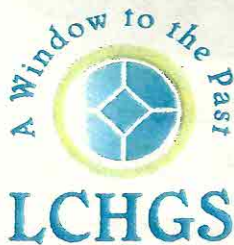




Gateway to the West

Lee County Historical and Genealogical Society P. O. Box 231 Jonesville, Virginia 24263

January 2015



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President's Report

By Becky Jones

Newsletter time again. The last six months have been busy for the Lee County Historical Society.

We had our smallest crowd at our December meeting, a busy time for all. Don Williams was our speaker. Don is one of the players with the Lee Players. We had asked Ruth Davidson one of the original members of the Lee Players to tell us about the history of the group. Ruth got sick and Don was good enough to fill in for her. Two of our members, Greg Edwards and Jessica Moore, are active with the Lee Players. The newly organized Lee Players has been very successful.

For our November meeting the Flatwoods Elementary School teachers presented us with a book written by the fifth grade students; *Down Flatwoods Road Looking Back*.

For our October meeting we attended the open house at the Old Milbourne Dickenson Home in Jonesville. We had a good time touring the old house, talking about the furnishings, the wood work, etc. and visiting the old graveyard. Several artifacts from the house have been donated to the society.

Virginia Spence always does a good job telling us about people and happenings in Lee County. This time she told us about a "Twisted Tale" of her family from the Turkey Cove/ Seminary area of the county. Neighbors that worked, played and fought together in the 50th regiment CSA. They were the Barrons,

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A view of the Dickenson - Milbourne house in Jonesville looking from north to south from the cemetery located behind the home.

See related story on page 6.



David Robinson



Don Williams

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Colliers, Slemps, Creechs and Johnson families. Then in May 28, 1864 at the first election after the reconstruction the murder of Johnson by Barron, was a very twisted tale and interesting true story that covered several years.

David Robinson, an engineer that worked building the tunnel that connects Kentucky and Tennessee, was our guess speaker in August. He talks about the problems encountered while building the tunnel - the way the rock plates laid, water and caves inside of the mountain and how they solved the problems. Sixty percent of the tunnel lies in Kentucky. Today the Cumberland Gap Tunnel is the main route north and south on 25E. With the completion of the tunnel in October 1996 a trip to Middlesboro, Kentucky is shorter and much safer for us.

Ronnie Montgomery was our speaker in July. He is a Member of the State Tobacco Commission. He told us how they distributed the money and who gets the money. Years ago tobacco was a big part of Lee County's economy. Every land owner, small or large, had a tobacco allotment that they counted on to help pay their bills. When the government bought up the tobacco allotments everyone received a check to help cover their losses for a few years. The tobacco commission has helped many charitable organizations in SW Va. as well as the Eastern part of state.



Vice-President Ada Vandeventer and Virginia Spence

This fall Helen Ruth Spangler donated her research materials to the Society. She grew up in Pennington Gap, married Earl and lived in Ky. for a while and back to Pennington Gap. She was active in several organizations - DAR, Rebekah and Eastern Star. She said that Elizabeth Carpenter had been a neighbor and they had worked together on many family genealogies and research for Lee County ancestors.

It is time to renew your membership. Our dues are still \$10.00 per year. Life membership is \$100.00. We can also use your donations of money, family genealogical records, books and articles for newsletters and artifacts for our museum.

Progress on the new pictorial book is slow. If you have pictures that you want to send us, do so.

The Society lost one of our active members this past year, Ralph Cox. Ralph and Mary Helen came to our meeting regularly and never empty handed. They always had something to share - paper products, coffee, cake or other refreshments for our meeting. Mr. Cox was a retired educator in the county and was in his nineties.

If you are in the area and would like to come to a meeting or visit our building to do research you can call or e-mail us. We still meet the second Saturday of each month, at 2 P.M. at our building - The Old Friendship Church.



The first Pictorial History of Lee County has been re-printed and is available for \$49.99 + \$5.00 shipping for a total of \$54.99. You can send us a check or money my mail to order a copy.

"Frontier Forts of Southwest Virginia" by Emory L. Hamilton

From Historical Sketches of Southwest Virginia

ROCKY STATION

On the old Kentucky Trace between Woodway and Dryden in the vicinity of the Litton Dairy farm, stood Rocky Station which was the only fort in Powell Valley to remain open during the dangerous days of the Revolutionary War when the Indians, aided and abetted by the infamous British agents living among them were inciting them to slaughter innocent women and children along the western frontier.

