

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

### OUR MEETINGS

Meetings are held the third Saturday of the month in Jan., Mar., May, July and Sept.

Meetings begin at 1:00.

There is no charge.

Members and visitors are always welcome.

*Check our website for last-minute changes:  
[www.mtgs.org](http://www.mtgs.org)*

**MTGS May Meeting**  
**The Giers Photo Collection at the**  
**Nashville Metro Archives**  
**presented by Ken Fieth**  
Saturday, May 18<sup>th</sup>  
1:00 p.m.  
At the Brentwood Library

**MTGS July Meeting**  
**Finding and Using Church Records**  
**presented by Veronica Sales**  
Saturday, July 20<sup>th</sup>  
1:00 p.m.  
At the Brentwood Library

For more information about events, visit  
the MTGS web site [mtgs.org](http://mtgs.org)  
or contact  
Virginia Watson at [ginnyology@comcast.net](mailto:ginnyology@comcast.net)

## *Middle Tennessee* *Journal of Genealogy & History*

Volume XXXII, Number 4, Spring 2019

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### *From the Editor. . .*

This issue brings the 32<sup>nd</sup> year of the MTGS Journal to a close. As usual, you will find the every-name index for all four issues at the back of this one. Thanks are due to Jim Long who has been proofing articles before publication this year (all remaining mistakes are, however, mine!) and also prepared the index.

The definition of what is 'historical' changes as time marches on, and in this issue we have for the first time a story about events in the 1930s. John Pace of Hickman County, the veterans' Bonus March and the Communist Party's influence on him are ably described in Debbie McConnel's article. When this Journal was started, most readers had probably heard of the Bonus March. But today a new generation can learn how this part of American history may have affected their family.

Another installment of the Marriage series is provided here, containing sad but informative stories of broken promises and brides left at the altar. Breach of Promise suits were not very common, but the records left give us a glimpse into the rites of courtship and the precarious position of 19<sup>th</sup> century women.

Another first in this issue is a guest book review. Col. John Norvell provides an extensive treatment of a new book on Nashville's Grey Eyed Man of Destiny, William Walker.

Read, enjoy and learn!

***Chuck Sherrill***  
***M.T.G.S Journal Editor***

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Yearly memberships include four issues of the *Middle Tennessee Journal of Genealogy & History*. Make check or money order payable to MTGS. Annual dues are \$25.00 beginning June 1 of each year. See back cover for details and application form.

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# How a Tennessee Farm Boy Became a Radical Communist: John T. Pace of Hickman County

by Debbie McConnel



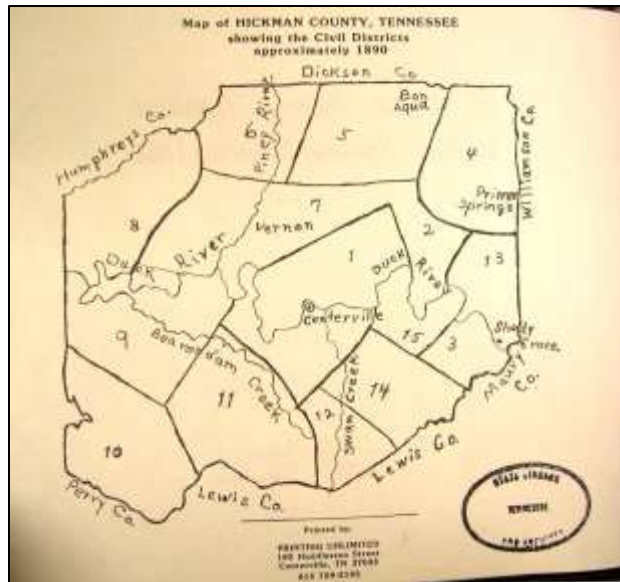
Pace (center) being arrested at the White House in 1932

John Thomas Pace was born Nov. 20, 1897, into a farming family with deep roots in Tennessee. The trajectory of his life was unlike that of any other boy from his neighborhood, and possibly unique among Tennesseans of his generation. As an adult he moved to Detroit and went into business. The Great Depression left him out of work and desperate. Anger at the government led him to Communist organizations. Eventual disillusionment with the movement not only caused him to leave, but eventually to testify against them before the House Un-American Activities Committee during the Red Scare era of Sen. Joe McCarthy. His remarkable story follows.

Research among the records of John T. Pace's early years shows that he was born into a well-established family in the farming community around Centerville in Hickman County's 1<sup>st</sup> Civil District. There places such as Council Bend, Little Piney and Mill Hollow were tucked away along tributaries of the Duck River.

His paternal grandfather, Wilson Reeves Pace (1830-1900) had also been born in Hickman County. He is listed in the 1850 census of Hickman County as Reeves Pace; he was then living with his grandfather, Wilson Pace [Sr.], who had been born in North Carolina in 1776.<sup>1</sup> Wilson Reeves Pace married Sarah Margaret Griner at her father's home near Centerville in 1854. He enlisted in Tennessee's 9<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Battalion (Confederate) during the Civil War and was discharged in Louisiana due to illness. His brother-in-law, W.P. Griner, was in the same unit and recalled years

<sup>1</sup> 1850 census



later how sick Pace was and “how bad he hated to leave” his comrades.<sup>2</sup> He recovered sufficiently to return to his homeplace and was elected sheriff of Hickman County in 1866, serving a two-year term.<sup>3</sup> John’s Grandfather Pace died in 1900 on the same farm where he had been born 70 years earlier, and his widow applied for a Confederate pension based on his service. Various census records indicate that Wilson Pace and Sarah Grinder had a large family of children, born both before and after the Civil War. The children listed in their household were: Martha L.; Elizabeth E.; Robert W.; William R.; Sarah A.; Annie N.; John B.; James; Samuel; George and Eva M. Pace.

John T.’s father, John Baldwin Pace, was born in Hickman County in 1869. He went to Clinton in Hickman County, Kentucky, in 1895 and married India Stone.<sup>4</sup> Evidently John T. was their only child and Sarah died not long after his birth.

By 1900 John Baldwin Page had placed young John in the care of John B.’s sister, Anna Pace, and her husband Elijah Jenkins.<sup>5</sup> Later that year John B. married again, to Alma Miles, and they soon moved to New Hope, Arkansas, where they farmed, raised a family and lived out their lives. 12-year-old John T. was with them in the 1910 census, but by 1920 he was again living with his aunt and uncle Jenkins, who had no children of their own.<sup>6</sup> Census records indicate that Elijah Jenkins was born ca. 1868 to Amos and Sarah Jenkins, all of Tennessee. Elijah and Anna (Pace) owned a farm on Newberry Road in Hickman County. They had cared for John when he was a small boy, and when he was old enough to leave his father and stepmother he returned to the Jenkins’ farm. The 1920 census shows “Johnnie” Pace at age 22 living with “Anner” and “Lige” Jenkins. His occupation was listed as farm laborer and he is erroneously shown as a brother-in-law instead of nephew.<sup>7</sup> By the 1930 census John had moved on and Elijah stated that he worked on the farm 53 weeks a year! By 1940 the Jenkins’ had hired live-in help, as the census for their household includes Sam Ward, black, farm hand, and “Henretter” Ward, black, housekeeper.

On September 12, 1918 John Thomas Pace, age 20, registered for the draft in Hickman County. His draft registration card provides his birth date and lists as next of kin his father John B. Pace of Arkansas. His occupation is listed as farming for Lige Jenkins. His hair and eyes were brown and he was of medium build.<sup>8</sup> Other records show that he went to Nashville and on October 15, 1918 signed up to become a Marine. The following day he was sent to Paris Island, South Carolina, for training. In less than a month, November 11, 1918, the armistice was signed and World War I was over. John T. did not serve overseas. He was discharged March 22, 1919 with the notation “Character Excellent.”<sup>9</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Tennessee Confederate Pension Applications, file number 2840 for Sarah M. Pace. Digital image, *FamilySearch.org*.

<sup>3</sup> W. Jerome Spence, *History of Hickman County, Tennessee* (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Publishing Co., 1900).

<sup>4</sup> Kentucky County Marriage Records, John B. Pace to India Stone, 14 Mar. 1895. Digital image, *Ancestry.com*.

<sup>5</sup> 1900 U.S. Census, Hickman Co., Tenn., E.D. 38, sheet 26, family #1, household of Elijah Jenkins. Digital image, *Ancestry.com*.

<sup>6</sup> 1910 U.S. Census, Newton County, Ark., E.D. 111, sheet 2B, family #28, household of John B. Pace. Findagrave.com entries for John B. Pace (1869-1935) and Alma Miles Pace (1879-1974) in Newton County, Arkansas.

<sup>7</sup> 1920 U.S. Census, Hickman Co., Tenn., E.D. 50, sheet 6, family #101, household of Lige Jenkins. Digital image, *Ancestry.com*.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. World War I Draft Registration Cards, entry for John Thomas Pace, digital record on *Ancestry.com*.

<sup>9</sup> Records of Ex-Servicemen in World War I, Tenn. State Library & Archives Record Group 36, Hickman County volume, listing for John “Page.”

On August 27, 1924, John T. Pace married Kathrine M. Breece in Hickman County. John was 26, and Kathrine had just had her 25<sup>th</sup> birthday. It was a marriage that would last a lifetime. Like John, Kathrine had a family tied to Hickman County. Kathrine's father, Alva Breece, died just a year after she married.<sup>10</sup> Her grandfather was also named Alva, (pronounced and sometimes written as Alvy), and appears in the 1850 census as a young man of 26, born in Tennessee, and evidently caring for his widowed mother, Lavinia Breece, a native of North Carolina, and several younger sisters.<sup>11</sup>

John T. and Katherine M. Breece Pace moved from Hickman County, Tennessee to Lincoln Park, a suburb of Detroit, Michigan, probably following her father's death in 1925. Their first child, John T., Jr., was born in Michigan in 1926, as were their other children; Lois Irene (1929); Donald Edward (1931); and Kenneth W. (1933) and Robert Harold (1935).

Like many other Americans migrating from farms to cities during that era, the Paces probably went to Detroit without extra funds to fall back on. John T. first found work there as a common laborer. The 1929 *Detroit City Directory* lists the Paces at 985 Cleophus Parkway in Lincoln Park. John T. is listed as a laborer. By the time the 1930 census was taken, he had found more substantial work. That record shows his occupation as Superintendent of Construction. This fits with his later testimony that he had worked over a period of time to build a business, but after the economic crash he lost everything during the Depression.<sup>12</sup>

An ambitious young man with a wife and two children, and another child on the way, John T. was devastated by the loss of everything he had worked for. Like many other Americans of that time, his hopes for his future were dashed. He recalled later that desperate people were "jumping off of bridges and turning on the gas, and so forth. I didn't feel that I could solve the problem that way. I wanted to fight, and any organization that had the word "fight" in it, condemning this thing, I was in for."<sup>13</sup>

It was at this point in 1931 that Pace was exposed to Communist literature and decided to join the Communist Party. During this period the Party devoted itself to the causes of organizing the unemployed, creating unions, championing the rights of blacks, and fighting against evictions of farmers and the working poor. John Pace believed that the Communists were on the side of hard-working poor people and against a government and system that allowed people like him to fall through the cracks. He believed that the Communists could lead America to a classless society; he wanted radical change and was willing to fight for it.

