

THE DEATH OF ELIJAH CROWELL
on October 28, 1863 - By David A. Crowell

A neighbor man kind to his family quite dear,
And always to his neighbors a friend evermore,
He was for the South, dear Dixie sweet,
And all his brave countrymen he kindly did greet.

To the army of the South he did not belong,
Not because he thought that it would be wrong,
Neither because he was not a true sage,
But because he was quite over volunteer age.

He had four sons when the war first began,
Who volunteered freely, a nice little band,
And bravely they fought at many times since,
Except one who fell in Liberty's defense.

They have killed them all, the harmless old man, too,
They can only kill one more, that is very true,
He has shared the fate of a brave volunteer,
To take care of his sisters and brother for they feel quite dear.

This good citizen was censured by some,
Who were not friends of their country nor home.
To kill him was their object, they lay around his farm,
And said to kill a secesh would be no harm.

Accordingly, he was driven from his home,
O'er hills and valleys of the did roam,
And, alas, was overtaken, party quite strange,
To whom mercy nor justice did not belong.

They slaughtered him there in the woods all alone,
Except the bloody mob, no mercy was shown.
No man was allowed his body to remove,
But the ladies in the country patriotic did prove.

They carried his body o'er loathsome land,
And delivered it to his children, a heart-broken band.
Heart-broken, indeed, their father to see,
Shot through the heart and bleeding so free.

Thus their last parent was taken away,
For their mother was called in a former day.
She was a good woman, and just before she died
She called her dear children around her bedside.

Good advice then to her children was given
And a kind invitation to meet a mother in heaven.
Soon after she expired, as on her bed she lay,
Her spirit by angels was wafted away.

Now dear children, a word here to you
From a friend that to you will ever prove true,
Your mother's advice, both good and plain,
I hope you'll obey it, that you may meet her again.

Historical Commentary

By Burton F. Whited – Church of Christ preacher – Buffalo Valley, TN 1960
on January 23, 1984 - UCGA, Vol. IX, No. 4 pgs. 100 – 103

Kin of Cass Crowell

The author of this poem, David A. Crowell, was born in Putnam Co., TN in 1840. When the Civil War broke out in 1861, he enlisted in the Confederate Army and was assigned to the 16th Tennessee Infantry, Co., K. This company, called “The Highlanders,” was composed of boys largely from the western end of Putnam Co. It was mustered into service on June 9, 1861, at Camp Trousdale, which was located between Portland and Mitchellville in Sumner Co., TN, very near the KY line. David’s brother (John Crowell), future brother-in-law (John Haggard), and several cousins were also members of this company.

David was captured during, or just after, the Battle of Stones River early in January, 1863, and was held prisoner for about a year. Gaining his freedom either by escape or prisoner exchange, he returned home and soon joined the Confederate service again. This time, however, he was captured, or turned himself in, for on April 21, 1864, he took the Oath of Allegiance to the Union in Nashville. Federal records described him as follows: height 6 feet even, complexion fair, hair dark, and eyes grey. After the war David vanishes from any known extant records. He was rumored to have moved out of state, possible to Alabama.

The subject of the above poem, Elijah C. Crowell, was David’s father. Born in Mecklenburg Co., NC, in 1809, he was the son of Charles and Elizabeth Crowell. Elizabeth was born in Ireland in 1786. The Crowells moved to Putnam Co. (at that time it was called Jackson Co.) in about 1830 and settled somewhere in the Buffalo Valley area. Elijah and his sister, Mary Melinda married a sister and brother from the Young family of John and Matilda Gibson Young, residents of Buffalo Valley. (Annie Young md Elijah Crowell, Annie was the– d/o John Young & Matilda Gibson) & (Allen “Alan” Young md Mary Melinda Crowell – Allen was the s/o John Young & Matilda Gibson). Elijah’s brother, lived out his life at Chestnut Mound, where he is buried in the Methodist Church Cemetery.

Elijah Crowell was about 52 years old when the Civil War began. He was in partnership with Joseph Y. McKee on a 300 acre farm and grist mill before the war. He also served as a Justice of the Peace and sat on the first Putnam Co., Quarterly Court on January 7, 1856.

Elijah’s four sons were William Maffett Crowell – b. ca. 1834; Charles N. Crowell – b. ca. 1836; John Young Crowell – b. ca. 1838; & David A. Crowell – b. ca. 1840. The author is really only referring to the sons who went away to war, because there were also two others at home who were too young: Netherland Cass Crowell – b. ca. 1851; & Adolphia A. Crowell – b. ca. 1858.

Maffett Crowell served in Co., K, 13th Tennessee Cavalry (Gore’s). Charles Crowell served in Co. F, 25th Tennessee Infantry. David and John Crowell both served in Co., K, 16th Tennessee Infantry.

