

**HISTORY OF WASHINGTON ACADEMY, ANDREWS COLLEGE,
BLOOMINGTON SEMINARY AND BLOOMINGTON COLLEGE**

By Judge Ernest Houston Boyd
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It is unfortunate that there is not available a complete list, in the order of their service, of the principals of Washington Academy.

The construction of the brick Washington Academy building, started before the Civil War, had not been completed at the outbreak of the war, and from 1861 to 1865 its completion was held in abeyance, as were all civil, business and industrial enterprises in Tennessee. During these four years of suspended completion of the building, the five members of the Board of Trustees were in military service. Lee R. Taylor, J. W. Crutcher, W. R. Hutcherson and Matthew S. Smith were in the Confederate Army and S. M. McCaleb was in the Federal Army. Soon after the close of the Civil War, work was resumed on the building and in a short time it was completed and made ready for use. It was a large, two story brick building with a cupola which sheltered a large bell, which could be heard to the uttermost bounds of the community.

The first principal of the school was Prof. H. C. Fleming. Other early principals were Prof. Brantley, W. P. Smith, J. G. Steward, J. J. Finney, J. G. Washburn, R. L. Smithson, Prof. Clement, Prof. Samuel B. Yeagan, Cleburne L. Hayes, A. Rufus Harris, J. L. Boone, John J. Boyd, E. H. Jared, Giles A. White, Albert H. Carpenter and C. Y. Jared. These men were principals while the school was taught in the first brick building, which building was torn down in 1898 and a splendid large two-story school building was erected on the same site. The first principal in the second building was Dr. A. L. Peterman, others were: P. Evans, Osslan S. Myers, Claude Lowry, N. J. Finney, t. K. Sisk, M. T. Carlisle and W. E. Moore.

The second building was torn down in 1922 and the present large, modern brick structure was erected on the same site. S. L. Gibson was the first principal in the present building. The several other excellent principals who have since served are generally recalled by the citizens of Cookeville.

Throughout the long history of this school, known in different periods of its history as Washington Academy, Cookeville High School, Cookeville Collegiate Institute and again as Cookeville High School, it has always had splendid principals and excellent faculties. The citizens of Cookeville have, throughout its history, been deeply interested in good schools, and no town of its population has been more fortunate in this regard. Who can conceive of, or compute, the inestimable blessings and benefits to Cookeville, Putnam County and this Upper Cumberland section of the State which have accrued from Washington Academy and its successors in name.

CONSTRUCTION OF WASHINGTON ACADEMY:

In 1860, the Board of Trustees of Washington Academy awarded the contract for the construction of the two story brick building to S. S. Rhodes, concerning whom little is now known locally. His death occurred in 1862. He was probably killed during the Civil War. In 1867, his widow and minor children were living in McMinn County, Tennessee.

After the close of the Civil War, the County Court elected a new Board of Trustees of Washington Academy, composed of Dr. J. M. Goodpasture, Maj. J. C. Freeze, Rev. B. D. Hunter, Holland Denton and Curtis Mills, and this Board of Trustees had the building completed. The building had remained in an unfinished condition during the four years of the Civil War.

When the contract was awarded in 1860 for the construction of the building the Cookeville Masonic Lodge was a party to the contract, which came about from the following facts. The Board of Trustees of the Academy agreed that if the Masonic Lodge would contribute a certain amount toward the construction of the Upper story of the Academy building that the Masonic Lodge might have the privilege of holding its meetings in the upper story of the building, and the meetings of the Masonic Lodge, as well as the meetings of the Odd Fellows Lodge, were held in the upper story of the building for about twenty-five years. This

was not an unusual arrangements in those days as lodge halls were then located in the upper story of school buildings in many towns and some rural communities, and it was not unusual for a lodge hall to be located in an upper story of a church building.

In 1866, one A. M. Walker filed a bill in the Chancery Court of Putnam County seeking to enforce a claimed lien against said building for some alleged work done by him, as a mechanic, on the building, under some sort of a claimed sub-contract with the contractor S. S. Rhodes. On Feb. 2, 1867 an answer and cross bill was filed in said suit by the Board of Trustees of Washington Academy and Curtis Mills, Treasurer of the Cookeville Masonic Lodge, in which Answer and Cross-bill it was alleged, among other things, that in 1860 their predecessors in title employed said S. S. Rhodes to build and complete the building, same to be built and completed within a fixed time, and that said S. S. Rhodes failed to complete said building according to said agreement, that he only built the walls of said building and covered it and laid the upper floor and some other small portions of work about said building, and that said Rhodes died in 1862 an that he left but little property of any kind except such as was included in a deed of trust to secure certain of his creditors.

