

# MID-WEST TENNESSEE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

## FAMILY FINDINGS

Volume XLVII – Number 1

January 2015

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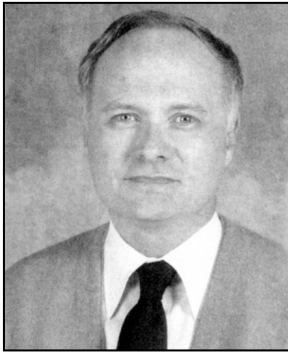
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## Jonathan Kennon Thompson Smith

1939 – 2014

By Jack D. Wood



On Friday, November 14, 2014, we lost a fellow genealogical researcher, historian, author, and educator: **Jonathan Kennon Thompson Smith**. There is no way to calculate the number of people he has helped, both personally and through the publishing of his genealogical and historical abstracts, vignettes, anecdotes, and narratives. The Tennessee Room of the Jackson-Madison County Library has over 100 of his works.

He is particularly well-known in the genealogy community for his abstracting of original public and private records and for his transcribing of cemetery gravestone inscriptions. The integrity of his research and the scholarship of his writing were always uncompromising. He was a public servant in the true sense of the word, for he produced and shared his work, not only without monetary gain, but almost always at great personal expense. He never sought the spotlight. For years I tried to convince him to give a program or be an instructor in a genealogical workshop, but he flatly refused. He did not wish to be seen as a celebrity. He preferred to share his expertise through writing and personal conversation. I think he did enjoy knowing that people appreciated his work, but he wanted to avoid pageantry. Anyone who met him and engaged him in conversation will most likely never forget the experience.

He was born on May 8, 1939, near Camden in Benton County, Tennessee. His parents were **Herschel Kennon Smith** and **Dorothy McGrady Smith**. He became interested in genealogy research when he was about 13 years old; and in 1957, he completed the course of study through the genealogical institute of the National Archives and American University. In 1960, he graduated from Peabody College for Teachers with a Bachelor of Science degree; and two years later, he received his Master of Arts degree from Memphis State University. As a teacher in the public-school system of Shelby County, Tennessee, Jonathan earned recognition for excellence in his service to his students. In 1973, he was appointed County Historian for Benton County, Tennessee, a position he held for many years.

Even after retiring from public school service, he continued being a dedicated educator as a historian and genealogist. He was a prolific writer and produced 130 or more monographs of local history and genealogical studies for Benton, Shelby, Madison, Henderson and several other West Tennessee Counties. His works not only continue to provide researchers with information on specific families or localities, but they also provide a more general historical background concerning the circumstances surrounding the origins and development of the records being used. In addition to his published work, Jonathan was also a dedicated correspondent. Through the medium of letter writing, he informed, questioned, critiqued, discussed, agreed with and disagreed with others seeking answers to historical and genealogical puzzles. I am one of many who have been influenced by his scholarship and his friendship. Although we miss his physical presence among us, we can be joyful about the gift of knowledge he left with us. Thank you, Jonathan, for all you gave us.

## Memorial Fund

In Memory of Jonathan Kennon Thompson Smith

By Jack D. Wood

Based on a suggestion from one of our library patrons who is a dedicated genealogist, we are establishing a fund in memory of Jonathan Smith, which will be used to purchase a digital microfilm reader/scanner for the Tennessee Room. A memorial plate will be attached to the reader/scanner when it is purchased. It is our hope that the use of this machine will help perpetuate the memory of his dedicated work in reading and abstracting records from an immeasurable number of microfilm rolls.

*To contribute to this effort, please write a check to:*

Tennessee Room Endowment – Jonathan Smith Memorial

*and send to:*

ATTN: Tennessee Room

Jackson/Madison County Library

433 E. Lafayette Street

Jackson, TN 38301-6340

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## Mary Ann House Mitchell

MWTGS Charter Member and Former Editor of "Family Findings"

1924 – 2014

**Mary Ann House Mitchell** was a charter member of Mid-West Tennessee Genealogical Society. She was the editor of *Family Findings* in 1969-1972 and 1979-1980. Her obituary was published in *The Jackson Sun* December 19-20, 2014.

Services for Mary Ann Mitchell, age 90, will be graveside 11 a.m. Saturday, December 20<sup>th</sup>, at Highland Memorial Gardens with John Long and Mike Long officiating.

Mrs. Mitchell, widow of **Leonard R. Mitchell** and daughter of **Thomas Earl** and **Lillian Russell House**, graduated from Tilghman High School in Paducah, Kentucky, and attended Murray State Teachers' College. A member of First Christian Church of Jackson, she served as treasurer and president of the Christian Women's Fellowship class. As a member of the Altrusa Club of Jackson, she held the offices of treasurer and president, as well as district treasurer. Mrs. Mitchell's love for research and genealogy led her to become a charter member of the Mid-West TN Genealogical Society, where she was editor of their quarterly *Family Findings*.

Surviving are a son, **Thomas R. Mitchell** of Jackson, and a daughter, **Kathy Mitchell Wood** of Tyler, TX. She was most proud of her grandchildren, **Thomas Hunter Mitchell** of Jackson, **Katherine Riddle Miller** of Alexandria, VA, and **John Mitchell Riddle** of Washington, D.C. Her grandson, **Michael Glynn Mitchell**, preceded her in death in 2004. Mrs. Mitchell had four great-grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorials be sent to Hospice of West Tennessee, 1804 Hwy. 45 Bypass, Suite 100, Jackson, TN 38305.

Arrington Funeral Directors, 148 West University Parkway, Jackson, TN (731) 668-1111; [www.arringtonfuneralgroup.com](http://www.arringtonfuneralgroup.com)

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## Cotton and the Madison County Archives

By Thomas L. Aud

Throughout the history of Madison County, cotton has been critical for its growth and development. **William E. Butler**, the “Father of Jackson,” was also an early speculator and land developer who planted cotton and imported one of the first cotton gins.

Some, however, had tragedy impact their livelihoods. **Abijah Whiting**’s gin house and about 15,000 pounds of seed cotton burned in April 1830. He also sold a deed in trust to **William L. Robertson** for debts incurred to several individuals including **S. Smith and Company** and **H. Haynes** in 1828. Whiting’s store and dry goods were estimated at about \$2,000 at that time.

Plantation owners often listed crops and lands to be divided among children; e.g. **Robert Marshall** in 1850. His 200 acres and mansion house went to his wife, **Seley**, along with five Negroes: **Pleasant** (very sick and if died, then boy **John**), **Mary**, **Alfred** and **Matilda**. He noted children **Asenith Manurva**, **Ann Landsen**, **Robert F. Marshall**, **Matilda Roach**, **Mary Lansdon**, stepdaughter **Sarah Moore**, and heirs of sons **John C.** and **Alexander**. All got money and slaves. In his codicil dated August 1, 1850, Marshall stated that the “hands and implements of every kind remain on the farm until [his] crop was gathered and his cotton ginned and disposed of.”

**David Reid**’s will in 1858 stated that his “library of books” were to be sold as well as “corn and cotton crops” to pay any debts. Reid was born March 12, 1808, and died August 28, 1858, and is buried at Denmark Presbyterian Cemetery.

The use of slaves for the production of cotton is well documented elsewhere but many slaves are noted in wills and deeds for the benefit of estates and heirs. During the Civil War, cotton was more than a commodity: it became a target for armies to seize, burn, and destroy and thereby take value from the local plantation owners. Claims for reimbursements for losses caused by such actions by various military units are filed in the Madison County Archives.

**Charles Parlow**, of Denmark in Madison County, lost 4,080 pounds of cotton “worth in gold at the time it burnt at \$.25 or \$1,020.” Parlow was born Dec. 9, 1803, and died March 24, 1889, and is buried in the Uptonville Cemetery in Madison County. **William R. Collier** also lost 54 bales of cotton “weighing 27000 pounds at 25 cents in gold worth \$7,020.” Collier lived near Pinson and lost his produce to an unknown unit of the C. S. A. for the use of the Rebel Army. “On the 6 day of June 1862 the U. S. Army occupied the county and on the approach of said forces the cotton was taken and destroyed under general orders of **J. T. Beauregard** commanding Army so called C.S.A.” Collier was born November 2, 1803, and died January 23, 1873, and is buried in the Big Springs Methodist Church Cemetery in Madison County.

The DeBeers 1877 map, available at the Madison County Archives and in the Tennessee Room at the Jackson/Madison County Library, has many cotton gins scattered throughout the county and are often identified as “cotton Gin” and near property owners such as **T. Webb** in the Carroll Post Office area, and **W. Bond** and **D. Bond** (2 gins) in District 5 in the western section.



Cotton brokers had offices within Jackson or elsewhere. In the 1880 census, **Thomas Butler**, 31, was listed with his wife, **Jennie**, 28, and son, **Thomas G.**, 2 years old. **William J. Hunt**, 28, and **Horace W. Parker**, 23, lived on Market Street (now Highland Avenue), while **Thomas W. Gates**, 42, was a cotton merchant on Baltimore Street, with his wife, **Laura**, 34, and family.

**Monroe Dunaway Anderson** (1873-1939) has been memorialized in downtown Jackson and is buried in Riverside Cemetery. He gained prominence as a cotton broker initially in Oklahoma and later in Houston. It is there that his donations contributed to the construction of a cancer hospital and research center which is now the University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center. He was a son of **James Wilbourn Anderson** and **Mary Ellen B. Dunaway**. More information is available in articles and books at the Tennessee Room of the Jackson/Madison County Library and elsewhere.

During economic hard times farmers and plantation owners would borrow against their crops of cotton and other produce. The Crop and Chattel Mortgages (from the Register of Deeds) highlight many with connections to cotton. The Marks Brothers had several loans to cotton producers for the tools necessary to raise and harvest cotton. In May 1899, **Tom Allridge** mortgaged 32 acres of cotton on his land for \$35 for implements to that company. A similar loan for \$35 for 10 acres of cotton being raised on the land of **J. H. Thomas** (at no rent) was done by **W. H. Thomas** to the same Marks Brothers Company. These mortgage books go from 1899 to 1965 and provide much genealogical proof of residences, etc. of local citizens.

Many of the former cotton fields have been turned into housing and commercial developments. Plats for such, however, do not note the former uses of the land. Some adjoin cemeteries, e.g., the Lacy Cemetery off of Edd Woods Road in western Madison County. By 2004 the former access road was planted in cotton thereby blocking ease of access and allowing the cemetery to become overgrown. The few tombstones can still be found, but it is suggested that visitors “go in winter” to avoid the undergrowth.

There are, no doubt, many other references to cotton producers, brokers, etc. within the Madison County Archives, but this brief article will demonstrate some of the possible sources for research.

#### Sources:

- Historic Madison, by **Emma Inman Williams**
- Findagrave.com
- 1880 Madison County, Tennessee Census
- [www.tngenweb.org/records/madison](http://www.tngenweb.org/records/madison)
- Madison County Wills, Book A
- Claims for War Losses Incurred by the Rebellion

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## The Lure of the Cotton Field

Madison County, Tennessee

By Kenneth Newman

I come from a long line of farmers on both sides of my family. When my parents married in 1940, they too tried their hand at farming since that was the only thing they knew. After three or four years, however, they decided there were more opportunities available closer into town than in rural Madison County. My father, after working at Morgan's Service Station, had the opportunity to go into business for himself—a combination grocery store/Pure Oil service station on the Bemis Highway/Highway 45 South, now commonly known as South Highland.

After a few years, my parents bought a little over an acre of land on Chester Levee Road and built a house for themselves and one for my maternal grandmother. My grandmother, a farm woman at heart, immediately planted a garden. I can still see her in her sunbonnet pushing a push plow. She probably had the cleanest garden plot anywhere. That garden kept us fed year-round.

Chester Levee Road at that time was in a rural setting. Running parallel to Highway 45 South, the majority of houses were on the north end of the road. On the south end, the houses were on the west side of the road and cotton fields were on the east side. Several acres of cotton, owned and farmed by Mr. **Bud Lake**, were in front of our house. There was also a plot of land at the back of our property between Chester Levee and the Bonwood community on the highway. That plot was also farmed by Mr. Bud, but later by Mr. **Arthur Johnson**, a farmer from Malesus.

When the cotton got big enough to chop that first spring, my grandmother, hearing the cotton's Siren Call, sharpened her hoe and headed off to the cotton field. I tried my hand at chopping, but ended up chopping down more cotton than weeds; my cotton chopping career was a short one. When cotton picking time came, my grandmother pulled that cotton sack down those long rows, earning herself extra spending money since her only source of income was her "Old Age Pension." Eventually, my mother heard that same Siren Call and joined my grandmother in the cotton patch; the money earned became her "Christmas Club."

I also joined them picking cotton in order to earn spending money to attend the West Tennessee State Fair. People I know who had to pick cotton still shudder and declare they would never set foot in a cotton field again. I, however, picked cotton not because I was forced to, but because I wanted to. At that time Madison County schools were dismissed on Tuesday for Fair Day, so I wanted to be sure I had enough money to fund those wonderful hours at the Fair.

I remember pulling that long, dirt-stained sack down those seemingly endless rows, shifting the strap on my shoulder as the bag got heavier. I remember wiping the sweat, swatting the insects, itching hands and arms, and wondering if the end of the row would ever come. I can still smell the earthiness of the cotton stalks and the stained cotton sack.

Mr. Bud had lots of field hands he picked up daily in his battered old farm truck, and I listened to their stories and their humming and singing to pass the time. All that seemed to make the time move faster—well, a little bit anyway. At the end of the day, the weighing-in and paying off took place. I remember the cheers and even good-natured jeers for those who picked the most that day, some of them totaling 300 pounds or more.

Even though I never reached anywhere near that amount, I was always proud of my 75-100 pounds or so, for that represented one or two more rides I could enjoy at the Fair.

One year when Mr. Arthur farmed the plot behind our house, my mother asked him if we could pick that area by ourselves. He brought us a cotton scale, which he hung in a tree in my grandmother's back yard, a trailer to dump the cotton in, and he turned that field over to us. Mr. Arthur just celebrated his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, and he still talks about the year the Newmans picked his cotton. According to him, we did a "fine job."

Recently, I saw displayed on the wall of a local business an original cotton sack, still dirt-stained, which was used on a Madison County Century Farm. Suddenly I was surrounded by the smells, the sounds, the sight of a cotton-white wonderland and the satisfying weight of that cotton sack on my shoulder.

A lot of cotton seasons have come and gone since those memories from so long ago, but even now when I see the fall cotton fields of snowy white, I think of my grandmother, my mother, and my childhood. These memories will always be a part of who I am.



## Genealogy Notes

**George Harold "Bud" Lake, Sr.** (25 Sep 1905 Hardeman Co, TN – 04 Apr 1967 Madison Co, TN) was a veteran of World War II. His wife was **Alliene Lovelace Lake** (1915-2000).

