

Putnam County, Tennessee, 1850 – 1970
By Mary Jean DeLozier

From the time that the first Putnam Countians had made land purchases, the area had needed lawyers, and as the county's economy became more complex, it demanded more attorneys. Harvey H. Dillard and Holland Denton set up law offices in Cookeville in the 1850's. Barristers W. C. Cullom, W. Goodpasture, and L.J. Lowe advertised in the Cookeville Times in 1858. Some of the lawyers practicing in Putnam County in the 1870's and 1880's were Alvin W. Boyd, Houston S. Boyd, Walton Smith, Alfred Algood, **Thompson Luther Denny**, Robert B. Capshaw, **Henry P. Davis**, Jesse Arnold, and George H. Morgan. *Thompson Luther was the s/o **Jonothan Denny** & Agnes Thompson. Pg. 69*

Brisk business activity from 1890 to 1920 increased the need for lawyers, and new legal firms opened throughout the county. Walter S. McClain, George H. Morgan, Harrison G. Morgan, Henry P. Davis, **Thompson Luther Denny**, W.G. Curried, Robert B. Capshaw, Holland Denton, John S. Denton, J.W. Puckett, **A.N. Ford, Grover C. Boyd, Oscar King Holladay, H.S. Barnes, and Linnie M. Bullington** were Cookeville Barristers. *Pg. 132*

Through many community leaders now urged women to exercise the franchise, there was considerable apprehension over women holding political offices. The Herald carried letters, reprints from other newspapers, and editorials reflecting this fear. **Mary F. Denny** was the first woman to run for elective office in Putnam County. In May of 1921 she announced as candidate for the Democratic nomination for Putnam County trustee. Mrs. Denny had held clerical and secretarial positions in the postal service, Cookeville town government, and at TPI; but in her campaign she found it necessary to explain that she needed the public office because she was the sole support of her invalid husband and son and to deny a rumor that her husband received a pension. She asked, "Is there any reason why I should be defeated just because I am a woman? I am asking for this office in order that I can better care for a man who cannot care for himself." Mrs. Denny won the nomination and the election and served two terms as trustee. *Pg. 167 – Printed in the Herald – 25 August 1921 – pg. 1.*

"I am coming home some time next spring when we get the Black Republicans all whipped out and all the fuss is settled," **Thomas C. Thompson** assured his wife July of 1861. *s/o Esquire Looney Sr. & Arena Sarah (Davis) Thompson Thomas C. Thompson married Martha Davis – pg. 38 – Reprinted in the Herald , 13 May 1909 – pg. 2*

Because of its location near the Caney Fork River and the fertility of its soil, Buffalo Valley was also a thriving center of trade after the Civil War. Milt and Joe Bartlett, **Wade and Joe Jones**, John T. Askey, R.S. Alcorn, J.N. Maddux, and

F.P. McGinnis were among its early merchants. North of Buffalo Valley, M.E. and J. H. Jared operated a store in the Pekin community. Pg. 65

Henry P. Davis Obt.
Putnam County Herald Newspaper, Cookeville, TN

DAVIS, HENRY P.: Putnam County Loses One of Her Best Known Citizens - Henry P. Davis died at his home in this city last Sunday afternoon from a complication of diseases, his fatal illness being brought on from exposure and getting wet while attending the funeral of Capt. Walton Smith two weeks ago. While all knew he was very low, the news of his death was a great shock to our citizens. He was buried Monday evening with Masonic rites, Rev. W. H. Carr assisting, in the presence of an immense concourse of friends and neighbors, who came to pay their last tribute of respect to the honored dead. Henry P. Davis was born in September, 1844, in what is now the First district of Putnam county, but was then a part of White county. When the Civil war broke out, although only a boy, he enlisted in Capt. Shaw's Co. 25th Tennessee Infantry, serving his full term of twelve months, and re-enlisted in Dibrell's cavalry, with which command he served until the end of the war, participating in many battles and campaigns, and making a fine reputation as a soldier. He mustered out at Washington, Ga., in May, 1865. After the war he returned home and worked for some time at the oil wells on Spring Creek, earning money with which he paid his way through Cumberland Institute, a school then flourishing in White county. In 1870 he was elected county court clerk of Putnam county, serving efficiently for eight years. He was a member of the legislature in 1881-2, retiring with added honors. Early in life he professed religion and joined the Cumberland Presbyterian church, since which time he had been an active member, and one who enjoyed a happy christian experience. He was an elder in the church at the time of his death. In the 70's he married Lydia Solomon, who survives him, as do also three daughters, Mesdames. R. P. Morgan and Whitley Hyder, and Miss Maggie; and six sons, O. M., Lem H., Roscoe, Edgar, Will and Newton. All were at his bedside but two, Lem and Edgar. He also leaves two sisters, Mesdames. Wm. Huddleston and Leroy Carr of this county, and three brothers Stephen D. and J. Richey of Texas, and John, who resides near Cookeville, as well as many other relatives, the family being large and influential. Henry P. Davis was one of the most widely known and best loved citizens of this section, and his death causes a loss that can never be filled. He was a model citizen, loyal friend and neighbor, a loving husband and indulgent father. The Herald unites with the entire community in extending heartfelt sympathy to the bereaved ones. [Date 3/25/1903, Vol. I, No. 7, Page 8]

U S Census 1900 – Putnam Co., TN, Dist. 1

Dwl: 479 Family: 489

Henry P. Davis Head W M November 1846 53 Married (# of yrs. married, 29) Attorney TN TN TN

Liddie Ann Wife W F September 1849 50 Married (# of yrs. married, 29) TN TN TN

Lemuel H. Son W M February 1875 25 Single Printer TN TN TN

Beulah A. Dau W F March 1880 20 Single At School TN TN TN

Maggie A. Dau W F May 1882 18 Single At School TN TN TN

Willie C Son W M September 1884 15 Single Day Laborer TN TN TN

Newton A. Son W M December 1886 13 Single At School TN TN TN

Henry Polk Davis – Lt. Co C 13 Regt. Tennessee Cavalry CSA

b. 14 November 1844

d. 22 March 1903

Buried: Cookeville City Cemetery, Cookeville, Putnam Co., TN

Stephen D. Davis Obt.

Putnam County Herald Newspaper, Cookeville, TN

DAVIS, STEPHEN D.: New reaches us of the recent death of Stephen D. Davis at his home near Eliasville, Texas. He was a brother of Henry P. Davis, and formerly well known in Putnam County. [Date 1/4/1912, Vol. X, No. 1, Page 5

Walton Smith Obt.

Putnam County Herald Newspaper, Cookeville, TN

SMITH, WALTON: Capt. Walton Smith is dead. About 9 o'clock Monday night his noble spirit took its flight to realms of eternal bliss. While we all knew there was very small chance for his recovery, the announcement that Capt. Smith was dead cast a pall over the entire community, and with hushed voice the the news was spread from neighbor to neighbor. The funeral was held at the Cumberland Presbyterian church Tuesday afternoon at 3, and despite the pouring rain, the building was crowded to its capacity with people who desired to pay tribute to the dead. The Masons and Odd Fellows marched in a body from their halls to the residence and thence to the church, and the beautiful service of the latter order was read, after which Rev. Zeigle made some very appropriate remarks. The remains were laid to rest in the family lot near the residence of the deceased. We hope to be able to give a sketch of Capt. Smith's life in the next issue of the Herald. The Herald extends sincere sympathy to the bereaved family, both for itself and its every reader. [Date 3/11/1903, Vol. I, No. 5, Page 1]

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