OTHER EARLY SCHOOLS OF PUTNAM COUNTY ANDREWS COLLEGE:

The earliest school of higher learning established in Putnam County was Andrews College. An act of the legislature relating to it refers to the school as "Andrew College", but it is reasonably certain that the name given it by its founders was "Andrews College". Why its founders named it "Andrews College" no living resident of the county seems to know. It was founded by the Rev. Isaac Buck, a Methodist minister, and his son Jonothan Buck. It was located on the Buck Mountain road before Cookeville was founded. Its location is about one mile East of the Public Square of Cookeville. While the exact date on which the construction of Andrews College was commenced is not positively known, it is certain that it was in either 1849 or 1850. Isaac Buck purchased the land on which the college building was located in 1849 or 1850. Isaac Buck purchased the land on which the college building was located in 1849 for the purpose of establishing the college at that location, and it is known that, immediately after he purchased the site, building preparations were started. Isaac Buck was born and reared in Pennsylvania. He received a thorough college education. In 1820 he was ordained to the ministry of the Methodist Church and on the same day on which he was ordained to the ministry he was married on the floor of the Methodist Conference of Pennsylvania, and at the same Methodist Conference which ordained him to the ministry, he responded to an appeal by the Bishop for ministers of that Conference to volunteer to locate in this section of Tennessee, and immediately thereafter he came to what is now Putnam County. He located on what is still known as "Buck Mountain", about four miles East of Cookeville, where he opened up a plantation of several hundred acres. In 1849, he purchased about 140 acres of land just East of Cookeville, upon which he and his son Jonothan Buck established Andrew College, on the farm now owned by Dr. J. P. Terry, well known Cookeville dentist, the site of the college building being just East of Dr. Terry's residence. The one large school building was certainly well built. It was a full two story building with high ceilings. The walls were constructed of immense poplar logs, carefully dressed by hand and securely fitted and jointed together and these impregnable walls were weatherboarded with thick, hand dressed, yellow poplar plank and all rooms were ceiled with thick, hand dressed yellow poplar plank. The building had five large chimneys, built of carefully dressed, uniform sized blocks of limestone rock. Two large buildings were connected by a single room, forty feet in width and sixty-five feet in length, it being an immense dining room for boarding students. The chapel was a very large room, all of the other rooms were twenty-five feet square or larger, several of them were about thirty feet square. It was the largest and most imposing frame structure in the county or in this entire area. Much of the construction work done with slave labor under the direction of capable carpenters and stone masons. The first college term opened in the fall of 1851, with a large enrollment of students, and the college enjoyed a large patronage until the Civil War, when, like practically all other Tennessee schools, it suspended operation.

Issac Buck and his oldest son Jonothan Buck were the principal teachers in Andrews College, but there were other teachers. The college ceased to function as a college when it suspended operation on account of the Civil War, but Jonothan Buck taught a private school in the building for several years after the war.

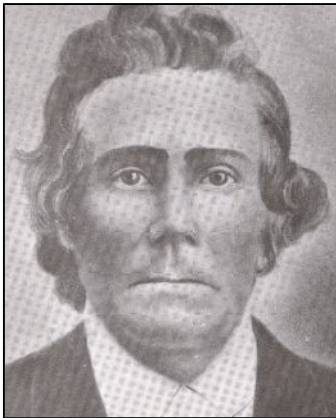
There has been much speculation as to the reason why Andrews College, as a college, did not resume operation after the close of the war. The reason, unquestionably, was the building and establishment of Washington Academy and the fact that State financial aid, which had formerly been received by Andrews College, was, by an Act of the General Assembly of 1855-56, provided, in part, as follows:

“Be it enacted, That it shall be the duty of the Trustees of the County Academy of Putnam County, to call upon Isaac Buck, and the Trustees of Andrew College of said County, for the amount of the Academy fund of said County, which has been appropriated to said college, and upon settlement, receive the same from said Buck, or Trustees of said College, with interest hereon, and appropriate the same to and Academy as other Academy money”.

Isaac Buck and Jonothan Buck had made a strong effort to have the county seat located around Andrew College and the Buck farm, and it was a bitter experience for them when the Commissioners appointed to locate the county seat of the re-established county decided in favor of the Charles Crook location instead of the Buck location, the fact that the Crook location contained two splendid springs.

Upon the establishment of Andrews College, Isaac and Jonothan Buck secured the establishment of a post-office at the point named “Monticello”, and Jonothan Buck established a weekly newspaper “The Monticello Times,” of which paper he was proprietor, editor and publisher, He published the paper for several years. It was published in the college building. When the Monticello pos-office was abolished and Cookeville was founded, the name of the paper was changed to “Cookeville Times.”

Isaac Buck was a scholarly man who, in his youth and young manhood, had enjoyed excellent educational advantages. He was proficient in Latin, Greek higher mathematics and theology. Coming to what is now Putnam County and location near the present city of Cookeville, he continued to reside in this section until his death in old age. The graves of Isaac Buck and his wife are in the Buck family cemetery, on the farm owned for many years by their son the late Enoch Buck, later owned by the late D. C. Wilhite and now owned by J. B. Mullins.