**Arthur D. Johnson** was listed in the 1940 US census for Malesus, Madison County, TN. He was 25 years old. His household included his wife **Ruth G.**, son **Arthur D. Jr.**, daughter **Elizabeth A.**, and widowed mother **Jessie I.**

**Kenneth Newman's** family:

- Father – **James Tommy Newman** (13 Jan 1914 Henderson Co, TN – 08 Jan 1978 Madison Co, TN)
- Mother – **Myrtle Elizabeth Smith Newman** (24 Jun 1918 Henderson Co, TN – 07 Apr 2004 Madison Co, TN)
- Maternal Grandfather – **Andrew Harrison Smith** (12 Sep 1893 Henderson Co, TN – 07 Jan 1957 St. Louis, MO)
- Maternal Grandmother – **Jennie Bell Britt Smith** (09 Mar 1891 Henderson Co, TN – 31 Dec 1963 Madison Co, TN)
- Sister – **Sybil Delores Newman** (23 Nov 1940 Madison Co, TN – 26 Nov 1940 Madison Co, TN)
- **Kenneth Newman** (1942 Madison Co, TN – living)
- Sister – **Sandra Faye Newman** (05 Oct 1943 Madison Co, TN – 18 Dec 1943 Madison Co, TN)
- Brother – **Bobby Newman** (1951 Madison Co, TN – living)
- Brother – **Jimmy Newman** (1956 Madison Co, TN – living)
- Sister – **Carol Newman Hall** (1957 Madison Co, TN – living)
- Wife – **Robbye Hillard Newman** (1948 – living)
- Son – **Paul Kenneth Newman** (1971 Madison Co, TN – living)
- Daughter – **Holly Newman Malone** (1974 Madison Co, TN – living)

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## The Crook Family in the Cotton Industry

Middle Fork, Henderson County, Tennessee

By W. Clay Crook

The Crook family settled in the Middle Fork and Jacks Creek areas of Henderson County in 1820 by land grant before its formation. Judge **John Crook** was appointed by the governor as one of the first magistrates upon the formation of Henderson County in 1821. The county was named for Col. **James Henderson** who served under Gen. **Andrew Jackson** and was a distant relative of the Crook family. The three Crook plantations totaled close to 6,000 acres with a total of 48 servants. The family used a black overseer named **Big Clem** who claimed to be the son of a prince in Madagascar.

Unity Baptist Church was founded by members of the family in 1848 and located on a beautiful hill in the midst of an oak grove owned by the family in September 1858. The church is still located there.

**Jeremiah Crook** was the patriarch of the family during the War Between the States. His son **W. Jere Crook** was a Major in the 13th Tennessee Infantry while his son **Barry Crook** was a Captain in Newsom's 18th Cavalry under **Nathan Bedford Forrest**, and son in law **J W Estes** was a Lt. Colonel in the 51/52nd Infantry. Many of the younger servants went to serve with the Crook sons. A letter from 1864 said that five were killed in the attack against Ft. Pillow. Another letter from 1863 said that the plantation had been stripped of livestock horses and all grown male servants and were taken to the Contraband camp in Corinth. The 1870 census shows many black female Crooks with children, but few men. Between the Contraband camp and service in the War, only two were known to have returned.

Two of the Crook sons became doctors; three others stayed with the plantation which had been divided into three smaller farms of 600 acres each. The family still lives on a small portion of the plantation in Middle Fork in the frame portion of Crookland Hall built in the early 1850s as an addition from the original log structure. The family remained with cotton as the cash crop, paying off some delinquent taxes with land and some excavation from a rough gold mine in the northeastern slope of Crook Mountain, a part of the Great Divide range of hills in West Tennessee that divides the watersheds leading to the Tennessee and Mississippi river tributaries. In the 1870s, **William Barry Crook** experimented with his own variety of cotton that was the basis of the family's latter transition from cotton farming to retail of cotton seed and ginning.

Middle Fork, TN was also known to many old timers as Lizard Lick. Located in southwestern Henderson County, it was once home to a cotton gin, delinting plant, and Crook Bros. Half & Half Cotton, a variety of plant that often grew six feet in height, produced an average of 140 open bolls, was easily picked, opened early, and was disease resistant. Developed by Prof. **W. C. Crook** around the turn of the century, it was named Half & Half as it was a hi-bred seed from the old Summuror's brand and a local seed that had been used by the Crook family since 1876. Large scale marketing began as early as 1900 with advertising in the *Progressive Farmer* from 1916 to 1957. Auburn Powers wrote in *History of Henderson County* that in 1929 Crook Bros. shipped more cottonseed than any company in the United States. Seed was also sold as far south as the British Honduras (Belize).

With the advent of mechanical cotton pickers, the plants were too large for effective mechanical picking. Also, by the late 1950s, other varieties offered a longer staple.

Sales ended after the summer of 1958 when WC and RL Crook Seed Company and TJ Crook & Sons ended sales shortly thereafter in favor of the Empire Brand. TJ Crook & Sons continued business until 1972.

In 1952, the Crook family expanded into mechanical delinting, having bought the 1925 ginning equipment from Jacks Creek, TN after a damaging tornado. This facility was sold to the Wadley family in 1973, who still uses the same equipment to delint and save their own seed. Middle Fork continues to be the center of cotton production in Henderson County; and although the hum of the gin is heard no more, the whirr of the delinting facility still reminds us of the days when cotton was king and Middle Fork one of his princesses.

**What Have You For Sale?**

For many years, Crook Bros., Luray, Tennessee, have bred Half and Half cotton and offered their seed for sale in **PROGRESSIVE FARMER**. Thousands of Progressive Farmer subscribers have bought from this advertiser. Here is a letter from them that tells the story:

"From a careful check I find that we get from two to five times the number of replies per dollar invested from Progressive Farmer than from any other paper. When we advertise extensively in your paper we rarely ever have enough seed to fill all orders."

"We have installed a modern culling, grading and recleaning machine and are prepared to furnish our friends the **VERY BEST**."

Signed, **W. C. CROOK**.

You can expect results like Crook Bros. receive when you use Progressive Farmer Classified Ads. They are read by farmers who know every single advertiser is guaranteed reliable. Fix up your advertisement and mail to us by April 8 for the next issue, April 19. The **MISSISSIPPI VALLEY** edition with a circulation of 115,000 may be used for 7c a word; or \$7.00 per inch for Display Classified Ads. (Crook Bros. use a display classified ad every issue in season.) Sell your potato, tomato and other plants, seeds, poultry, livestock and other useful merchandise the Classified Ad Way. See Classified Ad pages for rates and circulation.

**Classified Ads Will Tell and Sell**

W. C. Crook and a stalk of his Half and Half cotton

1916 Advertisement in *Progressive Farmer*



First cotton bales of season in Middle Fork, circa 1919 – Photo by Clyde Crook

Editor's Note: Read other W. Clay Crook articles: "Middlefork, A Forgotten Community," "The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture – Henderson County," and "Hurst."

[http://www.tnyesterday.com/yesterday\\_henderson/middlefork/hismf.html](http://www.tnyesterday.com/yesterday_henderson/middlefork/hismf.html)

<http://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entry.php?rec=620>

[http://www.tnyesterday.com/yesterday\\_henderson/hurst/hurst.html](http://www.tnyesterday.com/yesterday_henderson/hurst/hurst.html)

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## Cottonseed to Oil

Jackson, Madison County, Tennessee  
By Linda Jennings Higgins

Cotton farmers have always been part of the population who used every part of what they grew. For a while, the cotton seed was saved for planting, used for fertilizer and even animal feed, but most of the seeds were thrown away.

It wasn't until the mid-1800s when **William Fee** invented a huller that separated the hulls from the seed. That made it easier to crush the seed for oil. There was a demand for the oil until the petroleum industry emerged.

In the 1830s, Procter & Gamble began to use cottonseed oil to augment the animal fat used in their candles and soap manufacturing business; but as electricity emerged, the demand for candles decreased. So, they were able to hydrogenate cottonseed oil and develop a substance that closely resembled lard which in 1911 they would call Crisco, a vegetable shortening that could be used in place of lard.

Over the next 30 years cottonseed oil became the pre-eminent oil in the United States. Crisco and Wesson oil became direct substitutes for lard and other more expensive oils in baking, frying, sautéing, and salad dressings. But by World War II cottonseed oil shortages forced the utilization of another direct substitute, soybean oil. By 1944, soybean oil production outranked cottonseed oil production due to cottonseed shortages and soybean oil costs falling below that of cottonseed oil. By 1950, soybean oil replaced cottonseed oil in the use of shortenings like Crisco due to soybeans comparatively low price.

Cottonseed oil and production continued to decline throughout the mid and late 20th Century. The Cottonseed Oil Mills on Riverside Drive in Jackson closed in December 1966. (See the aerial picture.)

Cottonseed oil has traditionally been used in foods such as potato chips. The production of cottonseed oil in Jackson and the surrounding area was part of why P & G built their US plant that produces Pringles in Jackson.

This display was hanging in the administrative offices of P & G in 2008 showing the importance of cotton to the production of Pringles. P & G sold their Pringles production to Kellogg, and that manufacturer continues to produce Pringles in Jackson.

(Author's note -- Some of this article comes from Wikipedia.)





*The Cottonseed Oil Mills on Riverside Drive closed in December 1966.*

*The shining silver, pyramid-shaped buildings are still prevalent in the Jackson skyline, but no longer does the scent of cooking oil fill the air as in the 1940s and 1950s. The buildings are now used as warehouses by McCowat-Mercer. This early 1970 aerial photograph shows many other historic business buildings.*

*(Courtesy McCowat-Mercer)*

*This picture was published in 2009 in Images of America Madison County by Linda J. Higgins and Scott Parish.*

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## **“Oil Mill Gazetteer”**

Submitted by Wanda K. Lee

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE NATIONAL OIL MILL SUPERINTENDENTS'  
ASSOCIATION AND TRI-STATES COTTONSEED OIL MILL SUPERINTENDENTS'  
ASSOCIATION

Vol. 52; No. 6

Wharton, Texas

December 1947

### **Changes at Independent Mill**

**Frank B. Caldwell, Jr.**, has been named secretary-treasurer of the Independent Oil Mill, Jackson, Tenn., and **J. F. Clayton**, manager of seed buying, succeeding **J. T. McClaren**, manager, who passed away.

Mr. Caldwell, son of the president, **Frank B. Caldwell, Sr.**, has been with the Second National Bank of Jackson, Tenn., for the past 2 years. Prior to that time, he served in the armed forces for 4 years. Mr. Clayton has been with the company a number of years. **Paul Russell**, who has been with the firm since its organization, remains the vice-president. **J. O. Johnson** joined the staff as cashier about 6 months ago. **R. M. Clements** is superintendent of the mill. (Page 25)

### **In Memoriam**

**J. T. (Pete) McClaran**, manager of the Independent Oil Mill, Jackson, Tenn., died of a heart attack on November 13. He was 53. He had not been ill prior to his death and his passing came as a shock to his many friends in the industry. He had been associated with the mill since 1935.

He was a member of the Jackson Lodge of Elks, Rotary Club, Veteran of World War I, John A. Deaver Post 12, American Legion, Executives Club of Jackson, and a member of the Baptist Church of Brazil, Tenn.

He is survived by his wife, **Florine**, and one brother, **Joe**. Pallbearers were his nephews, **Robert, Richard, Charles, Hack, Henry Woffard**, and **Harry, Robert and Ralph McClaran**. Funeral services were held in Jackson. Burial at Trenton, Tenn. (Page 27)

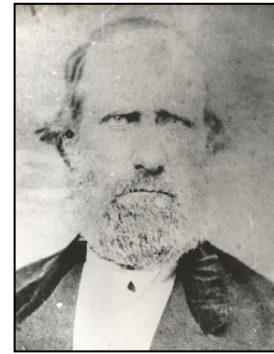
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## Cotton Gins in Scotts Hill, TN

By David R. Austin

**Ephraim Austin** (1820-1888), son of Scotts Hill's first settlers **Charles and Phoebe Woodward Austin** had many projects to make life easier for citizens in the community. One of these projects included the first cotton gin in Scotts Hill. It was a horse powered gin that could bale up to a bale and a half a day. It was located behind his general store in the main part of town on the east side of the street. Eph was married to **Lucy Ann Beauchamp**; they had ten children, **John J., Cynthia, Margret, Phoebe, Alfred, Eliza, Charles, Henry, Lorene and Robert**. Additionally, Eph (pictured at right) was Scotts Hill postmaster from 1853 to 1860.



**Frank Volner** had a horse powered gin two miles east of Scotts Hill on Peace Chapel Road. He later converted it to a steam powered gin. Frank was also a merchant in Scotts Hill. He was married to **Ann Taylor** and they had seven children; their names were **Jim, Joe, Phillip, Mack, Bill, Martha, Ann and Susanne**.

**Fate McKenzie** operated a cotton gin on the north end of Main Street on the west side of the street near the main part of town. A **Robin Helms** later operated at this location. Currently, the **Mike Singleton** residence is at this location.

**Edd Austin** (1871-1952) operated a gin on the south end of Main Street on the west side of the street near the school. Edd was a grandson of **Eph Austin**, who built the first Scotts Hill cotton gin in another location. Edd married **Alcy Ann Clenney**. Edd's residence was built in 1896; it is still standing on the Sardis Road, and it has recently been renovated by its current family.

**John S. Pratt** (1882-1958, pictured below) operated a gin about a quarter mile from downtown Scotts Hill to the south. He was the son of **William Martin** and **Nancy Pratt**.



**John** married **Roxie Kelley**; she was postmaster in Scotts Hill from 1934 to 1944. The Pratt Gin could bale 30 plus bales a day and about 1,200 to 1,500 bales a year. He ginned cotton for 27 years. His accomplishments included being Decatur County Road Commissioner, Decatur County Commissioner, Decatur County Board of Education, a Scotts Hill merchant, farmer and a Methodist. He was a member of the Masons, Order of the Odd Fellows, Modern Woodmen and Woodmen of the World. In addition, he was twice elected for one term to the Tennessee House in Nashville; elected for one term in 1926 and one term in 1936. **Tom Mitchell** later operated this gin; as the cotton market started to fall off, he built a livestock auction barn on the property. It is now owned by **James Linville** of Savannah, TN.

The latest cotton gin venture in Scotts Hill was a gin built on Highway 100. An **Owens** from Lexington, TN built it. He ran it for a while until **Dee McCollum** bought it. Dee was married to **Maude Jones**. Dee was the son of **John** and **Cumi Patterson McCollum**. **Jerry Taylor** bought it from Mr. McCollum. Jerry is the son of **Malcom**



**“Mack” and Lois Johnson Taylor.** Jerry married **Edith Davis** of Parsons, TN. They had three children, **Renee, Greg and James.** *The Lexington Progress* newspaper reported on November 19, 1964, that flames destroyed Taylor's Gin with a loss of about \$60,000. It was rebuilt, and the gin remained open until 1973 when it closed. Jerry was also a rural mail carrier for 30 years.

J. M. Brasher Metal Works in Scotts Hill built green cotton trailers for farmers to take their crops to the gin of their choice. **J. M. Brasher, Sr.** (pictured at right) and **J. M. Brasher, Jr.** both were in some type of business in Scotts Hill for nearly 75 years.



