

# Days Of Old Sumner County

Newsletter No. 15, July 2016  
Sumner County Historical Society

P.O. Box 1871, Gallatin TN 37066

www.sctnhs.org

(615) 461-8830

## Life Stories to be Told at Cemetery 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Tour

By Ken Thomson, SCHS President

Gallatin Cemetery, with its old-fashioned tombstones and towering memorials, dates back to 1814 when Felix Grundy, who developed Gallatin's first subdivision, deeded one acre to the city for a burial ground. Cemetery Street was originally called Walnut Street.

The first burial was Neal McAuley, who died Nov. 13, 1818, while visiting his brother Daniel McAuley. In the ensuing years, several additions were made to the cemetery, and there were thousands of burials.

Many of the county's most fascinating characters ended up there. The biographies of a handful of these people are presented in first person by costumed actors each fall at Gallatin's Candlelight Cemetery Tour. The tour was conceived by Donna Smith (then director of the Sumner County Museum) in collaboration with Barbara Parker, who is co-chair of this year's 19<sup>th</sup> annual event, Oct. 12 from 5 to 8 p.m.,

The tour "greeter" this year will be Gallatin's first mayor from 1822, William Hadley, who later moved to Nashville, where he became a prominent attorney.

(See **CEMETERY**, Page 5)



Above is an old label for Portland strawberries. Below, in this Sumner Co. Archive photo strawberry pickers show packs of berries, circa 1925



## Portland Strawberries in the White House

By Bonnie Martin, Archivist

Portland strawberries have been a cherished delicacy since the 1880's when the fertile soil and ideal growing conditions produced abundant strawberry crops. Local growers such as William McGlothlin, W.B. Dye, H.H. Gregory, W.C. Gibson and other farmers produced such large crops that by the 1920s train loads of berries were shipped across the United States.

The success of the strawberry crop prompted construction of the Strawberry Crate Factory, Bama Cannery, Dye Cannery, Bryers Ice Cream plant and other processing plants. The commercial plants,

(See **STRAWBERRIES**, Page 11)

# How the City of Portland Was Born

By Al Dittes

The Tennessee Legislature passed House Bill No. 434, "An Act to Incorporate the Town of Portland, Tennessee, on April 8, 1905. Gov. John I. Cox signed it into law three days later.

The bill provided "for the government and control of the city...and to define the corporate limits and powers and the powers of said Municipal Corporation, and for other purposes." It then specified the officers of the city and powers conferred upon them. A further enactment outlawed the sale of "any wine, Whisky, beer, ale, had cider of any malt, vinous, spirituous, or intoxicating liquors..." of any sort to be drunk within one mile of the city limits within the ages of 18-50. It also required men from ages 18-50, unless exempted or substituted, to labor on city roads for six days using their own tools, wagons, teams and other implements every year.

The bill ordered the sheriff of Sumner County to hold an election in Portland the first Tuesday in May 1905. To abide by the order, Sheriff F.E. Patton wrote a notice April 21, 1905, announcing that on May 2, voters would elect a mayor and seven aldermen, with J.E. Kerley & Sons' store serving as the first precinct.

The *Gallatin News* account of this historic event, which appeared the following Saturday, reported that Portland's first election, held May 2, had no candidates or formal ballots, so folks just wrote on paper the candidates they wanted. One-third of the male voting population received votes, and some of the most prominent citizens from the earliest family to settle Upper Sumner County won the offices.

Voters chose Risdon (R.D.) Moore as mayor by a landslide; he received 88 of 102 votes cast. A few people also favored Professor J.V. Chapman, a teacher in the Portland Seminary (later to become Sumner County High School), and T.L. Lanier, owner of a drugstore on Main Street. (See Pages 4 and 5 for more on Lanier.)

Of the 30 nominations for aldermen, W.T. McGlothlin came out on top with 75 votes. T.D. Kirkpatrick finished a strong second with 71 votes. The other aldermen to win were: F.C. Enders, H.M. Moore, J.W. Hornbuckle, S.H. Roark and V.R. Butt. John McGlothlin barely beat runner-up G.T. Wright, 47 to 43 votes, to become the first magistrate representing Portland on the Sumner County Court.

## At First, Portland Was Richland Station

In early days before it was incorporated, Portland was a settlement called Richland Station and existed along the newly built Louisville and Nashville (L&N) Railroad in 1859. It was renamed Portland on April 10, 1888, to avoid confusing the mail with other towns along the rail line that had similar names, such as Rich Pond, Ky. and Richland, Tenn. Nobody knows who chose the name Portland or why.

