

A History of Rutherford County and Murfreesboro



Presented by: The Young Republicans of Rutherford County

Written by: Jacob Bogle, 2013

This short presentation provides a history of Rutherford County and Murfreesboro dating back to the earliest settlements, going through the Revolution and Civil War, and includes some specific histories about the Battle of Stones River, military involvement of the County in each war since the Revolution, the Courthouse, the women of Rutherford County, and more.

About the Author and Introduction

My name is Jacob Bogle and I was elected as Treasurer for the Rutherford County Young Republicans in 2013. I was born in Murfreesboro and my family has lived here for generations. I have always had a fascination with history and I take great pride in my town, and my county.

Tennessee sits at the crossroads of America's east and west. It was Tennesseans who defended the Alamo and Tennesseans who helped to win the War of 1812, earning the State's motto as the "Volunteer State" in the process. Tennessee played an integral role in the lives of two presidents (James K. Polk and Andrew Jackson) and in the success of the Manhattan Project. And Rutherford County sits at the heart of Tennessee.

Rutherford County was founded by heroes of the Revolution, its ground laid covered with the blood of thousands during the Battle of Stones River, and our economy has helped to reverse the decline in American manufacturing with the likes of Nissan and Barrett Firearms. Rutherford County's history spans the history of America and gave birth to great American authors (like Mary Noailles Murfree), and played a role in the lives of two Nobel Laureates (James Buchanan and Muhammad Yunus).

Our history lays the foundations for our future and grounds our present. I hope that by learning more about Rutherford County in the context of the 2013 Tennessee Young Republican Federation State Convention you will walk away with a desire to learn more about the history of your own home area. And to realize that while the pages of the past are already written, each action we take and the influences we have on our cities, State and country, has the potential of entering the history books.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jacob Bogle', with a stylized, cursive script.

Jacob Bogle

Basic Facts

Rutherford County – founded on Oct. 25, 1803, it encompasses 624 square miles of territory and has a population of 268,921.

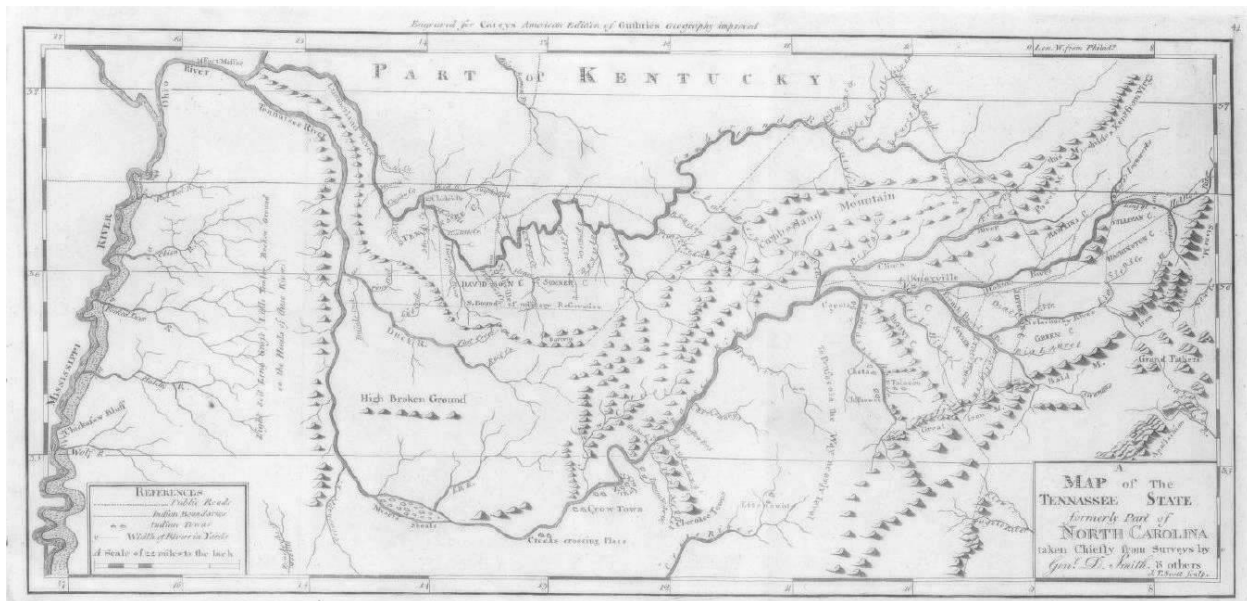
Murfreesboro – it is the county seat and largest city. First settled in 1811, its area is 55.9 square miles and has a population of 109,031.

Smyrna – founded in 1855, the Town’s total area is 23 square miles and has a population of 39,974.

La Vergne – first settled in 1852, its area is 25.1 square miles and has a population of 32,588.

Eagleville – the smallest incorporated city in the county, it was first settled in 1790 and incorporated in 1977. It has a land area of 2.1 square miles and a population of 604.