World War I draft registration card of John T. Pace (Ancestry.com)

<sup>10</sup> Tennessee Death Records, 1925, Hickman County certificate #77, Alva Jasper Breece age 62, son of Alva and Mary (Hickman) Breece. Digital image, *Ancestry.com*.

<sup>11</sup> 1850 U.S. Census, Hickman County, Tenn., page 89 (stamped), family #1365, Alva Bruce household. Digital image, *Ancestry.com*.

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Congress, House Special Committee on Un-American Activities, *Communist Tactics Among Veterans' Groups, Testimony of John T. Pace*, 82<sup>nd</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> sess., p.1951. Digital image on Internet Archive: ([archive.org/details/communisttactics1951unit/page/n3](https://archive.org/details/communisttactics1951unit/page/n3)).

<sup>13</sup> *Communist Tactics*, p.1951.

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It is not clear just what the organization Pace first became involved with was called. He stated that he was the “unit organizer of the Lincoln Park district of Michigan, Ford section.” Sometimes Communist party groups did not come right out and say they were Communists, but went by names like Unemployed Council, Workers’ Ex-Servicemen’s League and International Workers Order. To people who could see no way out of the Depression these organizations sounded like a good thing. Many who joined had never heard of Communism before the Depression, and groups that addressed the common man’s needs became very attractive. There had been little if any public education about Communism and therefore the revolutionary aspects of their philosophy were largely unknown.<sup>14</sup>

Lincoln Park was a bedroom community for workers at Ford’s River Rouge automotive plant. It is possible that Pace was working in the plant at the time he took the role of “unit organizer.” He was evidently intelligent and dedicated, as he quickly rose through the organization. He was next appointed chairman of the Unemployment Council in Lincoln Park. The Party sent him for advanced training at a worker’s school or camp in Farmington, Michigan. Although operated by an organization called the Workers Education Association, it was a Communist-affiliated school similar to the Highlander Folk School back in Tennessee.<sup>15</sup> After attending the school Pace was made an official member of the “Ford Section” of the Communist Party and appointed to the party’s district committee.<sup>16</sup>

Later in 1931, Pace’s testimony shows that he became the organizer of the Worker’s Ex-servicemen’s League of Michigan, a communist controlled veteran’s organization. Despite his brief and uneventful months as a World War I soldier, the Party identified Pace as a credible leader of American veterans. He organized a hunger march to Lansing, Michigan in 1931 and a strike in Ann Arbor, Michigan. He led various demonstrations in Detroit. By 1932 he was a bona-fide activist, clearing the way for his part in the Bonus March of veterans to Washington, D.C.



Six years after the end of World War I Congress passed the “World War Adjusted Compensation Act” to give the former soldiers a bonus for their service. If the soldier had been stationed stateside he would receive a certificate amounting to \$1.00 for each day of service up to \$500 (valued at \$8,604 in 2019). If he served overseas he would receive \$1.25 per day of service up to \$625. This “bonus” certificate was like an insurance policy, payable upon the soldier’s death. Soldiers still holding their certificate in 1945 would be paid in full.

The Great Depression left many of the men who had served during the war to “make the world safe for democracy” out of work, destitute, and their families hungry. They didn’t ask for extra money, but they needed the bonus payments immediately. The program was sometimes known derisively as the “casket bonus” because some men were killing themselves so their family could have the money they needed so

desperately to survive.

Congressman Wright Patterson introduced a bill in the House of Representatives to pay the bonus immediately. During the debate Tennessee Congressman Edward Eslick stood up to defend the bill and during his speech suffered a heart attack and died. Eslick, whose district included Hickman County, must have been viewed as a hero by John T. Pace. President Harding strongly opposed the bill because of the amount it would cost the nation, and with his influence the Senate voted it down.

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<sup>14</sup> Ottanelli, Fraser M., *Communist Party of the United States from the Depression to World War II*, (Rutgers University Press, 1989).

<sup>15</sup> Dermody, James, *Communism Comes to Farmington: the Workers Camp*, (Farmington Hills Historical Commission, 1993). Digital image: Hathitrust.org.

<sup>16</sup> *Communist Tactics*, p.1927.





Edward Eslick (April 19, 1872-June 14, 1932), was the Democratic Representative from the 7<sup>th</sup> district of Tennessee from 1925 until his death. The son of Merritt and Martha Virginia (Abernathy) Eslick, he was born near Pulaski in Giles County, Tennessee. He was involved in the law, banking and agriculture. During the draft registration 1917-1918 he served as a government Appeal Agent for Giles County. His wife, Willa McCord Blake Eslick served out the rest of his term.



Edward Eslick's grave at Maplewood Cemetery in Pulaski. The inscription reads "Member of Congress 1925-1932. Died on the floor of the House while pleading for the soldiers' bonus. He who falls in a just cause never dies." (findagrave.com)

A former sergeant in World War I, Walter W. Waters of Oregon, organized a march on Washington to persuade the government to make the veteran's bonus payable immediately. The march was commonly known as the Bonus March, and the men were known as the Bonus Army or BEF (Bonus Expeditionary Forces), a play on the World War I term AEF (American Expeditionary Forces). The soldiers, some with their families, traveled cross-county by any means available, including hitch-hiking, hopping trains and marching in groups.

In Pace's home state of Tennessee the appeal for immediate payment was popular. There were many local rallies leading up to statewide meetings held at the War Memorial Auditorium in Nashville. They met to plead for justice for every ex-serviceman. Members of the Nashville Negro Legion Post declared "the colored boys are ready to follow [our] Commander Dick Swint whenever he desires to march to Washington." A renewal of the song "Over There" could be heard. Political leaders speaking in favor of the Bonus included Attorney General Richard M. Adkinson, W.G. (Dick) Swint, commander of Nashville Post Number 5 American Legion, Major Rutledge Smith and City Commissioner Luther Luton. The *Tennessean* reported that an immediate payment of the bonus would have brought approximately \$3,500,000 to veteran's families in Davidson County alone.<sup>17</sup>

The majority of the 20,000 or more people in the BEF were patriotic Americans. They did not intend to use violence but were determined to make their need for the bonus money known. Obstacles on the way to Washington D.C. had fueled the fire of the men. The Pennsylvania, Ohio and Detroit railroad refused to provide free transportation to Bonus Army travelers. Marchers had several confrontations with local police over this issue.<sup>18</sup> Along the way the Workers' International Relief, a Communist agency, provided them with some comforts. Upon arrival in Washington D.C. President Hoover refused to address them. They set up shanty camps, the largest being Anacostia Flats, and inhabited some abandoned building within the city.

The Communist Party saw this gathering of disgruntled Americans as the perfect opportunity to foment revolution against the government. John T. Pace, because of his leadership in the Detroit Communist party, was chosen as the

<sup>17</sup> "The Bonus, Hard Times Cure," *The Tennessean* [Nashville] 16 June 1932.

<sup>18</sup> *Communist Tactics*, p.1932-1935.

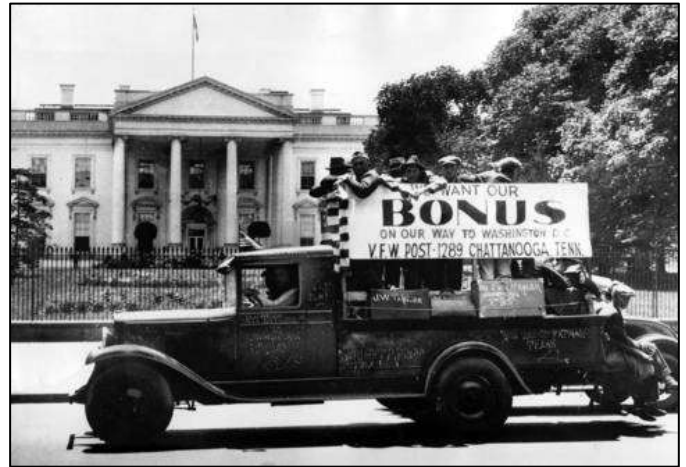
leader of the Communist contingent in the Bonus Army. In response to the railroad's ban on BEF travelers, Pace emphasized to the marchers that big business and government were denying the laborers the right to use a railroad that was a result of the toil and labor of their own hands, and that they must fight for their rights against private enterprise and government.<sup>19</sup>

Pace later testified that he was instructed to advertise himself as a former WWI soldier at first because there was a great deal of patriotism among the ex-servicemen. He could produce his Army discharge records, which at first was a requirement to join the Bonus Army. He registered as a BEF member in Camp Bartlett. Pace set up a camp headquarters but he and his comrades mostly assimilated into the camps and began working to sway the minds of the soldiers, organizing mass meetings and distributing literature.

Pace understood that once he and his fellow Communists had built up a sufficient following, they were to incite riots and create a violent scene in the camps. The organization's strategy was to stir greater anger and discontent among the Bonus Army. The Communists argued that the government had become an agent of big business, doling out the best deals to industry and banks, not doing anything for the veterans and unemployed. At one meeting, and without permission, Pace took to the platform and made appeals to the veterans for continuous demonstrations daily at the Capitol, he denounced the peaceful policies of the Bonus March organizers and said they had failed to support the veterans. Pace guessed there were between 15,000 and 20,000 people in the Bonus Army, but only around 200 were Communist party members.<sup>20</sup>



**John Pace lived at Camp Bartlett, shown here, during the Bonus March. Camp Bartlett was one of many tent camps for the nearly 20,000 veterans who marched on Washington in 1932.**



**The V.F.W. in Chattanooga sent this truck full of veterans to the Bonus March.**

The soldiers of the BEF were indeed treated like tramps in the capital of the country they had risked their lives to defend. Evalyn McClean, wife of the owner of the *Washington Post*, said: "On a day in June, 1932 I saw a dusty automobile truck roll slowly past my house. I saw the unshaven, tired faces of the men who were riding in it . . . I could remember when those same men, with others had been cheered as they marched down Pennsylvania Avenue. While I recalled those wartime parades, I was reading in the newspaper that the Bonus Army men were going hungry in Washington!"<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> *Communist Tactics*, p.1932-1935.

<sup>20</sup> *Communist Tactics*, p.1944.

<sup>21</sup> "The Bonus Army Invades Washington, D.C., 1932," *EyeWitness to History*, ([www.eyewitnesstohistory.com](http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com)).



## Moscow Ordered Riots In 1932 Bonus March, Ex-Communist Says

By the Associated Press

NEW YORK, Aug. 27.—The New York Journal-American quotes an ex-Communist as saying he got orders from his Red superiors to provoke riots in the ill-fated 1932 Bonus March on Washington.

"The Communists didn't care how many veterans were killed," the ex-Communist, John T. Pace, is quoted in the first of a copyrighted series on the 1932 march that turned into disorder.

In a dispatch from Centerville, Tenn., written by Howard Rushmore, the Journal-American quotes Mr. Pace as declaring:

"I've never told this story before, but I think it's about time; and the only reward I want is the knowledge that all veterans and everyone else will know the truth about two great Americans."

**Feels Responsible.**

Mr. Pace referred to former President Hoover and Gen. Douglas MacArthur, whom the Journal-American says have been accused of killing World War I veterans in Bonus March rioting.

"I feel responsible in part for this often-repeated lie about President Hoover and Gen. MacArthur," Mr. Pace said.

