

A SHORT HISTORY OF SMITH COUNTY TENNESSEE
FROM THE BOOK 'A HISTORY OF TENNESSEE AND TENNESSEANS

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Smith County (formed in 1819 from Sumner and named for General Daniel Smith): Large tracts of the best land in the county were entered by survivors of the Revolution, and the early settlers were generally from North Carolina, Virginia and East Tennessee. , As in Wilson and other counties where it is now rarely seen, cotton was grown in Smith county. Tobacco was also grown. Hemp fields were a common sight in Middle Tennessee in pioneer times.

The original site of Carthage, the county seat, belonged to William Walton, who located there about 1787 the county's first settler. Other pioneers of the county were Daniel Burford, Richard Alexander, Peter Turney, father of Hopkins L. and grandfather of Governor Peter Turney, William Saunders, Tilman Dixon, Micajah Duke, William McDonald, William Goodall, Armstead Flippin, James Hodges, George T. Wright, Arthur S. Hogan and the Gordons, Smiths and Fites. Robert Smith and Lucy Gordon were the first couple married in the County. The court pleas and quarter sessions was organized at the house of Tilman Dixon, December 16, 1799, the magistrates being: Garrett Fitzgerald, chairman, Tilman Dixon, James Gwinn, William Alexander, Thomas Harrison, Peter Turney, James Hibbitts and William Walton. During the winter of 1804 Carthage was laid off. The courthouse was completed the next year, and in March, 1806, the court of pleas and quarter sessions was held therein. The first term of the circuit court was probably held in March, 1810. Judge N. W. Williams presiding. The first term of chancery court was held in May, 1825, Judge John Catron presiding. The bar of the county commanded respect from an early day. Some of its members won distinction prior to the war between the states. Early members: Robert L. and Abraham Caruthers, William B. Campbell, William Cullom, Samuel M. File, James B. Moore, Jordan Stokes, John D. Goodall, Andrew McClain, A. A. Swope, E. L. Gardenhire and Sam Turney.

Two companies, commanded by Captains Robertson and James Walton, took part in the War of 1812, and were at New Orleans. Four companies were in the war with Mexico, commanded by Captains William Walton, L. P. McMurry, Don Allison and John D. Goodall. Twelve companies of Confederates were raised in the county. There was nevertheless a considerable Union sentiment. Carthage was occupied by Federal troops from February, 1863, until the cessation of Hostilities— —at first by General Crook, then by General Spears and his East Tennesseans, and lastly by General W. B. Stokes.

In 1830 Carthage had a population of 700. There were one minister, three doctors and eight lawyers. Geneva Academy was an early school of note; so was the Female Academy, established in 1842. Dixon Creek Baptist church was erected probably in 1799. Pioneer ministers were Rev. David Halliburton, Rev. John Page, Rev. John Maffit, Rev. Jesse Moreland and Rev. David P. Timberlake. The first church in Carthage was built by the Methodists.

Population in 1913. 18,548.

TERRITORY TAKEN FROM SUMNER COUNTY TO ESTABLISH SMITH CO., TN
Tennessee Cousins by Worth S. Ray
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SMITH COUNTY, TENNESSEE was established in 1799, and was named for General Daniel Smith, former Secretary of the "Territory of the United States south of the Ohio". Williamson County was established by the Legislature the same year and at the same time, also out of Sumner County which in 1786 had been taken from the parent county of Davidson.

At the time of its establishment in 1799, Smith County, besides its present territory embraced all of the following territory:

All of Jackson Co., TN
All of Warren Co., TN
All of White Co., TN
All of Van Buren Co., TN
All of Cannon Co., TN
All of Coffee Co., TN
All of Franklin Co., TN
All of Grundy Co., TN
All of Trousdale Co., TN
All of DeKalb Co., TN
All of Macon Co., TN

So you can see that in 1799 Smith County, Tennessee was far from being the moderately small county it is today.

The first and earliest settlers of Smith County came originally from North Carolina and Virginia, many of them, however, having lived for a time in the Holston Valley in East Tennessee before coming to what became known as "Middle Tennessee". A few of them perhaps came from Georgia, but even these were originally from the same localities the others came from.

In 1787 William Walton is said to have established his home in Sumner Co., TN but in that part included in Smith Co., some twelve years later. As a resident of Sumner Co., when he first came there, he settled on the present site of the town of Carthage, on the Cumberland, River.

Walton was the man who built and surveyed the first road across the mountains from East Tennessee to the Cumberland settlement. He was possibly a near relative of the famous Jesse Walton whose name appears on the Courthouse at Jonesboro, as one of the first settlers of the old Washington District.

Some of the first settlers of Smith Co., Tennessee were:
William Walton

Daniel Burford
Richard Alexander
Peter Turney
William Saunders
Tillman Dixon
Micajah Duke
William McDonald
William Goodall
Armistead Flippin
James Hodgens
George T. Wright
Arthur S. Hogan
Leonard Fites
The Gordons and Smith Families

Two famous places in Smith Co., Tennessee are the towns of Carthage and Dixon Springs.

Dixon Springs marks the home of the famous Tillman Dixon where on December 16, 1799, after the Legislature had established the County, the first session of the Court of Pleas and quarter Sessions was held.

At this meeting the following Magistrates of the new County of Smith, appeared and were sworn into office.

Garrett Fitzgerald, Chm,
William Alexander
James Gwinn
Tillman Dixon
Thomas Harrison
James Hibbetts
William Walton
Peter Turney

During the first year or two Courts were held at the home of Tillman Dixon, Col. Walton's and Saunders

When North Carolina opened up lands for it's revolutionary soldiers, practically all of what is now Smith & Sumner Co., TN and adjoining counties, tracts, were included.

A great flock of revolutionary patriots from North Carolina and East Tennessee poured in, and among them were the following, some of whom may not have lived in Smith County but some in Trousdale and adjoining areas that for a while was a part of Smith, and perhaps before that their original settlement had been actually in Sumner, from which Smith had been taken

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