Early History to Revolution



(Early map of Tennessee and North Carolina, ca. 1800)

As with the rest of the county, Tennessee’s history begins with the myriad Native American tribes and nations which populated the area before European settlement. The first recorded residents of Middle Tennessee were known as the “*Mound Builders*”. The culture of the Mound Builder people spanned more than 5,000 years and they left hundreds of mounds (thus their name) throughout the Mississippi drainage basin which were built for religious, burial and other purposes. Some of the mounds pre-date the Pyramids and the largest mound was built in modern-day Illinois; the base of which is as large as the Great Pyramid of Giza and required moving 55 million cubic feet of earth in woven baskets.

The Mound Builder culture gave way to the Mississippian Culture which thrived from approximately 800 AD to 1500 (depending on the region). The Mississippian Culture can be broken down into 4-5 regional civilizations. The Middle Mississippian Culture and Southern Appalachian Mississippian Culture encompassed modern-day Tennessee (as well as a dozen other states). The primary Native American tribes whose history bisects that of European explorers of Middle Tennessee were the Yuchi and Shawnee, although at times the Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek and Cherokee occupied portions of the region. The nearest known Native American archeological sites are in Davidson and Coffee counties, however Indian artifacts like arrowheads have been found here from time to time.

Little is concretely known about the area until the first European settlers. Rutherford County was primarily used as hunting grounds for the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw and Creek with no permanent Native American settlements. However, Cherokee Indian Chief Black Fox (1746-1811) did have a camp near Murfreesboro and a principle trail ran roughly north to south through Rutherford County. The first European known to have entered the county was a long-hunter by the name of Uriah Stone. Information is scarce about him, but in 1766/7 he was the first person to navigate what is now known as Stone's River (commonly spelled *Stones River*), the main waterway in the county. Fourteen years later the first settlers arrived in the area. In 1806, Chief Black Fox ceded 7,000 square miles of territory to the government which included portions of the county.

Settlement and Revolution

As people began to move west, scaling the nearly impassible Appalachian Mountains, they found themselves in the Nashville Basin. This basin is in an area with low hills, thick forests and multiple waterways. The bulk of the settlers came from North Carolina and Virginia. Prior to Tennessee statehood in 1796, the area was part of North Carolina's western territory.

Throughout the late 1700s and early 1800s the region was populated with a few hundred families who were mostly farmers, hunters and explorers. The action seen in the Revolutionary War never came to this area, but many of the first prominent people here were Revolutionary heroes and veterans. Rutherford County was created in 1803 from portions of Davidson, Sumner, Williamson and Wilson Counties.

The name of the county comes from General Griffith Rutherford. Born in 1721 in Ireland, he came to America around 1740 and made his way to North Carolina. He served during the French and Indians Wars as well as the Revolution - fighting throughout the American west (the contemporary term for lands west of the Appalachian's) and south. He fought against British loyalists in South Carolina and in North Carolina he helped lead American troops to victory by beating a loyalist militia twice the size of his Revolutionaries during the Battle of Ramsour's Mill. In his later life he acquired 13,000 acres in east Tennessee and died in 1805.

General History of Murfreesboro

In 1811, the Tennessee State Legislature created a new county seat. The settlement was called “Cannonsburgh” after Tennessee State Representative Newton Cannon. The land chosen was 60 acres belonging to Captain William Lytle. However, within one month and at the behest of Capt. Lytle, the State renamed the town Murfreesboro after Capt. Lytle’s friend, Col. Hardy Murfree. In 1817, Murfreesboro was recognized as an official city and in 1818 was named the capital of Tennessee; a title held until it was moved to Nashville in 1826 after a battle of words between the pro-Nashville Whigs and pro-Murfreesboro Democrats. During its time as the capital, the state legislature met at the original county courthouse and then the First Presbyterian Church. The church was built around 1820 and would see the worst sides of war during the Civil War. As mentioned, transportation access and proximity to Nashville helped to keep the area growing. The local economy was mostly agrarian, however there was some diversification. Oakland’s Mansion (the largest plantation in the county) was built in the 1820s by Dr. James Maney and mainly grew the kings of southern crops - cotton and tobacco.

During the 1850s, freed slaves organized themselves in Middle Tennessee and founded numerous churches. One of those churches was the *First Baptist Church of Murfreesboro* which was founded in 1853. When the Civil War did come to this area, it divided everyone – friends and family, and to a degree, even the African American population. After the devastation of the Civil War the city wanted to rebuild and start afresh.

On Sept. 11, 1911, the Middle Tennessee State Normal School was established to train future teachers. In 1920, the school had an enrollment of 393 with 75% of them women. The school expanded over the years and in 1965 it was renamed *Middle Tennessee State University*. Today, the student population exceeds 24,000 making MTSU the largest undergraduate school in the state and offers more than 80 major/degree programs; in 2009 the university awarded its 100,000th degree.

Since 1910 the City’s population has grown by double-digits every 10 years, and in the last 20 years the City’s growth exceeded 50% per decade. This growth has made Murfreesboro one of the fastest growing cities in the country and ushered in a corresponding growth in the City’s economy. Top employers now include companies like Verizon, Amazon, and State Farm.