The newspaper gave this account of an interview with Mr. Pace:

"I led the left wing or Communist section of the Bonus March," Mr. Pace said. "I was ordered by my Red superiors to provoke riots."

"I was told to use every trick to bring about bloodshed in the hopes that President Hoover would be forced to call out the Army."



**A NEW STORY FROM AN OLD PHOTO**—John T. Pace (center, wearing white pants), reluctantly obeyed an order to move on by police and plainclothes men when he attempted to lead a band of about 100 radical bonus seekers in an effort to picket the White House during the 1932 Bonus March on Washington. Yesterday he told the New York Journal-American that he got orders from Communist superiors to provoke riots during the bonus march. Mr. Pace, an ex-Communist, now a deputy sheriff and farmer and chairman of the Americanism Department of the American Legion, said he and four other Communists "took over" a "legitimate" bonus parade in Detroit and he was named commander of the area's contingent for the Washington march. The plainclothes man in white fedora is Detective Sgt. John Apostolides, still on duty with the Metropolitan Police Detective Bureau.

—Underwood Photo.

John Pace arrest  
photo from 1932,  
reprinted in 1949  
when he first  
came to the  
attention of  
the House  
Committee on  
Un-American  
Activities.

One story that circulated among the veterans made them particularly angry. It was told that a World War I veteran, Joe Angelo, had received a Distinguished Service Cross for saving the life of not-yet-General George Patton during the war. But when he came to Washington as part of the BEF and asked to see the General, he was sent away.<sup>22</sup>

Until the last day Congress was in session the BEF hoped the Senate would pass the Bonus Bill. Things came to a head for Pace on June 25, 1932, when he led a militant march on the White House and was arrested.<sup>23</sup> Following that incident, President Hoover ordered General Douglas MacArthur to disperse the 10,000 men still remaining in the camps. MacArthur advanced with tanks, fixed bayonets, and tear gas to drive away the protestors. The army chased the people away and set fire to the camp. An article in the *Washington Daily News* stated: "a pitiful spectacle, the mightiest government in the world chasing unarmed men, women and children with army tanks. If the army must be called out to make war on unarmed citizens, this is no longer America."<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup> "Private First Class Joseph T. Angelo," *Heroes of Camden, New Jersey* (<http://www.dvrbs.com/camden-heroes/CamdenHeroes-JosephTAngelo.htm>).

<sup>23</sup> *Communist Tactics*, p.1945.

<sup>24</sup> "Bonus Army Expeditionary Forces March on Washington," *National Park Service*, ([www.nps.gov/articles/bonus-expeditionary-forces-march-on-washington.htm](http://www.nps.gov/articles/bonus-expeditionary-forces-march-on-washington.htm)).

Pace was still in jail when the army dispersed the BEF; he was released and brought to New York by the Party. There he attended a meeting with the top leadership, where severe criticism came down on party leaders. Pace later said that the leaders misjudged the attitude of the BEF and believed they were far more willing to fight the government than they actually were. If the protestors had not been frightened out of Washington, the story might have ended very differently.

After the Bonus March Pace went back to Detroit and soon became disillusioned with the Party's tactics and anti-American rhetoric. He concluded that the Party was far from establishing a classless society, it was a dictatorship controlled by Moscow. As he told it later, he realized he had been wrong to join in with them, and in 1935 he renounced his Communist Party membership.<sup>25</sup> A Congressional Committee member pointed out that the Communists said rather that Pace was kicked out of the party. Pace retorted, "If you quit they always kick you out."

To make amends, Pace became an undercover operator spying on Communist activities and providing names and organizational information to the U.S. government. By 1946 he had switched sides completely and was chairman of the Detroit American Legion's Un-American Activities Committee.<sup>26</sup> At that time he alleged that the Communists were targeting American children as early as age 6, intending eventually to infiltrate the U.S. Army where they would perform acts of sabotage and incite mutiny.<sup>27</sup>

In 1951 Pace was called to testify before the nine members of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Un-American Activities. Among the committee members was Congressman James Frazier, Jr. of Tennessee. Pace was not brought before the committee on charges of being a Communist, but rather for the purpose of telling his cautionary tale about how the Communist Party disguised its real motives to appeal to Americans. His testimony fills 39 printed pages. In conclusion he stated, "I think that the public, the people, should be informed . . . that the Communist Party is a party of conspiracy to overthrow the government by force and violence."

In the 1940 census John T. and Katherine Pace were living in Detroit with their children John Jr., Louise, Donald, Kenneth W. and Harold on 18th Street. They were renting a house for \$25 a month. His occupation was listed as Counter Clerk at the State Liquor Store. His income was a very modest \$1260 (equivalent to \$22,611 in 2019).<sup>28</sup> In 1947 Pace and his family moved to back Centerville in Tennessee. In 1949 he was serving as a Deputy Sheriff in Hickman County, and heading up the Americanism department for the American Legions. At the time of his testimony in 1951 he was working for the Lincoln Construction Company in the unpleasant business of sewer removal. Sometime after the 1951 testimony John T. and Kathrine moved back to Detroit, where he died Sept. 8, 1971. Katherine died not long after, on June 2, 1972.

Little is known about the last 20 years of John Pace's life. Although he evidently never again achieved his goal of owning a business and remained a rather poor man in terms of his finances, John Pace turned from radical Communism to ardent patriotism after his experiences in the Bonus Army.



**John Pace and Katherine Pace  
and family in Detroit,  
ca. 1944.**

<sup>25</sup> *Communist Tactics*, p.1951.

<sup>26</sup> *Communist Tactics*, p.1947.

<sup>27</sup> *Communist Tactics*, p.1948.

<sup>28</sup> 1940 U.S. Census, Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan, E.D. 15, sheet 5A, household #88, John Pace. Digital image, *Ancestry.com*.

# Marriage and the Law in Tennessee

## Breach of Promise

by Charles A. Sherrill

The verbal contract of marriage between a man and a woman is normally a case for joy and celebration. But in more than a few cases in Tennessee history, these promises have been broken and the couple has ended up in court telling their sad story to the world. While the breaking of an engagement is not uncommon, breach of promise cases are fairly rare. But at least five of them were heard by the Tennessee Supreme Court prior to 1900.

A search of Nashville newspapers online revealed 18 stories about breach of promise suits published before

1860, but all were stories from other states and countries. Although such suits were being filed in Tennessee, the subject was a painful and private one which the newspapers shied away from printing. Public attitudes against bringing such private matters to court were strong. In 1822 the Nashville Whig reprinted an article titled “On Breaches of Promises of Marriage” which purported to be a letter from Modesty, Virtue and Chastity to women who had entered into such lawsuits. A portion of the letter reads:

Claiming damages because young men would not marry them! No woman of delicacy – no woman of virtue would demean, debase, and degrade herself by such an appeal. You justly add that, in your opinion, “the female who does this forfeits the right of her sex, and justifies the man who forsook her.” Disgusted, indeed, must men of sense be with that “disgraceful exhibition of cupidity in our sex,” which has so often been exposed in courts of justice, where the real honor of our sex has not been duly regarded, but the weakness of a few has been turned into sport to gratify a class of men who deal more in lucre than in equity. (Nashville Whig, 4 Sept. 1822:2)

The earliest case heard by the Tennessee Supreme Court against a man for breaching his promise to marry a woman arose in East Tennessee about 1814 when James Conn asked Eliza Wilson to marry him, but then got her pregnant and did not marry her. She sued for damages based on his breach of their verbal marriage contract. Both the lower court and the Supreme Court ruled in her favor, citing two Massachusetts cases as authority for the decision.<sup>1</sup>

The legal age of consent to marry was 14 in males and 12 in females under the common law. Nicholas Cooper, age 19, engaged himself to Mahulda Warwick in Union County in 1858. When Nicholas got cold feet and withdrew his



<sup>1</sup> *Conn v Wilson* 2 Tenn. 233 (1814).

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promise, Mahulda sued him. The court ruled that even though Nicholas was old enough to contract for marriage, he was still under 21 and could not be held liable for a contract made when he was under the age of consent.<sup>2</sup>

It has often been said that “oldest trick in the book” is for a man to promise marriage in order to seduce a woman, and then to renege on the promise. A Sumner County case in 1858 delved into that matter and resulted in the airing of a lot of secrets. Charles J. Goodal promised to marry Lavinia Thurman, then seduced her and made her pregnant. He decided he wouldn’t marry her after all, claiming the baby was not his, and she sued him for breach of promise. Goodal and his witnesses accused Lavinia and her sister Martha for lacking “prudence and proper female modesty in [their] intercourse with men.” But the Supreme Court observed that there were an equal number of witnesses ready to assert the good character and reputation of the women, leaving the matter unclear.<sup>3</sup>

In the Goodal case, the Sumner County jury assessed remarkably large damages for the time, charging him to pay Lavinia \$5,000 for destroying her reputation. Goodal’s attorneys argued that this amount was unreasonable and that no woman should profit from having an illegitimate child. They cited case law from another state holding that evidence of seduction should not increase the damages in a breach of promise suit. The Supreme Court agreed that the damages were probably excessive, but referred to the Tennessee case of *Conn v. Wilson* as their precedent. The opinion stated “Morality requires it [assessing damages for seduction] in order to repress the libidinous advances of the male sex, under dishonest and seductive assurances of marriage. We are not aware that this decision [*Conn v. Wilson*] has ever been departed from, in practice, by our courts.” Regardless of what courts in other states might write, Tennessee had established this as law “and we are not disposed to change it.”

In a last-ditch effort, Goodal’s attorneys claimed the trial in Gallatin was invalid because one of the jurors was related to Lavinia by marriage. The evidence showed that the man was related through his first wife, now deceased, and had since remarried. The Supreme Court did not think this serious enough to affect the outcome of the trial, saying it was more likely for a man to dislike his first wife’s relations than to favor them!

A deceived woman from Wayne County didn’t fare as well in the courts. Dollie J. Weeks sued Stewart Mayes for promising marriage, seducing her, and then refusing to go through with the marriage.<sup>4</sup> She sued him in Waynesboro’s Chancery Court in 1886, but before the case came to court, Mayes died. The trial went forward and there was considerable testimony about Mayes’ bad character. His attorney objected to this, but the courts considered evidence regarding his character admissible. However, the Supreme Court ruled that Weeks’ opportunity to sue him for being such a scoundrel died when he did. The damages could not be applied to his estate or his heirs.

New legal ground on this topic was plowed in 1900 when the Supreme Court heard an appeal from Maury County in the case of *Brown v. Odill*.<sup>5</sup> Miss Sarah Alberta Odill sued William Hugh Brown in Circuit Court and received a judgment in her favor allowing \$2,800 in damages. Sarah alleged that on Jan. 4, 1894 she and Brown promised to marry each other, and set a date two weeks afterward. Sarah’s parents were both present and gave their approval. After a few days, Brown said he had been talking with their pastor and was having second thoughts on religious grounds. Brown asked Miss Odill to postpone the marriage until his first wife, from whom he was divorced, died. This first wife was in poor health and not expected to last long. Sarah conceded. The first wife proved heartier than Brown supposed, and was still living in Dec. 1897 when Sarah was shocked to learn that Brown had gone down to Rutherford County and married Dora Bunch.<sup>6</sup> Sarah sued.

