

## BRENTWOOD TRIVIA

### The Crocketts of Brentwood

The Crockett family was one of Brentwood's earliest and most prominent. But they did believe in keeping it in the family, they having a decided propensity to marry each other.

The Crocketts had four Revolutionary War grants in Williamson County, three being in Brentwood. One was on Moores Lane at what is now Crockett Springs golf club, another on Wilson Pike and Crockett Road where Crockett Elementary School is, and another where the Brentwood Country Club is. The fourth grant was down Wilson Pike on Osborn Road at what is now Lake Colonial Estates.

The Crocketts were originally French. They converted to Protestantism during the Reformation and were forced to flee from France during the purge on Huguenots. They went to England and later to Ireland. They anglicized their original name of de Crocketagne to Crockett.

The first of the clan to come to America was one Samuel Crockett ca 1720. On board the ship with Crockett was Rev. John Thompson and his family. One of the family was a little girl named Ester, age five. Samuel became enamored with the child and asked the father for her hand in marriage when she came of age. Lo and behold, he waited for little Ester to grow to womanhood and married her. They had eight children.

It was mostly the descendants of Samuel and Ester Thompson Crockett who came to Tennessee. Their son Andrew built the oldest Crockett house in Brentwood, the Knox-Crockett House on Wykle Road. Their grandson Joseph lived at Crockett Springs on Moores Lane. He married his first cousin Mary, daughter of Andrew. Another grandson John H., son of Andrew, lived on Osborn Road. He also married his first cousin Nancy, a sister of Joseph, of Crockett Springs. Samuel, who built Forge Seat, also married a cousin as did his son Andrew, who lived at the site of the new Brentwood park.

Don't quit reading yet. The best part of the story is yet to come. Remember Ester Thompson, the five year old on shipboard, who married the old Samuel. Well, when he died "an old man," she then forty-ish, turned around and married a neighbor and (maybe cousin too) William Sayers who was 20 years younger than she was.

Next week we will have a quiz on which Crockett married which Crockett.

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## THE BRENTWOOD CROCKETTS

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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#### Guiding Principles

1. In the 1700's Middle Tennessee was prime land that attracted settlers from the Eastern Colonies at an early date.

2. The Crocketts were intelligent, ambitious, opportunistic, and well established. They sought out new and attractive opportunities on the American frontier.

3. The Crocketts were connected by blood and marriage to many of the like minded people who settled Middle Tennessee.

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\* \* \* The Crockett family originated in France where they during the Reformation converted to the Protestant faith, as did hundred of thousands of French people. They were called French Huguenots.

\* \* \* The Huguenots were expelled from France in the late 1600's. The Crocketts and other French families, notably the Maurys and Fontains, fled to England and later to Ireland and still later to America.

\* \* \* The Crocketts migrated to Virginia in the early 1700's along with related families Thompson, McGavock, Sayers, Montgomery, Maury, Fountain and Bell. They became well established in Virginia.

\* \* \* All of these related families migrated to Tennessee as soon as the Tennessee country opened up to settlement. They became the leading families in Middle Tennessee, especially Brentwood and Williamson County.

\* \* \* The Crocketts had four Revolutionary Grants in Williamson County, three in Brentwood, one where Brentwood Country Club is, one at Crockett Springs National Golf Club, one on Wilson Pike and Crockett Road, and one near Arrington on Osburn Road.

\* \* \* The Crocketts became leading citizens of Williamson County. They were planters, professional people, and artisans. At least two were doctors in Franklin. One operated an iron forge, while still another was a gun smith.

\* \* \* The Crocketts continued the Westward Migration, with second generation Williamson County Crocketts going on to Arkansas, Texas, and California.

\* \* \* The Samuel Crockett who owned the land where the proposed park is to go married his cousin Catherine Walker Bell in 1818 and built the house that was later rased. She was the niece of John Bell, Franklin lawyer and Tennessee politician, who ran for President against Abraham Lincoln in 1860.

\* \* \* Crockett land was sold to the Owen family in the mid 1800's and later to the Carpenter family. The Carpenters operated a general store at Forge Seat, and there was a post office there.