## The Moores: Town Leaders

Portland's first mayor was also the first president of its bank, the Portland Bank, chartered Oct. 24, 1903, on the north side of Main St. in a building later used by the Farmers Bank. A 1915 advertisement shows that the Portland Bank had \$25,000 in capital and \$130,000 in deposits.

By the time Moore was elected mayor, his family was already well established in Portland. According to a family genealogy, the first Moore to arrive in Sumner County was also named Risdon Dent Moore. Born in North Carolina, Risdon Dent married Arseneth Mitchell in 1811 and moved to Sumner County. He became a teacher and a surveyor and was Register of Sumner County. Risdon Dent died at age 77 in 1868. In a series of stories written in 1909 about early Portland, he is described by W.T. McGlothlin as "our venerable school teacher, honored and revered by the entire community."

The patron saint of that distinguished family was Risdon's son, Dr., William Polk Moore Sr., born in 1829. William was a physician. Before the Civil War, he and his wife built a grand house that still stands on what is now College St. He had two sons by his first wife, Amanda Dickey, both of whom served as Portland mayors. The eldest son, R.D. (1859-1928), was, of course, the first mayor and bank president. R.D. also taught school and was post master when the town changed its name from Richland Station to Portland in 1888. The second son, William Polk Moore Jr. (1857-1932), was also a physician and businessman. He served as mayor in 1910 and 1911.

(See PORTLAND, Page 3)

## (PORTLAND, Continued from Page 2)

William Sr. also had children with his second wife, Mollie Jane Duval. Their son, Oliver Moore, served as Sumner County Clerk for 14 years and co-owned with his father and brother, Hiram, a hardware and dry goods store. Hiram Mitchell Moore, was active in the strawberry, coal and ice businesses and served as postmaster for 10 years. He was the manager and salesman for the Strawberry Growers Association for 23 years and was one of the first aldermen elected in 1905. He briefly served as mayor from 1813 to 1814. He is pictured in a 1915 *Purple and White* high school newspaper in an advertisement for Hiram Mitchell Moore & Sons store as a dealer in furniture, pianos, carpets, rugs, stoves, queensware (glassware), wallpaper and sewing machines.



Hiram Mitchell Moore's son, Walter, one of the store's partners, also operated a theater and auto agency along the commercial strip of North Russell Street. Hiram' son, Oliver, also a store partner, was in the coal and ice businesses and was the father of Eleanor Moore, who married Fred J. White in 1944. Fred and Eleanor White operated a grocery store for several years and had a major role in the rise of Portland as a center of industry during the 1970s and 1980s.

### The McGlothlins: Town Leaders

The McGlothlins were among the first families to settle around Richland Station. The 1840 Census shows nine McGlothlins living in Sumner County, along with the Richard Pond family and two Gwins. The McGlothlins lived through the Union Army occupation during the Civil War, starting in

February 1862. The family was recorded in each 10-year census, with 58 individuals bearing that name in 1850, 67 in 1860, 53 in 1870 and 68 in 1880.

Joseph McGlothlin Sr., was apparently the first McGlothlin to arrive in Richland Station. He came from Orange County, N.C., in 1803.

His grandson, Alderman W.T. McGlothlin (Uncle Billy), who lived from 1837 to 1920, was the most prominent McGlothlin. Uncle Billy is listed in the 1880 census as being 42 years old and having a wife, Caroline, who is 38. He was a veteran of the Civil War and a member of the Methodist Church. His obituary states, "He was a successful businessman and had long been prominent in public affairs of Sumner County." He is listed in a news account as being treasurer of a Board of Trade, organized in 1908 in Portland. He was also the prime mover in organizing the Farmers Bank in 1912 to compete with the Portland Bank, chartered in 1903. According to a July 12, 1962 *Sumner County Leader* news story commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of Farmers Bank, Uncle Billy was the first president of the new Farmer's Bank on July 2, 1912, when its new \$350 building opened. In 1912, R.D. Moore, who was elected as Portland mayor the same time that McGlothlin was elected alderman, was the president of the Portland Bank. The anniversary story also noted that Uncle Billy "kept the rail depot, ran a small grocery in the baggage room and served as a magistrate."

### More About the 1905 Aldermen

Of the original aldermen, S.H. Roark was active in the coal and fertilizer businesses. He was also involved in brick manufacturing and built one of the only all-brick houses in town. At the end of his life, he was chairman of the Farmers Bank Board of Directors.

Alderman F.C. Enders moved from Pennsylvania to a Buck Lodge area farm. He started his career as a school teacher before going into real estate and insurance. He was secretary of Farmers' Bank when it opened in 1912. His son, Raymond Enders, became a bank cashier in 1917 and mayor of Portland in 1918, finishing the mayor term of Mayor William Clay Austin who died in the WWI flu epidemic.