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<sup>2</sup> *Warwick v Cooper* 37 Tenn. 659 (1858)

<sup>3</sup> *Goodal v Thurman* 38 Tenn. 209 (1858)

<sup>4</sup> *Weeks v Mays* 87 Tenn. 442 (1886).

<sup>5</sup> *Brown v. Odill* 104 Tenn. 250 (1900).

<sup>6</sup> “Tennessee Marriages 1796-1850,” online database *FamilySearch.org*, entry for W. Hugh Broun to Medora Bunch.

Brown's attorneys claimed that his promise to marry was not a valid contract because it was vague and uncertain, and hinted that such a contract could be an inducement to murder. Brown also alleged that since the date of his contract (his first wife's death) had not yet occurred, he had not yet violated his agreement with Miss Odill. Neither the Maury County judge nor the Supreme Court bought these arguments, and Sarah walked away with injured pride and \$2,800. The Supreme Court said the damages were not unreasonable, given Sarah's blighted hopes for the "social, domestic and material advantage to be derived from the promised marriage, the injury to her prospects in life, the wounds to her affections, [and] her mental anguish and mortifications."

A cache of love letters proved the undoing of Eugene Davenport of Franklin County when he failed to marry Miss Lethia Coover.<sup>7</sup> Lethia was from a respectable family in Winchester. She attended the Winchester Female Academy and at the time the Civil War broke out she was 21 and living in her father's home. Solomon Coover was a coach trimmer who owned two lots in town and had three slaves at the outbreak of the Civil War. He also had three daughters of courting age.<sup>8</sup>

Initially the people of Franklin County were overwhelmingly in favor of secession and supported the Confederate army. However by the time federal troops occupied the area in 1863 some residents were openly supportive of the Union. Among these was the family of Solomon Coover, who opened his home to visiting army officers. It was in this way that Letitia met Eugene Davenport, a Union army captain with the 14<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry.

Davenport was a frequent visitor at the Coover house, and became enamored with Miss Coover. She was about 25 years old and he ten years older. In April 1864 he made a formal proposal of marriage, to which she at first demurred. He wrote letters declaring his love and saying that "one word" from her "would make him the happiest man in Tennessee." Letitia at first demurred, but after some time became convinced the Captain was in earnest, and accepted his proposal.

The military work Capt. Davenport was responsible for included tearing up the railroad so that Confederates could not use it, and cutting large amounts of timber on private property for use of the army. He remained in the area after the war and was in charge of denying former Confederates the vote in 1867. As he later said, he did many "things which were obnoxious to the people of the county."

Davenport used his military reputation and connections to set himself up nicely in Franklin County after the war. He soon owned more than 500 acres of land, a half-interest in a "shoe store house," and two town lots on the railroad in Decherd. He began doing administrative work for the railroad and traveled extensively.

<sup>7</sup> *Coover v. Davenport* 48 Tenn. 368 (1870).

<sup>8</sup> 1860 U.S. Census, Winchester, Franklin County, Tenn., p.74B (stamped), family 102, Solomon Coover age 53 and family. Also *Indexes of Franklin County Records* (Winchester, Tenn.: Project Preservation, 1997), "Franklin County Tax Record 1861" entry for Solomon Cover [sic], district 1, page 4.

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Advertisement from Nashville's *Republican Banner*  
on 18 Nov. 1852, p.2



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After Miss Coover accepted his offer of marriage, he wrote to confess that he was not legally divorced from his wife in Paducah; although they had been apart for a year and the paperwork was completed. He told her he had written to his lawyer, who replied that Mrs. Davenport was unwilling to agree to the divorce. Davenport assured Lethia that he would “make everything right,” asking her to keep quiet about it for the time being.

This situation dragged on for two years, during which the couple exchanged letters frequently. More than a dozen of Davenport’s letters are copied into the court record. He continued promising Lethia that they would soon “have their bliss,” and signing himself, “Your loving husband, or I will be in a short time.” In April 1865 Lethia wrote to him:

*Dearest Eugene, . . . I implore you, by all that you hold sacred, by your great love for your devoted Lethia to finish up immediately without one moment’s delay, that affair in Kentucky. Let it cost what it may. If it cost all that you have, let it go. Let you but return to me and say, Lettie, it is finished, and I will be ten thousand times more happy than I would be if you were to say Lettie, I am a millionaire. Rather than have things take the turn I see they are taking, I would rather live in a log cabin with a dirt floor, and eat hog & hominy. Pride has ever been my weak side.”*

In July 1866 Lethia finally abandoned hope and filed a complaint against Davenport for breach of the marriage contract in the Circuit Court of Franklin County. He sued for a change of venue since so many people in Franklin County despised him, and the trial was moved to Marion County. Lethia had no money to prosecute the case and asked for support from the county to pay her fees. In March 1869 the Circuit Court of Marion County determined that Davenport was not guilty. Lethia then appealed to the Tennessee Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court found that the Marion County judge had given incorrect instructions to the jurors. He told them that if Lethia Coover had continued her contract to marry even after she learned that Davenport was not free, she had no claim against him. For that reason, the Marion County jury found him innocent. However, the Supreme Court ruled that the jury should have been asked to consider whether Davenport exercised undue influence and control over Lethia in order to keep her bound by the contract. A new trial was ordered.

Davenport turned out to be quite the scoundrel and typical of the carpetbaggers of his era. An 1872 article in the *Nashville Republican Banner* said of him:

Of all the adventurers who combined to plunder the people of Tennessee during the four years of Radical rule, none played a bolder game nor pocketed heavier stakes than D.E. Davenport. He was Receiver of the McMinnville & Manchester and the Winchester & Alabama railroads, and his accounts have never been straightened to this good day. Like the rest of his stripe, when he had made his pile he left the State, and finally turned up in Washington, where he is interested in a heavy contract, but whether under the Government, corporation or territorial regime, we have not yet learned.<sup>9</sup>

Lethia was persistent and sued Davenport again. This time the trial was held in Winchester, and on 2 Apr. 1873 the Circuit Court ruled in Lethia’s favor and ordered Davenport to pay \$4,000 in damages. She had to get in line to claim her money, as by then he was being sued by other creditors as well. Many court actions ensued but Lethia was able to acquire his two town lots in Decherd along with other valuable property.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> “Davenport. How a Defaulting Railroad Receiver Evaded the Law’s Clutches. A Radical Chief Justice Connives at His Escape,” *Republican Banner* (Nashville), 14 May 1872:4.

<sup>10</sup> Franklin County, Tenn., *Loose Records, 1870-1879*, file 323 *Coover v. Mowry* and *Coover v. Davenport*. Tenn. State Library & Archives, microfilm reel B-2410. See also files 403,909, 911, 991, 1100 and 1149.

Davenport appears in the 1875 state census of New York as a contractor living near the state capitol in Albany, and no doubt still up to his old tricks. His first wife, Rebecca, was still with him despite all that had occurred.<sup>11</sup> They do not appear to have had any children. He died sometime before 1890 and Rebecca received a widow's pension for his military services.<sup>12</sup> Lethia lived on with her parents and became a school teacher. She was still single at the age of 42 in 1880, after which no further record of her has been located.<sup>13</sup>

NAME OF SOLDIER:					Davenport, Charles E.				
NAME OF DEPENDENT:					Widow, Davenport Rebecca				
SERVICE:					E. 14 N.Y. Inf Genl Service U.S.A.				
DATE OF FILING.	CLASS.	APPLICATION NO.		CERTIFICATE NO.		STATE FROM WHICH FILED.			
159 July 3.	Invalid,								
	Widow,	429.849		311.309		D.C.			
	Minor,								
ATTORNEY:									
REMARKS:									

Davenport's entry from the Index to Pension Files 1861-1934 shows that he served in a regular New York unit as well as in "General Service" after the war.

There is no entry on the "Invalid" line to show that he applied for a pension, but his widow applied for hers on July 3, 1890.

The presence of a certificate number indicates the pension was granted.

(Ancestry.com database)

<sup>11</sup> 1875 New York Population Census, Lansingborough, Rensselaer County, p. 27, household 185, Daniel E. Davenport age 45 and wife, digital image, *Ancestry.com*.

<sup>12</sup>

<sup>13</sup> 1880 Franklin Co., Winchester, ED 85, p. 20, family 156, Solomon COver age 70 and family.

# Enslaved Men Recruited by the Union Army as Workers: Memoir of Joseph Swisher of Ohio

In the records of the U.S. Quartermaster General at the National Archives are many receipts and reports for military expenditures. Among them are monthly reports filed by Lt. Joseph Swisher of the 113<sup>th</sup> Ohio Volunteer Infantry, who was working for the Quartermaster's department in the months following the Jan. 1863 Union victory at Stones River. During this period Union troops were marching through the lower counties of Middle Tennessee, chasing Confederate soldiers, recruiting for the Union army and, most especially, raiding farms and homes to find enough food and supplies for their huge army.



Winslow Homer's *Bright Side* (1865)  
depicts black teamsters at rest in a Union Army camp.  
[afterslavery.wordpress.com](http://afterslavery.wordpress.com)

As with men in power throughout history, the army took men from the populace to do some of the harder work of hauling in supplies. Lt. Swisher's accounts mention the following slaves who were impressed into service for his unit.<sup>1</sup>

March 1863 at Franklin, Tenn.

Hired Lewis Ridley and Peter Boxley as teamsters, driving a six mule team, for the whole month at \$10 each. The slave owner listed for Lewis was Henry Ridley and for Peter was William Boxley.

There were many Ridleys, white and black, at that time in Williamson and Rutherford counties. Lewis Ridley is found in the 1870 census of Rutherford County at age 44, living with Liza age 45 and Clara age 14, presumably his wife and daughter.<sup>2</sup>

W.J. Boxley was probably the owner of Peter Boxley. He appears in the 1860 census of Williamson County as a wealthy Virginia-born farmer with a personal estate of \$40,000.<sup>3</sup> The slave population census shows that he had 20 slaves in 1860, of which 16 were aged 17-23. This indicates he bought young enslaved people and did not keep families together.

April 1863 at Franklin, Tenn.

Lewis Ridley continued to work, but Boxley was gone. In his place was Dennis Corcoran, owned by John Corcoran.

May 1863 at Franklin, Tenn.

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<sup>1</sup> Office of the Quartermaster General, 1818-1905, *Reports of Persons and Articles Hired*, U.S. National Archives Record Group 92, Entry 238, box 196, File 1863-2605.

<sup>2</sup> 1870 U.S. census, Rutherford Co., Tenn., Dist. 6, p. 295B (stamped), family 145, Louis Ridley household, digital image, [HeritageQuest.com](http://HeritageQuest.com).

<sup>3</sup> 1860 U.S. census, Williamson Co., Tenn., Dist. 1, p. 120B (stamped), family 231, W.J. Boxley household, digital image, [HeritageQuest.com](http://HeritageQuest.com). Also

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Lewis Ridley and Dennis Corcoran continued to work. Robert Spratt and Henry Spratt were added. All were paid at the rate of \$10 per month. No owner is listed for the Spratts.

June 1863 at Triune, Tenn.

The workers from May are all listed again. In addition was Moses Smith (no owner listed).

July 1863 at Shelbyville, Tenn.

