

# Hamilton County Pioneers

## Gann

Members of the Gann family began moving into Hamilton County while the Cherokees still resided south of the Tennessee River. Preston Gann was able to acquire hundreds of acres in the Falling Water and Hixson areas. It was 1829 when Preston Gann acquired 314 acres from James Brown, who was an influential Cherokee. Brown had gotten 640 acres as a result of the 1819 treaty with the Indians. It was "on the north side of the public road trading from Washington to John Brown's ferry of Tennessee River." The line "crossed the Little Chickamauga." Over the next few years Preston Gann added more than a thousand acres to his holdings in the vicinity of North Chickamauga Creek.

In the 1836 tax list of Hamilton County, Elizabeth Gann was in District 1 near Dallas. In District 2 near Falling Water and North Chickamauga Creek were Preston, Uriah and Alexander Gann. In District 10 north of Ooltewah were John and Ira Gann and Thomas Gann Jr. In District 12 in the Soddy vicinity were Allen, George W. and Washington Gann. In April of 1857, Washington Gann was found guilty of first-degree murder in the death of a man named Wilcoxon, who had a large family of children. The murder occurred at Dallas in November of 1856 and several other defendants were involved. This was said to be the first case in Hamilton County of a first-degree murder conviction.

The Ganns had been in Virginia since the mid-1700s. Samuel, Nathan and John Gann are mentioned in early deeds in Frederick County, Va. Adam Gann moved from Halifax County, Va., to Washington County in the future Tennessee just after the

Revolution. Adam Gann died at Jefferson County, Tenn., in 1812. He was apparently married twice. His will refers to children Adam Carter, Nathan, Samuel, Peggy and Hannah. Another son is listed as Thomas.

Preston Gann, who was born in 1802, had married Mary Ann Layman. The Ganns were closely allied with the Laymans. Thomas Layman, who moved to Hamilton County, was married to a daughter of Nathan Gann. Mary Ann Layman Gann, who was four years older than her husband, died in 1871. Preston Gann then took as his second wife Susan Ann Levi, who was 40 years younger than he was. By his first wife, Preston Gann had six daughters. Mary Ann married the German immigrant Christian Sniteman. Cassandra married Daniel C. Smith, who died during the Civil War. Louisa married Andrew J. Thomas in 1854. Rebecca married James Jasper Jackson in 1855. Sarah married James M. Eldridge. Martha married Allen K. Smith and later George W. Clarke. Preston Gann had a son and daughter by the second wife — William P. who married Sarah Elizabeth Adams and Catherine who married Clarence Oakes.

When Preston Gann died in 1884 he had transferred much of his former extensive holdings in Hixson and was living at Falling Water. The daughters got about 250 acres each in the vicinity of the Big Ridge. Preston Gann was buried at the Sniteman Cemetery. This cemetery is located on a steep hill beside the Hixson Seventh-Day Adventist Church on Hixson Pike. George Gann, who was born in the revolutionary year of 1776, is also buried here. He was in Hamilton County just prior to the Civil War.

Thomas Gann, a son of Adam Gann, spent his last days in Hamilton County. He was born in 1764 in Bedford County, Va., and had moved on to Halifax County, then to Washington County, Rhea and finally Hamilton in Tennessee. Thomas Gann served under both John Sevier and Francis Marion and was at the battle of King's Mountain. He fought the Indians along the Coosa River. He died about 1832. Elizabeth Gann continued to acquire real estate here.

The children of Thomas Gann are listed as Thomas Jr. who married Mary McArster in Rhea County in 1818, Cornelius, Mary who married Elisha Corbitt in 1818 in Rhea County, John "Jack" who married Sarah "Sally" Painter in 1812 in Washington County, Eliza who married Robert B. White, and Robert who married Rachel Bean.

John and Sarah Painter Gann lived in Hamilton County for many years, but they and several of their children migrated to southwest Missouri about 1852. Cornelius, Silas, Calvin and Samuel settled at Dallas County, while Adam went to Wright County. Cornelius Gann had married Lydia Moreland in 1840, while Silas Gann married Catherine Harris. John Gann died at Dallas County, Mo., in 1871. Staying in Hamilton County were his sons Ira, James, Charles and Elisha. Ira married Barbara Layman as his second wife. Elisha was married to Amanda Maddux, and his second wife was Talitha Ann Lowe Cate. Martha, daughter of John Gann, married a McConnell.

Children of Thomas Gann Jr. and Mary McArster were James, Robert, Elizabeth, William, John, Wesley, Nancy, Russell, Sarah, Andrew, Mary, Lydia A., Martha, Amanda and Lucinda. James moved to Missouri and Robert to Kansas. Elizabeth married Jefferson Gann. William and his wife, Mary, moved to Illinois. John married Martha Stidmore, but she left and went west. His second wife was Amanda Bean. Wesley and his wife, Eliza, had John, George, James, Nancy and Calloway who married Anna Eliza Smith in 1877. Nancy married Andy Gann, and their children were Allen who married Rebecca Rickett and then Rena, George, Russell who married Sarah Gann, and Richard. Russell, son of Thomas Gann Jr., mar-

ried Caroline Becknell, a Cherokee Indian, in Oklahoma. After she died in Arkansas in 1868, he returned to Hamilton County and married Jane Lowe in 1872. Russell Gann died in 1885. His son, William Thomas Gann, married Margaret Crawford. Sarah in 1852 married Miles Pinkton Penny, who previously was married to Mary Ann Bean. Sarah Gann Penny died in 1910 at Soddy. Andrew lived with his wife, Mary, at Soddy. Mary married John Billings. Lydia A. married Steven H. Jones, but he left for parts unknown in 1866 and she married Jacob Barnes, a miller whose parents had been killed by Indians at Rhea County. Barnes was first married to Eliza Cranmore. Lydia Gann Jones Barnes died in 1911. Martha died as an infant. Amanda married James M. Bean. Lucinda married William Hackney in 1876.