**Editor's Note: This is the first in a series of stories about the growth of Portland.**

# Portland's Fascinating Physician: Dr. Thomas Lanier

By Paula Shannon, Portland, and Jan Shuxteau, Editor

***Editor's Note: While researching her ancestors, Portland's Paula Shannon came across fascinating characters, including her great grandfather Dr. Thomas Luther Lanier, born in Davidson County on April 14, 1848. He was a prominent Portland physician, pharmacist and political leader, and may still be remembered by Portland old-timers today.***

Thomas was the son of William George Washington Lanier and Paulina Stogner Lanier. By the time of his birth, the Lanier family was well established with almost 70 years in Middle Tennessee. Thomas' great-grandfather, another William, and his family were among the earliest pioneers. They travelled 700 hazardous miles by covered wagon in the 1780s from North Carolina to the north side of Tennessee's Duck River, where they had a 1,500-acre land grant. The travelers included William Lanier's oldest son, John, then 12, who later became Dr. Thomas' granddad. John had five children, including another William G., who was Thomas' father.

## Dr. Thomas' Early Years

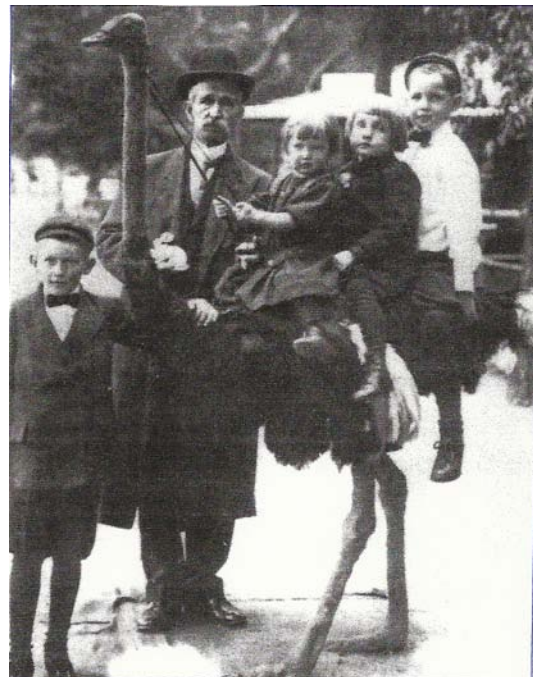
The incidents that most profoundly affected Dr. Thomas' childhood were likely the death of his mother in 1855, when he was only seven, followed by the remarriage of his father (then 39) to 17-year old Lucinda Peay that same year. But the event that overshadowed everything of that era was the Civil War. Dr. Thomas, himself, was too young to fight and is not listed in service rolls. He turned 13 in April 1861 when the war began and was still 13 in February 1862 when Nashville fell, bringing the rest of Middle Tennessee down with it. By that time, the family had moved to Gallatin. His father got work under Sheriff Hobdy as a Gallatin jailor, a job that may have exempted him from military service.

Thomas' older brothers, John Robert and Churchill, are listed as serving in the war. The Laniers', like all Southern-sympathizing families in Middle Tennessee, would have been hard pressed during the occupation. After the fighting was over, Thomas, his father and brothers, John Robert and Churchill, signed the amnesty oath in 1866. That same year, William served as a juror, Justice of the Peace and Magistrate in Sumner County. He had 10 children and lived to the age of 90, dying in November 1916.

Thomas, meanwhile, married Edna Clara Bell Tooley on Jan. 25, 1870. He attended Nashville Medical College where he graduated in 1880. Lanier descendants believe that Dr. Thomas then went into practice with Dr. W.P. Moore in

Portland (called Richland until 1888). The doctors would have used a buggy to make house calls and would have mixed their own medicines. According to 1880 Census reports, Dr. Thomas and Clara lived in Richland with their four children: Edna, Janie, Mary Ellen and Luther.

From 1880 until 1910, Thomas was an important man in Sumner County. He was a physician, a pharmacist, a buyer and seller of property, a Mason Grand Master, a politician, and an Elder in the Presbyterian Church—until it was torn down, at which time he went to Portland First Baptist.



**For unknown reasons, it was quite the thing in California to go to an ostrich farm have your children photographed on the back of an ostrich. In this picture, circa 1910, Dr. Thomas is shown with children on a stuffed ostrich.**

By 1887, Thomas had opened a drugstore on the south side of Main Street in Portland. At that time, medicines were compounded by the pharmacist, and a doctor could apply for a license without much training. Thomas' son Luther learned pharmacy by serving as his dad's apprentice and becoming his partner. Like all Main Street buildings, the pharmacy was a frame structure. It and the other buildings on that side of Main St. burned down in 1924.