The Rocky Station was garrisoned by a Company of Rangers who patrolled Powell Valley and watched the war paths from the Cherokee and Shawnee nations especially Cumberland Gap, which pass was used by both nations. Colonel Charles Cocke assumed command of this station in 1780, and remained in command until after the Revolutionary War. Colonel Cocke was particularly alert, often delegating command of the fort to a subordinate and going out as an Indian spy himself. We sometimes find this station referred to as Cocke's Station, because Colonel Cocke was in command there.

There are numerous accounts of Indian attacks upon the fort, and its Rangers had many encounters with them throughout the valley, especially those bands dedicated to stealing horses, which acts seemed to increase many fold during the Revolution.

Rocky Station was perhaps erected in 1775 or 1776, and was the home of Isaac Crissman, Jr., who is assumed, without proof, to have been a son of Isaac Crissman who build Crissman's Fort in Rye Cove and was slain by the Indians in early 1776 in Rye Cove. At least Isaac Jr., was heir-at-law to an Isaac, Sr., in possession of this property. Washington Co., VA, Land Entry Book 1, shows that Isaac Crissman, whether Junior or Senior not known, made actual settlement on the land in 1775. In a letter written by Colonel Joseph Martin to the Governor, dated November 8, 1791, he says: Crissman's Station is north of Clinch Mountain in Powell Valley.

MARTIN'S STATIONS

In the year 1769, Joseph Martin of Henry County came to Lee County, leading a group of land seekers into Powell Valley in search of land. After losing their trail and having much difficulty in finding the valley, they finally arrived, staked out vast acreages under the Loyal Company grant and returned to Henry County.

In January, 1775, Martin with a group of men from Henry County returned to the valley. Among those accompanying him was John Redd, Mordecai Hoard, Brice Martin (his brother), and William Parks, the latter killed by the Indians the following year on his land claim. These men and others staked out their claims and were improving them for home sites. Sometime between January and June of 1775, this little group built a fort of which John Redd leaves this description: Martin's Fort was on Martin's Creek. The fort was located on the north side of the creek. There were some 5 or 6 cabins; these built some 20 feet apart with strong stockades between. In these stockades there were port holes. The station contained about half an acre of ground. The shape was a parallelogram. There were two fine springs near the station on its north side. The station was not reoccupied after 1776, or during the Revolutionary War. (24)

This station was evacuated in June of 1776, just prior to the outbreak of the Cherokee War. Captain Joseph Martin, after the Cherokee Campaign was appointed Indian Agent to that nation and moved his headquarters from the valley to Long Island. When Long Island was ascertained to be in the state of North Carolina, Martin then moved back to the Valley. In 1783, the Governor of Virginia and Council authorized the building of a fort at Cumberland Gap which fort was erected under the supervision and on the lands of Captain Martin, in the fall of 1783. This new station was some 18 or 20 miles below Martin's Old Station and 2 miles from Cumberland Gap on Indian Creek, or on Station Creek, a tributary stream, for certainly that is how the stream got its name. Unfortunately no one has left a description of the new station, but it is sometimes referred to as "the Blockhouse" suggesting that it had bastions at the corners. This was the last stop-over for emigrants on the great Wilderness Road before their entry into Kentucky. Martin retained possession of this station until 1788, (25) when he sold it and returned to Henry County never to return to the western frontier in which he played so great a role, and has been almost forgotten by historians writing of the area.

There is a State Historical marker locating the site of Martin's Old Station at Rose Hill, in Lee Co., VA. The location is correct, but the marker states that the fort was built in 1768, which is an error. Martin's first venture into the valley, as previously stated was in 1769, and no fort was built since their stay at this time was only a few days. The location of Martin's two forts can be easily verified by a letter written by him from his home in Henry County to the

Governor of Virginia, on November 8, 1791, wherein he states: From Moccasin Gap to Martin's Old Station, 25

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Frontier Forts of Southwest Virginia *continued from page 3*

miles; from thence to Martin's New Station, 20 miles; from thence to Cumberland Gap, 2 miles. He further states in this letter that about 100 souls were living at or near the Old Station, and at Martin's New Station and the neighborhood about 50 souls. These two stations were always in Virginia, and when both Walker and Henderson ran their lines they were so run as to leave Martin's Stations within the state.

MUMP'S FORT

John Redd, in his Narrative in the Virginia Magazine of History and Biography states that in the fall of 1775, William Mumps, with a small band of men built a fort at the Sinking Springs, about 20 miles from Martin's Station. The Sinking Springs was the present site of Jonesville, the county seat of Lee County.

