

THE COOKEVILLE OF 55 YEARS AGO

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In 1875, fifty-five years ago, Cookeville's merchants were Major J. C. Freeze, J. H. Moore, Anderson Sloan, James M. Doubles, J. W. Crutcher and Capt. James H. Curtis.

Dr. J. B. S. Martin, then a young man of 27, had, the year before, opened the first drug store in Cookeville.

Cookeville's practicing physicians in 1875 were Dr. J. M. Goodpasture, Dr. J. P. Martin, Dr. L. R. McClain and Dr. Simeon Hinds.

Dr. J. M. Goodpasture died in the summer of 1876 at the age of 49. He was Cookeville's physician, having moved from Hilham, where he was reared, to Cookeville in 1857. Immediately after Cookeville was established as the county site. Dr. Goodpasture erected his residence on Washington Avenue where he lived until his death. It is now owned by one of his daughters, Mrs. Margery Jared. His office for several years was in the brick on the North side of the Public Square, the first brick home erected in Cookeville. After his death a frame extension was added to this building, the partition wall which separated the two office rooms was removed and the building was converted into a store house. It is now occupied by W. J. Byrne's grocery store.

In 1873 Dr. J. P. Martin and his family moved to Cookeville from White county. About the same time Dr. Simeon Hinds and his family moved here from Hilham. Dr. L. R. McClain located here in 1866.

Dr. J. F. Dyer and Dr. J. B. S. Martin each began the practice of medicine in Cookeville in 1878. Dr. Henry C. Martin has been practicing here since 1884.

Dr. Simeon Hinds' home for many years was located on the West side of the Public Square. He was the father of E. T. Hinds, for many years a well known druggist of this city, and of James M. Hinds, a well known business man who served as Postmaster here during both of President Cleveland's administrations and of John Hinds, who now resides in the West. One of his daughters, Miss Mary Hinds, is the only child of Dr. Hinds now living in Cookeville. Another daughter, Mrs. Emma Hinds James, of Murfreesboro, died a few years ago.

Dr. J. P. Martin's home was on Madison Street. He resided there until his death. After retiring from active practice, on account of his age, he conducted a drug store on the North side of the Public Square until his death. In 1887 Dr. Martin represented Putnam County in the general assembly. He was the father of Dr. John S. B. Martin and Dr. Henry C. Martin. One of his sons, Dr. Henry C. Martin, and a daughter, Miss Z. Martin are his only surviving children. They both live in Cookeville. The house in which he lived was torn down a few years ago.

Dr. L. R. McClain owned and for several years occupied the residence on East Spring Street now owned and occupied by Herbert Carlen. Afterwards Dr. McClain purchased the Curtis Mills farm, just East of town, where he resided for several years. Later he erected the large two-story residence on the West side of his farm, now owned by Oscar Ferguson, where he resided until he broke up housekeeping several years ago, since which time he has resided with his son, Dr. Walter S. McClain.

Dr. John G. Goodpasture, a brother of Dr. J. M. Goodpasture, located in Cookeville before the Civil War, moving here from Hilham. His residence occupied the present site of Charles K. Darwin's home. He sold his property here and moved to Smith county in 1870. His former residence here burned many years ago.

IN 1875, besides the physicians living in Cookeville there were four other well known physicians living in Putnam County. They were Dr. William Robinson of Bloomington Springs, Dr. Richard Fane who lived on the Nashville road, about seventeen miles West of Cookeville; Dr. W. S. Farmer, Sr., of Buffalo Valley, the father of Dr. W. S. Farmer, present Superintendent of the Central State Hospital for the Insane; and Dr.

Sypert, of Silver Point, the father of Dr. W. E. Sypert afterwards for many years a well known physician of Baxter.

In 1875 there was not a telephone or telegraph line in Putnam county. It was not until fifteen years later that Putnam county had a railroad. There was no rural free delivery of mail. Outside of Cookeville very few families of Putnam county read a daily newspaper. The old Weekly Nashville American and the Weekly Manner were the newspapers upon which the reading portion of our county's population generally depended for the current news of the state and nation, although a number of people of this county at that time read the Weekly Atlanta Constitution and the Weekly Louisville Courier-Journal.