#### Sources:

- Tennessee Blue Book, State of Tennessee, 1936
- History of Henderson County, Auburn Powers, 1930
- The History of Decatur County: Past and Present, Lillye Washburn Younger, Southaven, MS: Carter Printing Company, 1978
- The History of Scotts Hill, Tennessee, Gordon H. Turner, Southaven, MS: Carter Printing Company, 1977
- *The Lexington Progress*, November 19, 1964
- Personnel interviews with Jimmy Helms, Dock Woody, Jerry Taylor



The original Taylor cotton gin was built by an Owens and burned in 1964.



This Taylor cotton gin was built in 1965 to replace the burned gin. This photo was taken in 1975 for The History of Scotts Hill, Tennessee.

## Driving Tour of Historic Scotts Hill, TN Sites

Beyond the Central Business District

By David R. Austin

This driving tour is of the area around Scotts Hill, TN. The 20-mile tour loop showcases 21 points of local historical interests in the area outside of town. It includes five cemeteries (three that pre-date the Civil War) and four 19<sup>th</sup> century houses. Most places on this tour are not open to the public. Drive carefully while visiting the area.

Begin tour in the parking lot of the Scotts Hill Methodist Church, 340 Hwy 114 South.

**1 – Bevill Hill, Hwy 114 between City Park and the Methodist Church.** Bevill Hill was named after Dr. **William H. Bevill**, a doctor in Scotts Hill for over 20 years. He lived from 1834-1896; his residence was at the top of the hill next to **Micajah Scott's** store. Dr. Bevill and his wife are buried in the Methodist Cemetery.

*From here, go north to the bottom of hill to the next stop.*

**2 – Scotts Hill Baptist Church, 580 Hwy 114,** Church was organized in 1947; the original building was completed in 1948, and it was funded in part by raising cotton. It was 35' x 45'. Additions were made in 1961, 1980, 1986, and 1996. The original building is still a part of the current building.

*From here, go into Scotts Hill City Park.*

**3 – Veterans Monument, 600 Hwy 114 - on hill near small pavilion.** A monument in honor of all veterans, living or dead, is located in City Park. The monument was dedicated May 29, 2006. The Tennessee Air National Guard and the Air Cavalry Squadron began the program with a flyover. Flags representing each branch of the military are in place. A concrete walkway was built from the parking area.

*From here, go back to the tennis courts parking lot.*

**4 – Proposed Civil War Trails Marker, 600 Hwy 114 - near tennis courts.** This proposed marker will acknowledge the Civil War activity in the Scotts Hill area; the marker is currently under development. It is planned for early spring 2015.

*From here, turn right; go to the intersection of Hwy 100 & 114.*

**5 – Taylors Crossing, 800 Hwy 114 intersection of Hwy 100 & Hwy 114,** Hwy 100 was built in 1930 as the main road from Memphis to Nashville. The first store was built by **Eli Taylor** in the SW corner and was a grocery, gas and Trailways bus stop. The store on NW corner was built by **Henry Mitchell**, a store on the NE corner was **Garrett Pollack** Garage and Café, in the SE corner was a Holmes residence. **Elvis Presley** is said to have been seen at the Taylor Store.

*From here, turn left; go a tenth of a mile, next stop on the left.*

**6 – Taylor Cotton Gin, 9900 Hwy 100 - private business.** The historic gin is now Rogers Feed Supply. The original gin, built by an Owens, burned in 1964 when **Jerry Taylor** owned it. When it was rebuilt, it remained open until 1973 when it closed.

*From here, go back to Hwy 114; turn left, go about half mile, bear left then in about a quarter mile is the next site.*

**7 – Scuffle Ridge, 3735 Stage Road - on private property not accessible to public.** A school was located near here. A stage stop was located here, and the remains of it can still be seen on the west side of the road. On the right is a house that was built around an 1850s cabin. Civil War soldiers camped near this site. Also, an Indian encampment was just north of this stage stop. The original Stage Road ran north from here. The Chumney Cemetery, a small cemetery with at least 20 graves, was bypassed. Few can be found now. All these areas are on private property.

*From here, continue about a quarter mile to Lockhart Road. Turn left and follow road back to Hwy 100.*

**8 – 1937 Accident Scene, 9111 Hwy 100 near intersection of Lockhart.** On June 12, 1937, there was a fatal school bus wreck with two buses. Four people were killed; twelve people were injured. Three were taken to hospital in Jackson - two by ambulance. Others were treated by local doctors in Lexington, Scotts Hill, and Decaturville.

*From here, turn right 4/10<sup>th</sup> of mile to Grissom Road. Turn left and follow road to Old Reagan Rd; turn right, approximately 1.5 miles to Grice Road.*

*Access to Granny Austin Cemetery will be on the left; it is private and not accessible to the public.*

**9 – Granny Austin Cemetery**, 269 Grice Road, on private property not accessible to public. This cemetery was named for **Phoebe Ellen Woodward Austin**, wife of **Charles Austin**. She was the first adult buried here on April 10, 1854. The site was chosen by Charles Austin. The cemetery was nearly lost; it was cleaned up and rededicated in 1964.

*From here, go back to Scotts Hill via Old Reagan Road for about 2 miles to Austin Chapel Road. Then go about a half mile. The next stop should be on the left.*

**10 – Austin Chapel Church**, 585 Austin Chapel Road. This and other Church of Christ churches in Scotts Hill had their beginnings across the road from this church in a residence in 1872. The white structure was built in 1952 and the other part was built in 1985.

*From here, continue to the foot of the hill to next driveway on right. Stop at driveway, it's a private drive.*

**11 – Charles Austin Place**, 600 Austin Chapel Road - on private property not accessible to public. First settler log home was built in 1825, just north of the current brick home. Now a grove of pine trees sits at the actual site of the home. It was damaged in the 1909 tornado and torn down.

*Continue on Austin Chapel Road 0.4 of a mile to the intersection of Cedar Grove Church Road.*

**12 – Crews Roadside Farm Market**, (in season), 965 Austin Chapel Road - intersection with Cedar Grove Church Road. Find watermelons, cantaloupes, muskmelons and tomatoes for sale on the roadside during the season.

*From here, continue 0.4 mile on Austin Chapel around sharp left curve huge dip in road and sharp right turn to next stop.*

**13 – Fellowship Cemetery**, 1370 Austin Chapel Road. First a log church house was here, which also was a school. The mound where it stood is still seen on the cemetery's SW edge. First burial here was **Jonathan Duck** in 1855, first of the Ducks to settle in the area. About 1874, a frame building replaced the log structure; then in the mid-1930s, a block structure replaced the frame.

*From here, continue to Hwy 201; turn left and then go 0.4 a mile to Doe Creek Road. Follow Doe Creek Road 2.4 miles.*

**14 – Doe Creek Church and School**, 2330 Doe Creek Road, has been placed in the National and Tennessee Registers of Historic Places by the National Park Service of the U. S. Department of Interior. This one-room school and church has been restored (in 2007) to its original grace and beauty. It was built in the Reconstruction Era, c. 1870, as a meeting place for a Baptist congregation. The building still contains many of the original hand-hewn poplar logs which were "snaked" to the site by a team of oxen. It is Tennessee's oldest existing original one-room log school. Currently, it is a museum of its earlier place in the heart of the community.

**15 – Civil War Trails Marker—Doe Creek Cemetery**, 2330 Doe Creek Road - in front of cemetery. After the war ended, **James David Kennedy** and **Bill Nails** returned to Doe Creek; and Union sympathizers murdered both of them three miles from here at Wormly Branch. **Robert Kennedy** brought their bodies here for burial, thus creating a community cemetery where several other Confederate veterans, including **Isham Gurley**, were later interred. The arguing continued into the early 1900s when a descendant of **Hugh Kennedy** was killed by a descendant of Robert Kennedy; his wife and most of his family were interred on these grounds as is Hugh's son, **Hugh J. Kennedy**. First burials were James David Kennedy and Bill Nails.

*Continue on Doe Creek Road to Mary Alice Road; turn left and go about 0.6 of mile to Kennedy Lane. Turn right; next site is somewhere on the left about 50 yards off road.*

**16 – Falling Star**, on private property not accessible to public. A piece of this solid mineral mass hit near Scotts Hill in 1833. It was a heated molten sphere, white hot and giving off an intense glow. The heat and light continued for hours from the big hole where it bored into the ground 20 feet or more. The older folks called the crater a volcano. The rock had heat and light for a day or so. The location of the strike is just off Mary Alice Road. The big hole is now filled in by natural erosion, with some help of loggers. Even by 1966, pieces of igneous rock could be raked up.

*Turn around go back to the intersection of Mary Alice Road. Next site is on the right at intersection.*

**17 – Wylie Scott Place**, Kennedy Lane at Mary Alice Road. **Wylie Scott**, son of **Micajah Scott**, lived here; it may have been the home of Micajah Scott, and the home was built before the Civil War. Wylie, by two wives (**Millie Holmes** and **Catherine Caudel**), had 22 children. *From here, turn right on Mary Alice Road until you get to Liberty Road; then turn left and go about 0.6 mile.*

**18 – James Romulus Swift Place**, 2284 Liberty Road. On hill on the left past TGT gas lines that cross the road, this home was built in the early 1940s out of poplar logs. This home was built by **James Swift** and his son, longtime Scotts Hill business owner **Barney Swift**. *From here, go about 0.3 mile to next site that is just north of Edd Eason Road.*

**19 – Arch Jones Place**, 2026 Liberty Road. The last to live here was **Cora and Ida Scott**, daughters of **James Jones**. The home was built in the late 1830s to early 1840s. It was moved three times. This was the site of community hog killings. *From here, go about 1.5 miles. The cemetery will be on the left.*

**20 – Bethel Cemetery**, 530 Liberty Road. The first burial was **Daniel H. Murphy**, first Murphy to settle in this area. At this location was Center School as well as the first Methodist Church. It was built by **Romulus Sanders Swift** in 1843, one the first Swifts to settle in the area. This log structure was moved and reconstructed at the current site of Scotts Hill Methodist Church. *Continue around curve approximately a half mile to Hwy 114 and then turn left for 0.3 mile to next site.*

**21 – Holiness Cemetery**, 9365 Hwy 114. First burial was **Ruby Lee Rhodes** in 1935. Others buried here are **Cleo Kelley**, longtime business leader and pastor; **Ernest Rhodes**, business leader and twice State Representative; and **David Rhodes**, a three-term Scotts Hill mayor. *Continue 0.9 mile back to town to complete the loop.*

#### Sources for each tour stop:

1. The History of Scotts Hill, Tennessee, Gordon H. Turner, Southaven, MS: Carter Printing Company, 1977
2. Scotts Hill Baptist Church History Booklet, information from Gordon Turner
3. Personal knowledge
4. Personal knowledge
5. Taylor Family, Gordon Turner, general knowledge
6. Personal knowledge and interview with Jerry Taylor
7. Interview with Robert Milam
8. *The Jackson Sun and Commercial Appeal*, June 14, 1937
9. The History of Scotts Hill, Tennessee, by Gordon Turner
10. Austin Chapel Tribe of Benjamin, by Jeanne Taylor
11. The History of Scotts Hill, Tennessee, by Gordon Turner
12. Personal knowledge
13. The History of Scotts Hill, Tennessee, by Gordon Turner
14. <http://genealogytrails.com/tenn/henderson/doeschool.html>
15. Civil War Trails Marker
16. The History of Scotts Hill, Tennessee, by Gordon Turner
17. The History of Scotts Hill, Tennessee, by Gordon Turner
18. The History of Scotts Hill, Tennessee, by Gordon Turner
19. The History of Scotts Hill, Tennessee, by Gordon Turner
20. The History of Scotts Hill, Tennessee, by Gordon Turner
21. Decatur County Cemetery Records – personal knowledge

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## **Bemis Cotton Mill**

Madison County, Tennessee  
By Joel Jackson

Back in 1858 in St. Louis, MO there was a man by the name of **Judson Moss Bemis** (18 May 1883 - 6 April 1921 Newton, MA) who decided to borrow six sewing machines from his cousin and set up a bag making company on the second floor above a machine shop. Thus began what we remember as the Bemis Brother Bag Company.

By 1900, at the age of 67, Judson Moss Bemis already had operations in St. Louis, Boston, Minneapolis, Omaha, Chicago, New Orleans, Superior (WI), and San Francisco. This means he had seven operations before Bemis, TN. Before we settle on the Bemis Mill story let me mention that the jute used in most cotton gins to cover the bale from 1915 until 1950 came from his jute mills in Calcutta, India.

On 8 January 1900, Judson Moss Bemis closed the deal with Madison County on 300 acres of land for \$6,000 and designated as the site of a cotton mill and town. This can be found in Madison County deed book 58, page 514. True to his promise, he immediately started construction on the Mill and at the same time began constructing houses for the workers. Professional mill constructors, Lockwood, Green and Company, were hired with **Joseph E. Sirrine** (1872 - 1947) in charge. Mr. Bemis also had the able assistance of his son **Albert Farwell Bemis** (1870 - 1936, MIT Class of 1893), **Charles A. Tripp** (1870 - 1930, MIT Class of 1893), and **George R. Wadleigh** (1874 - 1974, MIT Class of 1897). In only eighteen months, the building was up and operating with 20,000 spindles whirling.

This mill was set in the middle of the 300 acres with houses built on all sides so the employees wouldn't have far to walk. Only 50 yards from the mill office was the Illinois Central Railroad, "Main-Line of Mid-America" it was called. A spur line into the mill yard was part of the original mill plans. That section of rail is still there in 2014.

Mr. Bemis convinced **James Buchanan Young** (9 January 1855 - 8 April 1928) from his St. Louis facility to transfer to his Bemis, TN venture. He was the construction overseer and then Mill Manager and also Town Manager until his death. As Cotton Buyer, Mr. Bemis enlisted **Fred Hammond** (16 May 1875 - 13 February 1959), a brother-in-law. In 1928 at J. B.'s death, his son **F. J. Young** (15 March 1883 - 18 August 1969) took over as manager of both Mill and Town. Then on 1 January 1956, **F. J. Young Jr.** (21 March 1917 - 14 March 1990) became manager of both Mill and Town. In 1969 at the retirement of F. J. Jr., the management went to a nephew, **Fred Hammond Jr.** (2 April 1915 - 25 December 1998). Fred Hammond Jr. remained manager until 1 May 1979, just a year before Bemis sold out (28 May 1980). You can tell by the succession of managers that the Youngs had "cotton in their blood." Finally, on 1 May 1979, **John Townsend** became Mill Manager, being the first Mill Manager not in the Young family to ever have the position. Since the Bemis houses had been sold starting 27 June 1968, there was no Bemis town for John Townsend to manage.