Civil War



The American Civil War (1861-65) was the deadliest war in American history with over 600,000 casualties. Tennessee's size and location (bordering northern states and with the Mississippi and Tennessee Rivers) made it a prime target for war activities. In fact, after Virginia, Tennessee saw the highest number of battles fought in the war and arguably gave up more men to fight for the Confederacy than any other state, as well as more troops for the Union than any Southern state. Some 187,000 Tennesseans fought for the South and 51,000 for the Union. And, given Rutherford County's central location within the state and near major transportation arteries, there is little doubt as to why the county saw the amount of war activities as it did.

Tennessee voted for secession in June 1861 (the last state to join the Confederacy) with the vote in Rutherford County was 2,392 in favor of secession and only 73 against. The areas around Murfreesboro gave rise to several prominent Southern leaders including Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest (born in Chapel Hill) and Gen. Joseph Palmer who was born in Rutherford County and whose original home can still be seen at 434 E. Main St.

The State's geography made it a prime target and the pro-Union factions within the state turned a war for independence into an actual civil war within the borders of Tennessee. Tennessee was also one of the most industrial states in the south making it an "arsenal of secession"; with one plant in Nashville manufacturing 100,000 percussion caps a day. Capt. William Ledbetter, a local resident, produced hundreds of rifles in Rutherford County and later went on to lead a local army group, the "*Rutherford Rifles*," which included 150 soldiers. Rutherford County and Murfreesboro were spared war until the fall of Ft. Donelson and Ft. Henry in early 1862. With these forts taken, Federal troops were able to pierce the heart of Tennessee and there were constant battles and skirmishes for a two year period as the Union Army made its way to Georgia.

Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest and his cavalry had been incredibly active throughout the area, going as far north as Kentucky and as far south as Georgia. His cavalry corps was formed in the summer of 1862 and saw major action during the First Battle of Murfreesboro (locally known as Forrest's Raid) on July 13, 1862. The Union Army (under Gen. Thomas Crittenden) had occupied the town and had troops camped on the Courthouse grounds. By July 9, the combined forces of Gen. Forrest and Col. John Hunt Morgan reached 1,400 men (compared to a Union force of 900). The raid began early on July 13 and Forrest's men overran a detachment from the 9th PA Cavalry a few miles east of Murfreesboro. Additional Confederate soldiers attacked the Union forces at the Courthouse and by that afternoon 890 Union soldiers had either surrendered or were killed. Southern casualties were 150. The raid destroyed much of the Union Army's supplies around the city and caused a diversion of the Union Army which would lead to one of the bloodiest battles of the war.

The Confederate Army had established a hospital at the First Presbyterian Church in October 1862 and took care of wounded from both armies after the Battle of Stones River (the Second Battle of Murfreesboro). According to Union soldier C. Lewis Diehl, 15th Pennsylvania Cavalry:

Jan. 7, 1863

The surgeons - rebel - treat us very kindly and are doing as much for us as they do for their own men.

As the war progressed and the Confederates re-deployed farther south, the church was converted into stables and a supply warehouse for Union cavalry. By March 1864 nothing remained. The wooden fixtures had been used as firewood and the church's bricks used for ovens and fireplaces. The Confederate retreat after the Battle of Stones River did not leave the area intact. To deprive the enemy the Confederate military had destroyed timber, rail lines, and even pulled down houses (to prevent them from being used as headquarters or otherwise be fortified) for miles in every direction.

