

**BEFORE THE RAILROAD, BEFORE US 70-N,  
BEFORE I-40, THERE WAS WALTON ROAD**

Herald Citizen Newspaper: 150<sup>th</sup> Putnam Anniversary  
Sunday, September 5, 2004

12<sup>th</sup> Street and East 10<sup>th</sup> in Cookeville follow Walton Route: by W. Calvin Dickinson

Walton Road played a major part in the settlement of Putnam County and the Upper Cumberland region.

Although not the first road through the area and although it followed older paths at several points, it was important because it was built at the time when settlers were ready to move into and across the area, and it provided a roadway adequate enough and secure enough to entice settlers to make the journey.

The road was named for William Walton of Carthage, one of the persons who surveyed and built it and one who profited from the road's traffic. Walton had come to Tennessee from North Carolina about 1785, and had received an original land grant of 3,840 acres in Smith County from North Carolina.

His land was along the north bank of the Cumberland River where the city of Carthage is situated; he was foresighted enough to give 50 acres for the location of the city, which later would be the county seat.

In 1799 the General Assembly of Tennessee appointed Walton, along with William Martin and Robert Kyle, to establish a new east-west road. Finished in 1801 between Southwest Point (Kingston) and the Cumberland River (Carthage), this would be the final Walton Road, a "super highway" over 100 miles long through the wilderness which would connect East Tennessee to Middle Tennessee. It was officially named Cumberland Turnpike, but it was always popularly called Walton Road.

The new road was more modern than nay of the tracks of earlier times. Fifteen-feet wide with all stumps removed, it was to be leveled on the sides of hills and was to have bridges or causeways built at the streams. The road was described by one traveler "as broad and commodious as those in the environs of Philadelphia."

Milemarkers were blazed on trees or signs every three miles, and tollgates and "stand" (inns) were established along the route. Tolls were to be \$1.50 for a four-wheeled carriage, 37 ½ cents for a cart and team, 75 cents for a wagon and team, 12 ½ cents for a man and horse, and 6 ½ cents for each for slaves and extra horses.

Putnam County, with its boundary just east of Chestnut Mound, contained more miles of Walton Road than the other three counties it crossed. The road grad generally parallels the present US Highway 70 N on the ridges in the western part of the county, and it runs with the railroad in the eastern part. One can observe the old grade veering off from 70 N when the modern highway is not right on top of the old road.

The **Raulston Stand** site on US 70 N, located east of Chestnut Mound in Putnam County, is marked with a bronze plaque on a boulder. **Built and operated by James Raulston** soon after the Walton Road opened, this stand sheltered many travelers, including the three President from Tennessee. James McKinley bought the stand in the 1820's, added a post office and changed the name to Mount Richardson. The McKinley family operated the stand until the 1920's, when it was torn down.

Later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century one of the dramatic events of Walton Road history occurred near **Raulston Stand**. In 1881, the Nashville stage was robbed by three masked men – “Bug” Hunt and Edwards boys. Taking several hundred dollars from the passengers, the bandits fled into the nearby woods. Hunt was captured after eluding the sheriff's posse for several days, and he served some years in the penitentiary. The Edward brothers were never apprehended.

Running north of Baxter, Walton Road passed by Blackburn Springs (Double Springs) and the Crawford house, a two-story log structure from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This house stands between the Walton Road on its front side and the railroad on its back side. Just beyond the house on the east the railroad track cut through the road.

Cookeville was established half a century after the Walton Road was built, so there is little relationship between the two. The railroad, which came some 90 years later, does run through the town. Walton Road ran north of where the Courthouse Square now is located, along the present 12<sup>th</sup> Street past the campus of Tennessee Tech, and then east along 10<sup>th</sup> Street. Near the street called Old Kentucky Road, the Walton Road crossed this north/south stock road, built about 1814.

Old Kentucky Road began in Maysville and ran to Huntsville, AL, in the south, using the route of the Chickamauga Trail from the Kentucky border to Putnam County. This road served as a commercial route for stock traders. Its path is marked with plaques at some points in Putnam, White and Warren Counties, and its grade can still be observed at some places.

White Plains was an early stand on the Walton Road in Putnam County. Established by Daniel Alexander, it was purchased by William Quarles, a revolutionary soldier who moved to the area from Virginia in 1809. The stand also served as a general store, a blacksmith shop and a post office.

Quarles was the most prominent early settler in the area until he was killed by an outlaw some miles from his home. The enlarged and bricked structure at White Plains serves as a home today, with the Walton Road as a street in front of the house.

Going east, the next sharp ascent after Chestnut Mound is east of Cookeville, Monterey, 13 miles east of Cookeville, is the top of the plateau, about 900 feet higher. This was a long and strenuous ascent or descent for wagons and animals along the Walton Road.

The Moravians in 1799 described the road, before Walton improved it, as “with steep declivities at the side...The road on this mountain range winds in every direction.”

The road went through modern Shenandoah subdivision of east Cookeville; one can still view the old road grade behind a row of house on Vista Road. Then the Walton joined Buck Mountain Road on a fairly level stretch toward Forks of the Road (Brotherton). At Brotherton the road made a “Y” then passed the Brotherton Cemetery and climbed a steep grade to cross the railway.

On the rough terrain between Brotherton and Monterey the Walton is usually under the newer road, but at numerous points one can observe it veering off to the side.

Sehon Stand was built along this rugged stretch of the road; today the site is marked by a brick chimney standing in a level area overgrown with sumac bushes. Established about 1806 at a very high point on the road, the stand served many travelers, including Andrew Jackson.

One anecdote pictured Jackson standing by the cook holding his watch to time the boiling eggs.