Now, back to the beginning, because of extensive planning, immediately hundreds of workers showed up to make bricks, lay bricks, dig the basement, hoist timbers, lay flooring, lay out streets, dig wells, construct a water tower, construct dam and conduits, build houses, build a school – all of this to support the "NEW Bemis Cotton Mill." Hundreds flocked in from the countryside and even surrounding counties. Production began only eighteen months from the signing of the contract in January 1900. Over 700

were immediately employed in this giant building to make cloth for Bemis bags. These bags were made in Mr. Bemis' other factories.

At first, the Mill was only half as big as it finally became. Originally the Mill was 250 feet long by 130 feet deep and was four stories high. The architects described it as “a low gable roof with bracketed projecting eaves covered with asphalt shingles.” It was also described as “52 bays wide facing A Street.” The Mill had double hung arched windows originally. These were filled in starting in 1951 until about 1958. This was done to help control humidity, which needed to be 80% in order to make good cloth.

The Mill building actually started with a basement and 6 x 6-foot piers made of brick. The walls in the basement and the 1<sup>st</sup> floor were 4 feet thick, built of on-site made bricks. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floor walls were 3 feet thick, while the 4<sup>th</sup> floor walls were 2 feet thick. The beams for the construction were from 13 to 15 inches wide and 15 inches high. They were held together with metal plates and 12 inch connecting screws. The roof decking was 3½ inches thick and 8 inches wide. The sub-flooring was slightly thicker at 3¾ inches thick by 8 inches wide. Most pieces were 10 feet long. On top of this was ¾ inch by 3½ inch maple finish flooring. This wood framing was free-standing with the roof beams protruding through and past the brick walls in a non-binding way so that the vibration of the 12 to 15 hundred looms plus 179 spinning frames twirling 51,000 spindles would not shake the brick walls down. It made a loud roar day and night. I often stayed over-night at my grand-daddy's (**James Clifford Cross**, 21 June 1896-7 June 1966) house which was less than 200 feet from the Mill. The roar and vibration would put you to sleep quickly.

In the beginning, power to the looms and frames was supplied by 4 coal fired steam engines, which turned 2 giant flywheels (10 ft. high) which turned 4 giant line shafts. A shaft ran ½ the length of the Mill, which in turn pulled leather belts to run individual machines. Holes were cut in the ceiling of the 1<sup>st</sup> floor room to send belts to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor machines. There was another line shaft which ran to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor ceiling which supplied the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> floor machines. The main boiler/engine room sat mid-way of the Mill on the south side where the water for steam arrived from the Dam/Sluiceway/Conduit/Mill Pond system into the boiler room. In 1913, this boiler room blew up killing one man and burning several others.

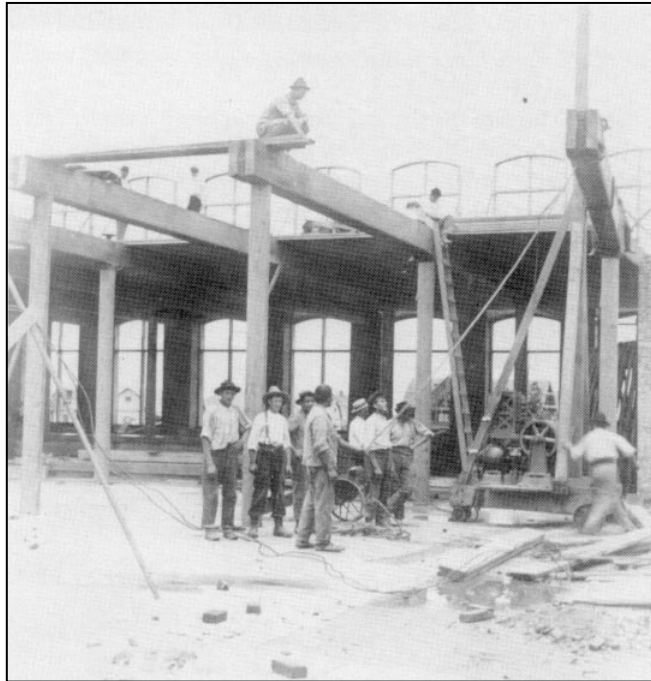
In 1920, the company added “towers” on each end of the Mill. These housed “dressing rooms” so people could shower and clean up before leaving the Mill.

In 1937, TVA opened the power grid from Pickwick Dam causing the steam system to be phased out over the next few years. Over the years, looms and spinning frames were updated to increase production. But Honduran labor was the winner and Bemis actually started a mill in Honduras with machinery from Bemis. On 28 May 1980, Bemis sold to **Nasser & Humayun Shaikh**, a Pakistanian textile family. Things went “downhill” from there until 2 August 1991; the Mill ceased production and all equipment was shipped out. By 20 January 1992, the building was bought to become a warehouse (WSBF). On 18 March 1992, Rabin Brothers Auctioneers sold the contents of the Mill. The building never seemed to work profitably because of the four floors and slow elevators.

On 11 April 2011, a storm came over Bemis and did extensive damage to the Mill roof which was never repaired, thus causing interior damage. In early January 2014, the warehouse (WSBF) sold to Bemis Mill LLC (The Dockery Group) for the purpose of deconstructing and selling the timbers and flooring. **Christian Morton** was the lead

partner. After a lengthy resistance from the community and city, during which time repurposing investors were sought, the pre-deconstruction got under way 24 April 2014 with the removal of the asphalt roof. By 21 August 2014, the roof on the west end was gone. Finally, on 28 August 2014, the permit was issued. On 2 September 2014, the first beams were lowered to the ground, thus the beginning of “THE END of THE MILL.”

As mentioned earlier, during the life of the Mill there was a unique hierarchy of family management which carried over to the employee side. It was not uncommon for three generations to be working in the Mill at the same time. There were scores of two generation workers and scores of siblings working simultaneously. As my dad **Coy W. Jackson** (17 October 1915-6 June 2002) said, “Bemis was the best place in the world to grow up in poverty.” It could have been because of the family atmosphere of the town.



Workers on the construction site of mill #2 in 1905  
Photo from Bemis Historical Society, <http://bemishistory.org/>



Child pictured near the construction site of mill #2 in 1905  
Photo from Bemis Historical Society, <http://bemishistory.org/>



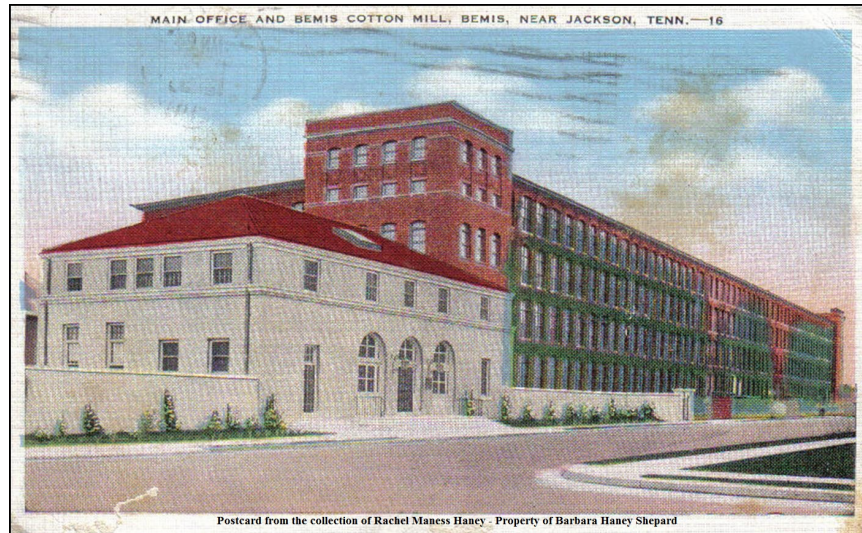
## Cotton Mill Memories

Madison County, Tennessee

By Barbara Haney Shepard

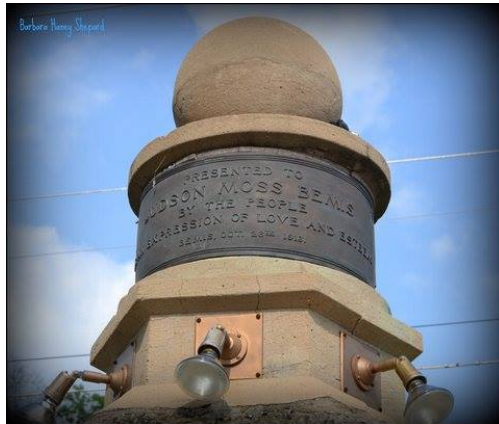
My Maness and Haney grandparents were cotton farmers. My Haney grandparents, **Elvin Earnest Haney, Sr.** (1890-1970) and **Bessie Ora Eason Haney** (1897-1966), moved their three young daughters from Henderson County to Bemis, Madison County, TN in 1921-22 to find work in the Bemis Cotton Mill. While living in Bemis, they added four sons to their family. My grandfather, my aunt **Nina Faye Haney Johnson** (1917-1998), and my uncle **Charles Kelly Haney** (1928-1995) retired from the mill after many years of service. My maternal grandmother, **Virgie Elizabeth Holloway Maness** (1908-1996), worked the night shift in the Bemis Cotton Mill during the war. Her husband/my grandfather, **William Emerson Maness** (1909-1945), died in an accident at the Milan Arsenal on August 9, 1945. After his death, she had to find other employment to be home with her young sons at night.

My parents worked in cotton fields beginning as young children. My mother, **Rachel Maness Haney** (born 1926), worked in the mill during World War II. My dad, **Robert Hardy Haney** (1923-2002), worked in the mill briefly after being honorably discharged from the US Coast Guard after the war ended.



Elvin Earnest Haney, Sr. was a cotton farmer and a Bemis Cotton Mill employee.



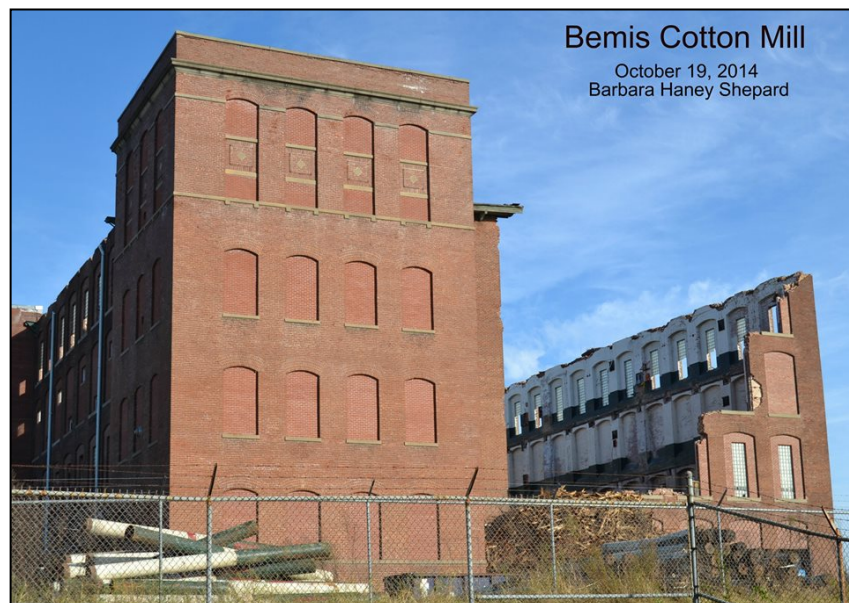


"Presented to Judson Moss Bemis by the People as an expression of love and esteem"  
"Bemis, Oct 26th 1913"

Deconstruction of the Bemis Cotton Mill began in August 2014. A few days before the deconstruction began, I had the privilege of touring the mill to capture images of a time gone by – before it was literally gone forever.



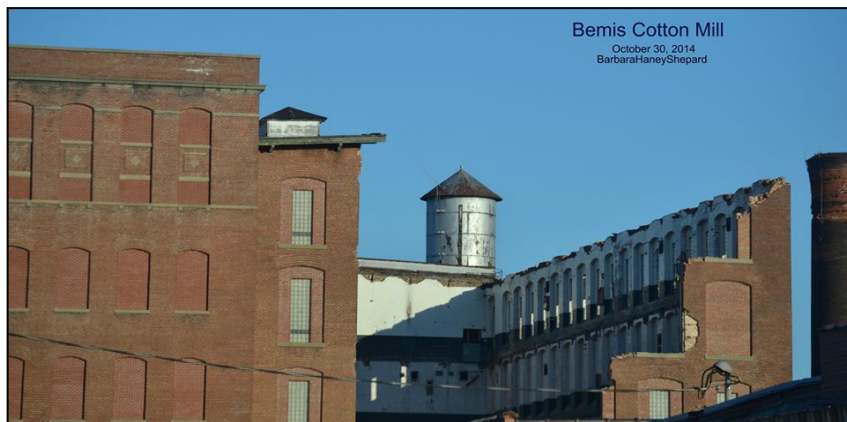
Part of first floor – August 2014



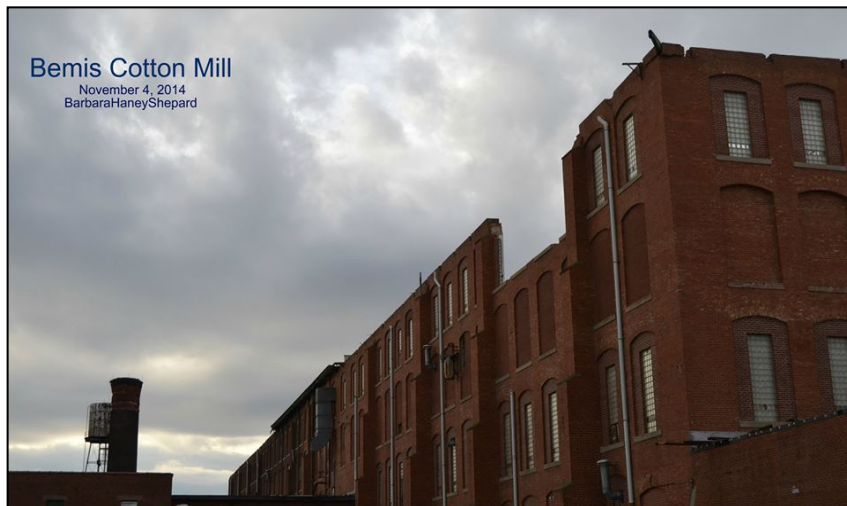
The west end of the Mill is disappearing. October 19, 2014



Mill smokestack is visible through missing windows. October 30, 2014



West end of the Mill. October 30, 2014



East end of Mill – November 4, 2014

The smokestack and water tower visible in this photo will be taken down.

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## Memories of Life on the Farm

Marie Hunt Morris Cole – Gibson County and Madison County, Tennessee

By Starla Jones Dougan

**Marie Hunt Morris Cole** is a dear neighbor of mine who turned 100 on April 15, 2014. She always has such interesting stories of her youth that I asked her to tell us about living all of her life on farms and particularly about raising cotton.

Marie's Hunt grandparents were born before emancipation. Her grandfather, **Frank Hunt** (1845-1916), and grandmother, **Bettie Hunt** (1841-1915), lived most of their lives on farms in Gibson and Madison Counties, Tennessee. Both are buried in the Bascom Cemetery.