\* \* \* The land where the proposed Crockett Park is to go was sold to Jim Reed, a Nashville automobile dealer, in perhaps the 1940's. He and his tenants operated a dairy farm there and had an outstanding herd of registered Jersey cattle.

\* \* \* The land was later sold to Monsanto Chemical Company. They mined phosphate on many farms in the area and built a railroad siding on the Crockett place for loading railroad cars with phosphate.

Anglicized to Crockett. He was of an established French family. He was dashing, handsome, and a skilled horseman (weren't they all). Louis XIV took note of him and enlisted him in the Household Guard. Antoine met and married a dashing and beautiful young lady of a noble family too (weren't they all). He left the Royal Guard and took employment with the Maury and Fontaine families in their mercantile business. They were purveyors of wines and salt.

The Maury and Fontaine families were among France's elite. They were wealthy, prominent and influential. They too were converted to Protestantism and directed their considerable wealth, skill and energy toward to spread of the new religion.

Needless to say, the Maurys, the Fontaines, the Croketts, along with hundreds of thousands of other Protestant French, were banished. They fled to Ireland, where they established themselves. They later congregated in Virginia where the Maury clan became teachers and ministers and were on first name basis with Colonial leaders from George Washington on down.

It is something less than coincidental that the Maurys and Fontaines, along with the Crocketts, became some of Williamson County's leading citizens. One of them, Abaham Maury, was the founder of the Town of Franklin. He laid out the town in 1799 on land that he had purchased from Thomas Spencer. His nephew Matthew Fontaine Maury was educated at the Harpeth Academy in Franklin and "went on to become a world renowned scientist. He came to be called "the Pathfinder of the Seas" for his work in oceanography.

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Antoine Deasurre Perronette de Crocketagne

According to a letter written by David T. Maury, of Essex County, Virginia, to S. M. Duncan, of Nicholasville, Kentucky, in 1858, and published in Janie P. C. French and Zella Armstrong's Notable Southern Families, Volume 6, Antoine Deasurre Perronette de Crocketagne was born in Montauban, in the south of France, in 1664, the son of Gabriel de Crocketagne. In 1669 he married Louise DeSaix. Their first child was born in 1672, the same time that the Huguenots were fleeing from France.

Antoine fled to England with his wife and young son. The family later settled in southern Ireland at Bantry Bay. There their name was anglicized to "Crockett." The rest of their children were born in Ireland. The children of Antoine and Louise Crockett were:

1. Gabriel Gustave Crockett, born 1672, in Bordeaux, France
2. James Crockett, born 1674, married Martha

Montgomery, daughter of Thomas Montgomery, a sailor in the English Naval Service.

3. Joseph Louis Crockett, born 1676, married Sarah Stuart, of Donegal, Ireland
4. Robert Watkins Crockett, born in Kenmore Parish, 1678, married Rachel Watkins, a third cousin, in 1702, in Ireland
5. Louise DeSaix Crockett, born in Kenmore Parish, 1680
6. Mary Frances Crockett, born in Kenmore Parish, 1682
7. Sarah Elizabeth Crockett, born in Kenmore Parish, 1685

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The Crocketts in America

Many of the Crockett clan came to America in the early 1700's. They were preceded by the Maurys and Fontaines, who established themselves very well in Virginia.

Most of the Brentwood Crocketts are descended from one Samuel Crockett, son of James Crockett and Martha Montgomery. At the age of 20, plus or minus, he came to America. As the story goes, there was aboard the same ship a Presbyterian minister Rev. John Thompson and his family. Among the members of that family was a five year old daughter named Ester. Samuel Crockett was much taken to the child and told her father that he would like to marry her when she came of age. Lo and behold, he was true to his word, two were married several years later.

The rest of that story is that Samuel Crockett died "an old man." His wife Ester Thompson Crockett, then in her 40's, married a neighbor William Sayers, who was 20 years younger than she was.

