn. was a delightful Summer Resort,*” a nice alliteration. In **1878** a regular correspondent to *The Daily American* wrote from Moffat that “*Life in the large, cool rooms and shady galleries of the Monteagle – quiet and easy going – is generally characterized by the one word, “comfortable” ...* In several readings, the village carried the name Moffat and the hotel, one of the first buildings erected, was called the **Monteagle** or **Mont Eagle Springs Hotel**. The eastern section of the hotel was built first by John Moffat and Oliver Mabee. It was actually the first home for the Mabees. Then additions to the hotel began to flow westward under new ownerships and new managements.

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The finished product of the Monteagle Hotel after wings were added.

That hotel burned on **June 16, 1929** about 4:30 a. m. starting near the center of the building at a loss of \$19,000. The rebuilding of the new hotel was begun immediately so as to be open for the early summer travelers in **1931**; one ad reads, “*Spend your vacation or week-end at the New Monteagle Hotel, Monteagle, Tennessee, Good Orchestra and Dance*

*Saturday Night.*" That building stood fast until **Mar. 1, 1950** when once again fire destroyed it.

More notes: **30 Jun 1907** – *The Nashville American*, "...and last but not least, Miss Lillian Moffatt, the daughter of Dr. Moffatt, the original owner of all the land in the neighborhood of Monteagle, when it was known, and for many years, as Moffatt's Station..." (*The Daily American* – **27 Jul 1884**) "...Prof. Moffat was a remarkable man in progressive enterprise and for the principles of morality. It was he who stopped off by the mountain road and determined to establish a town on this very spot. It was called Moffat for several years, until he had been unfortunate, and successors to his enterprises got a change of name to Monteagle. (*The Daily American* – **06 Aug 1889**) "An interesting fact not generally known is that Monteagle was formerly called Moffat, after its founder, John Moffat, first Commissioner of Immigration of Tennessee. He named the first hotel after Lord Monteagle, the first Scottish nobleman to distinguished himself in the British Parliament I personally do not think that the name **Monteagle** was the initial intent of John Moffat; he named the town **Moffat**, and **Moffat** it was to be until the winds were taken from John's sails by legal struggles, health issues, and then an early death. Later, I include another version from where the name Monteagle may have come.

## Part 5 of "All Things Monteagle"

### Moffat or Monteagle Springs

The following article was written in defense of John Moffat and the town's real name. *The American* – **Feb. 17, 1881**: "To the American: In the Banner of the 29<sup>th</sup> ult. There appeared an article headed "Picturesque Tennessee," in the course of which the village of Moffat was repeatedly alluded to as Monteagle Springs, a name not to be found on the maps, and wholly unauthorized by any sense of justice to the founder, Prof. John Moffat.

*Prof. Moffat made his appearance on this plateau over ten years ago; purchased a tract of five thousand acres of land; erected a saw-mill and temporary dwellings, initiative of further progress. Soon he was made Commissioner of Immigration and drew much population and wealth to the State. By his co-operation there were established a ladies' college and a spacious hotel, the latter as a summer resort, and of which he became sole owner. Himself and the immigrants soon enlarged the village to an incorporated shoe factory, a church, stores and many convenient dwellings, among which two or three may be classed as elegant."*

*A conflict of titles brought dismay to the residents of the town, and an accident to Prof. Moffat's person resulted in such nervous exhaustion that any further progress in his plans was, for the time, out of the question.*

*His plans lying dormant, and amid the convulsions that followed, Prof. Moffat sought other fields of usefulness for the purpose of recuperating his energies and his fortune, which, from the many flattering notices of the press, are a consummation.*

*With renewed energies he expects to return to the scenes of his former efforts, and he will find that not only has the hotel passed from his ownership, but even his plans are being carried out by an incorporated company, which, not being satisfied with the prospective profits of his invention, seek to take from him the honor of his good name by changing the name of the town, which had he not other honors as bright, would make him poor, indeed.*

*The popularity of the watering place is most gratifying to Prof. Moffat and his family, but the effort to change the name of Moffat to Monteagle Springs will meet with but little favor on the plateau, and though the changed name may be attractive to invalids and tourists, they will not fail to perceive its injustice..." signed Pioneer 1867.*

I do not know who wrote the article above, but one can feel the dissatisfaction in what was happening in and to the town of Moffat. I doubt that Mr. Moffat bought 5000 acres of land but suffice to say that he bought hundreds, maybe a couple thousand acres. John Moffat's little village was known by several names: Moffat's Station; Moffat; Mont Eagle Springs; Mont Eagle; Mt. Eagle, Monteagle Village and finally Monteagle. Before **Aug. 4, 1880**, the hotel owners were listed as Capts. Conley and Steger. Why was Mr. Moffat's name removed from his hotel, his village? There was trouble "in Moffat." Besides the physical accident spoken of by the "*Pioneer*," what else knocked the wind out of John Moffat's sails?

Let's insert at this place some notes from *The Anderson Intelligencer* issues on **Aug. 25, 1887**: "*Monteagle and Mont Eagle. There is on our table a communication from Rev. R. J. M. Only, which he wrote for publication, but afterward requested should not be printed. It is in reply to the article written by Prof. Goodloe, which appeared in the issue of July 25<sup>th</sup>. Rev. Mr. Only states that the east wing of the hotel was built and opened as the property of Mrs. M. E. Mabee, and was named by her husband, Mr. O. D. Mabee, "Mont Eagle Hotel" for a hotel on the south side of, and about half a mile below, Niagara Falls, which was named for Eagle Bluff, or Eagle Mountain on the opposite side. Mr. Mabee visited that hotel and retained such pleasant memories of it that he named the hotel here, Mont Eagle Hotel.*"

*"After Mr. Moffat bought the hotel, he wanted a sign painted thus: "Mont (here a large eagle) Hotel," but this was postponed. In 1880, after Capt. Steger had bought Co. Moffat's interest, the name of the village was changed from Moffat, as was the post office, to Mont Eagle. By reference to the hotel register of 1881 – 3 and to the U. S. Postal Guide, you will see that the name is two words. When the Assembly asked for a charter, they adopted the name Monteagle (one word), and, therefore, the Assembly's name is Monteagle, located at Mont Eagle."*

The clipping above came from the "*Monteaglean, a neat little eight-page journal published at Monteagle.*" I cite this because so many stories tell us of John Moffat naming



the town Monteagle after a "Lord Monteagle" from Scotland. I never did accept that thought, but I could be wrong. From other bits of history, we understand that Dr. Oliver D. Mabee and his wife, Mary Elizabeth had, as their first residence, the east wing of the lovely Mont Eagle Hotel suggesting to me that they had something to do with the naming of it. Often, we tend to overlook the Mabee family as being quite important friends and partners of the early Moffat family.

John Moffat had trouble with real estate dealings in Marion County also. Some of Moffat's land dealing errors can be laid at his feet, but many people in the Mountain District had to deal with these land disputes because of shady surveying, over-lapping grants, personal favors, etc., we might call it "fraud." There may still remain questions today (2018) about land boundaries brought about when the land was taken from the Indians and thrown open to the public in a hap hazard manner. Just about the only consistencies seen in these old, mountain grants are the Governors' names and their secretaries' signatures. The following is a long read and may be interesting to only a few mountain people. **Osborne Thompson** is buried at Summerfield; I live now (2018) within walking distance of where the **old bridge** crossing the **Fiery Gizzard** used to be, so this fraud was going on around us, back when our area was Marion County.

*"Daily American via McMinnville New Era, Mar. 6, 1881 – "A GRIEVOUS WRONG – How the trouble About Titles to Cumberland Mountain Lands Originated – "In your issue of Feb. 10 you have an article headed "Gruetli," in which very just complaint is made of the suits brought against the settlers by "claimants to the lands they have purchased and improved." It is time this matter was thoroughly investigated and the titles to these lands put in such a shape that settlers may be assured they will not be robbed by irresponsible persons selling lands, the titles to which have any cloud upon them. The foundation and root of this difficulty originates in the immense fraud committed years ago by one Edmond Monroe, and Samuel B. Barrell, of Boston, Mass., who employed on John Stump to enter large bodies of land under the act of 1820-30, with a view to speculation, but in doing which they went beyond the law in such a way that the grants they obtained on them it is contended conveyed no title. I will endeavor to explain their proceeding, but before doing so will state that this John Stump, under the pretence of this act, entered for these parties 80,000 acres, all of which were pretended to be assigned to the said **Saml. B. Barrell**, in whose name grants were issued. The law of 1820-30 reads thus: 'Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Tennessee, that it shall and may be lawful for any person or persons to enter and obtain grants for any quantity of land not exceeding five thousand (5,000) acres, north and east of the Congressional reservation line, and north of the Tennessee river."*

*"The records show they commences in Franklin county, where they used the names of sixteen individuals, one to each five thousand acre entry or tract; thence they went to Warren county, and from there to Marion and so on, using the same names they had originally used in Franklin, and again in other counties as they took them in rotation, thus infringing on and evading the intention of the statute, which says that no person shall enter more than five thousand acres in the territory north and east of the Congressional reservation line, and north of the Tennessee river.*

*In further illustration I will describe their actions in Marion county. At that time Samuel B. Mitchell was the County Surveyor. The mountains in those days were sparsely settled, and the party stayed all night with Osborne Thompson, whom they employed as a chain carrier, stating to him their business. At his suggestion they ran out for him around where he lived, a five hundred acre tract, before they commenced their general operations. They then made their starting point from a bridge that cross the Big Gizzard creek, old Higginbotham turnpike road, running due west one mile; from this point they turned due north and ran about fifteen hundred poles, they then turned east and at about four hundred poles came the bluff at Little Sequatchie. It was the fashion at that time to carry jugs of whiskey on expeditions of this kind, and by the time this point was gained they had imbibed enough to induce them to quit work, and they all returned to Thompson's for the night. They had now got sufficient data to enable them to plat and enter the whole county, which they did and no further surveying was made. In platting they continued this imaginary north line to the extreme of the county and set off 5,000 acre tracts right and left, but for the purpose of giving the appearance of reality to their proceedings they gave various dates to their entries, and the books show the following as a sample: entry 1585, dated Feb. 17, 1837, Frederick H. Stump enters 5,000 acres beginning on the northwest corner of Leonard P. Cheatham, then north 806 poles, then west 806 poles, then south 806 poles, then to the beginning. Entry 1511, dated Nov. 24, 1836, Thos. Craddock enters 5,000 acres, beginning on the northeast corner of Frederick H. Stump, then east 806 poles, then south 806 poles, then west 806 poles, then to the beginning. Here they were not sufficiently particular; at the time Craddock is said to have begun on Frederick H. Stump's northeast corner no such corner existed as the entry of Stump was not made till the following February. In this way the whole county was platted in one body – not a land mark made or called for – in all covering 120,000 acres.”*