**George Hunt**, Marie's father, was born in Madison County in 1867. He was a farmer and worked at the Bemis Mill. George died in 1957 in Humboldt, Tennessee at the age of 89. His first wife died at an early age. George then married **Hollie German** (1886-1971) who was born in North Carolina but was living in Tennessee. Hollie was Marie's mother.

George and Hollie Hunt raised a house full of happy children even though their life was very hard. Marie remembered that her father would bring home domestic material from the Bemis Mill and her mother would use blue, green and yellow dye to color the domestic and make dresses for the girls. She also used the domestic to make quilts.

All the children used a gallon bucket with holes in the lid to carry their lunches to school. The meal in the bucket was always cornbread, fried meat and molasses. She remembered the good smells of cooking food coming from houses as she walked by them. Marie described the smells of frying ham, turnip greens, sweet potatoes, cabbage and cornbread cooking; and she could smell them even across the field.

Living on the landowner's farm meant her family had to eat whatever the landowner brought to them, usually flour, rice and beans. Some landowners were better than others about furnishing food to their workers. Marie remembers there were times her whole family went hungry. When meat was butchered on the farm, the workers' families could have part of that.

They did have a garden where vegetables grew for her family. Blackberries and some vegetables like turnip greens and beans were canned for the family's use. Sausage was even canned by pouring grease over the fried meat instead of water. Some root vegetables were saved for winter by forming cornstalks in the shape of a teepee, wide at the bottom and stalks tied together at the top. Inside the wall of cornstalks, a hole had been dug to hold turnips or sweet potatoes. Branches of trees were woven through the cornstalks and then the whole thing was covered with grass. Vegetables would stay fresh for a long time inside there. She remembered that there was a little door to get the vegetables out as needed.

Marie remembered making sausage, putting the sausage in corn shucks and hanging these up in the smoke house to be preserved. They raised chickens to eat and for eggs. Her family ate a lot of fat back, gravy and biscuits. Sometimes the gravy would be white and sometimes it was brown gravy. Their corn was taken in a wagon to a mill on Shannon Street to be ground.

In the winter, the water pump in the yard would freeze. They had to pour hot water on the pump until it worked, but if that didn't work, they built a small fire around the pump until it thawed out.

Her family raised whip-o-will peas, and they were the only kind of peas she knew about. Her father used a one row plow to prepare his garden. She said her father grew some popcorn that everyone enjoyed. Marie's father raised a few peanuts in a little garden in Gibson County. One year he carefully mounded up the dirt in the garden so the children could come behind him and plant the peanuts in the hill he had just prepared. Several days later he said he just couldn't understand why so few of the peanuts were sprouting. Several of the children looked at each other and smiled because they knew why. They had eaten most of the peanuts instead of planting them while they were working along behind their father.

Marie Hunt married **Obe Morris** in 1929, and they had seven children. They lived on the Lower Brownsville Road near the Walnut Grove School and Walnut Grove Church. One day Obe and his youngest son sat on a root of a huge tree in their yard as a storm approached. Lightning struck the tree and killed Obe and badly injured the young son, **Bobby Morris**. Several other people were under the tree also, but Obe was the only person killed.

Marie was left a widow with seven children, the oldest being only 14 years old and the youngest only 8 months old. Marie married **Charlie Cole** (1913-2006), a World War II Army veteran. Charlie was the son of **Walter** and **Ella Cole** of Jackson. Charlie and Marie went on to have five children together.

Some of the farms that Marie and her children lived on were: the **Moneypenny** farm, the large **Will McClish** farm, the **Hays** farm, **Hugh Pearson's** farm, the **Hicks** farm and on **Max England's** farm for many years. These farms were in west Madison County on the Lower Brownsville Road near the Walnut Grove School and Church. They were able to buy land for their home from Max England.

The cotton fields had to be thinned and chopped soon after the cotton sprouted in the spring. A planter pulled by a mule had dropped seeds into the ground, but the seeds were not evenly spaced. To thin cotton meant to use a hoe and chop out some of the sprouts and make them evenly spaced to grow better cotton. Weeds, cockleburrs, and morning glories all had to be chopped out of the fields also. Marie said a two-row plow, called a middle-buster, pulled by a mule then came along and plowed the middle of the rows. Twenty acres of cotton was a lot of cotton to chop, and everyone from age five up was in the field with a hoe. The pay for chopping cotton was \$1.00 a day. Later it was raised to \$1.50 per day then to \$3.00 per day.

The women carried their children to the fields. Babies would be put in a box under a tree and an older child would stay with the little ones there. At lunchtime, all the workers would go to their homes to eat. One person would have stayed at home and cooked lunch for each family, then everyone went back to the fields to work the rest of the day.

No more work was needed for the cotton until harvest time. After the cotton bolls opened and the leaves were still partly green, the fields were picked the first time. Large sacks were pulled through the fields and packed with cotton. The sacks were three feet, seven feet or nine feet long. Marie picked with the seven-foot bag. She remembers how she would take her fist and punch the cotton down in the bag so more could be crammed



into the bag. Bags would be weighed on scales to determine pay. Marie usually picked about 100 pounds of cotton a day. The pay was \$1.00 for 100 pounds. Marie proudly said that she and four children picked eight bales (500 pounds each) of cotton one fall.

A second trip was made through each field to pick the cotton that had opened after the first picking. Finally, another trip was made through the fields to scrap it by pulling off the whole bolls that had only partially opened or not opened at all. Marie called these unopened bolls the hucks. After they were picked, they were piled in a room in her house. At night, the women and children would pick these out. Several years they picked out two bales of cotton (500 pounds each) from these unopened bolls. The landowner got most of the money for scrap cotton. Marie's family got a little bit of the money for all their work. It was just something they had to do.

For a while her family received money for selling cotton seeds, but later the landowners kept all that money. She remembers that well, because the seed money is what her family took to Witherspoon's Store to buy snacks like cheese, baloney, candy and soda water.

The cotton was taken by wagon and mules to Farmers Gin which was behind the old Kelly Foods building at the corner of Airways and the By-Pass in Jackson. Marie remembers how she and the children would tromp down the cotton in the wagon so more would go in there. The filled cotton sacks were brought to the wagon after being weighed, with the top part of the sack propped against the wagon side and the bottom of the sack on the ground. The top part of the sack was emptied; then the bottom part of the bag was lifted up on the wagon to empty.

Coal oil lamps were what she had always used for light in the house. When electricity came to the Lower Brownsville Road in the early 1940s, her husband didn't want to get it for their house. She finally got electric lights and an electric oven in her house about 1950. Marie saved her coal oil lamps and she still uses them whenever the electricity goes out. She still has the three-legged pot she used for cooking for many years.

Cotton ticking mattress covers were filled with grass they pulled to make their bed soft. It made a fluffy mattress to jump on as a kid, but by morning she was always covered with chigger bites. Sometimes they did have cotton put in their mattresses. They had sheets for the beds and used chicken feathers to make pillows.

Floors in their house were not covered with anything. The floors were bare wood, and they used their homemade lye soap to scrub the floors. Doors to the house were always left wide open in the warm months, all day and all night.

Times were very hard, Marie said; but in spite of that, her family always had a good time being together. People today don't realize how good and easy their lives are, she said. They don't know how to appreciate things like running water, electricity, automobiles and especially indoor bathrooms.

Children of Charlie Cole and Marie Hunt Morris Cole: **Charlene Cole, David Cole, Terry Cole, Maxine Cole and William “Ricky” Cole**

STATE <u>Tennessee</u>	D-377	DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE-BUREAU OF THE CENSUS	[D1-579]	SUPERVISOR'S DISTRICT No. <u>8</u>	SHEET NO. <u>451</u>
COUNTY <u>Madison</u>		<b>FOURTEENTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES: 1920-POPULATION</b>		ENUMERATION DISTRICT No. <u>145</u>	<b>B</b>
TOWNSHIP OR OTHER DIVISION OF COUNTY <u>Reed Creek District</u>		NAME OF INCORPORATED PLACE _____	(Place given name, city, village, etc., of town, village, etc., of place incorporated.)	WARD OF CITY _____	<u>1589</u>
NAME OF INSTITUTION _____		ENUMERATED BY ME ON THE <u>6</u> DAY OF <u>January</u> 1920 <u>Reynold Sniffed</u>		ENUMERATOR _____	<u>794</u>

PLACE OF BIRTH												NATIVITY AND MOTHER TONGUE												OCCUPATION					
Place of birth of each person and parents of each person enumerated. 1st of foreign birth, give the state or territory. 2nd of foreign birth, give the name of each state or territory, or the foreign country or empire. (See instructions.)												NATIVITY AND MOTHER TONGUE												OCCUPATION					
PERSONS.												PERSONS.												PERSONS.					
Place of birth.												Place of birth.												Place of birth.					
Foreign.												Foreign.												Foreign.					
Foreign.												Foreign.												Foreign.					
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George and Hollie Hunt and family  
1920 US Census, Civil District 1, Madison County, TN

[illegible]

Obe and Marie Morris and family  
1940 US Census, Civil District 8, Madison County, TN

1 PLACE OF DEATH		STATE OF TENNESSEE	
County <u>Madison</u>	Registration District No. <u>583</u>	File No. <u>3</u>	
Civil Dist. <u>10</u>	Primary Registration District No. <u>946</u>	Registered No. <u>8</u>	
Village _____	City (No. _____ St. _____ Ward _____)	(If death occurred in a hospital or institution, give its NAME instead of street and number.)	
2 FULL NAME <u>Frank H Hunt</u>			
PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS		MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH	
3 SEX <u>M</u>	4 COLOR OR RACE <u>Col.</u>	5 SINGLE, MARRIED, WIDOWED, OR DIVORCED <u>Married</u>	16 DATE OF DEATH <u>Feb - 12, 1916</u>
6 DATE OF BIRTH _____	7 AGE <u>65</u> yrs. _____ mos. _____ ds. _____		17 I HEREBY CERTIFY, That I attended deceased from <u>Jan - 24, 1916</u> , to <u>Feb - 12, 1916</u> , that I last saw him alive on <u>Feb - 12, 1916</u> , and that death occurred, on the date stated above, at <u>4</u> m.
8 OCCUPATION <u>Farmer</u>		The CAUSE OF DEATH* was as follows: <u>Arteriosclerosis</u>	
9 BIRTHPLACE (State or country) <u>Tenn</u>		(Duration) _____ yrs. _____ mos. _____ ds.	
10 NAME OF FATHER <u>Joe Hunt</u>		Contributory _____	
11 BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER (State or country) <u>Tenn</u>		(Duration) _____ yrs. _____ mos. _____ ds.	
12 MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER <u>Mother Brown</u>		(Signed) <u>R. J. Jones</u> , M. D.	
13 BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER (State or country) <u>Tenn</u>		Dated <u>Feb 25, 1916</u> (Address) <u>Barkshire Tenn. R.</u>	
14 THE ABOVE IS TRUE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE (Informant) <u>John Hunt</u>		*State the DISEASE CAUSING DEATH, or, in deaths from Violent Causes, state (1) Means of Injury; and (2) whether ACCIDENTAL, SUICIDAL, or HOMICIDAL.	
(Address) <u>Humboldt Tenn. R. 8</u>		18 LENGTH OF RESIDENCE (FOR HOSPITALS, INSTITUTIONS, TRANSIENTS, OR RECENT RESIDENTS) _____ yrs. _____ mos. _____ ds.	
15 _____		At place of death _____ yrs. _____ mos. _____ ds. In the _____ State _____ yrs. _____ mos. _____ ds.	
Filed <u>2/21</u> , 191 <u>6</u>		Where was disease contracted, if not at place of death? _____	
REGISTRAR		Former or usual residence _____	
		19 PLACE OF BURIAL OR REMOVAL <u>Barkshire Tenn.</u>	
		DATE OF BURIAL <u>Feb - 12, 1916</u>	
		20 UNDERTAKER <u>R. J. Jones</u>	
		ADDRESS <u>Barkshire Tenn.</u>	

Frank Hunt – Certificate of Death – Madison County, TN – 12 Feb 1916

5882		CERTIFICATE OF DEATH		12919	
DEPT. OF PUBLIC HEALTH		STATE OF TENNESSEE		DIV. OF VITAL STATISTICS	
COOPERATING WITH DEPT. OF COMMERCE		BUREAU OF THE CENSUS		REG. NO. <u>25805</u>	
2		5805 Obe		MARRIS	
1. FULL NAME (FIRST MIDDLE LAST)		2. DATE OF DEATH		6 11 1944	
3. PLACE OF DEATH		A) STATE <u>Tenn</u>			
A) COUNTY <u>Madison</u>		B) COUNTY <u>Madison</u>		DISTRICT <u>5</u>	
B) CITY OR TOWN <u>Jackson</u>		C) CITY OR TOWN <u>Jackson</u>			
C) NAME OF HOSPITAL <u>Auto White</u>		D) STREET NO. _____		(IF OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS, GIVE R.F.D. NO.)	
D) LENGTH OF STAY, IN HOSPITAL _____		E) CITIZEN OF FOREIGN COUNTRY _____		(YES OR NO)	
5. RACE OR COLOR <u>O</u>		6. SEX <u>M</u>		7. SINGLE, MARRIED, WIDOWED, DIVORCED _____	
8. AGE <u>37</u> YEARS <u>2</u> MONTHS <u>23</u> DAYS		9. DATE OF BIRTH: MONTH <u>Mar</u> DAY <u>18</u> YEAR <u>1907</u>		10. PLACE OF BIRTH: CITY OR COUNTY <u>Perry</u> STATE OR COUNTRY <u>Tenn</u>	
11. HUSBAND OR WIFE OF <u>Marie Morris</u>		12. IF VETERAN _____		13. USUAL OCCUPATION <u>Farming</u>	
14. INDUSTRY OR BUSINESS _____		15. FULL NAME <u>James A. Morris</u>		16. BIRTHPLACE <u>Perry</u> STATE OR COUNTRY <u>Tenn</u>	
17. INFORMANT <u>Marie Morris</u>		18. BIRTHPLACE <u>Perry</u> STATE OR COUNTRY <u>Tenn</u>		19. ADDRESS <u>Jackson, R-2</u>	
20. I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I ATTENDED THE DECEASED FROM _____ TO _____		21. I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I ATTENDED THE DECEASED FROM _____ TO _____		22. I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I ATTENDED THE DECEASED FROM _____ TO _____	
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86. I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I ATTENDED THE DECEASED FROM _____ TO _____		87. I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I ATTENDED THE DECEASED FROM _____ TO _____		88. I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I ATTENDED THE DECEASED FROM _____ TO _____	
89. I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I ATTENDED THE DECEASED FROM _____ TO _____		90. I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I ATTENDED THE DECEASED FROM _____ TO _____		91. I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I ATTENDED THE DECEASED FROM _____ TO _____	
92. I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I ATTENDED THE DECEASED FROM _____ TO _____		93. I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I ATTENDED THE DECEASED FROM _____ TO _____		94. I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT I ATTENDED THE DECEASED FROM _____ TO _____	
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Obe Morris – Certificate of Death #12919 – Jackson, Madison County, TN – 11 Jun 1944

## Sources:

- 1920 Census, Madison Co, TN; Roll: T625\_1754; Page: 13B; ED: 148; Image: 593; Household #231-231; Lines 60-67, Ancestry.com.
- 1940 Census, Madison Co, TN; Roll: T627\_3918; Page: 14A; ED: 57-37; HH #137; Lines 34-40, Ancestry.com.
- Certificate of Death #12919; Obe Morris; Jackson, Madison Co, TN; 11 Jun 1944; Ancestry.com.
- Certificate of Death; Frank Hunt; Madison County, TN; 12 Feb 1916; Ancestry.com.
- Personal interview with Marie Hunt Morris Cole by Starla Jones Dougan, December 2014.

