

TENNESSEE COUNTY HISTORY SERIES

Weakley County



by Virginia C. Vaughan

Charles W. Crawford

Editor



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This book is dedicated
To my husband, Wilbur,
To our children,
 Jim and Joan Aldridge Vaughan
 Mary and Bill Baird
To our grandchildren,
 David, Andy, and Tim Vaughan
And to our godson,
 Will Carr.

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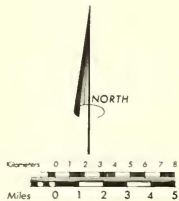
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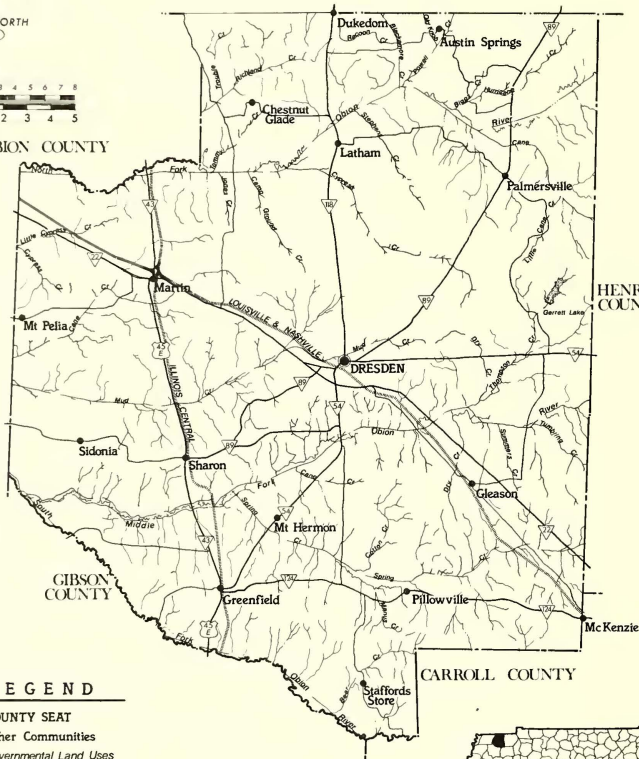
And a big "thank you" to my dear husband, "Mr. Wipps," whose encouragement, understanding, and assistance made this book possible.

...Virginia Clark Vaughan

KENTUCKY



OBION COUNTY



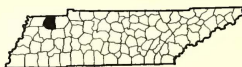
HENRY COUNTY

GIBSON COUNTY

CARROLL COUNTY

LEGEND

- COUNTY SEAT
- Other Communities
- ▭ Governmental Land Uses
- ◆ LANDMARKS
- SURROUNDING COUNTIES
- ⚡ Interstate Route
- ⚡ Federal Route
- ⚡ State Route
- ⚡ Local Route
- ☀ Prominent Peak
- RAIL SERVICE
- ▬ Major Streams
- ▬ Minor Streams



WEAKLEY COUNTY

REFERENCE INFORMATION
 State of Tennessee Department of Transportation
 U.S. Department of the Interior Geological Survey
 State of Tennessee Department of Conservation

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*W*weakley County is located on the Plateau Slope of West Tennessee. It is bounded on the north by the state of Kentucky, on the east by Henry County, on the south by Carroll and Gibson Counties, and on the west by Obion County. It is 26 miles from north to south, and 24 miles from east to west. The center of the county, near Dresden, is approximately 86° 15' north latitude and 88° 44' west longitude. It covers an area of 576 square miles. Originally rectangular in shape and 700 square miles in area, it lost its southern boundary line in a land exchange with Gibson County in 1837. This was done so that those living on the land adjacent to the south fork of the Obion River could get to a county seat without having to cross the unbridged stream. The western boundary line was changed in March 1889, pressed through the Legislature by Obion County representatives who wanted more land on the eastern side of Union City, the new seat of justice for Obion County. (State law required for a county seat to be near the center of the county.) When all Obion County records were moved from Troy to Union City in 1870, petitions were circulated in the second district of Weakley County by Obion County residents. Enough signatures were secured for a bill to be presented to the Legislature requesting a transfer of the second district land. The bill was passed in June of 1870 and approved July 2, 1870.

The major geological province in which Weakley County is located is called the Plateau Slope of West Tennessee. Weakley County slopes gradually to the west, all areas draining into the Mississippi River. The average elevation of the eastern part of the county is approximately 435 feet at mean sea level. The western portion is 320 feet. The average elevation of Gleason is 407, Dresden 417, Greenfield 433, Sharon 415, and Martin 400 feet above sea level.

The 1980 Census of Weakley County recorded a population of 32,896 people. The same census recorded the population of Dresden, the county seat, as 2256; of Martin as 8898; of Greenfield as 2109; of Sharon as 1134; and of Gleason as 1335 people.

Geological Formation of Weakley County

During the Cambrian period (500 to 600 million years ago), Weakley County was the bed of a shallow sea. This lasted for perhaps 225 million years. Dissolved lime was deposited on the ocean floor and, in time, hardened into limestone and dolomite of great thickness. This is buried deep beneath the earth in Weakley County but surfaces elsewhere in Middle and East Tennessee.

Then, in time, the limestone and dolomite layers were pushed upward into broad low domes. About 325 million years ago the entire area rose above the sea level probably more than 4000 feet and erosion started. About 75 million years ago, during the Cretaceous period, the sea again covered Weakley County. Thousands of feet of sand, silt, and clay were deposited on top of the layers of limestone and dolomite. Near the end of the Cretaceous period, for 30 million years or more, the shallow sea (the Mississippi Embayment) teemed with marine life—fish, shells, and giant seagoing reptiles. Some of the land nearby remained above sea level and sediments were brought down to the bottom of the ancient sea by streams and rivers that came from the north and east and as far away as the Appalachians. This sediment was deposited in the mouths of the streams close to the shoreline. Today it is only 10 or 12 feet below the surface but is exposed in

the eastern part of the county. Here are found iron and sand formations (sometimes geodes) which formed in the shallow sea water close to the shoreline. Iron accumulated in stagnant or swampy areas and crystallized, attracting more iron. The associating sands found in these shallow areas caused the iron oxide formations found in the Palmersville area.

Likewise, clay was deposited in shallow areas near the shoreline of the ancient sea behind barrier beaches or sand flats. Most of the clay of Weakley County is ball clay, representing the finest of the pure clay substance that remained longest in suspension before settling to the bottoms of the sea basins. The clays, therefore, are fine grained, highly plastic, essentially free of grit, and have a high bonding power. These high grade ceramic clays can be used for making pottery, whitewear, high-grade tile, refractories, and other ceramic products. From early settlement Weakley County clay was used in brick making and ceramic production, but when World War I curtailed ceramic import, then the county's ball clay became fully appreciated.

Although prehistoric animals roamed the land of our county, no fossil remains are to be found. Erosion has destroyed the evidence; however, fossil leaves are found in the Eocene clay beds.

When the glaciers grew out of what is now Canada and pushed over the surface of the earth (as much as two miles in vertical thickness), they ground up the rock over which they moved into glacial flour. This flour was brought down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers and deposited on the Mississippi flood plain which encompassed the county. Between flood stages, the prevailing southwest winds picked up the "flour" and blew it back over Weakley County, depositing a layer 10 to 12 feet in thickness. This soil is called loess. This is the last phase of geological time, covering the last 10,000 years.

The forces of erosion are still working on the land. The streams that drain Weakley County to the west are full of flood-plains material. The most recent geological formation is soil deposited during the flood stages of these rivers.

The north, middle, and south forks of the Obion River and tributaries thereof drain to the west into the Mississippi River.

Today, the flood plains of these streams have been cleared and channelized, causing soil erosion to occur at a higher rate than is acceptable beyond soil loss tolerance. Soil loss from the uplands is estimated from six to thirty tons a year. Much of this remains on the flood plains but a great deal finds its way into the Mississippi River via the Obion River's three forks. Cane Creek, Cypress Creek, and Richland Creek are tributaries of the North Fork; Thompson and Spring Creeks of the Middle Fork; and Cane and Mud Creeks are tributaries of the South Fork of the Obion River.

Prehistoric and Historic Indians

Like waves that rhythmically wash the shores, so came small groups of Ice Age hunters into North America from Asia, following herds of migrating animals. At that time, some 10 to 30 thousand years ago, a broad, rolling land bridge may have connected the two continents. Sea level was at times 100 feet to 450 feet lower than at present because water was locked in massive ice regions to the north, exposing great amounts of land.

The mammoth mastodons, horses, camels, straight-horned bison, and the predators that followed these herds pushed across this strip of land in search of greener pastures. In their wake came the Paleolithic Indian who depended upon the herds for food, clothing, shelter, and tools. In time, some 10 to 15 thousand years ago, these nomadic people crossed Weakley County, leaving evidence of their existence in the Palmersville-Latham area. There is a Paleolithic site near Harris Station also. Twelve fluted spear points and hundreds of stone scrapers, knives, and tools have been found and documented as to authenticity.

Perhaps the greatest number of artifacts found in Weakley County came from the period called Archaic (5000 BC–1500 BC). Over thousands of years the nomadic hunters gradually changed their living habits to include different foods and technology. They began to eat seeds, nuts, and roots, as well as meat. They became small game hunters and stayed longer in a region. They adapted well to the large river bottom areas found in this county, living

on fish, mollusks, snails, and fruits in the spring and summer. In the winter they moved to higher regions for nuts, acorns, deer, and small game. Because they no longer moved in endless migrations, they began to bury their dead in trash heaps, and developed more substantial dwellings. Their tools were made of flint by the percussion and flaking method. Since pioneer times in Weakley County people have found evidence of the Archaic Indian in their plowed fields or gardens. There have been hundreds of sites found in the county, mostly adjacent to the water courses.

Archaeological excavation has been done on the James Barner farm by a class at The University of Tennessee at Martin conducted by Professor Helmut Wenz. Flint arrowheads, clay tools, stone knives, and the bones of Archaic civilization were found.

The Woodland Period (1500 BC–AD 500) saw great changes in the culture of the prehistoric Indian. Bows and arrows, pottery-making, the cultivation of crops and domestication of the dog became a part of their life. Pottery, arrowheads, flint, and bone tools have been found throughout the county from this period. A site at Sidonia and Ethridges Levee near Sharon has produced many artifacts. When the Martin city lagoon was built on Hawks Road bulldozers destroyed an excellent woodland site, sweeping great mounds of archaeological evidence into the lower dam of the lagoon. Unusual pink and white flint arrow points were found, indicating the trading habits of the Indians at this period. Burial mounds began to be used during this era, although there are no large mounds in the county, as are found in Henry and Obion Counties.

The early ancestors of the Chickasaws (historic Indians) lived during the Mississippian Period (AD 500–AD 1700). The large site at McConnell is indicative of this culture. In surrounding counties there are temple mounds built for ceremonies and worship, but few such mounds are evident in Weakley County. These people were farmers and hunters, living on higher land near the available source of water. A Mississippian site is in the vicinity of Ethridges Levee near Sharon and another is between Greenfield

and Dresden on Spring Creek. A dirt mound, approximately seventy by forty feet and five feet high is in the latter area.

The Mississippian Indians were of the Muskogean language family, composed of many tribes speaking related tongues. They eventually became the dominant southern Indian nations. One of these groups was called Chickasaws. They controlled the four high bluffs on the Mississippi River in northwest Mississippi and southwest Tennessee. Their hunting grounds covered all of West Tennessee. They lived in settled villages along the bluff and went on hunting excursions in the winter and early spring when the supply of harvested agricultural food had been depleted. Thus there is little evidence of Chickasaw occupation in Weakley County. Their camps were seasonal and temporary. There is no evidence of woodworking tools or food processing equipment to be found here. Rather, the temporary camps had mostly tools, such as knives and scrapers, that were used in processing meat. West Tennessee abounded in white-tailed deer before the settlers came and research shows that eighty percent of the meat harvested by the Chickasaws was of this type, the rest being small game.

The Chickasaws had a right to West Tennessee in a deed signed by George Washington in 1785 and not until the Jackson Purchase on October 19, 1818, did the federal government acquire their right to the land. Although the main body of the Chickasaw tribe was not removed to Oklahoma until 1837, they used their West Tennessee hunting grounds less and less. In the winter of 1820 they returned and established a camp on the middle fork of Obion River, about four miles southeast of Dresden, and another on Thompson's Creek, about eight miles east. After that time, they were not seen by the early settlers who had quickly rushed in to dominate the land that had for thousands of years belonged to the Chickasaws.

Early Exploration and Settlement

Every square inch of land is claimed. It has been so since the beginning. Whether it be by lichen or mosses, bramble briars or forests, animals of different species or man, something or some-



Typical of early Weakley County homes, this log house in the Hyndsver community was owned by D. Hampton Highfill around the turn of the century. He is shown here with his second wife. Originally the house had four large rooms, two above and two below, separated by an open porch or “dog trot,” where the stairs to the rooms above were located. Later a large kitchen was added on the back. The house burned in 1957. *Courtesy of Pansy Baker*

one claims the land. Prehistoric animals, prehistoric man, and later the Chickasaws all knew Weakley County as their home. There was always a struggle to maintain life and keep the land free of enemies.

After the discovery and exploration of America by Spain, France, and England, each claimed ownership of the land that is now Weakley County. Eventually it became the Province of Carolina, an English colony. Between 1693 and 1712, the division between upper and lower Carolina became a reality. The Province of North Carolina extended westward to the Mississippi River.

By 1663, the present area of West Tennessee fell in Chowan district, the westernmost precinct of Albemarle County in North Carolina. (Territories we now call counties were at that time referred to as precincts or districts.) The English government of North Carolina had jurisdiction over this area. As population increased, new districts were added—always to the west, yet to

be settled. Consequently, as the tide of migration pushed steadily westward, so did the names of the new districts or precincts. Hence, over a span of 117 years the West Tennessee territory fell under seven districts. In 1776 the North Carolina Constitution provided for "the establishment of one or more governments westward of this state." Washington District was created, encompassing all of what is now Tennessee, and named for George Washington. This was the first political subdivision to be so named, honoring the Commander-in-Chief of the struggling American Army. Washington District remained a part of Rowan County until legislation made it a new county called Burke. This prevailed until 1777 when Washington District of Burke County became the County of Washington, encompassing the land of the present state of Tennessee. The North Carolina government referred to the Chickasaw land as the Western District.

Washington County was divided in 1783. The western portion, now West Tennessee, became Green County, North Carolina, and so remained until the second Cession Act of 1789 in which North Carolina ceded the land to the United States government. The first Cession Act was in 1784. However, the federal government chose not to accept the gift at that time. The second Cession was accepted April 2, 1790, and William Blount was made governor of the new federal land, "Territory of the United States South of the River Ohio." It became known as the Southwest Territory.

Land that was to become Weakley County remained under the control of the struggling new nation until the state of Tennessee was formed on June 1, 1796. The Western District was then placed under the jurisdiction of Montgomery County until November 1, 1803, at which time it was made a part of the new county of Stewart. Stewart County embraced the Jackson Purchase of October 9, 1818, made by General Andrew Jackson and Isaac Shelby with the Chickasaws. For \$300,000, the Chickasaws relinquished their claim to land that had been theirs since long before DeSoto came into their midst.

In October of 1819 all lands in the purchase area were divided into surveyor districts with townships five miles square.

The eastern part of Weakley County fell in the 12th district; the western part in the 13th. The first land offices were opened on December 6, 1820. That of the 12th district was where McLemoresville, Carroll County, is now. The 13th district land office was eight or ten miles north of Jackson, Madison County. By 1820, more than one hundred surveyors were in the districts of West Tennessee locating warrants, old surveys, and entries made prior to the Jackson Purchase. There was confusion between the range location of land and the old North Carolina natural boundaries.

The act to form and establish new counties west of the Tennessee River, passed November 7, 1821, in the 14th General Assembly, set out the boundaries of Henry, Carroll, Madison, and Henderson Counties. Territories for several other counties to be organized at a later date were attached to and made an actual part of some of these counties. Two other counties were laid off west of Henry: Weakley and Obion. They were to enjoy the privileges of and be subject to all the duties of Henry County with exception that "no tax shall be collected in said bounds for the purpose of erecting public buildings in Henry County."

When the 15th General Assembly met in 1823 at Murfreesboro, then capital of the state, it created eight new counties. Weakley, established by an act of October 21, 1823, was the fourth to be admitted. In all, Weakley County has been under the control of three European countries, two state governments (North Carolina and Virginia), one federal United States territory, and thirteen county governments.

Immediately after the Western District was cleared of all Indian claims an enormous flow of settlers, some with military warrants, rushed in to claim land. Some reasons for this heavy immigration were the spirit of speculation, the 1824 financial panic, and the severe drought of 1826 in North Carolina which forced people to seek their fortunes elsewhere. Many large land holders in the district had to sell much land to pay their taxes, making more land available to new settlers. Most of the immigrants were from North and South Carolina, Virginia, Kentucky, and Middle and East Tennessee, the latter originally from the

former states. Most migration came into Weakley County from the east, across Henry County, since navigation up the Obion in flatboats was virtually impossible due to the tree-clogged streams.

Since the population of Weakley County was not large enough to support a county government, Henry County controlled it. By 1823 there was sufficient population to demand a county seat, the long journeys to the seat of justice at Paris being difficult and at times impossible to make. There were 243 names on the petition to the General Assembly for the creation of the new county. The nine names suggested for Justices of the Peace were Thomas Adams, Albert B. Fane, James McNeeley, John R. Shultz, Stephen Smart, Eligah Stanley, John Terrell, Robert Wells, and Joseph Wilson. John Webb was to be recommissioned.

Those settlers in the county before the Jackson Purchase of 1818 had difficulties securing deeds to their land. To legalize their claims they had to secure a North Carolina land warrant. These were available from a North Carolina Revolutionary War soldier or through the Land Grant Act. The land had already been surveyed by North Carolina starting in 1789 and assigned through grants to various individuals, mostly Revolutionary War soldiers. Wealthy North Carolina businessmen bought some grants from the veterans for as little as \$25.00 for 300 acres, thus accumulating vast amounts of land for speculation. John Gray Blount and Thomas Blount entered claims for 40,000 acres in the Western District in 1784 through this method. These fascinating entries are found in the Weakley County Grant Book of 1794–1844, where about 85 men entered claims to thousands of acres of land. North Carolina held her right to these land grants even after Tennessee became a state. The Weakley County Occupant Entry Book of 1827–1833 mentions 4480 acres belonging to the University of North Carolina. This was sold to settlers for support of the University. Later, East and Middle Tennessee universities received aid from these land sales. West Tennessee, which needed the money badly, did not receive any funds.

When settlers rushed into the Western District much of the best land in Weakley County was owned by those who had military land warrants and by nonresidents. The pioneers, however,

generally settled on the lands belonging to the federal government, which was made subject to occupant entry by the laws of the state.

To protect early occupants who had cleared land, built cabins, and claimed title by "squatters rights," the Tennessee state government passed laws entitling the settler to 160 acres of land. A new law in 1826 increased that amount to 200 acres, and to any amount by 1833. Settlers first had to get a warrant from a land commissioner for a certain acreage. Then they had to locate their land, establish boundaries, and have it surveyed by a government approved surveyor. John Carlton and Martin Lawler surveyed vast areas of land from 1827 to 1833.

By 1826 Weakley County boasted 562 free male inhabitants, about one-third as many as neighboring Henry County. By the first official census of 1830 Weakley County's population was 4796.

Land titles were often challenged and there was much confusion. It was not until 1846 that the federal government relinquished all claims to lands in the Western District and land titles were firmly secured.

First Settlers in the County

Four years before the official formation of the county the first log cabin was built. In the fall of 1819 Ruben Edmonston and his brother-in-law, John Bradshaw, located on Mud Creek about six miles west of Dresden and three miles south of the center of Martin. Mr. Bradshaw raised the first patch of corn. The following spring, Archibald Edmonston, father of Ruben, moved his family from Todd County, Kentucky, to Bradshaw's location. The next year, he settled permanently on the North Fork of the Obion River.

Some of the early settlers and the areas where they located were:

At Bradshaw's location on Mud Creek were Ruben Edmonston in 1819, Isaac H. Ward in 1822, William Miles in 1823, Levi Clark, Mr. Glasgow (Edmonston's father-in-law), Dudley Glass, Sr., Isreal Jones. Early settlers around Dresden include Benjamin Bondurant, Jephtha and Alfred Gardner, Nelson Nailing,

Thomas Parham, Richard Porter, Robert Powell, John H. Reavis, Dr. Jubilee Rogers, Vincent Rust, Claiborne Stone, John Terrill, and Perry Vincent. In the Ridgeway Settlement on Cane Creek near Palmersville were Leric Mizell, John Webb, and Joseph Wilson before 1823; also the Buckleys, the Kilgores, the Killebrews, and the Ridgeways. In the northeast corner of the county between North Fork and the state line (later District 1) Henry and John Stevenson and Isaac and William Willingham were settled by 1819 or 1820; John F. Cavitt was there by 1820; other settlers in that area were Littleton F. Abernathy, Masco Austin, Jesse B. Davis, Benjamin Farmer, John Rogers, and Peter Williams. In the northwest corner of the county (later District 2 and now in Obion County) were John and George Horton; Daniel Lacewell and sons Daniel, Joseph, and Peter; Samuel Majors, Peter Mooney, Alexander Paschall and his son Jesse M.

The Adams, Benjamin Chambers, King Clark, Ruben Clark, the Snows, and the Stanleys settled in the Richland Creek area (later District 2, part now in Obion County). Between Mud Creek and the Middle Fork of Obion (later District 8) were to be found A. Clemons, Thomas Ethridge, John Jenkins, the Owens, the Parrishes, J. W. Rogers, and the Tansils. Between Middle and South forks of Obion (later District 9) Alfred Bethell, Duke Cantrell, Calloway Hardin, William Hillis, F. A. Kemp (Camp), and M. H. G. Williams were settled. A little higher up the river (later District 9) were Geton Bradshaw, John Bradshaw, E. W. Dickson, Richard Drewry, James Hornbeak, and Robert Mosley. The famous David Crockett settled in the southwest part of the county.

In the southeastern part of the county and along upper Spring Creek John Brawner, Ned Bucy, Isaac Cruse, Andy Dunning, Robert and Jonathan M. Gilbert, William Hamilton, Jim Kennedy, Francis Liddle, the McElroys, the McLeskeys, John O'Neal, Thomas Osborn, the Rogers, and Capt. James and Alfred Smith settled. The Thompson Creek area was settled by Daniel Campbell, William Gay, John H. Moore, Sam Morgan, Samuel Peeples, Daniel Shaw's father, Eligah Stanley, John Thomas, and Hayden E. Wells. The Carneys, the Damrons, E. P. Latham, the McLeans, Capt. John Rogers, the Shultzes, and the Smarts settled along

lower Cypress Creek, with Mr. Brann, Thomas Ross, and the Thompsons along upper Cypress Creek. Near Dukedom were settled the Beadles, the Cashions, and the Winsteads.

The first pioneers found virgin forests of oak, hickory, poplar, sweet gum, ash, beech, walnut, cedar, holly, tupelo gum, cottonwood, and cypress.

The western part of the county was covered with a heavy forest but the eastern part had barren grass in many places. This grass grew three or four feet high and covered the ground as thickly as a good crop of millet, according to Colonel John A. Gardner who visited the county in 1825 and settled there in 1827. He wrote that large bodies of barrens lay southeast of the Middle Fork of the Obion extending to the Henry County line, six or seven miles east of Dresden and beyond Thompson's Creek. The barrens were found north and northeast of Dresden, as far as Cane Creek, south of the North Fork, and in the northeast corner of the county, extending a little below Dukedom.

Wild animals were abundant. Bear, deer, elk, panther, wolves, beaver, raccoon, otter, muskrat, and squirrel were numerous. The settlers relied on wild meat at first, for it was impossible to keep hogs or sheep because of panthers and wolves. They were able to have cattle and generally had plenty of milk and butter.

Their corn fields were usually patches of a few acres around the house. Corn was raised chiefly for bread. Lumbrick's Mill on Old Town Creek, about thirteen miles from Dresden on the dirt road to Paris, did all the grinding for the first settlers. Some families had hand mills to grind their corn, while others grated it. Salt was brought from Mills Point, now Hickman, Kentucky.

The pioneers lived in huts and cabins constructed of rough unhewn logs. These primitive structures were generally floorless, but a few had puncheon floors. They used what was known then as the Forked Deer bedstead made with one post, the side and the head being built into a corner of the cabin. Boards were used in place of springs to support the mattress made of straw. Pumpkins and corn were stored under the bed.

The furniture was crude at first, generally handmade out of

green lumber, but as soon as possible after land was put into cultivation to sustain a comfortable living, a larger home was constructed and better furniture brought over the first passable roads.

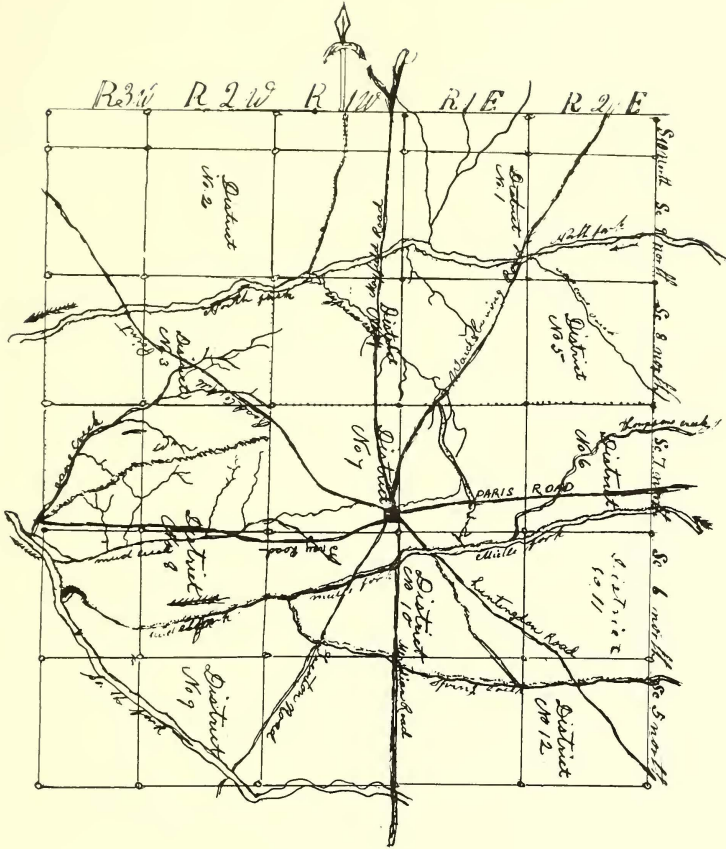
Establishment of the County

After the creation of Weakley County on October 21, 1823, the boundary was established by the General Assembly as follows:

Beginning at the northwest corner of Henry County, running west with the State line, to a point four miles west of the northwest corner of range two, fractional sections ten, in the Thirteenth District; thence south to the fourth sectional line in said district running parallel with the range line; thence east with the fourth sectional line to the second range line in the Twelfth Surveyor's District; thence north with the said range line to the beginning.

