

# Days Of Old Sumner County

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Sumner County Historical Society

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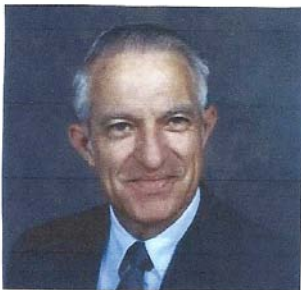
## Moffatt Tells Compelling Church History

By Jan Shuxteau, Editor

In his new book, *A Great Cloud of Witnesses*, Dr. Charles Moffatt III, pastor emeritus of the First Presbyterian Church of Gallatin, weaves a fascinating history of two related Sumner Churches: Shiloh Church, organized in 1793, and the First Presbyterian Church of Gallatin, organized in 1828.

His work, which was published last fall, took its title from the Bible (*Hebrews 12: 1-2*). It required years of research and the better part of the last three years to write. But it was a labor of love.

"I was inspired," said Moffatt, who pastored First Presbyterian from 1969 until retiring in 1990.



Dr. Charles Moffatt III

He was always fascinated by stories of his church. During his ministry he read a jigsaw of short church histories in old

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Allen Haynes' archive photo of Gallatin in the 1951 blizzard

## Recall the Great Blizzard of '51?

By Bonnie Martin

There is a saying in Tennessee: "If you don't like the weather, wait an hour." Tennessee is not a state famous for cold winter weather. Few Sumner Countians have laced up a pair of skates or careened down a snowy slope on a Flexible Flyer, but ask them about the Great Blizzard of 1951 and a visible shiver will be detected.

January 1951 began uneventfully: Christmas was over, children were back in school and spring's arrival was anticipated. A year before—Feb. 8, 1950—the temperature was 62 degrees: crocus were flowering, hawthorn trees were a mass of blooms and peach buds were almost open.

January 1951 was a hopeful time for Sumner County. Employment was plentiful at General Shoe Corporation. A 1951 Studebaker was a "gas mileage champion", and a 1951 Ford had something new called "Fordomatic Drive". Kroger Grocery advertised potatoes \$1.29 for a 50 lb bag, picnic hams were 39 cents a lb and bread 15 cents a loaf. The Palace Theater ran "Snow Dog" and "Broken Arrow" with James Stewart from January 28 to the 30<sup>th</sup>, and The Roxy Theater responded with "The Mad Ghoul (Frankenstein was a Sissy!)" and "The Glass Menagerie" with Kirk Douglas. Life in tranquil Sumner

(See **BLIZZARD**, Page 12)

# High School Ghost Dubbed ‘Colonel Berry’

By Jamie Clary

Although members of the Berry family contributed significantly to the Hendersonville community for two centuries, Hendersonville High School students knew the family for another reason. Soon after the domed high school (now Ellis Middle School) opened in 1966 next to the family’s Hazelpath Mansion, the ghost—whom students dubbed the Colonel—arrived. The colonel in the Berry family was Harry S. Berry, a veteran of World War I for whom Berry Field at Nashville airport is named.

Among the first to experience someone in ghost form were night watchmen, Link Wingo and Bufford Rush. Wingo was also a caretaker at the mansion and had experienced a spirit there until it apparently moved to the new high school, leading Wingo and others to presume that the ghost was a member of the Berry family. Wingo noted that Nannie Smith Berry was a great supporter of education; however, building HHS so close to the 1850s mansion certainly would have upset her. “She would turn over in her grave if she could see where they built that school,” he commented.

Usually noticed as loud footsteps, a shadow or a silhouette, the ghost was experienced also by Principal William Clevenger and Assistant Principal Bob Langford. Langford additionally remembered reports from students who caught a glimpse of an old man in the boy’s bathroom. Although never seen by Langford, the composite description that he gathered was “an old man with a great, black, bushy beard, dressed in a long coat like an old-time coachman.” Except for these rare glimpses, no students ever encountered a ghost—encounters were always by faculty and staff, always alone.

The description given Langford is the best known reason the ghost was named Col. Berry, who had served as colonel of the First Tennessee Infantry.

Clevenger was often in the school at night and could hear someone walking heavily upstairs in the supposedly empty halls. When he rushed to check, the noises would stop every time as soon as he turned on the lights. He considered the possibility that the round structure enabled sounds to carry well but did not believe it.

Local sports writer Frankie Helms, who found himself alone one night in the school gym, later recalled hearing footsteps coming toward him from a hall. He said, “I heard the footsteps coming, and I heard them pass right by me. But there wasn’t anybody there.”

