

Mountain Memories

By Gene A. Morrell

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Author's note

From December 1977 through January 1979, I wrote "Mountain Memories," a weekly column, which was published in the *Sullivan County News* in Blountville, Tennessee. These local and family history columns were based on my research of published sources and on oral history derived from my interviews of a number of county residents, many of whom have since passed away.

To the best of my knowledge, this is the first time that all the columns have been published at one time in a single publication.

The columns are listed by the dates they were printed in the newspaper, and I have added a headline to each column to aid readers in quickly determining its topic. Hundreds of individual names and place names are mentioned in the columns, and, to aid readers in locating information of particular interest to them, I have included an index at the end of this book.

Gene A. Morrell

December 15, 1977

Introduction

History abounds in East Tennessee and, especially, Sullivan County.

This is not just history as written in textbooks, or as constituted in established historical monuments, but is also the oral history of local communities that has been handed down from generation to generation.

This history also includes family histories contained on the yellowing, aged pages of old family Bibles, letters from long forgotten relatives, and bits and pieces of papers with timeless notes of births, deaths, or marriages.

Far too often these irreplaceable Bibles or other records have been thoughtlessly destroyed or lost. Far too often the mortal sources of history, the grandmothers and others, have died and taken their accumulated stories of local history with them, with none of their knowledge being recorded.

The purpose of this column is to prevent, in part, the further loss of some of this history.

Many people do not have the proper means of permanently recording their family histories or their memories of past events or people. Publishing a family history or other book is often a complex matter, and the costs of such a venture can be prohibitive.

In this column, this writer will gather and record, as space allows, the sidelights of local and family histories. Contributors of material are solicited, and although this writer cannot promise that all the material submitted will be published, or published immediately, he will attempt to record as much of the history of this local area as possible.

December 22, 1977

Civil War in Sullivan County

Sullivan County, "The Little Confederacy."

During the Civil War, most of East Tennessee was a sea of Union sentiment, but Sullivan County was an island of Confederate sympathy in that sea.

The people of the county had strong economic and ideological ties with the Virginia Valley and the Southern cause. Tennessee held three referendums on the question of secession, and the majority of voters in Sullivan County voted three times to withdraw from the union.

Numerous military units, both Union and Confederate, were organized in the county. Husbands, brothers, and sons died for the causes in which they believed. Many others were permanently handicapped by physical or psychological injuries suffered in the war.

While major battles of the war occurred in such places as Gettysburg, Pa., and Vicksburg, Miss., the war directly affected the people of the county.

According to oral history given by Cordia Childress Millhorn, Piney Flats, Union soldiers often entered area homes unannounced and uninvited. The soldiers ate their fill and took the remaining food, leaving civilians with none.

Mrs. Millhorn said soldiers of both sides were often so thirsty they drank from water holes containing dead horses or cows.

Although many county residents sided with the South, others sided with the North and refused any aid to Confederate soldiers or sympathizers. When the Union forces finally took control of the county, many of the Southern sympathizers were harassed or abused.

Horses were an especially valuable commodity during the war, and Yankee soldiers often stole the animals. Local residents were forced to hide their animals from these foragers.

Mrs. Millhorn and Letha Millhorn Morrell said some farmers often hid their horses in thickets along the present Enterprise Road on the former Carlie Allison property in Piney Flats.

Gerald Seneker, Piney Flats, a man of remarkable recall, is an invaluable source of local history and genealogical information. His recollections of people, events, and oral history are extremely helpful. He said his grandfather hid horses in wooded areas near the present Akard-Seneker homeplace along Boone Lake. One partially blind horse was left unhidden, but the Yankees were positive this was not the only horse the Akards owned.

The Yankees searched for other horses but were unable to find them. For days, the soldiers watched for evidence of food and water being carried to the hidden horses. The Akards, however, took pains not to wear a path to the hiding place as they carried water in gourds from the river to the horses.

The Union soldiers eventually gave up the search for the horses. Before the Yankees left the community, however, they tried to kill some Confederate soldiers. The Confederates took refuge in a barn on the property formerly owned by Jim Warren and Rhett Cross on the Enterprise Road. Whether any of the Confederates were killed in the skirmish or where the Yankees relocated is undetermined.

Some men in the county wanted to join regular army units of the Confederacy, but they were too old or infirm. These men often joined detailed conscript or home guard units.

These units acted as military reserves in case of an attack upon the community and also helped guard railroads and other strategic sites.

According to Ed Cross, Piney Flats, some men served the Southern cause in other ways. Some of the older men worked in saltpeter mines located in the Piney Flats area. Saltpeter was an important ingredient in gunpowder used in the war.

Next week, in this column, this writer will discuss some of the Confederate military units formed in the county and some of the soldiers who fought in them.

December 29, 1977

Civil War military units

“The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated (this land) far above our poor power to add or detract.”

President Abraham Lincoln spoke these words at Gettysburg, Pa., in 1863. He eloquently expressed his high regard and deep feeling for those who gave their “last full measure of devotion” during the Civil War.

When the war began, many of the brave men of Sullivan County enlisted in Federal military units. These men believed the Union had to be preserved, even if by force.

Other men joined Confederate units to defend their homeland from invasion and to preserve their rights and way of life as they saw them.

Company G, 60th Tennessee Mounted Infantry Regiment, was enrolled at Blountville on Sept. 25, 1862, and the company later mustered with the other companies of the regiment at Knoxville on Nov. 7, 1862. Cpl. William B. Millhorn was a member of Company G.

He and other members of the unit were captured by federal troops at Big Black, Miss., but he was later paroled. He re-entered the fighting but was captured again in 1864. He was released from military prison in June 1865.

The regiment fought in the battle of Vicksburg, Miss., and also fought in East Tennessee and western Virginia. Col. Nathan Gregg commanded the regiment for a long period.

Company K, 26th Infantry Regiment, was organized in Sullivan County, with Capt. J.R. Morrell as the commander. Other officers in the company included 1st Lt. W. B. Carrier and 2nd Lt. C. R. Morrell.

Col. James O'Dell was the regimental commander when the regiment formed. The unit was captured at Ft. Donelson in 1862, but the prisoners were exchanged later that year. The Confederate unit re-entered the war and engaged in battles at Murfreesboro, Chickamauga, Ga., and other locations.

The unit surrendered in April 1865 in North Carolina with Gen. Johnston's Army. Pvt. George W. Morrell was a member of Company K. He died in Dalton, Ga., of an illness contracted while a member of that unit.

Company E and Company F, 63rd Tennessee Infantry Regiment, were organized in Sullivan County as independent units. The companies assembled as part of this Confederate regiment in Knoxville in 1862.

Company E was commanded by Capt. Crockett R. Millard, and Company F was commanded by Capt. A.M. Millard. Col. Richard G. Fain and Maj. John Aiken were among the regimental officers.

The regiment fought in skirmishes at Rogersville, Bean Station, and Bluff City. In 1864, the unit marched from Bristol to Richmond, Va., and fought in the battle of Petersburg, Va.

Rufus White Morrell was a member of Company D of the regiment. In 1862, he was wounded in the shoulder at the battle of Drewry's Bluff near Petersburg, Va. He spent weeks in the hospital but never fully recovered from the wound. George Millard of Sullivan County was killed in a skirmish near Petersburg in 1864 while a member of the regiment.

Company M, 1st (Carter's) Tennessee Cavalry Regiment, was formed in 1863 in Sullivan County under the command of Capt. Edward Gammon. Elridge Morrell was an officer in this Confederate unit.

The regiment served in various locations and, in 1864, participated in the Virginia Valley campaign under Gen. Jubal Early.

Other Confederate units, in addition to those listed, were formed in Sullivan County, and some Union military units were also formed.

Much of the information concerning the units discussed here may be found in *The Military Annals of Tennessee: Confederate*, by John B. Lindsley.

A listing of Tennesseans who served in Union and Confederate units may be found in *Tennesseans in the Civil War*, by the Tennessee Historical Commission. Information on military units may also be found in this work.

These two books are starting points for those interested in knowing more about their family members who may have served in the Civil War. This county has a rich heritage of devotion to the principles of duty, honor, and country.

January 5, 1978

Elizabeth Chapel United Methodist Church

A nation which bows her head to worship God will not be forced to fall on her knees before other nations.

Freedom of religion and respect for God and country are cornerstones of the foundation of this nation.

The people of this county also recognized the need for establishing places of worship. Churches were established by the efforts of many people in each community.

Elizabeth Chapel United Methodist Church, located on Highway 37 near the old Thomas's Bridge, has a long history.

Most of the following information is derived from a pamphlet published in 1953 on the 61st anniversary of the church and from a church directory published in 1973. Other information is derived from the deed for the property of the former church building.

The original church building is located on Beaver Creek Road, Bluff City, a short distance from the present church building.

This original building stands on an acre of land donated by Elkanah A. Morrell and Sarah Ann Morrell. The deed, dated 1893, stipulated that a Methodist Episcopal church was to be erected on the plot, located adjacent to the land of Robert Anderson, in the Fourth Civil District of the county.

The deed also stipulated the church was to be named Elizabeth Chapel.

Elkanah A. Morrell and Sarah Ann Hamilton Morrell were the parents of six children, one of whom is still living. James R. Morrell, the surviving child, currently resides in Colorado.

According to Gerald Seneker, Piney Flats, James Morrell's homeplace was located near the former Watkins Blacksmith Shop on Beaver Creek Road, near the original Elizabeth Chapel church building.

In 1892, when construction began on the church, the people of the community were meeting in Hamilton School, located on the A.B. Hamilton farm near Bluff City. When the church was completed, the congregation moved to the new site on Beaver Creek.

Rev. William W. Pyott dedicated the church in the latter part of 1892 or early part of 1893. Rev. J.S.W. Neel was presiding elder in 1892.

Elizabeth Chapel was named in honor of Elizabeth Dungan, mother of Mrs. C.T. Longmire. Mr. and Mrs. Longmire and Pat Dungan, brother of Mrs. Longmire, were very interested in the building of the church.

“From early records, it has been established that Elizabeth Chapel was first called Beaver Creek Mission, in addition to the name it now carries.”

The weather boarding of the original church building came from one poplar tree. “According to reliable reports, Mr. Robert Smith and Mr. Floyd Jones cut and sawed the tree in Scott County, Va., and hauled the lumber to the site.”

The first trustees of the church included E.S. Smith, C.T. Longmire, L.H. Denny, Robert M. Smith, Henry Jones, Samuel Webb, William Hamilton, W.B. St. John, and A. Wilson.

For many years, the church was a member of the Bluff City Circuit. In 1949, Bluff City and Rockholds Camp Ground Church became a two-point circuit, and Piney Flats Circuit was established.

Rev. James E. Hankins was the first pastor of this five-point circuit, which included Elizabeth Chapel, Enterprise United Methodist, Piney Flats United Methodist, St. Paul United Methodist, and Edgefield United Methodist.

In February 1952, the trustees of Elizabeth Chapel purchased two acres from Mr. and Mrs. Harry Crowe for a new church building.

Ground was broken for the new building on Aug. 17, 1952.

According to Ivan Millhorn and Margaret Millhorn, Blountville, the first Sunday services were held in the new building on May 20, 1953. Rev. Hankins presented the first sermon in the new building.

The church withdrew from the Piney Flats Parish in 1961 and is presently an independent church in the Holston Methodist Conference.

Several ministers have served the church. Rev. E.C. Roderfer was the first pastor in 1892. Other ministers included Robert E. Smith, Rhea Cartwright, Sam Varnell, and John Ripley. The present pastor is Rev. James E. Whedbee.

Elizabeth Chapel and other churches in this area were built through the efforts of many people who had faith in God and in themselves.

January 12, 1978

O'Dell family history

Over 200 years ago, the pioneers filtered through the mountain passes from Virginia and North Carolina to the "Old West."

The present residents of this county and this nation owe a great debt to these men and women who endured numerous hardships while subduing an untamed and often violent land.

The O'Dell family of Sullivan County was one of these pioneer families.

Much of the following information is derived from an article submitted by Mrs. Blanche O'Dell Vance to the *Sullivan County News* and published by that paper on Jan. 15, 1948.

Mrs. Lucile Early, Bluff City, is the source of some information concerning dates of deaths and births included here.

William O'Dell (b. May 16, 1753; d. 1813) was one of the pioneers of this section of the county.

He emigrated from Shenandoah County, Va., to the area that is presently Sullivan County. The land was then a part of North Carolina.

The county was an "almost unbroken wilderness, inhabited only by wandering tribes of Indians, who subsisted mainly by hunting and fishing."

During the first six months after his arrival, O'Dell spoke to only two white men whose names were Hutton.

One of these two men was killed by Indians soon after their meeting with O'Dell.

During this period, O'Dell subsisted on wild game, and he had no bread or salt to eat.

He cultivated his first crops with a rifle close at hand because of the threat of Indian attacks.

O'Dell married Martha Morrell (b. Nov. 3, 1758; d. 1813) soon after his arrival in this section.

After their marriage, the couple relocated to present-day Washington County along Buffalo Creek, near the former home of Landon C. Haynes.

About 1790, the Indians killed two of O'Dell's brothers, Nehemiah O'Dell and Simon O'Dell, while the family resided on Buffalo Creek.

William O'Dell had 13 brothers and sisters, including Nehemiah O'Dell, Simon O'Dell, Job O'Dell, and Catherine (Katy) O'Dell.

Catherine (Katy) O'Dell married Jonathan Morrell in Shenandoah County, Va., in 1774. The couple moved to this section about 1778.

William O'Dell returned to the Hickory Tree area of Sullivan County and settled on the south fork of the Holston River near Bushongs' Forge, near the former home of Stephen Morton.

Martha O'Dell and William O'Dell were the parents of five children. One daughter died in infancy, and the other married Lork Elkins. The three sons were Thomas O'Dell, William O'Dell, and Daniel O'Dell.

Thomas O'Dell (b. Aug. 7, 1787; d. Nov. 27, 1879) married Mary McGarry (b. April 8, 1791; d. July 4, 1875) about 1810. She gave birth to two sons and one daughter.

William O'Dell Jr. (b. Jan. 15, 1793; d. April 13, 1873) married Annie McGarry, sister of the wife of Thomas O'Dell. Annie O'Dell gave birth to two sons, and one of these sons, Andrew O'Dell, later was sheriff of Sullivan County.

Daniel O'Dell (b. Nov. 20, 1795; d. Dec. 27, 1879) married Frances George about 1821. She gave birth to six sons and two daughters.

James O'Dell, son of Daniel and Frances O'Dell, represented the county for two terms in the state legislature.

William O'Dell, Thomas O'Dell, and Daniel O'Dell were members of the Lutheran Church. They are buried in Shipley Cemetery, Bluff City.

Many of the descendants of William O'Dell Sr. still reside in Sullivan County. These include Mrs. Vance, Mrs. Early, and others.

January 19, 1978

School on Reuben Hicks plantation

Reading, writing, and arithmetic taught to the tune of a hickory stick.

Education and schools have developed tremendously since this seemingly funny saying reflected reality.

In the early 1800s, education in Sullivan County was an individual or community responsibility.

Parents who could afford the costs often hired private tutors or enrolled their children in private schools.

In other instances, parents in the communities banded together and provided the school buildings and the teachers for their children.

Teachers were often paid on the basis of the number of children taught. Parents paid the teacher a specified amount for each of their children enrolled in the school.

The following is a transcribed copy of the original contract between Isaac Morrell and a number of subscribers.

The contract stated an "English school" would commence in November 1838 in a building on the Reuben Hicks plantation. The exact location of this plantation is undetermined.

The contract also states that subscribers were responsible for providing firewood for the school and for repair of the school building.

The names at the end of the contract are subscribers to the contract who enrolled children in the school. Some of the signatures are illegible due to the aged condition of the original copy of the contract.

The following is the text of the contract:

“Contract entered into between Isaac Morrell, teacher of the one part, and the undersigned of the other part, all of Sullivan County and the State of Tennessee. Witnesseth that sd. Morrell doeth agree to teach an English School for the term of three months or sixty days so far as his understanding and those that are committed to his care will admit, and we do each of us promise to pay unto sd. Isaac Morrell the sum of two dollars per scholar sent or subscribed to our names, which payment is to be paid in any good trade at common selling price to be delivered at said Morrell dwelling at the expiration of above said term of three months, and each subscriber doth hereby agree to bear his equal part in repairing the school house on Reuben Hick’s plantation and in keeping fire wood ready for use at sd. house where school is to commence on fourth Monday in November 1838 provided the number of twenty-five scholars are subscribed to sd. article: Isaac Morrell”

Subscribers’ names: Jacob Geisper, John Wassom, Thomas Combs, John Riley, Andrew Boy, Caleb Morrell Jr., Ed Hicks, John Crumley, Reuben Hicks, Alfred Glover, William Riley, John Martin, Isaac Royston, Jacob Crumley, and Matthew Royston.

A notation is made on the back of the contract that John Wassom paid partial payment to Morrell in corn in lieu of money.

Schools during this period often held sessions only during the winter months. This school commenced in November and continued for three months.

The children often assisted their parents in working on farms or other businesses. The winter months were the only times the children could be spared from work.

The primary concern of families was economic survival, but parents did not want to neglect the education of their children.

This high regard for education is one of the traditional values which the pioneers handed down to their present-day descendants in this county.

January 26, 1978

Great Depression in Sullivan County

New Deal. Civilian Conservation Corps. National Recovery Administration.

To many people today, these words are meaningless or part of “ancient history.” To the parents and grandparents, these words and the Great Depression of the 1930s were realities.

While a great swirl of economic and political events occurred in Washington, D.C., and on Wall Street in New York City, the Depression settled over Sullivan County and the nation like a dark cloud.

This period of history was grim, stark reality and was unlike the happy, romanticized version portrayed on a popular television show.

Each person who lived through the period from 1929-1940 has his or her own stories to tell of hard times, deprivation, and hard work.

Rufus William (R.W.) Morrell said employment was difficult to find. He said work on farms was hard and low-paying, but many had no work.

He harvested corn, picked greens, and did other farm work at the farms of Rice Cross and Raymond Bouton near Piney Flats. He was paid \$1 per day and often worked from dawn to dark.

He and W.S. (Bud) Fillers, Piney Flats, also worked on the Will Cross farm and were usually paid 50 cents per day.

Cecil Nelson, Bluff City, said the work day on dairy farms often began before dawn and ended at 10 p.m. For this day’s work, he received 75 cents.

He was employed on Clark’s dairy farm on the present Beacon Drive-In Theater and Akard Elementary School property near Blountville.

He was also employed on Detter’s dairy farm in Bluff City and on the Will Cross farm.

Many people in rural area raised hogs and chickens to supply meat for the family and to sell at the local grocery. Most people had gardens to supply fresh and canned vegetables since they had little money to purchase these from stores.

In order to obtain essential items from groceries, people sold eggs, butter, and other products to the store owners.

Nelson said Logue Ryden, owner of a grocery in Bluff City, often gave scrip, or due bills, for items sold to the store.

The money supply was limited, and this due bill – a scrap of paper with the amount owed to the customer and his name – was used to purchase items at the store.

Mrs. Grace Fillers, Piney Flats, often sold eggs in exchange for merchandise at J.B. Webb's grocery in Bluff City.

She and her sisters often hoed corn on farms for a full day in exchange for a bag of corn meal.

Corn meal was ground on one of several water-powered mills in the area. The miller often charged one gallon of corn for every bushel ground.

Nelson said Mike Morrell's Mill was located near Emmett Community in Bluff City. The Galloway's Mill was located near Lakeview Drive in Bluff City. Fillers said his grandfather was the former owner of this mill.

About 1940, Nelson discovered a job which paid good wages. He said he worked laying and repairing railroad tracks and was paid 25 cents per hour.

The Social Security Act was enacted in 1935. According to Nelson, one cent of each hour's pay was deducted for Social Security tax.

Farm prices were extremely low during the Depression. According to a warehouse ticket dated December 1939, Mrs. Letha Millhorn Morrell was paid about \$33 for 306 pounds of tobacco. The highest grade received 21 cents per pound, and the poorest grade received seven cents per pound.

Many public works projects were begun by the federal government to help ease the unemployment problem.

The Works Progress Administration was one of the agencies for this purpose. Nelson said men employed by the WPA repaired roads in the area and did other public projects.

The National Youth Administration, a part of the WPA, was an agency designed to help unemployed youth. Mrs. Evelyn Henson, Bluff City, said men from this agency constructed the former agricultural building on the Bluff City Middle School campus.

The building is constructed of native stone and is similar to others built during the Depression.

Political leaders in 1930 said prosperity was just around the corner, but, for many people, long, lean years of desperation and hardship were just around the corner.

Although the Depression started almost 50 years ago, the memories are still fresh in the minds of those who survived it. To these people, the Depression was not a few pages in a history book. It was living and surviving.

February 2, 1978

Cox family history

“It’s weather fitten only for crows and Methodist preachers.”

This saying was used by pioneers to describe especially rainy weather, but the words help reflect the zeal and devotion of the first circuit riding preachers in Sullivan County.

These messengers traveled the twisting, muddy trails carrying the word of God to the early settlers of this section.

These circuit riders largely depended on the laymen and their families to provide food and shelter during their travels. Edward Cox was an example of these hospitable laymen who opened their hearts and their homes to the early ministers.

The Edward Cox home, located approximately one mile north of Bluff City off Highway 11-E, stands as a monument to the pioneering spirit in the county.

According to *Together*, a magazine published by the Methodist Church, Cox was converted in Maryland by Francis Asbury, one of the early Methodist bishops in this nation.

Cox married Sarah Meredith, and, after “a 600-mile honeymoon by horseback,” they reached present-day Sullivan County.

Cox constructed the house about 1774. The two-story house is constructed of hewn logs and has a “dog trot,” or breezeway, connecting the two sections of the house.

The original structure contained a kitchen and other sections, which are no longer standing.

The Revolutionary War began in 1775, and Cox served in the local militia from 1775 to 1781.

The Indians raided the Holston Valley region during the war, and Cox was assigned to the rangers to help guard one of the local settlements.

Word reached Cox that his wife had been scalped by the Indians. “History leaps into life as one reads how she ran from a cluster of settlers to fling herself into an embrace with her grizzled husband.”

According to an article in the *Bristol Herald Courier*, Cox helped construct three forts to help protect the settlers in the area.

In 1777, Cox served as an officer in the North Carolina militia, and, in 1780, he served under Capt. Isaac Shelby for four months.

In 1781, he served under the same officers as he participated in a campaign against the British in South Carolina.

Cox was discharged from service when news was received of the British defeat at Yorktown.

After the war, Cox returned home to Sullivan County and began farming.

He conducted Methodist meetings in his home. “These meetings became so famous that persons from as far as 25 miles away would gather at the Cox house on Sunday.”

On numerous occasions, Bishop Ashbury boarded with Cox and conducted meetings in the home.

At the Cox home, in 1788, Ashbury helped conduct the first Methodist Conference west of the Blue Ridge Mountains and the first in Tennessee.

Cox was born in Baltimore, Md., about 1758 and died in 1850, a few years after his wife’s death.

According to *Roster of Soldiers and Patriots of the American Revolution Buried in Tennessee*, published by the Tennessee Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Edward Cox and Sarah Cox were the parents of several children.

Abraham Cox, one of the children (b. 1782; d. 1865), married Mary Cox. Elizabeth Cox (b. 1784) married Mr. Vincent, and Jane Cox married Mr. McAllister.

Catherine Cox married Mr. Dungan. No record is available concerning the marriages of the other children: Samuel Cox, Jacob Cox, and John Cox (b. 1802).

After their father's death, three of the children, Samuel Cox, John Cox, and Elizabeth Cox, remained in Sullivan County. The other children relocated to Arkansas, Indiana, and Kentucky.

The Cox house is presently a historical site of the Methodist Church.

It is owned and was restored by the Holston Conference on Archives and History of the Methodist Church.

Mrs. Amelia S. Copenhaver, Bristol, is among the descendants of Edward Cox who still reside in Sullivan County.

The Cox house stands as monument to the efforts of a pioneer man and his family. More than this, however, it stands as a monument to the religious spirit of the early settlers. It is a monument, not to what man has made, but to what God has wrought.

February 9, 1978

Businesses and industries in 1830s

By today's standards, Sullivan County was sparsely settled and was basically a rural county.

In the *Tennessee Gazetteer, 1834*, Eastin Morris listed Kingsport, Blountsville [sic], Pactolus, and Paperville as the major towns in the county.

According to Morris, Pactolus was a post town located six miles from Kingsport and 12 miles from Blountville on the south side of the Holston River.

Elijah Embree owned and operated an "extensive" nail factory located in the town. This factory supplied high quality nails to the whole country east of Huntsville, Ala.

According to Sullivan County deed books, on Feb. 22, 1811, an agreement was made by which John Spurgin allowed Elijah Embree and Elihu Embree to dig ore, presumably to be used in the manufacture of nails, near his home.

Paperville was a post town located 12 miles east of Blountville along Sinking Creek, a north branch of the Holston River.

In about 1834, the town contained about 100 people, including a wagon maker, a blacksmith, two saddlers, and a physician.

The town also contained a tavern, a Presbyterian church, and a paper mill.

Goodspeed Publishing Company's *History of Tennessee* states the paper mill was founded by a man named Burkhart. The mill operated under the name of Marsh and Burkhart.

The Sullivan County deed records also record an indenture made between George Burkhart and Jacob Buihar (or Booher) on Nov. 21, 1808.

Burkhart sold the land where he lived by this agreement. The land was located on the east side of Sinking Creek, beginning near the paper mill and extending to a stake on the widow Berry's property.

From here, the property line extended to a stake near the saw mill dam. This data provides further evidence of the existence of a paper mill and saw mill in the town.

Paperville also maintained a strong society of the Presbyterian church for about 40 years. A Methodist church was founded there before 1840, according to Goodspeed.