*“One of the present representatives or claimants of these lands, Mr. Monroe, was her about two years ago, with a corps of engineers, for the purpose of examining these lands, but could find no lines indicating any previous survey, and last year they had a Mr. Davis surveying this county, as indeed he is doing at this time, marking the trees and putting in stakes all over the woods, indicative of the lines he is running for the purpose of locating these pretended-surveys and grants said to have been issued on them.”*

*“In the suit brought by Mr. Tate against the Swiss settlers, these parties claimed they had a grant covering this property in the name of George Cagle, but they could not locate it. Then Warren county entries and surveys had all been plotted like those in Marion, but the beginning of them, said to be on Collins' river, is lost, and they had to resort to other means to have any showing. They ultimately compromised with Tate, paying him for his land and agreeing to pay all the costs. They paid Tate for his land, but the costs have not been settled to this day. This is one of the most stupenduous land frauds ever attempted; the whole county is involved in one entire ruin in consequence of it. No settlement can be made till some legal action is taken to bring the matter before the courts for examination. Time will probably develop the matter.”*

*“Let me not be misunderstood; I am not charging the present claimants with anything wrong – it came to them by inheritance; the wrong was in the first projectors of the fraud. C. F.”*

Of course, there were those who took offense at this newsletter, but I think I have seen the name, Samuel B. Barrell, on too many documents to not smell a rat.

## Part 6 of "All Things Monteagle"

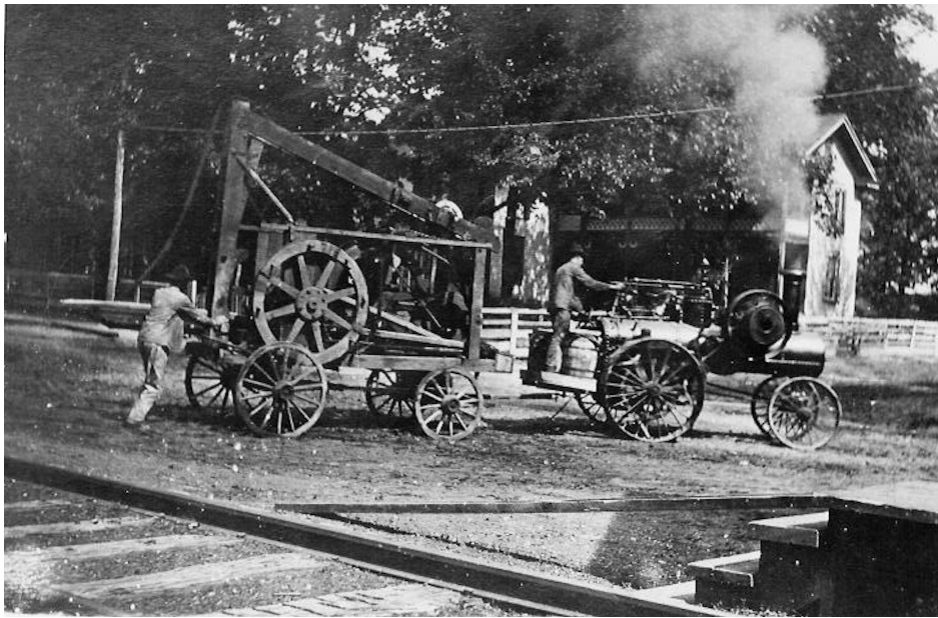
### From Moffat's Station Shed to Mont Eagle's Depot to Greyhound Bus Station

by Jackie Layne Partin

As the years passed and the village blossomed, a real, railroad depot, one owned by the railroad company, was needed since the Moffat's Station platform, "...the small frame one, ... has become too small." Initially, the best one could hope for was a seat on a luggage trunk and to stay dry during bad weather. Any lover of western movies has viewed that scene over and over. Then in **1887**, after John Moffat's death, (discussed later in our story), the search for a perfect placement for a depot began. The general manager of the N. & C. railroad, who would make the final decision, traveled up and down the road listing the pros and cons of possible choices. Obvious to us older, lingering Monteagleans, only two choices could have come to the forefront – the first being in front of the fabulous hotel entrance and the second near the entrance to the Monteagle Sunday School Assembly. Weighed in the balance, the Assembly entrance won out. *The Daily American, April 15, 1887: "...The last and most agreeable of the projected improvements is a proposed new depot and freight shed of proper style and capacity to suit the patrons and patronage of the railroad...It is spoken for immediately in front of the Grand Hotel. If convenience alone were considered, this would perhaps be best, but as freight is not selected by railroads, and there are sometimes delays in claiming unsavory property, it might be unpleasant to have it so near. It would also interfere with free air and a proper view of the hotel front, besides taking something from the already small front grounds. There is a most desirable place a little west of the hotel, and another east. One of these it is hoped will be chosen. The depot is sadly needed here, as the present structure is only a neat **shed**."* The official depot was built in the summer of **1887** and the railroad company moved into it in **May 1888**; the Monteagle Springs Hotel didn't miss out, "The old plank platform at the railroad has been removed and President John W. Thomas, of the Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis Railway, will at once replace it with a gravel walk running nearly the full length of the hotel front."

From the small shed with the sign hanging down with the words, *Moffat's Station*, written on the shingle, to the depot that was dismantled around **1943**, many changes came about. The town needed a depot section for passengers, but it also needed a freight

depot section so that residents like Silas Gregory could get his extra huge well-digger delivered by freight and unloaded a safe distance from the passengers.



Silas Gregory taking his new well-digger from the freight depot on the west end of the main depot.

Could the large house seen north of the railroad tracks be that of William and Jane Hands who bought the land from John Moffat and Charles Mabee? The Hands sold all their property to J. W. Thomas, railroad agent, in **1905** keeping a "life estate" for each. We know that Mrs. Hands (66 yrs.) was run over by a train on **Oct 12, 1911** in Monteagle and killed instantly. She was a widow at the time, so William died sometime between **1905** and **1911**.



**Postcard caption reads “New Depot, at Monteagle, Tenn.” This probably is not the first railroad depot built in 1887 and opened for full use in 1888, but the revised version finished in 1905.**

The new Monteagle Depot was a great addition to our town. Travel became much more comfortable with a warm, dry place to unwind or just to visit with locals or other travelers. In the springs and summers, even autumns, visitors to MSSA were plentiful. The depot became a Who’s Who center. On the other hand, local children and older citizens or other onlookers could count the car loads of coal going off this plateau by just watching the rails. The Depot was comparable to a wrap-around porch overlooking our village.

In the *Sequachee Valley News* **06 July 1905** we read, “*The new passenger depot at Monteagle, Tenn., was completed by the N. C. & St. L. building crew Friday afternoon and early Saturday morning it was placed in commission. The station is one of the handsomest on the line of the Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis, and is the finest between Nashville and Chattanooga. It is 103 feet long and 29 feet wide and built on a beautiful architectural plan. The roof is of Spanish tile, and the interior is finished in natural colored yellow pine. It is a substantial structure but built on special resort plan.*” Below is the beautiful new passenger depot in **1905**. The

next photo (1910) shows the new wooden water tank. John Robert Kennedy built the platform to support the decorative, banded tank.





A view westward showing the newer metal water tank at the Depot.



This photo in Monteagle was taken looking eastward. Most others are taken looking westward.



Above, the last Monteagle Depot moves on down the road to the east end of the Monteagle Hotel to be used as a bus station. Young Martha Alice Wooten looks on. A set of three original photos of this move were given to me by courtesy of the Hughie Wooten family. Soon after Monteagle's depot was marked off the must have list, wise residents of Monteagle found a need for the two sections of the Depot.



War WWII soldiers returned home to Monteagle at this bus station. The Spanish tile roof is still used.



The project of building the official depot may have been hexed from the beginning. In **June of 1887**, lightning struck the telegraph wires near the Fairmount College and traveled west down to the village and found its target when it set the depot office on fire. Luckily, the fire was put out – that time!

However, the official depot burned in a business district fire of **May 10, 1914**: *“Fire at Monteagle – Fire of an unknown origin began burning at Monteagle about 10 o’clock Sunday night, and burned until up to Monday and entailed a complete loss of over \$75,000, and completely destroyed six buildings. The firms suffering from the fire were J. D. Tucker, N., C. & St. L. Railroad depot, Mab Turner’s drug store, Cox’s produce store and E. W. Holcolmbe, the only one covered by insurance. A special train was run from here bearing volunteers and fire fighting apparatus, and did great work in saving property. The Monteagle Hotel was in great danger for some time.”* (Mrs. Grundy, **May 14, 1914**); another account of the fire also listed the Kennedy Bros. Ice company and the date of the fire was **May 3<sup>rd</sup>** with all business buildings completed incinerated.

Obviously, the Depot was rebuilt later. However, in **1943** several depots were abandoned, Monteagle being one. As stated, one section went to the Monteagle Hotel to become a bus station and ultimately, met its demise when fire destroyed it and the whole hotel; the other section went **to** the new Monteagle School grounds to be used as a school cafeteria. It was at this hotel and bus station that our WWII soldiers disembarked when they were discharged from the military.