John Crowell was wounded in the head on December 31, 1862, in the Battle of Stones River. He died on January 16, 1863, in a field hospital. In her diary, dated February 6, 1863, Amanda McDowell of White County, TN wrote: “John Crowell is dead. Poor fellow, how sad it makes me to think of all his sufferings. He was wounded in battle. David stayed with him until the last months. I hope and trust he has found that favor in the sight of God which alone can give him rest.” Amanda had taught both David and John in her school, Cumberland Institute, before the war.

After John’s death in battle, Maffett was killed at home by bushwhackers. He had returned there to recover from a wound. At the time of the composition of this poem, which must have been during the war, David evidently thought that Charles had also been killed. Actually, this brother was captured on December 31, 1862, at the Battle of Stones River and remained a prisoner until he was exchanged on May 6, 1863. He then remained with the army until its surrender at Appomattox Courthouse.

At the time of his murder, Elijah had seven dependent children at home: Mary Elizabeth, 20; Matilda Frances, 17; Rhoda Sildona, 15; Martha Pillona, 15, twin of Rhoda; Netherland Cass, 12; Queen Ann, 11; and Adolphia A., 5. Mary Elizabeth was the great-grandmother of this commentator.

Elijah was killed by bushwhackers led by Capt. Prettyman "Purt" Jones. Amanda McDowell wrote in her diary on August 31, 1863; "I heard today that Purt Jones is captain of the bushwhackers...I never had much faith in his moral principles...Fayette (Amanda's brother) wrote to us about their deserting (the Confederate Army) and taking eleven others with them." Later, on February 5, 1864, Amanda wrote again in her diary: "I am uneasy about Fayette. He and David Crowell have been here since Friday till yesterday. They left to go to the command which was to meet at Hilham tomorrow, but the country was alive with Yankees. They ran into them at White Plains and run a narrow risk of their lives, barely escaping. They came back here today. They and Mr. Sullivan started again this evening. They say it is Stokes' men, they always do more mischief than any others. They killed several men, one after they had taken him. I wish Fayette was with the army. Perhaps they suffer there, but that is nothing to some thins. David is very much like himself, but I was shocked to hear his sentiments about killing bushwhackers, as he calls them. **THEY HAD DONE HIM A GREAT DEAL OF INJURY. KILLED HIS FATHER, BROTHER, UNCLE, AND OTHER FRIENDS,** (capitals those of this commentator) but it is hard telling who was the aggressor, for he has killed some of them. He is wrathful at Jones' boys, says they are the cause of his troubles. I do not intend to uphold Jones' boys in what they are doing, but there are always two sides to a question."

David's mother, Anna Young Crowell, died before the U.S. Putnam Co., census of 1860.

The poem was among the effects left by Parthena T. Haggard Elrod, (Mrs. Isaac Elrod) upon her death in 1974 at the age of 91. She was a niece of David Crowell, who wrote the poem. While a student at Tennessee Tech in the early 1960's, Mr. Whited was personally acquainted with two daughters of the Jones' boys mentioned in the quotations from Amanda McDowell's diary. They were in their 80's at the time. There was no lingering animosity between them over the incident related in the poem and diary between their ancestors. To quote Mr. Whited, "In fact we were quite on friendly terms with each other, since I was also the minister of the church where they were members."

Story of Capt. Prettyman Jones & Family

By Mitch Jones

Upper Cumberland Genealogical Association, Inc.

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UCGA, Vol. IX, No. 4 contained an article on Elijah Crowell. That article, and another article by the same author, made three allegations against Capt. Purt. Those three allegations were: First, that Elijah Crowell was killed by bushwhackers led by Capt. Purt; second, that "David Crowell was robbed of his gold by Capt. Purt;" and third, that "Capt. Purt in some way managed to take illegal possession of Elijah's land.:

To refute the first allegation I offer the following. At the time of Elijah Crowell's death, 28 October 1863, Capt. Purt was a private in the Union Army. I believe it is well established and quite illogical for a private of seven days service to lead an Army unit. Also, the author based this allegation on a statement by Amanda McDowell in her diary on 31 August 1863. Amanda wrote, "I heard today that Purt Jones is Captain of the bushwhackers." This statement is certainly circumstantial evidence, and John Cerny and Arlene Eakle in their *Ancestry's guide to Research* state, "Favor primary over secondary sources and direct over circumstantial evidence." "Primary sources containing circumstantial evidence are less credible." "Least acceptable are secondary sources providing only circumstantial evidence." Certainly the statement by Amanda McDowell was a secondary source providing only circumstantial evidence.

To refute the second allegation that David Crowell was robbed of his gold by Capt. Purt, it certainly seems strange that a Confederate private would have gold in 1863 or 1864. The Confederates did not pay in gold

and, as reflected in the questionnaires of Civil War veterans, they were rarely paid. As one veteran stated, he was only paid one time in four years of service.

