

The Roark-Conner Association
presents the



Roark-Conner Heritage Trail

Compiled by
Gene Johnson, Chuck Gross, and Howard Scott

Booklet and map intended for persons interested in discovering sites of historical interest in the Birchwood area of Hamilton County, Tennessee

*Originally published in October 2008 to commemorate
the Roark-Conner Association's 50th Reunion*

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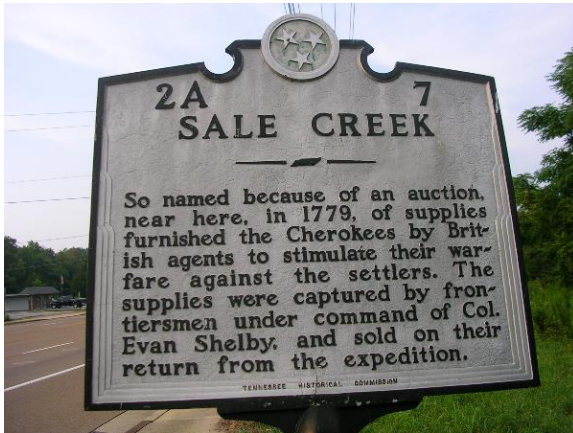
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The Roark-Conner Heritage Trail Tour

The Tour begins at Sale Creek, which is 9 miles south of Hwy 27/Hwy 60 intersection at Dayton, TN.

1 Sale Creek



Highway 27 (appr 9 miles south of Hwy 27/Hwy 60 intersection at Dayton, TN)
494.9 Mile Marker on Tennessee River Navigation Chart

About 1820, the brothers James (abt 18), John (abt 16), and Joseph Roark (abt 3) came down the rivers on a flatboat with their father, Timothy

Roark, Sr. and other family members and settled in the Horseshoe Bend area of Sale Creek. (The Horseshoe Bend is probably the Sale Creek Marina area. Look at horseshoe shaped area south of Sale Creek Marina on attached navigation chart copy.) The Sale Creek area on the west bank of the Tennessee River had only recently been secured from the Cherokee Indians about 1819. The eastern side of the river was still in possession of the Cherokees. Looking eastward across the river from the Sale Creek channel, it is easy to see the Birchwood Parker Loop river banks. Looking northward from the Tennessee River channel at Sale Creek, the Tri-County Veterans Bridge is visible in the distance. The old Blythe Ferry passenger pickups are still visible on the Birchwood side (east) and Dayton side (west). Hiwassee

Island, north of Blythe Ferry, can easily be seen from the Tri-County Memorial Bridge.

James Roark met Jerusha Blythe, a sister of ferry operator William Blythe, and married in 1825. Later, they moved across the river to land located on Little Grasshopper Creek, east of present day Birchwood Pike.

John Roark met Margaret Gross and they lived in the Sale Creek community until sometime in the late 1830s when they moved to the east side of the river along the present Parker Loop in Birchwood. Margaret had a brother Lewis Gross who remained in Sale Creek.

Joseph Roark married Juda Ann Carr, daughter of Samuel Carr, about 1833 in Sale Creek and they moved across the river to homestead an area of Grasshopper Creek.

Sale Creek was also Union Army headquarters in the Civil War that directed Privates John B. Roark (son of James and Jerusha) and Archibald Lafayette McCallie (future husband of Margaret Ann Roark), to serve as scouts and cross the Tennessee River for the purpose of making observation of the movements of the enemy.

Where did Sale Creek get its name? See Sale Creek historical marker photo.

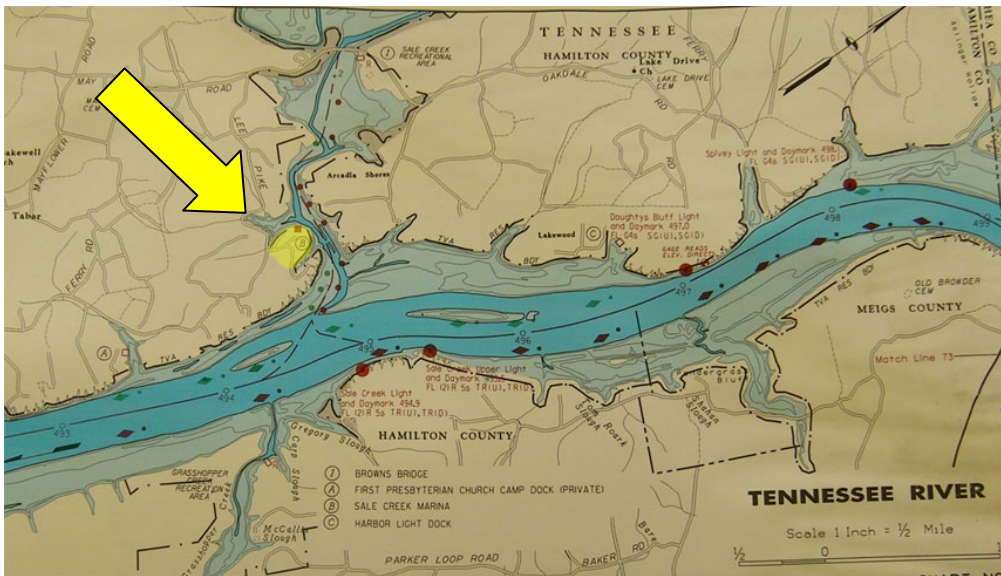


A boat is necessary to properly tour the Sale Creek channel and explore the possible locations where the Roarks may have chosen to stop their flatboat and settle. The Sale

Creek Marina is located at the 494.9 mile marker on the Tennessee River Navigation Chart.

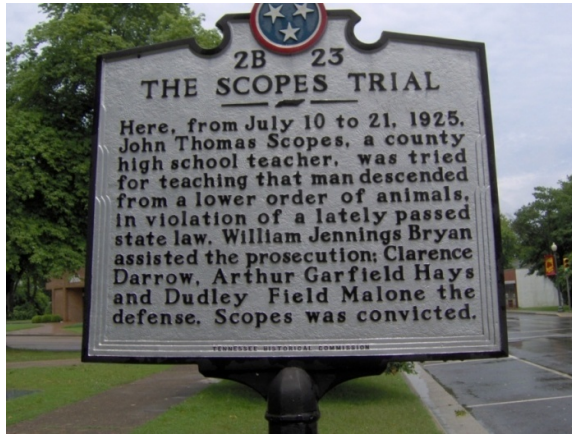
Directions from Cleveland, TN to Sale Creek Marina

- From I-75, take exit 25 onto Hwy 60 west.
- Stay on Hwy 60 toward Dayton, TN for approx. 20 miles through Birchwood to Hwy 27 (you will cross Hwy 58 and the TN River).
- Turn left onto Hwy 27 south and go about 9 miles to Sale Creek.
- In Sale Creek, pass under overhead School Zone sign.
- Take next left onto Patterson Road which becomes Mayflower Rd. Follow Patterson/Mayflower Road approximately 3-1/2 miles to the first crossroad and turn left onto May Road.
- Follow May Road approximately one mile and take 2nd right onto Lee Pike.
- Follow Lee Pike approximately 1-1/2 miles. Turn left into Regatta Point subdivision and immediately turn left into the marina driveway.



Notice “Horseshoe Bend” in highlighted area. This is area where the Roark brothers originally settled in Sale Creek about 1820.

Side trip suggestion: If traveling by automobile, it is suggested that a trip be made through historic Dayton to observe the courthouse where the famous Scopes Monkey Trial was held in 1925. The 1960 movie *"Inherit the Wind"*, starring Spencer Tracy and Fredric March, reenacted the 1925 courthouse drama.



Rhea County Courthouse

The Tri-County Veterans Bridge on Hwy 60 is appr 6 miles eastward from the Hwy 27/Hwy 60 intersection at Dayton (or appr 2 miles westward from Birchwood Elementary School). The bridge offers good views of Blythe Ferry areas and Hiwassee Island.

Tri-County Veterans Bridge is also called Highway 60 Bridge. The three county names for the bridge are Hamilton, Meigs, and Rhea.

Tour continues after trip across Tri-County Veterans Bridge on Hwy 60 approaching the Birchwood area

2 Blythe Ferry

Exit at Shadden Road off Hwy 60 and follow the signs for Cherokee Removal Memorial Park (Blythe Ferry).

6800 Blythe Ferry Lane
Birchwood, TN USA
37308



Blythe Ferry was the connecting points for Highway 60 to join the eastern side of the river at Birchwood to the western side of the river at Dayton. William Blythe, brother of Jerusha Blythe Roark, was the ferry operator until the “Trail of Tears” in 1838 when William Blythe moved to Oklahoma as part of the Cherokee Removal Act. William Blythe had married Nancy Fields, the daughter of Cherokee Chief Richard Fields.

Blythe Ferry is one of the state’s most important landmarks of the Trail of Tears and the process of the Cherokee Removal in 1838-39. The sheer number of Cherokees using the ferry, some 9,839 in all, with their 3,868 horses and 490 wagons, surely caused long waits, much to the dismay of detachment leaders. Detachments crossing at Blythe Ferry were led by Hair Conrad, Elijah Hicks, Jesse Bushyhead, John Benge, Situwakee, Old Field, Moses Daniel, Choowalooka, George Hicks, and Peter Hildebrand.

Construction of Cherokee Removal Memorial Park at Blythe Ferry is currently under construction (June, 2008). The park will be constructed in three phases: Phase I: The board walk and wildlife overlook shelters on top of the bluff (complete and open). Phase II: Visitors Center and Cherokee Genealogical Library (under construction). Phase III: Memorial Wall (future plans).

Blythe Ferry operated from about 1809 until the Tri-County Veterans Bridge was completed in 1994.



Blythe Ferry, 1995. See new bridge in background that opened to carry travelers from the Dayton side of the area back and forth to Highway 60 into Birchwood on their way to and from Cleveland or Chattanooga.

During the Civil War, a company of the Fifth Tennessee Infantry Regiment was stationed for over a year at ferry to guard the mouth of the Hiwassee River. Prior to the Battle of Chickamauga, a skirmish took place at Blythe Ferry on November 13, 1863.