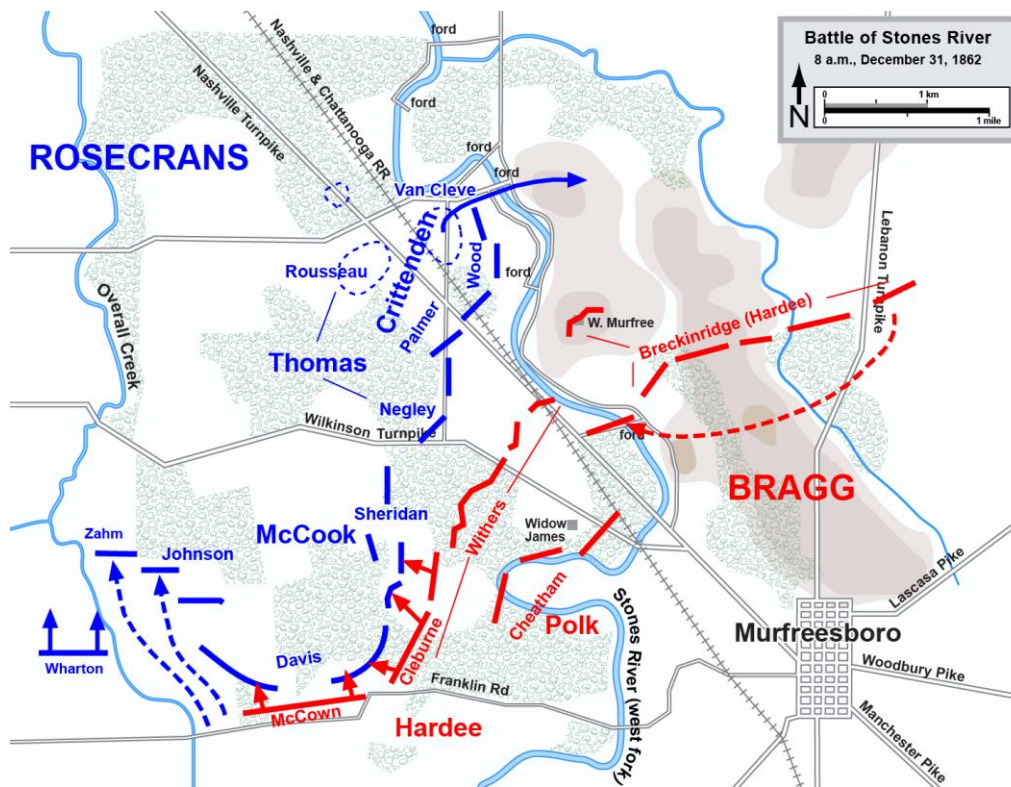
Battle of Stones River

In the fall of 1862, the Army of Tennessee (under Gen. Braxton Bragg and Gen. Joseph Johnston), numbering some 40,000 by November, took up defensive positions to the north of Murfreesboro, along Stones River. At this same time, the city of Vicksburg, Mississippi was threatened and Gen. Bragg was ordered to send 7,500 troops south to aid in the defense of Vicksburg. This loss would be sorely felt.

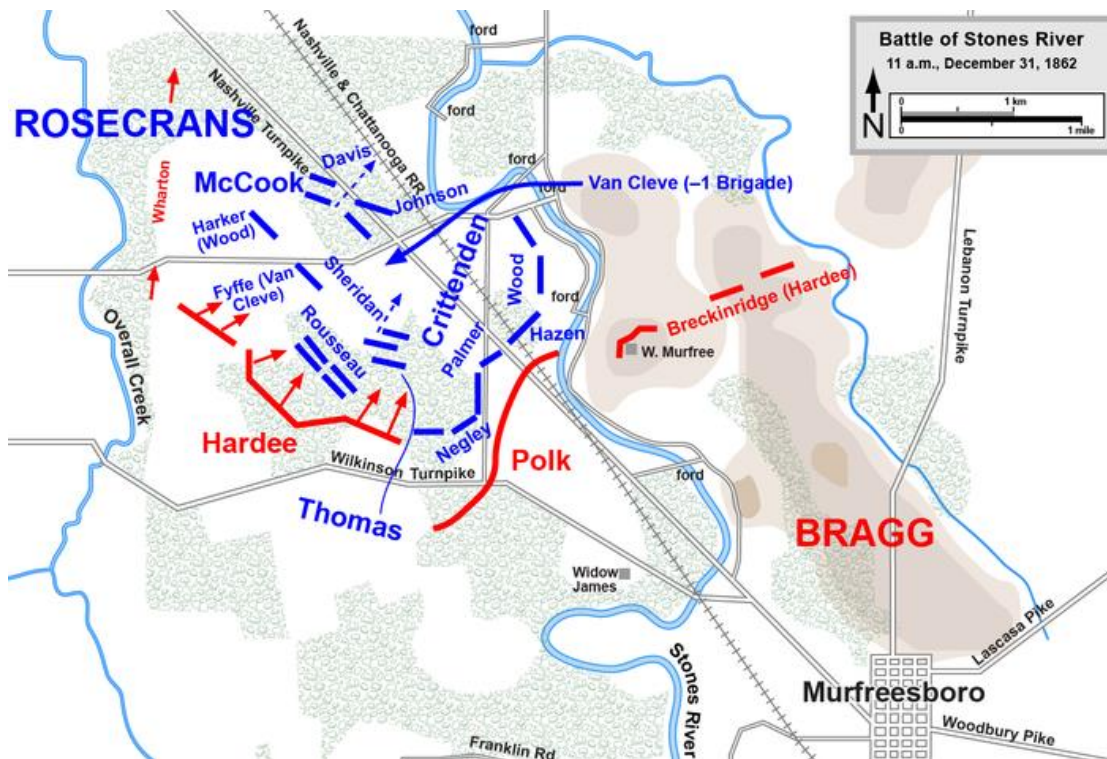
President Lincoln had become frustrated with the passive nature of Maj. Gen. Don Buell who was in command of the Union armies in the region and replaced him with Maj. Gen. William Rosecrans. Gen. Rosecrans, who had been the commander of the Union Army's XIV Corps, renamed his combined forces the "Army of the Cumberland" and moved his forces to Nashville. While Rosecrans reported that he had over 81,000 men in Nashville, only half that number would begin to march against Gen. Bragg on Dec. 26, 1862. Over the next several days, smaller detachments of Rosecrans's forces would skirmish against the Confederates and disrupt communications and rail lines. The Army of the Cumberland moved toward Murfreesboro in

three “wings”; 14,500 under Gen. Thomas Crittenden, 16,000 under Gen. Alexander McCook, and 13,500 under Gen. George Thomas.