**(See LANIER, Page 5)**

#### **(LANIER, Continued from Page 4)**

Dr. Thomas attended the Annual Session of the Tennessee Medical Society held in Nashville the spring of 1899. He made two reports at that session, one on typhoid fever and the other about a young boy who suffered a gunshot wound to the head. (Transcripts of the reports are in the *Lanier Family Book* by Nancy Chapman Lanier, located in the Sumner County Archives.)

In 1905, Thomas was appointed Grand Deacon of the Grand Lodge of Tennessee, was an unsuccessful candidate in the race for County Court Clerk and was hit by the death of his father on Dec. 18.

Two years later, in December 1907, his wife Clara also died. The month after Clara's death, Thomas and his daughter Mary Ellen Lane and her family began a trip to Perris, Calif., planning to visit another daughter, Edna Appling, living in California for her health. Thomas wrote about this journey West in letters sent back home and published in *The Sumner County News*.

From this point on, Thomas went back and forth from Portland to California. He married Ida Mae Holt Bailey, a newly widowed mother of five, in January 1909. They returned to Portland where Thomas made another try at being County Court Clerk, before withdrawing from the race due to illness. The family went back to California. Thomas sold his partnership in the Portland pharmacy to Dr. E.F. Peden. That done, Luther Lanier and Peden became partners and remained so until 1913. Luther contracted tuberculosis and died in 1915.

Thomas Lanier continued on in California, outliving his children Edna, Mary Ellen and Luther and eventually celebrating his 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary with Ida. He died in 1934 at the age of 85.

#### **(CEMETERY, Continued from Page 1)**

Eight additional tour characters will be:

- Sidney Hix, Commander of PT 108, who was killed in 1943 in the South Pacific
- Eliza Allen, the first wife of Gov. Sam Houston, whose brief marriage was cloaked in mystery
- Edward Albright, author and owner/editor of the *Sumner County News*, who was also Minister to Finland
- Mollie Franklin, who will be visiting her first husband Khleber Miller to whom she was married less than a year. He died of consumption after living in Mammoth Cave in a medical experiment in the 1840s.
- Henry FitzGerald, an Irish immigrant who was a successful factory owner and reaped great profits in the black market during the Civil War
- Vena Stuart, a beloved teacher and librarian in local schools for 60 years. A school and a street are named after her
- Governor Gen. William Trousdale, who was known as the War Horse of Sumner County. He was active in both the military and politics as well as being Minister to Brazil
- Capt. Stafford H.R. Doyle, a noted naval commander of the first U.S. aircraft carrier in the 1920s, who retired to Sumner County with his wife, a Sumner native. Their historic home was called "Duncruzin."

# Cecilia Bradford Carroll: Wife of Governor, Mother of Mayor

By Jan Shuxteau, Editor

Cecilia Bradford Carroll (1792-1848) grew up and married in Hendersonville's Bradford-Berry House (then called Hazelpatch), the 220-year-old house on Main St. adjacent to Hendersonville City Hall. She is most famously known as the wife of the longest serving governor of Tennessee, William Carroll, who was both the sixth and eighth governor. She was also the mother of Thomas Carroll, a mayor of Memphis.

In her 2015 book, *Legacies of our Grandmothers*, Tennessee DAR regent Susan Thomas, included a chapter about Cecilia Bradford Carroll, noting "As is so often the case in stories of women who were early settlers of Tennessee, painfully little is known about the personal life of Cecilia Bradford Carroll. There is information about her father, her husband and her sons, but so little about her. Bits of history and conjecture must then be woven together to produce the tapestry created in the 56 years of Cecilia's life."

Cecilia was a daughter of Revolutionary War veteran and Indian fighter, Maj. Henry Bradford, who built Bradford-Berry House circa 1796 on the land grant he received for his war-time service. The house, now empty, is protected by ordinance from demolition and was used by Hendersonville Arts Council in the 1980s and '90s.

## Well-Known on the Frontier

Cecilia's family was large and well-respected. Her dad was the local revenue collector, a federally appointed position he received because of his war record, upstanding character and support of powerful friends, including Thomas Jefferson and John Adams. Cecilia had four brothers—Larkin Priestly, Ira and Henry—as well as an older stepsister, Molly Blakemore, from her mother's previous marriage, and a younger sister, Sophia. Cecilia's mother, Elizabeth, and Henry were native Virginians who met about 1784 (historians' best guess) when Henry traveled from Virginia to Tennessee. They married in 1785 and settled in or near the settler stockade somewhere in Sumner County.