Morris states Blountville had a population of 209 in 1829.

The town, located along Muddy Creek, was the seat of justice in the county.

Blountville also contained 28 houses, a Presbyterian church, and a Methodist church. It also contained six stores and two taverns.

The population included a lawyer, a doctor, and 10 mechanics.

According to *Scenes from the Bluffs*, published by Bluff City United Methodist Church, Piney Flats was originally known as Shell's Crossing or Shell's Crossroads. Andrew Shell was "a pioneer preacher who was one of the first to take up land here."

After the advent of the railroad and the location of a depot there, Piney Flats became the accepted name of the community. The area takes its name from "the abundance of native pine and the gradual slope of the land toward the Watauga River," according to the book.

Bluff City is one of the oldest towns in Tennessee. Samuel McCorkle sold the first town lots in Middletown (Bluff City) in 1798. According to *Scenes*, the town was later named Union Depot, Union, Zollicoffer, and Union again, as well as its present name.

The *Gazetteer* also lists stagecoach routes in 1834. One of these routes extended from Blountville to Huntsville, Ala., via Knoxville and McMinnville.

The route included stops in Kingsport, Surgoinsville, Rogersville, Bean's Station, Rutledge, and Blaine's X Roads.

Transportation has made many advancements since the era of stagecoach travel. These improvements in transportation, communication, and technology have contributed greatly to the urbanization of the county and the nation.

The county is no longer a predominately rural county and is now thickly populated.

The face of the land has changed, but remnants of the past still survive. Many of the physical structures and sites have disappeared, but the industry, optimism, and pride of the people of Sullivan County still survive.

February 16, 1978

Crumley family history

The early settlers of this nation came here for a variety of reasons. They came for religious freedom, freedom from political oppression, and other reasons.

They came from a number of other countries and nationalities. The pioneers of Sullivan County included families of Scots-Irish, French, English, and German descent.

George Crumley Sr. (d. about 1826), the earliest identified member of the family in East Tennessee, was born in Germany.

He came to this country sometime between 1766 and 1769. His eldest child, Daniel Crumley, was born in Germany on May 3, 1766 (d. Nov. 4, 1850), and George Crumley Jr., the second child, was born in Pennsylvania in 1769 (d. 1851).

Between 1789 and 1802, George Crumley Sr. acquired a total of 778 acres along Weaver Creek on the south side of the Holston River in an area then called Chestnut Flats. This area is located about two miles east of Hickory Tree near Bluff City.

Crumley probably bought the land in this area because it was relatively inexpensive, and the Cherokees had not disputed ownership of the section. He may also have selected this land because it resembled the forests of his homeland.

The section of land had good timber for lumber, tillable land for crops, and a good source of water. These assets were very important for the pioneers.

The Crumley Cemetery is presumed to be within the original tract bought by the elder Crumley.

George Crumley Sr. married Elizabeth (d. 1824), and they were the parents of six children.

The children included Daniel Crumley and George Crumley Jr. mentioned previously. Jacob Crumley (d. April 28, 1814) married Nancy (b. Dec. 20, 1782; d. 1830-1840), and Henry Crumley (b. April 9, 1780; d. Sept. 24, 1864) was married two times. His first wife was Elizabeth (b. 1792; d. Oct. 8, 1833), and his second wife was Jane Black.

Stephen Crumley (b. April 3, 1784; d. Feb. 6, 1837) was also married twice. His first wife was Jane, and his second was Sally Jane Taylor. There is little information on the sixth child, Jessee Crumley.

Jacob Crumley was a private in the War of 1812 and served in Capt. William King's company of Col. Ewen Allison's regiment, 2nd Tennessee Drafted Militia. He died shortly after the Battle of Horseshoe Bend and is believed buried in Fort Strothers, Ala.

The majority of the descendants trace their lineage to George Crumley Jr.

He and his first wife, who is unidentified, were the parents of 15 children. He and his second wife, Zephira (Zilphy), were the parents of two children.

The children by the first marriage included: Mary Crumley (b. 1792), who married William Greer; Jacob Crumley (b. 1795; d. 1865), who married Catherine Greer (b. 1792; d. 1874); and John B. Crumley (b. 1798), who married Rebecca Jones.

Other children by the first marriage were: Susannah Crumley (b. Jan. 6, 1802; d. May 29, 1876), who married Isaac Morrell (b. May 18, 1799; d. Oct. 7, 1870); Martha (Patsy) Crumley; George Crumley; Daniel Crumley (b. 1806), who married Lucy Jones; Nancy Crumley (b. 1809), who married Robert Greer; and Elizabeth Crumley, who married, first, William Deery, and then, Christian Crumley.

The other children by the first marriage were James Andrew Crumley, who married Elizabeth Vanch; Margaret (Peggy) Crumley; Sarah Crumley; Savila Crumley; Catherine Crumley, who married Caleb Morrell; and Ruth Crumley, who married J.B. Emmert.

The children of George Crumley and Zilphy Crumley were David Crumley (b. 1825), who married Susan Crumley, and Phillip Crumley (b. 1827), who married Elizabeth Stoffel.

George Crumley Sr. and George Crumley Jr. were members of the Lutheran church, and both are buried in the Crumley Cemetery, near Hickory Tree Road, near Bluff City.

Most of the information above was derived from *George Crumley Family of Sullivan County, Tennessee*, by Hugh Henry Mottern.

Most of the descendants of George Crumley still reside in Sullivan County. They have a long, rich heritage of which they can be justly proud.

The nation has been called a melting pot, where various races, religions, and nationalities blend with each other, and, yet, maintain some of their originality.

Sullivan County is similar to the nation as a whole. The differences of its people do not divide, for the people are bound together by a common vision and a common heritage.

February 23, 1978

King family history

Sullivan County is almost 200 years old. The county was established in 1779 when the area was claimed by North Carolina.

North Carolina laid claim to all of the Tennessee country, extending to the Mississippi River. Washington County was created in 1777 and encompassed the present state of Tennessee.

In 1790, North Carolina finally ceded its western territory to the fledgling United States government, which had been newly reorganized under the Constitution.

The presence of the King family in this area predated the formation of Sullivan County.

Thomas King (b. March 17, 1754; d. June 13, 1847) emigrated to this county in 1777 from Lancaster County, Pa. He was the son of Edward King and Elizabeth Nichols King.

In 1783, Thomas King married Susan Ann Sharp (b. March 22, 1756; d. April 3, 1822), the daughter of John Sharp Sr. (b. 1720 in Scotland) and Jane Hamilton Sharp. Thomas King was a member of the Presbyterian church, and he and his wife are buried in New Bethel Cemetery near Piney Flats.

He participated in the Revolutionary War and enlisted in August 1776 in Paxton Township, Lancaster, Pa.

He served in Pennsylvania under the command of Col. Thomas Morrow and in campaigns with Gen. George Washington's forces in New York and New Jersey.

According to the King family history, on Dec. 25, 1776, King crossed the Delaware River with units of Washington's army and helped defeat the Hessians in the Battle of Trenton, N.J.

In 1778, after relocating to Sullivan County, King served under Capt. John Duncan in the North Carolina Company. He also served several other short-term enlistments, including a two-month stint as a private in Capt. Thomas Wallace's company in Col. Isaac Shelby's regiment.

King also participated in the Battle of Cowpens near Spartanburg, S.C., in 1781 and also fought under the command of Gen. Francis Marion, the legendary "Swamp Fox."

After the Revolutionary War, King again participated in military action. In 1786, he served under John Sevier in campaigns against the Cherokee and Creek Indians in Tennessee.

On Feb. 18, 1833, King was awarded a Revolutionary War pension of \$50 per year.

Thomas King and Susan Ann King were the parents of eight children. James Harvey King, the eldest child (b. 1784; d. 1869), married Jane Gregg (b. 1792; d. 1861), and Julia Annis King (b. 1786; d. 1865) married John Gregg Sr. (b. 1785; d. 1848).

Elizabeth King (b. 1788) married Edward C. Hunter (b. 1782), and Mary King (b. 1789; d. after 1883) married Alexander Dyer. Ellener King (b. 1792; d. 1888) married Thomas Berry (b. 1793; d. 1856), and Llewallen King (b. 1795; d. 1869) married Susan Crouch (b. 1800; d. 1884).

William I. King (b. Nov. 27, 1796; d. 1868) married Martha Crouch (b. 1797; d. 1841), and Livinia King (b. 1799; d. 1852) was unmarried.

James Harvey King served in the War of 1812 under Gen. Coffee in campaigns in northern Alabama.

Many prominent families in Sullivan County are interrelated with the King family. These include the Crumley, Millard, Morrell, Berry, and Cox families.

Much of the information above was adapted from *Thomas King and Susan Sharp and Allied Families*, by Anna Belle Stone Rogers and Vivian King Bullock.

This voluminous book is detailed and reflects arduous historical research. The book contains information on several other families.

The history of this county is the history of its people. Those who gone before have bequeathed a legacy which must be preserved, and this preservation process must include family history research.

March 2, 1978

Rainbow Bridge

The Tennessee Valley Authority was established by the federal government in 1933, and the agency brought extensive progress to Sullivan County and the region.

The TVA brought the magic of cheap, abundant electric power, which enabled the county to progress physically, socially, and economically.

The agency also established a system of dams for hydroelectric power and for flood control, a problem which troubled the county for many years.

According to *Memoirs*, by Homer Smith, a flood occurred along Reedy Creek near Kingsport in 1901. Smith wrote that the Holston River overflowed, and the water level on one bridge over the creek was “belly-deep to a horse.”

The water level rose to the roofs of many houses near Kingsport, and several bridges along the river were destroyed by the flood.

According to Smith, a gray horse was kept on Smallings Island, and, when the flood waters rose above the fenced enclosure, the horse swam to safety. The horse was later owned by W.J. Cross of Piney Flats.

Smith also recorded that Muddy Creek overflowed about 1928, and the water “was on such a rampage through Blountville that not much property in its way escaped being washed into the Holston River.”

Flood control and other projects of the TVA have aided in the progress of the county, but, many times, progress has a price. The establishment of the Boone Lake reservoir resulted in the destruction or disappearance of some relics of the past.

In the early 1950s, the old Rainbow Bridge on the Enterprise Road near Piney Flats was destroyed and the remains submerged when the lake was expanded.

This bridge was a landmark and was used as a reference point by residents of the area. According to Rufus William (R.W.) Morrell, the bridge was constructed of sand, cement, and native stones, and the bridge derived its name from the rainbow shape.

Raymond E. (Shorty) Morrell, Bluff City, helped construct the old bridge in the 1920s. He said a building contractor from near Knoxville was responsible for the construction.

Morrell said the bridge was built by manpower and horsepower, not by machines. The cement was mixed by hand, loaded into wheelbarrows, and poured into the molds.

He said an unidentified black man from near Mosheim was employed to help drive the steel pilings for the bridge. The steel driver and his family lived in tents near the construction site and relocated to another area when construction was completed.

Gerald Seneker, Piney Flats, said Raymond Bouton and Paul Phillips of Piney Flats also helped construct the bridge. Raymond Morrell said Albert Sidney Morrell also was employed there.

The old bridge remained until the TVA established the Boone Lake reservoir and flooded the original river bed. The bridge was dynamited and destroyed.

The present Rainbow Bridge is located near this area of the lake.

The expansion of the lake also submerged an island, which, evidence indicated, was inhabited by Indians at one time.

R.W. Morrell said the island contained about 33 acres and extended from near the Oscar Crussell property to below the present Pierce property.

He said numerous Indian arrowheads and hatchet heads were found on the island. The water level in the river at the time was low, and one could easily walk across partially submerged rocks to the island, he said.

The expansion of the lake also resulted in the destruction or relocation of numerous houses adjacent to the shoreline. The Oscar Crussell homeplace was relocated from near the river to its present location near Cross Dock Road.

Morrell said the lake also submerged an extensive cave located below the Gene Cross property along Cross Dock Road. This cave was often used as a storage area for potatoes and other crops due to the consistent year-round temperature in the cave.

The advent of the Tennessee Valley Authority has been a blessing to this county. The advancements brought to this area have been miraculous, and some were beyond imagination 100 years ago.

The areas and structures which were submerged by this progress exist now only in the minds of those who remember them. These memories are as vital to the study of local history as the printed word.

These memories must, however, be given some element of permanence by being recorded, or they too may be submerged by the floodwaters of time.

March 9, 1978

Millhorn family history

After the Revolutionary War, the western frontier of the United States extended from the Great Lakes to Spanish-controlled Florida and from the Alleghany Mountains to the Mississippi River. Sullivan County was part of that frontier.

In 1789, the United States Constitution was declared officially in effect, and the first president and Congress under the new government took office.

On Nov. 14 of that same year, George Millhorn Sr. was issued a deed for 200 acres by the State of North Carolina, which then laid claim to the Tennessee territory.

The land was located in the Forks Section of Sullivan County on the south side of the Holston River above Choat's Plantation "This is the first record found referring to the Millhorns in Sullivan County."

The Forks Section included an area of land between the Watauga and Holston rivers, extending a distance of about five miles up each river.

The Millhorn family was among the early families who settled in this section of the county, and a great many of the descendants in the county today trace their lineage to George Millhorn Sr.

Millhorn and his wife, who is unidentified, were the parents of two children: George Millhorn Jr. and John A. Millhorn.

The wife of George Millhorn Jr. is also unidentified, but they were the parents of three children. Celina Millhorn married George Washington Smith, and Nancy Millhorn (b. 1817; d. 1882) married Zabadee McKamey (b. 1822; d. 1901). William Washington Millhorn (b. 1849; d. 1909) married Sara Elizabeth Davis (b. 1846).

John A. Millhorn, the second son of George Millhorn Sr., married Susie Dyer, and they were the parents of seven children.

Andrew Jackson Millhorn (b. 1814; d. March 11, 1882) married Margaret Anne Sanders (b. May 18, 1818; d. Jan. 17, 1897). James Millhorn married Rachael Cross (b. 1836), and Elizabeth Millhorn married Mr. Feathers.

Samuel Millhorn married Martha Archer, and Harrison Millhorn (b. 1815) married Sarah Ann Dyer (b. 1816). Polly Millhorn married Mr. Collins, and the seventh child, Henderson Millhorn (b. 1825), married Nancy Ann.

Andrew Jackson Millhorn was a private in the 2nd Regiment of the East Tennessee Mounted Volunteers, commanded by Capt. Abraham McClellan. Other officers in the unit were 1st Lt. Abraham Gregg and 1st Sgt. Samuel Evans.

Millhorn joined the unit on July 8, 1836, and participated in campaigns against the Cherokee and Creek Indians in 1836-1837.

While serving in the unit, he contracted a disease from which he never fully recovered.

John Aiken Millhorn (b. Dec. 28, 1846; d. June 14, 1936), one of the children of Andrew Jackson Millhorn and Margaret Anne Millhorn, married Alice Campbell (b. June 8, 1846; d. May 18, 1924).

John A. Millhorn and Alice Millhorn are buried in Wheeler's Chapel Cemetery, and their home was located near the church.

Millhorn was a member of Company F, 60th Tennessee Mounted Infantry Regiment, of the Confederate forces. The unit was commanded by Capt. A.L. Deadrick and 1st Lt. Frank Deadrick.

Millhorn enlisted at Jonesboro, and others members of the unit from the “Forks” included John Henry Sanders, Peter Boring, William Cox, William Hawk, Tom Crumbley, and John Tody Sanders.

The regiment engaged in battles at Greeneville, Morristown, Bulls Gap, Strawberry Plains, and other locations.

When Gen. Robert E. Lee surrendered in 1865, the unit was in Marion, Va. The men were transferred to Knoxville, where they took the oath of allegiance to the federal government and were released from service.

Millhorn was a charter member of the Wheeler’s Chapel Church.

William Millhorn Jr., Argenta, Ill., a great-grandson of Andrew Jackson Millhorn, has compiled a history of the Millhorn family in East Tennessee.

Most of the above information is derived from *Genealogy of the Sanders, Allison, and Collateral Families of Sullivan and Washington County, Tennessee* by W.R. Sanders.

The book also contains information on the Hodge, Hodges, Gregg, and Alison families.

Many descendants of George Millhorn Sr. still reside in Sullivan County.

Genealogical research has been likened to working a jigsaw puzzle, with some of the parts missing. The history of the Millhorn family has many of the birth dates, death dates, and marriage information missing.

Some details may never be discovered, but other information may lie unnoticed and unheeded in old family Bibles or dusty attics.

Although the complete details of the family history may not be discovered, never let it be said that the search for the truth faltered.

March 16, 1978

Oakdale Community School

The era of one-room schools in Sullivan County has ended as modern school complexes have been constructed.

School buildings were often used for academic purposes on weekdays and as churches on Sundays. Many of these old school buildings still exist. The former Oakdale School building now houses Oakdale Free Will Baptist Church. Oakdale Community is located a short distance off Highway 11-E near Bluff City.

Mrs. Hazel Hicks Millhorn, Bluff City, said the Thomas family donated the property on which the building stands.

Her grandfather, John Hicks, helped clear the land for the site, and, she said, he made the first stroke with an ax to begin the clearing process.

Hicks was a Methodist minister and circuit rider and held services at the Oakdale church and others, Mrs. Millhorn said. She said church services were discontinued for a period, but the church later became affiliated with the Baptist denomination.

Mrs. Cordia Childress Millhorn, Piney Flats, said she attended school at Oakdale during the late 1890s and early 1900s. Jerry Mottern was the teacher at the one-room school, and, she said, about 50 pupils attended.

Grades one through eight were taught at the school, and students sat on wooden benches, she said.

Mrs. Millhorn said pupils carried buckets of drinking water to the school from a spring located on Maggie Webb's property.

Students brought their lunches to school. The Miller family had 13 children enrolled in the school, and, she said, their dinners were brought in one huge basket each day.

Teachers at the school during other periods included Mr. Boyd and Fannie Fickle, she said.

Mrs. Millhorn said some of the other students at Oakdale were Cleve Hicks, Maude Miller, Jim Hicks, Winnie Bouton, Faye Webb, Bessie Webb, Lucy Webb, Maggie Webb, and Mary Webb.

Dr. S.G. Thomas and Fannie St. John Thomas were Mrs. Millhorn's foster parents. She said she and her parents often attended services at a Lutheran church near Bluff City.

They forded the Holston River near Bluff City in a wagon before arriving at the church where Mr. Wolford, Blountville, was pastor.

There were no electric lights in the area in the early 1900s, and Mrs. Millhorn said kerosene lamps were used for lighting. She said children often did homework by the light of a fireplace.

She said the family raised hogs, cows, and chickens, and Mrs. Thomas often sold eggs and butter at Bob Miller's store, located near the depot in Bluff City.

Hams and other meat were salt-cured and stored in smokehouses, in addition to "poke sausage," which was stored in cloth tubes there.

Berries and apples were preserved by drying in the sun, and cabbage, beets, turnips, and other vegetables were buried in the ground for the winter.

Only a few items were purchased at the store, such as coffee beans, sugar, and salt.

Mrs. Millhorn said George Lady operated a store in Egypt Community near Oakdale. Corn and wheat were ground into meal and flour at St. John's Mill, presently Galloway's Mill, on Beaver Creek Road, Bluff City.

She said the operator of the mill, Berry St. John, resided in a large white house located on a hill opposite the mill site.

She added St. John's children included two sons, George St. John and Lee St. John, and twin daughters, Fannie St. John and Mattie St. John.

Mrs. Millhorn said the roads in the area at the time were dirt roads, and travel was by foot, horse, or wagon. She walked to school each day, she said.

She said when snow fell, there were no snow-plowing or salting trucks to clear the roads. The roads were almost impassable, and, she said, when the snow melted, the roadbed was a sea of mud.

During some storms, snow accumulated "up to the windows of houses," and, she said, the weight of the snow sometimes caused roofs of houses to collapse.

Many changes have occurred in the educational, social, and physical fabric of this county since the turn of the century. Advancements have been made in the educational process, in highways and roads, and in modern conveniences, which are now taken for granted.

Much of the evidence of the past has disappeared, but many landmarks, such as Oakdale Church, still survive. The memories of the people, however, are a valuable resource of history as are the physical monuments. Both must be preserved.

March 23, 1978

Poplar Ridge School; county in early 1900s

Many exciting events occurred in Tennessee around the turn of the 20th Century.

In 1891-1893, coal miners in East Tennessee rioted against the utilization of state prisoners as strike breakers and as leased labor. Every prisoner employed in the mines meant the loss of a job for a coal miner.

In 1909, Johnson City was chosen as one of the sites for state normal schools for the training of teachers. This normal school is presently East Tennessee State University.

In 1896, Tennessee celebrated the centennial anniversary of its admission to the union in 1796.

About 1896, Mrs. Pet Deakins Houston, 90, Piney Flats, entered the second grade at Enterprise School. She attended Poplar Ridge School during the first grade, but, she said, the teacher, Jewell Houston, became ill and operations at Poplar Ride were in limbo.

Mrs. Houston said her first teacher at Enterprise was B.H. McKamey, who became postmaster at Piney Flats in 1914. She said other teachers included Dimple Minga, Jerry Mottern, and Joe Hancher.

She said the school consisted of one room, and drinking water for the students was obtained from a spring on the Cox property near the school.

Mrs. Houston said other students in 1902 at Enterprise included Enoch Cross, Letha Millhorn, Irma Akard, Dalton Crussell, Susan Frances (Sudie) Morrell, Albert Sidney Morrell, King Akard, Porter Braxton (Port) Malone, Hugh Cross, Lula Hicks, and Herman Jeter.

The school building was also used for church services. She said charter members of the church included Sam Cross, William B. Millhorn, Florence Cross, and Mary DeVault.

She said Miss DeVault contributed substantially financially to the construction of the church and school building.

Other churches were also located in the area, Mrs. Houston said. A Lutheran church was located near the Harry Crowe property near Piney Flats.

Virginia Hancher, Piney Flats, said this may have been the site of the Dutch Meetinghouse, where Lutheran services were conducted in the Dutch language from texts written in the same language.

She said the exact location of the meeting house is undetermined, but her mother attended services at the church. *Memoirs*, by Homer Smith, also places the meeting house in this general area, she said.

Mrs. Houston said this building burned, and the Lutherans built a larger church near the Carrier meat processing plant near Bluff City.

Miss Hancher said this church was known as Luther's Chapel Lutheran Church. Her grandfather, J.K. Hancher, was a minister there, and William G. Wolford also held services there. She said her first church membership was at this church.

Dave Droke and Bill Droke, Piney Flats, were among the prominent members of Luther's Chapel Lutheran Church, Mrs. Houston said. This building was later destroyed.

Mrs. Mary Frances Malone, Piney Flats, said Mr. Crump, a Lutheran minister, held occasional services at Enterprise Methodist Church, as well as Holston Grove Lutheran Church.

Mrs. Malone possesses a copy of the *Sullivan County Developer*, dated Sept. 19, 1919. The paper was published in Bluff City each Friday, and the subscription rate was \$1 per year.

S.H. Thompson was editor, and W.F. Fiper was editor and publisher.

The paper contained an article concerning the death of J.N. Houston, Mrs. Malone's grandfather.

Community fairs were held in Bluff City and Piney Flats on Sept. 23 and Sept. 24, 1919, according to the paper. The Jeter's Mill Community (Enterprise) news column stated that Mr. and Mrs. Albert Sidney Morrell and son, Rufus William (R.W.) Morrell, visited Mrs. William B. Millhorn.

Other community columns included Rocky Springs Community, Timber Ridge Community, and Glover's Springs Community.

The fall session of Enterprise opened on Sept. 19, with Miss Mary Riley, principal, and Miss Ollie Smith, assistant principal.

The major article in the paper was titled "Bluff City: A good town to locate business." The paper lists unlimited water power, railroad facilities, abundant raw materials, and labor as major city assets.

The article mentions the Black Mountain Lumber Company and the flour mill owned by Sen. J. Parks Worley and his brother, Charles Worley, as thriving industries.

Many changes have occurred in Tennessee and Sullivan County since the early 1900s.

Stately, modern churches have been constructed in some areas, while other churches have been destroyed by fire or age.

Place names of communities have changed, and rural areas have become housing additions and suburbs.

The spirit of the people of the county has not changed. They look to the past for guidance, to the present with confidence, and to the future with hope.

March 30, 1978

Country stores

Another part of the past has died. The old country stores have become virtually extinct in Sullivan County.

Before the age of chain stores and mass transportation, the country store was the commercial heart of rural communities.

The stores were vital links in the communications process as they served as clearinghouses for information on local happenings, politics, and family information. The stores also often served as postal stations, where patrons received their mail since central post offices were not readily accessible.

Country stores were possibly one of three major social centers in many communities, in addition to local churches and schools. In some stores, the men gathered to play cards, to discuss current events, and to tell stories of bygone days.

At the country store, one could purchase a variety of goods, ranging from calico cloth to cured hams and country butter.

Gerald Seneker, Piney Flats, said John Gross's Store was a postal station and country store. The former store building is located along Enterprise Road on the Clyde Warren property.

Seneker said supplies for the store were hauled by wagon from the railroad depot at Piney Flats or by wagon from suppliers in Bristol.

There was no refrigeration, and meat sold by the store was salted and curded. Butter was stored in wooden tubs in the cool basement of the store, he said.

The date the store was established is undetermined, but Virginia Hancher, Piney Flats, said this was the mustering site for local military units during the Civil War.

Mrs. Irma Warren, Piney Flats, said her father, Lilburn F. (Judge) Cartwright, operated the Gross Store for a long period. She said a section of the Gross homeplace, located near her home, was built by Joseph Gross in 1852.

Mrs. Warren said Joseph Gross was the first settler in the community.

Seneker said Dalton Crussell also operated the store during the early 1920s. During this period, Crussell resided in a small house located a short distance from the store.

