

**Compendium
Of
Monteagle, Tennessee's
Pioneer Families**

Volume 2

*Compiled by
Jackie Layne Partin*

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Rev. William Franklin Norman (1868-1947)

Contributions by Larry Dewayne Norman

Early on, what the people on the street called him relative to his church affiliation, Methodist Episcopal (M. E.), Presbyterian, Methodist or Nazarene, didn't matter to William. He just wanted to share his faith with those around him. Some Sundays he preached for two or three different churches. He wasn't always a minister of the gospel because he started out in Gipson County, Tennessee as a farmer working beside his father in the fields. William was serious about his relationship with the Creator from the time he was thirty-six years of age when he was saved in the Bells Chapel Cumberland Presbyterian Church. He felt that God had called him from the fields of his father into a greater field of work.

William was born on June 15, 1868 to Robert Newton and Christiana "Christa" (Norman) Norman of Rutherford, Gipson Co., Tennessee. Christiana was the daughter of Sam and Flora (McAdams) Norman. William's siblings were Robert Thomas, Susan, Huey, Pearlie, Martha, and Maggie. By 1900, Christa had delivered nine children, but she lost three along the way. Their names, if named, are probably lost to us unless there is a family *Bible* hidden away in someone's attic. Christiana died of influenza on Jan. 16, 1923, and she took her place in the Bells Chapel Cemetery. Her husband Robert died two years later in 1925.

William Franklin Norman, (*right*), married Lela Banks, daughter of John T. and Margaret Banks, on Sept. 17, 1890 in Gipson County, Tennessee. To this union were born Luther Newton, Herbert F., Bertie Mae and William Lee "Willie."



On Dec. 12, 1908, Lela passed away and was buried in the Bells Chapel Cemetery. William had quickly become a single parent of his four children. He had received his calling to preach which meant a lot of traveling, so he turned to his side of the family for help with his children. Thirteen-year-old Luther Newton was taken in by Edd and Lillie Norman in Gipson County. Herbert moved into the care of Robert Thomas and Mary Bell (Wright) Norman in Gipson County. Eight-year-old Bertie was sent to Davidson County, Tennessee to live in the **Pentecostal Training Home**, but she

later came to live with her Uncle Robert. Four-year-old Willie Lee was taken in by the John and Amanda Norman family in Gipson County.



Luther Newton Norman



*Paul Benson Norman with
his half-sister Bertie Norman*



*Luther Newton Norman in
his green bean rows.*

Meanwhile, William Franklin Norman attended a Nazarene College in Nashville for one year and was soon out and about the countryside preaching the word. He became a circuit rider for the Methodist Church. His mode of travel was horse and buggy; his pay was \$75.00 a year in the beginning. True Christian folks practice the gift of sharing, so William was supported with vegetables, eggs, or whatever he could get safely home. On one of his trips through Monteagle, he met a young woman by the name of Lucy Gregory, born 1896. She was the daughter of Samuel and Mary Adaline (Long) Gregory. According to the dates on the burial stones, Lucy was twenty-eight years his junior, but she had never been married. The couple married on Apr. 19, 1915 in Grundy County, Tennessee, and settled into life in the small town of Monteagle. I don't know who built the house on 1st Street across from the old Church of Christ building, nor when the Normans moved in, but it has always been called the "Lucy Norman house" by me. So close were the two houses that next door my grandmother, Emma (Layne) King, and Lucy could speak from window to window.

Soon William and Lucy had a baby son, Paul Benson, and later a daughter, Pauline. William was mainly a Nazarene minister, but my granny, Emma Rose (King) Layne, and her son, Alex Benson "Dude" Layne, remember seeing William leave home on Sunday morning. He walked up the little lane that took one up to College Street. He was on his way to preach at the Cumberland Presbyterian Church which joined the lane. Probably he made a day of spiritual service in the town. However, Lucy wasn't so faithful.



*Right: Lucy
(Gregory) Norman
standing next to her
son Paul Benson
Norman
(1963)*

What can I say – Lucy was – well, Lucy was just Lucy! I think the best way to write about Lucy is to let her grandson, Larry DeWayne Norman, son of Paul Benson Norman, describe his time spent with her.

“I used to call Lucy, Mountain Grandma. My other grandma was Lucy also, and she was a very gentle lady. They were entirely two different people. Lucy from Monteagle was very strict and didn’t like my mother. My mother didn’t like the yearly trip to Monteagle along the winding road, but for the most part she got along well with my dad’s aunts and uncles (*William Franklin’s siblings*).

On Halloween Mountain Grandma would throw water on the kids who came to her door then yell at them as they ran away. My other grandma gave me freedom of the kitchen, so I could raid the fridge making cheese sandwiches and anything that caught my eye. She made her own butter and ice cream. Mountain Grandma, on the other hand, would chastise me if she found me so much as opening the fridge door.

Mountain Grandma wouldn’t let William’s children from his first marriage visit when he was sick, but my dad remained close to all of his half-siblings all his life. As I said before, Mountain Grandma didn’t like my mother, Helen Rachel (Meacham) Norman. She thought that she was not good enough for my dad, Paul Norman.

Lucy had Chihuahua dogs that had their own bedroom in the Monteagle house. They would peer down from the upstairs through a hole surrounding the pipe that went up from the pot-bellied stove all the time barking and growling. Wayne Sampley, a neighbor boy, {*son of James & Minnie Ruth (Gossett) Sampley*}, got me some firecrackers, and I set them off behind the house. Everything was silent. I had learned the secret of how to silence the Chihuahuas.

When Lucy came to visit us in Nashville, she brought a two-story cage and the dogs. By that time I had graduated to ash can fire crackers. When those dogs started yapping, I'd throw an ash can through the garage door and run. It worked—silence at last! I was nine or ten years old.

The last time I saw Mountain Grandma was just before we came to Australia when I was eleven. I saw my last opportunity to pester Lucy, so I put a glass milk bottle under one of her tires then quickly sneaked away. She found me and with authority said, "You are going to end up in prison!" And that I did, thirty-three years later as a prison chaplain.

My friend and cousin, Wayne Sampley, and one of his brothers were somehow involved in law enforcement. We all have changed. Their father, James Sampley, was a Greyhound bus driver. They lived in the old, remodeled Church of Christ building across the road from Mountain Grandma. I can remember their mother sailing a coat hanger or two at them as she chased them out the door! Wayne always dodged the bullet (*coat hanger*) laughing as we ran back to Mountain Grandma's house."

William would have been so proud of his son, Paul Benson, who never became a pastor but lived a fine Christian life sharing love and kindness to all around him. He served his country well in the Navy for six years leaving Pearl Harbor six weeks before it was bombed. He and his family migrated to Australia in 1963. Paul died June 23, 2012 in Melbourne, Australia and was buried there at Cheltenham Memorial Park.



Paul Benson Norman

*Left in his Naval Uniform
(1941)*

*Right: Ready to Enjoy an
Australian Christmas Dinner
in 2010*



Larry DeWayne Norman, William's grandson, works today as a pastor in Australia teaching anyone who will listen to the word of God. One day he may be feeding the homeless, and the next day baptizing a lost soul in an Australian prison.



Larry DeWayne Norman – his passport photo



Larry and his wife Christine



Larry is head of Myrrh Ministries, Hospital Chaplaincy, but as seen above, he unwittingly gets involved in the politics of Australia.



Christine, a nurse, is seen at Trinity Children's Home in Malaysia; these children have been abandoned by parents.

William and Lucy's daughter, Pauline (Norman) Ross, passed away at the age of twenty-five. She probably died from complications with the birth of her son, Ronald Gene Moss, since she died a month after his birth. Little Ronald died four months after his mother. Rev. William Franklin Norman was laid to rest in 1947 next to his daughter and grandson. Mountain Grandma, Lucy (Gregory) Norman, was placed beside her husband in 1967 and near to her Gregory family.

Charles Stewart Judd (1844-1892)

Burritt Samuel Judd and his wife Clarissa "Clara" (Hull) Judd were travelers. To give a few examples, Burritt was born in Connecticut, and Clara was born in New York. Their son Charles Stewart Judd was born in Arkansas. Another son Amos Wilson was born in Connecticut; their son William was born in Ohio, and yet another son Spencer was born in Minnesota.

In 1850 the family lived in Urbana, Campaign County, Ohio. However, by 1860 the Judds were living in Hawkersville, Franklin County, Tennessee. Charles was still at home filling his days as an apprentice carpenter, the trade of his father. Interestingly, Charles managed in three days time to get his name on the 1880 Census twice. On June 1, 1880, he and his brother Spencer were boarding in Pulaski, Giles County, Tennessee. They were working as photographers, not carpenters. Then Charles boarded a fast train

to Monteagle to be with his wife and children; thus, on June 4, 1880, he was counted the second time. Of course, being listed twice on a Census was not that uncommon. When families were in transit, some member here and another there, the double listing happened.

Charles married Helen A. Crane, daughter of Peter and Lorraine Crane, on Sept. 25, 1867, in Marion County, Indiana. Helen gave birth to eleven children, Helen, Frederick (Bertha), Anna Lyellke (James Clarence Dorris), Frank, Burt Alva, Mary, Harvey, Effie (Charles C. Kettenbuch), Clark and Wallie. She had lost one child before the 1900 Census. Her husband supported his large family by opening a studio for his photography work in Monteagle. He might well have been the first photographer in Monteagle. One of his earliest advertisements reads: "*C. S. Judd – Portrait and Landscape Photographer – Columbia, Sewanee and Monteagle, Tennessee – A fine assortment of Stereoscopic Views of Monteagle and Vicinity. 1 dozen views in book-form for \$1.00. Galleries near the depot and book-store.*"

Charles Steward Judd, died in 1892; his wife Helen A. Judd died in 1916, and their son Burt Alva died in 1921. All three are buried in the Monteagle Cemetery. Helen's mother Lorraine Crane is also buried beside them. She was born in 1821 and passed away in 1886.

Dr. David Hampton Bryan, M. D. (1858-1949)

Contributions by Bob Douglas, David Randall Bryan and John Milton Bryan, Jr.

Some appreciative patients named their newborns after their beloved doctor, Dr. David Hampton Bryan. For example, *David Hampton* Wells, Mary *Bryan* McFarland, and *David Bryan* Thomas were a few of those babies. We are a strange lot of people; we expect a doctor to be there when we need him, and today 2013, he or she is accessible most of the time except on holidays. One needs to think back to the medical situations of the late 1800's and early 1900's when the "Doc" traveled by foot, mule, or horse and buggy. Dr. Bryan was no different in his mode of travel in Monteagle and the surrounding areas. As a young doctor, he traveled by horseback when making house calls or by foot if the calls were close enough to keep him from saddling the horse.

Bob Douglas, a former neighbor of the doctor, recalls recorded home visits that Dr. Bryan made to a Trussell family who lived near Pelham. The family had contracted typhoid fever, and several members were quite ill. The good doctor traveled four miles

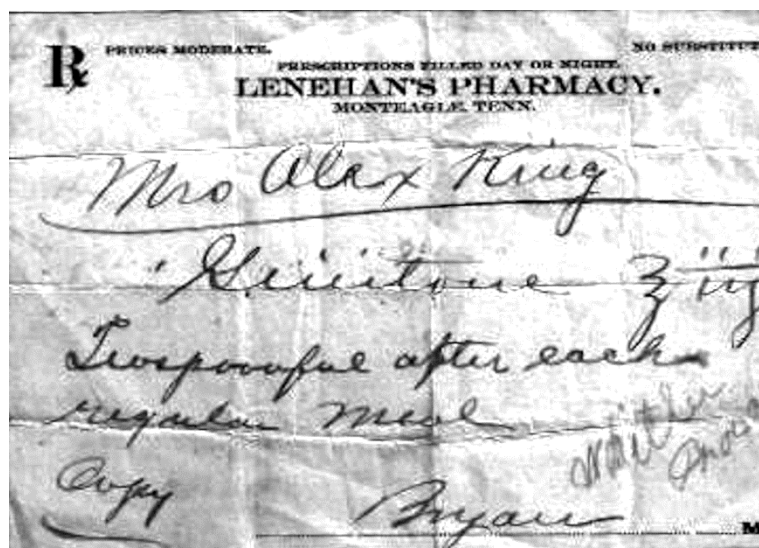
up and down the mountain on his horse twice a day to take care of the family. In the coming years, just for fun, he graduated from his horse to a big-wheeled bicycle and later for work trips, to a T-Model Ford sedan. Who was this man who gave so freely to those in need of medical attention?

