

Days Of Old Sumner County

Newsletter No. 2, April 2013

P.O. Box 1871 Gallatin TN 37066

Sumner County Historical Society

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Morgan to Present at SCHS Dinner

By Jan Shuxteau, Editor

Gallatin native Judith Andrews Morgan, author of *The Lost World of Langley Hall*, will be the guest speaker at this year's annual Sumner County Historical Society dinner, April 25 at 6:30 in the Gallatin Church of Christ.



Judith Morgan

"We are privileged to have Judith to give us a comprehensive review of her recently completed biographical love story of Sumner County's most prominent couple in the first half of the 20th Century," says Ken Thomson, president of SCHS.

Morgan believes that *The Lost World of Langley Hall* is a book she was destined to write. "I found a century-old love letter in a book that came from the library of the original Langley Hall. It was torn down in the 1960s. I'd had the book for a long time

(See MORGAN, page 10)



A painting of Fairvue Mansion by Bill Puryear

Fairvue: Gone With the Wind

By Bill Puryear

(Editor's Note: This is the second part or a three part series about Fairvue, located between Hendersonville and Gallatin.)

Fairvue's owner, Isaac Franklin, a slave trader and businessman, died in 1846 on a trip to his Louisiana plantations, never seeing the fate of his estates during the Civil War. His body was shipped home in a barrel of whiskey, to be buried in an elaborate stone tomb at Fairvue. Franklin's four children had died, and his widow, Adelia, took her late husband's money and fled.

The Civil War swept all around the margins of the plantation, with major battles nearby at the end of Cages Bend and below Pilots Knob, where Confederate Col. John Hunt Morgan and his men attacked a Federal blockhouse positioned to defend the railroad bridge there. The mansion may have served briefly as a hospital for wounded Federal soldiers, as there is a bloodstain on the back stairs, and the name of one James Record of Company C may still be seen written on the wall on the third floor.

Yet the Federal armies recognized the historic value of the mansion and allowed the plantation to continue its farming operations under Franklin's brother as executor, thereby avoiding the many slaves who worked it becoming an expensive burden upon the occupying army.

After the War ended, the South lay devastated, the slaves gone, the fields untended, and Fairvue, like mythic Tara, was an empty shell, its glory gone with the wind. Anyone who then predicted this ruined plantation would again attract wealthy owners and admirers from as far away as New York, London and Europe would have been thought crazy.

(See FAIRVUE, page 10)

Walking Through Sumner County History

By Tim Takacs

Tim Takacs, a Hendersonville attorney and the author of *The City by the Lake: A History of Hendersonville, Tennessee 1780-1969*, sometimes takes visitors on his “historic walk,” recreated in the article below for those who want to try it themselves.

While Hendersonville city limits now extend west to Mansker Creek, east to Cages Bend Rd., north to Long Hollow Pike and south to the Cumberland River, not long ago the City was less than a square mile, in an area referred to as the “old town.”

Hendersonville’s old town runs along both sides of Main Street, east to west. Our hike starts at the eastern edge at the First Presbyterian Church. It’s an easy walk, east to Rockland Rd., about a mile-and-half loop, with nine points of interest.



Hendersonville 1st Presbyterian Church

Point 1. Presbyterian Church and cemetery

- Hendersonville’s second church, organized in 1869, because the Methodist Church’s condition was too poor to be used after Union troops withdrew. Major General Daniel S. Donelson is interred here.
- To the east of the church lot was the Power House of the Nashville-Gallatin Interurban Railway (“The Blue Grass Line”).
- On nearby Drakes Creek, Sumner High School, Hendersonville’s first “high school,” was organized in 1871.

Cross Main Street – carefully! – at Sanders Ferry Road and look east.

Point 2. Gallatin Rd.

- “Gallatin Rd.” was at one time a toll road—“Gallatin Turnpike”—and just east of this spot was Gallatin Turnpike Co.’s toll house.
- Drakes Creek as we see it today was swollen due to the impoundment of the Cumberland River by Old Hickory Lock and Dam, a project of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Planning for the dam began in the early 1930s, and construction began March 15, 1952.