White's Store served the residents of the Rocky Springs Community near Piney Flats as a postal station and general store, Seneker said. He said E.W. King and H.P. King helped operate Gross Store and White's Store for a short period.

Mrs. Pet Deakins Houston, Piney Flats, said White's Store was later known as Burkie's Store and also as Walter Phillips' Store.

Joe Collins drove a freight wagon for Burkie's, Seneker said.

Mrs. Houston said other stores in Piney Flats during the early 1900s were operated by I.H. Hawk, Link Ford, and the Massengills. She often visited these stores while travelling by horse and buggy, she said.

Massengill's Store was one of the first in the area to deal extensively in "tailor-made clothes," Seneker said.

He said Lolla Station was located in the store operated by Parson Reece Gross, and the station stood along Sugar Hollow Road in Holston Grove Community.

Fairview Community and New Hope Community residents were served by Mike Webb's Store, and, Seneker said, this country store was later owned by the Shaver family.

Key's Store, operated by Lee Fickle, was located on Harrtown Road along Reedy Creek, Seneker said. Roederfer's Store and Blacksmith Shop was also located on Reedy Creek Road, in addition to Sam and Will Newland's Store.

The original Webb's Store in Hickory Tree Community near Bluff City was located opposite the present store building, he said.

Another store in Enterprise Community in the late 1890s was Hicks' Store, located on the former Albert Sidney Morrell and Letha Millhorn Morrell property. Seneker said the store was operated at different periods by Charlie Woods and John Sells.

He said many of the residents of Egypt Community received mail at Sumpter Station, located in George Lady's Store.

Many of these store buildings no longer exist, but some survive. The country store was, however, more than a physical structure. It was a spirit.

Store owners and operators knew their customers and their families. Most customers were old friends and neighbors, not just another stranger in the supermarket checkout line.

The owners of the stores often gave personalized service if a neighbor was sick or extended credit to help him through an economic crisis.

The competition from chain grocery stores, the advent of quick transportation by automobile, and the shifting social patterns ultimately destroyed the country stores.

There are some stores today which exhibit characteristics of the true country store, but many stores are merely located in the country. This location does not automatically make them country stores.

The passing of the country store was perhaps inevitable, when considering the social and economic patterns of the past few decades. Although its death was not entirely unexpected, the country store's passing is still mourned.

April 6, 1978

John I. Cox; Nathan Gregg

Dedication to the ideals of democratic government and public service may take many forms.

One may perform the duties of citizenship by being an intelligent, diligent voter in all public elections.

Others may be called to serve in the armed forces of this nation, while others may serve as elected representatives of the people.

John Isaac Cox, Blountville, and Nathan Gregg, Piney Flats, were two public-spirited citizens who served Sullivan County, the state, and the nation.

Cox (d. 1946) was born in 1857 in a house in the Thomas's Bridge Community near Bluff City, according to *Historic Sites of Sullivan County*, by Muriel C. Spoden.

His father, a Confederate soldier, was killed in the Civil War about 1862, and the boy was left to largely fend for himself.

Cox worked on area farms, carried the mail, and did other odd jobs while attending school. He worked his way through Jefferson Academy, located in Blountville.

He studied law under Judge W.V. Deaderick and later married Deaderick's daughter.

According to *Sites*, in 1889, Cox relocated to Bristol, where he became a successful attorney. He was elected state representative and later served as a state revenue agent.

He was a member of the state senate from 1900 to 1905 and also served as speaker of the Senate.

In 1905, U.S. Sen. William B. Bate died, and the Tennessee legislature appointed Gov. James B. Frazier to serve the remainder of Bate's term.

According to the provision of the state constitution, Cox succeeded Frazier as governor on March 27, 1905.

According to *Tennessee: The Volunteer State*, edited by John Trotwood Moore and Austin P. Foster, the only major incident during the Cox administration was rioting by striking miners at Tracy City and Whitwell.

Appropriations for military pensions were increased due primarily to the governor's efforts.

Cox paid special attention to educational matters of the state, payments on the state debt, and enforcement of quarantine laws against yellow fever.

On April 17, 1905, during the Cox administration, the Tennessee state flag was officially adopted.

Cox sought the Democratic Party nomination in 1906, but Malcom R. Patterson became the nominee. Cox left office on Jan. 17, 1907, but later was re-elected to the state senate, where he served until 1911.

The birthplace of Cox is the present home of J.L. McCord Jr., according to *Sites*.

Gregg (b. Aug. 5, 1835; d. July 5, 1894) married Catherine Morrell (b. Oct. 27, 1834; d. Jan. 29, 1902).

Gregg was the son of Abraham Gregg (b. 1790; d. 1876) and Jannett Gregg (b. 1796; d. 1851). Catherine Morrell Gregg was the daughter of Isaac Morrell and Susannah Crumley Morrell.

Col. Nathan Gregg was commanding officer of the 60th Tennessee Mounted Infantry Regiment during the Civil War.

After the war, Gregg served three terms as sheriff of Sullivan County from 1870 to 1876 and also served three terms in the state legislature from 1876 to 1882.

He was appointed pension agent during the administration of President Grover Cleveland.

Nathan Gregg and Catherine Gregg were great benefactors of educational and religious projects of their community.

According to Sullivan County deed books, they deeded one-half acre in 1884 for the establishment of a public free school in the 20th Civil District. Gerald Seneker, Piney Flats, said this was the site of Rocky Springs School.

In 1907, according to terms of Nathan Gregg's will, E.W. King, the executor, sold for \$1 to the trustees of the Bertha King Memorial Presbyterian Church one acre of land for use as the site of a Presbyterian church and a place of public worship.

According to information provided by Seneker, Gregg also contributed funds for the establishment of the church in memory of his great-niece, Bertha King. She was the daughter of Edward W. King and Alice Millard King.

Bertha King Memorial Presbyterian Church is presently the Rocky Springs Church.

The trustees of the church in 1907 were E.J. Burkey, E.R. King, J.F. Gross, and E.W. King.

Nathan Gregg and Catherine Gregg are buried in New Bethel Cemetery near Piney Flats. They had no children, and Gregg bequeathed his estate to Bertha King Memorial Presbyterian Church and to a niece, Jannett Gregg.

The spirit of public service and dedication to the ideals of representative government are still vibrant in Sullivan County today. The qualities of self-sacrifice and integrity are upheld today by the descendants of this county's past public servants.

April 13, 1978

Sullivan County in 1870s

The advent of the railroad and the Civil War were momentous events in the history of Sullivan County.

The railroad quickened the commercial heartbeat of the county. Some towns were bypassed by the railroad for political, economic, or other reasons, and these towns sometimes quickly declined in importance.

More rapid communication was possible with the railroads, and travel was made easier and safer.

The Civil War, or the War Between the States to many Southerners, brought the twin maladies of war – death and destruction.

Bluff City, Blountville, and Bristol were struck by the fires and shells of war.

Many men marched off to battle, and the women were often left to tend the farms.

The war eventually ended, and the county renewed the search for peace and prosperity.

According to *Introduction to the Resources of Tennessee*, published under the auspices of the Tennessee Bureau of Agriculture in 1874, Blountville was once a thriving town and “absorbed the trade of an extensive area.”

In the early 1870s, Blountville had a population of about 350, but the town had declined since the construction of the East Tennessee, Virginia, and Georgia Railroad.

The railroad bypassed the town, and the terminal as located in Bristol, where trade was then concentrated.

According to *Resources*, much of Blountville was destroyed by fire during the Civil War.

Four stores, two houses, the jail, and much of the courthouse were destroyed.

The courthouse had been rebuilt, and the town improved since the war, the book stated.

The Masonic fraternity built a school for the “education of both sexes,” and a large male academy had an enrollment of 145.

Bristol, Tenn., had a population of 1,800 at this period of time.

Commercial establishments of the town included 16 dry goods stores, two drug stores, two provisions stores, and two tin and stove establishments.

Industries included a steam sash and blind factory, a tobacco factory, two wool mills, a foundry, and two newspapers, including the *Courier-Democrat*.

Bristol also contained one Presbyterian, two Baptist, one Methodist, one Episcopal, one Catholic, and one Christian church.

Union (Bluff City) had a population of about 400 in the 1870s.

Five mercantile stores were located here, in addition to a steam mill and a grist mill.

A cotton factory was located in the town, with 800 spindles. The factory employed 60 people, half of these females.

The town included one Methodist, one Presbyterian, and one Baptist church.

“A good school of over 100 pupils” was also located in Union.

The book noted one white sulphur spring existed in the county. This spring was “unsurpassed, as is believed, in any country.”

The sulphur spring was located eight miles east of Blountville and five miles west of Bluff City in a valley.

The site was recommended for establishment of a hotel and was located in an excellent community.

The principal mineral of the county was iron. Eight iron foundries were located in the county at one time, but, in the 1870s, only two were in operation.

The principal valleys of the county were Denton Valley, Holston Valley, Cook's Valley, and Beaver Creek Valley.

Beaver Creek Valley had fine farms and excellent farmers, the book stated. The creek excelled for powering machines, and the meadows were excellent.

The average size of a farm in the county was about 160 acres then, and the average selling price per acre was \$15.

The farms were considered 20 percent poorer than before the war. The book stated some tobacco was being grown, with "a fair prospect of a large increase in it in the future."

The most profitable crops were grass and wheat on farms, but a good crop fruit could be even more profitable.

A number of thoroughbred horses existed in the county before the war, and the descendants of these horses were scattered throughout the county.

Sheep were killed by the hundreds every year by dogs, and the citizens of the county favored strong laws to control the dogs.

The population of the county was sparse and included about 13,136 residents.

Labor was scarce, and good laborers received 75 cents to \$1 per day.

The roads were in bad condition and were a great drawback to the county. The nearest shipping points by railroad were in Bristol and Bluff City.

The greatest drawback to progress in the economy was lack of capital.

Some of the prophecies of the book were fulfilled, and some of the conditions remain virtually the same.

The population has increased dramatically, and the number of farms has decreased. The railroads have declined in vitality but are still an important link in the economic process.

Most of the physical scars of the Civil War have disappeared, but the war left social, political, and psychological legacies, which are still felt today.

The challenge of today is to employ the resources of the county fully, while preserving the sanctity of the land and the people.

April 28, 1978

Sullivan County during the Civil War

As an old man once said, "I am an American by birth and a Southerner by the grace of God."

Southern pride is a spiritual, almost mystical, feeling. It involves a love of the land and respect for God, family, region, and nation.

This pride was born in the fields and valleys of the South at the same time the nation was born.

The pride was nourished and blossomed during the genteel, discordant antebellum period of Southern history.

The fiery cauldron of the Civil War steeled the pride, and it was molded and hardened by a harsh reconstruction at bayonet point.

The spirit of the "Lost Cause" continues to stir the heart and mind. The tales of sacrifice and hardship help to bind the people of the region tighter.

Virginia Hancher, Piney Flats, said Union soldiers often plundered the farms and homes in the area during the war.

Residents of the area were forced to hide their wheat and meat in the attics of their homes, she said.

She said the soldiers plundered the home of her aunt, Catherine DeVault Hicks. Miss Hancher said one of the soldiers became enamored with Miss Hicks and gave her two silk aprons and two gold bracelets.

The Union soldier corresponded with her aunt for a short period, but, Miss Hancher said, the final fate of the soldier is undetermined.

Gen. DeVault, uncle of Catherine Hicks, served with the Confederacy in the Shenandoah Valley.

Miss Hancher said bushwhackers killed the general's brother, 18-year-old Henry DeVault, during the Valley Campaign.

She said local women in the Shenandoah Valley planted a rose upon DeVault's grave to mark its location.

Battlefield conditions decreed the body could not then be brought home for burial, she said. Her great-grandfather travelled to the valley after the war and was able to locate the grave marked by the rose.

She said her great-grandfather also helped guard the bridges at Bluff City during the Civil War.

Many others from the Piney Flats area participated in the Civil War.

John Torbett, Robert F. Scott, and James M. Oliver helped to make saltpeter, an ingredient of gunpowder, for the Confederacy.

Corp. John Dunn served in Company D, Ninth Tennessee Calvary (Union), and sources say he was killed in a battle near Blountville.

Robert McKamey was one of the first Confederate soldiers to receive a veteran's pension after the war.

John A. Dyer was a member of Company G, 60th Tennessee Mounted Infantry Regiment (Confederate). He fought in the battles of Fishing Creek, Shiloh, Corinth, and Vicksburg.

Jacky Rose, James Shipley, and John Shipley served in the Union army.

Joseph O'Dell Morrell and Thomas Morrell joined Company D, 63rd Tennessee Infantry Regiment (Confederate).

In a skirmish near Petersburg, Va., Sgt. Thomas Morrell was “shot eight or nine times and died.”

Hugh Cross, Bristol, Va., said his grandfather, Reece B. Cross, a Confederate soldier, died of starvation during the siege of Vicksburg, Miss., and was buried in an unmarked grave.

William King (b. 1828; d. 1900), James Madison Hodge, and John C. Hodges also served with the Confederate military forces.

Lt. W.A. Cross was a member of Company F, 29th Infantry Regiment (Confederate) and commanded the company for a period.

Joe P. Lyle also served in the 63rd Regiment and was captured in April 1865 near Petersburg, Va. He and Joseph Morrell were taken as prisoners of war to Fort Delaware, where they remained until the formal surrender of the Confederacy.

Much of the above information was derived from veterans’ pension application records and *The New Bethel Sesquicentennial, 1782-1932*, which was published on the 150th anniversary of the church’s founding.

If one stands alone on a Southern hillside on a still, warm day, he may hear the sounds echoing from the past.

He may hear the tinkling and clanging of metal canteens, the squeaking of leather saddles, and the roar of the cannons.

Through the mists of time, the ghostly gray legions come, flinging themselves into the teeth of the enemy cannons.

The sunlight reflects off gleaming bayonets and flashing swords as rebel yells split the air.

Images of the past dance before the eyes.

Gen. Stonewall Jackson and his legions sweep through the Shenandoah Valley, leaving a string of defeated Union armies in their wake.

Pickett's doomed charge at Gettysburg fails, but his army is unconquered.

Gen. Robert E. Lee tearfully says goodbye to his tattered army as his loyal men press close to him.

If one feels the tingle up the spine, the lump in the breast, and mist in the eyes, he knows Southern pride.

April 27, 1978

Cheese factories

A nation's greatness may be measured in part by the initiative and industry of its people.

The ingenuity of the American people has blended with community action and a willingness to take a chance on a good thing.

Around 1915, many families in the Piney Flats area exhibited these qualities as they established a cheese factory on Weaver Branch Road near the property of Virginia Hancher and the Oliver property. The thriving business venture lasted until the mid-1930s, Miss Hancher said.

Miss Hancher said G.M. Tobey, from the agricultural extension office in Knoxville, gave technical advice and assistance in founding the factory.

She said Gabe W. Oliver donated the land for the factory, and the deed stipulated the land belonged to the stockholders as long as the factory operated.

According to the deed, when the business ceased, the land reverted to the Oliver heirs.

Miss Hancher said directors of the factory included Brack Cross, Will Webb, John Webb, Sam Hart, G.W. Jones, Walter Weaver, and Will Cross.

Will Cross was the first president of the business, and, she said, he was also the chief salesman for the cheese products.

The directors were required to purchase stock in the company, and, Miss Hancher said, the stock was \$25 per share. The stock drew eight percent dividends at one time, she said.

Others could purchase stock, however, and, Mrs. Pet Deakins Houston, Piney Flats, said she owned stock in the factory.

Mrs. Houston said Will Cross maintained a sales route for the cheese in Johnson City, Kingsport, Jonesboro, Abingdon, Va., Saltville, Va., and Erwin.

Gerald Seneker, Piney Flats, said Cross first used a hack with horses to transport the cheese along the route.

He said Cross later hauled the cheese in a truck, and drivers of the truck included Raymond Millhorn, Dalton Crussell, and Duard Crussell.

Mrs. Houston said Cross often stored his truck in her barn at night, and, on cold winter mornings, the truck "had to be thawed out."

Local farmers delivered the milk to the factory, and, Miss Hancher said, they were paid according to the percentage of butterfat the milk contained.

Mrs. Houston said she often hauled milk to the factory in a wagon, and Berry St. John also sold milk there.

Seneker said those who also sold milk to the factory included Brack Cross, King Akard, G.W. Jones, George Cross, R.B. Cross, Denver Jones, Walter Weaver, Dillard Eades, Bob Weaver, and Ed Plank.

Ed Cross, Piney Flats, said King Akard was the secretary-treasurer of the Weaver Branch cheese factory for a long period.

Gabe Oliver and Lula Oliver made the cheese at the factory for a long period, Miss Hancher said, and other operators included Mr. and Mrs. George Cross and Mr. and Mrs. Bernice Jones.

Thurman Webb and Bob Myers also participated in the operation of the factory, Charles Houston, Piney Flats, said.

Bill Webb also served as secretary-treasurer, and, Seneker said, Charley Mottern was secretary at one time.

Mrs. Houston said the round blocks of cheese were made in different sizes, and the cheese was aged in a separate room at the factory.

Seneker said the milk was transported by farmers to the factory in 10-gallon cans.

The milk was placed in vats and steamed, using a coal-fired boiler, he said. The whey, or the water portion of the milk, and the curd, or the white solid portion used to make the cheese, were separated by straining, Seneker said.

The curd was then molded in presses into foot-long bricks or into large round wheels of cheese, called daisy cheese, he said.

Seneker said he often travelled to the factory in a buggy with his grandfather.

Rufus William (R.W.) Morrell said he and his family often went on picnics near the factory during the 1920s.

He said local farmers often fed the excess whey to hogs, and the curds resembled tough, white chewing gum.

Miss Hancher said the profits from the business were paid as dividends or used in the operation and upkeep of the factory.

She said the factory ceased operation due to competition from a large local milk company. Seneker said this competitor was the Godsey's Creamery, Bristol.

The milk company picked up the farmers' milk at the farms and deducted only a small amount for hauling the milk, she said.

The farmers considered this arrangement more economical because no time was lost from their day to haul the milk to the cheese factory.

Seneker said a severe hailstorm in 1928 damaged the factory, but repairs were soon made.

Miss Hancher said the factory ceased operation about the mid-1930s, and subsequent efforts to revive the operation failed.

Seneker said other cheese factories were located in the county. Crystal Springs cheese factory was located on the Dee Akard property in the Muddy Creek Community near Blountville.

He said Will Phillips and Cora Phillips helped to operate this factory.

Arrants' cheese factory was located near the Sam Millhorn property in the Chinquapin Community near Bluff City, Seneker said.

Another factory was located near Holly Springs along Reedy Creek on the Margaret Latture and Josephine Latture property, he said.

The New Bethel cheese factory was located near the Gene Hale property near Piney Flats, Seneker said.

Arnold Hale, Piney Flats, said his grandfather, Eli Anderson Torbett, donated the land for the New Bethel factory in 1924.

Hale said directors of the factory included R.M. Anderson, E.A. Torbett, George Warren, Roy King, and E.L. (Ned) King.

According to the deed, shares of stock in the factory were \$25 each. The factory was located one-fourth mile from the New Bethel church on one-fourth acre.

The deed also stipulated the right-of-way was given to lay pipelines from a spring and creek near the site to the factory.

Hale said his mother presently resides in the original factory building, which was converted into a dwelling house by his father.

The factory ceased operations about 1930, Hale said. Seneker said the other factories did not prosper as the Weaver Branch factory did.

The Weaver Branch factory bought part of the equipment from the Crystal Springs and New Bethel factories after they ceased operations, he said.

He said Tobey, the extension agent, also helped to establish these factories and provided the formula for the cheese manufactured there.

The Weaver Branch cheese factory is now a forlorn building, with its exterior ravaged by time and the elements. The few remaining pieces of equipment stand idle.

The building stands as a monument to the innate ingenuity and enterprising spirit of the people of Sullivan County. It is part of this county's history, and it should not be forgotten.

May 4, 1978

Community schools

Troublesome Hollow. Beech Forest. Chestnut Flats.

These names are unfamiliar to many in Sullivan County today, but they are meaningful to some.

These are names of community schools which existed in the county but have now disappeared.

Many of the parents and grandparents received much of their education in one-room schools where the “three R’s” were emphasized and the teacher ruled.

Lewis Jones, Piney Flats, said Troublesome Hollow School was located near Shipley Cemetery, between Bluff City and Bristol.

He said Beech Forest School was located in Weaver’s Community, near Bluff City, near Bullock’s Hollow.

His father attended Beech Forest, Jones said, and his family donated the property for the school playground.

Both these school buildings were destroyed, Jones said.

According to Sullivan county deed books, E.A. Millard and Henry Bullock donated land in Beech Forest Community for a public school in 1859.

The school commissioners for the school district then were Joseph Meredith, C.E. Warren, and S. Morton.

Whether this location was the site of the previously mentioned school is undetermined.

Gerald Seneker, Piney Flats, said Chestnut Flats School was located in Chinquapin Community near Bluff City.

He said Liberty School was located in Indian Springs, near Blountville.

In 1926, according to deed records, the Board of Education sold the site of Droke's School to Mollie Smith.

This school was located in the Seventh Civil District, but the school had been consolidated with Indian Springs School and Cold Springs School.

The deed stated the Droke schoolhouse was in dilapidated condition and was unfit for school purposes.

The 60-acre tract of land was bounded by the lands of A.H. Hauk, Jacob Harr, and R.M. Hauk.

In *Memoirs*, by Homer Smith, he mentioned Droke's Liberty School, which was located in the Blountville area.

In 1873, John Hull and Elizabeth Hull donated one-half acre of land on which Hull School was located.

The land was located in the Eighth Civil District, and, Seneker said, Fairview School later replaced Hull School.

The Hull schoolhouse was also designated by the deed as a place of public worship and was to be open to all religious denominations.

Seneker said Hicks School was located on Dry Branch Road, near Bluff City, on the Riley property.

He said the school building was later abandoned and was used to house turkeys.

Virginia Hancher, Piney Flats, said school was taught three months of each year at the Dutch Meetinghouse near Piney Flats.

Nellie Nelson Morrell attended a school near Smith's Curve, between Piney Flats and Bluff City.

In 1853, Jonathan Morrell deeded land along Rooty Branch to be used as a public school and as a free, or union, meetinghouse, open to all denominations.

John Brown and Daniel Morrell were school commissioners for the district then.

The DeVault School was located along Rice Cross Road near Piney Flats, Seneker said, and Charley Smith was among the teachers there.

This school mysteriously burned, and Enterprise School was built to replace this school.

He said teachers at Enterprise included Fannie Fickle, Ethel Beard, Paul Erwin, Hugh Cross, Beverly Seneker, Toy King, Nora Hull, and Lola Cross.

Other teachers were Virginia Hancher, Gypsie Millard, Christine Allison, Margaret Mahaffey, Virginia St. John, and Mrs. Buckles, he said.

Jasper Cross, Bluff City, said the original Buffalo School was located near the present location of Buffalo Christian Church.

He said grades one through 10 were taught at the school, and Jerry Mottern was among the teachers there.

Cross said school was discontinued at the original site about 1925 when the second Buffalo School was erected along Beaver Creek Road.

This school was later partially destroyed by fire, and the reconstructed building presently houses the Buffalo Ruritan Club.

In his memoirs, Smith stated he taught two terms at Buffalo, beginning in 1889.

Smith said the original name of the school was Buchanan's School.

These and many other community schools have existed in Sullivan County. Much of the land for the school sites was donated by individuals or families who were interested in the educational needs of the communities.

The buildings themselves were often erected by the efforts of the people in the communities, and the buildings served as both school and church in many cases.

The people took pride in their local schools, and there was a spirit of closeness and kinship. The children walked to school, as did the teacher, many times.

Progress and advancement perhaps dictated the demise of these small one-room schools, but those who attended these schools often speak highly of the education they received there.

May 11, 1978

Life among Cherokees

“When the last red man shall have perished, these shores will swarm with the invisible dead of my tribe. The white man will never be alone.”

These words were spoken by Seathl, a Dwamish chief in 1854, and they reflect the despair, distress, and disillusionment felt by the Indians.

When the white man first came to Sullivan County, he was not alone.

Although the exact date of their arrival in Tennessee is undetermined, the Cherokees claimed East Tennessee as their hunting grounds long before the white man came.

The Cherokees were the first Tennesseans, and, when the whites encroached on their lands, the Cherokees fought.

After a long and bitter war, a treaty was signed in 1777 at the Long Island of the Holston, near Kingsport.

According to the terms of the treaty, the Indians once again ceded lands to the whites.

Lt. Henry Timberlake was a young English soldier, who, at one time, lived among the Cherokees to help cement the friendship between the whites and Indians.

Timberlake recorded vivid descriptions of the Cherokees in his memoirs, and the following are his descriptions of the Indians in the 1700s.

“The Cherokees are of a middle stature, of an olive color, tho generally painted, and their skin stained with gunpowder, pricked into it in very pretty figures.”

The young men often shaved their heads, except for small patch of hair which was decorated with beads, wampum, deer hair, and other trinkets.

Many of the older members of the tribe plucked their hair out by the roots.

The ears were slit and stretched by a painful operation. The person was often “unable to lie on either side for near 40 days” after the operation.

Rings and other ornaments were later placed through the slits in the ears.

Some of the Indians wore wampum collars, which were “beads cut out of clam shells.”

Others wore silver breastplates and bracelets on their arms and wrists.

They wore moccasins on their feet, and these moccasins were decorated with porcupine quills.

The women’s hair was often so long that it extended to the middle of their legs. The hair, however, was usually “clubbed and ornamented with ribbons of various colors.”

The remainder of their dress was beginning to resemble the whites’ mode of dress due to the influence of the white man.

The older members of the tribe bemoaned this foreign influence and praised the old days before the white man came.

The Cherokees wore little except a “bit of skin around their middles, moccasins, and a mantle of buffalo skin for the winter.”