David Hampton Bryan, born Dec. 20, 1858, was one of seven sons of John Alexander and Charlotte Elizabeth (Hampton) Bryan. David's brothers were Robert Jefferson, John A., Jr., Ben, William Ransom, George Edward "Eddie" and Joseph Wade. Like the neighbors around the Bryan place, farming went on in a big way. John, Sr. had plenty of help with the plowing, caring for animals, milking and anything else that a farmer's chores entailed; just as soon as a little son grew strong enough to fork hay or milk a cow, he was given a chore. Little Ben may have died between 1870 and 1880 leaving six sons to do chores. David Hampton's favorite stomping grounds were around Fountain Grove, Prairie Plains and Hillsboro.

It was only a matter of time until he met the love of his life, Frances Louvinia "Fannie" Brixey. They married in Warren County on Nov. 1, 1883. Fannie's mother was the former Martha Elizabeth Swann of Verville, Warren County, Tennessee. Her father, Calvin S. Brixey was infamous for his cruelties during the Civil War. I could write a long summary about him, but he was not directly tied to Monteagle since his reign of terror happened before Monteagle was established. He stole anything he wanted and killed off folks, (or had it done), he did not like, one being Anderson S. Goodman, an ancestor of my husband, Grady Ward Partin. Local Grundy County men also aided him in his rampages, two being Martin Van Buren Phipps and James Conaster. Martin Phipps moved to Cooke County, Texas to avoid the backlash from his time spent riding with the Brixeyites. Martin went so far as to name one of his sons *Calvin S. Phipps*. That is enough said about these evil man.

Before David Hampton and Fannie Bryan moved to Monteagle, Dr. William Kirkman Bowling, purported to be a descendant from John Wolfe and Pocahontas, was living in the newly formed Chautauqua, the Monteagle Sunday School Assembly. He lived there only a couple short periods of two seasons, and because of his age and his prestigious position probably tended only to those inside the domain as a resident physician. In 1885 Dr. Bowling died in Nashville. The Bryans saw a need in the growing little village for someone to care for the sick, so before 1891, they moved to Monteagle. Dr. Bryan may well have been the first medical doctor to linger many years with the needy folks of Monteagle. I'll name a few of his patients: Clara Etta Wooten was delivered by him in 1898; the following were tended while sick and until death by him, little Gracie Lee Levan, 1914; Thomas Raymond Metcalf, 1914; Emma Casine Scott,

1917; William Thomas, 1916; Mont David Barnes, 1916, Margaret (Turner) Starling, 1915, Henry Clay Parker, 1929, and my great-grandfather, Alex Benson King, 1912. Even my great-grandmother was given a prescription by him as seen below.



*Prescription written for
Mary Athelia (Perry) King
by Dr. David Hampton
Bryan*

The young family seemed to have lived near the DuBose School area on the Grundy County side of the tracks while Fannie was alive, but at some time after her death in 1908, Dr. Bryan and young Laura moved over to the Marion County side of town. Dr. Bryan continued his medical practice, but he needed someone to watch over his eleven-year-old daughter. Mary (Lowrie) Francis, wife of Robert Cooper Francis, became Laura's baby sitter for all the times that the good "Doc" was called out on duty. This is how Dr. Bryan became acquainted enough with Mary's half-sister Martha Lowrie to ask for her hand in marriage. They eventually moved into a small, two-room house behind the home of Robert A. and Nannie (Henley) Francis. The house now belongs to the Francis family, and underwent some renovations. It is located just south of the barn on said property and north of what used to be Kitty Bell Lane that separated the Will Richmond place. It is now (2013) the Tony Gilliam property.

In 1927 Dr. Bryan served as the Sunday School Superintendent at Morton Memorial Methodist. Folks thought of him as a kindhearted, dedicated man as he went about his work. Bob Douglas remembers him as being a tall, slim man with a jovial personality. He also remembers that Dr. Bryan was the first person that made him think really hard when he asked Bob about which came first, the chicken or the egg.

Dr. Bryan and his first wife had two children, but only one child, Laura, survived. He and Martha had no children. Laura grew up to marry Ragnar Gustraf Arthur Thele who immigrated to the USA from Stockholm, Sweden. He and Laura

moved to Jefferson County, Alabama where he worked as a civil engineer in the Birmingham Electric Company, and she was a clerk in the Birmingham Fire Insurance Company. Ragnar passed away in 1982 and Laura in 1988. Both were brought back to Monteagle Cemetery and buried beside Laura's parents.



Left: Dr. David Hampton Bryan in his older years with a friend.

In his older years, Dr. Bryan moved to Prairie Plains to live with his nieces, Hattie and Mamie. He took his T-Model with him. He was ninety years of age when he passed away in his beloved Prairie Plains in Coffee County. He had outlived both his wives. Mary Elizabeth had died in 1938. His body was brought back to Monteagle and placed between his two wives in the Monteagle Cemetery.

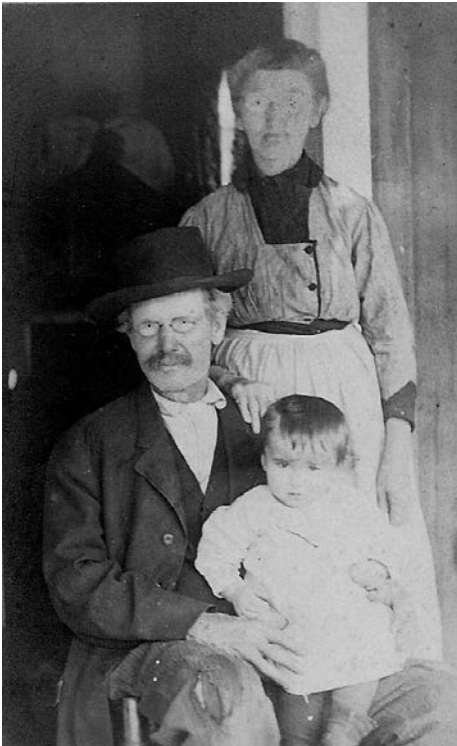


Left: Dr. David Hampton Bryan and a friend on a day of leisure. The photo isn't clear, but we can readily see the big fish and the fishing pole.

Orpha Gertrude "Gertie" (Tucker) McFarland (1893-1922)

Orpha Gertrude "Gertie" (Tucker) McFarland, born Feb. 28, 1893, was the daughter of Silas Leon and Orpha (Levan) Tucker. Her death certificate states that she was born in 1893, but Census records support her birth as being around 1888. Her siblings were Henry Lee, Ida Almeta, Lillie Myrtle "Daisy", Francis Jane "Fannie" and half-siblings, Grover Cleveland and Gracie.

On Oct. 2, 1910, in Grundy Co., Tennessee, Gertie married Thomas Edgar "Ed" McFarland, a son of William Edward & Rue Cassandra Cassie (Crabtree) McFarland. Gertie had a daughter, Billie and two sons, Velma Lee and William Henry (1917-1918). Little William Henry is buried at the Monteagle Cemetery. By the year 1914, the couple was living at 1216 Jefferson Road in Nashville where Ed worked as a molder. One might wonder why a young girl from a small village would agree to go so far from home and live in a big city. Gertie's older sister, Fannie (Tucker) Shaffer, and her children were also living in Nashville, so she had someone to share mountain stories with her. By 1920, the couple was living at 1510 Hayes St. still in Nashville.



William McFarland with his wife
Rue Cassandra "Cassie" (Crabtree) McFarland
with
Grandson
Velma Lee McFarland

On July 2, 1922, Gertie's life came to a violent end when she was shot in the head bringing about her death in City Hospital in Nashville. The incident was listed as murder. Two years later in 1924, Ed McFarland died in the Tennessee State

Penitentiary. According to the death certificate, his death was brought on by complications from a *two-year-old* gunshot wound to the head which was a former attempt at suicide. The wound causing the new trouble was in the left side of the temple probably where the bullet lodged. The bullet had entered the head from the right side.

It just seemed appropriate for Gertie to be remembered some other way than a brick size stone in the Monteagle Cemetery with only the word *Gertrude* written on it.



Ed Pirtle
&
Ed McFarland

W. C. WILLIAMS, M.D.
COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC HEALTH

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
NASHVILLE

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W. B. KE

Certified Copy Number
P 33022

STATE OF TENNESSEE
STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
DIVISION OF VITAL STATISTICS
CERTIFICATE OF BIRTH

2001

1. PLACE OF BIRTH
County of Polk
Civil Dist. 3rd
In. Town of Tullahoma
City _____
Registration District No. _____
Primary Registration Dist. No. _____
(No. _____) St. _____ Ward _____

2. FULL NAME OF CHILD Velma Lee McFarland If child is not yet named, make supplemental report, as directed.

3. Sex of Child m To be ascertained ONLY in event of sexual malice. 4. Twin, triple or other _____ 5. Number, in order of birth _____ 6. Legitimacy leg 7. Date of Birth June 9 1914 (Month, day, year)

8. FATHER
Full name Edgar McFarland
Residence Post-office Address Tullahoma
10. Color or race w. 11. Age at last birthday 23 (Years)

14. MOTHER
Maiden name Gertrude Tucker
Residence Post-office Address Tullahoma
16. Color or race w. 17. Age at last birthday 22 (Years)

12. Birthplace (city or place) Monteagle (State or country) 388
18. Birthplace (city or place) Tullahoma (State or country)

13. Occupation Nature of Industry Molasses in Tullahoma
19. Occupation Nature of Industry horse keeper

20. Number of children of this mother (a) Born alive and now living _____ (b) Born alive but now dead _____ (c) Stillborn _____ (d) Born at full term _____

CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDING PHYSICIAN OR MIDWIFE
I hereby certify that I attended the birth of this child, who was born alive on the date above stated (Born alive or stillborn)

When there was no attending physician or midwife, then the father, householder, or other person who was present at the birth, should make this return. A stillborn child is one that neither lives nor shows other evidence of life after birth.

Signature Bennie C. Beery, Jun 2, 1914
(Parents both dead)
(Physician or Midwife)
Address Monteagle Tenn
Give name added from a supplemental report _____ (Month, day, year) _____
Filed _____ 19. _____
Registrar _____ Registrar _____

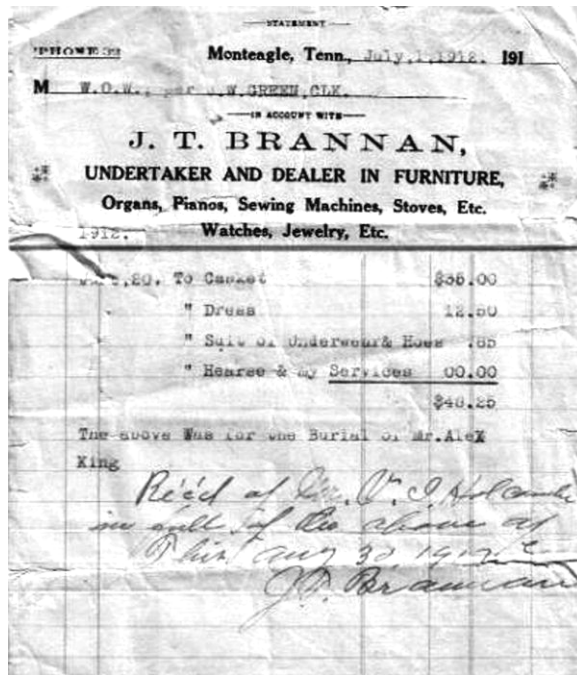
Velma Lee
McFarland's
Birth
Certificate

John Thomas "J. T." Brannan (1861-1958)

Early travelers had to carefully drive through old Monteagle on Dixie Highway/old Hwy 41 for fear that J. T. Brannan just might be standing in the center of the road with a hand held sign pointing customers to his hotel, Maplehurst. He hoped to convince them not to cross the railroad tracks to the lovely, historical Monteagle Hotel. He was a master at the free enterprise system in more ways than one can imagine. He was not chained by government control, so he went for the profit. Many



were touched in some way with his financial dealings. If one needed to buy or sell real estate, he emphatically felt he offered the best deal. If a family member died and needed an undertaker or grave plot, he offered to oblige in that area; if one needed money and was willing to pay his interest rate, he also worked out a deal for that. There was even one case where he wrote about helping some in need without expecting interest, seemingly an effort to clear his conscience before death. He was a big wheeler and dealer around Monteagle in the first half of the 1900's. The excitement he obtained from life seemed to come from having money and his ability to make it, a true entrepreneur. The following advertisement (*right*) is one of many he used in his outreach to the public; it appeared in *The Mountain Herald* in 1912, the same year that my great-grandfather Alex Benson King's widow received the receipt (*left*) below from J. T. Brannan. The burial costs were all paid for by The Woodmen of the World Insurance policy that my g-grandfather possessed.