Comparatively few people of this county then had buggies. Automobiles had never been thought of. People generally traveled either on horse-back or in wagons. A man then who had a buggy was looked upon as much more fortunate than the owner of an automobile is now regarded. All men then wore boots in the winter. Jeans pants and sunbonnets were the rule. Ice cream and cold drinks had not arrived.

The lawyers of the Cookeville Bar in 1875 were Capt. H. H. Dillard, Holland Denton, Capt. Walton Smith, Alvin W. Boyd and Houston S. Boyd.

Capt. H. H. Dillard, as a young lawyer, located in Cookeville when it was laid off and "started" as the county site of Putnam county. He was a son of the distinguished theologian and educator, Rev. John L. Dillard, D. D., founder and for many years prior to the Civil War President of old Alpine Institute in Overton county and one of the noted Cumberland Presbyterian ministers of his day. Under his personal direction and tuition his son, Harvey H. Dillard, was carefully educate, and there were few lawyers of his day in Tennessee who were so scholarly as he. He was a man of brilliant mind and was one of the ablest lawyers of that period in this entire section of the state. Any lawyer who knew him would readily agree that he would have made a great jurist had he been elevated to the bench. Only once did he seek public office. In 1886 he was a candidate for Chancellor. In that year he was one of six Democratic candidates for that judicial office, the Democrats failed to hold either a convention or a primary to make a nomination and shortly before the election a Republican candidate in the person of W. W. Wade, of Smithville, entered the race in which six Democratic candidates were waging a fierce contest. Wade was elected.

In April 1861, Capt. Dillard won the military title by which he was ever afterwards known, when as Captain he led the first company of Confederate soldiers from Putnam county to battle for he South. He was promoted to the rank of Major. He was a gallant Confederate soldier and those who remember his eloquent and fervent speeches at Confederate reunions can never forget this able champion of the South. He never married. He died about twenty-five years ago.

Holland Denton was another young lawyer who located in Cookeville shortly after the town was established. In 1857 he was a member of the state senate. He served throughout the Civil War in the Confederate army. He entered the service as Second Lieutenant in Capt. Dillard's company, Company "F" of the 16th Tennessee Regiment.

He was an able lawyer, an elder in the Cumberland Presbyterian church and a gentleman of the strictest integrity. He continued in the active practice of his profession until his death, which occurred about thirty years ago. His two surviving children are Mrs. Athen Vaden, of this city, and Hon. John S. Denton, formerly of Cookeville, but for the past several years a resident of Franklin. Mr. Denton was the step-father of the late Jere Whitson of this city.

Houston S. Boyd graduated from the law department of Cumberland University in the Class of 1873 and immediately began the practice of law in Cookeville. He at once took high rank in his profession in which he met with marked success until his death, which occurred in 1881. He married Miss Mary Algood, only sister of Gen. Alfred and Henry Algood.

Alvin W. Boyd was admitted to the Cookeville Bar in 1874 and practiced his profession here for thirty-eight years and until his death in 1912. He was Clerk and Master of the Chancery Court of this county from 1890 to 1896, and was state senator from this district from 1896 to 1900. For more than twenty years

he service as a member of the local school board. He also served as alderman and city attorney and from his young manhood until his death he was actively identified with the civic life of Cookeville and Putnam county. He was an elder in the Presbyterian church and enjoyed the confidence of all who knew him.

Capt. Walton Smith was reared in DeKalb county. He was a gallant Confederate soldier. He located in Cookeville to practice his profession about 1874 and was a highly respected member of the local bar. He died in 1903. Under appointment of Governor Robert L. Taylor, he served for some time as Chancellor of this division during the protracted illness and disability of Chancellor Wade. He was a man of the highest moral and physical courage and of great kindness of heart. He was a progressive and public spirited citizen. He was an elder in the Cumberland Presbyterian church. He is survived by two children, Major Rutledge Smith, formerly one of Cookeville's leading citizens but now a resident of Nashville and Mrs. C. H. Thomas, of Sparta.

R. B. Capshaw, a well known citizen whose death occurred about two years ago, began the practice of law here about 1878 in which he continued with marked success until his death in 1928. He was born in Warren county, December 13, 1885 and located in Cookeville in his young manhood. He taught school in this county for a few years before beginning the practice of law. He is survived by three sons, all of whom are lawyers.