Samuel and Ester Thompson Crockett had eight children:

1. Samuel Crockett, Jr., born 1735, died 1795, married first Jane Steele and second Elizabeth Young
2. Ann Agnes Crockett, born 1736, married John Montgomery in 1753
3. John Crockett, married Elizabeth Montgomery
4. Jane Crockett, born 1739, married Henry Davis

5. Catherine Crockett, born 1741
6. Robert Crockett, born 1743
7. Andrew Crockett, born 1745, married Sarah (Sallie) Elliot
8. James Crockett, born 1749, died 1826, married Mary Drake

The Crocketts first settled in Pennsylvania and later moved to Augusta County, Virginia, and still later to Wythe County, Virginia. They were a close knit clan with a strong propensity to marry their own kin. It is to be noted that two of the children of Samuel and Ester Thompson Crockett married Montgomeries. It will be remembered that their grandfather James Crockett married Martha Montgomery in Ireland. The families no doubt came to America together.

In Wythe County, Virginia, the Crocketts were neighbors to the McGavocks and the Sayers. There were strong connections with both families and many inter-marriages. So, the marriage of Ester Thompson Crockett to a neighbor half her age was probably not so scanderlous as one might imagine when he considers the family connections, past and future, between the Crocketts and the Sayers. In 1779 Hugh McGavock enlisted as an Ensign in Col. Joseph Crockett's regiment. Early tax records in Williamson County Crocketts as agents for McGavocks and McGavocks as agents for Crocketts..

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The Crocketts in Tennessee

The name of the game in American expansionism was Westward Movement. Families were large, and new opportunities for second sons were constantly sought. Families, like the Crocketts, and their proteges, were large slave holders. Those slave families too increased. New lands were needed for the slaves to work as well.

The first settlement in what is now Tennessee was Wautauga. These settlers were the vanguard into winderness country where Indian troubles abounded. The Crocketts were there too. This group being outside the juridsiction of both North Carolina and Virginia formed their own government under an agreement drawn up for that purpose. Among the signers of the document were David Crockett and William Crockett.

The Cumberland Country of Middle Tennessee became a very attractive plum for mid 18th Century Virginians and Carolinians. Prospects were bright for its settlement and development. Continuing the family prosperity was of uppermost importance to these people.



5. John Hamilton Crockett, married Nancy Crockett, his first cousin, daughter of John and Elizabeth Montgomery Crockett
6. Nancy Baker Crockett, married Robert Sayers, brother of Johanna Sayers, who had married her brother John Hamilton Crockett
7. Andrew Crockett, Jr., married Annie Powell
8. Robert Crockett, married Elizabeth Gibson

Andrew and Sally Elliot Crockett built the first of the Crockett houses in Brentwood. In later life he built a more substantial log house. It still stands and is known as the Knox-Crockett House. Andrew Crockett was a gun-smith and operated an iron forge at his home.

In 1801 Andrew Crockett deeded to his son Samuel Crockett one half of his grant. The son built his home there, which became known as Forge Seat. This home still stands as a land mark at the corner of Wilson Pike and Crockett Road. Samuel Crockett and his father made guns here known as Crockett Rifles. Andrew Jackson on his way south in the Indian Wars stopped at Forge Seat and bought rifles from the Crocketts there.

The grant was further subdivided when Samuel Crockett deeded part of the land to his son Andrew Crockett who married Catherine Walker Bell in 1818. This property was later acquired by Jim Reed of Nashville. His tenants operated a very fine dairy there and raised registered Jersey cattle. The land was later bought by Monsanto Chemical Company. They built a railroad siding there to accommodate their phosphate mining operation in various adjoining farms. The home was recently rased by Monsanto Chemical Company.

A good measure of wealth during the early days of Williamson County is the number of slaves owned. Samuel Crockett, who lived in the town of Franklin, owned 3 slaves. Joseph Crockett owned two and James Crockett five. Andrew Crockett owned 14 and his son Samuel 10. Andrew Crockett, Jr. owned 4, while John H. Crockett of Arrington owned 19.

The Crocketts were active in civic affairs in Williamson County from the time of their arrival. In 1834 an advertisement appeared in Franklin's Western Weekly Review to the effect that Andrew Crockett "manufactures and has constantly on hand a supply of spinning machines, made of the best materials, and on the latest and most approved plan, which he will sell low for cash, or on a credit to puctual men." He residence was said to be located six miles "northeast of Franklin on the western road leading from Franklin to the Fishing Ford."