"If You Want---Any Kind of Furniture, Stoves, Organs, Pianos, Sewing Machines, for less money than you can buy anywhere else, now is your chance. I will also pay your Rail Road Fare. Also I have a new and complete line of Coffins and Caskets much cheaper than the cheapest. J. T. Brannan, Undertaker, Phone No. 32, Monteagle, Tenn."

George Washington and Mary Ann Brannan were the parents of William Howard, Andrew Jackson, *John Thomas "J. T."*, Robert Lee, Loretta Louella, Della Florence, James Henry, George Washington, Jr., Mary A. "Molly" and Susan Pauline— all born between 1855 and 1876. John Thomas "J. T." married Lenah J. Abernathy Aug. 19, 1897. Her parents, Thomas C. and Mary E. (Walker) Abernathy, were residents of Tarlton Valley when she was a child. If my memory serves me correctly, a large field across Highway 56 from near the Isham Dykes families' homesteads was pointed out to me years ago as being the "Abernathy Field." Maybe this is where young Lenah was reared. She and J. T. started their married lives together in Tracy City.

Lenah became the mother of Herbert Edwin Brannan, born Sept. 25, 1898. She gave birth to two more children, one born 1901 and died 1903; the other was born in 1903. Lenah died Apr. 7, 1904, and two weeks later on Apr. 21, 1904, her youngest baby died. All three of these family members were buried in the Hobbs Hill Cemetery in Grundy County, TN. John Thomas and little Herbert were forever drawn closer together. Herbert became an educated man, a civil engineer for the roads and highway systems, traveling to different states and even on foreign soils—Peru and Brazil. He was an expert surveyor of land. On Mar. 17, 1961, he was appointed Postmaster for Monteagle for a short time.

On July 1, 1906, J. T. Brannan married Mary Ann Eliza Hessey in Franklin County. She was the daughter of Robert Hatton and Eliza Mary (Doney) Hessey. To this marriage were born two children, Raymond and Nora. The family probably lived in the Annex house of the Maplehurst Hotel for some years with Herbert still at home

playing big brother to his younger half-siblings; the family also lived near the corner of King and 1st Streets in a two-story house. This is the house that I remember as being his property. It did have rental rooms as most large houses did in those early days. Most young families could not afford to rent the whole house but could afford a couple rooms. It was in this house that my mother, Clara Meeks, first rented a room when she moved to Monteagle with her young daughter Gabriel. A family named Noblitt and Ramsey also later lived there.

It was also at this house one Sunday afternoon in 1941 that J. T. Brannan took refuge after shooting and killing Constable Pete Norwood. *"Wealthy Marion Man, 80, Held for Killing Constable,"* proclaimed a newspaper heading. Some folks felt that J. T. believed he was above the law, but others felt that the Constable was a trouble maker. Though found guilty and sentenced to do "time" for the killing, J. T. never served his time.

The big house on 1st Street slowly became a rental home, so J. T., Mary Ann and Herbert moved over to the little house behind Jim Francis Grocery Store. When I was a youngster my grandfather sent me over to that house with a document of some sort, and I was fascinated with the rolls of maps standing around the room into which I was invited. Herbert obviously was happy with his study of maps and his survey work. I felt the same way when Russell Stocker over in Sequatchie County invited me into his little museum where maps also seemed to be the center of attention.

John Thomas "J. T." passed away in 1958 and his wife Mary Ann died in 1960. They were buried in the Monteagle Cemetery with a huge concrete slab poured around the whole plot area. It is reasonable to say for those of us who knew J. T. that he was one of Monteagle's unusual, possibly entertaining, characters. Herbert died in August 1979, while still maintaining a residence in Monteagle, but no one that I have spoken with knows for certain where his grave or ashes are.

Sarah Ellen (Kilgore) Ladd (ca. 1859-1931)

Years ago when I first started my visits to the Trussell, Ladd, Kilgore Cemetery on the outskirts of Monteagle, with the exception of two marked graves with data, I was completely at a loss as to whom the forty plus graves entombed. Back then when one traveled south on Trussell Rd. as far as possible in a regular vehicle, the setting became wilderness, log roads, mud holes big enough and deep enough to swallow a person, and paths so numerous that a choice could not be made as to which to travel. As the

years zoomed by like a rapid transit train and my interest in Monteagle's past piqued, then old man Benjamin Trussell's name came out of its hiding place in my mind. I had always assumed that he was the character for whom Trussell Rd. was named. This was an area of real pioneers, hardworking, home-schooled-educated in the fields of plowing, logging, hand digging wells, building log shelters, moonshining, quilting, canning, to name a few. This was the environment, the scattered togetherness, that Sarah Ellen (Kilgore) Ladd reared her family, lived, died and was buried.

Who knows? In 1850 Benjamin Trussell said he was sixty-seven, giving him an approximate birth year of 1783. He was in Marion County as early as 1830 and probably much earlier. Anyway, we trust Lucinda "Cinda" Martin when she stated that there were only four families on the mountain around or near what became known as Summerfield, when she and the McCoys moved up out of the valley. Let's quote her, "*Thar wus four families here when we-uns settled, or jes' 'bout that time. Ben. Wooten had the fust store at Tracy City; thar warn't nothin' else thar; then Ben. Trussel and Osbourne and Moses Thompson.*"

Old Ben Trussell was deep in the earth, turned back to soil, gone forever, before Ellen, we shall call her, joined him in that setting. I can't prove it, but my head tells me that old Ben was among the first thin, pale tabernacles buried in the Trussell, Kilgore, Ladd Cemetery. Ellen was born around 1859 to Hiram L. and Nancy (Tolbert) McGeorge Kilgore. She ran through the woods, swam the creeks and descended/ascended the bluffs of Franklin, Marion and Grundy Counties with her siblings, half-sister Mary McGeorge (*daughter of Zechariah McGeorge*), Malinda Jane, John Stephen Taylor, John W., Allen N., and possibly others.

Then there is that other name on the cemetery title – **Ladd**. William M. Ladd, son of Amos and Eveline (Carroll) Ladd, born around 1845 in Franklin County, TN, decided to marry Sarah Ellen Kilgore around 1879. They were living around the Sewanee area of Franklin County where William worked as a common labor. Twenty years later the couple was living back in the vicinity of Trussell Rd. near Ellen's relatives. Her brother, Taylor, lived in the next household. During the approximately twenty years of marriage, Ellen had given birth to twelve children, but in the 1900 Census record only seven were still alive. She states in the 1910 record that two more of those had passed away.

William and Ellen laid their children to rest one by one in the Trussell, Kilgore, Ladd Cemetery. Those who survived, allowing us to have a record, were John William (Ida A. *Wooten or Lawson*), Margaret Elizabeth "Lizzie" McBee, Fannie Della

(Armstrong) White), Jesse (Martha Thorp), Winnie (R. K. Burdurant, Priest Meeks), Mary (Jeremiah Marr "Jerry" Johnson), Rebecca, Sarah and Robert Albert--*Alf*. William and Ellen were faced with the situation of helping rear grandchildren, Maggie, Laura Bell, George W. and Clara Ella *aka* Clara Bell, children of John William Ladd. It is believed that Maggie died as a baby.

As Ellen and the children grew older, she went outside her home to work in private homes. We don't know exactly when, but between the years of 1920 and 1930, William M. Ladd passed away and was buried at the Trussell, Kilgore, Ladd Cemetery. Like all the others, his grave was marked with fieldstones with no data. According to Ellen's death certificate, she was born around 1847, but her parents were not old enough for that to be true. Her birth date of 1859 is more accurate with the Census record. In 1930 she was living next door to her son George W. and his wife Rosa. Sarah Ellen (Kilgore) Ladd died on Nov. 26, 1931. She was a widow and her son-in-law, Charles Chatham "Chattie" Custer was the informant. Ellen had lived a life of hard work and service to her family and others.

Now we all know that living isn't always easy, but in Ellen's case, dying caused some problems too. According to a long visit I had with Ellen's granddaughter, Thelma (Meeks) Watley, a bright and active, elderly lady at the time, things went askew during the burial. Thelma's mother Winnie did not go to the burial of her own mother, but she was suspicious of a niece's intention concerning the burial of Ellen. In Winnie's mind there was never any question that Ellen would be laid to rest next to her husband when she passed away. Winnie ordered her daughter Thelma, barely ten, to go out to the cemetery and be sure that Ellen had been buried beside Thelma's grandpa, William. I remember asking Thelma how far she had to walk and which way she headed. Thelma pointed south and stated, "It was in that direction, way out in the woods a long way from home."

Thelma came home with bad news for her mother. It seemed that Sarah Ellen (Kilgore) Ladd was buried away from her husband. Winnie was outraged and went to court finally getting an order of exhumation for reburial next to William M. Ladd. Thelma told me that her grandmother was exhumed and put where she was meant to be buried.

This very old cemetery is now much easier to access. The original old road may have been recently cleared (2013) and set aside for a short walk without interfering with private ownership inconveniences. The original deed called for a one acre square for

the burial ground, but the fence surrounding it when my husband and I put up the Grundy County Historical Society sign a few years back did not cover an acre.

Marion Allen "Allie" Wallace (1854-1934)

Some years ago, I happily visited with Junior Moon in his home in Summerfield, Tennessee, a little rural area outside of Monteagle. During the long conversation he, I and another cousin had, he softly, made the statement, "You know that we are kin to the *Wallaces*." To me the Wallace name was a Warren County surname that popped up throughout my *Hill* genealogy research. But what about Monteagle's Wallaces! Who were they?

Marion Allen "Allie" Wallace seems to be the progenitor of those in Monteagle. He was born in Alabama ca. 1859 (*Census record*), or 1854 (*tombstone*). Allie's second marriage was to Martha Ida "Mattie" Starling around 1883. Martha had eleven children in all but lost three before 1910. The other named children were: Sarah Elizabeth "Bettie" (James Clay Foutch), Lemuel Earl "Lem" (Huella "Ella" Meeks), Margaret (1892-1965), Allie Leason (1894-1918), James Laney (Theola Speegle), Robert Arnold (1899-1905), Alexander "Alex", Leonard G. "Tubby" (Iva Evelyn Overturf) and Alma Vaudrene (Barney Adams). Marion Allen worked as a stone mason, truck farmer and general laborer to support his family.



Daughter Sarah Elizabeth "Bettie" Wallace – 2nd from right

This is an outing at a coal mine probably near Summerfield/Clouse Hill area.