Point 3. Sanders Ferry Road

- James Sanders and Daniel Smith surveyed the area in the 1780s for North Carolina. They were rewarded with several hundred acres on both sides of Drakes Creek. In 1799 Sanders and neighbors petitioned Sumner County Court to open a road from here to the mouth of the creek, where Sanders had a ferry.

Point 4. William Henderson (first postmaster)

Walking west, we find a historical marker recognizing William Henderson, who in 1800 was named the town’s first postmaster.

- H. G. Hills, now CashSaver, was built in 1967 on the site of the old Donelson home. In the 1990s Freed Hardware moved across the street to the shopping center here, joining the Ace Hardware franchise.
- Hendersonville Methodist Church was razed in the 1980s from its location on Walton Ferry Rd. at the corner of Harlan Dr. All that remains are gravestones, located behind Nana Rosa Restaurant

Our walk continues west on Harlan Dr., between Dunn St. and Shivel Dr.

Point 5. Hendersonville Grammar School

- Open in 1920, the Grammar School was once located here and demolished in the 1950s.
- Martin R. Curtis, Sr., Hendersonville Public Library (now the Samaritan Center) was the town’s first real library, named after its most prominent citizen. It was organized by the Hendersonville Civic Club, formed in 1943, a group of civic-minded men who informally led the community until the City was

(See WALKING, page 3)

WALKING, continued from Page 2

incorporated in 1968. After WWII, the Civic Club helped form Hendersonville Utility District to provide water and sewer to the little community.

- Hendersonville Church of Christ was first located at 315 W. Main until it moved to Rockland Rd in the '70s.

In 1968, though opposed by the Utility District and most residents outside the old town, the City of Hendersonville was incorporated by a vote of 53 to 26. It was less than two-tenths of a square mile.

Point 6. The Small Incorporation ("The Rump City")

- The first City Hall was located at the real estate office of Jack Simpkins, 327 W. Main, at the corner of Shivel Dr.

Continuing west on Main, we pass the former site of the 1st Baptist Church of Hendersonville, organized in 1944, now the Community Church of Hendersonville after the Baptist Church moved to its current location.

Point 7. Community Church of Hendersonville

- Hendersonville High School, opened its doors in 1941 with V.G. Hawkins as principal. Then located at the end of Campus Drive, the school later became a junior high school named for Hawkins and was torn down around 2000.
- Hendersonville's second City Hall was located in the old Shirley and Ann Shannon home on Main St.. Hendersonville Police Dept. is now on the property.

The growing city needed a new post office, which was constructed on Imperial Dr. in 1980.

Point 8. 1980 United States Post Office

- The Imperial Drive extension to Sanders Ferry Rd. opened about 10 years ago.
- "Old" Gallatin Road was renamed Rockland Road after the Gallatin Road "bypass"—a four-lane highway—was completed in 1949 from the "Rockland curve" near to Drakes Creek.

We'll cross Main Street again and walk east toward Old Shackle.

Point 9. 1964 Post Office to town's center

- Under long time postmaster L. W. Oliver, Jr., the Post Office moved from near the Presbyterian Church to this site in 1964. Continuing down the street, C&G Cleaners (now Avis) was a fixture in town until owner Cleon Cooke died. A cemetery is behind the building.
- First called Sumner County Shopping Center, City Square Shopping Center was built in 1967.
- Dr. Sanford Lovely and Dr. Charlie Sharp purchased the Lavada Roney home next to Freed Hardware and built Hendersonville Drug Company, among the shops where Pony Mailbox is now.
- Bloodworth's general store and later Freed Hardware were at the corner of Old Shackle and Main. B.F. Myers Dept. Store was on the corner of Walton Ferry and Main. North on Old Shackle Island was the Louisville & Nashville Railroad Depot, which carried passengers between Louisville and Nashville. It stopped at Hendersonville until it ended passenger traffic in the 1930s.
- The Bank of Hendersonville, which matched the Freed building and was on the opposite corner of Main and Old Shackle, was the town's first bank. It was organized in 1906.



**Bloodworth's on Main St., 1915
(Historic Rock Castle: Willie Ellis)**

Gen. William Hall: Sumner's Hero in Later Years

By Jan Shuxteau, editor

(This is the second part of a two-part series about Hall. See January 2013 SCHS newsletter for his early years.)