The Confederates set up positions to prevent any Union movement further south and the terrain around Murfreesboro would make it very difficult for any army to quickly move wagons and artillery. Despite being encamped in the area for a month, none of the Southern troops were ordered to construct fortifications. Rosecrans arrived in Murfreesboro on the evening of Dec. 29 and Union forces numbered 41,000 against Bragg’s 35,000. Although the Federals had a numerical advantage, the odds of victory were much closer when you factor in the successfulness of the Southern cavalry under Gen. Joseph Wheeler, which had gone completely around the Union lines and captured or destroyed many supply wagons, as well as captured 1,000 Union soldiers.



The battle began at about 6 a.m. on Dec 31, with Confederate Gen William Hardee (and a single massive wave of 10,000 men) attacking the Union’s right flank. This was the third recent battle in which an early morning Confederate attack caught the Union off guard. During this first attack the Southern divisions under Generals Cleburne and McCown swept the Union forces back three miles and captured several artillery batteries. Gen. Johnson’s (US) division suffered 50% casualties. Rosecrans had intended for Gen. Crittenden to attack the rebel right, but was forced to send his men to the aid of McCook.



By 11 a.m., the Union forces were being surrounded and their ammunition was running low. Repeated attacks by Gen. Polk's (CS) men against Col. Hazen's brigade developed into a killing field known locally as "Hell's Half-Acre". Hazen was successful at repulsing each attack with one Southern infantry regiment suffering 80% casualties. Hazen's brigade was the only part of the original Union line that held and a monument to Hazen's men now stands at the site.

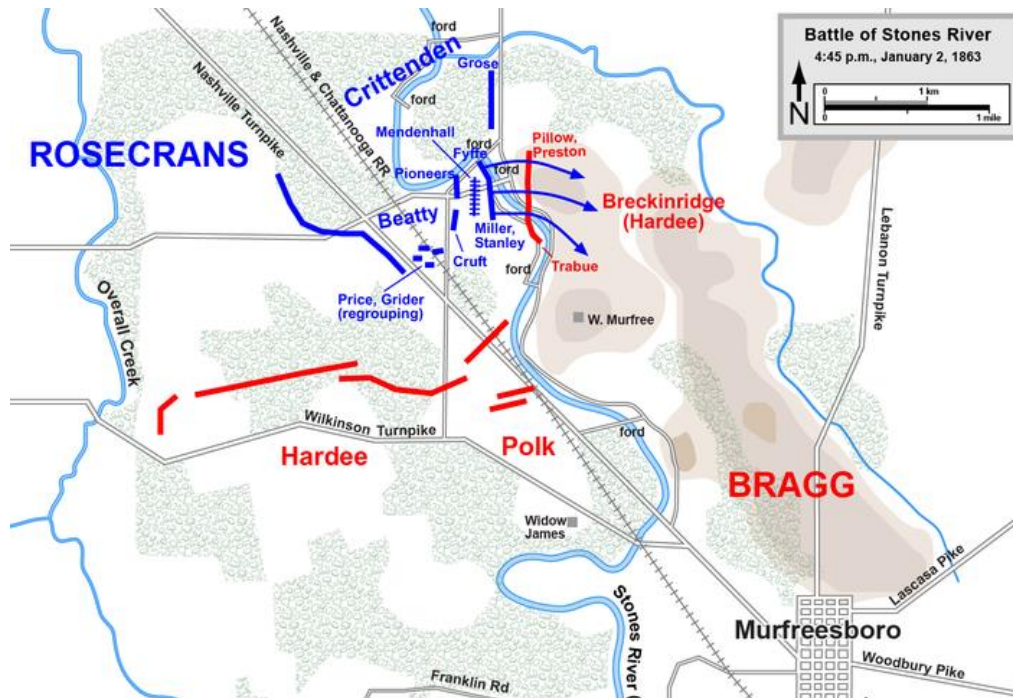
As the day wore on, Bragg's plan was to continue the attack on the Union left and cut off Rosecrans's lines of communication. However, his attack concentrated the Union army into a small point which had the effect of strengthening the Union's defensive capability. Bragg's biographer, Grady McWhiney observed:

"Unless the Union army collapsed at the first onslaught, it would be pushed back into a tighter and stronger defensive position as the battle continued, while the Confederate forces would gradually lose momentum, become disorganized, and grow weaker. Like a snowball, the Federals would pick up strength from the debris of battle if they retreated in good order. But the Confederates would inevitably unwind like a ball of string as they advanced."

Although Bragg had already lost 9,000 men, he felt the Union had lost more and ordered his soldiers to begin digging in. That night both sides held meetings; Bragg was certain of victory and several of Rosecrans's generals were certain of defeat. Gen. Thomas (US) made an impassioned plea and said, *"This army does not retreat!"*, and the decision was made to stand and fight.

