

ANTIQUITIES OF MCNAIRY COUNTY, TENNESSEE

**Transcribed under the supervision of the
McNairy County Records Commission
Nancy Kennedy, Director**

MCNAIRY COUNTY HISTORY

1823 - 1876

notes of

ANCIL WALKER STOVALL

Including the original works of A. W. Stovall, Poetry and Speeches

**Transcribed by Nancy Wardlow Kennedy
May 2001**

The notes concerning McNairy County were written about 1876. The poems and speeches show the date of their origin. There is no specific order as to the notes - they were copied as found in the files. Sometimes the notes are not very clear and there is duplication. I appreciate the chance to transcribe these notes as they tell us some things about McNairy County we didn't know. The McNairy County Public Records Commission would like to thank, Dianne Caylor Galloway, great granddaughter of A. W. Stovall for sharing these notes with us. The original notes are on file in the McNairy County Archives.

August 1, 2000

Nancy,

I spoke with you on the phone a few weeks ago regarding a mountain of papers that my mother had saved. You expressed an interest in those papers related to McNairy County. Hope they will be of some interest.

My grandfather, D. A. Stovall, was the son of A. W. Stovall. Both were lawyers. D. A. Stovall, born 1882, moved to Hugo, Oklahoma, in about 1903 and stayed there until his death in 1971. He married Norma Laura Pardue in 1907. Their only child, Norma Ann Stovall, was my mother.

A. W. Stovall was born in Selmer in 1849, attended "common schools." Read law and was admitted to the bar in 1870. He was a practicing attorney and poet, author of two books, county judge in Madison Co, Tennessee 1913 - 1918.

He represented his district in the 41st Tennessee General Assembly, House of Representatives in 1879 - 1881. He served two terms in the Tennessee Senate. In 1885-1887 he served in the 44th district and 1895-97 the 49th district. He died in 1923.

Sincerely, Dianne Caylor Galloway Dallas, Texas 75225

STOVALL FAMILY

by General Marcus J. Wright

The Stovall family have been residents of McNairy county for many years, coming from Middle Tennessee. Their remotest ancestors, of whom they have any account, was Bartholomew Stovall, who was born May 15, 1755. He was in the Revolutionary War, and took part in the battle of King's Mountain, under Col Williams. He was one among the early settlers of Davidson county, was in the Frontier Fort at Nashville, then known as "French Lick," and while living there and protecting themselves in the fort, two of his boys, mere children, wandered too far from the fort "hunting cows" and were slain by the Indians. He had married Agnes Nolen and raised a family and after her death he was again married to Mary Ham, who was born May 18, 1753. He died September 6, 1829.

George Prior Stovall was a son of Bartholomew Stovall, and was known to many citizens of McNairy county. He was born in the year 1797, and lived near where his father settled in Middle Tennessee until some time after he had married Elizabeth Shull, and several children were born to them, among the number, John M. Stovall and W. W. Stovall, who were afterward well known in McNairy county.

The family emigrated from Middle Tennessee in about the year 1827, first settling in Madison county, at the then village of Jackson. Moving from there in a few years afterwards, they settled in McNairy county, in the Second District, on Mosses Creek, and raised a large family.

He (George) was a poor man, and never accumulated much property, but succeeded in educating his children above the average at that time. In politics he was a strenuous Whig; he believed strong in maintaining the unity of the nation and the perpetuation of our institutions. He died at that place where he had lived for many years, the place is still known as the "old Stovall place." Leaving Elizabeth a widow with several children to care for and educate, she did well her duty, living most of her time with John M. Stovall, who aided her in maintaining herself and family.

Elizabeth Stovall was born November, 1800, married in January 1818 and died at the residence of Nancy E. Stovall on the 27th day of March 1878.

John Milton Stovall was born July 20, 1825, came to this county when a mere boy; married Nancy E. Ferguson on December 16, 1846. Soon after his father's death he quit farming and moved to Springfield, Mo, engaging in house carpentering, but returned to McNairy county again within twelve months to help care for and provide for his widowed mother and family, which charge he met like a hero, although he was a very poor man, so far as property was concerned.

In 1855 he moved to Purdy, then a flourishing town of several hundred inhabitants. Here he worked some time at the carpenter trade, and also kept grocery, run a livery stable, etc, he did some work on the Purdy College. In politics he was always a Whig, and was once the Whig candidate for Register against Maj Benjamin Wright, his party being in the minority, he was defeated by a slight majority.

At the outbreak of the war he was opposed to secession and in favor of the Union. But when Tennessee, his native State, seceded, he sided with her afterwards and twice enlisted in the Confederate Army. He raised a company of volunteers, and was elected captain, but was never received in the service on account of the scarcity then of arms and provisions. He did not become a soldier, but went to farming to support his family.

After the war he engaged in merchandising, as he had been immediately preceding the war. He studied law after the war and was admitted to the Bar as a practicing attorney in 1867. At his death he was an attorney for the Mobile and Ohio Railroad, having acted in that capacity for some time previous. He died in the town of Bethel Springs , on the 28th day of November, 1870, where he had lived for some time previous. He left a large family, but few of whom were grown.

Among his children that were well known in McNairy county, was David Jerome Stovall, who as born on the 21st day of April 1851. He was very apt at study and soon procured a good education and studied telegraphy. He opened the first telegraph office at the now flourishing town of Henderson, Madison county, (note: today in August 2000, Henderson is in Chester Co.) He held the position of railroad agent and operator at Kenton, at Troy station, and at Bethel. At the time of his death he was railroad agent and operator and express agent at Bethel, getting a good salary, having the utmost confidence of his employers and the public. He had a brilliant mind and doubtless would have attained distinction had he lived. He originated the idea of joining the interests of Falcon and Bethel in an effort to move the county seat to the railroad. He died, greatly lamented on the 4th day of August, 1876.

(Transcriber's note: A. W. Stovall was also the son of John Milton Stovall and Nancy E. Ferguson; grandson of George Pryor Stovall and great grandson of Bartholomew Stovall.)

(Transcriber's note: It seems strange indeed that only David Jerome Stovall was mentioned as a child of John Milton Stovall. A. W. Stovall was also a son of John Milton Stovall and was not mentioned, although he did much research for Marcus Wright's History of McNairy County - as the following notes will show.)

**NOTES ACCUMULATED AND WRITTEN BY A. W. STOVALL
FOR THE HISTORY OF MCNAIRY COUNTY**

WRITTEN BY GENERAL MARCUS J. WRIGHT

Apparently, much of the Marcus J. Wright book was written by **A. W. Stovall**, however proper credit was not given him. These notes are the original ink copies written by Stovall and are on file at the McNairy County, Tennessee Archives. They are not in any specific order and often repetitious.

MCNAIRY COUNTY

An act to organize the county was passed 8th Oct 1823. The first county court was held early in the year 1824 at a log cabin built for the purpose on a farm then owned by A. V. Murry, about 4 miles southwest of Purdy and about 2 miles south of Bethel and 1/4 miles from where the M & O Railroad now runs. The chairman of the court being Pressley Christian. County Court Clerk Joseph Barnett and Sheriff Henry Wilson. The first register was William Murry.

The first Circuit Court was held at Purdy in a log cabin, not larger than 20 feet square and built expressly for a Court House, which was used as a Court House for about 4 years and on the – day of – 1828 or 9 - the present Court House was built. The lumber used for the same being sawed by hand with a whip saw, there not being a saw mill in the county. The lumber being sold at from 75 cents to \$1.25 per hundred feet. The boss carpenter or contractor was James Reed and the brick works was done by Henry Kirkland. The contract for building the same was let to the lowest bidder and James Reed taken the same. The price being three thousand dollars, the county being taxed to pay for the building. Considerable confusion arose in consequence of the tax which was voted by the County Court and was considered (by a great many) as being oppressive.

The ---- civil divisions of the county were called Captains Companies. Prior to the Constitution of 1834, the voting all being done at Purdy, the county at this time being thinly settled. John Chambers, Abel Oxford, Matthew Moss were among the first settlers. At the first settling of this county, land was considered as very near worthless. Farms often selling for a gun or a cow or a horse. Any one person could get a home or tract of 200 acres of land by staying all night and cutting down a few bushes.

Benjamin Wright was the first surveyor of the county. The first stores kept in the county were kept, one by Nathaniel Griffith at Purdy and one by John Chambers near the Mississippi line. A good portion of his trading business done with the Indians in the year 1821 before the county was organized. There was not corn enough raised to supply the wants of the autumn immigration and in the following spring, 1822, numbers of pioneers were forced to return east and haul corn down the Tennessee river in canoes and skiffs and then haul out in wagons.

The lands of McNairy County were owned by the Chickasaw Indians prior to the year 1819, it being a portion of the territory then known as the Western District. The Indian titles to this territory were extinguished during the year 1819 and the county of Hardin organized the territory of this county being included in the bounds of Hardin, taking its name from Col Joseph Hardin.

The earliest settlers came to this county while it was in the bounds of Hardin county in the year 1821. Pioneers after emigrating to this county were forced to return to Middle Tennessee after corn to supply their wants for the next season (there not being enough raised to supply the demands of new comers.

On the 8th day of October 1823, the General Assembly of the State passed an act providing for the organization of McNairy County in Taking its name in honor of Judge McNairy of Nashville, Tennessee.

Early in the year 1824, the organization of the county was effected. The first county court being held at a log cabin, built for the purpose, on a farm then owned by A. V. Murray, about 4 miles southwest of Purdy, 2 miles south of Bethel and 1/4 of a miles from the M & O RR. The Chairman of the County Court, then elected, was Pressly Christian. County Court clerk, Joseph Barnett and Sheriff, Henry Wilson. The courts were held at this place one and ½ or two years. The exact date of the removal not being known now.

On the 4th day of August 1824, John Yount conveyed to George M. Barnett, A. V. Murry, William S. Wisdom, Robert Rankins and Thompson M. Prince, commissioners for the Town of Purdy, 50 acres of land on which the county seat was located. The acknowledgment of the deed being made at the November Term of the County Court 1825 before Joseph Barnett, clerk. The Town was surveyed by Benjamin Wright who was the first County Surveyor, but by some means, the county seat or town taken its name in honor of John Purdy, surveyor of the 9th Surveyors District.

The county seat being moved to Purdy, a Courthouse was built of logs, not larger than 20 feet square. The first Circuit Court that was ever held in the county was presided over by Judge Haskell. Macklin Cross being Clerk. The first register for the county was William Murray. Among the early settlers of the county and mentions the names of John Chambers, Abel Oxford, Mathew Moss, Nathaniel Griffith, Peter Shull, — Rankin, ---- Beaty, ---- Kirby, Joshua Ferguson, Lany Moore, & Dollarson Sweat.

The first stores being kept by Nathaniel Griffeth at Purdy and John Chambers in the south part of the county. A great deal of the latter's trade coming from the Indians. The country was thinly settled at this time and settlers were scattered over the county in settlements for a period of several years, each settlement having a distinguishing name. All elections were held at Purdy for all offices.

