

Burkett Chapel Graveyard and More

By Jackie Layne Partin

2014

Burkett Chapel Cemetery and More

By Jackie Layne Partin (2014)

One need only to look as near as the Burkett Chapel Cemetery in Marion County to find a group of descendants who truly cherish their ancestry. They have a cleaning every year on the first Saturday of August and try to follow the next day or soon with a "Layne Reunion". Just by chance I stumbled into this information yesterday, August 2, 2014, when my husband said, "Let's go for a ride." In fifty-four plus years of marriage, he has never said that to me. Then he asked, "Where would you like to go?" I didn't have to think about it, I blurted out, "Burkett Chapel Cemetery. I've never been there."



Lester Layne was instrumental in getting this huge, sandrock marker to replace the old wooden one. Several people aided in the project. Future hopes are to acquire more land and build a nice pavilion.

It was tempting to turn back after several miles out Ross Creek Road. We had seen no sign of the burial ground, but we didn't give up. There it was, on the right where my husband said he remembered it being many years ago while riding his mule off into Bryant's Cove. My perception of a graveyard is one of green grass, either mowed meticulously, or grown so tall as to hide the stones of those interred. This graveyard reminded me of my parents' backyard when I was a small child; we kept it

swept with an old broom, no grass at all. When one lived on a small section with lots of children playing in the yard, no lawnmower, and a minimal income, the yard was often swept. Burkett Chapel Cemetery was grassless, no weeds, orderly, each grave prominent. If one did not notice the age of the stones, it would appear that most were fresh burials because the soil was heaped up on the top of each grave, as though it had not yet settled around the coffin. Tender care obviously has been given for endless years, possibly from as far back as the Civil War era. Today there is a fence surrounding the graves, but that has not always been the case. Counting on the hard survey work of my now deceased friend, Sue Scott, in the book *Cemeteries of Grundy County, TN, Vol. 1*, there are approximately 252 graves with markers of some sort.



Burkett Chapel Cemetery viewed from the old section

Bryant's Cove can be seen in the background.

Most if not all of the graves in this old section are Laynes or are connected to Layne families.

Available information from the stones and other reliable notes tells about some of the oldest burials. Here are a few of the earliest names and death dates: Alexander Coulson (1872); Abigail (Myers) Coulson (1879); John L. Lathrum (1888); Rosa Jane Lane and Mary Jaco (1889); Sallie Tate (1891); Elies Layne (1892); Henry Lee Hicks (1894); Rebecca Jane (Layne) Fults and Julye Campbell (1897). There are specific earlier burials that we will talk about later on in our story.

Annual cleanings have been going on so long that when one came to work in the distant past, transportation was either by foot, horse or 'wagon and team'. Some recall bringing a mule and sled loaded with food and tools from the other side of the cove, crossing the creek and encouraging that old mule to "git on up there" to the graveyard. Good reader, it wasn't easy to get that mule to move on up the side of that cove. It wasn't easy for my old Tahoe to "git on up there" this week (2014)—it took some

encouragement and kind words along the way—and pushing the right button. Like many other romps, I just **had** to go to the flatland in the cove and visualize the busy lives being lived in that beautiful place. Sadly, timber cutting has taken the beauty out of so much of the area that I wondered if it might just be a sin to destroy what God had given to Marion County. But when I needed a small house, or a cord of wood, or even a toothpick, I did not stop to think of what had gone on in the past and now in Bryant's Cove, Savage Gulf, Clouse Hill, Pigeon Springs and so many other places.



Modern Day Mule Travelers of Bryant's Cove Area

Left to Right: Stan Partin on Liza, Bobby Phipps on Belle, Grady Ward Partin on Jenny, and Joe Phipps on Jack

The animals were tied up in the shade for comfort while the workers cleared the grass and debris. Families from both sides of Bryant's Cove could be seen making their way to the little burial ground. Each family brought food for a big spread placed on the make-shift tables. At noon lids and wraps came off the food, and the hardworking men, women and children headed for the table taking time to give thanks to the Almighty for the blessing of the day.

However, once the meal was over and work began again, the mule and sled were used to remove all the grass, fallen branches, and other natural debris piled up by the volunteers. An out of the way place was chosen and the sled was unloaded in the woods. The custom is perpetually and faithfully carried out each year although transportation and tools have modernized. Trash cans are thoughtfully placed around

the cemetery area, and this is where compliments are to be handed out to the people of that area. The cemetery, although hidden as a child would be during an intense game of hide-and-go-seek, is respected by the local people – kudos for my friends on that end of Grundy and Marion Counties for your love of family and the land that provides and keeps on giving.

Let me hasten to say that some of the descendants of those buried here call it Burkett Chapel “**Graveyard**” not “Cemetery.” They prefer that designation, sort of like many of the older ones call Bonnie Oak Cemetery, “Parsons **Graveyard**”. Feelings run deeply when one tries to change the name of an old burial ground. Excitement filled me when I began to realize that many of the remains below the ground in this particular graveyard were in some way tied to John Hiram, Sr. and Barbara (Devault) Layne – as am I. These were some of the Laynes who didn’t cross over the plateau to Hollingsworth Cove which became known as Layne’s Cove situated north of Monteagle, TN. I am a direct descendant of John Hiram Lain, Jr. and Ester (Kilgore) Lain who are buried in the Summerfield Cemetery near Monteagle. Make no mistake; we are all cousins, no matter what the genealogists say.



Ester (*Kilgore*) Lain



J. Lain

I found the stones side by side; sadly they have been recently been removed by someone, but not until after I took these photos. A newer stone was placed by Mae Wilhelm before she passed away.

According to John “Squirrel” Layne, it is thought that Burkett was a preacher/school teacher who came through the area many years ago with the Good News and made an impression on the local folks leading them to name their little chapel and cemetery after him. The original one room log building with a porch doubled as a church and school. It stood just inside the front entrance to the graveyard

where one can readily see three of the foundation stones still present today (2014). Also noticeable is the fact that there are no graves in the spot where the church/schoolhouse stood. Good readers, those three stones are voices from the past. I didn't even know the area or its history, but the moment I saw those stones I exclaimed to my husband, "These are cornerstones to a building!" Turning around and around in excitement, I tried to visualize the fourth cornerstone calling upon my past years of geometry to fix my eyes on the spot where it must have been placed. They must be cherished and never be moved or removed. Several years ago, I ran upon a very similar scene at Pigeon Springs. That community also in Marion County had a one room schoolhouse; only three cornerstones remain today (2014). They like Burkett Chapel's stones are treasures for the ages.

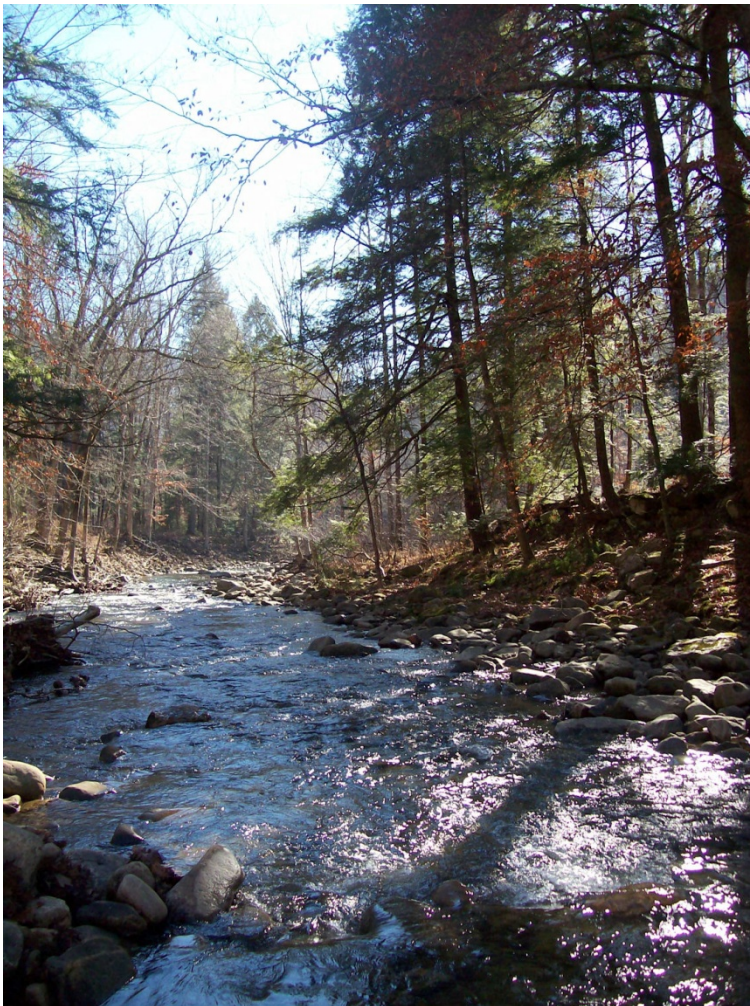


Two of the three cornerstones used in the first church/schoolhouse at Burkett Chapel

