

## **BUFFALO VALLEY HOME ON LIST AFTER 29 YEARS OF RESTORATION**

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H-C Photos/Camille Fliss

Story by Jill Thomas: Herald Citizen, Staff

When **Ned Cowen** settled down in the Buffalo Valley region of Putnam County in 1769 he built a small log cabin. His descendants added a bigger log cabin, a barn, a spring house, wash house, weigh house, slave quarters and, continually, dry-stacked stone walls as the land was cleared.

In a 200-year span, that original one-room cabin served first as the family home, then as a kitchen, then as the slave quarters for the two "house" slaves, then it became a storage room and, most recently, a guest room for family and history buffs.

The limestone foundations of the log cabins, as well as the wide plank floors, log walls, hand-hewn stairs, limestone and sandstone chimneys, fireplaces and rafters of the buildings have survived two centuries of human habitation, storms, earthquakes, disuse, neglect and even rehabilitation.

The 40-foot logs of tulip poplar that are 30-inches wide and eight inches deep still run solidly through the entire length of two or three rooms. The limestone that was used for outdoor steps and for the chimneys for the big house are as solid now as they were when Putnam County was just coming into existence.

And now those log cabins plus the rest of the 167 acres comprising the Cowen Farmstead are to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

"I think this is the only residence in Putnam County to be on the register," said **Randal Williams**, the Historic Preservation Specialist for the Upper Cumberland Development District.

Commercial buildings in Putnam County on the register include the Depot, the Arcade Building on the Square, the Hardy photography studio, and Henderson Hall at TTU.

From 1769 until 1976 the Cowen Farmstead property was passed down from descendant to descendant of **Ned Cowen's son, Matt**. It may be because the farm stayed in the family that that so much of the original farm is intact.

"When the family replaced or fixed things they usually just threw the old material behind the house," said **Dick Fahey** who, with his wife **Ellen**, bought the place in 1976 and have spent the past 29 years restoring it with Ellen choosing the antiques that match the home's history and decorating the rooms in a befitting style.

When the Faheys bought the farm it was suffering from years of neglect and **Gertrude** and **Clay Farmer**, the last descendants of Cowen to own the property, were well up in years.

**Dick** and **Ellen** restored the exterior of the farm using photos of the "big" house which had replaced the original log cabin as the living quarters for the families.

"The property went through a major change in 1857 when the owners put siding on the log cabins and added gingerbread detail work," **Dick Fahey** said.

In addition it was at that time that the family added a long room to connect the "new" log cabin to the old one.

"When we bought the place most of the gingerbread trim had either decayed or been taken down. The owners told us they took off some of the corner brackets because they were just too hard to paint.

"Fortunately, they didn't throw them away. They just piled them out back,' he said.

So **Dick** and **Ellen** were able to find and use much of the original gingerbread trim.

Similarly, when the original chimneys broke away from the log cabins during an earthquake in the 1800s, the homeowners left the huge original limestone chimneys on the property after they stopped using them.

Dick and Ellen were able to repair and attach them again them.

"They were still straight as rulers and indestructible. We had to clean out decades of soot and ashes, but the chimneys were, and are, in great working order," Dick said.

Likewise the **Faheys** were able to dig up the hand wrought fireplace and cooking tools that had been made by the local blacksmith a couple of hundred years ago and then thrown out back when newer models looked good to the descendants of the original owners.

Digging things up became an ongoing treasure hunt for the couple.

So when they dug up what they thought were arrow heads, they were pleased but not surprised. After all, Middle Tennessee was once Indian country.

"We knew that **Ned Cowen** had been killed by Indians in 1796," Fahey said.

"And we knew this was big Indian territory with Cherokees and Creek Indians.

But when they took the "arrow heads" to experts they found out that they had been handling something called a "projectile point," a weapon blade that predates arrowheads and were used as spear or knife points by inhabitants of their property 10,000 years ago.

"That prehistoric component was part of the attraction that made this property so acceptable to the review board of the National Register," Williams said.

As the **Faheys** saw how much history was included in their property they began to think of it as a sort of living history that should be preserved. **Dick Fahey** talked to his friend history professor **Calvin Dickinson** and Dickinson put him in contact with **Randy Williams** at the Upper Cumberland Development District.

Williams worked with state preservation specialist **Claudette Stager** who came out and sent other experts out to take a look at the property.

"My job was to take Dick's work and double check it and go a little deeper with the research," Williams said.

"Many people don't realize that this is a service that the Upper Cumberland Development District does for free for its residents," he said.

**Williams** worked with the **Faheys** to accumulate the evidence that showed the remarkable history of the old homestead.

He went with Dick to present that evidence to the review board at the Tennessee Historical Commission and the state historic Preservation Office in Nashville.

The review board included archeologists, architects, historians, business people, anthropologists, and others. And after the presentation they recommended that the Matt Cowen Farmstead be listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

That recommendation has been sent to Washington and the final approval should be sent back in the next few weeks.

"We're confident this will be approved by Washington," **Williams** said.

"It's extremely rare that they do not take the state's recommendation."

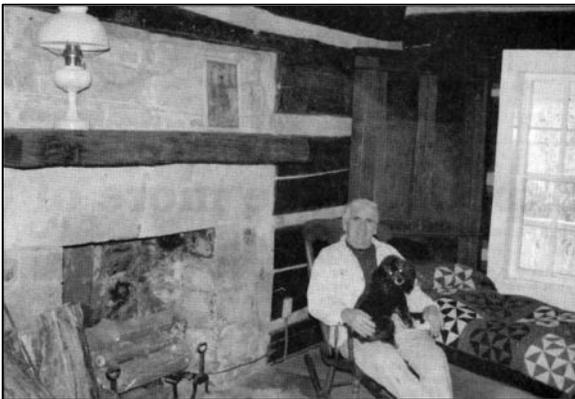
For **Dick** and **Ellen** the placement of the farmstead on the national register will be a continuing protection for the property.

And does that mean they have finished with their rehabilitation?

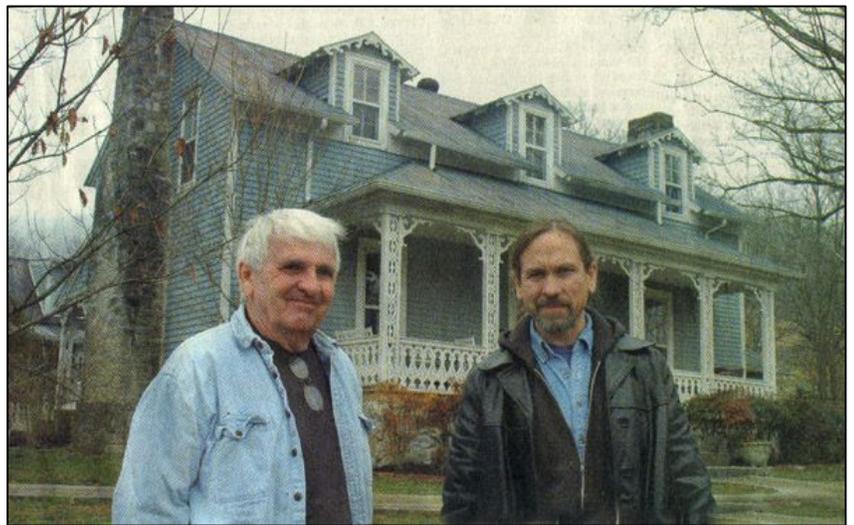
"Well, it's a little like owning a big ship," **Dick Fahey** said.

"You just keep starting over."

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Fahey at Home: Dick Fahey sits in the corner of one of the rooms of the "big" log cabin built more than 200 years ago. The logs are tulip poplar and the fireplace is original to the home.



Property owner Richard "Dick" Fahey and preservation specialist Randy Williams take a moment to discuss the listing of the Fahey's home on the National Register of Historic Places.



The family farm after 150 years: The Dutch style barn with a long sloping roof and "walk through" passage through its center was probably built by Cowen descendants around 1901. The House itself, located halfway up the hill behind the barn was placed there because the air was considered healthier the higher you went. But farmers were practical and didn't want to build too high up and so used the hill tops as pasture land.

## COWEN FAMILY

Siftings from Putnam County Tennessee by Mary Hopson. Pg. 172  
By William D. Halfacre

**Alexander Matthew Cowen** was born on April 8<sup>th</sup>, 1850, the first child of **William Wade Cowen** and **Louisa Hogan Cowen**.

They lived on the Cowen homestead on Indian Creek between Buffalo Valley and Granville. This is now the 9<sup>th</sup> District of Putnam County (formerly the 12<sup>th</sup> District but listed variously in past census reports as the 8<sup>th</sup> District of Smith County, or the 15<sup>th</sup> District of Jackson County, TN due to the proximity of these).