The log courthouse was used as such for some 4 or 5 years, when a new one was built. The contract was let to James Reed, he, being the lowest bidder. Henry Kirkland was the brick mason employed. The lumber used was sawed with a whip saw by hand and sold for from 75 cents to \$1.25 per hundred feet at this time. There was not a saw mill in the county.

The county Court voted a tax upon the citizens to pay for the building and in the collection of the same considerable confusion arose as a great many considered the tax oppressive.

The first census of the county was taken in 1830 and shows the total population to have been 5,697. 5,316 of whom were white and 381 colored.

For a period of a few years in the early settlement of the county, lynch law was executed. There being a regularly organized band of lynchers in the county with head quarters somewhere in the Mosses Creek country. Mathew Moss being considered their captain or leader and like all bands of a similar character, they struck the wrong man, in the person of a Mr Lenox, who after being whipped severely, shot and killed one of their members whose name was Job. The tragedy occurred at a little creek called Sulphurs Creek in the 1st District. This ended the notorious lynch law in this county.

The first white person born in the County of McNairy was Hugh Kerby. He lived to be — years old and died in this county on the — 187-. The first couple ever married in this county were

----- on the day of ----- 18----. (Not filled in)

The first settlers were principally from Middle Tennessee and North Carolina. The more recent immigration was mostly from North Carolina and some from Virginia. In the early days land was very cheap. Any person could get a farm of 200 acres by staying all night on the tract and chopping a few bushes. Partly improved farms often sold for a gun, a cow or a horse.

After the constitution of 1834, the county was laid off into civil district, there being originally 12 districts but the number has swelled to 17 since.

Politics first assumed a definite shape in 1836 in the canvass for the President of the nation. Between Van Buren and H. L. White, the Whigs having a majority in the county. The first representation the county ever had in the General Assembly was John M. Johnson. The Whig Party held their majority in the county until about 1849, after which time the Democrats and Whigs would frequently alternate being nearly evenly balanced until about the year 1853. The Democrats seems to have had a small majority and in 1856 in the canvass between Tillmon & Buchanan, the Democrats gained such a victory in the county as to no longer doubt their numerical strength. They have also ---- ever since. Excluding about 4 or 5 years since the war while the ex-Confederates were disfranchise, at which time the Republican Party controlled the county. Politically at this time, 1876, the Democratic Party is supposed to have 2/3 majority over the Republican Party.

The county has since is organization, furnished four state senators and one member of congress in the person of John V Wright who although he was defeated in his first canvass, was three times elected to that honorable position and was once elected as a member of the Confederate Congress.

The first newspaper ever published in the county was called the Purdy Gazette and published by a William Martin. The next paper published in Purdy was called the West Tennessee Angus, which commenced publication the 19th of August 1856. It was published by Isaac W. Nash and edited by Alphonzo Cross and D. Barry. It espoused the cause of the democracy in the memorable canvass of 1856. This paper continued its publication as a Democratic Paper until January 1, 1859, the name of the paper being changed to that of the Whig Banner and was edited by D. M. Wisdom and S. L. Warren. It exposed the cause that its name indicated and was an able defender of Bell & Everett in the stormy canvass of 1861. The publisher continued until June 1st, 1862 when it was suspended on account of the war. On the night of the 7th day of August, 1862, the office together with a livery stable, saddles ship, dry goods store and circuit clerk's office all burned down, supposed to have been the work of an incendiary. The last paper published in the county only continued for a few weeks being printed at Corinth, Miss and edited by Dahl Barry at Purdy. It commenced publication January 24, 1873 and was called the Purdy Gazette.

The Agricultural & Mechanical Association held their first fair at Purdy on the 14th, 15th and 16th days of October 1856. A. Cross, President; C. F. Sawyers, Sec; W. K. Walsh, Ticket Master and W. B. Clayton, door keeper. The Association had 4 Exhibitions or Fairs, the last being had on the 23, 24, 25, & 26 October 1860. The Association never having been reorganized until during **the present year 1876**. Considerable stock has been taken, officers elected and the improvements are fast being made preparatory to having an Exhibition in Oct next. Geo W. Morley is President and J. W. Purviance, Secretary.

The only criminal that was ever hung by the Civil officers was the Negro Henry who was tried at the July term of the Circuit Court 1860 for the murder of his mistress, Mrs Irwin. He was sentenced to be hung on the first Friday in September 1860, which was promptly executed,

bringing a larger crowd of the people of the county to Purdy than has ever been there at one time, before or since.

On the 9th day of February 1861 when the question of Secession was voted upon the County of McNairy polled 1731 votes. The question being convention or no convention. The vote in the county stood 918 for no convention and 813 for convention, a majority of 105 in favor of the State remaining in the Union. On the 8th day of June 1861, four months afterward, the vote stood for separation 318 and for no separation 588. A majority of 730 in favor of Secession.

The scenes that were enacted during the long and desperate struggle in the County of McNairy can better be imagined than described. A great many of the sons of McNairy volunteered. Some on one side and some on the other. It is impossible to tell the exact number of soldiers that entered either army. Through no less than 12 entire companies entered the Confederate service and about 3 or 4 companies went into the Federal Army. Among these a great many were slain in battle. Some died of sickness and some were never heard of during this ----- conflict.

It was the misfortune of our county seat to be destroyed by fire. The records of all the courts were utterly destroyed during this conflagration. The oldest records of the county court dates 1858. This loss is grievously lamented as the lost records can never be supplied by human aid. At the close of the war, the citizens of this county went diligently to work to repair their shattered fortunes and except a few revengeful lawsuits, all file into a peaceful channel.

On the – day of – 1867, the notorious Negro riot occurred at Purdy which resulted in the death of the Sheriff Samuel Lewis and the wounding of 2 or 3 other citizens by the Nergros. The Negroes were armed militia stationed at Purdy. They made an attack on the whites on a public day, there being a great many people in Town, all unarmed. Of course the attack was unexpected and greater consternation was never seen or felt by the citizens before or since. None of the offenders were punished, but most of the leaders have either been punished since for other officers or have been killed or left the county.

The census returns show that the population of the county in 1840 was 9,385; in 1850 was 12,864; in 1860 was 14,732, in 1870 was 12,726.

The county in 1870 had 64,596 acres of improved land. The value of all farms was 1,139,310 dollars. Of all livestock 615, 521 dollars. There were in the county: 2,338 horses, 1,149 mules and donkeys, 2999 milch cows, 827 work oxen, 9,865 sheep and 21,801 hogs. There was raised in 1870 in the county: 44, 599 bushels of wheat, 363 bushels rye, 370,431 bushels indian corn, 18,362 bushels oats, 6,338 pounds tobacco, 3, 347 bales cotton, 13,509 pounds wool, 22,028 bushels sweet potatoes and it was estimated that the value of all farm productions in 1870 would amount to 943, 156 dollars.

The population in 1870 was divided as follows: 4,348 males and 6,378 females. Between the ages of 5 and 18 years: 2,281 males and 2,187 females. Between the ages of 18 and 45 there was 2,165 men. There was assessed in 1870 for taxation 382,468 acres of land valued at 1,320,352 dollars. Town lots to the value of 70,519 dollars and all personal property 328,053 dollars. A total of 1,718, 924 dollars.

In 1872 the value of all property, real and personal, was assessed at 1,757,233 dollars.

In 1873 all property was assessed at 2,161,269 dollars.

In 1874 all property was assessed at 2,430,589 dollars.

In 1875, the assessment of real estate being also for 1876, there was assessed for taxation

404,518 acres of land valued at 2,026,149 dollars. Town lots to the value of 102,119 dollars and personal property exclusive of exemptions 209,014 dollars. Making a grand total in 1875 of 2,337,282 dollars. An increase since 1870 of 618,358 dollars.

There was assessed in 1875, 3065 dogs at 4,279 dollars, (2762 dogs, 303 bitches) the great part of which has not been collected. The Total revenue assessed against the people of the county in 1875 was 27,833 dollars and 89 cents.

There are in 1876, five veterans of the War of 1812 in the county. Whose names are respectively: Major John G. Randolph, Gardner Gill, Jacob Baker, Jacob Jackson and William Shelton.

Major Randolph is a resident of the 4th district of the Town of Montezuma, is about — years old, is a respected member of the Methodist Church, draws a pension from the government for his services in that memorable conflict with the British Hasts and is one of the wealthiest citizens of the county.

Gardner Gill is a resident of the 7th District, is 87 years old, born June 15, 1879. Emigrated to this State from Virginia. Lived with the Father of President Polk while the son was attending college. Remembers that when very young he saw the illustrious Washington. Remembers the sorrow expressively by the grateful nation at the death of her illustrious defender of American Liberties. On account of his position during the late war has never drew a pension from the government. Is a member of the Christian Church and a respected citizen of the community. Each of the other mentioned veterans of 1812 are old and respected citizens and drawing pensions from the government for their bravery in vanquishing the British Invaders.

There are in the county, survivors of the memorable struggle with Mexico to wit: J. F. Huddleston of the Town of Purdy and the 7th civil district, a lawyer and respected citizen and yet in the prime of life. A. Whitesides, a resident of the 15th district, a farmer and yet on the sunny side of life. N. M. McAfee, a resident of the 7th district, a farmer and a soldier in the Confederate Army in the late war and is now a comparatively young man. William Ross, a resident of the 2nd district, though a very old man is yet a bachelor, is a farmer and is respected by all who know him.

The number of polls assessed in 1870's were:

1808 in 1870 - 2288 in 1873 - 2293 in 1874 - 2460 in 1875

An increase since 1870 of 652 or a little over a third of the population of the county. In 1876 by the closest estimate that can be made without to be 16,000 - a larger population than the county has had since its formation.

There are now (in 1876) in the county:

21 general stores 5 saloons 7 steam mills

25 doctors 7 lawyers

From June 20, 1875 to June 20, 1876 there were 150 marriage licenses issued.

There are two railroads in our county, viz: The Memphis & Charleston and the Mobile and Ohio. Considerable work has been done on the Memphis & Knoxville Rail Road in this county. But it has been suspended.

There are no manufacturers in the county. There are a good many blacksmith shops. A few carding machines and several water mills.

The greater portion of the people are farmers by occupation. Corn and cotton are the chief products. The corn crop of 1875 is said to be the largest ever produced in the county. The cotton crop being very poor.

There are 85 school districts in the county. 4823 white children between the ages of 6 and 18 and 714 colored , making a total of 5, 537. A Teacher's Institutes was organized in 1875, who have regular meeting to promote the interest of school.

The county is divided into seventeen civil district as follows:

1876

The 1st District situated in the southwest corner of the county, settled mostly by emigrants from North Carolina, among the earliest of who are mentioned: Newtons, Flowers, Bensons, Ingrahams, Warrens, Matthew Moss and C Lee (?) . Most of whom are now dead. J. G. Gooch is an old settler and still living, was elected to the office of Justice of the Peace at the first election

ever held in the district, the first Saturday in March 1836. Has held the office continuously every since, a period of a little over 40 years. The greater part of the time was Chairman of the County Court. Is a Primitive Hardshell Baptist and the Father of 22 children.