The workers from May and June are all listed again. James Dismue and John Henry were added (no owners listed).

August 1863 at Wartrace, Tenn.

The workers from July are all listed again. Glenn Dwiggins and Robert Dwiggins were added (no owners listed). James Dismue only worked the first half of the month, for \$5.

Sept. 1863 at Triune, Tenn.

Lewis Ridley Robert and Henry Spratt were listed again. Richard Dwiggins and John Henry Lee were added (no owners listed).

Lt. Swisher was a native of Columbiana County, Ohio, and returned to that place after the war. He was active in the reunions of the Grand Army of the Republic for many years, holding the rank of Major. In 1884 he wrote his reminiscences and had this to say about his time in Tennessee:<sup>4</sup>

We soon arrived at Nashville with banners flying and bands playing. Before leaving the boat Colonel Wilcox presented me with a Second Lieutenant commission, which was to me a very agreeable surprise. We marched out about three miles and went into camp for the night. . . . We remained here but one day, when we took up our line of march for Franklin, Tenn., distant eighteen miles. We remained here near two months, in the meantime drilling and doing picket duty. I was here detailed as Quartermaster of the 1 13th Regiment. I learned here of the death of Harrison Walborn, who had been left at Nashville sick. I have no doubt but this was a case of death from home-sickness.

I have many pleasant recollections of this place, Franklin being a very beautiful village, situated in one of the most beautiful countries I ever beheld. The citizens were intensely rebel, and took no pains to conceal it. While here we had several brushes with the rebels, but nothing serious or verging on what would be called a battle. Eleven rebel cavalry here made a dash through our outposts and through town, and down to the Harpeth river, and attempted to cross, when three of them were shot. No more reckless charge was made during the war. . . .

We moved from here to Triune, Tennessee, about the middle of May, and remained but a short time. General Rosecrans having advanced on Tullahoma, we moved to Murfreesboro, Tennessee, where Rosecrans had defeated the rebel army, under General Bragg, six months before. This was a fine country and a beautiful village. Here General Mitchell was sent to hospital with small-pox. We moved from here to Shelbyville, Tennessee, passing on our way the church where Vallandigham had been passed through the lines, that he might join with his rebel friends in talking treason, of which a court martial had found him guilty a short time before.

We lay at Shelbyville for some time, but were compelled to leave town, where we first took up our quarters, on account of the fleas. They drove us out of town. We camped south of town on an old rebel camp, where we encountered nothing worse than graybacks. In driving the rebels out of town and across Duck river, many of them were killed and sunk in the river. . . .

While here I was sent out by General Whittaker with a large train, on Sunday, with the 98th **O.** V. I., as a guard, to cut a field of oats and bring it in. We found four McCormick reapers and five cradles, impressing the owners of the machines, with their teams, to run them.

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<sup>4</sup> F.M. McAdams, *Our Knapsack: Sketches for the Boys in Blue* (Columbus, Ohio: Charles M. Cott, 1884) pp.69-70.

At three o'clock we started back to camp with forty acres of oats on our wagons. Rosecrans having moved from Tullahoma, we moved to Wartrace, Tennessee, where

we remained but a short time. This being the season of roasting ears, peaches and blackberries, we fared well. The grand advance was now made on Chattanooga.

## Masonic Leaders in Nashville, 1863



The notice shown here appeared in the Nashville Daily Union on April 30, 1863. This newspaper was published in Printer's Alley "by an association of printers" undoubtedly under the supervision of the Federal military officials who were then occupying the city. Meetings for several different divisions of the Masons are listed here, but many of the same people were the leaders of each. Certainly many other Masons were away fighting on both sides in the Civil War.

Morton B. Howell and John McClelland held the principal office in each of the organizations listed below. Howell (1834-1909) was a young man of 28 at the time, but

has no record of service on either side during the war. Son of the pastor of Nashville's First Baptist Church, he was trained in the law, and in 1865 was appointed Clerk and Master of Davidson County. From 1875-1876 he served as mayor of Nashville.

John McClelland was a Pennsylvania native and staunch Unionist. He settled in Nashville not long before the start of the Civil War and worked as a railroad auditor. He held many Masonic honors and in his obituary was noted as "one of the most noted Masons in Tennessee." A friend of Presidents Lincoln and Johnson, he was named Revenue Collector of Nashville after the war. He died in 1885. (*Nashville Daily American*, 2 Aug. 1885:4).

The other leaders named in the notice are:

Anderson, Adna  
Anderson, Thompson  
Baker, L.D.  
Bowen, J.  
Bransford, R.C.  
Brown, W.S.  
Cox, T.J.  
Donigan, G.W.  
Fields, E.

Frenbach, John  
Fuller, C.A.  
Grewer, D.  
Harrison, H.H.  
Lumsden, James  
McCrary, Jos.  
Moore, W.F.  
Moss, F.C.  
Norvell, George W.

Peden, C.W.  
Reed, W.M. (Rev.)  
Sartain, L.R.  
Sheffield, H.  
Siefferle, George  
Wheeler, E.D.  
Wilkin, D.



**John McClelland**  
Tennessee Masonic Leader  
(Library of Congress: [www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov))



**Morton B. Howell in 1860**  
Colonial Dames Portrait Project  
([tnportraits.org](http://tnportraits.org))



# John Overton's Whiskey Tax Ledger, 1796-1801

## For Davidson, Tennessee and Sumner Counties

Students of history will recall the Whiskey Rebellion against President George Washington's administration. Students of theatre will be familiar with the music of *Hamilton* and the vision for a strong national government that drove Alexander Hamilton. Students of food and drink will likely know something about the popularity of whiskey. All three topics come together in this historic record book found at the Tennessee State Library and Archives.

Students of genealogy will find that this record book, among the earliest Federal records listing individual Tennessee citizens, documents many pioneer settlers and gives us a glimpse into a facet of agricultural life in those times that is often overlooked. As our country's first Secretary of the Treasury, Alexander Hamilton looked for ways to bring in revenue for the struggling new country and to pay its war debts. He recommended an excise tax on the production of distilled spirits as one such measure. Although the tax covered all distilled spirits, whiskey was by far the most commonly produced. Many farmers then, as now, grew corn crops. But transporting fresh corn to market quickly was almost impossible. It was far more lucrative to distill the corn into whiskey, which was both portable and popular as a drink for men, women and, when watered-down, children. In those days water and milk were both known to carry disease, whereas alcoholic drink was safer and lasted longer in the pantry.

Secretary Hamilton's so-called Whiskey Tax went into effect in 1790. This record covers the years from 1796



**Judge John Overton** (1766-1833)  
miniature, ca. 1803, from the *Traveler's Rest* Collection  
(Tenn. Portrait Project, Colonial Dames)

to 1801. There may have been an earlier ledger covering the Territory South of the River Ohio, but if so it has not been located. This volume begins with Tennessee statehood in 1796, when John Overton was appointed collector of the tax. Overton, a lawyer, planter and friend of Andrew Jackson, was not yet 30 years old. His record is meticulously written and very precise. In fact, the tax is calculated not only to the dollars and cents, but to the "mill." A mill was a small coin worth 1/1000<sup>th</sup> of a dollar, or 1/10<sup>th</sup> of a penny.

This was the first tax in the new United States to be levied on individuals, and it was a very unpopular move. Many residents believed that the Revolutionary War had been fought, in part, to do away with taxes imposed by a remote government. In Pennsylvania and Kentucky, many farmers refused to pay the tax. Armed rebellion over the issue broke out in Pennsylvania, culminating in a 1794 battle between the Army and rebellious farmers. The Army prevailed and the tax continued in force, but it was a factor in President John Adams' failure to retain the Presidency in 1800. By 1802 the Jefferson administration had repealed the tax.

This ledger includes records from all of Tennessee's counties at the time, but only the Middle Tennessee



**A Whiskey Tax collector is tarred, feathered and ridden on a rail in this depiction from 1880.** (Wikipedia.com)



Washington: Hamilton!  
 Hamilton: Sir!  
 Washington: I hope you're happy.  
 Hamilton: Sir, is this about the  
           Whiskey Rebellion . . . ?  
 Washington: You could have given me  
           a word of warning.  
 Hamilton: It is . . . Jefferson who has  
           been agitating these men to  
           rebellion.

Lyrics for "One Last Ride" on the *Hamilton* album  
 by Lin-Manuel Miranda.

county lists are abstracted here. In 1795 the only established counties in Middle Tennessee were Davidson, Sumner and Tennessee counties. Tennessee County was renamed after Tennessee became the name of the state, and was renamed Montgomery County; soon afterward, Robertson County was carved out of Montgomery.

The heading on the first page and the titles of each column in the original ledger are as follows. Only selected data has been abstracted for this article.

"General account of Country Distilleries employed in distilling Spirits from domestic materials in the District of Tennessee. Subject to duties according to their capacities for the year commencing the first day of July 1795 and ending the thirtieth of June 1795."

Column 1: When charged with duties

Column 2: Names of Collectors

Column 3: By Whom Payable

- a. Names
- b. Places of Residence

Column 4: Capacity of each Still

- a. No. Stills
- b. Gallons

Column 5: Yearly duty at 54 cents pr Gallon  
 (in dollars and cents)

Column 6: Monthly duty at 10 cents pr Gallon  
 (in dollars and cents)

Column 7: What time employed (no. months)

Column 8: First half year ending Dec. 31<sup>st</sup> 1795

- a. No. Gallons distilled as pr acct. at 7 cents
- b. Deduction for leakage at 2 pr cent
- c. Amount of duties due (in dollars, cents and mills)
- d. When paid

Column 9: Second half of year ending June 30, 1796

- a. No. Gallons distilled as pr acct. at 7 cents
- b. Deduction for leakage at 2 pr cent
- c. Amount of duties due (in dollars, cents and mills)
- d. When paid

Column 10: Total amt. of duties for one year  
 (in dollars, cents and mills)

*General Account of Country Distilleries employed in distilling Spirits from domestic Materials in the District of Tennessee Subject to duties according to their Capacities for the Year commencing the first day of July 1795. and ending the thirtieth of June 1795.*



Digital scans of the pages of John Overton's record book are available on the website of the State Library and Archives, as part of TeVA, the Tennessee Virtual Archives. Search the library catalog for "Federal distillery tax book" to find the link.

