

CHIMNEY CORNER TALES

By Dale Welch

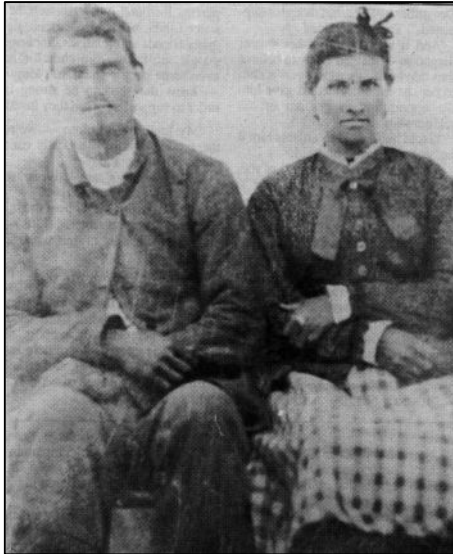
LIFE OF MARGARET ELMORE WILSON AN UPPER CUMBERLAND SAGA

By Dale Welch

Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN: Sunday 13 March 1994, pg. 7

Margaret Elmore was nearing her teenage years when the War Between the States broke out.

Her parents were Julius and Nancy Miller Elmore. Her brothers and sisters included Martha J., Malinda, Thursa A., William Daniel, Lousia, Allen, Christopher Columbus, Enoch Elmore.



The Elmore family lived in the Elmore community of what was then Putnam County but is now part of Cumberland County, an area near the Putnam, Cumberland, Fentress and Overton County lines in what is now called the Clear Creek community.

(Pictured: Joseph and Margaret Elmore Wilson. Photographed about the time of their marriage about 1880. He died at the age of 36, in 1894, and she survived him by 44 years).

Margaret and her brothers and sisters helped their parents work in the fields during the day. Sometimes in the late afternoon, since she was one of the younger children, Margaret was allowed to go down to Clear Creek and sometimes to the East Fork of the Obey River to fish.

If she caught anything worthwhile, she would of course take her catch home, clean the fish and fix them for supper. The usual family routine was that, after supper, the family would finish up the chores for the day.

Since they lived near some of the major roads through the area, the Elmores saw lots of travelers.

Slave traders would herd their human wares by the Elmores' home, stopping to water and feed them at the nearby stream.

Once, little Margaret heard one of the women slaves crying. The woman, facing the fire, had her back to Margaret. When the girl ran over to see what was wrong, she saw that the woman, still crying, was milking her breasts into the fire.

What're you crying about," asked Margaret, full of concern and curious.

The woman weepingly said, "They sold my baby from me."

Margaret was speechless. In her young mind, she couldn't imagine, even with what her eyes had already seen, that anyone would be so cruel as to take a mother's baby and sell it.

This incident stuck deeply in Margaret's mind, and many years later she told her great-grandchildren about it.

Once, when the rebellion had begun, a band of Confederate guerillas raided the Elmore home. Guerillas, whether they called themselves "Confederate" or "Union," usually didn't really care which side folks were

one. Much of the time they were for whichever side it was convenient for them to be on at the time. Of course, they were always on their own side.

When a band would come through, some of the older men in the community would hide out, fearful that they might be killed, Margaret Elmore's father, Julius, among them.

Families also had to be pretty ingenious about hiding their food and other belongings to keep these guerilla groups from taking everything they had.

One day a group of these men rode upon the Elmore farm, turned things upside down and took what they wanted. They family could do nothing but watch.

One of the marauders took from the porch a basket of eggs which had been collected by Nancy's mother, Margaret. When he dumped the eggs in a sack, a false bottom in the basket fell out – and out came a dollar bill that Nancy thought was well concealed.

Then the man, glancing about to see that none of his fellow “patriots” was watching, placed the dollar back into the basket and replaced the false bottom. He hung the basket back up on the porch, looked at Nancy and winked.

Eventually, the guerrillas had collected everything they wanted, and they left.

Some years later Margaret Elmore married Joseph Wilson, Berry and Julia Beaty's son. Joseph's mother, Julia, was a first cousin to Tinker Dave Beaty, and his father was a member of the tinker Dave's Independent Scouts, the Union guerrillas of the area.