There are 2 men and 5 women over 75 years old in the district. 3 good water mills, 1 saw mill. The Memphis & Charleston Rail road passes through the district. The only point of trade being the flag station on the Rail Road at which very little business is done, the place being called the Big Hill. There are assessed in 1875 in this district 38,624 acres of land valued at 112,037 dollars. In 1870, there was a population of 812 white and 20 colored. A total of 832. There has been an increase since.

The 2nd District was settle by emigrants from North Carolina and other portions of this state. Among the old settlers are mentioned the Moores, Robertsons and Bells. The only business point in this district is Camden, which was once a thriving little village. But has now very little business done. The population of this district in 1870 was 1027 white and 63 colored, a total of 1090. There was assessed in 1875-76 41,890 acres of land valued at 163,430 dollars. It votes about 200 in elections and gives a Democratic majority.

The 3rd District had a population in 1870 of 914 white and 155 colored, a total of 1029 - which population has been greatly reduced by the formation of the 17th District - it taking a good portion of its territory. In 1875 there were 19,037 acres of land assed for taxation at 99,995 dollars.

The 4th District is in the north west corner of the county had a population of 645 white and 124 colored in 1870, a total of 769. There were 20,556 acres of land assessed at the last assessment valued at 119,515 dollars. Has one town, namely Montezeuma which has a population of – stores, 1 blacksmith shop, 1 church, a good school, a good steam mill. It is an old town and has an Odd Fellows Lodge.

5th District had a population in 1870 of 969 whites and 193 colored, a total of 1162 and has increased some since. The land assessment now is 43,565 acres valued at 255,855 dollars. Being the largest assessment of any district in the county. It has three voting places: Chewalla, Ramer and Gravel Hill. Chewalla is a town on the Memphis & Charleston RR with about – inhabitants, – stores, – saloons, church, school house, telegraph & express office.

Ramer is a station on the Mobile & Ohio RR of about – inhabitants, 1 store, 1 grocery, post office & telegraph office.

Gravel Hill is only a voting place. This district in 1874 voted 394 and is usually the turning point in elections, there being but few votes other than Democratic.

The 6th District had a population in 1870 of 386 white and 66 colored, a total of 452. The last land assessment was 23,067 acres valued at 119,567 dollars. The population has increased since the last census was taken. The Town of Falcon is in this district, is a station on the Mobile & Ohio Railroad, is of very recent growth, not over two or three years old and has a population of about 50, 2 general stores, 1 saloon, 1 blacksmith shop and telegraph office.

7th District had a population in 1870 of 1070 whites and 238 colored, a total of 1308, has increased some since. There were at the last assessment 38,149 acres of land valued at 191,110 dollars. It's towns are Purdy and Bethel. Purdy is the county seat of the county and was formed about the year 1825, has a population of 283. 5 dry good stores, 2 family groceries, 2 saloons, 2 drug stores, 1 saddle ship, 1 livery stable, 1 blacksmith shop, 1 college, 1 church, Masonic & Odd Fellows Lodge, a court house and jail.

Bethel Springs is a station on the Mobile & Ohio Railroad. The town was laid off by T. H.

Bell. The sale of town lots occurred January 21st and 22nd of 1861. The town taking its name from a Presbyterian church and some noted spring near it. The place was usually occupied by soldiers during the war. It first being held by the Confederation and the head quarters of General Gladden and the point that Polk's Division came to on the (rail) cars in route to the memorable Battle of Shiloh. The town sometime afterwards was held by the Federals who built considerable forts that are lasting monuments of the desperate conflict. The most noted of the Federal Officers located here were Colonels Harvey Sanford and Morrison. It now has a population of 118 whites and 65 colored, a total of 183. Has five dry good stores, one grocery, 2 blacksmith shops, one grist mill, one hotel, express & telegraph office, one school house, two churches, and shipped from June 1st 1875 to June 1st 1876, 1052 bales of cotton.

The 8th District had a population in 1870 of 771 whites and 189 colored, a total of 960. The last land assessment was 22,063 acres, valued at 102,820 dollars. The voting place is White Plains and it gives a Republican majority in elections.

The 9th District is situated in the south east portion of the county . Had a population in 1870 of 837 whites and 68 colored, a total of 905. In 1875 it has 27,672 acres of land valued at 125,295 dollars. Its voting place is Monterey and gives a Democratic majority.

10th District had a population in 1870 of 902 white and 72 colored, a total of 974. Has in 1876 assessed for taxation 24,596 acres of land valued at 136,547 dollars. Its voting place is Stantonville and among its citizens in the county and delegate to the Constitutional Convention (was) General J. H. Meeks.

11th District had a population in 1870 of 571 whites and 33 colored, a total of 604. There was assessed for taxation in 1875-76 15,056 acres of land valued at 80,600 dollars.

12th District in 1870 had a population of 315 whites and 39 colored, a total of 354. The land assessment of real estate in this district gives 16,768 acres of land valued at 103,131 dollars. The voting place is Milledgeville. It has — stores.

13th District had in 1870 a population of 515 white and 78 colored, a total of 593. The lands are assessed at 16,304 acres valued at 81,424 dollars.

14th District had in 1870 a population of 505 whites and 134 colored, a total of 639. The lands at the last assessment were assessed at 10,728 acres, valued at 74,400 dollars.

The 15th District had a population in 1870 of 567 whites and 57 colored, a total of 624. The lands are assessed at 14,360 acres valued at 53,683. The Town of Adamsville is in this district, is an old town and has a population of about —, — stores, one drug store, a saloon, blacksmith shop, good school and church.

The 16th District had a population in 1870 of 420 whites and 11 colored, a total of 431. In 1875-76, there were assessed 15,821 acres of land valued at 53,683 dollars.

The 17th District has been laid off since the census of 1870. The lands are now assessed at 17,562 acres valued at 93,490 dollars. McNairy Station is in this district and has a population of about 150, is a station on the Mobile & Ohio Railroad, has two stores, one grocery, one drug store, one blacksmith shop, a mill, church, school house and hotel.

In the year 1830 the County of McNairy had a population of 5,697. In 1840 it reached 9,385, in 1850 it advanced to 12,864 in 1860 it swelled to 14,732 and in 1870 it was 12,726. In the year 1870, the population was divided as follows: 11,226 white and 1,500 black and being divided into 16 districts as follows:

| | White | Colored | Total |
|------------------|-------|---------|-------|
| 1 st | 812 | 20 | 832 |
| 2 nd | 1027 | 63 | 1090 |
| 3 rd | 914 | 115 | 1029 |
| 4 th | 645 | 124 | 769 |
| 5 th | 969 | 193 | 1162 |
| 6 th | 386 | 66 | 452 |
| 7 th | 1070 | 238 | 1308 |
| 8 th | 771 | 189 | 960 |
| 9 th | 837 | 68 | 905 |
| 10 th | 902 | 72 | 974 |
| 11 th | 571 | 33 | 604 |
| 12 th | 315 | 39 | 354 |
| 13 th | 515 | 78 | 593 |
| 14 th | 505 | 134 | 639 |
| 15 th | 567 | 57 | 624 |
| 16 th | 420 | 11 | 431 |
| Total | 11226 | 1500 | 12726 |

Total number of acres of the land assessed for taxation in the year 1875-76 are 404,518.
Divided into seventeen districts as follows:

| | | | |
|------------------|---------------|-----------|--------------|
| 1 st | 38,624 acres | valued at | 112,037 \$ |
| 2 nd | 41,890 acres | valued at | 163,430 \$ |
| 3 rd | 19,037 acres | valued at | 99,995 \$ |
| 4 th | 20,556 acres | valued at | 119,515 \$ |
| 5 th | 43,565 acres | valued at | 255,855 \$ |
| 6 th | 23,067 acres | valued at | 119,667 \$ |
| 7 th | 37,149 acres | valued at | 191,110 \$ |
| 8 th | 22,063 acres | valued at | 102,820 \$ |
| 9 th | 27,672 acres | valued at | 125,295 \$ |
| 10 th | 24,596 acres | valued at | 136,547 \$ |
| 11 th | 15,056 acres | valued at | 80,600 \$ |
| 12 th | 16,768 acres | valued at | 103,131 \$ |
| 13 th | 16,304 acres | valued at | 81,424 \$ |
| 14 th | 10,728 acres | valued at | 74,400 \$ |
| 15 th | 14,360 acres | valued at | 113,150 \$ |
| 16 th | 15,821 acres | valued at | 53,683 \$ |
| 17 th | 17,562 acres | valued at | 93,490 \$ |
| | 404,518 acres | totals | 2,026,149 \$ |

VARIOUS INDIVIDUAL NOTES

The first exhibition of the Agricultural and -----Association of McNairy was held on the 14th, 15th and 16th days of October 1856. A. Cross, president, C. F. Sawyers Sect. W. K. Walsh ticket master and W. B. Clayton door keeper.

Last farm 23-26 of October 1860. (Note: I think this means the last meeting of the Agricultural Association was held at this time)

(Unclear)

4th July – at Bethel 1860, Sp (may mean Speaker) John W Wilson, H. T. Johnson

Negro Henry tried and sentenced to be hung for murder of Mrs. Irwin, July term 1860 to be hung 1st Friday in September 1860.

(These notes unclear - typed as listed) McNairy county voted June 8th (1860?) for Separation 1318, No Separation 588. Majority 730. In Feb proceeding gave from 300 to 500 in favor of No Separation. Convention 813 - No Convention 918. Feb 9, 1861. Meeks 600, Rossen 1117, Wisdom 1400.

Purdy named after John Purdy.

9th Sen District. (?) Party lines were first drawn in 1836 in the canvass between Van Buren and White. Whig and Democratic. Whig majority. Whig kept majority until 1849 when they were nearly even. And in 1853

4th day of August 1825, John Yount conveyed 50 acres of land, on which Purdy is built, to the Commissioners: George M. Barnett, A. V. Murray, William S. Wisdom, Robert Rankins, Thompson M. Prince. Acknowledged Nov term 1825.

NEWSPAPERS:

There was a paper published at Purdy by a William Martin.

The West Tennessee Argus commenced publication on the 19th of August 1856. Isaac W. Nash publisher. It's politics being Democratic. D. Barry, editor and A. Cross, local editor. Continued until Jan 1, 1859. The name of the paper changed and was called the Whig Banner about this time and also the politics of the paper and continued publication until June 1, 1862 when it was suspended on account of the war. D. M. Wisdom and S. L. Warren editors.

The office burned down on the night of the 7th of August 1862 and also a livery stable, Circuit Clerk's office, saddle shop and dry goods store.

McNairy County in respect to area, stands 3rd among the counties of West Tennessee. It comprises about 645 square miles or 412,800 acres. Exclusion of town lots the number of acres assessed for taxation in 1873 was 402,976 valued at 1,753,550 or 4.33 dollar per acre. Average the whole value of taxable property for the year 1873 was 2,161,269.