Coach Bob Cumming had a similar encounter alone at night in a dark upstairs hall. He vowed never again to be caught alone in the school.

“Nearest I ever came to seeing it,” said Rush, “was one night I was outside the school and glanced up. It looked like somebody walked across the window in front of the light. I saw a figure. I rushed up there, but nobody was in the building.”

Rush also recalled feeling sure that he once had caught vandals throwing metal trash cans around in a boys’ bathroom. But, when he opened the only door to the bathroom to look in, the noises ceased and nobody was inside. He had a similar experience hearing a heavy chair being dragged across the floor of a classroom. Again, when he opened the only door, the noises stopped and nobody was there.

## They Tried To Catch It On Tape

In 1980 two students got permission to spend the night in the school and set up equipment to record the ghost. With a chaperone, the two equipped the second floor hallway with an infrared camera and audio recording equipment. Although they did not photograph anything, they did catch some sounds on tape that, they said, were similar to those of a person wearing heavy boots walking through the hall. The walker apparently approached the tape recorder, paused, then stomped away. Both students wore soft-soled shoes that night, and the chaperone never went upstairs.

By no stretch is there definitive proof of a spirit taking up a haunt in the former Hendersonville High. At best the evidence is entirely circumstantial and susceptible to individuals’ memories, perceptions and motivations. But with those being acceptable for the genre, some additional facts should be mentioned to complement the tales of a dead man wondering the halls.

Colonel Harry S. Berry died in January 1967, during the first year the building was open. He passed away in that home, Hazelpath, just next door to the school. The date he died was the 13<sup>th</sup> a Friday.

**Clary is the author of *The City by the Lake Volume II: A History of Hendersonville from 1968 until 1988*. Other excerpts are posted on [www.hendersonvilletomorrow.com](http://www.hendersonvilletomorrow.com)**

# Who Was the Real Col. Harry Berry?

By Judith Morgan



**Harry Smith Berry, 1904 West Point**

*Reports as to his haunting of Hendersonville High School aside, Col. Harry Smith Berry was a colorful character who lived an interesting and varied life. He spent many happy hours of his youth with his siblings and his Berry cousins at his home Hazelpath in Hendersonville, at his grandmother Jane White Berry's home Elmwood in Nashville, and in Gallatin at what is now called Trousdale Place, where his Aunt Annie Berry Trousdale and Uncle Julius Trousdale lived.*

A 1904 graduate of West Point, Harry Berry left fulltime military duty in 1908 on the sudden death of his father and returned home to run the immense family farm (reportedly 5,000 acres at the time of World War I). He remained involved with the Tennessee National Guard and in 1916, as head of the First Tennessee Infantry, Berry was in charge of training and commanding men when they were deployed to the U.S./Mexican border when war with Mexico loomed. When diplomatic efforts eased the crisis, the First Tennessee was called home in spring 1917 and

honored with a huge celebration in Nashville just as war with Germany was declared. The First Tennessee went back in training, preparing for its role in the American Expeditionary Force during the Great War as part of the newly formed 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. Berry commanded the 115<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery during the war and was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal.

Berry attracted attention even when he was not in the military. As State Highway Commissioner in 1928, he had a very public disagreement with Gov. Henry Horton when the governor refused to build a highway in West Tennessee in fulfillment of a campaign promise. Horton cited state expense and insufficient need. After resigning his post, Berry remained Horton's enemy, and his testimony was part of an unsuccessful effort to impeach Horton in 1931 when millions of state dollars were lost in the collapse of several banks.

When the "New Deal" arrived in Tennessee, Col. Harry Berry became state administrator of the Works Progress Administration (WPA). One WPA project was the Nashville Airport, named Berry Field in his honor. The Nashville airport code still recalls this name: BNA (Berry Field Nashville).

At the onset of World War II, Berry returned to active duty, instrumental in the establishment of the army training center in Tullahoma. He was then transferred to the Army Transport Command and was for three years in command of the transport base at Camp Luna, New Mexico. He was awarded the Legion of Merit.

The crusty old warrior, hard of hearing in his later years as a result of his artillery service in World War I, remained military to the end. Whoever the bearded, old-fashioned figure roaming the halls of the Hendersonville school may be, it's hard to imagine it could be Col. Harry Berry. On the other hand, if brisk orders to clean up, straighten up and fly right begin to be heard, we will know right away the Colonel has returned.