**Oliver Mabee meets his son Dale for the first time in January 1946 at the Monteagle Hotel. The returning of our WWII soldiers may have contributed to the decision to get the old, defunct, passenger depot moved to the east end of the hotel.**

On the night of **February 28, 1950**, *“The brick Monteagle hotel and adjoining frame Southeastern Greyhound lines bus station were destroyed by fire last night, with the loss estimated unofficially at \$200,000. The hotel, it was reported, was fairly well filled with guests, but all left the structure without injury. The hotel was owned and operated by the Monteagle Development Co., headed by John Harton of Tullahoma, former state treasurer. Harton came to the scene of the fire from Tullahoma. The flames broke out about 6:30 o’clock in the loft of the bus station and spread rapidly to the hotel.”* My friend John Campbell was assigned the job of holding a fire hose in the rain filled cellar of the burned-out shell of the Corner Oaks house, the original home of John Robert and Magdalena (Abplanalp) Kennedy. It was an all hands-on-board effort, but my mother only let us watch from our living room windows. The fire was so huge, and we were so young, she did not want us up on College Street.

## Part 7 of All Things Monteagle

### Let’s Eat

by Jackie Layne Partin

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 in the old Corner Oaks house serving their special frosted malts, but the youth of Monteagle only enjoyed stopping in for that delightful treat for about a year because 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 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.

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



[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.” (excerpts from pg. 81-- the book *John Gamp*-author Elizabeth Purnell). Hollingsworth Cove is now known as Layne's Cove.

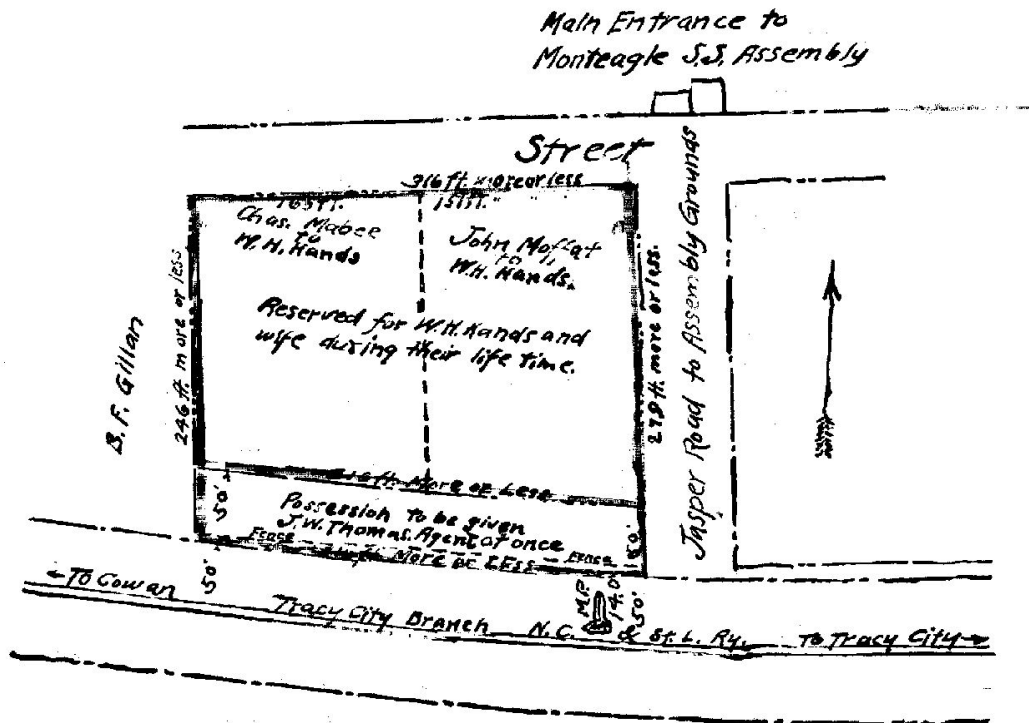
Dear reader, wipe away all the images you may have in your mind of a “road or trail,” coming up the mountain from Pelham, wandering through Bostick/Thompson acreage, and going off south to Battle Creek. I am going to say it in plain, mountain language, there ain't no such images in our heads that can 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 by wagon or in large numbers. And forget any roads going off the south side of Moffat/Monteagle until the Dixie Highway was built. Please don't confuse the word “road” with “foot path.” As a friend once told me, “There is a path to everywhere.”

(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**— *The Chattanooga News* – 25 Aug 1906“...A nearer and better road was built from near Poplar Springs, now Monteagle, called the Heartbarger road, down the mountain to a connection with the old Nickajack Trace and by it to the stage road about one mile further on. I knew a few years ago when living at Monteagle, a few old people who remembered when the Indians crossed the mountain in 1838 and 1839, by this Nickajack Trace, on their way to their lands in the west. This trace is still traveled, up, across and down the mountain, and was during the last war. There is a new pike being built from Monteagle for three miles down on the north side of the mountain to Reservoir Spring, and Wonder Cave. This was formerly Park’s Spring...” (R. J. M. Only). Admittedly, I am still struggling with the old Stage Road, the Jasper Road, the Harbarger Road, Braggs Defeat Road, the Nick-a-Jack Trace, but hopefully my entries will encourage others more qualified in this field to get these trails/roads placed correctly on a map of Monteagle.

It came up from Hollingsworth/Laynes Cove to the back of the Assembly and continued on toward 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.

## Part 8 of All Things Monteagle

### What Happened to John Moffat?

by Jackie Layne Partin

Part 8 of my Monteagle history is dedicated to the person of John Moffat. Don't despair! There was a time throughout the years that I got so tired of hearing about a man who got on a train, took in the scenery as the engine climbed this Cumberland plateau, liked what he saw, carved the words *Moffat Station* (as in railroad station/shed) on a wooden plank, then nailed it to a nearby tree. (Actually, a true happening!) When I decided to write about my hometown's early history and found out things, I declared, "I will not write about John Moffat." I lied to myself, for John Moffat was larger than life but a life reduced to a broken sundial 135 years after his death.

In the fall of **1874** in a Tennessee Probate Court, "*John Moffat, a native of Scotland, filed his declaration of intention to become a citizen*" of the United States. He already had bought hundreds of acres of land on the Cumberland plateau before his citizenship oath had been taken. John and Lydia (Landon) Moffat lived in Nashville in **1870** while the builders started on the east end of the land chosen to build a hotel wing and built only that one section which was a two-story building with kitchen, dining/dance hall, and numerous bedrooms. The Moffat and Mabee families moved into that east wing at first. Other parts of what became a rather large hotel were added gradually beginning around **1880**.

John and Lydia later moved into their small *pioneer* house on what became known as the corner of S. Central Ave. and Lydia St. Many folks living today (**2021**) will remember that Garland and Mary Foutch and son Garland, Jr. lived in a house on that corner. John had other little houses built around Poplar Springs since the land at that time was all his. According to the notes of Nell Savage Mahoney in an interview in **1949** with Wm. Homer Richmond, Sr., the Foutch house incorporated the much smaller Moffat house. Of the Moffat house, Mr. Richmond said, "*I helped Tom Tucker, my brother-in-law, build this house---a plain box-house of rough boards nailed on the sill, plate, and center belt, and 2 X 4's.*"

Over the years, I and others have generally spoken of the Charlie and Katie (Goforth) house as being the *original* John Moffat house, but I believe that was an error. Mr. Richmond stated that Jane (*Moffat*) Weir stayed on in the old home place, later the Foutch home, and her mother Lydia Moffat moved over to a small house near Poplar Springs. It was here that she died on **September 18, 1901**. There is evidence in *The Daily American*, **March 8, 1886**, of a new house having been built: "*Prof. Moffat's family will soon move into their own new residence here. He is still in Missouri engaged in temperance work.*"



Mrs. Moffat expects to join him soon." This may well have been the house where the Fults family later lived. Of course, it is doubtful how much living John himself did in the new house no matter where it stood, considering he died the same year.

On **June 8, 1908**, *The Nashville American* gave us some insight into the reason the Moffat family had to acquire another home: "E. W. Holcombe gave five acres of ground and the headwaters of Laurel Branch, known for half a century as Poplar Spring. Mr. Holcombe has been for years one of the most highly-esteemed of the residents and business men of the place. A few years ago, he succeeded by purchase from Capt. T. M. Steger to the estate formerly owned by Col. John Moffat, founder of the place. Since his accession he has done much to encourage good settlers to take up homesteads. The ground and spring are near the center, and will be a delightful resort for summer sojourners. R. M. Payne, by reason of his position as Chairman, will be active in improving the ground. It is very near Monteagle Hotel, and has fame for the water. Years ago, the valley people came and camped near this spring to drink the waters and break chills and fever. The park will be fenced and improved. It is a beautiful place naturally, and will be made very attractive by the contemplated improvements." John Moffat lost just about everything he had striven so hard to establish and own, even his beloved home, compound, beloved spring, and orchards to Thomas Maddin Steger, who in turn had sold and conveyed the Moffat homestead to E. W. Holcombe. "...But Mr. Moffat, like a good many other men, had more brains than money, and more enterprise than economy, and so the house with his residence and his fine orchard and evidences of his thriving energy passed into other hands. He crossed over the river..." so wrote A. S. C. in (*The Daily American*, **12 Aug. 1888**). I assume that the writer was Arthur St. Clair Colyar.

On **Mar. 12, 1886**, Mrs. Moffat and daughter Adaline made a stop in Nashville on their way to be with John while he was in St. Louis on a lecturing engagement; he was serving as the Vice-President of the Temperance Benevolent Society of Missouri. On **Dec. 9, 1886**, Mrs. Moffat was recalled to St. Louis; her husband's health had become critical. On **Dec. 20, 1886**, while teaching in Gallatin, Tennessee, Adaline received a message from St. Louis that her father was dying. She quickly went to be with him.