**William Wade Cowen**, his father, was born November 26<sup>th</sup>, 1825, and died June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1891, the son of **Matthew Cowen** and **Catron Trousdale Cowen**. Matthew Cowen, born in 1776 and died March 21<sup>st</sup>, 1865, was a captain in the war of 1812 and at the battle of New Orleans and the son of **Ned Cowan**, on the "Longhunters" who explored much of middle Tennessee in 1769 with **Uriah Stone**, **Robert Crockett** (an older relative of Davy Crockett), Kaspar Mansker, Obadiah Terrell, Abraham Bledsoe, and others.

**Catron Trousdale**, born December 19<sup>th</sup>, 1782, was the daughter of **James Trousdale** who was born in Scotland and became a North Carolina Captain in the Revolutionary War under **Francis Marion**, the "Swamp Fox". **James** was married to **Elizabeth Dobbins Trousdale**. Another of the eight children, **William Trousdale**, 1790-1872, was a military man who was elected Governor of Tennessee in 1849. Catron and Matthew were married in Sumner County on March 8<sup>th</sup>, 1800. The city of Gallatin is within what was once the Trousdale farm.

**Alexander Matthew Cowen** married **Celina Apple** on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 1870, in Smith County. Celina Apple was born on March 4<sup>th</sup>, 1848, the daughter of **George Washington Apple, Jr.**, 1820 – 1882 and **Mary Ellen McDonald Apple**. George was the son of **George Washington Apple, Sr.** (born 1792) and **Mary Polly McDonald** (born 1797), who was the daughter of **William McDonald**, one of Smith County's first settlers, and his wife, **Elizabeth Sadler McDonald** daughter of **Mr. and Mrs. John Sadler**. **William** and **Elizabeth McDonald** were from Virginia.

**George Washington Apple, Sr.**, was born in 1792, the son of **Daniel Apple**, 1761 – 1849, who was the son of **Johan Adam Apple**, 1734 – 1801, who was the son of **Thomas Apple**, 1710 – 1775.

**Alexander** and **Celina Cowen** had eight children: **James Cowen**, born 1872, **Edward Cowen** born 1873, **Louisa Cowen**, born 1875, **Wade Hampton Cowen**, born July 14, 1878, **George Losco Cowen**, born March 9<sup>th</sup> 1880, **Mary Birchia Cowen**, born February 1883, **Ira Cowen**, born April 1885, and **Lillie Cowen** April 1890. **Celina Apple Cowen** died June 14<sup>th</sup> 1902. **Alexander Matthew Cowen** died on his 78<sup>th</sup> birthday, April 8<sup>th</sup>, 1928. They are buried near many of their children and foreparents in the Cowen cemetery off Halfacre Road on part of the old Cowen homestead. **George Losco Cowen, Sr.**, was born March 9<sup>th</sup>, 1880, and married **Geneva Pearl Young**, born October 21<sup>st</sup>, 1886. **Geneva** was the daughter of **George H. Young**, 1864 – 1935, the daughter of **John A. Harris**, 1829 – 1926 and **H. M. Harris**. **George H. Young** was the son of **Isaac George Young** 1818 – 1884, and **Elizabeth Moore Young**, 1822 – 1879, the daughter of **Richard Moore** and **Elizabeth McKinley Moore**. **Isaac George Young** was the son of **Samuel Young**, 1787 – 1857, who was the son of **William Young** and **Elizabeth Huff Young**.

**William Young**, 1744 – 1818, married **Elizabeth Huff**, 1754 – 1819. They came to this area from Virginia.



William Young  
b. 15 April 1744  
d. 31 October 1818, TN  
Wife: Elizabeth Huff  
Buried: Buried: Young Bartlett Cemetery,  
Maddux Hollow, Putnam Co., TN  
Rev'l War: Lieut. VA & NC Militia

Elizabeth (Huff) Young  
b. 27 October 1754, Western Virginia Territory  
d. 22 May 1819, Jackson Co., TN  
Husband: William Young  
Buried: Young Bartlett Cemetery,  
Maddux Hollow, Putnam Co., TN





Chapter 7: Some Old Houses: Pictorial History of Putnam County Tennessee by 1<sup>st</sup> American Bank, Cookeville, TN: pg. 183

This house is possibly the oldest one in Putnam County and is believed to have been built prior to 1780, probably in 1769, by **Matthew Cowan or Cowen** born March 18, 1777 in Tennessee and died March 21, 1865 in Putnam County, TN who married **Catherine Trousdale** March 8, 1800 in Sumner County, TN. It is located in the Rock Springs Community near Buffalo Valley and remained in the hands of the family for over two hundred years. It was first owned by Matthew and his wife and next by their daughter, **Elizabeth McCombs Cowan**, who married **John Trousdale, Jr.** It was next owned by **Sina McCombs Trousdale** and husband **Clay Vaden**, then by **Martha Frances Vaden** and husband, **Dr. Winfield Scott Farmer**, and in 1938 it was given to **William Benjamin Clay Farmer** and wife, **Gertrude Stewart Farmer**. In 1977, it was finally sold out of the family to **Richard and Ellen Fahey** who have lovingly restored the house and grounds and cherish its long history.

#### THE HERITAGE

Pictorial History of Putnam County Tennessee by 1<sup>st</sup> American Bank, Cookeville, TN: pg. 183

This narrative was given by Estelle Wooten, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Winfield Scott Farmer.

Sina McCombs Trousdale was born April 1, 1845; Henry Benjamin Clay Vaden was born June 2, 1844. Sina Trousdale and Henry Benjamin Clay Vaden were married on March 15, 1865. Sina McCombs Trousdale was the daughter of John Trousdale, Jr., and Elizabeth McCombs (Cowan) who were married on January 4, 1820. This was John's second marriage. There were 11 children from this marriage, Sina being the last. John, Jr. was born May 10, 1791 and died May 28, 1879.

There is no mention of her birth date (Elizabeth), but I was told she was 19 years old. She and John were third cousins. Sina's mother, Elizabeth, died on April 12, 1845, when little Sina was 11 days old. When Sina was born, her mother, Elizabeth, developed "child-bed fever," now called phlebitis. She knew that she could not live. With her husband's permission, she called her sister, Sarah (called Sally) Harvey and her husband Wesley. They gave Sina to them to rear as their own with the understanding that her name remain the same. Sally and Wesley had no children of their own.

Wesley Harvey and his brother, Benjamin John were master craftsmen and made furniture, chairs, etc. for their own use. After Wesley met Sally Cowan and knew they would marry, he acquired two or three slaves to help with the work on the plantation. This plantation belonged to Sina's maternal Grandfather, Matthew Cowan. The house had 4 rooms, two downstairs and two upstairs. There was a hall which separated the downstairs rooms. This house was built of logs that were 30" thick. From the entrance hall, there was a covered porch called "dog trot," which led to the one room log cabin which was used as the kitchen-dining room. Sally used the upstairs rooms for weaving flax, spinning cloth, carding, quilting, and sewing. All the clothes were made at home. Sally had brought two slaves with her when she married. They helped her with the house work and with the spinning and weaving. Wesley began to expand the farm and cut more

trees for building houses that were needed, barns, for the livestock, house for slaves, fences and other necessary needs.

One of the house slaves had a little girl, Ellen, who was 11 years old. When little Sina came to live with the Harveys in April, 1845, Ellen was told that she was to care for the baby girl while the others were busy with other things. This became a good relationship and Ellen was so good to Sina. When she grew up and married Ryle, he became one of the Harveys' slaves. Both Ellen and Ryle remained there until they died sometime after 1912. Sina used to say, "Ellen cared for me when I was a baby, so I cared for her when she got old." After the slaves were freed, most of them remained with the family until they died.

When Sina was about 12 years of age, the Harveys saw the need for a larger house. Sina had a private teacher who stayed at the house and taught her arithmetic, language, music, art, and to read and write the classics. When Sina was 13, she went to a boarding school near Elmwood, where there were only 12 students. They were taught many other things there, including how to run a home of their own. Sina was always the life of the party and never saw a stranger. She was a good musician, playing both piano and pump organ. She had a natural talent and only had to hear a tune to play it. One of the slaves had taught her to play the banjo, French harp and later she learned to play the guitar.

It was when she was in boarding school that she met Clay Vaden. He was a student of law studying under some lawyer near Carthage. She always said that the first time she met Clay Vaden, she knew that he was the one she would marry. While she was at boarding school one time, the Harveys enlarged the house. Two bedrooms and a dining room were added.

Sina had a lot of company and Clay Vaden continued to be her favorite among the young men. When she was 19, just before her 20<sup>th</sup> birthday, on March 15, 1865, she and Clay Vaden were married. They left by steamboat from Granville, Tennessee for Nashville for their honeymoon. They spent a week in Nashville before returning home.