To Joseph and Margaret were born three daughters: Artem, who married William Spencer Phillips; Julia, Named after her Grandma Wilson, who never married; and Rillie, who married Remus Hammock.

Joseph Wilson died on March 1, 1894, just five days away from his 37th birthday. It was said that his lungs burst when he tried to remove a tree from the road.

This left Margaret with three daughter to raise on her own, and she managed the best way she could. She sheared the sheep, spun the wool, made clothes, tended to the livestock, worked the fields and, with God's help, she made a life for them.

Of her three daughters, Artem was the only one to have children. She married William Spencer Phillips and gave birth on October 20, 1902, to a daughter whom they named Bertha Lee Phillips.

Then about two years later, Artem's husband died on October 12, 1904.

A few years later, she married again. Henry Bilbrey was a widower with two small children of his own, Clinton and Bessie.

One day after her 15th birthday, Bertha married Robert Lee Welch who was from Welch Hollow, just west of Monterey, the son of Harvey Dillard and Thursa Jane Ford Welch. Robert was a timber worker and had been living with his uncle, Sam A. Ford, who operated a general store in the Lovejoy community of Overton County.

With the marriage of granddaughter Bertha, Martha Elmore became a great-grandmother seven times – Hollis, Herschel, Gerstel, Talmadge, Jewell, Joe and Dimple. Just a few months after giving birth to Dimple, however, Bertha contracted typhoid fever.

Realizing that there was little or no hope for recovery and that her husband wouldn't want the job of raising them, she planned out where her children would go, divided among various family members. Then she died.

Two of the children, the oldest, two boys Hollis and Herchel, went to live with their great-grandmother, Margaret Elmore Wilson.

Margaret, born before the Civil War, died in 1938. She was buried beside the grave of her husband in the Wilson Cemetery near Lovejoy. Several of her family now lie near her.

Dale Welch writes 'Chimney Corner Tales' from Monterey, TN.

OVERTON'S JOHN MADISON LEE SPENT YEARS IN UNION PRISON

By DALE WELCH

Special to the Herald-Citizen

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John Madison Lee, born in 1837, was the son of Henry Lee, a prominent distiller in the Copeland Cove area of Overton County, Tenn., and Virginia Copeland Lee.



In 1856, John married Polly Swallows. The couple raised five children, Martha, Fred, I.B., Andrew Forrest and Jacob McMinnis, in the Oak Hill community, also in Overton County.

(Pictured: John Madison Lee and his wife, Polly.)

At the outbreak of the Civil War, in 1861, Lee, along with other Southern patriots, joined Capt. Richardson Copeland's company of the 25th Tennessee Infantry. Later, he joined Col. George Dibrell's 8th Tennessee Cavalry where he attained the rank of sergeant.

Lee participated in battles that included Fishing Creek, Ky., and Neely's Bend as well as several skirmishes along the way. Little did he know of life he was soon to endure in as a prisoner of war in the dreaded Union prison at Ft. Delaware, Del.

On a withdrawal to Sparta from one of the skirmishes, the men of the 8th were furloughed for five days since they were so close to home. Lee, along with a group of his fellow Confederates, road through the Calfkiller River Valley at night to avoid any Union patrols. At daybreak, the soldiers awoke to find themselves surrounded by Union guerrillas.

The Union commanding officer told the Confederates that they would be released if they agreed to an oath of allegiance, join and fight in the Union Army. To their captors' dismay, none of the men of the 8th Cavalry stepped forward.

The guerrillas seized one of Lee's fellow soldiers, bound him and placed him in front of a firing squad to make an example of him. Just as the order to "Fire!" was given, one of the men from the 8th Cavalry yelled to the Yankees that the man they were about to murder was a Mason and a Christian and that to kill this man would be an unforgivable sin.

To the dismay of the commanding officer, the firing squad refused to shoot. The squad was dismissed and the captured men were ordered taken to Chattanooga where they were later transported to prison camps.

John Lee was eventually taken to the dreaded Union prison camp at Ft. Delaware. Other Confederate soldiers became what they termed "Galvanized Yankees" because they took the oath of allegiance.