OTHER NOTES

Emigrated Dec 24, 1824, from Alabama, Mrs. Celia Shull. William Steadman ?

John Chambers and Nath Griffith, partners on the Mississippi line at the White House.

Trade with Indians.

Town lots were sold March 25. William S. Wisdom auctioneer. Sometime during this year Griffith kept a store at Purdy and Peter Shull clerked for him. Indians came to Purdy, having a

passion for red and -- cut money (?) they would sell deer skins. Courthouse built in 1830. The courthouse had a board door and puncheon benches. The jail was made of logs.

These names are written but reason is unknown:

Major Benjamin Wright

McKenzie - 10th district

Thomas Lain - vin

William S. Wisdom, Overton Co, TN, originally from NC

William Steadman - Alabama

John F (could be Burtwell ?)

Joseph & G W Barnett

Boyd & Maclin Cross - Wiley B. Terry, William Ruleman, John Pace - N Alabama

Nolon (?) Surratt

Purdy burned 15 April 1863 – (another page say Aug 7, 1862)

Negro riot July 1867

W. S. Wisdom 72 years old & Richard Harwell the only old settlers living

The first mill built by Boyd Barnett on Cypress

James Reed done a great deal to build up the Town of Purdy. Assisted a great many in starting a portion of the Town being known as the Reed Additions.

W. S. Wisdom, born 14th Nov 1796, moved to the county in 1820, to Purdy in 1828. Was a citizen of the town until he died Nov 19, 1871. Was deputy clerk under Barnett. Was County Clerk. Was never a member of a secret society. Was considered a benefactor to a great many of the citizens.

Peter E. Shull emigrated on Oct 25 (no year stated) from Middle Tennessee. Lived in Purdy until 1836. Engaged in merchandising most of the time. Was elected county clerk in March 1836 and died same year.

John Shull emigrated from middle Tennessee in 1832 was a nephew of Daniel Boone.

W. S. Wisdom worked for his father until 24 years old, then left home to go to school, acquired a practical education. His father died soon afterwards. On Jan 1 1828, moved to Purdy taking care of his father's family. Paid his father's debt to amount of 16.00 dollars and married Jane Anderson in August 1833. Being worth about \$5000. (Note: don't know if this means he was worth \$5,000 or his wife.) His wife died Oct 19, 1852 and he married Mrs. Shull in Dec 1860. At this time had amassed a fortune to the amount of about 250 or 300 thousand. Having large interest in lands. During the war lost heavily and at his death was worth about 140,000 dollars

Sale of Bethel Town lots July 21 & 22 1861

(Note these were questions and answers. Some questions had no answer.)

1. At what time was Bethel laid off?
2. Who laid it off? Answer: Thomas H. Bell
3. What did the town take its name from? Presbyterian Church
4. When did the first (railroad) cars pass? About Dec 25, 1859
5. Who was first P M (Postmaster?) R. D. Wilson
6. What army built the forts during the war? Federals - Harvey & Morrison

7. What army left the railroad at Bethel to reinforce the Confederates at Shiloh?
Cheatham's Division
8. Where was the depot located?
9. How many dry good stores now? Five
10. How many groceries? One
11. How many other kinds of businesses? One blacksmith shop, one steam — mill, one hotel, one church, one school house. Express and telegraph office
12. What is the population? 118 whites, 65 colored.

Questions for the Centennial History of the County of McNairy.

(Some not answered)

1. When was county organized? Act passed 8th of Oct 1823. Court organized early 1824.
2. Who were the first county officers and were they elected or appointed?
Chairman County Court: Pressly Christian. County Clerk: Joseph Barnett. Sheriff: Henry Wilson. Register: William Murray. Circuit Clerk: Maclin Cross
3. Who were the first settlers of the county? John Chambers, Abel Oxford, Mathew Moss, Nathaniel Griffith, Peter Shull, Rankin, Beaty, Kerby, Joshua Ferguson, Lany Moore, John Carman ??? Sweat???
4. Where did they emigrate from?
5. When and by whom was the courthouse built? And Jail?
Courthouse 1828 or 29 by James Reed and Henry Kirkland.
6. Who surveyed or laid off the Town of Purdy and when? Benjamin Wright
7. Who was the first representative of the county ever had in the state legislature?
John M. Johnson
8. How many State Senators did the county ever furnish?
Meeks, F Hurst, John Aldridge, S. L. Warren.
9. How many members of Congress and who were they?
John V. Wright elected three terms and one in Confederate Congress
10. How many criminals have ever suffered the extreme penalty of the law and who?
One - Henry - colored
11. What political party first had the ascendancy in the county? Whigs
12. What have been the various changes politically since? How long did each party hold its power?
13. How many newspapers ever published? What years published? By who? Names of the papers before and since the war?
14. How many county ----ever held and what years?
15. What time was the courts suspended during the war, when reorganized?
16. What day was the Town of Purdy burned? First Aug 7, 1862 (Another page says Apr 15, 1863) - Second ?

17th District

McNairy Station - June 20, 1876

Jas W. Pace, Esq

Dear Sir:

The 17th civil district of McNairy County is comparatively a new district and ----- is but little of importance to note from here. I however submit the following which may help you some.

About the year 1871, by an order of the county Court of McNairy County, there was formed from the parts of the 3rd, 4th, 7th, 8th, and 14th districts, what is now known as the 17th civil district of McNairy County. The principal part of which was taken from the original 3rd district.

The first settlers of this district were John Woodbern, Robert Rankin, Charley Clayton, John Kerby and E. F. Dodd. The principle part of them emigrated from the state of North Carolina and settled here some 55 to 60 years ago. They are all dead now.

There is now living in this district 3 persons who claim to be over 75 years of age. Jack Clayton, colored, says he is about 100 years old. Emigrated to this county from NC 50 to 60 years ago. Robin Jones, colored, claims to be 94 years old. He was born in the State of Maryland, been here some 20 years. Mrs. Elizabeth Spears (?) white, is 76 years of age. Came from NC some 45 years ago. Hugh Kerby is said to have been the first male white child born in McNairy County and this occurred in the 17th district (at that time it was the 3rd district.) This was somewhere near 60 years ago. He has been dead several years. There is not one of the first settlers of this district now living.

John T Warren

16th District

1st The Sixteenth Civil District was settled about the year 1819 by William Markham, John Plunk, James Robinson, Fredric Sewell, William Canday and others.

2nd None of the old heads are alive.

3rd The majority emigrated from N. Carolina.

4th. There are 3 men and 3 women between the ages of 75 and 84 years.

5th. Sidney Plunk was born on the head waters of Big Sweet Lips Creek. The first born in the district and is still living in it.

This district is well watered with springs and creeks. The soil is generally sandy and well adapted to the cultivation of corn, cotton, wheat and potatoes. This district has 4 public school houses and they are used for churches.

This district was formed in about the year 1857.

We cannot expect many our district to attend on the 5th at the celebration, they are so behind with their crops on account of the heavy rains. I never witnessed such a destruction. I hope you will excuse my short history of this district as I was confined at home repairing our farm. J H. Miller

Historical of the 3rd Civil District

First settler generally from North Carolina. Parties over 75 years: 2 males 2 females. The oldest Mrs. Holderful (?) 90 years. Mrs. Garner Deleas (?) One year ago 106 years old. This district was formed in about the year 1857.

Jas W. Mitchell

To Wm C. Shull:

Will you please write me answers to these few questions if you can.

How many stores in the county? 21

How many saloons? 5

How many steam mills - saw or grist? 6

How many physicians? 15

How many marriage license issued from Jun 20th 1875 to June 20 1876? 150

The **1st District** situated in the southwest corner of the county was settled mostly by emigrants from North Carolina. Among the earliest of whom are mention, the names of C. Lee, M. Moss, the Newtons, Flowers, Bensons, Ingrahams and Warrens. None of whom are known to be living at present. John G. Gooch is also an early settler and is yet living. He was elected to the office of Justice of the Peace in this district on the 1st Saturday in March 1836, the first election that ever occurred for that office (they having been appointed heretofore.) He has held the position ever since, a period of a little over 40 years. The greater part of the time was Chairman of the County Court. He is a Primitive Hardshell Baptist and the father of 22 children. There are 2 men and 5 women over 75 years old. There are 3 good water mills in the district and the Memphis & Charleston Railroad passes through it (the first district). There is not business point in this district except a Flag Station of the Railroad called the Big Hill and very little business is now done there. There are assessed in this district 38,624 acres of land valued at 112,037 dollars. In 1870 there was a population of 812 whites and 20 colored, a total of 832. The population is supposed to have increased about 1/4 since that time.

June 15th day 1876

---- of the Executive Committee in compliance of your request, I give you the following list: (concerning **First District of McNairy County**)

1. District was first settled by ----- M Moss, Newtons, Flowers, Benson, Ingraham, Warren.
2. Mostly emigrants from N. C. Of whom are mostly all dead or gone.
3. About 2 men over 75 years of age and about 10 over 70 years of age. About 5 women over 75 years old, about 10 women over 70 years of age.
4. The first child that was born in the 1st district was born where its mother was but when I don't know the date.
5. The first district in McNairy county is situated in the southwest corner of said county and is generally the turning point of county elections and is composed of good citizens. Has two fine streams passing through it for machinery and has the Memphis & Charleston Rail Road running through said district and 3 good water mills. Signed **J. G. Gooch**

Bethel Tenn, June 22nd 1876

To Mr. T. F. Sanders, Co School Supt:

Please give me the following information:

1. How many school districts in the county.
2. How many schools taught last year including subscription school?

(Note: didn't find the answers to these questions)

William Wisdom who moved to Purdy in 1828:

William S. Wisdom was born the 14th day of Nov 1796 in the State of North Carolina, moving with his father soon afterwards to Overton County, Tennessee from whence he emigrated in 1820 to the County of McNairy, it being then a portion of Hardin County. They settled in the 8th district at a place called White Plains. Here he worked for his father until long after he had passed the age of 21 years, then determined to educate himself he left home with a capital of \$2.00, the gift of his father. Effected an arrangement with a friend to board him while attending school and by hard study soon acquired a practical education. About this time his father died and left a family that had to depend entirely upon him for support. On the 1st day of January 1828, he moved to Purdy, the County Seat, and some time afterwards entered into a co-partnership with Wiley B. Terry and Peter Shull and went into the mercantile business, having no capital but the sum of \$400 that he borrowed for the purpose. In August 1833 he married to Miss Jane Anderson. At this time an examination of his affairs showed that he had supported his father's family - paid the entire indebtedness of his father to the amount of \$16.00 dollars - paid himself out of debt and was worth \$5,000 dollars, continuing his business in the mercantile line. He entered largely into land speculations and has during his life been the owner of more than half the farms of McNairy County. He at one time was elected to the office of County Court Clerk. This being the only office he ever held, except as deputy clerk under Joseph Bennett. On the 19th day of Oct 1852 he was grieved at the death of his wife. In all his business transactions he was fair, honest and truthful, never misrepresenting, non-failing to pay or collect to the minutest exactment. In the month of December 1860 he was again married to Mrs. Celia Shull, the widow of his former partner in business. Having been very successful in business, he was the possessor of a great number of slaves and a great quantity of lands and when the war broke out was worth 250-300 thousand dollars. During this sorry wrong conflict he was among the sympathizers of the south and was a heavy loser of property, the close of the war finding him the possessor of little else than his real estate. He died in the Town of Purdy where he had lived 43 years on the 19th of October 1871, he was the possessor of about 140,000 dollars, the county losing his usefulness and the poor a benefactor. His life was in every way worthy as an example to the rising youths of the county.