The Harveys had great admiration for Clay Vaden. When he and Sina returned home from Nashville, they were told that they were to take over running the plantation. Clay was to take over the duties of caretaker and overseer of the plantation, including the slaves which would soon be freed. Sina was to be in charge of the household and servants there. The Harveys were getting older and did not want all the responsibility. They would give advice if needed and were asked for it. They wanted to live there until they died, but the plantation was given to Clay and Sina. Clay knew how to get along with everyone. He was a handsome young man, 6 ft., 4 in. tall, soft spoken, but firm in his manner and businessman and farmer. Clay proved to be a prosperous businessman and farmer. There were three or four families of slaves when he came there to live. The war would be over soon and the slaves would be freed. No one knew what to expect for the war had changed many things. The slaves there did not want to leave and begged to stay on. Clay promised to help them but was firm in telling them that they had to learn how to read and write and do things on their own.

There were no schools except a few boarding schools so Clay Vaden built a one-room schoolhouse on his property. With the help of the neighbors, a teacher was hired. The children of the neighbors were invited to come to school. On Saturdays, Clay would help the teacher teach the slaves or ex-slaves, and their children to read and write and simple arithmetic and spelling. He tried to explain how important it was to know how to take care of their money when they were on their own. Clay acquired acreage from adjoining lands and later sold acreage to relatives or friends so that they would have good neighbors. The schoolhouse was used on Sundays for Sunday School and later by visiting preachers. These preachers would go by horseback to country churches and were called circuit riders. The ex-slaves were allowed and encouraged to attend church. Clay was well-liked by everyone and had many friends. He was considered one of the most outstanding citizens in his community as well as the surrounding counties. To know him was to love and respect him.

Clay updated the house again a few years after he and Sina were married. A covered side porch was built in the shape of a L. A kitchen was built at the end of the dining room which made it easier than running up and down steps to the old kitchen. The old kitchen was used for years when canning season was on and in

the winter time when the hogs were killed. A new smoke house was built near the old kitchen. A woodshed was built back of the kitchen. Two new chick sales (outhouses) were built back of the house, one for the children and one for the adults. A harness house and buggy sheds were built where there was a garage in recent years. The horses were brought up from the barn and saddled or harnessed near the house. The spring house was remodeled with a pulley for water buckets which could be sent to the spring and the weighted bucket would fill and it could be pulled up to the house. This was better than walking to the spring and carrying a bucket of water up a steep hill.

All kinds of grains and tobacco were grown and there were cattle, mules, oxen, horses, and hogs. The Vadens were considered to be very prominent and prosperous.

Clay Vaden died at the prime of life. One day he went into the hog pen and one of the large hogs ran between his legs and knocked him down. Before he could be helped, one of the hogs (a boar) attached him. He was in serious condition. There were several doctors attending him. Two surgeons from Nashville came up and operated but it was too late to save his life. He died on February 1, 1895 at the age of 50.

After Clay died his oldest daughter who had married Dr. Winfield Scott Farmer moved back with her mother. Sina wanted Dr. Farmer to help her run the farm. Sina knew everything about the farm and how her husband had cared for it but she felt that she needed the help of Dr. Farmer, who was a good businessman in addition to being a doctor. In 1895, Dr. Farmer built an office in the corner of the yard (exists today). There he kept his medicines as there were no drug stores. His office was more like a drug store. Also, a few patients would come to his office. He practiced medicine from there while his father was still practicing in the Buffalo Valley area. In 1908, Dr. Farmer decided to go to Cookeville to practice. Sina left the farm with them for she had fallen and broken her hip a short time before and was not able to be active for the rest of her life.

The farm was rented for a few years, then Clay Farmer decided he wanted to go back and live there. Sina died March 23, 1920. She willed the Vaden farm to her two daughters and the Vaden paternal home to her only son, Ben. Since Clay wanted to live there, Dr. Farmer's wife bought her sisters part so that the Farmers would have it to pass on.

When Dr. Farmer's wife, Frances Vaden, died in 1930, she left the farm to her husband and three children, Clay, Douglas, and Estelle. Dr. Farmer bought the interest of the three children so that he could do what he wanted to do with it. When Dr. Farmer died in 1938, this farm was given to Clay Farmer and the Farmer ancestral farm at Buffalo Valley was given to Douglas Farmer. Estelle was given another farm (100 acres west of the farm).

The children of the Vadens were:

**Martha Frances Vaden** born July 24, 1868 – died June 19, 1930 married to **Dr. Winfield Scott Farmer**, March 12, 1890. **Dr. Winfield Scott Farmer md 2<sup>nd</sup> Ollie McGinness.**

Willie Vaden born August 12, 1875 – died (unknown) married to Mr. Elrod, June 30, 1895.

Benjamin Harvey Vaden born May 5, 1870 – died 1960 married (to unknown) July 3, 1892.

The children of the Farmers were:

William Benjamin Clay Farmer born June 16, 1892 – died November 20, 1978 married to Gertrude Stewart, December 9, 1920. They had a daughter named Frances Farmer.

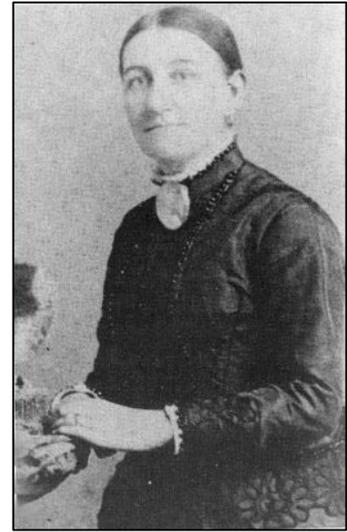
Jess Douglas Farmer born February 17, 1898 – died October 2, 1960 married Delia Guthrie, June 17, 1926.

Estelle Farmer Wooten, born June 22, 1906 – married to M. Frank Wooten, Jr., June 18, 1934.



Henry Benjamin Clay Vaden. Photo taken in 1865. He was married to Sina McCombs Trousdale who was the granddaughter of Matthew Cowan, a large land owner in the Rock Springs Community in the 1700's. Courtesy of Richard and Ellen Fahey.

Pictorial History of Putnam County Tennessee by 1<sup>st</sup> American Bank, Cookeville, TN: pg. 94.



Sina McCombs Trousdale Vaden was the daughter of Elizabeth McCombs Cowan Trousdale and John Trousdale, Jr. This photograph was taken in 1865. She was married to Henry Benjamin Clay Vaden. Courtesy of Richard and Ellen Fahey.

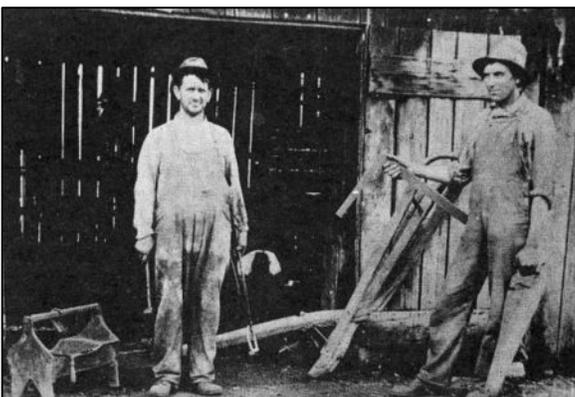
Pictorial History of Putnam County Tennessee by 1<sup>st</sup> American Bank, Cookeville, TN: pg. 94.



Alexander Matthew Cowen and Daughter, Mary Birchia Cowen.



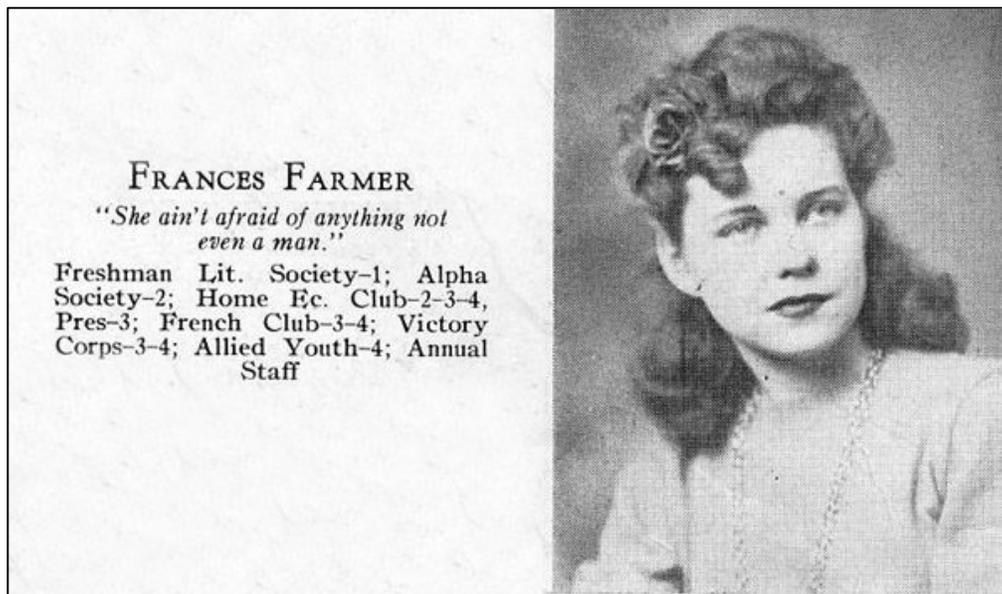
The Cowan house as it looked in 1895. One the left (*barely seen*) is Ellen, servant of Sina Trousdale Vaden from the time Sina was eleven days old; Patsy Vaden, Clay Farmer, Frances Vaden Farmer, and Sina Trousdale Vaden. Courtesy of Richard and Ellen Fahey. Pictorial History of Putnam County Tennessee by 1<sup>st</sup> American Bank, Cookeville, TN: pg. 185.