William Mumps and his men were probably from Henry Co., VA, and likely induced by Martin to make settlement in Powell Valley. Redd says the fort was evacuated in 1776, and never again reoccupied. In June of 1776, shortly before the evacuation of the fort the historically famous George Rogers Clarke was a guest at Mump's Station on his return from Kentucky, which he had left because of fear of an Indian War.

Redd says the fort was evacuated in 1776 and never again reoccupied, yet Alexander Ritchie, Jr., in his Revolutionary War pension claim gives the line of forts and stations in use by the militia and he states: A fort where Lee County Courthouse now stands.

In this statement he is referring to the year 1777, or thereabouts. It is possible that he was referring to Mump's abandoned fort and that it was an occasional use by the militia after 1776, however, this is only a supposition. It is unknown if this was a stockaded fort, but in all probability, due to the exposed location, it had some sort of rude fortification around it.

PRIEST'S FORT

This is another fort found only in the memoirs of John Redd, and of it he says: That it was located some 5 or 6 miles above Martin's Station and was on no water course. It was built about the same time as Mump's Fort, and William Priest, its builder, was perhaps a Henry Co., VA man in the valley through Martin's influence. Five or six miles from Martin's Station would locate this fort between the towns of Rose Hill and Jonesville, in Lee County.

This fort was evacuated at the same time as Mump's and Martin's, and the men from both fled to Fort Blackmore, in June, 1776, when alarmed by the outbreak of the Cherokee War. All evidence points to the fact that it was, as Redd says, never reoccupied after the initial evacuation, as no other mention of it has been gleaned from any source.

OWEN'S STATION

The only known mention of Owen's Station comes from the pension statement of James Kincaid, filed in Lafayette Co., MO. He tells of going to Owen's Station ten miles below Martin's Station in Powell Valley, in present day Lee Co. Ten miles below Martin's Old Station would place Owen's Station some eight miles from Cumberland Gap, and in the vicinity of the present village of Ewing. Kincaid's reference was to the year 1776 or 1777, and no other reference has been found mentioning this station. In the year 1786, a William Owen was living in the vicinity of Owen's Station, and this station may or may not have been his home.

YOKUM'S STATION

Located in Powell Valley on the banks of Powell River, between Dryden and Woodway, near where the highway crosses the bridge at the Wygal place. Yokum's Station seems to have been a neighborhood fort for the scattered settlers of Turkey Cove. The station was perhaps the home of one George Yokum and anything of his personal life is unknown to this writer.

It appears that the station was built sometime after 1780, since this is about the time that Turkey Cove began to be settled, with Vincent Hobbs and some others settling there in this year. No description has been found for this fort and none of the military correspondence or pension claims make mention of it. This leads to the assumption that it may have been only a neighborhood fort manned by the settlers. The only intimation that militia troops might have been stationed here comes from the assignment order for militia troops in 1792, which shows a Captain, Sergeant, Corporal and 24 Privates stationed in the Turkey Cove, but does not show at what particular places, if any, they were stationed.

In a letter written from Morristown, TN, September 9, 1925, by Mr. William A. Orr, who grew up in the neighborhood of the fort, to Dr. David F. Orr, he says: When the fort was built there was only a trail from it up and down the river, up Turkey Cove and on over Lovelady Gap and across Natural Tunnel in Scott County. It was then part of

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Frontier Forts of Southwest Virginia *continued from page 4*

Washington County. Do you remember a large pile of rocks at the Comfrey Patch? That is where the fort stood. It was from there that Captain Hobbs went when he shot Bengé.

It is true that it was from this fort that Captain Vincent Hobbs led his small band of settlers that killed the half-breed Indian Chief Bengé in present Wise Co., VA, forever freeing the frontier from the Indian scourge. All of Hobb's men lived in and around Turkey Cove and most of them were members of the militia in Captain Andrew Lewis' (Jr.) Command, which again might suggest that some militia was stationed at this fort.

GIBSON'S STATION

Gibson's Station was located in lower Lee Co., VA about five miles from Cumberland Gap, and is still, today, called Gibson's Station. In 1775, Ambrose Fletcher made a settlement on a tract of land in the western end of what is today Lee Co., VA, and on the 10th of August 1785, Fletcher assigned his certificate for land to Major George Gibson. This tract was entered before the Commissioners of Washington Co., VA on August 10, 1781, by Fletcher, and is described as 400 acres of land lying in Washington Co. in Powell's Valley, and known by the name of the "Indian Old Fields". George Gibson had this land surveyed on December 8, 1785, and was issued a patent for the same on August 1, 1785.