Grady Ward Partin and his two grandchildren, Jocelyn and Stokes Partin, standing on the three cornerstones of the Pigeon Springs one-room schoolhouse.



Burkett Chapel was a name given to a chapel/school and an area that otherwise was wild wilderness with a sprinkling of families. Down at the floor of Bryant's Cove about one hundred school children from both sides of the cove, the floor of the cove and even the tops of the cove came together to attend the Bryant's Cove School, but at one time a few children right around Burkett Chapel attended in the little log house next to the graveyard. It was convenient. That log house was the go-to-place when rain overtook the yearly cleaning group, or if a burial was in progress, or if a child needed to rest or was sick. Even today we have our "special places" marked—shelter from inclement weather, toilets (outdoor or indoor), and water supplies—just as the early settlers did.



"Down at the floor of

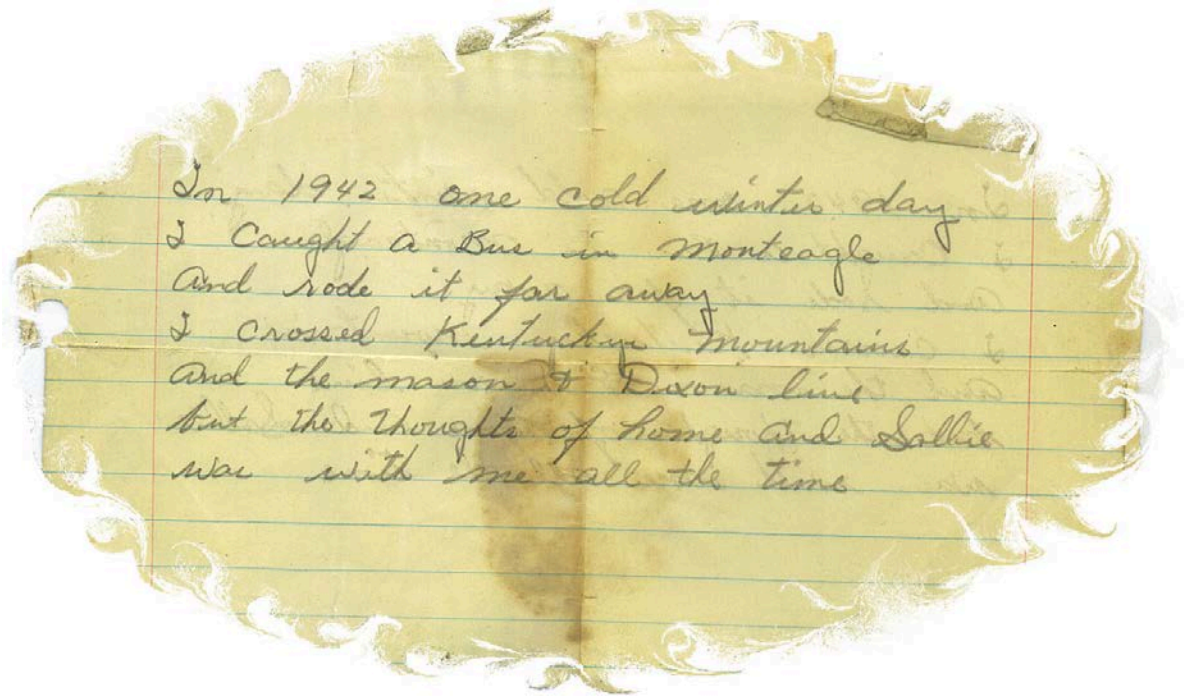
Bryant's Cove"

(Dec. 12, 2014)

The creek like many other tributaries is making its way to the Little Sequatchie River on its way to the Sequatchie River.

When the original chapel/school was gone, another little chapel was built in the clearing across the road by John Franklin "Ring Eye" Nunley, son of William Elihu and Harriet Melissa (Smith) Nunley. Other interested individuals aided in the project. It was a wonderful little chapel for its time and place. The usual two-door entrance was inviting, opening into a setting copied from the past many times over with benches and

a stage/pulpit area. This one was not built of logs; it was a frame building with lap board—weather board, painted white. The spring rains fell down upon a tin roof separating the true listeners from the napping ones. Oh Lord, lift my eyelids and hold them open as if blunted toothpicks were supporting them!!



John Franklin wrote this note at the age of fifty-nine when he had to go North in 1942 to find work in Detroit (Courtesy of ehawkins via ancestry.com)

Ironically, according to his death certificate old “Ring Eye” died on Nov. 13, 1945, and two days later on the 15th, his was the first and last funeral held in “his” Chapel. He died of a cerebral hemorrhage due to hypertension at the age of sixty-three years and fifteen days. The building stood several years before it began to deteriorate. Had this building been in a small town, it probably would have lasted more years with lots of care, but in the open wilderness, it is quite difficult to give the protection and care needed. Hunters built fires inside from time to time. One of those fires caused the building to burn, and wisely it was never built back. One might say that the fire ended the religious presence at Burkett Chapel, but the name stayed with the cemetery and the vicinity.



**John Franklin and wife, Sallie Louisa (Hatfield) Nunley (ca. 1906)
Both are buried at Burkett Chapel Cemetery.**

Our Cemetery

*Over at Burkett's Chapel
Where the dirt is so beautiful red
We meet in the month of September
To clean off the graves of our dead.*

*Although we've had many heartaches
And some have shed bitter tears
But we always meet in September
It has been our custom for years.*

*Over there one time at a working
Some money was collected, it's said
By a man of high rank in religion
To build us a nice little shed.*

*A shed we might work under
To protect us from snow and rain
While burying our friends and our loved ones
If it should happen in bad weather again.*

*The building was never erected
Though people pass by, it is said
And look with dismay o'er the graveyard
And ask, "What became of the shed."*

*The steward and the money soon parted
And he goes through life with a dread
Afraid that someone will ask him
"What became of the money for the shed?"*

*So brother if you aim to build it
Build it before you are dead
For the Good Lord will sometime ask you
What became of the money for the shed.*

*And we all want to meet up yonder
And meet there without any dread
There we'll meet our friends and loved ones.
And the Saviour will have us a shed.*

(Copied from ancestry.com purportedly written by John Franklin Nunley)

Our Church

*Down in the cove
Near the old Brown place
In a little church house
In a rocky place*

*The people around
Are kind hearted and fine
They all have religion
In the hot summer time.*

*But along in the fall
When the weather gets cold
They all get contrary
And their religion gets old.*

*They all get to fussing
And don't care a bit
And the first thing they know
Their religions frost bit.*

*Oh Lord send us a preacher
That will preach with all his might
And give us a religion
That the frost won't bite*

(Copied from ancestry.com purportedly written by John Franklin Nunley)

The sign states:

**BRYANT'S COVE CHURCH
FIRST REVIVAL JUNE 1986 – SAVED
(illegible) AND 35 BAPTIZED**

**CHARLES "COTTON" ROSS AND
ERNEST "MUTT" LOCKHART
PREACHED**

CHURCH BUILT 1990

*(John Franklin Nunley would be happy to see
that the people in the area of the cove still
believe.)*



From these poems we learn that the month of the graveyard cleanings was in September in years past. We can also understand that the community down in the cove was substantial at times almost a complete, self-sustaining village. Monthly trips out for stable goods or to meet the "rolling stores" and trips to "grandma's house" seemed to be the norm in all the cove areas. As far as local historians today know, with the exceptions of the marked graves of Houston A. Bryant (1846-1897) and Abbie C. (Tate) Bryant (1852-1896), A. Jackson Bryant (ca. 1844- aft 1890) and possibly a few graves destroyed by extensive timber works, all burials were brought up to Burkett Chapel Cemetery for interment. Burying in the bottom of the cove was avoided. Creeks wreak havoc on graves.