The act also provided that the Court of Pleas and Quarterly Sessions and the Circuit Court should be held at the house of John Terrell, until otherwise provided by law. By subsequent acts of the General Assembly, James Fentress, William Hall, Abram Maury, and Benjamin Reynolds were appointed commissioners to fix a site for the county seat as near the center of the county as possible. John Terrell's land was chosen as the best location since there was a spring there. Terrell conveyed a gift of 39 acres to the commissioners with the stipulation that the land be used for the county seat. The deed was proved in the Court of Pleas and Quarterly Session, of which John Terrell was an officer, on January 10, 1825. Afterwards, in July of 1828, Martin Lawler, Richard Ridgeway, John R. Shultz, Perry Vincent, and Mears Warner, commissioners previously appointed by the court to lay out the town of Dresden, bought 17.50 acres for \$50.00 from Simpson Organ and Ewing Wilson, thus making 56.50 acres in the town site.

By early 1825 the organization of the county was completed and the town of Dresden was surveyed and platted to contain a public square and ninety lots. A public sale of the lots took place in April of that year, and the \$5742.00 collected was spent for



This 1836 map of Weakley County was compiled by commissioners John M. Schultz, Martin Lawler, William Ridgeway, Robert R. Gilbert, and David Winston for the purpose of electing justices of the peace and constables, and to fix suitable places for the election granges. *Map courtesy of Pansy Baker*

the erection of public buildings and other legitimate expenses of the new county. Jephtha Gardner, William H. Johnson, J. W. Rogers, and the Vincents were among the largest purchasers.

In 1835 the General Assembly directed that the county be divided into twelve districts for the purpose of electing Justices of the Peace and Constables and to select suitable voting places. The commissioners, Robert R. Gilbert, Martin Lawler, William Ridgeway, John M. Shultz, and David Winston signed their report on January 13, 1836. The 1836 map of Weakley County shows how the districts were formed. The voting places for the districts were: District 1, Aaron Farmer; District 2, John Horton; District 3, Jesse Gardner; District 4, Capt. John Rogers; District 5, James McWherter; District 6, Elias Tomlinson; District 7, Courthouse; District 8, Benton Ship; District 9, A. McKenziey; District 10, John Welch; District 11, Capt. James Smyth; and District 12, John Green.

By 1843 two new districts were added. District 13 was taken from Districts 1 and 2 and District 14 was taken from Districts 3 and 8. As the population increased, more districts were created until at the present time there are 25.

The original shape of the county was first changed in 1837 for the convenience of land owners in the southwestern section of the county. The unbridged South Fork of the Obion River made it almost impossible for those living in that area to get to Dresden to attend to legal business. Likewise, the river presented the same problem to residents in the north-central portion of Gibson County. The two counties agreed to a land exchange for the convenience of their citizens, thus changing the southern boundary of Weakley County. In this exchange, Weakley County lost the homestead of one of her most prominent citizens, David Crockett, who had settled there in September of 1822 on land that would one day be near the village of Rutherford in Gibson County. The Crocketts were living in Weakley County when he started his ill-fated journey to Texas on November 1, 1835.

Another change in county boundary lines occurred in 1870 when the 36th General Assembly voted to cede to Obion County the larger part of District 2. Emerson Ethridge represented

Weakley, Obion, and Henry Counties in the Senate and W. P. Caldwell was in the House of Representatives when this occurred. Twice before this, in December of 1868 and March of 1869, laws had been made changing the county lines but were repealed. The final bill was signed by Governor DeWitt Clinton Senter on July 2, 1870. The 36th General Assembly changed many county lines and established six new counties. The last change in Weakley County's boundary was in 1889 when J. W. Boyd and Company arranged for his business to be situated in Obion County instead of Weakley. B. F. Hall was in the Senate and C. C. Adams was in the House when this change was made.

The first county court, called the "Court of Pleas and Quarterly Sessions," had the following members: Daniel Campbell, E. D. Dickson, J. M. Gilbert, Miles Gilbert, John H. Moore, J. R. Shultz, Stephen Smart, John Terrell, Perry Vincent, Mears Warner, John Webb, William Webster, and Joseph Wilson. They held sessions at the Dresden houses of John Terrell for seven terms and Benjamin Bondurant for three terms, until April of 1828. The next session was held in July of 1828 in the new courthouse. The first officers of the Court in 1825 were: William H. Johnson, County Court Clerk (1825-1838) and John D. Calvert, Sheriff (1825-1828).

The last term of the Pleas and Quarterly Session Court was held in April of 1836 and the first court of the County Court proper, created by the 1834 Tennessee Constitution, was held in May of 1836 with the Honorable Caleb Brasfield, chairman. There were 21 additional justices of the peace at this meeting.

The first Circuit Courts were held in a small log cabin located on what is now the courtyard. The structure did not have a door and when court adjourned in the evening, a flock of sheep would take possession and stay until the sheriff ran them out the next morning. This was torn down when the first courthouse was erected by John Scarborough of Stewart County in 1827. It was a brick structure, forty feet square, and was built in the center of Court Square. In 1852 it was torn down when it became too small and unsafe for use.

A two-story brick building with two county offices and a



The 1854 Weakley County Courthouse. *Courtesy of Col. James Corbitt*

courtroom on each floor was completed in 1854 at a cost of \$20,000. The contractor was Major Cowardin. Two wings were added to the courthouse at a later date. This structure was destroyed by fire on February 19, 1948. It was thought that the fire started in the cupola from faulty wiring. The town clock and old records were kept in this area and for many years, pigeons had used it for nesting and roosting. When it became apparent to the large crowd of spectators that the fire departments from Dresden, Martin, Paris, and South Fulton would not be able to save the building, concerned citizens went into action. Junius White, the newly elected register, and Bob House, former register, went into the burning building and with others formed a human chain, passing the heavy books from one man to another. The line stretched from the building across the courtyard to a truck owned by Waymon Gaylord. Trustee books were removed in the same



The present Weakley County Courthouse. *Photograph by Wilbur Vaughan*

manner. Occasionally, a burning board would fall from above but no man left his post until all of the records were removed. A few old records in the trustees offices and veterans records were lost. Many records from the superintendent of schools' office were lost. However, the county court clerk's records were saved.

For two years, the county's records were kept in various store buildings while a new courthouse was under construction. Books from the register's and trustee's offices were taken to the basement of Sax Freeman's Pool Hall. Sax Freeman was Dresden's only policeman at this time. The county court clerk's records were kept in Beard's Chevrolet showroom. Court was held in the Masonic Lodge building.

The new courthouse was built of Alabama limestone. Its three stories and basement hold 37 offices. It was constructed so well that it is completely fireproof. Three courtrooms, one each for County, Circuit, and Chancery Courts, are on the first and second floors. The courthouse required two hundred tons of con-

struction steel and three hundred cubic yards of concrete to build. A modern steam heating plant replaced the old pot-bellied stoves of the former building. The Courthouse Commission which supervised construction was composed of J. M. Adams, Dean Grooms, John Hatler, R. A. Nants, and A. J. Strawbridge. Judge Robert A. Elkins was chairman of the committee until his death, a year before the completion of the building. Dedication of the new courthouse was held in May of 1950.

The first circuit court session was held in Dresden in November of 1827, with Judge John D. Hamilton presiding. The first action of the 13-member grand jury was to return an indictment against William Ward for assault and battery. The defendant was fined \$1.00 and court costs on being found guilty. The first trial of the petit jury was at the following May term. In 1836 the first murder trial in the county occurred. George R. McClain and William Price were accused of the murder of a Mr. Stunston. McClain was found guilty and sentenced to be hanged but escaped from jail and disappeared. Price was finally tried and acquitted in February 1838.

The Chancery Court of Paris, Henry County, held jurisdiction over Weakley County until 1838. The first chancery court met in Dresden in February of that year, with the Honorable Milton Brown, Chancellor, presiding. Samuel A. Warner was the first Clerk and Master (1838-1844).

Soon after the first courthouse was built, a brick jail was built on the south side of the Troy road in the western part of the town. This jail was replaced in 1854 by a new one made of logs and brick. A third one, built in 1875 of brick, cost \$8000.00. This jail was one block north of court square. The present jail, constructed in 1965, is a one-story brick building with living quarters for the sheriff attached. It has a capacity of 31 prisoners. There have been five lynchings recorded in Weakley County between 1892 and 1915; two persons were tried, found guilty, and hanged in 1853.

All courts suspended sessions during the Civil War for various lengths of time. In this period, a notorious bandit and his gang were in Weakley County. His name was Bill McDougal and

he was born near Palmersville. He would not rob people from his home county and citizens did not hesitate to call on him for help against the bushwhackers. He rode a trained show horse that was said to have performed almost impossible feats. One day when he found a crowd of people on the Courthouse Square, he started to ride around a large sycamore tree near the courthouse. He began to yell and shoot at the tree as he rode around it, and when the gunfire ceased, it was discovered that he had shot his name into the tree. He then proceeded to ride the horse into the courthouse, up the stairs, and into the courtroom where he fired four bullets into the wall. When he and his horse came out of the courthouse, they quietly rode away. For several years, he alarmed the citizens of Weakley County with similar feats.

The Naming Of the County

Weakley County proudly bears the name of Robert Weakley, III, one of Tennessee's most illustrious citizens. Born July 2, 1764, in Halifax County, Virginia, of immigrant parents, young Robert fought for the cause of American liberty at the battles of Alamance and Guilford Court House, in North Carolina. By nineteen years of age he was in the Cumberland Settlement as a surveyor for the state of North Carolina. At twenty-two, he represented Davidson County (still a part of North Carolina) in the convention called to ratify the United States Constitution. He voted against the ratification, but at the second convention of 1788 he voted for it. He was elected to represent Davidson County in the first session of the Tennessee House of Representatives in 1796. Following this service, he was elected to the Senate for six different sessions of the General Assembly—the 3rd, 4th, 5th, 7th, 13th, and 15th, representing Davidson, and sometimes Williamson counties. In the 13th and 15th sessions, he was Speaker of the Senate. He held this prestigious position when Weakley County was created in 1823.

In addition to long service in state government, Robert Weakley, III, served one term in the United States House of Representatives (1809–1811) representing the Nashville District.

When 51 years of age, he became involved in the race for governor of Tennessee and was defeated by Joseph McMinn. Six years later, he ran for this office again but withdrew from the race before the election. His last official duty was representing Davidson County in the Tennessee Constitutional Convention of 1834, called to revise the state's constitution.

Robert Weakley, III, accumulated vast land holdings through his role as surveyor. His holdings in Davidson County alone totalled over 8000 acres, and he also owned land in Obion, Tipton, Haywood, Shelby, and Giles counties.

From earliest times in the Cumberland Settlement his leadership held the struggling pioneers together. He was active in the militia and in 1791 was made Brigade Inspector of the Mero District with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. In 1798 he was a Colonel of the 2nd Regiment of the Davidson County Militia.

Robert Weakley, III, married Mary Jane Narcisea Locke on August 11, 1791. Four children were born to this union. In 1810 the Weakleys began construction of a mansion on a 615-acre tract in what is now east Nashville. They called their home Lockeland, in honor of Mrs. Weakley's family. It was here that Robert Weakley, III, died February 4, 1845, at 81 years of age.

Education

Many of the early schools were taught in primitive log school houses that also served as churches. They were subscription schools and attended by children whose parents could afford the fee and supply an allotted amount of wood for heating. Students sat on backless benches and had only basic materials for learning. Probably the first school in the county was at the Bradshaw settlement about the year 1828. Fielden Ezelle was the first teacher, followed by William Ross.

Between 1823 and 1825 James K. Polk, then in the Tennessee Legislature, made a concerted effort to get government land set aside for the schools in the Western District but was thwarted in his efforts by Congressman David Crockett who championed the claims of the occupants. Crockett felt that occupants earned the

right to the land by virtue of clearing and settling. Thus, the Western District did not progress in education as rapidly as other sections of the state.

The children of early settlers had few opportunities for receiving an education except for those living in the growing communities. Later, academies and grammar schools were established at different points in the county. These were private institutions governed by boards of trustees. These schools were free of taxation and students were exempt from road and military service. The buildings were generally wooden, and the instructors were frequently ministers or editors of newspapers.

An article of agreement made in 1848 between 21-year-old Bright Grooms, teacher in the 37th District, south of Dresden, and eight "subscription" parents, stated that he was to teach spelling, reading, writing, and arithmetic for the term of nine months, five days a week. The parents were to furnish the school house, seats, desks, supplies, and plenty of good fire wood. Grooms was to get room, board, and \$7.50 for each student, due at the end of the school year. Some of the rules listed in the contract were: no profanity; no boxing, wrestling, or climbing trees; no nicknames; boys and girls could not play together, and no borrowing of books without permission. Three trustees were chosen to oversee the school of nine students.

Schools like this served the county for higher education for many years until 1870, when public high schools were established in Dresden, Gleason, Palmersville, and at a point near Sharon. In February of 1870 authority was given to sell the Dresden Male and Female Academies and incorporate Dresden High School.

By 1885 there were 9595 students registered in school (8338 white and 1307 black) with 105 teachers. The average number of days taught was 74, and a teacher's salary was \$35.00 per month.

Not until the turn of the century did the county become actively involved in building schools. Between 1900 and 1910, 20 schools were built; from 1910 to 1920, 39 schools were built; and from 1920 to 1930, 31 schools were built. These figures were

given in School Superintendent F. Y. Fuqua's annual report to the school board in 1930.

The length of the school term in 1930 was 160 days. There were 36 one-room white elementary schools at this time. Those built between 1900 and 1910 were Donoho, East Grove, Fairview, Freeman, Glasgow, Liberty, Little Zion, Morgan, Meridian, McClain, and Ridgeway. Those built between 1910 and 1920 were Brocks Chapel, Barber, Center Point, Coats, Eagle Hill, Gibbs, Harris, Hill Top, Killgore, Levister, Lamb, Pleasant Hill, Reavis, Thompson, and Ward Chapel. Those constructed from 1920 to 1930 were Fancy, Gully View, Hill Crest, Parrish, Pierce, Pittman, Spears, Shady Grove, West Union, and Tumbling.

There were 23 elementary schools with 2 rooms in 1930. Those built between 1900 and 1910 were Adams, Bible Union, Brundige, Mt. Arie, Shafter, Union Grove, and Peace and Harmony. Those constructed between 1910 and 1920 were Holts, Hynsder, Jackson Academy, New Salem, Pisgah, Rinda, Ralston, Salem, Old Salem, Smith Chapel, and Webb. Those built from 1920 to 1930 were Earls, Green Hill, Oak Grove, Parks, and Terrell. Gardner, a white elementary school with more than 2 rooms, was built prior to 1900. No schools of this size were constructed from 1900 to 1910. Between 1910 and 1920, Central High (4 rooms elementary), Lone Oak (4 rooms), Sidonia (8 rooms), Seminary (3 rooms), Stella Ruth (6 rooms), and Union High (4 rooms elementary) were built. Between 1920 and 1930, Dunlap (4 rooms), Mt. Pelia (3 rooms), Palmersville (5 rooms), Wesleys Chapel (4 rooms), Welch (5 rooms), and Union No. 1 (3 rooms) were constructed.

There were five black one-teacher schools in the county by 1930: Beach Grove and Jones, erected before 1900; Mt. Olive and Terrell, erected between 1900 and 1910; and Vincent, built in the '20s. Martin and Lees Grove at Gleason both had three or more teachers.

By 1930 there were fourteen high schools for white students and one for black students. Gardner High School was built before 1900. Chestnut Glade, Dresden, Greenfield, Palmersville,

Sidonia, and Stella Ruth high schools were built between 1910 and 1920. Dunlap, Gleason, Martin, Mt. Pelia, Sharon, Welch, and Wesley Chapel high schools were built between 1920 and 1930. Eighty-one schools were in session in the county by 1930.

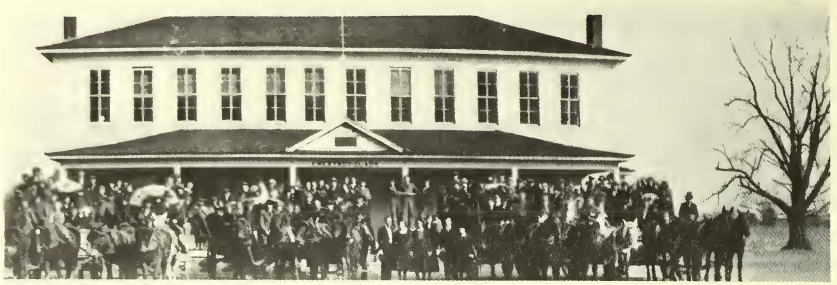
By 1940 there were 36 one-teacher, 28 two-teacher, 7 with more than two teachers, 5 with seven to fifteen teachers for white students, and 5 one-teacher schools for black students. Five special district black schools were also operating, making a total of 86 schools.

In 1950 the number of schools had dropped to 47. There were 23 one-teacher schools, 6 two-teacher schools, and 10 schools with more than two teachers. Five one-teacher schools, 2 two-teacher schools, and one with more than two teachers were conducting classes for black students.

In 1960 the total number of schools had dropped to 15: one white and two black one-teacher schools with grades one through eight; two white and two black schools, grades one through eight with two teachers; one white, grades one through eight with three or more teachers; six white, grades one through twelve; and one black grades one through twelve.

The 1970 count dropped to ten schools: one school, grades K-five; one school, grades one through seven; two schools, grades one through eight; two schools, grades one through twelve; one school, grades six through eight; one school, grades eight through twelve; and two schools, grades nine through twelve. By 1980, five kindergartens had been added to the systems. A primary school at Martin, a junior high school at Dresden, and a vocational school had brought the number of schools up to thirteen by 1980.

In 1982 the Weakley County School System of 13 schools had an enrollment of 5097 students. Fifty-five school buses were used to transport students to and from school. Dresden had an elementary school with 501 students and 27 teachers, one junior high school with 290 students and 12 teachers, and a high school with 329 students and 19 teachers. Martin had a primary school with 290 students and 15 teachers, one elementary school with 600 students and 34 teachers, a junior high school with 475 stu-



Chestnut Glade Special School. *Courtesy of Pansy Baker*

dents and 20 teachers, and a consolidated high school (with Sharon) with 657 students and 34 teachers. Greenfield had an elementary school with 445 students and 25 teachers, and a high school with 276 students and 16 teachers. Sharon had one elementary school with 384 students and 21 teachers. Gleason's school was kindergarten through twelve, with 573 students and 28 teachers. Palmersville school was kindergarten through twelve, with 270 students and 15 teachers.

Before 1934 the county school superintendent was appointed by the Quarterly Court. Sylvanus Fisher, who served from 1910 to 1914, would travel from school to school in a horse and buggy, spending the night with school board members. His office was in his home. He was often gone from home for an entire week. It was during his term that consolidation of schools was started. Students were transported to school in wagons, the forerunner of the school bus. Thirty years later his nephew, Wayne Fisher, put into operation the first school buses, making further consolidation possible.

Named for the huge chestnut trees on the grounds, Chestnut Glade School was at one time a model for other school systems in the state. It was built in 1917 at a cost of \$5000.00 with materials, labor, and money contributed by the community. This Special District included all of the 17th and part of the 13th School Districts. It took the place of several one-room schools in the area—Sandy Branch, Sawyers, White Rose, McClains, Sunny Side, and Ridgeway. No money from the county or state was used to

operate the schools since funds were derived from a special school tax for the district. There were between 300 to 400 students in the first session and later enrollment peaked at 500. Students were transported each day by eight wagons with four horses each. A six-room house was built on the school property for a home for the teachers and a live-in housekeeper was provided. There was also a stable to house the school wagons and horses during the day.

Mr. Will Dildine, the contractor who built the Chestnut Glade School, requested that it be named for his wife and daughter, but the School Board rejected his idea. However, the next school he built was named Stella Ruth.

Federal Law 94-142 and State Law 839, which required mandatory education for the handicapped, were passed in 1974 and Tennessee became a leader in legislature for special education. At first classrooms for the educable mentally retarded were set up in the schools with teachers certified in special education. The more severely retarded students were bussed to Dresden, although not all handicapped children in the county were served at the beginning of the program. The vacated Turner-Ward school building in Dresden was converted to serve the needs of the trainable mentally retarded and severely mentally retarded students. Lisa Evans and Monte Adams were the teachers. The school was closed in 1980.

At this time, classes for the severely mentally retarded are held in the Martin Primary School with 10 students and classes for trainable mentally retarded are in the Martin Elementary with 11 students. Classes for the older handicapped students (14 to 21 years) are held at Sharon where shop skills are taught as well as academic subjects. Special resource teachers have been in every school in the county since 1974, serving the needs of the handicapped child as well as the gifted. Dr. Steve Ramsey has been the supervisor of special education in Weakley County since 1979.

In 1970 Mrs. Evelyn Blythe saw the need for facilities to educate the handicapped children in the area. Working as a volunteer for a year, she led a drive that created an Easter Seal Center

in Martin. The University of Tennessee at Martin donated a house that was remodeled for class use and the center opened with a staff of ten. In 1976, a five-building complex was opened on the southwest corner of the campus with state funds paying for construction of the buildings. The Northwest Tennessee Mental Health Center now shares the facilities, occupying two of the buildings.

In July of 1971 the West Tennessee Easter Seal Society opened a preschool and school program in Weakley County for 32 mentally retarded children. When the children entered the school system through the enactment of Public Law 839—Mandatory Education for the Handicapped—in 1974, the Habilitation and Training Center began serving adults. The 12-month program is possible through the support of local contributions, city and county appropriations, and state and federal grants. Clients receive training in functional daily living and prevocational skills. The goal of the program is for the client to achieve his or her maximum potential and to become a productive member of the community.

Agriculture

The first crop grown in Weakley County was corn. Usually a pioneer would locate good farmland, clear land, and plant a crop of corn, cut his initials on nearby trees to mark his "territory" and go back "home." Then he would return with his family, his belongings and his livestock. Corn was the only grain used for bread at first. It was grated by hand before the first mills were erected.

In 1828, due to a severe drought and the increase of land planted in cotton, corn was scarce, selling from \$3.00 to \$4.00 a barrel. But by 1840 corn was one of the largest crops grown, 454,248 bushels being produced that year. By 1880 this had been increased to 1,304,512 bushels, making Weakley County the largest corn producing county in the state. Production has not increased greatly through the years, for in the mid-1970s there were 1,843,550 bushels grown. Corn became important in the pro-

duction of cattle and hogs. In 1979, there were 29,000 acres harvested, averaging 94 bushels per acre.

Nearly all of the pioneers engaged in the cultivation of cotton as soon as enough land was cleared; however, it was soon found that tobacco brought in more revenue. There was a steady decline in the production of cotton: 93 bales in 1850, 42 bales in 1860. The 1870 agricultural census showed an increase in production to 1904 bales. The year 1880 found the market overflowing with 7576 bales of cotton available. The overproduction of farm products caused prices to drop. A letter written by William Duke Hawkins to Samuel B. and Martha Hawkins Sanders in December of 1885 from Sharon, Tennessee, stated that cotton was two and one-half cents a pound; pork, four cents a pound; wheat, 80 cents a bushel; corn, \$2.00 a barrel; and chickens, 20 cents. The writer advised also that a sure cure for cholera in hogs was a dose of Simmons Regulator. At the turn of the century, due to increase in acreage cleared and population, cotton production had increased greatly. By 1959, there were 10,597 bales produced from 9041 acres, but there has been a steady decrease since then due to increased production of soybeans. In 1979, 350 bales were produced from 658 acres.

The first tobacco crop was planted in 1831 by Capt. William Martin with seeds that he brought from Halifax County, Virginia. By 1840, 462,986 pounds were produced and the 1880 production increased to 3,611,229 pounds. Production started to decline in 1960 as crop land was converted to soybeans or corn. Labor costs also contributed to this decline. By 1974 the yield of tobacco from 101 acres was 162,480 pounds. Weakley County produces type 22 western dark fired tobacco, used in chewing tobacco and snuff. Since the federal warning against smoking, type 22 is in more demand and in 1979 acreage increased greatly, almost doubling. In 1980, there were 138 acres of tobacco planted with an average of 1700 pounds to the acre.

At one time, one-fourth of all sweet potatoes grown in Tennessee were grown in Weakley, Henry, and Gibson counties. Production started in 1850 with 45,180 bushels grown. In ten years, this amount was doubled. In 1944 Weakley County ranked four-



A forerunner of the 4-H Club, the Corn Club of Weakley County was started by County Agent R. E. Ellis in 1912. Its members planted and harvested corn according to advanced agricultural methods. The ten boys making the highest corn yield in 1917 were: (*bottom row from left*) Adrian Pinkston, Virgil Radford, Jones Gatewood, Hershel Priestley; (*top row from left*) Hulon Morris, Auverne Abernathy, Finley Hagler, Roy Donoho, Edd Staulcup, and Rastus Webb. *Courtesy of Col. James Corbitt*

teenth in national production. Since that time, there has been a steady decline due to labor costs. According to Jerry McMaster, county extension leader, not over 20 acres were planted in 1981.

In the early days almost every farmer grew enough wheat, rye, and oats to trade to the miller for flour to meet the needs of his family and stock. There were 44,229 bushels of wheat produced in 1840. The years 1870 and 1900 were peak years, with production reaching 307,980 bushels by 1900. Another high yield was in 1974 but the 1980 harvest more than doubled it, with 718,000 bushels produced. Farmers are growing more wheat today because of the two-crop system in a three-way rotation between wheat, soybeans, and corn. Better farming methods

promoted by the Agricultural Extension Service have made this possible.

The production of soybeans as a cash crop started in the 1960s and ranks as the leading crop of the county today. In 1965 there were 2800 acres with 23 bushels per acre. The 1979 yield from 120,000 acres was 3,301,000 bushels, averaging 28 bushels per acre. World demand for protein and soybean oil for human consumption has caused more farmers in the county to convert pasture land into soybean production.

Crops such as strawberries, cabbage, beans, and most vegetables have decreased greatly due to rising labor and production costs, and availability to markets. Only in 1850 was rice grown in the county, when 900 bushels were produced.

Many early settlers brought stock into the county when they came in the early 1820s. As the herds of milk cows increased, dairying was confined to the spring and summer months when pastures were plentiful. Cows, calving in the spring, were allowed to go dry in the fall and were poorly fed and sheltered during the winter. By the 1950s, modern dairying was one of the major agricultural activities, as modern milking barns, advanced feeding methods and milk distribution changed the dairying picture. Since the early 1960s dairying has declined due to more pasture land being converted to soybean production.

Weakley County is the top swine producer in the state today and one of the top 400 counties in the nation. Much corn and wheat produced in the county goes into hog production. From 24,085 hogs and pigs in 1840, the county now produces 94,100. George W. Zarecor, a county resident, is the largest hog producer in the southeastern part of the United States and sells about 20,000 hogs a year. On four farms, with 15 mechanized houses covering all facets of hog production, he conducts a minimum disease operation. Bill Dodd Zarecor, William Ofenheuse, and Steve O'Brian are his partners in the hog business. They produce four different breeds and crossbreeds of registered hogs.

Prior to the establishment of the extension service in Weakley County, the agricultural department of the Illinois Central Railroad took the lead in agricultural educational programs. Agri-

cultural agents loaned purebred sires to dairy and beef cattle farmers in order to improve their herds. Soil samples were tested free of charge and new crops were introduced to fill needs of newly established agricultural industries. Cheese and butter-making experts were brought in to instruct local dairymen in creamery processes.

In 1913 R. E. Ellis was appointed county agent. After a few years, Mrs. Ellis became the home demonstration agent. Farmers in the county, located where many people could see them, were signed as demonstrators and were visited as often as possible by the county agent, who gave them instructions and bulletins. For 13 years Weakley County bankers supplemented the county agent's salary which came from county and federal funds.