The women, Timberlake said, were “remarkably well-featured,” and both men and women were erect, well-built, and had relatively small hands and feet.

The Indians used guns, bows, arrows, darts, scalping knives, and tomahawks for their warfare.

“The hammer part of the tomahawk, which being made hollow and a small hole running then along the shank, terminated by a small brass tube for the mouth, makes a complete pipe,” he said.

He said the Cherokees were gentle and loyal to those who were their friends, but they were just as fierce with their enemies.

If they were wronged, their revenge was only complete when their enemies were completely destroyed, he said.

He noted that the Cherokees were friendly and helpful to the whites before the Europeans taught them how to scalp.

Most of the above information was derived from *Centennial: 100 Years of Progress*, published by Bristol Centennial Committee in 1956. Other information was derived from *I Have Spoken*, by Virginia Irving Armstrong.

The history of the white man's dealings with the Indians was characterized by broken treaties, broken promises, and, ultimately, a broken race.

Little evidence exists in Sullivan County of the history of the Cherokees. They did not build libraries or museums, for much of their history was oral history.

When the white man speaks now of tracing his roots, he is generally proud if he is able to trace his family tree to the 1700s. This lineage pales when compared to the roots in this land of the Cherokees and other Indian tribes.

The lands were ultimately wrested from the Indians as they were conquered by war, disease, and starvation.

Chief Joseph, Nez Perce chief, said in 1877, "I am tired of fighting. I want to have to time to look for my children and see how many of them I can find. Maybe I shall find them among the dead. Hear me, my chiefs, my heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands, I will fight no more forever."

May 18, 1978

Early post offices

Communication is the chain which binds the nation together. The postal service and mail are vital links in this chain.

The Founding Fathers of this nation realized the importance of a postal service to the existence of a free society through an enlightened public.

The Constitution specifically provided for the establishment of a postal service by the federal government.

The mail brings newspapers, news magazines, and letters from one's congressman.

Letters from a loved one or the seemingly ever-present bills also arrive by mail.

The U.S. postmaster general authorized the establishment of rural free delivery from the Piney Flats Post Office, which commenced in February 1902.

According to the general instructions, rural carriers received \$400-\$500 per year, including expenses for "horse hire."

They were required to deliver mail every day, including legal holidays, with the exception of Sundays. Postage fees were two cents per ounce.

Charles Warren and Robert A. Smalling were appointed mail carriers in 1902, and John A. Anderson was named substitute carrier.

There were two routes established for the Piney Flats post office.

Route 1 included stops at the houses of I.W. Booher, J.C. Brown, G.L. Baker, J.R. Hancher, David Brakes, and W.J. Cross.

Others residents on the route included those of A.P. McKenzie, Zebidee McKamey, Frank Mills, J.H. Sanders, James W. Peters, and Elbert Black.

The route extended via Poplar Ridge Church, Anthony Hampton's blacksmith shop, Jeter's Mill, and Sells Store.

Stops were also scheduled at post office outlets located at Cross's Store, White's Store, and Lida Post Office.

Arnold Hale, a current mail carrier in Piney Flats, said Lida was located near the home of R.B. Cross.

Route 1 served 178 houses and 525 people, and covered an area of 14.5 square miles.

Route 2 included stops at the homes of I.N. Barnes, Mrs. D.N. Hall, Anderson King, C.I. Allison, Marion King, Anson Hodge, and Mr. Sells.

Others residences on the route included Jacob Rose, Widow Hickman, Lee Rose, Isaac King, A.J. Ranger, C.P. Faws, Mrs. W.A. Massengill, and Mrs. Mary Hodge.

The route extended via New Bethel Presbyterian Church, Blalocks's Shop, Deer Lick School, Easley's Mill, Massengill Hollow, and Deltaville Post Office.

Hale said Deltaville was located near Picken's Bridge.

Route 2 served 152 houses and 450 people, and covered an area of 10 square miles.

A memorandum from the postmaster general recommended certain star routes and post offices be discontinued after establishment of rural free delivery.

The post offices to be discontinued were Lida, Gross, White's, and Deltaville.

Requisitions were authorized for letter collection boxes to be established at Poplar Ridge Church, Sells Store, Gross Store, White's Store, Anderson King's, Deer Lick School, and Easley's Mill.

Piney Flats Post Office was established as a fourth-class office on Aug. 29, 1855. Rural free delivery service was established on Feb. 1, 1902.

The office became a third-class office on July 1, 1944. The post office moved into the present building in October 1960.

Andrew Shell was the postmaster at Piney Flats in 1855. He was succeeded by James Hughes, Samuel Hughes, Abraham Smalling, and John W. Smith.

Other postmasters included Landon Smalling, Cornelia Smith, A.M. Shell, Samuel M. Warren, B.H. McKamey, Paul L. Cross, Ivan Malone, and Kenneth Downs.

Other mail carriers included James Arrants, Arthur Shell, Hugh I. Hawke, Edward Hodge, Russell Jones, Walter Phillips, James Trivett, and Albert Browder.

Ivan Malone said Browder delivered the mail by horse and buggy during the winter months due to the bad road conditions and utilized a car during the summer months.

Most of the above information was derived from materials provided by Arnold Hale, Piney Flats.

The delivery of the mail is often taken for granted, but, on those days when service is interrupted, the mail is sorely missed.

The postal service has progressed from the days of the Pony Express to jet-age delivery.

The mail is the window to the outside world for the aged and bedridden. It is part of the lifeblood for businesses and a major cog in the wheels of the nation's economy.

The mail brings good and bad news. It reflects life itself as the joys and sorrows are brought home through letters from across the continent or across town.

The dedication, sacrifice, and devotion of the postal employees, past and present, deserve respect and admiration from the people of Sullivan County.

May 25, 1978

Blevins family history

History is a fragile, multi-faceted creature. Her features, however, have often been scarred and torn by abuse and neglect.

Priceless historical documents and information have been ravaged by time, and family lines have been lost in the murkiness of bygone eras.

The following Blevins family history may seem disjointed, but coherent family histories often arise from fragments of information.

John Blevins (d. 1816) and William Blevins (d. June 7, 1832) were born in Albemarle County, Va., in 1760, and both are buried in Shipley Cemetery near Bluff City, between Morrell Creek and Little River. Both served as privates in Virginia during the Revolutionary War.

John Blevins married Catherine Cox, and William Blevins married Mary Thompson.

Henry Blevins (b. 1753; d. Sept. 12, 1847) was born in Henry County, Va., and died in Hawkins County, Tenn. In 1777, he enlisted in Capt. James Robertson's company in Col. Arthur Campbell's regiment. At the time of his enlistment, Blevins lived in Sullivan County, along the Holston River. He fought in the battle of Long Island Flats and later volunteered again to serve under Isaac Shelby at the battle of King's Mountain.

Blevins married Catherine in September 1786, and they were the parents of a daughter, Nancy Blevins.

According to Sullivan County deed records, an indenture was recorded on Jan. 2, 1812, between Gatewood Blevins, an heir to William Blevins, and John Blevins, son of William Blevins. Gatewood Blevins relinquished his share of the estate of land then in possession of Ann Blevins, widow of William.

In May 1813, an indenture was made which involved the descendants and heirs of Jonathan Morrell. These heirs included: William Morrell; Jonathan Morrell; Nathan Morrell; Caleb Morrell; Martha Morrell; John Blevins, son of William Blevins and heir by marriage; and Samuel Millard, another heir by marriage to Jonathan Morrell. This group of heirs sold 50 acres on the south side of the Holston River to William O'Dell. The land had originally been deeded Jonathan Morrell by John Shelby.

In the 1850 census of Sullivan County, William Blevins, 72, was a farmer who owned 1,500 acres. The following were members of his household: Elizabeth, 30; William, 35; John, 27, Lucy, 25; Mary, 23; Alfred, 22; Hiram, 21; Juneral, 20; and John, 19.

Another William Blevins, 46, was also listed in the census of 1850. Members of his household included: Elizabeth, 70; Sarah, 60; Priscilla, 30, Lucinda, 36; Mary, 13; Martha, 10; Louisa, 8; Martha, 6; Sarah, 4; and Jacob, 1.

According to Tennessee Civil War pension application records, Hiram Blevins, H.H. Blevins, and Calvin Blevins were members of the 26th Infantry Regiment (Confederate).

John W. Blevins enlisted in the detailed conscripts in Sullivan County.

Widows of veterans were also permitted to apply for pensions based in their husbands' service.

Christenah R. Blevins was the widow of William L. Blevins, and Maggie Blevins was the widow of Hiram Blevins.

Mary Catherine Blevins was the widow of John Wesley Blevins, and Rebecca Jane Blevins was the widow of Henry Huffman Blevins of Sullivan County.

John Blevins (b. Nov. 14, 1801; d. Nov. 10, 1876) married Peggy Hobach (b. 1803), according to information provided by Mrs. Lucile Early, Bluff City.

Katharine Holland Blevins (b. Aug. 4, 1827; d. Nov. 24, 1882), daughter of John and Peggy Blevins, married Daniel O'Dell (b. Aug. 20, 1823; d. April 6, 1906). Mrs. Early said Daniel Blevins and Katharine Blevins were her great-grandparents.

Daniel O'Dell was the son of Thomas O'Dell (b. Aug. 7, 1787; d. Nov. 27, 1879) and Mary McGarry (b. April 8, 1791; d. July 4, 1875).

Mrs. Essie Woods Morrell, Bluff City, married John Blevins Morrell. Mrs. Morrell said her husband was the grandson of William R. Morrell (b. Jan. 29, 1825).

William Morrell was a son of Caleb Morrell (b. Sept. 1, 1787; d. Nov. 21, 1860) and Martha D. (Patsy) Blevins (b. Oct. 26, 1796).

Some of the information above was derived from Tennessee pension application records and *Roster of Soldiers and Patriots of the American Revolution Buried in Tennessee*, by Lucy Bates.

This account of the Blevins family in Sullivan County is admittedly fragmented.

The search for one's family tree may lead to unrelated branches before finally reaching the true roots of the tree.

Some priceless family records may lie unheeded and unnoticed in a box of dusty papers or in a tattered Bible.

June 1, 1978

Place names in the county

“I have fallen in love with American names, the sharp names that never get fat... Tucson and Deadwood, and Lost Mule Flat.”

Stephen Vincent Benet, American poet, had a special love for the picturesque, lilted place-names of the United States.

The place names of Sullivan County are also descriptive and colorful. The names reflect the history of the land, of its people, and its legends.

Songa Hollow was named for an Indian chief buried there, according to *A Study of Folklore in Sullivan County*, by Catherine R. Sanders.

According to local legend, if one taps the rock under which the chief is buried, he will answer, Ms. Sanders wrote.

Billy Goat Knob, located near Blountville, derived its name from the goats which roamed there, she wrote.

The old man who owned the goats died, but his children allowed the goats to remain.

New owners later purchased the land and wanted the goats removed. Ms. Sanders wrote that goats were too wild to catch, and they were eventually shot.

Ms. Sanders wrote that during the Prohibition era, federal agents discovered a huge moonshine still on a large hill.

The federal agents smashed the still, and, she wrote, the illegal whiskey ran down the hill into a creek.

Some cattle which drank from the creek died, and others were intoxicated for days, Ms. Sanders wrote.

This creek attained the name Boozie Creek.

No horse will proceed by Crazy Horse Rock, Ms. Sanders wrote, and the horses become extremely upset if drivers attempt to force them by the rock.

No other animal acts in this manner at the rock, except horses, she wrote.

Elbert Jefferson, his dog Liz, and several neighbors went hunting in Big Hollow for rabbits, she wrote.

A brush fire began, and everyone, except Jefferson, retreated with their dogs.

Ms. Sanders wrote Liz would not give up the chase, and Jefferson proceeded into the fire to retrieve her.

Jefferson was never seen again, she wrote, but Liz, the dog, did return.

She sensed her master remained in the fire, and the loyal dog reentered the fire to find him, Ms. Sanders wrote.

The dog's skeleton was later found near a sinkhole, and local residents assumed Jefferson died when he fell into the hole, Ms. Sanders wrote.

This area became known as Jefferson's Hell.

Roads or hollows often attained the name of the predominant families who lived in the areas.

Weaver Branch Road, near Piney Flats, obtained its name from the Weaver families who resided there.

Gross Road, now called Rice Cross Road, was named for the Gross family, which operated a general store at the intersection for many years.

The origin of the name of Old Stagecoach Road is self-evident, but the name reflects an exciting page in the history of the county.

Enterprise Community was formerly known as Jeter's Mill Community. The mill operated down river from the old Rainbow Bridge.

The mill operated for many years but was virtually destroyed by a flood during the late 1930s or early 1940s.

Many communities derived their names from the prevailing types of trees. Hickory Tree Community, Chestnut Flats Community, Piney Flats, and Chinquapin Community are examples.

Paperville Community near Bristol derived its name from a paper mill which operated there in the 1800s.

Brainerd (Buck) Feathers, Bluff City, said buffalo herds travelled through the hollow near the old Buffalo School to Beaver Creek, which was their watering hole.

Buffalo Community derived its name from these buffalo, a part of the American heritage which has virtually disappeared.

Arnold Hale, Piney Flats, said the buffalo were the "first highway engineers." The buffalos travelled the easiest routes, he said, and the Indians later followed the buffalo trails.

The white man utilized the Indian trails for wagon trails, and, Hale said, many of the present roads in the county generally follow the wagon roads.

Feathers said Beaver Creek derived its name from the presence of the animals in the creek.

Cave Hill Community near Blountville derived its name from Linville Cave located there, Feathers said.

There are numerous place names not discussed here, names such as Possum Creek, Mud Hollow, Vinegar Hill Road, Troublesome Hollow, Silvacola, Egypt, and Strawberry Ridge.

The names flow before one's eyes and are rhythmical and musical to the ears, names such as Horse Creek, Applebutter Road, Buttermilk Road, Rooty Branch, Sinking Springs, Persimmon Road, and Carden Hollow.

Many place names have fallen into disuse, and the former names may be shrouded in the mists of time.

The names on the land are part of the historical heritage of Sullivan County. The names and meaning of these names must be preserved.

It is time to rekindle the memories of the origins of the place names of the county.

Benet wrote, "You may bury my body in Sussex grass. I shall not be there. I shall rise and pass. Bury my heart at Wounded Knee."

June 8, 1978

Small businesses in the county

The sounding of the death knell for the nation's small businesses and industries has become a frequent occurrence.

In an era of mass production and big business, the small businessman has often been conquered by too much competition and overregulation.

A large percentage of the total businesses in the nation are, however, still small businesses.

The citizens of Sullivan County demonstrated their industry and work ethic as they established many varied businesses.

In the late 1800s, James White (b. 1820; d. 1897) operated a tanning yard near his home, located about three-fourths of a mile from the old Rocky Springs School, near Piney Flats.

The tanning yard did a thriving business in leather production.

Mart Chase, a cobbler, operated a shoe shop near the tannery. Chase used much of White's leather to produce shoes for many local families.

James White married Sarah Yoakley, and he was the son of Adam White and Elizabeth King White.

Gerald Seneker, Piney Flats, said Oliver's Distillery, located on Weavers Branch, produced apple brandy prior to World War I.

The brandy was bottled and bonded, and, Seneker said, state inspectors ensured the quality of the beverage.

The labels on the bottles of brandy bore the insignia of Oliver's Distillery, he said.

Many local farmers maintained large orchards to supply apple cider to the distillery, he said.

The farmers maintained apple cider mills to produce the cider, he said.

Seneker said the distillery ceased operation during the Prohibition period.

He said Applebutter Road indirectly derived its name from the many orchards. Pet Deakins Houston, Minnie Cross, and other local residents made large amounts of applebutter from the apples, he said.

The road derived its name from the applebutter production, he said.

Applebutter Road extended via the Weaver Branch cheese factory, Willen's Mill, and the homes of Brack Cross, Will Cross, and King Akard, Seneker said.

The road was, at one time, the main road between Piney Flats and Blountville, he said, and portions of the old unpaved road bed may still be seen.

Some local craftsmen also made burial coffins, he said.

John Droke produced wooden caskets near his home along Reedy Creek, Seneker said.

Wolfe Brothers Furniture Plant near Piney Flats also produced coffins, he said.

Virginia Hancher, Piney Flats, said Wolfe Brothers was originally located near St. Paul United Methodist Church.

In the age before automobiles, horses were a primary means of transportation, and blacksmiths did a thriving business.

Brainerd (Buck) Feathers, Bluff City, said Bill Watkins operated a blacksmith shop near Carl Cotter's Store in Cave Hill Community.

Watkins later relocated his shop to a site on Beaver Creek Road, Feathers said.

Miss Hancher said a blacksmith shop operated near the present home of Charles Houston near Piney Flats.

In the late 1930s and early 1940s, Corrie Phillips manufactured cheese in her home on Rice Cross Road, Seneker said.

She delivered the cheese to homes and stores in Bristol, using a 1930 Model A automobile, Seneker said.

Rufus William (R.W.) Morrell said the cheese was often produced in long loaves.

He said Will Phillips, Mrs. Phillips' husband, was the brother of Walter Phillips, who operated a general store on Rocky Springs Road.

Numerous water-powered mills were located in the county at one period.

Homer Smith, in *Memoirs*, wrote these mills included Morrell's Mill, Hancher's Mill, and Booher's Mill on Reedy Creek.

Torbett's Mill was located on Back Creek, and, Smith wrote, Lindamood Mill was located on Indian Creek.

Some of the information above was derived from *Genealogy of the Sanders, Allison, and Collateral Families of Sullivan and Washington County, Tennessee*, by W.R. Sanders.

The small businessman continues to exist despite continued predictions of his imminent demise.

Big business has, however, enabled the nation and the county to make great strides in technology, material production, and increased living standards.

The small businessman will continue to exist because the spirit of individualism and independence lies in the hearts of many men.

June 15, 1978

Buffalo Community

The quality of a nation's religious and educational systems will help determine the country's greatness.

A nation's children are molded by the moral and intellectual tones established by the churches and schools.

The citizens of Sullivan County dedicated themselves to this quest for higher quality educational facilities and more meaningful religious expression.

Brainerd (Buck) Feathers, Bluff City, said the old Buffalo School and Buffalo Christian Church were located in close proximity.

He said the schoolhouse was located opposite the present church building, but the school was destroyed by fire about 1938.

He and other local residents attempted to extinguish the fire, he said.

His father, Samuel Feathers, attended Buffalo School in the 1890s, and, Brainerd Feathers said, he attended the same school.

He said about 100 children attended the school, which included grades one through eight.

Drinking water for the students was carried from a spring along Beaver Creek, he said.

Feathers said teachers at the school included Jerry Mottern, George Dolan, R.M. Shanks, Miss Hall, Beulah Mingae, John Deck, John Deakins, Lola Cross, and Ada Cross.

Teachers at the school often boarded at the home of Ashby Morrell.

The teachers who boarded there walked across a foot bridge across Beaver Creek to reach the school, Feathers said, and the local residents probably constructed the bridge.

He said Buffalo Christian Church has retained the same denominational affiliation since its origin, and Roy Gentry, Elizabethton, was one of the pastors.

Susie Cross, Bluff City, said the Bullock family donated the land for the school, and, possibly, for the church.

According to Sullivan County deed records, A.H. Bullock and N.D. Bullock, Johnson City, donated one acre of land on Beaver Creek for Buffalo School in 1895.

The schoolhouse existed on property at that time, and, the deed stated, the school was commonly known as Buffalo.

The trustees of the school then were D.M. Marion, J.D. Feathers, G.W. Lowdy, Wilson Malone, and G.W. Cotter.

The deed stated the land was to be used for “educational and literary purposes” only.

Feathers said the Cross families were among the oldest families in the community.

He said “Coonie” Snapp operated a rock quarry in Buffalo Community on the Jake Cross farm. Jake Cross married Susie Droke, Piney Flats, Feathers said.

Rock from the quarry was used for the gravelling Enterprise and Buffalo roads, Feathers said.

He said the roads were graded with graders pulled by mules, and the rock was hauled by wagon when the stone bed was replaced on Beaver Creek Road.

He helped construct the concrete dam near the Galloway’s Mill on Beaver Creek, and, Feathers said, the concrete was mixed and poured by hand.

He said Berry St. John originally owned the mill, and, later, John Snow and Joe Earhart were owners.

Jim Young and Paul Gray were the next owners, and, he said, Holly Galloway then purchased the mill.

Feathers said Bill Godsey, owner of Godsey's Creamery in Bristol, purchased the farm on which the mill stood, and Galloway purchased the mill itself.

The roads in the area were often in bad condition in the 1930s and early 1940s, and May Feathers said the carrier often delivered the mail using a horse and buggy when the automobile could not negotiate the roads.

She said George Humphries delivered the mail, and Brady Hendrickson also delivered mail from the Blountville Post Office.

Mrs. Feathers said Tate Cox helped deliver the mail on the Bluff City route, and Mr. Greene was also a mail carrier.

She said "rolling stores" also delivered a variety of goods to residents in the Buffalo and Enterprise areas in the late 1930s and early 1940s.

She said the inside of the truck was lined with shelves of goods, and, if an article was not in stock, the driver would take an order and deliver the article the next week.

The driver also purchased chickens, butter, and eggs from local residents, she said.

Trucks also delivered Rawleigh brand and Watkins brand products, and, she said, the Watkins truck was painted bright yellow, with the company name on the side.

She said Watkins liniment was utilized as medicine for many ailments, and the arrival of the truck was always a highlight in the week.

Each community in the county has its own store of legends and lore.

Oral history is a valid and useful historical tool.

The history of many areas of the county has been neglected, and much of it has been forgotten. The present generation must strive to preserve the rich, elusive history for succeeding generations.

The preservation of this vast heritage is one of the finest riches which could be bequeathed to the future by the present.

June 22, 1978

Weaver family history

In 1856, the rumbling black clouds thundered their message of the coming of the irrepressible conflict.

In that year, the Democratic candidate James Buchanan defeated the Republican nominee James C. Fremont for the presidency.

Rep. P.S. Brooks of South Carolina attacked Sen. Charles Sumner on the floor of the Senate and beat Sumner severely with a heavy cane.

Sumner was disabled for many years as a result of the physical attack. The provocation for the attack was a speech strongly criticizing the South and slavery.

About five years later, the sectional conflict between North and South would no longer be a war of words.

The brothers' war, the War Between the States, would devastate the South and change the course of history.

In 1856, John A. Jones and his wife, Mary Jane Booher Jones, erected a log house in the Poplar Ridge Community near Piney Flats, according to Jane Weaver.

The original structure is presently occupied by Miss Weaver. John and Mary Jones were her grandparents, she said.

She said the chimney of the house contains the inscription, "D.H., Jan. the 2, 1856."

John and Mary Jones were the parents of eight children.

The children included five sons: William M. Jones, Samuel A. Jones, James Jones, Henry B. Jones, and Rufus Denver Jones.

The daughters were Lollisa Persis Jones, Lizzie Leona Jones, and Rowena Jones, Miss Weaver's mother.

Rowena Jones married Robert E. Weaver, a carpenter, who originally resided in Johnson City.

Miss Weaver possesses a building permit, dated Dec. 31, 1890, issued to Robert Weaver by the chairman of the building committee in Johnson City for the construction of a dwelling house in the city.

Miss Weaver said she and her mother attended the old Poplar Ridge School, which was torn down.

She said Lola Cross and Ada Cross were her teachers at the school.

Miss Ada taught grades one through six, and, Miss Weaver said, Miss Lola taught grades seven and eight in another area of the school.

She said other students at the school in the 1930s included Louise Smith, Blanche Ringley, Naomi Jones, Lola Bell Cross, Eva Mae Morris, Maureen Carr, and Harold Jones.

The school was heated by two potbellied stoves, and, Miss Weaver said, students were responsible for supplying wood for the stoves.

An old well near the school provided drinking water for the students.

The old Poplar Ridge Christian Church was located near the present church building, she said, but the old building has been destroyed.

She said pastors at the church included Tom Shepherd, Clyde Smith, Harvey Powell, and Richard Ginn, the present pastor.

She said her great-grandparents were Jacob Latture Jones, father of John Jones, and Abraham Weaver.

According to Bible records provided by Miss Weaver, Abraham Weaver (b. March 10, 1829; d. March 23, 1854) married Susan Elizabeth Feathers (b. Feb. 11, 1834) on April 21, 1853.

The records also list the following names and dates: James Daniel Weaver (b. May 23, 1854), Robert Elkanah Weaver (b. May 10, 1856), and Bessie Weaver (b. May 2, 1882).

The list also includes: Clarence K. Weaver (b. Sept. 12, 1885), Effie May Weaver (b. April 15, 1887), and Sarah A. Weaver (md. Aug. 18, 1880).

The record also states S.A Smalling was the father of S.E. Weaver. Miss Weaver said this was Sam Smalling, father of Sarah E. Weaver.

In 1856, the ravages of the Civil War had not descended upon Sullivan County and South.

The Jones-Weaver home in Poplar Ridge was not destroyed by the demons of war, but other structures in the county were damaged or destroyed.

Physical structures could be replaced, but a precious human life could not. Many young men of one generation had their lives snuffed out by the Civil War.

Memories of them and others who have died cannot be destroyed as long as the perpetual flame of human goodness, dignity, and honor burns in the hearts and minds of men.

June 29, 1978

Marion-Lowdy family history

The memories of the past are shooting stars which brighten the darkened skies of history.

A camera may capture the flickering beauty of the falling star as the mind captures the glow of human emotions and actions.

The picture cannot, however, fully reflect the whole essence of a person, but it helps keep the precious memory alive.

The printed words of this column cannot capture the full memory of a person or event, but the words may help to catch the glimmers of the stars as they dance across the skies of the mind.