## Being a Sharecropper's Daughter

Wanna Faye Holmes Crouse – Chester County, Tennessee

By Rhonda Crouse Robertson

**Robert McNamara**, a 19<sup>th</sup> century history expert, defines sharecropping as a system of agriculture instituted in the American South in the period of reconstruction after the Civil War. It essentially replaced the plantation system which had existed, with slave labor, in the years before the war. In sharecropping, a poor farmer who did not own land would work a plot belonging to a landowner. The farmer would receive a share of the harvest as payment.

I've heard the word my entire life. My grandparents were sharecroppers. My paternal grandparents, **Hobert McKinley Crouse** (1896-1976) and **Ethel Beatrice Morton Crouse** (1902-1985), and my maternal grandparents, **James Euther Holmes** (1901-1987) and **Graple Maureen Johnson Holmes** (1913-1978), raised large families on virtually nonexistent incomes as sharecroppers. Both of these families farmed in Chester and McNairy counties. I had the opportunity to talk with my mother (b. 1933) about her childhood as we were preparing Thanksgiving dinner.

Mother is eighty-one years old. Her father, commonly known as J. E. Holmes, sired twelve children. My mother was the fourth of his but the first of her mother's, Graple Holmes. Papaw's first wife died after bearing him three children. He then married my grandmother and they had nine. Mother was the oldest of the nine.

Recalling picking cotton at a very young age and being a very hard-working little girl, Mother said she was nine years old when she picked her first 100-pound sack of cotton. She remembers wearing a pair of overalls that she said she'd keep forever because they were her lucky clothes. That pledge never happened; because a few months later, their house and all they owned was destroyed in a tornado and Mother found her lucky overalls in a tree top where the wind had carried them away. Papaw was severely injured by flying debris and was given up for dead by emergency medical workers. However, he did survive with loss of hearing in one ear and lived to be eighty-six years old.

Mother said Papaw would move them every year or two to a different house and sometimes different landowners. The clothes she wore to pick in changed to a dress, some kind of long sleeve over her arms, and a bonnet. "We never went to the field without a long sleeve on," Mother said. Her mother, my MeeMaw, never went to the field at all. There was always dinner to cook, which was the mid-day meal. Supper was the evening meal and usually consisted of leftovers. "It was too hot to cook three meals a day," recalls Mother. Not only were there meals to cook but also babies to care for, clothes to wash, foods to can. After Mother came **James, Bonnie, Darlene, Donald, and Tony**. Mother threatened MeeMaw saying, "If you don't stop having kids, I'm going to run away from home!" Mother told me, "She waited five years and then had twins." That would be **Jack and Mack**. Four years after that, **Janice** was born to make nine.

The houses they lived in never had curtains on the windows. Poverty had nothing to do with that. It was a Papaw thing, "why have windows if you're going to cover them up?!" was his philosophy. However, during WWII, there would be blackouts and someone, anyone, who had a car, would come around and tell them there was going to be a blackout on such and such a night. Mother said, "I always wondered how an enemy plane

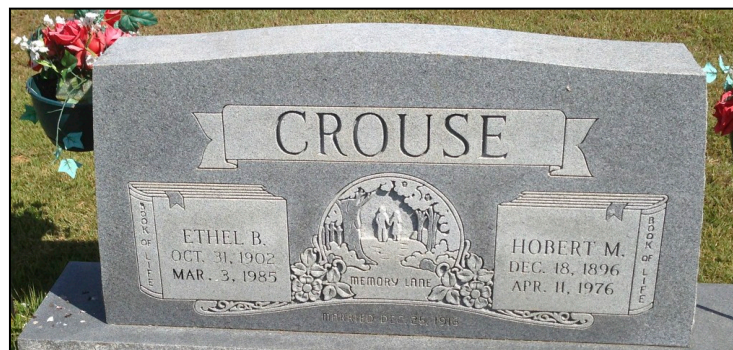


flying over a little tiny town like Finger could see one or two coal oil lanterns burning in our house.” But out would come quilts or blankets or anything that could cover up a window.

She can remember Papaw going to the bank every year and borrowing \$600 to put in the crop of cotton and would have it set up to pay back in the fall. The money would buy seed and fertilizer. He always made enough to pay back the bank, and the landlord would pay him some for the work. Mother said, “It never seemed fair for us to do all the work and only get a small portion of the profit. The landlord did virtually nothing.” Most landlords were very fair in their treatment of the Holmes family because they knew J. E. Holmes was a hard worker – with a growing labor force. The most money Mother ever remembers Papaw making was the year he harvested 25 bales of cotton to 25 acres of land. With that profit he bought his oldest son, James, a bicycle, and bought Mother a red couch. I asked, “A red couch? Why?” She said they didn’t have couches and wing back chairs to sit on. Only straight back wooden chairs or the side of a bed. For her daddy to buy her a red couch was one of the most extravagant things he could have done. I didn’t get a report on what the other children got.

When I approached Mother about the subject of this article, I asked her if I could interview her about what it felt like to be a sharecropper’s daughter. She said, “There’s no way you can ever write well enough to make anyone understand what it meant to be a sharecropper’s daughter. We didn’t know we were poor because everybody else was like we were.”

And all of those Holmes kids turned out pretty darn good to have been raised children of a sharecropper.



Crouse buried in Cave Springs Cemetery, Chester County, Tennessee



Holmes buried in Chester County Memorial Gardens, Henderson, TN  
My grandmother’s name is spelled wrong on the marker. Grapel should be Graple.

## Hicksville

Madison County, Tennessee  
By William Bell Hickerson, Jr.

*New York Times* best-selling author, storyteller, and battlefield preservationist, **Robert Hicks**, often shares stories from his childhood summers spent in Hicksville with his grandparents. He says that Hicksville was a place, “Where everyone in the town was my cousin. I had an enchanting childhood.”

He says his grandmother instilled a sense of history that drives his passion for preservation. “In 1974, I moved to Franklin and saw Pizza Hut and a strip mall with a part of history underneath<sup>1</sup>. I realized I had begun to see history the way my grandfather and grandmother saw it. I wrote *The Widow of the South*<sup>2</sup> and began to see the bigger picture about the land.”

“The entire world, both within and without, is surrounded by the stories from my father, older relatives, strangers, books, and movies. I was raised surrounded by storytellers. They've made the world I live in forever magical and rich, even within the solitude of my cabin walls.”

Hicksville is now referred to as the rather more refined-sounding “Highland Park.” Located near the intersection of Campbell Street and North Highland Avenue, Hicksville developed around the founding family’s grocery store, opened in the late 1800s by **W. A. Hicks**. The store, which had a post office in the back, was located in an area so far removed from downtown Jackson that, “It was just sittin’ out here by itself, really,” **Erby Henry** (who helped build the Hicksville Gin Company) recalled in a quote from a 1992 article in *The Jackson Sun*.

The article went on to say that the intersection was once a stopover on the old “Burlington Route,” – a dirt highway linking New Orleans with Burlington, Iowa. There were landmark yellow poles emblazoned with the initials “BR” to signify to Burlington Route travelers that they were on the right road.

When Hicksville underwent significant retail development, beginning in the 1940s, naysayers warned that investors were putting their money into an area “too far out in the boondocks to ever build a clientele.”

The naysayers were wrong according to the late **Delores Ballard**, who was beloved by Jackson Sun readers for her wonderfully nostalgia-inducing columns. She shared memories of “family night” at Simpson Center – the first and, at-the-time, only away-from-downtown shopping center in Jackson. The stores stayed open until 9 o’clock on Fridays, and, while her parents shopped at Simpson’s Supermarket, she’d spend time in the Ben Franklin store, “admiring the assorted wonders,” and deciding how to spend her weekly 25 cent allowance.

---

<sup>1</sup> Civil War site of the Battle of Franklin

<sup>2</sup> From Barnes & Noble: *The title character of this haunting historical novel is **Carrie McGavock**, whose farmhouse was commandeered as a Confederate field hospital before the tragic battle at Franklin, Tennessee, in November 1864. That day, 9,000 soldiers perished. This tragic event turned McGavock into “the widow of the South.” She spent the rest of her life mourning those lost, eventually reburial nearly 1,500 of them on her property.*

She wrote, “Summer nights tasted like milkshake and smelled like barbecue, with the heavenly aroma of The Hut’s hickory pit hanging over the little village and making you hungry no matter if you’d already eaten.”

Approximately halfway between the time of the opening of Mr. Hicks’ grocery store and the mid-twentieth century retail development of Hicksville, a cotton gin was built on West Forest Avenue. From the 2005 book, *Hicksville, USA*, “Cotton growers from all around Madison County and Gibson County, including Humboldt, Milan, Trenton, etc., came with their cotton to Hicksville.”

A 1973 article in *The Jackson Sun* by the late **Kent Gardner** began, “The partially dismantled old building stands in the afternoon rain like beached whale, its ribs showing underneath the decaying skin. Sheet metal, blackened timbers and piles of cotton lint mark the end of the Hicksville Cotton Gin, a landmark on Forest near Campbell for half a century.”

Gardner went on to say that the old gin, which once sat in an open field on Omar Lane, a gravel road that ran through the fields to the Bells Highway, was a victim to progress. The cotton that came from mechanical cotton pickers, unlike the carefully hand-picked cotton of the past, was filled with trash and would have necessitated the purchase of expensive new equipment to process.

Another factor was the expansion of facilities for Jackson’s burgeoning medical community. Part of the Jackson Clinic is located on the former site of the Hicksville Gin.

In the 1973 article, **H. J. Lett**, who purchased the gin in 1947, explained, “Then too, the big trailers couldn’t get to my gin. It and the Farmers Gin on Airways were the only gins in the city limits, and they were both way out in the country when they were built.”

Lett’s best guess as to the building of the gin was in “about 1920 or 21.” He stated that, “In the thirties cotton sold for a nickel a pound. After World War II, it went up to 40 cents a pound.” By 1966, mechanical cotton pickers had “really taken hold” and production dropped to 600 bales per season. “I just wound it up.”

Gardner shared the thoughts he had standing “in front of the dying building.” He wrote, “One can imagine the sputtering of Model T Fords, the braying of mules who pulled the wagons loaded with white gold and the distant strains of a Charleston coming from the then suburb of Hicksville.

The end of the gin is the end of an era. And a lot of Jacksonians will miss the Hicksville gin, sprawled in its rusting grandeur, dozing its last years away as a reminder of a South that is gone forever.”

### **Harlon Jerome Lett (1918 - 2013)<sup>3</sup>**

Harlon Jerome Lett, 95, of Crozet, VA, formerly of Jackson, died December 18, 2013, surrounded by his loving family, at the Heritage Inn Assisted Living Facility in Charlottesville, VA.

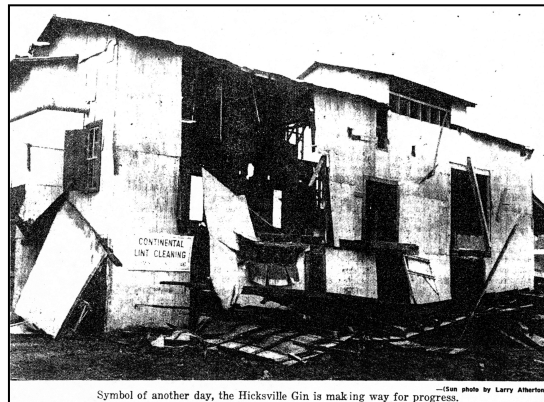
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<sup>3</sup> Obituary published in *The Jackson Sun*

He was born October 20, 1918, in Bradford, TN, and was preceded in death by his parents, **Bernice Newbill Lett** and **Robert Benton Lett**; sister, **Rebecca Lett Arendale**; and grandson, **Robert Jeffrey Adams**. Harlon attended Jackson High School and graduated from Lambuth College in 1940. He served for four years in the U.S. Army in the South Pacific during World War II and made landing on Leyte on October 20, 1944. After an additional year of service in the Korean War, he left the military in 1953, with the rank of Major. After the military, Mr. Lett joined **H. D. Hammond** and **Raymond Hammond** in the cotton business and Hicksville Gin Company. This became H. J. Lett & Co., with partner **Jack May**. Harlon enjoyed sports. His favorite game was golf, with the highlight of his golfing career being his 7 holes-in-one and playing St. Andrews golf course in Scotland.

He is survived by his loving wife, **Grace Rayl Lett**, of Crozet, VA, formerly of Jackson; daughters, **Betsy Lett Adams** of Asheville, NC, and **Cathy Lett Loman** and husband **Jim**, of Crozet, VA; son, **Robert Lett** and wife **Susan**, of Cheyenne, WY; and grandchildren, **Julia**, **Matthew**, and **Sophie Loman**; and grandson **Joshua Lett**.

Funeral services for Mr. Lett will be held at 2 p.m., Sunday, December 22, in the North Chapel of George A. Smith & Sons Funeral Home, with Dr. Paul Clayton officiating. Burial will follow with military honors in Ridgecrest Cemetery.



Photos obtained from:

(Left) *Jackson & Madison County, A Pictorial History* and (Right) *The Jackson Sun*

### Sources:

- Ballard, Delores. "Children bought memories in Hicksville." *The Jackson Sun* 2 Feb 1992: C1.
- Ballard, Delores. "Then and Now: Once known as Hicksville, shopping area continues to grow." *The Jackson Sun* 2 Feb 1992: C1.
- Barnes & Noble. "Meet the Author: Robert Hicks." *A Separate Country: A Story of Redemption in the Aftermath of the Civil War*. 13 Dec 2014 <http://www.barnesandnoble.com/>.
- Gardner, Kent. "50-Year-Old Gin Becomes History." *The Jackson Sun* 1973.
- **Robinson, Carole**. "Brentwood Women's Club Celebrates 41 Years of Lifting the Volunteer Spirit," program by Robert Hicks, *Williamson Herald* 4 Dec 2014.
- **Williams, Emma Inman, Marion B. Smothers, and Mitch Carter** photographer. *Jackson & Madison County, A Pictorial History*. USA: The Donning Company/Publishers, 1988.
- **Wilson, Charlotte and Marilyn Ferrell**, *Hicksville, USA*: Sun Enterprises, 2005.



