

Dr. Bumpass was 'father of Waterloo'

Times Daily - Apr 24, 1997 Brows

It is fitting and proper for Dr. Gabriel Bumpass to be called the father of Waterloo.

It has been said that he became interested in this potential town site as early as 1807. It offered all the advantages of a deep water port below the shallow, fearsome and almost-impassable barriers called the Muscle Shoals.

Waterloo, and its across-the-river neighbor, Eastport, Miss., were ideally situated for future steamboats on the lower Tennessee River.

It was through Bumpass' organizing and planning, and by his promotion and guidance, that the Articles of Agreement to establish Waterloo were signed at Pulaski, Tenn., in March 1819. The other founders of the town were Tyrone Rodes, Maximilian H. Buchanan, German Lester and John McCracken, all of Giles Co., Tenn.

There were 100 shares with 51 original shareholders, including Alexander McDonald and John Webb. Bid Cooperman was employed to lay out the town. Each share was for two acres each. Fifty of these shares were allotted to Bumpass. Each original share was to be divided, making a total of 400 shares. The cumulative sales for 1819 amounted to \$9,525.

The first business district of Waterloo was called The Landing. This was along the river bank. Before the coming of the Valley Authority dams, the Tennessee River was wild and unmanageable, especially during the spring floods. About every 20 or 30 years, the big ones would bring destruction over the entire valley. The first of these to hit Waterloo was in 1847. Thirty-five houses, as well as warehouses and boats, were either washed away or demolished. Many the families and businesses moved to what was known as the plateau where the town is now located. For the next 20 years there were two sections of Waterloo-the old one at the river, and the new town on the plateau. The next large-scale flood hit in 1867, when all that remained in the old town was swept away.

Thirty years later, in March 1897, the worst of all previously recorded floods caused much havoc over the Tennessee Valley. The high-water mark exceeded the 1867 flood by some 20 inches. Fortunately, all the town by then was on the plateau above the raging waters below.

Bumpass was a large man, weighing more than 300 pounds, but quite agile. Born in Person County, N.C., he and his brother James, also a physician, headed a colony of about 50 immigrants out of South Carolina. They were to become the first settlers of Giles County, Tenn.

However, the Indians had not given up this part of the state and the Bumpass pioneers were delayed in Nashville about a year. Finally, around 1810, they began the almost impossible task of blazing a road through the wilderness. This highway from Columbia to Pulaski was known as the Bumpass Trail.

At the opening of the Huntsville Land Office in 1818, Bumpass began buying up large parcels of land throughout West Lauderdale County. He moved to Waterloo, served as its physician, operated its ferry and became one of its first and most Influential citizens.

Bumpass died soon after the Civil War and was buried in the Witherspoon Cemetery, near the confluence of Bumpass and Second creeks. In 1937, TVA, in making way for Pickwick Lake, relocated his grave to the Richardson Cemetery, which overlooks the town. This burying ground on top of Lucy Hill seems to be a fitting and proper place for the earthly remains of the father of Waterloo.

William Lindsey McDonald is the author of 12 books and numerous historical articles, mostly about the Shoals area. A retired Tennessee Valley Authority employee, United Methodist minister and U.S. Army colonel, he was appointed city historian in 1989.

The information below was taken from another article.

ancestry.com The Ezell Family in America.

Descendants of George Ezell of Old Colonial Surry, Va. 1692-1961
Chapter 5 THE FOURTH GENERATION

DOUGAL. The said land being a part of a grant to Hillery GUY. Witnesses were Jesse LILES, Timothy EZELL (his mark), and Sam NEWTON. Book H, p 321, dated 10 October 1806, Union District, South Carolina, Micajah EZELL (Michael, Kike) sold 215 acres to Joseph CALDWELL and William HAMMOND. This sale took place about the time Micajah and his brothers, Timothy and William, migrated to Tennessee with Dr. Gabriel BUMPASS.

Four of the children of William EZELL were part of the migration of South Carolina Families to Giles" County, Tennessee. They were Micajah (Michael), Timothy, Willian EZELL and their sister, Elizabeth (EZELL) BUCHANAN, wife of Robert BUCHANAN. In the same party were William Haynie BUCHANAN and his four sons, Robert, Maximillian Haynie, John and Jesse. Three of William EZELL'S children married three of Wa. Haynie BUCHANAN'S children. Timothy EZELL married Elizabeth BUCHANAN, Elizabeth EZELL married Robert BUCHANAN, and William EZELL married Margaret (Peggy) BUCHANAN. They all settled in Giles County, Tennessee, near Cross Water, now called Sutton's Spring.

In 1806, Dr. Gabriel BUMPASS of Abbeville District, South Carolina, gathered together about 50 of his friends from Abbeville and Union Districts with the intention of settling lands in Tennessee. They set out from South Carolina and reached the vicinity of Nashville in the fall of 1806, where they had to remain for many months because the land they wished to settle had not been ceded by the Indians. The Indians were very hostile to the white men for entering their lands and peacable possession was impossible. Finally, conditions bettered and the group of settlers set out again for their destination. Many left their wives and children in Nashville until they could clear some land and build homes for then.

The group encountered little difficulty until they reached the vicinity of Columbia, Tennessee. From here on they had to cut their way through heavy cane.