Young Allie Leon died of influenza in 1918, and in 1928, his brother James Laney was killed instantly from massive head injuries caused in a vehicle accident in the village of Victoria, Marion County, Tennessee. There are three unmarked fieldstones between Margaret Wallace and the next plot. These could be the other children of Marion Allen and Martha Ida Wallace.

Martha Ida Starling was the daughter of Alexander (b. 1837) and Margaret (b. 1850) (Turner) Starling. In 1870 the family was started with two children, Baird/Bearden "Dock," (Tennessee Arledge; Francis Layne), and Martha Ida "Mattie". By 1880, Hattie Alexander, (William David Bennett), Lou Rebecca, (Allen N. Kilgore), and Ella had joined their two older siblings. They lived in Marion County and Alexander was a common laborer. Ida "Belle," (Clifford Rolland), and Scott, (Della Mae Tate), are the last two children added to the family that we can document. By 1900 they were living on the Marion County side of rural Monteagle. Sadly by the time the 1910 Census was taken, Margaret had given birth to sixteen children in all, but she had only six still living. She and Alex were still living in Marion County near their son Dock who was a widower for the second time.



Left: Leonard G. "Tubby" Wallace, son of Marion Allen "Allie" and Martha Ida "Mattie" (Starling) Wallace

It is believed that one of the two large white houses on College Street, on the Grundy County side of town that burned around 1946/47 belonged to Allie and Mattie Wallace, but that research is still ongoing. The houses burned simultaneously having been built so close to each other. School children were allowed to peer from the windows and watch the houses burn. Since Martha Ida's sister, Hattie Alexander

Bennett had lived in the one adjoining the C. J. Cantrell property, it seems reasonable that the Wallaces may have owned the other. That particular house was rental property with the Jim Gossett family living in it at the time it burned. What we do know is that "Mrs. Wallace has opened a boarding place in the Corner Oak House – from Mrs. Grundy, Apr. 14, 1923." Corner Oak House actually stood on the corner west of the two aforementioned houses where the present day (2013) Monteagle Fire and Police Station serve the town. It is possible that the Wallaces lived in one and operated a business out of the other, or that Corner Oak House belonged to one of the Wallace children.

Rt: possibly the Marion Allen "Allie" and Martha Ida "Mattie" (Starling) Wallace House on College St.

It stood west of where the original Cumberland Funeral Home was soon built after the fire.

Pictured: l to r: Beulah Mae Gossett, Herbert Brannan, Edith Gossett and James "Jim" Gossett



Believed to be the William David and Hattie Alexander (Starling) Bennett house on College Street that stood west of the Wallace house.

After the fire, the old rock fence stood for years against C. J. Cantrell's Furniture Store.

Picture left are Johnny and Beulah Mae (Gossett) Jones sitting on that rock fence.

Marion Allen "Allie" Wallace and his wife Mattie are buried with known markers in the Monteagle Cemetery. However, Alexander and Margaret (Turner) Starling are known to be buried there but in unmarked graves.

Elizabeth "Eliza" (Hopkins) Layne Lindsey (1862-1928)

Contributions from Personal Notes of Clarice Flowrella (Layne) Martin Bouldin

Henry C. Hopkins, father of Elizabeth, was born in North Carolina in 1831. His wife, Christiana (Blackwell) Hopkins was born in 1835 also in North Carolina. The children of this couple are Martha Eviline "Mattie" Hopkins, born 1854 in AL, married Jesse Morrell Lappin; Mary L. Hopkins, born 1855 in AL, married Idelbert Brown Lappin; Melinda Celia Hopkins, born 1858 in TN, married James Howell; James William Hopkins, born 1860 in TN, married Ellen Howell; Elizabeth "Eliza" Hopkins, born 1862 in TN, married Preston Franklin Layne, divorced, and then married Edward Lindsey; and Anna J. Hopkins, born 1869 in TN.

Eliza Hopkins married Preston Franklin Layne on Jan. 2, 1879 in Grundy County. Preston was the son of James Wesley and Elizabeth Layne. His siblings were Sarah Elizabeth "Sallie" and John Wesley. Preston and Eliza became parents to fourteen children. They are listed as follows:

- Emily Anna Rosalina "Rosie" (1880) m. John Mallard, then John Hall
- Lois Evelyn (1882) m. Burl Condra
- William Oscar Lewis (1884) m. Alice Maleta Johnson
- John Wesley (1886) m. Lou Ada Thomas
- Oliver Dentrell (1888) m. Nora Gibbs, Lora Gipson, Carrie Custer
- Martha "Mattie" Druscilla (1890) m. John Grantham
- Mary (1892) lived 6 months
- Libby Pearl (1894) m. William Reece
- Elender (1896) stillborn
- Bessie McKingley (1898) m. I. Hubert Newell
- Olive Celess (1900) m. Arthur Dee King (divorced)
- Preston Lonely (1902) m. Julia Condra
- Cora Lee (1906) twin, died 1908
- Dora Dean (1906) twin, m. Jim Norwood and Russell Hall

By 1920 Elizabeth (Hopkins) Layne was married to Edward Lindsey, but only she, her son, Preston Lonely, and daughters Dora and Bessie (Layne) Newell were living in Walker County, GA. When Preston Franklin and Eliza divorced, he married Ann Eliza Gipson, daughter of Johnson and Betsie Ann (Weaver) Gipson. They were living on Trussell Rd. where together they had four sons, Joseph (b. ca. 1914), James (b. ca. 1915), Daniel (b. 1917-d. 1922) and Simon P. (b. ca. 1922). These four children made

his total number of offspring come to eighteen. On Feb. 9, 1924, Ann Eliza fell victim to a terrible accident. She burned to death from the flames of a cook stove, leaving Preston with three of his small sons to rear. He took his thirty-year-old wife to the cemetery and buried her without the aid of an undertaker.

Elizabeth (Hopkins) Layne Lindsey died Aug. 20, 1928. On her death certificate she was listed as a *Layne*. Preston Franklin Layne died on Jan. 10, 1939. Elizabeth is buried in the Monteagle Cemetery among some of her children. Preston Franklin Layne is buried in his twenty-five foot plot that joins the plot of his sister Sarah Elizabeth "Sallie" (Layne) McCoy. Probably his second wife, Ann Eliza (Gipson) Layne and little Daniel are also buried beside him in unmarked graves since their death certificates give said cemetery as place of burial.

Steven A. "Steve" McCoy (ca. 1858-1919)

Contributions by Clyde Kunz and Sam Kilgore



Do you know about Summerfield Cemetery's three really, really old people who were interred at the age of 102, 105, and 112? The handsome young man to the left was a descendant of all three. William "Billy" McCoy who died at the age of 102 was his grandfather, and Sarah "Sallie" (Cawhorn) McCoy who died at the age of 105 was his grandmother, wife of William.

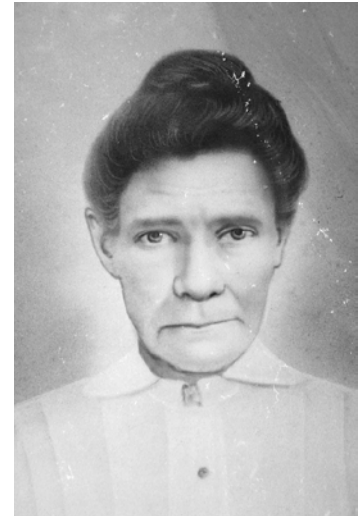
The matriarch, Jane Cawhorn, Sallie's mother, lived to be 112, died and began her long awaited rest. She was the great-grandmother of the man for whom this summary is dedicated, *Steven A. "Steve" McCoy*.

All three of his ancestors were buried in a row near the Thompson family row of little white stones. As late as 1900 their wooden slab markers could still be read, though barely.

We shall call him *Steve* for that is what his family and friends called him. His parents were Andrew Jackson and Sarah "Sallie" (Thompson) McCoy. Andrew was a chairmaker and reared his family on the Marion County side of rural Monteagle. The house was vibrant with noisy children: William A., Mary E., Abigail Jane "Abby", Isaac, Steven A., Nancy Angeline, Joseph B. and James S.



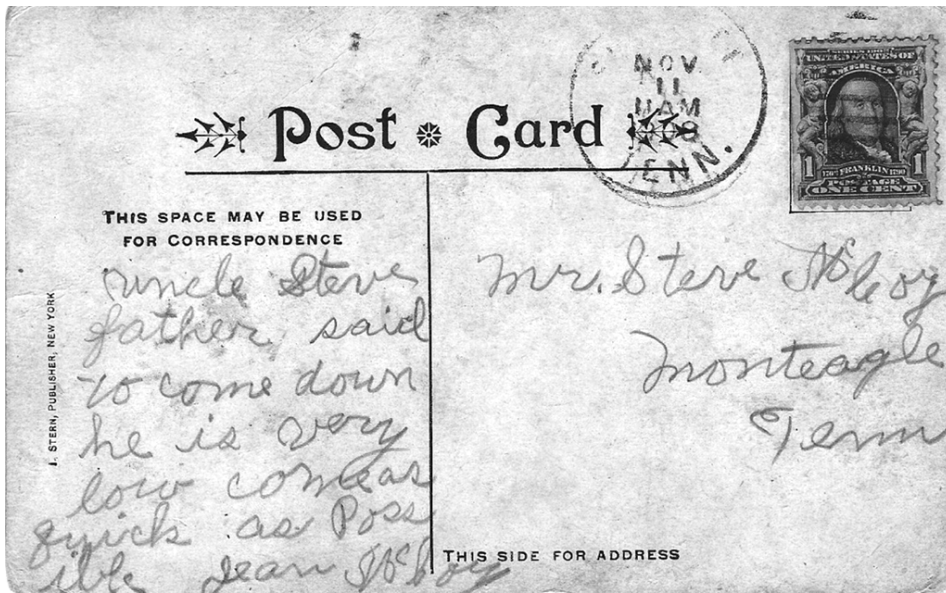
Left: Isaac McCoy



*Right: his sister, Abby Jane
McCoy*

Around 1891 Steve, by then in his thirties, married Sarah Elizabeth "Sallie" Layne, daughter of James W. and Elizabeth Layne. Her two siblings were Preston Franklin Layne and Westley "Wes" Layne. Sallie was a couple years older than Steve, and they never had any children. On Apr. 26, 1907, Sallie passed away and was buried in the Monteagle Cemetery. In the 1910 Census, Steve lived alone, was a widower, could read and write and owned his own house. He maintained a truck garden for his financial needs.

Steve's brother William A. McCoy, a carpenter, was living in Sewanee, TN when he died Nov. 18, 1908. Before he passed away, Steve got the following postcard from his niece, Jean.



"Nov. 11, 1908

*Uncle Steve,
father said to
come down— he is
very low— come
as quick as
possible.*

Jean McCoy"

A few days later, Steve went to the Eastern Star Cemetery with his nieces, nephews and sister-in-law to lay his brother at rest. This happened about a year and a half after they had helped Uncle Steve lay his wife at peace in the Monteagle Cemetery. William's family then moved to Kenosha, Wisconsin where there were iron foundries and cotton mills for the family to find needed jobs. In 1910 Mary Louisa McCoy and six of her eight children were settled into a totally different life in the North. On Sept. 10, 1910, Uncle Steve received the following postcard from his niece Odessa "Dessie". The following photo was on the front of the postcard with no names on the back, but we can assume they probably are Steve's nieces.



*"Hello Uncle Steve, we are all well— did you think we had forgotten you— why don't
you come up and see us. Answer soon. From your niece, Odessa McCoy"*



The nieces as born were Alice, Clara, Odessa Jean "Dessie", Laura, Olive Mae, and Mildred.

The nieces still at home in 1910 were Odessa Jean, Laura M., Olive Mae "Ollie", and Mildred.



On Nov. 8, 1919, Steven A. "Steve" McCoy died from chronic kidney failure. A new doctor in town, Dr. William A. Jackson, tended to the medical needs of Steve for nearly two months before he died.

He was buried in the Monteagle Cemetery in an unmarked grave, probably beside his wife Sarah Elizabeth McCoy.