## Portrait from the Past

Bemis Elementary School – Madison County, Tennessee

By Kathy Haney Williams

**Ethel D. Bond Baker** (1908-2002) is pictured below with her 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students at Bemis Elementary School in November 1936. Mrs. Baker is seated in the center of the second row.

Mrs. Baker was born August 4, 1908, to **Dawson W. Bond** and **Ethel David Mayo**. She was a 1932 graduate of The University of Tennessee, and she was a devoted Vols fan throughout her life. She married **Alfred Thomas Baker** (1908-1978) on November 8, 1935, in Tipton County, TN.

Mr. Baker was the owner of Baker's Drug Store in Jackson, TN. He died May 23, 1978, in Madison County. Mrs. Baker died in Madison County on February 2, 2002, at the age of 93. Their younger daughter, **Betty Bond Baker**, died September 20, 2002, in Madison County at the age of 53. They are buried in Hollywood Cemetery in Jackson, TN. Mrs. Baker was survived by her older daughter, **Sally**.

Many of these students were born and raised in Bemis, Madison County, TN. Their family members worked in the Bemis Cotton Mill. Many of them grew up to also work in the Cotton Mill.

**Robert Hardy Haney** (1923-2002) is the eighth student from the left on the top row. He was a student in Mrs. Baker's class when she married. He often recalled the memory of his teacher marrying during the school year, and the students had to change from calling her Miss Bond to Mrs. Baker.



Bemis Elementary School – Bemis, TN – 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Class – November 1936

Photo from the collection of the late Robert Hardy Haney

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## Cemetery Wanderings

Bemis Cemetery – Madison County, Tennessee

By Wanda K. Lee

The Bemis Cemetery is located on a hill at the end of Butler Street in South Madison County. The Bemis Company provided the cemetery for employees and their family members. **Kelly** and **Willodean Holmes** have been the cemetery caretakers for many years.

There are over 400 marked and many unmarked gravesites in the cemetery, which includes a high number of children and babies' graves. According to **Joel Jackson**, President of the Bemis Historical Society, Dr. **Thomas Wyatt**, a pediatrician from Bemis, told him that during the 1930s when sanitation was not "that important" an epidemic of Dysentery was nationwide. With Bemis being a young community, there were lots of babies and preschool age children who were more susceptible to the virus. The accepted protocol for infants was to increase the milk in their formula to help get more strength to fight the problem. Dr. Wyatt said in later years the accepted protocol was to weaken the percent of milk because it did not agree with a sick stomach. Therefore, many of the infants died from dehydration.

The oldest grave in the cemetery is thought to be that of little **Celia Walker** who died November 9, 1901, at the age of three. Her gravesite is at the back of the cemetery and is not marked.

The following is a small listing of employees who worked at the Bemis Cotton Mill. I have included their job description and the address where they lived while working at the mill.

<u>Employee</u>	<u>Job</u>	<u>Address</u>
<b>William Franklin Allen</b>	Slasher	241 Tennessee Street
<b>J. E. Anthony</b>	Spinner	100 Second Street
<b>Samuel J. Armstrong</b>	Pipe Fitter	144 Massachusetts Street
<b>William Arthur Austin</b>	Weaver	191 Bemis/Jackson Road
<b>Sylvester E. Austin</b>	Mechanic	10 Roberts Street
<b>Elmer Lee Austin</b>	Superintendent	1 Herron Street
<b>Sam Barker</b> (unmarked)	Mill Operator	Eastport
<b>Annie West Branch</b>	Textile Worker	Chester Street (Bemis)
<b>William Harvey Brasher</b>	Mill Operator	116 Missouri Street
<b>Jessie Alvin Buchanan</b>	Textile Worker	102 Morton Street
<b>Timothy Cleary</b>	Loom Fixer	2 Kentucky Street
<b>Robert Cecil Ellis</b>	Spinner	126 4th Street
<b>Willie S. Gaines</b>	Textile Worker	4th Street
<b>Fred Kern</b>	Weaver	4 Kentucky Street
<b>James Washington Perkins</b> (Grandfather of <i>Carl Perkins</i> )	Textile Worker	16 Roberts Street
<b>Joseph Jimmy Pruitt</b>	Textile Worker	12 N. Missouri Street
<b>William F. Tosh</b>	Oiler	First Street

At the Bemis Cotton Mill, many wives worked along with their husbands at a time when most women did not work outside of their homes. Some of the couples buried in Bemis Cemetery are:

<b>Marvin R. Downing</b>	Loom Fixer	207 N. Massachusetts Street
<b>Myrtle Downing</b>	Weaver	
<b>Fuller Kent Ellis</b>	Slasher	New Kentucky Street
<b>Agnes Doss Ellis</b>	Spinner	
<b>Milford Nance</b>	Textile Worker	18 N. Missouri Street
<b>Bessie Nance</b>	Spinstress	
<b>William Asa Martin</b>	Textile Worker	11 Tennessee Street
<b>Lorhada Cupples Martin</b>	Spinstress	

The most tragic thing that can happen to a family is the loss of a child. I cannot imagine what the **Leon and Pearl Fore Medlin** family went through with the loss of so many children. Eight Medlin children/infants are buried in the cemetery. Census and death records show that only three Medlin children lived into adulthood.

<b>Leon Medlin</b>	Spinner	108 B Street
<b>Pearl Fore Medlin</b>	Spinner	

*(Leon and Pearl Medlin's children)*

<b>Raymond</b>	(1918-1920)
<b>Pearl</b>	(1921-1924)
<b>R. D.</b>	(1923-1924)
<b>James</b>	(1927-1930)
<b>R. C.</b>	(1929-1929)
<b>J. C.</b>	(1929-1931)
<b>Gene</b>	(1931-1933)
<b>Infant Son</b>	(1934-1934)

### Sources:

- Bemis Cemetery, Madison County, TN, [www.FindAGrave.com](http://www.FindAGrave.com).
- **Holloway, June Turner, Joel Jackson, and Billy King** "A Tour and History of Bemis, Tennessee, 1900."
- <http://www.tngenweb.org/records/madison/cemeteries/donahue/bemis.htm>
- Madison County, TN census records 1910, 1920, 1930, [www. Ancestry.com](http://www.Ancestry.com).
- Madison County, TN death records, 1908-1958, [www. Ancestry.com](http://www.Ancestry.com).
- **Williams, Katherine Haney.** "The Fore Family." *Family Findings* Vol. XLV, Jan 2013, No. 1, pages 8-18. Jackson, TN: Mid-West Tennessee Genealogical Society.



Bemis Cemetery – Madison County, TN – Photo by Wanda K. Lee

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# Letterheads Found in Madison County, TN Probate Records

Madison County Archives – Jackson, Tennessee

Submitted by Helen Oxley Johnson, Sandra Woodbury Kelly, Starla Jones Dougan

JAS. W. ANDERSON.  
NEIL P. ANDERSON.

Jackson, Tenn. *July* 1874

*Mr J. P. Anderson*

**Bought of Anderson Bros.,**

DEALERS IN

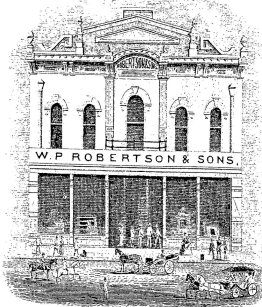
**STAPLE AND FANCY DRY GOODS, BOOTS, SHOES,**

**HATS AND CAPS, WHITE GOODS, NOTIONS, &c.**

1873

Ten per cent. Interest  
will be charged on all ac-  
counts after due.

---



W. P. ROBERTSON. W. B. ROBERTSON. G. H. ROBERTSON.

Jackson, Tenn. *Aug 12 1890*

*Mrs A. W. Commons*

**Bought of**

**W.P. ROBERTSON & SONS.**

SUCCESSORS TO  
ROBERTSON & BOTTS

107 & 109 S. MARKET ST.

DEALERS IN

DRY GOODS, MILLINERY, CARPETS, BOOTS, SHOES,  
CLOTHING & GENTS FURNISHING GOODS.

TELEPHONE NO 34.

1890

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1873

" Jackson, Tenn. *Sept 15 1874*

*Estate of P. A. Treadwell*

**Wholesale Dealers in**  
**BACON, FLOUR, MEAL.**  
Sugar, Coffee, Molasses,  
**Liquors, Tobacco,**  
BAGGING, ROPE, AND PLANTATION  
**SUPPLIES.**

**Bought of R. A. TREADWELL & CO.,**

**Grocers**

**AND COTTON FACTORS,**

Nos. 4 and 5 Market Street.





# White Star Laundry and Dye Co.

H. S. RIGHTMIRE, Manager.

Shirts, Collars and Cuffs Our Specialties.

High Gloss or Domestic Finish.

209 N. LIBERTY STREET.

Jackson, Tenn.,

*Clothing a Specialty  
Gents'  
Furnishing Goods*

*THE LEADING  
STANDARD SHOES*

*TERMS:  
STRICTLY THIRTY DAYS*

*Goods sent out on approval must  
be Promptly Returned*

*Jackson, Tenn., Jan 24<sup>th</sup> 1918*  
*M Ernest Humphrey*

BOUGHT OF

## SOL TUCHFELD'S SONS

DEALERS IN

### DRY GOODS, NOTIONS, CLOTHING BOOTS, SHOES AND HATS

Both Phones 138

Cor. Liberty and LaFayette Streets



# GEORGE CADE, COTTON COMPRESS, SAW & PLANING MILL,

AND MANUFACTURER OF

All Kinds of Building Material, Well Curbing,

## Cheap Furniture, Wagon Material, Plow Beams, &c.

TERMS, Strictly Cash, or its Equivalent in Trade.

*Milan, Tenn., Apr 11<sup>th</sup> 1872.*

*Holland's*

FINE DRESS GOODS  
A SPECIALTY

FINE UNDERWEAR AND NECKWEAR  
THE BEST

### HIGH ART CLOTHING

STANDARD SHOES FROM THE BEST MAKERS

LaFayette and Liberty Sts.

Murray Block



TERMS CASH—No Credit beyond

Thirty Days

*Jackson, Tenn., June 1 1904*

## SULLIVAN, McCALL & CO.

*Sold to J. I. Farnum*

## Words from the Past

Chronicling America  
Submitted by Kathy Haney Williams



**“The Bolivar Bulletin” – Bolivar, TN**  
**Friday, October 4, 1901 (Image 1) – Vol. XXXVII – No. 9**  
**Subscription: \$1.00 per year**

### Bemis Cotton Mill Humming

The cotton mill at Bemis is in operation, and the monster building is now a hive of industry. The company has experienced some difficulty in procuring a sufficient number of hands to start all of the machines, but this has been about overcome and four-fifths of the machines are moving now and other looms are being started as fast as spinning and carding can be done. The company only works a sufficient number of trained hands to teach such as can be employed at home to do the work.



**“The Washington Times” – Washington, DC**  
**Saturday, January 3, 1903 (Image 1) – Number 3127**  
**Price one cent**

### Mute’s First Words Were Her Swan-Song – Calls a Farewell Audibly to Friends

Memphis, Jan. 3 – A dispatch received from Bemis Cotton Mills in Madison County states that **Clara Ware**, nineteen, died there Thursday. She had been mute from birth, but just before her death she called the members of her family around her and in perfectly natural tones bade them good-by, saying she was going to a happier home.

These were the first words the dead girl had ever spoken. Two other members of the family are mutes.



**“The Tensas Gazette” – St. Joseph, LA**  
**Friday, April 10, 1908 (Image 8) – Vol. XV – No. 29**

### Killed by Train

Huntingdon, Tenn. – **Robert Walker**, a former citizen of this county, was struck and instantly killed by an Illinois Central railroad train at Bemis, where he was employed as engineer at the Bemis cotton mills. He was walking along between the tracks and started to cross over when he was struck by an approaching freight train and instantly killed, his body being terribly mangled.

### **Source:**

- The Library of Congress. Chronicling America, Historic American Newspapers. <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>

# Newspaper Article from the Past – *The Jackson Sun*

"The Town That Bemis Built" – Published August 14, 1944

Reprinted from *The Northwestern Nuller*

Submitted by Jimmy Wilkins

THE JACKSON SUN: JACKSON, TENN., MONDAY, AUGUST 14, 1944

## The Town That Bemis Built

(Reprinted from *The Northwestern Nuller*)

Bemis, Tennessee, a community of about 4,000 population located about two miles south of Jackson, Tenn., is one of the country's outstanding examples of employee-employer relationships. The community centers around the cotton mill of the Bemis Bros. Bag Co. There are 485 residences, all occupied by employees of the cotton mill and their families. The community spreads over 650 acres of rolling terrain and has a wealth of recreational facilities including tennis courts, a swimming pool, golf course, roller skating rink, gymnasium and auditorium. There are five churches, four schools for white children and one for colored children.

The entire community is company-owned—streets, houses, utilities, churches, etc. There is no regular form of city government, the affairs of the community are administered by the plant manager.

In 1865, J. M. Bemis, who founded the Bemis Bros. Bag Co., concluded that if he were to get the type of goods best suited for making cotton flour bags it would be necessary to have control of the output of a cotton mill. His ambition was to build a mill and a village where the workers could work and live and which would be the finest village in the South. The community was started in 1900.

The community is located on land that was once a part of the old Jackson Plantation. The mill that supports the town makes sheeting for the 14 bag factories of the company. The weekly output is 1,350,000 yards and about 60,000 pounds of baled cotton is used each day in making the sheeting.

Mr. Bemis had high ideals as to the physical, moral, educational and recreational features which

should be available to the people who were to live in the village. Mr. Bemis' son, A. F. Bemis, who had just come into the business, was interested in architecture and personally supervised the planning and construction of the mill and the village. The mill was of the most modern type. Comfortable cottage type houses of varied designs for the families of mill workers were built. Large lots were provided, thus allowing space for spacious lawns, flowers and vegetable gardens. Larger plots were made available to those who wished to garden on a more extensive scale. Free pasture was furnished to those who wished to keep cows.

Wide paved streets and sidewalks were built throughout the village. The streets were landscaped with shade trees, shrubbery and parkways. Water, sewerage and electric power and light systems were provided.

School buildings of the most modern type were built. The educational facilities of the village are now unsurpassed in the state and the school system is complete from kindergarten through high school. The school buildings are rented to the county for a nominal amount. The county now maintains the buildings and pays the teachers' salaries. There are about 965 pupils enrolled in the school system which is under the supervision of 30 teachers. One of the main features of the high school is a special manual training course which forms a prominent part of the boys' four-year training. The school was started in a building donated and equipped by A. F. Bemis. It has been very successful and for many years was the only high school in western Tennessee that offered a vocational training course to boys. The religious activities of the community are adequately provided for with five churches of different denominations. The recreational life has many features that residents of most communities of much larger size in the state do not enjoy. There is a large swimming pool near the mill. Baseball teams organized within the community have several fields on which to

play and in the winter there are numerous basketball teams organized.

