

**PIONEER ROAD BUILDER'S MEMORY
TO BE PERPETUATED, GROUP'S AIM**

Putnam County Herald, Cookeville, TN: 23 July 1931

Delegates From Five Counties Gather Here At Luncheon Tuesday: Elect Officers And Plan To Secure Large Membership In Old Walton Road Association And Keep Live Memory of Revolutionary War Hero.

A meeting was held in Cookeville Tuesday at the Methodist church which is expected to be far-reaching in its influence on the road improvement of this section. It was called for the purpose of organizing the Old Walton Road Association, in order to perpetuate the history of that pioneer trail across the mountains traveled by the early settlers of Middle Tennessee, and to appropriately mark the points of interest along the route.

Delegates from Roane, Cumberland, Putnam, Smith, Wilson and Davidson counties were present, with officers and members of the Old Walton Road Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, of this city, and members of the Cookeville Lions Club, who were hosts to the gathering, at a delightful luncheon served by the women of the church.

The meeting was called to order by president H. T. Whitson, of the Lions Club, and a permanent organization effected with Jas. N. Cox, of Cookeville, president, Fred Myers, of Carthage, secretary, Mrs. J. Lee Epperson, of Algood, treasurer, and Mrs. Clar Cox Epperson, regent of the D.A.R. chapter as vice-president at large. Other vice-presidents, one for each county along the route of this historic road, were elected to form an executive committee, as follows:

Roane, J. F. Littleton, of Kingston; Cumberland, N. D. Walker, of Crab Orchard; Putnam, W. B. Ray, of Monterey; Wilson, A. D. Alcott, of Lebanon; Smith, G. W. Allen, of Dixon Springs.

Resolutions were read and adopted setting forth the purposes of the organization, and in a discussion support was pledged by those present from each county to carry out the plan of erecting markers and keeping alive the traditions of the pioneer's who came over it.

The last Legislature passed a resolution naming the Old Walton Road, as that part of the State Highway system beginning at Carthage, and continuing through Chestnut Mound, Cookeville and Monterey to Crossville, thence over Highway No. 1, to Rockwood and Kingston, a distance of approximately one hundred miles of the finest paved road, through a section of scenic beauty unsurpassed anywhere in the State.

It was a happy thought when the Daughters of the American Revolution organized their local chapter at Cookeville about a year ago, that they decided to name it the Old Walton Road Chapter, giving it a historical name of old days, rather than a geographical name of local meaning, and they have been commended for it by the National officers of the association.

It was in 1799 that the Legislature named three commissioners, William Walton, William Martin, and Robert Coile, to lay out and prepare a wagon road through the wilderness, through a country infested by savage Indians, across the mountains from Southwest Point, now known as Kingston, to the confluence of the Caney Fork and the Cumberland rivers near Carthage, and so well did Capt. Walton do the work, that almost a hundred years later the engineers of the Tennessee Central Railway found no other course suitable for the iron track of the locomotive than the route of this early trail. After it was completed it was known as the Walton Road, and settlers came rapidly to settle up the Cumberland country, to which many of them had grants of land from the old North Carolina state. Capt. Walton had grants to 3840 acres on the north bank of the Cumberland at Carthage, and settled there, where he lived until his death, becoming a very popular citizen, who wielded a good influence in public affairs. It is known that he gave Smith county 50 acres of land on which Carthage was built, and when it was laid off in town lots and put up for sale to secure funds for building a courthouse, jail and stocks, he bought back over \$1400, thus showing his generous public spirit.

Eloquent and inspiring talks were made by Hon. J. F. Littleton, of Kingston, where the Old Walton Road begins, by Frank McElwee, of Rockwood, whose father was an early settler, and possessed a rare fund of historical knowledge, and who wrote a sketch of the life of Capt. Walton, and his achievement in building this road, and who, perhaps, was better posted on the history section than any one else, Judge Sam M. Young, of Dixon Springs, who has an almost priceless collection of historical papers and who read another sketch of this great man written by Dr. John Bowen in 1883. Dixon Merritt, of the Lebanon Democrat, whose ancestors came over this same route in 1802, and after a brief stay in Cookeville, settled near Lebanon, where he now lives, recalled some interesting incidents of the long ago.