Larry Alexander Layne (1947-1948)

Being barely six-years-old, I thought it was my fault! I believed that all the hurt brought on my family was caused by me. Irritable and unhappy with anything going on around him, my mother put his little white sweater on him and asked me to take him for a short walk. Realizing that it was my assignment to make my baby brother, Larry Alexander Layne, happy, and confidently assured that I could do just that, out the door we went, hand in hand, off to Happyland. The afternoon sun was already edging toward the west, so we squinched our eyes as we stepped off the front porch. He seemed to brighten up when the cool autumn air of Oct. 17, 1948 met his tiny face.

Holding his little hand securely as though I was afraid to let go, he allowed me to take the lead; "No," I had to take the lead, he was not in any mood to play tug of war or to kick the freshly fallen leaves with his tiny feet. We walked across King Street to the front yard of the Wilburn Sampley house. There was a huge oak tree in the corner that was a favorite to walk around. Larry seemed to barely be able to lift his feet over the giant roots; he became quite irritable again, but this time the tears came rolling down.

I quickly took him back home to my mother who mentioned that maybe he just needed a nap. Our house was small, so our living room doubled as a bedroom for my parents. Mama always kept spotless bedding; we children or anyone else were not allowed to sit or play on the beds once they were made up in the mornings. But this time without hesitation, she placed her baby son in the center of the bed and wiped his face with a clean cloth. The words my Mama spoke loudly were "his eyes have rolled back." She knew he was seriously ill, but I did not understand any of it. Whoever was the closest to our house with means to rush him and Mama to the Sewanee Hospital did so. And like the saint that she was, Mrs. Alyne Wooten took charge at our house.

From Oct. 17, 1948 to 8:00 p. m. Dec. 6, 1948, Dr. E. W. Kirby-Smith, better known as Dr. Bettie, tended to my little brother. My mother never left his side. Encephalitis, an inflammation of the brain, took him from us. The new Cumberland Funeral Home carried his prepared body to my Aunt Wihelmenia (Layne) Mullins' living room. Not understanding death for what it really was and the fact that my little brother was the first dead body that I had ever seen, I was amazed. Little Larry looked liked a peacefully sleeping angel taking a short rest, readying for his next flight to—well, to wherever angels fly!

He was the first burial in my parents' long plot in the Monteagle Cemetery which is full of Monteagle little ones just like our Larry. Daddy, Cleveland Layne, and Mama, Clara (Meeks) Layne, are there with him now.



Happier times: Cleveland and Clara Layne with their baby son Larry Alexander Layne—Mama always loved dahlias.



Larry's Burial at Monteagle Cemetery: lft. to rt. his siblings, David, Freddie, Johnnie Maxine and Jackie

Adaline (Smith) Bennett Wagoner (1823-1915)

What does it mean to die of "old age"? Isn't age relative? At seventy-one years this morning (2014), feeling relatively well and having consumed a couple homemade chocolate chip cookies, if I were to drop dead, would my death certificate state that I died of "old age"? Sometimes I wonder a lot! On March 19, 1915, Adaline (Smith) Bennett Wagoner died of old age. Since she was born on May 20, 1823, then I assume two chocolate chip cookies did not cause her death, but could she have died from living her life?

Adaline's father was Elias Smith of NC and Marion County, TN. Adaline's mother was a "Walker," according to her grandson's notation on death certificate. At this writing, I have no first name for her. Elias' wife Charity was more the age of a sister to Adaline, so we cannot assign her to be her mother. In all actuality they may well have been sisters.

Adaline Smith married James H. Bennett around 1843 probably in Hardin County, TN. In 1850 the family had grown by three, Eliza J., John Manley (Palestine

Sanders; Texanna Prater), and Sarah Ann (James Wilson, Mar. 11, 1869, Franklin Co). By the time the 1860 Census was taken in Franklin County, Mary M. (Unk Thompson), Martha (Taylor Stephens – Mar. 1870, Franklin Co., TN), Margaret A. and George W. (Mary Willis (Dudley) Wileman) were running around the Bennett house. It was just about this time that another son William David Bennett (Hattie Alexander Starling) was added to the list, but he would never get to know his father because of the coming Civil War. His father fought hard for the South but paid the ultimate price, his life.

Getting a handle on the right situation of death on James H. Bennett is difficult. It would be easier on me to just write, “James was killed in the Civil War,” and go on with the story. However, I want to at least give some information that might help his family find out more about his death and burial. I am not at all an expert in War matters, but I want to present one possibility in James H. Bennett’s behalf.

Handed down to descendants were two bits of information: 1) James H. was killed in the Civil War around 1864 when his youngest child, William David Bennett, was four-years-old. 2) The second bit of information is that he died in the Battle of Murfreesboro and was buried there in the cemetery. A friend pointed out to me that that particular battle lasted only three days, Dec. 31, 1862 through Jan. 2, 1863. So we can exclude his death happening then unless the age of the child has been figured wrongly.

My best guess at this time is that Pvt. James H. Bennett served with the 32nd TN Infantry Regiment under Captains Elijah H. Ikard and John D. Clarke whose Company K was made up with men from the Decherd, Franklin County area. In 1860 James H. was living in that area, so it seems plausible that this is where he would have been mustered into service. The ten companies of the 32nd TN regiment reported to many different commands, even reported to Breckenridge’s Army, Brown’s Brigade and other positions at Murfreesboro and Tullahoma. If the family’s death date is wrong, and he was killed at Murfreesboro, he probably was buried by the Union on the battlefield where he fell. However, Stones River Cemetery today holds mainly the Union dead from the three day battle. The Confederate soldiers’ bodies were “...buried in the Confederate Circle at Evergreen Cemetery. This plot is their third resting place. They were buried on the battlefield by Union soldiers after the battle, and were moved to their own cemetery later. When the first Confederate cemetery fell into disrepair in 1867, the bodies were moved to Evergreen Cemetery.” (Quote is from the National Park Service). If James H. Bennett did not fall during those three days of horrific fighting but continued to remain with the 32nd TN regiment, then he could be buried a number of places since the numbers dwindled as the war fought on with other brigades to the end. More likely than not, his

remains are in the mass grave in the Confederate Circle at Evergreen Cemetery. We will leave this research to the Civil War experts.

Adaline (Smith) Bennett married Solomon Wagoner on Aug. 9, 1869, in Franklin County, TN. She obviously kept her family together in Franklin County even four years after the war. Before the next Census was taken, Adaline was again a widow. To her benefit, she still had two unmarried sons at home, George and William David, who were farming to care for the family's financial needs.

All together Adaline had given birth to nine children with six still alive in 1910. Those believed dead at that time were Eliza J., Margaret A. and possibly an unnamed stillborn baby. She lived with her son George W. in Monteagle up until her death. Her widowed son John Manley Bennett and his children were also in the household. Maybe she *was* making chocolate chips cookies for her granddaughters when she died in 1915 of "old age". Maybe she even *ate* a couple of them. She is buried in the Monteagle Cemetery with no known marker. Her son William David Bennett was the informant.

Virgil Ward Lacy (1905-1964)
Contributions by Evelyn Hicks

In the 1950's, where in Monteagle would one go to buy a five-cent dip of real chocolate ice cream? Or if one could afford it, for a dime he or she could buy a three-dip version on a double cone. Lacy's Drugstore was the place to visit. Now there were other treats that Son Adams could dish out from behind the soda fountain, but my one nickel didn't usually reach into those treat areas. "Ward," which I would have never called him to his face, or Mama would have switched my legs good, wore the appearance, a real merchant demeanor, of a serious business man, pleasant, good-looking, laid back we might say, but vigilant. "Mr. Lacy," Mama would like that better, "no," she would have insisted that I use that name, was the face I saw every weekday for four years while I was in high school (1956-1960). Lacy's Drugstore was the meeting place for high school bus riders.

John Lacy and Minnie Jane Roberts married on March 14, 1900 in Overton County. They started their lives together with a good old-fashioned, honest, work ethic in farming. They did manage to keep at least one farm laborer to help while John took care of other business efforts such as being a cashier in a local bank in Pickett County. When one's family begins to enlarge, then a good father of the house will venture out to form work habits that will feed his family. Both of the Lacys were college educated, so

they were ready to take on the challenge of building a life for themselves and their babies. The couple's children were Ramona Clarice, Virgil Ward, Enola and Eva Ann. Two-year-old Enola died on Jan. 7, 1910 from a fever.



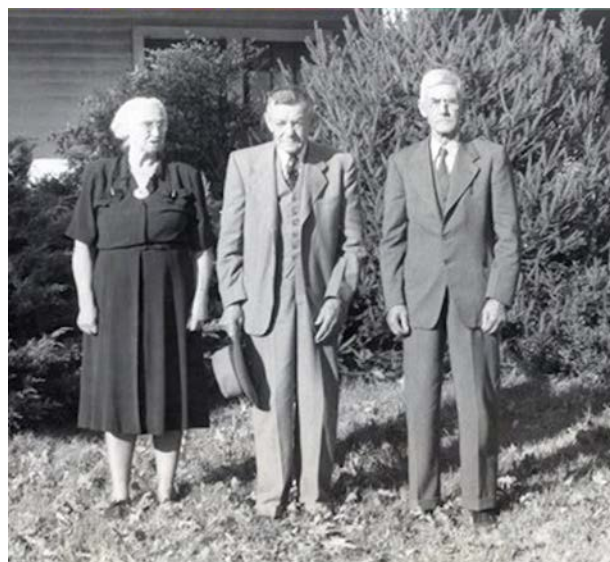
*2nd Lt. James Lewis Lacy-Union Army
(father of John Lacy)*



*James Lewis Lacy with father, William
Porter Lacy*



*Sarah "Ellen" (Brown) Lacy, wife of James
Lewis Lacy, mother of John Lacy*



*Minnie & John Lacy with John's bro-in-
law Millard Smith*

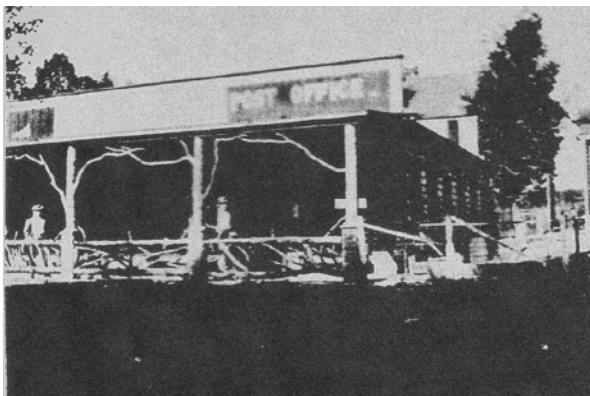
Virgil Ward was keen on doing his own "thing" as a grown-up young man, so off to California he went with some of his uncles to work in timber. We all had an adventuresome spirit about us in those days beginning in our teens. I know how it was; I was so full of life and adventure that I got married when I was seventeen-years-old. It

has been a fifty-three plus years adventure, but I'm still waiting on the fun part to begin. Well, obviously Ward didn't like cutting down trees, so upon his return home, his father sent him to pharmacy school. Did I mention that Ward was also Monteagle's pharmacist when I was a child? He could fill your prescription, dip your ice cream cone, sell you a wedding shower gift, find the needed piece of hardware to fix a barn door, and still manage a tiny, pleasant smile.

In 1930, John, Minnie and daughter Eva Ann were living in Coffee Co., TN where John continued doing some farming. However, on Apr. 17, 1931, an ad showed up in *The Cumberland Outlook Tracy City Newspaper*.

"Lacy and Company who have taken over the store occupied by Crownover & Company at Monteagle are open for business with a full line of goods and will be glad to welcome the old customers and through good service and right prices hope to win new ones. Lacy and Company, Monteagle, Tennessee"

And guess who probably would manage the new undertaking. On Nov. 13, 1931 Virgil Ward Lacy married Pauline "Polly" Smith in Overton Co., TN. Polly and Ward's sister Eva were roommates at the University of TN; this is how the two met. John and Minnie had finally made the move on up to the plateau from Coffee County to get the new store up and ready for operation. Below are three different versions of the store throughout the years. It still stands (2013) and has housed numerous other businesses. Until the old timers die off (*that includes me*), it will always be known as Lacy's Drugstore.



