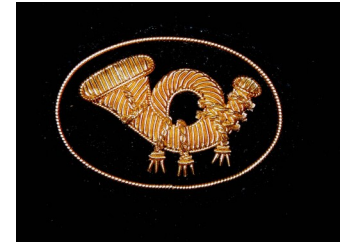


The Bugle



The Bugle, a publication of the Brentwood Historic Society

The Harmon House, also known as, "24 Trees"

BY: T. VANCE LITTLE

In 2005, the Harmon House, called "24 trees" located at 1304 Wilson Pike was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. This house was built in 1793 and is associated with some of the earliest Tennessee settlers. It was built by Sarah Jane Leiper Smith and her husband Alexander Smith on a North Carolina land grant to Mrs. Smith's father, who was James Leiper.



The Harmon House, called "24 Trees", is associated with the earliest Tennessee settlers

It was a bitter-sweet love story. James Leiper came to Nashville in 1780 as a part of the James

Robertson party. Nashville was settled in that year by two groups of settlers, one came by land, which was led by James Robertson, and the other came by water led by John Donelson. The Robertson party came from Upper East Tennessee and drove their cattle and livestock before them. Donelson brought his party down the Tennessee River, up the Ohio River, and down the Cumberland to the site of Fort Nashville. The latter group was made up mostly of women and children, while the men and boys came with Robertson.

The Bugle

Brentwood Historic Society
Post Office Box 788
Brentwood, Tennessee 37024-0788



For his bravery in defending the fort, Leiper was awarded a 640 acre land grant on the Little Harpeth River. It was bordered roughly by what is today Concord Road, Wilson Pike, and Franklin Road. The young Sarah Jane Leiper inherited this land grant.

At the age of 18, Sarah James Leiper married a promising young surveyor, Alexander Smith. He had been appointed by the Governor of North Carolina, along with two other men, to settle the disputed boundary between Tennessee and North Carolina.

The newly married couple set up their homestead on the Little Harpeth grant. During their married life they acquired additional land south of Concord Road that included what is today Twin Springs subdivision and the Harmon property.

James Leiper was a member of the Robertson party and Susan Drake was a member of the Donelson party. Both in their late teens or early 20's, they fell in love and were married by James Robertson. Theirs was the first marriage performed in what is now Middle Tennessee.

The couple had been married only a few months when James Leiper was killed during an Indian raid on Fort Nashboro. A few weeks later his wife gave birth to a daughter whom she named Sarah Jane Leiper. The mother too was later killed in an accident.

The Alexander Smiths had three daughters and at least two sons. They deeded to each of their children about 200 acres. One of the daughters, Elizabeth, married Denney Portfield Hadley. They built a home on their land which they called Hadleywood. Today it is known as Green Pastures and is the home of Cal Turner, Jr. Another daughter, Emeline, married Richard Christmas. They built the Franklin Pike home now know as Ashlawn and is the home of the Shamblins. The third daughter, Susan Drake Smith, received the family home place, which is now the Harmon House, or 24 Trees. After the death of her

tery to Vance Little. The State Archaeologist was called in and the resulting effort located 12 graves on the site, including David Johnston (1745-1829), Elizabeth Johnston (1747-1827), Robert Johnston (1775-1827), Rachel Johnston (1782-1864), David Johnston, Jr., Carrie Johnston (1803-1824), Esau Johnston (1836-1863), Henry C. Johnston, Fannie Johnston (1840-1864), Rachel Johnston (1830-1848), William Ford, James Polk Reed (1844-1909), and Dallas Reed (1842-1920). Others are unknown.

We want to recognize this Revolutionary War hero, his family, and their contributions to state and country, and make sure their cemetery is not lost again. In November 2003, the Brentwood Historical Society in conjunction with the Williamson County chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution conducted a ceremony to celebrate a new historic cemetery marker beside Franklin Road, and a marble headstone with the SAR emblem at the graves of David and Elizabeth.

200th Anniversary and Rededication of the Sneed Family Cemetery
October 6, 2012 at 10:30 a.m. at the site on Old Smyrna Road
Public Invited
More details coming in the next edition of the Bugle!

To join the Brentwood Historic Society or renew your membership, please complete the following:

Membership Levels-tax deductible	
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$ 15
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	25
<input type="checkbox"/> Contributing	50
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate/Benefactor	100+

 Name Address/Zip Code

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Detach this form and send, along with your check payable to:

Brentwood Historic Society; Attention: Linda Lynch; City of Brentwood, P.O. Box 788; Brentwood, TN 37024-0788

For more information: www.brentwood-tn.org/aboutus/history or Linda Lynch, City of Brentwood, 371-0060

The Brentwood Historic Society is a citizen organization supporting the Brentwood Historic Commission, the Boiling Spring Academy School Program, and dedicated to the study and preservation of Brentwood's history and culture.