3 Hiwassee Island (aka Jolly or Benham Island) “Tennessee Wildlife Refuge”

Exit at Shadden Road off Hwy 60 and follow the signs to Tennessee Wildlife Refuge; then take Priddy Lane and the right fork in the road to the viewing station. The road into the viewing station area is a narrow gravel road.

This island area was the landing location of the Maximilian Haney Conner, II, flotilla in late 1834 when they found the Tennessee River frozen over on their planned trip to the Mississippi Delta. Third child, Thomas, was born to Maximilian Haney Conner, II and wife, Martha Palmer Conner as they waited for the ice to melt. Thomas Palmer, Sr. and wife Emily Atkins Palmer also accompanied the Conners on the flotilla.



The Hiwassee Island encircling the confluence of the Hiwassee and Tennessee Rivers is steeped in Cherokee history. This land lies near the center of the ancestral land of the Cherokee Nation that once encompassed portions of Kentucky , Tennessee , Alabama , Georgia , South Carolina , North Carolina , Virginia , and West Virginia.

John Jolly, a wealthy merchant and planter who lived on Hiwassee Island , was one of the area's famous Cherokee residents. Although of both Cherokee and European descent, Jolly spoke no English and dressed in traditional buckskin clothing, leggings, moccasins, and turban. Jolly left Hiwassee Island in 1818 for Oklahoma where he served as Principal Chief of the Cherokee "Old Settlers" for 20 years. As a youth, Sam Houston spent several years on the island living among the Cherokees.



View of Hiwassee Island from overlook shelter at viewing stand.

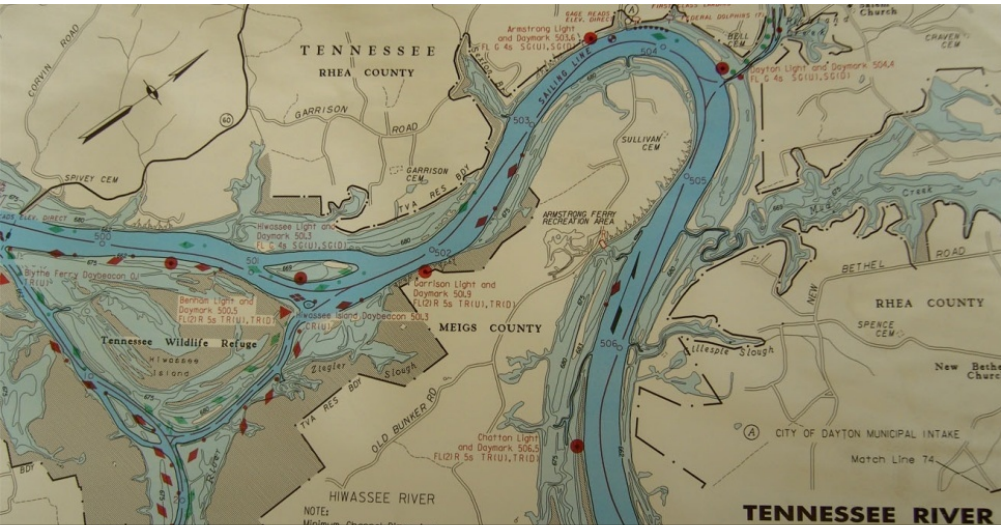
Birchwood, in a portion of Meigs County, is the home of the Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge on Hiwassee Island, a favorite stop each fall and late winter for over 50,000 migrating sandhill cranes. These birds make the Hiwassee Refuge their stop from nesting grounds in the north to wintering spots in Florida and Georgia. This is certainly a magnificent sight and a must-see for bird watchers and nature enthusiasts.

Fossils indicate evidence that the sandhill crane dates back 14 millions years and makes them one of the oldest living feathered relatives of dinosaurs. They are social animals, large, stately, graceful, and beautiful in flight.

The island was over 800 acres before the TVA built the Chickamauga Lake. The government purchased the island in 1936 for the lake and all residents were required to leave the island. After the water level was raised by the Chickamauga Dam construction, only about 450 acres were remaining.

John Wesley and Permelia Conner Roark lived on the island in the 1880s and 90s. John was a farmer raising corn and melons that he took to market in Dayton. John was the main supporter of building a school on the island to educate the island children. The church building was used as a school classroom. John and Permelia’s daughter, Julia, was the first teacher. Her brother, Daniel, also taught at this school.

At one time, about 1890, there were eleven families living full time on the island.



Hiwassee Island as shown on 1992 Tennessee River Navigation Chart.

4 McInturff Cemetery

Off Hwy 60 on McInturff Road; easily seen atop a knoll along Hwy 60.(less than 2 miles west of Birchwood Elementary School. Note: The road sign is incorrectly printed “McIntruff Road”.



Taken from an Internet website: *The cemetery was once part of the McInturff family farm. When a friend of the family was called to battle during the civil war, he commented that if he died, he would like to be buried under the large cedar tree on a small knoll on the farm. His wish was granted. Being that he was a confederate soldier, he was buried in an*

unmarked grave for fear of grave robbers looking for confederate "souvenirs". Other burials soon followed. The story has been passed down orally from senior citizens in the Birchwood community---but since stories tend to become embellished over the years--may be true--may not.

The large cemetery contains many family names familiar to the residents of Birchwood, old Salem, Friendship, Georgetown, and nearby Meigs County areas.



McInturff Cemetery

At the top of the knoll are large cedar trees with benches placed for visitors to rest.

5 Birchwood Baptist Church and Cemetery

5436 Highway 60
Birchwood, TN 37308

The Birchwood Baptist Church was established in 1873 by members of the Salem Baptist Church who wanted a church nearer their homes. Many descendants of the Roarks, Conners, Grosses, Pendergrasses, McCallies, and other pioneer families are buried here. The community of Birchwood was the center of a group of pioneers coming into Cherokee Territory in the 1830s.



Birchwood Baptist Church

Birchwood Baptist Church Cemetery is located on the south side of Birchwood Baptist Church, located on Highway 60 just past Birchwood Elementary School; located at 5436 Highway 60. The land for the church and cemetery was given by Mr. A. M. Bare.

Birchwood Baptist Church Cemetery

There are more than 25 Roark headstones; 5 Conner headstones; 16 Gross headstones; appr. 14 Pendergrass headstones; appr. 9 McCallie headstones; 6 Bare headstones; and many more familiar family names.



The Birchwood Baptist Cemetery contains more than 400 marked gravesites and includes many family names of pioneers who first settled the area. There are about 60 old unmarked graves. Many former teachers who taught at Birchwood School teachers are among those buried in this cemetery.

Turn left at Bunker Hill Rd at Birchwood Baptist Church on Hwy 60

6 Rutherford Graded Academy – Limestone Lodge No. 176 F.&A.M.

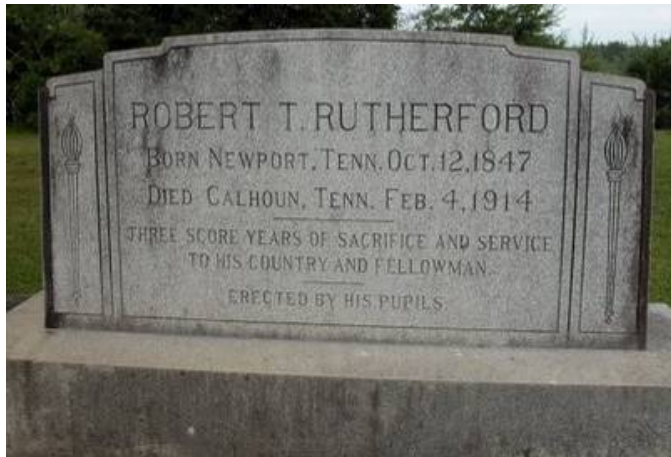
Rutherford Rd.; off 5535 Bunker Hill Road
Birchwood, TN 37308



Before Birchwood School was built, many of the students in the surrounding Birchwood area attended Robert Rutherford's Academy or Graded School, located off Bunker Hill Road in the small town of Birchwood. Robert Rutherford came to Birchwood from Newport, Tennessee, to open the academy in 1893 and served two generations of students. The attending Rutherford Academy students were children of farm families in a 6-7 mile school radius. The school graduated many students that went on to become teachers and physicians. Robert Rutherford died in 1915. His school still looks pretty much like it looked in old photographs, except for the

Masonic lodge symbol over the door and the change from a white painted frame to a gray vinyl siding.

Currently, the building that housed Mr. Rutherford's Graded School has been converted into a Masonic lodge named Limestone Lodge. Limestone Lodge was originally housed in Georgetown but was moved to Birchwood. Many Roarks and Conners enjoy(ed) their association with the Limestone Lodge.



7 Birchwood Methodist Cemetery (at Birchwood Church of God)

5611 Bunker Hill Rd.
Birchwood, TN 37308



Historically, this cemetery is known as "Birchwood Methodist Cemetery" because the church history dates back to 1882 when Euclid Waterhouse deeded two acres of land on the Bunker Hill Road in James County for the Methodist church and cemetery. The Methodist Church stopped church services about 1920 and the building and grounds remained unoccupied for about 20 years when, in 1939, the Birchwood Church of God obtained permission to use it for their services. Later in May, 1945, the Methodist Conference sold the congregation the property. The historic cemetery bears

names of many pioneers in the area: Bower, Brown, Curton, DeFriese, Dixon, Gamble, Gross, Harris, Hutcheson, Knox, Lane, Martin, McClanahan, McCallie, Munger, Olinger, Pierce, Potter, Roark, Tipton, and Witt. (See pages 96-97 of *James County – A Lost County of Tennessee*).

The cemetery is located in the 5600 area of Bunker Hill Road, about a block off Highway 60, across the road from Birchwood Baptist Church, in the middle of Birchwood. The cemetery is incredibly old and headstone inscriptions are difficult to read on many headstones. A cemetery survey was completed in May, 2008, and combined with those graves included in Chuck Gross's book, "*The Cemeteries of Interest to the Roark-Conner Families*".