Account of County Distilleries for the Year commencing 1<sup>st</sup> July 1795 and ending 30<sup>th</sup> June 1795

Davidson County

Tax Collected by Henry Bradford

Name	Capacity of Still in Gallons	Production of Gallons 1 <sup>st</sup> Half/2 <sup>nd</sup> Half of year	Tax Owed in Dollars.Cents.Mills	Notes
Walton, Wm.	122; 99; 72; 87	285/396	46.71.7	Four stills
Moloy, Thos.	57		10.5.0	Paid duties but reported no production
Lancaster, John	28		5.60.0	Paid duties but reported no production
McLean, Ephm. Jr.	70; 84	170/154	22.22.7	Two stills
Espey, Jas.	54			
Espey, Jas.	70	94/33	8.71.3	
Overall, Nathl.	59	50/0	3.43.0	
Johnson, Isaac	77	184/139	22.15.9	
Overall, Susan	40	62/0	4.25.4	
McLean, Ephm. Sr.	87	175/0	12.0.5	
Hoggett, Jas.	130; 143		14.30.0	Paid duties on two stills but reported no production
Stump, Fred.	153; 41; 125; 70	204/395	41.9.2	Four stills
Smith, Ezekiel	47	20/0	1.37.2	

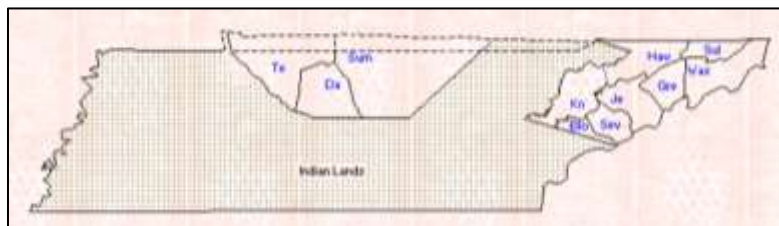
Name	Capacity of Still in Gallons	Production of Gallons 1 <sup>st</sup> Half/2 <sup>nd</sup> Half of year	Tax Owed in Dollars.Cents.Mills	Notes
Talbot, Thos.	125; 48	100/127	15.57.3	Two stills
Walker, John	100; 80	135/65	13.72.1	Two stills
Talbot, Mattw.	142; 130	227/126	24.21.7	Two stills
Williams, Danl.	45	50/0	3.43.0	
Mothrell, John	95	161/0	11.4.5	
Porter, Reece	90	128/235	24.90.2	
Murray, Wm.	64		1.65.7	Paid duties but reported no production
Craighead, Thos. B.	46; 72	36/121	10.77.1	Two stills
Todd, James	75	14/0	0.96.1	
Rains, John	117; 63	208/184	26.89.2	Two stills
Everitt, John	130	33/0	2.26.4	
Mulherin, Jas.	93	82/62	5.56.6	
Buchanan, Jno.	138; 83	197/378	39.44.6	Two stills
Campbell, Jas.	85	185/90	18.86.5	
Davis, Fred	46		24.84.0	Paid duties but reported no production
Walker, Philip	58		31.32.0	Paid duties but reported no production
Bosley, John	90; 42		22.68.0	Paid duties on two stills but reported no production
Hardeman, Thos.	128	228/203	29.56.7	
Able, Ezekiel	138; 66	90/285	25.72.5	Two stills
Cross, Richd.	50	138/0	9.45.7	
Darden, Jonthn.	85	94/0	6.44.9	
Hall, James	84	69/0	4.73.4	
Shaw, Joseph	38		20.52.0	Paid duties but reported no production
Boyd, John	39		3.90.0	Paid duties but reported no production
Caffray, John	138; 90; 82	0/314	21.54.1	Three stills
Young, Danl.	143; 104		29.84.1	Paid duties on two stills but reported no production
Hutson, Jesse	90		14.26.9	Paid duties but reported no production
Philips, Philip	57; 63	0/370	25.38.2	Two stills

Account of County Distilleries for the Year commencing 1<sup>st</sup> July 1795 and ending 30<sup>th</sup> June 1795  
 Sumner County  
 Tax Collected by Henry Bradford

Name	Capacity of Still in Gallons	Production of Gallons 1 <sup>st</sup> Half/2 <sup>nd</sup> Half of year	Tax Owed in Dollars.Cents.Mills	Notes
Parker, Nathl.	129; 105	105/197	20.71.8	Two stills
Kuykendall, Simn.	70	80/80	10.97.0	
Brown, Geo.	48	49/0	3.36.2	
McElrath, [Jos.?)	67	12/105	8.2.7	
Dobbins, John	38	26/0	1.78.4	
Ellis, Rob	59	13/89	9.26.2	
Douglas, Ezekiel	50	7/0	0.40.0	
Moore, John	95/45	23/241	18.11.1	Two stills
Catron, Francis	48	119/60	12.28.0	
Yates, Thos.	54	90/0	6.17.4	
Holeman, Danl.	60	40/0	2.74.4	
Perry, Thos.	111	50/0	3.43.0	
Douglas, Edwd.	120; 89	142/90	15.91.6	Two stills
Montgomery, Wm.	117; 54	96/162	17.70.0	Two stills
Zeaniker, Jno.	79	70/61	8.98.7	
Elliott, Hugh	16	102/0	6.99.8	
Wall, Pierce	85	8/0	0.54.9	
Gibson, Roger	66	0/245	16.80.7	
Crabtree, Wm.	136	0/86	5.90.0	

Account of County Distilleries for the Year commencing 1<sup>st</sup> July 1795 and ending 30<sup>th</sup> June 1795  
 Tennessee County  
 Tax Collected by Henry Bradford

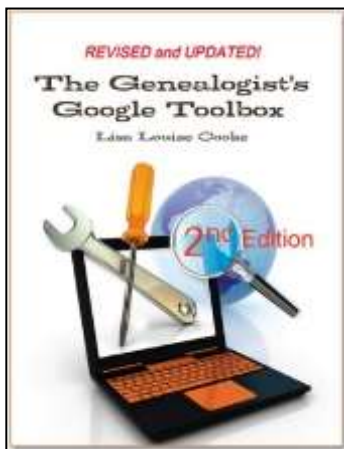
Irwin, Andw.	90	76/28	7.13.5	
Johnson, Thos.	131	52	15	4.59.8
Prince, Francis	90; 44	61	38	6.79.2
Fort, Wm.	263	128; 0	8.78.1	
Hornbarger, Phil.	55	48/0	3.29.3	
Patton, Joseph	80	0/0	0	
Brown, Wm.	97	0/0	0	



**Tennessee Counties in 1795**  
 Tennessee County Formation Maps, TN-GenWeb Project  
<https://www.tngenweb.org/maps/county-ani/tn-maps/tn-cf.html>



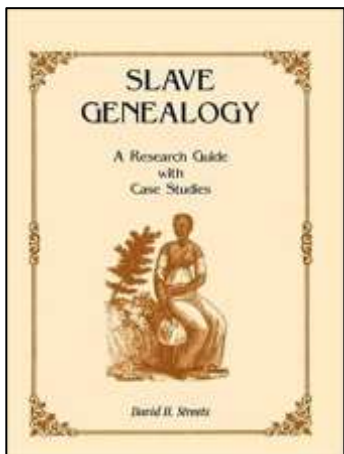
## Book Reviews *by Shirley Wilson*



***The Genealogist's Google Toolbox*** by Louisa Cooke, paperback, 2015, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 203 pp., illustrations. This revised and updated version is billed as a genealogist's guide to Google and indeed it is. If you think you know everything there is to know about Google, this book will almost surely prove you wrong.

We all know about Google Earth and Google Maps, but how about Google Patents or Google Scholar? The book includes specific directions on how to use this research tool along with illustrations to demonstrate it.

With a 2015 publishing date, it is already slightly outdated and it will be 2019 by the time you read this. While it is a book that will continually need to be revised and updated, it has a lot to offer current readers.



***Slave Genealogy A Research Guide With Case Studies*** by David H. Streets, paperback, 2008, 87 pp., appendices, bibliography, illustrations.

This is a good basic source for beginning slave genealogy and the case studies are very helpful for those who are attempting to get started on their family tree. Many sources are discussed and explained with an emphasis on census records.

While this edition was copyrighted in 2008, it was originally copyrighted in 1986. Be aware that the book does not appear to be updated since 1986. References to the census are to the years 1900 and 1910, whereas today the 1920, 1930 and 1940 census records are available.

The bibliography is an excellent tool, but again somewhat outdated.



***Mecklenburg County, N. C. Miscellaneous Land Records Volume 1 and Volume 2 (1767 – 1953)*** by Stewart Dunaway, paper-back, 2017, illustrations, index.

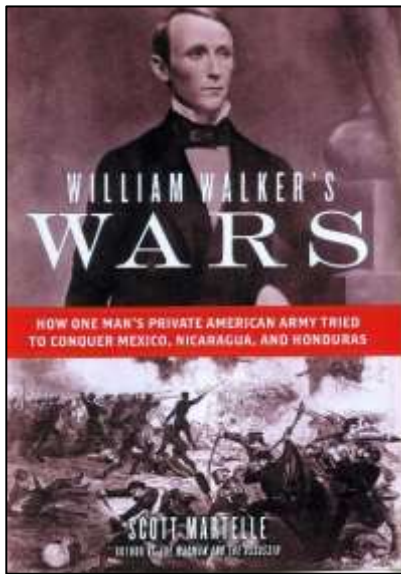
Volume 1 and 2 are two separate books covering the same time period and information. Both came from the North Carolina State Archives. The author describes them as a “catchall” of land disputes, agreements, surveys, proceSSION, etc. which he located in two boxes. Box 1 was A-P and Box 2 was P-T. The records were in alphabetical rather than chronological order. Both books have an index, but it is not certain from the index which book is A-P and which was P-T; it appears that Book 1 is A-P

Copies of these unique and interesting documents can be found in the books, usually along with the author's abstracts.

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# William Walker's Wars by Scott Martelle

by Guest Reviewer John E. Norvell<sup>1</sup>



*William Walker's Wars: How One Man's Private Army Tried to Conquer Mexico, Nicaragua, and Honduras* Scott Martelle. Chicago Review, \$26.99 (288p).

He seemed to be a somewhat precocious, but in many ways just an ordinary Nashville boy. His mother was Mary Norvell, who married James Walker, a business and insurance company owner in Nashville. Yet, William Walker

(born 1824-died 1860) occupied a unique place in the history of the state of Tennessee: leading an invasion of Mexico, conquering Nicaragua, and proclaiming himself president in 1856.<sup>2</sup> In an engaging new book by Scott Martelle, *William Walker's Wars*, it is clear that there was more to Walker, his Nashville ties, and emergence from Tennessee onto the larger world stage.<sup>3</sup>

Walker's life in many ways could have been fiction. Martelle, an editorial writer for the *L.A. Times*, treats it as an adventure story worthy of Rudyard Kipling. Like Kipling's rip-roaring tale, "The Man Who Would Be King," William Walker's life was one of achieving power, fame, and in the end failure. To tell this story Martelle draws upon a wealth of primary and secondary

sources (scholarly works, biographies, Walker family and friends' letters; historical articles, journals, contemporary accounts and newspapers) and in the process presents a very detailed look at the life of this man.