Houston A. Bryant

born Dec. 14, 1846

Died Mar. 3, 1897

(Abbie's data is on the back side of this much taller stone than the photo shows.)

Pvt. A. Jackson Bryant

*{son of James & Mary (Tate) Bryant
and brother to Houston A. Bryant}*

*Enlisted in
CO I 10th Tenn Inf Regiment
(Union)*



Why the Name "Burkett"?

A good possibility, probability, for the **Burkett** name could be Rev. M. H. B. Burkett (1811-1875) a minister for the Tracy City and Spencer Circuit of the Methodist Episcopal Church, **North** in the years **1872-1873** and the Tracy City Circuit in **1873-1874**. Seven years after the Civil War, Mr. Burkett was riding between Tracy City and Spencer fulfilling his duties. Mr. Burkett had a son named after him, but for the purpose of this story, we are going to assume that the elder Burkett is the man needed to fit this part of our story since his son became a physician. Prof. Burkett taught school in Washington Co., TN in **1850**. The Burkett family, father, mother, Caroline (Harrison) Burkett, and six children were born in Virginia, but it seems that little Tennessee and Jr. Burkett may

have been born in Tennessee. The family came to Tennessee around **1847/48**, thus the name for their daughter Tennessee born around that time. Since there was a Methodist minister, Stacy Lauson, in the home with the Burketts in the 1850 Census, it seems reasonable to believe that we are in the right family.

**Professor Michael H. Bascom
Burkett**

(1811-1875)

(Photo courtesy of Find A Grave)



In **1860**, we find M. H. B. Burkett, Sr. living in Sneedsville, Hancock Co., TN. He was still teaching school. Little Nelly had been added to the list of children. We also find out that the “B” in Junior’s name stands for Bascom. The Burketts were big on naming their children with three names causing researchers a few headaches.

In **1870**, the Burketts lived in Bradley Co., TN. where Mr. Burkett was still teaching school. Here we find out that the “M” initial stands for Michael. Now we have Michael H. Bascom Burkett. Henry is probably the name for the initial “H” since his son, the physician, with the same three initials is sometimes called Henry in the Census records. Mrs. Burkett died on Apr. 22, **1872**. Prof./Rev. Burkett died on Oct. 10, **1875** in Bradley County. They were buried in the Hayes Shed and Michigan Avenue Cemetery in Bradley Co. The following photos of the tombstones and inscriptions are shared with us through “**Find A Grave**” and its contributors.



Caroline (Harrison) Burkett Gravestone Inscription:

Her life was a model of domestic virtue and Christian graces. The light of her examples shine on to illuminate our pathway homeward.



Rev. Burkett's Gravestone Inscription:

He was a zealous Minister of the Methodist Church, an earnest Instructor of youth, A faithful husband and parent, and a devoted Christian

First Burial At Burkett Chapel – Legend or Fact?

James Wanamaker's grave is hailed by locals as containing the first burial. Locals believe he was buried there during the mid 1860s during the war. He has a military stone with the following information: **CO I, 10th Tennessee Infantry**. Local stories tell of James' death in the gulf (Bryant's Cove) below and the removal of his body to the top of the plateau for burial. No one today seems to know exactly who he was, but I would like to take an aim at his history.

First, I noticed that the above A. J. Bryant and James Wannamaker were in the same Company and Regiment in the Tennessee Infantry. One scenario, and a good one methinks, is that James was traveling through the cove and stopped off to visit his fellow military comrade A. J. Bryant who lived there with his parents. It is believed at this time that there were no burials in the cove, but soon the Bryants would have passed

away and burials would have taken place. At this writing A. J.'s death year is still a mystery. James became much worse from his many ailments and died; his friends, the Bryants, took him up to Burkett Chapel and placed him there in the cemetery. Going solely on the military stone information, he seems to be the same James William Wanamaker who first married Didamie Patrick, and after her death, he married Martha (Abernathy) Cochran on May 16, 1864. **If he is, then he was born in 1830 and died on Aug. 15, 1892 subtracting him as the first burial in that graveyard.** He was enlisted in the military on July 23, 1862 at Battle Creek, Marion Co., TN by Capt. P. M. Pryor (*Capt. Pleasant Marion Pryor*).



James Wanamaker with no dates on the stone; military info engraved: CO 1 10th TENN INF
(Union Army – jackie)



James William Wanamaker (1830-1892)

W	10	Tenn.
James Wanamaker		
Co. I, 10 Reg't Tennessee Inf.		
Appears on		
Company Descriptive Book		
of the organization named above.		
DESCRIPTION.		
Age	32 years	height, 5 feet 11 inches.
Complexion	Light	
Eyes	dark	hair Auburn
Where born	Marion Co. Tenn.	
Occupation	Farmer	
ENLISTMENT.		
When	July 23, 1862.	
Where	Battle Creek	
By whom	Capt. Pryor; term 3 yrs.	
Remarks:		

Left: An official Army document on
James Wannamaker
CO I, 10th Reg't, Tennessee Inf.
32 years of age, 5 ft. 11 in., light
complexion, dark eyes, auburn hair
Born Marion Co., Tenn
Occupation—farmer
Enlisted July 23, 1862 at Battle Creek by
Capt. Pryor for a term of 3 yrs.

Below are documents that tell us a lot about this man. They were found on **ancestry.com** where a Mr. Smith provided the information and the photo of James for researchers.

Original Pension Claim No. 657069

James Wannamaker, Rank: Pvt. Company I 10th Regiment, Tenn Volunteers, Nashville, Tenn

Claimant's address: Gorman, Humphreys County, Tenn., September 26, 1888

Applicant states he is suffering from the following disability, incurred in the service: smallpox, bone scurvy, disease of liver, kidneys & bowels & sunstroke, also affliction of bladder.

Pulse Rate: 98 Respiration: 22 Temperature: 98 Height: 5 ft 10 inches

Weight: 130 lbs Age: 58 years

Pulse irregular. Distinct regurgitation in bicuspidal valve. He has a flattened protrusion above umbilicus, which expands when he applies diaphragmatic pressure (blows himself up). This may be a gastric hernia? He has discoloration on right leg from passed leg ulcers and a big adhering scar in the left lumbar region from scrophulous abscesses which formed about 2 years ago. He further asserted that the flow of his urine sometime suddenly stops, which would indicate the presence of a calculus. He also complains about weakness and stiffness in both hip joints, but except some clumsiness in his gait, nothing wrong locally can be seen. Uses a cane in walking. Asserts to have had a sunstroke at Franklin, Tennessee, but his sense-organs are unimpaired. The above tumor in epigastric region had by him been taken for an evidence of liver disease. The valvular insufficiency may have originated from rheumatism in service, but all the other infirmities are subsequently contracted.

He is, in our opinion entitled to a 4/18 rating for the disability caused by heart disease,..... four dollars per month...