#### **Announcement of John Moffat's Death in *The Daily American*, Dec. 27, 1886**

"A dispatch from St. Louis announces that John Moffatt died there, Christmas day at 2 o'clock, aged 57. Mr. Moffat was a native of Scotland. He came to Canada more than thirty years ago, and began to be known in Nashville shortly afterwards through his connection with the National Division of Sons of Temperance. He came to Tennessee about 1870 and made an investment at Monteagle, which he called Moffatt, hoping to develop that range of mountain country by inducing immigration from Scotland and the raising of fruits. He bought a thousand or more acres and succeeded in establishing more or less of a town. He was disappointed in his

*expectation of immigration through a lack of support from friends upon whom he had relied. The colony he hoped to establish never realized. He lived at Moffat until the Monteagle Assembly was established, having brought his family from Canada and built a comfortable home. In the meantime Mr. Moffatt had sustained serious financial embarrassment and a year ago he went to St. Louis as a lecturer on temperance, in which he had been more or less engaged ever since his coming to America. He also composed and delivered frequently lectures on Burns and other Scottish poets that marked Mr. Moffatt as a ripe scholar and a man of culture. He was educated for the ministry in the Presbyterian Church. He was very well known in Nashville as a man of very strong and tenacious character, and in the social circle he had no superior. His family consists of Mrs. Moffatt and three daughters, one of whom is married and lives at Monteagle. Miss Adelaide, a younger daughter, is a teacher at the Howard Female College in Gallatin, Tenn., and Miss Lillian is with her father. There are one or two sons, one of whom at one time made his home in Nashville."*

Another account of John's passing can be found in *The Times-Democrat* (New Orleans, Louisiana) published **29 Dec. 1886**. *"The death is announced in St. Louis, Saturday, of Mr. John Moffat, the great temperance advocate and worker, of heart disease. The deceased, who was a nephew of the famous missionary, Robert Moffat, was a cousin by marriage to Livingstone, the African explorer. He was a native of Glasgow, Scotland, but removed with his parents to Canada when very young. He began his temperance work at the early age of sixteen and soon rose to prominence. In 1870 he removed to Tennessee and made an investment at Monteagle, which he called Moffat. He built up quite a town, but was in the end disappointed in the number of immigrants which he had expected to come across the water. He returned with his family to St. Louis about a year ago. He leaves a wife and three daughters – one married, one teaching in Gallatin, Tenn., and the other in St. Louis with her mother. He also has one son living."*

He died on **December 25, 1886**, and according to Wm. Homer Richmond, Sr., he helped bury John Moffat in the yard of his home on Lydia St. and S. Central Ave., later known as the Foutch home place: *"Col. John was first buried in the yard of this house. I helped to bury him twice, the first time and then when the cemetery was opened."* Wm. H. Richmond, Sr.'s words are from Nell Savage Mahoney's notes. John Moffat was later laid to rest in the new Monteagle Cemetery. I say "**new**" cemetery because in the **Nov. 16, 1886**, issue of *The Daily American*, we read in the section of Monteagle news, *"A new cemetery has been selected, and a deed made conveying it to the town. All the bodies in the present ground will be reinterred in the new place."* John Moffat may well have been the first new burial in the new cemetery. His foreseeable death may well have brought about the decision in **November 1886**, one month before his death, to act upon the need for a new burial ground. His grandson Harold Ormiston Weir died in **1880** and has a marker in the new cemetery, so he may have well been one of those disinterred from the old burial ground. I'd rather believe that the child was also buried in his grandfather's yard, moved to the

new cemetery and buried in what became known as the Moffat sundial plot. The sundial is described in some of Nell Savage Mahoney's notes. *"The memorial sundial on granite shaft in the Monteagle Cemetery to John Moffat states that he was born in Glasgow, Scotland, and Founded this Town in 1870...The memorial shaft with bronze sundial...on which is the Browning line: 'Grow old along with me. The best is yet to be...' has a bas-relief design on the circular shaft engraved with Scottish thistle, English rose, and the maple leaf of Canada. N. S. M.)"*

Will I ever speak of John Moffat again in my writings of Monteagle? Absolutely! I have written a story about my **theory** as to where the **old** cemetery was. It can be read here:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59c69c542278e73c826f3226/t/5bc011cb104c7bc0b221b7b3/1539314123357/Tennessean+%23+61+Thomas+Cemetery++Aug.+12+.pdf>



**Moffat Family Monument in the Monteagle Cemetery  
Nine family members buried around the plot (2021)**



**Engraved with English roses; Scottish thistle and the maple leaf of Canada (2021)**



**Moffat Sundial on top of monument with missing dial (2021)**

## Part 9-A of "All Things Monteagle"

by Jackie Layne Partin

### Churching and Schooling Our Monteagle Pioneers



**IT ALL BEGAN in the union church building that also doubled as the first school for Moffatt/Monteagle's children. It stood north of Sawmill Hollow and behind where the Dairy Queen stood for years.**

The photo above was shared with me by Roberta (Gregory) Mitchell Alexander. She exclaimed, "This photo is the Union Church in Sawmill Hollow." Roberta has passed on, but I wish I could tell her that this photo is my favorite of all old Monteagle ones; it has been used in several of my stories. I hope her descendants realize what a treasure has been entrusted to them in that little photo box.

*The Daily American --June 21, 1876--Organization of a New Congregational Church There--"Prof. H. S. Bennett left here Saturday morning for Moffatt, Marion Co., Tenn., for the purpose of assisting in the organization of a Congregational church. Moffatt is one of the most thriving little places on the line of the Tracy City railroad, and derives its name from*

*its founder, Col. John Moffatt, the commissioner of immigration for the State. The Council called for the purpose of assisting in the organization of the church began its work Saturday night, the 17<sup>th</sup> inst., by the election of Rev. David Peebles, of Sand Mountain, as Moderator, and Prof. H. S. Bennett as Scribe. The action of the persons who contemplated organizing the church was approved, and Rev. R. S. Rosboro of Tracy City, was examined with reference to his installation as pastor. On the following day, Sunday, the services of organization and installation were carried out as follows: Sermon, Prof. H. S. Bennett; reading of articles of Faith and Covenant, Rev. David Peebles; charge to the pastor, Prof. Bennett; to the people, Rev. David Peebles; Benediction, by the pastor. The pastor and his wife were the only Congregationalists in the company. The rest were Methodists and Presbyterian, with one Mennonite. After due consideration, they chose the Congregational polity as the one on which they could all unite." Moffatt has a fine hotel, and several springs of chalybeate and freestone water, and the splendid atmosphere of the mountain. It seems to be destined to become a favorite place of resort for persons from all sections of the country."* There is no mention of the actual church building being ready for any activity in this 1876 article, but I believe the building was there, and all that was lacking was the decision of what denominations or civic activities would be acceptable, in other words, the format.

Quoted from the **July 29, 1880** issue of *The Daily American*: "Mr. {A. G.} Adams has been the means of starting a church in Moffat – a union church. Mr. Steger had given the land; others will aid the work." It is generally accepted that John Moffat had planned to build a church building near his home fairly early in the initial years of buying land on the plateau. No doubt this idea would have become the union church building, but he lost control of that project too. The little excerpt gives credit to Mr. *Adam Gillespie* Adams and *Thomas Maddin* Steger. Steger was married to Felix Grundy's granddaughter, Ann Grundy Eakin. He was a Davidson County lawyer, highly respected and sought after in numerous legal matters. His financial status and standing were far above that of John Moffat. We must remember that John Moffat lost just about every material possession he worked to own, even any credits given him from the beginning of his town, Moffat; he would have been unable to pay for a church building. He lost land, even close to his first home, to T. M. Steger, thus allowing him to be the donor of the land to build the union church. It appears more and more that Moffat's investors were the ones intent on having a town, but they were not keen at all on leaving the name of the town in honor of John Moffat.

In the beginning of John Moffat's ventures in Moffat, he managed to have built a significant hotel, the East Wing; have a small, plain house built for himself; set up a sawmill across the road from his house in Sawmill Hollow; at least see a church building rise up for worshippers near that hollow; build a large building behind the church for a

shoe factory—that soon failed; see a girls' school succeed (known now as DuBose Conference Center—2020); give land and help bring the Southern Sunday School Assembly, now MSSA, to fruition; and many other real estate ventures. Mr. John Moffat was a good man, but a man who rushed into business painting with a broad brush, leaving out the details. Let's say, "No one had his back!"

Miss Anna Mary Parker included in her book, *Memories of Morton Memorial*, this short paragraph from Louise (Metcalf) Conry: "I remember the church when it was behind where the Dairy Queen now stands. The building was also used as the public school..." Thelma Louise (Metcalf) Patton Conry was one of ten children who attended Morton Memorial Methodist Church. I am often asked how long the little union building stood on the corner of Central Ave. and Church Street. I could never give an exact date as to when the doors were originally opened or closed forever.

Here are some things I can pass on; in *The Tennessean*, **Oct. 2, 1888**, in the Monteagle news section we read: "On Friday the school children in the Union Church building were greatly alarmed by fire breaking through the roof from a defective stove pipe. Only slight damage resulted." Here in this one excerpt, we have evidence of the first effort for united worship or sharing of one building inclusive of formal education for Monteagle's pioneers. Other usages of the little building follow: in **1888**, Rev. Mr. Clement conducted a service there, and in **1889**, Dr. Atchison held a lecture in the little church. In **1896**, Lydia Landon Moffat held a healing service there, and the same year the building was used for meetings to discuss the Fourth of July celebration for the MSSA. **1904** the church entertained a gospel meeting from Rev. W. M. Taylor of Chattanooga. In the **Nov. 21, 1895**, edition of the *Tracy City News* and under the subtitle of "Monteagle News," **Nov. 19**, we read: "We have the finest public school in the States according to the size of our town and financial condition of its patrons."

In **1873** Mrs. Harriett B. Kells was the principal of Fairmount Girls School that stood on land donated by John Moffat and joining Basil Summers' grant land. This was a private Episcopal institution, so we need not follow it in our search for Monteagle's public education. In the *Sequatchie News*, **Sept. 11, 1902**, we read, "...we boarded one of Smith & Byers fine hacks for a trip to Monteagle. On the way we passed the neat little town of Summerfield, a very clean place of some 200 inhabitants. There are several neat dwelling houses, a **church** and a **schoolhouse**." In **1915**, Summerfield had "a somewhat dilapidated building with not sufficient seats for the seventy-five splendid children enrolled, so that many of them are obliged to sit upon the steps of the platform and use its floor for a desk. The building is badly lighted and insufficiently heated. No fence encloses it, and the pigs and dogs hurry after the children, seeking to share their lunches." (*The Nashville Tennessean*, **Nov. 21, 1915**.)