Ft. Delaware was located on Pea Patch Island, just out of Delaware City. The island was in the middle of the Delaware River, which is the dividing line between Delaware and New Jersey. Originally built in 1813, it became the largest modern fort of its time when Congress appropriated \$2 million to complete it in 1859, just before the start of the Civil War.

Its walls of granite and brick were 32-feet high and a 30-foot moat encompassed the fort, crossed only by a drawbridge.

The fort was not made to be a prison, but was ordered to start receiving prisoners-of-war during the Civil War. At first, sheds were constructed on the parade grounds. But the demand for prison space became so great that barracks were constructed outside the walls to house 2,000 prisoners.

By June 1863, there were 8,000 prisoners at the camp. In August 1863 there were 12,500 prisoners, even though the fort had been upgraded to house only 10,000.

During its time as a prison, Ft. Delaware housed over 40,000 Confederate, federal and political prisoners. Approximately 2,700 died as prisoners-of-war, and 2,400 of those were buried in a national cemetery just across the river in New Jersey.

Once at Ft. Delaware, John Lee was stripped of all his belongings and given a set of clothes, a "cheap" overcoat and issued one blanket, which hardly kept the cold and dampness of the marshy prison away.

The barracks were heated by coal-burning stoves which were badly placed to heat approximately 200 prisoners per stove. Some of the older and weaker prisoners who required more heating and food could not survive. Boat loads of dead bodies increased each day across the Delaware River to the cemetery.

Disease was rampant at the fort. The malnourished prisoners contracted measles, smallpox and other diseases. There was also an abundance of lice. During his stay at the prison, John Lee made five extended stays in the hospital.

At the prison hospital, prisoners were stripped of their clothing and given "a shirt and drawers of course texture, belonging to the hospital which probably had been frequently used before," noted one prisoner.

If one was healthy enough, there could be an escape attempt. The official federal account of escapes totaled 273. Prisoner accounts were somewhere between 500 and 1,000. With survival first on his mind and being too weak for the attempt, Lee remained at the prison until his release in March 1865.

Upon his release, he was transported by boat to New Orleans and, even though in ill health, had to walk home.

On the homefront, survival was also of the utmost importance. Lee's wife, Polly, took care of the then-three children. She plowed fields with an ox and harvested wheat and corn, also killing hogs and wild animals to provide food for the table.

Late in the war, the Lee farm was visited by Yankees. Polly's father, Isaac Swallows, was staying with the family and was on the porch rocking in his chair when the soldiers rode up. They bound the elderly man and began pulling his hair out.

A former slave from the Oak Hill area pleaded with the soldiers to stop beating the old man. The black man told the Yankees that Mr. Swallows was a good old man and not to bother him again. The soldiers let the Swallowses go and began their plunder of the property.

One of the plunderers took a basket of eggs and began to place them in his saddle bags. Polly told him to allow her to place them in the bags "for they would surely break everyone." She began placing them in the bags carefully and, unknown to anyone, Polly took the money that she had hid in the bottom of the egg basket and secretly hid it once more.

Before leaving, the soldiers took a British saber that had been taken at the Battle of New Orleans. The Lees were thankful that their lives had not been taken and that Isaac Swallows had survived the inhuman beating, thanks to a former slave.

Returning to his Oak Hill home, John Lee was nursed back to health and spent the rest of his life farming the land that he loved and fought for. Disabled because of his war years, he still served as a mail carrier for a time and served on the Overton County Board of Equalization. He and his wife are buried in the Carr Cemetery in the Copeland Cove of Overton County.

* Fort Delaware is now a Delaware State Park. Boat transportation to the island is available summer weekends and holidays from Delaware City. The Fort Delaware Society, PO Box 553, Delaware City, DE, 19706, is eagerly seeking copies of letters/diaries and photos of the men who were there for their research files and exhibits. Their Internet homepage is located at <http://www.del.net/org/fort>.

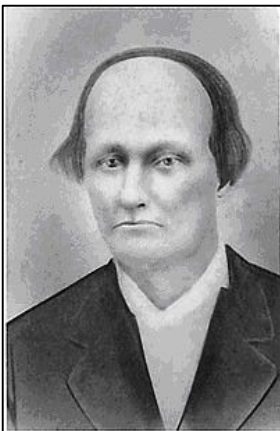
* Do you have an interesting family story that you would like to see in print? Contact Dale Welch at 303 Taves Ave., Monterey, TN 38574. His phone number is (931) 839-2949.; or you can e-mail him at dawelch@usit.net.