**(Information for this article is extracted from the author's recent publication, *The Lost World of Langley Hall.*)**

# Early Fountainhead and the Adventist Founders

By Albert Dittes

The first Adventists to settle in Fountain Head in 1907, now considered part of the Portland area, left behind them a remarkable description of the community of their day and its early founders, some of whose families had moved here early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

A surviving manuscript contains no author, yet a careful reading of it shows that one of the early Adventists had to have written it.

A young man named Braden Mulford was the leading spirit among the Adventist pioneers to Upper Sumner County. He comprised part of the original student body of Madison College, founded in 1904. He was one of the first to go out and start an extension school of Madison near Ridgetop, Tennessee, with another man, Charles Alden. Then he went out on his own and bought a farm near Fountain Head, the site of Highland Academy, Highland Elementary School, The Bridge at Highland and the Highland Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Mulford then asked his sweetheart, a young school teacher named Pearl West doing mission service in Africa, to come home and marry him. She accepted and her brother, Forrest West, who happened to be married to the sister of Braden Mulford, and his wife also moved to Fountain Head, and the nucleus of the Adventist community here began.

I assume one of them wrote the following article. It shows these founders made an effort to know their adopted community and its culture as well as expresses their philosophy of education.

## Fountain Head

"The term [above] was not coined by us, for long before our arrival at this place, Fountain Head was here, and occupied a most prominent point in the mind of many who have been here before us. Going back to pre-Civil War days, we find some of the most prominent families of this section living at Fountain Head. Some occupied

places in the State Legislature, County Judges and members of the County court.

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## Highland History

**Highland Elementary provides the following note online.**

*"The roots of Highland Elementary School go back to the founding of Madison College in 1904. One of the early students there, Braden Mulford, moved to Fountain Head and started the school as a "unit" of Madison in 1907. His wife, Pearl West Mulford, was the school's first teacher. He chartered it in 1914 to teach "the rudiments of education, the science of agriculture, trades, and the Word of God."*

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It is interesting to note that there was organized at Old Fountain Head, in the year 1812, the first Methodist Episcopal Conference in this part of the country, under the leadership of Bishop [William] McKendree. Bishop McKendree was a close relative of the Payne's, who had been leading lights in the community for more than a century.

Two of the families that had much to do with the earlier days were the Sarvers and Hodges. Henry Sarver came from Germany and settled in North Carolina with his wife, Thamer Holle Sarver. In 1806 this family moved to Fountain Head. Isam Hodges came to America from England, and settled in Virginia. Later, he moved with his family and settled at Fountain Head about the same time with the Sarvers. We got this part of our story from Mrs. John House, who is a daughter of Elder M. Hodges, a Baptist Minister. Mrs. House is 93 years old and remembers well the days of her girlhood. Her grandmother, on her father's side was Elizabeth Clay, a first cousin of Henry Clay. The Butlers and the Ponds have added much to the community since for the past 75 years.

**(See ADVENTIST, Page 5)**

## **ADVENTIST, Continued from Page 4**

Space forbids our mentioning others by name, but we do want to add that when we came to this spot a quarter of a century back, we found a community of most splendid citizenship. We found lands that had been cleared by others. Many other opportunities were ours because of the energetic effort of men and women who had given their lives for the cause of progress. We stepped into generations of accomplishments. It was only left for us to build upon what they had already laid out in a most substantial manner. To do this in keeping with the splendid foundation handed us was our duty—our most sacred trust.

As stated above, the term 'Fountain Head' was not coined by us. Neither was it made up by those of the generation before us. For when the Sarvers and the Hodges came in 1806, they found the place already named. From best data that we can get, we conclude that the name came from the earlier settlers recognizing that this is the highest point in the Highland rim, and too, because near this point they found a bursting, bubbling, ever-flowing spring of sparkling water.

We are glad that it was so named, and as evidence that those men were right in their conclusion it is an established fact that just to the North of Fountain Head Station is the highest point between Louisville and Nashville, and the spring is still flowing as it was found 125 years ago. We are glad for the name. We could not add to it. We shall use every effort to not detract from it.

It is hard for us to approach the subject of our own work. We would rather dwell upon the doings of those hardy men and women before us. But we have been asked to give a short story of the establishment and development of our work here, known as Fountain Head Sanitarium and Rural School.

In giving the story of our own work, we feel that we must in this, also, grant to others the planting of the seed and the subduing of adverse mental decisions. For a time before the first step was taken to open up an institution in this place, we

had the privilege of being in close contact with a group of educators, who were ploughing up virgin soil in the educational field.