Martelle begins by looking at Walker's early Nashville home life. As a child, young Billy Walker, as he was called, led an uneventful childhood. Surrounded by an extended Norvell family, he found himself in a familial group which had actively established itself in Nashville life and society. His uncles Joseph and Moses owned the *Nashville Whig* newspaper, ran steamboats, and owned warehouses serving the city. His grandfather Lipscomb Norvell lived with James and Mary Norvell Walker in Nashville, where Lipscomb undoubtedly told his grandson stories of his service in the Revolutionary War and the excitement of being in battle. From his family he also learned of the experiences of his uncles and cousins and their exploits in the military.<sup>4</sup>

It was a very unique circle Billy Walker's family occupied, not the top tier of Nashville society, but very close. Uncle Caleb Cushing Norvell married Mary Catherine Carroll, the niece of Tennessee Governor William Carroll and grand-daughter of Duncan Robertson, a well known philanthropist of Nashville.<sup>5</sup> Uncle Joseph Norvell was Master of the Freemason

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<sup>1</sup> John E. Norvell is a retired Air Force Lt Colonel and former Assistant Professor of History at the US Air Force Academy. He is also the first cousin 3 times removed of William Walker and the great-great-great grandson Lt. Lipscomb Norvell, who is buried in the City Cemetery in Nashville, Tennessee. He is a member of the Company of Military Historians and The Society of the Cincinnati in the State of Virginia. He can be reached by email at [Jenorv66@aol.com](mailto:Jenorv66@aol.com)

<sup>2</sup> William Oscar Scroggs, *Filibusters and Financiers*, (The MacMillan Company, New York, 1916) 9-10

<sup>3</sup> William Walker's Wars: How One Man's Private Army Tried to Conquer Mexico, Nicaragua, and Honduras Scott Martelle. Chicago Review, \$26.99 (288p) ISBN 978-1-61373-729-3

<sup>4</sup> Grandfather Lipscomb Norvell ( 1756-1843) had been a lieutenant in the Virginia Line during the Revolutionary War and is buried in the City Cemetery. For a detailed look at the Norvell family in Nashville, see How Tennessee Adventurer William Walker Became Dictator of Nicaragua in 1857: The Norvell Family Origins of the Grey Eyed Man of Destiny, Middle Tennessee Journal of Genealogy and History, Vol XXV, No4., Spring 2012, pp 149-156.

<sup>5</sup> Octavia Zollicoffer Bond, "Yester Nashville Names: The Norvell Family." *The Nashville American*, November 7, 1909.

Grand Lodge of Tennessee, which included many influential citizens of Nashville and Andrew Jackson as members.<sup>6</sup> Martelle notes that his mother, Mary Norvell Walker, was in the inner circle of Sarah Polk, wife of James K. Polk, then a member of Congress and future president. Sarah noted in a letter to her husband that she had picked up some tidbits from Mrs. Walker from “whom you know I get a great deal of news.”<sup>7</sup> Given these influences it is not surprising that Billy would see many opportunities for future careers. Martelle sees these family and Nashville influences as very important in the life of young Billy. Yet, he notes that Walker was not close to his father, a strict Calvinist, whose business interests seemed to hold little interest for the young boy.<sup>8</sup> And so Billy turned to the occupations favored by his Norvell relatives: law, politics, journalism, medicine, and the military.<sup>9</sup>

A medical career, like that of his uncle Thomas Norvell, at first seemed to appeal to Walker.<sup>10</sup> This might be due to the fact that his mother Mary Norvell Walker was an



William Walker of Nashville

invalid. As a youth he had spent a great deal of time in her company, which he seemed to prefer to his strict father.<sup>11</sup> At the age of 14 in 1838, Walker completed his preparatory education at the University of Nashville graduating summa cum laude. In 1843, he earned a medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania. He then spent the next two years in Europe, studying medicine. When he returned to Nashville in 1845, he briefly practiced medicine, but decided that this was not his calling.<sup>12</sup> He then moved to New Orleans to study law. He practiced law for a short time but quit law practice to become co-owner and editor of the *New Orleans Crescent*. In 1849, he moved to San Francisco, California, where he became a journalist, but this too did not last.<sup>13</sup>

Walker now began to see himself as a “Filibuster” - a military adventurer or soldier of fortune.<sup>14</sup> As many did in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, he seemed to believe that it was the “Manifest Destiny” of the United States to annex the remainder of the continent.<sup>15</sup> As a filibuster, Walker envisioned himself as a conqueror of vast regions of Central America, where he could create new slave states to join the federal union or even set himself up as president of a new republic.<sup>16</sup>

Undoubtedly Walker was a smart and gifted man, but the

6. Uncle Joseph Norvell, would serve as one of President Andrew Jackson’s pall bearers in June 1845. See John E. Norvell, “Andrew Jackson’s Pall Bearers,” Middle Tennessee Journal of Genealogy and History, Vol XXIX, No1., Summer 2015, p 1.

7. Martelle, William Walker’s Wars, 11.

8. Martelle, William Walker’s War, 12.

9. Norvell, How Tennessee Adventurer William Walker, 150-151

10. Ibid., 151.

11. Brady Harrison, Agent of Empire, (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2002), 6.

12. Ibid., 6.

13. Ibid., 6.

14. Scroggs, *Filibusters and Financiers*, 9-11. For an in-depth look at Filibusters in 19<sup>th</sup> Century America, see also Robert E. May, *Manifest Destiny’s Underworld: Filibustering in*

*Antebellum America*,” University of North Carolina Press, 2002. May details the activities of many others besides Walker who undertook illegal expeditions into Latin American countries, explaining why thousands of men joined filibustering expeditions, how they were financed, and why the U.S. government had little success in curtailing them. Walker may have been the most famous, but he was hardly alone.

15. Kenneth M. Stamp, *America in 1857* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990) 189.

16. William V. Wells, *Walker’s Expedition to Nicaragua: A History of the Central American War*, (New York, New York: Stringer and Townsend, 1856) 23., Daniel Bedinger Lucas, W. A. McCorkle, J.F. McLaughlin, *Nicaragua: War of the Filibusters* (Richmond, Virginia: B.F. Johnson, 1896), 28-29.

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question remains: Why did he think that he could lead men and win battles with no military experience? Martelle offers a clue: “the reason... was his inordinate confidence in his handful of Americans to conquer, unassisted, any number of enemy.” It was this sense of *hubris*, or overwhelming pride, that drove Walker and later would prove his downfall.<sup>17</sup>

In October 1853, Walker began his military adventures in Mexico where he hoped to conquer Lower California and Sonora.<sup>18</sup> After capturing two small towns, he named himself president of the new “Republic of Sonora.”<sup>19</sup> Some poor planning, a lack of supplies and unexpectedly strong resistance by the Mexican government forced Walker to retreat.<sup>20</sup> Martelle notes that Walker may have already been deluded at this point and never really understood the realities of his campaigns, adding “it was a romanticized and distorted mirror reflecting future glory into which Walker gazed.”<sup>21</sup>

Although his first filibustering adventure had ended in failure, it was not be his last.<sup>22</sup> From his adventures in Mexico, Walker now looked to Nicaragua, where in 1854 a civil war erupted.<sup>23</sup> That Walker would consider a military adventure in Nicaragua was due in part to Manifest Destiny and in part due to the discovery of gold in California. Since 1849, California and the west had taken on new importance to the United States and a major trade route opened between New York City and San Francisco which ran through Nicaragua. Ships left New York for Nicaragua, where people and goods would then be transported by water and land to the Pacific to be shipped to San Francisco.<sup>24</sup>

To begin military actions, Walker sailed from the United States with a group of 57 men called the “American Phalanx.” Upon landing in Nicaragua, this force was reinforced by locals and more Americans.<sup>25</sup> “Colonel” Walker attacked the city of Rivas, near the trans-isthmian route and on October 13, 1855 and then took control of the country.<sup>26</sup> Over the next year, he consolidated his power through a series of deals, negotiations, and executions.<sup>27</sup> In July 1856 Walker was inaugurated as president -- in effect the dictator of Nicaragua.<sup>28</sup> In November 1856 the American

government recognized the Walker government<sup>29</sup> and Walker began a program to Americanize Nicaragua by reinstating slavery and encouraging immigration from the United States.<sup>30</sup> Not content with just this, he began to think of broader conquests in the region to bring other countries under his control.<sup>31</sup> In doing this, Walker alarmed his neighbors in Central America, who now began to plan military action against him.<sup>32</sup> In May, 1857 forces composed of exiled Nicaraguans, other Central American countries, and mercenaries funded by American economic interests who opposed Walker, drove him from Nicaragua. He returned to the United States, where he plotted his return.

And what of his followers through all this? Martelle notes that they starved and deserted in great numbers. This didn’t faze Walker who was determined to make one more try. In 1860, he landed in Honduras, where he was captured. Authorities there executed him on September 12th.<sup>33</sup> And so his brief meteoric life ended. Sadly, the distortion of the mirror into which he gazed never showed him the realities of all that confronted him. And in the end, that mirror failed him too.

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17. Martelle, *William Walker’s Wars*, 128.

18. Scroggs, *Filibusters and Financiers*, 31.

19. Harrison, *Agent of Empire*, 7.

20. Scroggs, *Filibusters and Financiers*, 48-50.

21. Martelle, *William Walker’s Wars*, 138.

22. Harrison, *Agent of Empire*, 8.

23. Harrison, *Agent of Empire*, 8.

24. Scroggs, *Filibusters and Financiers*, 71-72.

25. Harrison, *Agent of Empire*, 8. Scroggs, *Filibusters and Financiers*, 107-110.

26. Scroggs, *Filibusters and Financiers*, 110-117.

27. Kenneth M. Stamp, *America in 1857*, 190-191

28. Harrison, *Agent of Empire*, 8.

29. William Walker, *The War in Nicaragua*, (Mobile, Alabama: S.H. Goetzl) 141.

30. Daniel B. Lucas, *War of the Filibusters*, (Richmond, Virginia: B.F. Johnson, 1896) 68-70; Harrison, *Agent of Empire*, 8. Stamp, *America in 1857*, 190.

31. Stamp, *America in 1857*, 190.

32. Harrison, *Agent of Empire*, 8.

33. Harrison, *Agent of Empire*, 8.

# Jewish Merchant arrested by Federal Troops

## Meier Salzkotter of Nashville's Falsely Imprisoned for Smuggling

The following petition is found among the correspondence of the Adjutant General of the United States. It shows how a Jewish merchant in Nashville was arrested and imprisoned on trumped-up charges of smuggling. Meier Salzkotter's account also shows how dishonest military officials used the opportunity to steal his merchandise and money.<sup>1</sup>

"To the Hon. Secretary of War of the United States.

"The undersigned, Meier Salzkotter, a resident of Nashville, Tennessee, makes the following statement, to which he begs your attention, and such decision and action in the case as humanity and justice may require.

"He is a native of Westphalia, Prussia, whence he immigrated to this country in the year 1853. He settled in the town of Knoxville, East Tennessee, where he was engaged in trade until 1859, when he removed to Nashville. During his residence in Knoxville, Mr. A. Schwab, who had mercantile houses both in that place and in Nashville, became indebted to him in the sum of about \$5000, for which he held a note. Upon his arrival in Nashville he conducted business in Market Street for Mr. Schwab, whose son-in-law he had become in 1858. This was the condition of affairs when the City of Nashville was surrendered to the Federal forces in February, 1862. Mr. Schwab desiring to attend to his business house in Knoxville, your petitioner took the stock on hand in payment of the balance due him on the note, and carried on the business on his own account, and solely for himself, without business relations or communication of any kind with Mr. Schwab.

"With the proceeds of the stock of goods thus obtained, and which was all he had, he bought on speculation 6,421 yards of Bleached Domestics, and placed them, together with the other goods named in the account appended to this petition, in the Auction House of Shields & Co., with directions to sell as soon as they would bring a certain price. This transaction occurred in the latter part of the year 1862, and the goods were still at the House of Shields & Co., unsold, when, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> of January, 1863, your petitioner was arrested by Col. Truesdale of the Army Police, upon what he understood was a charge of smuggling, and after an examination which amounted to nothing more than his being asked whether he was a smuggler, and his denial of the charge, he was consigned to the military prison.