View of the New York Store



Lenehan's Pharmacy



*Lacy & Co. –Furniture, Groceries,
Pharmacy, Dry Goods, Hardware*



*Lacy & Co. -Furniture, Groceries,
Hardware, Dry Goods, Drugs*

Ward and Polly made a beautiful couple. Polly added the feminine touch needed by some patrons. She was a well-dressed, pleasant and happy person who appreciated her customers. The couple built a large brick house beside the store which still stands today. Some years after Ward died in 1964, the store and house were sold. When Polly grew older, she went to McKendree Manor in Hermitage to live with her sister. Upon her death in 1990, her remains were brought back and placed beside Ward's in the Monteagle Cemetery.

Mary Willis (Dudley) Wileman Bennett (1868-1956)

Contributions by Clyde Kunz

Aunt Mary Bennett is what the younger ones in Monteagle called her. Of course, there was not a grain of kinship between her and us, but out of respect for her age, we called her Aunt Mary. She lived alone for several years in the tiny little barn-like house across Lee Street from Silas Custer, Sr. and his family before they moved into the Cicero King house. Aunt Mary could remove warts. "Yes, she could!" As a child I sucked on my right index finger and kept a "seed wart" all the time. I sucked on that finger until I started school. One day Mama told me to go visit Aunt Mary and get that seed wart removed from my finger.

On June 13, 1864, Isaac Newton Dudley married Julia Ann Mitchell in Coffee County, TN. The couple soon moved to Green County, KY, and before the 1870 Census, they had brought Henry Lee, Mary Willis and Samuel Aaron into their lives. They had moved back to Coffee County, TN, with three more little ones, James C., Joseph M. and William Thomas, added to their family. Then there was a divorce on Oct. 18, 1879. On Aug. 26, 1880, they remarried and continued on with their lives adding baby Nancy and

Orville to the family. Julia had given birth to ten children with eight still alive in 1900. And to everyone's happiness, the marriage appeared to still be on track.

Their daughter Mary Willis married Samuel McClendon "Mack" Wileman on July 28, 1887 in Franklin County, TN. The names of the three children out of five who survived were Mamie Beatrice (W. H. Young), Lillian M. (Walter Love), and Bee McClendon (Florence Shetters). In 1900 Mack and Mary Willis were living in Huntsville, AL where Mack was working in a cotton mill as a card stripper.

Sometime during the next nine years, Mack and Mary Willis decided to divorce and go their separate ways. On July 17, 1909, Mack married Mary Ella Henley. A year later in 1910, Mack, Mary Ella and two of his and Mary Willis' children, Lillian and Bee, were living in Ladd's Cove, Marion Co. Mack was nineteen years the senior of Mary Ella in this Census record. In the same Census year in Coffee County, TN, Mary Willis was living with her brother, Joseph M., a widower. She declared herself as being a *widow*. This was not uncommon because divorce was not something any woman wanted to admit happening in her life, no matter who was at fault. Joseph had four young children, so Mary Willis may have moved in to help him care for them. Her parents Isaac Newton and Julia Ann were also living near.



Samuel McClendon "Mack" Wileman



Mary Willis (Dudley) Wileman Bennett

Mary Willis Wileman married George W. Bennett, son of James H. and Adaline (Smith) Bennett. They lived in Monteagle, Marion Co. in 1920. George farmed a little and at different times Mary Willis worked in restaurants and the Monteagle Hotel to help with the bills. They had no children together.

In 1930 George was seventy-one and Mary was sixty-four. They had moved to the Grundy County side of the railroad tracks. George died of pneumonia on Jan. 2, 1937 and was buried in the Monteagle Cemetery the next day. I believe he is buried in an unmarked five foot plot to the left of the front (old) entrance to the cemetery; seventh row over along the old front fence line is a single grave with no marker, but his name is on an old map as either having bought the plot or having been buried there.

I don't know the exact year that Aunt Mary moved into the little barn-like house, but it probably was in the mid 1940's. Johnnie Louise (Meeks) Gilliam remembers that she, her parents, and her siblings lived in the same small house while her dad built them a house next door behind her Aunt Mae Tucker's house on the corner of Lee and 2nd Streets. Johnnie Louise remembers the house as looking like a small barn but just as livable as most folks' houses around the area. She also recalls that Mary Willis' children came for visits.

Interesting, and worthy of mentioning here in Mary Willis' little summary of her life, is this story that concerns her and her first husband, Mack Wileman. Around the end of 1948 or beginning of 1949, Mack went to Monteagle to see Mary Willis because he was very ill with cancer and probably realized that his time on earth was short. According to family stories, Mack probably walked from Ladd's Cove to Mary's house in Monteagle. Being as ill as he was, he obviously had a need in his heart to talk with her for a few minutes. When Mary Willis answered the door of her humble home, she would not let Mack come inside. She told him to go get his wife; then they both could come inside. It is not clear if Mack did so, but some family members thought that he probably did just that.

A grown granddaughter of Mack's was in the room with him as he lay dying. She said Mack called out to Mary Willis which could possibly mean that she did make the trip to Ladd's Cove to see her dying ex-husband. There were some family whispers that Mack's present wife Ella should not have let her come to his bedside. Mary Willis was not there when Mack actually passed away because she heard the news from a man on the mail truck. Mack died at home with family around him. My hope is that Mack and Mary Willis had their little talk in privacy somewhere during the last few days of

his life. *Life is like a vapor*, but sometimes the fog in Ladd's Cove was so thick that the good things along the way were sometimes missed.

Mary Willis died on Dec. 24, 1956, in Jackson Co., AL in the Bridgeport Tri-Cities Hospital. She is buried in the Pleasant Grove Cemetery in Marion Co., TN.

Oh, yes! About my seed wart: it left, but maybe Aunt Mary shamed me enough so that I stopped sucking my finger. Or maybe she told Mama to switch my legs. Or maybe she and Mama together concocted some distasteful herb or salve to put on my finger. Johnnie Louise (Meeks) Gilliam agreed that Mary Willis could remove warts, but she did it by gently rubbing the warts with her fingers. Whatever we think about it, my seed wart did leave!

George Washington Parker (1852-1929)

George Washington Parker was born July 9, 1852 in Vervilla, Warren County. He was the son of William McClelland Parker (1810-1889) and Sarah M. (Bonner) Parker (1813-1883). Their other children were John, William Thomas, James, Martha Jane, Daniel Webster, and Henry Clay. George W. married Martha Ann "Mattie" Paty (1860-1896) on Dec. 20, 1877 in Warren County. Mattie was the daughter of Lorenzo Overall Paty and Eliza Jane (Allen) Paty who married Dec. 12, 1848 in Smith Co., TN.

The children born to George W. and Mattie Parker were William Overall, 1879; Robert Norton, 1880, Virginia Mary, 1882, John Thomas, 1883, Nancy Bertha, 1884, Oscar Reams, 1886, Sallie Pearl, 1888, Chester Arthur, 1890, Don Cecil, 1892 and Josie Beulah, 1895. Martha Ann "Mattie" Parker died soon after the birth of her last child, leaving George with several young children still at home. (*Full names and dates were borrowed from the notes of Anna Mary Parker.*)

Almost immediately, George moved his family to Monteagle where he met and married Laura Lee Thomas (1868-1937), daughter of John Burkley and Rebecca Emeline (Knight) Thomas. She was possibly a second wife of Thomas J. Adams, whose first wife, Levina J. (Lindsay) Adams died in 1889. There is a record of a Laura Thomas marrying T. J. Adams on Sep. 15, 1892 in Franklin Co. In the 1900 Census, George and Laura Lee stated that they had been married three years. Laura Lee stated that she had given birth to four babies and only two were alive at that time, namely George and Jean M. Since in the 1910 Census record she said that she had been married twice, one

wonders if two of the four babies spoken of in the 1900 Census record may have been from her first marriage.

However, by the time the 1910 Census was recorded, Laura Lee had given birth to ten children, four of whom were still alive. Added to George (b. 1900) and Jean M. (b. 1900) were Nannie M. (b. 1902), Jessie (1904-1908), John B. (b. 1906), Lucille (1906-1906), Emma Lee (1908-1908), Rachel (1908-1908), Rhoda (1909-1909) and Flora (b. 1913). Little Jessie, Lucille, Emma Lee, Rachel and Rhoda are all buried in the Monteagle Cemetery. Flora was born after the 1910 Census, so it appeared to be eleven children in all that she had given birth to by George W. Parker. If I have the count right, then he was the father of twenty-one children by two wives.

George W. had always worked as a house carpenter, and while the family lived in Huntsville, Madison Co., AL, some of the older children worked in the cotton mills and as carpenters. At the age of seventy-seven, George W. died in Huntsville on Nov. 14, 1929. Four days later he was laid to rest beside his four babies in the Monteagle Cemetery.

Laura Lee lived out her later years in the home of her daughter, Jean (Parker) Bryant in Huntsville. On Jan. 5, 1937, she passed away; her remains were brought back to Monteagle and placed beside her husband and babies.

Silas Lafayette Custer, Sr. (1895-1976)

Charles Anderson and Martha Josephine "Josie" (Friend) Custer were the parents of Henry Jacob (Gertrude Lappin), Carrie (Oliver Dentrell Layne), Archie (Della McBee), Silas Lafayette (Nora McFarland) and Charles Chatham "Chattie" (Laura Ladd). Josie had lost two children before the 1910 Census record. The family settled on Catherine St. just off present West Main St. in Monteagle. One by one their children married and left home. At the age of thirty-three Silas was still at home with his parents.

On Nov. 30, 1933 Silas found the woman of his dreams. With the assistance of Justice of the Peace, Harvey Greeter, he married Nora Miriam McFarland, daughter of James Neal and Lillie Myrtle "Daisy" (Tucker) McFarland. Silas was thirty-eight-years of age and Nora was thirty-one. The couple set about making a home, living first in a small house a little way from the old Custer home on Catherine Street. Then when Josie Custer died in 1931, they moved back into the home to care for Silas' dad who died in

1947. The young couple moved to a house behind the Monteagle Cemetery. Still later a move was made to Summerfield. Silas and Nora then moved back to Monteagle into one of the Emmett Aylor houses.

During these years three children were added to this union: James Anderson (named after his two grandfathers), Silas Lafayette, Jr., and Daisy Jo named after her two grandmothers. Silas supported his family with his work for the Kelly Partin dairy and his work on the Monteagle Assembly grounds. He peddled milk products from the back of his wagon, and often held a night watchman job. Somewhere on the Monteagle Assembly walls hung a picture of Silas peddling his milk. That photograph has been greatly sought after for years. Nora as a young lady had also worked on the Assembly, but as a married lady, she was totally devoted to her husband and children.

The Custers' daughter, Daisy Jo, was a classmate of mine for twelve years. During these years I was blessed to be in the Custer home from time to time. They were living on Lee St. about midway between 1st and 2nd Streets on the east side. I remember the inside of that house so vividly. Certain things become lasting memories inside a child's head, so I will share those I harnessed from visiting in the Custer house. Cleanliness and order, everything was so tidy and kept in order but used daily. The dolls in the baby bed in the little room off to the right of the kitchen, the huge wood, cook stove with its reservoir of hot water, the unheated bedroom to the right of the living room, the doilies, the wonderful spell of slowly cooking food exuding from the cast iron pots and skillets on the stove, and most of all the quite, pleasant, Christian attributes of Mrs. Nora Custer are the memories etched on my brain. Anyone who visited that home had to come away feeling loved.