"It is some satisfaction to me that I have not been driven from my heritage, but that I have been able with the assistance of the brave men of the period gone by, to defend it through all attacks. I am living at the same place [Locustland], now, which was settled by my father, having been here 66 years in all, since I first came to the country."

William Hall, then 77 years old, reminisced in the statements above in an 1852 edition of the *Southwestern Monthly*. Described at that time as a man with "fine aquiline features, a noble presence" and "silvery hair," Hall lived in a time of remarkable change as Middle Tennessee was cut from the wilderness and "civilized."

To today's bystander, it is as if Hall's life is in three parts: his tumultuous youth defending against ferocious Indian attacks in Sumner County in the 1790s, his difficult War of 1812 and his life as a Tennessee statesman. Born the year the Revolution began, Hall and his family came to Tennessee from North Carolina, arriving in Sumner County in November 1785.

Gen. William Hall: War of 1812

Two hundred years ago—January 1813—William Hall, then 38 and elected as "Colonel Commanding" under Gen. Andrew Jackson, led a Middle Tennessee regiment of infantrymen down the Cumberland River and on to Natchez to await orders for the War of 1812. What began well enough ended inauspiciously when their mission was aborted. They turned around and made the long, hard trip home.

Hall, who had already been Sumner's legislative representative from 1797-1805, was called again to battle in 1814, this time to fight against the Creeks after their massacre of soldiers at Fort Mims, Ala. (*For most Tennesseans, the Creek War was the War of 1812.*) Hall, by then promoted to brigadier general, commanded the First

Brigade, which included more than 1,400 volunteers in two regiments. This foray also ended badly. The march was a miserable starving time, with supplies long delayed. First Brigade troops said their enlistments were up, and they would go home. Enlistment, they claimed, included the time when they waited at home after Natchez. Jackson disagreed and threatened to open fire on any who left. Hall and other officers intervened, promising that the brigades would remain until reinforcements arrived. Despite this compromise, Jackson's anger with the First Brigade continued, but Hall was able to retain Jackson's respect and eventually supported him for President.

Years in Political Office

Hall had already served four terms in the State House when he was elected to the State Senate, serving 1821-1829. With a sterling reputation behind him, he was elected Speaker of the Senate, 1827-1829.

In assuming this post, he put himself on a page of history he did not seek. Then-Gov. Sam Houston married 18-year-old Eliza Allen of Gallatin on Jan. 22, 1829. Shortly after the wedding, the two had a quarrel—no one knows why—that escalated into a serious scandal when Houston's new "first lady" went home to her family. Despondent, Houston resigned and left the capital.

As Speaker, Hall was next in line to be governor. The dust had barely settled on Houston's departure when Hall was sworn in. Hall's term, which began April 16, 1829, was brief—only about five months—but it was a source of pride to Sumner Countians. His duties consisted largely of handling requests for pardons and encouraging the General Assembly to take action on several programs originated by Gov. William Carroll, Houston's predecessor and Hall's friend.

Five months as governor was not the end of Hall's political career. Two years later, ex-Gov. Hall ran for Congress and was elected. He served only one term in Washington then returned to Locustland plantation, where he farmed until his death in October 1856.



Family members sit on the front steps of the English basement home of Judge William Hall, built in 1850 at 114 West Main, Gallatin. Pictured front, l. to r. are: Saidee Cassady Hall. (Judge Hall's daughter, July 11, 1889 - July 5, 1931 in Gallatin and married to William Howard Hitchcock), James Mentlo Hall (the unmarried son of Judge Hall, Aug. 26, 1879 - June 23, 1933, in Gallatin), William Alexander Hall (Jan. 7, 1884 - Oct. 29, 1958, in Ventura, Calif., married to Ruby Hatwood Heimiller). Pictured middle row, front, l. to r., are: Susie Hall (Judge Hall's daughter, Aug. 18, 1875 - Sept. 27, 1945, in Taft, Calif., and married to William Green Harris), Winceanna Hall (Judge Hall's daughter, April 6, 1878 - Oct. 23, 1932 in Gallatin and married to James W. Alison). Pictured in back, top row, l. to r.: Judge William Hall (March 17, 1848 - Sept. 23, 1931) and his wife, Mary Brandon Mentlo Hall (June 22, 1857 - Dec. 8, 1899). Judge Hall was the son of Col. William Harrison Hall and Sarah Winceanna McDaniel. Mrs. Hall was the daughter of Capt. James Alexander Mentlo and Susan Ann Branham Mentlo.