East of Schon’s, Standing Stone was a monolith well-known to traveling Indians and to migrating settlers. It was a towering sandstone monument on the side of Walton Road. Its shape and size are disputed, but it was a significant symbol to the Indians. The stone was blown up by the railroad company during track construction, but its impressive base can be observed under the tracks.

East of Monterey a landmark that was famous among early travelers was Flat Rock. Moravians in 1799 described “the Flat Rock...a great rock shelf that here juts out into the open.” It was already “a well known camping spot.” This is a huge outcropping of sandstone near the point where the railway passes under I-40 at a curve of the interstate. The rock obviously impressed early travelers, as it does modern motorist. Travelers in wagons camped in the flat area west of the rock, and the rock was used to denote the campaign area.

The Walton Road served the traveling public into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and its roadbed provided the route for newer roads until the building of the interstate highway system in the 1950’s and 60’s. The Tennessee Central Railroad, built in the 1890’s, followed alongside the Walton Road, particularly in Cumberland County, and one way to trace the old road today is to find the abandoned railroad bed.

US 70 N, built in the 1920’s also followed the Walton Road, and in western Putnam County and eastern Smith County, the modern highway many times was put down on top of the old road. Then the Walton Road was abandoned, and it can only be seen today as “ditches” in the woods adjacent to the railroad and the highway.

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### **THE OLD WALTON ROAD**

A Historical Sketch

Herald Citizen Newspaper, Cookeville, TN: Thursday, 30 July 1931, pg. 7

The following information on the Old Walton Road and Captain William Walton has been furnished by Mrs. S. Hayden Young, Historian of the Old Walton Road Chapter DAR of Cookeville, by Ernest H. Boyd who says his data is from the "*Life of Jefferson Dillard Goodpasture*, by A. V. and W. H. Goodpasture, entirely dependable authority.

The sketch was based on information given by Ernest H. Boyd from the family records of his great-great grandfather James Goodpasture. Ernest was also the great-great-grandson of William Pennington Quarles. His information was given to his cousin's wife, Effie (Boyd) Young, wife of Stephen Hayden Young, great-grandson of William Pennington Quarles.

Of the Walton Road he writes: There had long been a trace across the mountains from Southwest Point to the Cumberland Settlements. Francis Bailey traveled it in 1796 and has left an interesting account of his journey. But at the time the Goodpastures crossed the mountain a wagon road had been recently marked out under authority of the General Assembly between Southwest Point and the mouth of Caney Fork river where Carthage was afterwards established. The work was the enterprise of Captain William Walton (1760-1816) a native of Bertie County, North Carolina, who had enlisted at the age of seventeen, as a private in the Revolutionary War, and served until its close in 1783, coming out with the rank of Captain. He emigrated to the Cumberland Settlement in 1785 and located his military land warrant on the north bank of the Cumberland River, at its confluence with the Caney Fork, in 1786. The road which still bears his name, was about one hundred miles in length, and contained four "stands" for the accommodation of travelers. Coming west the first of these was at Kimbrough's, on the eastern foot of the mountain plateau in Cumberland County; the third, at White Plains, in Putnam County, on the western foot of the mountain; and the fourth, near Pekin, also in Putnam County. The road was completed in 1801."

In the fall of 1802 Michaux writes of this road.

"The road that crosses this part of the Indian territory cuts through the mountains in Cumberland; it is as broad and commodious as those in the environs of Philadelphia, in consequence of the amazing number of emigrants that travel through it to settle in the western country. It is notwithstanding, in some places very rugged, but nothing near so much as the one that leads from Strasford to Bedford in Pennsylvania. We met an emigrant family in a carriage, followed by their negroes on foot, that had performed their journey without accident. Little boards, painted black and nailed upon trees, indicate to travelers the distance they have to go."

All contained in the foregoing is absolutely accurate and dependable. In 1800 my great-great-grandfather, James Goodpasture and his family (from Virginia), crossed this wilderness, traveling the Walton Road (which was not then completed) for Southwest Point to White Plains, thence to Hilham, where he located. At the time the road was neither so good nor so safe as it was when Michaux traveled it, although, even then, it was not considered prudent to travel it, except in parties, on account of roving bands of Indians, one of which bands of Indians they met before they reached Southwest Point.

Now as to the location of Southwest Point. I know definitely the location of Southwest Point. It was a Federal Fort at the junction of the Clinch and Holston Rivers, on the eastern border of the Indian Reservation. The place was then in Knox County, about a mile from Kingston, now the county site of Roane County. One reason that I know the location of this old Indian Fort, Southwest Point, is that James Goodpasture, to whom I have referred, when he came with his family from Virginia, first located in the neighborhood of this fort, from which place in 1800 he moved to what is now the Holham community of Overton County. He was a personal friend of Captain William Walton.

So you can see that the Walton Road extended from Southwest Point or fort, near Kingston, to the mouth of Caney Fork river where Carthage was afterwards established, and was about one hundred miles in length.

The reason so many Virginia and North Carolina emigrants first located in the vicinity of Kingston, was on account of the protection afforded from the Indians by the Federal Fort, Southwest Point, near Kingston. As conditions grew safer, most of them pressed their way westward, as did the family I have referred to.

### **OLD WALTON ROAD CHAPTER DAR MARKERS**

Herald Citizen Newspaper, Cookeville, TN  
October 22, 1936

The Old Walton Road Chapter of the DAR this week dedicated markers at two sites of historical significance to Putnam County.

The first was placed on the Knoxville Highway east of town directing motorists to the White Plains home and resting place of William P. Quarles.

Quarles was one of the first residents of the county, coming here after serving as an officer for the colonies in the Revolutionary War.

His plantation at White Plains was also the site of the first post office in the region.

The second marker was set on the Nashville Highway near the home of Mary Lowe Jared where the **Raulston Stand** once served as a tavern, inn and trading place for pioneers in the area.

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