**His brandies, wines, cigars, meerschaum pipes & other articles were used by Col. Truesdale's detectives freely and lavishly, no doubt without intending any compensation to the owner.**

"In the meantime his store was taken into possession by Col. Truesdale's detectives, and, as he is able to prove, his brandies, wines, cigars, meerschaum pipes & other articles were used by them for their own purposes, freely & lavishly, without proposing, and no doubt without intending, any compensation to the owner. What was left of them was, as your petitioner is informed, given to some one for the use of hospitals. The Domestics at Shields & Co's Auction House were also seized by order of Col. Truesdale and were also delivered to the hospitals for the benefit of the wounded at the battle of Stone's River.

"In addition to these seizures Col. Truesdale took from Shields & Co., by an order directed to and executed by Col Ashburn, \$100 in money, belonging to your petitioner, the proceeds of the sale of goods deposited with them, but whether this was given to hospitals, or what was done with it, your petitioner is not informed.

<sup>1</sup> Letters Received by the Adjutant General, 1861-1870, Meier Salzhotter [sic] file. Digital images on *Fold3.com*.



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“The books and papers of his store and the contents of his safe were examined by experts sent for the purpose by the Chief of Police, in order to obtain proof of smuggling or other illegal traffic. These efforts, however, utterly failed, since, as your petitioner solemnly avers, there was no smuggling or any other than regular, legitimate and lawful trade – in the strictest military sense – carried on by him, by his agents, or by any one connected with him or under his control. This averment your petitioner confidently declares cannot be truthfully controverted.

“Your petitioner is informed that while he was in confinement at Nashville, the following circumstances occurred which determined his transportation to a Northern prison. Two men named William Muller and David Kuhn, both Germans, the former a private and the latter a lieutenant in the rebel army, deserted and were endeavoring to make their way to Europe. Arriving in Nashville and finding themselves objects of suspicion, they determined to ingratiate themselves into the favor of the authorities by furnishing information true if possible but false if necessary. Muller had formerly been employed by Mr. Schwab and knew your petitioner and no doubt thought that the desire of the police to obtain evidence against him was an excellent opportunity for them. What their story was your petitioner has

**During his imprisonment his young wife and infant were left without support or protection . . . His wife became insane and he was afterward compelled to place her in the State Lunatic Asylum.**

never heard, and does not know, never having been confronted with them and not seeing them during their stay in the city. Their plan must have succeeded, since they procured the necessary papers and went to Europe. Your petitioner was, a few days afterwards, that is, on the 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> of January, 1863, sent from this City under sentence of Col. Truesdale to remain in the Alton prison during the war.

“During his imprisonment at Nashville, not only was his property taken and destroyed and carried away as mentioned, but his young wife with an infant at her breast, was left without support or protection. He was not even permitted to see or correspond with her, even for the purpose of procuring a change of clothing, until at 12 o’clock of the night before he was sent away, he was informed that he could go home then with a guard to bid his wife farewell. At that unseasonable hour your petitioner declined to disturb her. It may not be improper to mention in this connection that during his absence his wife became insane, and that after his return to Nashville he was compelled to place her in the State Lunatic Asylum, whence he removed her only a few days ago to be conveyed to her aunt in Louisville for more careful attention.

“Your petitioner was removed from the penitentiary early in the morning of the 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> of January, and notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather, and the exceeding cold, he was placed in an ordinary box freight car, still covered with the ordure of the cattle that had been conveyed in it, without fire or any convenience whatever, like an animal, and not having been permitted to get his overcoat or shawl from his house, he was of course subjected during his ride to Louisville, to very great and unnecessary suffering. His companion on this terrible journey, a Mr. Allison, contracted disease in consequence of it, from which he died in Alton penitentiary.<sup>2</sup>

“After he had been conveyed to Alton various efforts were made for his release. A Mr. F.M. Justice, one of Col. Truesdale’s detective police, received from your petitioner’s mother-in-law \$200 in money, as his receipt will show, for endeavoring to procure his release, and this Mr. Justice proposed \$500 to ensure his release. Judge John S. Brien of Nashville, and Gov. Andrew Johnson interested themselves and wrote in his behalf to the Secretary of War, and he was at length, after six weeks confinement, informed by Col Hildebrand, commander of the prison, that it was the order of the Secretary of War that he be released upon taking the oath of allegiance. Your petitioner being a subject

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<sup>2</sup> A list of prisoners received from Murfreesboro, Tenn., at the prison in Alton, Illinois, Jan. 23, 1863 includes: Meier Salzkotter; Matthew Allison (Private, 25<sup>th</sup> Tenn., for spying and aiding the rebellion); Samuel Y. Brown (Citizen of Cheatham Co. Tenn.); John F. Fletcher (Citizen of Davidson Co.); Mrs. Clara Judd (Citizen of Winchester, Tenn. Arrested at Mitchellville); Silas Norris (Citizen of Davidson County) and Edward Smith of Monroe, N.Y.) Selected Records of the War Department Relating to Confederate Prisoners of War, 1861-1865. Digital image on *Ancestry.com*.

of the King of Prussia and not a citizen of the United States, he at first refused, but his health being very much impaired by imprisonment, and being satisfied, and his position so advising, that longer confinement would certainly kill him, he consented and took the oath of allegiance to the United States. He therefore now occupies the doubtful and uncertain position of a foreigner who has taken no legal steps to become naturalized, and yet has taken the oath of allegiance before a military officer.

“Your petitioner has thus endeavored to give a simple and true account of the circumstances connected with the seizure of his property. Conscious of his innocence, he desires to procure the return of his property or its equivalent, being very averse to losing in that summary manner the hard earned fruits of the labors of years. There is no tribunal to which he can apply for redress, and he therefore appeals to you and prays that inquiry may be made under your direction and authority, and if the facts stated in this petition are found to be true, that he be reimbursed for the losses sustained, as expressed in the accompanying statement, by the wrongful and unjust acts of the officers & detectives of the police department.”

[signed] Meier Salzkotter, Nashville Sept. 12, 1863

Nashville, Sept. 14, 1863

“I have perused the foregoing statement by Mr. Salzkotter, and I had previously learned the substance of what he says to be correct. He has been badly treated, and his property has been unjustly taken from him. The scoundrel Kuhn, whose false swearing damaged him most, was a Rebel Lieutenant, and is now in the Nashville Penitentiary where I had [him] put, but two weeks ago, as a rebel.”

[signed] W.G. Brownlow

Executive Office, Nashville, Tenn.

Sept. 15, 1863

“Minor Salzkotter, the petitioner, I have no doubt, has been greatly wronged and is entitled to redress.”

[signed] Andrew Johnson  
Mil. Gov'r.

#### Statement of Goods seized by the Army Police belonging to M. Salzkotter.

6,421 yds Bleached Domestics @ 45 cts.	\$2,889.05
Cash taken from Shields & Co's Auction House	100.
1 Trunk of Meerscham Pipes & sundries	1000.
1 Box Pocket Knives	60.
24 Gal. Madeira Wine @ \$4.50	108.
18 Gal. Madeira Wine @ \$3.50	63.
44 Gal. Port Wine @ \$4.50	193.
58 Gal. Ginger Wine @ \$2.00	116.
60 Gal. Roshell Brandy @ \$5.00	300.
9 Gal. Hennessy Brandy @ \$8.00	72.
11 Gal. fine Holland Gin @ \$5.00	55.
4 Gal. Jamaica Rum @ \$5.00	20.
55 Gal. fine Bourbon Whiskey @ \$3.50	192.50
22 Gal. Robertson Co. Whiskey @ \$2.50	55.

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1 doz. Bot. Anisett Cordial @ \$2.50	12.
18 doz. Glass Tumblers @ \$3.00	54.
	\$5294.55

Notes and witness testimony from the file:

E. Schwab, brother-in-law, worked in the store with Salzkotter and was present when he was arrested. He kept the store open for several days until Mr. Justice came and cleaned it out.

James Beal Nichol, clerk for B.F. Shield & Co., said the domestic fabrics owned by Salzkotter were taken by Dr. Henry Erni, Dr. Wheeler and Dr. Russell for use in military hospitals. Dr. Erni was acting for his boss, Medical Director Dr. E Swift.

H.V. Bassett, a dealer of liquors in Nashville, confirmed the value of the items taken from Salzkotter's store.

Patrick Mulloy, a drayman employed by Mr. Blair of the L&N Railroad, described seeing seven or eight men in Salzkotter's store laughing and drinking the liquors. He was hired to haul a load of casks, taking them to the Colonnade Building on Cherry Street where the Customs House was located.

John K. Hume, was bookkeeper for B.F. Shields & Co. in 1863. He was left in charge due to Mr. Shields' illness when Dr. Russell, with orders from Col. Truesdale, shut down the store and put the employees under arrest. Mr. Shields was brought from his home and marched off along with Hume, George Shields, T.W. Barnes and M.J. Dolan to the Odd Fellows Hall and imprisoned them. After being questioned about Mr. Salzkotter's character and business reputation, which he attested were excellent, Hume was released after midnight.

Hunter Brooke, Provost Marshal at Nashville in May 1865, reported that he could find no record of the investigations into the Salzkotter claim made by his predecessor. He wrote, "I was a member of Gen. Rosecrans' staff at the time Truesdale was removed and can assert officially that said removal was caused by charge of immense frauds and unwarranted outrages upon the part of himself and his agents, and I have no doubt whatever that the case in hand constituted one of these."

Morton B. Howell, who may have been the attorney who prepared the claim for Salzkotter, delivered the claim to the Army headquarters in Nashville on May 17, 1865, noting on the jacket that it was endorsed by W.G. Brownlow and Gov. Andrew Johnson, and requesting that it be referred to the Secretary of War.



The file does not indicate whether Meier Salzkotter was ever reimbursed for his losses. In 1864 he secured a divorce from his wife, giving him custody of their two-year-old son. He claimed that while he was imprisoned during the war his wife had turned to prostitution.<sup>3</sup> Remaining in Nashville for the rest of his life, he seems to have recovered and become prosperous. He went into business with George Dickel, a family connection through the Schwabs, and eventually became a partner in that famous distillery. At some point Salzkotter remarried; his second wife was Rachel Essinger. He died in 1891 and is buried at the Temple Cemetery in Nashville.

**Monument at Temple Cemetery in North Nashville**  
**Meier Salzkotter died Aug. 3, 1891**  
**Rachelle Salzkotter, died Feb. 17, 1934**  
 (FindaGrave.com)




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<sup>3</sup> Fedora Small Frank, "Nashville Jewry During the Civil War," *Tenn. Historical Quarterly* 39:3 (Fall 1980, p.318).

# Every-Name Index

## MTGS Journal

### Volume XXXII, 2018-2019

*Indexed by Jim Long*

### Introduction to the Index

We believe that every genealogical work requires a complete index, and to that end provide an every-name index in the fourth and final issue of each volume of the Journal. This index includes names, places and miscellaneous. Pagination of Volume XXXII began with page 1 in the Summer 2018 issue and continued through this issue. The following notes prepared during the indexing process will be helpful to the reader.

- Individuals identified in the text as *slaves/former slaves* are indexed with (slaves) entered before their name.
- If the maiden name of a female is known, she is listed under both her married and maiden names.

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