In 1835 a Doctor Crockett ran an ad wherein he

the Crocketts built a house about two miles west of Gates, Tennessee. According to Sloan, the "old house, surrounded by large oak trees, still stands," and at his writing the land was still owned by Crockett descendants.

The Crocketts continued as leaders in that West Tennessee County. One Andrew Crockett served as Sheriff of Lauderdale County. His brother Joseph moved to Ripley and also served as Sheriff. A son Bernard Crockett served as County Trustee for 12 years.

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### The Thompson Connection

Remember little Ester Thompson on ship board with her family back in the early 1700's. Well, that family was no slouch either, and they continued a close connection with the Crockett family for several generations. Ester's father Rev. John Thompson, as we observed previously, was a Presbyterian preacher. He was educated in Glasgow, Scotland, and came from Ireland to America to take up a pastorate on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. He later settled in Hanover County, Virginia, and was still later sent by the church to North Carolina.

One daughter of Rev. John Thompson married Presbyterian minister Rev. Richard Sankey, who founded Hampden-Sidney College in Virginia. A granddaughter married Minos Cannon and also came to Williamson County. Their son Newton Cannon became Governor of Tennessee.

Robert Thompson, son of Rev. John Thompson and brother to Ester Thompson Crockett, held the distinction of being the first American to be killed in the events that led up the American Revolutionary War. He along with prominent Presbyterian minister Rev. David Caldwell met with Royal Governor Tryon, before the Battle of Alamance, in an effort to prevent further hostilities between the two forces gather at that North Carolina city. As they started to leave, Robert Thompson was shot to death in cold blood by the Royal Governor.

Three sons of this Robert Thompson came to Middle Tennessee. They were Thomas, Ephraim, and Jason Thompson. They settled near the Crocketts, Jason and adjoining land. One settled on what is now Thompson Lane and gave his name to that thoroughfare.

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crockett

"respectfully informs the citizens of Franklin and its vicinity that he has resumed the practice of Physic. He has a full supply of medicine of the first quality, and being now unincumbered with all other business, will devote the whole of his time to that of his profession. His office is on the Public Square, south of the court house."

In 1833 James Crockett was appointed one of three commissioners to "let out to the lowest bidder, in the town of Franklin, . . . the building of a female academy on land of James Crockett on Little Harpeth, six miles northeast of Franklin. The building to be of brick, thirty feet by twenty -- one story high, the work to be completed by the first day of June next."

The Boilding Springs Academy opened on what is now Moores Lane in 1831. In 1834 an advertisement for a teacher appeared in the Western Weekly Review. The ad specified "good testimonials of his qualification for the office" and directed applications to be submitted to Joseph Crockett, Esq.

Joseph Crockett sat as a member of a three man special court in 1823 to "pass sentency on negro Allen, formerly convicted of rape." He was sentenced to be "hung on Saturday next, between the hours of 12 and 4 o'clock." The newspaper account, which appeared in the Independent Gazette, went on to say: "It is expected that masters of slaves generally will permit them to witness the punishment inflicted on one of their own class, as the reward of his crimes, that they may by example be deterred from the commission of like offences."

Brentwood has another Crockett/McGavock connection. Lysander McGavock, born 1800, son of David McGavock, one of Nashville's first and most prominent settlers, married Elizabeth Crockett, born in Wythe County, Virginia, in 1795. They lived at Midway Plantation, now the Brentwood Country Club. It is not clear whether the land was first McGavock land or Crockett Land.

#### The Westward Movement Continues

The Westward Movement did not by any means stop in Middle Tennessee. Second sons continued to move Westward as new territories opened up. First, they moved to West Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi, then to Arkansas and Missouri, and still later to Texas, and finally to the Pacific Coast. The Crocketts were very much a part of that migration.