George Losco Cowan and Geneva Pearl Young Cowan had ten children: Hazel Cowan, Manelle Cowan, George H. Cowan, Robert Cowan and Virginia Cowan. Geneva Pearl Young Cowan died on Mother's Day, May 14<sup>th</sup>, 1950. George Losco Cowen, Sr. died June 15<sup>th</sup>, 1959. They are buried in the Cowen cemetery.

This 1917 picture shows John Lambert and George Losco Cowan Sr. at work in the Cowan Blacksmith Shop.

Picture courtesy of Virginia Turner, 2364 Lakeland Dr., Cookeville, TN 38501 and William D. Halfacre, 107 Shirley Court, Smyrna, TN. Pg. 173 of the book: Siftings of Putnam County Tennessee by Mary Hopson.



Frances Farmer: Senior picture of Frances Farmer from the 1944 Baxter Seminary Yearbook. She was the daughter of William Benjamin Clay Farmer & Gertrude Stewart.

### **PRESERVING THE UPPER CUMBERLAND PAST**

The UCDD's Randy Williams a one-man preservation team  
Working to save and recognize the region's historic treasures.

By Jill Thomas – Herald Citizen Newspaper Staff,

Cookeville, Putnam Co., TN

1 May 2005, Front page:

How much does it cost to have a building approved for the National Register of Historic Places?

Officially nothing, but there can be substantial research costs and those were the concern of Dick and Ellen Fahey who spent years gathering information about property they bought in Buffalo Valley that could be traced back as far as 1769.

"Normally you have to hire someone to do the research for something like this. We had investigated doing that but then decided to try to do as much of the work ourselves as we could," **Dick Fahey** said.

Then the **Faheys** heard about the **Upper Cumberland Development District's Historic Preservation Specialist Randy Williams**.

"We had no idea the Development District had a preservation specialist. It turns out this is a service they do free-of-charge for the community," Fahey said.

"Randy jumped right in and picked up the research and even went to the archives in Nashville to get additional information.

"He brought it all together. I gave him bits and pieces that I had found, military records and stories and things like that and he put it together with what he found. I can't even begin to estimate how many hours that took," Fahey said.

Williams also brought in experts who could confirm the property's history and he filled out the extensive application required by the National Register.

"You got the feeling from Randy that this was a labor of love," Fahey said.

It was a labor that took more than two years to complete.

A new program at UCDD

The Upper Cumberland Development District added an historic preservation program to its list of services three years ago to help residents identify, register and protect significant historic and archeological properties.

Since that time, three properties in the 14-county district have been added to the national register:

- \* The Cowan Homestead in Buffalo Valley in Putnam County.
- \* The Alpine Historic District in Overton County.
- \* and the old Highway Patrol Building in Crossville in Cumberland County.

Helping communities

But adding items to the national register is not Williams only responsibility.

The preservation specialist also serves as a consultant and an educator.

When Fentress County Executive John Mullinax wanted to add a clock to the clock tower on the Jamestown courthouse, he called Williams to get some advice.

"I was able to connect him with Campbellsville Industries which specializes in that kind of thing," Williams said.

"My job is to put the right people together so the whole community benefits."

So this July 4th, for the first time in 100 years the bells of the Jamestown Courthouse will strike in time to an actual clock.

Williams also helps communities and organizations apply for historic markers like the one going up on May 18 in Cumberland County which commemorates Camp Crossville, the WWII prisoner-of-war camp.

There are times when helping a community requires some tough love from Williams.

"Because I'm a member of the Tennessee Preservation Trust I have some input on a list they make each year of the 10 most endangered areas in Tennessee," Williams said.

"The areas that make that list often get some attention from the media and sometimes get help quicker than those not on the list."

For Williams one of the most endangered areas is the old York Institute in Jamestown.

"That school was Alvin York's legacy," Williams said.

"All of his life he was known by outsiders as that famous soldier of WW1. But York spent his life as an educator and York Institute came about because of his interest. He raised the money for it, but when it ran out of money during the depression the state took it over. It was a state-owned and state-operated high school.

"Now the roof is falling in and it's a deserted building. The community wants to save it and make a museum out of it.

"Getting it on the list of most endangered areas should bring awareness to the problem and generate interest from organizations and the community at large," he said.

Current projects

At present Williams is working on two projects:

\* The Cumberland Corridor where 21 counties in Middle Tennessee have been declared a national heritage corridor by the Dept. of the Interior.

Of those counties, eight are in the Upper Cumberland Development District, including Putnam County, Williams said.

"The project would link cultural resources like state parks, water falls, scenic gorges, rails with trails projects -- all sorts of historical and cultural resources would be linked so the public could follow the trail.

"The Plateau is within a five hour drive of 26 metropolitan areas," Williams said.

"That's an area that has a total population of 18 million people who might take advantage of driving through that corridor."

In addition, Williams is currently working on an education program for the entire development district.

"We're in the development phase of the Upper Cumberland Cultural Heritage Education Program. This is program for seventh and eighth graders. We want to educate them about local artisans and craftspeople, get them to find out how their grandparents lived and things like that.

"We want kids to know they come from somewhere. They're not just a product of the 20th century."

This fall Williams will try out the curriculum on a pilot program in Overton County.

For adults Williams does presentations to community groups on the economic benefits in preserving important cultural and historic artifacts and areas.

And finally, Williams works on grants.

"I'm batting a thousand on getting the grants," he said.

"People call and say, 'I've got a project, but where can I find...?' and I'm able to help them. In Smith County a group wanted to convert the high school gym to a theater and we were able to help them."

Williams is currently working on a grant in Macon County to restore old school buildings and one to help restore an old antebellum home.

He's working on a "transportation enhancement" grant that will help get funding to preserve old railroads, some with bike and hike trails and welcome centers.

He has provided help for people restoring old graveyards, recognizing signs that there are additional gravesites outside the fenced in area and connecting restorers with experts in Knoxville and Nashville who can bring their expertise to a project.

He gets his own expertise from working for five years as an archaeologist for the state of Tennessee plus knowledge from growing up in Putnam County and his Bachelor's degree in history and a Master's in English from Tennessee Tech.

With a "territory" that includes 14 counties and 5,000 square miles, Williams has to be selective in what he chooses for his projects.

"But I've been very fortunate in that Patty Jones, my supervisor and Wendy Askins, the director of UPDD have been so good at allowing me to do projects that I want to do," he said.

The Upper Cumberland Development District's motto is 'Improving the quality of life for all of our citizens.'

Williams wants everyone to know how far reaching that motto is.

"My job is to let people know that quality of life is not just about services and plumbing," he said.

Published April 30, 2005 4:07 PM CDT : Herald Citizen Newspaper, Cookeville, TN

**DR. WINFIELD SCOTT FARMER,**  
**HEAD OF THE CENTRAL STATE HOSPITAL DIES**

Born and Reared in This County, And Practiced Medicine Here For a Number of Years

**Dr. W. (Winfield) Scott Farmer**, who for twenty-two years was superintendent of Tennessee's Central State Hospital for the Insane, died Friday after a long illness.

Three months ago he gave up active work at the hospital because of failing health and had been confined to Vanderbilt Hospital, Nashville, since July 1.

Dr. Farmer was a former resident of Cookeville, where he practiced medicine for a number of years.

He devoted a great amount of his time and energy to the improvement of the Central Hospital for the Insane. Through his efforts a building for the criminally insane was secured for the institution. He was widely known as a psychiatrist, having participated in a nation-wide study of legal psychiatry with nineteen other outstanding specialist several years ago. He aided in formulating the policies of the American Psychiatrist Association on legal psychiatrist Association on legal psychiatry. While head of the state institution Dr. Farmer was called in on more than 700 criminal cases as an authority. His work with the courts was done without added expense to the state.

He gave freely of his time, volunteering his services without remuneration.

Dr. Farmer served as an instructor in psychiatry for many years on the Vanderbilt University faculty. He conducted clinics for Vanderbilt medical students and students of psychology in the academic school. Students from Peabody, colleges in Middle Tennessee, and high schools in Nashville and surrounding area attended his clinics.

After graduating from Vanderbilt Dr. Farmer began the practice of medicine in his native county. When he went to Nashville he joined the McKendree Methodist Church, the Nashville Council of Social Service Agencies, and the Exchange Club.