There are many McCallie graves in the small cemetery, including Archibald and Sarah McCallie, parents of Archibald Lafayette McCallie and John McCallie..



8A M. C. “Mack” and Margaret Gross Conner home site

Bunker Hill Road (right side of road past Meigs Co. 411 sign and Dilbeck Lane)
Birchwood, TN 37308



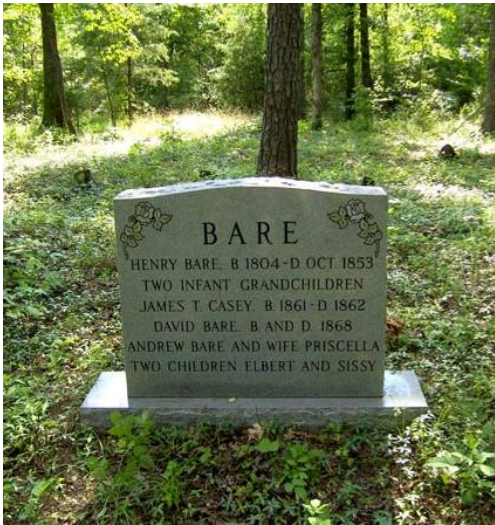
M. C. “Mack” and Margaret Gross Conner and their family of six boys and three girls lived on this land. “Mack” was the eldest son, born May 2, 1833, of Maximilian Haney Conner, II, and Martha Palmer Conner.

M. C. Conner was known as “Uncle Mack” and was a member of the numerous Conner family of James, Meigs, and Hamilton Counties. He married Margaret Gross of Birchwood.

After touring No. 8 location on Bunker Hill Road, return to Hwy. 60 and travel across Hwy. 60 to enter Daugherty Ferry Road to see the location of No. 8B - Bare Cemetery. This very old cemetery is difficult to find without guidance; and requires a hike up and down little hills through the woods and across streams.

8B Bare Cemetery

Directions: Daugherty Ferry Road is immediately south of Birchwood Baptist Church. Turn onto Daugherty Ferry Road and the entry point to the cemetery is about ½ mile down the road on the left side of the road at Bob Randolph's mailbox. After the entry point, the cemetery is at least ½ mile through the woods. Contact Bob Randolph (423) 961-2676 before entering the cemetery.



There are only three legible original headstones and several unmarked limestone slabs for headstones.

In the past few years, Mrs. Elizabeth Bare Randolph has installed a new large headstone for Henry Bare (1804-1853), a true pioneer settler.

The stone also includes others that are known to be buried in the old cemetery.

The cemetery location is now owned by Bob and Carole Roark Randolph.

The first road east of Daugherty Ferry Road is Johnson Road. Turn right at Johnson Road at Whistlin' Bill Blacksmith Shop on Hwy 60.

9 John Roark Family Cemetery

4453 Parker Loop (across the yard from Willard Farmer's house)
Birchwood, TN 37308

The cemetery is off Parker Loop in the community of Birchwood, Tennessee. Turn onto Johnson Road (past Birchwood Elementary School) and travel south 1 ½ miles until it dead ends into Parker Loop. Take Parker Loop 9/10 of a mile and the “Roark Cemetery” sign can be seen on the right; up the hill from the intersection of Bluff View and Parker Loop. The cemetery is located in a wooded area on public property.





There are approximately 43 headstones with readable names and dates. Among the headstones are the pioneer family relatives of Pendergrass, Cross, Haney, Hardings, Roarks, and others. John and Margaret Gross Roark; and including their youngest son, John Lewis “Jack” Roark, and his wife, Victoria Darleska Conner are among the graves.

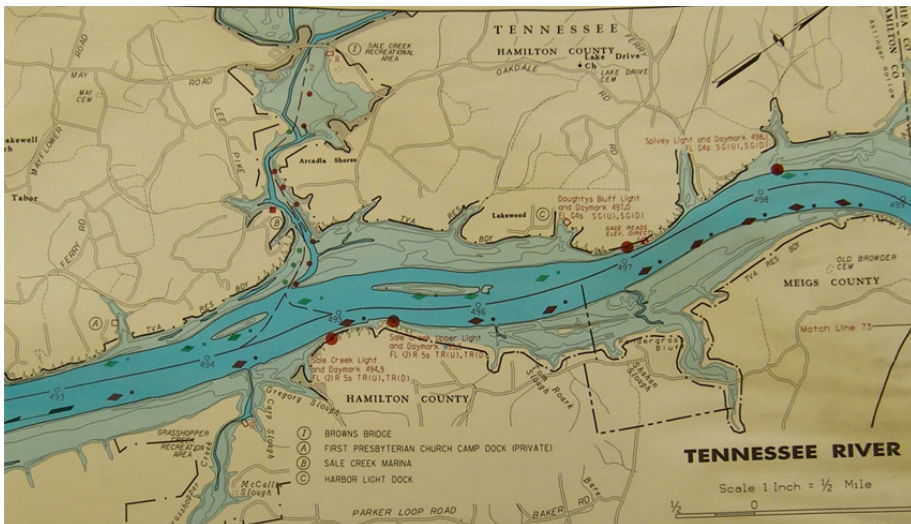
John Roark was one of the three Roark brothers (James, John, and Joseph) that came from across the river in Sale Creek to settle in Birchwood about the year 1830. They had traveled from Virginia by flatboat and first settled at the Horseshoe Bends on Sale Creek about 1816. James Roark is buried in the Conner Cemetery; Joseph Roark is buried at Bald Hill Cemetery; and John Roark is buried here; in his private cemetery on his farm.

The Roark Cemetery is located across the road and up a little hill from the John and Margaret Gross Roark home site on the Tennessee River.

10 John and Margaret Gross Home Site

River mile marker 495 (across from Sale Creek channel), or if standing looking directly ahead at the names on the John and Margaret Roark gravestone markers, look to your right towards the river.

The home site of the original log cabin near the Tennessee River is nearly 2 miles west of what became Birchwood. John, Margaret and their children came to this location from Sale Creek, on the western side of the river.



11 McCallie Cemetery and McCallie Home Site

River mile marker 494.25
McCallie Slough
Grasshopper Creek Recreation Area
Birchwood, TN 37308

McCallie Cemetery is located in a clearing on a little rise overlooking McCallie Slough, on TVA property near the community of Birchwood, at the edge of the Tennessee River on Grasshopper Creek Recreation Area.

From the center of Birchwood, take Johnson Road south off Hwy 60 1.5 miles until it deadends into Parker Loop. Take Parker Loop left 1.3 miles and turn left into Grasshopper Creek Recreation area. Take this road 4/10 mile and see a closed gate on the left. This gated road is paved. Walk past the gate approximately 450 yards, keep to the left (picnic area on the right). As the paved road ends in a clearing, the cemetery is approximately 25 yards to the left.

The cemetery contains 32 marked graves. Twenty-four of the marked graves are either McCallie (18) or Dungan (6) names.



Return to Birchwood Community on Hwy 60 from Johnson Road, Parker Loop, and Grasshopper Creek Recreation Area

12 Birchwood Community (Birchwood School, Two Sisters Vintage Shop, Whistlin' Bill Blacksmith Shop; Dr. Luther Lee Friddell historical marker)

Birchwood Elementary School

5623 Highway 60
Birchwood, TN 37308

12A Birchwood School was built in 1931 to replace a school building that had burned in 1929. Baker School merged with Birchwood School in



1920 to create one of only three high schools in Hamilton County. The High School portion of Birchwood school ceased to exist in 1976, with high school students being transferred to Central High School, Harrison, TN, or Ooltewah High School, Ooltewah, TN. Birchwood lost its Jr. High School students to the new Hunter Middle School in 1995. The closings met with much local

opposition from parents who said the closings meant longer bus rides and less parent involvement at the new schools. During meetings with Hamilton County education officials, parents stated their fears that the closings were just another step towards closing the entire school. Birchwood Elementary School had a total enrollment of approximately 135 students (from an article in September 27, 1999 edition of Chattanooga Times).

In the 2007 school year, prospective Birchwood and area students entering the fifth grade were required to attend Hunter Middle School or Sale Creek Middle School.



Birchwood School's first principal was Jasper Bare, a position he held for twenty-five years. Over the years, many teachers of the Roark, Bare, DeFriese, Gross, Baker, Wiggins, Bischoff, Randolph, Pendergrass, McGill, and other teaching families made their homes in the Birchwood community.

12B Two Sisters Vintage Shop was located directly across from the



school and on the location of George Dewey “Doc” Roark’s ‘filling station’ that closed in the early 1960s. The Two Sisters Vintage Shop was owned and operated by two of Doc’s daughters, Kaye and Phyllis. Their store contained an assortment of old photographs of Birchwood interests, novelty items, and artwork and jewelry created by

Kaye.

Doc Roark and cousin Roy Roark built a movie theater next to Doc’s fillin’ station in the early 1950s. After a short duration as a movie theater, Doc converted the building into a skating rink that operated for a while. Now, the old movie theatre/ skating rink building is the current meeting place for the “Old Sunday School Baptist Church”.



Across the creek behind the Two Sisters Vintage Shop is a house that was built in 1873 by Dr. Samuel Lee who lived there for awhile and sold the house to Dr. Luther Friddell, who sold the house to Newton Nathaniel “Berry Newt” Roark

who lived there until his death. The large house is now owned by grandson Raul Roark who is in the process of renovation of the house.

12C Whistlin' Bill Blacksmith Shop

was located at the corner of Johnson Road and Highway 60 and was one of the last blacksmith shops in Birchwood. William Cleveland Johnson owned the blacksmith shop and was known far and wide as "Whistling Bill". If he was not talking, he was whistling and was known for the talents of blacksmithing and whistling.