Byrd Sloan in a "History of Gates, Tennessee" tells of a group of migrants from Williamson County making their way to new territory in Arkansas in the 1850. The group included Joseph Crockett, John Johnson, and Frank Robison. They reached the Mississippi River, but "because of illness," they were unable to cross. They looked around themselves and saw rich and fertile land on the east side of the river in Lauderdale County, Tennessee. They decided to settle there. So the account goes,

6. Rachel Crockett, married a Carter
7. Jane Crockett, married Robert Johnson
8. Nancy Crockett, married John H. Crockett, her first cousin, son of Andrew and Sally Elliot Crockett
9. Mary (Polly) Crockett
10. Catherine Crockett
11. Elizabeth Crockett, married a Ragsdale
12. Sarah (Sally) Crockett

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The Williamson County Crocketts

There were at least three Crockett grants in Williamson County, maybe four. John H. Crockett, son of Andrew and Sally Elliot Crockett, the one who married his first cousin Nancy, settled near Arrington, on what is now Lake Colonial Estates. Joseph Crockett, son of son of John and Martha Montgomery Crockett, the one who married his first cousin, Mary (Poly) daughter of Andrew and Sally Elliot Crockett, settled on what is now Crockett Springs Golf Club. Andrew Crockett (son of Samuel and Ester and uncle to John H. of Arrington and Joseph of Crockett Springs) and his son Samuel settled on a grant on the Little Harpeth adjoining their cousin Joseph's grant, which became the sites of the Knox Crockett House, Forge Seat, and the property recently purchased by the City of Brentwood for a park.

Andrew Crockett, seventh child of Samuel and Ester Thompson Crockett, married Sally Elliot. He served as a Major in the Revolutionary War and received the grant on the Little Harpeth River to which he and his son and their families later came to settle.

The children of Andrew and Sally Elliot Crockett who died in 1821 at the age of 71 and is buried in the Crockett Cemetery on Wilson Pike were:

1. Sarah Crockett, married John Mallory
2. Mary (Polly) Crockett, married Joseph Crockett, her first cousin, son of John and Martha Montgomery Crockett
3. James Crockett (1790 - 1874), married his cousin Martha Bell
4. Samuel Crockett III, born in Wythe County, Virginia, in 1772 and married Johanna Sayers

From Wautauga scouts went westward into what is now Middle Tennessee through the Cumberland Gap and Kentucky. One such group went out in 1769. A member of the group was one Robert Crockett. He was killed by Indians near the Caney Fork River. According to Ramsey's account in Annals of Tennessee, he "when returning to the camp, provided for two or three days' travelling; the Indians were there in ambush, and fired upon him and killed him . . . Crockett's body was found on the war track, leading from the Cherokee nation towards the Shawnees tribe."

Too, the Crocketts had been active in the Revolutionary War. Andrew, son of Samuel and Ester, was first a lieutenant and later a major in the Virginia Militia. One Joseph Crockett was a colonel. For their services the soldiers in the Virginia Militia received grants of land, some in Tennessee. At least three of those grants were in Williamson County, Tennessee, which is the ultimate reason for the Crocketts' locating in that county.

Before they received their grants, and perhaps before their participation in the Revolutionary War, the Crocketts had been in scouting parties to check out the Cumberland Country. Brothers Andrew and James Crockett were in Nashville in 1780, the year of its settlement, and both signed the Cumberland Compact. That was some number of years before they brought their families to Brentwood.

John Crockett, third child of Samuel and Ester Thompson Crockett, married Elizabeth Montgomery, sister of Capt. John Montgomery, who had married John Crockett's sister Ann Agnes. He received a large grant of land on the Little Harpeth River in Brentwood. In his will he said "I give and bequeath to my son Joseph, my tract of land on Little Harper (sic) in the County of Davidson and state of Tennessee, and containing 640 acres, but if the title thereof should at any time hereafter be insufficient, whereby my said son Joseph should lose said land then he is to have an equal share with my said sons, Samuel and John, of my lands in this county, and in case either of my said sons should die unmarried before they arrive at the age of twenty-one years then this share of my estate is to descend to my surviving son or sons."

The children of John and Elizabeth Montgomery Crockett were:

1. John Crockett
2. Joseph Crockett, married his first cousin Mary (Polly) Crockett, daughter of Andrew and Sally Elliot Crockett
3. Samuel Crockett
4. Sarah (Sally) Crockett, married John Wright Stanley
5. Ester Crockett, married a Young