What Became of Eliza's Historic Home?

By Kenneth Thomson, Jr., President SCHS

The fascinating English basement house above was built in 1850 at 114 West Main St. in Gallatin for **Eliza Allen Houston Douglass** as a gift from her second husband Dr. Elmore Douglass on a lot that she owned.

Eliza was the first wife of Gov. Sam Houston of Tennessee and later of Texas fame. This marriage lasted only a few weeks, but it took a decade for their divorce. In the meantime, he became the first President of the Republic of Texas, making Eliza the first lady of a country she never saw.

In 1840, Eliza married Dr. Douglass and died in this house in 1861. She was spared the agony of the Civil War and the Federal occupation of Gallatin by their army's evil commander, Brig. Gen. Eleazer A. Paine, who used her house as his headquarters. Paine was brutal and killed many people upon the slightest provocation and others without any cause. In 1865, the year after he left Gallatin, he was court-martialed in

Paducah, Ky. In 1890, The Hall family bought the house and are pictured above in 1895. They lived here eight years until building a house on Hartsville Pike.

It is ironic that Judge William Hall's grandfather, Brig. Gen. William Hall became Tennessee's first "accidental" governor upon the resignation of Gov. Sam Houston due to his marital difficulties, and that 60 years later he would own the frame house of Houston's grass widow, Eliza.

For most of the first third of the 20th Century this house was the Dresser School of Music, owned by Prudence Simpson Dresser, who taught many Gallatinians to play both the violin and piano. At her death, the house was removed from its tall brick foundation, and the top story was turned to face Franklin Street as a rental house. The West Main Street lot became the site of a new building for the W.N. Robertson Furniture Store, which stands today.

Cumberland Compact Signers – How Many?

By Jack Masters

In 1846 historian A. W. Putnam discovered the only surviving copy of the Cumberland Compact in a trunk that once belonged to Samuel Barton. Among the faded contents, he had found the original document that came to be generally known as the *Cumberland Compact*.

The focus of this paper is determining the total number of signatures. The signatures appear on four pages, each lined into columns. A total of 255 signatures can be counted the variable being several names which are duplicated. I have seen the number of signers given from as few as 244 to 263.

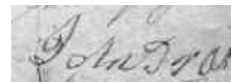
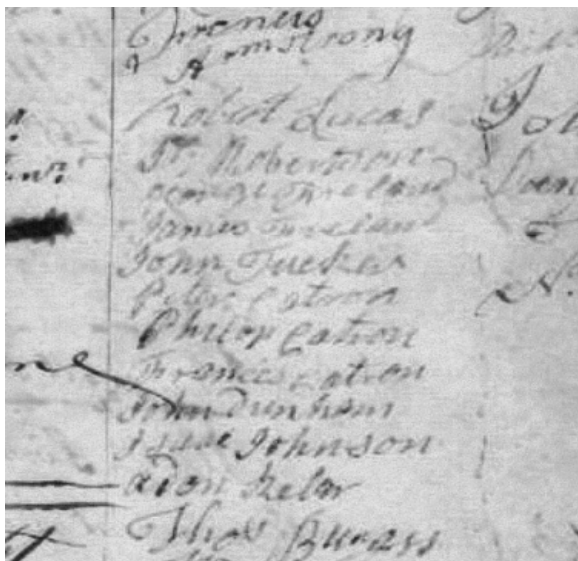
Images of the four individual pages of signatures are shown below:



Speculation on my part is that the various pages were circulated about the settlement, accumulating the signatures of those wishing to sign. Without the benefit of reading names on the other pages, interested parties—wanting to ensure that all names appeared on the

document—very likely signed names other than their own. The actual number of signers is based on a careful analysis of the handwriting along with ink characteristics.

John Drake's name appears twice on the document, but according to family members there were actually two John Drakes in the settlements. Based on different signature characteristics, John Drake counts as two signatures.