"Jasper, Tennessee May 8, 1895

In the winter of 1863 and 4 we were mounted for a short time and while out after guerillas in crossing a creek, James Warnamaker got wet and his clothes

froze on him and afterward was sick. There was something wrong with his legs as well as I can remember, he was unable to walk, I think he was sick twice. I am not sure. If I ever heard anyone say just what the disease was, I have forgotten

/s/ Richard S. Pryor"

Note: Richard S. (Stone) Pryor is believed to be a brother to Pleasant Marion Pryor mentioned above as being the one who enlisted James into the military. (*jackie*)

Deposition

"Residence: Warren County, KY -- P.O. Blue Lick, KY Occupation: Farming, Age 56?"

I have known Martha A. Wannamaker ever since along in 1863 or 1864. I knew her for about a year before she married Jas Wannamaker. She was living at Nashville, Tenn. I knew her first husband, William Cochran for 9 or 10 months before his death. I was there in Nashville and they all came there during the war is how I got acquainted with them and for a part of time lived in same building. We were living in same building where Wm. Cochran died - my mother was living there. I had a brother die there. I don't remember date of Cochran's death, and can't tell what was the matter. He was well and healthy one morning and died before night. They allowed he was poisoned someway. He was a soldier. Regiment was camped close and they brought him home where he died. I had known James Wannamaker all my life - he was my half-brother. I had a sister in East Tenn - Nancy Love, near Whitfield Coal mines, but I haven't heard of her in 12 years, there are no others of our family living. The first wife of James Wannamaker was Didama Patrick. He married her in Warren County, Tenn. I know that she was his first wife. She died time of the war in Nashville. I cannot recall the date - in 1862 or 3. I cannot tell the date. She died outside this side of Nashville near Old Race Track - right in edge of town. She was buried out on a hill this side of Nashville - not in the city cemetery. I was present when she died. I cannot tell now who was the Doctor there were 2 or 3 doctors - I think Dr. Naffloe for one. Can't tell where he is. I can't mention any one else who was present at time of death. James Wannamaker was there - he was a soldier but Regiment was camped there close and Regimental doctors waited on her. Dr. Naffle was a Regimental doctor. I cannot recall any of neighbors. We had not been there long. was not much acquainted and I was young and didn't notice. ...

James Wannamaker did not leave any property and Martha has been dependent upon the people you might say - she has not been able to work much and last time I saw her was nearly blind. I am not related - only by marriage to her... I was small when we left Warren County and can't refer to any who knew Wannamakers there."

/s/ Peter Countiss by his Mark "X"

Deposition

"Residence: Blue Lick, Kentucky, Warren County, Age: 60? Occupation: farming.

I belonged to Company I 3rd Tenn Infantry. James Wannamaker was a cousin of mine. His mother partly raised me in Marion County, Tenn. they moved from Warren County, Tenn to Marion County at which time James Wannamaker was married and had a family. His wife was Didama, but I did not know her before they married. She was mother of a child when I first knew her. James Wannamaker was much older than me. James Wannamaker lived in Marion County, East Tenn until during the time when we were run out by the rebels. ... Didama lived in Nashville Tenn as reported but I was not present. She died as represented. I was in the army. I came to Nashville with them and then I went into army. My mother wrote to me of her death and in winter of 1863 I came to Nashville and she was missing and his children were all dead and he was married again to Martha Cochran - this was time of Hoods' Raid (1864-5) because we followed Hood up there. I had never known Martha Wannamaker before that.

" I married her daughter Elizabeth February 10 1869 as per family record. I have known Martha Wannamaker ever since Hood's Raid and know that she lived with James Wannamaker until the time of his death. He did not leave her any property - they were dependent upon the children and she has had no means since - except what her children can do for her. She has not owned any property or had any income except from her own labor since the death of James Wannamaker. ..."

/s/ John H. Clay, by his Mark "X"

State of Tennessee - County of Marion

On this 20th day of February AD 1891 personally appeared before me, a Notary Public, Pleasant C. Grayson, aged 69 years, whose post office address is Shirlyton, Marion County, Tennessee, who being duly sworn according to law states that " I was acquainted with James Warnamaker (applicant for Invalid Pension); and knows that the said applicant to be the identical person of that name who enlisted or volunteered as a soldier in Company I 10th Regiment of Tennessee Vols and who was discharged at Nashville, Tennessee on or about the 23rd day of June 1865 by reason - at the close of the late war.

That the said James Warnamaker while in line of duty, at or near the (do not remember) day of (was in) 1863 became disabled in the following manner: while camped in the Capitol at Nashville, the said applicant contracted a disability called Bone Evisislis(sic), some called it Bone Scurvy. I do not (know) what causes it unless exposure and hard shifts in the service. That the facts stated are personally known to me by reason of being with him in the service at that time, both camped together in the Capitol. It has been so long I do not remember his medical treatment. Also we was together in the Raid after when we became so exhausted that I crawled from one shade to another. Said James Warnamaker was with us. He appeared to be very sun stricken and I brought milk and gave him to drink and done all I could for him so we could get to the command.

*And deponent further states that he is well acquainted with the claimant having known him for at least 28 or 29 years ago, have not seen him since the War. And further that his knowledge of the facts above stated was derived from said acquaintance and from having served as a soldier of **Company I of the 10th Regiment of Tennessee Infantry Volunteers**, from the 23 day of June 1862 to 23 day of June, 1865.*

/s/ Pleasant C. Grayson, Marion County, Tenn

Note: According to Pleasant C. (Carroll –jackie) Grayson’s pension application, he was in **CO I 10th Regiment Tenn Infantry** the same regiment as James Wanamaker.

The following history of James William Wanamaker came to me courtesy of Mr. Smith via ancestry.com messaging:

*"All I know of my James William Wanamaker was that he was born April 15, 1830 in Warren County, Tennessee. He died February 13, 1892 and to my surprise this document says he passed in Marion County. His first wife was Miss Didama Patrick, they married circa 1849. She died October 3, 1862, in Davidson County. Their children were Mary J., John E., Margaret D., Martha J. and William J. All of their children died of small pox. During the Civil War, he served under the command of General Patterson and joined duty at Battle Creek at age 32. From Nov. 1862 to Jan. 1863 he was ill and absent of duty. He recuperated Feb. of 1863 and was stationed at Camp Spears. He became ill again in October 1863 and was hospitalized. He was sick and absent from duty from Oct. 1863 to Apr. 1864. Soon after recovering he married Martha Ann (Abernathy) Cochran on May 16, 1864 in Nashville. Martha was the widow of William Cochran who died from wounds received in the Battle of Nashville on December 17, 1863. James and Martha moved to Humphreys County, Tennessee some time after 1875. James and Martha's children were Sophia Josephine (1865-1898), Arpha Annie (1868-1936), Virginia Frances (1870-1934), Lawson Edward (1872-1944) "my great great grandfather" and John William Abrell (1876-1917). Before James died in 1892, he and Martha moved to **Shirleyton, Tennessee in Marion County (bold type by Jackie)**. Martha Abernathy Wanamaker was listed in the U.S. Census record as living in Humphreys County in 1900. So I'd say she probably moved back here after James' death to come live with one of her children in Humphreys County. So now I'm thinking he probably is buried somewhere in Marion County, Tennessee. Martha died on July 15, 1907; she was born May 18, 1833. Her parents were Valentine Abernathy and Sarah Elizabeth Caldwell."*

In the above history, we see that James William Wanamaker lived in Shirleyton, TN in Marion County before he died in **1892**. Shirleyton is near Whitwell making it easy to see why James may have been buried in Burkett Chapel Cemetery. James could have walked Bryant's Cove many times during his war years and those spent in Marion County. The Cove had its own life and more than anything, it furnished much needed shortcuts from one side of the cove to the other.