David Johnston, A Revolutionary War Soldier

BY: BOB DENNISON

After the Revolutionary War many states rewarded those citizens who had served in the war with a grant of land in what was known as the “Western Territories”. This method was used since most of the states were essentially broke from waging the long and costly war. Tennessee, then a part of North Carolina, provided the land for that state’s heroes, and as a result was settled by many of those soldiers and their families. One of these was David Johnston.

David Johnston was born about 1745, probably in North Carolina. Little is known about David, but in 1780 he was listed as a private in the Mecklenburg, NC militia. On November 20, 1780, he was serving under Gen. Thomas Sumter in South Carolina. Gen. Sumter was a great hero of the Revolution, and led his troops in numerous engagements against the British, winning some, forced to retreat in others. On this date, however, Sumter had moved his troops into defensive positions on the Blackstock Plantation in a bend of the Tiger River in what was then Union County, SC. His force was attacked by the British 63rd Regiment, led by Col. Banastre Tarleton. Tarleton pushed his force to the attack, but Gen. Sumter had the position well defended. In the ensuing battle Tarleton lost 51

killed or wounded. The Americans lost 3 killed and 4 wounded. Two of the wounded were Gen. Sumter with a shot to his shoulder and David Johnston who lost his arm.

David Johnston’s military career undoubtedly came to an end. On March 4, 1789 he was granted a disability pension while living in Wilkes County, NC. By 1807, David had moved to Williamson County with his wife, Elizabeth. There was at least one son, Robert. David’s land included land that is now Brentwood Hills subdivision, including the property that is today the Tennessee Baptist Children’s Home, and extended north to Concord Road. It is on the Children’s Home property where the family cemetery is located.

David died February 18, 1829. Named as David’s heirs were his grandchildren David, Robert, William, James, Lancelot, and Martha Johnston. Grandson James is credited with building the home known today as Isola Bella on Franklin Road.

The Johnston family cemetery had been lost and forgotten for many years until former Children’s Home resident Jim Murphy related his boyhood knowledge of the ceme-

husband Thomas Maury Petway, Susan Drake Smith Petway, married prominent Brentwood physician Dr. Southerland Shannon Mayfield.

The house stood in shambles for many years until it was “discovered” in the 1950’s by Brentwood builder Glenn Noble. He had a knack for finding and restoring historic properties. He restored it to a livable condition and it was later purchased by Paul Harmon.

Examples of other National Register properties in Brentwood are Ravenswood, Inglehame, Mountview, Century Oak, Mooreland, Isola Bella, Owen Chapel Church of Christ, Green Pastures, Forge Seat, Wildwood, Knox-Crockett House, Windy Hill, Cottonport, Pleasant Hill, Boil-



ing Spring Mound site, Boiling Spring Academy, Owen-Primm House, Boxwood Hall, Maplelawn, and Wood Park.

Granny White Pike, A Turnpike Road

BY: T. VANCE LITTLE

When going to Nashville, I almost always take Granny White Pike. There is something about the sometimes rough and narrow way that appeals to me. At the narrowest and roughest point, I remember Granny White’s cabin that stood on a hillside so steep that they said she had to prop her pumpkins up to keep them from rolling down the hill.

In her rustic log inn, she entertained such dignitaries as Andrew Jackson and Thomas

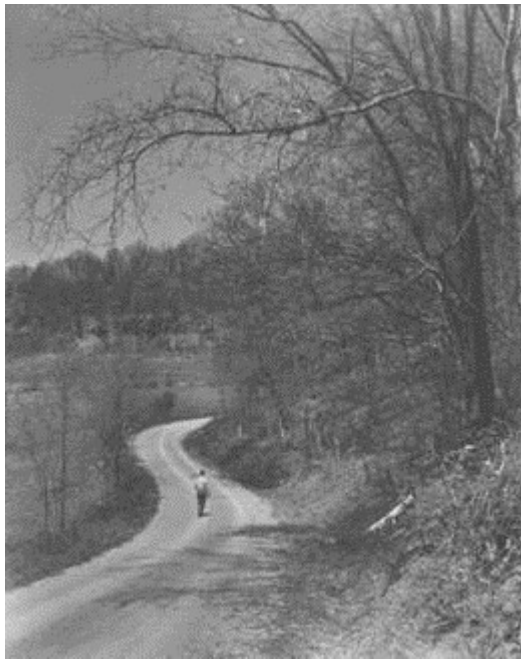
Hart Benton. The latter made her a national celebrity by mentioning her in a speech before Congress as the quintessential example of American courage, frugality, and industry.

As I take care not to slide off the side of the road into the washed out ruts, I remember that the pike was once a gravel road. It probably did not even follow the same route that it does today. In the old days, roads followed paths of least resistance, hugging

contours and low grades. They changed their courses according to season and climate.