### **Adventist Schools Begun**

These men and women had stepped out from most prosperous positions in schools and colleges, and had come into the South with very limited funds, with the thought in mind of establishing a school on a farm, and to make that school 100 percent self-supporting to the student and to the teacher. This same group of teachers said that young men and young women, the future home makers of our land, should be trained to honor the soil. That true education would bind up in its curriculum that combination of intellectual and industrial which would bring labor up to its rightful place. It was urged that the type of industrial training that should be given should include the various lines of work that must be done on the school farm, fruit growing and stock raising. Also that cooking and dress making should be a part of this. To these activities were added various other lines of work such as carpentry, blacksmithing, auto repair and weaving.

### **Most Health Instruction Chosen**

Still another phase was added. Recognizing the value of good health, it was urged that every student should receive definite instruction along the lines of diet, treatment of the simple diseases and the prevention of same. It was urged that individuals, rounded out with this sort of training would make efficient home builders and community leaders. These men and women urged, much to the chagrin of educators in higher schools of learning, that for a student to learn to bake a loaf of bread and prepare a well-balanced meal, was a point of development of far more real worth than an accomplishment in the field of the languages or higher mathematics, without this practical training. We have reference to The Nashville Agricultural and Normal Institute, founded in 1904 by Doctors Sutherland and Magan, Prof. Alden and their colleagues."



**Samuel and Darthulia Nickelson home on North Water Ave.**

## Nickelson: Gallatin Entrepreneur, Adventurer

By Ken Thomson, President SCHS

Samuel Nickelson, whose family home was located on North Water Ave. in Gallatin, had the colorful life of both an entrepreneur—he ran cotton and woolen factories—and an adventurer. He was among the thousands who joined the California Gold Rush of 1849.

Nickelson was born into an industrious Massachusetts family in 1814, the son of John and Jane (Williston) Nickelson. Following the custom of the period, he was sent to learn his trade at the age of seven. He was taught carding and spinning at a cotton factory in Newton Upper Falls, Mass.

In 1839, the 25-year-old Nickelson moved to Covington, Ky., and in 1841 he became superintendent of the cotton mills in Lebanon, Tenn. But he dreamed of more. Stories of California riches stirred his blood. Saying goodbye to Darthulia Virginia Phipps, his lady love, he headed to the gold fields, where he remained for three years. He carried with him a coin purse embroidered with his name and hers—D.V. Phipps—in

the flap. This purse passed down through the family and was auctioned in 2005 and given to the Sumner County Museum.

Darthulia Phipps met Nickelson in Wilson County, Tenn., where she lived with her parents, William Richardson David Phipps and his second wife, Elizabeth Cummings Phipps.

Nickelson returned from the gold mines in 1852 and soon married Darthulia. The couple moved to Pulaski, Tenn., where he manufactured cotton goods. They remained in Pulaski until 1864, near the close of the Civil War, when he, for a more promising economic future, returned with his family to his native Massachusetts. There he found immediate success and prosperity. In April 1865, President Lincoln was assassinated. Everyone in the Union states was stunned and embraced the deep

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## NICKLESON, Continued from Page 6

mourning customs of the day—everyone except Darthulia. She was a Southern Belle, nurtured in a sociological and political venue completely foreign to that of his Massachusetts family. They all wore black arm bands. Nickelson took her lack of mourning as proof positive that she was unable to adjust to Massachusetts society. He began making preparations for his family to return to Tennessee.

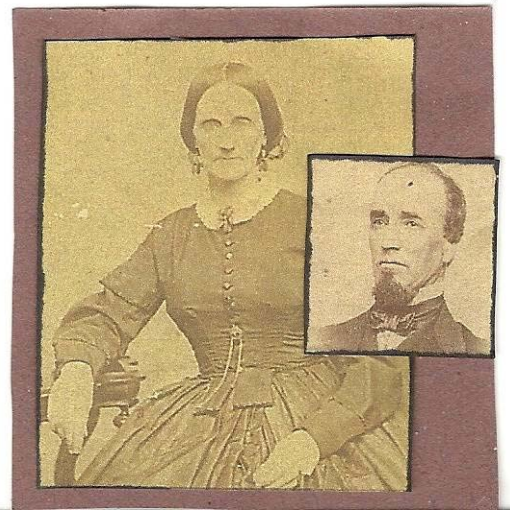
In 1867, the family moved to Gallatin, where Nickelson purchased a brick house on North Water St. (now Avenue) that had been built in 1857 for William S. Mundy, a local attorney. Nickelson also bought a house and storehouse on the corner of North Water and Railroad Ave. These buildings were constructed in 1856 for John and Dorothy Henley Wilson. (In 1869, Samuel sold the Wilson house. It had numerous owners through the years and was finally razed in the 1950s.)