A large recreational building houses many social activities. There is a special department for ladies. Clubs cater to the various tastes of the residents. Fraternal organizations are active in the community.

A large store is operated where the necessities and many of the luxuries of life can be purchased. There is a drug store, a restaurant and a postoffice.

The health of the community is given prime consideration. Doctors are available and registered nurses are on duty at all times.

Constant improvements are being made which makes this a most desirable place to work and live.

With such favorable working conditions, there are, of course, a large number who have been employed at the mill for many years. Sons and even grandsons of original employees now work at the mill. Over 500 persons have been employed over five years. One hundred and seventy have been employed for over 20 years.

The Bemis cotton mill is unique in one feature, namely, that it works on full time operation 52 weeks of the year. The mill manufactures cotton cloth for use exclusively in making Bemis bags. Two other Bemis cotton mills, one at Indianapolis and one at Bemiston, Ala., also manufacture cloth for Bemis cotton bags. But all this production is not sufficient to supply the needs of the 14 Bemis bag factories. Uninterrupted production at the Bemis cotton mill is, therefore, scheduled year in and year out. This continuous employment situation has produced a corps of faithful, efficient workers who are happy to be employed in a plant where shutdowns and slack seasons are unknown and where desirable working and living conditions are provided.

The first manager of the mill was J. B. Young. He was succeeded upon his death in 1929 by his son, F. J. Young, who has very capably handled the management of this large enterprise which includes not only the responsibility of running a cotton gin and cotton mill, a full time job in itself, but also the job of running a community of 4,000 population.

The residents of Bemis have made an enviable war record. Nearly \$323,000 has been invested in war bonds. One hundred and seventy are serving in the armed forces. Two have won the Purple Heart. Three have been killed in action and one is a prisoner of war in Germany. Over 400 are serving the nation in various capacities in every corner of the world.

The federal housing authority might well have taken its ideas about community housing from the Bemis community. The houses rent for 50c to 75c per room per week. At this rate, a five-room cottage rents for about \$15 per month. The water is free and electric power is supplied from the mill power plant at a nominal cost to the residents.

As Mr. Young, the manager of the mill and community, explains, the Bemis plan "makes for pleasant living for the company and its employees." War orders have stepped up employment at the mill from a normal 900 to 1,400 and from two shifts to three shifts per day.

## **Family Information from Madison County, TN Courthouse**

Documents Now Stored at the Madison County Archives

Submitted by Helen Oxley Johnson, Sandra Woodbury Kelly, Starla Jones Dougan

This alphabetical listing continues from previous issues and will be continued in future issues. Only documents about 100 years old have been listed here. Many more persons have documents in the County Court files that are not shown here. These original documents are now stored at the Madison County Archives on Hollywood Drive in Jackson, Tennessee. These files represent 20 years of dedicated work by Helen Johnson and other volunteer workers who unfolded, cleaned, carefully sorted, documented, and helped preserve these records for us.

**Casey, B. F.** – County Court record dated 1868 was for Rebel Account Claim vs. The United States for Quartermaster Stores.

**Casey, J. G.** – Doctor's exemption from road work and petition for release from road work and poll tax records was dated April 1907.

**Casey, J. W.** – Doctor exemptions from manual labor on road work and for poll tax exemptions are dated 1906, 1908 and 1909.

**Casey, John** – He died in March 1867. Inventory of his estate is dated August 20, 1868; and he owned 75 acres of land. His son, Thomas B. Casey, was Administrator of the estate and Guardian of minors George W. and Mattie L. Casey. The two minors signed the request for Guardian. A Guardian's Report dated March 4, 1873, is in file. George reached age 21 in April 1872.

**Casey, W. L.** – Rebel Account Claim vs. The United States for Quartermaster Stores is dated May 1868.

**Cash, Emily** – She died intestate in 1907, and G. E. Pierce was named as her Administrator. A document dated April 6, 1907, shows the inventory of estate with items listed, the sale price and the person who purchased the items. An Administrator's Report is dated August 16, 1907, with distribution to: J. C. Cash, Archie Davidson, Liddia Franklin, Birdie McFarlen, J. W. Davidson, and J. J. Davidson.

**Cash, J. H.** – He filed a petition for release from poll tax, affidavit of age dated 1902.

**Cash, John J.** – The file has his Rebel Account Claim vs. The United States for Quartermaster Stores, dated May 1868.

**Cash, S. D.** – (One paper shows his name as L. D. Cash.) John E. Cash was appointed Guardian of the minor children left: Sarah Jane Cash (now Spencer) and Elizabeth R. Cash. Document was dated July 3, 1866. Guardian's Report is dated August 30, 1866.

**Cash, Whaley** – He died intestate in October 1863. John E. Cash was appointed Administrator. The deceased had no family and was confined several years prior to his death from cancer. One hundred acres of land in the 16<sup>th</sup> District was sold on January 22, 1866, to C. E. Mathis for \$1,350.

**Cash, Wyatt** – At his death, Wyatt Cash left a minor son, Watt Cash, 15 years old. James M. Watt was named Guardian of the minor on May 6, 1867. The estate was valued at \$250.

**Cate, John T.** – His will was dated March 19, 1910; and he died June 26, 1912. Mr. Cate died in Gibson County, TN. A listing of estate items was dated October 23, 1912. Heirs were Mary Jane Cate, L. R. Cash, Dellie Cash, C. B. Bettie, Nettie Bettie, Jesse Cate, Lela Jones, Tom Jones, J. C. Cate, and L\_\_\_\_. W. J. Boone was Administrator of the Will Annexed. The final Administrator's Report was dated October 13, 1915.

**Cate, S. W.** – He requested a release from poll tax for 1894 because he was a resident of Gibson County that year and paid taxes there. Request is dated August 1895.

**Cathey, Alex H.** – Mr. Cathey died July 23, 1882. Two unnamed children, a boy age 18 and a girl age 14, were left. A list of his notes and property was dated July 25, 1882, with another list dated December 5, 1884. R. T. Whitlow, largest creditor, was appointed Administrator. Administrator's Report was dated December 5, 1884.

**Cathey, Chauncey and Lola M.** – The minors were heirs of funds received from an insurance company. Chauncey was 14 years old and Lola was 11 years old in 1913. Their father, R. F. Cathey, was appointed Guardian for them. Guardian Reports were filed each year from 1914 to 1923. Chauncey turned 21 years old on January 4, 1921, and received his \$500. Lola died unmarried and intestate, leaving her father as heir at law, per the January 8, 1923, Guardian Report. Mother of Chauncey and Lola was Loula M. Cathey who died in Madison County on November 10, 1913, at her residence.

**Cathey, J. A.** – Document shows he was born December 10, 1857, and had been assessed for poll tax for the year 1878. Release was granted because he was less than 21 years old.

**Cathey, Joseph J.** – He was a minor whose Guardian, Robert A. Cathey, was appointed in April 1856. His former Guardian was Joseph J. Watson of Yorkville, S. C. The Guardian's Report showed he had a balance of \$1,174.98 on June 23, 1856. Guardian's Report is dated November 29, 1856.

**Cathey, Mrs. Rebecca A.** – John A. Cathey was Executor of her estate. Inventory of estate was dated July 10, 1883. She left a daughter about 18 years old, Alice Cathey. Alice's brother, J. H. Cathey, was appointed her Guardian on December 13, 1886; and he filed two Guardian Reports for 1888 and 1889. The Executor's Report on the estate of Rebecca A. Cathey is dated October 9, 1889. See Robert A. Cathey file.

**Cathey, Retta** – She died intestate October 10, 1899. Umphlett & Griffin were the undertakers, and Will Anderson was the Administrator. A court document was signed by Sallie (X) Brooks, Mahola (X) Artia, and Ida Anderson to have Will Anderson become their Administrator.

**Cathey, Robert A.** – He died March 21, 1873 or 1874. His Administrator was his wife, Rebecca Cathey. He left five minor children: John A. (16 years), Walter J. (15 years), Mary A. (13 years), Adaline (12 years), and Alice E. (5 years). Mr. B. R. Campbell was appointed Guardian for the minors in June 1874. He resigned in February 1878 with Guardian Reports dated in 1874, 1877, and 1878. Inventory of the estate of Robert A. Cathey is in the file with estate receipts. In 1878, Mrs. Rebecca Cathey became Guardian for her minor children and filed Guardian Reports in 1879, 1880, and 1881. See file for Rebecca A. Cathey.

**Cathey, William R.** – An unmarried man, he died intestate on May 17, 1908, in an I. C. R. R. accident. William M. Cathey, father of deceased, was appointed Administrator in August 1908. Funds received from I. C. R. R. totaled \$200. His father was the sole heir.

## Queries, Announcements, and Contributions

*Family Findings* welcomes your queries about your family roots and also welcomes your contributions to be printed in the January, April, July, and/or October quarterlies. Send contributions, queries, and announcements to: **Kathy Haney Williams**, Editor of *Family Findings*, 276 Cobb Road, Jackson, TN 38305-6296 or KatherineWilliams@charter.net.

### Queries

Submit your genealogical queries to the editor. We can help each other with research.

### Announcements

Thank you to Larry Greer for serving as MWTGS President for two years. Congratulations to Lenny Ellis for being elected MWTGS President and to William Bell “Bill” Hickerson for being elected MWTGS Vice President.

Thank you to each quarterly contributor and to **Starla Jones Dougan** and **Wanda K. Lee** for serving on the Editorial Staff with Editor Kathy Haney Williams. Thank you to Corresponding Secretary **Sandra Kelly** for mailing the quarterlies.

Members’ names will be listed in the April 2015 publication of *Family Findings*. Invite your friends and family to join Mid-West Tennessee Genealogical Society.

### Contributions

Contributions are appreciated for *Family Findings*. The deadlines to submit contributions are: December 1 for the January quarterly, March 1 for the April quarterly, June 1 for the July quarterly, and September 1 for the October quarterly.

Upcoming themes for *Family Findings* will be:

- April 2015 – “Lawful and Lawless in Mid-West Tennessee”
- July 2015 – “70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the End of World War II”
- October 2015 – “American Revolutionary War Veterans in Mid-West Tennessee”

Please e-mail the editor in advance to request space in a quarterly and to identify your subject. This will help us avoid duplicates of subjects and allow space for several contributors. Articles should be limited to three pages per article unless approval has been given by the editor. Articles should be submitted to the editor in Microsoft Word format via e-mail or via US mail (saved to a disk or a jump drive). Disks and jump drives will not be returned to the sender. Photos should be submitted to the editor in jpg format. Minimal editing will be done to the submission. Please cite sources and give credit to other authors and photographers.

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## ***Family Findings***

1969-1979

<http://tngenweb.org/family-findings-quarterly-journals/>

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## Old Family Recipe

Submitted by Wanda K. Lee

This recipe was given to me by **Judy Watson Lowrance** while I was employed as the office manager at The Bemis Gin and Warehouse Company. Judy's husband **Larry Lowrance** worked for 25 years in the cotton industry.

### Mississippi Mud Cake

2 sticks butter or margarine	4 eggs, slightly beaten
½ cup cocoa	1½ cups chopped nuts (optional)
1½ cups plain flour (must be plain)	1 teaspoon vanilla
Pinch of salt	Miniature marshmallows
2 cups of sugar	

Melt butter and cocoa together. Remove from heat and stir in sugar and beaten eggs. Mix well. Add flour, salt, chopped nuts, vanilla and mix well. Spoon batter into greased 13 x 9-inch pan and bake at 350 degrees for 35-45 minutes. Sprinkle marshmallows on top of warm cake. Cover with chocolate frosting.

### Chocolate Frosting

1 box powdered sugar	1/3 cup cocoa
½ cup milk	½ stick soft butter or margarine

Mix together and pour over cake.

Pet milk can be used in the frosting, and the nuts can be used in the frosting instead of in the cake.

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## Books for Sale

Checks should be payable to Mid-West Tennessee Genealogical Society and mailed to:  
*Mid-West TN Genealogical Society, 841 Sanford Street, Henderson, TN 38340-2006.*

<u>Title</u>	<u>Price</u>	<u>Quantity</u>
<b><u>Jonathan Smith Publications</u></b>		
<u>Antebellum Militia, Justices and Some Early Taxpayers,</u>		
<u>Madison County, Tennessee (98 pages)</u>	\$20.00	_____
<u>Reported Deaths in Nineteenth Century Jackson, Tennessee, Newspapers (102 pages)</u>	\$20.00	_____
<u>Several Genealogical Vignettes of Madison County, Tennessee (47 pages)</u>	\$20.00	_____
<u>The Land Holdings of Colonel David Crockett in West Tennessee (126 pages)</u>	\$25.00	_____
<b><u>Cemetery Books</u></b>		
<u>Cemetery Records of Madison County, TN, Vol. I (1995) – Southern Half of County</u>		
(168 pages hardbound)	\$50.00	_____
<u>Cemetery Records of Madison County, TN, Vol. II (1998) – Northern Half of County</u>		
(224 pages hardbound)	\$60.00	_____
<u>Highland Memorial Gardens (through 1991) – An alphabetical listing (5,260 names)</u>	\$35.00	_____
<u>Hollywood Cemetery (1986-2003) Addendum published in 2004</u>	\$15.00	_____
<u>Riverside Cemetery Inscriptions (1975) (125 pages)</u>	\$25.00	_____
<b><u>Miscellaneous</u></b>		
Back issues of <i>Family Findings</i> (per issue) Which issue? _____	\$5.00	_____
Index to Hardeman County, Tennessee Freedman's Contracts: 1865-1866	\$15.00	_____
Jackson-Madison Sesquicentennial Edition of <i>Family Findings</i> – July 1972	\$5.00	_____
Total Enclosed (All prices include shipping and handling.)	\$ _____	



## Programs at MWTGS Meetings

Mid-West Tennessee Genealogical Society meetings are held the second Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at St. Luke's Episcopal Church at 309 East Baltimore Street in Jackson, TN unless otherwise noted. MWTGS Vice President William Bell "Bill" Hickerson will schedule the monthly programs in 2015.

**October 9, 2014** – Kenneth Newman presented the program "Cemetery Mysteries Solved!?!?" His curiosity led him to discover a local family's story from the 1940s.

**November 13, 2014** – Bill Hickerson told about free websites that are available to search for our ancestors.

**December 11, 2014** – The Christmas reception was enjoyed by members and guests.

**January 8, 2015** – Members and guests will enjoy the annual Show and Tell by showing heirloom items and telling the history or story of each item.

**February 12, 2015** – For Black History Month, MWTGS President Lenny Ellis will present a program titled "Then and Now."

**March 12, 2015** – To be announced

**April 9, 2015** – To be announced

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## Membership Form

Membership dues are \$20 per year (January through December) and include quarterly issues of *Family Findings*. Checks should be payable to Mid-West Tennessee Genealogical Society and mailed with the membership form to:

*Mid-West TN Genealogical Society, 841 Sanford Street, Henderson, TN 38340-2006.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer to receive paperless copies of the quarterlies in pdf format. Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

Membership is for the calendar year of \_\_\_\_\_.