He was a member of the American Medical Association; a fellow of the American psychiatrists' Association; a charter member of the Middle Tennessee Medical Association, of which he was past president; a member of the Tennessee State Medical Association, the Upper Cumberland Medical Society, and the Nashville Academy of Medicine; and was elected last year to honorary membership in the Tennessee-Mississippi Peace Officers' Association.

Funeral services were held in the chapel of the Central State Hospital at 3 p.m. Saturday, conducted by Dr. King Vivion, pastor of McKendree Methodist Church, assisted by the Rev. Pickens Johnson, pastor of the Arlington Methodist Church.

Dr. Farmer is survived by **his wife, Mrs. Ollie McGinness Farmer**; one daughter, Mrs. Frank Wooten, of Nashville; two sons, Clay Farmer of Buffalo Valley, and Douglas Farmer of Nashville; three sisters, Mrs. R. L. Kerr, and Mrs. W. W. Jared of Buffalo Valley, and Mrs. Emma Burch of Prague, Okla., and several nieces and nephews.

**His first marriage was to Miss Fannie Vaden.**

**Dr. Farmer was the son of the late Wm. Scott Farmer and Mrs. Amanda Smellage Farmer.** He was born and reared in Putnam County.

Burial was at Buffalo Valley, his former home.

Herald Newspaper, Cookeville, TN: 11 August 1938, front page.

#### **Farmer Cemetery, Putnam Co., TN**

Located East of Buffalo Valley Post Office and the Presbyterian Church alongside the railroad tracks. Recorded by Maurine E. Patton, 30 October 1987. \*married couples.

\***KERR, Robert Lee**, b. April 1866, TN – d. February 1940, s/o James R. Kerr/Carr & Carolyn Allen

\***KERR, Philena Hixie Farmer**, b. June 1872, TN – d. January 1943, d/o Dr. William M. Farmer & Maranda A. Smellage

\***FARMER, Winfield Scott (Dr.)**, b. 17 May 1867, TN – d. 5 August 1938, s/o Dr. William M. & Maranda A. Farmer. Dr. Winfield Scott Farmer of Buffalo Valley moved to Nashville where he was the Director of Central State Hospital. Dr. Winfield Scott Farmer md Martha Frances Vaden on the 12<sup>th</sup> of March 1890.

\***FARMER, Martha Frances Vaden**, b. 24 July 1868, TN – d. 19 June 1930, d/o Henry Benjamin Clay Vaden, TN & Sina McCombs Trousdale, TN.

#### **Children of Winfield Scott Farmer & Martha Frances Vaden:**

1. William Benjamin Clay Farmer, b. 16 June 1892 – d. 20 November 1978 md Gertrude Stewart on the 9 December 1920.
2. Jesse Douglas Farmer, b. 17 February 1898 – d. 2 October 1960 md (unknown) 17 June 1920.
3. Estelle Farmer, b. 22 June 1906 md M. Frank Wooten, Jr., 18<sup>th</sup> of June 1934.

**FARMER, William Scott**, b. 7 August 1930 – d. 11 March 1931, s/o William Benjamin Clay Farmer & Gertrude Stewart. William Benjamin Clay Farmer, b. 16 June 1892 – d. 20 November 1978 & Gertrude Stewart Farmer, b. 13 August 1896 are both buried in the Crest Lawn Cemetery, Putnam Co., TN. William Benjamin Clay Farmer md Gertrude Stewart on the 9 December 1920.

*'A Little time on earth he spent till God for him his angels sent'*

\***FARMER, William M.** (Dr.), 30 October 1827, TN – d. 11 March 1908

\***FARMER, Maranda A.**, b. 11 June 1841, TN – d. 5 February 1882 - d/o Jephthah “Jeptha” W. Smellage & Nellie Elender Garner, d/o William Garner & Nancy Davis. Jephthah “Jeptha” W. Smellage was the Founder of Smellage Cemetery, Boma, Putnam Co., TN.

**FARMER, Henry**, b. 3 July 1876, TN – d. 7 July 1876 – s/o William M. & Maranda A. (Smellage) Farmer

**FARMER, Reynard S.**, b. 21 January 1869, TN – d. 1 December 1870 - s/o William M. & Maranda A. (Smellage) Farmer

**FARMER, Missouri E.**, b. 21 August 1871, TN – d. 21 September 1875 - d/o William M. & Maranda A. (Smellage) Farmer

**OLLIE MCGINNESS** – b. 23 January 1877, TN – d. 14 April 1963, TN

Ollie buried: Ridgewood Cemetery, Carthage, TN - md **Dr. Winfield Scott Farmer**, b. 17 May 1867, TN – d. 5 August 1938 – md 1<sup>st</sup> **Martha Frances Vaden**, b. 24 July 1868, TN – d. 19 June 1930, both buried: Farmer Cemetery, Putnam Co., TN. Dr. Winfield S. Scott, s/o **Dr. William M. (1827 – 1908) & Maranda A. Farmer (1841 – 1882)**.

\*See Chapter 8. \*See Dr. Winfield Scott Farmer Obt. \*See Cordelia F. (Farmer) Kerr Obt.

**EURA HELEN FARMER** – b. 17 August 1879, Putnam Co., TN – d. 1 June 1972, Prague, Lincoln Co., OK md **John Armstrong Burch** on 25 December 1895, Putnam Co., TN. Eura, d/o **Dr. William M. Farmer & Maranda Smellage**. John Armstrong Burch – b. 19 September 1870, Gilmer Co., GA – d. 22 June 1930, Bales (twp.) McCloud, Pott Co., OK. Both buried in the Fairview Cemetery, Shawnee, Pottawatomie, OK.

More about **John Armstrong Burch**:

Parents: William Burch & Elizabeth Evans

Burial: June 1930, Fairview Cemetery, Shawnee, Pottawatomie, OK

Cause of Death: Cerebral hemorrhage, 5 weeks in duration, died at 5:30 p.m.

Medical Information: Oklahoma Death Certificate 63-251

Occupation: Teacher/General Merchandise

Residence: 1900, Civil Dist., Putnam Co., TN

More about **Eura Helen Farmer**

Parents: William Farmer & Maranda Smellage

Burial: 3 June 1972, Fairview Cemetery, Shawnee, Pottawatomie, OK

Medical Information: Died at age 92

Residence: 1880, Dist. 9, Putnam Co., TN

Social Security Number: 446-50-2339

(SS Death Index: Name: EURA H BURCH - Birth: 17 Aug 1879 – Death: 15 Jun 1972 – Age: 92 – Last

Residence: Prague, Lincoln, OK 74864 - Last Benefit: (not specified) – SSN: 446-5-2339 Issued By: Oklahoma).

### **Joel Whitlee Kerr Obt.**

## **SUMMONS OF DEATH FOR JOEL W. KERR**

Prominent As Local Grain Dealer and Noted for His Integrity.

**Joel W. Kerr**, one of the best known grain dealer in the South died yesterday afternoon at his home 919 Fatherland Street. Mr. Kerr had been in failing health for some time, but his death came suddenly as a result of heart trouble, and was a shock to his friends and business associates. He was 57 years of age and up to the time his health became impaired was one of the most active of Nashville's business men.

Mr. Kerr is survived by his wife, formerly **Miss Cordella Farmer** of Putnam county; one brother, S. S. Kerr, of this city; and two sisters, Mrs. W. R. Ford of Elmwood and Mrs. Luther Fitzpatrick of Chestnut Mound.

Prior to his entry into the grain business, Mr. Kerr was a commercial traveler representing a large Nashville house in the upper Cumberland section and no traveling man in that part of the country was ever better known or more fully enjoyed the confidence and esteem of those with whom he dealt. Some ten years ago he gave up traveling and opened an office in this city dealing extensively in grain. In this new field he achieved marked success, his business steadily growing as he became known to the trade, for he soon acquired a reputation for integrity, honesty and fair dealing that won him friends and patronage. These characteristics were notably exemplified in every feature of his business. He was a member of the Nashville Grain Exchange.

Mr. Kerr was a member of the Methodist Church and was a devote Christian, modes and unassuming, but active in every line of church work and every movement for moral and social uplift. He was also a Mason.

The funeral was held this afternoon at the residence, services being conducted by the Rev. T. A. Mulloy, pastor of the East End Methodist church. Interment was at Mt. Olivet cemetery, with Masonic honors.

The following served as pallbearers: Active-Frank Cooper, Charles Booth, Herman A. Vantrease, Same Allen, John C. Bennett and E. C. Hawkins.

Honorary – I. T. Rea, R. H. Lee, J. H. Bell, W. R. Cornelius, Sam Polk and Andrew Mizell.

Cookeville Press Newspaper, Cookeville, TN, Wednesday, 22 August 1917.

