

A Step Back in Time

By Bobbie Sue Shelton-Lonas

HISTORY OF COLLEGE GROVE

Carolyn Smotherman, a College Grove resident, who is a participant of a very valuable project, writing the History of College Grove, submitted the following information. A group of individuals, who are interested in preserving the history of the community, have been working on this project for several years and are in the final phase of completion. This is a very important, but a time consuming project, that will be a benefit to generations to come.

Several neighboring community has already had their history preserved and others are in the process. Interested individuals in the Longview Community, Bedford County, are also working on their community history as well. Copies of the "Eagleville" history, completed in 2005, are still available for purchase. Anyone interested, contact, Don McCord 615-274-2859, or Bobbie Sue Shelton-Lonas 615-274-6282.

COLLEGE GROVE HISTORY BOOK

When was College Grove established? Who were the earliest settlers? Were the land Revolutionary War land grants? Where are the records kept? Was there a Civil War battle at College Grove? What were and are the major businesses in College Grove? What are the boundaries of College Grove?

These are the kinds of questions that led to the writing of the College Grove History book. Without exception it seems the answer to each question is, "Well, there is not just one answer." For instance, it appears that land was granted in the area, which is now College Grove not later than 1784. These land grants were on the Harpeth River or on Grove Creek. Grove Creek is the waterway that passes east of Horton Highway and somewhat parallel to the highway and which creek has a sign at the bridge, which identifies it as Overall Creek. When Elizabeth Battle realized that it was misidentified and began to try to get it changed, it turned out the location of the bridge was in Rutherford County and the change has not yet been accomplished.

In spite of the fact that people began obtaining deeds to the land in the College Grove area soon after the end of the Revolutionary War, it does not appear that settlers came until almost 1800. And while the people were here and the land was fast filling up with settlers between 1800 and 1820, there was no town where College Grove is today until after 1850.

James Patton Allison, who lived at Unionville in Bedford County until after 1840, by 1857 had acquired and had given, in two separate deeds, land for a church and a school in the same location where College Grove High School and the College Grove Presbyterian Church were located for more than 100 years after that. When he wrote the deed for the church, he indicated the building already existed, so perhaps the first building that inaugurated the community was about 1854.

There were no stores, nor mills, nor blacksmith shop and it was not called College Grove. The first indication that the town began as Poplar Grove is a July 1859 advertisement for the "Poplar Grove Male Academy" which was published in the *Western Weekly Review* (which later became the *Review-Appeal*). The earliest records for the Presbyterian Church also indicate that it was called Poplar

Grove Presbyterian Church. The oft told story of how College Grove got its name is that in 1861 a post office was authorized, but those seeking the office were told that there was another Poplar Grove in Tennessee and a different name would have to be chosen. College Grove was selected in honor of the male academy, and a female academy at the present location of the Methodist parsonage.

About 2001 a group began working on a history of College Grove at Fifty Forward (Senior Citizens at that time), housed in the former College Grove Elementary School building. We let people know, to the best of our ability, primarily through newspaper articles, the Senior Citizen newsletter, word of mouth, an internet site and internet mailing lists, that we were collecting material to write the history and would include family articles, school and church information, and old photographs. There was a lot of interest from the community and many people wrote about their families, loaned us pictures to copy, and sometimes came to meet with our committee.

By the fall of 2004 we had an impressive collection and began to compile it into a book. At the November presidential election, we sat up a table to advertise the

Bank of College Grove



book and to collect deposits against the unknown price of the future book. More than 70 people had enough faith in our ability to produce a book to give us \$20. At that time we thought we should be able to have the books by November 2005 and that they would contain about 250 pages and perhaps 400 photographs.



The College Grove Depot was built soon after the Louisville and Nashville tracks were laid in 1914. It served as the passenger and freight terminal, telegraph office, and was the means of getting mail to and from College Grove. It was also the shipping point for cattle and other locally produced goods. In later years, it housed the local health clinic. The depot was dismantled in 1980. Salvageable lumber was used in the construction of a local home.

The intervening years seem almost like a dream; whenever anyone inquired about the progress on the book and when it would be finished, we always said it was almost finished and we believed it when we said it. Each year we would begin the year with a plan to have the books by Christmas. We were continually receiving

but the material is in the hands of the publisher and the books will be delivered some time in early 2011. Now our estimate is 500 pages and 800 photographs.

Many people have worked on the book; the major long-time contributors include Elizabeth Ogilvie Battle, Pauline Heaton Covington Arnold, Beverly Burke Collins, Arline Windrow Sudberry, Glenda Crick Dyer, Frances Greathouse, Betty Blue Windrow Dye, and Carolyn Smotherman. Rick Warwick of the Williamson County Historical Society and the Heritage Foundation scanned all the photographs and contributed material for the book. Louise Lynch, Director of the Williamson County Archives, gave us articles and suggestions, and made our work easier with her many indices and notebooks of organized materials. So many people and organizations were helpful to us that we could not hope to name everyone, but we are grateful to each one and those who enjoy the book should know we could not have accomplished such a great result without the support of the community.

We are trying to reach as many people who feel a connection to College Grove as possible while we are still able to offer the book at a discounted price. Once the actual printing begins, we have to lock in a number of books ordered and we have to borrow money to pay for the ones, which have not been pre-paid. This means there will be few extra books and they will cost more. Please order your book now—it will be a great help to us—and please let your friends and kin who no longer live in the Williamson County or Eagleville area know about the book.

College Grove Canning Company