TINKER DAVE BEATY TELLS WHY HE ROSE UP AGAINST CHAMP FERGUSON

TINKER DAVE BEATY

By DALE WELCH

Special to the Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN



Tinker Dave Beaty was the leader of a band of guerrillas in this Upper Cumberland region who fought for the Union cause.

The son of George and Lydia Ann Wilson, he was born in 1817 and lived and farmed in the Buffalo Cove area of Fentress County until the outbreak of the Civil War.

In testimony given during the trial of his staunch Confederate guerrilla enemy, Champ Ferguson, Tinker Dave said:

"About 10 or 12 days after the Mill Springs fight, about the 1st of February, 1862, several of Bledsoe's men came to my house and told my wife to tell me I must take sides in the war or leave the country. They took some of my property, some saddles and other things belonging to me. When they left and as they were going down to cross the creek, I fired on them, wounding one man and a horse. I was in the field at the time, a short distance from the house, with my two sons and a neighbor.

"After this they kept running in on us every few weeks, Ferguson, Bledsoe and others, killing and driving people off. I told my boys that before I would leave home or run away, I would fight them to Doomsday and if they killed me, let them kill me.

"So, I took my sons and raised a company of men to fight them. Sometimes I had as many as 60 men, sometime as low as five. Things went on this way until Gen. Burnside went into East Tennessee, whence he wrote me a letter saying that he wanted me to go in the mountain forks and bushwack the Rebels and keep the roads open, saying that I could accomplish much good for our cause in this way.

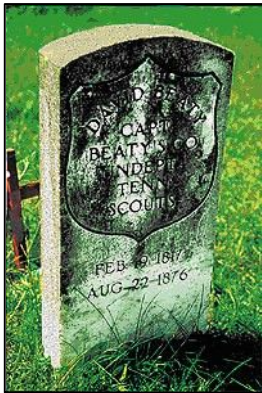
"I have the letter at home now. We were not getting any pay but the Government furnished us with all the ammunition we needed. I don't know how many men we bushwhacked and killed but I suppose we killed 25 or more during the War," said Tinker Dave at Champ Ferguson's trial.

Tinker Dave and Champ met each other many times on the battlefield. By the close of the war they had known each other for approximately 20 years. The last time they met, it almost cost Tinker Dave his life.

About three weeks after the fall of Richmond, Va., Ferguson and five of his men came to Tinker Dave's home while he was eating supper. After demanding that Beaty give up his arms, they ordered him on his horse and told him they were going to take him to Pleas Taylor's place, a man whom both Ferguson and Beaty feared and respected.

Once mounted, the captors guarded Beaty three on each side. It was Beaty's notion that he would never make it to the Taylor place. He knew they were going to kill him after he got out of sight of his home.

It was also Beaty's notion to escape. Champ had been riding on Beaty's left. Beaty had been watching him closely, waiting for a break. Beaty thought that if he could turn his horse suddenly and slip out, they wouldn't shoot at him for fear of hitting each other, and before they could get turned around, he could have a head start.



Tinker Dave said in testimony against Ferguson:

"I wheeled my horse like a flash, and one of them instantly snapped a cap at me. They then turned and fired about 20 shots at me as I dashed down the road. Three of these shots took effect, one in the back, one in the shoulder and one in the hip. I, however, got away from them and did not show them the Taylor place.

After the war, Tinker Dave went back to his farm and lived it is said a peaceful life. He died in 1876, and is buried in the Beaty-Lacy Cemetery in western Fentress County.

A complete listing of Tinker Dave Beaty's Independent Scouts appears in Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers of Tennessee, Microfilm #395/Roll #199, in the State Archives. All men owned their own horses. The record gives the names of the men, their rank and age and notes about sick leave, capture and death and the value of each horse.