**The Record – Carthage Newspaper, Smith Co., TN**  
September 23, 1888

**CHESTNUT MOUND:** The wheat market is live here now and the farmers are being paid 70 cents per bushel delivered on the river. J. W. (Joel Whitlee) Kerr is buying large quantities in Buffalo Valley and up the Caney Fork, which he is bringing down the river in flat boats to the railroad.

**Cordelia F. (Farmer) Kerr Obt.**

Funeral services for **Mrs. Cordelia Farmer Kerr**, 62, **widow of Joel Kerr**, grain dealer in Nashville for many years, were conducted by the Rev. J. F. Baggett and Dr. E. P. Anderson at 11 a.m., Monday at 919 Fatherland Street. Burial was in Mr. Olivet Cemetery.

Mrs. Kerr died Sunday afternoon, following two years' ill health. She was a sister of Dr. W(infield) S(cott) Farmer, superintendent of Central State Hospital. She was born in 1870 at Laurel Hill, the **daughter of Dr. and Mrs. W. M. Farmer**, who later made their home in Buffalo Valley. She received her education at the Clark School at Elmwood and also at Alexandria.

In 1899 she married Mr. Kerr and the young couple made their home in Cookeville. Later they moved to Buffalo Valley and Lancaster. Twenty years ago they went to Nashville, where Mr. Kerr entered the grain business.

Mrs. Kerr was a member of the East End Methodist Church and the Eastern Star.

Surviving her are brother, Dr. W. S. Farmer; three sisters, Mrs. W. W. Jared and Mrs. R. L. Kerr, of Buffalo Valley, and Mrs. Eura H. Burch of Paden, OK.

The following served as pallbearers: honorary, Robert Orr, C. B. Clark, Herman Vantrease, Solon S. Kerr, Dr. W. A. Bryan, Dr. O. N. Bryan, J. T. Tidwell, A. S. Clark, Charley Woods. And active: C. B. Moore, W. W. Jared, R. L. Kerr, Will Harris, H. E. Lamb, and Solon Fitzpatrick.

*Cordelia F. (Farmer) Kerr, d/o Dr. William M. & Maranda A. Farmer.*

Herald Newspaper, Cookeville, TN, Thursday, 10 November 1932, pg. 8.

**Hicksey Philena (Farmer) Kerr Obt.**

Funeral services were held Saturday at the Presbyterian Church in Buffalo Valley for Mrs. **Hicksey Philena Farmer Kerr**, 70, with the Rev. J. W. Shelton in charge assisted by the Rev. J. A. Harris. Burial was in the Farmer Cemetery.

Survivors are 2 grandsons, Robert Joel Kerr, who is in the service near Australia, and Howard Farmer Kerr of Cookeville; 1 great granddaughter, Shirley Jo Kerr of Cookeville; 2 sisters, Mrs. William Wirt Jared (Leona Farmer) of Buffalo Valley and Mrs. J. A. Burch of Progue, OK.

She received her education in the public schools of Putnam Co., TN and the Masonic Normal at Alexandria. She was **married to Robert Lee Kerr** about 50 years ago. He preceded her in death by 3 years.

Those who came from a distance to attend the funeral of Mrs. R. L. Kerr, Saturday were Mrs. S. F. Carr, Mrs. H. E. Grigg, Miss Dimple Maddux Maxwell, Mrs. Byron Bartlett, Lebanon, Mrs. J. D. Lancaster, Mrs. Edd Lancaster, of Lancaster, Mrs. F. Bush, Mrs. R. L. Witherington, Mrs. David Lindsey High (Anna Pearl Jared), Mrs. Solon Maddux, Cookeville, Dr. Bozer, Mrs. Ben Vaden, Mrs. W. S. Farmer, Miss Ruth Nichols, Mr. & Mrs. E. H. Maddux, Carthage.

*(Philena (Farmer) Kerr died of influenza bronchitis).*

Herald Newspaper, Cookeville, TN: Thursday, 21 January 1943.

**Ollie (McGinness) Farmer Obt.**

Farmer Rites Held Monday

Funeral services for **Mrs. Ollie McGinness Farmer**, 86, **widow of Dr. W. S. Farmer**, were conducted at the Carthage Methodist Church Monday afternoon by the pastor, Dr. J. W. L. Matlock, assisted by the Rev. Herbert Leslie, minister of the Christian Church. **Burial was in Ridgewood Cemetery.**

Mrs. Farmer died in Smith County Hospital Sunday shortly after noon from a stroke she suffered in February.

She was born and reared in Buffalo Valley, Putnam Co., TN, a **daughter of the late Felix P. and Victoria Jared McGinness.**

**She was married to Dr. Farmer** who for many years was superintendent of Central State Hospital in 1936. Dr. Farmer, who had previously practiced medicine in Cookeville, died 1940. She had lived here since his death.

She was a member of the Carthage Methodist Church, being very active in various women's organizations of the church and in numerous church activities, in all of which she had an interest and pride.

Survivors are three brothers, **H. B. and Roscoe McGinness**, Carthage, and **Dewitt McGinness**, Carthage; two nieces, Mrs. J. B. Gore, Carthage; Mrs. Kenneth Robinson, Atlanta; and one nephew, Houston McGinness, Los Angeles.

Sanderson Funeral Home was in charge.

Carthage Courier Carthage Newspaper, TN: Thursday, 18 April 1963.

**Robert Lee Kerr Obt.**

Funeral services for **Robert Lee Kerr**, 73, livestock dealer, who died at his home in Buffalo Valley Sunday morning, were held at the Buffalo Valley Presbyterian Church Monday afternoon, the Rev. Z. T. Osborn officiating. Burial was in the Farmer Cemetery.

He had been in failing health for several months, but his last illness confined him to his home for only 10 days before his death. He was a native of Putnam County, TN and was the **son of the late James and Carolyn Allen Kerr**. He was reared near Silver Point, but spent the greater part of his life at Buffalo Valley.

Survivors include **his wife, Mrs. Philena Farmer Kerr**; a son, C. F. Kerr, and 2 grandsons.

*(Robert Lee Kerr and his wife Philena (Farmer) Kerr residence was located across the rail road from the Buffalo Valley post office in Buffalo Valley, Putnam Co., TN. He died of pulmonary TB).*

Herald Newspaper, Cookeville, TN: Thursday, 8 February 1940.

**1870 census, post office Laurel Hill, DeKalb Co., TN**

Dwl: 126 Family: 129

**William M. Farmer** Head 42 M W (value of real estate, 500) (value of personal estate, 2,000)  
Farmer & Physician TN

**Maranda A. Farmer** Wife 29 F W Housekeeper TN (*nee Smellage*)

Winfield S. Farmer Son 3 M W TN

Reynard S. Farmer Son 1 M W TN

James G. Farmer 21 M W Farmhand TN

**Census Place: 1880 District 9, Putnam Co., Tennessee**

Source: FHL Film 1255275 National Archives Film T9-1275 Page 174C

|                        | Relation      | Sex    | Marr   | Race   | Age | Birthplace |
|------------------------|---------------|--------|--------|--------|-----|------------|
| <b>William FARMER</b>  | Self          | M      | M      | W      | 50  | TN         |
| Occ:                   | Physician     |        | Fa: VA | Mo: VA |     |            |
| <b>Maranda FARMER</b>  | Wife          | F      | M      | W      | 39  | TN         |
| Occ:                   | Keeping House |        | Fa: NC | Mo: TN |     |            |
| <b>Winfield FARMER</b> | Son           | M      | S      | W      | 13  | TN         |
| Occ:                   | At School     |        | Fa: TN | Mo: TN |     |            |
| Ovy C. FARMER          | Dau           | F      | S      | W      | 9   | TN         |
| Occ:                   | At School     |        | Fa: TN | Mo: TN |     |            |
| Hixy FARMER            | Dau           | F      | S      | W      | 7   | TN         |
|                        | Fa: TN        | Mo: TN |        |        |     |            |
| Leana FARMER           | Dau           | F      | S      | W      | 2   | TN         |
|                        | Fa: TN        | Mo: TN |        |        |     |            |
| Eura FARMER            | Dau           | F      | S      | W      | 9M  | TN         |
|                        | Fa: TN        | Mo: TN |        |        |     |            |
| Nancy MAYNARD          | Other         | F      |        | W      | 25  | TN         |
| Occ:                   | Servant       |        | Fa: TN | Mo: TN |     |            |
| Pleasant LEAGUE        | Other         | M      |        | B      | 24  | TN         |
| Occ:                   | Laborer       |        | Fa: TN | Mo: TN |     |            |