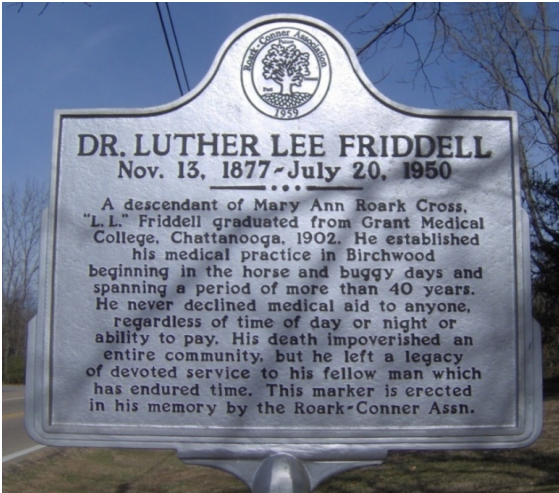


The old blacksmith shop was in disrepair after the death of Whistlin' Bill until purchased by Ken and Margaret Gamble. The shop was renovated and a new blacksmith sign was installed and the outside area made into a quaint area for sitting and visiting. Kenneth has recently (June, 2008) installed a forge in preparation for possible demonstrations of pioneer blacksmithing techniques.



Ken is a descendant of Eliza Roark and James Pendergrass.

12D Dr. Luther Friddell marker (across road from Two Sisters Vintage Shop) Dr. Luther Lee Friddell was the grandson of Mary Ann Roark and John Cross and great grandson of John and Margaret Gross Roark.



Luther Friddell was born in 1878 at Tom Roark's place on the river (site 29 on the tour map). Luther's parents, John and Lizzie Cross Friddell, were visiting with family at Tom Roark when Luther was born.

Dr. Friddell practiced medicine for 45 years in the Birchwood and area communities. In earlier days he traveled by horseback or horse and buggy to call on his patients. Later, he traveled by automobile, both to visit the sick

and to check on his large farm and peach orchard in the Friendship Community at 11514 Birchwood Pike. Dr. Friddell's peach orchard site can be seen on the hillside in the attached photo.

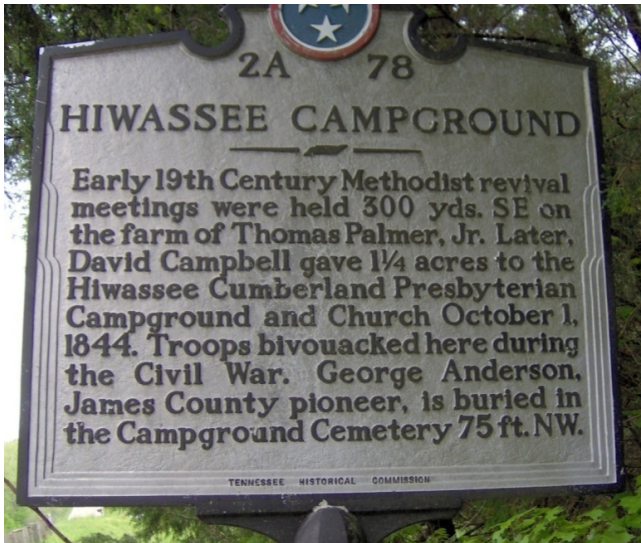


Doc Friddell's old farm and peach orchard at 11514 Birchwood Pike.

Continue Traveling east towards Georgetown on Hwy 60 to see Hiwassee Campground historical marker and Thomas Palmer, Jr. Home Site

13 Hiwassee Campground and Thomas Palmer, Jr. Home Site

Marker is appr 4 miles east of Birchwood School on Hwy 60 towards Georgetown or 1.2 mile west of Hwy 60 and Hwy 58 intersection



Hiwassee Campground historic marker was placed on the northern side of Hwy 60 across from Anderson Cemetery in the 7400 block of Hwy 60 by Tenn. Historical Commission on April 12, 1981.

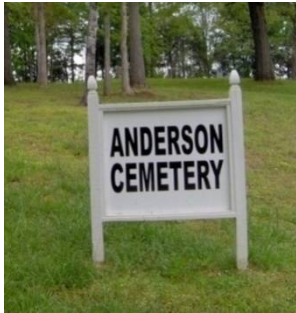
Thomas Palmer, Jr. was given scrip for 500 acres of land in Tennessee for his service in the War of 1812. He selected the

Hiwassee Springs area and lived here for several years. He sold it for a yoke for oxen, a Dutch oven, and other minor items and moved his family to Glendale, IL where he had a scrip for 80 acres.

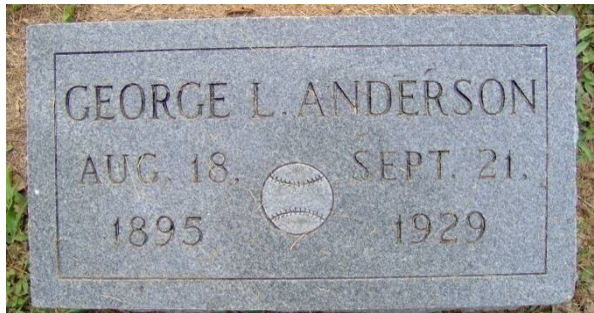
Hiwassee Camp Ground was founded and used by our early ancestors before they could build a church house for their worship.

During the Civil War, Union soldiers camped at the Hiwassee Campground.

The Campground Cemetery was located on the Hiwassee Campground acres and was later named the Cedar Hill Cemetery but is known today as the Anderson Cemetery. Stately cedars laden with resurrection moss stand as silent sentinels over the known and unknown dead of this old cemetery..



The Anderson Cemetery (located across the road from the Hiwassee Campground marker) is only a few miles east of Georgetown, TN. In the 1910s, Georgetown was well known for its baseball teams. George L. Anderson is buried in the Anderson Cemetery with a baseball engraved onto his headstone. George L. Anderson played major league baseball with the Philadelphia Phillies and New York Yankees in 1923.



After return from Hiwassee Campground and Thomas Palmer, Jr. Home Site visit, turn onto Birchwood Pike (aka known as Hwy 312) to continue tour

14 John Lewis “Jack” and Victoria Conner Roark Home Site

Located NW of Sam Smith Road and Birchwood Pike intersection about 14101 area of Birchwood Pike (apparently the old home site began at a point west of this area and reached all the way to Hickory Landing on the Tennessee River) Birchwood, TN 37308



John Lewis “Jack” Roark married Victoria Darleska Conner at Salem Baptist Church in September of 1866. “Jack” Roark enlisted in the Union Army at age 1 during the Civil War and served in the 5th Tennessee Infantry and stayed the entire 4 years.

Their marriage was blessed with the birth of fourteen children.

Jack Roark was a member of the Limestone Lodge, F. & A.M. in Birchwood for more than fifty years and a member of the Salem Baptist Church for more than seventy years.

Victoria Conner Roark was a member of the Salem Baptist Church for more than fifty-five years.

Both are buried at the family Roark Cemetery in Birchwood.

15 James P. and Jerusha Blythe Roark Home Site

Located north of Sam Smith Road at Birchwood Pike intersection

About 14100 area of Birchwood Pike
Birchwood, TN 37308



The James and Jerusha Blythe Roark home site was located about 2 miles south of Birchwood, on the east side of the road and about 3 blocks from the road. They settled here about 1832 after moving across the river from Sale Creek. Nothing remains of their house.

James and Jerusha raised six children to maturity. As James accumulated land in the Salem Community, he was elected to serve as a Justice of the Peace for Hamilton County for 1840-41 and following his term in that office, he was elected constable for a term of two years.

James and Jerusha were members of the Salem Baptist Church and maintained their membership through their later adult years. Both are buried in the Conner Cemetery.

16 Maximilian Haney Conner, II, and Martha Palmer Conner Home Site



Located about the 13935 area of Birchwood Pike (south side of Sam Smith Road at Birchwood Pike), Birchwood, TN 37308

Note: The Sam Smith Spring is located at 14028 Birchwood Pike. M. H. Conner, II, home site is on east side of Birchwood Pike across from Sam Smith Spring. Sam Smith was a Civil War veteran and was a small man with

a long white beard, per Howard Scott. The spring was once covered by a shed and a gourd was hanging on a nail for people to use to drink water from the spring.



Looking east towards M. H. Conner land from Sam Smith Spring.

The home site of Maximilian Haney Conner, II, and Martha Palmer Conner was located east of Birchwood Pike and almost opposite the Thomas Palmer home site. Their home site was a large two-story log house with a wide dog-trot and a detached kitchen. Maximilian Haney, wife Martha, and three small children came in with the large migration from Cocke County, Tennessee, on flat boats. Their granddaughter, Laura Belle Roark Shropshire, remembered visiting often in their home. She said they had a beautiful lawn with many kinds of flowers in bloom, and that they always had a very clean, neat, well cared for home, and everything was kept in excellent condition. She said one of her fondest memories was when she would spend the night at their house. They would sit on the front porch with her in her grandfather's lap. He would sing a verse of a hymn and Mr. Sam Smith, at the old Palmer house, would answer back singing another verse of that hymn. They would sing several songs in this fashion, and it made a great impression on their granddaughter.

Sixteen children were born to this couple. All but one lived to adulthood. Their descendants, now numbering in the thousands are in most states. Martha lost her eyesight in her later years. Mary Jane Scott lived with the elderly couple and took care of them until both died. Maximilian Haney died about one year after Martha died. Both are buried in the Conner Cemetery in the same row adjoining her parents, Thomas and Emily Palmer.

17 Thomas Palmer, Sr. and Emily Adkins Palmer Home Site

About 13825 area of Birchwood Pike
Birchwood, TN 37308

Note: The Sam Smith Spring is located at 14027 Birchwood Pike. Thomas Palmer, Sr. home site was located just south of the Sam Smith Spring.

The home site of Thomas Palmer, Sr., a Revolutionary War soldier and scout for George Washington, and Emily Atkins Palmer was located on the west side of Birchwood Pike, about three miles south of Birchwood. They and their five sons and two married daughters were part of the migration from Coker County, Tennessee, in 1834. Thomas Palmer, Sr., who was then 75 years old, arrived in a wilderness area, among the Indians and wild animals without shelter or any other resources except what they brought on horseback because there were no roads.