Jessie A. Marion, 87, of Bristol, said her father, D.M. Marion (b. 1860; d. 1939), and grandfather, G.W. Lowdy, were trustees of the old Buffalo School, Bluff City.

She said several old letters and papers in her father's possessions related to his duties as a trustee, or board member, of the school.

Miss Marion said Buffalo was the first school she attended, and she walked to school from her home.

The farm on which she lived was owned in recent years by R.L. Ford, Kingsport, and, she said, the farm was called Valley Cove.

She said this farm was inherited by her mother, Edna Regina Lowdy, from her mother, Mary Deck Lowdy.

Mary Lowdy had inherited the land from her mother, Regina Shrite Deck, the second wife of Simon Deck.

Simon and Regina Deck had two children: Mary Deck and Martha Deck.

Mary Deck, Miss Marion's grandmother, married G.W. Lowdy, and they were the parents of 12 children.

Martha Deck married Jim Cole, and they were the parents of several children, Miss Marion said.

Miss Marion said her mother died in 1899, and, three or four years later, her father and the children moved to Bristol.

The farm was later sold to Abe Cox, she said.

She said teachers at Buffalo School included Mr. Mottern and George Blevins, brother of John Blevins, a lawyer in Blountville.

John Blevins was the father of Harry Blevins, who still resides in Blountville, she said.

Miss Marion said some of the students at Buffalo were Nora Hendrickson Cross, Sam Feathers, John St. John, and Stella St. John, who rode a pet steer to school.

Lida St. John, older sister of Stella and John St. John, was a substitute teacher at Buffalo at one time, Miss Marion said.

She said other students included Ola Hendrickson, Molly Hendrickson, the Carroll children, the Thompson children, and Lily Slaughter, who later married Jack Watkins.

The Barger children also attended the school, and, she said, their father was "Blind Jim" Barger, who lived near the Buffalo church.

Miss Marion said Barger may have donated the land for the church cemetery. Her brother, father, mother, and sister-in-law are buried there, she said.

She said Barger rode a mule to Blountville and often stopped at her home to visit with her father.

The Lella Post Office stood near the present site of Davis Boat Dock, and, she said, Mr. Cross, the postmaster, married the sister of George Blevins.

The post office was discontinued when rural free delivery was instituted, she said, and her father and older sisters had many letters addressed to this post office.

She said her uncle, Andy Marion, was one of the first rural mail carriers, and his route was Route 1, Blountville.

Andy Marion moved to Blountville later from her grandfather's old home, which stood on the bank of a small creek near Miss Marion's former home, she said.

Roy Marion replaced Andy Marion on Route 1 when his father retired.

Dale Marion was postmaster at Blountville for a long period, she said. His son, Tony Marion, delivered the mail on Route 1 when his uncle, Roy, retired.

Miss Marion said her grandfather, G.W. Lowdy, remarried after his first wife, her grandmother, died.

He and his second wife lived in a log house on the top of a hill near his first home on land adjoining the Bruce Slaughter property.

Lowdy and his wife had three sons: Homer Lowdy, Arthur Lowdy, and Dallas Lowdy.

Homer Lowdy and Arthur Lowdy moved to Illinois, where they married and died. Arthur had no children, but Homer Lowdy had a large family. Dallas Lowdy presently lives near Abingdon, Va., she said.

Miss Marion said her grandfather and his second wife are buried in a church cemetery near Davis Boat Dock. This is presumably Walnut Grove Church cemetery.

She said the church was originally a Lutheran church but later changed denominations. She said the Shaver family donated the land for the church and cemetery there.

History records the past, explains the present, and illuminates the future.

Historical study is based upon the collection and analyzing of many facts, but it is basically the study of people and events which affect them.

The lamp of knowledge must not grow dim, for its light will illuminate those precarious, shadowy steps into the future.

July 6, 1978

Feathers family history

In the early 1770s, the white man established permanent settlements in East Tennessee.

One group of settlers located north of the Holston River at Sapling Grove, near the present location of Bristol.

Evan Shelby and Isaac Shelby emigrated from Maryland to the Tennessee country and were among the first settlers at Sapling Grove.

A second group of pioneers settled near Rogersville in Carter's Valley.

John Carter built a trading post in the valley in 1770, but he later relocated to the Watauga settlement.

The third group of settlers located along the Nolichucky River. Jacob Brown built a trading post near here in 1771, and a number of families from North Carolina settled here.

A fourth group of pioneers settled along the Watauga River near Elizabethton.

This group included James Robertson, Valentine Sevier, and John Sevier.

The Seviers, who were of French Huguenot ancestry, were part of the Sapling Grove settlement for a number of years and had emigrated from Virginia.

John Feathers came to this country from Ireland in the 1770s and settled in Albemarle County, Va.

He and his wife were the parents of five children.

Catherine Feathers married Mr. Foust, and Christiana Feathers married Andrew Crockett.

Nellie Feathers married Mr. Stewart, and they later moved to Alabama. Another child married Mr. Clark, and John Feathers Jr. married Sarah Barbara Sharrett in 1800.

John Feathers Jr. (b. 1779; d. 1865) came to Sullivan County with his mother and step-father. They resided on the old John Peters farm near Weaver's Church.

Sarah Sharrett Feathers was born in Pennsylvania and came to Sullivan County at the age of 11.

Her mother's maiden name was Leedy, and the mother came from Germany.

Sarah Feathers helped plant an orchard on the Reeves Farm, near Paperville.

John Feathers and Sarah Feathers were the parents of several children.

William Feathers married Rachael Myers, and Samuel Feathers married Dorcas Watson.

Henry Feathers married Mahala Feathers, and Jesse Feathers married Elizabeth Millhorn. James Feathers married Tina Myers, and Caroline Feathers married William Cart.

Elizabeth Feathers married Henry Jones, and Susan Feathers married Jonathan Watson.

Sarah Barbara (Sallie) Feathers married Joel D. Millard, and John Feathers married Miss Weaver.

Isaac Feathers married Miss Hatcher, and Margaret Feathers married Elkanah Carr.

Rachael Feathers married Kill Carr.

Frank Feathers and Nathan Feathers were unmarried, and David K. Feathers married twice. His second wife was Rebecca Millard, daughter of Timothy Millard and Elizabeth Millard.

David Feathers was the grandfather of Brainerd (Buck) Feathers, Bluff City.

David Feathers (b. 1810; d. Jan. 6, 1900) and his wife, Rebecca, were the parents of several children.

William Brainerd Feathers was a Civil War veteran, who died unmarried, at age 76, near Bluff City.

Jonathan (Dock) Feathers resided with his brother, William Feathers, in a home along Beaver Creek. Jonathan was also a Civil War veteran and was unmarried.

Sarah E. Feathers married John M. Galloway (b. June 15, 1826; d. Aug. 9, 1886) on Jan. 26, 1865.

They lived on the old Galloway Mill farm near Talley's Ford on the Holston River, near Flourville, near Borings Post Office.

Ellen Feathers married George W. Beard, and they lived on the Galloway farm.

The children of David Feathers and Rebecca Feathers included Alva Feathers, Anna Feathers (b. 1833), David Feathers, Timothy Feathers, and two children who died in infancy.

Samuel L. Feathers, Brainerd Feathers' father, was the son of David Feathers and his first wife, who is unidentified. Samuel Feathers married Fay Webb.

The family history information above was derived from

Descendants of John Feathers, by Omer C. Feathers, which was provided by Brainerd Feathers.

Family history research is a challenging, often frustrating, process.

In order to fully understand what one is today, he must know what his ancestors were in the past.

Each person may carry traits bequeathed to him by his ancestors, and the keys to understanding the actions of the present may lie locked in the events of the past.

July 13, 1978

Cross family history

A weary people grew tired of the protracted war as their anger and frustration surfaced.

Discontent arose, and desertion plagued the ranks of the armed forces.

The nation's military forces won few clear victories, but the enemy seemingly could not break the stalemated war.

A political writer berated the "summer soldier and sunshine patriot...who shrink from the service of their country."

According to some historians, the Revolutionary War was fully supported by only one-third of the American colonists.

The people of today owe a great debt to those who fought, and sometimes died, for the cause of American independence.

In Tom Paine's words, "he that stands now deserves the love and thanks of man and woman."

Elijah Cross was born in 1758 in Baltimore, Md., and died after 1832 in Sullivan County.

In 1776, Cross served a two-month tour as a ranger at Blackmun's Fort on the Clinch River under Capt. James Anderson and another one-month tour at the same location in 1779 under Stanton.

Cross served a two-month tour in 1779 under Capt. Martin in campaigns against the Cherokees.

In 1781, he served as ordnance sergeant at Yellow Mountain with Col. Sevier and served in the North Carolina militia.

Cross was listed in the 1840 census of Sullivan County and lived for a period with David Cross.

Elijah Cross married Ann Looney in Sullivan County on a date between May 18, 1779, and May 21, 1780. They were the parents of several children.

Elijah Cross II (b. about 1800) married, first, Catherine Cook, and his second wife was Polly Malone.

Jessee Cross married, first, Susan Hicks and married, second, Susannah Hicks.

Abraham Cross (b. 1792; d. Sept. 19, 1885) married Peachey Getz, and David Cross married, first, Catherine Boy and later married Ellen Smalling.

Zechariah Cross (b. between 1780 and 1790) married Sarah Hicks, and Rachael Cross married Thomas Jones. Amanda Cross married Ezekiel Keys.

In the War of 1812, Abraham Cross served as a corporal in Capt. Rogers Company, 24th Infantry. He enlisted on Aug. 29, 1812, for an 18-month tour.

He was reported absent from the company on Dec. 31, 1813, and later held the rank of private.

He was buried in Smith-Cross Cemetery, near Rice Cross Road, near Piney Flats.

Reece B. Cross Jr. was born in Sullivan County in 1844. In September 1862, he enlisted at Blountville in Company G, 60th Tennessee Mounted Infantry Regiment (Confederate).

The company was commanded by Capt. Jonathan Bachman, and Col. Crawford was regimental commander. Capt. Joe Crawford was later company commander.

Private Cross participated in battles at Big Black River and Vicksburg, Miss. He was captured at Vicksburg by federal forces on July 4, 1863, but was later paroled.

While participating in Stoneman's raid, Cross's left leg was frostbitten, and he never fully recovered from the ailment.

The leg became irritated and swollen, and Cross recuperated for about one month at a private home.

Cross returned to duty, and, after Gen. Robert E. Lee surrendered in 1865, the regiment disbanded near Marion, Va.

In 1907, Cross's wife was 36 years old, and they were the parents of two sons, ages four and two years.

W.E. Beard served with Cross in Company G and was with him at the end of the war.

R.B. Cross Sr. was a private in Company G, 60th Tennessee Mounted Infantry Regiment. He enlisted in September 1862 but was captured at Vicksburg, Miss. in 1863.

He was paroled but was recaptured on Oct. 28, 1864, in Jefferson County. He was transferred to prisoner of war camps at Nashville, Louisville, Ken., and Camp Douglas, Ill.

Cross died at Camp Douglas of pleurisy on Dec. 22, 1864, and was buried in Chicago City Cemetery.

In the 1850 census of Sullivan County, Jessee Cross, 60, was listed as a farmer, who owned 4,000 acres.

The following were listed as members of his household: Susan Cross, 45; Reece Cross, 22; William Cross, 17; and Jacob Cross, 12.

Reece Cross married Harriet Cox, and they were the parents of six children.

Nat A. Cross (b. Oct. 11, 1862; d. June 1, 1936) married Blanch Jeter. Martha Cross married John Hicks, and Sarah Ann Cross married George Malone.

Elizabeth E. Cross (b. Nov. 29, 1851; d. Aug. 30, 1924) married William B. Millhorn (b. March 16, 1845; d. May 26, 1918).

Susie Cross married Floyd Webb, and Hoyle Cross's (b. 1853; d. 1900) wife is unidentified.

Some of the information above was derived from Civil War pension applications and military records, and from *Roster of Soldiers and Patriots of the American Revolution Buried in Tennessee*, by Lucy Bates.

Without careful, meticulous research, one may begin climbing the wrong branch of a family tree.

Many of the names of family members are same, and the dates of births and deaths may be missing.

The hunter of a family history should not become discouraged and surrender to despair and failure.

His quarry – an understanding of his roots – may be elusive, but the capture at the end of the long hunt will be very rewarding.

July 20, 1978

Cherokees in East Tennessee

“The Cherokees were the first carpetbaggers to come to the South.”

The Cherokees originally came from New York, said Dr. Arthur DeRosier, president of East Tennessee State University.

They were Iroquoian in their language characteristics, and, he said, the Cherokees were the most ferocious of all Eastern tribes because they were surrounded on each side by natural enemies.

The Cherokees had no natural frontier to protect them, he said, and the Creeks, Chickasaws, and Senecas constantly encroached on their hunting grounds.

“There were no major Indian tribes who occupied northeastern Tennessee,” but, he said, “the Cherokees claimed East Tennessee as their hunting grounds.”

They built small fortresses in Sullivan County for protection while they were engaged in hunting.

He said constant conflict and violence occurred in Sullivan County when the Cherokees battled interlopers.

Great archaeological excavations of Indian art have been discovered in the county, he said. Dr. DeRosier said the Warrior’s Path was the route the Cherokees used when they originally came south.

The Cherokees claimed much of the territory south of the Ohio River, and, he said, this area included Kentucky, all of Tennessee from Nashville eastward, and parts of North Carolina and Alabama.

The tribe had about 22,000 members, and, he said, the Indians lived in a series of towns, with major towns in Tennessee located in the vicinity of Knoxville and Lenoir City.

The southern Indians were agriculturally-oriented, and, he said, they contributed more than 100 types of vegetables to the food tables of the white man.

The Indians literally gave vegetables to the world, Dr. DeRosier said, and these foods included okra, corn, and tomatoes.

The Indians were “natural environmentalists,” and, he said, they believed each living thing had a purpose.

They abhorred hunting animals for sport and revered all animals.

The Indians believed in one god, who was a male, DeRosier said.

“Mother Earth was the wife of God,” and, he said, she gave birth to all that was good on the earth, including man and other animals.

God was the universe, and each thing had a purpose in life.

The Indians believed winter was a time generated by their god to help families stay together, he said.

There were no incidents of wife or child beatings among the southern Indians, and, he said, the elders of the tribe were revered for their wisdom.

The tribal council was composed of the aged, both men and women, and most of the tribes elected their chiefs. The Indians were exercising political democracy and women’s rights before many of the “civilized” white communities.

When an Indian couple of the southern tribes married, the husband took the wife’s family name, Dr. DeRosier said, and the couple lived with the wife’s family.

The family unit was the major social force in Indian life, he said.

The storyteller was the historian of the tribe, he said, and children began listening to stories at the age of two years.

The children listened to stories of the history of the tribe and tribal legends, and, he said, at the age of 13, they were learned.

Choctaws were the largest Indian group east of the Mississippi River, and, he said, they were pro-American and anti-British during the colonial period.

They were considered the most civilized tribe in America and were friendly toward the United States.

The Choctaws were, however, the first tribe to be removed from their homelands to areas west of the river, he said.

The white man desired the land on which the Indians were located, and the tribes had to be removed.

“There was no treaty between the white man and Indians that was not broken,” and, DeRosier said, the inhumanity inflicted upon the Indians by the whites equaled that inflicted by any group upon another people in the history of the world.

The treatment of the Indians was a “very sordid page in our nation’s history,” and, he said, this sordidness is one reason many Americans shrink from the study of Indian history.

The material above was contained in a speech by Dr. DeRosier to a meeting of the Sullivan County Historical Society.

The Indians were the first Americans, but their heritage and their history have often been neglected, prejudiced, or biased.

Their history is a part of the history of the nation and Sullivan County. Many citizens have Indian blood coursing through their veins, and they can be justly proud.

The Indian were ravaged by war, sickness, and the white man's civilization, but they still remain a viable, vital force in American life.

July 27, 1978

Slavery in Sullivan County

Black slavery in the South has been called the “peculiar institution.”

The Negroes, or “people of color,” were bought and sold, or passed from father to son, just as any other piece of property.

Slavery existed in Sullivan County until the last years of the War Between the States.

The county deed records contain numerous bills of sale and deeds involving slaves.

One must not, however, judge his ancestors too harshly for owning slaves. The ancestors’ actions must be viewed and judged in light of the prevailing attitudes of that historical period.

In 1814, Elijah Cross sold Abraham Looney a slave called Carter, 23. The sale price was \$450, and the Negro was declared “clear of any known impediment.”

The slave owners often speculated in property and invested in the future potential of slaves.

In July 1820, Thomas Morrell purchased a Negro named Eliza from Edmond Morrell. The child was seven months old, and the sale price was \$200.

The slaves were sometimes freed by their masters.

In May 1834, Pheby Morrell and Abigail Morrell sold six slaves to Alle, “a free woman of color.”

The sale price was \$6, and the slaves included Alle’s husband, 40, and her children: Rachael, 18, Rebecca, 16, David, 11, Essey, 9, and Rody, 7.

The owners had freed Alle before the sale, and they sold her children and her husband to her for the nominal sum of \$1 each.

In 1864, Stephen Hopkins held a mortgage of \$500 against Rhoda Morrell for a slave named Nelson.

The mortgage was paid in full, and Hopkins relinquished title to the slave.

Witnesses to the deed were C.E. Warren, Daniel Crumley, and Joseph Meredith.

In 1862, Nathan O. Morrell sold a Negro to Jonathan Morrell, Caleb R. Morrell, and Elkanah A. Morrell.

The slave was named Sam, 16 years old, and declared to be “sound in mind and body.” The sale price was \$700, and witnesses to the sale were William O’Dell and James Harrington.

The graves of two slaves were located near the former residence of Scott Hensley on Enterprise Road on the St. John farm, Rufus William (R.W.) Morrell said.

He said “Uncle Joe” Sims, Bluff City, was a former slave whose owners cut off his thumb.

The thumb was removed as punishment for teaching other slaves to read and write, and he said, the blood from the severed thumb was used to blot out Sims’ writing.

The thumb was then thrown outside for the dogs to devour.

According to *Scenes from the Bluffs*, published by the Bluff City United Methodist Church, Sims was the “oldest man to live in Bluff City.”

He was born on April 1, 1847, and died on Feb. 6, 1966, at the age of 118.

Sims was born into slavery on the Isaac DeVault farm along the Watauga River according to *Scenes*.

He remembered his days in slavery, especially the cruel treatment by some masters.

He said his master was, however, a good man, and, although the slaves worked hard, they also had leisure time.

Sims recalled that, every year, the master took the slaves by wagon to the Jonesboro County Fair.

Sims lived a number of years by himself on Cedar Street in Bluff City, according to *Scenes*.

Grace Fillers, Piney Flats, said Kate Sims, who lived near Denton Road in Bluff City, was a former slave.

Ed Cross, Piney Flats, said a slave cemetery was located near the J.B. Snapp property.

Nina Smith Witt, Blountville, said older members of the community related to her that the Cross slaves were buried in the Lindamood Cemetery on Enterprise Road.

Jimmy Droke, Piney Flats, said slaves may have been buried in the Droke Cemetery along Boone Lake, near Rainbow Bridge.

Most of the graves of slaves were marked with slabs of limestone, with no inscription.

Contrary to the belief of many, the primary cause of the Civil War was not the desire of the North to eliminate slavery in the South.

Most historians agree arguments over states' rights and economic and political differences were the primary causes of the war.

The abolition of slavery did not become a rallying cry for the North until President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863.

In the Antebellum period, many Southern ministers and scholars defended the institution of slavery. The schisms of some religious denominations into southern and northern factions were partially the result of the defense of slavery.

The day of the "Jubilee" and freedom for the black slaves came with the end of the Civil War. The fight for full economic, social, and political equality for blacks continues today.

August 2, 1978

Burial customs; family cemeteries

“For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return,” the Bible states.

Death is the common denominator of mankind, and one cannot remove death’s presence by refusing to discuss the subject.

A person’s respect for the living is often reflected in his respect for the dead.

Burial customs in Sullivan County have altered because of changing social mores, legislation, and tradition, but respect and concern for the deceased and his family are still alive.

Mrs. Cordia Childress Millhorn, Piney Flats, said, in the past, funeral homes were not readily accessible or did not exist in some areas.

The body remained at home until burial, she said. Wooden coffins were utilized, and, she said, these often contained glass windows in the top for viewing the remains.

Wolfe Brothers Furniture Plant often provided the wooden caskets for area residents, she said.

No embalming of the body took place, and, she said, the body was often placed on a wooden slab in the home and covered with a sheet until the coffin was prepared.

When neighbors received word of a death, they prepared food and delivered it to the home of the deceased, she said.

This eliminated the burden on the family of preparing meals for themselves and callers during the grieving period.

The neighbors and friends held wakes for the deceased, she said, and many remained awake at the home the entire night.

The wake assured the family that concerned friends were near to assist them, and the wake demonstrated respect for the deceased.

Gerald Seneker, Piney Flats, said those who remained with the body during the night also helped protect it from the ravages of cats and dogs.

Many homes had no screens over the windows, and, he said, animals and insects could molest the body if it were left unattended.

He said funeral services were held at the homes of the deceased or in nearby churches.

Burial generally took place in a local family cemetery. These private cemeteries were usually located on a hilltop with a cedar or other evergreen tree in the center of the plot.

This evergreen tree symbolized eternal life for the deceased.

Seneker said Lindamood Cemetery, located along Enterprise Road, was formerly known as White's Cemetery.

At one time, there was no bridge over the Holston River, which separated this cemetery from the opposite shore.

Mona Larimer, Bristol, said a boat, connected to a cable, was paddled across the river, and, she said, bodies were sometimes transported to the cemetery in this manner.

Seneker said that, during one winter, the river was frozen completely, and a body was transported on a horse-drawn sled across the ice to the cemetery.

Virginia Hancher, Piney Flats, said this was the body of Sally Cross.

Coffins were also transported by boat across the river from Enterprise Community to Holston Grove Church Cemetery, near Sugar Hollow Road.

Many family or community cemeteries exist in the county, and numerous church cemeteries also exist.

Claudia King Church, Piney Flats, said a cemetery exists on the Harry Crowe property near Piney Flats.

Arnold Hale said this may be the cemetery which was located adjacent to the Dutch Lutheran Meetinghouse which was destroyed years ago.

He said those buried in the cemetery included Gabriel DeVault (b. Jan 29, 1770; d. Nov. 30, 1849) and Adam Geisler (b. Feb. 23, 1787; d. March 18, 1868).

Others buried in the cemetery include Mary Geisler (b. Nov. 2, 1795; d. May 26, 1876), Rev. Henry Geisler (b. Feb. 19, 1833; d. Dec. 15, 1864), W. A. Feathers, Mary Jane Feathers, and Margie Catherine Feathers.

Donna Bammon, Piney Flats, said the Cross Family Cemetery is located on the Clyde Warren property near Rice Cross Road.

The Droke Cemetery is located along Boone Lake near Enterprise Road. Those buried there include John Smith (b. June 13, 1766, in Shenandoah County, Va.; d. Dec. 25, 1830), his wife, Elizabeth Smith (b. June 7, 1770; d. 1830), and Agnes Webb (b. June 12, 1844; d. Jan. 29, 1929).

Others buried there include: Albert Sidney Morrell (b. Nov. 29, 1886; d. Sept. 3, 1923); D.E. Malone (b. Sept. 23, 1854; d. April 19, 1903); and Henry Hicks (b. 1858; d. 1926).

Those buried at Lindamood Cemetery include Nancy Hicks Jones (b. 1837; d. 1873), Andrew Emmert Combs (b. Nov. 22, 1876; d. Dec. 12, 1937), and John Hicks (b. Jan 15, 1894).

The Smith-Cross Cemetery is located near Rice Cross Road. A marker in the cemetery states Henry Smith and his wife, Mary Smith, were the first persons buried there about 1820.

Their son, John Smith, and his wife, Catherine Umphres Smith, are also buried here.

The cemeteries and the markers located here help to lend a form of immortality and continuity to the deceased and their survivors.

Burial customs may be altered, but the need for loving, caring neighbors during times of grief will not be changed.

Comforting the living denotes respect for the dead and love for those who survive.

August 10, 1978

Morrell family history

Sullivan County, especially its rural areas, has undergone drastic changes in recent years.

The close-knit families and community ties have been ravaged by “progress” and upward mobility.

The close bonds between neighbors and the trust between strangers have degenerated. The past has often been raped in the name of progress for the future.

History disappears before one’s eyes as the faceless, rootless forces destroy what has gone before them.

The pathways to the past are being obliterated by the sands of time and carelessness.

The memories of prior generations steadily grow dimmer, and the local and family histories of the county must be preserved.

On April 17, 1774, Jonathan Morrell (b. Sept. 9, 1753; d. Oct. 30, 1800) married Catherine (Katy) O’Dell (b. Sept. 29, 1755; d. July 23, 1824) in Shenandoah County, Va.

Catherine was the daughter of Caleb O’Dell Sr. and Alice O’Dell.

In 1787, Jonathan Morrell was granted 87 acres in Sullivan County, located on the north side of the Holston River. According to tax lists, in 1796, he owned 100 acres, and, in 1797, he owned 137 acres.

He and Catherine were the parents of 10 children. These included John Morrell, Ruth Morrell, William Morrell, Nathan Morrell, Jesse Morrell, and Else Morrell.

Jonathan Morrell (b. 1782; d. 1863) married Elizabeth Millard, and Martha Morrell married John McGarry.

Caleb Morrell (b. 1787; d. 1860) married Martha D. (Patsy) Blevins, and Isaac Morrell (b. May 18, 1799; d. Oct. 7, 1870), married Susannah Crumley (b. Jan 6, 1802; d. May 29, 1876) in October 1823.

According to the Sullivan County census of 1850, Isaac Morrell was farmer and owned 1,000 acres.

In 1838, he taught school in a building located on the Reuben Hicks Plantation in the county.