Judge T. L. Denny began the practice of law in Cookeville in 1881 and was thereafter actively engaged in the practice until his death which occurred in 1911. He was an able lawyer and enjoyed a large practice. He was a public spirited and progressive citizen and was held in high esteem.

Gen. Alfred Algood, one of the ablest lawyers this section of the state has produced, was admitted to the Cookeville Bar about 1878. He was Attorney General of _____. He was actively identified with the civic and religious life of this city and county from his young manhood until his death which occurred on January 26, 1925.

Judge George H. Morgan and W. G. Currie, both of whom were able lawyers and splendid citizens located here in 1887. Judge Morgan had previously been one of the leading lawyers of Gainesboro and had served as Attorney General of this circuit from 1870 to 1873, and as Speaker of the State Senate in 1881. He died in 1901.

W. G. Currie was reared at Brownsville. He married a daughter of Judge W. W. Goodpasture, of Livingston. For about ten years he and **Judge T. L. Denny** were law partners under the firm name of Denny & Currie. They enjoyed a lucrative practice. Mr. Currie moved to Oklahoma in 1898. He now resides in Memphis.

There were the older members of the bar who located here in the "long ago" before Cookeville was a railroad town and for years practiced their profession here when Cookeville was only a small inland town. All of them for years labored for its upbuilding and lived to see Cookeville take on new life with the building of the railroad. Some of them continued to live and practice their profession here until a few years ago.

The county officers of Putnam county in 1875 were as follows: Sheriff, Campbell Bohanon; County Court Clerk, Henry P. Davis; Circuit Court Clerk, Capt. J. H. Curtis; Trustee, Silas W. Gentry; Register, C. R. Ford; Clerk and Master, Dr. J. M. Goodpasture; Deputy Clerk and Master, Jesse Arnold; Superintendent of Public Instruction, Houston S. Boyd; Chairman of the County Court, Capt. S. G. Slaughter.

Cookeville's two hotels in 1875 were the "Shaw Hotel" and the "Regan Hotel." The old Shaw Hotel building burned in 1881. It was located on the South side of the Public Square on a lot now occupied by B. A. Mitchells' building. The first Reagan Hotel building burned in 1883. It was located on the South-east corner of the Public Square. It was at once rebuilt, but at a different location. After it was rebuilt it continued to serve the public as a splendid hotel for that day for more than thirty years. It is now owned by A. A. Staley, a grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Reagan, its first owners, and is occupied as a private residence by Policeman Phy Gibson.

Cookeville had a weekly newspaper in 1875. "The Cookeville Times."

Prof. J. J. Finney, an educator of ripe scholarship and splendid ability, was principal of Washington Academy during that period. He was a kinsman of Prof. N. J. Finney, who, twenty-five years later came to Cookeville to accept the principalship of the Cookeville Collegiate Institute and taught here until 1906, shortly thereafter becoming president of Bethel College, which position he held for about twenty years and in which institution he is still teaching.

Prof. J. J. Finney, in 1873, became one of six charter members of Mount View Lodge, No. 179, I. O. O. F., of Cookeville.

In 1875, there was only one church building in Cookeville. It was a "union" building and was used by the Methodist, Cumberland Presbyterians, Baptist and Disciples. It was located just South of the present "Sidwell Hotel" building, and fronted the East. That old frame building was the scene of many historic revivals and religious events. A few years later the Methodists acquired sole ownership of the title to this church property and the other denominations which had formerly shared its use erected church buildings of their own. After the erection of their brick church at the present location the old building was used for some time by Prof. Yeargan for the school that he taught here for several years.

In 1875, as now, it was the pride of the people of Cookeville that their's was a community of law-abiding, church going people who were deep interested in maintaining a good school for their children and a moral standard surpassed by no other community in the land. At that time Washington Academy enjoyed a large patronage. Many young man and women from throughout this and the adjoining counties attended it.

In 1875 both the Masonic and Odd Fellows' lodges at Cookeville were in a flourishing condition and held the meetings in the upper story of the old brick Washington Academy.

Among the families living in Cookeville in 1875 were the Dows, Algoods, Arnolds, Goodpastures, Freezes, Martins, Butons, Douglass, McClains, Crutchers, Curtis, Fords, Davis, Moores, Shaws, Quarles, Browns, Hinds, Dentons, Reagans, Staleys, Smiths, Mills, Hunters, Hitchcocks, Sloans, Slaughters, Gabberts, Dowells, Matlocks, Rayburns, Laughbaughs, Barnes, Marchbanks, Pendergrass, Judds, Allisons and Cummins.