George Gibson doubtless moved on this land shortly after acquiring it and established a station, since, and to this day known as Gibson's Station. His home was a two story log house nearby a spring. The spring was inside the fort, and the chimney of the old Gibson home is still standing, but another house has been built to it. The location is beyond the Southern Railroad underpass about 300 yards beyond on the right. Apparently this was another of the neighborhood forts, for I find no record that militia was ever stationed there. It was likely defended only by its occupants.

George Gibson was a son of Robert and Isabella Gibson, and was born in County Cork, Ireland, in 1732. Came to America when quite young with his parents and settled in Augusta Co., VA. About 1776 he married Elizabeth Smith, a daughter of Zachariah Smith of Augusta Co. When upon coming to Southwest Virginia, it is said that he first settled in the vicinity of Abingdon, before coming to Powell Valley around 1785. He was a Lieutenant in the French and Indian War, and died during the Point Pleasant Campaign in 1774. During the Revolution he served in the Continental Army, was promoted to Major, and is said to have been at the Battle of King's Mountain. He died at Gibson's Station, April 3, 1819.

The Indians captured his son, Matthew Moss Gibson, when he was a small child and he lived with the Indians until grown, when he was identified by a birthmark and ransomed by his father. Family tradition states that he never became accustomed to living with his family, and would often be found outside the door listening and not entering the house. That he often returned to his Indian parents, staying awhile and then returning to his own parents. He later moved to Missouri where he spent the remainder of his life.

SCOTT'S FORT

Leaving the waters of Clinch and crossing through Kane's Gap of Powell Mountain we come to the headwaters of Wallen's Creek, a tributary of Powell River and Scott's Fort. This was the home of Archibald Scott, built in 1775, and nothing more than a fort-house and not stockaded. It stood on a section of the old Kentucky Trace and was a noted stop-over for emigrants travelling to Kentucky.

Archibald Scott and his four children were massacred here on the evening of June 20, 1785, and his wife, Fanny, taken captive and carried north by the Indians, presumably led by the half breed Bengé. She eventually escaped and returned to the Clinch frontier where her story has become one of the classical Indian stories of Virginia's last frontier.

After the destruction of the Scott family the old fort became the home of Robert Duff, who had married Fanny Scott's niece and remained a famous stop-over on the Kentucky Trace for many years afterwards. Scott and his children were buried near the old fort house, but no markers were ever erected at their graves and today only the general location of their resting place is known. The Duff family graves are well marked and it is interesting to read the epitaphs of some four or five members of the family who served in the Confederate Army.

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Frontier Forts of Southwest Virginia *continued from page 5*

area as early as May 1790, and immediately upon coming here he built a Station or Fort, which was widely known as "Chadwell's Station."

The station was a stop-over for people traveling westward over the Wilderness Road, as well as being a refuge from Indian attacks for Chadwell and his neighbors. Whether this was a stockaded fort or just a fort house is not known. There is today a church in this area called Chadwell's Station Church.

After settlement David Chadwell began acquiring other lands and by 1801 he was assessed with 1800 acres of land in Lee Co. He continued to acquire land in both Lee Co., and adjoining Claiborne Co., TN, and finally moved to Tazewell, the county seat of Claiborne Co., leaving his Lee Co. lands in the hands of his children. He died at Tazewell, in 1832, at the age of 100, having been born in 1732, and is buried there at Breastwork Hill. He married Elizabeth Turner and their children were: [1] John Chadwell, b. 1771, m. Mary "Polly" Adams, b. 1772; [2] David Chadwell, Jr., b. 1776, m. Nancy Lane; [3] Susanna Chadwell, b. 1773, d. 1846, m. 1st Benjamin Posey, 2nd Daniel O'Daniel; [4] Barthena Chadwell, b. 1775, m. 1st Moses Cotterill, the Ensign who was chased across Powell Mountain by the Indian Chief Bengie in 1793, m. 2nd Jerome Skelton; [5] Mary "Polly" Chadwell, Aug. 30, 1777, d. 1855, m. 1st Walter Middleton, Feb. 29, 1801, m. 2nd Benjamin Cloud who died in 1845 at Chadwell Station; [6] William Chadwell, b. 1783, d. Dec. 5, 1857, m. Catherine Lane, b. 1795 in Grainger Co., TN; [7] Alexander Chadwell, b. 1783, d. 1868, m. Lucy Bailey, b. 1789, d. March 31, 1859, d/o Carr and Mary Bailey of Henry Co., VA; [8] Nancy Chadwell, b. 1774, m. in 1790 to James Brittain.