During Mr. Ellis's tenure he introduced many improved methods in farm management. There were Agricultural Rally Days held in the towns and communities where agricultural specialists from The University of Tennessee at Knoxville advised farmers on all farming enterprises. On July 28, 1922, at the Agricultural Rally Day in Palmersville, Mr. Wells, UT poultry specialist, told poultry raisers, "It is a wrong idea to depend on chickens to catch their meat scraps in the form of bugs, as it will take all the energy derived from one bug to run after and catch the next one, thereby causing the fowl to become poor and having no quality for egg production."

Mr. Ellis rode a horse from farm to farm when he first started as county agent, leaving his home on Monday morning, staying with the farm family he was advising during the night, and returning to his office late Friday night to write his reports. Several years later, he was able to buy a Model T Ford and transportation became easier. Another innovation in farming methods encouraged by Mr. Ellis was keeping complete farm records. *The Dresden Enterprise* reported in June 1922 that "L. A. Elliott, a farmer of the second district, who keeps a dairy herd in addition to his regular farming, is keeping a close record on his cows this season. For the month of May, cream from three cows sold for \$28.65 above the cost of the feed given. His average price received for



First county agricultural agent R. E. Ellis on his horse as he started his week's work on Monday. *Courtesy of Col. James Corbitt*

butter fat was 29 cents." Mr. Ellis retired in 1943 after 30 years of service to the people of Weakley County.

Since 1913 there have been many county agents working to improve agriculture and the quality of life in Weakley County. Extension work has changed greatly in that time. Today there are five experienced personnel involved in agricultural leadership. Jerry C. McMaster is extension leader; J. Paul Sutton, extension agent; Bob Williams, assistant extension agent; Mrs. Patsy C. Oliver, associate extension agent (home economics for youth);

and Mrs. Jean Paschall, associate extension agent (home economics for adults).

The Soil Conservation District was organized in 1940 by the Dresden Chamber of Commerce to continue the work of conservation started by the Civilian Conservation Corps, which was disbanding. County Agent R. E. Ellis and Jimmy Corbitt, manager of the CCC Camp near Dresden, explained the meaning of the Soil Conservation Service to the men of the Chamber. The first district conservationist was McLemore Roberts in 1941, followed by A. G. Morrow and Jimmy Corbitt. Jimmy Spencer has been district conservationist since 1972.

In the early 1960s the Soil Conservation Service started the Thompson Creek Watershed project, which included five flood detention dams, 17 miles of channel improvement, 140 acres of bare roadbanks vegetated, and 2019 acres of trees planted on gullied land. One dam was built in cooperation with the Tennessee Game and Fish Commission to provide year-round fishing to the public. The resultant Garrett Lake was named in honor of Finis J. Garrett, Tennessee statesman who was born and raised in nearby Ore Springs.

The Farmers Home Administration (FmHA), originally the Farm Security Administration, was started in 1947 in the county. Its purpose was to help rural people who had no other source of credit and to provide counseling in better farm methods. Tom Duscoe was the first supervisor, followed by Frank Phillips and Quincy Stykes. Maynard Reed, state supervisor, was instrumental in the organization. Today Weakley County rates in the top level in the nation of farm ownership, 831 loans being outstanding in 1981. Since 1958 the county supervisor has been William M. White, and Anna Lou Caldwell is county office assistant.

The Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASC) started in the early 1930s. Their responsibilities are farm related, having to do with government allotments and quotas. The first county executive director was Lube Glasgow. The present one is Sam Dennison.

The Weakley County Farm Bureau was organized in 1930 with Mr. Ralph R. McUmbert the first president. There were 70

charter members who lived mostly in the Greenfield and Martin areas. Housed at first in the county agent's office, it later moved to a brick building on the Greenfield Highway. The purpose of the organization is to improve the living conditions and quality of life for rural people. Since 1950 services such as fire, health, automobile, and life insurance have been added to meet the needs of members. Mr. William Hunt was executive secretary with this program for almost 50 years. To date, 19 Weakley County Farm Bureau presidents have helped membership grow to 3021 families. John Bryant Freeman is the present president.

Wildlife

Since 1975 wildlife has become an important economic resource to Weakley Countians. The white-tailed deer herd was reestablished in the mid 1950s when Elmore Price and Joe Farrar, biologist with the Tennessee Game and Fish Commission, restocked deer in the county. Today, over a thousand deer are harvested annually by hunting from this established deer herd. This was one of the first reestablished deer herds in the state. Sportsmen from throughout the southeastern United States participate in the hunting.

The wild turkey was reintroduced in the winter of 1979 after a 65-year absence. Turkey hunting will be allowed in 1983.

Weakley County's Primeval Giant

When the bald cypress tree first sprouted, probably around AD 600, the western world was dominated by the Byzantine Empire that stretched across the Mediterranean. The dark ages were beginning in Europe, and Christopher Columbus was a thousand years away. By the time the tree reached its full growth William the Conqueror had tamed England, and Leif Ericson had set foot on Newfoundland. When DeSoto's ill-fated expedition crossed a part of Tennessee in his quest for gold nature was probably eating away at the tree's core.

The tree was the oldest known living member of its species in the United States and the largest tree east of the Mississippi River. Estimates are that it grew to be 400 feet in height; however,

lightning took its toll on the towering giant. For many years it was 122 feet tall, but in 1976 a tremendous bolt shattered its uppermost branches, scattering debris for 100 yards. The tree burned for two weeks and the towering funnel of smoke could be seen for several miles. Although no longer living, the carcass still remains 45 feet high.

Core samples were taken by the Tennessee Forestry Department in 1946, and its age was estimated to be 1350 years old, possibly older. At breast height the tree measures 55 feet and 8 inches in circumference and has a diameter of 17.7 feet. The entire length of the tree is hollow and the opening at the bottom is large enough to hold a rider on horseback. David Crockett at one time lived near the tree and probably used it as a shelter while on hunting forays. It has been placed on the American Forestry Association's Social Register of One Hundred Famous Trees.

The cypress with 20 surrounding acres was donated to the state in 1965 by Weakley County farmer, W. Eli Tillman. When he died, the state purchased his 263-acre farm from his widow. In 1973, through the efforts of Weakley County Conservationist James Corbitt, the General Assembly passed legislation making the 283-acre site a natural area. It was named "Tillman Big Cypress Tree Natural Area." In 1977 an additional 47 acres were purchased from R. D. Robinson, making a total of 330 acres.

The Big Cypress has been protected through the years by relative seclusion, since it is in a marsh usually covered with water. Located about three miles from the town of Sharon near the Kimery community, it stands 100 feet from the north shore of the middle fork of the Obion River and is separated from the river by an old dirt levee. Much of the year water stands as deep as five feet at its base.

The state has allocated \$38,500 for the area, matched with an additional \$37,500 from federal land and water conservation funds. A park ranger, Bill McCall, supervises the area and is helping to develop future plans, including the renovation of a barn for a rustic interpretive center, a picnic shelter, a parking



This bald cypress, located near Sharon, was the oldest known living member of its species before lightning destroyed the top in 1976. *Courtesy of Tennessee Conservation Department*

lot, signs, trails, and some measure for a better view of the Big Cypress.

Transportation

The first settlers came from the east with their wagons and few belongings. They reached the Tennessee River and had to cut trees, build rafts, and float their wagons across the wide stream. It was impossible to come by flatboat by way of the Cumberland-Ohio-Mississippi River route into and up the Obion River because the mouth of the river was choked by immense piles of logs and driftwood. The settlers had to blaze roads through the forest and barrens at their own expense. As late as 1830 the government (state or federal) still had not spent any money on roads.

In 1825 a tax was placed on lands for the improvement of all rivers. A board of trustees for navigation in the Western District was created by the legislature and John W. Cook, Robert E. C. Doherty, and George W. L. Marr represented the Obion River on the nine-man board. Laws were enacted in 1838 and 1842 for improvement of the Obion, but due to the soil along its banks and the ever changing channel of the river the stream continued to be clogged with trees washed from the banks with every flood.

Residents of the district needed desperately to get groceries, dry goods, and supplies from keelboats that were stopped from navigating the clogged streams except at high-water times. Nor could cotton, tobacco, or whisky to be sold in New Orleans or Natchez be exported easily. But very little was done toward improving the Obion until 1840. William Martin shipped his and his neighbors' products to New Orleans on one to three flatboats each year between 1840 and 1850.

For mail service to be made available, roads had to be built that would accommodate a two- or four-horse stage coach. Before 1830 there was a mail route from Dresden, by way of Totten Wells, near Harris Station, to Troy, in Obion County, and from Jackson, by way of Trenton, to Dresden. These routes connected with others going to Nashville or Memphis. As more bridges were built, the "horse mails" started a route three times a week. By

1840 there were six roads in the county suitable for stage coaches. The route from Paris to Mills Point (Hickman), Kentucky, through Dresden was the most heavily traveled because so many farmers carried their products to the river post for shipment to Natchez or New Orleans. One road came from Huntingdon to Dresden; one from Trenton to Dresden; one from Boydsville to Dresden that connected with the Paris to Mayfield, Kentucky, road; one from Dresden to Mayfield; and one from Winston, directly south of Dresden, to Christmasville in Carroll County.

Weakley County today has a network of highways and roads that serve her citizens well. United States Highway 45 East traverses the county from north to south. There are five state highways: 22, 54, 89, 118, and 124, with a total of 132 miles. Nine hundred and seventy miles of county roads are maintained, 395 miles of which are blacktopped. Weakley County ranks seventh in the state as to the number of miles of county roads.

The early roads were dirt-filled "turnpikes" financed by tolls. The word "turnpike" is derived from the gates across the road, made with sharp poles or pikes placed on the gate so that passage over or through was impossible. After the traveler paid the toll, the gate was opened or turned, allowing access to the road. These roads were privately owned and were chartered by the state legislature. In 1870 the 36th General Assembly repealed a charter for a turnpike across the North Fork of the Obion River operated by heirs of Abner Boyd and D. P. Caldwell. It released them from obligation of keeping the road passable or from collecting tolls.

In 1820 the mail arrived by horse and rider, but by 1830 it arrived in the county twice a week by stage. It was always a big event to the pioneer settlers who listened with anticipation for the horn blown by the driver of the mail stage. A post office was established on February 15, 1827, in Dresden with Jephtha Gardner as postmaster. Fleming post office was established in the 12th District between Gleason and McKenzie, on December 18, 1827, with William Fleming as postmaster followed by Robert R. Gilbert in 1831.

Following is a list of early post offices with first postmasters:

| | <i>First Postmaster</i> | <i>Date Established</i> |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Dresden* | Jeptha Gardner | February 15, 1827 |
| | William W. Gleason | March 15, 1844 |
| Fleming* | William Fleming | December 18, 1827 |
| | Robert R. Gilbert | October 5, 1831 |
| Gardnersville | Richard W. Gardner | January 8, 1830 |
| Cullen* | Benj. M. McFarland | November 24, 1831 |
| Locust Grove | Samuel A. Warner | April 11, 1832 |
| | Nathaniel Jones | June 7, 1843 |
| Paschall* | Jesse M. Paschall | January 5, 1833 |
| Bowers* | William G. Bowers | January 5, 1833 |
| Poplar Grove | Alexander Matson | February 19, 1833 |
| Dukedom* | Duke A. Beadles | July 30, 1833 |
| Marion | Benjamin Blythe | February 15, 1834 |
| Harmony | Edmund P. Latham | May 1, 1834 |
| Winston | David Winston | May 19, 1836 |
| Boydsville | Abner Boyd | November 1, 1837 |
| Irvine's Store | Samuel Irvine | February 13, 1838 |
| Old Hickory | Abner Boyd | November 2, 1846 |
| Pillowville | Robert Ury | July 1, 1847 |
| Palmersville | John D. Palmer | September 20, 1847 |
| Shieldsborg | Rowland H. Galey | February 21, 1848 |
| Mount Warren | William Jones | October 24, 1849 |
| | Abner P. Cantrell | December 19, 1849 |
| Palmer's Store | John D. Palmer | July 24, 1850 |
| Phillipsville (changed to Oakwood) | Thomas H. Phillips | September 16, 1850 |
| | Joshua Hamilton | February 24, 1852 |
| Cedar Hill | Pleasant F. Huddleston | May 21, 1851 |
| Mount Pelia | Robert K. Waddy | July 14, 1851 |
| Dedham | Nelson O. Underwood | January 15, 1852 |
| Elm Tree | Niander Y. Cavitt | March 29, 1852 |
| Alma | Alex Ralston | January 20, 1853 |
| Jonesville | John E. Halford | March 16, 1854 |
| Black Oak | Debaron B. Grubbs | October 17, 1855 |

Roland Springs Alex H. Scates December 19, 1855

 James N. Drewry March 9, 1858

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*Stage Coach Stops in 1830

Ronald C. Thomas in his MA thesis published in 1973 by The West Tennessee Historical Society *Papers* gives the following account of the first railroads in Weakley County.

In 1852, citizens of Weakley County, seeing the advantage of an east-west railway, started a drive to connect with the Hickman and Obion Railroad which was laying fourteen miles of track between Hickman, Kentucky, and Union City, Tennessee. The citizens held a meeting and decided to raise the necessary funds for the grading of a road by private subscription. Captain William Martin wanted the tracks to pass through his property so he subscribed five thousand dollars. However, private subscription proved to be inadequate to complete the road, so the people were asked to levy a tax for the necessary funds. After much controversy and a final decision by Tennessee's Supreme Court in 1857, stock to the amount of \$100,000.00 was subscribed. Property taxes to pay this amount were collected for three years.

In the meantime, the Hickman and Obion Railroad was sold in 1855 to the Nashville and Northwestern. John A. Gardner succeeded in accumulating the company's stock and was chosen the first president. The Nashville and Northwestern continued to push its track from Union City through Martin and Dresden, forming a junction with the Memphis and Ohio at McKenzie. This was completed just after the start of the Civil War.

During the war work continued on the Nashville and Northwestern by the Union Army, connecting Nashville with the Tennessee River at Reynoldsburg. After the war a bridge was built across the river, and tracks were extended to Hollow Rock to join the line of the western division from McKenzie. This gave Weakley County a direct route from Hickman, on the Mississippi, to Nashville, the state capital.

The Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad bought the company in 1872, renaming it the Nashville, Memphis, and St. Louis (NC & St.L) The line was merged with the Louisville and Nash-

ville and the name changed to L & N. In 1982, the L & N Railroad discontinued use of its line through Weakley County.

The north-south railroad was started in the spring of 1855. In late 1853 the Tennessee legislature had incorporated the Mississippi Central and Tennessee Railroad Company "to contract and maintain a railroad from a point where the Mississippi Central may touch or cross the state boundary of Tennessee to Jackson, with branches to the Kentucky state line and to Nashville." By August of 1860, the line being built from New Orleans to Jackson, Tennessee was finished. The Civil War interrupted any further construction northward.

The Mississippi Central resumed building in June 1866 but, due to the war and increasing debts, it was unable to build the track from Jackson north through Weakley County. The Illinois Central Railroad purchased the bonds of the Mississippi Central in 1872 and a line was begun as planned.

The first survey for the proposed route revealed that Gardner, a town three miles west of the Martin family estate, was the best route. Colonel George W. Martin and his brothers Thomas, Marshall, and William convinced the railroad owners that land through their 2500-acre holdings would be the better route, thus bypassing Gardner. In exchange for the relocation, the railroad was given a continuous strip of land for a right-of-way and a parcel of land west of the proposed route for a park in the proposed town. The railroad was being charged for land through the Gardner location; therefore, they accepted the Martins' offer.

By 1873 Weakley County had a rail connection between New Orleans and Chicago. As soon as the line was completed more people began to move into the area being served by the railroads. Martin, Sharon, and Greenfield owe their start and progress to this fact (on the IC), as well as Gleason, Dresden, Ralston, Martin, and Gardner (on the NC & St.L). Martin, the only location at the junction of both railroads, soon outgrew the other towns in population and economy. The Martin family realized great benefits from their gift of land to the Illinois Central.

In 1874 the New Orleans, Jackson, Great Northern and Mis-

Mississippi Railroads consolidated as the New Orleans, St. Louis, and Chicago Railroad Company. Two years later, the Illinois Central assumed control of the line and in 1877 changed its name to Chicago, St. Louis, and the New Orleans. In 1882 the Illinois Central leased it and until 1972 it was known as the Illinois Central Railroad. At that time the line merged with the Gulf, Mobile, and Ohio Railroad and the name was changed to Illinois Central-Gulf.

The gauge of five feet between the rails that ran through Weakley County did not conform with the gauge of four feet, eight and one-half inches of the northern lines. On July 29, 1881, the rails were changed to standard gauge. All 550 miles of rail between East Cairo and New Orleans were changed in one day with more than 3,000 men distributed along the line. This was the first southern railroad east of the Mississippi River and one of the first in the entire country to change from wide to standard gauge.

Industrial Development

The first industries in Weakley County were the gristmills that ground corn at first and wheat later as more land was cleared. They were scattered about eight to ten miles apart and were near the areas of the developing communities. Janes Mill on the middle fork of the Obion River between Ore Springs and Gleason had a very large mill pond enjoyed by those who liked to fish. Janes also owned a mill on Thompson's Creek. There were gristmills in all five larger towns from their beginning.

Sawmills developed early, soon after the towns were established. Tobacco warehouses and, later, cigar factories soon were thriving businesses. Then barrel stave factories followed in the path of the expanding tobacco crop, for hogsheds were needed to ship the product to Natchez or New Orleans.

Every small community had a blacksmith and livery stable. Wheelwrights, tanners, tailors, boot and shoemakers, and saddlemakers were listed in the 1850 census as occupations.

Cotton began to be grown in the early 1850s and cotton gins

began to appear. It was not until the 1870s, however, that cotton became a significant crop. Bales of cotton were shipped to New Orleans by flatboats via the Obion and Mississippi rivers before the railroads came. The gins were run by steam. Dresden had a wool-carding mill and a spoke factory around 1900.

During the late 1800s and early 1900s the economy depended largely upon agriculture and related industries. With the great farming depression of the 1880s and 1890s, the industrial economy suffered also. Businesses failed and cotton gins and factories closed. It took many years for the industrial growth to accelerate. By the 1920s most Weakley County industries were still agricultural or forestry related.

In 1932 Salant and Salant opened a plant in Martin that manufactured men's shirts in the building on north Broadway previously occupied by the American Tobacco Company. Six employees started the first day. Charlie Wagster, Elsie Hurt, Patty Farmer, and a Miss Wallace were four of the six. Every day a few more were hired and trained until, at the end of the first year, between 50 and 70 people were on the payroll. In 1954 the plant changed ownership and became the Martin Manufacturing Company. It moved in 1974 from its original location to a larger building with additional facilities on the Martin-Dresden Highway. The work force now is approximately 500 men and women. It is a prime supplier of uniform shirts for the armed forces.

Gleason had two industries that started in the 1930s. H. C. Spinks and Company began mining clay in 1930, and the Henry I. Siegel Company, Inc., started manufacturing sportswear in 1935. Today, H.I.S. employs 285 people and the clay-related industries employ over 200.

In 1948 the Bay-Bee Shoe Company, Inc., opened in Dresden, producing children's shoes of all types. From a beginning in a city-built building with about 125 employees, the company operates today in a building that has been expanded six times and has over 500 employees. Their production is now over 7,000 pairs of children's boots a day.

Frank L. Prins and son, Frank L. Prins, Jr., opened the Greenfield Manufacturing Company in 1947 that produced la-

dies' dress coats. The first year employment was about 50 but the number was quickly increased. The following year, a plant was opened in Dresden. Present employment is 365 at Greenfield and 315 at Dresden. Both plants have more than doubled in size with additional facilities. In 1951 a plant was opened in Martin that manufactured field jackets for the army. After the Korean conflict terminated, this plant was moved to the enlarged Greenfield structure.

Greenfield Manufacturing Company became the largest industrial employer in Weakley County. The Prins family merged their business with 15 other family-owned manufacturers in 1961 and formed Kellwood Corporation. Seventy percent of their production goes to Sears which owns about 22 percent of the stock.

Merit Clothing Company of Mayfield, Kentucky, opened a branch factory in 1955 in the building vacated by the Greenfield Manufacturing Company. They manufactured men's suits, sports coats, and slacks. The company closed in 1975. In 1958 the Sharon Manufacturing Company started producing children's pajamas and robes. Today it has 225 employees.

In 1955 the *Nashville Banner* published an article about Weakley County which revealed that the county had the greatest out-migration of any county in the state. Because of the lack of industry, citizens (especially the newly graduated high school and college seniors trained with Weakley County tax dollars) were going elsewhere for work. Between 1940 and 1950, 1536 people left the county, and in the next ten years the county population was down by 3635.

Merchants and civic leaders joined efforts to counteract this out-flow of population. As a result, the Weakley County Chamber of Commerce was organized in 1959 with 85 charter members. Their first goals were: (1) to bring new industry to the county, (2) to erect Hill-Burton hospital, (3) to provide public housing for low income families, (4) to create a planning commission, and (5) to organize a country club. Frank Prins, Jr., was the first president. Milton Roberts of Sharon and Viron Beard of Martin followed as presidents. A special industrial development fund was

created, with the cities, county, banks, and electric systems contributing to pay the salary of a full-time executive vice president to work toward industrial development and other goals of the Chamber. In 1961 Eugene McDonald was the first so employed, followed by Bill Teuton in 1963. Jim Perry and Bob Pierce served in this capacity for nine years followed by Bill Teuton for four years on a part-time basis. Fred Rucker has been executive vice president since 1979. The Illinois Central's industrial agent, Jack Frost, and their agricultural and forestry agent, Wilbur Vaughan, helped locate out-of-state industries and influenced their moving to the area. In addition, the L & N industrial agent and the Weakley County Municipal Electric System furnished data pertinent to industrial development.

The Weakley County Chamber of Commerce's efforts soon began to bear fruit. In 1960 Gleason Clay Products, brick manufacturer, opened with 39 employees. By 1965 the 49-bed Hill-Burton hospital was complete. Staffed by doctors, nurses, and personnel from the entire county, it provided medical needs for the seriously ill who had previously gone to hospitals outside the area.

Pepsi Cola Bottling Company opened in Martin in 1962, employing 20 people. Callins industries, Inc., started manufacturing aluminum foil capacitors in Greenfield with 112 employees in 1964. Old Hickory Clay Company of Gleason, mining ball clay, began in 1965 with ten employees. Martin Brothers Container and Timber Products, manufacturers of shipping containers with 165 employees, and the Miller Company, manufacturers of lighting fixtures with 171 employees, began production in Martin in 1965. In the same year Conchemco, Inc., started manufacturing mobile homes with 50 employees, and Tran-Spectra, Inc., which produces electrolytic capacitors with 150 employees, began operating in Greenfield.

Between 1965 and 1970 the following industries were started in Weakley County: Maness Tool and Die Company with 23 employees (Martin); Leland-Powell Screw Company with 40 employees (Martin); Western Tool and Machining Company, manufacturers of tools, dies, and jigs with 6 employees (Green-

field); Monsanto Company which mixes fertilizer, 10 employees (Sharon); and Dico Company, Inc., manufacturer of industrial wheels for farm equipment and hydraulic hoists with 110 employees (Dresden).

Since 1970 W. F. Hall Printing Company, printers of paperback books with 705 employees (Dresden); Q and S Electroplating Company with 10 employees (Gleason); Rebel Screen Print Company with 25 employees (Sharon); Arrow Aluminum Industries, Inc., manufacturers of storm doors and windows, with 42 employees (Martin); B and B Revel Gears and Machine Corporation, manufacturer of gears with 25 employees (Sharon); and Green Apparel, manufacturer of pajamas and robes with 73 employees (Greenfield) have helped to change the economic environment.

In 1970 there were sixteen major industries in Weakley County with 3900 employees. Ten years later, 41 major industries employed 9981 people. From a population of 28,827 in 1970, the count rose to 32,781 in 1980, surpassing several West Tennessee counties for the first time. The increase ranks Weakley County as 31st in the state due to the 14.1 percent gain in population. All towns increased in number except Sharon, which lost four percent of its citizens.

Military History

Survivors of the Revolutionary War who settled in Weakley County were Daniel Baldrige, Sr. (N.C.), James Buckley (VA), Henry Carson (S.C.), David Cashon (VA), Henry Charson (N.C.), John Chester (N.C.), Richard Drewry (VA), Benjamin Gilbert, Jr. (VA), Cornelius Glasgow (N.C.), Thomas Harvey (N.C.), Richard Jones (VA), Thomas Jones (N.C.), Kinchen Killebrew (N.C.), Caleb Mason (N.C.), William McLeskey (S.C.), Benjamin Murrell (VA), Buckner Russell (N.C.), William Thomas (N.C.), Presley Thornton (VA), Luke Tipton (MD), John Welch (VA), and Alexander Wheatley (N.C.). These names are from pension lists. Many more veterans came to Weakley County but no record is available at this time.

Many other settlers were survivors of the War of 1812. Some of them were James Bowers, Capt. (N.C.), Henry Bradshaw (VA), Charles N. Brigrance, Pvt. (TN), Willis Cook (N.C.), Charles S. Clemons (IND), George S. Elliott, Pvt. (TN), John Wesley Finch (N.C.), William H. Freeman, Pvt. (VA), Jesse Gibbs (N.C.), Bright Grooms (TN), Ezekiel Henderson, Pvt. (KY), William Hughes (TN), Anderson Jennings, Pvt. (VA), Martin Lawler, Pvt. (VA), William Maryin, Pvt. (VA), I. Maynard, John Montgomery, Pvt. (TN), William Porch, Alexander Ralston, Maj. (TN), John H. Reavis, Charles Ross, Sgt. (TN), Gilford D. Sims, William Smithson, Pleasant Thacker, Pvt. (VA), Orrin Vincent (N.C.), Perry Vincent, Thomas Washburn, Pvt. (N.C.), Mears Warner, Pvt. (TN), Allen Williams.

By 1836 there were four militia divisions in Tennessee. The 4th Division was made up of brigades from West Tennessee, with the 19th Brigade from Dyer, Gibson, Weakley and Obion Counties. The 117th and 118th Regiments were from Weakley County. One-day musters were held in the spring, including three-hour drills, shooting matches, running races, and pioneer sports.

During the Indian War of 1838 Hiram W. Cook organized a company of men at Dresden that was attached to the 3rd Battalion, Tennessee Volunteers. Edward A. Tansil was First Lieutenant, J. T. Johns and Newton S. Julin, Sergeants. Others in the company were Rice Cantrell, John A. Dunning, Benjamin G. Ezzell, John Garner, William R. Hawkins, Elliott Dean Hornbeak, Andrew Malone (Ensign), David Richee, and William Stowe.

Hiram W. Cook also served as company commander in the Seminole War of 1838, being one of 80 men to see action.

Survivors of the War with Mexico in 1846 who lived in the county were the Reverend P. W. Cook, W. T. Harris, John R. Stallcup, Dr. P. B. Stubblefield, William Tucker, and James Umphrey.

Weakley County furnished about 1100 men to the Confederate Army and about 400 to the Union Army. There were eleven Confederate companies and four Union companies.

The first Confederate volunteers were J. A. and J. P. Jenkins who went to Paris to enlist. The first company was the "Hickory

Blues," organized under Capt. Bradford Edwards at Gardner Station in May of 1861. Capt. B. G. Ezzell raised a company in the southern part of the county in the spring of 1861. Other company commanders were Capt. E. E. Tansil, Capt. Thomas Bell, Capt. John Elliott, Capt. B. J. Roberts, Capt. William Simons, and Capt. John Hatler. Dr. Thomas C. Edwards and Dr. J. W. Rogers of Dresden, were surgeons. Also Capt. Samuel Crabtree, Capt. John Matheny, Capt. H. C. McCutchen, Capt. E. T. Hollis, Capt. J. G. Thomason, Capt. William McWhirter served as officers.