Little happened on January 1, 1863 other than skirmishes and harassments by Wheeler's cavalry. At 4 p.m. on Jan. 2, Bragg ordered Gen. Breckinridge to attack Gen. Beatty's division.

Breckinridge feared the attack would be suicidal but carried it out. The attack began successfully and the Union forces were pushed back, then the Confederates ran into heavy fire from across the river. Capt. Mendenhall's (US) artillery had been perfectly placed with 45 guns on the ridge overlooking the river and another 12 guns about a mile away to provide enfilading fire. This prevented the Federals from being completely destroyed and the rebels suffered 1,800 casualties in less than an hour.



The Confederates retreated and the next day a resupply train reached Rosecrans along with reinforcements. Bragg knew that Rosecrans would most likely stay and fight since the Confederates had only 20,000 men capable of resuming the battle and Rosecrans would soon have 70,000. Beginning at 10 p.m. on Jan 3, Bragg withdrew his forces and retreated 36 miles south to Tullahoma.

The battle resulted in 24,645 lives: 12,906 on the Union side and 11,739 for the Confederates. Rosecrans set about building a massive series of earthworks and fortifications. Over the course of six months Fortress Rosecrans became the largest earthwork fortification built during the entire war. It encompassed an area of 255 acres and had a perimeter of 3.5 miles. It served as a garrison and supply depot until the war ended. Today, only a 3,000 foot portion of the curtain wall remains and it can be seen at Old Fort Park.

Sam Davis



Sam Davis (1842-63) was a native of Smyrna and is often called the “Boy Hero of the Confederacy”. He attended the Western Military Institute (now Montgomery Bell Academy) in Nashville and left before graduating to join Company I of the “Rutherford Rifles” in the 1st Tennessee Infantry Regiment in April 1861. The 1st Tennessee saw action in Virginia within the command of Gen. Robert E. Lee as well as the Tennessee battles of Shiloh and Stones River. In 1863 he joined “Coleman’s Scouts” as the Union Army began to occupy much of Middle Tennessee. Davis and the Scouts worked behind enemy lines disrupting communications and collecting information on troop movements.

On Nov. 20, 1863, Davis was making his way to Chattanooga and was captured by Federal troops near Minor Hill, TN (close to the Tennessee/Alabama border). The Federals found various papers with information on troop movements on Davis’ person and charged him with spying. Union General Grenville Dodge offered Davis a chance to save himself if he would reveal who his sources were, Davis replied: *“I would die a thousand deaths before I would betray a friend,”* and was hanged on November 27, 1863. His Smyrna home and 160-acre estate still survives and is now a museum operated by the State of Tennessee.

Three other local boys, Dewitt Smith Jobe and his two cousins, Dee Smith and Thomas Benton Smith also served as scouts. Jobe and Dee Smith were ultimately tortured and killed by Union forces. Thomas survived the war and attained the rank of Brigadier General.

Aftermath

The war took the lives of well over 600,000 Americans making it the bloodiest conflict the country has ever been in. In the South, the casualties represented 18 percent of the male population and resulted in hundreds of deaths and injuries in a county whose population stood at 29,000 by war’s end.

After the war, reunions were a popular activity in both the north and south. Veterans would gather, reenact key battle scenes, and the mood was usually that of camaraderie with their past enemies. One of the he last reunions to take place in Rutherford County occurred in 1929 and included some 60 southern veterans. One of the participants was Albert C. Everett, an African-

American (one of several local African-Americans who served in the Confederate Army), who joined the 51st TN Infantry. The oldest surviving Confederate veteran was Samuel H. Mitchell, who died on March 24, 1941 at the age of 98.

Cemeteries

After the Battle of Stones River, the victorious Union established a cemetery on the battlefield. This became both the first American military cemetery and the first monument to the war. Established on March 29, 1864 by Maj. General George H. Thomas, the cemetery had the remains of 6,850 soldiers with 2,562 of them unidentified. The Confederates were buried together in a mass grave.

Around 1890-91, the remains of Confederate soldiers which were scattered throughout the area were reinterred at the *Confederate Circle* in Evergreen Cemetery. The grave holds some 2,000 bodies with 90% of them unnamed.

Local Military Service

Tennessee is known as the “*Volunteer State*” which comes from the number of Tennesseans who volunteered to fight in the War of 1812. Below, is a brief description of the number of known soldiers and units from Rutherford County to have fought in the various wars of our country.

The American Revolutionary War (1775-83) occurred prior to any large or permanent settlement of Rutherford County. That being said, several prominent early settlers were also Revolutionary veterans. They include (among others): Capt. William Lytle, Capt. Robert Wilson, James Shepard, William Jordan, and Gen. Joseph Dickson (a veteran of the legendary Battle of King’s Mountain).

The War of 1812 (1812-15) was the last war in which a foreign power invaded the mainland United States. It was also a war which technically ended before the most famous battle of the war concluded - the Battle of New Orleans. The war ended with a peace treaty (on Dec. 24, 1814), but word of the treaty did not reach Gen. Andrew Jackson in time and with his direction the Battle of New Orleans (Jan. 8, 1815) resulted in a resounding American victory.