Isaac and Susannah Morrell were buried in Leesburg Cemetery near Jonesboro.

They were the parents of 12 children, including Elbert Morrell, Harriet Morrell, Marshall Morrell, and Thomas Morrell, who was killed during the Civil War while fighting for the Confederacy.

Other children included Eldridge Morrell, who married Susan Allison in 1856, and Mary Ann Morrell, who married John Cain Carson in 1859.

Isaac Morrell (b. 1831) married, first, a Smith and, second, a Peters. Joseph O'Dell Morrell married Rhoda Anderson, and Catherine Morrell married Nathan Gregg.

Martha Morrell married Elbert James in 1863, and, after his death, she married William Perinar. The Perinars relocated to Kansas, and descendants reportedly still reside there.

Elzira Morrell married George Millard, who was killed during the Civil War near Petersburg, Va., while fighting for the Southern forces. Elzira Millard and her family relocated to Hillsboro, Texas, following the war.

Rufus White Morrell (b. Aug. 27, 1843; d. Dec. 6, 1915) married Martha Ellen Morrell (b. June 15, 1861; d. Feb. 16, 1935) on Feb. 25, 1883.

Martha Ellen Morrell was the daughter of George W. Morrell and Marthy Jane Morrell, and the granddaughter of Caleb Morrell and Martha Blevins Morrell.

Among the children of Caleb and Martha Morrell were William R. Morrell, Caleb Morrell (b. 1835), Thomas Morrell, Daniel Morrell, and John B. Morrell.

Nathan O. Morrell married Rosannah Millard, and James B. Morrell married Elizabeth Vance in 1854. Elkanah Morrell married Maggie J.C. White, and, after her death, he married Sarah Ann Hamilton. Jonathan Morrell married Elizabeth.

George W. Morrell died in July 1863 during the Civil War while serving with the Confederacy, and his wife, Marthy Jane, died about three months later.

Their young daughters, Martha Ellen Morrell and Frances Irena Morrell, resided with relatives near Erwin for an undetermined period.

Frances Irena Morrell later married Richard (Dick) Miller, Bluff City.

Rufus White Morrell was wounded during the War Between the States in a battle near Drewry's Bluff while serving with the Confederacy.

He and his wife, Martha Ellen Morrell, were born in Sullivan County and were married near Bluff City by the Rev. James K. Hancher.

They resided in Washington County for a short period, and, in 1898, purchased land in the Eighth District of Sullivan County from Joan Hicks and Joseph Hicks.

They are buried in Droke Cemetery near Piney Flats.

Rufus White Morrell and Martha Ellen Morrell were the parents of four children.

George Morrell was born on May 19, 1889, and died the same day.

Mary Katherine Morrell married Henry Peters in 1918 and relocated to California.

Susan Frances (Sudie) Morrell married Charles P. Hopkins Sr. in 1917.

Albert Sidney Morrell (b. Nov. 29, 1886; d. Sept. 23, 1923) married Letha Tulin Millhorn (b. Oct. 6, 1891; d. June 26, 1965) on May 14, 1916.

They resided on the plot purchased by Rufus White Morrell, located along Enterprise Road, near Piney Flats. Albert was a farmer and also helped with the construction of the old Rainbow Bridge over Boone Lake during the 1920s.

Letha Millhorn Morrell resided in the homeplace until her untimely death in an automobile accident.

She and her husband are buried in Droke Cemetery.

Albert and Letha Millhorn Morrell were the parents of three children.

Lewis Harmon Morrell married Ardith Rouse, and Joseph Edward Morrell married Irma Webb.

Rufus William (R.W.) Morrell (b. Feb. 26, 1917) married Nellie Nelson (b. Nov. 15, 1917; d. Jan. 1, 1966). Nellie was the daughter of Robert Nelson and Eliza Selfe Nelson, Bluff City.

The goddess of history continually calls and beckons, and her wiles are difficult to resist.

The roots of many families in this county parallel and reflect the history of this area and the nation.

History is essentially the study of individuals – individuals who experienced the Revolutionary period, the founding of the nation, the westward movement, wars, and depressions.

Despite the hardships and frustrations of everyday living, they kept going. Without a thought of making history, they lived history.

August 17, 1978

Lutheran and Methodist churches

Freedom of religion is one of the greatest freedoms enjoyed by the people of Sullivan County and the nation.

The liberty to worship in the church of one's choice was recognized by the Founding Fathers as a basic human right.

In the practice of this freedom, the people of the county have established many churches of various denominations.

The Lutheran churches have declined in numbers, but the worshipers in the Lutheran faith are a dedicated, vital part of the county.

According to Sullivan County records, in 1802, John Scott deeded one acre to the congregation of the Lutheran Dutch Church.

The church was then known as Gum Spring Meetinghouse and was bounded by the lands of William McKinley.

This meetinghouse may have been located near Piney Flats.

The deed stated the congregation was not to permit any other denomination to use the building.

The congregation was also to maintain and support a minister "of the Lutheran profession."

The witnesses to this deed were Joseph White and Christian Weaver.

In 1874, James Mottern deeded a plot of land in District 16 to the elders of Luther's Chapel Lutheran Church for public worship by the congregation.

The elders were Samuel Akard, James Droke, and Henry Mottern.

The church was located near the present location of Carrier's meat processing plant near Bluff City, but the building was later destroyed.

In 1859, Martin L. Roller deeded one and one-fourth acre, located north of the Holston River, to Roller's Chapel Lutheran Church.

The elders of the church were William Dickson, Benjamin Horn, and John Holt.

Gerald Seneker, Piney Flats, said this church was located near Pettyjohn's Mill, and, he said, the building was destroyed during the expansion of Boone Lake.

Seneker said the Shaver family donated the property for Holston Grove Lutheran Church near Boone Lake.

He said members from Enterprise Community travelled by boat across the Holston River to the church, and these members included Mrs. Susan Frances (Sudie) Hopkins and Mrs. Letha Millhorn Morrell.

Nina Smith Witt, Blountville, said many attended Holston Grove because church services were held only monthly at Enterprise Methodist Church at that time.

Vera King, Blountville, said other members of Holston Grove included members of the Akard, Lindamood, King, and Beard families.

According to *Historic Sites of Sullivan County*, compiled by Muriel C. Spoden, the Lutheran congregations along Reedy Creek were "the oldest Lutheran churches in Tennessee."

In 1785, Old Union Church was founded, and Shavers' Zion Church was founded approximately the same year, according to *Sites*.

The present Immanuel Lutheran Church is descended from Old Union Church.

According to *Sites*, the first Lutheran ministers in the county included Rev. Paul Henkel and John G. Butler.

The Methodist denomination has also been a prominent part of this county's religious history.

In 1909, Mary A. Carden deeded land in District Five in Carden Hollow to be used for educational and religious purposes.

The members of the Board of Education then were T.S. Thomas, J.J. White, J.E. Miller, J.M. Body, and H.A. Mauk.

The deed stated the building could be used for services by "any reputable minister in good standing with his one church, regardless of denomination."

If a conflict arose in scheduling of services, however, the Methodist Episcopal Church was to have preference for services in the building.

A right-of-way for a public road was also included in the deed, and this road extended through the lands of Elbert Carden to the public road.

Other signatures affixed to the deed were David Cross, Nannie Cross, L.W. Warren, and Mary Warren.

These and many other churches are evidence of the great respect the people of Sullivan County had for religious freedom.

The citizens of the county today recognize the profound importance of proper religious instruction and moral upbringing.

The denominations may differ in their creeds and methodologies, but their fundamental beliefs and aims are essentially the same.

August 24, 1978

Cox family history

The search for family roots continues unabated in Sullivan County.

The desire to seek one's family history is understandable, for the human need to belong to a place and a family is a strong urge.

The search, however, is often hindered by a lack of information and sources. The best place to begin is with one's own family members who can relate facts.

With oral history and family records, one may seek other written information. The following family history information may be useful, although it is, admittedly, incomplete.

John Cox immigrated from England shortly before the Revolutionary War and settled in the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia.

He was an army drum major during the Revolutionary War.

His wife is unidentified, but his children included Abe Cox, Jacob Cox, Jack Cox, and Jeremiah Cox.

John Cox later relocated to Sullivan County with Jeremiah Cox and his family of four children.

They settled in District 14 of Cox Valley, south of the Holston River.

William Cox, son of Jeremiah, married Mary Willoch in January 1805, with Rev. Jonathan Mulkey, a Baptist minister, performing the ceremony.

She was the daughter of John Willoch, who lived near Kendrick's Creek in Washington County.

William Cox served in the War of 1812, and Mary Cox later received a veteran's pension of \$6 per month after her husband's death.

William and Mary Cox resided in Cox Valley, and they were the parents of 12 children.

Elizabeth Cox (b. Oct. 25, 1805) married Jeremiah Profitt, and they relocated to Bulls Gap.

Deborah Cox (b. Dec. 16, 1807) married Jeremiah Profitt after her sister Elizabeth's death.

Sarah Cox (b. Oct. 25, 1810) married Thomas Parker, and Mary Cox (b. June 12, 1811) married Thomas Brown. Thomas and Mary Cox Brown also settled in Cox Valley. They were the parents of two children. One died in childhood, and the other died during the Civil War.

Other children of William Cox and Mary Cox were Margaret Cox (b. Nov. 20, 1812), who married John McCulley. John and Margaret McGulley's children were William McGulley, Robert McGulley, James McGulley, and Jane McGulley.

After John McCulley's death, Margaret McGulley married Nathan Jackson. Their children included John Jackson, who married Kate McCulley.

William Cox (b. May 24, 1816), son of William and Mary Cox, married Elizabeth Crouch, daughter of William Crouch and Susan Crouch.

Jeremiah Cox (b. May 24, 1816) married Eleanor Amanda King, daughter of James King and Jane Gregg King.

After Jeremiah's death, Eleanor married Jacob Cox (b. Aug. 9, 1832), her brother-in-law.

Jacob and Eleanor Cox's children included Jeremiah Cox, George Cox, Samuel Cox, Mary Jane Cox, Margaret Angeline Cox, and Melissa Elizabeth Cox. The remaining four children are unidentified.

The following information may be related, in some fashion, to the facts above.

Thomas Cox (b. 1751) served in the North Carolina militia during the Revolutionary War. He resided with Stephen Miller in Sullivan County after the war.

Joseph Cox (b. 1759) served in the Maryland militia during the Revolutionary War.

William Cox served in the East Tennessee militia. He married Ruth Boring, and they were the parents of a son, Caleb Boring, who married Nancy Ann Carrier.

In the 1850 census of Sullivan County, James Cox, 41, was a farmer. His household included: his wife, Margaret Cox, 42; James, 18; Samuel, 16; Susan, 14; Jesse, 13; Harriet, 11; and William, 8.

Susan Elizabeth Cox and Clementina Cox were charter members of Pleasant Grove Presbyterian Church, Bluff City, which was organized in 1846.

Most of the information above was derived from *Thomas King and Susan Sharp and Allied Families*, by Anna Belle Stone Rogers and Vivian Bullock, and *Roster of Soldiers and Patriots of the American Revolution Buried in Tennessee*, by Lucy Bates.

Various sources of information may be used in one's family research. Government records – such as pension records, census records, and military information – may be useful.

Other previously published research may be helpful, but the primary place one should start is in the memories of older memories of his family.

The best source for any historical research is an original source, and nothing is more original than the mind and memories of one who has lived history.

August 31, 1978

Methodist churches

Methodism has a long, proud history in Sullivan County and Tennessee.

According to one source, the first Methodist circuit rider in Tennessee was Jeremiah Lambert.

He was appointed to ride the Holston Circuit in about 1783. He and other preachers brought God's message to the pioneers in this section.

The Methodist churches in the county were founded by people of varying backgrounds and at varying times.

The formal written records of the congregation of St. Paul United Methodist Church, Piney Flats, date to 1892.

Mrs. Ida Poe said, however, she joined the congregation in 1878. Rev. John D. Hickson was the pastor then.

She said the congregation was organized as a "Methodist class" in 1878.

The meetings were held in the first Rocky Springs School building, and, later, were held in the second school building when the original log structure was torn down.

The congregation held services here until the Bertha King Memorial Presbyterian Church (Rocky Springs) was built in 1905.

The Methodists utilized the building when the Presbyterian congregation was not holding services.

The Bluff City Circuit, of which St. Paul was a member, was divided in 1949.

Bluff City and Rockholds became a two-point parish, and the Rocky Springs congregation, Edgefield, Enterprise, Piney Flats, and Elizabeth Chapel formed the Piney Flats Methodist Parish.

In 1951, the congregation began construction of St. Paul United Methodist. Mr. and Mrs. O.W. Burdine donated one acre of land for the church site.

Mrs. Roxie Warren and Kenneth Stidham assisted in ground-breaking ceremonies. Rev. James Hankins was pastor of the church at this time.

The board of trustees included Clyde Warren, Arthur Malone, Arden Hamilton, Sherwood Godsey, and Oney Burdine.

Mrs. Willie B. Malone Johnson, Piney Flats, said while the new church was being constructed, the congregation met at Burdine's home.

Mrs. Johnson said the congregation later met in the basement of the church building until the building was fully completed.

She said the church was completed and officially opened in November 1951, and the first services were held by Rev. Hankins.

The church held dedication ceremonies in November 1958, she said.

Some of the earliest members of the congregation were J.W. Boring, J.R. Clay, B.H. McKamey, J.W. Jeter, and E.J. Burkey.

Other members were John Sanders, Guilford Torbett, H.D. McClelland, M.A. McClelland, Watson Anderson, E.S. Blalock, William Collins, and William Poe.

Some of the pastors of the congregation were John Hickson, the first pastor, R.E. Smith, John K. Dean, L.R. Hankins, N.R. Cartwright, E.K. Cox, and J.W. Shaver.

Some more recent pastors of the church were Thurman Littreal, Sam Varnell, James Walters, Lee Hill, Alden Nichols, and John Deck, associate pastor.

In 1922, church records indicate that the pastor was paid an annual salary of \$125.

The first Women's Society was organized in December 1937 by the church, under the leadership of Rev. Roy Reece.

The eight charter members of the society were Mrs. Raymond Hamilton, Mrs. Ida Poe, Miss Ola Hamilton, Mrs. A.W. Malone, Mrs. Clyde Warren, Mrs. George Warren, Mrs. A.D. Hamilton, and Miss Bell Oliver.

Most of the above information was derived from a brochure published in 1951 by the Piney Flats Methodist Parish, entitled *To Glorify God and Serve Humanity*.

The churches and church members must strive to preserve their written and oral records of their history.

Older members of the churches may relate interesting sidelights of the founding of the churches, and seemingly unimportant written records may be of great usefulness to future historians.

Members should not wait for a specific anniversary of their church to begin collecting this vital information, for, by then, records may have been destroyed or oral history may have been taken to the grave.

September 7, 1978

Mexican War; Cherokee removal

The last haunting bugle notes drift over the hills and vanish into a gray, leaden sky.

The ominous silence is broken by the sharp, metallic click of rounds being chambered.

The rifles are shouldered and fired. Seven shots, 14, then 21.

A brother, father, or son has given his life in the defense of the nation.

The men of Sullivan County have heeded the call of God, duty, honor and country throughout the country's history.

During the Mexican War, 1846-1848, so many volunteers from Tennessee stepped forward that the state attained its nickname: the Volunteer State.

One local unit, Sullivan County Volunteers, was mustered into service on Nov. 10, 1847.

The regiment was commanded by G.R. McClellan. Other officers included Capt. John Shaver, 1st Lt. William King, 2nd Lt. J.J. O'Dell, and 2nd Lt. Samuel R. Anderson.

Some other members of the unit were Andrew Blevins, David Ingle, James Blevins, James Millhorn, and Stephen Miller.

Other members were William Harkleroad, Jacob Latture, Elkana Cross, Elkana Droke, John W. Malone, John Emmert, Jonathan Snapp, and Joel Millard.

The unit travelled by flat boat to Memphis and then to New Orleans. From New Orleans, the unit sailed across the Gulf of Mexico and was later discharged from service on July 20, 1848, at Memphis.

Allen Torbett (b. Aug. 4, 1802; d. April 26, 1855), Piney Flats, also served in the Mexican War.

The Cherokee removal occurred in the 1830s.

This was a sad, tragic chapter in the history of the nation as thousands of Indians were uprooted from their homelands.

The Cherokees were transported, under military escort, to new lands west of the Mississippi River because of the white man's greed for Indian lands.

This was a political decision, but enforcement of the decrees fell upon the military, which had no choice but to obey.

Capt. Abraham McClellan's Company, 2nd Regiment, 2nd Brigade, Mounted Volunteer Militia was composed of many men from Sullivan County.

Other officers in the unit were 1st Lt. Abraham Gregg and 2nd Lt. James Riley.

Other members of the unit included Timothy Millard, Andrew Millhorn, Samuel Cross, Jessee White, Royston Boy, and Elkanah Millard.

The unit served from May 1836 through April 1837.

John Torbett, Piney Flats, also participated in the Cherokee removal.

Scenes from the Bluffs, published by the Bluff City United Methodist Church, contains a letter written by John G. Burnett. He was a member of Capt. McClellan's company, and, in his letter, Burnett related a sorrowful description of the Cherokee removal.

According to Burnett, the "Trail of Tears" was marked by 4,000 Cherokee graves.

Much of the information above is derived from *Historic Sullivan*, by Oliver Taylor.

The nation has fought several other wars, and the men and women of Sullivan County have answered their country's call.

There is perhaps no epitaph which can do full justice to those who lost their lives in these wars.

Rudyard Kipling, the British poet, did well when he honored the soldiers of his time with this tribute: "I have eaten your bread and salt. I have drunk your water and wine. The deaths ye died I watched beside, and the lives ye led were mine."

September 14, 1978

Vance's Chapel and other community churches

When the early settlers came to Tennessee, they brought their great respect for religious and educational instruction with them.

The Presbyterian ministers were among the first ministers in Tennessee.

According to some sources, Samuel Doak was the first Presbyterian minister to permanently reside in the state.

He established a school and church near Jonesboro, and this school later became known as Washington College.

In January 1889, Mr. and Mrs. Eli Buckles and Mr. and Mrs. Hirman Brown deeded a plot in the Fourth District of Sullivan County for educational purposes.

The school commissioners then were Elbert Smith, William Hamilton, and James Witcher.

A school building was erected, and a Sunday school was later organized.

This was the foundation of Vances' Chapel Church, named in honor of the first owners of the property.

Church services were first held in the Vances' School building and later at White Top School. Services were also held in the home of J.D. Faucett.

Among the first members of the Sunday school were Andrew Harkleroad, C.E. Weaver, Lizzie Godsey, Maggie Witcher, and Henry Wampler.

Rev. R.F. King and his wife, Julia T. King, held services in Haw Ridge Community on the John Shipley farm.

A church was later erected here, and John C. Shipley and Mary Shipley donated three-fourths acre for the church site.

The church became known as Soul Winners Chapel.

According to the deed, all political discussions and meetings were forbidden in the building.

“The raising of money for all religious purposes by any modern clap-trap methods, such as poke and ice cream suppers, strawberry festivals, or any species of religious gambling” was also forbidden.

The church was part of the New Bethel congregation, and Rev. Dan Graham was involved greatly with the church.

Pleasant Grove Church was organized in August 1846 near Bluff City.

Logs were cut and transported to the site, but work was discontinued in July 1847.

Rev. D. Rogan held the first services on the site as the congregation sat on the logs.

The trustees of the church were William Wallace, David Woods, Joseph Rhea, Harmon Arrants, and David McClellan.

In May 1848, about 80 men “raised the house.”

Rev. Rogan was the first pastor, but he also held services at New Bethel and Blountville churches.

Among the charter members of Pleasant Grove were William Rutledge, Elzira Rutledge, Kitty Rhea, Mary Miller, David Woods, and Jane Woods.

Other charter members included Mary Vance, Jane Wallace, Mary Long, Adam Thomas, Ann Gross, Elizabeth McClellan, and John P. King.

Robert P. Rhea donated the land for the church site.

In 1890, the old log church was torn down, and a new church erected.

Other pastors of the church included John R. King, J.P. Doggett, C.F. Newland, M.W.

Millard, Asa Watkins, and Rex King.

Most of the information above was derived from *The New Bethel Sesquicentennial, 1782-1932*.

Community churches continue to thrive in Sullivan County.

The decentralized congregations seem to give a feeling of closeness to God and fellowman.

A great debt is owed to those who gave their land, resources, and efforts to the establishment of these churches.

September 21, 1978

Miscellaneous deeds and land grants

The land was here before any man owned it.

One merely uses the land during his stay here on earth, and, then, bequeaths it to the next generation.

Parcels of land in Sullivan County have seen many owners, and many means of acquisition have been utilized.

The county was once part of North Carolina, and that state issued land grants to settlers here.

The county's records contain many land grant deeds.

In 1789, George Millhorn Sr. received a grant of 200 acres on the south side of the Holston River.

The acreage was located in the Forks Section of the county, near Choat's Plantation.

In 1787, Thomas Morrell received a grant from North Carolina for 150 acres on the north side of the Holston.

John Cox Jr. received a grant for 220 acres along the Holston River in 1782.

The ownership of a given plot of land is often difficult to retrace.

Gerald Seneker, Piney Flats, said the Scott family owned part of the present Clyde Warren property along Enterprise Road.

The Scotts also purchased Millhorn property bordering the Carlie Allison lands, Seneker said, and the Scott children included Bell Scott, Ida Scott, and John Scott.

Stella Smith, Bristol, said her grandfather, William Washington Millhorn, owned land adjacent to the Allison property.

Seneker said Looney Cross Island, which is now submerged, was located in the Holston River, opposite the Oscar Crussell property, near Cross Dock Road.

Looney was the maiden name of Cross's mother, Seneker said.

He said the Willen, Cole, Malone, and Wright families also owned property near the Cross Dock Road.

Jessee Cross once owned part of the present Akard-Seneker property, he said.

John S. Boughers, Bluff City, said some lands have remained in the same family for generations.

Boughers said during the War Between the States, the Confederate government was in dire need of financial support.

He said some members of the Morrell family loaned money to the state governor to help finance Southern expeditions.

As collateral for the loans, the government issued land grants in Sullivan County, and, Boughers said, many of these grants were near Bristol and Bluff City.

When Gen. Robert E. Lee surrendered, the Confederate government was bankrupt, Boughers said, and the loans could not be repaid.

He said the land grants were, therefore, still valid, and the Morrells accepted the grants in lieu of money for repayment of the loans.

Some of the land was obtained for 50 cents per acre, he said.

Southerners have special pride and great respect for the land.

The ground which has been trod by generations of the same family retains a certain aura.

In Sullivan County, the land was wrested from nature and the Cherokees. The land has suffered floods and droughts, and she has suffered from the atrocities of man.

Cannon balls thudded into her flesh during the Civil War, and the blood from many wounds stained her.

She has been possessed by many but owned by none.

One must love and respect her, for the land is one of God's great gifts to man.

September 28, 1978

Enterprise and Deer Lick schools

The educational process has changed greatly in Sullivan County for both students and teachers.

Students are now transported by bus to the doors of modern schools.

In the not-too-distant past, children usually walked to their neighborhood, one-room school. Equipment and books were often expensive and scarce.

Teachers were transferred from one school to another on an almost yearly basis.

Gerald Seneker, Piney Flats, said his father, Beverly Seneker, taught at Enterprise School and others.

About 1900, a teachers' meeting was held at Enterprise, and some of the teachers spent the night at Tom Akard's home, Seneker said.

Seneker said students at Enterprise School in 1931 included Vernon Crussell, Taylor Hodge, Lewis Harmon Morrell, Percy Malone, and Hersey Malone.

Other students were Virgie Ringley, Donna Hodge, Reba Combs, Dot Fillers, Pearl Profitt, Carlis Ringley, Clarence Ringley, and Beatrice Profitt.

The teacher then was Margaret Mahaffey.

Seneker said students at Enterprise School in 1908 included Hugh Cross, Ollie Smith, George Malone, Porter Braxton (Port) Malone, Irma Akard, Lula Hicks, and Martha St. John.

Gerald Seneker said Whit Cross, the teacher at the time, became ill, and Beverly Seneker replaced him.

The Hodges family was instrumental in the founding of Deer Lick School near Piney Flats.

In March 1883, Louisa Hodges, William Anson Hodges, Sara M. Hodges, Samuel Hodges, William Hodges, Ellen Hodges Sanders, James Harwood, and Nannie Hodges Harwood donated a tract in District 20 for educational purposes.

The school commissioners then were Hiram Hughes, E.R. King, and J.F. King.

The tract was located on Lick Branch, near King Branch. The school building was also to be used for religious services by any Christian denomination.

James Hodges (b. April 11, 1832; d. Feb. 24, 1862) married Louisa Chase (b. Dec. 3, 1836; d. March 2, 1924).

Their children included William A. Hodges, who married Sarah Melissa Millhorn. Melissa Ella Hodges married Abraham Sanders, and Hannah Hodges married John Archer.

Nannie Hodges married James M. Harwood, and Samuel D. Hodges married Sarah M. Hale.

According to Sullivan County records, in July 1908, J.C. Brown and Sallie V. Brown sold two acres in District 9 to the Board of Education and to the trustees of Poplar Ridge Church.

The land was to be used as a “hitching ground by the church” and as a playground for the school there.

The plot adjoined the lands of J.W. Smith, J.C. Brown, the Weavers, and the schoolhouse lot.

In 1904, J.S. Smith and M.G. Smith donated property in the Ninth District to the elders of Poplar Ridge Church.

The land was to be used as church land and as a cemetery, in order to “have a place to bury the dead.”

The church and graveyard then were located, the deed stated, and the tract adjoined the lands of Assa Routh.