The Union officers in charge of companies were Lt. William J. Campbell, Capt. Albert Cook, Capt. John H. Edwards, and Capt. Holt. These companies were under the command of Col. J. A. Rogers of Dresden.

In December of 1863 a Federal army, under General Thomas Kilby Smith, encamped a few days at Dresden and foraged heavily on the people in the area. Guerrilla bands and bushwhackers infested the county during the war inflicting much damage. Some fifteen or twenty people, including Confederate Capt. W. W. Faulkner, were killed in and around Dresden by the outlaws.

Veterans of the 1898 Spanish American War from Weakley County were: Raymond Atkinson, Clarence Baker, Clarence Blake, George Brooks, Abe Burchard, J. F. Burchard, Will Cashion, J. T. Coulter, Bob Ellis, Percy Gibbs, Jim Hadden, Brad Hanning, John Lawler, Tom McCombs, J. G. McWherter, Clarence Melton, Charles Parrish, Ed Rooks, and Jim Wilson.

Out of 1111 Weakley Countians who served in World War I, 36 were killed. In World War II, 56 of the 2872 who served lost their lives. Six hundred and sixty Weakley Countians saw service in Korea but only six were killed. Weakley County men who gave their lives for their country in the Viet Nam conflict were: PFC Jimmy O. Call, E4 Danny E. Carlton, Sp. 5 James W. Chambers, PFC Bonnie Lee Coleman, Sp. 4 Tommy Darling, Sp. 4 John E. Davis, Sp. 4 Harry Garrigus, Sp. 4 Dennis Lane Long, and Sgt. Joseph E. Royster.



Willie Grissom, grandson of Marshal Stone Lockridge, stands in front of the Lockridge home about 1965. Raymond McNatt, local historian, is on the porch. Upstairs on the left is the bedroom where Maj. Schaffer died. The house has been demolished. *Courtesy of Col. James Corbitt*

Battle of Lockridge's Mill

During the Civil War the first northern troops that appeared in Weakley County were a regiment commanded by Major Schaffer de Boernstein of the Fifth Regiment, Iowa Cavalry. In April of 1862 the regiment had captured a large store of Confederate supplies at Henry Station in Henry County. The major confiscated as much flour and hams as his regiment could use and then set fire to the depot, destroying the remainder. The regiment was then ordered to reconnoiter beyond Paris into Weakley County. On May 6, at 5:00 P.M., the detachment of three companies went into camp near Lockridge's Mill on the north fork of the Obion River. Two companies camped near the Lockridge home, a large two-story white frame house which was located on higher ground about one-half mile from the mill. The other company camped about a mile away on the road to Dresden. Pickets were posted to guard against a surprise attack. Soon after the men had unsaddled their horses, the Confederates, un-



Major Schaffer de Boernstein.
Courtesy of Kindred Winston



John George Bauer. *Courtesy of
Col. James Corbitt*

der the command of Col. Thomas Claiborne, attacked both camps with a much superior force, causing great confusion in the Union ranks. Twenty-four Union cavalry were killed or wounded, 38 escaped and the remainder were taken prisoners. Major Schaffer de Boernstein was mortally wounded and died the next day. His body was taken back to his home in Iowa for burial. The Union soldiers who died were buried in a common grave across the road from the Lockridge home.

An interesting story is told by Col. James Corbitt of a visitor from Minnesota to his home in Martin in 1972, inquiring about the location of Lockridge Mill. The young man's great-grandfather, John George Bauer, was wounded in the battle and was left by the rest of his company when they were routed by the Confederates. Mrs. Lockridge took him into her home, treated his wounds, and when he was strong enough to travel, gave him a horse and a patchwork quilt to cover his Union uniform. He was able to slip through the Confederate lines in this manner. As a result of her kind treatment and religious character, Bauer became a Methodist circuit rider after the war and preached the



Quilt given to J. G. Bauer by Mary Lockridge. It is owned by the Bauer family and the colors (red, orange, and green) are still bright today. *Courtesy of Col. James Corbitt*

rest of his life. He treasured the quilt and in 1918, at his death, passed it to his heirs who reside in Burnsville, Minnesota. The colors are still quite bright: red, orange, and green on a white background. He always thought that the Lord had saved him at

and Dick Maiden captured a ten-gallon still made of copper on Cypress Creek bottom. Deputies found four "wild cat" stills in the swamp area known as Panther Springs in District 16. In one instance, Sheriff Bullock and seven deputies found a large still manufacturing "white mule" in the river bottom, seven miles east of Dresden. The men were able to approach the still unobserved and watched for some time, recognizing the men who were working. When the sheriff made his presence known guns appeared and shots were exchanged, resulting in the death of one bootlegger. One surrendered and the others fled but were caught and put in jail the following week. About the same time, a 75-gallon still was located on the farm of Will and Dewey Norwood in the 15th District near Pillowville.

The *Dresden Enterprise* told how many Weakley County citizens felt about prohibition in its June 30, 1922, edition. "Uncle Henry Looney, an old Negro living in Dresden, was bitten by a moccasin snake while picking blackberries in the river bottom last week. When bitten, his hand began to swell. He came to town and was given medicine, but none of the old time snake remedy, which can't be had here for love nor money."

Health Care

Weakley County Nursing Home

The Weakley County Nursing Home is a county-owned, non-profit institution which is governed by a five-member board of directors who are court appointed. Those on the present board are Lewis Garner, Robin Moore, A. B. Reed, Joe White, and Charles Culver.

Before 1885 the county owned a farm five miles east of Dresden for the underprivileged. It was sold to T. J. Deason for \$500.00 because the land was not fertile. At the same time, a tract of one hundred and thirty-one acres was bought from John and Sarah Glass for this purpose. A large, white two-story frame dwelling on the site became "home" for many orphans, widows, and indigent citizens of the county. There were eighteen residents at first. G. J. Baxter was the first physician.

Through the years complete reconstruction of the original house has brought expansion, improvements, and installation of modern equipment. The present structure is completely bricked, landscaped, and meets all requirements of an Intermediate Care Facility. It has 24-hour nursing service for 139 residents.

Weakley County Health Department

The Weakley County Health Department started in 1926, with offices in the courthouse. Dr. M. D. Ingram was the first director; Alma C. Petree, sanitary inspector; Elizabeth Garrison, county nurse; and Mrs. Ocie Gaylord, secretary.

Dr. Ingram served as health director for seventeen years and was replaced by Dr. Martin R. Beyer in 1943. Dr. Beyer served for 21 years, retiring in 1964. For a short time in 1968 Dr. H. H. Beale served as director, followed by Dr. W. R. Peoples. Dr. Peoples left after a short tenure; since his departure, no medical doctor has been connected with the Health Department on a regular basis. When Dr. Ingram and Dr. Beyer were active in the county, they visited all rural schools and examined all school children. At times, travel became difficult due to poor roads and bad weather. Communicable diseases were quarantined at this time and the county health doctor was responsible for visiting the patient and posting a quarantine notice on the door of the house. Dr. Beyer initiated the Blue Ribbon Program in the county which promoted better health practice for families.

D. Louis Rushing has been acting director of the Health Department for the past 24 years. The same length of tenure is held by Martha Poyner, office manager. Some public health nurses of past years are Pauline Allen, Frances Marsh, Sandra Anderson, Carol Norris, Donna Staten, Charlotte Roberts, and Hope Fong. Present nurses are Shirley W. Woods, R.N., Martin Johnson, R.N., and Marie Nowlin, L.P.N. Charlotte Statler, L.P.N., is in charge of family planning. Joan Pearson, clerk, Carolyn Jones and Frances Nanney, homemakers, complete the present staff.

Operating on a budget of \$109,817 in 1981, the Weakley County Health Department provides services in immunization



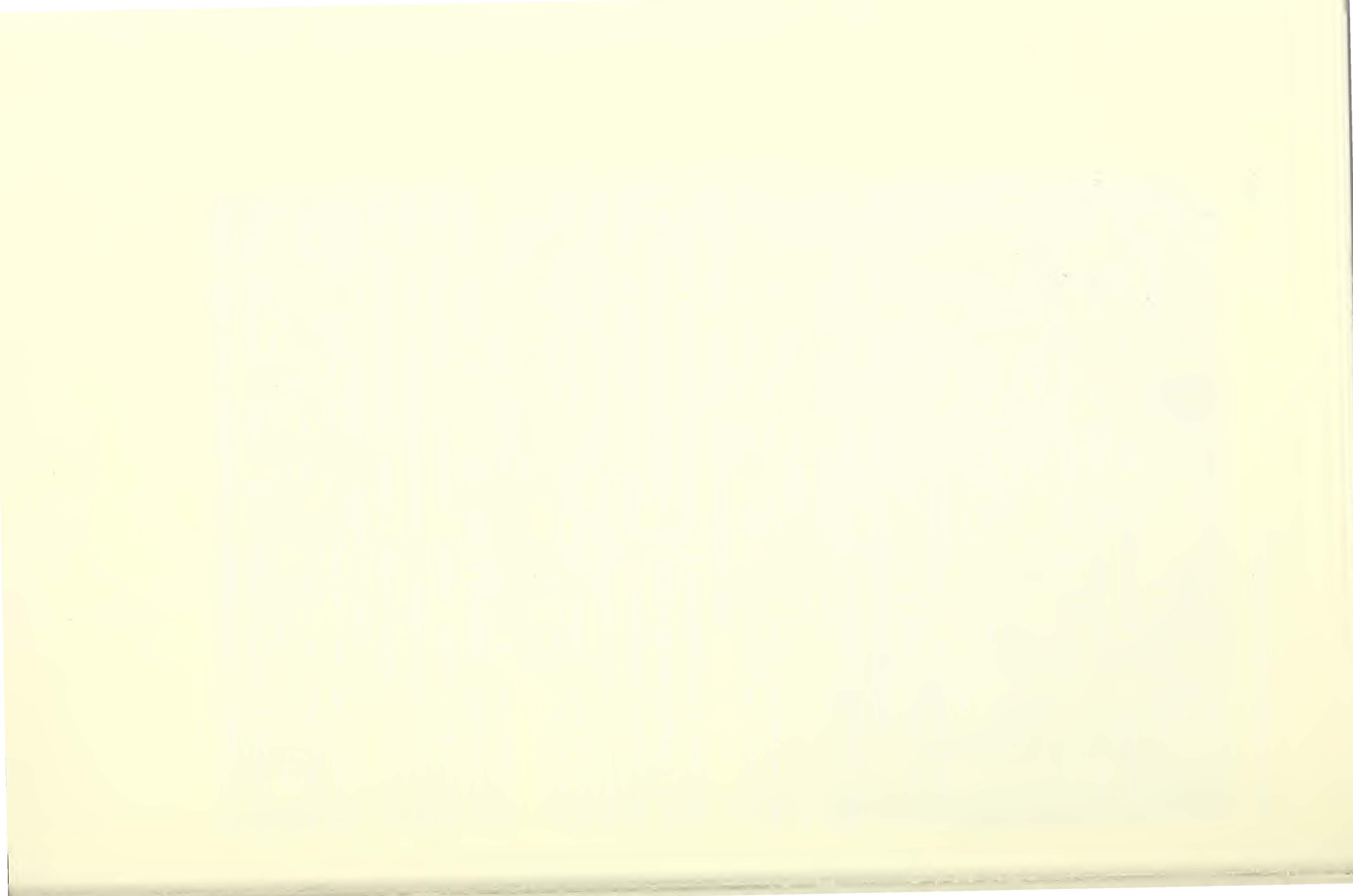
The Weakley County Health Department building was constructed in 1938. *Photo by Wilbur Vaughan*

clinics, dental services to Medicaid recipients and children on free lunch programs for ages 5 through 18, prenatal programs, environmental health, rabies control, school sanitation, day-care facilities, nursing homes, home-nursing care, venereal disease detection and control, family planning, blood-pressure checks, tuberculosis testing, homemaking care, nutritional counseling, and many others.

Community Histories

Dresden

The county seat, Dresden (present population: 2256), was named by Mears Warner (1799–1863) who came to Weakley County as a commissioner to lay out the town. He requested the name because Dresden, Germany, had been the birthplace of his father. Warner served as circuit court clerk from 1825 to 1835 by appointment, and was also a justice of the peace until that office became elective. Warner is buried in Sunset Cemetery.



Brasfield; Deutlemosier; J. W. Hays, who continued in business until 1862; William Landrum; Malone and Ethridge; W. C. and R. F. Scott, and Isaac Winston.

From 1850 to the beginning of the Civil War the merchants were W. T. Cochran and Son; Hiram Cook and Co.; Dabney, Glass and Co.; Gleason and Malone; Irvine and Baker; Irvine, Freeman and Co.; W. H. Knox and Co.; William Landrum; W. R. Palmer and Co.; McCutchen, Bondurant and Co.; McCutchen, Latham and Co.; McGlothlin and Boswell; John R. Moore; W. S. Scott and Son; and F. T. Williams. All of these, except William Landrum, closed their businesses during the war. He bought the remnants of the other merchant's stocks and continued in business.

Merchants after the war included L. B. Cochran; C. W. Cottrell and Co.; Henry Dryfuss; Edwards, Latham and Co.; J. J. Epstein; J. A. Gilchrist; R. C. Hays and Co.; Irvine, Palmer and Co.; Irvine and Moran; J. A. Lumpkin; J. M. Meadows and Co.; J. R. Moore and Co.; J. W. Moran; the Palmers; Rogers; Hawkins and Jones; Rogers and Yates; W. S. Scott; E. E. Tansil and Co.; J. M. White and Co.; among others. The Brasfields, Cottrells, Irvines, Parkers, and Scotts continued in business into the 1900s. Thomas E. Loyd was in the tobacco business during the late 1800s.

At the turn of the century, Dresden merchants were J. C. Brasfield, C. W. Cottrell, Joseph T. Durham, R. N. Irvine, Thomas McElwrath, John M. Meadows, J. G. Parker, W. R. Robitt, C. B. Scott and Co., W. C. Scott and Co.; W. A. Swain and Co., and others. Irvine and Scott were the proprietors of the gristmill, sawmill, cotton gin, and wool carding mill, all combined.

By the 1920s businessmen in Dresden were holding Merchants Trade Campaigns to expand sales and attract rural customers. These were held in the spring and early summer months and lasted several weeks, ending in a final day when an automobile was given away, speeches were made, and Dresden's marching band gave a concert. In June of 1922 L. C. Mitchell of the 10th District won a Ford car and R. E. Maiden delivered the main address. In March of the following year, the merchants presented an aerobatics circus to their prospective customers.

Phoebe Fairgrave and her aviator husband thrilled a crowd of 2000 with her aerial gymnastics. She stood on her head, walked on the wings, and supported herself by her teeth while in the air. As a climax to the entertainment, she made a spectacular jump from the airplane. Weakley County residents looked forward to the Merchants Trade Campaigns for many years.

Most business activity in Dresden is still centered around Court Square. One of the oldest is E. T. Reavis and Son Dry Goods, started by Elbert Thomas Reavis (1869–1967) whose wife was Ben Loyd (1870–1946). He clerked in a store as a young man and eventually bought the business. The firm was first known as Reavis and Mayo, then Reavis and Duke, and later Reavis and Loyd (his brother-in-law). Originally located in the building now occupied by Alexander and Chandler, it has been in its present location for over 50 years. Their son, Loyd Reavis, grandson Loyd Reavis, Jr., and great-grandson Thomas Loyd Reavis have continued the business which has been serving the community for over eighty years. Another business that dates from 1930 is Alexander and Chandler Drug Store. John Oscar Alexander opened the business with Roy Brasfield in a building bought from the widow of Duke C. Bowers. About 1946, Harry Chandler bought Roy Brasfield's interest and the business became Alexander and Chandler. Today, sons of these men, John O. Alexander, Jr., and Harry Tem Chandler, III, carry on the tradition of service to the community.

The early hotels were the Scott Hotel and Hampton House. Benjamin Bondurant, Robert Powell, and Benjamin Barham were the first hotel keepers. The New Century Hotel, built by J. P. Taylor in 1906, changed ownership and names many times. It became the Bowers Hotel and later the Steel Hotel. The Steel family operated the hotel for 54 years with father, E. D. Steel, and from 1935 with son, Charles P. Steel. Many notable people stayed in this hotel and many weddings were held there. Since 1979 it has been unoccupied.

The Bank of America did business in Dresden for about three years during the 1850s. In 1870 the Dresden Bank of Deposit was chartered. A branch of the Bank of Henry and a branch of

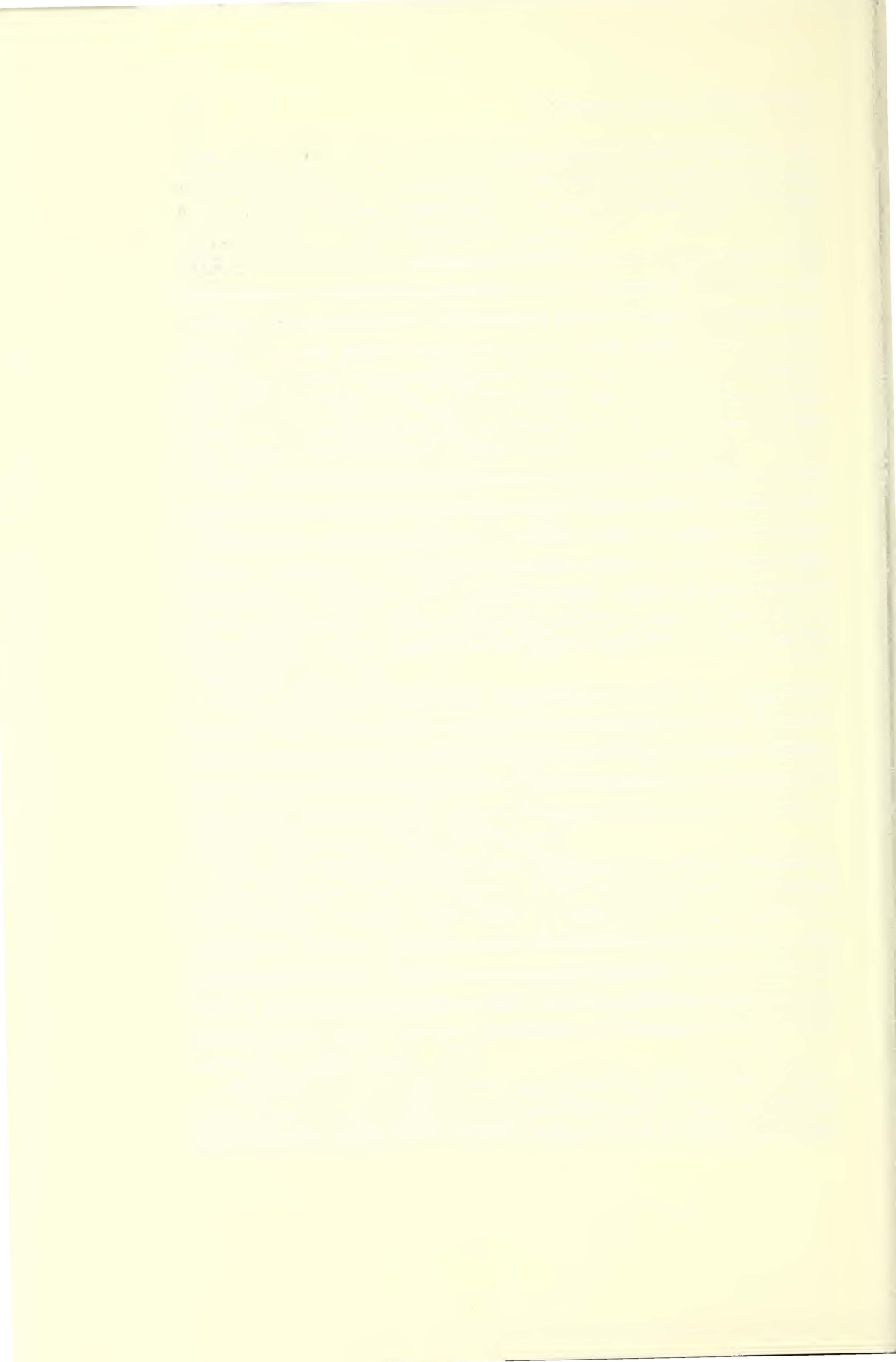
the Bank of Martin both opened in 1886. These were replaced by the Weakley County Bank which was organized by thirteen businessmen in 1887. It still serves the people of the area, as does the Peoples Bank which was established in 1919.

Newspapers. Jesse Leigh published the first newspaper in Dresden in 1838, *The Tennessee Patriot*. It was also the first in the county. Its third issue gave prices of products at Mills Point (now Hickman, Kentucky). Tobacco was 3 to 6 cents a pound, cotton 8 to 9 cents a pound, corn in bushel sacks, 45 to 50 cents, salt in barrels 75 cents, and molasses 50 cents a gallon. Carlton and Whitteley, Wash Talbert and A. W. King succeeded Mr. Leigh as publisher. Summers and Guinn published *The Dresden Spy* during the 1850s and Henry Massey published a paper before the Civil War. For a short time in 1867 W. F. Hampton published *The Gossiper*. T. H. Baker published the *Dresden Democrat* from 1876 to 1882. The *Enterprise* began publication in 1883 with R. Lewis as publisher. This excellent county newspaper will celebrate its one hundredth anniversary soon. The present managing editor is Jeff Washburn. It is owned by his father, James Washburn, of McKenzie.

The Professions. Dresden's first physicians were Drs. Jubilee Rogers, P. B. Bell, Joseph Irby, and Thomas Edwards. The 1880 census adds Dan C. Johnson, N. R. Winston, and Ed B. Lillie, and at the turn of the century R. M. Little, Basil S. Mayo, and T. F. Taylor. The dentist of this time was Dr. Shobe Smith. In recent years, physicians were Drs. Paul Wilson, M. R. Beyer, E. H. Welles; and dentists were R. C. and Richard Shannon, and Richard Hutcherson. Dr. Joe Anderson is Dresden's only optometrist.

Dresden's early lawyers were Samuel A. Warner, Henry Sample, and A. G. Bondurant. They were followed by William Fitzgerald, Henry A. Garrett, John A. Gardner, and John Grundy, son of Felix Grundy. Later, the Honorable Emerson Ethridge, M. D. Cardwell, and J. A. Rogers were at the Dresden bar for over forty years.

B. B. and N. N. Edwards, twin brothers, were practicing law in 1890, as were W. P. Caldwell, C. M. Ewing, H. H. Barr, and John R. Thomason. Others included George W. Winstead, B. F.



pleted and soon after a home for the pastor was constructed nearby. In 1959 a classroom addition was made. Expansion became necessary, and since 1973 the congregation has worshiped in a new auditorium that seats 700.

The Fuller Street Baptist Church was organized in 1930 by members of the Obion River District, with the Reverend W. M. Poole as pastor. A building was completed in 1933 and has been remodeled twice. Thirteen ministers have served this church, including the present pastor, the Reverend H. T. Connar.

The Pentecostal Church building was constructed in 1951. The first pastor was the Reverend Johnny Stubblefield. In 1974 the building was sold and a new house of worship, located on Highway 118, occupied in 1975. Its present pastor is the Reverend R. P. Faulkner.

Dresden churches have prospered and grown through the generous efforts of dedicated citizens. In April of 1923, however, two denominations regretted their magnanimity. An old man with one leg hobbled into the Baptist Church. In his hand he bore a paper on which was written an appeal for help to buy a new leg. The paper included his faith in the Baptist doctrine and his message was so earnest that the Baptist members dug deep into their pockets to help the old man's cause. The next day the Baptists discovered that, upon leaving their congregation, the old man had hobbled into the Methodist congregation with a statement of faith in Methodism and had collected another large contribution. Baptists and Methodists were both chagrined when they discovered that they had been duped.

Education. Jesse Leigh, publisher of *The Tennessee Patriot*, taught Dresden's first school in 1828 for a term of 74 days for a salary of \$35.00. The old lodge building was used for a private school after the Civil War. Dresden High School was incorporated February 24, 1870, and authorized to sell the property of the Dresden Male and Female Academy with funds derived to go to Dresden High School. Stock was sold in the school for \$25.00 a share. Mr. Hart opened a school about 1880, later run by Mrs. Evans. This was known as the Dresden Academy and was taken over by Mary Sue and Maud Mooney and Mr. Nix.

Mr. Nix became County Superintendent and during his term in 1897 a public school was established on east Main Street. Miss Minnie Childs was the principal with the assistance of her brother, Horace Childs. Mr. Barlow replaced her. Mr. Robert Taylor ran the school until it closed.

About 1904 a five-room brick building for a Training School was built on Poplar Street. This was run by Mr. Williams, Mr. Branock and his daughter Ethel, and John Bell Tansil. Vanderbilt graduates Charlie Cobb and Walter Nichols changed it to a preparatory school and built a boy's dormitory on the south part of the campus in 1906. They introduced football and basketball to the curriculum. In 1909, Mr. Davenport and Robert Debow were in charge.

At the same time the Training School was in operation, the public school on Main Street was reopened by Sam Featherstone, former County Superintendent. In 1910 the school disbanded. Renamed the Dresden Training School, it was reopened as a public school in 1910 with Robert Chemault, principal.

Dresden Special School District was organized in 1916. In 1917 Heber Finch was elected principal at a salary of \$100.00 per month. The enrollment was about 150 pupils and the term was eight and one-half months. Many dropped out before they graduated, and in 1916 Miss Gladys House offered a \$5.00 prize to the Dresden boy completing the high school course. Claud Jeter won the prize in 1918, the valedictorian of his class.

Additions to the school building were made in 1923. Bricks were burned on the school ground for the \$30,000 construction. Mr. Mede Glasgow was in charge of the kiln. The auditorium was used for a gymnasium until soon after 1930 when a new gym was built with WPA labor. In 1922 Mrs. Duke Bowers donated over 200 books to the Dresden High School library.

An elementary school was built in 1970 with Jerry Simmons as first principal. In 1971 a modern high school was built on the Highway 22 bypass and the following year the old high school building was demolished. In 1975 the junior high building was completed. Dresden schools had a combined enrollment of 1150

pupils in 1981—elementary 514, junior high 295, and high school 341.

Before 1920 there was a one-story school for black children located on Wilson Street, east of Court Square. This burned and a two-story, three-room building was constructed on the same site. It was named Turner-Ward School in honor of Steward Turner and Jackson Ward, prominent black citizens. This building was destroyed in a tornado and a concrete block and stucco structure replaced it. It was a two-teacher school with grades one through eight. High school students were bussed to the Weakley County Training School in Martin.

Many beautiful, spacious homes were built in Dresden during the 1800s. George Boyd, William Camp, C. W. Cottrell, Emerson Ethridge, Alfred Gardner, Thomas Little, Capt. John W. Moran, and S. P. Scott all left landmarks that are still in use today.

Notables. Probably Dresden's most famous citizen was Emerson Ethridge (1819–1902). He was a conservative Unionist candidate in the Tennessee gubernatorial election of 1867, one of the most exciting campaigns in Tennessee's history. Ethridge made a strong appeal for the black vote; however, William G. Brownlow, the incumbent, with the aid of special state police, often marched black men to the polls and even voted for some of them. The state and especially the Confederate veterans would have suffered far less had Ethridge won the governor's seat instead of "Parson" Brownlow.