Cecilia would have been about five when the Bradford family moved from their original home into Hazelpatch. She would have known the slaves her grandparents sent from Virginia to help with the building. From childhood, she would have known Andrew Jackson, who moved to Middle Tennessee in 1788 and was a family friend. Cecilia and her siblings would have been contemporaries of James Franklin's children at Pilot Knob. She would have known the Daniel

Smith family who also came from Virginia to Hendersonville about the same time as Henry. The Smiths moved into Rock Castle about 1791. The daughter of house, Polly, 11 years older than Cecilia, scandalized the community when she eloped with Samuel Donelson at age 15. By the time Cecilia was 15, Polly had given birth to three sons, been widowed and then remarried to James Sanders, a Hendersonville widower with six children.

In her book *Salt of the Earth*, Henry Bradford descendant Sara Bradford Saunders said that Henry Bradford introduced William Carroll to Cecilia. William came from Pennsylvania to Nashville between 1808 and 1810, opening a hardware store and factory in the city. "His store on the square was successful," reported Saunders. "Evidently, Major Henry Bradford and his sons traded there, and Major Bradford invited Carroll to his plantation home in Sumner County, where he met the girls. Soon he and Cecilia Bradford were engaged."

William's father, Thomas Carroll, was a partner of Albert Gallatin, U.S. Secretary of the Treasury under Presidents Jefferson and James Madison. Gallatin, for whom the city is named, provided William with a letter of introduction to Andrew Jackson, his commander in the War of 1812.

In 1813, Cecilia and William married in the front parlor of Hazelpatch. In *Salt of the Earth*, Saunders quoted Nannie Smith Berry (1861-1961), whose family owned Hazelpatch from 1868 to 1968, and heard a description of the wedding from an eyewitness. "For the wedding, she [Cecilia] dressed in her white billowing gown, aided by her sister. A large company had been invited. Probably, Cecilia walked down the circular stairway on the arm of her father, Henry Bradford...After the ceremony, the guests were served on a long banquet table. I feel sure it was a midday meal with baked ham, beaten biscuits and other vegetables, cake and pie...After the wedding, I do not know where she [Cecilia] lived. Perhaps Cecilia stayed at the home of her father because William Carroll had to be off to War..."

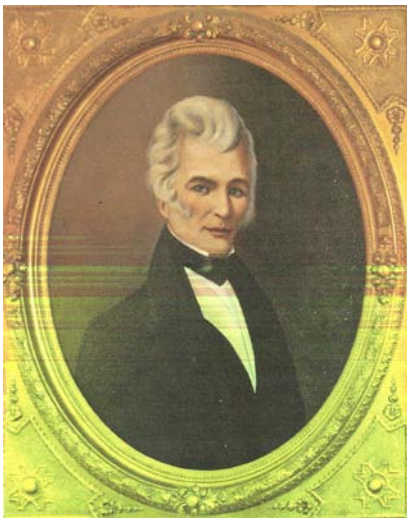
In the fall of 1813, William left his new bride and along with his brother-in-law, Larkin, joined Jackson in his campaigns at Natchez and against the Creek Indians. William survived unscathed though his horse was shot out from under him, but Larkin was killed. William wrote home, giving family the sad news a week before Christmas.

(See CECILIA, Page 7)

## (CECILIA, Continued from Page 6)

"William Carroll continued his service in the war," reported Susan Thomas, "leading the Second Division Tennessee Volunteers to New Orleans in 1814 with Gen. Jackson, where the British were routed on Jan. 8, 1815."

After the fighting, William returned to Nashville, where his reputation as a practical, honest businessman and an intellectual grew. He began investing in steamboats. He bought the *General Jackson* in 1816, the first steamboat to traverse the Cumberland River. But tough times were ahead.



**Portrait of Gov. William Carroll**  
No portrait of Cecilia has been discovered

Thomas reported, "The panic of 1819 brought hard financial times to the Carrolls, but William's strong leadership in opposing the power of wealthy speculators who ran the banks propelled him into the office of Governor of Tennessee in 1821. He held that position until 1827, lost to Sam Houston for a two-year term, and then was re-elected as governor from 1829-1835, giving him the longest service of any governor in Tennessee history to date."

William was only 33 when he first took office, and Cecilia was about 29. *Salt of the Earth* describes his first inauguration. "On Oct. 1, 1821, William Carroll was inaugurated as governor in the Hall at Murfreesboro... The inaugural ball was held at the Nashville Inn at the corner of Market Street and the Square.