Samuel Nickelson's brother, Jonas Nickelson, may have influenced him to settle in Gallatin. Jonas had lived in Gallatin for 15 years and was the owner of its foundry and iron works. Another brother, Thomas W. Nickelson, accompanied Samuel and his family to Gallatin and then stayed a few years to assist him in establishing the Eagle Woolen Mills.

Samuel Nickelson saw to it that his family wanted for nothing. He and Darthulia had seven children: Albert O.P. (1853), William R.D. (1855), Samuel B. (1861), Leola Virginia (1863), Ophelia Elizabeth and Victoria Elvira (identical twins, 1864) and Edwin F. (1868).

When Samuel died in 1877, his eldest son, Albert, became superintendent of Eagle Woolen Mills. Samuel's son, Samuel, was an employee of the woolen mill. Albert was also the organist and choir director of the Presbyterian Church. He married Hattie B. Saunders, and in 1887 they moved to Arkansas City, Kansas, and later to Fort Smith Arkansas.

William R.D., the darling of the Nickelson family, studied medicine and pharmacy at Vanderbilt University. After his training, he moved to Arkansas where he was a beloved physician. He spent his inheritance and earnings caring for others. It is said that he never sent a patient a bill.



**Darthulia and Samuel Nickelson**

Darthulia may have been possessive of her three daughters. Only one of them—Ophelia—married. The family home on North Water St. had double parlors. Ophelia and her twin, Victoria, would each have a suitor, one in each parlor. They always dressed alike and during the evening would sometimes excuse themselves and swap dates, unbeknownst to the gentlemen.

When Ophelia married Ira W. King, she and her sisters both had wedding dresses and trousseaus. Both wore their wedding dresses, and Victoria accompanied the happy couple on their honeymoon. Years later, their great niece, Anna Nickelson Blessing said that the family considered Ira a saint for putting up with the sisterhood.

Darthulia died in 1904, and Edwin, Leola and Victoria bought the homeplace from their siblings.

**This is Part 1 of a two-part story.**



## Tyree Springs Hotel sketched by J.T. Albert, who grew up there

# 'Famous for Home-Cooked Meals and Moonshine'

By Jan Shuxteau

For more than a hundred years, Tyree Springs Resort—at one time advertised as the “most celebrated watering place in the state”—thrived in the Shackle Island community, north of Hendersonville on Tyree Springs Road, at a site now noted by a Historic Marker.

Nothing remains of the resort itself except, possibly, pieces of furniture scattered among Hendersonville households after being auctioned in the 1930s, but Tyree Springs still exists in living memory and has been described nostalgically in numerous publications by those who recall its by-gone charm. Shirley Garrett of White House recalls living in one of the resort's guest cottages in 1935 with her parents, Frazier and Bertie Albert. She was only five and has a child's recollections of “a white house with a big porch facing down the hill toward Hendersonville” and her grandparents' home on a nearby hill. Frazier Albert had contracted with the hotel to work the vegetable garden that year.

After the resort closed, it was used as a place to hang tobacco until after WWII. In August 1945, Durham's Lumber Co. in Hendersonville bought the hotel for scrap for \$6,250, according to deeds provided to the Sumner County Archives by Kay Durham Hurt of Gallatin.

### Location and Surroundings

The resort operated on a 400-acre site near the headwaters of Drakes Creek on high hills, which even today remain comfortably cool in summer. According to Mrs. Willie Ellis in her book, *Historic Rock Castle*, the northeast corner of the property contained an Indian cave and the ridge-top site of Thomas Hamilton's stockade, built in 1787.

Visitors came to Tyree Springs to escape the summer heat, to partake of health-endowing mineral springs (now plowed under, with only the occasional strong smell of mineral water as a reminder) and to be entertained by Saturday dances, summer picnics, walking trips, card games and enormous country meals. These are described in a memoir by Mrs. Kathryn Albright Easley, who vacationed there as a child around 1910. “The food,” she wrote, “was equaled only by the Maxwell House...Waldorf salad with Mrs. Latimer's dressing...creamed peas, green beans cooked with bacon pieces, candied yams, spiced apple sauce, two-year cured ham, creamed potatoes and gravy, hot biscuits and yellow butter, many interesting jams, jellies and marmalades, sliced tomatoes laced with sliced big sweet onions (accomplished by soaking the slices in sugar water before serving) sweet pickles, sour pickles and watermelon rind pickles, all homemade, and last blackberry cobbler with silly bub on top (that is, whipped cream with sugar and bourbon). One could have homemade ice cream too, always the best and richest custard cream anywhere.”