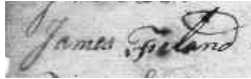
Page 1 – Col 3



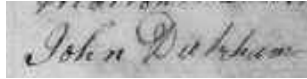
Page 3 – Col 2

The example, on left, is copied from Page 1 Column 2 and included are three of the six signatures suspected to be duplicates. Robert Lucas appears to sign his name, as well as the next nine names, which include: J's Robertson, George Freland, James Freland, John Tucker, Peter Catron, Philip Catron, Francis Catron, John Dunham and Isaac Johnson.

Of these nine names, James Freland, Page 4 Column 1; John Dunham, Page 3 Column 3; and Isaac Johnson, Page 3 Column 3, appear to be duplicated.



Page 4 – Col 1



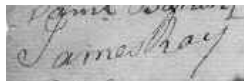
Page 3 – Col 3



Page 3 – Col 3

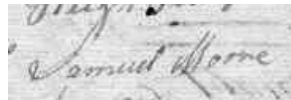
To remedy this count, the three duplications revise to a new total: 252.

Evidence is also shown for signature duplications of James Ray, who first signed his name on Page 2 Column 1, left. The same James Ray appears to be signed on the same page in Column 3 by William Ray, right.



Total signers are now revised to 251.

Samuel Moore's name appears on Page 2 Column 2, left. It appears that Rich'd Moore signed his name again on Page 3 Column 1, under his own name, right.



Total signers are further revised to 250

Dan'l Jarrott signed his name on Page 2 Column 3, left. John Phillips signed his name and George Flynn's and Daniel Jarrott's names on Page 4 Column 1, right.



Total signers are now revised to 249 actual signers, which is the net of this study.

While many historians agree that the *Cumberland Compact* was more about Richard Henderson's land related interests, the document—without a doubt—does provide the best single window into those early pioneer settlers in the Cumberland Valley Region.

(Jack Masters and Bill Puryear co-authored a trilogy on the history of the Cumberland Settlements. Additional details on this subject and others may be seen at: <http://www.cumberlandpioneers.com/cumberlandcompact.html>)

A Mob Outmaneuvered: Gallatin 1920s

By Walter Durham, State Historian

Sometime in the mid 1920s, a mob gathered in the front yard of the Sumner County Jail at the southwest corner of South Water and Smith Streets and demanded that the sheriff turn over to them a young male African-American jailed the night before for allegedly assaulting a white woman.

As the gathering was on a Saturday morning, several of the assembled crowd were prepared to spend the day and had brought their illegal whiskey to honor the occasion. Before mid morning the beverages were having their effect; the crowd threatened to become boisterous and unruly.

Fearing the he was about the lose control of the situation, the sheriff called the state guard headquarters in Nashville to send out a company of guardsmen to restrain the crowd. Assured that help was on the way, the sheriff announced the information, and the surprised crowd settled down to await the arrival of the guard, coming out on two chartered passenger cars of the Gallatin-Nashville Interurban electric railway.

Traditionally, if one needed the help of the guardsmen it was first appropriate to feed them. One block directly north of the jail on West Main Street was Hotel Sumner with a dining room large enough to seat and serve the guard company.

It was customary also to entertain visiting guardsmen and what better entertainment was there than a good, rip snorting speech by a local orator? State Senator J.T. Durham, a local attorney, agreed to address the troops. Word spread to the mob outside the jail, and nearly all of them walked over to the hotel to hear Senator Durham, who was a local draw.

While the soldiers were being fed and entertained, the two Interurban trolley cars, standing by on the “Y,” or

turnaround track next door to the hotel, rolled quickly down to the end of the track at Smith Street. With the mob’s attention transferred to the guardsmen at the hotel, the sheriff quickly hustled the prisoner sought by the ruffians into the lead car. Spreading the prisoner on the floor, the sheriff handcuffed and bound him to steel seat frames.

The motorman Jim Hailey of Nashville and conductor Charles H. Ogles of Gallatin in the prisoner’s car moved it out onto the track in West Main Street. They said that they were not going to wait around for the soldiers but would return empty to the “car barn” in Nashville to get back on their regular runs.