Poetry by A. W. Stovall

Purdy in 1857

I dreamed a dream in daylight of forty years ago;
I stood a boy in Purdy, and watched things come and go.
She was the queen of beauty, upon a grand old hill,
No scars of war defaced her, twas old Purdy still.

I saw an old time circus, wind down the eastern hill,
Dan Rice and Tony Pastor passed near Burrell Adams mill.
I saw the older school days, light hearted, free from care,
McMahan, Dudley, McCowate and Johnson all were there.

I saw the boys in winter, the girls in summertime,
and noticed older matrons, ahumming some old rhyme.
I saw Floss Moore's old fiddle, Sam Henry's old cornet,
John Stumph and Dahl Berry, the band seems playing yet.

I saw the old Whig Banner and read of other days.
The stage it came in early, I heard the bugle lays.
I saw the slaves of old time, a working with a mill,
Old Henry Walsh and Comfort, Bill Tooge and little Bill.

I went to Blackwell's tanyard, and Billy Ruleman's, too.
Saw troughs conveying water, twas best that they could do.
We boys through Wisdom's meadow, and then through Jerry Clouds,
Made way for Burney's millpond and swam with merry crowds.

I saw the old time blacksmith shop, and cabinet makers true.
I saw Kinciad's old tavern, and Patrie Braden's too.
The college it was building, for coming youths to tread,
The trowel, saw and hammer, were used by those now dead.

Out north I saw the waterfall, and west old Walker's spring.
From top to stern the beechen tree, with gravened names that ring.
The springs and swings and grassy ----- we children
were clothed in nature's living green and gorgeously arrayed.

I saw the cakes of Mrs Swan, of Rains and Maxwell grand
And wagon loads of melons came, the Brown and Macky brand.
The old time fair attracted me, which honest farmers made,
The luscious fruit and staff of life, and not mock lemonade.

Oh! Happy is the daylight dream, of Purdy long ago,
Twas pleasure in the sunshine, and happiness in snow,
The artist paint a picture, and make it much like heaven,
And for a perfect model, sketch Purdy in fifty seven.

August 17, 1897, the foregoing prepared to be read at the Purdy reunion Sept 16, 1897.
A. W. Stovall

The Old Dinner Horn

I've heard the songs of the woodbird sung, since the day that I was born,
Heard musical chime of many bells rung, but will always remember the old dinner horn.
The dinner horn hung on the old cabin wall, when I plowed 'mong long rows of corn,
My mule would stop all and answer the call, when I welcomed the old dinner horn.
Oh! The burdens and sweat, I shall never regret, of the many long evenings and morn,
The joy 'twould beget, I'll never forget, on hearing the old dinner horn.
In sweltering June, there is scarcely a tune, when plowing to lay by the corn,
That's never too soon, and always a boon, like the lay of the old dinner horn.

This dinner horn was used at my father's farm house to call my brothers and myself and such others as were not present at meal time to dinner. I remember this particular horn as far back as 1862, say 41 years ago. March 26, 1903, A. W. Stovall

Extract from a letter from Mars. **Mary E. Allen** of Union City, Tenn. My sister in reply to an enquiry as to her recollection as to how, when and where our parents came into possession of "The Old Dinner Horn."

"As well as I can remember: Pa and all the old and young too that were at home at that time went to Shiloh battle or so near that they saw them carrying the wounded to the hospital, on the second day, Monday, April 1862. I won't be positive they went on Monday but I have always remembered it this way. Old **Lawson Sanders**, some of his oldest boys and several others started together and happened up with crowds going. Some of the Sanders boys got some horns at the slaughter pens where they killed cattle for the soldiers. After they got home they gave Pa this horn - it had never been used. He fixed it as it was when my children sold it. Mother gave it to **Mr. Allen** after we moved to the Owens place to use as she used it in war time. In 1880, I let Avon and Johnnie have it to play with. The boys all came to blow it with them. Finally **Mr. Mayne**, the old school teacher that lived at the cedar grove asked me why I did not stop them from making such a noise with it, said it worried him. So **John Piggott** got after them to give it to him. I would not let them do so. After that, he told them his Papa said he could buy it for a dinner horn. I then told them to ask Mother, she did not care, so it went. We have often wished we had not sold it.

(Note: this was typed on stationary of Stovall & Stovall, Attorneys at Law and Solicitors in Chancery. A. W. Stovall and David Stovall. East Side Court Square, 2nd floor Stovall Building, Rooms 3 and 4. Jackson, Tenn. Dated March 29, 1903

SUNDAY MORNING HATS

Titled by Nancy Kennedy, transcriber

I went to church on Sunday and sat well to the rear,
I scarce could see the preacher, but fairly well could hear.
For sitting just before me was a hat with plumage gay,
And where I would see the preacher, the hat was in the way.
The preacher preached a sermon, the outlines I did hear,
For whatever hats before me, I must see to make it clear.
A lingering doubt came o'er me his gestures doubt would free,
But ah; the hats before me and only cross rays see.
I listened quite intently, to gather up the threads,

But bless my soul I couldn't for millinery heads.
I failed to catch the sentence, twould make it plain to me,
And understand the sermon if I his face could see.
Oh ladies, leave your hats at home or lay them in your lap,
Or let us have a tier of seats and from you fix a gap.
Place a full aisle between us and your hat wear as you please,
And we can hear the sermons and see his face with ease.

Monday morning, June 14, 1897, after being at the Methodist Church
where Rev G. T. Sullivan preached and I sat behind a lady whose hat was in the way.
A. W. Stovall

Col Fletcher

When President McKinley planned out a holiday,
And came to our Centennial to see us have our way,
The greatest preparation by Tennessee was made
And Fletcher went to Nashville to join the great parade.
Bob Taylor's staff was ready and Colonel's were galore,
They marched as if determined to reach the golden shore.
And Bushnel's Corps of Colonels sought not the pleasant shade,
When Fletcher went to Nashville to join the great parade.
The Colonels and the Captains in tall magnificence,
And every other officer were graceful in a sense,
Good looking men and women did from the cavalcade,
When Fletcher went to Nashville to join the great parade.
The marching of the soldiers, on great Ohio day,
And Cavalry Confederates had on the old time gray,
The soldiers and policemen formed Ohio Governor's aid ,
When Fletcher went to Nashville to join the great parade.
The auditorium was a sight, ne'er to be seen again,
The nations fairest ladies, applauded with the men.
The tall form of John Sherman lent luster undismayed,
When Fletcher went to Nashville to join the great parade.
The ladies of the Hermitage in true patriotic mood,
Presented to McKinley, a cane from Jackson's wood,
And praised the rugged honesty, their hero had displayed,
And Fletcher went to Nashville and joined the great parade.
The decorated banquet hall the honored guests delighted,
To spend three hours a dining where privates weren't invited.
Colonel Fletcher's reputation for dining's long been made,
And Fletcher's will sustained it, just after the parade.
I saw the well drilled soldier and Colonel Fletcher's sword,
And pitied swarthy Spaniards if McKinley gave the word.
For Fletcher will go to Cuba, down where the trocha's made,
Just as he went to Nashville, to join the great parade.
Colonel Fletcher, he's so stately and trimly made and tall,
For soldierly appearance, the Colonel led them all.
The women said he's handsome in uniform arrayed,
When Fletcher went to Nashville and joined the great parade.

Occasion of parade, June 11, 1897, President McKinley's visit to Centennial Exposition.

Written June 14, 1897, Jackson, Tenn. A. W. Stovall

REUNION HELD AT PURDY - SEPT 16, 1897
A. W. STOVALL - RESPONDS TO WELCOME ADDRESS

From very many sections of our county we have today gathered to loiter amid the haunts of the long ago, to revive memories that are hallowed by age, sweetened by experience, and sanctified by reflections, to meet face to face with those whom a kind providence in infinite wisdom permitted to have a home in the beautiful, historic, town of Purdy, a town around which cluster touching reminiscences of other and better days. A town on which the vicissitudes of time and circumstance have laid a heavy hand, one that even amid her ruins and desolation is picturesque and enchanting.

What memories well up in the hearts of those of us who saw Purdy in the zenith of her glory. She was the peer of the proudest, and no town of any size or station ranked her in the intelligence of her men or the virtue of her women.

About forty-three years ago I first saw Purdy. I came there a boy with my parents from Moss Creek, in this county, where I first beheld the light of day. I had then no recollection of ever having seen a brick chimney or a white house. The rippling waters, the primeval forest, the fruitful and undulating soil of that section at that early day prepared me to appreciate life this godly land.

Purdy was then about thirty years old. Her beautiful streets, costly houses, rich gardens, aromatic flowers, brave men and women, pretty girls and playful boys, presented to me a picture of perfection in a town that all the progress of that age, the allurements of fashion, symmetry, architecture, have not produced its equal or its like.

At that time I had never had a fight, worn no stone bruises, didn't know how to "wrestle or box." Had never played leapfrog or town ball, never gone with a pretty girl to a party, had never flown a kite nor played snowball. All these things I learned at Purdy.

I took my first lesson in fighting with my old friend Jeff Walker, who thanks to a kind providence, is in attendance today. This early lesson was given the first trip I made down to town with John D. Gullett, whom providence permits to dispense sunshine to his neighbors in an adjoining county.

I have always felt under lasting obligations to those boys for the early lesson they gave me, for, to know how to fight, is a necessary accomplishment for any country boys who moves to town.

God bless the boys who lived in Purdy forty years ago. The memory of their association is to me sacredly sweet, and in recalling those early days, we are wont to enquire of the whereabouts of those early associates.

Where are the boys of 1857? Many of them are gray-haired grandsires, many of them are living in other sections and in other states, and many, very many, sleep in the silent tomb of our fathers. Could we call the roll of the schools taught by McMohon, Stribbling, Dudley, (Mrs. ?) McCowatt or by Alva Johnson and B. H. Malone. How many would be missing from our ranks.

We would call in vain for my good brother, Dave Stovall, for Ben Walker, Campbell Moore, Tab Crump, Tab Combs, Charley Crump, Andy Sanders, Ned Sanders, James Johnson, John Johnson, Polk Gullett, Ben McCann, Campbell Hurst, Bascom Riggs, Frank Holeman, Billie Kincaid, George Chambers, Booker Swaim, John Kerr, and many, very many others.