None of their five sons settled here. Thomas helped his son-in-law, Maximilian Haney Conner, II, build a millrace from the Little Grasshopper Creek to a mill. He built a house for his family not far from a large spring,

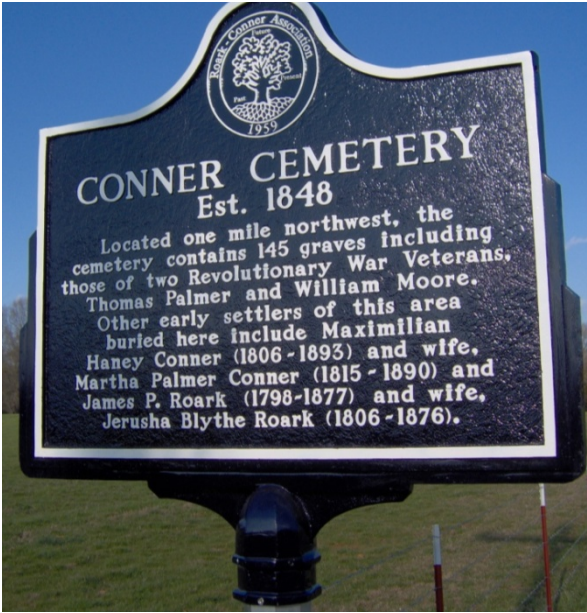
known later as the Sam Smith Spring. Thomas was 92 years old in 1852 when he died, and was buried in the Conner Cemetery on his own land.

John C. I. Smith told Mrs. Laura Roark Shropshire that they fired a 21 gun salute at his funeral. He was the oldest Revolutionary War soldier in Tennessee and his obituary was in the "*Baptist and Reflector*", earliest Baptist Tennessee State paper.

A long time friend of Thomas Palmer, Sr., was William J. Moore, who was also veteran of the Revolutionary War and lived in Rattlesnake Springs in Bradley County for many years. However, he spent his last days with the Palmers and was interred beside his comrade in arms at Conner Cemetery.



18 Conner Cemetery



The Conner Cemetery, located on Birchwood Pike, is a very historic graveyard as it contains the burial sites of two Revolutionary War veterans. The cemetery, established in 1853, contains some two-hundred graves and the last burial service was held there in 1928. The Conner-Roark Cemetery Association has placed 141 numbered markers in the cemetery to mark unmarked graves. The cemetery is located on private property, the farm of Ronald Johnson, at 13825 Birchwood

Pike near Birchwood in Northwest Hamilton County. The cemetery is located in a wooded, fenced area that is on a seldom traveled, but very active pasture land. Directions: Travel north 12.2 miles from the intersection of Birchwood Pike (Highway 312) and Highway 58. The farm of Ronald Johnson is 2/10 mile past New Liberty Baptist Church. (If traveling south on Birchwood Pike from Birchwood, the cemetery is about five miles south of Birchwood.) Prior to visitation, permission from the Ronald Johnson family must be obtained before attempting to pass through the locked pasture gates to locate and visit the cemetery. Mr. Johnson's phone number is (423) 961-2759.

The Conner Cemetery was founded by M. C. "Mack" Conner, at the request of his father Maximilian Haney Conner, II, in 1848 on land owned by Thomas Palmer, Sr. The first burial was John Conner, son of Maximilian Haney Conner, II, and wife Martha Palmer Conner..

Conner Cemetery is the resting place for two Revolutionary War soldiers, William “Bill” J. Moore and Thomas Palmer, Sr., and their wives. The wife of William Moore was Mariah Atkins and the wife of Thomas Palmer was Emily Atkins. (Mariah and Emily were sisters.)

William Moore and Thomas Palmer were best friends and natives of Virginia and both fought with the Virginia troops before migrating to Tennessee with their families.



The Cookston Cemetery is located nearby on the same Ronald Johnson farm. It is advisable to travel to the Cookston Cemetery with a 4-drive vehicle or walk a distance from a sometimes wet and bumpy creek bed separating the cemetery from the pasture land. Two creeks must be negotiated to enter the area where the Conner-Roark Cemetery is located; and an additional creek bed must be crossed to enter the area where the Cookston Cemetery is located.

19 New Liberty Baptist Church

13746 Birchwood Pike
Birchwood, TN 37308

(One mile north of Salem Baptist Church site)

In 1934, Rev. T. Jeff Latham, as pastor of Salem Baptist Church, left with several other members of the congregation to form the New Liberty Baptist Church.



Rev. Latham was also a lumberman and lived $\frac{1}{4}$ mile north of Salem Baptist Church and about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile south of New Liberty Church. Because of his lumber and church leadership, some have said, “Rev. Latham ‘built’ the New Liberty Baptist Church”.

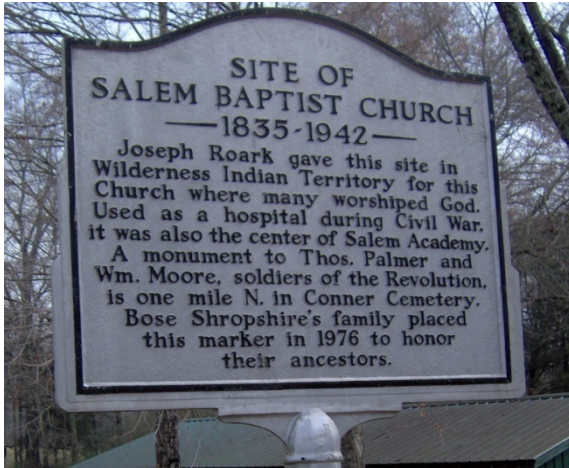
New Liberty Baptist Church and Friendship Baptist Church were partners in maintaining the Bald Hill Cemetery and many New Liberty members are buried in the Bald Hill Cemetery.



20 Salem Baptist Church site

¼ mile north of Grasshopper Road

or .3 mile south of Eldridge Road North and Birchwood Pike Intersection



Salem Baptist Church was one of the small pioneer churches that led the community in the midst of its physical hardships from 1835 to 1941. Through the Civil War Reconstruction, the migration of its members to Texas for cheap land, the turn of the century, and later, the depression, the small church led its community in faith.

This church site on Grasshopper Creek was deeded to the church by Joseph Roark in 1872 to replace the original 1835 church that was organized about two miles southwest. The original church site was deeded to church trustees Maximilian Haney Conner, II, and George Irwin by George Gardenhire in 1844. Little is known of this original church because it burned, along with all the church records, some time before 1857.

Between 1850 and 1860, after fire destroyed the first Salem church building and all its records, the congregation moved the church about two miles northeast and erected another log house near Grasshopper Creek and the Joseph Roark Spring. The Salem Baptist Church served as a hospital for General Braxton Bragg's Confederate Army following the Battle of Chickamauga in 1862. Evidently, the Civil War delayed making a deed to the church for the land it was built on, but on September 28, 1872, Joseph Roark deeded an acre of land surrounding it to the Salem Church.



Salem Baptist Church, Ca. 1915.

The Salem Church was instrumental in establishing the Birchwood Baptist Church. Twenty-four members were granted letters in September 1873 for the purpose of organizing a church at Birchwood.

Until their deaths, Maximilian Haney Conner, II, and Martha Palmer Conner were considered the parents of the Salem Baptist Church because of their long years of faithful leadership and were so noted in the Memorial Service for each of them.

The last service at the Salem Baptist Church was the funeral of Civil War veteran, John Lewis “Jack” Roark, on July 15, 1941. Howard Scott remembers that he (Howard) turned out the lights the last time at Salem Baptist Church.



The old church bell at Salem Baptist Church can be seen on display outside in the parking lot of Maple Grove Baptist Church at 9525 Birchwood Pike, Harrison, TN.

21 Joseph and Juda Ann Carr Roark Homestead

North of Grasshopper Road about .15 of a mile
or immediately south of Grasshopper Creek



The Joseph Roark home site is located on a little bluff just south of Grasshopper Creek on Birchwood Pike. Joseph and Juda Ann Carr Roark and children came to the homestead site from Sale Creek, Tennessee, about 1834. They built a sturdy two story log house with an east wing for the kitchen and dining room. The fireplace in that wing was large enough for 6' firelogs. Food for a growing family was cooked over that fireplace. Later, this part of the house was removed and a much larger two-story built to take its place, and a high ceiling room added next to the creek. The original log cabin was



weatherboarded over the outside and paneling added on the inside. Joseph's youngest son, William Marion, inherited the home place where he was born and lived out his life. William's youngest son, Grover, inherited it next and now his daughter, Marleita Roark Carmichael, owns it and has taken steps to preserve this very important landmark, the only and oldest log cabin in this area of the county.

The Roark Spring a few yards east of the home provided water not only for the family but also for the Salem Church and Academy. The large spring house was built to keep the milk and butter, cream, and cooked foods cool in the summer warm weather. Huge crocks of milk, cream, apple pie, vegetables, and etc. were partially submerged in the cold, clear water for enjoying the next meal.

At least 32 children of three generations called this house home, and hundreds of grandchildren and great grandchildren enjoyed the delights of being in this home.

Sidetrrip suggestion: Turn left onto Grasshopper Road to see the farm places of William Grover Roark (son of William Marion Roark and grandsons of Joseph Roark), and . . .



Barn located on property of William Grover Roark.

farther down Grasshopper Road is the home place of Oscar and Ruth Elmore DeFriese at 5910 Grasshopper Road. Oscar was the son of David and Harriet Roark DeFriese and grandson of John Lewis “Jack” and Virginia Conner Roark.

Interesting note: Oscar DeFriese drove a school bus for Birchwood School and sold bus and route to Coulter Roark. On first day when Coulter was to begin route, January 5, 1939, substitute driver Darwin Roark drove for Coulter. Why? Because wife, Ruth, had given birth to their first child, David Coulter Roark.