Arriving in the city, the trainmen turned their captive over to the sheriff of Davidson County for his and the public’s safekeeping. The mob had been outmaneuvered.

After Senator Durham’s speech, the guardsmen walked the short block down to Smith Street to protect the jail ad the prisoner who had been cleverly removed. When the crowd returned to the jail with the guards, the sheriff announced that the prisoner had been transferred to Nashville and was out of his and their reach.

The mob growled and fussed and lingered awhile but broke up by late afternoon, and the guardsmen returned to Nashville. The prisoner was ultimately tried and acquitted of the charges.

(Walter Durham: This is written based on separate accounts told to me first by my grandfather Senator J.T. Durham and years later by a business associate C.H. Ogles. As both were participants in the event, I accepted the story without further research and now share it.)

The Great Hendersonville Fire Burned 70 Years Ago

By Jamie Clary

Chicago's fire hit in 1872. San Francisco endured its "great" one in 1906. Hendersonville's great fire occurred 70 years ago, on Nov. 17, 1942. Half the town's commercial area was destroyed.

Back then Hendersonville was an "at". People did not talk about being "in" Hendersonville. People would be at Hendersonville because it was little more than the intersection of Gallatin Road, Walton Ferry Road and Old Shackle Island Road. Gradually Shivel Drive, the first subdivision, was added, and Hendersonville grew to an "in."

Rockland Road was not even considered part of Hendersonville. It was a separate sparsely populated community, as were Saundersville and Indian Lake.

In 1942, Old Hickory Dam was 14 years away. City government was more than two decades off.

In 1942, during the heart of World War II, Hendersonville was six commercial buildings and a handful of houses. From there to Gallatin were more houses, but no businesses. Heading west from the heart of Hendersonville, the next commercial center was Madison.

Bruce Carter (not the same man who now works for First State Bank) innocently started the blaze near the intersection's southwest corner when he lit some trash on fire, a common task back then. He later told a reporter that a gust blew some flaming paper close to the wall of a building.

He drew water from a nearby well and yelled for help. The extra hands formed a bucket brigade, but the flames spread. Gallatin and Nashville sent firefighters who ran 2,500 feet of hose to Drakes Creek, preventing the flames from spreading to the north side of the highway.

"It's hard for people to believe," said John Freed, 50 years after seeing the tragedy. "Something could just sit and burn and there wouldn't be any fire engines, water and everything."

The community was devastated. "Nobody could believe it," remembered Margaret Ann Davis. "We just stood there with our mouths open."

When the flames were extinguished, the post office, The Bank of Hendersonville and the building that had housed Bloodworth's general store and Dr. Stephens' office were gone. All that remained in the commercial center were a small café, Hurt's Grocery Store and another building

across the highway. The loss of the general store was especially significant. It sold on credit, bought eggs and farm produce, provided medicine, clothes, and served as a meeting place for the community.

T.B. Ellis, the bank cashier, preserved cash and records by throwing them into the fire-proof safe. But he had to do business from a building across the street for some time.

Freed said people felt that the town was gone. "It was just a wide spot in the road, and it wasn't even very wide," he said.

The *Gallatin Examiner* pointed a finger three days later, not at Carter, but at all residents: "The citizens of any community the size of Hendersonville owe it to themselves and to one another to secure fire equipment of some kind."

So the community came together. They formed The Civic Club, a volunteer group of businessmen and farmers that bought a fire truck from the War Assets Administration. They sold fire-protection subscriptions for \$10 per year to buy equipment. They trained volunteers and found a home for the equipment on Powell Drive.

The same group initiated municipal water service with the creation of the Hendersonville Utility District, providing water for firefighting and underground pipes to replace wells and springs. Later they encouraged the formation of the City of Hendersonville, which eventually took over the fire service and expanded it.

When I first wrote about the 1942 fire, I was the news editor at the *Star News*. It was 1992. On the 50th anniversary of that fire, an incident happened that validated the response of the victims of the earlier fire.

On that breezy afternoon—November 17, 1992—a controlled fire got loose along New Shackle Island Road. The 1992 site was less than a half mile from where the 1942 fire had started.

In 1992, however, Hendersonville's Engine Company#2 responded. The firefighters extinguished the flames soon after they reached a nearby shed. No further damage was reported.