\ In all this vast, assemblage there is scarcely a tithe of the school boys of that day present. Let us look on this happy, this joyous occasion, hope that their immortal souls are having a happy reunion of Purdy spirits around the Great White Throne.

Retrospective reminiscence has charms to those who have passed the meridian of life which are unknown to the younger generation. One of the greatest charms of old age is to look backward and view with pride the slow receding years of the misty past. And though our paths may have been well strewn with sorrows to leaven our many joys, we love to live the life over again in fond retrospection and pleasant memories.

A few days ago I spent an afternoon with my old friend, Isaac W. Nash, and looked over copies of the West Tennessee Argus and Banner newspapers published by him in 1867-8-0 and 1860. What a pleasure it is to look over Purdy papers forty years old. Mr. Nash is deserving the thanks of all lover of old times for their careful preservation.

I read the directories of the Masonic and Temperance Societies of Purdy and vicinity of 1858. The Masonic Lodge No 132, that met upstairs at the brick Church in 1858 was officered by: James F. McKinley, Worshipful master; I. F. Huddleson, Senior Warden; R. W. Pool, Junior Warden; B. R. Harris, Secretary; P. Cates, Treasurer; James Warren, Senior Deacon; Arch Houston, Junior Deacon; and W. H. Tacker, Tyler. Not a single one of them but has crossed to the unknown shore.

The Independent Templers official directory of 1858, which met at Purdy, showed the names of Dr. Daniel Barr, President; I. W. Nash, Secretary; C. F. Sawyer, Vice President; T. M. Bell, Secretary; R. F. Stribbling, Conductor; B. F. Joplin, Assistant Conductor; R. M. Doolin, inside guard and S. P. Sanders, outside guard. Only three of these are living, one in Mississippi and one in Tennessee, who is with us today.

The Independent Temperate Brother who met at W. G. Wilson's, four and one half miles northwest of Purdy, in 1858, were officered as follows: J. W. Wilson, President; W. C. Wilson, Assisting President; R. P. C. King, Vice President; Ben Walker, Recording Secretary; I. F. Stovall, Conductor; J. S. Barrum, Chaplain. But a single one of this company survives who is with us today.

The first fair was held at Purdy, October 13, 14, 15, 1586.

On February 14, 1857, a call was made in the Argus for all favorable to the motion on a college to meet at W. S. Wisdom's counting room February 18, 1857. April 18, 1857 was set apart to locate the college. The first school opened at the brick college January 17, 1859. The Board of Trustees and Faculty of the school at its opening were as follows: Board of Trustees: W. S. Wisdom, President; Macklin Cross, Secretary; A. R. Hall, Treasurer; J. F. McKinely, Alford Moore, D. M. McKinzie, F. P. Duke, C. C. Lewter, W. C. Kendel.

Faculty - Rev. A. M. Johnson, President; James P. Baldrige, Professor of Languages. Of the board and faculty, consisting of eleven men as mentioned in the prospectus, not a single one survives. They have crossed to the other shore. Peace to their ashes. Prof B. H. Malone, whose presence here today lends interest to the occasion was Professor of Ancient Languages. Subsequent to the date of the publication of the prospectus, and Professor Baldrige of

Mathematics.

The West Tennessee Argus suspended publication May 14, 1859. The Whig Banner issued the first number April 22, 1859.

November 20, 1858, the Mobile and Ohio Railroad is reported finished from the Mississippi River to Jackson and doubts expressed as to whether the rails would ever be laid through McNairy County.

It is a source of very great pleasure to revisit the scenes of my early childhood. So it is with many others here on this occasion.

Today I saw where I used to build circus tents with strings and newspaper, where I played marbles, ran foot races, played town ball, "base," bull pen and jumped "half-hammon," where I went to school, where I first learned that girls were pretty, where my youthful heart beat faster than watch ticks and where I first earned a five cent piece.

Thank God for the faculty of memory. It carries me back to the sweet days of childhood. It permits us to review the faces and join in the laughs of long gone friends. We thus see our early struggles, our triumphs and our failures. By the aid of blessed memory we can see the lovely forms and all but hear the cheerful voices and merry laughter of early associates. God bless the reunion! May those who attend be the better for it.

It does me good to be with you, to shake the hands of friends. God bless the one who invented hand-shaking, to join with tears the sorrowful, to look backward with the aged and onward with the young and bid them God speed in their hopes and ambitions.

McNairy County by Ancil W. Stovall

They say I came from the backwoods of McNairy County. Yes! I did come from that God-favored land. For 38 years of my brief existence McNairy County was my home. In her sacred soil lie buried remnants of four generations of my blood. That cherished land to me is a sacred memory, I love her productive vales and everlasting hills, her people are my people and mine hers. She encouraged my youthful hopes and early ambitions, her people have shared with me my sorrows and exalted at my successes. It would be unreasonable in me if I did not share with them their every hope and encourage their ambition.

Possessing a soil that fairly well produces every necessity and most of the luxuries of life, which with her genial sun favored climate she furnishes a home suitable for those closed to divinity.

I stood upon the massive rocks which lay on the crest of her old bald-knob and overlooked the vales of little Hatchie and witnessed a midsummer panorama, so beautiful in natural architecture that a tongue not divinely directed would fail to describe.

I have seen from that summit the far-rolling hills and natural forests clothed in the beauty of every hue and color an autumnal sun could paint after months of summer kisses. I have stood in the low-lands of McNairy county and watched the swelling of maple buds and alder blossoms in February, have seen the peach and plum orchards garlanded in pink and white blooms in March, saw dogwood blossoms in April invite youthful hearts fishing for the finny tribe, and witnessed her streams of sparkling water wind through a labyrinth of honeysuckles and caught the aromatic breeze perfumed by sweet-bessie blooms that line her hazel grown hill-sides.

I've drunk from her eternal springs of cold water that bubble from under her hills out of banks of pure white sand. Yes! I came from the backwoods of McNairy, where the trees grow taller and shade more dense, where men grow stronger and braver and women prettier than anywhere else on God's green earth.

"Twas there I caught the first inspiration of ambitious hope that led me to think life worth living. "Twas there I played upon the mossy banks of her enduring streams. "Twas there I courted and learned to love the woman who has shared with me the joys and sorrows of life for 26 long years and who is the mother of my children. Yes, God bless McNairy County and her people.

Speech delivered by Stovall at Knights of Pythias Lodge, Jackson, Tenn 1897.

Also published in Stovall's book titled "Scraplets" in 1909

SOME OF THE BENEFITS TO BE DERIVED FROM THE REMOVAL OF THE COUNTY SEAT.

By A. W. Stovall

Fellow citizens, let me admonish you that if you fail to remove your county seat this time, it is only delaying a great work that must sooner or later be done. Then why delay. Delays are dangerous - all inland and non commercial towns must sooner or later give place to others with greater advantages.

With your county seat on the railroad you insure to yourselves and your children a market or a commercial point in your county that will live when you have passed from off the stage of action. One that will grow brighter and brighter and move onward and upward long as a liberty loving people shall preserve American institutions. You will have a county town through which the might avenues of commerce will daily wind its progressive way, in which you can stand and with the aid of the mighty network of electric telegraph hold converse with the civilized world.

Connecting yourselves as it were with the manufacturing cities of the east, the coal and mineral regions of the north, the grain elevators of the west, and the rice and sugar plantations of the south.

It will promote industry, encourage agriculture, invite commerce, create competition, renew confidence, develop latest resources and advance the manufacturing interest of the whole county. It will furnish our citizens with a home market for the various products of the county. Including cotton, corn, rye, wheat, potatoes, etc. Also chickens, eggs, butter, hides, fallow beeswax and every article demanded by the commerce of the nation.

It will reduce taxation, increase the revenues of the county. Build up first class schools, rear churches and foster the various enterprises so much needed by our own county to place her in an equal footing with her sister counties of the state.

The county of McNairy is unequalled in area and extent by but few counties in our state, it has a population almost as extensive. Equally as industrious and quite as intelligent as any sister county in the state. We are blessed with a climate that equals the far famed valley of prosperity - framed by the gentle breezes and soft ----- of nature's most grand and magnificent cloud land. We have a soil as rich and productive as the idealistic Eldorado or the wonderful valley of the historic Nile. In fact the handiwork of God has shaped the hills and valleys of McNairy County to suit the taste of the most varied minds. I love her grand old hills, admire her gracious vales and boast of her tillage and ----- with as much patriotism as the Swiss peasant's boast of their ---- clad mountains of patriotic Switzerland.

Nothing remains to be done by nature to insure prosperity to unborn generations in McNairy County. But much depends upon the vigor enterprise and industry of the citizens of today. Among the many needed reforms for the citizens of McNairy County, there is one in comparison with which all other smirk into insignificance: to wit: the removal of the county seat to the railroad, from which manifold blessings will flow.

In a letter from the Tennessee State Library and Archives to David Stovall, dated February 24, 1960:

Ancil Walter Stovall represented McNairy County and Hardeman counties in the House of the 41st General Assembly and in the Senate of the 44th. He also represented Madison and Henderson counties in the Senate of the 49th. He served as a Judge from 1913 to 1928.

Records of a Debating Society 1868-1869

To which **A. W. Stovall** belonged and was Secretary:

(Transcribers note: These notes have no historical value are very interesting.)

Bethel, Tenn. Feb 21, 1868. Society met pursuant to agreement. The roll called. R. W. Tatum, Harrison McCrimmon, absent.

Question argued and decided in favor of the negative that the rebels shall not vote.

We then proceeded to arrange the next subject which was moved, seconded, carried, that we have for debate the next night: Which is the greatest passion, love or ambition?

Love:

J. M. Stovall, W. A. Lewis

H. M. McCrimmon, R. W. Tatum

Amibtion:

W. C. Wilson, A. W. Stovall,

J. G. Wilson, D. J. Stovall

Bethel Springs, Tenn. Feb 28th, 1868. Society pursuant to agreement. Roll called, W. A.

Lewis absent. Question argued and decided in favor of affirmative.

D. A. Allen President, H. McRimmon & D. J. Stovall, Judges

We then proceeded to arrange the new subject, which we choose the following resolution:

Resolved that the U. S. Government was justifiable in driving the Indians from this country:

Affirmative they were:

H. McRimmon, W. C. Wilson,

D. J. Stovall, T. J. Shull

Negative were not:

J. G. Wilson, J. M. Stovall

A. W. Stovall, H. A. Lewis

Bethel Springs, Tenn, March 10th 1868. Reading Society met pursuant to adjournment. Members read as follows:

H. McRimmon) gained

W. C. Wilson)

T. J. Warmack)

J. A Wilson) gained

W. C. Wilson Jr)

D. J. Stovall) gained

A. F. Hendrix)

W. R. Lumpkin) gained

Miss M. E. Stovall)

Miss Belle Woodourne) gained

Dialogue between Miss Louisa Baxter and

Miss Dillie Stovall

President W. L. Womack. Judges were Thomas Croskey and T. H. W. Turner.