In 1875 there was not a brick residence in Cookeville, and aside from the old courthouse, there was only one small brick building on the Public Square. The only other brick structure in the town, a very imposing one for its day, was the noted old Washington Academy building, a two story structure and then the most valuable building in Putnam County.

Among the pioneer residences of Cookeville are the following: Major J. C. Freeze's residence, now occupied by his daughters, Mrs. Bilbrey and Mrs. Chilcutt; the J. M. Douglass residence, now occupied by Mrs. High; the Russell Moore residence, now owned by R. B. Jackson; Judge James T. Quarles' residence, now owned by Miss Anne T. Robinson; Capt. S. G. Slaughter's residence, now owned by his niece, Miss Dora Myers; the Cr. R. Ford residence, now owned by Miss Cora Ford; the J. W. Crutcher residence on Jefferson Street, now owned by Dr. Lex Dyer; Mrs. A. W. Boyd's residence on Jefferson Street is the same one in which she and her husband started housekeeping, (before they acquired it, it belonged to Houston S. Boyd); The jeer Whitson residence occupies the site of Capt. J. H. Curtis' old home; O. E. Cameron's new residence. The residence of Mrs. Joel Algood stood just West of the present residence of her son, Henry Algood. The Presbyterian church, on Dixie Avenue, occupies the site of the old Braxton Hunter home, later owned by his daughter, Mrs. Pauline Mills. The Holland Denton residence, erected and occupied for several years by Dr. L. R. McClain who sold it to Mr. Denton, is now owned by Herbert Carlen, who has remodeled it. Before moving to this property Mr. Denton, for several years, lived on his farm about one mile Southeast of Cookeville, which farm is now owned by James M. Wright. E. Y. Gibson residence was the former home of Judge George H. Morgan, it being originally the home of William Cummins. Dow E. Slagle's residence on Walnut Street occupies the site of the old Isaac Brown home. The place now generally referred to as the Whitney place is the former home of Esq. F. F. Hitchcock, a pioneer citizen of

Cookeville, who was once chairman of the County Court. He sold the property to the late C. H. Whitney. Dr. Lex Dyer now owns and lives at the old home place of his father, Dr. J. F. Dyer, where the latter resided for fifty years.

Capt. Walton Smith's residence occupied the now vacant lot opposite the present residence of Ben Clark, on Washington Avenue.

The residence of W. M. Shanks was for many years the home of Judge James W. Wright, and still earlier, the home of Mr. Blanton Clarke. Each of these owners remodeled the residence, which is now one of the most modern homes in Cookeville.

The present residence of Ben Clark, on Washington Avenue, was the home of W. G. Currie, a prominent lawyer, who moved from Cookeville to Oklahoma thirty years ago.

The present residence of Warren Morgan, on Jefferson Street, was the home of the late Henry P. Davis throughout his married life. When he erected this residence, it was one of the finest homes in Putnam county. He was County Court Clerk of Putnam county from 1870 to 1878. After retiring from County Court Clerk's office, he studied law, was admitted to the bar, and engaged in the practice of his profession until his death in 1903.

The old Gabbert home was located just North of the county jail on Washington Avenue. The lot now belongs to the county. Ben Gabbet, a highly esteemed young man, while policeman, was killed about 1881, during the old County Fair. His mother, Mrs. Diana Gabbert, resided there until her death as did her daughter, Miss Leah Gabbert. Her son, Joel C. Gabbert, also died there. Her daughter, Miss Mary Gabbert, the last survivor of the family of Mrs. Diana Gabbert, continued to reside at the old home until a short time before her death, at which time she was living with her niece, Mrs. L. P. Gillem. All of the other residents of Cookeville hold the memory of this family in affectionate regard.

And so this article might be indefinitely continued. The number who lived in Cookeville fifty-five years ago are not now numerous. Most of them have passed to the Great Beyond. They laid the foundation for the Cookeville of today. They were, with few exceptions, a splendid, God fearing, industrious, patriotic people, who made the Cookeville of that day respected throughout this section of this state because of the splendid personnel of the citizenship. They did well their part and their descendants are proud of them.

*Read more about the History of Putnam Co., TN at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>