Each record also states that they were mustered in on Jan. 25, 1862, and discharged on June 1, 1865. To conserve space, only their names and important notes about capture or deaths are included here:

'Independent Scouts'

Members are: Thomas Allred, Claiborne Beaty, David Beaty, Fleming Beaty, George Beaty (captured March 31, 1862, and died in Richmond, Va., on March 24, 1865, as a prisoner of war), Harvey Beaty, James Beaty, George Beaty, John Bowles Sr., John Bowles Jr.;

John Conatser (leg broken), Austin Choate Sr., Christopher Choate Sr., John Choate, Sabe Choate, Thomas Choate, William Crabtree, Peter Cravens, Dow Culver, Tom Culver (killed Nov. 21, 1863), Sherwood Delk, Wade H. Erwin;

James Farrell, John Francis, Tom Franklin, Jack Frogg, Harrison Guffey, Martin Gwinn, Bob Hatfield, Eli Hatfield, Emanuel Hatfield, Marion Hatfield, Job Hix, James Hix, John Hix, Wilburn Houge Solomon Houge, Madison Hoover, John Huff, Mac Huff, James Husk, Miller Husk, Bill Johnson (in Rebel army before; had one horse captured by enemy), F.M. Johnson;

John King, Henry Livingston, John Livingston, P.T. Livingston (had one horse captured by enemy), John Moodey, Jonathan Moodey (killed Feb. 10, 1863, the day he joined), Peter Moodey, Eli Mullinox, John Mullinox, John Padgett (in Co. D, 2nd Tennessee Cavalry, till Nov., 1864);

James Piles, Sherwood Piles (deserted 11th Tennessee Cavalry in 1863), Sampson Ramsey, William Reagen (killed on Dec. 25, 1864), Joseph Reeder (killed on Dec. 11, 1863), George Roberts, Bud Robins;

John Scroggins, Harvey Shilling, James Shilling (killed on Jan. 4, 1865 by Jones brothers for the brutal murder of their brother, a young boy, while drunk; served as a second lieutenant until death), Reuben Skinner, Asa Smith, Hijah Smith (killed March 3, 1864; never in company, but mistaken by Rebels for his brother, Asa);

John Smith Sr., John Smith Jr., Wash Smith, John Sproul, Burton Stephens, William C. Smith (also in Company D, 2nd Tennessee Infantry; killed on Nov. 13, 1864), David Stephens, George Stephens, Isaiah Stephens, Jackson Stephens (killed Feb. 24, 1864), John Stephens Sr., John Stephens Jr., Russell Stephens;

John Taylor (taken prisoner and starved to death on Oct. 24, 1863), Kiah Taylor (taken prisoner, stripped and shot on Dec. 19, 1863), Cullom Threat, Dean Threet (killed on July 22, 1864), George Threat (served in Rebel army until 1862), James Threat, William Tipton, Jack Turner, John Turner;

Drury Upchurch, Henderson Upchurch, John Whitehead, Elijah Williams, Hardy Williams, Jack Williams, Berry Wilson, John Winningham Sr., Seth Winningham, Isaac Woods, Silas Wright, George York and Mitchell York.

NOTE: Do you have an interesting story that has been handed down by or about your ancestors that you would like to see in "Chimney Corner Tales"? Contact Dale Welch at 303 Tayes Ave., Monterey, Tenn. 38574. His phone number is (931) 839-2949; or you can e-mail him at dawelch@usit.net.

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SERVICES HONOR SIX CONFEDERATES SLAIN BY UNION SOLDIERS

Surprised while eating breakfast at the William Officer home in Overton County

By Dale Welch

Special to the Herald-Citizen

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The corn still grows across the wagon road that leads to the Conley Cemetery, located in a remote area appropriately called 'Peaceful Valley,' near the Overton and Putnam County lines off Highway 84. Last Sunday, members of the Sons of Confederate Veterans and the United Daughters of the Confederacy along with relatives paid their respects in a memorial service for the Confederate soldiers buried there so long ago.



Re-enactors from the Jackson County Chapter of the Sons of Confederate Veterans last Sunday fire their rifles a ceremonial 21 times over the graves of six Confederates slain by Union soldiers

in a surprise raid in Overton County on March 12, 1864. From left are Henry A. Ford, brigadier general of the Tennessee Division of the SCV, his sword lifted; First Sgt. Gerald Site; Pvt. Clay Thomas; Second Sgt. Buddy Roberts; Pvt. John Ford; and First Lt. Ronnie Cassidy. * H-C Photo/Dale Welch

Rain fell that day across 'Peaceful Valley' as though to also mourn those who died in service to the Confederacy. A prayer was said, kind words spoken and then a final 21-gun salute marked the occasion.