Looking at dates, and having researched the deeds for the erection of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church building (ca. **1896**), the Methodist Episcopal Church, South building (ca. **1897**); and the Church of Christ (ca. **1907**), [all three known to congregate in the same church building at different times of the week before they got their own buildings built and dedicated], we conclude that the church building that Steger (land), Adams (money) and others (labor and expertise) built was soon filled with Congregationalists or a union of them and at least three other groups, Presbyterian, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and Christian Church/Church of Christ, all acceptant of the Congregational polity, at least for the moment. Oh! Let's not forget the one Mennonite's attendance, possibly a Swiss immigrant, a follower of the teachings of Menno Simons, and Mrs. Charlie Mankin (Ella) who was a Baptist.

One definition of a Congregational church is given as follows: "Congregational churches (also Congregationalist churches; Congregationalism) are Protestant churches in the Reformed tradition practicing congregationalist church governance, in which each congregation independently and autonomously runs its own affairs." We know from church history that Methodist Episcopal Church, South and Cumberland Presbyterians were/are not Congregationalists in their polity. The one Mennonite would have been a Congregationalist. It seems strange that the Council would have chosen the "Congregational polity" as a unifying condition. I base this comment on others who surely attended that Saturday night meeting possibly making comments to steer away from congregationalism. What a wonderful thought, "Unity!"

Rev. Samuel Reed Roseboro married Martha Clarissa Colyar, sister to Arthur St. Clair "A. S." Colyar, a highly respected gentleman in the coal and railroad industries around Sewanee and Tracy City. Samuel was in Cache Creek, CA in **1870** and Marshall, Michigan in **1880**, quite often moving around as a clergyman. He is buried in Clifton Springs Cemetery in Ontario, New York. He and his wife had one daughter, Viola, who attended Fairmount School in Moffatt/Monteagle. Rev. Roseboro thus had ties to Tracy City and the town of Moffat. Professor Henry Stanley Bennett was at one time a professor of theology at Fisk University. He, too, traveled around teaching, building missions and serving as a Congregationalist. He was involved directly with The American Missionary Association.

This formation of a Congregational union group came about five years after Oliver Dennis Mabee sorted out the mail for callers in **1871**. In **1876**, the town of Moffat was well on its way to becoming a must-visit, get-out and sit-a-spell village on the Cowan/Tracy City railroad. The main calling cards for that particular stop on the plateau were the cool, summer temperatures, the lovely flora and plentiful fauna in the nearly



undisturbed wilderness. Unlike the larger, dusty, coal town of Tracy City, to the east, Moffat was clean, inviting, and had the aroma of freshly cut lumber and wild flowers that adorned the mountain slopes and boulder fields. John Moffat had on his own land the sought-after Poplar Springs that still remain to this year (2018), although well hidden in the thickets in a city park, a park that needs a historical marker today and a spring that needs a really good cleaning. The Fairmount School for Young Ladies, as one ad called it, began its operation on **Apr. 9, 1873**, so their spiritual efforts, Episcopal, did predate the entrance of the Congregationalists upon the mountain. The school's connection to the University of the South made it the first religious effort in Moffat Station. There was no Monteagle Sunday School Assembly until the early **1880s** with its first season in **1883**.

An excerpt from a **Jan 24, 1887** news article, *The Daily American*, gives us another bit of interesting news of schooling in Monteagle — "A school for the winter has been reopened in the village, and has an excellent attendance. Miss Martha Lowrie has it in charge. Last fall the idea of a winter school was agitated by Mrs. Mary E. Stone, wife of Rev. H. M. Stone, of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. With her also began the idea of a school for those unable to pay for it. Application was made to several liberal persons in the assembly, and quite a number were secured a few months instruction. At Christmas an entertainment was prepared for everyone, in which the school children showed most creditable proficiency. But the kind teacher, so earnest, gentle, patient, was taken ill from the effect of the cold and died in a few days. She was laid to rest in the *new* cemetery, which has not yet been laid out into lots..."

In the **1870s** and **1880s**, the denominations worked, taught and forged on as though they had their own buildings. The village union church building connected the town folks together. Even when Lydia (Landon) Moffat brought in her teachings on Scientology, she was able to meet in the union building and was received, but rather coolly.

## Part 9-B of "All Things Monteagle"

### Churching and Schooling Our Monteagle Pioneers

by Jackie Layne Partin

March 1, 1889—*The Daily American*--"**QUITE A PRETTY ROW**"--"A Squabble Between School Districts in Marion and Grundy Counties – Special to *"The American."* "MONTEAGLE, Feb. 27 – About sixty citizens of the Twelfth School District of Marion County and the Seventeenth of Grundy County met Tuesday for the purpose of arbitration as a settlement of the recent difficulty regarding the division of a part of each district, that the public school of the village might accommodate all the village children in the only school-house accessible for several miles. There has been in the Seventeenth District, it seems, a feud between the church trustees and the school directors as to whom the house, sometimes used, belongs. Last Sunday the Rev. Mr. Gwyne, of Pelham, read the original deed of the ground to the church, and the school men, who had helped to build the "church-house" finding themselves turned out, were naturally furious. There seemed but one way to act, and that to demand of the county all the funds in the treasury that could best proven a collection of the tax for the children and build a house. This house could not be built in time to give this year a session before the opening of Monteagle Assembly, which every year offers peculiar and valuable privileges to the children of this community. The Seventeenth District school-house was called **Summerfield school-house**. The people there are further from the assembly and hence preferred that the children have a mid-summer session, when clothing is cheaper and no fuel has to be bought. On the other side use of the county money at once could be converted into instruction here now. It was thought a pacific arrangement had been made. Mr. White, one of the most liberal and efficient public school teachers in the State, was employed and ninety scholars of the two districts were enrolled. It is astonishing how petty ill-feeling will cause men to sacrifice sacred trusts to gratify personal prejudices."

"Mr. John Scruggs made an earnest, manly talk to the audience, and the teacher, Mr. White, an eloquent appeal to the better nature of the parents present and for the eager children to whom the results of this meeting are a vital matter. There are always some who will oppose progress. Fortunately, they grow fewer every year."

"A proposition from the successful side to assist in building a school-house will probably be accepted. An addition built to the school-house in Monteagle and an assistant appointed for Mr. White, who would like to see established here a graded school of the best order."

The Rev. Mr. Gwyne of Pelham in the quoted article above was a Methodist minister, so one could assume that he was reading the original Basil Summers' deed

conveyed to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (one of the groups in the union church). Basil was still alive in January **1881**, so it is reasonable to think that he prepared for his little building to be under control of the Monteagle Methodist Episcopal Church, South. However, Elizabeth Purnell writes in her book *John Gamp* that the elderly Basil Summers built his log meeting house on his own land and by himself long, long ago when there was no one living in the area to help him; as often happens, the Summerfield Cemetery took form around that little log church. Probably in the late **1880s** the logs were framed so that the little church had a look of a new building. It was later torn asunder by a tornado, but not until its many leaders rendered years of spiritual energies aimed toward the uplifting of souls. Throughout the years, speakers ranged from Basil Summers, Hence Layne, C. H. Kilby with Roy Elbert Partin helping to spread a long healthy history of the Good News. The community of Summerfield, TN should be remembered for its founding before the town of Moffat/Monteagle.

On the night of **February 13-14, 1952**, a raging tornado unroofed the Summerfield School and damage was suffered by the Summerfield Church of Christ. Recently, I was told that the Basil Summers church was blown away by a tornado maybe in the early **1930s**, rebuilt and destroyed permanently in the **1952** massive tornadic front that crossed Monteagle and Summerfield.

**The Union Church in Monteagle-** *The Nashville American, Jan. 7, 1908--HOW MONTEAGLE PEOPLE ENJOYED THE CHRISTMAS*—"Monteagle, Tenn., Jan. 6. – The holidays on the mountain were celebrated with a quiet but generally joyous observance. The churches, **three** in number, had well-laden Christmas trees.

*The **Union, Sunday-school**, a remnant left when the Christian Church congregation separated, was entertained by the veteran workers, Mr. and Mrs. George King, who refused to go with the majority when they elected to have a church without an organ in it. The **Methodist Church**, having the largest congregation, had the largest attendance. By request of the pastor, Rev. Bruce Lyle, no jokes or grinds were put on the beautiful tree. The **Presbyterians** had an entertainment, which was much enjoyed. A custom I have not heard of in any other place is observed here on Christmas night. The older boys and young men engage in a battle of light and color. Roman candles are used, and the display is brilliant and beautiful. Sides are chosen, and the advances and retreats made with a spirit of the best. A party given by Mrs. E. W. Holcombe to the visiting members of the Boys' Club was much enjoyed by members and their quests."*

The "split" in the Christian Church or Church of Christ at the little Monteagle union building may have come about in **1889** since "the young people of this place have

undertaken to promote sociability by Friday evening entertainments. The small admission fee is to be used for the purchase of an organ for the Union Church and Sunday-school..." ("The Daily American," Jan. 1889). As long as the building did not have a musical instrument in it the Christian Church was agreeable to continue sharing time slots with the other denominations and even enjoying fellowship.

As afore mentioned, the stage traveler saw a "church" and a "school" in 1902 in Summerfield and was impressed. These two buildings may well have been the Church of Christ church, (later the Dick Meeks house), and the school that we older ones remember as the Summerfield School in our day. Earlier than 1899, the village of Summerfield had a schoolhouse, but whether it was in the Basil Summers' church building or not is the conundrum. This may well have been the reason for the "row" going on between the Summerfield church group and the Summerfield school group. Summerfield school trustees may have felt that the community owned their building but had no deed to support that. Monteagle wanted only one school supported by both counties. In the 1910 Grundy County list of teachers there was no mention of a Summerfield School. Teachers for Monteagle were listed as W. H. Nelson, Coker Parker, and Dollie Partain. Possibly, the "pretty row" solved the problem.