Ethridge was representing Weakley County in the 36th Congress when the vote was taken to secede from the Union. His earnest speeches against secession were ill received, especially after the Fort Sumter battle. He also served in the 33rd and 34th Congresses, representing the Ninth District.

He served in the 26th General Assembly (1845–1846) and in the 36th (1869–1871) as senator. It was during this session that an act creating a new county to be named Ethridge out of Gibson, Carroll, Madison, Weakley, and Henderson Counties was introduced. The county seat was to be named Emerson. The act called for an election to be held for the people to decide if they



Home of Congressman Emerson Ethridge in Dresden. *Courtesy of The Dresden Enterprise*

wanted a new county, but the vote was never taken. Emerson Ethridge is buried at Mt. Vernon Cemetery near Sharon.

Gleason

Organized as a community in 1850, the town of Gleason (present population: 1335) was first called Oakwood because of an old oak tree that grew beside W. W. Gleason's general store. Development centered near the tracks of the Nashville and Northwestern Railroad, which was completed in 1860. Cotton and tobacco were the main agricultural products shipped by rail. Daily arrival of the two passenger trains caused local residents to gather for news and fellowship. Early depot agents were Tom Butler, Tom Cooper, George Lasater, W. V. Overall, and Will Phelps.

The first post office was established in 1851 in the corner of "Josh" Hamilton's general store. He was one of the first settlers and became the first postmaster. The second post office was housed in a hotel building until 1936. In 1939 a large modern post office

was built on Cedar Street. Earlier postmasters were John Allmon, George Brummitt, a Mr. Cox, and W. F. Newberry. Bob Wray is the present postmaster.

In 1871 Gleason was incorporated as a town. The 1903 charter of Gleason lists T. N. Drury as Mayor and W. H. Williams as city recorder. Other mayors have included W. W. Bandy, Doc Brummitt, Monroe Cochran, Lester McCaleb, Frank Margrave, Jr., Jesse Margrave, Bob Owen, and a Mr. Whitworth. The present mayor, Charlie Huggins, has served since 1963, the year the present city hall was built.

Commerce. By 1889, there were five stores, three churches, two tobacco houses, a blacksmith shop, two hotels, four saloons, and Oakwood Lodge #330 F and AM. Joseph Hamilton and Ephriam Mobley were Gleason's first merchants.

Electricity came to Gleason in 1916 when Clarence Horn opened the first light plant. The current was turned on one day a week and during certain hours at night. The opera house used electricity from privately installed dynamos. It seated four hundred persons and was also used for moving pictures, shown three nights weekly.

At one time, Gleason had two banks—The Bank of Gleason, organized in 1901, and The Farmers and Citizens Bank in 1909. The two banks merged in 1930. During the Depression, The Bank of Gleason did not default and kept its doors open, being one of only two in the county to do so.

The first veneering mill was operated by R. N. Nants from 1916 to 1954, making the first potato hampers to ship the sweet potato plants introduced by W. R. Hawks in 1913. Due to Mr. Hawks's efforts, sweet potatoes became a prosperous industry. At one time, ten thousand bushels were produced by growers. In 1915 the "Nancy Hall" sweet potato was named by Mr. Nants, grandfather of Martin pharmacist, Billy McAdoo. A newspaper interview with Mr. Nants quotes him as saying he was thinking of the family name, originally spelled Nance and of the "long haul" the potatoes were making to northern markets. He became the largest shipper of sweet potatoes in the south. Today, Gleason

son is known as "Tatertown" and since 1974 has had a yearly celebration to honor the agricultural product that brought it fame. *Churches.* Organized in 1865, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church was the first church in Gleason, with E. B. Johnson as pastor. The first church building burned but was rebuilt. The Methodist Church was formed in 1868, meeting in the homes of members, then in other church buildings. Later, the four organized churches each had one Sunday for their worship and people of all creeds met together for services. In 1875 the Methodist Church was officially organized and a new frame building was erected on land donated by A. M. Smith. The Baptist Church was organized with 33 members about 1887 with S. C. Hearn as the first pastor. Soon after this church was organized a building was erected. In 1947 a new auditorium was built and the original building was converted to Sunday School rooms. Other additions have been made since that time on the original site. The First Christian Church was built across the railroad from the Methodist Church in the late 1800s. In the 1920s, Harry Carroll deeded land for the present church building. The Church of Christ was formed and built on its present site in 1947.

Schools. Gleason's first public school opened in 1906 in the Masonic Male and Female Institute. It was a two-story brick building erected in 1904 to replace a private school building that had burned in 1902. Public school funds were limited to three months, so parents paid tuition for their children. By 1910 enrollment had reached 150 students. Two new rooms were added. Some of the early principals were Birch Atkins, Marvin Clark, O. E. Holmes, Jack Oliver, W. G. Robinson, and J. B. White. Miss Bess Clement organized the first home economics department in 1917, which was enlarged and remodeled in 1963. Football was started in 1929, the same year a new school building was constructed.

In the early 1930s the Parent Teachers Association converted the old school building into a gymnasium. By 1947 a new gymnasium and six classrooms had been added, by 1948 the Agriculture Building had been bricked, and by 1964 three new classrooms had been built and the home economics department expanded. In 1974 a portable building was being used for kin-

dergarten classes and another addition was added in 1976. A large two-classroom addition was built in 1977.

In 1969 both girls' and boys' basketball teams played in the state tournament. There were 12 teachers in the 1930s and 14 in 1950 with a total enrollment of 425. Enrollment has increased to 582 with 27 teachers in 1981.

Industry. Mr. Kelly Finch was the first to discover clay on his land in the 1920s. He was digging a square wooden curbed well to water his livestock when he hit clay and had difficulty digging further. Mr. Finch was an inquisitive man, so he drilled test holes to find the extent of the mineral on his farm. Satisfied that there was minable clay, he proceeded to open a mine with seven or eight teams of two mules to a pond scoop. About this time he started to Zanesville, Ohio, with a suitcase full of clay samples for testing. The train porter, a former employee of Spinks Clay Company, picked up his heavy suitcase and when finding the contents to be clay, suggested that Mr. Finch go to Cincinnati, home of the famous Rookwood Pottery. When he arrived in Cincinnati, his clay was tested and found to be superior in quality. The company suggested that he contact H. C. Spinks Clay Company of Newport, Kentucky, and Henry County, Tennessee, to commercially mine the product. This Mr. Finch did and in 1930 H. C. Spinks, father of Harriet Spinks Carothers (Mrs. R. B.), leased land from Mr. Finch. The Carothers family has continued to mine the Finch clay and has expanded the industry throughout the area.

The clay industry has now grown to four companies mining and shipping up to 600 tons of clay daily. Kentucky-Tennessee Clay Company, Spinks Clay Company, Old Hickory Clay Company, and Cyprus Minerals (formerly United Clay Company) ship ball clay world wide, earning Gleason the title of "Ball Clay Mining Capital of the World."

Two other industries are directly associated with clay mining. Gleason Clay Products, Inc. makes about 120,000 bricks daily and Gleason Foundry Company, started in 1934, is the only plant in the nation that produces clay shredders.

Gleason's two other industries are Henry I. Siegel Sportswear (H.I.S.) and Q and S Electroplating.

Greenfield

"Old Hall" was a small community east of the railroad when the Illinois Central built their line through District 9 in 1873. In 1850, there had been only 103 families in the district, but that number had increased greatly by 1870. In 1873 the residents in the area moved closer to the tracks and a town was planned and surveyed; the main business street on the east side, Front Street, ran parallel with the tracks. The conductor of the first train suggested the name "Greenfield" for the new town because he was impressed with the large fields of green wheat in the vicinity.

Greenfield was established in 1873 on lands of Joseph H. Ward and Samuel Baker. In one year, 500 people moved into the town, swelling the population to 550. By the mid-1880s, it boasted five general stores, two dry-goods stores, six groceries, two drug stores, three saloons, one gristmill and sawmill combined, two steam cotton gins, two box factories, one hotel, one livery stable and several small industries. Gilbert Patterson built the first hotel in 1874. Front Street had grown from the first building where the Ward brothers had opened their business to two blocks of two-story brick buildings with nine merchants. The family names of early settlers were Baker, Bakers, Barton, Dewberry, Elam, Ezell, Hillis, McAdams, Mosely, Priestley, and Ward.

The first dwellings were built in 1874 by John W. and James M. Ward. The post office was established the same year with Henry C. Pulman as first postmaster. Kenneth Stafford has been postmaster since 1971. There have been 24 postmasters at Greenfield.

Commerce. Early businesses and the dates they started were: Greenfield Undertaking Company, 1865; Ray and Grooms (mule merchants), 1877; Dudley Sheet Metal Shop, prior to 1884; J. H. Ward and Co. (flour mill), 1890; Gardner's Grocery, 1875; and Greenfield Hotel, 1891. Keel-Drury Lumber Co., 1898, Sam Baker, Carl Swearingen and S. B. Patterson, fruits and vegeta-

bles, 1917–1926, and Paul C. Moore Broom and Mop Co., were other businesses.

By 1878 Greenfield had telephones, installed by the Cumberland Telephone Company. According to Dixie Eldridge Prins in her book, *The Life and Times of Greenfield*:

The first office was in the north block of the business district over what was then Baker's Barber Shop. It was called the "old pea vine system." In 1915, the office moved upstairs over what is now the Greenfield Drug Company and stayed in this location until 1953. Southern Bell Telephone Company bought the Cumberland Bell system and took over the operation in 1918. Mrs. Laverne Parrish Nowlin was the first telephone operator. Managers have been Bob Cooper, Will Campbell, Walter Grooms, Neal Freeman, Vance Killebrew, Mr. Metz, Tom Berry, Carl Sims, Hugh Cordle, Richard Maxwell, Bertha Lowrance, and Marjorie Canada. In 1953, the company changed to the dial system and at that time an office was built adjoining the City Hall. There is no office now, only the Plant Department. Bills are collected at the Greenfield Banking Company.

In 1885 Christopher Tully built and operated the Tennessee Box and Basket Factory for N. B. Hall Company, making fruit and vegetable boxes and baskets. This plant employed 40 people. A larger plant, finished in 1887, was the Greenfield Box and Basket Factory, employing 60 people. Henry C. Ward operated this factory for the A. A. Wells Company. Logs of gum and elm from the nearby Obion River bottoms furnished raw materials for these operations. These plants were sold in 1914 to L. C. Brasfield, Roger Brasfield, Jim Coats and Herman Coats, who continued the manufacture of fruit and vegetable boxes. In 1918 L. C. Brasfield became the sole owner and manufacturing stopped, the firm going into the brokerage business, dealing with all types of fruit and vegetable packages. Mr. Brasfield continued as head of the company until his death in 1949. Since that time the business has been owned and operated by his grandson, Bill Maiden.

J. N. Ray and Z. W. Grooms, who were first cousins, were in business together for 50 years. Forming a partnership in 1877, they started business in an old frame barn. A new brick barn was



The veneer mill of the Ward-Kent Company at Greenfield in 1894. The box plant across the road can just be seen to the left of the mill. *Courtesy of Charles Heavrin*

built on the same site in 1910 after the original building was torn down. After the brick barn burned in 1923, another was constructed in its place. Their company was named Ray and Grooms and their building was known as the "Mule Barn." Their mules were bought in St. Louis, Missouri, Marion, Illinois, and Mayfield and Murray, Kentucky, where they were able to obtain superior animals. In the spring when the planting season started, people came from miles around to purchase mules, some buying four or five. The partners provided many types of the animal. Some were very small, suitable for working in mines; some were large, adaptable for plantation planting. A good mule sold for \$150 to \$200. An extra good mule could bring up to \$500.

Z. W. Grooms moved to Dresden when he was elected trustee of the county, but he continued in the business, moving back to Greenfield on completion of his term. His son, Deon Z. Grooms, was a member of the General Assembly for ten years, serving as

senator for six years and representative for four (1939–1949). He was a Weakley County magistrate for 34 years. Upon the death of Z. W. Grooms in 1927, J. N. Ray continued the business until his death in 1933.

Professionals. The first physicians in Greenfield were Dr. E. J. Shannon, who came to Weakley County around 1847, and Dr. J. J. Edwards. Dr. D. Warren Scates started practicing medicine in 1879 after his education at the University of Nashville and Jefferson College in Philadelphia. A year earlier Dr. Henry F. Hudson established his practice which lasted for 46 years. Dr. John Fowlkes arrived soon after 1893 and was active for 40 years. Other doctors who have tended the physical health needs of Greenfield citizens include Robert W. Brandon, Vernon Fagan, Edward T. Frank, Robert Garrett, Glen Johnson, Basil S. Mayor, William F. Mitchell, J. H. Padfield, I. F. Porter, Nathan F. Porter, J. D. Shannon, George C. Thomas.

Dentists of Greenfield have been Dr. N. M. Barnette, Dr. R. D. Bishop, Dr. Oscar Brasfield, and Dr. W. T. Smith. Optometrists have been Dr. C. O. Galloway, Dr. Grover C. Jewell, and Dr. Billy Pitts.

Lawyers living in Greenfield have been Judge Robert A. Elkins and Seldon Longley Maiden. Lawyer Phil Dair Harris was also postmaster at Greenfield, mayor for six consecutive terms, state senator for two terms, and was appointed an attorney in the office of the chief counsel, Internal Revenue Service, United States Treasury Department, Washington, D. C., where he remained for 26 years. Robert E. L. Gallimore and Russell O. Haskins, both deceased, practiced law for shorter periods of time in Greenfield. Mr. Haskins died aboard ship of pneumonia while returning to the United States after 27 months of military service in England during World War II. Phil Barton Harris, Weakley County's circuit court judge, began the practice of law in 1942. He was county attorney for Weakley County from 1957 to 1959 and city attorney for Greenfield since 1948. He served in the General Assembly for two terms, 1953 and 1955, and in 1966 was elected circuit judge of the 14th Tennessee Judicial Circuit.

Churches. The first church organized in Greenfield was the Pres-

byterian Church. In 1837 a group of people raised a small log building which was used for a church and school. In 1870 it merged with the Cumberland Presbyterian in the Hopewell Presbytery. Two early ministers were the Reverend Joe McLeskey and the Reverend William M. Zarecor. In 1906 there was a division in the church over doctrine. Part of the congregation joined the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. It is now the United Presbyterian Church. The Primitive Baptist Church was organized in 1833 at Spring Creek, three miles north of Greenfield and moved into town in 1875. The Church of Christ organized in 1879, the Baptist in 1885, and the Methodist in 1887. The United Pentecostal Church had its beginning in 1950. The African Methodist Episcopal Church was established in 1897, St. Luke's Baptist Church in 1884, the Johnson Tabernacle Christian Methodist Episcopal Church (formerly called Edmond's Chapel CME Church) in the late 1800s, and the Walnut Street Church of Christ in 1950.

Schools. The first school was held in the log church building erected by the Presbyterians. Parents of children attending paid the teacher and each family had to donate wood for the fireplace. A larger frame building was erected in 1879 near the church, but it was later destroyed by fire.

In 1881 the state chartered an academy to be built in Greenfield. At this time the length of a school term was 74 days and a teacher's salary was \$35.00 a month. By 1890 a two-story brick building was constructed south of the original academy and called Greenfield Normal College, instructing students from first grade through college. In 1925 Greenfield Normal College became a city school (Greenfield Grammar School) with first through ninth grades.

In 1908 Greenfield Training School was organized. This was a private school maintained by tuition. A two-story brick building was constructed, equipped with electric lights and running water. This building burned in 1915 and another building was erected on the same site. It was sold to the City of Greenfield in 1925 and was converted to Greenfield High School, free for all students. A special school district was formed and operated until

1949 when the county took control. The present high school building was built by the county for about \$180,000. A large gymnasium was built in 1963–1964 near the high school for \$200,000. In 1958 an agriculture building was completed.

The first black school in the vicinity was built by Ellis Allen around 1900 on his farm in the Brocks Chapel Community. Students walked from the Greenfield area, a distance of three or four miles, to attend school. Professor Mac Dobbs, from Jackson, was the teacher.

The first black school in Greenfield was a two-story frame building located on East Main Street. This building burned in 1938 and was rebuilt in the same location. Some of the early teachers were a Mr. Anderson, Professors A. W. Carter, O. C. Cole, Mac Dobbs, Bertha Smith, Jim Vincent, and Avery Woodson. Later teachers were Frankie Jefferies Bond, Annie B. Coleman, Tommy Diggs, Bobbie Pettis, Joseph Pettis, and Freneze Royster. The school was closed in 1966 due to integration and Mrs. Coleman transferred to Greenfield Elementary School.

Industry. Greenfield became the center of produce shipment as early as 1893. The Illinois Central established a fast express service to get strawberries to Chicago markets. Cantaloupes, asparagus, tomatoes, onions, blackberries, wax beans, okra, sweet peppers, field peas, and eggplant were also shipped. During the peak season, 20 carloads of strawberries and 10 carloads of beans were shipped a week. Hickory nuts were also shipped from 1900 to 1910. Thomas Akin started in the produce business on Front Street in 1937, merging with Porter Brothers in 1960. The firm is now known as Akin and Porter and is one of the largest businesses in the city.

Today, there are four industries in Greenfield: Greenfield Manufacturing Company (coats), Greenfield Products Company (automobile windows), Green Apparel, Inc. (pajamas), and Tran-Spectra, Inc. (electronic capacitors).

Government. Greenfield was first incorporated on November 9, 1880, and again in 1905. An official government began in the city in April of that year with a legislative charter calling for a

major and a board of aldermen (eight men). The mayors of Greenfield were:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| R. B. Brasfield (1905–1913) | Richard Jobe (1947–1948) |
| J. N. Ray (1907–1916) | Thomas Akin (1949–1950) |
| W. E. McAdams (1917, resigned) | N. A. Johnston (1951–1952) |
| W. M. Orr (1917, resigned) | Conyer Rawls (1953–1954) |
| John West (1917–1918) | Joseph A. Barton (1955–1956) |
| Clyde Ezell (1919–1922) | Roy Overton (1957–1960) |
| P. D. Harris (1923–1938, resigned) | J. Samuel Williams (1961– 1965) |
| Al Stout (1938–39) | Jack Huggins (1965–1971) |
| W. Harry Whitis (1939–1944) | Johnny Tharp, Sr. (1971– present) |
| C. B. Foust (1945–1946) | |

Entertainment. Before the days of television, Greenfield citizens were entertained by traveling tent shows, Chautauquas, and Mr. W. T. Aydelott's moving pictures. Starting about 1904, he showed his moving pictures for a few years in school houses. He would turn the projector by hand and speak the dialogue for the actors on the screen. At that time many adults and children could not read and many older people could not see the printed words on the screen. In the front of the tent, Mr. Aydelott would spread a tarpaulin on the ground for the children. Many would be asleep when the movie was finished. His largest crowd was at Hornersville, Missouri, in 1912, showing the story of the sinking of the Titanic. The admission prices were 15 and 25 cents.

His territory was gradually expanded to include parts of Kentucky, Missouri, and Arkansas, as well as Tennessee. He bought a tent and at first used wagons and teams to transport the equipment. In 1917 he used a tractor to pull a large wagon, later replacing the tractor with two Smith Farm-a-Trucks, and, in 1918, bought one of the first Model T Ford Trucks. He continued to travel until his death in 1929. His widow, Martha Hunter Aydelott, lived 25 years after his death.

Joe F. Pitts, Sr., of Sharon was the featured singer in Aydelott's shows from 1907 until the closing of the 1921 season. At that time, he formed the Pitts Brothers and Mullins Shows, fea-

turing movies, vaudeville, and illustrated songs. Their equipment had a value of \$10,000.

Mrs. Prins' *Life and Times of Greenfield* tells of the old Opera House:

Started by John and Tom Coats in 1905, and completed in 1906, the Greenfield Opera House was one of the few in this part of the country. Shows coming out of Cairo, Illinois, would play in Fulton, Kentucky, and Greenfield on the way to Jackson, Tennessee. The shows would stay three days in Greenfield, presenting a different play each night, and the performers would stay at the Old Commercial Hotel, operated by Mrs. McCorkle. The plays drew local crowds as well as large audiences from neighboring towns. In these early days, the Opera House had a balcony all around it, and it was from this balcony that the "barker" with a megaphone would advertise the shows. The Opera House had a full orchestra pit, and would seat about 500 people. Formal, or "Sunday dress" was the rule.

The Opera House boasted the first electrically operated piano in this area. Arthur Keel painted the front curtain and back-drop, which were later moved to the old Training School. The schools also used the Opera House facilities to stage school plays.

A restaurant, serving reputedly fine food, opened on the lower floor of the Opera House, in the section now occupied by Blands Grocery, and patrons of the shows used it extensively.

Before 1900 a newspaper was published in Greenfield. It became known as the *Greenfield Times* and ceased operation in 1908. From 1915 to 1917, Harry Davidson and Tom Cannon published a paper, installing the first linotype. David Crockett of Troy, Tennessee, bought the paper in 1918 and changed its name to *Greenfield Gazette*. It has had several owners, Paul Dycus being the latest.

Martin

Martin was established in 1873, on land belonging to the heirs of William Martin. It is located at the intersection of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad and the Illinois Central-Gulf Railroad. The Mississippi Central (now the IC-G) was persuaded to reroute the proposed railroad through the 2500-acre estate of



For over half a century W. H. Hoffman and Son Grocery and Hardware Store operated on Broadway Street in Martin. Hardware and farm equipment were added soon after the business opened. Two horse-drawn hacks were used to deliver groceries. In season, oysters were shipped in barrels from New Orleans. *Courtesy of Mrs. Wade Freeman*

the Martin heirs by George W. Martin. Originally the line was planned through the growing town of Gardner. The railroad was given an extensive right-of-way through the new town to change their plans.

The small settlement was first called Green Briar Glade but was changed to Frost in honor of a railroad official. As the community began to develop, the Martin brothers changed the name in honor of their their father, Captain William Martin, who had died in 1859.

Thomas I. Little, civil engineer, surveyed and platted the town in 1876. The population was then 500 inhabitants. The town was laid out on both sides of the railroad tracks because George W. Martin owned land on the east side and his brothers, Marshall and William, owned land on the west side. The Martin brothers

erected a sawmill about 300 yards southwest of the proposed rail junction to meet the needs of building activity that soon developed. This did not supply the needs for finished lumber, however. The first homes were built from lumber hauled in wagons from Paducah or Hickman, Kentucky, until a planing mill was erected. Edwin R. Jeffress and his son, Jesse, built many of the first homes including the Marshall Martin home on Ryan Avenue, now occupied by the Odell Jones family. The first business area to develop was east of the railroad, on Broadway and Main. It was not until the north-south Mississippi Central Railroad was completed that Lindell Street became a business district. The Martin Bank, fire station, Bruce Hotel, Frazier Blacksmith Shop, W. H. Hoffman and Son (grocery and hardware), a tobacco barn, and potato house were on the east side. Mrs. Draughn built a frame house where the Methodist parsonage now stands and started a boarding house. George W. Martin built the first hotel, the Martin House. T. A. Blake, A. M. Clemons, and Marshall Martin started dry goods stores. Smith and Brooks, and Dr. T. H. Bailey opened grocery stores.

Martin was incorporated in 1874 and a city government was formed with George W. Martin, H. C. Draughn, and A. M. Clemons as commissioners. John L. Smith was appointed mayor, and in the first election in 1875 B. A. Crawford became the first elected mayor. J. A. Parish was marshal and Marshall Martin was city treasurer.

Early mayors were Ruffan Aycock, J. P. Beach, L. A. Blake, George Bowden, John L. Brooks, J. D. Jones, James E. Kennedy and J. M. Ridgeway. After 1900 mayors were: A. B. Adams, W. B. Blakemore, George M. Brooks, H. C. Brundige, Max Burchard, Tom Copeland, L. A. Elliott, Milburn Gardner, Walter Harper, George Hurt, L. G. McMillian, Douglas Murphy, J. T. Perkins, Frank Smith, Jack Vincent and C. E. Weldon.

Early Commerce. In 1873 each railroad company built a freight depot and telegraph office. A flour mill was started in 1883 by the Martin brothers. Shortly before this, the Martin Roller-mills Company with F. M. Kennedy, president, started operations. The



Ivandale was built in 1894 on McCombs Street in Martin by Dr. Charles M. Sebastian. The house is on the National Register of Historic Places and is currently owned by Tom Dodd. *Courtesy of Ms. Cate Hamilton*

Martin Planing Mill Company, Dr. W. T. Lawler, president, erected their mill in 1884.

Sixteen stores were housed in brick buildings and many one-room frame store buildings were occupied on Lindell Street as well as on Main Street. Some of the businesses on Lindell Street in the early 1900s were: Parker and Son Hardware; William T. Murphy Livery Stable; D. C. Martin Grocery; Tom Whitsley's Saloon; Mrs. Bray's Restaurant; Steve Farmer's Saloon; Bales Dry Goods; Bowden and Bloodworth; Dr. Trent's Drugstore; J. L. Brooks and Sons Produce Store which bought hides, pelts, and scrap iron as well as selling poultry; Wes Waterfield Blacksmith Shop. Roy Murrell and George Clements had a marble yard in back of the "Ryan block." Other businesses were: B. E. Dodd and Sons which started on Broadway and moved to Lindell; Kennedy Flour Mill, later Stafford Milling Company; the Martin Overall and Glove Factory; Edwards Grocery; Ryan Hampton

Tobacco Company; J. B. Cashion, Jewelry and Watch Repair; Chambers and Sons Grocery; Fitts and Sons; East Side Meat Market, W. E. Travis owner; and Duke and Priestley, feed, seed, wagons, and harnesses. Two wagon and carriage shops, a livery, feed, and sale stable owned by W. B. Blakemore and a blacksmith were kept busy by the activity of the growing town.

By 1890 the population was over 2000. There were eight dry goods houses, ten groceries, three drug stores, two hardware and furniture stores, one book store, two brickyards, two tailor shops, five saloons, and several boarding houses.

The Professions. As the town began to develop, many professional people moved into Martin from surrounding communities. Dr. George W. Dibrell, Martin's first physician, came from Mt. Pelia. He was soon joined by 24-year-old Dr. C. M. Sebastian.

Four years after the incorporation of Martin its citizens suffered an epidemic of yellow fever that took the lives of 52 people. Four hundred cases were reported over a three-month period. Dr. C. M. Sebastian and Andrew Shepherd became heroes of the town through their long hours of service to the stricken community. Dr. Sebastian met the needs of the sick, working alone for many weeks until Dr. D. M. Pierce came from Union City to give him aid. Dr. Dibrell, who was older and not well, soon left the town. He had lost members of his family and buried them near where the American Legion building now stands. Andrew Shepherd maintained the railroad tracks, switches and mail service alone for over a month because all of the railroad crew had fled the city. Many citizens left Martin during this period.

Dr. Vincent Biggs, grandfather of Malcolm Douglas (Doug) Biggs, Jr., moved to Martin before 1880 from Palmersville and practiced medicine until he retired in 1935. Dr. W. T. Lawler, son of Weakley County pioneer Martin Lawler, began his practice in 1880 and continued until his death in 1910. Dr. D. W. Scates was another early physician. Moving from Greenfield about 1880, he served the medical needs of the community for 32 years. Dr. H. V. Hannings began his medical practice in 1908 and was active in his profession for 49 years. Dr. R. M. Little, Vanderbilt



Built in 1880 on Mechanic (now University) Street by Dr. W. T. Lawler and presently owned by Mr. and Mrs. Cleo Dawson, this home has recently been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. *Photo by author*

graduate, moved to Martin in 1912 and practiced until his death in 1932.