Again I state that the military engraving on James Wanamaker's stone at Burkett Chapel Graveyard, plus with the application for a pension, the physician's letter and the depositions, plus statements of men who knew James Wanamaker seem to coincide with the same soldier buried in said grave. My final supporting point to add to the list is the person who sent out James' military stone spelled his surname with two "NN's,"

Wannamaker, not our local spelling of Wanamaker; it was probably ordered by a family member or sent out by the U. S. Army not knowing at the time exactly where the grave was. That stone made its way to Burkett Chapel Graveyard. The name on the stone is spelled with double "NN's".

Wannamaker James
Pvt. Co. I, 10th Regt.
Tenn. Infy
Cemetery near
at Whitwell
Tenn.
Grave
Date of death Aug 15-1892
Headstone supplied by
Vt. Marble Co., Proctor, Vt.
CONTRACT JUNE 28th 1897.

His stone came from Vermont and was supplied by the U. S. Army.

Wannamaker, James

Pvt. Co. I, 10th Regt., Tenn. Infy.

Cemetery near at Whitwell, Tenn.

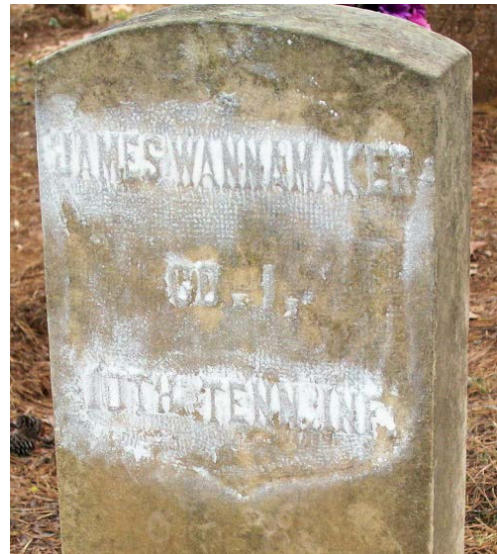
Date of death Aug 15, 1892

Headstone supplied by Vt. Marble Co.,
Proctor, VT.

Contract June 28th, 1897

An Interesting Border or Insignia

I found it interesting that A. J. Bryant and James Wannamaker have the same border around their military data. These stones are Union stones. Look carefully and compare the two borders. James' border is a little harder to see, but it is visible.



This is a Union sample of a military stone.

This is a CSA sample of a military stone.

Assumed First Burials – the Hangings!

If James Wanamaker was not the first burial at Burkett Chapel, then who was? Can we ever know for certain? With little thought one might now assume that the two Layne men, William Harrison “Little Britches” (1812-1863) and Abraham (b. Unk-1863) were the first two burials. Since they were supposed to be hanged at the same time, probably on the same tree, and during the Civil War, then they probably were the first

burials, the beginning of Burkett Chapel Cemetery. It is believed that the bodies were cut down from the huge tree and then buried beneath its branches. The exact spot is lost since knowledge of the old tree has long been gone. It has been my experience that often land is set aside for a burial ground when a town is being planned out by an engineer or town officials. But when there is no town, no village, no cemetery but a body has been buried in the open wilderness, folks near that burial tended to add loved ones to that hollow ground. One either buried babies or other lost ones on high ground on their own land or went to a place where burials already existed.

Let your imagination run rampant for a few moments and think about the choice of having a chapel, a school and a graveyard in the exact spot as we now know as Burkett Chapel. In 1863 the Bryants had not yet been buried in the cove. Families were so few and far apart, but the community chose to bury loved ones for certain as early as 1872 in the spot on high ground right at the top of Bryant's Cove just before the lay of the land began to drop off into the cove. Even the ones on the other side felt it important enough to go to tremendous trouble to bring their loved ones' bodies to Burkett Chapel Cemetery. Why? Could it have been because a well-worn foot path or wagon road was already there? Could it have been because the Layne men's bodies were the origin of the cemetery? Could it have been because the few families who lived in District 4 of Marion County, TN in 1860, lived right there near the path/road and the two burials?



**Left:
Memorial Stone for the
two Layne men:**

**William Harrison "Little
Britches" Layne (1812-1863)
and
Abraham Layne (??-1863)**

In 1962 a book was published with the title of *Layne-Lain-Lane Genealogy* by Floyd Benjamin Layne. From that book I quote these words on page 77:

15 *William Harrison Layne: b c1812*

16 *Stephen Layne: b 1815*

17 ***Abraham Layne: lived at Burkett's Chapel, Grundy
co Tenn in early 1800's with brother William Harrison
Jr, both were miners; during Civil War both
were hanged by Union soldiers (bold type by me-jackie)***

18 *Elizabeth Layne: b c1824; m William Stegal*

19 *Esther Layne: b c1822; m Noah McCrary*

20 *(Son) Lane: b c1825*

Then on page 80 we read, "...*William known as 'Little Britches'; lived with brother Abraham at Burkett's Chapel, Grundy co Tenn where both were miners; both hanged by Union soldiers as result of activities supporting the Confederate cause;...*"

Folks, as years went by and all the Laynes discovered libraries and then computers, the Layne-Lain-Lane Genealogy took second place to the Holy Bible in Layne family researchers' homes. It held its place on library shelves and coffee tables, actively used, no dust adorning it. But even Floyd Benjamin Layne knew it was not the gospel. It appears to me that all the stories we have heard on these two hangings had their roots in the two entries in his book. Let's make a note here that Floyd B. Layne was a wonderful person in that he cared enough to do such an extensive work on the Layne families. But we must remember that most of his information came from people just like you and me who knew some things to be true, believed others to be true, and just accepted what we were told as a child to be true. There are errors in the book. There will be errors in my story, although not intentionally. Mr. F. B. Layne, nor I, Jackie (Layne) Partin, were there, so we can only present material for the reader to move around, look under, stand back and take second glances, just like a lady who is house cleaning and moving her furniture around to make things look prettier or to come together with a better theme. Mr. F. B. Layne ran ads in newspapers, wrote letters, traveled around the country talking with any Layne he could find. Some of his most interesting and most fruitful moments came when conversations started with "Now, Mama always said..." or "Granddaddy's first wife died young, then he married Miss...,"; it is the same with me in my gatherings.

Contradiction of the entries in the book is not my purpose, but I have doubts about the wording and implications of the entries. I am not saying that two Layne

men were not hanged on a tree in Burkett Chapel but a few questions arose when I reread them. Immediately I noticed the statement that William Harrison was called "Jr." in the 17th line, but since we believe he is the son of David Layne, he could not be a "Jr." Note that brothers, Abraham and William Harrison, Jr., were living together and were **miners** in the **early 1800s**. According to research done by Nonie Webb in her book, *Old Mines and Miners of Marion Co., TN*, mining did not come about in Marion Co. until **1852** at Mt. Etna, **1854** in the Southwest corner of Marion Co., and **1877**, "*James Bowron & Assoc. brought into the Marion Co. valley sufficient capital to develop the Iron & Coal Industries. Coal Mines were opened in Whitwell, Coke Ovens built in Victoria, Iron ore was obtained from Inman, and Smelter erected in South Pittsburg. Coal was worked in Georgia and Alabama and Shipped to Shellmound in Marion Co., TN. Marion Co. had claim on it as Coal development.*" Of course, we know that Tracy City started officially mining coal around **1857/58** when the railroad was completed to the town. Where did the brothers mine in the early 1800s when there appeared to be no mines in Marion or Grundy Counties in the early 1800s? In 1850 and 1860, William was a farmer. If he died three years later, he died a farmer by trade.

Assuming the hangings did happen let us spend some time trying to find out what led them to that tree to be hanged by the neck till dead. Their memorial stone reads: "**Both men were hung in this area by Confederates for turning Union Sympathizers.**" The person who had the stone engraved did not accept the information in the book, but chose to believe the reverse which may be right. An excerpt from Stella Dodson's story about Ross Creek gives a different viewpoint saying that the brothers "**...were hanged during the Civil War by Union soldiers for their activities in support of the Confederacy.**" Obviously, Mrs. Dodson accepted the information found in the *Layne-Lain-Lane* book. Who is going to say which is correct – not I?