Some of the above information was derived from *Genealogy of the Sanders, Allison, and Collateral Families of Sullivan and Washington County, Tennessee*, by W.R. Sanders.

The county and the nation are undergoing rapid, drastic changes.

One may, at times, seem overwhelmed by these changes, but history may serve as a rudder to guide him over the rough, turbulent waters of the future.

The purpose of history is to serve as a guide to the future, but, in order to accomplish this, the history of the county must be preserved.

October 5, 1978

Highways, bridges, and railroads

The United States is a technologically advanced nation with many interdependent parts.

Rapid, dependable transportation is the lifeblood of such a nation.

Sullivan County is a microcosm of the nation, and its transportation needs are great.

Modern four-lane highways and all-weather county roads were considered improbable at the turn of the century.

Gerald Seneker, Piney Flats, said the Bristol-Johnson City highway was concreted in the 1920s.

He said much of the work was done by mules pulling the graders and scrapers.

Many of the construction workers resided in tent camps along the route, and, Seneker said, one camp was located near Ordway Hill in Avoca Community.

This was near the site of an old chair factory, he said.

Corrals for the mules were also located here, he said, and other camps were located near Piney Flats.

He said Jess Cross of Piney Flats, Raymond (Shorty) Morrell, and Barnes Morrell of Bluff City helped construct the highway.

The present county road between the Piney Flats intersection and the Carlie Allison property was constructed about 55 years ago, Seneker said.

The road was originally dirt, but, he said, later, gravel was placed on the road.

Mrs. Cordia Childress Millhorn, Piney Flats, said the old Enterprise Road was routed differently.

She said the remains of the old dirt roadbed may be seen behind her home.

The railroad played a significant role in the development of Sullivan County.

Arnold Hale, Piney Flats, said the remains of a railroad may be seen near Pickens Bridge when the water level is low.

Seneker said the East Tennessee and Western North Carolina Company began construction of the narrow-gauge railroad during the World War I era.

The railroad was designed primarily to haul pulpwood from North Carolina to Kingsport, but, he said, the rail company encountered severe financial problems before the railroad could be completed.

Hale said laborers from foreign nations were used in the construction, and, Seneker said, Spanish and other nationalities were utilized.

These workers resided in tent camps near the bridge and at other locations along the route, he said.

Seneker said Charlie Cartwright and Lee Cross, Piney Flats, helped construct the railroad.

According to *Memoirs*, by Homer Smith, the Bristol and Elizabethton Railroad was constructed about 1890.

The railroad was constructed along Beaver Creek, across Hamilton Hill, to Bluff City, Elizabethton, and Mountain City, Smith wrote.

He said the railroad operated for many years but encountered financial difficulties with the advent of automobiles.

The railroad eventually ceased operations, and most of the tracks were removed, "except for a few sidetracks to industries and elsewhere," he wrote.

Smith also listed several highway bridges which were erected before 1948.

These included bridges at Central Holston Church, Old Holston Regular Baptist Church, and Bluff City.

Other bridges were erected at the Michael DeVault farm near Hogan's Branch, and others near Hemlock, Pactolus, and Tri-City Airport.

Smith wrote covered wooden bridges stood at Bluff City, Thomas's Bridge, Blountville, and over Reedy Creek at Lovedale.

Today, few public roads remain unpaved, and the paved roads are a vast improvement over the dusty or muddy roads of relatively few years ago.

Modern interstates now crisscross the nation, and motorized vehicles carry a multitude of goods for the nation and its people.

A trip which required an entire day by horse now often requires possibly half an hour.

Improvements in the transportation systems of the county have brought increased safety, convenience, and prosperity to the people of the county.

October 12, 1978

Country doctors

The “country doctor” has almost vanished in Sullivan County.

These doctors ministered to the needs of those in the rural areas and often used a horse and buggy to travel over treacherous roads at all hours.

These doctors were family counselors, friends, and neighbors, and they were sometimes paid in trade goods, or, at times, not at all.

Gerald Seneker, Piney Flats, said Dr. F. Graves often came to Gross Store on Enterprise Road and ministered to residents gathered there during World War I.

Graves, who was of German descent, later moved his practice to Bluff City, Seneker said.

Mrs. Cordia Childress Millhorn said Dr. Childress was another doctor in the county, and Seneker said Dr. Massengill also practiced in Piney Flats.

Veterans who applied for Civil War pensions in Tennessee were required to attach physical examination certificates to their applications.

In June 1904, Dr. H.T. Massengill performed the examination of Rufus White Morrell.

In the original application in December 1901, Morrell was examined by Dr. E.S. King of Sullivan County, and, in 1907, Dr. J.D. Massengill certified the examination for the pension application of R.B. Cross.

W.S. Sproles was examining physician in October 1905 for William B. Millhorn’s application.

Sproles came to Bluff City in the early 1900s from Virginia, according to *Scenes from the Bluffs*, published by the Bluff City United Methodist Church.

He practiced medicine in the Bluff City area for 35 years until his death in 1933.

In 1915, he bought his first automobile, the book states, but many times he was forced to go by horseback to visit patients because the roads were impassable with a car.

Mrs. Pet Deakins Houston, Piney Flats, said Dr. Aaron Cole often made his medical house calls by horseback.

According to *Scenes*, Dr. Cole was born on May 27, 1886, in Goin, near Tazewell.

He was the son of Josiah Cole and Hester Harmon Cole, who were the parents of eight other children.

Dr. Cole taught school for six years, and, in 1918, he married one of his students, Hassie Anne Keck.

He later decided to attend medical school, and, after graduation, he opened his practice in Goin.

Aaron Cole and Hassie Cole were the parents of a son, Osler Cole, and four daughters, Brenda Cole, Vivian Cole, Hester Cole, and Ruth Cole, who married Carl Ingram.

In 1925, the book states, Dr. Cole moved to Piney Flats and established his office at his home, where he practiced for 35 years.

Cole estimated he delivered 6,500 babies during his 44 years of practice.

Like other country doctors, Cole made house calls at all hours of the day and during all types of weather.

“He was often called on to pull teeth or treat animals, a little out of his line, but he was always willing when he could be of help,” the book states.

He retired in 1960 and died on Oct. 27, 1969.

Dr. Cole rode a horse to make many of his calls, but he later purchased a Model T automobile to speed his travels.

The roads were often muddy and impassable for a car, however, and, in the 1920s and 1930s, he often relied on his horse for more dependable transportation.

Dr. A.C. Emmert practiced in Bluff City during the mid-19th century, according to *Scenes*.

His office building and home were located on West Main Street.

Many fees were often paid in produce, but a patient was never turned away because he could not pay.

In the past, family doctors and general practitioners fulfilled the literal meaning of the titles.

They were members of the community and were dedicated professionals. They were often overworked and underpaid.

Specialization and depersonalization of medical services have been a result of the passing of the country doctors.

Their services to the citizens of Sullivan County were priceless, for, with divine assistance, their services often meant the difference between life or death.

October 19, 1978

County newspapers

Many freedoms are taken for granted until they no longer exist.

Freedom of the press is one of the basic freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution of this nation.

Newspapers and other mediums function to keep the citizens informed so they may make enlightened decisions on matters affecting their lives.

Newspapers also serve to entertain, to educate, and to communicate.

The history of the press in Sullivan County is a proud one.

The *Sullivan County Developer* began publication about 1910 in Bluff City, according to *Memoirs*, by Homer Smith.

W.D. Lyon (d. 1947) was a lawyer and also editor of the paper, Smith wrote, and Lyon favored improved roads for the county and other developments.

Lyon served as county highway commissioner for a number of years and was also a member of the state legislature.

The newspaper was published from 1910-1920, according to *Scenes from the Bluffs*, published by the Bluff City United Methodist Church.

A hand press was used to print the paper, and offices were located in a portion of Jim Woods' store building.

Mrs. G.H. Evans, Mrs. Sam Woods, and Ethel Carrier were typesetters for the paper.

About 1880, Noah J. Phillips (d. about 1921) published the *Central Star*, a weekly paper with offices on Main Street in Blountville.

Phillips came to Blountville in 1869 and was a teacher at Fall Branch. He fought for improved roads in the county, and served as clerk and master of chancery court for a number of years.

In April 1944, Smith wrote, the *Sullivan County News* began publication. The publisher was Joe McKenzie, and the editor was Mrs. Louise Smith.

In 1955, the paper was purchased by Bristol Newspapers, Inc., and Donald White became the publisher.

According to the *Bristol Herald Courier*, A.K. Moore was editor of the *Bristol News* in 1857.

Moore was a real estate agent from Pennsylvania, and a stock company had organized the paper's operation.

He was later killed during the Civil War, and J. Austin Speery replaced Moore as editor until Speery relocated to Knoxville in 1862.

In 1867, the *Goodson Gazette* was established, the *Herald Courier* states, and, in 1879, the *Bristol Reporter* was established by J.H. Burrow and T.J. Burrow.

John Barnes and Z.T. Hammer also published the *Daily Argus* in the town for a short period.

In October 1870, John Slack began publication of the *Bristol Courier*, forerunner of the *Herald Courier*.

The *Bristol Courier* was a four-page weekly newspaper published on Thursdays, until Charles Slack began the *Daily Courier* in September 1888.

John Slack was later appointed postmaster of the Bristol, Tennessee, Post Office in 1885, and served in the office until his death in 1900.

The *Courier* later merged with the *Bristol Herald Courier* to become the *Herald Courier*.

Newspapers have become a vital part of the daily lives of the people of the nation.

The papers bring the triumphs and tragedies in the nation, world, and community.

They are a window to the outside world and reflect the needs, social trends, and temper of the times.

Newspapers, like all other institutions, are not infallible, but to emphasize their mistakes is to overlook human nature.

The disappearance of newspapers or of freedom of the press would leave a void in the lives of the people of the county and the nation.

October 26, 1978

Camp meetings and religion

Camp meetings were a colorful and integral part of the religious history of Sullivan County and the state.

The first camp meeting in upper East Tennessee was held about 1800, according to one source.

Families travelled for miles by foot, by horseback, or by wagon. They camped on the meeting grounds, cooked their food there, and stayed for several days.

The people came to hear sermons and to hear religious instruction, but they also came to socialize with their neighbors and to catch up on the local news.

Bond's Camp Meeting Ground near Blountville was, "for many years, the most popular tent meeting in East Tennessee," according to *Genealogy of the Sanders, Allison, and Collateral Families of Sullivan and Washington County, Tennessee*, by W.R. Sanders.

In August 1842, James Bond deeded one and three-quarters acre for the building of a place to worship for holding camp meetings by the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The trustees for the property were Benjamin Yokley, Jacob Snapp, Jacob Music, Blake Carlton, Fredrick Craft, Jessie Craft, John Barns, Abraham Gregg, and Stephen Adams.

William Miller Bowman witnessed camp meetings held at the site, according to Sanders.

Bowman said the camp grounds were located about four miles southwest of Blountville.

There were two creeks to furnish water for the horses, and two springs which furnished drinking water for the congregation.

The main meeting house was a wooden structure with open sides and ends. The building, however, had doors, with hinges at the top, which could be opened to allow fresh air when the weather was hot and could be partially closed during foul weather.

The “tents” were also permanent buildings, Bowman said, and some were two-story buildings.

The owners of the tents “brought the best of their farm products for their tables,” Bowman said.

He said, “I remember my family killed a fattened lamb for the occasion, and their doors were always open at mealtime so long as one could crowd inside.”

A bell in the meeting house was rung 10 minutes before each meeting, and the bell also rang at 6:30 each morning for devotional services.

At that time, the tent holders would pause, read the Bible, and then pray. These devotions were often conducted by elderly women, who also helped to prepare the food.

The meetings often began on Fridays and lasted through Sunday of the following week.

People came from miles away to attend these camp meetings.

Nothing was allowed to interfere with worship, and, thus, nothing could “be offered for sale within a radius of one mile of the campgrounds.”

Bowman said the only reminder of the existence of the campgrounds was a faint sign at the entrance to the campground.

In the early 1800s, these camp meetings developed into a “Great Revival” in Tennessee.

The religious fervor lasted for about 12 years, but the camp meetings continued for many years after the revival.

Church membership increased greatly as a result of the great revival, and this increased membership resulted in the establishment of more permanent churches.

The spirit of religious revival still lives in the churches of Sullivan County today.

November 5, 1978

Sullivan County during World War II

The newspaper headlines screamed, "The war is over!"

The nightmare of World War II had ended for the people of the world and Sullivan County.

Many young men of the county had marched off to answer their nation's call, and some of these now rested in the jungles of Pacific islands or in hedgerows of Europe. They would never return.

Although the war ended more than 30 years ago, Jasper Cross, of Bluff City, and many other veterans can recall the times of "only yesterday."

Cross said he was stationed at many installations in the United States, including a military training camp in this state.

He was a member of the U.S. Army's 36th Division, which was nicknamed the Texas Division, and he participated in campaigns in Italy and in other parts of Europe.

Like an artist using his paint brush, Cross uses words to describe the blackness of the night as he heard the thud of mortar rounds coming increasingly closer.

Cecil Nelson, of Bluff City, served in the Pacific Theater of war against the Japanese.

Those who remained on the home front during the war also suffered deprivations and regimentation.

In order to free up more goods for the fighting men, gasoline, coffee, shoes, sugar, and other items were rationed.

The Office of Price Administration established local boards to administer the rationing program.

Local Board 5-A was located on State Street in Bristol, and residents of the Piney Flats area had their ration coupons issued there.

Fannie Fickle was issuing officer for the board during one period, and Mrs. George H. Vance was registrar of the board in May 1942.

Each stamp authorized an individual to purchase rationed goods in the quantities and at the times designated by the OPA.

Purchase of the controlled goods without ration stamps was illegal.

When all the stamps in a ration book were used, the person was required to return the empty book to the board before issuance of another full book.

“Rationing is a vital part of your country’s war effort,” the ration book stated, and the ration books were “your government’s guarantee of your fair share of goods made scarce by the war.”

“Any attempt to violate the rules [of the rationing program] is an effort to deny someone his share and will create hardship and discontent. Such action, like treason, helps the enemy,” the book added. Another note urged consumers to salvage tin cans and waste fats in order to make munitions for the fighting men.

Price ceilings were established for rationed goods, and dealers were required to post the ceiling prices. Consumers were urged not to pay more than these prices for goods.

T. Kegley was issuing officer of the Price and Rationing Board in Bristol in April 1945 for a “mileage ration.”

This gasoline allowance was allotted by the board, and, if a person sold his vehicle, his unused ration stamps were returned to the board before the sale.

The military draft laws also affected many young men.

In October 1940, Ethel Beard was registrar for the Selective Service Board in the Eighth Precinct of Sullivan County.

Paul Anderson was a member of local Selective Service Board Number 3 in Blountville in 1944, and M.S. Harmon was a member of the board in 1945.

The people of the nation endured hardships during the war. Many lost their lives, and some bore permanent physical handicaps as a result of wartime injuries.

World War II is considered by some to be the last war which was totally supported by the American people. The majority obeyed the ration laws and the Selective Service laws.

Korea and Viet Nam have followed, but the full historical significance of these wars is yet to be determined.

The veterans of these wars, however, are linked by a common bond with the World War II veterans. It is the bond of suffering, sacrifice, and, often, sadness.

November 16, 1978

Recollections of James R. Morrell

Life has been compared to the early morning mist which exists for a short time and then is gone.

During a lifetime, a person touches the lives of many others and often leaves wisdom and pleasant memories in his wake.

It is the responsibility of those living to preserve the memories of those who are gone.

James R. Morrell died in August 1978 at the age of 89. Although he left Sullivan County almost 60 years ago to reside in the West, his memories of this area and its people were vivid and informative.

He was the son of Elkanah A. Morrell and Sarah Ann Hamilton Morrell. Maggie White was the first wife of Elkanah Morrell.

Elkanah was the brother of George W. Morrell (b. 1834; d. 1863).

According to James Morrell, his father was a Lutheran, as were most of his close relatives.

When he was about six years old, James Morrell attended Oakdale School near Bluff City, and he said his first teacher there was John Blevins.

Blevins later worked at the courthouse in Blountville, Morrell said.

He recalled Joe Houston as another teacher at the school, and several members of the Millhorn family attended school there.

James Morrell later attended school at Bluff City, where Luther Morrell, of Erwin, attended. Luther Morrell resided with relatives in Bluff City, the Walter Miller family, while attending school.

James Morrell was also acquainted with “Professor” John Elias Lafayette (J.E.L.) Seneker, superintendent of schools at one time, who resided between Blountville and Bristol.

Mary L. Hull married James Morrell, and she was the daughter of Elbert Hull and Dora Bell Bushong Hull, of Fairview Community, near Muddy Creek.

In 1914, Morrell left Sullivan County and served in the Army during World War I. He was stationed at three different camps in the U.S. but did not serve overseas.

He was discharged in San Antonio, Texas, and returned home in 1919 to help his brother, Jerome Morrell, on the farm near Thomas’s Bridge, along Beaver Creek Road

James Morrell again departed the area and established his permanent residence later in Colorado, but he did not forget his friends and family here.

Several first cousins resided near Central Holston Church, he said.

He often visited his cousin, Martha Ellen Morrell, who resided at the home of Albert Sidney Morrell and Letha Millhorn Morrell, along Enterprise Road, near Piney Flats.

In December 1903, M.E. Morrell sold about 42 acres in the Fourth District of Sullivan County to Lawrence Roe and Chassie May White Roe.

The land adjoined the lands of D.H. Miller, John Miller, James Miller, and Elkanah A. Morrell.

James Morrell said Chassie Roe was a second cousin, and the land purchased formerly belonged to his uncle, Caleb, and his aunt, Margaret.

When his father Elkanah Morrell’s property was sold, Lawrence (Dink) Roe purchased part of it, and the Watkins family purchase the remainder, James Morrell said.

Bill Watkins later operated a blacksmith shop on the property located along Beaver Creek Road.

The memories of those past may flicker, but they cannot be extinguished if their history is preserved.

The oral history of this county is, like life itself, a fleeting, fragile creature.

These recollections of things past are a valued legacy, for some of today's written history has its roots in oral history.

November 22, 1978

President Kennedy assassinated

Pearl Harbor has been attacked. World War II has ended.

There are those days of such significance and magnitude that those living at the time cannot forget where they were or what they were doing then.

The memories may be etched with pain as the thoughts of tragedy and of senseless loss flow back to the mind.

Fifteen years ago, on Nov. 22, 1963, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas.

According to the Warren Commission Report, the gunman was a cynical loner named Lee Harvey Oswald.

The people of this nation and Sullivan County were plunged into a time of grief and sadness by the death of the young president.

Each person old enough to remember can probably recall where he or she was when the terrible news reached them.

During a history class at Bluff City High School, Principal Kenneth Carrier requested the students' attention via the intercom.

Then, the radio account of the shooting began to broadcast. The first reports stated only that shots had been fired at the presidential motorcade and that the president may have been shot.

The students suddenly became unusually quiet, as the instructor, Lester Carrier, repeated, "How could anyone do such a terrible thing?"

The classes changed, and, during the next class period, the announcement came. President John Fitzgerald Kennedy died in Dallas at 1 p.m. Central Time.

Some students wept openly, but most were too stunned and shocked to cry, at least not yet.

Monday was declared a national day of mourning, and there would be no school. That day and that weekend were not holidays.

The national television networks cancelled all regular programming in order to cover all aspects of this national tragedy.

In Bristol, the streets were unusually quiet for a Friday night. The movie theaters and the stores were almost deserted, in many instances.

When people grieve, they wish to be with family and friends.

The burley tobacco markets cancelled their sales, which were to begin on the following Monday. Flags flew at half-staff for the fallen leader.

The images on the television screen reflected a bad dream which refused to end.

The widow, Jacqueline Kennedy, stepping from the plane carrying her husband's body, her dress darkened with his blood.

The thousands of mourners quietly and somberly filing by the flag-draped casket. There often was no commentary by the broadcasters. None was needed.

Mrs. Kennedy and her young daughter, Caroline Kennedy, visiting the resting place. At one point, Caroline slipped her small hand underneath the flag as if to touch her father one last time. A grieving nation choked back a sob.

The funeral services took place with the muffled drums and the clicking of horses' hooves on the pavement.

As the honor guard placed the casket on the caisson to travel to the final resting place in Arlington National Cemetery, the president's three-year-old son, John F. Kennedy Jr., saluted his father. The nation's knees crumpled.

At the cemetery, the guns saluted the fallen president, and a young soldier's lips quivered as the notes of "Taps" lingered in the air.

The City of Dallas established a memorial to President Kennedy. It is a place full of echoes of the past.

During the presidential campaign of 1960, then Sen. Kennedy visited Tri-City Airport. His confidence and eloquence lent an air of excitement and expectancy.

His term of office was too short, but, in that short time, he instilled in many a lifelong commitment to this nation and its leaders.

Like the eternal flame which burns at his grave in Arlington, his memory will not be extinguished as long as there are those who are willing to "pay any price, bear any burden...oppose any foe, to assure the survival and success of liberty."

November 30, 1978

Civil War battles in the county

The War Between the States was a divisive force among the people of East Tennessee and Sullivan County.

East Tennessee was a bastion of Union sympathy, with the exception of Sullivan County, which leaned heavily toward the Southern cause.

The county was the site of numerous engagements throughout the war, and the railroad facilities were of particular military concern because railroads were used to transport troops and materials within the South.

In November 1861, Union sympathizers from neighboring Carter County burned parts of the railroad bridge at Bluff City.

The bridge was burned during Carter's raid in December 1862.

Union cavalry forces commanded by Gen. Samuel P. Carter, of Carter County, came south through Moccasin Gap.

The force consisted of two battalions each of the 2nd Michigan Cavalry and 9th Pennsylvania Cavalry and a battalion of the 7th Ohio Cavalry Regiment, totaling about 1,000 men.

About 30 wounded Confederate soldiers of the 4th Kentucky Cavalry were captured near Blountville, and Blountville was entered by Yankee forces on Dec. 30, 1862.

A detachment from the Michigan unit arrived from Blountville at about noon, and the forces under Lt. Col. Campbell captured two companies of the 2nd North Carolina Infantry near Bluff City.

The advance party then began “to destroy the bridge [at Bluff City], which, because it was wet with rain and built mostly of green timber, did not burn readily.”

The main body of Carter’s force arrived, and sufficient “kindling was brought in to make a hot fire in the covered bridge.”

A highway bridge was also destroyed by the Yankee forces, in addition to a railway car, three wagonloads of salt, the depot, and military arms.

The raiders then moved about 10 miles southwest to Carter’s Depot, where another railway bridge crossed the Watauga. The depot was located along Highway 11 in Washington County.

The bridge was burned, and an engine captured. The Yankees “ran this engine onto the bridge as it collapsed and fell into the river.”

A company of Pennsylvania cavalry then moved to Kingsport, where the unit camped along the river.

During the raid, the Union forces destroyed two railroad bridges, an engine, 10 miles of tracks, military armaments, and supplies, while capturing about 400 Confederate soldiers.

Confederate Gen. Sam Jones was headquartered at Zollicoffer, or Bluff City, with about 6,000 troops, and forces under Col. James Carter and Gen. Jones moved to engage the Union forces near Shipley’s Ferry.

In September 1863, the Confederate forces were driven back toward Blountville, and Col. Carter placed his artillery batteries east of the town.

Col. John Foster, the Union commander, established his troops near the cemetery on the western side of the town.

“A shell from the Federals’ guns entered the courthouse [at Blountville], setting it on fire and destroying also the best part of town.”

The Southern forces withdrew toward Bluff City but later engaged the Yankees near Hamilton Hill near the town, as the Union forces were driven back to Blountville.

The last major Union raid into the county was Stoneman’s raid in December 1864.

Much of the above information was derived from *Scenes from the Bluffs*, published by the Bluff City United Methodist Church.

The Civil War caused much social and political upheaval in the county and the nation.

Many families were divided by the war, as some marched off to join the Union forces and others joined the Confederate forces.

The concepts of duty and honor bound the soldiers of both sides as they fought for their way of life and their ideals.

December 7, 1978

Seneker-Akard family history

The roots of many families of Sullivan County run deep into the land.

Generations have lived fruitful lives here, and, when they died, have been placed into the soil which nourished and sustained them.

James King Seneker was the son of Elias Gottlieb Seneker, a German immigrant, and his wife, Catherine Susong Seneker.

James King Seneker (b. 1813; d. 1886) married, first, Elizabeth Bushong, and, second, Leonora Armentrout. His third wife was Mary Hodge.

Gerald Seneker, Piney Flats, said his grandfather, John Elias Lafayette (J.E.L.) Seneker, was the son of James King Seneker and Elizabeth Bushong Seneker.

John Elias Lafayette (J.E.L.) Seneker married Margaret Dulaney, and they resided in a house near Highway 126 between Blountville and Bristol.

He was a school teacher and was also superintendent of schools for Sullivan County.

A small building near the main house was used as a printing office and was later used as the superintendent's office, according to Gerald Seneker.

John Elias Lafayette (J.E.L.) Seneker and Margaret Seneker were the parents of Beverly Seneker, who married Irma Akard.

She was the daughter of Thomas Akard, who married a King. Thomas Akard purchased the present Akard-Seneker homeplace, which is located along Cross Dock Road in Enterprise Community, about 1850.

Thomas Akard's brother, Franklin Akard, relocated to Indiana, and another brother, Henry Akard, married, first, a Smith, and, second, a Range.

He and his third wife, Barbara Wine, were the parents of three children: Pet Akard Doane, Minnie Akard Johnson, and Elvie Akard.

Thomas Akard also had two sisters. Elizabeth Akard married William Barr, who operated a hotel in Blountville, and Margaret Akard, who married a Phillips.

Many members of the Akard family are buried at New Bethel Cemetery, and Thomas Akard is buried at Holston Grove Cemetery.