Among those Confederate dead in the cemetery lie four Texas cavalymen, a Texas Ranger and an Alabama cavalryman who were murdered by Federal forces at the William and Cynthia Officer home which still stands on the Rock Springs Road, though now in poor condition.

On March 12, 1864, the six soldiers 2nd Lt. Robert S. Davis (8th Texas Cavalry, Co. D), Coxswain John P. York (8th Texas Cavalry), Oliver Shipp (8th Texas Cavalry, Co. S), Samuel Garrett (Texas Cavalry, Co. G), W.M. Slaughter (1st Regiment Texas Rangers) and W.A Lipscomb (3rd Regiment Alabama Cavalry) along with a young boy, Johnny King, who was from Manchester, Tenn., and who was traveling with the group had stopped at the Officer home.

Officer's son, John Holford Officer, also a Confederate soldier, was at home on leave. The Officer family and the soldiers were seated around the dining room table eating breakfast when Yankee forces under the command of William B. Stokes rode up. The Officer's son, John, ran into the kitchen when he saw the soldiers ride up, and hid in the loft and was further concealed by "Uncle Abraham" Officer, a slave on the Officer farm.

The other soldiers had no time to go for their guns, which were stacked in the hallway.

When the Yankees rushed the house, they killed York, Shipp, Garrett, Slaughter and Lipscomb in the house. As Shipp ran through the house, he grabbed Mrs. Officer's hand. With bullets flying from Yankee guns, Mrs. Officer was hit in the shoulder. According to a later account by "Uncle Abe," Mrs. Officer slowly recovered.

Some of the Yankees had by that time found Johnny King, the young lad, hiding in a corner. "Uncle Abe" persuaded the Yankees that King was just a young orphan boy going from house to house for support. The argument saved King's life.

There was no mercy for Lt. Davis, who was already wounded. The Yankees took him out to a gate post in front of the house and riddled his body with bullets. Before they fired the finishing shots, Davis cried out, "You ought not to do this. I have never done anything but my sworn duty."

The Yankees set fire to the Officer house, but Mr. Officer kicked it out. He was told that he would be shot if he did it again. "Every time you try to burn my house, I will surely put it out," Officer replied.

Unknown to the Yankees, Officer's son was still hiding in the house. The Yankees finally relented and rode off when reminded by Officer that they had already done much damage to his family and his guests.

The bodies of the slain soldiers were taken by ox cart and buried in a common grave, but not before one of the Officer family cut locks of their hair. A portion of the fence post where Lt. Davis was executed is now in the Overton County Library.

Another Confederate soldier buried in the Conley Cemetery is James Forester Parrott. As a lad, Parrott was traveling with his family along the Old Walton Road westward. He came down with the measles and was left by his mother who was traveling in a wagon train in the care of the George Thompson family.

Parrott's mother and six other children continued on their journey, never to return.

Parrott became a Confederate soldier in Nov. 1862 when he joined Company H of the 28th Tennessee Infantry. At Franklin, Tenn., the then-Sgt. Parrott was captured after he was wounded in the ankle. He was admitted to the US Army hospital in Nashville where his right leg was amputated near the knee.

After serving time as a prisoner-of-war, Sgt. Parrott was released on June 16, 1865, and walked home with a wooden leg to his wife and two sons.

Parrott died a few years after the war, in 1868. Some of his descendants tell that he was on horseback just a little way from home when he was ambushed. Always, when he was on horseback, always tied his wooden leg around the saddle horn to keep from losing it.

After he was shot, his horse returned home, the leg still tied to the saddle horn, and his family went out looking for him. They found him too late.

Members of the Sons of Confederate Veterans' Jackson County Reenacting Club (4th Tennessee Cavalry and 4th Tennessee Infantry, Company E) and the Sally Tompkins Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy participated in the event. Both groups are part of national organizations which promote the memory of their ancestors who fought in the Confederate service.

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