Dr. H. G. Edmonson started his medical practice in 1920. At that time, there were 11 doctors in the city. He practiced for 56 years, a record that has never been broken. Dr. R. W. Brandon moved to Martin in 1925; Dr. Madison H. Buckley in 1931; Dr. John M. Lawler in 1936; and Dr. G. S. Plog in 1946. Dr. Tazewell

Wingo was another early doctor who practiced medicine in Martin for many years.

Later doctors to practice medicine in Martin include Hobart H. Beale, Robert W. Brandon, Jr., Kenneth W. Carr, William L. Duncan, Michael W. Hinds, John D. Howard, Susan Johnson, Robert Patrick, James W. Shore, David Smith, O. K. Smith, K. R. Somashekar, Enos Thurmond, Jr., Robert Trevathan, and Jose A. Veciana.

Dentists of Martin have included Robert E. Clendenin and L. E. Taylor, who came to Martin in 1902. Others have been C. E. Baker, T. R. Clements, John Fairless, Ronald E. Foley, Thomas W. Gallien, Warner Miller, Robert L. Moore, and Sanford Truitt.

The first black doctor in Martin was Dr. West. Doctors who followed were Dr. Montague Lay, Dr. Perry, Dr. Pigott, Dr. Richards, and Dr. Simpson (first names of others unavailable).

Newspapers. Martin's first newspaper was the *Martin Exchange* published from 1879 to 1881 by R. M. Sanders. *The Baptist Gleaner* was published in 1881, followed by *The Martin Star* from 1881 to 1884. *The Martin Mail* was established in 1885 by J. B. Gilbert. Elder C. F. Cayce started publishing *The Primitive Baptist* in 1886, which later moved to Nashville. In the late 1920s *The Martin Mail* became *The Weakley County Press*. It is now in its 95th year of publication with a circulation of almost 5000. *The County Times* was published weekly by Harold Watson for about two years in the mid-1930s, and sold to *The Weakley County Press*. WCMT-AM radio station, licensed and owned by J. T. Sudberry, went on the air in 1957. He obtained an FM license in 1968. For 20 years "Duke" Drumm was general manager and sales director. Harold Brundige and Tony Youngblood became co-owners in 1980. Don Goodlow became general manager in 1981, when he bought Mr. Youngblood's interest in the station.

Banking. Before 1886, citizens were forced to make trips to Trenton to utilize a branch of the Bank of Tennessee. George M. Martin and Thomas H. Farmer urged the bank to move to Martin. It was the first bank in Weakley County and its first president was George W. Martin. It was renamed The Bank of Martin which



This ice house, with 14-inch solid walls, was built by Thomas Dudley Martin behind his home on Poplar Street. Ice was cut in the North and shipped by train in the winter. Packed in sawdust, it kept during the summer for the comfort of the family and was shared with those suffering from fever. The property is now owned by Warner Pace. Dr. C. M. Sebastian built a similar ice house for use with his patients. *Photo by Wilbur Vaughan*

eventually became The Martin Bank and its first cashier was Thomas H. Farmer. Later Mr. Farmer was promoted to president and served for seven years. George E. Bowden was also an early president. Hal J. Ramer came to Martin in 1904 as assistant cashier. He served the bank for 65 years and held many responsible positions, including chairman of the board. Charles M. Jones came to the bank in 1957 as cashier and through the years served as vice-president and president. He retired as president in 1975 and was succeeded by Thomas H. Farmer, III, grandson of the first cashier. Horace Stanford was elected president of the bank

and Jimmy Harrison was elected senior vice president and a member of the board of directors in August of 1982.

The City State Bank was chartered in 1890 as The First National Bank of Martin. The first president was John L. Smith. The name was changed to City National Bank about 1913, and to City State Bank in 1920. Until 1968 it was located on Lindell Street, when it constructed a new building on University Street. B. H. Baker is president and Dillard Brooks, vice president.

The First Federal and Loan Association was started in 1960, with Joe Barton as managing officer and Paul Clark as first president. Tom Copeland is present president and managing officer. *Telephones.* Telephones came to Martin in 1886. In 1899, the first long distance line was established. In 1900, the Weakley County Telephone Company was organized. It sold the property to Southern Continental Telephone Company which in turn sold to General Telephone Company, the present owners. The system was converted to the use of dial telephones in 1930. Since 1960 General Telephone has owned all systems in the county except Gleason and Greenfield, which are owned by Bell Telephone Company.

Modern Commerce. Businesses that will be remembered in the 1920-1930 period and beyond are: Wood and Priestley Farm Implement Business; Morris and Roberts; Midwest Ice Cream Factory; John Vowell's Saw Mill, which later became Vowell and Sons Lumber Company; the American Cigar Company; General Cigar Company and C. M. Cunningham's Tennessee Cigar Company whose employees hand-rolled cigars; Martin Hardware and Furniture Company, started by Tom Ryan, Cletus Ellis, and a Mr. Frazier which eventually passed to Mr. Ryan's nephew, Beckom Ryan and wife, Georgia. They have owned the furniture business for 36 years, but have been connected with several businesses on Lindell Street for 61 years.

Another business that became known over a large region in the 1920s was the Chambers-Godfrey Company whose owners invented and patented a ham preservative. In 1911 A. N. Chambers, convinced that his anti-skipper compound had merit, persuaded G. P. Godfrey, local Illinois Central agent, to provide



Employees of the Tennessee Cigar Company of Martin hand-rolling cigars in 1933. *Courtesy of Ruth Harrison*

money to patent the formula. The two men began production as a partnership and operated in a small way until 1920. Shortly before 1920 F. L. Todd joined the company as sales manager. Business expanded greatly. Griffin Chambers, son of A. N. Chambers, sold his interest in the company in 1930 to Carl Bowden who had served as manager since 1922. Bowden and Todd operated the company until 1948 when it became a corporation. Fay Ward became president at this time, and Frank Todd, son of F. L. Todd, became general manager. In 1959 the company began treating and selling hams. The name slowly changed from Chambers-Godfrey Company to Mar-Tenn Hams. At Fay Ward's death in 1960 Frank Todd became president and remained such until the company was sold to Holiday Inn in 1972. Buring Food Group bought it in 1976, operating in the building 2.5 miles south of Martin on Highway 45 where the company had been located since 1961.

After World War II the business district began to expand into

other sections of town. Several businesses started at the west end of University Street. Willard Rooks, who has served as an alderman for the city for 30 years, opened a grocery, and five other businesses were soon located nearby. Another shopping center, started in 1960 at the north end of town, was named Weldon Plaza by Cliff Weldon, owner of much land in that vicinity.

Postmasters. A. M. Clemons was appointed the first postmaster in 1873, holding that office for twelve years. Following him were George C. Thomas, 1885; Neill B. Lovelace, 1889; W. B. Gibbs, 1893; George W. Farmer, 1897; John S. Hornsby, 1901; W. H. Wilson, 1908; Vincent A. Biggs, (acting) 1912; and Carl B. Bowden, 1913.

In 1922 Matthew D. Duke was appointed postmaster by President Warren Harding. He had previously been in the dry goods business for 25 years, starting his career in the store of Acres and House. A reporter for the *Dresden Enterprise* recalled on June 23, 1922:

When some of us boys needed a nickel to buy a milkshake from Jim Scarce, doing business alongside Acres and House, Matthew would tell us to get him a bucket of water from the big well that stood mid-way between the railroad and the west side. Sometimes, particularly on very hot days, to get a bucket of water from this seemingly exhaustless stream meant a wait of an hour, so great would be the demands for cold water by the merchants of Martin.

Matthew Duke owned his own dry goods business for more than 20 years before becoming postmaster.

Following Matthew Duke as postmaster were Malcolm D. Biggs, 1926; Paul H. Scates, 1934; James Howard Smith, 1935; Fred T. Vowell, 1948; James Howard Smith (acting), 1950; Thomas C. Tucker, 1950; James Howard Smith (acting), 1962; Ralph Nix Rogers, 1964; and Thomas L. Erwin from 1979. All of the postmasters before Mr. Erwin were appointed by the president of the United States under the political systems of appointments. Mr. Erwin's appointment was by the postmaster general under the merit system. This change was made in 1971 when

the Post Office, as a department of the Executive Branch, became the semi-independent U. S. Postal Service.

Health Care. By 1926 Martin citizens became interested in a hospital for the community. Shares of stock were sold to buy the McFerrin boys dormitory from the city and convert it for this need. Dr. Robert W. Brandon, Sr., came from Lafayette, Kentucky, to manage the hospital. Eventually, Dr. Brandon bought all shares and the hospital was privately owned. In 1948 Dr. R. W. Brandon, Jr., formed a partnership with his father. Two wings were added through the years. In 1972 Dr. Thomas Warren purchased the hospital and changed the name to Brandon Memorial Hospital. The facility closed in 1975.

Volunteer General Hospital, a 49-bed facility, was built in 1964 on the Mt. Pelia Road near the university. The building committee was composed of Harold Brundige, Charles Castellaw, George Dodd, Wade Freeman, Charles M. Jones, Paul Meek, Douglas Murphy, Wilbur Vaughan, and Fred Wade. Harold Brundige, Charles M. Jones, Wilbur Vaughan, and Fred Wade continued on the nine-member Board of Trustees with Milton Crowder, James Moore, Charles Scates, H. B. Smith, and Clint Wash added.

Paul Moore was employed as administrator. An addition of 28 private rooms was completed in 1970, and numerous services, including electrocardiography, nuclear medicine, a coronary care unit, and a pathology department, were added. Expansions were made in 1975 and 1978. In 1979 an emergency wing was added which included an out-patient physician's office, prayer room, diagnostic ultrasound room, and nuclear medicine room. Since 1977 Tommy Bryant has been administrator. There are 75 beds in the hospital with an active staff of 19 doctors. Volunteer General Hospital was sold on January 1, 1982, to Hospital Corporation of America, an international health care company based in Nashville. The transfer of ownership makes available additional human resources and financial management to Weakley County citizens. An expansion of facilities is underway at this time.

Churches. Many of Martin's first citizens, being God-fearing and

religious, soon started the organization of worship centers. The Methodists conducted a revival meeting in 1873 which eventually resulted in the formation of the Martin Methodist Episcopal Church South with 27 charter members. The first pastor was the Reverend John M. Spence. A one-room frame building was built in 1876 on land donated by George W. Martin. This building was sold to the Cumberland Presbyterians and moved east across the street. The present brick building with two spires was erected on the same site in 1896. A parsonage was built about the same time opposite the church on the site occupied by the first house built in Martin. Formerly Mrs. Draughn's boarding house, it was rolled two blocks south to the corner of Rebecca and McCombs Streets to make way for the new parsonage. An educational annex was started in 1922. In 1934 the two-story frame parsonage was replaced by a brick cottage.

The name of the church was changed to The First Methodist Church in 1939 when the Methodist Episcopal Church South, the Methodist Church, and the Methodist Protestant Church combined into one body: The Methodist Church. The name was changed again in 1968 to the First United Methodist Church when the 10 million Methodists in America united with the 750 million Evangelical United Brethren.

In 1952 Clarence and George Dodd purchased the Bruce Hotel, west of the annex, and gave it to the church to be remodeled into a Youth Center. Robert Harrison was architect for the building program and the Reverend James H. Elder was pastor at the time. This building has not only served the needs of the youth activities in the church, but is widely used by the community as a whole. The church has had 36 pastors and now has a membership of 808. The Reverend Al Doyle is the present minister.

The African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church was organized in the late 1860s after the Civil War. A later building was located on Mays Street and was active until 1919. The Reverend J. A. Allen was the last minister. A member who worshipped in this church is Mrs. Sally Adkins who is now 101 years old.

In 1867, when Martin was called Frost, the Oak Grove Mis-

sionary Baptist Church was organized. It was the first black Baptist Church in Weakley County. The first pastor was Brother Thomas Jones. The congregation worshipped in a one-room frame building on north Olive Street until 1882, when a new frame church was built on K Street. Brother S. K. Coleman was pastor. It was named Oak Grove because of the oak trees surrounding it. The present brick structure was built in 1921. The pastor is now George M. Howard and the membership totals about 200.

In 1874 the Martin Church of Christ was organized. William Fall surveyed the area and arranged a meeting at which J. H. Roulhac of Union City preached. Then he held meetings for the congregation for several years along with the regular Lord's Day worship conducted by Brother William Fall. In 1882 a brick building was constructed on the corner of Oxford and Olive Streets. A. B. Lipscomb and N. B. Hardeman number among the many well-known evangelists who have ministered to the Martin congregation. The present minister is John Forgy and the membership is 325.

The First Baptist Church was organized in the Martin Academy building in 1876 with 13 charter members. The first pastor was J. B. Robertson. This group continued to worship in the school until 1881 when a frame building was erected. In 1909 the present building was constructed. The church has expanded through four building programs since 1905. The educational building was completed in 1957 and a pastorium was constructed in 1950. The auditorium was renovated in 1970 and extensive remodeling done in other areas. The church has had 26 pastors and now has a membership of 1200. The Reverend Thomas Atwood is the present minister.

McCabe United Methodist Church on K Street started in 1883 with the Reverend J. L. Massey as first pastor. A frame building was constructed on a lot purchased from George W. Martin for \$50.00. The present brick edifice was constructed in 1901 while the Reverend J. D. Meredith was pastor. The church has had 20 ministers. Dr. S. A. Gathings is the present pastor and the membership is 120.

In 1891 the Macedonia Primitive Baptist Church began conducting services in Martin. George W. Martin donated a lot on South McCombs Street and a brick church was erected. Elder S. F. Cayce was one of the early pastors. This church was the first constituted in the county, starting in 1824 in the home of John Terrell who lived in Dresden. The church later moved to Ralston and after 1832 was called Primitive Baptist. In 1922 the Ralston church merged with the one in Martin. The original church records and covenant are still kept intact. In 1963 a new church building was constructed on West Peach Street. The present pastor is Elder Houston W. Patrick and the membership is 55.

Miles Chapel CME Church, on Highway 45 and Jackson Street, was organized in 1893 by the Reverend D. D. Featherstone with two brothers, Brother Ben Haynes and his wife, Julia. The first building was constructed in 1894 while the Reverend Robinson was pastor. In 1897 the building was destroyed by fire and was rebuilt on the same site. The second building later burned as well. The present brick church was built in 1918. Membership today is 51 and the pastor is the Reverend Dan Adams.

The Martin Cumberland Presbyterian Church was organized in 1895 with 23 charter members, an outgrowth of a revival conducted by the Reverend Allen Faust and the Reverend T. F. Crawford. For three years the congregation met in the original Methodist Church frame building. This building was moved to a lot owned by the Cumberland Presbyterians and, after the new Methodist building was completed, they bought the frame building and used it until 1907. Until 1920 the church was inactive. At that time the Reverend P. F. Johnson worked to restore interest and in 1923 the church was reorganized and a new building constructed. In 1967 an educational building was dedicated. In 1980 a manse was bought adjoining the church. Hal Ramer was an influential member for over 60 years. The present pastor is Bruce Potter who recently replaced Kermit E. Travis. The church has about 100 members.

The Central Baptist Church was organized in 1922 by 100 members in the high school auditorium. The first pastor was the Reverend C. C. Truitt, a teacher at Hall-Moody Institute. The

first meetings were in the Wells tobacco barn, located across the street from the Methodist Church, until the basement of a new church was completed on University Street. This was used for three years until the sanctuary was built in 1926. The author's father, the Reverend Roger Lamar Clark, served this church from 1930 to 1933, during its debt-plagued years. Finally, the church lost the building and had to meet in the Capitol Theatre for some time. Later, they were able to regain the title to this property. Seventeen pastors have served the church. The present membership is 915, and the pastor is now the Reverend Thomas Pirtle.

The Old Fulton Road Church of Christ was started in a revival meeting held by Marshall Keeble in 1925. R. F. Nunnely was the first pastor. A church building was constructed on Palace Street in 1929. The congregation built a new church and moved to its present location in 1974. Present membership is 100.

Southside Baptist Church was organized in 1954 in the Capitol Theatre with 44 members. Its first pastor was the Reverend George Archer. Ground was broken for a new church building in 1955, and in 1981 the addition of a new sanctuary was made and extensive remodeling done. Seven ministers have served this congregation. Membership is now 660 and Jerry P. Powell is the present minister.

An Episcopal congregation was organized in 1957, called St. John's Episcopal Church. A new building on St. Charles Street was consecrated in 1959. The first full-time clergyman was the Reverend Cameron Hess. The Reverend Sid Sanders served as the first vicar. The present vicar is Larry Packard and the membership is 75.

St. Jude's Catholic Church held services for the first time in 1966. Two homes were purchased on the Union City highway, one being used as a church while the other became a Newman Center for university students. Father Patrick Joseph Lynch serves the church at the present time and ministers to about 106 church families and 334 college students.

The Church of God of Prophecy on Meek Street was orga-

nized in 1967 by Brother D. D. Creacy. Its first pastor was Brother Don Price. The present pastor is Mrs. O. R. Hagon.

The First Assembly of God was organized in 1970 by the Reverend Reba M. Roberts and her husband, R. R. Roberts. They bought and renovated the Taylor home on Main Street to serve the needs of the church, and later built an auditorium with additional classrooms and baptistry. The Reverend Windell Splawn is the present minister. A new sanctuary and educational facility were built in 1982 on the Mt. Pelia Road and Highway 45 Bypass.

The Evangelist Baptist Church was organized in September of 1982 and worships in the building formerly occupied by the First Assembly of God. Brother Larry Byassee is the pastor.

The Maranatha Baptist Church was organized in 1971 with 62 members. The congregation met in the Union Hall on Broadway Street until they moved into their new building on K Street in the same year. The first pastor was Brother Gary Hardin. In 1980 the name of the church was changed to Eastside Baptist. Brother Horry E. Dungan is the present pastor and there are 230 members.

The First Christian Church, Disciples, on St. Charles Street, was organized in 1972 with Dr. N. W. Robinson as pastor. They met in the church building owned by St. John's Episcopal Church. There were 47 charter members. The membership disbanded in 1981.

The Broadway Baptist Church began in 1973 with 23 members. For several years they met in a remodeled building on Broadway Street. Since 1976 they have worshipped in a new building on Haygood Road. The first pastor was Brother Gary Hardin and the present pastor is Brother Tom Doty. The membership is approximately 135.

Trinity Presbyterian Church was formally organized in 1976, culminating three year's effort by members meeting in different homes to establish a church. The first minister was Dr. Wave McFadden and the church was in a home on Lovelace Avenue. A modern church was built in 1980 on Moody and Hannings Lane. Dr. John Wilson is the present minister with 63 members.

The Progressive Missionary Baptist Church was started in

1974 with the Reverend W. R. Coleman serving as pastor. It occupies the building on Palace Street formerly owned by the Church of Christ. The present membership is 110.

Schools. The first school in Martin, the Martin Academy, was built on land donated by Captain William Martin's sons, Marshall and William, and was taught by Mrs. John Isaac Adair, G. A. Hayes, and O. V. Hays. It contained two rooms in 1881 and a separate music building. Another private school operated in a small brick building and the teacher was Miss Carrie Pope.

In 1900 the Martin Academy burned and the Martin District Public School, a two-story brick building, was erected in 1902. This was located where the Weakley County Municipal Electric System building now stands. As enrollment increased, another two-story brick building was constructed. This became the Martin City School in 1908. The Illinois Central Park, later renamed for Mayor Cliff Weldon's wife, Virginia, was the school's playground. It then included all land from Main Street to Park Avenue between the IC Railroad and Lindell Street. The school was changed from a district school to a city school in 1908, with Professor B. W. Bruce of Sharon as principal of the first nine-month high school.

By 1923 the enrollment had increased to 550 and the school had gradually grown from a six-month elementary school to a nine-month, twelve-grade school with home economics and an interscholastic athletic program.

In 1924 the City of Martin bought the McFerrin College property from the Methodist Conference for a high school. In 1926 a front wing to the administration building was completed. Professor E. P. Smith, who had been principal of the city school since 1912, was moved to the high school as teacher and superintendent. Miss Ruth Houston was principal of the high school with six teachers; Miss Delray Kennedy was principal of the elementary school with nine teachers.

Professor Smith, superintendent until 1932, was replaced by Spencer Taylor who served for ten years. During this time, the old McFerrin girls' dormitory, an apartment building for several



Martin City School started in 1902 with the building on the left. By 1908 the second building was constructed. They were used until 1950 and were torn down in 1953. *Courtesy of Martha Mires*

years, was torn down and a gymnasium constructed from salvaged and new materials.

Frank Taylor became superintendent in 1942, Roy Baker in 1943. In 1944 vocational agriculture was added and the old McFerrin gymnasium was turned into classrooms, office, and shop for that course of study. Robert Marshall served as superintendent from 1945 to 1947 and was followed by E. B. Eller. He served until 1954, when Don Wertz took his place. In 1956 L. S. Miles became principal. During his term extensive remodeling was done: four new classrooms, a cafeteria, a library, a typing room, teachers' lounge, and two restrooms were built.

Mac Buckley became principal in 1965. There were then 627 students with 23 teachers. Martin schools were integrated in 1966 which increased the enrollment. Consolidation of the Sharon and Martin High schools came in 1970, when Clifton Carroll was principal. The school was renamed Westview High School and



One of McFerrin's literary societies, the Franklin Club, in 1900. *Front row, from right to left:* J. W. Rankin, Bob Taylor, Amos Edwards, O. J. Hoffman, Osmond Cayce. *Back row:* Ben Higgs, Mr. McCormick, Mr. Townsley, Mr. Throgmorton, C. M. Martin, Bob Edwards, Jim Bullington. *Center:* Mr. Penn, J. W. Hendrix, A. N. Walker. *Courtesy of Mrs. Wade Freeman*

moved to a modern brick building on Stella Ruth Road in 1971. Since 1976 Robert Conley has been the principal. Enrollment is now 710 with 35 teachers.

McFerrin College was established in 1890 by the First Methodist Church. It was built on Poplar and College Streets on six acres of land donated by George W. Martin. A two-story brick building was erected to contain not only the college courses but primary, intermediate, and academy instruction as well. In 1901 the school status was changed from a college to a preparatory school. In 1908 two dormitories were built, one for boys and one for girls. A gymnasium was later added. Professor J. T. Williams was the first president. A wide range of subjects were offered—English, Latin, Greek, French, German, history, science, mathematics, philosophy, civil government, political economy, biblical

antiquities, voice, piano, violin, oratory, and declamation. Children of ministers of all denominations were given free tuition. McFerrin closed its doors in 1924.

Another school that was a great influence in the county was Bruce Business Institute, founded in 1948 by Miss Grace W. Bruce and operated until 1977. Typing, bookkeeping, accounting, shorthand, business law, economics, and other related subjects were taught to the hundreds of local students, including 400 veterans and many handicapped persons, during the years it operated.

During the early days of Martin, three black churches supplied education for black children. Later, a building on what is now K Street housed a school. In 1911 a two-story brick building was built on Highway 45 North where the Pizza Hut now stands. It was 50 by 30 feet in size and had three classrooms. Professor A. M. Bishop became principal of the school at that time with Mrs. Fannie Lawler and Miss Ella Grizzard as assistant teachers. In 1919 the school was expanded to 84 by 50 feet with an auditorium and ten additional classrooms. The school contained a grammar school, a two-year high school, and a library, and offered domestic science, domestic art, and manual training. The enrollment in 1923 was about 240. In 1943 the high school was extended to four years. It was during these years that Miss Frenze Rutherford (Mrs. James Royster), and Miss Frances Pigue (Mrs. Charlie Moore) came to Martin to teach. Principals of the school included Professors Roy Stewart, S. M. Stamp, and D. E. Henderson. An outstanding graduate of this school is Dr. J. W. Diggs who earned his Ph.D. in medical research. He is now with the National Institute of Health at Silver Springs, Maryland. His brothers, Tommy D. and Cornelius L. Diggs received Master's degrees and are now principals of schools in Detroit, Michigan, and Decatur, Illinois.

Of great concern to Professor Henderson was the safety of the students crossing heavily traveled Highway 45 when arriving and leaving the school. He was successful in getting a new school building which was constructed on North McCombs Street where John Walters brick kiln and yards had formerly stood. The build-



In 1939 Prof. R. T. Stewart and his wife, Mary E. Stewart, came to Martin to assume the responsibility of principal and English teacher of Weakley County Training School. It was through their efforts that the first senior high school for blacks was established in the county in 1944. *Courtesy of Frenze Royster*

ing was occupied in 1952 and was named Weakley County Training School.

Professor Henderson was succeeded by Professor A. P. Nunn who in turn was followed by Professor Harold Conner. Students were bussed from all of Weakley County to the high school department. In 1966 the Weakley County Training School was abolished as a result of integration and the building was converted to Martin Junior High School, with the addition of four classrooms and a cafeteria. Mr. Conner remained as principal until 1969 when he joined The University of Tennessee at Martin as Dean of Students. Mr. William Thomas Jones replaced him as principal.

Hall-Moody Institute began operation in 1900, under the leadership of Dr. I. N. Penick and the First Baptist Church, in a



Part of the student body of Weakley County Training School in 1944. It was demolished in 1974. The first graduates were Robbie Nunley and James Mathis. *Courtesy of Freneze Royster*

two-story brick building with a faculty of five teachers. The school was named in honor of Elder J. N. Hall and Dr. J. B. Moody, two outstanding Baptist ministers. From 1904 to 1914 Hall-Moody underwent a period of expansion. During this time, it conferred 47 Bachelor of Arts degrees and 93 Bachelor of Science degrees. The school reached an enrollment of 500 students, most of whom were training to be teachers. By 1918, all courses were fully accredited. The name of the school was changed to Hall-Moody Junior College.

In the 1920s the original brick building was enlarged twice, wings added for classrooms on each side, and the auditorium expanded. A small brick building was added north of the main building. The first dormitories were two-story frame buildings. In 1918 a brick dormitory for girls was constructed east of the administration building and a brick dormitory for boys was built in 1921. The lumber from the old boys' dormitory was used to build a dining hall.

The University. Recognizing the need for an institution of higher learning in the northwest Tennessee area, George C. Rowlett, W. W. Jones, John Hatler, and other interested citizens were instrumental in getting the governing bodies of Martin and Weakley County each to float bond issues of \$100,000. The funds were used to purchase the Hall-Moody plant, secure additional lands and to add new facilities.

Early in 1927 the General Assembly passed a bill which legalized the establishment of a junior college of agriculture, industrial arts, and home economics in Martin. This new school was made a part of The University of Tennessee. It opened for classes in the fall of that year with an enrollment of 120 students and a total faculty of 15. C. Porter Claxton was the first executive officer and remained until 1934 when Paul Meek replaced him.

The spirit of growth was slowed by the depression years, but Martin residents were determined to keep the college, even though there was an attempt in 1932 to separate it from the University at Knoxville.

Paul Meek came to the junior college as an expansion of the curriculum was approved by the Board of Trustees. Under his leadership, great progress was made in increasing its facilities, strengthening its faculty, increasing its enrollment, and building its reputation as an outstanding junior college. He counteracted the drop in enrollment during World War II by obtaining a naval training program that brought 500 Navy men to the campus at various times.

The fall of 1946 brought the return of the war veterans and enrollment rose to 650, necessitating a faculty of 46. The curriculum was again expanded, and the building program continually met the needs of the growing school.