**MONTEAGLE, Tenn., April 16.—** Agreement has been made between the Superintendents of Public Instruction in Marion and Grundy counties to locate a joint school here, to be managed by a local committee. E. Graenicher and Thomas Tucker will represent Marion county's interests in the board, and C. B. Mankin and a fourth to be chosen by the county board of education of Grundy will represent that county. The population of Monteagle is pretty well divided between the two counties, and only of late years were two schools maintained. This was not satisfactory in results, and by agreement the old system of one school is restored. The teachers will be selected from the two counties, and each county furnish an equal sum of money.

*Sequachee Valley News* — Apr. 21, 1910

Five months after the “pretty row” meeting, on **August 21, 1889**, Thomas Maddin Steger sold approximately 4/5 of an acre to the directors of the 12<sup>th</sup> school district of Marion County, TN and the 17<sup>th</sup> district of Grundy County, TN, jointly. The directors being: D. T. Tucker, S. M. Young, Benjamin Read of Marion County and G. M. King, John Kelton, Stephen Metcalf of Grundy County and their successors in office. The land was lot #54 of the **1883** F. P. Clute map of Monteagle, and the said parcel was to be used for the education of white children. The cost of the land was \$50.00, and it stood, “*Beginning on King Avenue on the northwest corner of Lot #54...*” (Deed from Book J— pp. 68-69). In **1938**, the Monteagle School on the Grundy Co. side of the railroad ceased to be a school, so the land and building were sold to Charlie and Ella Mankin, then to Charlie and Mattie (Adams) Meeks, then to my parents, Cleveland and Clara (Meeks) Layne. Charlie Meeks dismantled the building and built several residential houses around the area, one being the house I called home for seventeen years which, in part, still stands on King St. on the exact spot of the first public Monteagle School.

The news article tells us that the **village** of Monteagle had a good public school in **1899**. In April **1895**, Robert White held the office of Principal at the village school, and at Christmas break in **1898**, Mr. Pearson resigned as principal opening the door for George Carney Partin to take the position. It appears that some of the children not from the village area and on the Grundy County side of the railroad tracks had for some years previous to **1889** attended school at Summerfield. Touching on that point, the children met in a building which was also known as the “Summerfield school-house.” I have to admit, that I do not know which building, but the following paragraph expresses the need by the community of Summerfield to have its own school building apart from Monteagle’s school. We might say that these folks were the losers in the “pretty row.” What once, they thought, was a Summerfield school was taken away by a church group who felt the building belonged to them.

On **December 15, 1892**, J. P. Meeks (Priest, Sr.) and wife Arena, conveyed approximately 63 acres in three plots; 55 acres to Norris E. Rose; 1 acre to Nick Dotson and **one lot of two acres to the School**, and 5 acres to John Ogelvie— (Book K pp. 335-336). Once the papers were drawn up, one usable room for the school built or refurbished, and directors found for the school, Summerfield had a school of its own. I will insert notes from a **June 28, 1893** deed here: “*J. P. Meeks and wife to G. W. Summers: Know all men by these presents that whereas J. P. Meeks and Arena Meeks his wife, in the consideration of six dollars paid as hereinafter stated do hereby sell and convey to G. W. Summers and M. M. Lane School Directors a parcel or tract of land it being in Grundy County. The said*

*land is conveyed to school district No. 30, known as Summerfield School House and described as follows...About 2 acres –witnesses S. A. Henley and W. H. Reider."*

This suggests that the supposed "losers" in the "*pretty row*" of **Feb. 27, 1889**, were the Summerfield school-house group. G. W. Summers was a son of Basil Summers; the M. M. Lane in the excerpt above was my g-grandfather, Madison Monroe Lane. This may explain that the schoolhouse squabble had nothing to do with Basil Summers church land of three acres, but a small two-acre partial belonging to James Preston "Priest" Meeks and wife, Arena (Sartain) Meeks. That parcel of land may well have become part of the future home of the Summerfield schoolhouse as I remember it. I have a vivid picture of the stile that crossed the fence onto the school grounds.

Concerning the Monteagle School we read: **Dec. 28, 1895—The Daily American** "*The **public school** was opened on Monday. Addresses from several people were spirited and pithy. Mr. E. W. Holcombe, who is a leader in the **Union School** work and in all other work that advances the community's interests, made a telling speech. He gave the current opinion of power as expressed by foreign nations notably Germany and England, France and Russia, in their enormous standing armies, and claimed America's potentiality is in her public school system. Her protection is the intelligence and activity of her citizens. Miss Clara Mann of Omaha, Neb. made a brief address. Miss Mann is an educator of the new school type. Her specialty is Domestic Science and Economy. Dr. Lettell of Tracy City; Mrs. M. B. Clemmons of Berlin, Ontario, Canada, and Mr. John Lucher, one of the trustees, and an active worker, each had some good words for the **105** students enrolled. Dr. Bryan, Assistant, and Mr. Robert White, Principal, directed their remarks to the students mainly. An interesting fact was developed in Mr. White's talk. He had visited all the schools in the district. He found more girls than boys in the schools – in a hundred, forty boys and sixty girls. If the ruling power in America is to be intelligence, it would seem that women would soon have it. He called the boys attention to this and said that they need not complain if radical changes took place if they neglected their opportunities to hold their own. Valuable additions have been made to the school building. A new room has been promised for next year, for young children, who are to have the most advanced methods of instruction."* **The Nashville American-Oct. 18, 1896--**"*The event of this week here was the formal opening of the public school, with the usual reception and speech-making. Dr. Tillett, of Tracy City, Tenn.; Mrs. E. W. Holcombe, Mr. M. B. Clemens, Mr. John Tucker and Miss Clara Mann responded to their names, and gave brief and pointed suggestions to the assembled school. One hundred and sixteen members are enrolled. Mr. J. C. Nelson and Miss Byrd, of Bellbuckle, have the work in charge.*

In **1897**, the directors of the Summerfield School were George W. Summers, S. J. Smith, and Andrew J. Thompson. There was one teacher, Miss Allie King, for the 35

students on the roll. So even though this deed was written in **1893**, Old Summerfield had a school house that predated the deed. This deed was the foundation for what became known as the Summerfield School that stood on the property later to be known as Billy Nunley's Market.

**Part 9-C of "All Things Monteagle"**  
**"Churching and Schooling Monteagle's Pioneers"**  
by Jackie Layne Partin

(Occasionally I put this note in my writings to allow the reader to understand that the words in italics are direct quotes from the media that help support my story. When I have personal comments or anecdotes, I return to normal font print. I make a strong effort to give credit to whom credit is due. Thank you.)

In **September 1900** in the *Tracy City News*, we read the following article under the title of **Monteagle School**:

*"The School Board composed of directors of the 17<sup>th</sup> scholastic district of Grundy and the 12<sup>th</sup> of Marion counties, Tenn. met in joint session Sept. 3<sup>rd</sup> to discuss methods to raise funds sufficient to supplement the public money of said districts to run a regular graded school eight months in the year. The following plans were unanimously adopted by the Board:*

1. *That the school year be divided into two terms of four months each, known as a Fall and a Spring term, and that the public money be used in the Fall term.*
2. *That all citizens living in the 17<sup>th</sup> district of Grundy and the 12<sup>th</sup> of Marion, be required to contribute to funds of said school not less than 50cts per month, during the year of twelve months, to defray the expenses of said school or be deferred from the school after the public money expires, unless they pay the regular rate of tuition as fixed by the Board.*
3. *That the rate of tuition be fixed at \$1.00 for the first grade and 20cts additional for each consecutive grade.*
4. *That if at any time a surplus accumulated in the treasury, the Board of Education may order a temporary suspension or reduction, of the amount collected.*
5. *That children whose circumstances shall justify it, shall be admitted free to the school, and said Board shall determine all questions of this kind that may arise.*
6. *That a collector and treasurer be appointed by the Board to collect and hold said funds and pay out same as directed by the Board.*

*William David "W. D." Bennett was elected collector and treasurer, and has subscribed at present \$37.50 per month.*

The school year of **1900/1901** saw Professor George Carney Partin become principal at the public school. Under his guidance and skillful leadership, within three



years the enrollment was **184** students. Of course, for so many reasons the average attendance for the **1902/1903** year was 89.4. There is no doubt that the desire of the parents was for their children to have the best education possible. The children wanted to attend school even if some did not like the discipline required for learning. The following school year, **1903/1904**, Professor Partin and his two faithful teachers, Miss King and Mr. Smith were hopefully looking forward to an even greater year which would begin on the first Monday in September **1904**. In December of **1903**, the town of Monteagle presented its public school with a piano, something that would lift the spirit of any student with its familiar melodies." (Bits and pieces from **1903**, *Mrs. Grundy*, formerly *Tracy City News*.) School was going well, so let's check back with our churches at work.