However, there could have been another scenario—maybe they were Confederate deserters turned Union as part of Calvin Brixey's marauders and were **hanged by their own side, the Union Army**, for being so out of control—just like Brixey was. Let's add one more possibility please. Because of the tension in that area is it possible that **neighbors or even kinfolks hanged the men** without any government directive to do such a thing? Vigilantism? Hang or be hanged! Catching Brixey's Company of men would have been an easy task for local men working together, plateau with valley, but each man could not be sure what the other was thinking, what army might come down on them with a vengeance. Remember, both sides were represented in the area of Marion, Grundy and Sequatchie Counties. Even after Anderson S. Goodman, a well respected man from Pelham, jointly wrote and signed a letter to General George Day Wagner asking for help with the Brixeyite problem, he was brutally murdered by the ruthless gang. Has anyone even given thought that Anderson

S. Goodman was murdered not over the shearing of his horses tails, or because he downgraded young Brixeyites, but maybe because he dared stand against Brixey and the young men some of whom grew up around him as neighbor children and probably worked for him on his farm?

Obviously we have stepped off into a quagmire here. The burial stone is a more recent one; it was inscribed from information given orally or written down by a person like me who searches and searches for history—possibly someone who had heard stories of the hangings handed down from one generation to the next until we have several conflicting accounts in our present generation. I keep thinking about the points that we have found out. The little Burkett Chapel was probably named for a minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church, **North**; this is not to be taken lightly. There was the M. E. C., **North** and the M. E. C., **South**, and members of either group were for the most part enemies, or at best, not speaking to each other. The military stone of James William Wannamaker was sent by the **Union**; the man, Capt. Pryor, who enlisted James was a **Union** man from the area, the soldier buried in Bryant's Cove, A. J. Bryant, was a **Unionist**, and now we have two supposed **Union** sympathizers hanged near the Burkett Chapel area. Obviously that area of Marion Co., TN was crawling with **Union** sympathizers. Matter of fact, the whole area was torn apart by the war issue, neighbor against neighbor, family against family, brother against brother. Great fear and tense nerves abounded all around Burkett Chapel, Ross Mountain, Victoria, Pelham, Tracy City, Altamont, and other parts of Marion and Grundy Counties and even Sequatchie County. In this setting, one just could not utter the words, "I am neutral." That was more dangerous than being in the Confederacy or the Union Army.

Please remember that my maiden name is "Layne", so what I am going to write now, includes my own family heritage. From the first time I heard about these two hangings, I felt it reeked of Calvin Brixey and his "Brixeyites". (1) Union sympathizers, (2) the surname Lain/Lane/Layne, (3) the areas of Marion and Grundy counties, (4) the practice of malicious behavior (or punishment) such as murder or hanging, (5) the mentioning of the Confederacy and Union within the context of a soldier's participation, all have the negative connotation of Brixeyism.

Found in the Memphis Appeal, Saturday, July 18, 1863

"There was a class of men called cowboys, in our first war for independence, who cared neither for King, country or liberty. Their sole object was plunder, and they robbed indiscriminately the loyalist, the tory and the patriot. More than eighty years have passed away, and the South now finds herself engaged in another struggle for all that free men hold dear in life. Surely,

in an age so enlightened, and in a cause so just and holy, there can be no cow-boys in the Confederate States. Yes, there can be, and are.

The whole mountain range, from Cumberland gap, in the east, to the Sewanee coal mines in the west, is cursed with cow-boys of the most desperate character. They alternately hoist the Federal and Confederate flags. Today, they are loud in professions of devotion to the South, and tomorrow, are found bushwacking Confederate soldiers, and plundering their patriotic neighbors. They are worse, if possible, than Lincoln's hirelings and should be swept from the face of the earth.

*We have just heard of a band of these marauders in Grundy county, which is headed by a native by the name of **Calvin Brixey**. He stopped several gentlemen on their way to Chattanooga, took their purses, and then with the most imperturbable impudence said, "Gentlemen, there is another lot of my boys on ahead, and less they may handle you a little more roughly than I have done, I think you had better let me give you a pass." They then bowed their assent, and the pass was given. Fortunately for our friends they met no more of Calvin Brixey's boys, and they reached Chattanooga in safety.*

We make this statement that our cavalry on their next visit to Grundy county, may keep a sharp look out for these tory plunderers and especially for Calvin Brixey. A rope is entirely too good for such an infamous scoundrel. – Chattanooga Rebel."

Another story to help understand the Brixeyites can be found on the following site.

<http://www.grundycountyhistory.org/Brixeyites.pdf>

The following is an excerpt from another story I wrote:

*"James Henry 'Polk', like **Martin V. B. Phipps**, James Conaster, "Spunkie Bill" Layne, a young man named McChristian, and others, spread quickly away from **Calvin Brixey** presence, just in time to keep from being hanged themselves. If a Brixeyite got away with his raiding and looting and left a dangling, empty, windblown, noose on a sturdy oak tree branch with his name on it, he quickly looked for a hiding place. Not only was the U. S. Army looking for him, but the local people of the many Tennessee areas and members of his own family who had grown to hate him would have enjoyed putting a noose around his*

neck. It is no wonder that Polk later moved on to the Higgins' land, way up in Sequatchie/Coppinger Cove!"

Just a small note here for interest: "Polk" Higgins' first marriage was to Susan Dicie **Bryant**, sister to the two men, Houston A. and A. Jackson **Bryant**, known to be buried in the bottom of Bryant's Cove. The marriage ended in divorce. What wild and possibly dangerous conversations went on among these family members! Polk Higgins rode with Brixey; A. J. Bryant was a Union man but did not ride with Brixey and probably disowned his brother-in-law.

Let's start with William Harrison "Little Britches" Layne and try to find out who he was and what happened to him. We must acknowledge here that the name William, and also Abraham, are so plentifully used in the John Hiram, Sr. and Barbara (Devault) Layne lineages that it will be difficult to pinpoint them. Our search for the right William will be like looking for a needle in a haystack. However, we do find a good possibility in the **Pvt. William H. Lane, CSA, Co. C, 16th Regiment, Tennessee Infantry**. This just so happens to be the Confederate company, regiment and infantry that Calvin Brixey enlisted in at the beginning of his military career and later deserted to join up with the Union. It seems plausible that the two knew each other. The only problem with this is that the only William listed as a Brixeyite (Unionist) had a middle initial of "L". I do know that William Harrison "Spunkie Bill" Layne, a first cousin to William Harrison "Little Britches" Layne, came mighty close to being hanged right along with his Capt. Brixey. Only the pleas of his family kept his noose hanging empty.

We also find **Pvt. Harrison Layne, CSA, Co. A, 35th Regiment, Tennessee Infantry**, (alternate name William H. Layne), with Albert C. Hanner and R. B. Roberts as Captains. This company was made up of Grundy County men. Like other efforts, I can make no connection from this to the hangings.

The following letter was taken from the work of Johnny L. T. N. Potter on the *1st Tennessee and Alabama Vidette Cavalry, Roster, Companies A, B, C, D, E, F, G, and H.*

*"Correspondence, etc. – UNION – September 24, 1863
Col. W. B. Strokes,
Commanding Cavalry, Tracy City:*

The general commanding directs that you proceed at once with the forces with which you have been operating in the Sequatchie Valley and report to the

commanding officer at Bridgeport for scouting duty along the river below that place.