According to a 1987 story by Hugh Walker, who wrote historical pieces for the *Tennessean*, the resort was famous not only for its food but also for its white moonshine in the years after WWI.

### Andrew Jackson's Favorite Watering Hole

The tradition of a Tyree Springs' visit harks back to the 1820s, when Richard Tyree first advertised his hotel and spa in a Nashville newspaper. In

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## RESORT, Continued from Page 9

that era, some referred to it as Jackson Springs because of Andrew Jackson's love of the place.

A story is told that after the gubernatorial election of 1839, Andrew Jackson, Felix Grundy (U.S. Senator-elect), Judge George Campbell (former minister to Russia), Governor-elect James K. Polk and Gen. John Armstrong retreated to Tyree. They entertained themselves by conducting a mock court and exacting fines for quaint lapses in etiquette, such as failing to bow to a lady.

The late state historian Walter Durham wrote in his book, *Old Sumner*, that Tyree Springs' heyday was a dozen or so years before the Civil War. In 1834, the *Gazeteer of Tennessee* called it the "most celebrated watering place in the state."

In 1841 and 1842 newspaper ads, the resort boasted of adding eight new rooms with fireplaces, a spacious ballroom, a parlor and reception room. Durham's wife, Anna, wrote one of the most comprehensive reports describing the place for the 1969 *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*.

### Hotel Burned and Rebuilt

The hotel caught fire and burned in 1865. Though the cause was uncertain, it was for years blamed on Yankee troopers camped nearby. However, a small book based on the diary of an unknown Yankee soldier who claimed to have seen the fire, said the troops "had no hand in it." That book, published in 1869, was brought to the attention of Walker, who quoted the soldier's report in a 1970 *Tennessean* article. Troops passed the hotel at sunset Dec. 23, wrote the soldier, and saw "no sign or sound of life" before pitching their tents a half mile away.

"Just after dark in the midst of our horse-feeding and coffee-boiling, a bright reflection was observed over the trees in the direction of the springs," the soldier wrote. "The light rapidly increased in intensity and in compass until the whole northern sky was illuminated...From our picket post at the top of the hill a sublime and terrible sight was presented. The immense building was wrapped in great sheets of flame, which forked wildly out from the windows and curled above the roof. It burned with frightful rapidity. In less than an hour the whole burning mass collapsed with a crash that shook the woods around and sent great volumes of flame and smoke far up into the heavens."

The resort was not rebuilt until about 1890, 25 years after burning. It was owned by a Mrs. Geiger and managed by a Mrs. Cartwright .

Katherine Easley described the new building as a "ramshackled charming three-story building, rectangular and plain, with its guest houses, [appearing as] whitewashed 'shot-gun' cottages, and other buildings..."



**Edward Albright (in hat) is pictured in Easley's memoirs with ladies dressed for dinner at Tyree Springs Resort .**

The road to the resort was winding and steep through the hills. It was difficult even for horses for riders to reach a certain point, and many visitors got out and walked the last distance.

The hotel had a spacious screened-in dining room area that could accommodate 300 people. "It was very plain, but at meal time it was always decorated with gay, pleasant people and good food on white tables with big white napkins."

She said, "After afternoon naps, the best dresses and white shirts were put on for supper, and the nights' entertainment. On weekdays, crowds would come from all around the hotel and gala square dances were enjoyed by everyone on moonlight evenings, with everyone kicking up their heels on the sawdust under beech trees..."

# 'The Great Panic': Remembering Feb. 16, 1862

By Jan Shuxteau

In his 1985 book, *Nashville The Occupied City*, the late historian Walter Durham of Gallatin provides a gripping account of the "great panic," that seized Nashville as it awaited invasion by the Union army in the Civil War.

Picture yourself as a Nashvillian on Feb. 16, 1862, when it all began. You are getting ready for church on that cold and soggy Sunday morning. Then shocking news arrives—perhaps, you hear it on the street. Fort Donelson has surrendered! The Union army is en route to Nashville!

Midnight dispatches had allowed you to go optimistically to bed in the wee hours. The Confederacy was holding the line at Fort Donelson, which had been under fire by Union forces for three days. Fort Donelson was the key to your piece of mind. Located in Dover near the Kentucky state line, the fort was defending river routes into Nashville. Its loss meant the fall of Nashville or a battle for its control.