Several dozen men are known to have fought in the war from Rutherford County, however an exact figure is difficult to come by. Some of the military units in which Rutherford men served were the 1st Regiment of TN Volunteer Infantry, the 2nd Regiment of Volunteer Mounted Riflemen, the 2nd Regiment of West TN Militia, and the Tennessee Volunteer Cavalry.

The Mexican-American War (1846-48) the “Murfreestboro Guards” was comprised of 76 men from Murfreestboro. This war served as a training ground for many future soldiers in the Civil War. Also, in 1844, former Murfreestboro Mayor Henderson Yoakum left for Texas, befriended Sam Houston, and fought with Col. John Coffee Hays of the Texas Rangers during the war.

War for Southern Independence (1861-65) units comprised of men mostly or entirely from Rutherford County include: Company E of Davis’ TN Cavalry Battalion; Douglas’ TN Battalion

of Partisan Rangers; Capt. Lytle's 11th Cavalry Regiment, Co. D; Gen. Forrest's Escort Guard (Capt. Jackson's TN Cavalry); 1st TN Cavalry Battalion, Co. E; 4th TN Cavalry Regiment, Co. E; 21st TN Cav. Reg. Co. A; 9th TN Cav. Reg. Co. K; 1st TN Infantry, Co. I; 2nd TN Inf. Regiment, Co. A and F; as well as companies from the 18th, 20th, 23rd, 24th, 45th and 55th Tennessee Infantry Regiments.

Some men fought for the Union at one point or another. After doing some research I was unable to find an exact number, however, the 4th TN Volunteer Infantry Regiment and the 5th TN Volunteer Cavalry were made up of men from the county.

The Spanish-American War (1898) was a short lived conflict which resulted in the United States gaining control over Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines. Although the war only lasted a few months, the combined militaries of the United States, the Spanish Empire and irregulars from the various territories equaled more than 670,000 men. About half of those came from the US and 56 came from Rutherford County, including decedents of Capt. William Lytle and Col. Hardy Murfree.



(Monument to war dead from 1917 onwards)

World War I (1914-18): although America did not join the war until 1917, the war saw the service of 1,177 Rutherford men and suffered the loss of 44 of them.

World War II (1939-45): the war lasted six years and one day and resulted in over 15 million Americans being placed under arms. WWII was also the first truly modern and geographically integrated war making it difficult to find entire units who came from this county. However, the war did leave its mark and 104 county citizens lost their lives.

The Korean War (1950-53): also known as the “Forgotten War,” the war claimed 18 casualties from the county including nine deaths.

Vietnam (1955-75): Twenty people from the county died.

Operation Iraqi Freedom (2003-11) over 4,400 Americans died during the course of this war, five of them were from Rutherford County. These five were, A. F. Hawn II, J. D. Hirlston, Raymond Mitchell III, Corey Kowall, and Russell S. Hercules Jr.

Specific Histories and Tales

Courthouse

The Rutherford County Courthouse is one of only six remaining courthouses in the state which dates to before the Civil War. It has existed in its current location since 1813, although the original structures have been demolished, renovated, expanded and so forth.

The original courthouse was built in 1813 and was part of a jail complex. The site served as the seat of the state legislature until 1822, when the building burned down, and the legislature was then housed in the First Presbyterian Church. The courthouse was rebuilt, but in 1859 the county decided to build a newer and grander courthouse modeled after the Tennessee State Capitol building in Nashville. This new construction cost \$50,000 (around \$1,260,000 in today's terms) and was finished soon after with the new bell tower being completed in 1860.

The courthouse played a role as headquarters for both Confederate and Union armies, as well as a temporary POW prison during Union occupation. Unlike the First Presbyterian Church, the courthouse managed to survive the war fairly intact, only to be nearly destroyed by a tornado in 1913.

By late 1936, the county had outgrown its old courthouse and one option was to entirely demolish the old structure and build a new one. One newspaper report at the time described the Courthouse as:

"A bare, worn, dusty surface is what we call the courthouse yard ... the sole bench looks more like a one-pole chicken roost ... The inside of the courthouse is in keeping with the so-called lawn. And what's more, it smells bad."

After a series of meetings and with the public's support, on January 7, 1939, the county decided on paying \$5,000 to renovate it and \$5 a week to pay a janitor (one long-term janitor who died several years ago was actually the son of a slave). During WWII, the clock tower was used as an air raid alarm and the Courthouse lawn served as military training grounds. After the war, General McArthur, whose wife Jean was a local native, made a wildly popular visit around the Square.

Once again, by the late 1950s, space concerns prompted proposals to build a new courthouse. The local chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Daughters of the

American Revolution offered up strong opposition against demolishing the building. The Courthouse was renovated with its interior restored to the original 1859 design, had two “wings” added to either side, and the main judicial functions were to be carried out at a new judicial building (the 5-story building to the right of the Courthouse if you’re looking toward E. Main St) which was completed in the 1970s.