*Leave one company at Tracy City, unless you can find **Captain Brixey**, Who commands a company of independent scouts. If you find him, order him to protect that place, and then take your whole force with you.*

*J. A. Garfield,
Brigadier General, Chief of Staff"*

It seems strange that no one could keep up with Capt. Brixey. This letter adds credence to his philandering ways. He was everywhere and yet, nowhere. But wherever he was, he was up to no good. The question before us is whether or not William Harrison "Little Britches" Layne ever rode with him. Since we really must say that we don't have the whole story on the hangings, let's throw out some more possibilities. Maybe he was approached by a cousin and recruiter for Brixey, John B. Layne, to desert and come on over to the Union. And just suppose William said, "No." Could his rejection of the offer have gotten him hanged? Or suppose William said, "Yes." Wouldn't that have angered his Confederate friends enough to hang him? When Brixey was willing, in a drunken state, to hang two teenage boys near Oak Grove, TN, couldn't he just as easily ordered the hanging of two men who had angered him? The point I am trying to make is that Calvin Brixey and his company included at least eleven **local** "Layne" men who were without doubt all cousins and knew each other. The war did enough to tear families apart and turn up the heat amongst families, but Brixey stirred the pot.

Most researchers believe that the two men hanged at Burkett Chapel were sons of David "Dave" Layne, who was a son of John Hiram Layne, Sr. David and his wife had a son named William and a son named Abraham. Their names are given on an old deed as two of the heirs of David Layne. In 1850 William Layne was living in District 4 of Marion County which had approximately fifty-two families in the district. The 1860 Census records that William and his family were still living in part of District 4 of Marion County that was on top of the mountain, but the mail was sent out from Jasper, TN. There were only twelve families living in that area. Finding the family in 1870 would be a great help because it would tell us if his wife was a widow thus lending some credence to the hanging.

William Harrison Layne, (b. ca. 1812 according to Census records and died possibly ca. 1863), married Sarah Brown, daughter of Samuel and Rhoda Jane (Layne) Brown. One of their daughters, Rhoda Jane Layne (1846-1921), is buried in Burkett Chapel Cemetery. She first married an "Allen"; then she married Squire John Nunley

as “Mrs. Rhoda Allen” July 14, 1868. Rhoda Jane would have been seventeen when her father and uncle were hanged. She would have known the story well and would have visited their graves, discretely in the beginning, then openly later on. One thing that she would not have done was talk openly about the incident. Not speaking out back then left folks like me and other researchers one hundred and sixty-one years into the future to try to understand the how and the why these things happened.

**William Harrison “Little
Britches” Layne’s daughter
Rhoda Jane (Layne) Allen
Nunley
Buried at Burkett Chapel
Cemetery**



The **Layne** men in the valleys and on the mountains around Burkett Chapel were often targeted by Brixey’s recruiters for enlistment in his Company D under the guise of being part of the Union “**home guard**”. Some men who were listed in Co. D’s approximately one hundred recruits were **A. L. Layne**, **Alexander Layne**, Charles Layne, Jackson Layne, James Layne, James W. Layne, **John B. Layne**, John Jr. Layne, John Sr. Layne, Samuel Layne and William L. Layne. These are all local “Layne” names from Grundy, Marion and Sequatchie County. This list may not be complete, but it will give one an idea of the influence Brixey had on the Laynes. 1st Lieut. John B. (*possibly Bryant*) Layne was a commissioned officer in Brixey’s Company D, enlisting on Dec. 9, 1863, and mustering out on June 16, 1864. No doubt, he started his recruiting with men he already knew – his Layne cousins. Wondering around in the Mount Zion Cemetery in Marion Co., TN, I found a good number of military stones like the one pictured below. I cringe when I see one of these stones with **CO. D** etched on it.

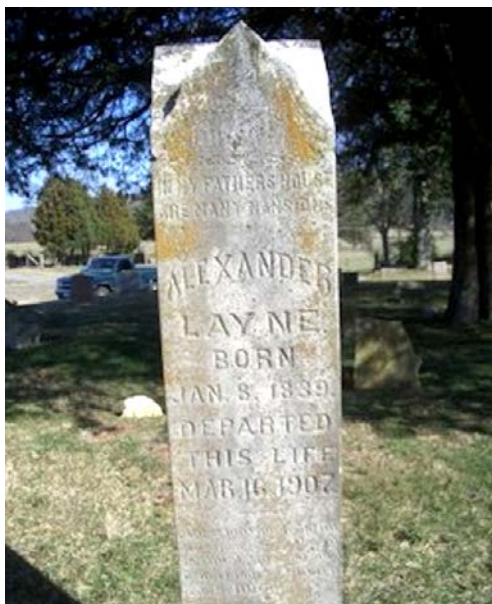


J. H. Layne

CO. D

1st Ala. & Tenn Vid. Cav.

Alexander Layne was the son of Daniel and Anna (Bryant) Layne. He married Mary Ann Bryant and both are buried at the Bryant Cemetery in Sequatchie Co., TN. Alexander had the honor of having his grandmother, Barbara (Devault) Layne, sit at night telling the stories of her days in Pennsylvania, and possibly Germany. She was ninety-years-old about the time the Civil War began and Alexander enlisted with Brixey.



Alexander Layne (1839-1907)



Mary (Bryant) Layne (1849-1914)

Please be aware that CO D is the regiment that became marauders, really, really out of control. And there is always the possibility that not all the men in the company were as wild as others, but reason tells me that they knew what they were getting themselves into. The other companies formed in the 1st Ala & Tenn Vid. Cav. Regiment, CO's A, B, C, G, H, E, and F were not part of Brixey's gang.

On July 21, 1864, Major General Rosecrans got this letter from Capt. C. Brixey, written in Decherd, Tenn.

"Genl, I hope that you will not be wearied with me as this is my second letter to you. I am very anxious to come to your army and bring what men I can recruit. I want to get those bad men of mine on the Frontiers. I can enlist them from one to five years just as you direct. I was arrested on the 8th of last month for the mischief of my men, but am now released. My men are all mustered out of the service but I have not bin yet on account of my arrest.

My men is too rough for this country and they are all anxious to get to the western frontiers. I want if you pleas to send me a permit to recruit a company of the men and report to St. Louis. In this you will much oblige.

Your humble Serot, C. Brixey Capt Co., "D". 1st Indpnt Vidette Cav."

His army life was over, death came knocking at his door, but he never wanted to give up the wild fight that was within him. I wonder how many of our Layne cousins would have followed him out West. They would not have been looking for fun as much as they would have been running from a noose.

Folks, something bad happened when the two hangings took place, but I doubt that we today will ever know if the Confederates, or Unionists, or family and neighbors, did the deed. But I lean toward the idea that Brixey had something to do with it. I could be wrong.

Moving on, let's talk about Abraham Layne, the supposed other brother, hanged and buried near Burkett Chapel. Strangely enough we can find a Pvt. A. L. Layne, Union, Co. D, 1st Regiment, Tennessee Independent Vidette Cavalry on the muster roll of Brixey's company. If we assume that this is Little Britches' brother, Abraham, then we have a connection to Brixey. As mentioned before, the name Abraham was quite common among the Layne families in the areas spoken of in this story. My own gg-grandfather was Abraham K. Layne (1828-1879) who was born in the Victoria area but

moved over the mountain to Pelham Valley. By the way, my ancestor, Abraham K. Layne, nor his descendants are mentioned in Floyd Benjamin Layne's book, *Layne-Lain-Lane Genealogy*. He actually was the first born child of John Hiram Layne, Jr., but until I came along and started researching my line, he was just not known to researchers.

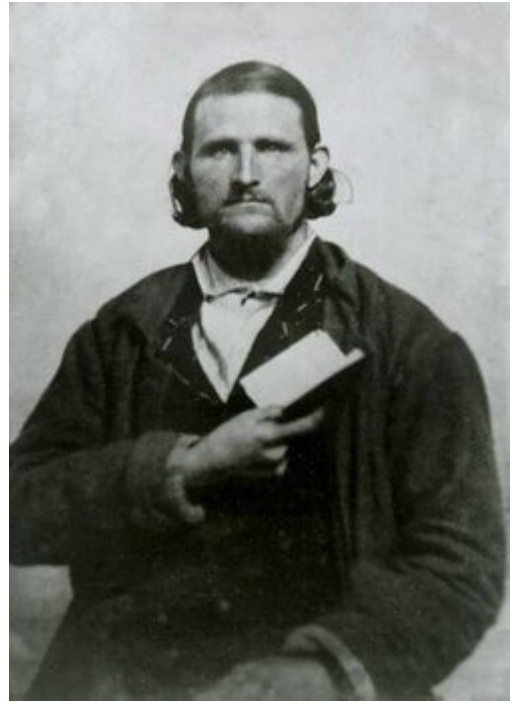
To be honest with the reader, I cannot find any military records or Census records or family notes to support the story of the hangings beyond Floyd Benjamin Layne's book. However, I would be so happy to accept tangible proof of the happening, a family Bible notation, a military mentioning, or a Marion Co. government record.

