

RAWLSTON:

Source: Hamilton County Pioneers, by John Wilson, 1998, pp 242-244.

Matthew Roulston fought for the Patriots in the Revolution alongside his neighbors from the lower half of Looney's Mill Creek in Augusta County, VA. After selling his Virginia lands in 1789, he became one of the earliest settlers of the future Tennessee, going to the section that became Jefferson County. Some of his descendants made their way to Hamilton County prior to the Indian removal.

The Roulstons (later spelled Raulston or Rawlston) are listed on the roster of Scottish clans in 1147 as having risen out of Ayrshire. The name is said to have come from the fact they rolled stones down from their highland homes to protect themselves from enemies.

Matthew Roulston traces back to John Roulston, who was born in Scotland in 1653 and was in the shipping business – hauling passengers and cargo between England and America. John Roulston emigrated from the region of Paisley and Renfrew to Boston and married Mercy Bumstead Bosworth, widow of Samuel Bosworth. John Roulston served in King Phillip's War. He was licensed in 1714 to operate a tavern and inn at Boston. He died three years later. His children included Mercy, John II, Thomas, Joseph who died in 1690 as a small child, and Mary. John Roulston II, who was born in 1684, made his way to the region of the James River near Richmond, VA, in the early 1740s. He married Dorothy Nicholson. John Roulston II died in 1744. His children were William, Mercy, John who married Ruth Everden, and Mary. William Roulston and his wife, Eleanor, lived at Botetourt County, VA. He was a member of the colonial militia under Col. John Buchanan in 1758. He died in 1767. His children were David, Robert, William Jr., Matthew, Samuel and Andrew.

The Revolutionary soldier Matthew Roulston married Martha Moore, daughter of James Moore. Matthew Roulston in 1795 established a "stand" on the Walton Road. It was the first tavern on the well-traveled road and guests included Andrew Jackson, James K. Polk and Andrew Johnson. This was about 12 miles west of Cookeville. One of the daughters of Matthew Roulston was Elizabeth, who married another Revolutionary soldier, William Jared. Another daughter, Ruth, married Mark Young. Other sons were William who married Anne Moore and Samuel who married Besty Lowry. Samuel Roulston fought with Jackson in the battle of New Orleans. Another son, James Raulston, lived in a log cabin that straddled the Alabama and Tennessee line. A legislator, he was a lifelong friend of Andrew Jackson and was one of his commanders. James Raulston was the patriarch of the Sequatchie Valley branch of the family. His wife was Jane Simmons. One descendant was Leonard J. Raulston, South Pittsburg attorney and historian. He wrote a book on the Raulstons.

Another son of Matthew Roulston was Moses Roulston, who received from his father "15 pounds to be paid to him in trade three years after my decease." Moses was first married to Susannah White and they had four daughters. These were Martha who married John Yearout, Susannah who married James Bogle, Elizabeth who married Lewis Reno Vance, and Mary Anne who married James Cook. After the death of his first wife, Moses Roulston married Mary Denny. Moses Roulston mainly lived at Chestnut Mound in the later Putnam County. A subscription schoolteacher, he later moved to Blount County. He died in 1829.

One of the daughters of Moses Roulston by his second wife was Jane, who was first married to a Millsaps and then to George Bowers. A son, William Jarrett Rawlston, was born in 1811. He married Martha Jane Arnett, daughter of George Arnett, in 1837. They obtained a land grant along the Tennessee River in Hamilton County at Gold Point in 1840. Nine children were raised on this 200-acre farm. They were Thomas Washington who married Bessie Taylor Samples, Isabel who married William Pleasant Hodges, William Seward who married Winnie Caroline Adams, Elizabeth who married William Watkins, John who married Elizabeth Caroline Rogers, George who married Sarah Hixson, James Frances who married Tennessee Lovelady, Mary "Molly" who married McKinney Hixson, and Martha Virginia who married Frank Hixson, brother of McKinney Hixson.

The Rawlstons at Gold Point sided with the Union. Thomas W. Rawlston in a letter to his cousin, Caroline Millsaps, referred to "the place where we once had to hide from the Rebs. I can never forget you for kind favors that you showed us while we were in the wild cliffs of Waldons Ridge and I am bound to you for every favor that you should ask from me as long as my head is above the sod." T. W. Rawlston was working in the post office at Chattanooga at the time the letter was written at the end of 1864. He also spoke of a letter from his brother, Will, that was written from near Columbia, TN. Will reported "they had marched there a foot and at that date they were throwing up breast works three miles from the Rebs. Since that time they have had a fight and I do not know what loss the regiment suffered." William Seward Rawlston rose to the rank of corporal in Co. K. of the Fifth Tennessee Infantry after being wounded in the shoulder on May 14, 1864. His brother-in-law, William Watkins, also fought for the Union.

William Jarrett Rawlston died in 1883 and Martha Jane Arnett Rawlston in 1894. On her death bed, she called the children one by one – from the oldest down to the youngest – to bid them goodbye. The family then vowed to have an annual reunion and the first one was held at the Thomas W. Rawlston home at Ooltewah on Thanksgiving Day 1894.

James Francis Rawlston was postmaster at Gold Point from 1891 to 1895 and William Seward Rawlston was the Gold Point postmaster beginning in 1897. This post office was discontinued and moved to Hixson in 1907. William Seward Rawlston was the Chattanooga postmaster from 1905 to 1913.

Thomas W. Rawlston was a schoolteacher. His sons included William, Zachary Taylor who married Rose Ella Watkins, and Thomas W. Jr who was a deaf mute who married Cynthia Rebecca Mynatt. Children of John R. Rawlston were Addie who married William Washington Hixson, Luther who died as a small child, Margaret J. who died when she was 11, Sophia who married Doc Rogers, Robert Lee who married Mary E. Hixson and then her sister Minerva Hixson, and Carrie Elizabeth who married Creed Jackson. Children of George Rawlston were Joseph who married Mae Gann, Lossie who married Harry Brown, Ophia who married Eugene A. Hixson, and Lucille who married Lester Henry. Children of James Francis Rawlston included Martha Minerva, Mary Virginia, Cora Elizabeth, William Sevier who married Eva Hixson, John Wesley who married Lou Holcomb, Rosa Belle who married George Holcomb, Early who married Eunice Freeman, Zach, Jim, Ethel and Noah.

Several of the children of William Seward Rawlston were educators, John Taylor Rawlston was principal of Gold Point School. He married Louise Hale and then Maude Martin. George McKinney Rawlston was principal of Ganns-Middle Valley School. He married Varina Brogden and then Nancy Dent. Their brother, Thomas Monroe Rawlston, was a streetcar conductor, then he ran a general store. He married Bertie Johnson. Another brother, Leonidas "Lon" worked in the post office. He married Ida Knox. Another brother, Samuel Grant Rawlston, married Blanche Miller. He had a restaurant and then worked in a silk mill. Their children included Dorothy who married Carl J. Williams, Clara Mae who died when she was 15, Edna Rose who married Otis Howard Sims, Samuel Lamar who married Eloise Morgan and then Janie Ruth Sosebee, and Rita Ruth who married Cyrus Cecil Barger. Another daughter, Mary Elizabeth Rawlston, has researched the history of the family. Another son, John William Rawlston, married Betty Thomas. Their sons are John Jr., a photographer at the Free Press, and Mark, a detective with the city police. Daughters of William Sherman Rawlson were Eliza Cleo who married William Jackson and then William Thomas Miller, and Tamer Lee who married James Hayne Roberson.

Read more stories by John Wilson at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>