Like other Nashvillians, you head to church, hoping to learn more. "Rumors and speculation were rife," wrote Durham. Many heard the false message that the Union army was 25 miles away in Springfield and marching to Nashville to join a fleet of Union gunboats meant to shell the city at 3 p.m. "Bedlam followed," Durham wrote. "Worship services in churches all over the city were interrupted and in most cases were abruptly dismissed by the pastor."

A rumor that Tennessee Gov. Isham Harris would evacuate women and children spread across the city and sent residents flying home to pack. On the way, many of them spotted exhausted Confederate soldiers (some had walked 30 miles already that day) under the command of Gen. Albert Johnston marching through the city toward Murfreesboro. Later, these troops cut down trees and burned fences for warmth and scavenged corn and hay for their horses. From vantage points in the city, residents saw the camp fires.

By mid day that Sunday, many military hospitals (some makeshift) in Nashville began evacuating patients. Those able to walk went south of town to convalescent camps, and others were sent to partially vacated buildings. Added to the confusion that day was the arrival of a boatload of wounded Union prisoners from Fort Donelson.

Durham reported that prominent Nashvillians such as John Overton, reputedly the richest man in Tennessee and a staunch secessionist, wisely rushed beyond the reach of the oncoming Union

army. Congressman Andrew B. Ewing and his family left in a hurry, as did Circuit Court Judge Nathaniel Baxter and Joseph Acklen of Belmont estate. Gov. Harris and the legislature loaded the state archives and themselves onto an afternoon train to Memphis.

"As there had been no preparation for the possibility of Union control of Nashville, the populace was confounded when its leaders turned and ran," Durham wrote.

Every type of vehicle—from farm wagons to carriages and trains—was commandeered, and people fled further South or into the countryside, taking what they could carry. A bottleneck occurred at the suspension bridge that connected the city Edgefield as citizens waited helplessly while Gen. Johnston's officers tried to get troops and equipment over the bridge before nightfall.

"Long before the afternoon trains were to leave, panicked mobs collected," Durham wrote. "An observer...noted 'To have seen the people running to get on the train [to Memphis] made one's heart sick. The 2:30 train to Chattanooga was crowded to suffocation.' Even the roofs of the cars were covered with people who could not find room inside. As many as seven trains 'loaded with women and children inside and crowded with frightened men on top' were reported to have departed for the South."

Several banks opened their doors, allowing depositors to remove bank boxes. The records and holdings of the Bank of Tennessee, which included state school funds, were removed and sent to Chattanooga and then to Georgia.

Nashville Mayor R.B. Cheatham and other leaders hurriedly met with Gen. Johnson that Sunday afternoon to determine what was happening. Cheatham then made a speech at the courthouse, explaining that Johnston would not risk the safety of the city by attempting to defend it. He—Cheatham—would surrender the city to General Don Carlos Buell when he arrived. Cheatham pleaded with people not to burn the city in an effort to keep it out of Union hands.

Though thousands fled that Sunday, "the vast majority of the populace remained uneasily in place," Durham wrote, "As the daylight hours gave way to night, soldiers and citizens mingled in disorder in the streets...sleep for many was fitful at best as the advance guard of the Union Army was believed to be only a few hours away."

## **MOFFATT, Continued from Page 1**

bulletins and heard a wealth of stories from long-time members, but he found no volume that recorded it all. It was a void waiting to be filled.

Moffatt offers the perspective of both pastor and historian. He completed his doctoral dissertation at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, about a minister and pamphleteer who wrote about a variety of 18<sup>th</sup> Century issues. He studied church history in the seminary, and he majored in history as an undergraduate.

“I had this love of history in my blood,” he said, “and being a pastor gave me an added appreciation for what was done in the church. What I brought to this book was a passion for history, for stories, and for what transpired before and after events.”

### **Shiloh’s Famous ‘Awakening’**

The Shiloh Church featured prominently in the 1798-1801 “Second Great Awakening,” a fascinating phenomena that started with revivalist Rev. James McGready in Logan County, Kentucky, and spread to other areas, including Sumner County. It began in 1798 with days set aside by the Presbyterian Church for members to fast and to pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Kentucky.

“Since the ‘sacrament,’ as it was called, was only celebrated once or twice a year in a congregation, people from congregations near and far would often come to the services. In part, it was a time for socializing,” Moffatt wrote.

In 1799, families that knew no one at the meeting place arrived in their wagons and camped beside them, just as they had done in their journeys into the frontier. In 1800, McGready publicized that the sacramental meeting at Gasper would be a “camp meeting.” Thereafter, the meetings evolved into massive tent meetings that drew hundreds of frontier families.

