

Goodspeed's History Of Maury County, Tennessee

Maury County

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A superficial view of the county would present the picture of a section of a River Valley, running almost due east and west, with the dip to the west, and fringed to the north and south by smaller valleys which furrow the sides of irregular ranges of knobs and hills which lie along the northern and southern boundaries. To the west these hills broaden out into the uplands known as the "Barrens," forming a part of the Highland Rim. The bed of this valley is occupied by Duck River, which flows through the whole extent of the county, dividing it almost equally. The river drains the entire county, as all of the other streams flow into it. The river is not navigable through the whole extent of the county. The river was much used formerly for flat-boats and barges. It is still much used in floating out rafts during high water. The great value of Duck River is in its excellent water-power, which draws the numerous grist and sawmills that line its bank is. The county is well drained. In several creeks in the western part of the county are some beautiful waterfalls. On the northwest and south the Rim which borders the county is slashed by narrow and beautiful valleys of extreme richness; the remaining portion of the county is of a gently rolling surface, stretching out toward the West and South of the river into almost a plain-like smoothness.

Except a small portion around the northern, western and southern edges, invaded by the Highland Rim, the entire county is of limestone formation. It is by no means of one uniform variety, nor is the soil the same over the county. The soil generally is dark and friable, and exceedingly rich. The subsoil is generally a stiff, dark-colored clay, which weathers rapidly into a rich soil. But the characteristic of the county is the cedar timber, which abounds in some places so thickly as to exclude all under-growth and to shut out every ray of the sun as effectually as the darkest clouds of winter. In "the cedars" the rock comes to the surface. The soil is admirably suited to wheat and grasses, and peach trees to finely in it.

The original settlers in the Zion Church neighborhood came from Williamsburg District, S.C. They came in a kind of colony, led by Squire John Dickey, to brought about twenty families with him. A portion of these arrived in 1807, and others in 1808. Five thousand acres of land were purchased of the Gen. Greene Survey, at \$3 per acre. Around this has a nucleus clustered the little colony. Among the settlers were Squire Dickey, Moses Frierson, James Blakeley, William Frierson, Eli Frierson, James Armstrong, Thomas Stephenson, Nathaniel Stephenson, "Old Davy" Mathews, Samuel with her stated, John Stevenson, James Frierson, P. Fulton, Alexander Dobbins, Moses Freeman, the Flemings and Mayes. Mr. J. S. Mayes, who is four score and ten, and still vigorous, lives in the

Mount Zion neighborhood, and was one of the original settlers, and has a very distinct recollection of the first settlement. Like the Pilgrim Fathers the first thing they did on their arrival was the erection of a church. A place was selected, as near as could be judged, in the center of the purchase for the church site, which proved almost the exact mathematical center. There was erected a rude log church sometime in 1807, which is supposed to have been the first church erected in Maury County. Near the church was laid out a graveyard in which the body of Robert Frierson was consigned in August, 1808, the first in that vicinity. In this rude church, in the midst of the cane breaks and shades of the forest, the little band of pioneers met regularly every week to hear sermons by the Rev. Samuel Frierson or William Frierson, who poured forth the truths of the gospel with apostolic zeal and simplicity. In a short time the Rev. James N. Stephenson, who had been pastor of the church in South Carolina, became the pastor at Mount Zion. The old log church stood till 1814 or 1815, and was replaced by a brick church of peculiar shape. It was arranged with the pulpit at the side of with the main part of the building arranged for the life is, and a kind of trend stepped at the end for the color people. The old accounts did tell 1831, when a small body of ground was purchased near the old house and in the building erected. This house still stands, although it has several times been repaired and improved. The people of the Zion neighborhood were largely members of the Mt. Zion church, and being an intelligent class of people have always maintained a talented ministry. After the retirement of Dr. Stephenson, before mentioned, the Rev. James M. Smell was called to the pulpit, who remained tale 1850; the next was the Rev. Daniel G. Doak, who remained tell 1853, when he was succeeded by Rev. A. A. Doak. Rev. Doak remained but a short time, and was succeeded by Rev. J. T. Hendrick, his death occurred in 1860. Rev. Hendricks was succeeded in 1860 by Dr. Mack, of Columbia, he served the church tell 1863, and then gave place to Rev. C. Foster Williams, who still preaches occasionally. The next pastor was Rev. S. W. Mitchell, who still serves the church.