Jamie Clary is the author of "The City by the Lake Volume II, A History of Hendersonville from 1968-1988."

MORGAN, Continued from Page 1

but had never read it," she explains. "The letter folded inside was dated 1898. It was from someone named Willie to someone named Katie—basically a marriage proposal. I was enthralled. Who was Katie? Who was Willie? What had happened to them?"

She found the identities easily enough. Katie was Eleanor Katherine Trousdale, a member of the prominent Trousdale family of Trousdale Place in Gallatin. Willie was William Young (W.F.) Allen, her husband, who became the first president of First and Peoples Bank beginning Jan. 16, 1916, until he died in 1941. Langley Hall was built by Katie before her marriage and was their family home.

Langley Hall is a love story with a mystery, a family saga and a history of Gallatin for nearly a century from the post Civil War era to Katie's death in 1952. "It's all of these things" Morgan says. "If you like them, you'll like the book."

She searched through the archived Trousdale, Peyton and Allen family papers and letters, old news stories, documents and interviewed local historians and family members. "I went through every Gallatin and Sumner County newspaper from the 1860s to 1952 and many in Nashville... You'd be surprised what you can learn, especially in gossip columns."

She learned, for example, that Katie and her family participated in the grand society events of the Tennessee Centennial Exposition held in Nashville from May 1 until Oct. 30, 1897. "Katie stayed with a cousin, Alice Berry [related to the Sumner County Berry's], in Nashville at the time," says Morgan. "In the newspapers, I read that the Berry's hosted a reception as part of the Centennial for the National Organization of

Women's Groups. Katie was in the receiving line for the guest of honor, Susan B. Anthony."

The mystery in the book relates to the fact that it was almost a decade from the time Willie wrote the 1898 notes until the couple married—a first marriage for each. The family saga is about both the Trousdale and Young families and the times in which they lived. "The families were involved in every major historical event in the time: the Depression of 1893, the Spanish American war, the building of the Panama Canal—Katie and Willie toured it during construction," says Morgan. "You'll see the people of Gallatin, for example, celebrating the Fourth of July in 1876—the Centennial of the country, just 10 years after the end of the Civil War." The book also follows the Spanish American War and WWI, when Harry Berry was head of Tennessee National Guard; as well as the Roaring '20s, the Great Depression, WWII and the Korean War.

"Doing the research, writing the book, getting involved, learning the people and the history of the town in that period—you can't imagine anything more interesting than the real thing that happened to real people in those years," says Morgan.

(Editor's Note: Judith Morgan, author of The Lost World of Langley Hall, is a retired educator who taught English and Spanish at Gallatin High School and was later the executive assistant to two Tennessee Commissioners of Education during the Sundquist administration. She now lives in Hendersonville with her husband, Gerald. This is her first book.)

SCHS Dinner

Sumner County Historical society's annual dinner meeting will be April 25 at 6:30 in the Gallatin Church of Christ, 150 E. Main St. The SCHS welcomes anyone who wants to attend. Make reservations by contacting Bonnie Edwards, Sumner County Archives, 452-0037 (365 N. Belvedere Dr., Gallatin, TN 37066). Cost is \$17 per person. Also, SCHS welcomes new members. Membership is \$25 per family or \$10 for a student. Send to the archives at the address above.

FAIRVUE, Continued from Page 1

Yet the next century was to bring to it titans of industry, royalty, and the international champions of the sport to which it was best suited, the breeding and racing of thoroughbred horses. In 1882 Adelia Franklin sold Fairvue to Charles Reed. Everybody acquainted with the history of the

American turf had heard of this New Yorker who had paid \$100,000 for St. Blaise, the winner of the English derby. This was the record price for a racehorse, equivalent to several millions of dollars today. By comparison, for Fairvue and its 2,000 acres, he paid only \$50,000.

Thomas Spencer: Sumner's Amazing Pioneer

By Jan Shuxteau, Editor

Walking in deep woods, you can imagine how it must've been for Sumner's early pioneers—pressing cautiously westward on shadowy wilderness trails, often wet, cold and alone, stopping at nightfall, cooking a bit of meat and swapping tales around a camp fire. The name "Tom Spencer" was often spoken at those gatherings, and stories evolved about that giant of a man, the Virginia longhunter who is considered Middle Tennessee's first white settler.