Cecilia wore a yellow satin embroidered dress with flounces. It was gathered at the sides and falling in folds to her ankles, a tight bodice, short sleeves trimmed in lace, a low neck with a U-neckline, and a lace bertha. Her only ornament was a filmy handkerchief... Marquis D. Lafayette and George Lafayette arrived with Gen. Andrew Jackson in a carriage drawn by four horses. The address was by Dr. Philip Lindsley."

No records of Cecilia's activities during her husband's tenure as governor have been found. It is presumed that she attended to her young children and participated in civic and cultural activities as First Lady. William and Cecilia had three sons who lived to be adults: William Henry, born in 1817; Thomas Bradford, born in 1819; and Charles Montgomery, born in 1821.

Thomas Carroll is the best known son. After living in Mississippi and Arkansas, he settled in Memphis, where he ran twice for mayor and was elected in 1856. He served only a few months before dying suddenly in April of 1857.

Cecilia did not live to see Thomas Carroll elected to office. She died at the age of 56 in September 1848, four years after her husband.

In April 2015, the Tennessee Society Daughters of the American Revolution authorized the City of Nashville to place a marker on Cecilia's grave. A previous marker apparently wore away.

---

### WYNNEWOOD PRESENTS "IF THESE LOGS COULD TALK"

Wynnewood will present special programs titled "*If These Logs Could Talk*" every third Sunday, April-October at 2 p.m.

The programs are free with the regular cost of admission or \$5 for just the presentation. The house is open from 10 a.m.-4 p.m., so there will be plenty of time before and after for a tour. Please bring a chair.

Check the Web site, [www.historicwynnewood.org](http://www.historicwynnewood.org) for program topics and presenters for upcoming "*If These Logs Could Talk*" series or call 615-452-5463. On July 17, Dr. Kevin Smith, MTSU anthropology professor, will speak about the Castalian Springs Indian mounds. On Aug. 21, Tonya Staggs of Traveler's Rest, will present a program on fashion from 1830-1870.

Wynnewood is located at 210 Old Highway 25, Castalian Springs.



**Douglass-Clark House**

## **Beyond Elmore and Emma: Other Owners of the Douglass-Clark House**

By Taryn Hill

When the Douglass-Clark House on Station Camp Creek opened to the public in July 2015, it was known that the site had once been a court house owned by Elmore Douglass and that it had been occupied during the Civil War by his niece, Emma Clark, who lost three sons in the war.

Those happenings provided the criteria that led to the preservation of the Douglass-Clark House as a public history site. However, those events only covered a combined seven years of history within the house's 230 year existence. What happened during the other 223 years? Who had owned the house? When did it leave the Douglass family?

According to Ken Thomson, president of the Sumner County Historical Society, Elmore Douglass is the first known owner of the property. He sold it to his brother, Reuben Douglass, but it was Reuben's daughter Emma (Douglass) Clark who eventually lived in the house. According to the 1802 tax record, Elmore Douglass paid taxes on the land at that time. However, by 1809 the same land was listed as the taxable property of Reuben Douglass.

The question of how Reuben Douglass used the house between 1809 and 1831 is unknown. Thomson pointed out that Reuben's primary residence was on Upper Station Camp Road,

next to his family cemetery, so it isn't likely that Reuben, himself, ever lived in the house.

It is known that Emma Douglass married William Sanders Fulton Clark in March 1831, and it is presumed that the couple moved into the house. However, 1833 tax records list William S. F. Clark as owning three slaves, but no land. Future records show the addition of more slaves to the Clark household but, again, no property.

Reuben Douglass died in August 1832 and bequeathed his property to his son, Bennett Edwards Douglass. Reuben divided his money, furniture and 33 slaves among his eight adult children and three grandchildren. No mention was made of William Clark who had only married into the family the year before. Reuben left Emma's home in her brother's hands, not her new husband's.

As it happened, William Clark died suddenly in 1847 at the young age of 41, leaving behind his pregnant wife Emma and nine children. No Will appears to have existed, so Emma's brother Willie (Wylie) J. Douglass was named executor of the estate of William S. F. Clark. An inventory showed that William owned six slaves, livestock and furniture but no land or house.

**(See HOUSE, Page 9)**



## **(HOUSE, Continued from Page 8)**

Bennett Edwards Douglass, Emma's "beloved brother" acted as a sort of surrogate father to the 10 Clark children. He never married. He died in 1868 after a long illness and left the majority of the property he had inherited from his father to his sisters, Elizabeth and Sophia. He left Emma Clark "my land south of the turnpike road." Emma became the sole owner of the property where she had reared her children to adulthood.