His father, Gerald Seneker's great-grandfather, was Samuel Akard, who purchased much of the Bill Wright-Jessee Cross property along Cross Dock Road.

Elizabeth Latture married Samuel Akard.

Thomas King was the father of the wife of Thomas Akard. Thomas King married a Morelle, and her brothers were stagecoach drivers over routes travelling into Kentucky.

Seneker said his ancestors immigrated from Germany and later settled in Lancaster County, Pa., before relocating to Sullivan County.

During the War Between the States, Seneker's grandmother fed some of the soldiers journeying through the area.

Although the Senekers, Lattures, and Akards were primarily Lutherans, Elizabeth Latture Akard did donate the logs for the underpinning of Enterprise Methodist Church when it was first established.

Members of the Latture family also served as telephone operators at the switchboard telephone office at Silvacola, Seneker said.

This was during the period when one could not dial direct but was required to place phone calls through a local switchboard.

In keeping with the educational tradition in the family, King Akard, brother of Irma Akard Seneker, taught school in Sullivan County, and his sister, Corinna Akard, attended a normal school.

Most of the above information was provided by Gerald Seneker, and some was derived from *Historic Sites of Sullivan County*, by Muriel C. Spoden.

The older families of the county are interrelated with many others in the area. The family names are handed down through the generations, and marriages often occurred between cousins.

These events, along with missing records and fading memories, often frustrate the search for family histories.

The search will continue, however, for there is an innate desire to know those in the past who made the present possible.

December 14, 1978

Churches of late 1800s and early 1900s

The religious history of Sullivan County is a rich and varied one.

The early settlers brought their beliefs and preferences with them when they came to the area.

They worshipped God in their own way and established churches by common effort and faith.

In March 1897, S.D. Hughes deeded property in Piney Flats to the trustees of the German Baptist Brethren Church.

The trustees of the church were J.B. Bowman, C.H. Diehl, William A. Sharefy, M. Mead, and J.B. Pence.

According to the deed, the tract was located near High and College streets in the town.

No “intoxicating liquors or beverages are to be manufactured or sold on said lot, in penalty of forfeiture of title to the same,” the deed states.

Witnesses to the transaction were L.E. Paterson and Roena Bowers.

In July 1853, John A. Bowman and Benjamin Wine deeded one acre of land to the trustees of the German Baptist Church, commonly known as Dunkards.

The trustees were Madison Bowman, Henry Ghast, and John Lear.

The property was located in the Eighth District, near Muddy Creek, at a place “known by the name of Pleasant Hill.”

Land was also donated for a cemetery near the church, and the trustees were instructed to ensure that “good grave stones [be placed] at head and foot of every grave and to see that people bury in family order.”

Witnesses to the deed were Archabald Thompson, John A. Sherfing, and Warren Loilly.

The Dunkard Church, or Brethren Church, in Piney Flats was to be located on the site of the A.D. Browder property, according to *Scenes from the Bluffs*, published by the Bluff City United Methodist Church.

“On the fourth Saturday evening of a certain month, they would get together for a soup-eating and foot-washing.”

The members of the church dressed plainly and did not wear jewelry, the book states, and Mr. Garst was the pastor of the church.

J.E. Shaver deeded land in March 1914 to the trustees of Holston Grove Church, located along Boone Lake, near Piney Flats.

The property was located in the Eighth District and adjoined the lands of R.B. Cross, Andrew Smith, and A.C. Smith.

Trustees of the church were R.B. Shaver, J.D. Loudy, Fred Hull, and J.L. Payne.

In December 1883, James Hughes and Jane Hughes, of Carter County, sold property to the trustees of the Disciples of Christ of the Church of Christ, “sometimes called the Christian Church.”

The trustees were H.H. Bullock, J.H. Watkins, Samuel Millard, and W.A. O’Dell.

The tract was located along Beaver Creek and was bounded by the lands of A.H. Bullock, J.I. Cox, and Buffalo Schoolhouse.

This is presumably the site of the present Buffalo Christian Church, which is located near the site of the original Buffalo School.

The deed states the members of the church called themselves, “individually, Disciples of Christ and, “collectively, or in an organized capacity, the Church of Christ, or Christian Church.”

Jacob Glover and George Hughes were witnesses to the deed.

The public records of this county contain a wealth of useful and interesting information.

Although many of the marriage and other records stored at the courthouse in Blountville were destroyed during the War Between the States, there is still an abundance of deeds, wills, and other records stored there.

These can be excellent primary sources for the study of local church histories.

December 21, 1978

Millhorn family history

The ultimate purpose of family history research is to enable those living today in Sullivan County to trace their roots as far as possible.

Many times, this quest for identity with the past is frustrated by incomplete information.

Recently, a partial history of the Millhorn family appeared in this column, but a more complete record of one branch of this family is now available.

George Millhorn Sr. is the progenitor of many descendants in this area today. His wife is unidentified, but they were the parents of two children.

John A. Millhorn married Susie Dyer, and the wife of George Millhorn Jr. is unidentified.

Among the seven children of John A. Millhorn and Susie Dyer Millhorn were Andrew Jackson Millhorn, who married Ann Sanders, and James Millhorn, who married Rachael Cross.

Elizabeth Millhorn married Jessee Feathers, and Samuel Millhorn married Martha Archer.

Harrison Millhorn married Sarah Ann Dyer, and Polly Millhorn married a Collins.

The seventh child, Henderson Millhorn, married Nancy Ann. They were the parents of eight children.

Richard Millhorn (d. 1897) married Adelia H. Jones (b. 1864; d. 1897), and Benjamin Millhorn (b. 1852) married Eliza.

Rachael Millhorn (b. 1850) married a Willis, and Eliza Millhorn married a Hatcher.

Rebecca Millhorn married a Godsey, and the marital status of Mary Ann Millhorn and Jonathan Millhorn is not available.

The eighth child, William B. Millhorn (b. March 16, 1845; d. May 26, 1918) married Elizabeth Cross (b. Nov. 29, 1851; d. Aug. 30, 1924).

William B. Millhorn served with the Confederacy during the War Between the States and was awarded a pension for disabilities incurred during his service.

He was known as "Buck" to his contemporaries and was a farmer, who owned 33 acres in 1905.

The land is located along Enterprise Road, near Piney Flats, and, according to Letha Millhorn Morrell, their home was located on the present Jack Combs property.

William B. Millhorn and Elizabeth Cross were married on Jan. 15, 1874, about three miles south of Blountville by James A. Cole.

Both are buried in Lindamood Cemetery along Boone Lake.

William B. Millhorn and Elizabeth Cross Millhorn were the parents of four children, including Flora Millhorn (d. Oct. 8, 1929), who married J.C. White, and Reece B. Millhorn, who married Cordia Childress.

Emma Jane Millhorn (b. Nov. 26, 1874; d. April 9, 1957) married Andrew Emmert Combs, and Letha Tulin Millhorn (b. Oct. 6, 1891; d. June 26, 1965) married Albert Sidney Morrell (b. Nov. 29, 1886; d. Sept. 23, 1923).

J.C. White and Flora Millhorn White were the parents of three children.

Jesse White married Hazel Richards, Haskell White married Margaret, and Cecil White married Clara.

Andrew Emmert Combs was a farmer, and he and his wife, Emma Millhorn Combs, are buried in Lindamood Cemetery. They were the parents of eight children.

Bill Combs married Francis Barr, Lonna Combs married Kyle Smith, and Joe Bayless Combs married Myrtle Berry.

Reba Combs married Fred Barr, and Jack Combs is unmarried. Ida Mae Combs, Nora Pauline Combs, and Bessie Combs were also unmarried.

Reece Millhorn and Cordia Childress Millhorn were married on May 15, 1910, near Bluff City. They resided in Holston Grove Community for a time, and, later, relocated to the Egypt Community near Bluff City, according to Cordia Childress Millhorn.

About 60 years ago, they purchased the present home place near Piney Flats. Reece Millhorn died several years ago, but Cordia Childress Millhorn still resides there.

He was a farmer by profession, and he and Cordia were the parents of seven children.

Raymond Millhorn married Hazel Hicks, and Reece B. Millhorn married a Hicks.

Ivan Millhorn married Margaret Watkins, and Mona Millhorn married Fred Larimet.

Zella Mae Millhorn married Dee Hicks, Juanita Millhorn married Cecil Carty, and Virginia Mae Millhorn married Clarence Combs.

Albert Sidney Morrell and Letha Millhorn Morrell are buried in Droke Cemetery near Boone Lake. They were the parents of three children.

Lewis Harmon Morrell married Ardith Rouse, Joseph Edward Morrell married Irma Webb, and Rufus William (R.W.) Morrell married Nellie Nelson.

A family is not a static, unchanging system. A family line is constantly being increased by birth and decreased by death.

Each new generation must maintain a constant vigil over family traditions, history, and records.

December 28, 1978

Cross family history

These are truly exciting times, and many days are etched with future historical significance.

Although the people of Sullivan County may not fully realize it, the everyday events today will be the history books of tomorrow.

The history of the families of the area must be recorded now so coming generations can anchor their identities on firm foundations.

Elijah Cross (b. 1758; d. after 1832) served in the Revolutionary War at various locations, including Yellow Mountain and Blackmun's Fort.

He was born in Baltimore, Md., and died in Sullivan County. He married Ann Looney on a date between May 1779 and May 1780 in the county.

They were the parents of several children, including Elijah Cross, Abraham Cross, Amanda Cross, David Cross, Zechariah Cross, and Rachael Cross.

The seventh child, Jessee Cross, (b. 1790-1800) married, first, Susan Hicks, and second, Susannah Hicks. They were the parents of three children: William Cross (b. 1833); Jacob Cross (b. 1838), who married Hannah; and Reece B. Cross (b. 1828), who married Harriet Cox.

Reece B. Cross served with the 60th Tennessee Mounted Infantry Regiment (Confederate) during the War Between the States.

He was captured by the Union forces in Jefferson County in 1864 and later died in a prisoner of war camp in Illinois.

He and Harriet Cox Cross were the parents of six children.

Hoyle Cross (b. 1853; d. 1900) married Sallie McClellan, and Nat A. Cross (b. 1862; d. June 1936) married Blanch Jeter.

Martha Cross married John Hicks, and Sarah Ann Cross married George Malone. Susie Cross married Reece Webb, and Elizabeth Cross married William B. Millhorn.

Hoyle Cross and Sally McClellan Cross were the parents of seven children.

Nora D. Cross married Charlie O. Smith, and Walter Cross married Pearl Gross.

Mary Cross married, first, Mike Webb, and, second, Bob Rogers. She worked for many years in the county's register of deeds office.

Another child, Minnie Cross, married Toy Hicks, and Ethel Cross married Ellard Trivett. The Trivetts lived in Science Hill, Ky., according to Austin Smith of Texas.

The sixth child, Hugh Cross, married Olivine Witcher, and Jessie Cross married Dalton Crussell of Piney Flats.

Nat A. Cross and Blanch Jeter Cross (b. 1868; d. 1964) resided near Boone Lake in Enterprise Community. Members of her family operated Jeter's Mill near there.

They were the parents of three children: Lena Cross, Enoch Cross (b. 1892; d. 1972), and Bell Cross, who married a Ledford.

The children of Elizabeth Cross and William B. Millhorn are listed in a previous column.

John Hicks and Martha Cross Hicks were the parents of four children. Sudie Hicks married Joe Carrier, and Belle Hicks married Frank Carrier.

James Hicks married Okey Eads, and Cleve Hicks married Gladys Rutherford. Cleve Hicks was the county's tax assessor for many years.

George Malone was nicknamed the left-handed fiddler, and he and his wife, Sarah Cross Malone, were the parents of several children, including Clint Brett Malone, Billy Malone, John Malone, Beulah Malone, Fred Malone, and George Malone, who married Blanche.

Other children were Arthur Malone, who married Lydia Blalock, and Porter Braxton (Port) Malone, who married a Smith.

Reece Webb and Susie Cross Webb's children included Emma Webb, who married an O'Dell, and Sam Webb, who married Anne Miller.

Other children were Floyd Webb and Bailey Webb, who died in Shenandoah Valley, Va.

Charlie O. Smith (b. 1873) and Nora Cross Smith (b. 1880; d. 1960) were the parents of four children.

Thurman (Andy) Smith died in 1974, and Austin Smith has resided in Texas for about 50 years. Roy H. Smith died at young age, and Crossie (Speedy) Smith resides in Bristol.

Dalton Crussell and Jessie Cross Crussell were the parents of eight children.

Nicely Crussell died at a young age, and Avery Crussell married Lois Lady.

Janice Crussell married a Meadows, Horace Crussell married Jo Ann Arnold, and Edna Crussell married Bobby Hall.

Sylvia Crussell married Earl Cross, Chlora Mae Crussell married Frank Cross, and Catherine Crussell married Jasper Cross.

Hugh Cross and Olivine Witcher Cross's children were Hugh Cross Jr. and William Cross.

Cleve Hicks and Gladys Rutherford Hicks were the parents of Martha Hicks.

James Hicks and Okey Eads Hicks were the parents of two children: Charles Hicks and Hazel Hicks, who married Raymond Millhorn.

Arthur Malone and Lydia Blalock Malone's children included Irene Malone, who married a Hamilton, and Ivan Malone, who married a Fleenor. Ivan Malone was postmaster at Piney Flats for many years.

Willie B. Malone married Tom Johnson, and Hazel Malone married a Hudson.

G.W. Malone and Mabel Malone were the children of George Malone and Blanche Malone.

This family history may enable some of the present generation to retrace their roots.

A certain pride should result from the knowledge that their roots run deep into the land and far into the history of this county.

January 5, 1979

Morrell family history

“What is to come we know not, but we know that what has been was good,” said the poet William Ernest Henley.

The study of the history of Sullivan County, or of the nation, is the study of the efforts of individuals and families to make the world a little better than they found it.

The struggles of many have gone unnoticed, but the available records of the past must be studied and recorded.

According to records, Jonathan Morrell (b. September 1753; d. October 1800) married Catherine (Katy) O’Dell (b. September 1755; d. July 1824) in Shenandoah County, Va., in 1774.

They emigrated to Sullivan County, and, in 1787, he owned property along the Holston River.

Their children included John Morrell, Ruth Morrell, William Morrell, Jonathan Morrell, Nathan Morrell, Else Morrell, Martha Morrell, Jesse Morrell, Isaac Morrell, and Caleb Morrell (b. Sept. 1, 1787; d. Nov. 21, 1860).

In 1823, Caleb Morrell married Martha D. (Patsy) Blevins (b. Oct. 26, 1796).

Their children included William R. Morrell, Jonathan Morrell, Caleb Morrell, Elkanah Morrell, James Morrell, Nathan O. Morrell, John B. Morrell, Thomas Morrell, Daniel Morrell, and George W. Morrell (b. Sept. 9, 1833; d. June 10, 1863).

George W. Morrell married Martha Jane (b. Nov. 24, 1834; d. Sept. 11, 1863) on June 1, 1858.

He served with the 26th Infantry Regiment (Confederate) during the War Between the States and died in Georgia of a disease contracted during his service.

His wife died about three months after his death.

George W. Morrell and Martha Jane Morrell were the parents of two children.

Martha Ellen Morrell (b. June 15, 1861; d. Feb. 16, 1935) married Rufus White Morrell in February 1883.

Frances Irena Morrell (b. August 1859; d. December 1915), the second child, married Richard (Dick) Miller. They were the parents of Walter Miller, Denver Miller, Toy Miller, Thurman Miller, Harmon Miller, and Inez Miller, who married a Smith. She served as postmistress at Bluff City for many years.

Rufus White Morrell and Martha Ellen Morrell were the parents of four children: George Morrell, who died in infancy; Mary Katherine Morrell; Albert Sidney Morrell; and Susan Frances (Sudie) Morrell

Mary Katherine Morrell (b. March 1884; d. 1955) married Henry Peters (d. 1933) on Jan. 29, 1908. They later moved to California, where he was killed in an auto accident. She is buried in La Verne, Calif.

They were the parents to two children. Carl Peters (b. Feb. 21, 1909) died in California on Aug. 14, 1978. Lola Ellen Peters (b. Sept. 13, 1912; d. Aug. 4, 1964) married Lewis Ireland. She is buried in Pomona, Calif.

Albert Sidney Morrell married Letha Tulin Millhorn in May 1916. Their children are listed in a previous column.

Susan Frances (Sudie) Morrell (b. Aug. 5, 1895; d. Sept. 4, 1962) married Charles P. Hopkins Sr. (d. April 8, 1965) on July 15, 1917.

They resided in Enterprise Community for a period and later moved to Bristol. They later relocated to Chinquapin Grove Community near Bluff City.

He worked many years for a local railroad and served in the armed forces during World War I.

They were the parents of five children. Charles P. Hopkins Jr. married Garnett Wampler, and Louise Hopkins married Herbert Worley. Martha Hopkins married Herbert Davidson, and Agnes Hopkins married Edwin Kesner. Mary Edna Hopkins died at young age.

The branches of a family may spread in many directions, but the members are all bound by common roots.

The common experiences, ties, and ancestors serve to help bind families together, just as a larger history binds a nation together.

“We are the masters of the days that were; we have lived, we have loved, we have suffered,” Henley wrote.

January 11, 1979

New Bethel Presbyterian Church

“I.G. d. 1790”

This is the inscription on the oldest marked grave in New Bethel Presbyterian Church Cemetery.

According to legend, an unidentified traveler was found dead near the cemetery in 1790.

A small stone was found in his saddlebags with the initials, I.G., cut into it, and he was buried in the church yard, using the stone as his marker.

The engraving later faded after many years, and Nathan Gregg had the stone emplaced into a marble slab, which now marks the grave site.

New Bethel Presbyterian Church is located a short distance from Piney Flats and is considered by some to be the oldest established congregation in the area.

The church was founded in 1782 by Rev. Samuel Doak, who probably derived the name from Bethel Church in Virginia, where he resided for a number of years.

“The first log building doubled also as a school. Doak’s log cabin, which was next to the church, was burned down by the Cherokee Indians.”

The first actual congregation of New Bethel Presbyterian Church was part of a group of settlers from Maryland and Pennsylvania who accompanied Rev. Joseph Rhea Sr. to the area.

Rev. Rhea died, however, before the church could be fully organized.

He had served as a chaplain during the Revolutionary War, and three of his children – John Rhea, Matthew Rhea, and Joseph Rhea Jr. – also served in the war.

Francis Hodge, James Gregg, and John Allison were the first elders of the church in 1782.

The first church building was built of logs and stood near the site of the present church.

In a church report in 1797, New Bethel was listed as having 40 families in the congregation and “able to pay \$120 for the support of a minister.”

Among the early families in the church membership were the Hodge, King, Rhea, and Hughes families.

Rev. Samuel Hodge, son of Francis Hodge, delivered the historic sermon at the church at its centennial celebration in 1882.

John King Sr., son of Edward King, emigrated from Lancaster County, Penn, to Washington County, Va., and later settled in the Forks Section near Piney Flats.

James M. King and Edward R. King were deacons of the church.

Joseph Rhea, the grandson of Rev. Joseph Rhea Sr., was appointed an elder in the church in 1839 by Rev. Daniel Rogan. Rhea later relocated to Jonesboro.

William P. Rhea, also a grandson of Rev. Rhea, was installed as an elder in 1848 by Rev. Rogan.

Robert Hughes, son of David Hughes, was one of the original members of New Bethel.

Hughes emigrated from North Carolina to Carter County and later to this county.

Henry Hughes, who died in 1874 at age 43, was a deacon of the church.

“New Bethel is the mother church of Soul Winners Chapel, Haw Ridge, Bertha King Memorial Presbyterian Church (Rocky Springs), and Piney Flats Union” churches.

The cemetery of the church reflects the history of the county and the nation.

Soldiers of the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Mexican War, War Between the States, Spanish-American War, World War I, and World War II are buried there.

The inscriptions of some of the stones have worn away, and the memories of some of those buried there have faded.

The history of the church and its people shall not fade so long as its congregation is bound together by worship, tradition and history.

Most of the above material was derived from *Scenes from the Bluffs* and *The New Bethel Sesquicentennial, 1782-1932*.

January 18, 1979

Methodist churches established

In 1786, a young nation struggled under the weak, inadequate Articles of Confederation. Another year would pass before the Constitution was constructed by the Founding Fathers.

George Washington became the first president of the country under the new constitution in 1789.

In 1786, a one-story log building was erected in Sullivan County.

This was Acuff Chapel, the first Methodist church to be built in Tennessee.

The church, located along Highway 26 near Blountville, was erected on a plot donated by Timothy Acuff.

Micajah Adams, a Revolutionary War veteran and neighbor, assisted Acuff in planning for the chapel.

The building, like many in the past, served as a church on Sundays and as a school on weekdays.

Acuff (b. 1735; d. 1823) emigrated from Virginia and married Anna Leigh (b. 1742; d. 1820) in 1760.

Bishop Francis Asbury, a historic figure of Methodism, held services at the chapel on several occasions and resided in the home of Acuff on those days.

The house is located across the highway from the chapel.

Adams Chapel eventually replaced Acuff Chapel as a meeting house, and the structure was sold.

“Clapboards were applied to the logs, and it was used as a residence.”

The Holston Conference of the Methodist Church eventually purchased the building and restored it to the original appearance.

The chapel is one of the monuments of the denomination in Tennessee, but the “oldest continuing Methodist congregation in the state” is Bluff City United Methodist Church.

The church traces its roots to religious meetings held at the Edward Cox house near the town in the 1770s.

Bishop Asbury visited the Cox house and held a Methodist conference there.

With encouragement from the bishop, Cox, Thomas Rockhold, and William Rockhold helped establish a camp meeting ground on the land of William Rockhold.

Methodism continued to thrive in the area, and, in 1855, David McClelland deeded a plot on Broad Street in Bluff City for the erection of a church.

The trustees of the church then were James Worley, F.D. Massengill, George Pile, Andrew Shell, Jacob Harkleroad, W.W. Proffitt, and Andrew Boyd.

The noise from passing trains often disturbed worship services, and, in 1893, the location of the church was changed to the present site of Carter and Cedar streets.

The original tract was traded to Elbert Smith in exchange for the site.

Bricks for construction of the church were handmade from clay produced near the site, and kilns for firing the bricks were located nearby.

“The first Methodist church of Bluff City” thus obtained its present appearance.

An annex to the church was built in 1935, and the building was remodeled in 1953-1954.

Bluff City United Methodist Church and Rockhold United Methodist Church were joined in a two-point parish.

Much of the information above was derived from *Scenes from the Bluffs* and *Historic Sites of Sullivan County*.

Some religious denominations have thrived in the county, while others have declined or almost disappeared from the scene.

Shrines to the efforts of those past exist in many parts of the county.

These monuments may take the form of established landmarks or long-forgotten deeds.

No matter what their forms, they testify to the determination of the people to worship freely in the manner they wished.

January 25, 1979

Ingle family history

The idea that man can better himself through his own efforts and those of his God has become part of the reality of America.

The pioneer ancestors of Sullivan County trekked across the mountains in search of a better existence.

They were followed closely by those who looked beyond this life to the hereafter.

These men were the circuit riders, "God's horsemen."

In everyday language, the preachers were overworked and underpaid, often having to depend on gracious settlers for a night's food and lodging.

The Edward Cox house near Bluff City was known for the residents' hospitality, and Bishop Francis Asbury lodged there.

The first wave of circuit riders was succeeded by the next generation of preachers who were assigned to specific circuits, as many are today.

Willis I. Ingle (b. between 1798-1805; d. Oct. 30, 1867) was a travelling preacher for 27 years.

Ingle was associated with the Methodist Church for 45 years.

For several years, he preached at local churches, and, about 1838-1840, he joined the Holston Conference.

Rev. Ingle opposed slavery and was noted by one source as being among the "best revival preachers" of the conference.

He was appointed to Blountville in 1848, to Kingsport in 1851, and, again, to Blountville in 1854.

He was born in Virginia and died in Abingdon, Va., where he is buried in the Ingle Cemetery.

He married Elizabeth Gregory (d. Feb. 13, 1875), daughter of Thomas Gregory and Mary “Polly” Hawk Gregory.

Willis I. Ingle and Elizabeth Gregory Ingle were the parents of nine children.

Andrew Ingle (b. 1824) married Bellicent Litton, and Mary A. Ingle (b. May 30, 1826; d. Sept. 5, 1916, in Cabool, Texas) married Michael C. Cayler in 1850.

The marital status of Sarah Ingle and Robert Ingle is uncertain. Martha E. Ingle (b. November 1834; d. June 30, 1922) married, first, a Bellamy, and, second, James C. Alfred.

Anthony Ingle (b. 1837) married, first, Mary Porter, and, second, Ellen Gobble. He was also a minister and served in the Virginia infantry during the Civil War.

Nancy J. Ingle (b. May 11, 1843; d. April 17, 1919) married Jonathan David Andis. John Wesley Ingle (b. 1845; d. 1892) married Alsey Jane Williams.

Joseph D. Ingle (b. March 30, 1832; d. Sept. 3, 1914) married Mary Jane Dixon (b. Nov. 10, 1834; d. Dec. 23, 1895) on Jan. 15, 1853, in Blountville.

They were married by Rev. Ford, and George Cunningham was a witness to the marriage.

Among the preachers in the Blountville Methodist Circuit in the 1860s to 1870s were Thomas Morrell, Frank Morrell, and W.K. Cross.

Jonathan Morrell was also an “exhorter of the circuit.” Near the end of the Civil War, he was attacked by a gang of “bushwhackers” and almost beaten to death.

He never fully recovered from his wounds, and he died in 1897 at age 83.

Much of the information above was derived from *Holston Methodism from its Origin to the Present Time*, by R. N. Price, along with material provided by the United Methodist Publishing House and information from Mary Lou Wardlaw and Dorothy Hamilton.

(Author's note: This was the final "Mountain Memories" column.)

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