Others present who responded with assurances of hearty co-operation in making the Old Walton Road Association a success were W. B. Ray, who has for many years given freely of his time towards better roads for the mountain section, Congressman J. R. Mitchell, who paid tribute to the splendid public spirit that had brought about the wonderful highways through this country in the face of sacrifices and difficulties, Mrs. Clara Cox Epperson, regent of the Old Walton Road chapter, who spoke of the growth of the organization and of its appreciation of the movement to forward the plan of erecting suitable markers along the route and Mrs. Ruthledge Smith, of Nashville, a former Cookeville woman who is intensely interested in the progress of the upper country.

Resolutions Adopted:

WHEREAS, the Daughters of the American Revolution, in the organization of their chapter honored the achievement and patriotism of Captain William Walton by naming their organization "THE OLD WALTON ROAD CHAPTER," and

WHEREAS, they originated the idea of memorializing this oldcontinues.

THE OLD WALTON ROAD: A Historical Sketch –

The following information on the Old Walton Road and Captain William Walton has been furnished Mrs. S. Hayden Young, Historian of the Old Walton Road Chapter D.A.R., of Cookeville, by Ernest Houston Boyd, who says his data is from the “Life of Jefferson Dillard Goodpasture,” by A. V. and W. H. Goodpasture, entirely dependable authority.

Of the Walton Road he writes: There had long been a trace across the mountains from Southwest Point to the Cumberland Settlements. Francis Bailey traveled it in 1796 and has left an interesting account of his journey. But at the time the Goodpastures crossed the mountain a wagon road had been recently marked out under authority of the General Assembly between Southwest Point and the mouth of the Caney Fork river where Carthage was afterwards established. The work was the enterprise of Captain William Walton (1760-1816) a native of Bertie County, North Carolina, who had enlisted at the age of seventeen, as a private in the Revolutionary War, and served until its close in 1783, coming out with the rank of Captain. He emigrated to the Cumberland Settlement in 1785 and located his military land warrant on the north bank of the Cumberland River, at its confluence with the Caney Fork, in 1786. The road which still bears his name, was about one hundred miles in length, and contained four “stands” for the accommodation of travelers. Coming west the first of these was at Kimbrough’s, on the eastern foot of the mountain; the second at Crab Orchard, a once famous place on the mountain plateau in Cumberland County; the third, at White Plains, in Putnam County, on the western foot of the mountain; and the fourth near Pekin, also in Putnam County. The road was completed in 1801.”

In the fall of 1802, Michaux writes of this road:

“The road that crosses this part of the Indian territory cuts through the mountains in Cumberland; it is as broad and commodious as those in the environs of Philadelphia, in consequence of the amazing number of emigrants that travel through it, to settle in the western country. It is, notwithstanding, in some places very rugged, but nothing near so much as the one that leads from Strasford to Bedford in Pennsylvania. We met an emigrant family in a carriage, followed by their negroes on foot, that had performed their journey without accident. Little boards, painted black and nailed upon trees, indicate to travelers the distance they have to go.”

All contained in the foregoing is absolutely accurate and dependable. In 1800 my great-great-grandfather, James Goodpasture and his family (from Virginia), crossed this wilderness, traveling the Walton Road (which was not then completed) for Southwest Point to White Plains, thence to Hilham, where he located. At that time the road was neither so good nor so safe as it was when Michaux traveled it, although, even then, it was not considered prudent to travel it, except in parties, on account of roving Indians they met before they reached Southwest Point.

Now as to the location of Southwest Point. I know definitely the location of Southwest Point. It was a Federal Fort at the junction of the Clinch and Holston Rivers, on the eastern border of the Indian Reservation. The place was then in Knox County, about a mile from Kingston, now the county site of Roane County. One reason that I know the location of this old Indian Fort, Southwest Point, is that James Goodpasture, to whom I have referred, when he came with his family from Virginia, first located in the neighborhood of this fort, from which place in 1800 he moved to what is now the Hilham community of Overton County. He was a personal friend of Captain William Walton.

So you can see that the Walton Road extended from Southwest Point or fort, near Kingston, to the mouth of Caney Fork river where Carthage was afterwards established, and was about one hundred miles in length.

The reason so many Virginia and North Carolina emigrants first located in the vicinity of Kingston, was on account of the protection afforded from the Indians by the Federal Fort, Southwest Point, near Kingston. As conditions grew safer, most of them pressed their way westward, as did the family I have referred to.

*Read more about Old Walton Road - Before the railroad, before us 70-N, Before I-40, there was Walton Road by W. Calvin Dickinson & William Walton at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>