**Census Place: 1880 District 12, Putnam Co., Tennessee**

Source: FHL Film 1255275 National Archives Film T9-1275 Page 159A

|                     | Relation    | Sex    | Marr   | Race | Age | Birthplace |
|---------------------|-------------|--------|--------|------|-----|------------|
| <b>Henry VADEN</b>  | Self        | M      | M      | W    | 36  | TN         |
|                     | Occ: Farmer | Fa: TN | Mo: TN |      |     |            |
| <b>Sinie VADEN</b>  | Wife        | F      | M      | W    | 35  | TN         |
|                     |             | Fa: TN | Mo: TN |      |     |            |
| <b>Martha VADEN</b> | Dau         | F      | S      | W    | 12  | TN         |
|                     |             | Fa: TN | Mo: TN |      |     |            |
| Benjamin VADEN      | Son         | M      | S      | W    | 10  | TN         |
|                     |             | Fa: TN | Mo: TN |      |     |            |
| Willie VADEN        | Son         | M      | S      | W    | 5   | TN         |
|                     |             | Fa: TN | Mo: TN |      |     |            |

**1900 census, 9<sup>th</sup> Civil Dist., Putnam Co., TN**

Dwl: 193 Family: 193

**John A. Burch** Head 29 M W September 1870 Married (4 yrs. md) Dry Goods Merchant GA GA GA  
(*John Armstron Burch, s/o William Burch & Elizabeth Evans*)

**Ura Burch** Wife 19 F W August 1880 Married (4 yrs. md) (1 child born, 1 child living) TN TN TN  
(*Eura Helen Farmer, d/o William Farmer & Maranda Smellage*)

Pauline Dau 2 F W August 1897 Single TN GA TN

Emma Burch Sister 22 F W April 1878 Single School Teacher GA GA GA

**1900 census, 9<sup>th</sup> Civil Dist., Putnam Co., TN**

Dwl: 195 Family: 195

**William M. Farmer** Head 71 M W October 1827 Married (19 yrs. md) Farmer TN VA VA

**Belle Farmer** Wife 55 W F December 1844 Married (19 yrs. md) (0 children) TN TN VA

Cordilia Carr Dau 29 F W September 1870 Married (0 yrs. md) TN TN TN

Joel W. Carr Son-in-Law 40 M W February 1860 Married (0 yrs. md) Stock Trader TN TN TN

Byrtie New Servant 18 B F January 1882 Single Cooking TN TN TN

Henry Lankster Servant 26 B M January 1874 Single Farm Laborer TN TN TN

Marshall Burton Servant 17 B M May 1883 Single Farm Laborer TN TN TN

**1900 census, 12<sup>th</sup> Civil Dist., Putnam Co., TN**

Dwl: 29 Family: 29

**Winfield S. Farmer** Head 33 M W May 1867 Married (9 yrs. md) Farmer TN TN TN

**Fannie Farmer** Wife 31 F W July 1868 Married (9 yrs. md) (2 children born, 2 children living) TN TN TN

William B. Son 7 M W June 1892 Single TN TN TN

Jessy D. Son 2 M W February 1898 Single TN TN TN

**Sina M. Vaden** Mother-in-Law 55 F W April 1845 Widow

(5 children born, 3 children living) TN TN TN

Kittie E. Elrod 24 Sister-in-Law 24 F W August 1875 Married (3 yrs. md)

(2 children born, 2 children living) TN TN TN

Robert H. Elrod, Nephew 3 M W December 1896 Single TN TN TN

Johnie D. Nephew 9/12 M W August 1899 Single TN TN TN

Rutha Green Servant 16 F W August 1883 Single TN TN TN

Handy Sadler Servant Unknown B F Day Laborer TN TN TN

**1910 census, 1<sup>st</sup> Civil Dist., Smithville Street, Putnam Co., TN**

Dwl: 335 Family: 351

**Windfield S. Farmer** Head 42 M W M1 (19 yrs. md) Physician General Practice TN TN TN

**Fannie Farmer** Wife 41 F W M1 (19 yrs. md) (3 children born, 3 children living) TN TN TN

William B. Son 17 M W Single TN TN TN

Jesse D. Son 12 M W Single TN TN TN

Estelle Dau 4 F W Single TN TN TN

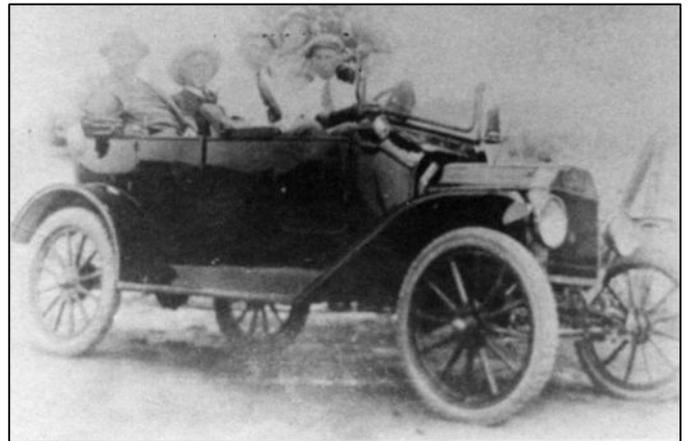
**Sina Vaden** Mother-in-Law 65 F W Widow Own Income TN TN TN

<http://www.ajlambert.com>

DC: #13064: **Mrs. Martha Frances Farmer.** Cause of Death: perforation from gastric ulcer. Attended by: H. B. Bracken, M. D., Nashville, TN. True: Mrs. Willie Elrod, Murfreesboro, TN. Undertaker: Wilkerson & Co., Nashville, TN. Father: Henry Benjamin Clay Vaden – Mother: Sina McCombs Trousdale.

Believed to be one of the first automobiles in Putnam County, this car was owned by Dr. Winfield Scott Farmer of the Rock Springs Community near Buffalo Valley. Dr. Farmer is shown in the back seat on the left. He hired another man to do the driving. Others in the automobile are: a Mr. Sadler, and Dr. Farmer's children, William Benjamin Clay Farmer, Estelle Farmer Wooten and Jesse Douglas Farmer.

Photo courtesy of Richard and Ellen Fahey.



**Source:** Smith County History, sponsored by: Smith County Homecoming '86, Heritage Committee, pg. 775.

**YOUNG FAMILY:** **William Young** was born April 15, 1744 and died October 31, 1818, was married to **Elizabeth Huff** on March 25, 1770. Elizabeth was born October 27, 1754 and died May 22, 1819. They had eight children: **David** 1772-1847, married **Elizabeth Vance**; **Jacob** 1774 – before 1842, married 1<sup>st</sup> **Mary Boren**, md 2<sup>nd</sup> **Polly Huff**; **Susanna** 1775-1832, married **John Porterfield**; **John** 1788-1835, married **Matilda Gibson**; **Mark** 1780, married **Ruth Ralston**; Naomi 1782, md **John Douglas**; **Levina** 1785- 1824, married **Adam Marley**; **Samuel** 1787- 1857.

Their youngest child, **Samuel Young**, was born July 6, 1787 and died in 1857. Samuel had three wives, **Elizabeth George**, **Patsy Fitzpatrick** and **Elizabeth Dickens**. His youngest child, **William Frederick Young**, was born June 17, 1816 and died August 18, 1887.

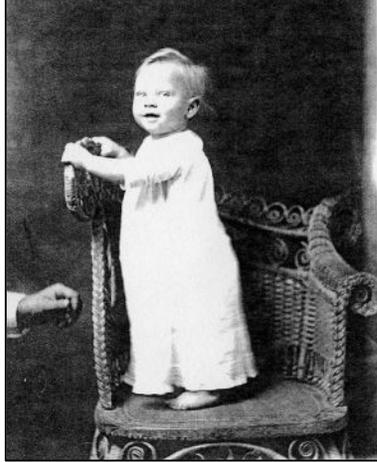
William F. married **Margaret Moore** and they had nine children: **Elizabeth**, **Delia C.**, **Samuel II**, **Richard**, **Martha**, **Arabella**, **James Preston II**, **Frances**, **Hampton M.**

Their seventh child, **James Preston Young II**, was born November 9, 1849 and died May 9, 1944. **James** married **Jincy Ray** who was born July 16, 1857 and died April 10, 1925. Their eight children were **Fanny**, **Ova**, **Willie**, **Eva**, **Solon**, **Samuel Ditty**, **Lizzie** and **Mattie** who both died in infancy.

The fifth child, **Solon K. Young**, married **Jennie Callicut**. They had four children: **Lucille**, **Bebe**, **Hazel** and **Maynelle**.

Lucille married **R. D. Woods** and they had six children. Their fourth child, **Ralph Raymond**, married **Bobbie Croslin**. They have two daughters, **Donna Fern** and **Darla Dian**.

**Donna** married **Jimmy Judkins** from DeKalb County, and they have two children, **Valerie Dawn** and **Benny Shawn**. **Darla** married **Kerr Cowan**, and they have one daughter, **Lori Beth**.



Lucillous Constantine Gentry Sr.  
& his wife Sallie Elizabeth Burch

Lucillous Constantine Gentry Jr.,  
s/o L.C. Gentry Sr. & Sallie  
Elizabeth Burch.