A "*Special to the News*," Monteagle article from **Dec. 28, 1905**, from the *Sequatchie County News* stated that the people of the Christian Church were holding a revival in Monteagle. Rev. Shelburn of Pennington Gap, VA was the minister in charge. This tells us that the Christian Church, often referred to as the Church of Christ, did exist in Monteagle early on. A short statement in the same column reads, "*The entertainments given by the three Sunday Schools of this place were all heartily enjoyed. The children rendered their parts well and the decorations were beautiful.*"

On **Sept. 19, 1913**, the trustees, R. M. Payne, T. D. Tucker, and G. C. Partin, of the **Monteagle** Methodist Episcopal Church, South sold a lot in Summerfield to the trustees, George W. Garner, Joseph Turner, and W. L. Knighton, of the United Brethren in Christ Church (**Book W page 561**). That denomination was of the Baptist polity. "*Quarterly Conference was held at Summerfield Saturday night and Sunday May 22 and 23 by Rev. Dr. H. B. Crowell, presiding elder, United Brethren Church of Shelbyville... (Sequachee Valley News – June 3, 1909)*. The Monteagle Methodist Church, South had obtained the land/ deed from Basil Summers, Sen. Because George W. Garner, father of the infamous Pewter Garner, and his family lived down the lane that ran northward on the west side of the Dick Meeks house, I believe the Congregational Methodist church met in the little church house on the lane then left the building vacant; then the United Brethren Church moved onto the lot. Later the Summerfield Church of Christ began to use the church house that stood parallel to the lane known today (**2021**) as Masters Lane. "*Baptising at Summerfield – Three additions to the Christian Church were baptized at Summerfield Sunday afternoon about four o'clock. About 60 people from Tracy City attended the service, which was conducted by Elders Bailey Brooks and W. W. Bates. Mr. Bates will commence a revival service here on the \_\_ Sunday in September.*" (*Mrs. Grundy, Aug. 31, 1916*)

The newspaper clipping below was courtesy of Grundy County's Historian, Mr. William Ray Turner (dec'd.). He dated the church photo to be around **1910**. Some who are identified are Taylor Street; Walter and Arthur Turner; Allen McCreary; Emma and Dessie Sanders. I am sorry the picture is not clear. The group could be a United Brethren Church group or a Congregational Methodist group. It may have been too early to be a Christian/Church of Christ group. Many years ago, my cousin Debbie Layne Davis and I visited Mr. Junior Moon who lived across the road from the church building much of his life. He was confused somewhat about what name the church carried. I can understand that after reading several old deeds.



**THE PAST**—Here is a Summerfield church group posed probably some time in the 1910's. Among identifiable in the picture are Taylor Street, fourth in back row; Walter Turner, the boy with the dark hair, next to him. The fourth per-

son in that row is the late Allen McCreary. The photograph is from the collection of William Ray Turner, Tracy City, who wonders if anyone can identify other persons in the picture.

(1) EMMA (2) DESSIE

In **1910**, a Rev. W. B. Cates worked for a year at the Summerfield United Brethren Church. Then in **1919** the building was acquired by G. M. Thorogood and sold for one dollar to the trustees of the Summerfield Church of Christ who owned it until **1955** when Dick Meeks bought it. It was in **1956** that I remember seeing the old church building with its faded sign hanging tilted from its former position. Some scenes from our past just never seem to leave us. Now, Rev. Mr. Gwyne in the article above was a Methodist preacher. In a local newspaper of Nov. **1893**, we read: "*Congregationalists—I will organize a Congregational Church at or near William Sitz in Tracy City on the first Sabbath in November 1893. Mrs. R. J. Smith.*" William Sitz lived in White City near Myers Hill. This may well have been the beginning of the Myers Hill Congregational Church. It was

Victor A. Faiguax, a one-time janitor of Shook School, who zealously planted the Congregational Methodist missions all around Grundy County in **1893**. It is possible that the Summerfield group congregated as early as **1889**. According to an old deed, the little church building was built by the Congregational Methodist Church up until **1914** when it was transferred to G. M. Thorogood (a trustee of the Tracy City Church of Christ) by the then trustees, John Bates, I. W. Anderson and W. A. Sullivan. Then in **1919** Mr. Thorogood conveyed the building to trustees for the Summerfield Church of Christ, W. M. Sanders, Walter Thomas, and John Thomas. Then in **1953**, J. W. Thomas, trustee sold the property to Isaac Church and wife, who then sold it to Delbert and Beatrice Meeks. Because denominations often shared their buildings with other groups, it is difficult to know who the true owners of the property were.

In (**2019**), I stopped at the old Delbert “Dick” Meeks house to talk with its new owner. He was giving the house a great facelift. I talked with him about the possibility of the original walls from the front door straight back to the northern wall being made of logs. He said he had not had any reason to go into the walls but was not surprised at my question. He had been told it used to be a church building and used as a funeral parlor at one time. Dennis Clark Meeks, brother of Dick Meeks, assured me that the two side wings of the house were attached to the outer walls of the original building that was built of logs then possibly framed. I also have a memory of reading that E. C. Norvell used the building for a small funeral parlor.

As mentioned before, on **June 28, 1893**, James Preston and Arena (Sartain) Meeks sold land to the two school directors, George W. Summers and Madison Monroe Lane, in a conveyance known as Summerfield School House in school District # 30 which lay in Civil District # 12 of Grundy County Tennessee. It is easy to see that the Summerfield School House existed before **1893**. When working with deeds one must remember that a piece of land did not have its beginning on the day of sale or conveyance--some sort of school house existed in Summerfield even before **1893**. With George W. Summers’ name involved, I lean toward the Basil Summers church house being the one in dispute mentioned in the beginning of this document. The M. M. Lane (director) was my great-grandfather, Madison Monroe Lane who lived on the first bench under Forrest Point; he was a poor man, but he was not lacking in the skills of carpentry and masonry, and his expertise came in handy around an old school house. In **1897**, the directors of the Summerfield School were George W. Summers, S. J. Smith, and Andrew J. Thompson. There was one teacher, Miss Allie King, for the 35 students on the roll. So even though this deed was written in **1893**, Old Summerfield had a school house that predated the deed. This deed possibly was the foundation for what became known as the Summerfield School that stood on the property later to be known as Billy Nunley’s Market.

In August **1888**, Rev. Mr. Clement conducted a service in the Union Church of Monteagle village, and Rev. Rufus J. Clark preached to a mountain congregation at Summerfield, near Monteagle. In neither of these cases in the year **1888** is the church building called a schoolhouse.

The hardworking pioneer families of Moffat/Monteagle, both counties (Marion first, then Marion and Grundy), went to work searching for the land on which to build their new school house, a house not owned by a church group, a house for teaching and learning the "A, B, C's." Less than six months later, land was bought, directors decided, and the work of planning the first jointly shared public school of Monteagle began.

*"...Dr. Bryant has given great satisfaction in the public school, taught in the handsome new school-house built last year. . . (The Daily American—20 May **1894**). Now we have an exact year that the Monteagle public school was built in Grundy County---**1893**.*

My paternal grandfather, Alex Layne, and two of his siblings were on the **1902** roll of the new school; Alex's future wife, Emma Rose King, attended the new school that stood there as did all of their children except the baby, Patricia "Patsy" Layne. She started her education in the new Monteagle School across the railroad tracks. By this record we find that some of Summerfield children who lived closer to the new school on King St. made the move to that school probably because of redistricting.

In **1922** new trustees were chosen to be over the Summerfield Methodist Episcopal Church, South and cemetery which was donated by Basil Summers. That particular old deed is lost to us today according to the said deed of **1922**.

Years, principals, teachers, students, and happenings came and went between **1893** and **1938** atop that first hill on King St. The actual Lot # 54 could not contain a school full of mountaineer and village students, so the children did as I did as a child growing up on that same lot, they expanded their recess territory to the woods over on Holcombe heirs' land, down in the hollow behind the school where the crawdads were plentiful and the clear water ran over beautiful sandstone outcroppings. Playing in the road on King Street, aka Old County Road, wasn't worrisome, for the road was not much more than a muddy path in the beginning, then later a slated wider road. Separate outdoor toilets were built at the back of the property. Water was carried from the Charlie and Ella Mankin well. When I was a baby, my parents bought the land where the old school stood, and I remember a well on the property of the old Monteagle School; I remember my

parents drawing water from that well and it is still there. I always assumed that Mr. Charlie Meeks or my parents had that well dug after the school closed.

**Dec. 3, 1914** in the *Grundy County Times*, we read that “*The Monteagle School is run jointly with Marion County and Grundy County funds, which enables this school to run longer than the others.*” The other school children in Grundy County probably cheered when they were released in November, but the Monteagle students had the greater opportunity for learning by having a longer school year.

Back to church! The Monteagle Christian Church aka, the Church of Christ, at that time, was one of the three churches that met in the union church building originally. In **March 1905**, “*Rev. E. L. Crystal... took charge of the Christian Church preaching every third Sunday.*” Then on **Sept. 23, 1907**, the Church of Christ split over the use of the mechanical instrument of music during their worship services, for on that date,  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre of land was bought from W. H. Nelson on the Grundy County side of town on 1<sup>st</sup> St., almost directly behind the Cumberland Presbyterian Church by the trustees, I. P. Lappin, C. H. Mankin, and J. R. Morris, of the new Monteagle Church of Christ. Looking at the date, **Jan. 7, 1908**, of the above news article, the majority of the group that met at the union building wasted no time preparing for another meeting house. As the original trustees died off and new ones were appointed, in **1954**, John W. Thomas and Pascal Barnes, the only men left overseeing the little building on 1<sup>st</sup> St. sold the building to Pascal Barnes; he renovated it forming a house from the old building. (As I drove up 1<sup>st</sup> St. yesterday, **Oct. 27, 2021**, my thoughts perked up when the shell of the oldest Church of Christ building in Monteagle appeared to be getting a facelift. I hoped that the original building’s shape would be retained.) The new trustees and church group in the **1950s** built a new brick building on West Main where it is now (**2021**) snugly surrounded by the “new” flea market.

An effort to list all churches known to have been in the Summerfield and Monteagle area, in no particular order, follows; Summerfield Methodist Episcopal Church, South/ Methodist; Summerfield Seventh Day Adventist Church; [Summerfield Congregational Methodist Church/The Nondenominational Free Worship Church/The Cumberland Bible Chapel]; Summerfield Christian Church/Church of Christ; Summerfield United Brethren in Christ Church; Monteagle Holy Comforter Church/Episcopal; Monteagle Union Church; Monteagle Cumberland Presbyterian Church; Monteagle Methodist Episcopal Church, South/Morton Memorial United Methodist Church; Monteagle Christian Church/Church of Christ; Monteagle United Pentecostal Church; Monteagle First Baptist Church; a Baptist Church built by C. J. Cantrell, left on the second hill on King St.; and the Bible Baptist Church on the Marion

County side of Monteagle near Welles St.; Monteagle Seventh Day Adventist; Monteagle Assembly Non-Denominational; Monteagle New Beginnings Church; Highland Community Church in Summerfield.

