

Records that Pre-Date 1856s

The Hatcher Papers", in the possession of Glen Hatcher of Gatlinburg, TN. cover the period between the years 1793 to 1898; a span of 105 years. For the first 58 years, each year is represented by at least one document. The papers are well preserved and on most of them the ink bright and readable. Much of the writing is hard to decipher. They can be roughly divided into tax receipts, accounts, notes, deeds, and contracts. Many of the early papers were signed by "mark" with two witnesses attesting the signature. This resulted in a wide variation in the spelling of the surname. An example is the many spellings of this name: Magloughin, MagLowgerton, McGlaughton, McLawton, etc.

The barter system is shown in these papers. For example, if John Huskey made rails for Reuben Hatcher, he might be given a note for \$5. Huskey would trade the note to the store keeper for \$5 worth of supplies. The store keeper in turn would buy \$5 worth of corn from Reuben Hatcher and pay him with the original note. Reuben Hatcher would then tear off the signature, showing that it had been paid. Some of these notes passed through many hands before they were paid, they took the place of currency. The notes alone provide an excellent cross section of business, as it occurred in early Sevier County, Tennessee. It is interesting that up to the year 1819 that debts were sometimes paid in pounds, shillings, and pence.

The land owned by William Hatcher was in Wears Cove. Apparently, he settled there about the same time as his brother-in-law, Aaron Crowson. He was a resident there in 1793, when it was still a part of Jefferson County. The name of this Cove has changed with the years. Inez Burns in her "History of Blount Co." says that the original name was "Crowson Cove". This is verified by the Hatcher Papers. On the survey plat of Colonel Samuel Wear that was made of the plantation in 1807; the road up river is labeled "to Bears Cove". In the map of Tennessee made by Matthew Rhea published in 1832, in Columbus, Tennessee, it is given as "Weirs Cove". By 1898, it was called Wears Valley. In 1941, the highway sign read "Weirs Valley"; however, a recent road map lists it as Wears Valley.

The Hatcher Papers help to clear up some vague points in the early history of Sevier County. Fred Matthews in his pamphlet entitled the "History of Sevier Co." states that Thomas Buckingham, the first sheriff of Sevier County, lived with his brother Alexander on Boyd's Creek. He says that the initials T. L. and A. B. are carved on their old home, being occupied in 1950 by Paul Trundle. In the Hatcher Papers, there is tax receipts signed by Thomas Buckingham, Sheriff and by Nath. B. Buckingham, Deputy Sheriff. A carved "N" and a carved "A" would look very much alike. Evidently, the Alexander was in reality, Nathaniel, or else there was another brother.

The earliest census of Sevier County was made in 1830. One value of the Hatcher Papers lies in the fact that they give us the names of many of the residents prior to that date. They shed light on the early subscription schools. Many of the aspiring teachers could hardly write a receipt for the dues. The results of their teaching, however, are evident after 1850, very few people signed by just a mark.

It is known that there was an early Baptist Church in Wears Cove, but a removal letter in the Papers, verifies that there was a fully organized Church there in 1800.

Research by Robert Nave of Compton, California indicates that William Hatcher of Sevier County was the son of Edward Hatcher of Bedford County, Virginia. Edward's Will is dated 1781 and was probated in 1782. In the will he mentions his wife, Sarah, and the following children: Reuben, Lucy, Edward, Josiah (perhaps this is Elijah, for the actual will was not seen), William, Rhoda, Elizabeth and Farley. Records of this estate are probably on file in Bedford County, Virginia.

Relationships between the Hatcher and Crowson families of Wears Cove are clearly defined by letters, and the estate settlement of William Hatcher and his wife, Polly Crowson Hatcher. William Hatcher made a will, but it was lost when the Sevier County Court House burned in 1856. From the deeds, we learn that the estate was divided into eleven parts, and was kept in vast acreage until the death of William Hatcher's widow, and the youngest heir became of age. Their children were: Elijah, Reuben, John, Nancy, wife of Spencer McBryant of Blount County, Rachel, Mary, Richard, William, Cally, Elizabeth, the wife of Jesse Renfrow who lived in Cole County, and Missouri, the wife of John Husky.