Photos courtesy of Penelope “Penny” Giacoletti. She writes of her family history: “Sallie Elizabeth Burch was the younger sister to my great grandmother, Emma Burch Medley, w/o Ruben Medley. Lucillous Constantine Gentry Sr. took his wife and child L. C. Gentry Jr. to Texas and then to Prague/Paden, OK by 1930. Sallie and Emma’s older brother, John Armstrong Burch arrived in Oklahoma about 1905. He was a school teacher and died in 1929. His wife, Eura Helen Farmer, d/o Dr. William Farmer, Putnam Co., TN lived until 1972. Lucillous Constantine Gentry signed a paper for Lovuina Jones Tucker when she applied for a widow’s pension for Creed Haskins Tucker’s service in the War of 1812.”

\*See Chapter 10: <http://www.ajlambert.com>  
\*See Family Sheet of Robert Gentry & Nancy Harris  
family photos courtesy of Penelope “Penny” Giacoletti  
of Hurley, NM.



Eura Helen Farmer Burch. Eura  
is the d/o Dr. William Farmer &  
Maranda Smellage.



Right: Eura Helen (Farmer) Burch, her daughter Marie  
Burch and son William Burch. Left: (woman with hat,  
Emma (Burch) Medley, her sister-in-law and great  
grandmother of Penelope “Penny” Giacoletti and behind her  
in the white shirt and tie is Penny’s grandfather, Irma Jack  
Medley.

\*See Descendants of John Armstrong Burch: History – Buffalo Valley files: <http://www.ajlambert.com>  
Courtesy of Penelope "Penny" Giacoletti.

\*See Chapter 7: Lucillous Constantine Gentry – md ca. 1910, Sallie Elizabeth Burch

\*See Gentry files: William Newton Gentry, courtesy of Penelope “Penny” Giacoletti.

**JESS DOUGLAS FARMER OBT.**

b. 17 February 1898 – d. 2 October 1960

TN Pvt Army WWI

md Delia Guthrie, June 17, 1926

s/o Dr. Winfield Scott Farmer & Martha Frances Vaden

J. Douglas Farmer, 62, Buffalo Valley, Dies:  
The Citizen, Cookeville, TN, Tuesday, 4 October 1960



Funeral services for **J. Douglas Farmer**, 62, were held Tuesday morning at 9:30 o'clock at the Buffalo Valley Presbyterian church with a former pastor, Rev. Ralph C. Arbaugh of Donelson, officiating. Burial was in the Mimosa cemetery in Lawrenceburg, TN.

Mr. Farmer died Sunday of a heart attack which he suffered at his home in Buffalo Valley. **His parents were the late Dr. W. S. (Winfield Scott) and Frances Vaden Farmer.** He attended the Putnam county schools, Jefferson Academy in Mississippi, and West Point Military academy, New York. Studied engineering at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Later he accepts a

position with the State highway department with which he was connected for 20 years.

Survivors include his **wife, Delia Guthrie Farmer**, a sister, Mrs. M. Frank Wooten Jr. (Estelle Farmer) of Orlando, Fla.; a brother W. C. (William Benjamin Clay) Farmer of Buffalo Valley, route 1. Three aunts, Mrs. W. W. Jared, Buffalo Valley, Mrs. J. C. Elrod, Murfreesboro, Mrs. Eura Burch, Plaqua, Okla., and a number of nieces and nephew.

Hooper and Huddleston funeral home in charge.

\*See Bockman Cemetery in the Virtual files at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>

**HISTORY-RICH CABIN HIDDEN AWAY IN BUFFALO VALLEY**

by Megan Trotter



Pictured on the porch of the Cowan house, are, from left, Neomia Cowan, Brenda Cowan Francis, Betty Kirby Taylor (whose mother was a Cowan) and her husband Jack Taylor, Ira B. Cowan, Earl Cowan and his wife Mary Jo Cowan, homeowner Richard Fahey, Marshall Cowen, James Cowen and archivist Glenn Jones. Not pictured is fellow owner and Richard's wife, Ellen Fahey. Ty Kernea | Herald-Citizen



The Cowan house as it appeared in 1896. Out front are, from left, Patsy Vaden, Clay Farmer, Frances Farmer and Sink Vaden.

Tucked away on a hillside in Buffalo Valley on 167 acres is an 18th century farm that is one of the oldest in the Putnam County area — and research by Randy Williams, Upper Cumberland Development District’s Historic Preservation Specialist, suggests that it might even be the oldest in Middle Tennessee.

“It has a fascinating history, really,” said Richard Fahey, who owns the homestead now with his wife Ellen.

When the couple bought the property from the Cowan family — which some branches spell Cowen — in 1977, they knew nothing of the history of the home or the family who had lived there since it was first built.



This room in the old Cowan home displays the old log cabin walls and some rustic furniture. Ty Kernea | Herald-Citizen

“Back in 1981, I busted my knee and my left shoulder, and they put me in a cast from (my shoulder) to my ankle, and I was going crazy,” Fahey said. “We had (the Cowans’) old family Bible, and I just started going into it. This was way before there was computers, so I had to go around to different libraries and dig all this stuff out.

But now it’s easy with the computer.”

He found that the property first belonged to Edward “Ned” Cowan, a long hunter who gathered with others to explore and hunt west of the mountains. And he was in now well-known company: Kasper Mansker, the namesake of Mansker’s Station in Nashville; Uriah Stone, the namesake of Stones River near Nashville; Robert Crockett, kin to Davey Crockett; and the Bledsoes, namesake of Bledsoe Creek. Many of these hunters returned to their homes in the spring of 1770, but Cowan settled on Little Indian Creek in the Caney Fork River Valley and started a family there.

“When the Cowans came here, no (Native American) tribes lived in this area,” Fahey said. “Standing Stone was the dividing line for the Cherokee, which were in North Carolina, and the Creek were on this side of Standing Stone. But they used this as hunting ground.”

Fahey and his family have found remnants of the Native Americans’ presence on the property such as arrowheads, drills for sewing leather clothes, blunt rocks used to stun animals, scrapers to clean hides, parts of axes and parts of clubs.

And though the personal histories of those people remain a mystery, through his own research and help from Williams and Cowan family descendents, Fahey — a history buff himself — has learned a fair amount about the Cowan family legacy. Ned Cowan and his unknown wife had at least one child, Matthew.

“I understand Matthew was quite a character,” Fahey said. “They say he used to ride up and down here and was loaded to the gills, telling people to get out of the way. ... If you walk down Highway 70, just before you get to Smith County, there’s a big old white house sitting up on a bluff right there, and there’s a big historical marker on a piece of granite there. That used to be a tavern. So that’s where he was going to get loaded.”

And that was not the least of Matthew’s adventures. Oral history suggests that he may have been taken for a time by a Native American tribe. Then in Sumner County’s 1798 Court of Pleas and Quarter Session Records, there is a record of him being fined 50-cents for two suits of assault and battery when he was 21 years old. Two years later records indicate that he married Catherine Trousdale, whose brother was the governor and whose father was a captain who received a land grant for fighting in the Revolutionary War under Francis “Swamp Fox” Marion.

“There’s a story I found that Matthew stole Katie and (her father) was shooting at them when they forded the river,” Fahey laughed.

Records show that Ned was killed by Native Americans in 1796.

“We don’t know where he was killed, but we’re pretty sure he is buried right up here in the old family graveyard,” Fahey said. “There’s one grave there that’s piled up with rocks, and back at that point in history around here, that’s an old English or Scotch way of burying people — they call it a carin. But also they put the stones there to keep the critters from digging up the grave. So we think he’s there, but we’ll never know.”

There are 30-40 graves in the family graveyard, most of which are unmarked and likely belong to the family’s slaves — of which, according to one census, the family kept 27 at one point in time. The field slaves would have lived in a separate shelter outside, while the house slaves lived in the kitchens. At first, the kitchens were separate from the rest of the home because if a kitchen fire started, it would not spread to the rest of the house if it was separate. It was in 1857 that the family connected that area to the rest of the home, and more additions have been made since that time.

While walking the grounds, Fahey has come across many items from the previous owners, from tiny bottles that the slaves likely kept medicine in, to devices to make dye. He even uncovered a table used to cut meat or vegetables on that he later learned had been used to perform an emergency surgery on a Cowan family member. Unfortunately the procedure failed and the man died — and the table is now sitting in Fahey’s living room.

Also fascinating to history lovers is that in addition to the relics from the Cowan family and their slaves and passing Native American tribes, Fahey has also found tools that the state archeologist says date back to even more ancient peoples: those from archaic times.

“Someone’s been living here for 10,000 years,” Fahey said.

Ned’s great-great-great-grandson, Ira B. Cowan Jr., recently purchased a \$1,000 memorial brick from the

Putnam County Archives in Ned's honor, which will be placed in the new archives building when it is built.

Cowan said that he made the donation "because I want to help Putnam County keep their history and have a beautiful building and grounds to properly honor all Putnam County Veterans."

For more information about memorial bricks, call the archives at 520-0042.

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\*See History of Buffalo Valley, Putnam Co., TN at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>