It is only necessary to review the Putnam County, TN deeds to refute the third allegation that Capt. Purt illegally obtained the land of Elijah Crowell. Elijah was in partnership with Joseph McKee in 300 acres of land before the Civil War. The Putnam Co. deeds show the land of Joseph Y. McKee being transferred to Henry Bartlett, Josiah Jared and James L. Exum. Also, a search of the Putnam Co. deeds prior to 1890 reveals no evidence that any of the land owned by Capt. Purt had ever belonged to Elijah Crowell.

Allen “Alan” Young = His farm joined to Virgil Timothy Denny’s farm.

John Young - b. ca. 1788 – d. 1835, Nashville, TN *of yellow fever.*

md **Matilda Gibson** – b. ca. 1790 – d. 1870

...**Allen “Alan” Young** – b. ca. 1814 – d. ca. 1860 – md **Mary Melinda Crowell**

Listed in the 1850 census as living in the 13th District of Putnam Co., TN.

...**John Madison Young** – b. ca. 1834

...**Lewis Hartford Young** – b. ca. 1835 – md **Jane Nichols** – b. 18 July 1836 – d. 16 April 1870

...**Matilda Young** – b. ca. 1838

...**Robert Young** – b. ca. 1840

...**Churchwell Young** = b. ca. 1842

...**Adolphia Young** – b. 1845

...**Elizabeth Young** – b. ca. 1846

...**Marley Young** – b. ca. 1850

...**Adolphia Young** – b. ca. 1816 – d. 5 July 1852, nr. the Wood River 100 miles out of Winter Quarters – Adolphia Young died of cholera.

md **Rhoda Jared** 26 July 1836, Jackson Co.,

TN - b. 24 October 1820, Putnam Co., TN – d. 29 March 1899, Provo, UT

Mary Melinda Crowell Young – b. 15 October 1817 – d. 16 May 1891 ?

(1850 census 13th Civil Dist., Jackson Co., TN: Dwl: 251 – **Allen Young** is head of household, 36 yrs. old, TN, md to **Mary**, 37 yrs. old, NC. Children: John, 16 yrs. old; Lewis, 15 yrs. old; Matilda, 12 yrs. old; Robert, 10 yrs. old; Churchwell, 8 yrs. old; Adolphia, 5 yrs. old; Elizabeth, 4 yrs. old & Marley young, 1 yr. old. All born in TN).

Chapter 15

Young, John

b. ca. 1788 – d. 1835, Nashville, TN *of yellow fever.*

md Matilda Gibson – b. ca. 1790 – d. 1870

...**Allen “Alan” Young** – b. ca. 1814 – d. ca. 1860 – md **Mary Melinda Crowell**

Listed in the 1850 census as living in the 13th District of Putnam Co., TN.

...**Adolphia Young** – b. ca. 1816 – d. 5 July 1852, nr. the Wood River 100 miles out of Winter Quarters – md **Rhoda Jared** 26 July 1836, Jackson Co., TN - b. 24 October 1820, Putnam Co., TN – d. 29 March 1899, Provo, UT
Rhoda Jared Young md 2nd in Salt Lake City, UT, Alfred Douglas Young –
Cousin of her husband’s. Adolphia Young died of cholera.

*See Story of Rhoda Jared Young. *See Chapter 8.

...**John Harman Young** – b. ca. 1818 – d. ca. 1860 –

He was killed by bushwhackers.

...**Annie Young** – b. 25 March 1819, TN – d. 5 October 1859, TN

md **Elijah Cass Crowell**, b. ca. 1809, Mecklenburg Co., NC – d. 28 October 1863, TN,

s/o Charles and Elizabeth Crowell

Elijah was killed by bushwhackers.

(1850 census 13 Civil Dist., Jackson Co. TN – **Elijah C. Crowell** is head of household, 41 yrs. old, NC md to **Anna**, 28 yrs. old, TN. Children: **Maffett**, 16 yrs. old; **Charles** 14 yrs. old; **John** 12 yrs. old; **David**, 10 yrs. old; **Mary**, 7 yrs. old; **Frances**, 4 yrs. old; **Sildona**, 1 yr. old & **Pilona Crowell**, 1 yr. old).

Chapter 8

Moses Jared Sr. & Malinda Byrne

Rhoda Byrne Jared – b. 24 October 1820, Putnam Co., TN –
d. 29 March 1899, Provo, UT -
md 26 July 1836, Jackson Co., TN, 1st **Adolphia Young** –
b. ca. 1816 - d. 5 July 1852, nr. the Wood River 100 miles out of Winter
Quarters md Salt Lake City, UT, 2nd Alfred Douglas Young –
Alfred was her husband's cousin.

Elijah C. Crowell md Annie Young.

Mary Melinda Crowell md Allen "Alan" Young

Elijah C. and Mary Melinda Crowell are brother and sister.

Allen "Alan" Young and Annie Young are brother and sister.

Elijah C. Crowell is the son of Charles and Elizabeth Crowell.

David A. Crowell is the son of Elijah C. Crowell and Annie Young.

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