She did not remarry, possibly because of her son William Jr., who was disabled. Census records throughout William Jr.'s life refer to him as an "idiot." With Bennett and later Emma as sole proprietors of the property, they could ensure the care of William Jr. even after their deaths.

Emma Clark died in December 1881, and her Will bequeathed the house and 120 acres of land to her daughter Ellen (Clark) Brown, wife of Dr. Alfred D. Brown, and to her son, William Jr.. Emma's Will explained that she inherited the land from her brother Bennett. Emma also stated in her Will that she desired for Ellen to clothe, feed, and care for William Jr., and she gave Ellen full and complete control over him.

In 1884, Ellen's husband died, and per the 1900 census Ellen was listed as the head of household at the Douglass-Clark House. Also listed as householders were William Jr.; her nephew Vernon Dorris (son of her sister Sophia [Clark] Dorris), a boarder, and two lodgers.

The 1910 census showed a shift in the household. Roland B. Dorris was listed as the

head of household (also a son of Sophia Clark Dorris), and Ellen Clark Brown was listed as his aunt. William Jr. was not listed on the 1910 census, indicating that he likely died between 1900 and 1910. In 1917, Ellen sold her land and house to her nephew Roland for \$2,500. The 1920 census again showed Roland as the head of household. Roland never married, and throughout his life he rented rooms in the house to boarders and lodgers.

Roland Dorris died in 1954 and willed the house and land to his sister-in-law, Fern (Ellison) Dorris. Fern had been the wife of Roland's brother, Vernon. At that time, Fern lived in Georgia, and it is unknown how often or if she ever visited the property before her death in 1959. The executor of Fern's estate sold the house and land to Newman and Sarah Cheek, which was the first time the property left Douglass ownership.

The Cheeks rented the house and land to Kenneth and Mildred Knight. In 1965 the Cheeks sold the property to Parkes and Katherine Armistead, but the Knights remained as the tenants. Katherine Armistead died in 1999, and the property was sold.

It changed hands numerous times among several different development companies before Centex Homes donated the house and eight acres to Sumner County in 2006. Sumner County, partnered with the State to renovate the house as a public history site.

Douglass-Clark House is open to the public Tuesday-Saturday at no cost. For more information, call Taryn Hill at 615-991-5119.



**Ribbon Cutting at the Douglass-Clark House, September 2015**

# Wirt Seminary: Sumner's First College

By Jan Shuxteau, Editor

Wirt Seminary (later Enon College), which opened in 1838, was the first college in Sumner County. A boys' school, it was located in buildings—of which no trace is left—11 miles east of Gallatin, near the intersection of what is now U.S. Hwy. 231 and State Hwy. 25.

According to *A College for this Community*, a 1974 book by the late historian Walter Durham, Wirt was founded and operated by partner teachers, Thomas M. Patterson and Thomas M. Fite. It endured—though sold and renamed—until sometime in the 1850s.

First mention of Wirt Seminary occurred in the Nashville *Union* newspaper on Thursday, June 22, 1838. It was announced that exams would end the first session—presumably begun earlier in the year—on July 19, and the second session of classes would begin the Monday following. The newspaper also noted that college enrollees could board in private homes near the seminary.

"The school's operations seem to have been continued on a regular basis. An announcement that the ninth session would begin in January 1842 strongly indicates that two sessions had been held each year since the opening in early 1838," said Durham. The announcement said that Founder Thomas M. Patterson and his brother, C.B. Patterson, would begin the ninth session. The other co-founder, Thomas M. Fite, had left Wirt by this time, and C.B. Patterson had become his brother's partner at the seminary.

In 1843, the brothers incorporated the school and got a charter from the state giving Wirt College the authority to confer Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees. The charter noted that Wirt Seminary had been "in successful operation for the past six years" and that its founders and proprietors had erected "extensive, commodious and costly buildings and supplied the institution with apparatus and other requisites for the advancement of literature and science." It noted that "the present flourishing condition" of the seminary was attributable to individual enterprise, unaided by Legislative authority."

The charter bestowed the name "Wirt College" on the seminary and granted "all the rights, privileges, liberties, exemptions, dignities and immunities enjoyed by any literary institution in this State." It allowed Thomas, C.B. and W.K. Patterson to remain as the college's faculty with the power to appoint other professors.

"With the seminary now advanced to college status, the membership of the board of visitors was impressively enlarged," said Durham. "The board included in 1843, H.B. Hill, J. Anthony, E.S. Payne, J.H. Patterson, William Read, J.B. Dickerson, J.L. Swaney, William Hall, M. Duffy, A.R. Wynne, G.C. Crenshaw, W.L. Malone, J. Saunders. S. Rickman, R. Jackson, William Goodall, H. Bate, T. Mosley. P.W. Stone, C. Hart, G. Brown, J.D. Bond, S. Debow, J.M. Jettson, J.W. Locke, N. Crenshaw and J. Algood."