Silas Lafayette Custer, Sr.
and wife
Nora Miriam (McFarland) Custer

All good stories must have something of the absurd or ridiculous recorded or else we would all be zombies. The above mentioned dolls in the baby bed were not just dolls for decoration, but they were important to little Daisy Jo. One particular doll, an extra large one, was passed on to her from Julie Mabee. The doll never hurt anyone; really it was a probably the most kind-natured doll of all in that bed, but for some unknown reason, a first cousin of Daisy Jo's, Scooter Bill McFarland, shot the doll between the eyes with a pellet gun. The pellet stayed lodge in its head. This act of unkindness led to an arm disability for the life of the doll.

Since their last home was owned by Nora's brother-in-law, Emmett Aylor, the Custers took the opportunity to buy their own property when just above them on the corner of Lee and 2nd Streets, the old Cicero King house became available. The Custers moved there. Again, I knew the house well. Fried okra—oh, the beckoning of such soul-comforting food was just another memory to add to my earlier ones. The well on the porch, two stoves in the kitchen—a wood cook stove and an electric one. Nora just couldn't give up her love for the old way of doing things. The house had a room upstairs. In the spring a large garden was planted and the yield kept Nora busy putting up food for the winter.

Where in all of my memories did Silas Custer, Sr. fit? He was a quiet, unassuming man, a hard-working man, dedicated to his role as husband and father. On occasion, when he and my grandfather, Alex Layne, worked as night watchmen at the Monteagle Assembly movie theater, we all walked home together. I remember how quietly the two men walked behind us, watching our frolicking behavior as we playfully ran down the big hill on Central Ave. going toward home. Mr. Silas Custer had a purpose in life, that of providing and caring for his loved ones; he did his job well.

He passed away on May 25, 1976 and was buried in the Monteagle Cemetery. He has a military stone marked "**PVT US ARMY WWI**" which earns him more respect from all Monteagle citizens who knew him and those who did not. His beloved Nora joined him on Oct. 18, 1991.

Robert Lee "Bob" Brannan (1888-1953)

I may have been ten years of age when I got a surprise of my life. Two of the Brannan girls and I were playing in the backyard of their home in Monteagle. One of

them asked me, "Do you want some peanuts?" Of course, I answered with a loud, "Yes!" To my surprise, they started toward the garden where their father Bob Brannan was working. Hey, I thought peanuts came in a bag at the store, so why were we going to the garden? Mr. Brannan pulled up a plant from a row in his garden, shook it gently, and there dangling from the roots were husky, dirt-free peanuts. Now folks, as a child not much set me back on my heels, but that did. We opened our little hands, and Mr. Brannan placed some in each hand and off we went. That was the last time I saw Mr. Bob Brannan.

Robert Lee "Bob" Brannan was born in Alto, Franklin Co., TN. His parents were John and Sarah Jane (Hill) Brannan who married on Aug. 23, 1876 in Franklin County. His paternal grandparents were Albert James and Mary Ann Frances (Partin) Brannan. His maternal grandparents were Andrew Jackson and Margaret (Gipson) Hill. Bob's siblings were Marcena, Nervie, Luallen (male), Martha Ann, Rebecca, Margaret, Willis, Henry, Andrew, Mamie and Hattie. Sarah Jane did lose one child along the way. She stated in the 1900 Census that she had given birth to twelve babies with only eleven alive at that time. Marcena does not show up on any other Census than the 1880 where she was the only child listed, so maybe she is the child who died. Also there seems to be a small problem with the birth dates of Marcena and Nervie.



Albert Brannan (1820-1894), grandfather of Robert Lee "Bob" Brannan, stone at Partin Cemetery in Roark's Cove

Martha Ann Frances (Partin) Brannan, (1825-1888); dau of John Partin, Sr. and Amy (Gilliam) Partin; wife of Albert

Bob registered for the WWI Draft in 1917 at the age of twenty-seven. He was still single and farming for his father in Alto. On Christmas Eve 1922, Bob married Lena

Mae Frizzell, daughter of Crawford D. and Nola Jean (Rogers) Frizzell, in Franklin County. Lena's siblings were Charley, Joseph David "Joe", Lou Vernice, William Murphy and Alice Beulah. Nola Jean lost one child probably her first one; some researchers say that her name was Della Frizzell.



"Mr. and Mrs. Crawford Frizzell were honored on their 50th anniversary Sept. 25 with a dinner given by their son W. M. Frizzell and Mrs. Frizzell at their home on Hamilton Avenue. Miss Beulah Frizzell, Mr. and Mrs. Bob Brannan, and Mr. and Mrs. Joe Frizzell were present, as were the honorees' 10 grandchildren. Mr. and Mrs. Frizzell have been residents of the city for four years. Mrs. Frizzell, who was Miss Nola Rogers before her marriage, is the daughter of Mrs. Alice Rogers and the late M. W. Rogers of Bridgeport, Ala."

Bob and Lena Brannan continued to live in Alto and started their family there. Their son Bernice (Edwene Cannon) was the firstborn; then Johnny Crawford (Jonsie Katherine Myers) and Willie Mae (Vernon Long) came along. In 1940 the family was living in Grundy County in Pelham Valley where Bob was a cropper on another family farm. The new additions to the family were Nell Verna (James Turner), Nola Jane (Kenneth Bonner), Judy Lou (Lamar Murry) and Nina Sue (Donald "Don" Bynum).

Nina Sue was the youngest child when Bob moved his family up on the plateau to Monteagle around 1943. They lived in a house off South Central. In 1944 Jimmy Rogers (Jen Smith) was born making the family complete. There was another son, Robert Lee Brannan, Jr. who was born Apr. 17, 1938 and died Apr. 30, 1938 from pneumonia while the family was still living in Alto. He was buried in the Hill Cemetery.

Bob's daughter, Nina Sue and I started to Monteagle Elementary School in 1948 and were constant friends for the next twelve years. When I asked her if there was any one thing that she remembered about her dad, she responded, "He liked for me to comb his hair with a fine tooth comb." I laughed and told her that I did the same thing for years for my grandfather.

The family moved to the east end of Monteagle near Trussell Rd. behind where the old ballpark/flea market was. It was at this house that I met Mr. Brannan in his garden and discovered that peanuts grew in the ground. He was born to be a farmer and died farming while he was shockin' corn. His heart gave out on Sept. 27, 1953 and two days later he was buried in the Monteagle Cemetery. Mr. Brannan was a good man who worked hard to make an honest living to support his family. His wife Lena Mae passed away in 1985 and was buried beside her husband.

Egbert Wells Holcombe (1847-1922)

In June 1912 after the death of my great-grandfather, Alex Benson King, Virgil I. Holcombe was appointed administrator of his estate. On Dec. 3, 1920, my great-grandmother, Mary Thelia King, wrote a \$4.60 check to V. I. Holcombe for lumber. The Holcombe name seemed to be well known in the business realm of old Monteagle, but just who were these Holcombes?

Egbert Wells Holcombe and his wife Mary Jane (Cahill) Holcombe were living in Osborne Co., Kansas before they came to our small village. Egbert's parents were Edwin Ralph and Priscilla Delight (Lyon) Holcombe. Mary Jane's parents were James and Elizabeth (Wallace) Cahill. When they arrived in Monteagle sometime after 1882 and before 1885, the couple had two living children, Virgil Irvin (1878) and Junia Hope (1882), One little girl Laura Delight (1880-1881) had died and was buried in Union Cemetery in Osbourne Co., Kansas. Baby Beth, born Aug. 6, **1885**, was the first Holcombe born and died in Monteagle. She lived only nine months and was buried in the Monteagle Cemetery.

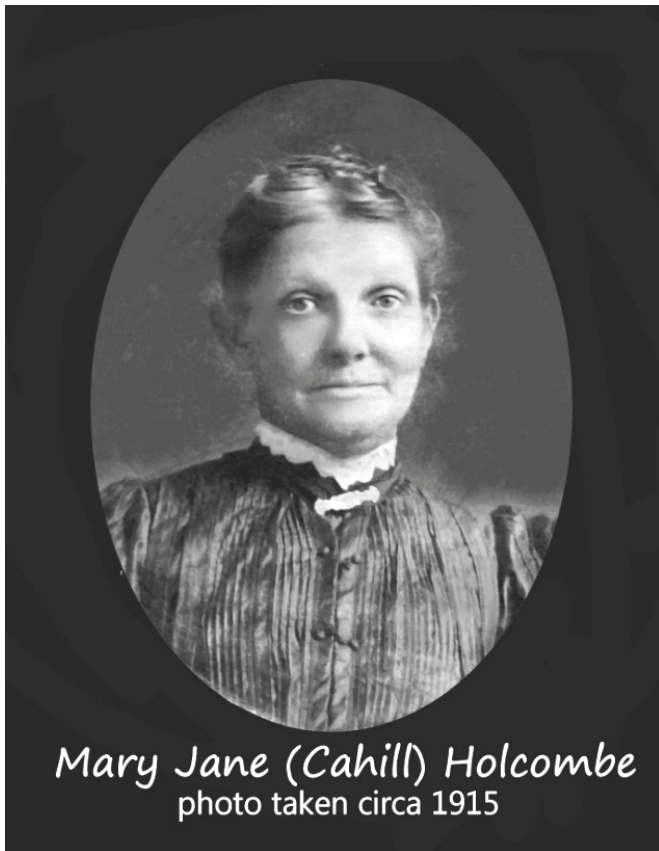
James and Elizabeth (Wallace) Cahill had six children in all, but three died in infancy. Besides Mary Jane Cahill, there was a sister Amelia Cahill and a brother James T. Cahill who survived. Her mother later married John Davis and had more children. When Elizabeth Wallace (Cahill) Davis died (1819-1900), these words could be read in her obit: "*...Habits of industry formed in her early youth she retained in her age and was ever eager to "wait on myself" or to do anything in her power for others...*" The emphasis I want to stress here is a possible inherent desire of Mary Jane (Cahill) Holcombe to get up and get the job done. Monteagle was founded and built by just this sort of characters. Money played its part in the establishment of the town, but the desire to get out of bed, go to work and at the end of the day, look at one's completed job and think, "Well done!" – was what built the town.

“Holcombe Haven” was the name given to the house that stood east of Winston Avenue. In earlier years Winston Ave. went straight to the Monteagle Cemetery. This house remained home to all the immediate Holcombe families as they came and went through summers and winters. After several years with no occupants, the house burned in the early 1980’s.

On March 22, 1889, Egbert Wells Holcombe had already established himself as a reliable, trustworthy man, for he was given the job of Monteagle’s Postmaster. Mary Jane also became active in local affairs. They brought to the small village the idea that hard work and education accomplish deeds. Egbert was born in rural New York and was reared on a farm. Mary Jane was born in Ohio and did some college work along the way.

Mary Jane Holcombe became the first president of the Monteagle Cemetery Association in 1904. It was the Holcombe family who sold land to the Association in order to give much needed room for future burials. Section 2-E and 2-W are now on that land.

As the years passed, in 1945, a pavilion was erected under the direction of the Monteagle Woman’s Cemetery Association with Charlie A. Smith chosen as the builder. Harold Lappin Lowrie did the intricate framing for the roof and then nailed down the roofing. One needs to look up and appreciate the design that young Lowrie used for his roof. The pavilion was presented “**In Loving Memory**” of Egbert W. & Mary J. Holcombe with a lovely poem posted by Blanche Sanders, daughter of Junia Hope (Holcombe) Gilland.



In 1900 they were living in Monteagle, Marion Co., where the whole family, except Virgil Irvin who was off at school, was working in the general store. His sister Junia Hope was right there in the store working as a clerk. Egbert's father Edwin, a widower, came with them to Monteagle. After 1900 he went back to Nebraska, died on Mar. 23, 1905 and was buried on the 24th in a plot that belonged to his daughter's husband, Myron D. Fabrique, in Chester Cemetery in Nebraska. His wife Priscilla Delight (1824-1879) was buried in Union Cemetery in Osborne Co., Kansas just a few feet from where her granddaughter Laura Delight later joined her.