Continuing southward down Birchwood Pike

22 Salem School House (now a private residence)

13318 Birchwood Pike (home of Howard Newell)



The Salem School was converted into a private home in the 1950s by Howard Newell, grandson of America Ann Roark and David Gregory. The home is structurally the same building without the belfry and front steps. It is located about three blocks south of the Joseph Roark house, on

the east side of Birchwood Pike. This is where many Roark and Conner children and grandchildren attended grammar school, in the days when the necessary facilities were well water with a single dipper, an iron stove, and outhouses. Both Jake and Emma Roark, grandchildren of John and Margaret Gross Roark taught there.

The Roark Spring at the Joseph Roark home served as a place where the boys would tote water from the spring to the school house when the well went dry. Howard Scott remembers that teacher Miss Emma Roark had a wooden keg with a pigot for each child to get a drink..

Note: The next area is the Friddell place on both sides of Birchwood Pike. The B&W Grocery was formerly Friddell's Grocery owned and operated by Herman Friddell, son of Lille Belle Cross and George Francis Friddell. Lillie Belle was a great granddaughter of Mary Ann Roark.



Laura Roark and husband Alfred Shropshire built this as their first home. See the house located across the road from B&W Grocery.

23 Samuel and Margaret Carr Home Site

13000 area of Birchwood Pike (about a half mile west of road)
Birchwood, TN 37308

The Samuel Carr home site was located about one mile south of the Joseph Roark home and a half mile west of Birchwood Pike, where, at a later date John and Mattie DeFrieese Dungan lived. Laura Roark Shropshire remembered vividly visiting her Carr grandparents residence here, and recalled the row of slave houses around the Carr home. She recalled one very old Negro ex-slave whose hair was white sitting in the doorway of one of the cabins.



The Carr property joined a section of Joseph Roark's property on the west side of Birchwood Pike.

24 Joel and Sarah Elizabeth Roark Talley Home Site

12595 – 12717 blocks of Birchwood Pike and right side of road to the Eldridge fence line
Birchwood, TN 37308



The home site of Joel and Sarah Elizabeth Roark Talley (she was the daughter of Joseph and Juda Ann Carr Roark) is about one mile south of the Samuel Carr home site. The large white two-story house burned several years ago.

A few years ago, part of the Talley farm was purchased by the Church of Latter Day Saints Mormon Church as a cattle farm. The Mormon Church auctioned off several portions of the farm and the other farm areas were sold as home sites.

Ralph and Dollie Talley Johnson were the last persons to live and farm the property. Dollie was the daughter of William and Elsie Smith Talley.

12600 Eldridge Road – south entrance for sites 25-31
(Eldridge Road was called “Narrow Gauge Lane” in the 1930s)
“Ole Dan” wheat field on north side of Eldridge Road entrance)



25 Site of original Salem Baptist Church

1.035 miles west of entrance to Eldridge Road at Birchwood Pike

This northern side (where the original Salem Church was located) looks across to the south side of Murphy Slough where Gardenhire Cemetery is located.

The site of the original Salem Baptist Church organized in 1835 was located near the Gardenhire Spring, off Eldridge Road about 1.035 miles from the Eldridge Road entrance from Birchwood Pike. Eldridge Road was known as Narrow Gauge Lane in the 1920s and 1930s.

The original road site was to the left of the current Eldridge Road and the original log church building was located up in the woods to the left of the

roadway. There is not any current entrance to the original church site and those who have searched for signs of a foundation or other indications of a site have been unsuccessful.



Presently, there is nothing to see but trees! The photo shows the location of the original Salem Baptist Church site on the left; the Gardenhire Cemetery was located in the trees on the right side of photo.

This church was established about four months after the migrating Coker families of the Conners and Palmers arrived in the area. The first church building was on an acre of ground deeded the church by George Gardenhire. The deed to the church listed Maximilian Conner, II, and George Irwin as trustees for the church. After that building, and all the church records, burned in 1850, the church was rebuilt on Grasshopper Creek near the home of Joseph Roark who donated the land for it.

This was the first church in the Cherokee Territory – the oldest church in this region. Some Cherokee Indians were listed as members of the church.

Until their deaths, Maximilian Haney Conner, II, and Martha Palmer Conner were considered the parents of the Salem Baptist Church because of their

long years of faithful leadership and were so noted in the Memorial Service for each of them.

26 River Farm of Laura Roark Shropshire

Starts at 13107 Eldridge Road -- River mile marker at 491.9



The river farm of Laura Roark Shropshire is located 2 miles from the Eldridge Road entrance at Birchwood Pike and was next to James Franklin “Dyke” Eldridge’s property. and he also owned the land across the road from Laura’s farm. Laura Roark Shropshire inherited the land from her parents and where she lived in their house just off the road until TVA took the land in 1937 or 1938. Her husband, Alfred Shropshire, died in 1921 and the and her children continued living there until the lake was formed.



27 First Home of John and Permelia Conner Roark

North side of Laura Roark's river farm on Eldridge Road at 2.02 miles from entrance to Eldridge Road

River miler marker about 492.2

The land on the north side of Laura Roark's farm belonged to Franklin Asberry Roark, son of William Marion and Virginia Conner Roark. Franklin Asberry and Mattie White Roark owned land on both sides of the road. Franklin Asberry Roark's father-in-law, H. E. White, also lived on the property.

This property was the location of the house where John Wesley and Permelia Conner Roark first began housekeeping.

There is nothing but wooded property remaining with driveways leading down the hillside to new, modern lake homes.



28 Roark Steamboat Landing

Estimated location at about river mile marker 493

The Roark Landing was located on the Tennessee River about two miles west of the Joseph Roark home. From here the Roarks shipped their farm crops to Chattanooga on the Sam Conner and other steamboats. They bought furnishings and farm equipment in Chattanooga and shipped them home by boat.



This may be the Old Hickory Landing that was located on the west side of John Lewis “Jack” Roark’s property.

29 Land of Tom Roark

Estimated location at about river mile marker 493.2
North side of Franklin Asberry Roark land

The land of Tom Roark began about 2.075 miles from Eldridge Road entrance at Birchwood Pike.



Tom Roark, son of William M. and Virginia Conner Roark) inherited the land from his parents. He and his family lived here until TVA took the land.

Between Tom and Laura's land, there was some property that was shared by both Tom and Laura. On the top of the hill at the end of Tom's land was a wagon trail that led eastward through the woods to exit at Salem School. The trail was too narrow for any traffic other than horse and wagon.

On the hillsides of Tom's land down to the river was pure farm land where corn was planted. There was a pond that never went dry and Tom's house sat on top of the hill. His well was located on the north side of the house.

There is nothing to see but trees and driveways now!

30 Middleton Springs

Estimated location was about river mile marker 493.2 on Tom Roark land



The Middleton Springs was located on Tom Roark's land and always had cool, clear water from a gushing spring that has now been covered up by TVA when the lake was raised.

Howard Scott remembers the spring but the area has now been covered by the lake waters of the Chickamauga Dam Reservoir.

In her *Pioneer Days* book, Laura Roark Shropshire writes of Middleton Springs: *"The Middleton Spring in a hollow at the north part of the Roark land was another source of vital importance for both man and beast quenched their thirst from its pure, clear, cold, sparkling waters. Only two families built houses near this spring and their residence there was of short duration due to the isolation."*

31 McCallie Steamboat Landing

Estimated location was about river mile marker 494

About 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ - 3.07 miles from entrance to Eldridge Road from Birchwood Pike



In her *Pioneer Days* book, Laura Roark Shropshire describes the McCallie Steamboat Landing as McCallie Hayshed. She says in her book, “*McCallie Hayshed was the next landing north of Old Hickory on the McCallie land. The elder McCallie secured his land during the Polk Administration for a jug of whiskey and some other insignificant exchange.*”

The McCallie property was on the left side of Eldridge Road where the McCallie’s farmed and operated a sawmill. The sawmill sawed chestnut trees for lumber to sell to Cleveland Casket Co. Huge, tall piles of sawdust were always set on fire to burn but the lumber created more sawdust than could be burned.

Marce Smith set the saw carriage (locked the logs in place) for years. The Dungan's married into the McCallie family and much of the McCallie land was heired to the Dungans.

As you approach the exit at Eldridge Road to turn south on Birchwood Pike, please notice the large hayfield on the right side of Eldridge Road. This field was owned by Joseph Roark in the 1930s and was grown up in persimmon trees, sassafras sprouts, and plentiful wild dewberries. Being resourceful, Joseph Roark charged dewberry pickers a nickel a gallon to pick dewberries.

This large field is on the south side of Eldridge Road before arriving at the intersection to the Birchwood Pike (called the Big Road in the 1930s). The "Big Road" was built by shovels and WPA in the 1930s.



Continuing the tour: After exiting Eldridge Road at the north end, turn right at the Birchwood Pike intersection and travel south 3.1 miles to Thatch Road. Turn right onto Thatch Road.

32 Site of the Gardenhire Cemetery

River mile maker 491.25 (nothing to see but trees at Murphy Slough)
Off Thatch Road ½ mile. Entrance is blocked by TVA gate. A ¾ mile hike from blocked gate.

Directions: Turn right at Thatch Road North and travel ¾ mile. The access road is blocked by TVA and standard vehicle traffic cannot travel past the gate. The old cemetery is approximately ¾ mile from Thatch Road and requires a brisk hike through the weeds and up the knoll through a brush covered logging trail. A knowledgeable guide will be most helpful.

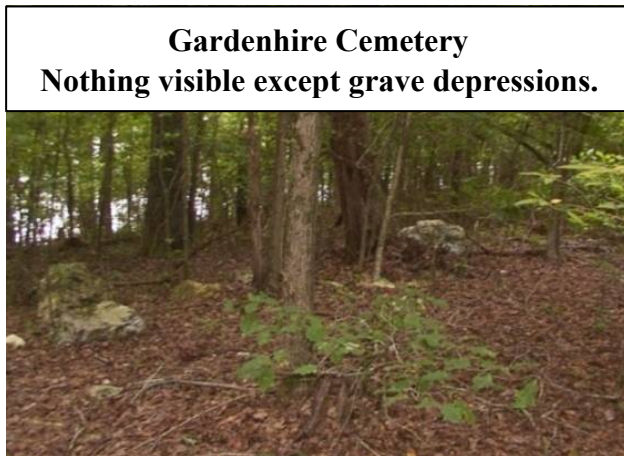


Entrance to site of Gardenhire Cemetery off Thatch Rd.