We know that David Chadwell, who was a Captain in the Revolution, was in the area of his station as early as May, 1790, for on that day he was granted permission to establish a grist mill on his property. David Chadwell had a sister, Jemima, who married William Cox and settled also in Lee Co., VA. This could possibly have been the Mrs. Cox shot at by the Indians, on March 17, 1785, mentioned in letters to the Governor of Virginia from both Captain Joseph Martin and Colonel Arthur Campbell.

The Dickenson - Milbourne House by Libby Laforce

We are fortunate that Lee County is full of rich history. Some of that history can be seen daily in our historical homes. Many of these homes have been well preserved. One such home is the "Dickenson-Milbourne" house located in Jonesville, Virginia. The house was built in 1824 by Benjamin Dickenson. The house sets on 62 acres across from Jonesville Middle School. The bricks were manufactured on the property as well as the foundation was quarried from stone on the property. After the death of Benjamin, the house was obtained by Andrew Milbourne who resided there for 50 years.

The house was used by both Confederate and Union soldiers during the Civil War. The whole bottom floor was said to have been used as a hospital while the cellar was used as a prison. One rumor had it that the chimney of the house still had cannon balls lodged in it. However, members of the family said this was not true. The cannon was fired from that spot and hit a two-story log home that sat on the Charlie Baker property.

There is a cemetery behind the house. Some family members who lived in the house are buried there as well as Confederate soldiers. The house has four original fireplaces as well as the original double door and the board which was used to secure it.

One very interesting room that has been sealed shut is on the second floor of the home. You can look through some windows and still see the empty room with the boards on the walls and the floor as well as seeing the windows on the outside wall. I spoke to Julia Chance who was the granddaughter of Bonnie Wygal. Bonnie lived in the house in 1937. Julia said that particular room was at one time part of the inside slave quarters, probably for house staff and child care. There was also a house that stood in the backyard that housed workers.

The house has been remarkably well taken care of. The history of the home is very interesting and holds a lot of intrigue for a 190 year old gem in our community. The home was placed on the Virginia Landmarks Register on June 16, 1993. This is another example of people in our area who are dedicated in preserving our past so places like this can still be shared for generations to come, see and enjoy.

Query For Information.....

See photos on page 7.

In 1880 Lee County had some communities (prior to coal camps) that no longer exist and we are now trying to locate them. They were: Tide, Lee Co, VA; Golcondai Golconde, Lee Co, VA; and Slemp, Lee Co, VA. If you can help us locate these communities or have any information please let us know. Thank you!

Down Flatwoods Road and Looking Back

Our November program was presented by Linda Woodward, Sheila Shuler, Gretta Carroll and Gigi Long, all teachers at Flatwoods Elementary School. The program was about the publication of the oral and written stories of *Down Flatwoods Roads and Looking Back*. Many people from the community shared with the student's stories, customs, artifacts and photos from past generations.

Students learned what school was like years ago whether walking to school or riding horses because there were no buses, getting water from a spring, homemade clothes and lunches brought from home because there were no lunchrooms or playing outside because there were no gyms. Students were told about Daniel Boone, Indians and pioneers. The 4th and 5th grade students then wrote from their own understanding of the history they had studied about. The young students benefited from learning the history of the Flatwoods Community and are proud of their accomplishment with helping to publish this book.



Flatwoods Teachers (Left to right) Linda Woodward, Sheila Shuler, Greta Carr and Gigi Long

The Dickenson - Milbourne House - photos



View of the front of the Dickenson-Milbourne house looking from south to north from Highway 58.



*Left and right –
Two of the fireplaces and
mantles in the house.*



Jonesville's Spurrier Building Is Demolished



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Estes Brothers Construction tearing down the old Spurrier building.

Jonesville lost one of our oldest buildings on January 21, 2015. The old Spurrier building stood on the south east corner of Main and Church Street. The building had set empty for several years and was in bad shape.

There have been many owners of the building over the years. Barnett Harless, Montgomery, Jessee, Rowlett, Kenney, Browning, Cridlin, Ritchie and Skaggs were a few of them.

We know James W. Orr and George Orr had a hardware and machine shop there in 1913. James W. Orr was the owner in 1920. James died in May 1931 and his family lost the building in the depression in 1933. Orr had gotten the property from Champ Hamblin. Hamblin had acquired the lot from Andrew Milburn for \$1650 in 1869. In the eighties and nineties Harless/Barnette ran a restaurant "Deli'Vison" in there. Tom Joyce had a hardware store and ran his plumbing business from there in the seventies. Charles Belleau and his mother had a dry good store there in the forties. Why it was call the Spurrier Building we don't know. We do know that William Spurrier was a merchant in Jonesville and maybe he had business there in the twenties and thirties.



Looking at the demolition from Main Street