Again in 1910 Egbert along with his son Virgil Irvin was operating the store. Around 1903, Virgil had married Alma May Perry, daughter of William C. and Virginia (Riley) Perry. The couple had five children, Mary Virginia (1904), Phyllis Delight (1908) and William Perry (1909-1910), Alma Celeste (1915-1915) and Egbert Wells (1911). In 1918 when Virgil Irvin registered for the WWI Draft, he gave his occupation as a confidential clerk and manager of a store and saw mill working for his father. In 1920 Egbert and his son Virgil were still operating a general store, but before the next decade, Virgil, Alma, their son Egbert Wells and their daughters, Phyllis and Virginia, had moved to San Antonio, TX where they continued in the retail business and other ventures. Virgil also worked as a superintendent of an office building.



*Back:
Virgil Irvin and wife
Alma Mae (Perry)
Holcombe*

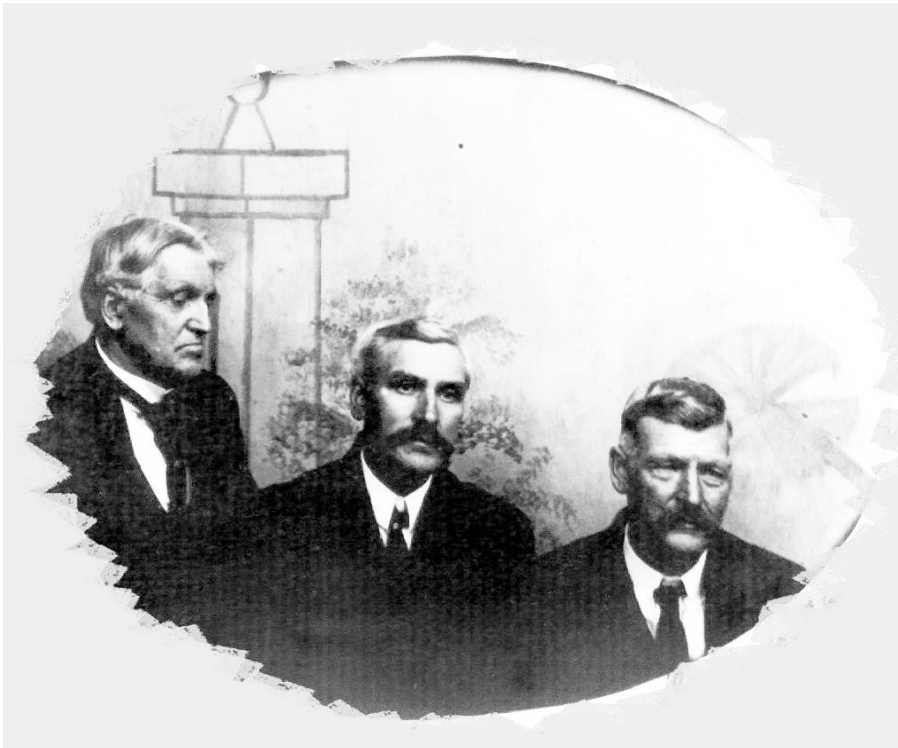
*Front; Mary Jane
(Cahill) Holcombe
holding granddaughter
Mary Virginia
Holcombe; Junia Hope
Holcombe and Amelia
(Cahill) Doan (sister to
Mary Jane Cahill)
(taken 1907)*

Egbert and Mary Jane's daughter Junia Hope Holcombe married John Henderson Gilland and moved to San Antonio, TX after their little son John Henderson, Jr. was born and died Feb. 9, 1916. He was buried in the Monteagle Cemetery.

Egbert Wells Holcombe (1847) died Sept. 9, **1922** and was placed to rest beside his baby daughter Beth. In **1930** after the death of Egbert, Mary Jane was living in San Antonio, TX with her daughter's family. In **1940**, Mary Jane was back in Monteagle, Marion Co., with the Gillands. The Gillands lived at Holcombe's Haven, so Mary Jane truly came home. John H. Gilland was working under the occupation of "trucking for hire." Family notes state that "Mr. Gilland owned and operated a filling station on the site of his father-in-law's (Egbert Holcome's) store."

Mary Jane Holcombe died in her beloved home on Oct. 15, **1943** and made only a short trip to her resting place.

Virgil Irvin Holcomb died on Dec. 13, **1962** in Brooke General Hospital in Fort Sam Houston, TX. His body was brought back to the Monteagle Cemetery to be placed beside his wife, Alma Mae, who passed away in Texas in 1945 and was removed to Monteagle for burial. At the time of his death he was listed as being an electrical engineer. The Holcombe families were high achievers who poured out solid foundations for our small, but growing town.



L to R
Egbert Wells
Holcombe
(1847-1922)

Shirley Grant
Holcombe
(1865-1935)

Horace Seaver
Holcombe
(1852-1939)

Lessie Belle (King)Vail (1906-1968)

Rolling one's own cigarette was an art. Now I can honestly and thankfully say that smoking was not one of my vices. However, as a child I was mesmerized by those gifted elders around Monteagle who could roll a cigarette without ever dropping a flake of tobacco or missing out on participating in an ongoing conversation. Lessie Belle Vail was highly skilled in rolling her own cigarettes, for she had been doing it for years. I studied her every move and actually got the same thrill that I received from a front row seat at a ten-cent show at Monteagle Elementary School in the late 1940's and early 1950's.

Lessie was one of two children of Isaiah Thomas and Fannie (Layne) King. Her paternal grandparents were Stephen N. and Sarah Catherine (Perry) King. Her maternal grandparents were Madison Monroe and Rebecca Jane (Cox) Layne. Lessie's parents had married Nov. 8, 1903 in Grundy County. Her father brought one child into the marriage, Beatrice Virginia King (Daniel T. Trippe), giving Lessie an older half-sister. Actually Isaiah married Lula Bell Layne first; together they had one daughter Beatrice. Lula Bell died in March 30, 1903, so Isaiah married her sister, Fannie. It was not unusual for a man to marry a sister of his dead wife, especially if a baby was without a mother. Lessie did have a full sister, Rebecca Sarah King (Dillard West King), who was two years younger.

Lessie and Rebecca's mother died in 1911 in Hamilton Co., TN. So the three young girls had to basically rear themselves. Life wasn't easy for Lessie. Around 1922 she married Joe Vail, son of John and Betty (Turner) Vail. Joe worked as a crane operator at Combustion Engineering in Chattanooga. Soon Dorothy Fannie Vail (Henry "Hank" Murray) was born in 1924; then a little boy, Joe Alvin Vail was delivered on Oct. 25, 1925. Baby Joe Alvin died Jan. 6, 1926 and was buried in Forrest Hill Cemetery in Chattanooga. Milk fever was given as the cause of death. Joe and Lessie's last child, Beatrice Virginia, (Anthony "A. J." Long), was born at the end of 1926. The two daughters grew into beautiful young women.

Joe and his family had moved to Monteagle and built a neat, little slab house at the back of South Central Avenue where it made a loop to come back to town on Spring Street. On Dec. 16, 1946, tuberculosis claimed the life of Joe Vail. He died in Pine Breeze Hospital at the top of Stringers Ridge in Hamilton County. He was brought back to Monteagle for burial in the local cemetery.

The girls, Dorothy and Virginia, married and began rearing their children. Lessie lived alone in the little slab house. It is at this point of her life, that I had grown old enough to walk over to the Marion County side of the tracks and all the way out Spring Street with my mother to visit Lessie. (*Lessie was a niece of my grandfather Alex Layne since her father's two wives were his sisters.*) She heated only one room in the winter. I remember the old wood cook stove sitting there in the cold kitchen area with no heat coming from it. Our old stove at home was at least warm all the time from Mama's constant cooking. I guess Lessie lived on little canned items she could open quickly and her hand-rolled cigarettes.



Left: the neat, little slab house; Lessie Belle (King) Vail with her daughter Dorothy nestling two white geese.

Lessie always wore short hair and rarely looked into a camera.



Another view of Lessie's little house.

Lessie and her daughter Virginia shovel snow

Once one stepped into her little heated room, there was very little to attract the eyes, but I remember what I saw during one visit on a cold day. In one corner was a small, well-used cot. Leaning against the foot of the cot was a guitar. An obviously chilled cat that had scampered passed us at the door was near the small stove in the center of the back wall. A couple of straight back chairs invited Mama and me to sit. All the time, Lessie's eyes were on me. She never took them away from me, but she had

a faint smile on her face. I took that to mean that it was okay for me to be there. She picked up her guitar and strummed a few chords and placed it back in the same position.

Then, with her eyes still on me, she began to roll a cigarette. The thin paper, the placement on her fingers, the little tobacco sack with its draw string, the use of her teeth to close the sack, the amount of tobacco, the arrangement of the tobacco on the thin paper and the licking of the thin paper with a small twist at one end, all were a part of the ritual. Then with the strike of a match and a draw on the cigarette came the squinting of her eye. The smoke rolled up around her cheek into one of her eyes. She didn't care and neither did I; it was great entertainment for me. My dad smoked *Lucky Strikes*; my grandfather chewed *Beech-Nut*, but nobody made their own cigarettes at my house.

Front: Lessie Belle (King) Vail looking down at daughters Dorothy and Virginia; husband Joe Vail to her left



I'm certain Lessie Belle Vail very reluctantly gave up her Montecagle life and went to Florida to be close to her daughters. Interstate 24 took her little slab house and tore into her organized world. Montecagle was never to be the same; they called it progress. She lived in Florida and died there on Dec. 21, 1968. She was cremated and her ashes were placed on top of her husband's grave at the Montecagle Cemetery.

Jonathan Newton Tucker (1856-1912)

The surname "Tucker" was common in Monteagle's history, but it is also one of the hardest family names to follow while researching. In 1850 in district eight lived a nineteen-year-old man named Archibald Tucker. He lived and worked on the farm of Thomas Thompson. Jonathan and Nancy Thomas and two sons, David (1827) and Robert C. (1831) were living and farming in the same district during the same year. Not too far away in district seven was a nineteen-year-old lady named Elizabeth Tucker who was living in the Blair family household. Both of these Census districts were recorded in the fall, one in *September* and the other in *October*.

On *July 1*, 1850, Archibald Tucker married Elizabeth "Bettie" Thomas in Grundy Co., TN. She was a daughter of Jonathan and Nancy Thomas. Since the marriage took place in *July*, one is left to wonder why they were living in separate homes when the Census records of 1850 were taken. (*I once wrote a true story where a couple got married; then each went back to his/her family home. This happened because one father was a Democrat and the other was a Republican. They stayed in their fathers' homes and kept the marriage secret until one of the fathers passed away.*) Children born from this union were David Thomas "Dan" (Isabella "Belle" Ragsdale); William A. (Caroline "Callie" Howell), **Jonathan Newton** (Mary K. Howell; Mabel C. Sanders; Lucy Rebecca "Lula" Jordan), Samuel Houston {Alzora Thomas (1865-1900); Amanda Belle "Allie" Watley}, and Normandie (William Homer Richmond).

Jonathan Newton Tucker had three marriages. His first wife was Mary Katherine Howell (m. Dec. 27, 1878); his second wife was Mabel (Lowe) Sanders (m. Apr. 19, 1900); his third wife was Lucy Rebecca "Lula" Jordan (m. ca. 1906). I can find no marriage license date for the last marriage. He and Mary Katherine were parents of Idella "Della", Elizabeth, Junia, and John Douglas. Mary Katherine died in 1899 and was buried in the Monteagle Cemetery. He had no children with Mabel, but his step-daughter Irene Lowe Sanders, daughter of Alfred Law and Mabel (Lowe) Sanders, lived in his home. Mabel was still alive in 1910, but she and her daughter Irene were living with her Lowe family in Monteagle. It is not clear if there was a divorce, but Mabel stated in 1910 that she was a widow. There were no children born with his last wife, Lula.

Jonathan Newton Tucker spent his life working in logging and lumber. He seemed to have done quite well in this business. He died in 1912 and was buried beside his first wife in the Monteagle Cemetery.