Other Interesting Burials at Burkett Chapel Cemetery

Below is a photo of **Thomas Brown**, husband of Sarah "Sally" (Layne) Brown. I can find no stone for him at Burkett Chapel Cemetery, but he is buried there. However, when Sally died on Dec. 14, 1927, her body did not make it across the high waters of the creek in Bryant's Cove. She was cheated of the right to be buried beside her husband. Some have said the body could have been removed to Burkett Chapel one way or the other, but sometimes circumstances enter a situation and changes have to be made. On December 14, the weather may have been so bad – cold, snowy, wet – that either option, going down into the gulf, crossing a high creek and climbing out the other side may have been extremely unsafe in 1927, or removing the body several miles out to Ross Creek Rd. and seven miles out the terrible road, at the time, would have been perhaps just as dangerous. She was buried near her son Isaac Brown's house on the opposite side of the cove. The stone is near the end of Popular Springs Rd. Her stone gives her age as 102, but Census records will not allow her to be older than 96 years. I took notice that an old road bed went passed her grave and the one other grave marked with a fieldstone. It appeared to have been well traveled as it made its way toward the bluffs of Bryant's Cove.



**Isaac Brown, son of Thomas and Sally
(Layne) Brown**



Thomas Brown
(Photo courtesy of Bob Sherwood via
Find-A-Grave)

The nine **Hicks babies'** graves are the epitome of sorrow and sadness. They were the children of Benjamin Franklin (1858-1941) and Narcissa (Layne) Hicks. Narcissa was the daughter of Daniel David "Dave" and Nancy Elizabeth (Countiss) **Layne**. The first baby died in 1893 and the last one in 1920. Narcissa lost five children before 1900: Rachel El Naria, Henry Lee, Ceacie Lizzybeth, Nancy Angline, and Benjamin Franklin. Only little Stella was alive in 1900, but she died in 1927. Bertie Ester, Ruby, and the twins, Bethel and Ethel, all died between 1903 and 1916. Other children born who lived were Nellie, Virgie, Orma, Della, and John W. In 1910 Narcissa only had 6 of her fifteen children still alive and still at home: Stella, Nellie, Virgie, Orma, Della and John W. Hicks. By 1920 James and Jennie C. were added to the family. This made the total number of children come to seventeen. In 1930, we find that Benjamin and Narcissus were rearing five of their grandchildren. I was so happy to find out by research that the couple was able to rear some of their children to adulthood. Narcissa died in 1957 and was buried at Griffith Creek Cemetery. Her husband was buried at the same cemetery.

Unfortunately, my research has never gotten me involved in the Ross families in any way, so when I saw the Ross brothers had died rather young, I felt this would be a good time to learn something about the Rosses. The following three stories hopefully

were "life with the Rosses" on their bad days, and I hope that there were many wonderful, fulfilling days somewhere in the Rosses' lives.

The following news article from *The Mountain Herald, Tracy City, Tennessee, Thursday, Sept. 24, 1914*, tells the reader how two of the Ross men died.

"Brothers Killed"

"Robert and Cleaveland Ross Shot and Killed by Edward Bryant on Public Road Near Tatesville"

Ill-Feeling Existing Between Bryant's and Ross's for a Number of Years was the Cause of Tragedy.

Grundy county has two more victims of the murderers bullet annexed to her already long list. Cleaveland and Robert Ross were shot and killed last Thursday, Edward Bryant doing the shooting. The Bryant's and Ross's have been on bad terms with each other for a long time, they having had trouble at a shooting match over a year ago as well as several other difficulties previous to that one.

Houston Bryant, Robert Bryant, Robert Ross and Cleaveland Ross were working the public road near Tatesville when the trouble arose between Houston Bryant and Cleaveland Ross. From what news can be gleaned, Cleaveland Ross breaks a shovel over Houston Bryant's head. Then Edward Bryant steps out of the woods and shoots Cleaveland Ross one time (over the ear killing him instantly. Bob Ross turns to flee, but is hit twice by Edward Bryant and then knocked in head with butt end of pistol until he is dead. Jim Ross, father of the dead boys takes a warrant for four of the Bryant boys, namely George, Houston, Robert and Edward. Three of the boys flee to Dunlap, but give up, Sheriff Hamby going after them and bringing them to Tracy City Monday evening.

The preliminary hearing was given at the Court house yesterday before Esq. Tidman and they were released under \$5,000 bond until Circuit court. The Ross men have large families."

Five years later, another son of James Monroe "Jim" and Martha Jane (Ramsey) Ross joined his brothers in the cemetery. This is the story of **Henry Ross** (1883-1919) and how he died. One of my husband's good friends is eighty-nine-year old Bance Myers, a son of Benson "Bence" Myers who shot and killed Henry Ross, his son-in-law, in 1919. The following is a transcription of a newspaper clipping from the *Sequatchie Valley News* printed on August 14, 1919.

“SLAYS HIS SON-IN-LAW”

When Crazy With Drink He Pulls Knife On Him

*“Bence Myers, living in the head of Little Sequatchie Cove near Tracy City, shot and killed **Henry Ross** Wednesday while Ross was endeavoring to force an entry into Myers’ house. Ross is his son-in-law and was on a drunken spree. He had been to graveyard working at the Ross graveyard and was in a drunken condition while there. Coming back he raised a fuss with his father-in-law and started to enter the house. He was repulsed and again tried to force entry, drawing his knife. He failed to get it open, for Myers shot him three times, once thru the jaw and twice in the head, in forehead and top of the head. Myers surrendered to Sheriff G. W. Coppinger, of this county, (Marion County – jackie), Thursday, and was taken before Justice Kilgore, of Oak Grove for examination Friday. He entered a plea of self-defense, and was released on bond. Assisting Sheriff Coppinger was deputy sheriff Allen McCullough, but Myers made no attempt to escape.”*

“A Good Man”

**Vance “Tubby” Myers,
son of Benson Myers**

Warming by his custom built stove



It would be wonderful to say that the killings stopped, but that is not the end of violence that surrounded this family. In Aug. 23, 1923, Mrs. Grundy, had this article:

“Jim Ross Bound Over”

“Jim Ross, who shot and killed Pete McGovern at Palmer last Thursday was tried before Esq. A. J. Brannan and W. E. Arbuckle last Monday and Ross was put

under a \$5000.00 bond for his appearance at the next term of Court. In default of bail he is at present in jail. From the proof in the case it seems like both parties had been in dispute over some mountain land for some time, and as result of same caused the killing. Both parties were men of old age, Mr. Ross being over 70 years and Mr. McGovern about 65 years. Mr. McGovern's body was brought to Tracy City and buried."

The father, Jim, died in 1926 in Clarksville, Montgomery Co., TN, and was buried at the Greenwood Cemetery in that city. The mother died in Palmer in 1931. There are so many unmarked fieldstones at Burkett Chapel Cemetery, so maybe she was taken to be with her sons. Time and space will not allow me to write more stories on these fascinating people buried at the cemetery. Hopefully, I have presented some food for thought or for just good old gab at next year's reunion.

**As the curtain falls on the
final scene in this story, we are
confronted with the enigma of a
Confederate flag standing tall
on a Union soldier's grave.
Perhaps this whole story is
represented by the scene in the
photo to the right.**