By 1951 the State Legislature established The University of Tennessee at Martin (UTM) with authority to offer a four-year Bachelor of Science degree to students completing requirements in agriculture and home economics. All other courses were limited to two years.

Paul Meek's dream for the junior college had come true. During the 33 years he served (1934–1967), he bore the titles of ex-

ecutive officer, dean, vice president, and chancellor. Enrollment had passed 3000 with a faculty of 165 professors. Resident halls, classroom buildings, physical education buildings, a stadium, a heating plant, and a student center were constructed. Campus acreage was expanded and an agricultural experiment station was added. A library that bears his name was completed as he retired.

Dr. Archie R. Dykes replaced Dr. Meek as chancellor in 1967. During his tenure UTM grew rapidly. Expansion in academic programs included a four-year degree program in engineering technology, a Master of Science degree in home economics and a registered nurse certification program. The departments of agriculture, business administration, education, and liberal arts were elevated to schools. Enrollment was 4907 in 1971, and there were 245 faculty members.

Dr. Norman Campbell served as acting chancellor for three months in 1971 when Dr. Dykes resigned. Dr. Larry T. McGehee became the fourth administrator in the school's 44 years in December of 1971. A three-million-dollar education, home economics, nursing building and a five-million-dollar physical education convocation center were completed during his stay. Four new programs, made possible by the Ford Foundation's Venture Grant, were started. Enrollment rose to 5192 with 233 faculty members.

Dr. Charles E. Smith became Chancellor of The University of Tennessee at Martin in December of 1979. Under his leadership UTM continues as the educational, cultural, and recreational center of northwest Tennessee, providing instruction, public service, and research.

UT Martin's enrollment has increased steadily, from slightly more than 5000 students in 1978 to almost 5600 in 1981. The number of faculty has risen to 261, and UT Martin operates on an annual budget in excess of \$20 million. Private and annual giving has increased considerably. UTM raised \$2.8 million during UT's highly successful three-year Tennessee Tomorrow Campaign, which netted the university system more than \$57 million.



Administration Building of the University of Tennessee Junior College from 1927 until 1951. The building was originally part of Hall-Moody Junior College. It was destroyed by fire in 1970. *Photo from the 1938 Volunteer Junior Annual*

New academic initiatives and accomplishments highlighted the first two years of the Smith administration. UTM implemented the Pacesetter Honors Program for outstanding high school students and the University Scholars Program for gifted college students. A new Academic Speakers Program annually brings 20 distinguished and nationally-renowned academicians to the campus.

In 1981 UT Martin became the home of West Tennessee's Public Broadcasting Service-affiliate station, WLJT-TV, Channel 11, with the opening of studios and offices on campus. Later that year, the Tennessee General Assembly appropriated \$1.6 million for construction of the West Tennessee Agricultural Pavilion at UTM, a multipurpose facility which will be the site of

numerous agriculture-related activities and a permanent home for UTM's nationally-ranked Rodeo Team. The West Tennessee Museum/Archives became a reality with dedication ceremonies in May of 1982, creating a permanent home for West Tennessee history.

As Chancellor of UT Martin, Smith lived up to his reputation as an effective and energetic administrator. In April of 1980 he led a Tennessee delegation to Washington, D.C., to present the first volume of the papers of Andrew Jackson to President Jimmy Carter at a special White House ceremony. In May Smith received a Fulbright Fellowship and served for three months as a consultant and lecturer at the Federal University of Santa Catarina, Brazil. Later that year, in November, he approved a "sister university" agreement with Japan's Hirosaki University. In December, Smith successfully negotiated a \$450,000 educational contract with Japan's Nihon University to provide training for 200 Japanese students on the UTM campus with no use of state appropriated funds. Since that time, two students have become UTM's first international exchange scholars at Hirosaki, and Japan's Ministry of Education has endorsed a \$1.35 million extension of the UTM-Nihon educational agreement. In February of 1982 Smith served on a panel with state, national, and international leaders at the Governor's Forum on U.S.-Japan Opportunities in Nashville.

The UTM Chancellor further advanced UTM's reputation as president-elect of both the Gulf South (Athletic) Conference and the Tennessee College Association, composed of presidents of Tennessee's colleges and universities.

Accomplishments in intercollegiate athletics included the hiring of former Tennessee basketball coaching great Ray Mears as Director of Athletics; establishment of a 12-station Pacer Radio Network; a 500 percent increase in athletic gate receipts; and expansion of the Pacer Stadium Pressbox. An outstanding basketball coach, Floyd "Red" Burdette, was inducted into the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame in 1981. He coached from 1953 to 1971 and his teams won more games than any coach in the history of the University.



Administration Building of the University of Tennessee at Martin. Built in 1959, it is located a short distance east of the old Administration Building. *Photo by Wilbur Vaughan*

Sharon

Located eight miles southwest of Dresden, Sharon has a present population of 1134 people. Settlers were in the area surrounding Sharon as early as 1824. Land grants were given to Graves Fonville, John Jenkins, and Wesley Rogers. Nelson Underwood had a general store and post office. This was the Dedham neighborhood, named for Dedham, Massachusetts, Underwood's previous home. In 1850, the Brigaces, Jenkins, Nooners, Rogers, Solaces, and Withingdon families lived nearby. In the Fonville neighborhood lived the Brocks, Mitchells, Robards, Rogers, Thompsons, and Wagners. The Glass family, the Harkeys, the Hornbeaks, and Terrells lived near each other. The Crocketts, Ethridges, Ships, Tansils, Wades, and Waterfields were near each other. Other early families were the Bondurants,

Clemons, Dents, Moores, Nowlins, Overtons, Owens, Shannons, Terrys, Tillmons, and Winstons.

With the coming of the railroad in 1873, many of these families relocated to be near the new center of trade. Fonville and Owensville were names considered for the new town, but citizens chose the name Sharon because wild roses ("The Rose of Sharon") covered the area of the new railroad tracks. The conductor of the first train is said to have thought of the name. Some Sharon residents claim that the town was named for the conductor of the first train.

The town was incorporated in 1901. T. F. Shannon and F. P. Fonville were instrumental in getting this done. An early mayor was J. W. Ethridge who served in 1906. B. W. Bruce (1929–1949), Charles M. Edwards, Sr. (1949–1953), Robert Overton (1953–1955), Will Allen Ezell (1955–1959), Russell Jones (1959–1979) and George Broussard (1979–present) have been mayors for the past 53 years, B. W. Bruce and Russell Jones serving 40 years of that time.

Sharon's post office was established in 1873 in the corner of the Sharon Hardware Company building. It was moved in 1959 to a new building on the corner of Main and Highway 45 South. About 25 postmasters have seen service through the years, Charles W. Moore being the first. R. W. "Buck" Simmons held the longest tenure as postmaster, 31 years. James Hamlin is the present postmaster.

Some of the first doctors in Sharon were Robert and William Allen, Ben Bondurant, a Dr. Hall, Jesse Moore, E. J. Shannon, and H. J. Shannon. The first dentists were M. M. Barnett and a Dr. McCain. Later, in 1899, Dr. Oscar Harkey opened an office.

By the 1900s there was one hotel, two steam cotton gins, two general stores, one dry goods store, one drug store, three groceries, one machine shop, one gristmill, one sawmill and three churches. The population was about 300.

Churches. The first church established was the Methodist Church in 1878, under the leadership of the Reverend W. C. Sellars who was the first pastor. A frame house of worship completed the following year was the first church building in Sharon. There were 18 charter members, the most active probably being Captain Elisha



Confederate veterans of the Sharon area at a reunion in the early 1920s. *Front row:* John Parrish, Buck Chandler, Fannie Glass, Loucile Trout, George Bond, Robert Boyd, Joe Farmer. *Second row:* Jeff Marlar, Will Allen, B. T. Bondurant, G. M. Terry, John M. Glass, Dock Tidwell, Andy Betts, Jim Duke, John Wesley Patterson, Tom Stevens. *Third row:* John Nowlin, Tom Owen, John Nooner, Dan Stacey, W. G. Rudd, John Roberts, John Martin. *Back row:* C. H. Owens, Henry Underwood, Charlie Dugger, Wm. Henry Ezzell, Joe Cook, Dan Campbell, Gabe McCuller, Dan Cothran, W. E. Thomas, Marion Gaylord, W. J. (Buck) Roberts. *Courtesy of Col. James Corbitt*

T. Hollis, a Civil War veteran. The frame structure burned in 1886, and a one-room building of brick was raised on the same site. A new building was completed in 1912. The congregation has had 40 pastors. The present pastor is Charles Morris and the membership is something over 100.

The second church, the Cumberland Presbyterian, was organized in 1886. It was located where Burney Harkey's home now stands. The old church building was sold in 1925 and a new one built on U. S. Highway 45. The present minister is Joe Wescott and the membership is 114.

The Presbyterian Church United originated in 1903. A building was erected in 1910 on Highway 45 and is in use today. The Reverend Larry Kennon is the present pastor and membership is 18.

Sharon Church of Christ was organized in 1873. At first members of the church met in various public buildings, had tent meetings, and later met regularly in the large hall of the Bondurant home. In 1903 a lot on the north side of Main Street was given to the church and a building was constructed. The congregation worshiped there until 1977, when they moved to a new building on West Main Street. The present minister is Buddy Boreland.

The Sharon Baptist Church was organized in 1903 and a sanctuary was built in 1909. This building was torn down in 1972 and another one built of brick. A new parsonage in 1952, a Sunday School annex in 1959, a new sanctuary in 1966, and a Fellowship Hall in 1979 have increased the capacity for congregational activity. The present pastor is the Reverend Kermit T. Brann and the membership is 233.

The Pleasant View Baptist Church, the Reverend Garland W. White, pastor; the CME Methodist Church, the Reverend Samuel Gathings, pastor; and the Church of Christ are black churches on Chestnut Street and have been active for many years. The Methodist Church building was blown away in a storm in the 1960s and since school integration, the congregation has worshiped in the vacant school building previously used for black students.

Commerce. The first bank was established in 1902 and named the Bank of Sharon. The first president was B. S. Jones with W. C.

Tansil as cashier. R. S. Moore held the executive position for many years followed by Bob Short Roberts, who stayed with the bank for 50 years. J. R. Fisher followed Mr. Roberts. John Clark has been president since 1981. The Farmers Bank operated for several years in the mid-1920s, but was taken over by the Bank of Sharon about 1928.

The first telephone was installed in 1896. Electric lights were installed in 1915. The streets were graveled in 1927 and were paved in 1963.

The first business in Sharon faced the railroad and was run by George Terry. The main street was the Dresden-Trenton Road. Most of the north side of the town on to the west was owned by the Fonville family who had come to the area in the 1840s. An early business was Hollis and Parrish General Store which passed to the Harkey family and is now owned by the Lackys. The original building from the late 1890s is still being used. Robinson and Belew Feed Mill is another business with roots back into that era. Others were Moore Brothers General Store, Wyatt Overton Drug Store, Bailey Store, and Dr. Ben Bondurant's Drug Store. *The Sharon Tribune* was published by the Terry family for several years before 1915, with Mr. Biles as editor. *The Dresden Enterprise* bought it and has carried both names in its flag since that time.

Schools. A summer school east of Sharon was taught in 1877 by Lou Bruce. In 1878 a school was held in the Corinth Church. Mattie Carr and O. R. Beard were two of the students. Minerva Brinkley taught in a log house on her father's farm in 1879 in the Corinth Community. From 1879 to 1890 Evans school was in session one and one-half miles east of town. Later, Mrs. L. T. Evans taught on her father's farm in the Rockhill neighborhood, where the Country Club is now located. In 1892 Hickory Grove School was located west of Sharon, taught by Professor Goldsby and Mrs. Longacre.

The Sharon Training School was built in 1891, with Mr. Douglas as the first teacher. It was built on the site of the present elementary school. Later it was enlarged and became a 12-grade school and was used until a high school building was constructed in 1923. Before it was completed, the old elementary school burned. Classes

for the elementary students were held in churches and stores in town.

Both elementary and high school buildings were completed in 1924. High school students were required to pay tuition but grades one through eight attended free of charge. The high school building burned in 1968 and Sharon students attended school in Martin until a new consolidated school, Westview, was finished in 1970 between the two towns. In 1981 the town of Sharon voted on a referendum to raise taxes in order to erect a new high school building. In July of that year the Weakley County Commission passed a resolution authorizing the construction and funding of the school for a cost of not more than \$300,000.

Mildred Chandler spent 43 of her 44 years of teaching at the Sharon school. Other teachers with long tenure include Eddie Bondurant, Nannie Mae Brock, Mary Louise Hunt, Alberta Jones, Hassie Lawrence, Tansil Moore, Ruth Roberts, Mary Ellen Simpson, Edna Swearingen, Miss Bird Taylor, Faye Thompson, and Bess Underwood.

Mt. Vernon Methodist Church. One of the oldest churches in the Memphis Conference is near Sharon. This church was organized in 1823 by Reuben Edmonston, the first settler in Weakley County, in John Bradshaw's cabin. Bishop Asbury helped with the organization and indoctrination of the six members. At first they met in the Edmonston home but by 1844 were meeting in the Waterfield home. By 1850 brush arbor meetings were held at Mr. Vernon Camp Ground on land donated by Harvey and Wesley Waterfield for a church and cemetery. Shortly after 1851 a two-story frame building was constructed with the help of the Masons, who held their meetings on the top floor. It was torn down in 1955 and a modern brick building replaced the old one.

Dukedom

Located at the crossroads of State Highway 118 and the Kentucky-Tennessee State Line Road, Dukedom is one of the oldest communities in West Tennessee. It developed on a stage coach route from Dresden, 15 miles to the south, which ran into Graves County, Kentucky, and on to Mills Point (later Hickman, Kentucky), an im-



Store buildings in Dukedom in 1900. The small white building, left, is Dr. Jones's office. Next is B. A. Winston's store, J. T. Jackson's store, and the small building on the right is Dr. Tom Taylor's office. *Courtesy of Kindred Winston*

portant port on the Mississippi River. This route was originally an old Indian trail.

Dukedom was established in 1830 by Duke A. Beadles, its first merchant and postmaster. Its name is unique, being the only post office in the United States by that designation. In the 1850 census, Duke A. Beadles is listed as a "trader." During this time many stores did not use currency as a means of exchange since few settlers had any. In the same census, there were seven families in households by the name of Beadle, 36 people in all. In the area, there were also the Bowdens, Cashions, Cavenders, Clarks, Clemons, Jacksons, Masseys, Roberts, Roses, Starks, Welches, Willinghams, Winsteads, Winstons, and Works. Many of the older people were born in Vermont.

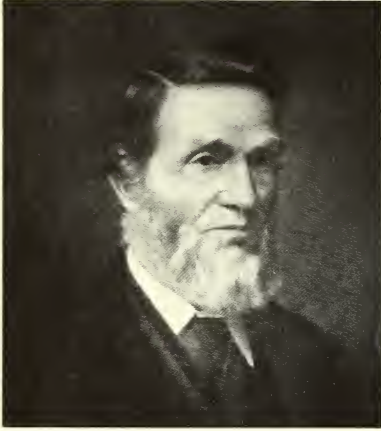
In 1890 there were three stores, several blacksmiths, a school, and a Methodist Church. The village was the center for tobacco sales. Hubert Jackson's father opened a funeral home in 1895 and the business remained in the family until it was sold in 1981. The

family lived in the same home with the business, and Hubert Jackson has lived in the home since 1902, moving there a few years after he was born.

In the early 1900s there were two drug stores and three groceries. The economy was thriving. In 1904 the Dukedom Bank was opened with Jim Si Cavender the first president, and Everett Atkins the first cashier. Mr. Cavender built the large two-story brick home in 1905 that can be seen from the four-way stop on Highway 118. The brick for the home was made from clay mined on the property. The Dukedom Bank was one of the few banks in the county that did not close during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Mace Rose, cashier for 59 years, took two policemen and went to Paducah, Kentucky, and brought back money to stave off the first runs. Then, through Vice President Ben Winston, the bank secured backing from First National Bank of Mayfield. It handled much of Weakley County's court business by train and buggy until other banks in the county made proper adjustments. It has had six presidents in 78 years: Jim Si Cavender, Bud Jones, Charlie Ross, Mace Rose, Kindred Winston, and James O. Lanier.

By the third decade of the new century, Dukedom had two hotels, a flour mill, a cotton gin, a tannery, two saloons, a photographer, a blacksmith shop, a barber shop, a shoe shop, a tobacco pricing barn, two distilleries, four groceries, dry-goods stores, and one of the first telephone exchanges in the county. It boasted a Farmers Grange, Agricultural Wheel, a Masonic Lodge, a Woodman of the World Camp, an Oddfellows Lodge, a semi-pro baseball team, five doctors, two dentists, and a brass band.

The Dukedom Academy was open for students aspiring to higher education. One of the earliest schools in the vicinity was Welch School, located one mile south of Dukedom, on land donated by J. L. Welch. It was a one-teacher school, covering grades one through six. Later, another teacher and two more grades were added. The school expanded until it became a high school, remaining so for two years. School consolidation and bussing closed the school after this time. Other small schools in the area were Ridgeway, McLean, and Ellis. Teachers in the late 1800s and early 1900s were Mollie Collier, George Roberts, D. J. Milam, Fain Parker, Daisy Shelton, and Sarah Welch.



Col. John Almus Gardner. Courtesy of Col. James Corbitt

The Methodist Church was organized in Dukedom in 1863. The Christian Church was started about the same time. The Reverend Shelton was one of the early ministers.

Today, Dukedom's business district consists of a bank, a post office, a funeral home, a general merchandising store, two service stations, a grocery, and a restaurant.

Gardner

The town of Gardner was founded in 1856 on land owned by Colonel John Almus Gardner, the first president of the Nashville and North Western Railroad, now the L & N. He was prominent in local and state affairs, serving in the Tennessee Legislature for six years as a senator. He was a member of the 1870 Constitutional Convention. The town bears his name.

The first business was a steam saw and flouring mill owned by Gardner and Peeples in 1855. Robert H. Watkins, the first merchant, opened a store in the same year. The first home was built in 1856 for D. W. Scates. Dr. William E. Stone located in Gardner in 1857. Captain James M. Dean taught the first school established in 1858.

Gardnerville was the name of the first post office and was located about one mile north of the present town. Thomas H. Gardner was the first postmaster. It was later moved nearer the railroad and the name changed to Gardner.

The Methodist Church was the first church to hold services. This was in 1877. Reverend W. C. Sellars was the first pastor. At one time the Baptists had a church at Gardner, but it no longer exists. The Church of Christ has an active membership there today.

Gardner was incorporated in 1869 and William P. Caldwell was the first mayor. He was a lawyer and served in the United States Congress. His home still stands north of the railroad.

Soon after the Civil War Gardner became the business center of western Weakley County. It was the only principal town between Dresden and Union City. Some businesses at this time were Martin and Brooks Grocery; Meadows and Lovelace; Knox and Caldwell (general merchandise); Gardner Sons and Smith; Gardner-Ayers Company; Gordon and Penn; J. H. Draughan; Meadows and Hawkins Grocery; F. M. Gardner, Druggist; Earl Cathon and Dr. Sawdeck, saloons.

Some of the early settlers in the community were D. P. Caldwell, William Freeman, and Joshua, Jesse, and Alfred Gardner, and some of the early families were Bomers, Cravens, Daltons, Elders, Farmers, Grays, Hesters, Malones, Pettyjohns, and Wheelings.

Many of the businesses of Gardner moved to Martin when the north-south Mississippi Railroad line was changed in 1873 from the originally planned route through Gardner to the Martin location, thus forming an intersection with the Nashville and North-western. Thereafter, Gardner began to decline.

Hyndsver

The name of the community was taken from the first postmaster, A. L. Hynds. The post office was established in the first store owned by Tom Highfill. This store, one of two in Hyndsver, had several co-owners during the years—A. C. Davis, R. H. Davis, a Mr. Elliott, a Mr. House, and John Tuck. Curtis Bowers and Alphas Levister were partners at one time in the store.

The first school was subscription run, the parents paying the teacher. It started before the Civil War and was held in a log house. After the war, two acres of land were bought from Sam Landrum and a one-room school house was built. It was later enlarged, but it burned in 1938, and was replaced by a larger building with sev-

eral classrooms, a stage, and a basement. In 1955 the school was closed. The people in the area use it today as a community center, for social gatherings and elections.

The early settlers of the present Hyndsver community were in four small groups about eight miles apart. These were Oak Hill, where a Methodist Church developed; Hatler's Chapel, Church of Christ; Hatler's Camp Ground, Methodist; and Bible Union, Baptist. Early settlers were the Brooks, Jack and Boone Bynum, the Farmers, John Hatler, and the Youngs.

Hatler's Camp Ground was started when two Methodist circuit riders, James and Alexander Hatler, came in a covered wagon to bring the word of God to the neighborhood. Later a tabernacle was built and eventually cabins developed around it. Summer camp meetings were held here for many years, lasting from two weeks to a month. All denominations used the tabernacle which was said to be "sanctified." Another group started Oak Hill Methodist Church.

In the early 1900s I. G. Hatler gave land for the present Hatler's Chapel Church of Christ. Bible Union Baptist Church, two miles due south of the center of Hyndsver, was started in 1856 about 1.25 miles from its present location. The church moved with part of the congregation and built a frame building. This was replaced with a brick church in 1956.

Latham

Ten miles north of Dresden the community of Latham (named for E. P. Latham, early settler from North Carolina and vast land owner) was settled about 1850. Mr. E. P. Latham is listed in the 1850 census as age 43 with three of his four children in school.

Early settlers in the area were the Billingslys, Carneys, Hortons, McClains, Prices, Morrises, Westbrooks, Wheelers, and the Winsteads.

At one time there was a one-teacher, and later a two-teacher, school named Bible Union which was discontinued after 1955. The building is now used as a community center. There were a school and a church for black people in the community, but they have been gone for many years.

The Pisgah Methodist Church was organized in 1887. It is about



Sam Winstead in front of Winstead-Jones General Store at Latham in 1919. *Courtesy of Mrs. Pearl Wiles*

3.50 miles from Latham on the Dresden Road. The Church of Christ of Bible Union and the Calvary Missionary Baptist Church, organized in 1942, are the denominations represented in the community today. The Old Concord Hardshelled Baptist Church was one of the first churches, but has been gone for many years.

At one time Latham had a gristmill, a blacksmith, and a large general store (Winstead and Jones) that sold everything from coffins to coffee. A son, Sam Winstead, ran the drug store, and remained to manage the entire store after his father moved to Martin. Later, Sam Winstead became postmaster in Dresden. Another general store at Latham was owned and operated by R. L. Stephens. He sold overalls for \$1.25; good brooms for 40 cents; six bars of Bob White soap for 25 cents; and five pounds of Peaberry Coffee for \$1.00. Guaranteed auto tires were advertised for \$7.50 to \$9.00 and best tubes for \$1.50 to \$1.75. Mr. Carlos Brundige bought the

store in 1926 and ran it for almost 30 years. He also bought the flour mill from Mr. Winstead. Later, he became owner of the gristmill and sawmill. The gristmill, at one time, was water-run and located on the north fork of the Obion River but was converted to steam when moved into Latham.

Latham had a thriving business until Highway 118 rerouted to the "upper road." "Old Latham" slowly lost its economic pulse as citizens traveled to other areas to shop. Today, there are five businesses on the highway—an appliance store, a restaurant, a garage, a general repair shop, and a feed mill.

Mt. Pelia

Mount Pelia, once called Middleburg and later Montpelier, is one of the oldest communities in the county. When a post office was established in 1840, the name Middleburg had to be changed since another post office in Tennessee was already using that name.

Two general stores, a grocery store, one saloon, six blacksmiths, a Masonic Hall, two churches, and a school were taking care of the community's needs in 1885. The population was then about 100 people.

R. M. Bondurant and J. Lewis were early school teachers. The members of the community desired a good education for their children and eventually the Mt. Pelia School was one of the best in the county. In the early 1900s it was a four-teacher school. By 1930 it was in a Special School District and had a high school. This was abolished with the move to consolidate in the 1940s, and the school was closed.

The Mt. Pelia Baptist Church was organized about 1829 by Brother James P. Edwards, a missionary of Troy, Tennessee, whose field of endeavor was Weakley and Obion counties. The first church building was probably built of logs and was destroyed by a storm around the turn of the century. Another building was constructed and this was damaged by a storm. In 1939 a new church building was built on the original lot. At this time, Brother Warren Hill started services on a half-time basis. The church expanded its property in 1957 with the purchase of one acre of land. A new auditorium was built in 1965. The older building was torn down in 1969 and an

education building was constructed in its place. Since 1946 services have been held every Sunday. Brother Bill Williams is the present pastor and membership is 295.

The Church of Christ was started before 1900 by Daniel R. Rivers, its first pastor. He moved his family from Middle Tennessee to Mt. Pelia about 1876, where he lived until his death in 1915. There was no Church of Christ there at the time, but there were several saloons. He was instrumental in getting whiskey out of the town and getting a congregation started. In July of 1897 the Mt. Pelia Masonic Lodge No. 177 sold one-half interest in their meeting house and lot to the Church of Christ. It was a two-story frame building with the Masonic Lodge meeting room on the second floor. The deed was signed by W. L. Dunnigan and W. C. Miller on the part of the lodge and Joe L. Priestly, J. C. Wharton, and D. R. Rivers for the church. In the deed it was stipulated that whichever group dissolved first, the other would get all the property. The church came into the property in this manner.

Part of the materials used in constructing a new church building on the same site were from the other building torn down about 1919. Some of the leaders in the church in the early 1920s were Arvie Caudle, Albert Duncan, and Bart Tanner.

As Martin began to develop, many Mt. Pelia citizens relocated in the growing town. The Blakes, the Bowdens, Dr. George W. Dibrell, who had practiced medicine in Mt. Pelia for over twenty years, and Dr. W. T. Lawler were among those who left.

Some of the early settlers of Mt. Pelia were the George and Jim Averys, the Daniel Caldwell family, the Cooks, the Jeters, the Knoxes, the Tomlinsons, and the Winstons.

Ore Springs

William C. Ore and wife, Elizabeth, settled on a 640-acre land grant given to him by his father, Joseph Ore, of Grainger County, Tennessee. The deed of transfer was recorded in Weakley County Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions on July 25, 1827. West of the house that he built was a large spring which supplied an abundance of fine water. It eventually became known as Ore's Spring and the community grew around it. Stage lines used it as a stopping place

for rest, feeding and watering teams; later it was the voting place for the community.

Wild animals were numerous at the spring and many bears were seen and killed when the Ore family first came. William Ore began to clear the land soon after he had settled and after the first day of work remarked to his wife, "Well, I have cleared enough land for a burial place." He died a few years later and is buried in the small cemetery that he cleared, easily seen from Highway 54 just behind the Ore Springs store.

Joseph A. Ore, son of William, became the sole owner of the land by 1856, purchasing the interest of the other heirs. He possibly erected a store at the site of the spring. His grandson, Eustace Porter Baughman, eventually acquired the interest of all the heirs in the early 1880s and built a store near the spring. It was in this store that the Ore Springs post office was established and was used until Rural Delivery started. Others who have owned the Ore Springs store are Dave Terrell and Will Bragg, whose wife was killed in the cyclone that destroyed the store May 25, 1917.