Moffatt noted that several members of the Shiloh church and their new pastor, Rev. William Hodge, attended the Gasper meeting. When they returned home, they told of the marvelous things God did there and what could happen here. Consequently, a camp meeting was held at Shiloh in September 1800, and more than a hundred conversions took place in the sparsely populated region. The sacrament lasted Thursday night through Monday night. McFerrin, in his history of Methodism in Tennessee, speaks of the “sight of 3,000 people encamped for worship.”

Moffatt reported that though no statistical records exist historical events indicate that the Shiloh church attained its zenith in numbers and spiritual impact in 1800 and 1801. The extreme emotionalism of the revivals aroused opposition even amongst Shiloh members. The church divided in 1803, but both groups took the name “Shiloh.”

### **Gallatin Presbyterian**

When Gallatin Presbyterian started in 1828, the Shiloh Church moved from a site on Shiloh Hill (behind Enoch’s Veterinary Clinic on Hartsville Pike) to a location on DeShea’s Creek. In 1871, it moved again to Scottsville Pike, and in 1958 it ceased to exist as a congregation. However, the building stands, and there is a service there every October.

Gallatin Presbyterian church building has existed for 176 years though damaged by fire in 2004. Moffatt cherishes its past and especially the people who make up the congregation and the strong pastors who were his predecessors and “rock-solid” citizens of the community.

## **BLIZZARD, Continued from Page 1**

County was looking up. Then the snow began to fall.

Jan. 28, 1951, recorded a balmy 59 degrees with rain. On Jan. 29, a cold front swept over the area and afternoon temperatures fell. A wintery mix of snow and sleet began. By evening 1.6 inches of snow had fallen; the temperature was 31 degrees with a north wind of 15 miles per hour. On Feb. 1, an additional 5.2 inches of snow and freezing rain fell on Sumner County, and by the end of the day 11 inches of snow and ice covered the county. On Feb. 2, the temperature was -15 degrees, a record that stood until 1985. Falling limbs and trees caused widespread damage to electric and telephone lines, and roads were impassible for repair crews. Business was at a stand still. General Shoe Corporation shut down, and mail was undeliverable.

Without electricity most Sumner County residents were without heat or light. The fortunate few with wood stoves huddled around them, their front side scorching, their back side freezing. Pipes froze and running water stopped. Resourceful Sumner Countians broke off the massive icicles and melted them for water. Food supplies and fire wood grew scarce. One newspaper article told of an ingenious cooking method involving a flaming can of Johnson's Wax.

Allen Haynes was eight that winter and remembers Great Grandmother Sally Ann Forbes passed away during the storm. Impassible roads kept the funeral home snow bound but Great Grandmother remained comfortable in his Grandparent's icy house for the duration of the storm. Allen's family melted four foot icicles for wash water, and a neighbor's well supplied drinking water. Outdoor conditions were bitter cold, and the continuous rattle crack of trees and branches snapping under the weight of ice echoed through out Sumner County.

Hendersonville resident Roy Butler's recall of life in his family's concrete block house reminded him of living inside a freezer. Kay Hurt's family then living in Hendersonville remained warm with an oil stove, but water had to be carried from the creek in chunks of ice.

Bill Puryear slid through the streets of Gallatin on his sled and went home to Mother's hot chocolate and the warm coal furnace his Father kept stoked. School was closed for two weeks, and with time on their hands Bill and friends decided to try ice fishing. While walking on the frozen creek, the ice suddenly broke, plunging them into the icy depths. However, the water being only 18 inches deep did little harm except for wet, cold feet.

James Johnson's family lived the rural life in the county with a wood stove and one electric light bulb. When the light went out, they didn't notice much difference.

Brother Leroy and buddies thought it was a perfect time to joy ride the back roads. When inevitably the car slid off the road, it was no problem. Boys piled out, picked the car up and put it back on the road.

For those younger than 12, it was a glorious adventure: candle light and story telling around the fireplace with parents reassuringly beside them. For the adults, the dark and bitter cold, snow and isolation pressing in around them must have been unnerving.

The thaw finally came Feb. 5, and those who could get out descended on Gallatin for supplies. The stores did a booming business, and the sidewalks were crowded with people greeting their neighbors and retelling their stories of the ordeal. It took weeks to fully restore services to Sumner County; however, spring did arrive and life returned to normal.

But did the Great Blizzard's icy memories instill a primordial survival instinct in today's Sumner Countians? Could this be why at the mere mention of snow flurries the store shelves are stripped bare of milk and bread? Ask the 1951 Blizzard survivors, and you'll observe an involuntary shiver.