Bethel Tennessee, March 13, 1868. Debating Society met pursuant to agreement. The roll called. R. W. Tatum absent. It was moved that T. J. Shull take the place of the absentee. We then proceeded to discuss the question for which we appointed W. L. Wormack president; judges Thomas Croskey and W. M. Hill. Decided in favor of the negative. We then chosen for our next subject which deserves the greatest honor Columbus or Washington.

Columbus Affirmative:

H. McRimmon, J. M. Stovall

D. J. Stovall, A. W. Lewis

Washington Negative:

J. G. Wilson, W. C. Wilson

A. W. Stovall, T. J. Shull

Bethel Tenn, March 17, 1868. Reading Society met and read as follows:

W. C. Wilson Sr) gained

W. C. Wilson Jr)

D. J. Stovall)

H. M. Hendrix) gained

J. G. Wilson) gained

T. J. Womack)

W. R. Lumpkin)

A. F. Hendrix) gained

A. W. Stovall) gained

H. McRimmon)

F. Hendrix)

O. J. Stovall) gained

Dialogue between Miss Lizzie Hendrix and Miss Belle Woodbourne

Dialogue between M. E. Stovall, Louisa Baxter and Dillie Stovall

Bethel Tenn, March 27th 1868. Society met pursuant to agreement. Question argued and decided

in favor of the negative Washington (Washington deserves the greatest honor.). President: Thos Croskey and Judges A. F. Hendrix and W. R. Lumpkin.

We then chosen for our next subject the following resolution: Resolve that all crimes shall be punishable by death.

Affirmative:

W. C. Wilson, J. M. Stovall,
H. McRimmon, D. J. Stovall

Negative:

A. W. Stovall, T. J. Shull,
W. A. Lewis, J. G. Wilson

Bethel Springs, Tennessee, April 10, 1868. Society met pursuant to agreement. Roll called and business proceedings. Attended to question argued and decided in favor of the affirmative. (That all crimes shall be punishable by death). Committee appointed: Ladies: Liddie Wilson, Lizzie Hendrix, Mary Croskey, Mary Black. Gents: T. M. Lain, J. W. Rhodes, J. M. Sanders. We chosen for our next subject the following which was proposed by H. McRimmon. Is man capable of self government as a mass or body?

Affirmative

A. W. Stovall, J. M. Stovall,
T. J. Shull, J. G. Wilson

Negative:

H. McRimmon, W. C. Wilson,
W. A. Lewis, D. J. Stovall

April 24, Society met pursuant to agreement. Roll called. W. C. Wilson & T. J. Shull absent. Present question postponed on motion by the absence of said members and the question agreed upon for debate was as follows: Which is the strongest passion love or ambition?

Affirmative - Love:

A. W. Stovall, J. M. Stovall
H. McRimmon, W. R. Lumpkin

Negative - Ambition:

W. A. Lewis, J. G. Wilson,
D. J. Stovall, A. F. Hendrix

We also appointed F. Conner as president and then proceeded to argue the subject which was deliberately argued and the final decision given in favor of the affirmative - love. It was then moved to adjourn with agreement to argue the subject as before stated on page 69. House then adjourned. Secretary A. W. Stovall

Bethel Tenn May 15th 1868. Society met pursuant to agreement. Question argued and decided in favor of the affirmative - that man is capable of self government. The question first on page 69. President F. Conner. Judges T. Croskey & G. D. Wilson with (?) Miss Lizzie Hendrix & Mollie Black.

Next question was chosen and as follows: Which deserves the greatest honor a warrior or a statesman. Question to be argued on the night of the 29th as follows:

Affirmative - Warrior:

Wm A. Lewis, J. M. Stovall,
J. G. Wilson, D. J. Stovall

Negative - Statesman:

A. W. Stovall, W. C. Wilson,
J. T. Shull, G. D. Wilson

President F. Conner. Decided in favor of the negative.

Bethel Springs, Tennessee, May 29th, 1868. Society met pursuant to agreement. Roll called as usual. The question argued and decided in favor of the negative - statesman. Decision left entirely to the President F. Conner.

We then proceed to choose another subject which was chosen as follows: Is war natural?
Affirmative - yes: W. C. Wilson, A. W. Stovall,
W. A. Lewis, G. D. Wilson
Negative - nay: J. M. Stovall, T. J. Shull,
J. G. Wilson, D. J. Stovall

Bethel, June 12, 1868. Society met pursuant to agreement. The roll was called and the following members absent: T. J. Shull and W. A. Lewis. The question argued and decided in favor of (not stated). President Carman gave the decision.

Society agreed to on the night of the 20th (to) argue the same subject that was argued the (?) 20th 1867, also to celebrate the 20th of June 1868. Question is as follows: Which does man enjoy himself best in pursuit of an object or in possession of the same?
Affirmative: (Not appointed) Negative: (not appointed) Said subject was not argued on the 20th but postponed and on the evening of the 20th we had a grand picnic and also some addresses made by the following members: W. A. Lewis, A. W. Stovall, W. C.. Wilson and opening remarks by J. M. Stovall which was followed by the others.

Meeting postponed until July 24th, 1868 which we agreed to argue the same subject as chosen before which is as follows: Which does man enjoy himself most - in pursuit of an object or in possession of the same. Members chose as follows:

Affirmative - Pursuit: J. G. Wilson, J. M. Stovall, J. McRimmon
D. J. Stovall, W. R. Lumpkin,
A. F. Hendrix
Negative - Possession: A. W. Stovall, W. C. Wilson, G. D.
Wilson, W. A. Lewis, H. M.
Hendrix, J. T. Wilson

Bethel July 24th 1868. Society met pursuant to agreement. Roll called and business commenced as usual. The question argued and argued in favor of the negative - possession. The question for debate for the 7th of August is as follows: Which does a man desire the most: information from reading or traveling.

Affirmative - Reading: J. G. Wilson, J. M. Stovall, H. McRimmon,
D. J. Stovall, W R. Lumpkin, A. F. Hendrix
Negative: Traveling
A W Stovall, W C Wilson, G D Wilson
W A Lewis, H M Hendrix, J W Wilson

Bethel Aug 7th 1868. Society met pursuant to agreement. Roll Called and business commenced at a lawful hour. The question was argued and decided in favor of the negative - traveling. President F. D. Carman, judges Thomas Croskey & T. T. Wilson.

It was moved and carried that we argue the following subject viz: Which is the most attractive to the eye of man - the art of man or the works of nature?

Affirmative: The eye of man
Negative: the works of nature

A. W. Stovall, W. C. Wilson, G. D. Wilson
W. A. Lewis, J. W. Wilson, W. R. Lumpkin

J. G. Wilson, J. M. Stovall, H. McRimmon
D. J. Stovall, A F. Hendrix, J. M. Hendrix

Bethel, August 18th, 1868. The question was (?) Negative (the works of nature)
Moved and second that we argue on our next meeting: Which is the strongest passion of man - love or ambition?

Affirmative: Love

Negative: Ambition

J. J. Swim, A. W. Stovall, J. G. Wilson,
W. A. Lewis, J. M. Stovall, W. C. Wilson

H. McRimmon, J. W. Wilson
W. P. Conner, G. D. Wilson

Negative gained - Ambition that's manly. Passion that excels womanly - love.

Bethel Tenn, May 29, 1869 Society met pursuant to arrangement. Qestion agreed was as follows: Resolve that there is more eloquence produced from the pulpit than from the bar?

Affirmative - Pulpit

Negative - Bar

J. M. Stovall, W. C. Wilson, J. G. Wilson
A. B. McCalip

D. F. Reynolds, A. W Stovall,
W. P. Conner, J. J. Swim

President: F. D. Carmen. Judges Sion Tatum, J. J. Williams, J. K. McAfee.

Decision given as a tie. Secretary A W Stovall

Bethel June 5, 1869. Society met pursuant to agreement. The question argued was as follows: Resolve that fear has more influence on the mind of man then the force of imagination.

Affirmative

Negative

D. F. Reynolds, A. W. Stovall
J. G. Wilson, R. W. Tatum

J. M. Stovall, W. C. Wilson
W. C. Conner, W. B. Simpson

Judges: D. F. Stovall, J. J. Williams, J. K. McAfee

Protem President: W. L. Womack

Decision given in favor of the negative by a majority of the quorum. Sec. A. W. Stovall.

Adjourned with an agreement to meet on the night of 7th. Instructed to organize for celebration.

Bethel June 7m 1868. Society met, also delegates from the Sunday School. Whereas it was resolved that we do — for the purpose of celebrating the Debating Society and Sunday School union. It was resolved that we appoint a committee of arrangement. Resolved that we appoint the following gentlemen: W. C. Wilson, A. R. McCalip, F. D. Carmen, W. L. Womack

Resolved that this committee must regulate the whole program, have the yard for the tabled prepared, have the table prepared and attend to all such business.

Resolved that we appoint an officer of the day and that he be a legal officer. Resolved that we appoint J. M. Sanders, the deputy sheriff of the county to act as marshal of the day.

Resolved that the gentlemen who intend making speeches on the 19th just make it known what subject they intend discussing by reporting to the committee of arrangement at their first meeting.

Resolved that the committee of arrangement appoint one regulator or marshal and other officers. They resolved that J. M. Stovall act as the marshal.

The speeches on the 19th will commence or open with an address on The Self Culture of

Man And The Beauties Of Education by A. W. Stovall, Sec, followed by an address on Sunday School by Capt D. F. Reynolds, which will be followed by an address on Education And The Benefits Of Debating Societies by John G. Wilson. Concluding speech by Rev P. F. Stovall on the Purpose And Benefit Of Sunday School. Strains of music by the band at the expiration of every speech.

Resolved by the committee that we send a brief statement of the proceedings of the 19th just to Tribune. June 24, 1869.

Bethel Springs, Tennessee, June 26, 1869. Society met pursuant to agreement. Question chosen and agreed in the following form: Which is the most incentive to action? The hope of reward or the fear of punishment.

Affirmative: Hope of Reward

Negative: Fear of Punishment

W. R. Carmen, A. W. Stovall, R. W. Tatum

D. J. Stovall, D. F. Reynolds, J. M Stovall

President Pro Tem: I. F. Stovall. Decided in favor of the negative.

An invitation being extended from the Snake Creek Society to answer for speakers on the 3rd July. We passed the following resolutions:

1st Resolve that we do send delegates to Gilchrist Schoolhouse for that purpose.

2nd Resolve that we send 3 delegates and therefore we nominate the following members:

D. F. Reynolds, A. W. Stovall, J. G. Wilson.

This June 26th, 1869. A. W. Stovall, Secretary

Bethel, Tenn. July 1st 1869. Society met pursuant to adjournment members chosen the following question to be argued: Which can a man gain more knowledge from reading or travel?

Affirmative: Reading

Negative: Traveling

W. P. Conner, W. C. Wilson

J. G. Wilson, R. W. Tatum

Judges: D. F. Reynolds, A. W. Stovall. Decision in favor of the affirmative.