Concerning the SDA church and school in Summerfield, Lloyd and Bessie (Cotton) Swallen moved from Canton, Ohio to the Monteagle/Summerfield area around **1925**. In Summerfield they started the Seventh Day Adventist Church and School combined. Lenora (Johnson) Layne described the church/school building as *“a little one room building with only a small closed in porch entrance with one big outhouse toilet, one end for boys and one for girls. The inside building for school had oil lamps each spaced on the walls different places to accommodate people for seeing at night time or dark days. The building was located about a quarter of a mile from the Swallen home place on the old Summerfield road near the Summerfield Cemetery – not far from the cemetery, back to back. One road in front of the Swallen house went to the Tracy City Highway.”*

Lenora attended her first year of school in the little SDA building; then her parents enrolled her in the Summerfield public school where she stayed for another year. Because of redistricting, she then found herself going to school in the Monteagle Elementary School on the Grundy County side of the railroad tracks. There’s where she met one of my aunts, Artie Mae Layne and her brother Alex Benson Layne. She had the same classes as they.

Where did John and wife, Lydia Moffat fit into all this church mix? This year (2018) my friend Bob Douglas wrote about Monteagle’s Cumberland Presbyterian Church wherein he listed John and Lydia (Landon) Moffat as charter members. The following article was written after John’s death but sheds much light on Mrs. Moffat and their daughter Jane (Moffat) Weir’s faith. Charter members originally helped start different denominations, but they did not always adhere to that particular doctrine. While searching around in these old deeds and reading in general, I noticed that I. B. Lappin was a trustee of the CP denomination but later became a trustee in the Church of Christ church.

**The Daily American Aug. 6, 1889**—*“The Power of Faith; Christian Science Advocates on the Mountains; Discussion of the Subject at Monteagle; An Extraordinary Meeting In a Little Church Last Sunday Evening: An extraordinary meeting was held in the little church at Monteagle Sunday afternoon. An appointment had been made by Mrs. Moffat, a believer in the Christian Science theory, to expound it. The gathering at her residence was so large that the place of meeting was transferred to the little Union Church nearby. Ere long Mrs. Moffatt and her daughter, Mrs. Weir, entered, the latter taking a seat in the audience. Mrs. M. was dressed in*

*black, with just a little white trimming to her black bonnet, while a long black veil was gathered close around it, and hung back of her shoulders."*

*"She timidly began her address saying that money would not induce her to appear before a public audience. She claimed that it was the duty of his creatures to come nearer to God, that he was all-powerful, and would send his comforter if asked. The faith of her creed, though she didn't call it creed, was in "the power of good over evil." The world believes in the power of evil over good. Soon after introducing her theme she commenced a silent prayer, and all heads bowed in deference to the request."*

*"God uses weak means to bring about great ends, she said, and that growth in Christian science must come through humblest methods. The student must begin free from prejudice. They may grow until the scripture is no longer a mystery, and when power to heal is given. She believes still in the power to perform miracles where proper faith is exercised, and notes that at times Christ would not work miracles when on the earth, because of unbelief. She referred the first chapter of Acts and accepts the Bible as it is. It is understood that Mrs. Eddies' book is an inspiration."*

*"The process of healing is through an unseen power. The power of evil is absolutely denied. In event of broken limb or severely cut and bruised flesh she would send for the surgeon as a help. The real healing is by process of thought. She would say to the physician, "go on and practice but look into this gospel truth. Go on trusting in God and you will never lose a patient. Success must come through giving God and Christ all honor, creeds and doctrines must be removed from the mind." She said "the mind must be full of holiness to God."*

*"Taking a seat, she said she should be glad to hear from any one present. A lady of the assembly asked her construction of Paul's assertion that when he would do good, evil was present with him, and she replied promptly that the Apostle believed in the power of evil. She denied the power of evil and declared for the divinity in man."*

*"Many questions were asked by the intelligent audience, which was made up wholly of visitors."*

*"Surprise was expressed at the absence of all mountain people. There seemed not one in the audience who concurred in her views except the daughter. She was deeply concerned, and asked her mother many helpful questions. After the discussion at the church Mrs. Weir was the guest of friend at the hotel, and for more than an hour a spirited discussion was maintained, a minister and several ladies taking an active part."*

*“While none were induced to accept the faith, and one or two ladies emphasized their non-concurrence, the sentiment prevailed that purest and highest motives controlled their every word and deed. Those who recall the family history for a quarter-century bear the highest esteem and most cordial sympathy for the family. Prof. Moffat was a remarkable man in progressive enterprise and for the principles of morality. It was he who stopped off by the mountain road and determined to establish a town on this very spot. It was called Moffat for several years, until he had been unfortunate, and successors to his enterprises got a change of name to Monteagle. Whatever sentiment may prevail concerning the theory by so honored a title, Christian Scientists have much pleasure and comfort in their faith. Mrs. M. is young for “second sight,” but she has lain aside spectacles after using them fifteen years. They claim they can cure not only nervous diseases, but all things except unbelief. They admit that supernatural power is given to all alike in proportion to their faith – that all have the same power.” Mrs. John Moffat gave much of her later years to spreading the teachings of Scientology.*

In Part 9-D, next issue, we will talk about the Monteagle School that was built in Marion County.



Part 9-D of "All Things Monteagle"  
Churching and Schooling Our Monteagle Pioneers

by Jackie Layne Partin



Here we are in Marion County in **1938**. Well, it would be ten more years before I became a part of the student roster at this school in **1948**, unless one counts the numerous days that Mrs. Katie (Goforth) Fults allowed me to attend with my sister Johnnie Maxine Layne in **1947/48**. Those visits were the beginning of my life in public school. The ell section on the left end of the building enclosed my little world, a large first grade classroom, a lengthy, cloak/storage room, a restroom for girls and another for boys, and a large activity area between the actual classroom and rest rooms. But this story is about **1938**, not me, and all the excitement that went with the new beginning.

Contractor bids were taken in **March 1938** for the building of a new school for Monteagle and Grundy County students. This time around, the school came back to Marion County, or simply stated – "across the railroad tracks." Monteagle's second new school building waited for the little shoes and some bare feet that were marching up King St. on **Oct. 3, 1938**. My Uncle Alex Benson "Dude" Layne, eight-years-old, picked up his little chair in the old school building in Grundy County and walked south up King St.,

crossed College St., walked east a few yards on the active railroad, turned right and slowly descended the cinders to cross Main St., finally entering into the grounds of the new school. It just came to my thoughts that on that date, no doubt, the rough cinder-bed footpaths were formed by Monteagle's school children over the years as they deepened and smoothed for as long as there were railroad tracks in Monteagle. My memories tell me that there were two of those paths on Grundy side of the tracks—one came down from the tracks and dumped walkers onto College St. at King St. entrance. The other path on the Grundy side brought the walkers down on College St. near Lee/Lea St. On the Marion side of the tracks, I recall a cinder path coming down toward Hwy. 41 and Ed Asher's Blue Sky; then the main cinder path was in front of the school that led all railroad walkers across Hwy. 41 into the front entrance of the new school lot.

When Uncle Dude was alive, he enjoyed so much speaking of the advantages the new building offered. Indoor plumbing—no more carrying drinking water from neighboring wells or springs, or forming little paper cups from tablet sheets for drinking; indoor toilets—heated, no less—no more cold trips outside to relief oneself; no more pot-bellied stoves; no more pigs under the schoolhouse floor; new furnishings with beautiful, wooden floors that smelled of cedar shavings; more teachers; and a whole new world—bigger windows to see the passing world; more grass and playground per se, and a special painting by Mr. Brantley Smith, hanging in each of the five classrooms. Oh my! Where are those paintings today (2022)?

There was no money for a cafeteria. As usual for a while the students brought lunches or walked/ran home for lunch—I was one of those runners—we had thirty minutes to leave, eat, and return. Dear reader, thirty minutes meant thirty minutes—no monkeying around or counting cross-ties as hungry students hopped along the tracks. The giving, sharing residents of Monteagle took on the task of organizing a way to feed the children hot lunches. Ernest Lautzenheiser secured two acres of land and assigned a WPA worker to tend it; two bags of WPA potatoes produced 1800 pounds that year. Sarah (Campbell) Speegle bought four gallons of onion sets to be planted, yielding 120 pounds. Mary C. Partin canvassed the community for the smaller seeds to plant.

Now the gatherings were wonderful, but there were no canning jars. Two of the many people who donated jars were Mr. Dave Thomas and Clara (Cannon) Shoemate. Having no place to use as a kitchen for canning, the garden harvests were taken to the Tracy City Cannery where 589 quarts were readied for the start to the hot lunch project. Two days after the school opened its doors, Mr. Jim Francis bought the old Kennedy house and lot that joined the school lot, then conveyed a deed to the Marion County School Board. The building was to be torn down and used as a beginning of a school

cafeteria. However, funds were still limited. One room was scrubbed and a kitchen took shape. Equipping the kitchen was taken on by Mrs. Julius Hassler, Miss Coker Parker, and Sarah Speegle, trustees for the Monteagle Community Home. A quick shopping trip to Winchester and thirty dollars furnished cooking utensils and dishes.

Since it was immediately obvious that a number of children needed a hot lunch, the cooking began with two WPA ladies, Louise Adams and Hettie Smith took charge. Some merchants furnished food items when they could and the 1938-1939 school year finished with an average of 60 pupils fed each day. All volunteers were looking ahead to a better setup for the hot lunch program when the 1939/1940 year began.

“The lunch room was separate from the main building. It was located in the old railroad freight building which had been moved from a site near the Assembly Grounds water tank.” (Quote is from *History of Grundy County TN Schools* by Janelle Layne Coats, 1988.)



**The first lunchroom for the  
Monteagle Elementary School  
was formerly an old freight  
building from near the depot and  
the MSSA water tank in the area.**



**1938 Monteagle Student Body at the West End Door of the New School**

Fellow historians, my story "All Things Monteagle" will take a rest. If I wrote everything that I think I know about Monteagle, the story would never end. However, I do have other things to share about my home town, but in shorter formats. Some information in this Part 9-D was taken from minutes and notes donated by the George Carney Partin family and stored in the Research Library on Depot St., Tracy City, TN.