Olivet Methodist Church was established before 1852 on land surrounded by John Monroe Bragg's farm who was the grandfather of James Bragg Jackson of Martin. A school was at Olivet for some time. Walter Harper was a teacher there and lived in the Bragg home. Thompson Creek Baptist Church was organized in the vicinity in 1831 but about 1965 moved across the county line into Henry County. Jolly Springs Baptist Church (in about 1888) and West Union (in 1869) were the other churches organized that are still active. New Hope Cumberland Presbyterian Church was a very early church organized in the late 1800s which no longer exists. The congregation moved their memberships elsewhere when the church roll dwindled. The empty church building stands as a reminder of "better" days near the old well-kept cemetery that is still occasionally used.

Families at Ore Springs at the turn of the century were the Alexanders, Hearn, Fosters, Jones, Jollys, Newberrys, Olivers, Powers, George Simmons, (ancestor of Jerry Simmons, present County School Superintendent), and the Taylors.

Finis J. Garrett, great-grandson of William C. Ore, was born in



Finis James Garrett, 1875–1956

A. B. Bethel College, editor of weekly newspaper, school teacher, member of Congress 1905–1929, appointed associate judge U.S. Court of Customs and Patent Appeals 1929; chief justice thereof 1937 until retirement (at 80) in 1955. *Courtesy of daughter, Mrs. Ben G. Koehler*

the log house of his grandmother, Mary Jane Ore Baughman, which was east of the Hermon L. Hearn house. He served as Clerk and Master of Chancery Court and served in the United States Congress for 24 years. He became an advisor to President Woodrow Wilson during World War I, helping him draw up the Articles of the League of Nations, and was named to the U.S. Court of Customs and Patent Appeals by President Calvin Coolidge. He became Chief Justice of that court in 1937.

Palmersville

Palmersville, twenty miles northeast of Dresden, was established in 1842 on the lands of Smith Palmer. John Palmer was the first merchant and Robert Hays the first postmaster. In 1890 it contained a grist and sawmill, two general stores, a Primitive Baptist Church, and two societies, Oddfellows and Masons.

Other families who settled in the area were the Atkins, Branns, Buckleys, Harts, the Kennedys, the Kilgores, Killebrews, the LaFons, the McWherters, Moores, Pentecosts, Ridgeways, Rosses, and the Webb family. Many of these families intermarried.

The Missionary Baptist Church was organized in 1891, and met in a small building that was adjacent to the Primitive Baptists. After 1918 both congregations worshipped in a two-story frame building that was erected with the help of the Masons, who used the second floor for their meetings. In the 1950s the

Missionary Baptists moved to a brick building on Highway 89; in the late 1970s the Primitive Baptists discontinued worship in the old building. Today, the Masons continue using the building jointly with Boy and Girl Scouts.

Palmersville burned in the mid-1920s, with the exception of three buildings: a general store, one concrete and one brick building. Ten years later, another fire destroyed the town, leaving the old bank building as the only landmark of the original business district.

In the late 1920s a cheese factory was opened, started by the agriculture teacher, Jerry Fitch. It brought much needed income to the dairy farmers in the area, especially during the depression years. It closed in the late 1950s.

The residents of Palmersville have always taken pride in their school. From early times there were small subscription schools in the area, and later the Baptist Church building was used for a school. In 1891 Minida Normal College was organized with A. M. Kirkland as the first president. It offered B. S. and B. A. degrees and charged \$8.25 for a term of 10 weeks. The fee could be paid in tobacco or other products if cash was unavailable. All children of school age went to this school, the smaller children in the ground floor of the two-story frame building. The college was closed about 1912 and a lot was purchased from Charlie Pentecost for a two-room school building. This was used until 1920, when a larger frame building was erected where the present school now stands. The first high school graduating class was in 1924. A gymnasium was built in 1950; an agriculture building in 1980, financed by local citizens; and extensive expansions of library, study hall, cafeteria, and administrative wing have been added in 1981.

Ralston

Ralston was established in 1860 on lands belonging to Alexander Ralston, the first postmaster. Much of the land in the area at one time belonged to William Martin whose heirs sold it to early settlers. The town grew around the NC & StL Railroad depot.

Business establishments were a steam cotton gin, Bob Carmichael's Gristmill and General Store, three tobacco warehouses, a blacksmith, and several mercantile firms. The first merchants were Alex R. House, who was also the first railroad agent, A. E. Scott and Company, C. H. Whitlock, B. E. Dodd, E. L. Freeman, and Green Hawks.

Early physicians were Dr. V. A. Biggs, Dr. Frazier, and Dr. C. M. Sebastian, who soon moved to Martin as the population shifted in that direction. Others who moved were the Malcolm Biggs family, Mattie Carmichael, B. E. Dodd, the Elisha Freemans, the Clay Hardemans, and the W. A. Roberts family.

The Poplar Grove Methodist Episcopal Church, organized in 1875, was built on the land of Alexander Ralston. Ralston Baptist Church was organized in 1884.

Terrell Community

The Terrell Community developed five miles southwest of Dresden on land owned by Benjamin Franklin Terrell, son of John L. Terrell. There was a store and school house near the old Terrell homeplace. All of these are gone. In addition to the Terrells, early settlers were the Adams, Bailey, Davis, and Rogers families. Miss Annie Lou Bailey, Benjamin F. Terrell's 83-year-old granddaughter lives near the site of the homeplace today on land that has been owned by the Terrell family since Weakley County was established.

Terrell Station

Just after the start of the Civil War in 1861 the Nashville and Northwestern Railroad completed its tracks from McKenzie, through Martin and Union City to Hickman, Kentucky. The line passed through Gardner and in a few years a station was located three miles to the west, called Terrell. Joseph N. Terrell was the first postmaster of this village, located one mile north of Highway 22 on the L&N Railroad. He married Mary Lee Walker, daughter of L. R. Walker, one of the first settlers in the area. The Terrells lived on the 600-acre farm of her father. Joseph N. Ter-

rell was the son of Peleg Terrell, one time sheriff of the county, and brother of John L. Terrell, one of the founders of Dresden.

Tom Futtrell started the first store and expanded his business to include a rolling mill, sawmill, and flour mill. He was also in charge of the depot. At one time Terrell shipped more hogs and cattle than any other station between Hickman and Nashville. There were also large factories that made barrel staves for tobacco. At a later time Gus Brewer ran the depot and was postmaster. The post office closed after 1950 when Rural Delivery started.

The Farmer's Baptist Church, named for the Farmer family, was organized in 1896. It moved to Highway 22 and changed its name to Northwestern Baptist in the late 1940s. Another church in Terrell is the Terrell Grove Baptist Church for blacks.

Other Small Communities

It is interesting to learn how some of the communities were named. Liberty Community, started in 1827 between Dresden and Greenfield, was so named because all of the people were "at liberty" to worship in the open arbor built by people of all faiths. Kimery Community at one time had a store run by two brothers named Kimery. There was a church and blacksmith there. Sidonia was named by Mr. Willie Wilson who suggested the name Sidon from the Bible; someone else added the "ia." Stella Ruth came from the names of the wife and daughter of Mr. Will Dildine, who built the community school. The community of Jewel had a postmaster whose name was Fowler. His son was named Jewel Fowler. When the post office was named, he named it for his son. Rudd's Crossing had a post office where William Granville Rudd settled in 1858. His original home is occupied at the present time by the fourth and fifth generations of his family. Pillowville, Elm Tree, and Boydsville no longer exist.

Boydsville was named for Abner Boyd, owner of a great deal of land near the northeast corner of the county on the state line. The community was established in 1832 and he was the first postmaster. He and Benjamin Blythe were the first merchants. Robert Watson was the first blacksmith. Peter Boyd, a slave of

Abner Boyd, was a wheelwright who made spinning wheels. A dry goods store, owned by W. B. Cook, a grocery store owned by E. R. Cook and James Hale, and a tobacco house owned by John D. Brown completed the businesses. A grocery store is all that remains today.

Once a booming community, Austin Springs developed due to pure mineral water. It is located just below the Kentucky line, about five miles east of Dukedom. It was named for Chris Austin, large land owner from North Carolina, on whose land the mineral spring was discovered on the bank of Powell Creek. He cleared the creek and walled the sides of the spring with stone. Soon people were coming to the area by train, buggy, and wagon to drink the healthful water. This was during the era when doctors recommended many types of mineral waters for their patients. To accommodate the ever-growing number of health-seekers, a large two-story hotel was built. It had a porch with many chairs and a board walk that connected with the business area. There was a campground near the spring where those coming in wagons could spend the night. The town was located in a curve of the road just before it crossed the creek.

The first general merchandise store was built by Tom Johnson, whose sons, T. Chap and Clyde, continued in the business. Another store of this type was operated by Font Gibson. At one time there were two groceries, a blacksmith, two corn mills, a barber shop, a saloon, and a jail at Austin Springs. Near there, the first white child in the county was born. He was Lewis Stunson and by 1850 at age 29 he had accumulated many acres of land. Families in the area were the Dunns, the Fredrick Farmers, the David Frields, the Gargises, and the Gentrys.

Since the depression, the burning of the hotel, and the closing of the stores, the town is no longer in existence.

The exact location of Winston Springs is lost. It is shown on Colton's 1859 map of Weakley County as being about five miles south of Dresden on the road to Trenton. It was one of the earliest towns in the county and prospered for about 36 years. Large land owners in the vicinity were David Winston and his brother, James, who came from North Carolina. David Winston was one

of five men who surveyed and mapped the range lines and roads in the county in 1836. He and his wife, Candice Jeter, established a water-powered gristmill, a general store, and a post office. He was listed as the first postmaster in 1836, and served for 12 years. Alpheus King, Phillip White, Samuel W. Overton, William V. Simms, John Jeter, and R. F. Parks followed as postmasters until the Post Office was discontinued in 1872.

County Notables

Weakley County points with pride to native son, Ned Ray McWherter, Speaker of the Tennessee House of Representatives. He was first elected to the House in 1968 and served in the 86th and 87th terms of the General Assembly before being elected Speaker of the House in 1973. He is currently serving his fifth term in that position, a record no other House member has accomplished.

As presiding officer of the lower house, Speaker McWherter appoints all committees and committee officers, is a member of the State Building Commission, and is a member of all standing committees of the House. He serves on the Board of Governors of the Council of State Governments and the Executive Committee of the Southern Legislative Conference. He is active in the Southern Speakers Conference, as well as in local charitable and civic organizations including the Elks, Shriners, Eagles, and he is a 32nd Degree Scottish Rite Mason. He is past charter member of the Dresden Lions Club and the Dresden Jaycees, and he is a member of the Weakley County Chamber of Commerce.

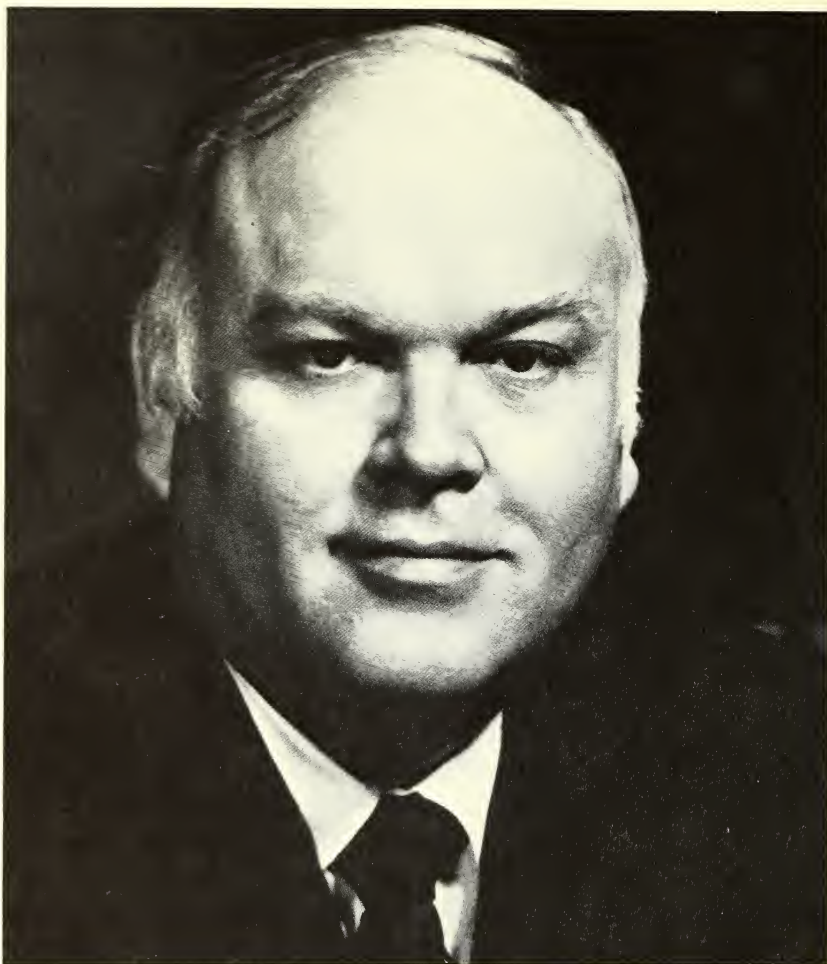
Other activities include: Former membership on the Executive Committee of the Northwest Tennessee Economic Development District; former chairman of the Head Start program in Weakley County; a current member of the Board of the Tennessee Easter Seal Program, western region; the Board of the Tennessee-Arkansas-Mississippi Girl Scout Council; and two one-year terms as chairman of the Tennessee Heart Association fundraising campaign.

He is retired from the Tennessee National Guard where he achieved the rank of captain with 21 years of service.

He is a widower, the father of two children, and attends the United Methodist Church.

He has often been mentioned as a gubernatorial candidate but insists that he is happy where he is. His influence has not been confined to the state of Tennessee. President Jimmy Carter relied on the Speaker's advice during his years in the Oval Office, and he has been described as the most powerful Democrat in the state.

He lives in Dresden where he carries on several successful businesses; however, Palmersville claims him as a native son.



Ned Ray McWherter, one of Tennessee's most influential Democrats, is currently serving his fifth two-year term as Speaker of the state House of Representatives, a record no other Tennessee legislator has held.

Appendices

A. Members of the First Court in Weakley County, 1827

| | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Perry Vincent, Chairman | Israel F. Outhouse Ephrim D. Dixon | William Winter Nathan L. Norville |
| Tyrel C. White | Isaac Cruse | Paul M. Palmer |
| John R. Shultz | Jesse M. Paschall | Ebenezer Craig |
| Stephen Smart | John Thomas | Moses F. Span |
| Joseph Wilson | James D. Thomas | Stephen H. Goldsby |
| Daniel Campbell | James Bousland | William Todd |
| John H. Moore | John F. Cavit | John Siratt |
| Jonathan M. Gilbert | | |

B. First Justices of the Peace, 1827

| | | |
|---------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Robert Powell | John R. Shultz | John H. Moore |
| Perry Vincent | Stephen Smart | Tyrel C. White |
| William Miles | Isaac Willingham | |
| Jonathan M. Gilbert | Isaac Howard | |

Court was held in the home of John Terrell.

C. Quarterly Court

Chairmen:

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Willis Williams, 1853–1855 | Solomon Pope, 1870 (Jan.–Sept.) |
| S. B. Crittinden, 1855–1856 | Bennet Ray, 1870–1879 |
| Nathan N. Edwards, 1856–1858 | H. A. Ross, 1879 (Jan.–Oct.) |
| Solomon Pope, 1858–1868 | A. M. Smyth, 1879–1893 |
| Willis Williams, 1868–1870 | J. M. Summers, 1893–1994 |

Judges (Title changed by Private Act of the State Legislature):

| | |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| John R. Thomason, 1894 (Jan.–Sept.) | John T. McWherter, 1934–1942 |
| J. L. McGlothlin, 1894–1902 | Cayce Pentecost, 1942–1950 |
| H. L. Hill, 1902–1910 | George C. Thomas, 1950–1958 |
| G. T. Mayo, 1910–1918 | Cayce Pentecost, 1958–1966 |
| H. L. Hill, 1918–1926 | E. W. Wheeling, 1966–1974 |
| N. E. Estes, 1926–1934 | Charles T. Butts, 1974–1982 |
| | Homer Carmon Brundige, 1982– |

D. County Court Clerks

| | |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| William H. Johnson, Prior to 4/18/1828-1837 | E. E. Tansil, 1902-1906 |
| C. K. Williams, 1837-1840 | C. H. Hilliard, 1906-1914 |
| John C. Dodd, 1840-1843 | W. J. Jeter, 1914-1922 |
| Thomas H. Etheridge, 1843-1850 | J. B. Manness, 1922-1930 |
| C. P. Bondurant, 1850-1854 | Cayce Pentecost, 1930-1938 |
| E. J. Looney, 1854-1858 | Charles M. Edwards, 1938-1946 |
| G. R. McWherter, 1858-1870 | Shobe Smith, Jr., 1946-1951 |
| E. J. Looney, 1870-1878 | Velma W. Smith, 1951-1952 |
| J. M. Finch, 1878-1882 | Thelon Capps, 1952-1958 |
| T. J. Little, 1882-1894 | Ellis E. Featherstone, 1958-1966 |
| G. T. Mayo, 1894-1902 | Charles T. Butts, 1966-1974 |
| | James T. Omer, 1974-1982 |
| | Faye Butts, 1982- |

E. Registrars

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| William Landrum, 1836-1852 | W. L. Barton, 1902-1906 |
| John J. Drewry, 1852-1860 | G. T. Atkins, 1906-1910 |
| Robert Irvine, 1860-1865 | J. B. Swaim, 1910-1916 |
| A. B. Charlton, 1865-1870 | R. B. Freeman, 1916-1922 |
| J. A. Lumpkins, 1870-1878 | C. L. Swinny, 1922-1930 |
| W. T. Cardwell, 1878-1879 | Roy Prince, 1930-1938 |
| H. A. Ross, 1879-1880 | Robert L. House, 1938-1948 |
| R. B. King, 1880-1886 | W. Junius White, 1948-1954 |
| W. J. Reavis, 1886-1890 | Wray Dellinger, 1954-1962 |
| J. W. Killebrew, 1890-1898 | Mason Kemp, 1962-1970 |
| W. I. Simpson, 1898-1902 | Opal Harper, 1970-1978 |
| | Houston Patrick, 1978- |

F. Trustees

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| William Todd, 1836-1838 | B. D. Irvine, 1876-1878 |
| I. F. Outhouse, 1838-1842 | B. F. Bondurant, 1878-1882 |
| James Hatler, 1842-1850 | Lee Harris, 1882- |
| I. F. Outhouse, 1850-1856 | Names not available for these years from the records. |
| Thomas Killebrew, 1856-1865 | Potter Moore, 1916-1920 |
| I. C. Reavis, 1865-1870 | Joe Eaves, 1920-1924 |
| Calvin Finch, 1870-1874 | George Swaim, 1924-1930 |
| Ed Lyon, 1874-1876 | |

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Mrs. Mary Lee Estes, 1930–1932 | Thomas L. Moore, 1948–1952 |
| E. A. Jeter, 1932–1936 | Hoyt Hutcherson, 1952–1956 |
| Arden Brooks, 1936–1940 | John Hodges, 1956–1960 |
| Joe W. Hunt, 1940–1944 | Hershel Maxey, 1960–1966 |
| Clifford P. Taylor, 1944–1948 | Dan Crofford, 1966–1978 |
| John R. Prince, 1978– | |

G. Sheriffs

| | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| John D. Calvert, 1825–1828 | W. A. Thompson, 1896–1899 |
| Robert Powell, 1828–1830 | I. D. Elliott, 1899–1900 |
| Alfred Gardner, 1830–1835 | Loyd Dodd, 1900–1906 |
| Peleg Terrell, 1835–1836 | John S. Acree, 1906–1908 |
| William S. Scott, 1836–1842 | C. A. Brasfield, 1908–1914 |
| Theo Hall, 1842–1844 | Whitt LaFon, 1914–1918 |
| William Ridgeway, 1844–1848 | B. A. Thompson, 1918–1920 |
| E. P. Latham, 1848–1850 | B. B. Bullock, 1920–1926 |
| William Wilson, 1850–1852 | Rice Mayo, 1926–1930 |
| W. Roffe, 1852–1853 | Will Dunn, 1930–1934 |
| J. G. Moore, 1853–1860 | Tom Grooms, 1934–1938 |
| John C. Vincent, 1860–1864 | Ret Harris, 1938–1942 |
| W. W. Dudley, 1865 | Tom Grooms, 1942–1946 |
| H. M. Lawrence, 1865 | Jess Davis, 1946–1950 |
| William Blacknell, 1866–1868 | Willy Sims, 1950–1954 |
| John E. Vincent, 1868–1874 | Ret Harris, 1954–1958 |
| Benjamin J. Ward, 1874–1878 | Harold Cooper, 1958–1962 |
| G. C. Thomas, 1878–1881 | L. C. Gardiner, 1962–1966 |
| J. A. Covington, 1881–1884 | Harold Cooper, 1966–1970 |
| W. A. Thompson, 1884–1888 | Jerry Riggs, 1970–1974 |
| R. W. Eskridge, 1888–1890 | Lewis Taylor, 1974–1978 |
| Whitt LaFon, 1890–1896 | Marlind Gallimore, 1978–1982 |
| Mike Wilson, 1982– | |

H. Superintendents of Schools

Superintendents were appointed by the County Court until 1934. The list of appointed superintendents and the dates they served are incomplete. Early school records were burned in the 1948 courthouse fire.

Appointed Superintendents

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Archilus Hughes, 1868– | Mr. Nix, 1897– |
| S. O. Hooker, 1884– | Sam Featherstone, 1906–1910 |
| Mrs. L. L. Evans, 1890– | Sylvanus Fisher, 1910–1914 |
| F. Y. Fuqua, 1914–1930 | |

Elected Superintendents

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| A. Sidney Campbell, 1930–1936 | J. T. Miles, 1944–1962 |
| Frances Ford, 1936–1940 | Biggs Danner, 1962–1970 |
| T. Wayne Fisher, 1940–1943 | Mac Buckley, 1970–1978 |
| Jerry Simmons, 1978– | |

*I. Circuit Court Judges**12th Judicial Circuit*

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Clinton Aden, 1884–1886 | R. E. Maiden, 1902–1908 |
| William H. Swiggart, 1886–1902 | Joseph E. Jones, 1908–1918 |

Changed to 14th Judicial Circuit

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Robert A. Elkins, 1918–1942 | Ethel Morris, 1942–1966 |
| Phil Barton Harris, 1966– | |

J. Clerk and Masters

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Samuel A. Warner, 1838–1844 | No Records |
| W. F. Hampton, 1844–1859 | Finis J. Garrett, 1900–1906 |
| Nathan N. Edwards, 1859–1861 | I. L. Banks, 1906–1932 |
| W. R. Ross, 1861–1874 | Grooms Herron, 1932–1954 |
| B. B. Edwards, 1874–1886 | Wayne Fisher, 1954–1978 |
| Angie Fisher Damron, 1978– | |

K. General Sessions Judges after 1960

Before 1960 the Justices of the Peace held court in their own districts.

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Harold Bell, 1960–1965 | Robert Jeter, 1965–1968 |
| Robert N. Glasgow, 1968– | |

L. Tax Assessors

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| H. B. Bowlin, 1928–1932 | Cleburn Kelley, 1948–1956 |
| Jack Jolley, 1932–1940 | Scott Ross, 1956–1964 |
| Steve E. Lecornu, 1940–1943 | Lewis Garner, 1964–1972 |
| Fred Lecornu, 1943–1948 | Richard Malone, 1972– |

M. Weakley County Census

| | | | | | |
|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|
| 1830 | 4,797 | 1890 | 28,955 | 1950 | 27,962 |
| 1840 | 9,870 | 1900 | 32,546 | 1960 | 24,227 |
| 1850 | 14,608 | 1910 | 31,929 | 1970 | 28,827 |
| 1860 | 18,216 | 1920 | 31,053 | 1980 | 32,896 |
| 1870 | 20,719 | 1930 | 29,262 | | |
| 1880 | 24,538 | 1940 | 29,498 | | |

N. Circuit Court Clerks

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Mears Warner, 1825–1835 | W. W. House, 1910–1918 |
| Newton S. Julin, 1835–1842 | King Webb, 1918–1920 |
| Samuel Irvine, 1842–1860 | E. T. Brann, 1920–1926 |
| J. B. Thomason, 1860–1865 | M. R. Duke, 1926–1930 |
| Joseph McLaughlin, 1865–1870 | E. T. Brann, 1930–1934 |
| J. G. Thomason, 1870–1886 | C. E. Sandefer, 1934–1942 |
| E. C. Lyon, 1886–1890 | J. H. Brundige, 1942–1950 |
| J. G. Thomason, 1890–1894 | J. H. Bell, 1950–1958 |
| John J. Thomason, 1894–1898 | R. L. House, 1958–1966 |
| J. W. T. Killebrew, 1898–1906 | Wray Dellinger, 1966–1974 |
| King Webb, 1906–1910 | Charles W. Bell, 1974– |

O. 1982 County Commissioners

| | |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Zone 1: Biggs Danner, William Mansfield | Zone 6: James Barner, Larry M. Jolley |
| Zone 2: Little Jack Dunning, Jacky Esch | Zone 7: A. B. Reed, Johnny Vincent |
| Zone 3: Fred Clements, James Porter | Zone 8: Denton Bell, James Harold Bell |
| Zone 4: George Broussard, Robin S. Moore | Zone 9: Wesley Perkins, Jimmy Westbrook |
| Zone 5: Earl Wright, Joe W. White | Zone 10: Lewis C. Garner, Kerry Killebrew |

P. 1982 School Board Members

| | | |
|----------|-------------------|-----------|
| Zone 1: | Robert Cantrell, | 1976–1982 |
| Zone 2: | Roy Lee Hodges, | 1978–1982 |
| Zone 3: | Billy Bethel, | 1980–1986 |
| Zone 4: | Bob Gardner, | 1976–1982 |
| Zone 5: | Mrs. Alice Houff, | 1978–1984 |
| Zone 6: | William B. Higgs, | 1978–1984 |
| Zone 7: | Frank Hahn, | 1980–1986 |
| Zone 8: | Dale Overton, | 1980–1986 |
| Zone 9: | Donald Glover, | 1978–1984 |
| Zone 10: | John Lee Jolley, | 1978–1984 |

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About the Author

Virginia Clark Vaughan, daughter of the Reverend Roger Lamar and Mable Thomas Clark, was born at Humboldt, Tennessee, on January 7, 1920. In 1940 she became the wife of James Wilbur Vaughan. She received a B. S. degree in Home Economics from The University of Tennessee at Martin in 1962. Later, she earned a certification in elementary education. From 1968 until her retirement in 1982 she taught Tennessee history in the sixth and seventh grades at Martin Junior High School. Two of her projects that had state-wide influence were Flag Study Week, during America's Bicentennial, when her classes promoted legislation resulting in a resolution whereby all public school students in Tennessee should learn everything about the flag of the United States. Another project was a two-year effort to have the General Assembly designate limestone as the state rock. This bill was signed into law by Governor Alexander on March 13, 1979.

She was a delegate to the White House Conference on Children in 1970; Washington, D. C., delegate to the Governor's Conference on Career Education, 1973; Chairman of the Flea Market which raised funds to renovate the old Post Office building into the Martin Public Library and Co-Chairman of the Decorating Committee for same; served on the Martin Library Board for four years; was Co-Founder and first Chairman of the Martin Arts Commission; served for three years on the Board of Directors of the UT Alumni Council; and was President of the Weakley County Education Association, 1972-1973. She was an organizing and charter member of the James Buckley Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, and the organizing President of the Big Cypress Tree Chapter, Children of the American Revolution. Since 1973 she has been a member of Alpha Eta Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma Society, honorary teachers sorority.

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