Isaac Buck led a very active and exceedingly useful life. He was an educator, minister, and a large farmer, and, for several years, he owned a large general store. He left one memorial which will perpetuate his memory through future years. He was the founder of Salem Methodist Church, near Cookeville, one of the oldest church organizations in Putnam County. He preached for Salem Church for many years and was a leading spirit in the historic old Salem camp meeting grounds, the scene of many great camp meetings in ante-bellum days.

(Pictured: Rev. Isaac Buck Sr.)

After Isaac Buck came to what is now Putnam County, his brothers Abraham Buck and Jonothan Buck, Sr., also came from Pennsylvania to this county and became the progenitors of large families. Jonothan Buck, Sr., owned the farm known for many years as the B. P. “Pate” Pointer farm, now the home of D. Wade. Abraham Buck owned a large farm a few miles Northwest of Cookeville, known by many people as the H. R. “Harve” Shipley farm. Isaac Buck and his brothers Jonothan Buck Sr., and Abraham Buck were all large slave owners. Jonothan Buck, Jr., oldest son of Isaac Buck, who was associated with his father in the establishment and conduct of Andrews College, was a man of splendid education. He served as a member of the County Court for many years and until his death in 1885.

Isaac Buck and his son, Jonothan Buck, Jr., the founders of Andrews College, deserve a preeminent and secure place in the history of Putnam County. Their labors for the up building of the county, and the contribution made by them to the cause of education in the early period of the county’s history, should be made known to all public school students of Putnam County by their teachers.

In his advanced years, Thomas Buck, of Pennsylvania, the father of Isaac Buck, Abraham Buck and Jonothan Buck Sr., followed his sons to Putnam County. His grave is in the Buck family cemetery.

Jonothan Buck, son of Isaac Buck, one of the founders of Andrews College, was named for his uncle Jonothan Buck.

It is interesting to note that the Act of 1842 establishing Putnam County provided that when the Commissioners named for the purpose should determine the permanent location of the county seat, that the county seat town should be named "Monticello". The Commissioners were William H. Vance, James Bartlett, Edward Anderson, John Bohannon and James Jackson. The Commissioners were unable to agree on a location for the County site for over two years. They finally, in 1844, agreed upon the Buck site, but, before the land was purchased by the county and a sale of town lots had, the county officials of the new County were enjoined from functioning by the Chancery Court of Overton County, and Monticello, as a County Site town, failed to materialize. This explains why Jonothan Buck caused the post-office, which he procured established, at the Buck site, to be named "Monticello." By reason of delay of the Commissioners in deciding upon a location of the permanent County Site, White Plains, named in the act establishing the County as the temporary County Site, continued to be the temporary County Site from 1842 to 1844.

BLOOMINGTON SEMINARY:

In the early '50's, Prof. Garland Kuykendall, a well educated teacher, established a private school at Bloomington (now Bloomington Springs) which he named "Bloomington Seminary". This school enjoyed a large patronage until it was suspended at the outbreak of the Civil War. This school was really the beginning of the town of Bloomington, as a considerable number of families built residences there on account of the school. There is an interesting reference to this school in the autobiography of the late Rev. John H. Nichols, who was a student in the school at the outbreak of the Civil War, when he, and numerous other students of the school, joined the Confederate Army.

About 1880, the Methodist Episcopal Church erected a large school building at Bloomington and established a school named "Bloomington College". It had strong faculties and enjoyed a large patronage until 1896 when the school building was destroyed by fire. At that time, Prof. Ossian S. Myers, a highly capable teacher, was Principal of the school. He came to the school from Lynn, Indiana. When the building burned, Pro. Myers became a co-principal of Washington Academy, in which he taught for a few years, Bloomington College was never rebuilt.

In 1910, the Board of Education of the Methodist Episcopal Church established another institution of higher learning in Putnam County, but it was not established at the former Bloomington College location, instead, it was established at Baxter, on the rail road. It was given the name of "Baxter Seminary". It has become one of the most successful and widely known schools in Middle Tennessee. Dr. Harry L. Upperman, an able, scholarly and widely known educator and minister, has served for about thirty years as President of Baxter Seminary. Under his administration the institution has made constant and marked progress. It is now one of the leading Church schools of Tennessee. Dr. Upperman has made an incalculable contribution to the educational progress and history of Putnam County.

PROF. SAMUEL B. YEARGAN:

Prof. Samuel B. Yeargan, of Rutherford County, became principal of Washington Academy in 1883. He was a resident of Cookeville for 37 years and until his death on October 23, 1920. During practically all of this period he was engaged in teaching in Cookeville. For years he taught a private school for young men and young ladies in Cookeville, the "Yeargan Select School", and hundreds of young men and young ladies of Putnam and adjoining counties were his students.

No teacher of his day ever made a greater contributions to the cause of education in Putnam County than did Prof. Yeargan. He was an educated, cultured, Christian gentlemen, whose memory is cherished to this day by hundreds of his living former student.

(Subsequent articles will relate to the history of Dixie College, Junior Military Academy and Tennessee Polytechnic Institutes).

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