Traveling with a small group of hunters, Thomas Sharp Spencer made his first long hunt into Middle Tennessee in 1776. He was described in the July 1852 *Southwestern Monthly* by Sumner County general and statesman William Hall as a "most remarkable man, a perfect Hercules in form—indeed the most powerful man I ever saw." Hall said that Spencer, knowing his own strength, feared he would kill a person if he lost his temper and hit someone.

The men made base camp at Bledsoe's Lick, now Castalian Springs. At that time, Spencer was a seasoned hunter who'd already ventured into the wilds of Kentucky. Friends Isaac Bledsoe and Kasper Mansker had spurred his desire to see Tennessee, telling him stories about a rich land—possible free—and abundant game.

Spencer's group hunted and explored Bledsoe, during which time his huge footprints earned him the nickname, "Big Foot." After a year, the other men packed up and headed home, but Spencer and a companion—probably John Holliday—stayed on. The two remained through the winter and spring of 1778, even clearing land, building cabins and planting corn. (It was because of this that Spencer was known as the first white settler.) Then Holiday also left, and Spencer was alone in the wilderness for the winter of 1778-'79.

He blended into the forest, using an immense hollow sycamore tree as his home and blind. The tree, standing 50 yards from the lick, was nine feet in diameter and broken off 20 feet above the ground. From inside, Spencer watched the lick area, spying on game and, on at least one occasion, a band of Indians stalking game all around him.

In a 1972 article in the *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, state historian Walter Durham quotes a description of the tree from a letter by journalist Charles Cassidy in 1839. Cassidy wrote: "I saw some vestiges of the stump of this tree in 1817—it was of enormous circumference and must, from

the richness of the soil, have been lofty and of giant growth. The hollow of this monarch of the wilderness...afforded Spencer room for an upper story, to which he retired by an Indian ladder, whenever danger threatened...this [ladder] Spencer drew up after him, shut down the trap door in the flooring, and all was secure."

There was great danger in being discovered by the Indians, who were ferocious in their attacks against early pioneers. In 1780—the first year of the Cumberland settlement—Spencer twice escaped them, once when returning to the Bluff from a hunt and on another occasion when he and a friend ventured to light a campfire. The friend was shot dead. According to Gen. Hall, who wrote about the episode in his book, *Early History of the Southwest*, Spencer immediately caught up the two guns, and placing the arm of his dead friend around and over his shoulder he started off at a hard run through the cane, and the Indians seeing this evidence of his powers and knowing also that he had two loaded guns, followed at a respectful distance."

In 1784, Spencer and three other men were ambushed at Drakes Creek while letting their horses drink. One of the men was killed, but the others escaped, Spencer with a bullet in his arm.

Ten years after that Spencer was again ambushed, this time fatally, on a trail near today's Crab Orchard, Tenn. He was returning from Virginia, riding alongside another man and ahead of a group of travelers. He died instantly, and the Indians rushed in and took his saddlebags, which were said to have contained gold. He was buried near the trail where he fell by an old friend, Sampson Williams, who was probably among the travelers.



Bill Puryear's painting depicts Spencer

-----Farm of John Gowen Dunn, Hendersonville-----



Pictured above is the farmhouse of John Gowen Dunn on the Cumberland River at the end of Walton Ferry Road in Hendersonville. On the front row are: l. to r., Louise Hamilton Dunn 1891-1938, daughter of Harry Smith Dunn Sr. and Mary Shute and later married to Woodford Hall Dunn; John Gowen Dunn 1826-1921, the son of Albert Gallatin Dunn and Amanda Gowen and father of Harry Smith Dunn, Sr; Harry Smith Jr. and John Michael Shute 1832-1921, the son of Lee Shute and Margaret Dunn and father of Mrs. Harry Smith Dunn (Mary Shute). In the back are: Mary Lee Dunn, daughter of John Gowen Dunn and Sally Dunn, daughter of John Gowen Dunn and Margaret Donelson Watson.

This photo was in the collection of Mrs. Burton Wilks Glover (Mary Louise Dunn).

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