Durham could find no records listing the board's actions or officers though he did discover a brief announcement in the 1847 *Union* by men named S.B.F.C. Barr and J.M. Burney, which gave their titles as board president and secretary.

## Response to Cholera Epidemic

"In August 1849, during the cholera epidemic in Middle Tennessee, the administrators of Wirt College posted notice that it was soon to begin its twelfth year," said Durham. "Referring obliquely to the epidemic, the announcement cited the school's record of 12 years of uninterrupted good health for its students and boasted that its location was 'far removed from scenes of dissipation or places of public resort except churches.' College courses of 10 months duration were offered by professors William K. Patterson and H.R. Ring. A student paid board and tuition charges of \$100 for the period."

In 1850, the school tried to entice enrollment with the offer of five-month courses for \$50. A notice in the Nashville *Daily Centre-State American* newspaper lauded Wirt College. "It is predominantly the People's College, without endowment it has educated more destitute young men than the best endowed institutional in the state, within the same period of time... Government—Justice and Benevolence kiss each other. Morality—Let each student come prepared with a Bible. It will be studied."

The details of what happened that year were lost, but apparently the college lacked sufficient funds to continue operation. Other small colleges of that period had similar problems. In 1851, the Enon Association of United Baptists purchased Wirt College and its property "at a very reduced price and commenced a very flourishing school" that they renamed Enon College.

**(STRAWBERRY, Continued from Page 1)**

field workers and strawberry graders created a viable employment opportunity in an area that had little resources for work. Many of the plant workers were women supplementing their family's limited income.



After WWII box car loads of berries supplied the expanding United States market and barrels of capped berries were sent to Europe. By the 1950s, an estimated 6 million pounds of strawberries were produced and more than 2,000 acres were designated to growing strawberries. The Portland Strawberry Association and Sumner County Fruit Growers Association supplied thousands of production workers and berry pickers. Field pickers ranged from children to seniors. Work started early as the sun was rising, and by mid-morning shirt sleeves were rolled up, hats shielded faces and fingers grew sticky and stained. Pickers earned 10 cents to 20 cents a gallon and hurried to fill their fruit baskets. Pickers brought full baskets to the sorting shed, received a ticket and collected money at the end of the day. Berry sorters graded berries by freshness and size, piling the berries into 16 or 24 quart crates. Strawberry buyers from as far away as New York City came to bid on berries and trucks hauled the filled crates to the processing plants or the rail cars.

Although it was a back-breaking job, many workers enjoyed the work. Neighbors caught up on the local news between the strawberry rows, and children ate their fill of juicy berries. Children were allowed out of school to pick, and teenagers enjoyed a few ripe strawberry fights. Many a teenage romance blossomed between the rows as strawberries were lobed at popular unsuspecting targets. Lunch was spent under the shade of big tents. Cold soda pop cooled down the pickers, reviving them for a few more hours. There was a festive air to the short season and a sense of pride in growing the finest berries in the United States.

Celebration of the berry season culminated in formation of the Strawberry Festival in 1940-1941. The festival was discontinued during the war years but resumed in 1946. The festival drew thousands to Portland and featured a parade, crowning of Strawberry Queen and Old Fiddlers contest. Although strawberries are no longer an important Portland agricultural crop, the May festival continues and attracts large crowds.

Today, the strawberry processing plants are gone, replaced by other industries. Where rows of strawberries once grew, rows of houses cover the strawberry fields. Picking strawberries is now a family outing at a few remaining berry patches. Yet for some Sumner County residents, memories remain of an era when Portland strawberries were renowned.

To the people who toiled in the berry fields and canneries, it was a fitting tribute that President Harry Truman—a simple man of rural beginnings—appreciated and shared their fondness for Portland strawberries. After Portland sent the president a box of strawberries, Truman responded through his secretary with a note that read:

*The White House  
Washington*

*May 21, 1948*

*My dear Mr. Dye:*

*The President has asked me to thank you and Mr. H.H. Gregory for the delicious strawberries, which were pre-sented to him through the good offices of Congressman Gore. This treat was thoroughly enjoyed by the President and his family.*

*The President sends you and Mr. Gregory his very best wishes.*

*Very sincerely yours,  
Matthew J. Connelly  
Secretary to the President*

*Mr. W. B. Dye, Jr.  
Portland,  
Tennessee*

*Sumner County Historical Society*

---

Post Office Box 1871  
Gallatin, TN 37066

To: