

Overton County Address
of
Albert V. Goodpasture
Delivered at Livingston, TN the 4th of July 1876
(An Exact Reprint of the Original Edition of 1877)
by
B.C. Goodpasture – 1954

(Jackson County, Tennessee was formed from Smith County, Tennessee in 1801, the latter established in 1799 from Sumner County, Tennessee, one of the original Middle TN Counties, Country and State Lines were often fluid over the years, and Jackson one of the most fluid since it was adjacent to Monroe Co., KY, Indian lands, and the Military Reservation (land reserved for NC Revolutionary War Soldiers. Border disputes between TN and KY were not ultimately resolved until 1820 and as will be seen, some Tennessee Combs became Kentucky Combs during that period of adjustment. In 1806, Overton Co. was established from Jackson, and White Co. from Jackson and Smith counties, with Warren from White in 1807. In 1824, Fentress was established from Overton, and in 1837-8, DeKalb was established from Cannon, Smith, Warren and White, with Van Buren established from Warren and White in 1840, Clay Co., TN was established from Jackson and Overton in 1870, consisting of northern segments of about counties, and thus also on the state line.)

(Overton County was formed in 1806 from Jackson County and Indian lands. The county seat is Livingston. Overton County, at one time, included part of the territory that eventually became Fentress, Clay, Pickett, and Putnam counties, and since many of the early records of these counties have been partially or entirely destroyed, the extant records of Overton County are important. The courthouse was burned in April of 1865. Neighboring counties are Clay, Jackson, Putnam, Fentress and Pickett.)

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

At a meeting of the citizens of Overton county, held at the court-house in Livingston, on the first Monday in May, 1876, the following, among other resolutions, was passed, viz.:

“Resolved, That A.V. Goodpasture be appointed and requested to deliver an address in Livingston, to the people of Overton county, on the 4th of July, ‘embracing the entire history of the county,’ as requested by a resolution of Congress, recently transmitted to our Governor by Secretary Fish.”

In response to this resolution, I have done what I could to collect and arrange the early history of our county, and I appear before you today to give you the result of my labor.

This is not the centennial anniversary of our county, but of our republic and our system of government. Our experiment is a success! The Declaration of Independence, on the 4th of July, 1776, prepared the way for that magnificent edifice, whose durable groundwork is independence, and whose splendid superstructure is liberty. Under the sublime theory

of self-government by the people, what was, one hundred years ago, thirteen English Colonies, upon the Atlantic border of a vast and unexplored wilderness, is now the thirty-eight United States of America, which stands peer to the greatest nations of the world. It is my pleasure, today, to speak of the part which Overton county has taken in that wonderful transformation.

ITS LOCATION

Among the thirteen States which were parties to the Declaration of Independence, was that of North Carolina. There was no Tennessee then; but in the western district of the old North State, lay a beautiful and luxuriant country, stretching from the Allegheny mountains to the Mississippi river, and rich in all the natural resources necessary to a great state. The pioneer sons of this county, in whose honor we are proud to participate, led by the peerless "Nolichucky Jack," gave an impetus to the Revolutionary cause at King's mountain, which was the beginning to the end at Yorktown. The cession of this county to the United States, by the State of North Carolina, was accepted in 1790, after which it remained as the Territory of the United States South of the Ohio river, until 1796, when it was admitted into the Union as the State of Tennessee, and "Nolichucky Jack" (John Sevier) was its first Governor.

In the northern part of this State, hovering between the majestic Cumberland mountains, which overlook it on the east like Uri or Appenzell, where "liberty is only less eternal than the rocks which guard it," lies the county of Overton. One hundred years ago, when our fathers were signing the Declaration of Independence, the foot of civilized man had never pressed its generous soil. It was the home of the wild beast, and the hunting grounds of the savage Indian. It yielded spontaneously and bountifully the finest vegetation. Its mountains and hills were clothed with majestic forest, and its coves and valleys were covered with a rich and luxuriant growth of cane and grass. But in those romantic and adventurous times, all eyes were turned toward the unpenetrated wilderness, and the tide of emigration and of civilization rolled on the West.

FIRST VISITED

In 1783, the Legislature of North Carolina passed an act erecting the county of Davidson, which extended from the Cumberland mountains to the Tennessee river, and from the northern boundary of the State, to a line extending due east from Duck river, at a point near the center of what is now the western line of Hickman county, being the fourth county created in the territory of what is now Tennessee, and was then Washington county. Until 1786, this section of country remained a part of the old county of Davidson, but no trace of civilization had yet marred its native wildness. In 1786, the county of Davidson was divided by a line, commencing in what is now the Kentucky line, and following the eastern boundaries of the present counties of Robertson and Davidson to Stones river, and thence up Stones river to its southern boundary, and out of the eastern portion, which included what is now Overton county, the county of Sumner was established. And it was in that year that a trio of bold and daring adventurers, Crockett, Drake, and Mansico, wandered into this dangerously wild county. They came, not as

immigrants seeking a western home, but as fearless hunters, attracted by the abundance of bear, buffalo, deer, and other valuable game, which flourished in its verdant woodlands and prairies. They established a camp about two hundred and fifty yards from where Isaac Cooper now lives, close to the margin of Matthew's creek, and hunted from the open land south of its head, to what was then known as the "Buzzard Cane," being the present farm of Mrs. C.P. Gardenhire. During their stay they collected many skins, but danger and death were all the while lurking around their camp. And at last they were discovered by the jealous and merciless Indians; their camp was attacked, and Crockett was killed. Drake and Mansico escaped, and soon afterwards left for Stockton's Valley in Kentucky, and never returned. It is said that the grave of Crockett is yet to be seen, and I trust that its place may one day be marked, so that it may ever be preserved and cherished, as a memorial of the first white man whose fortune it was to visit and to die in what is now Overton county.

FIRST SETTLEMENTS

By the treaty of Holston, entered into by the United States and the Cherokee Nation in 1791, a district of country was set apart for the Cherokees, the western boundary of which extended in a south-westerly direction from the south fork of the Cumberland river, where it intersects the northern boundary of the State, to the ridge separating the waters of the Duck and Cumberland rivers, forty-five miles above Nashville, which line passed through what is now Overton county, about two and half miles east of the present town of Livingston. By an act of the General Assembly, in 1798, the line of the Indian reservation was made the western boundary of Sumner county, which in 1799, was reduced to its constitutional limits, and the new counties of Smith and Wilson were established: the former of which included all of that part of Overton county west of the reservation line under the treaty of Holston. Up to this time the Cherokee had been undisputed lord and monarch of all this section of country, but early in the spring of 1799, Col. Stephen Copeland, a representative of one of the old families of North Carolina, accompanied by his son Jo, who was afterwards familiarly known as Big Jo, left the good old country of Jefferson, to seek a home in the new country beyond the Indian line. Following an Indian trail over the dark ravines and precipitous cliffs of the Cumberland mountains, where the venomous serpent and ravenous beast kept their vigils by night and by day, these fearless pioneers, laden with the scanty supplies which they had brought with them from Kingston, pursued their lonely journey. A beautiful canebreak in the valley of the roaring river arrested their attention, and recommended itself as a desirable location, and there on the farm where the widow Wilson now lives, they pitched their camp, and planted the first crop of corn that was ever grown in the limits of Overton county. While here, Col. Copeland hunted many days and camped many nights with the famous Indian chief, Nettle Carrier, whom he always remembered as a kind and devoted friend, a generous and congenial companion, and a nobleman by nature. Nettle Carrier left his camp on the creek which now bears his name, during that summer, and was never seen more in his old hunting ground, though in 1813, as one of the chiefs and councilors of the Cherokees, he signed an authority for a turnpike company to open a road through the reservation. After they were done cultivating their crop, Col. Copeland and his son returned to Jefferson county for the rest of their family.

In the early part of the same year, John Goodpasture and two other young men, whose names I am unable to call, found their way from the old Dominion State to the then most inviting country, near where Hilham was afterwards located. They brought with them three horses and two cows, together with a little salt and meal, which they obtained at Kingston, and extemporized a home on Buffalo creek, near where Thomas J. Murphy now lives. There they raised a crop, and returned to Virginia for their families. Not long afterwards other immigrants settled in the north-eastern part of the county, among whom were Ned Irons, a Mr. Biles, and Robert Hill, who located on what is now Iron's creek.

During the whole of this season these pioneers lived entirely without bread, and yet their fare was sumptuous. They were not long in being educated to the wild meats, and the buffalo, bear, elk, deer and turkey were always at their command. They then found that bread could easily be dispensed with, dried venison, or "jerk," as it was called, taking its place. Big Jo Copeland used to relate, that when his father and himself stopped at Kingston on their return to East Tennessee, he called for some corn bread, thinking it would be a great luxury; but when brought, he found it so dry and harsh that he could not swallow it, whereupon he repaired to his wallet and substituted "jerk." And Billy Upton, when his corn began to mature in the fall, made him a mortar and pestle, with which he manufactured a small quantity of meal, and gave it to his wife, anticipating a royal supper. When supper was announced, Billy was of course present, but seeing none of the new viand before him, he asked, "Wife, where is the bread?" The good lady with profound amazement and equal mortification, exclaimed, "The Lord have mercy, William, I clear forgot your bread!"

But they were not long to live on meat alone; bread follows close in the footsteps of civilization. When they returned in the fall of 1799, together with many others, among whom was our venerable fellow-citizen Hiram M. Allen, who, then quite a youth, accompanied his father and settled on Flat creek, where he now lives, they found that nature had liberally responded to their demands, and yielded them a bountiful harvest of corn. But as one of the inconveniences consequent upon the early settlement of a country, they were for a time forced to do their milling at Dixon's Springs, now in Smith county, at a distance of more than sixty miles. In the same fall the buffalo, as though he was conscious that his presence was no longer necessary to sustain the thrifty pioneer, retired, with his companion, the red man, still further from the approaching lights of civilization. From that time a host of immigrants found their way to this new settlement, and staked their fortunes upon its future destiny. Among these were the Seviers, Windles, Nelsons, Tottens, McDonalds, Matthews, and many other families which have shed lustre, as well upon the name of the State, as that of the county. But Solomon Copeland, who immigrated to this world in the same year, as the son of Col. Stephen Copeland, above all others, deserves particular mention in this connection, being the first born of his race in the bounds of Overton county.

MOSES FISK

November 6, 1801, the General Assembly established the county of Jackson, which included all that part of Overton which had been previously included in the country of Smith, and provided "that the Courts of Pleas and Quarter Sessions of Jackson county shall be held . . . at the house of John Brown, on Roaring river," which place is in the present limits of Overton county, and has been popularly known as the Jackson old court-house.

During the time in which Overton county was a part of Jackson, and soon after the organization of the latter, a most remarkable and celebrated character began to figure in its history. Dr. Mose Fisk, a native of Massachusetts, was a learned man, a graduate of Harvard University, and a classmate of Levi Hedge and John Quincy Adams. He came to Tennessee in a very early day, and figured prominently in her history. In 1797 he was licensed to practice law in the Courts of Pleas and Quarter Sessions, and in 1798, in all the Courts of Law and Equity of the State of Tennessee. In 1801 he was Chairman of the County Court of Smith county, and the 18th section of the act erecting the county of Jackson, provided that he should be authorized and empowered to administer the oath of office to the first justices of said county. And he assisted in revising and compiling the laws of the State, in pursuance of an act passed November 3, 1803. He was also a fine mathematician and a practical surveyor, and in pursuance of an act of the General Assembly, passed November 13, 1801, he was appointed by Gov. Archibald Roane, to act with Gen. John Sevier, and Gen. George Rutledge, as a commissioner on the part of the State of Tennessee, to settle and designate the true boundary between this State and the State of Virginia. He also did a large amount of local surveying, and in that way became familiar with the locations of land in that section of country. And about the year 1803, he entered a large body of land in the Overton portion of Jackson county, in which, in 1805, he carefully and accurately laid off the site of the first village that was ever founded in Overton county, which his sanguine temperament caused him to picture as a great southern emporium of the future, and called its name Hilham. He was a literary man, and had been engaged in writing a Greek Grammar; but in his new relations as a pioneer and the founder of a great city, he laid aside his MSS., and bent all his energies to one purpose—the upbuilding of Hilham. Although his extravagant anticipations were in no wise realized, yet he spent, out of his own means, many thousands of dollars in public improvements, looking to their consummation. On the 19th day of October, 1812, he obtained a charter from the General Assembly to open a turnpike road from Hilham to the highlands south of Roaring river, crossing below its junction with Spring creek. November 7, 1817, he obtained a charter to open a turnpike road from Hilham to Obeds river, near Wm. Dale's. He also contemplated opening, and perhaps partly opened, a road from Williamsburgh, then the county site of Jackson county, to Monroe, the county site of Overton, intersecting these other roads at Hilham.

But these are not the only means which he employed. He was, perhaps, the most efficient patron of learning, and did more to encourage and disseminate education than any man who has ever lived in our county. In 1796, he was appointed a trustee of Davidson Academy, and afterwards, in 1806, he was appointed a trustee of Cumberland College, when Davidson Academy was merged in that institution. In the same year, he was appointed a trustee of Overton Academy, and also Fisk Female Academy. The act of the

General Assembly incorporating Fisk Female Academy recited, "that Moses Fisk and Sampson Williams are willing to contribute one thousand acres of land each toward the endowment of a female academy, to be established at a place called Hilham, on the eastern part of Magnolia river, in the county of Overton," and Dr. Fisk, out of his munificence, built a commodious academy, which, unfortunately for the county, had only been occupied on session when it was accidentally destroyed by fire. But his efforts did not stop here. He yet taught many schools, and educated many young men who became bright and shining stars in the galaxy of our country's honored sons.

OVERTON COUNTY ORGANIZED

At this time Overton county was peeping through what may be called its chrysalis state, and it was not until 1806, being thirty years after the Declaration of Independence, that it was fully clothed with all the dignity of a county. The Indian line, under the treaty of Holston, running through Overton county, the county of Jackson never included all of what is now Overton county. But, by a treaty between the chiefs of the Cherokees and the United States, concluded January 7, 1806, all that territory was ceded to the United States for the use of Tennessee; and afterwards, on the 12th of September, in the same year, the Legislature established the county of Overton, which included, besides its present limits, all of Fentress county, and a large part of the counties of Clay, Putnam, Cumberland, Morgan, and Scott. The ninth section of the act erecting the county of Overton, provided that the courts of said county should be held at the house of Benjamin Totten, who then lived on Eagle creek. Benjamin Totten was the first County Court Clerk; John B. Cross, the first Sheriff; James Turney, who gave bond March 13, 1810, the first Circuit Court Clerk; and James Taylor, Wm. Evans, Isaac Oaks, John Ragan, John Coonz, Abel Willis, James Turner, Francis McConnell, Robert Mitchell, Squire Poteet, Samuel Brown, Peter Williams, Allen McDonnold, George Armstrong, John Taylor, and Henry Rayburn, who were commissioned April 22, 1807, were the first Justices for the county. The military department was also organized in the same year, and the officers commissioned May 13, 1807, as follows: Stephen Copeland, Lieutenant Colonel, commandant of Overton county; John B. Cross, First Major; Charles Sevier, Second Major; James Turner, Captain; John Armstrong, Lieutenant; Spencer Gregor, Ensign; Charles Matlock, Captain; Peter Williams, Lieutenant; Alexander Baxter, Ensign; John Copeland, Captain; Richard Copeland, Jr., Lieutenant; John Morris, Ensign; James Goodpasture, Captain; Robert O'Neal, Captain; James M. Mitchell, Lieutenant; Wm. Livingston, Ensign; Wm. Young, Captain; John Jones, Lieutenant; Josiah Derham, Ensign.

This marks an important epoch in the history of Overton county. In the amazingly short period of seven years, our fathers had reclaimed a wilderness, and entitled it to a distinct place in the grand mechanism of the State. The unfortunate Indian, who once triumphantly chased the deer and the buffalo over our hills and plains, had even now

"Gone-glimmering through the dreams of things that were; A school-boy's tale, the wonder of an hour!"

And the bear, once so plentiful that big Jo Copeland killed as many as sixty-two grown ones in a single hunting season, had fled for safety to his mountain-den; and all was now life and enterprise and expectation.

MONROE

The courts continued to be held at the Benjamin Totten old place until the General Assembly passed an act, April 20, 1809, repealing the ninth section of the act establishing the county, and providing that after the 1st day of June, 1810, the courts of the county should be held at the town of Monroe. In 1809, George Wallis opened a modest little store in Monroe, and was authorized by the Legislature to retail merchandize as a hawker or pedler through the counties which at that time composed the Winchester district, when he offered for sale the first goods that were ever sold in Overton county. But the facilities for transportation at that time were very bad, many of the old citizens of the county now living having seen wagon-loads of goods unpacked in Monroe which had been loaded in the city of Baltimore, from which place most of the merchandize of that period was hauled. Monroe was in a prosperous and thriving condition until about 1823, when it had between thirty and forty families and about three hundred or three hundred and fifty inhabitants, many of whom were afterwards leading men in the politics of the State.

RIVER SETTLEMENTS

But, in the mean time, the river portion of the county was being rapidly settled. Near the mouth of Iron's Creek a mill had been erected by Robert Hill, not long subsequent to similar improvements in the western part of the county by Simeon Hinds and others, about the year 1804 or 1805; and Joseph H. Windle, who came to the county in an early day and settled on a part of the land which had been granted by the government to his father-in-law, Gov. John Sevier, opened a store at Sinking Spring, on the same creek. From this time flat-boating became the favorite and profitable avocation of many of the river settlers. These flat-boats were invariably accompanied with the old time bugle, and in the spring time, when the tides began to rise, on almost any still, quiet evening, the lonesome sounds of many of these bugles could be heard reverberating from cliff to cliff, and carried for miles upon the peaceful bosom of the rivers, as it meandered through its rich but uncultivated valleys, proclaiming that their boats were coming to the land. Often times these hardy boatmen carried their produce to New Orleans, sold their boat and cargo, and walked back to their mountain homes. An old citizen of the county relates an incident in the life of Wallace Bickerstaff, which fairly illustrates the hardihood and good nature of these early river-men. Bickerstaff had sold out at New Orleans, and, with a number of others, was walking back. On the way, and just before they met a party of ladies and gentlemen of the more densely populated South, he had place two or three fence-rails upon his shoulder. When he met this party, they were very much surprised, as he had supposed, to see him carrying these rails, and asked the cause. "Oh," said Bickerstaff, "some of the boys are sorter sick, and I just take these 'ere along to make a bridge across the creeks for 'em!" These were delightful times to those old boatmen, and many of them, even now, remember the day with more of pain than pleasure when

the first steamer, whose shrill whistle echoed from their native hills, robbed them of their beloved avocation.

THE MILITIA

These sturdy pioneers believed that they owed their first duty to their God, and their second to their country, and in this order we find that the two great occasions which brought them together were the camp-meeting and the general muster. On muster days everything else was laid aside, and the people, male and female, repaired en masse to the grounds. If a man had anything in which he took a particular delight, he was only too happy to exhibit it at the general muster; if he had anything which he desired to sell, he would never miss this occasion to give it public notoriety; and if he had any difficulty to settle, it must be done on this chivalrous day. One of these muster-grounds was at Becky Watson's two miles West of Livingston, who was at least celebrated, if not famous, in her day. She kept public house, and always had plenty to eat and drink and it was of her that the famous old song, "Go to Becky Watson's to get some cider," which today is sung and admired in every land where the "Arkansas Traveler" is known and the "hoe down" is danced, was written. To give additional notoriety to this place, it was a favorite stand on the "great road" which, in those early days, before the iron car was dashing with majestic speed all over our land, and when the princely steamer had never ploughed our majestic rivers, was the principal, and I may say, only thoroughfare connecting Huntsville, Alabama, with Lexington, Kentucky. That almost incredible trains of wagons which were constantly passing over this road, both North and South, always stopped at Becky Watson's and many of our old citizens now living-remember having seen as many as twenty wagons there at one time.

These musters were strong cords to bind the hearts of the people of their country, and no county has ever possessed more of that early patriotism, which won for the State the distinguished and honorable appellation of "Volunteer," than Overton. In the war of 1812, it furnished four volunteer companies, commanded respectively by John Kenneday, Abel Willis, James Turner, and James McConnell. Its arms were again felt in the Florida war. And no more noble and valorous men were ever sacrificed to any cause than those who, in the spring of 1847, followed Capt. Creed T. Huddleston to the burning plains of Mexico. In the fall of 1847, another volunteer company was organized, of which Capt. J. R. Copeland was elected. Captain, defeating the old and tried veteran of 1812, Capt. Kenneday; but their services were never demanded. Their worthy and honored Captain, however, was immediately called to the Quartermaster's department by President Polk, with the rank of Captain. Of those brave men whom Capt. Huddleston led through the Mexican war, only twenty-nine ever returned to their homes, and the remaining seventy-one stand upon the melancholy list of the lost, a sacred monument to the valor of the Overton county volunteers. In storming Chapultepee, fourteen of this number were killed, and many others wounded, by one shell, among whom was the companion on either side of Capt. Luther B. Myers, who, of all the number, alone remains in this county.

Nothing was more repugnant to the feelings of those men, than the idea of being drafted into the service when their country was suffering for their aid. To illustrate this, we will take the case of Capt. Willis, who, as senior Captain of the militia regiment which mustered at Becky Watson's was ordered to draft a company for service in the war of 1812. When the regiment met at the muster-ground, Capt. Willis read the order and made them a short speech. He told them that he knew the patriotism of the Overton militia, and that he was sorry that they had not known that their services were needed before this order came, but that even now he thought that they might be admitted into the army as volunteers. In concluding, he took the flag of this country in his hand, and, walking out upon the muster-ground, asked all who were willing to follow that flag to the war to step to the front. That was an appeal which they never yet resisted, and they immediately responded, and no man was wanting to make a volunteer company from the militia of Overton county. Among the first of these gallant men to obey their country's call, was Capt. Hiram M. Allen, then a young man, who, upon the day before he left for the seat of war, was married to his affianced, Miss Betsy Bryan. And I desire here to record the fact that, out of more than two thousand men which it has sent out for the common weal, no conscript company, in any war, has ever left the soil of Overton county.

CAPT. JOHN KENNEDAY

And its citizens were all proud of our Democratic Republican form of government, where every man is politically free and equal, with one notable exception. Capt. John Kenneday, who, as we have seen, commanded a company in the war of 1812, was a military man by nature and a monarchist by intuition. He had great reverence and respect for those in authority, and bore hard upon those whom it was his duty to command. He lived an avowed enemy to Gen. Jackson, and died in the belief that he should have been tried by a court-martial for insubordination, and divers other offenses against military law. He had many warm and devoted friends, and, though a Whig, was for twenty-two years Register of the Democratic county of Overton. But his birth and origin are, unto this day, as profound a mystery as that of the "Man with the Iron Mask."

SOCIAL LIFE

To give you an idea of the social life of these early pioneers, I can do no better than to read an elegant and interesting letter from our esteemed fellow-citizen, Capt. J. R. Copland, in reply to a request for information concerning the early history of the county. Capt. Copland is now a septuagenarian, a son and grandson of the first two inhabitants of the county, and, therefore, speaks from personal knowledge. He says

"I was born in the year 1806, and it is, therefore, true that I have lived nearly three score and ten years in the bounds of Overton county, and have a vivid recollection of a great many of the habits and customs of the early settlers.

I was here in the days of hunting shirts, moccasins, and buckskin pants, all of which articles I have worn myself; when the rifle was the constant companion of the early settler when he left his domicile and entered the woods. I was here in the days of log-

cabins and puncheon floors; yes, and puncheon tables, for my first eating at table was upon a broad puncheon put upon legs; when our meals were all eaten off pewter plates by the best livers; and what a pride our mother took on Saturday evenings in scouring their pewter and having it all bright and shining! And those who could not afford pewter and tin, old Solomon Allread turned them plates and bowls out of wood on the turning-lathe. Numbers of families used that kind of table-ware, for it was a long time before “delf-ware,” as it was called, was brought to this country. I was here when our mothers and sisters manufactured from the raw materials of cotton, wool, and flax, all the wearing apparel of the family; calico was very scarce, and our mothers used to vie with each other in making the prettiest cotton frock-for that was the term used for dress in those days-and eyed each other very closely at church to see who had excelled. We had no buttons for our flax and cotton shirts, but our mothers had some inventive faculties, and they went to work, wrapped some thread round a goose-quill, shipped it off, and then worked it into a button with the needle. Pearl and ivory buttons were not known. For our coats, when we had any, we made some button-shapes out of some pieces of gourd, and our mothers covered them with some of the same material of the garment. As for pants buttons, we had some trouble, and not a little sole-leather was used for that purpose; but some had instruments for cutting them out of horn and drilling them.

Notwithstanding all this, the old settlers enjoyed themselves well. They all had plenty of hog and hominy, as the saying was, and if any fell a little short, there was a great deal of hospitality in the county in those days. Some of the best livers enjoyed a cup of coffee on Sunday mornings.

I forgot to say in the proper place, that Charles Sevier and James Dodson principally supplied the hats of the county, manufacturing them out of sheep’s wool and coon’s fur; and that Josiah Copeland furnished the saddles-he made the trees and covered them. Paul Cahpin was the principal blacksmith. Some of the best farmers used to raise some wheat, and large fields of rye, and large flax patches; and when harvest time came round, all the neighbors were asked to come in on a certain day with their families, and the men to bring their reap-hooks, for grain-cradles were but little known in those early days. When assembled, the men went to the grain-fields to reap down the grain, and the boys and girls, such as were able, repaired to the flax-patches, each lad generally choosing some rosy-cheeked lass to pull flax by his side; and all went to work in good earnest. At the close of the day-the work being ended-all was good cheer, and a big egg-nog wound it all up.

If men had fallings out in those days, the knife or pistol was not thought of, but if a collision occurred, it was entirely fisticuff. In those days, if an individual or his friends were disposed to boast of his manhood, it was not long until he had to fight somebody, just to see which could endure the most hard knocking, in a ring, with a man each to see that all went off in accordance with the “code of honor” of those days of fisticuff. This was in the days of the Williamses, Dales, and Matthwses, when they all used to meet at Rebecca Watson’s.”

SCHOOLS

In 1833, Monroe, which was then the county-site of Overton county, became uneasy under its honors, for the aspiring little village of Livingston was its open and avowed rival. And although the people of that part of the county tried hard to retain the county-site there, yet in 1835, a decisive vote was taken and it was removed to Livingston, where it has ever since remained; but the contest was often close and bitter, and was never entirely abandoned until the adoption of the Constitution of 1870, which renders a two-thirds vote necessary to remove a county-site. While Monroe was its capital, and until the breaking out of the late civil war in 1861, Overton county was in a state of unparalleled prosperity. Its people, who had early been taught to regard industry and economy as Christian duties, were fast accumulating wealth. There had been many good schools in the county, and its people, as a community, were fairly educated. Among these schools, besides the noble and most successful efforts of Dr. Moses Fisk, at Hilham, of which I have spoken, was that of William Hall, who, at an early day, taught a very prosperous school of more than sixty pupils, for a number of years at old Union meeting-house near Hilham. Judge Leonard also taught a fine school at Hilham. In the Academy at Monroe, there was for some years a flourishing school, under the superintendence of Sidney H. Little, who was afterwards a distinguished statesman and lawyer in the State of Illinois. But more important yet was the Alpine Institute of later date, in reply to a request for an historical sketch of which, Rev. Wm. M. Dillard says:

“John L. Dillard (my father) purchased the body of land, including those springs at Alpine, built more houses, and moved his family up there in 1846. Father immediately put up a roomy log building, and I commenced teaching in it in the fall of 1846-same year. At the close of the first session of six month, I had forty-perhaps more-students. After a vacation of two or three weeks, I commenced teaching again. In a month or two my school became too large for me.

In the fall of 1847, Mr. John L. Beveridge, now Governor of Illinois, visited us by invitation of my father, and entered this school as principal teacher, and we taught in connection a couple sessions.

Mr. Beveridge visited Illinois, married a wife, who returned with him, and both of them were instructors in the school. Soon afterwards a Mr. Huff-a young man of fine morals and educational qualifications-entered the school of Alpine.

This school then had a corps of four or five teachers, who were constantly employed and did thorough work. It was well endorsed by all the surrounding counties; received the influence and patronage of such good and useful men as Doke Capps, Esq., the Culloms, Bates, McHenry, Goodpastures, McDonnalds, Hayters, and Copelands. Many young men and ladies, not only from the surrounding countries of Fentress, Jackson, Smith, and Wilson, but from Kentucky and other States, received the most, if not all their beneficial education at Alpine Institute. Often have I been told by many of the good and useful men of your county, since the unfortunate close of the Alpine Institute, that it gave to all your county a new and fine impulse; that it had a fine bearing-a splendid influence upon your

county; and though it existed in full operation only about five years, its good effects are still plainly seen and powerfully felt.”

At this school some of the leading men of our country were educated, among whom I will only mention Judge Mike Ousley, of Kentucky; Dr. P.D. Sims, of Chattanooga; Judge James W. McHenry, of Nashville; Capt. H. H. Dillard, of Cookeville; Maj. John G. Lowe, of Hartsville; and **Judge W. W. Goodpasture**, of Livingston.

THE WAR

But, ladies and gentlemen, I cannot dwell longer upon the earlier history of the county. Its prosperity was not long to continue unbroken. In 1861, it participated in that great political upheaval which shook the very foundation of our government. Of what followed I shall only speak in the most general way, for many of you know it much better and can appreciate it much more keenly than I. Our county went with our State, and, as one of the border counties of the Southern Confederacy, was exposed to that general devastation and destruction attendant upon a relentless civil war, embittered by the cruel and merciless depredations of guerillas and bushwhackers, and all the horrors and inhumanities of border warfare. But in this, as in all other wars, it did its duty to the cause it espoused. It gave to the Confederate army Brig. Gen. Gregg; three Colonels, John M. Hughes, F.H. Daugherty, and Samuel Davis; and twelve companies of volunteer troops, which won many laurels for themselves as well as their county.

There is one instance of Overton county heroism which I cannot forbear here to relate. I know that heroes are commonly thought to be remarkable beings who once lived, but whose heroism cost them their lives; and I am aware that it is not often that the world has ever recognized them, because their heroism is seldom discovered until they are dead. But the conduct of Col. John M. Hughes in front of Richmond, was as grandly heroic as that of Joan of Arc at Orleans, or the “Drummer Boy” at Gettysburg. He was in command of a Confederate brigade, and with a force of four hundred and fifty men and officers, was the only defense of the Confederate States capital, and was forced to meet and expected to hold in check a grand army of twenty thousand Federal soldiers. He met them boldly, but was driven back two and a half miles to Fort Harrison, where, with his exhausted men, he made a desperate attempt to resist their further progress until Gen. Lee’s forces could arrive from Petersburg. There he sat upon his horse and saw the enemy make their grand charge, four lines of battle deep; he saw his gallant little band, who were many of them city troops in their first engagement, waver and give way before the resistless shock. Every effort to cause them to stand was fruitless, save upon a few brave men from his own regiment, who were captured. At this trying a critical moment, Gen. Gregg exclaimed, “My God, Colonel, what shall we do?” With the calm and determined manner of a hero, as he was, Col. Hughes replied, “I am going to give them the best I have before I leave.” The enemy had advanced to within forty feet of where Col. Hughes was standing, and were beginning to plant their banners upon the parapet, when he raised his revolver, and, with a steady nerve and matchless aim, he saw their colors go down three times from his shots. When he had discharged his eleventh shot, his mare was killed, bearing five bullet holes in the right saddle-skirt, and he retreated,

wounded in either foot, overtook and halted a part of his troops, and checked the further advance of the Federal forces until Gen. Lee arrived. You know the rest. It was one of the grandest victories for the South during the war.

And those of her citizens who remained true to the Union, were equally patriotic. They gave to the Federal army parts of three or four companies, together with Col. A. E. Garrett, who commanded a Federal regiment.

1865

After the war was ended, in 1865, came the most trying time to the good citizens of Overton county. A large majority of them were financially ruined and politically disfranchised, and there was a small minority of bad men in this and Fentress county, who, while society was in a state of fermentation, taking advantage of their assumed loyalty to the government, had insinuated themselves into the favor of those in authority, and, like the skum upon the brother, were bubbling to the top. These men, banded together, sometimes as a body-guard to our appointed Sheriff, at the public expense, but more often as vigilants, took advantage of the times to harass and oppress, and sometimes even murder, the disarmed and unprotected rebels. Gov. Brownlow appointed Col. John Bowles Sheriff, and gave him blank commissions to fill the various other offices for the county, which done, the civil authorities were supposed to be reorganized and reinstated. Shortly afterwards there was an election by the people, but, like old Rip Van Winkle, after a nap in the mountains, they were surprised to find that times had so changed that they were now incapable of choosing their own officers. The County Court appointed by Col. Bowles was a strict, jealous, and altogether a most remarkable court. After awhile the Legislature passed an act authorizing the Clerks of County Courts to issue certificates of suffrage. But the Bowles appointees in this county, who were jealous of their waning authority, thought that the acting Clerk, John Q.A. Sprouls, who was then looking to Legislative honors, was issuing certificates to altogether too many rebels, and, as Col. Bowles had assumed the title of Deputy Governor, they, too, doubtless, laboring under the fond delusion that they were a Deputy Legislature, passed the following order, which stands upon the records of the County Court unto this day: "Ordered by the County Court, that the certificates issued by the Clerk of this Court, be disannulled and blotted out and held void, and that the voters be required to get new ones."

But, whatever else may be said of it, this was a strict court. It was strict within its own body, as appears of record, where it is "Ordered by the County Court, that but one man shall speak to this Court at a time, and he shall stand in front of the Chairman, with his head uncovered" And it was strict even with the persons of its members. Witness the following order: "Ordered by the County Court, that if Esquire S. wears his coon-skin cap into this Court any more, the Sheriff, without further order, shall forthwith proceed to burn the aforesaid coon-skin cap."

Following the illustrious example of the County Court at an humble distance, our justices were also strict. They were particularly strict upon the subject of larceny, discountenancing it in every form. One of them even went so far, in this commendable

direction, as to issue a warrant for a man, and bind him over to court, for the questionable offense of stealing a mill site! But I also said that it was a remarkable court. It was remarkable for the wonderful power and tact of its members for constructing legal forms. If it should ever become necessary for any one now before me to write a warrant for a man, for an offense against the property of his neighbor, he would do well to model it by the following: "To any lawful officer, etc." You are hereby commanded to arrest the body of A.B., and bring him before me or some other justice of the peace, to answer the State of Tennessee upon a charge of assault and battery, this day committed upon the body of C. D., by then and there feloniously killing his spotted heifer," etc. Or if it be the person instead of the offense, which he wishes particularly to describe, it would perhaps be better to use the following form, constructed by one of those eminent justices: "To any lawful officer, etc.: You are hereby commanded to arrest the body of old man Sweat and his two sons, and his two son-in-law," etc. And no legal form book should be countenanced, which fails to follow the same high authority who words a certificate in this wise: "He, I the aforesaid A. B.C., do hereby certify," etc.

PRESENT CONDITION

After a few years of turmoil and discord things began to assume their natural attitude. It was not many years before quiet, peaceable men could venture to town on public days without the fear of being cudgelled or shot. And now, at a distance of more than ten years from the close of the war, times have wonderfully changed, and we are fast regaining our former strength and position. I consider the future of our county, as I do that of our whole country, bright. I can see a new era dawning upon us. We must not deceive ourselves as to our present condition, when we look back upon the past prosperity of our county. Those, indeed, seem splendid times, when in the intervals of labor, old Jacky France could kill one hundred and fifty-six wolves! Those, indeed, appear law-abiding times, when Toker Jack even asked permission of the court to give the "war-whoop!" and those, indeed, must have been prosperous times, when nature responded so kindly to the demands of our father. But we must remember that we now have thousands of conveniences and advantages of which they never dreamt. And although our surroundings may not justify a present enthusiasms, yet in the dim background there are bright lights which cast their luminous rays ahead. It is peculiarity of the human vision, that the past bears many more charms than the present.

At summer eve, when heav'n's aerial bow
Spans with bright arch the glittering hills below,
Why to yon mountain turns the musing eye,
Whose sun-bright summit mingles with the sky?
Why do those cliffs with shadowy tint, appear
More sweet than all the landscapes smiling ner?
"Tis distance lends enchantment to the view,
And robes the mountains in its azure hue."

ITS GREAT MEN

But I have yet to refer to the most interesting chapter in the history of our county. Its great men, of which no county in the State, during the last seventy-five years, has been

more prolific, are the glory and the pride of Overton county. Its sons have filled with distinction every profession and almost every avocation of life. The honest and thrifty farmer of our county, today, though made poor by the vicissitudes of the last fifteen years, have bright and noble examples in the persons of such men as Jessee Roberts, who, by his practical good sense and honest industry, rose from the most abject poverty, to opulence and wealth in their own midst. It has given to our neighboring cities many of their most popular and energetic merchants. And speculation may well pay a tribute to Overton county, when it remembers that some of its strongest magnets, represented by Sam Tate, the railroad man of Memphis, owe their origin to its soil. If any should ask for its distinguished physicians, I would point them with pride to Dr. Henry M. Colquitt, of Livingston, Dr. Simeon Hinds, of Cookeville, the late Dr. B.J. Bledsoe, of Livingston, Dr. John B. McConnell, of Nashville, and Dr. P.D. Sims, of Chattanooga, as a few of the many not unworthy of that responsible profession, which it has furnished. If nay, by charging its want of colleges, should imply the ignorance of its people, they must yet acknowledge that it has contributed much to the cause of education, when they remember that it has given such teachers as Dr. Moses Fisk, the great educator, Rev. B. W. McDonald, D.D., L.L.D., late President of Cumberland University, and John I.d. Hinds, now a professor in the same institution, and Vice-President of the State Teachers' Association.

If it be chargeable with a want of churches and ministers among its own people, it will not be denied that it has sent most valuable men into many pulpits, not only of its own, but of adjoining States. Can the Methodist Episcopal Church ever forget to whom it is indebted for Elder John W. Phillips, of Texas, Elder T.P. Holsman, of Mississippi, Elder Harris, and Rev. Dennis, of Missouri, and Elder Hicks of Alabama? Or can the Cumberland Presbyterian Church ever cease to be thankful for such men as Revs. James McDonald, and A.S. Hayter, of Texas, Rev. A.H. Goodpasture, of Illinois, Revs. T. W. Pendergrass, and John Hinds, of Missouri, Rev. Q. D. Elder of Kentucky, and Revs., B. W. McDonlad, D.D., L.L.D., W. D. Chadick, D.D., and T.F. Bates of Tennessee?

And the Christian Church is no less indebted to it for such eminent divines as Elders Caleb Sewell, Isaac Sewell, and Isaac T. Reneau, of Kentucky, and Elders E.G Sewell, editor of the Gospel Advocate, and Jesse Sewell, of Tennessee. But these are only part of a number of valuable ministers from Overton county, among whom I must not fail to mention Rev. Chilton, late of West Tennessee, of the Episcopal Church.

But it has been still more honored in the legal profession. There is no country in the State, perhaps, whose sons have been more eminent in the law, either upon the bench or at the bar. With twelve judges, two of Supreme Courts, and two Chancellors, some of whom have presided for more than twenty years, it could have kept one upon the bench without intermission, almost from the time we were English colonies. Among these is our venerable and honored fellow-citizen, Judge Alvan Cullom, now far receding toward the sunset of life, who, in addition to his valuable services as a judge and an advocate, has educated at least five celebrated lawyers, three of whom were judges, and one was Attorney General for the State of Missouri. The first lawyers of Overton county who gained any prominence, were Adam Huntsman, Jacob Dillen, and Stokely B. Rowan. Besides these, I have noticed many names in a recent article in the Union and American,

the accuracy of which I have since confirmed by investigations. Missouri is indebted to it for Judge Solomon H. Leonard, Parker Lane, and General James B. Gardenhire, late Attorney General for the State; Texas, for Daniel McMillan; Arkansas, for Supreme Judge Edward Cross, and Judge Richard C.S. Brown; Mississippi, for Judge James L. Totten, and Richard Nelson; Illinois, for James Turney, and Tennessee, for Supreme Judge A.W. O. Totten, of Jackson, Judge A. J. Marchbanks, of McMinnville, who was for many years one of the best Circuit Judges of the State, Judge Benj. C. Totten, of Huntingdon, Judge E. L. Gardenhire, of Carthage, Judge W. W. Goodpasture, of Livingston, Judge R. S. Windle, of Monroe, Judge James W. McHenry, of Nashville, Judge Wm. Cullom, of Chinton, Attorney General James W. Wright, of Livingston, Attorney General John M.D. Mitchell, of Livingston, Samuel Turney, of Sparta, J.D. Goodpasture, of Livingston, James A. Whiteside, of Chattanooga, John R. Nelson, of Knoxville, and W. E. B. Jones, of McMinnville.

In politics its sons have won laurels equally bright. In the thirty-four sessions of the General Assembly which have met since Overton county was established, men who have been once its citizens, have had seats twenty-eight times in the Senate, and forty-three times in the house. Of the sixty delegates who framed our Constitution of 1834, Overton county may claim at least six, viz.: Hugh C. Armstrong, Richard Bradshaw, Maclin Cross, Adam Huntsman, Richard Nelson, and Julius C.N. Robertson, being one-tenth of the whole number of delegates. And the walls of our National Capitol have echoed to the voices of eleven of its sons. Hon. Ed. Cross, had a most remarkable career. He received a license to practice law at Monroe, in 1827, and soon afterward went to Arkansas, where he was appointed Judge under the Territorial government, and after the State was admitted into the Union, was elected for three successive terms to the Congress of the United States, and afterwards Supreme Judge of this own State. He was of a very happy and sanguine temperament, and when he was prepared to leave for Arkansas, he called to bid adieu to his friend Alvan Cullom. Cullom had not then built up the reputation which he afterward established, and as he expresses it, was feeling very gloomy and dejected, and thought that Cross' prospects were not much brighter than his own. But Cross' spirits were overflowing, and he exclaimed, "By the gods, Cullom, I am going to Arkansas, and I expect to meet you in the Congress of the United States." And as if he had spoken the words of a prophet, about twenty years later they met, for the first time, in Congress, and remembered their parting. Hon. Sidney H. Little, besides being a deep and acute statesman was a profound lawyer, and was defending the notorious Mormon prophet, Joseph Smith, when, while taking his family driving one evening, he was thrown from his carriage and killed. Adam Huntsman was a remarkably popular and exceedingly witty politician. He beat Davy Crockett for Congress, using his own weapon, the only time that he was ever beaten. Soon after the election, Crockett remarked very laconically, that the "people might go to the devil, he was going to Texas." He did go, and was sacrificed to the Texan cause at the bloody Alamo. Besides these, Hon. Wm. Cullom, late Clerk of the House of Representatives, Hon. Alvan Cullom, Hon. E.L. Gardenhire, ex-member of the Confederate Congress, Hon. A.E. Garrett, and Hon. John L. Beveridge, the present Governor of Illinois, who has had the most remarkably successful career of any politician in the United States, up to the late Republican

Convention, which defeated his as a candidate for Governor, are among its distinguished politicians.

Although it is true that all of whom I have spoken were not born in Overton county, yet I have referred to none who did not live among its people, and imbibe the spirit of their mountain home, before they had won their first honors, and while yet they were unknown to the world.

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for your patient and courteous attention.

Source: Putnam County Herald Newspaper, Cookeville, TN

GOODPASTURE, MARTHA ANN: On last Monday night, at eight o'clock, death removed from our midst one of the best known and most highly respected women in the community, Mrs. **Martha Ann**, wife of **W. W. Goodpasture**. She was a converted Christian woman, a true and faithful wife and devoted mother. She has gone to her reward. For twenty years she has been afflicted, and suffered much, and during the past seven years she had been a constant care to her faithful companion, who patient watchfulness and tender devotion we have never seen surpassed. She bore her affliction with patience and submission, and in the crucible of suffering God refined and purified the gold until the image of the Father could clearly be seen in her daily life. She realized that the end was near, and frequently spoke to her her (sic) husband about it, giving him the full assurance that she was ready to go. We laid her to rest in the family graveyard where she awaits the resurrection of the just. A husband, two daughters, and a son survive her, we extend to them our prayers and sympathy. [Date 11/9/1904, Vol. II, No. 40, Page 4]

Source: Putnam County Herald Newspaper, Cookeville, TN

GOODPASTURE, JUDGE WINBORNE W.: At six o'clock, Wednesday morning, June 19th **Judge Winborne W. Goodpasture**, Overton County's most distinguished citizen; quietly and peacefully obeyed the beacon of the angel of death and his soul returned to God who gave it. His son, E. C. Goodpasture, his two daughters, Mrs. C. M. Hensley, of Birmingham, Ala, and Mrs. W. G. Currie, of Ada, I. T., and other relatives and friends were with him when the end came. He retained his natural buoyancy and good cheer until the last and, on the day preceding his death, expressed the opinion that he would soon recover. His burial took place at five o'clock Wednesday evening, at the family cemetery, and was attended by a vast concourse of people who sorrowfully paid their last respect to the honored dead. The funeral services were conducted by Rev. W. H. Gilbert, pastor of the Southern Methodist church, assisted by Revs. Gutherie and Wilson. . . . Judge Winborne W. Goodpasture was born and reared near the historic village of Hilham, this county. He was born October 20, 1828 and at the time of his death, was in his seventy-ninth year. He was a **son of John** and **Margie Byran Goodpasture** and was the youngest of a family of fourteen children, seven boys and seven girls -- all of whom lived to have families of their own. . . . In 1854 he **married Miss Martha Capps**, a daughter of a prominent merchant of this place, and for more than fifty years they lived happily together, his wife having died two years ago. . . . [Date 7/11/1907, Vol. V, No. 19, Page 2]

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