Today Granny White Pike is a blacktop road for which we owe a debt of gratitude to Scottish engineer John Louden McAdam. He discovered a technique of road building that is still being used today. Such roads are called McAdamized roads.

The technique discovered by McAdam was based on the idea that chipped gravel would compact and bond together through usage by travelers and their vehicles. The



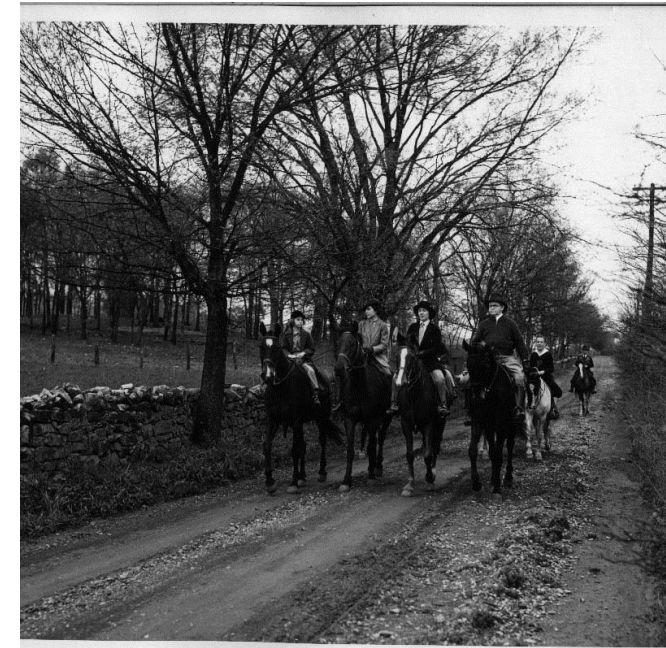
*Granny White Pike in Brentwood in April 1948
Dept. of Conservation Photograph Collection
Tennessee State Library and Archives*

Romans used the idea of piling rock on top of each other beginning with the larger ones on the bottom and working up to a layer of fine stone. But the Romans and road builders until the time of McAdam used river gravel with smooth edges. They failed to pick up on the idea that chipped gravel would compact.

Middle Tennessee was a Mecca for McAdamized roads. Limestone is one natural resource in Middle Tennessee for which there is an unlimited supply. Quarries can still be seen along roadsides where convicts and Irish laborers chipped limestone day after day and hauled it away on mule drawn land slides.

McAdamized roads provided a permanent surface for all-weather travel. But it took money, manpower, and equipment to build a McAdamized road. The private sector came forth and organized companies to build roads. Turnpike companies they were called. They depended on local sources of capital and became one of the major investment tools of the mid 19th century.

On January 25th, 1850, the Tennessee Legislature created a turnpike company to build a new Granny White Pike. The company was called the Nashville and Middle Franklin Turnpike Company. The commissioners were directed to open books and sell capital stock not to exceed \$50,000. Those commissioners were John Nichol, Henry Compton, Dr. William Lawrence, Thomas McCrory, James Walker, Frederick Bradford, and William Sawyers. Commission-



*Granny White Pike near Nashville in April 1939
Dept. of Conservation Photograph Collection
Tennessee State Library and Archives*

ers appointed to locate and fix the route of the road were John Kirkman, James Overton, Thomas Gowdy, John Seigler, Thomas N. Cotton, William D. Gale, and Matthew Johnson.

The road was to begin at Broad Street in Nashville and run along the western wall of the Lunatic Asylum (that's right – Lunatic Asylum) with the old Middle Franklin Road and to continue to run along with the old road, passing White's Gap where Granny White lived.

Tennessee law specified the duties of turnpike companies. Following the dictates of

McAdam, the gravel was not to exceed one-half pound in weight. It was not to be piled in the middle of the road and had to cover the space from one ditch to the other. Turnpike commissioners were also charged with the responsibility of keeping the roads free of impediments and debris, being free for the passage of any carriage, wagon, or other vehicle.

Both Franklin Road and Wilson Pike were also built by turnpike companies. Franklin Pike was built in the 1830's and Wilson Pike in the 1840's. The railroad was built through the intersection of these two roads, which is where the Village of Brentwood was originally laid out. It was a town center, which is about to be reborn.

Scottish Engineer John Loudin McAdam would be proud of his legacy in Middle Tennessee and to the world. For his contributions he was offered a knighthood, which he declined.

Did you know?

Wilson Pike was originally called Harpeth Turnpike, Concord Road was originally called Callendar Road, Crockett Road was originally called Carpenter Road, Edmondson Pike was originally called Owen-Winstead Pike, and Moores Lane was originally called Liberty Meeting House Road.