When the Civil War broke out, the John Gann sons — in Missouri and in Hamilton County — went with the Union. Ira Gann was apparently past fighting age. But James, Charles and Elisha, along with James Gann's son, Campbell A. Gann, all enlisted in the Union army at Harrison on Feb. 25, 1862. They were mustered into the Fifth Tennessee Volunteer Infantry Regiment on March 29, 1862, at Barbourville, Ky. This unit arrived from McMinnville at Chattanooga just after the fighting at Chickamauga. They helped man the bridge across Chattanooga Creek until eventually withdrawing into town. They were later headquartered at Sale Creek and did duty along the Tennessee River between Chattanooga and Knoxville. Then they were in the Atlanta campaign and the fighting around Nashville. James Gann, who was a private in Co. C, was left sick at Nashville on Jan. 17, 1863, and he died on Jan. 28 of "chronic diarrhea." He was buried at Nashville. Campbell Gann served through the war and was mustered out at Nashville on April 4, 1865. Elisha Gann deserted on Sept. 20, 1862, en route from Cumberland Gap to Ohio. He was arrested and later returned to duty. Charles Gann deserted along with his brother and was brought before a court-martial. He was ordered to forfeit a year's pay and was then allowed back in the service. Charles Gann moved to Missouri after the war.

John Gann, son of Thomas Gann Jr., joined the Union's Sixth Mounted Infantry on Sept. 12, 1864. He was mustered out at Nashville on June 30, 1865, and he later drew a pension at his home at Igou's Ferry. Andy Gann, younger brother of John Gann, was also a private in the Sixth Mounted Infantry. He hurt his hip in jumping off a train during the war. He also received veteran's benefits at Igou's Ferry. Jarrett G. Gann was also in the Sixth Mounted Infantry, and he later lived at Igou's Ferry.

The children of Ira Gann are given as Sophronia who married a Carney and then a Hixson, Jesse who married Nancy Posey, Zachary Taylor, James Madison who married Isabelle Carden, Mary, Silas, and Martha who married a Bice and then a Freeman. Jesse Gann was living near Soddy when he died in 1927. His wife, Nancy, lived until 1943. Their children were listed as Lewis of Soddy, A.J. of Atlanta, and Mae who married Joseph Rawlston and lived at Hixson. James Madison Gann was also living near Soddy when he died in 1930. His children were given as Ida Mae who married John W. Horne, Callie who married Lon J. Layman, Fred, Floyd, Robert and Willard.

The children of Elisha Gann are given as John Adam who married Josephine Hodges and then Cyrena Smith, William, Martha who married Moses DeFries Miller, Tennessee who married William Davidson, William J., Dora who married James Parker, Phoebe who married James Gann, Samuel who married Ella Henry, Sally who married Jonathan Pendergrass, and James Taylor who married Osie Reno.

Jefferson Gann married Elizabeth Gann, daughter of Thomas Gann Jr. Their children included Marion, Franklin who married Mary Ann Sniteman, Sarah who married Russell Gann in 1874, Joseph who married Sophronia Smith in 1874, W. Riley who married Emmeline Mills in 1874, Robert and John. Franklin Gann was a Union veteran. When he died in 1926, he was buried in the Rogers Cemetery. His sons were Wilbert J. and Richard A. The daughters were listed as Della Cornelison, Almeda Hatfield and Mary McKeel. Washington Gann was an older brother of Jefferson Gann.

Campbell A. Gann, married Mary E. Lowe in 1867.

Their children included Adaline, Elizabeth, William, John W., Sarah M., Thomas, twins Saneptra and Seleta, and Phillip R.

James F. Gann, son of Wesley Gann, lived all his life at Igou Ferry near Soddy. He died in 1926 at age 73. His death occurred several days after he and his wife, Mary M., had celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary with all the children present. They were William of Chattanooga, Thomas N. of Nashville, James A. and Benjamin H. of Soddy, Mrs. Louise Bean, Martha Crest and Mrs. Amanda Gann.

Jarrett G. Gann married Margaret "Rebecca" Courtney, daughter of John Courtney. They lived in Illinois, but they returned to Hamilton County by the time of the Civil War. The homeplace of Jarrett Gann was three miles from Daisy. He and Rebecca are buried at the Jackson Chapel Cemetery. Their children were William who married Liza A. Stevenson, James M., Daniel, Sophronia, John and Cynthia A.

A number of Ganns still reside here. The family name is also kept aloft by the names of Gann Store Road and Ganns-Middle Valley Elementary School. Cassandra Smith Road recalls the name of Cassandra Gann Smith.

Thomas L. Ghann of Rossville has extensively studied the family history. His branch of the family adopted an alternate spelling. Christine and James Holcomb compiled information on Preston Gann. Thomas Thurman Butler of Joplin, Mo., wrote a book on his Gann ancestors. Phyllis Horsman is another local Gann researcher.