Note: The following is from *Pioneer Days*, by Laura Roark Shropshire, May 29, 1963, pp. 14-15.

“The Salem Baptist Church was organized in 1835. It was a log structure and was built on land of George Gardenhire near his residence and near a fine spring of clear, sparkling water flooding from a hill, all near the Tennessee River. The Salem Church Cemetery was in sight of the church on a knoll due west of the church. All the people buried there at that time for there was no other burial place in the region – no family burial plots or any other private or public burial place. The record of lists of many people living there at the time and being buried there are their neighbors, the Campbells, the McCallies, the Bottoms, the Gardenhires – George Gardenhire and wife on whose land the church and cemetery had been founded – the Roarks and others. I am confident my great grandfather, Samuel Carr and wife were buried there, besides the land of Samuel Carr joined the land of George Gardenhire near the site of the church and it stands to reason both were members of the church as were their children which is of record. George Friddell told me he was present there at a number of burials and he gave me

a list of names that he new that were buried there, - he being a permanent resident of the region all his life.



Once you arrive at the location of the Gardenhire Cemetery, there is nothing to see except some depressions in the ground where graves are located. There is not a single headstone or portion of a

headstone to be seen.

There is a lot of brush, limbs, vines left from a lumber company cutting.

While standing at the cemetery location you can look north across Murphy Slough to see the stand of trees where the original Salem Church was located. You can look northwest and see the Eldridge Boat Dock area across Eldridge Slough. You can walk closer to the shore of the lake and look west and see the Tennessee River Channel at river mile marker 491.25. Looking north across Murphy Slough is the original site of the Salem Baptist Church that was built in 1835. The original Salem church site is somewhere among the trees.

This Gardenhire Cemetery is not to be confused with another cemetery on Eldridge Road. There is an **Eldridge Family Cemetery** on the old home site of Jess Eldridge. The cemetery is located back through the woods on the bank of the lake before arriving at the beginning of Laura Roark Shropshire's river farm. This old cemetery is about 350-400 yards off the main road and the entrance is blocked by TVA. The cemetery contains a few visible headstones and the most recent burial was T. J. Eldridge in 1932.



Eldridge Family Cemetery off Eldridge Road

After visit to Gardenhire Cemetery off Thatch Road, turn vehicle around and return to Birchwood Pike and turn right to continue tour down Birchwood Pike.

33 Bald Hill Cemetery

11907-12020 Birchwood Pike

Friendship Community



Bald Hill Cemetery is located in the Friendship Community of Harrison, Tennessee in Hamilton County. This cemetery is often mistakenly referred to as “Ball Hill Cemetery”; located 8.1-8.3 miles north on Birchwood Pike from Highway 58. (Bald Hill Cemetery is located 2.0-2.2 miles north of Friendship Baptist Church between 11907 and 12020 Birchwood Pike.)



Old Joseph Roark marker.

There are multiple graves with slabs of stones with no markings. Some old headstones are deteriorated and names and dates are difficult (sometimes impossible) to read.

Survey indicates approximately 655 graves with readable headstones. A large central area of the western side contains multiple old graves without stones or markers and, therefore, are not included in the count of 655. A Friendship native stated that the old limestone slab markers were removed during

a cemetery cleanup project with the then reasoning, “No one knows who was buried at those markers and probably no one cares because they died so long ago.”

The oldest readable headstones appear to be those of Mary D. Irvin Coffey (died 1/28/1872), Thomas Seldon Thatcher (died at age 17 on 11/24/1872), Joseph Roark (died 2/15/1876), Samuel Irvin (died 7/20/1881), and Davis Priddy (died 02/24/1882).

Davis Priddy and Samuel Irvin (father-in-law of P. L. Lovell) donated some of the land for the beginnings of Bald Hill Cemetery. Other portions of the cemetery land were donated by James A. “Jim” and Bertha B. Malone and Samuel Jefferson “Jeff” and Julia A. Stulce.



Bald Hill Cemetery (established before 1872)

Joseph and Juda Ann Carr Roark, Alfred and Laura Roark Shropshire, William Marion and Virginia Conner Roark, and a number of other Roarks,

the Talleys, Eldridges, Malones, Lovells, McCamishes, McDades, Stulces, Moons, Howards, Scotts, Priddys, and many other pioneer families are buried on both sides of the road at Bald Hill Cemetery.

34 Friendship Cemetery, original sites of Friendship Baptist Church and Friendship School

34A Friendship Cemetery:

11541 Birchwood Pike, home of Mr. and Mrs. Alex Johnson.

Turn into the long gravel driveway at 11541 Birchwood Pike, home of Alex Johnson. Contact Alex Johnson to arrange to visit the old cemetery, located in the wooded part of Johnson's property behind his house.



For several years, the cemetery was unprotected from cattle and farm animals and many of the headstones are broken and fallen down. The small cemetery suffered from years of neglect and the hands of time. After purchasing the property that contained the cemetery, Alex Johnson constructed a fence around the cemetery and has worked to clear away much of the brush and undergrowth. Mr. Johnson hopes to create enough local interest among the community to clean up the cemetery and repair the damaged headstones. The cemetery contains several

unmarked graves.

The Friendship Cemetery includes the grave of Rev. Jonas Posey Moon, Jr., the first pastor of Friendship Baptist Church, and graves of three of his brothers who helped organize the first Friendship Baptist Church. Those four Moon brothers are Jonas Posey Moon, Jr., John D. Moon, James Harvey Moon, and William Noah Moon; and all are buried in the Friendship Cemetery. The elder Rev. Jonas Posey Moon, Sr. (1777-1849) and wife Lydia E. Burke Moon (1780-1858), parents of the Moon brothers, are buried in the Francisco Cemetery in Bradley County, Tennessee. Rev. Jonas Posey Moon, Sr. died in 1849, prior to the 1854 organization of the church at Friendship. There are no grave markers for William Noah Moon and his wife, Matilda J. Francisco Moon. At first, a cedar house was built over their graves.

From papers of Idella Moon Kelly (1906-1997): "Every summer a number of relatives came to this cemetery. They came from as far away as California and Utah. Some came from Spring City, Tennessee, and Memphis, Tennessee. All were very much concerned about the condition of the cemetery and were anxious to get a fence built around all the graves, marked and unmarked, and the stones put in place and repaired."

John P. Moon, youngest son of the above mentioned Jonas Posey, wished for perpetual care to be provided. He was ill from a stroke, was living in Sweetwater, Tennessee, and all his brothers had gone west while young men.

The children of John D. all moved away but a grandson, Adam G. Moon, tried to help keep the cemetery cleaned up. In his late years he and Harvey's grandson, Abner, would work at the place as would others of Harvey's descendants. Others have worked over the 130 and more years but we need to do more and better and make a more respectable place for our ancestors."

The Friendship Cemetery includes "plague" graves that contain the bodies of those who died from the scarlet fever epidemic of 1854-1855. Two of

William Noah Moon's daughters, Lydia Francis and Martha J., died from scarlet fever on the same day on November 24, 1854. Another daughter, Sarah F., also died from the scarlet fever epidemic. William Noah Moon was the first church clerk at Friendship Baptist. William "Willie" Jonas Moon, son of William Noah Moon, died at the young age of twenty-five years and full Masonic rites were conducted in the Friendship Baptist Church yard before his burial at Friendship Cemetery. William Jonas Moon was married to Martha Virginia Roark, daughter of John Lewis "Jack" Roark and Victoria Darleska Conner, son and daughter of pioneer families of Salem and Birchwood.

34B Original site of Friendship Baptist Church: can be seen from 11541 Birchwood Pike and site of old Friendship Cemetery. While standing at the old Friendship Cemetery, look southwesterly to the knoll a hundred yards away. This was the approximate site of the first Friendship Church.█

The original Friendship Baptist Church meeting house (organized at Deer Lick Springs Schoolhouse in 1854 and constructed in 1857) burned to the



ground in 1902 after a great all-day meeting. For several years worship services were held in the nearby Friendship School. In 1911 a new Friendship School was built, the church bought the old school building and worshipped in it until a new meeting house was built on the site of the present Friendship Baptist church house about 1917

34C Friendship School Site: about 11523 Birchwood Pike, now the site of the brick home of Nelle Ruth Johnson Roark (widow of Sim Scott Roark).



The community of Friendship became the consolidation point for four other neighborhood area schools. It was built about 1890 near the Friendship Baptist Church. In 1911, a new school house

was built closer to the relocated Harrison-Birchwood Road (now Birchwood Pike), and Friendship Baptist Church bought the old school building. The new school burned in the 1917-1918 school year and while a third Friendship School was being built, the school years of 1917-1918 and the fall of 1919, the school (grades 1-8) met in the Friendship church building



Teacher Miss Marie DeFries and one class at Friendship School.

Mr. Will Beene was the principal that preceded Wallace McGill as principal. Miss Marie DeFriese was principal of Friendship after the 5-8 grades were sent to Birchwood School. Looking at the front of Friendship School, the right side of the school included grades 1-4 and the left side of the school included grades 5-8. Large folding doors separated the rooms.

In 1936, the Friendship School was “killed” at Christmas and the 5-8 grades were sent to Birchwood School. Grades 1-4 were continued at Friendship School for another couple of years with Miss Marie DeFriese as principal. Idella Moon Kelly was a teacher at the school during this period. Afterwards, the school was dismantled and a portion of the lumber was sent to Meadowview for construction of a school cafeteria. When a new Meadowview School was built, Mr. Judd Gross purchased the cafeteria lumber and used the “old Friendship School” lumber to build his house.

The land where the Friendship School was owned by Hamilton County and after the school was dismantled, the area was sold to Rev. James Malone, where his daughter and son-in-law constructed the brick house and lived there for awhile; and then was sold to Scott and Nelle Ruth Johnson Roark.