Bethel, Tenn. July 10, 1869. Society met pursuant to agreement. The following subject chosen for discussion. Resolved that love was more influence on the mind of man than ambition.

We appointed W. L. Womack as President. John Webster and W. R. Lumpkins as Judges.

Affirmative: Love

Negative: Ambition

D. F. Reynolds, R. W. Tatum

A. W. Stovall, W. C. Wilson

W. P. Conner, A. F. Hendrix

J. G. Wilson, I. F. Stovall

Decided in favor of the affirmative. We then chosen for our next debate the following subject: Resolved that the face is a true index of man. To be argued on Friday the 23rd July 1869.

By consent of parties it was postponed for two weeks.

Next meeting:

Affirmative: The face is an index of man

Negative: It is not an index

J. G. Wilson, D. F. Reynolds,

W. P. Conner, A. W. Stovall

W. C. Wilson, A. F. Hendrix

R. W. Tatum, W. R. Lumpkin

Decided in favor of the negative - it is not.

July 31. Society met and the following subject argued whether or not a universal suffrage is right.

Affirmative: It is

A. W. Stovall, J. G. Wilson

Negative: It is not

Capt. Reynolds, W. P. Conner

Question chosen for next debate on Aug 5th. Is Capitol punishment right.

(Aug 5)

Affirmative: Is

J. G. Wilson, D. F. Reynolds, W. C. Wilson

Negative Is not

W. P. Conner, A. W. Stovall, Robert Lock

W. L. Womack, president, decided in favor of the negative. We then resolved to argue on the next night the following subject: Resolved that Women Suffrage is right.

Next:

Affirmative: It is

D. F. Reynolds, A. W. Stovall,

J. G. Wilson, R. W. Tatum

A. A. Wilson, President. Decided August 14th in favor of the negative.

Negative: It is not

Robert Lock, W. C. Wilson,

W. P. Conner, J. J. Swin

A PLEA FOR THE COTTON INDUSTRY

December 4, 1895 by A. W. Stovall

Transcriber's Note: To all of us who have picked cotton by hand, or that cotton was our living when growing up - we will appreciate these notes.

The farmers of the south for many years have been much abused and unjustly censured for growing cotton, without perceptible diminution (?) of the acreage planted each successive season. Whereon reduces his acreage in cotton hoping to increase the price, another increases his hoping to share a greater proportion of the advance in price.

When the farmers of our section organize to reduce the acreage to be planted in cotton, vast numbers of the unorganized farmers of the cotton belt intuitively exert themselves for a large crop with an increased acreage.

The secret of the matter is that for a strictly money crop - cotton is a world beaten. I venture the assertion that nowhere on this globe, in no climate, on no soil can there be found a surer or more profitable strictly money crop as the direct product of the soil than the various grades of upland

cotton. No where can be found a product of the soil that will as readily yield bountiful results to unskilled labor as will the cotton plant. Then it is not surprising that I should enter a plea of justification for those who annually persist in raising cotton.

For raiment for men, women and children, the demand for cotton is unequaled by any other single commodity on the globe. Its manufactured product find ready market in every climate, in all kinds of weather and in all conditions of society. No one is either too rich or too poor to be without it entirely. The demand for cotton fabrics is quite universal and its seed when hauled by machinery furnishes an excellent food for beast and a pretty good substitute for lard. But it is not as a food crop that I advocate the growing of cotton, and that I may be fully understood, I suggest that cotton should not be exchanged for food products for man or beast.

It is not profitable to grow cotton to get money to buy corn with. Where ever cotton thrives corn will grow in reasonable abundance. Unskilled labor can produce corn where it can produce cotton and buy cotton. No one should raise cotton to buy corn. The two crops are twin industries and should grow on the same farm, the one for market and the other for a good supply.

No one should cultivate cotton at all, who does not also produce grain grass and meat for home consumption. With these articles of food produced at home and cotton grown for a money crop, success to a marked degree will follow, probably to a greater degree than the same labor and soil will produce by any other method of farming known to civilization.

I do not under rate diversified farming in the South, for that is the great panacea for our many financial ills. But what I want to emphasize is that notwithstanding the abuse heaped upon farmers for their persistency in growing cotton. It is the one great sure and never failing money getting of the world. There is not a single article produce by the combination of sunshine, train, soil and labor that can anything like equal it for certainty in obtaining money. Therefore the development of improved methods in cotton culture and in harvesting and marketing it? So as to give to the planter the greatest net gain. should receive the thoughtful earnest and careful consideration of everyone having a habitation in our race troubled through God favored southland.

Chiefest among the improved methods of this progressive age is one of easiest adoption that already outline in this paper, 'supply the table and the manger' from the same farmer that grows the cotton. When this plan is adopted the victory is already won. This is as well demonstrated this season with corn selling at \$1.00 per bushel as it were some years since at \$1.00 per bushel. Corn is not a profitable money crop unless cotton farmers b— it and thereby make a market for it. It is the sheerest nonsense and is financially suicidal to do so.

I am satisfied that picking cotton with the fingers is a scientific operations necessary to be acquired by thoughtful study and careful practice to insure best results, as is the handling the throttle of the steam engine which speeds the great staple to market. Yet who ever heard of a training school 'that taught a person how to pick cotton?' Who has not known of an instance where the deft and trained fingers of one person could easily and without fatigue gather from 200 to 300 pounds of seed cotton in a day. While there were those working alongside who with greater effort and more fatigue, fully as active and equally as intelligent could not gather 100 pounds in the same length of time.

Strange as it may seem the power of a person to so far out do the efforts of another in the picking of cotton is called a slight, and has never been considered a science that could be learned and acquired like mechanism in other vocations.

Much can be added to the value of cotton by picking it clear of trash, leaves, weed and dirt,

and when ginned and packed with improved machinery in a careful and scientific manner its value will be materially increased. Much carefulness should be indulged in the selection of the quality of seed to be planted, and the selection of soils, the proper time for and the manner in which work should be done to the growing plant and subjects deserving of much profitable scientific research.

Very much good can be realized by those engaged in the cotton industry by the scientific training of the operatives, in the art of planting, plowing, hoeing, picking, ginning and baling, and our agricultural experiment stations might do the country a good service by experimenting along that line.

In almost every other industry except farming, operatives must acquire some scientific knowledge. Such as is learned in training schools or by apprenticeships. But the cultivation and gathering of this valuable plant is left to the unskilled, main strength and awkwardness of those inclined to engage therein. But notwithstanding its adversities and surroundings as money crop this valuable plant that raises aloft its majestic head at midday and bows good evening to the life giving luminary as he sinks from view on each succeeding summer day, has no rival whatever in any product of the soil.

The new method of packing cotton in cylindrical form and covering it with its own manufactured product now being tried in our good West Tennessee, City of Jackson, is deserving of much favorable consideration and careful experimenting. The use of cotton osnabrig (?) twice for covering and dispensing altogether with jute and iron certainly has the merit of providing a new and considerable demand for cotton as well as avoiding compress charges.

It is however along a different line I now want to make a hearty, an earnest and measured appeal to the reflective and intellectual persons engaged in this great industry. Every freight bill paid upon a bale of cotton to Boston or Lowell, to Manchester or Liverpool or upon a bale of sheeting, case of prints, box of clothing or shipment of thread but further emphasizes the fact that cotton should be manufactured where it is grown and it is to this feature of the cotton industry that I ask your earnest consideration.

Where vast deposits of iron ore are discovered thrifty enterprise and cash capital leaps as if by magic and furnace fires and rolling mills turn out the manufactured article on the spot and freight trains carry no waste or slag. When railroads penetrate a primeval forest, when valuable timbers have escaped the ravages of the woodman and destructive axe capital punishment its way therein and even southern energy manufactures, furniture, spokes, cars, sash, doors, boxes and barrels.

Fruits and vegetables are canned in sight of where they are gathered. Brooms are made where broom corn grows. Sugar is refined on the sugar plantations in Louisiana. Tobacco is manufactured where grown in Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee. But it is the exception where cotton, is either carded, spun, wove, cut or made in a thousand miles of the cotton fields. We should manufacture our cotton at home. Why pay progressive storage, compress charges, picking bill, commissions on sales, freight charges to market. Why pay return freight charges on sheeting, plaids, prints and the various articles we must wear of cotton made goods. Why not the middle and southern counties of West Tennessee have cotton manufacturing industries in their midst to consume their cotton. Some portions of the south are gradually awakening to a realization of the true situation by establishing and operating cotton mills in their midst, but not fast enough. They are too timid. Why not West Tennesseans recognize their duty in this regard and do it.

Many appreciate the necessity for manufacturing cotton in the south and realize the

magnitude of this long felt want but honestly believe the south is unable to do it. We are indeed comparatively poor when considered individuals. But collectively we can get together immense wealth. Need I suggest that combination and cooperation is the same road to success. Farmers could afford to lay aside a portion of their crops every year to build factories that will afford a home market for their crops. A tithe from them all would get together much wealth and it is by this means we may hope to ultimately manufacture cotton where it is grown. The sooner we get at it - the better. If we do not do it, our children will, it is the only practical feasible common sense course to pursue.

Our cotton should be spun into thread; wove into cloth; dyed; bleached; cut and made into clothing at home. What is there that is made of cotton which cannot be as cheaply made in West Tennessee as at Lowell, Manchester, Hamburg or Berlin? Shipping spool cotton, bleached domestic and calico from Massachusetts to West Tennessee is as inconsistent as the oft repeated folly of carrying coal to New Castle or the Dutch capturing Holland.

Cooperative or joint stock companies, organized in our section by the aggregated wealth of the farmers who raise the — staple is the only way we may hope to manufacture our cotton at home or reap the full reward of our labor. It is with the planters themselves as to how much longer it shall be deferred. The necessity for it is very apparent.

The owners of wheat fields in Illinois have put their money in the most approved flouring mills and ship flour of the finest quality all over the world. Shall their example be worthless to us who raise cotton?

The necessity for and benefits of manufacturing cotton at home may not be felt or realized by those producing the staple but beyond doubt they are the people to be directly benefited. Thereby, it will mean to them and them alone a saving in freight bills, compress fees, commission on sales, storage fees and other expenses incidental to shipment of cotton. In all, say the least the sum of \$4.00 per bale for this amount is now deducted in every sale of cotton from the time it leaves the wagon until it reaches the factory and it is paid alone by the producer. The merchant, the broker or the manufacturer is affected by this expense. If the expenses incident to the shipment of cotton paid by the farmers of West Tennessee and by them wholly were paid into a common fund for as much as five years to create a fund for cotton manufacturing purposes it would place this section in a fair way to become what the God of nature intended it to be. Not only the finest soil and climate but the most prosperous section of the progressive nation. That I may not violate the rule of brevity prescribed in the preparation of the ----- of this convention I shall conclude this paper with the suggestion that if I have failed to make plain the particular point intended to be pressed, "It is" briefly stated, "the fact that West Tennessee should manufacture cotton."

A. W. Stovall, Dec 4, 1895