An interesting note, the bricks of the Courthouse are actually painted, and the bricks have always been painted since the first brick courthouse was constructed.

When the President Came to Town

Murfreesboro played host to a presidential visit. However, in this case it wasn’t Obama, Reagan, or even Lincoln - but his counterpart Confederate President Jefferson Davis. Davis won the election of 1861 with 97% of the vote and came to Middle Tennessee to review the troops of the newly formed Army of Tennessee. Murfreesboro had just been liberated by Gen. Forrest and Davis was concerned about the defense of the Deep South, namely Mississippi (his home state). President Davis arrived in Murfreesboro on Friday, Dec. 12, 1862, along with his aide Gen. George Washington Lee (Gen. Robert E. Lee’s son). During his visit he stayed at Oaklands Mansion and the whole event was cause for lots of celebration. While here he met with Gen. Braxton Bragg to stress his orders to send an entire division of men from the Army of Tennessee to reinforce the defenses of Vicksburg, MS. He also promoted several officers including John Hunt Morgan (from Colonel to Brigadier General); Gen. Morgan was also married here with Davis in attendance and a historical marker commemorating the wedding can be found near the corner of E. Main St as it begins to wrap around the Courthouse. President Davis left on the 14th on a train to Chattanooga.

The *Murfreesboro Daily Rebel Banner* described the event as “[the troops] *delighted with the manly form, the firm features, and the unpretending style of the president.*” And the entire populace of Murfreesboro envisioned the event like “*a royal visit from a royal visitor.*”

Women of Rutherford County

As mentioned in the section of the Courthouse, women have played a very large role in giving us the Square, and city, we have today. Without women’s organizations, their fundraising, and hard work many of the monuments around the Square and multiple historic sites around the county (such as Oaklands) would not exist. Beyond the work of generations of women in protecting our historical and cultural heritage women have played a number of large roles in the history of this county, and this county has played a large role in the history of equal rights for women.

Several schools and academies for women were founded in Rutherford County, including The Female Academy in 1825, Midsylvania Academy in 1834, Eaton’s College for Women in 1853, and Tennessee College for Women in 1907. Eaton’s was one of three schools which were reorganized to become Union University. The longest lived and most prestigious female school in Murfreesboro was Soule College. Founded in 1851, it survived for 65-years and included students from around the nation, and even Korea (class of 1898). Murfreesboro Electric now occupies the grounds of the original school on North Walnut St. The first black female to serve

on the Rutherford County Board of Education was Ola Jordan Hutchings in 1972, and her sister, Lillian Jordan Hammons taught in the county for more than fifty years. Both were graduates of Bradley Academy which was the first school in Rutherford County (1809) and became the first African American school in the county in 1884.

Sarah Childress Polk (1803-1891) was born in Murfreesboro and was the wife of President James K. Polk. She was described as wealthy, pretty, ambitious, and intelligent, and their marriage was urged on by Andrew Jackson. She hosted the first Thanksgiving dinner at the White House.

Emily “Emma” Lane (1847-1923) was the daughter of William and Martha Lane, her diaries of the Civil War provided extraordinary insights into the war and in one passage she lamented the it had brought “*trouble, sorrow, and desolation to the hearthstones of so many.*” Her writings are now housed in the Albert Gore Sr. Research Center at MTSU. Her family’s home can be seen at 500 N. Spring Street and was built in 1850.

The Human Fly

In April 1923, a young man in his early twenties came to Murfreesboro and proclaimed himself the “Human Fly.” He asked permission to climb to the top of the Courthouse using only his bare hands and feet. The officials granted him permission to climb the Courthouse and over the next few days the young man, along with an associate, went around seeking sponsorships from local business owners. On April 6, on a Friday night some 200 locals gathered around the Courthouse and the two men began to scale the building (with the “Fly” going up first). They made it to the top of the cupola and then sat atop the weather vane. Climbing down slightly to the top of the clock the men took a break. Instead of climbing down, the Fly headed back up where he lost his grip and fell to his death. The man’s real name was Ray Royce, aged 26 and he was born in St. Louis, MO. He was actually somewhat of a famous young man having climbed structures in the mid-west which were taller than the Courthouse. According to local legend he was buried in an unnamed pauper’s grave at Evergreen Cemetery.

Cannonsburgh Village

Located at 312 S. Front St, the village represents 100 years of early Tennessee life from the 1830s to the 1930s. The village contains a gristmill, school house, a museum, the Wedding Chapel, a doctor’s office, general store, log homes, and much more. One of the more interesting points of interest within the village is the *World’s Largest Cedar Bucket*. This 6-foot tall, 6-foot in diameter bucket is made from local red cedar and was constructed by the Tennessee Red Cedar Woodenworks Company in Murfreesboro in 1887. The bucket has the capacity to hold 1,556 gallons and was displayed at the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair and the 1904 Saint Louis World’s Fair. Unfortunately, in 2005 the bucket was severely burned by arsonists. It took six years for the bucket to be refurnished, mostly due to the scarcity of high quality red cedar in this area. The new bucket was unveiled in 2011.