Sometimes, when the school well would go dry or rumors of “hair in the water” from the nearby Friendship Cemetery, the school children would walk

Spring across from the old Friendship School that



across the road to 11514 Birchwood Pike to get water from a spring. The spring is now covered with a shed, with green ferns hanging about, and produces a constant supply of delicious spring water.

35 Friendship Baptist Church

11510 Birchwood Pike.
Friendship Community



Friendship Baptist Church, located at 11510 Birchwood Pike, is the lone remaining active community organization of the now defunct James County. (James County was organized in 1871, largely from Hamilton County and a fraction of Bradley County, and ended with bankruptcy in 1919.) Friendship Baptist Church

was organized in 1854 and has survived scarlet fever epidemics, wars, depression, uprooting of farm families due to TVA Reservoir projects, and the continued replacement of traditional rural lifestyles. The church was organized and begun by Friendship Community pioneer settler families that came to the area prior to and after the Indian Removal of 1838. The church was first organized by Jonas P. Moon and three of his brothers.

The original Friendship Baptist Church [church building No. 1 built in 1857] burned to the ground in 1902. In August, 1903, a letter of sympathy composed by Salem Baptist members T. J. Hoge (possibly the son of Rev. F. J. “Flau” Hoge, a teacher at Maddux School in the 1890’s and a pastor at Friendship Church after 1879), Joe Roark (b. 1842, Confederate veteran and oldest son of James P. Roark. This is not the Joseph Roark that built his house across the creek from the Salem Church. Joe’s brother, John B. who served in the Civil War as a Union soldier), John “Jack” Eldridge (b. abt 1870, son of

John Blair Eldridge/Elizabeth Gardenhire, and J. M. “Johnny Mack” Roark (b. 1870, son of John Lewis Roark), were sent by Salem Baptist Church to their sister church, Friendship Baptist. The original Salem Baptist Church also burned to the ground during a time the original Friendship meeting house was being built in 1856-1857.



In 1958, a new brick church was built to replace the church that was built in 1912. In 2005, the k church was declared unsafe because of a faulty foundation and was



Friendship Baptist Church construction (July, 2008 photo)

demolished. Presently, a new church is being constructed and expected to be completed in late 2008.

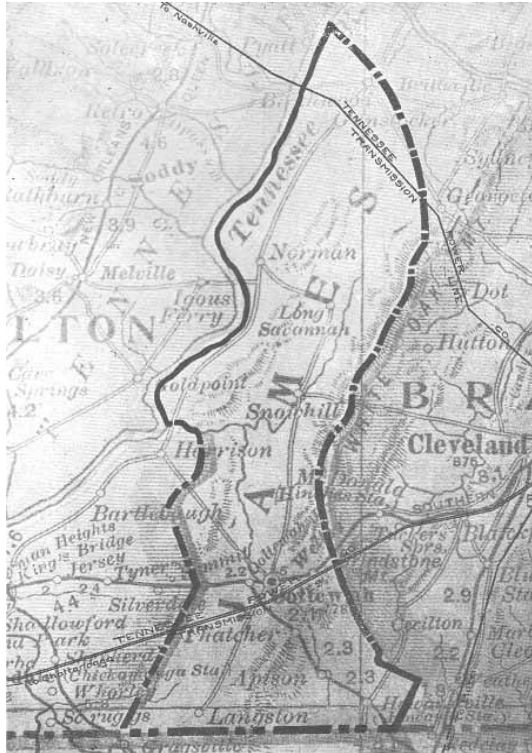
By standing in the Friendship Baptist Church parking lot and looking northwardly, you can see the original site of Friendship School and the areas where the original Friendship Baptist Church and old cemetery were located.

**36 Site of Norman Store P.O. (1878-1894)
Norman P.O. (1895-1909),
Work P. O. (1909-1914),
Alliance Store, site of Wesley Newt and Jeff Roark Store
(1914-1919)**

Across the road from 11510
Birchwood Pike, Friendship Baptist
Church
Friendship Community

During the 1960s residents in the northern part of Friendship Community received mail from the Birchwood Post Office until 1872 when Thatchers Landing Post Office was established. Meanwhile, the southern part of the community received mail from Snow Hill, then from Long Savannah, until 1878 when Norman's Store became the post office with William C. Norman as Postmaster.

Taken from page 113, "*James County – A Lost County of Tennessee*" The James County postal history identifies three post office names that once handled mail for the Friendship Community. The location of the post office names was across the road from



James County Map
Norman is shown as the location of Friendship on this map. As shown, Igous Ferry carried passengers to Soddy-Daisy side of river. Sherman Heights is also shown, as well as the old Birchwood-Harrison Road.



Friendship Baptist Church. The first post office for the community was established at William C. Norman's general store on December 2, 1878, and existed until January 31, 1894, when the name was changed to Norman. In 1890 after the Alliance Store was built by community stockholders, it became the site of the post office for the entire community with John P.

Moon serving as Postmaster. In 1894 the name was shortened to Norman Post when W. C. Norman served again. After Charles A. Lane became Postmaster in 1902, the post office was housed in his new store south of Alliance Store. The postal name, Norman, existed until the postal service required Norman to change its name to a four-letter post office name to avoid conflicts with another Norman post office. The name "Work" was selected as the new name on October 29, 1909. The Work post office was discontinued on July 31, 1914, and all postal activity was directed to rural delivery from the Harrison post office.

Brothers Newt Wesley Roark and Jefferson "Jeff" Arthur Roark operated a general store in the vicinity of the Friendship Baptist Church in the 1914-1921 period. Newt Wesley Roark also operated a "jitney bus" service between Friendship and Birchwood.

By standing in the parking lot of Friendship Baptist Church and looking westward across the road and see the huge oak tree, that is about where the Norman's Store, Norman, and Work Post Offices were located.

37 Norman-Eldridge Cemetery on Skull Island

10815 Birchwood Pike
Friendship Community



The old cemetery is located on a knoll approximately 500 feet west of Birchwood Pike overlooking the Tennessee River. The TVA Sequoah Nuclear Power Plant, located across the river, is highly visible. The cemetery is located on the T. J. Davis tract, TVA Land Map 23, on the left bank of the Tennessee River at mile 485; contains 66 graves; and has elevation at lowest point of 716. Before the lake was raised in 1940, access to the cemetery was by walking from Birchwood Pike since the old private road leading to cemetery was in cultivation.

Hamilton County Highway Department constructed an access road to the cemetery from Birchwood Pike about 1964 and the island was donated by TVA to the area Boy Scouts Association of America. Years later, the Boy Scouts of America returned the ownership of the island to TVA, saying, "*The area is just too mean!*"

After the island ownership was returned to TVA, the island was named Skull Island Recreation Area and concrete picnic tables, iron barbecue grills, a swimming area, and camping spots were created. TVA drilled a well for water that was 350' deep and installed a bath house with shower facilities. TVA

provided a facility for housing a manager to oversee the Skull Island Recreation Area operations.



After completion of the Sequoah Nuclear Power Plant, a warning or emergency siren was installed on Skull Island to warn local residents in case of a nuclear emergency.

The Skull Island Recreation Area is open for camping from mid-March through October and has few vacancies

during the summer months. A year-round boat ramp is available from an entrance on Birchwood Pike.

This is a very old, inactive cemetery with a burial of Mary Davis recorded as recently as 1935.

The Cooleys once owned all the land around Skull Island (Norman-Eldridge Cemetery), but it was marshy with a prevalence of mosquito, which, they thought, caused so many deaths from typhoid fever, that they traded the land for some uphill land. (from Descendants of Jefferson and Rachel Blair Eldridge book, page 11).

The Norman or Norman-Eldridge Cemetery is also called JackField Cemetery because the Eldridge family had a donkey that pastured on the knoll where the cemetery is located. The Eldridge's referred to the area as "Jack's field"; therefore the name JackField.

In spring and summer, the cemetery has an overgrowth of vines, weeds, and much ground cover plants. In fall and winter, the leaves and dead plants made it impossible to view the headstones or lack of headstones. Fallen trees have damaged the heavy iron fences surrounding many of the graves and almost all of the intact headstones have been pushed or fallen over. The fallen trees and limbs are numerous. Several names and dates are illegible on the headstones; having been worn away with time and weather elements. Many graves are sunken into the ground and there are no headstones to identify the placements.



Eva Roark Norman (1854-1891)
Daughter of James Roark and Evaline Irvin, wife of
Jessee C. Norman

THE END

Final Thoughts on “Roark-Conner Heritage Tour” Map and Booklet

This concludes the tour locations on the *Roark-Conner Association 50th Reunion* production of the Roark-Conner Heritage Tour.

Depending on “user” acceptance of this tour guide and map, this may or may not become the end of a beginning “work in process”.

In *Pioneer Days* (p. 93), Laura Roark Shropshire writes, “*These old landmarks so vital to man in their time and place will be lost to the present and future generations unless preserved by file or record by those who knew them*”.

Hopefully, future tour guides will include information about such landmarks as the Eldridge Boat Dock Tree Swing, Peaches Lightfoot Used Car Parts, Dollie Pond Church of God, Charlie Hixson Grocery, Bettis Grocery, Jarrett’s Store, and the many home sites and landmarks of Roark associated families and other settlers who helped found the area communities.

And..... Cemeteries are important historical sites and some cemetery or grave yard areas severely need attention by some group or groups. Several old cemeteries have obviously been abandoned for many years and need care and attention. Several of these old cemeteries contain the graves of our pioneer settlers. Restoration and cleanup is desperately needed for several grave yards in the Friendship area (Friendship Cemetery, David M Eldridge Family Cemetery, Eldridge Family Cemetery on Eldridge Road, Denney Cemetery, Gardenhire Cemetery, and Norman-Eldridge Cemetery on Skull Island)

Enjoy the tour guide and map and hopefully you will find it useful, as well as interesting and informative information about the entire Hamilton County area.

Please advise Chuck Gross of all errors, omissions, and requests for changes and additions. (See contact information at the beginning of this booklet. Thank you in advance for any and all comments and constructive criticisms.