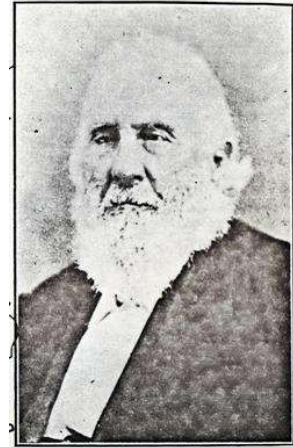


10. George Hale Grisham, Loyalty to All

George Hale Grisham was born on Feb. 12, 1795 in the Buffalo Ridge area in what was known at the time as the "Southwest Territory." In 1796, Southwest Territory was admitted into the union as the sixteenth state, Tennessee. Buffalo Ridge was in Washington County, Tennessee. George was probably the first child born to John Fuller and Nancy Anne Hale Grisham. The couple would eventually have fourteen children.

George's grandparents, Thomas and Dorcas Lane Gresham were originally from Maryland but moved to Virginia during the Revolutionary War and then to Tennessee after the war. At about this time the name was changed to "Grisham." In her book (Reference 8) Bagwell states,



REV. GEORGE GRESHAM.

"Here I wish to say that about the time of the emigration from Maryland to Tennessee, the spelling of the name was changed from Gresham to Grisham. It is a tradition, and I presume it is a fact, that the change was made intentionally, because the Tennessee Greshams became intense Whigs, and they wished to distinguish their descendants thus as a Whig branch of the family. I have, however, held to the 'e' throughout this volume, as the change was evidently illegal and confuses the genealogical connection with our English ancestry."

In this recounting of George (also Elijah, Nathan and George Edgar in other chapters), "Grisham" will be used as apparently, these men spelled their own names this way.

Thomas is listed as a Revolutionary War Patriot by the Daughters of the American Revolution. Dorcas Lane Gresham was the daughter of John Fuller and Elizabeth Cloud Lane. John was a minister of the gospel (probably Baptist) and is also listed as a Revolutionary War Patriot. The Lanes probably migrated to Tennessee at about the same time as, and perhaps with, the Greshams. Dorcas's brother, Tidence Lane, was the first preacher at the Buffalo Ridge Baptist Church. Buffalo Ridge was the first Baptist church in Tennessee. It is likely that the Greshams attended the Buffalo Ridge Church. Thomas Gresham died in 1804 and Dorcas died in 1805 when George was a young boy.

In addition to Thomas Gresham and John Fuller Lane, George Hale Grisham's great-grandfather,



George Hale was a Patriot in the Revolutionary War. George's son, George Hale Jr., also located to the Buffalo Ridge Area of the Southwest Territory following the war.

On October 13, 1813, George enlisted in the Army to fight for his country in the War of 1812 in the East Tennessee Mounted Infantry. He served as a private in Captain David G. Vance's Company of Colonel Samuel Blount's regiment. The company also included Sergeant John Grisham. It is not known whether this was his father or one of George's cousins. His father did serve during the War of 1812 but may have served in a different unit. George's company fought in the Battle of New Orleans. He was discharged on January 22, 1814.

George married Mary Boone Hoss on March 10, 1814; George was 19 years old and Mary was 17 years old. They had ten children, all of whom survived to adulthood. George worked as a farmer in Buffalo Ridge but he also served as Justice of the Peace from 1835 to 1841, "the first Justice of the Peace after the new constitution."

Sometime in the 1820's, a Baptist minister by the name of James Miller began to be influenced by the teachings of Barton W. Stone, one of the leaders of the Restoration Movement. In 1825, Miller left his current ministry and moved to East Tennessee where he continued to preach but not under the authority of the Baptist church. Miller was ordained by Stone in 1830.

Miller preached a revival in Boones Creek Valley in the summer of 1826 and it caused quite a stir in the area. Many began to adhere to the teachings of the Restoration Movement. In 1827, the Baptists sent a delegation to the Buffalo Creek Baptist Church to settle the differences. The committee noted that the Buffalo Creek had lost many to "Miller's Church." The membership dropped from 183 in 1825 to only 23 in 1828.

The Boone's Creek Christian Church was formed sometime in late 1828 but was not officially chartered until September 20, 1834. The record of members totaled 134, led by eight elders and three deacons. The elders included James Miller, the founding evangelist and George Grisham. Most of the members of the new congregation, including George, were originally from the Buffalo Ridge Baptist Church. Goodspeed (Reference 1) describes Mary Grisham (George's wife) as an active member of the Baptist Church. It could be that Mary – and possibly other Grishams/Greshams – did not transfer to the Boones Creek church or perhaps Goodspeed was merely more favorable toward her Baptist affiliation and didn't bother to mention the Boones Creek Christian Church affiliation. The church continued to grow and numbered 318 members at the beginning of the Civil War.

Church records indicate a large number of preachers were sent out from the congregation including, George although there is no known record of a formal ordination. He preached at the Boones Creek Christian Church and other locations.

In "The History of Wise County [Texas], a Link with the Past" it is stated that the Grishams moved to Texas from Jonesboro, TN in 1853. It is not clear to which Grishams the article refers but George Hale Grisham and his nephews, Elijah and Nathan, are mentioned specifically. There may have been other family members, but they are not mentioned. George's wife, Mary, probably accompanied him but their children were adults by this time and likely remained in Tennessee. George is described as a minister of the Christian Church. The narrative also records that George enlisted with his nephews in the Texas Frontier Cavalry. As he was 67 years old and well past the age limit for enlisting in the Confederate Army, it seems unlikely that he would be accepted. George's name was not found on any of the enlistment rolls, so it is likely that he volunteered at Fort Belknap as a civilian.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the citizens of East Tennessee leaned more toward Union sympathies and George's son had very strong pro-Union and anti-slavery views. It doesn't seem credible that George would have developed strong secessionist feelings during his short time in Texas so his motivation was likely not political. Given his background and vocation, George was probably more concerned with the spiritual needs of the cavalry troops. This author speculates that it is likely that George served as a self-appointed chaplain for the unit, a function for which he was prepared and able to do. There is no documented evidence to support this theory, however.

Just as there is no definitive record of his joining the unit, there is no record of his departure from the cavalry or of his leaving Texas. However, by the summer of 1863, George had returned to Buffalo Ridge in Tennessee.

On September 5, 1863, George's son, George Edgar, began recruiting a company of cavalry for the Tenth Tennessee Cavalry (Union) under the verbal orders of Colonel S. K. N. Patton, in the town of Jonesborough in Washington County. His recruits were mustered into Company I of the Eight Tennessee Cavalry a few months later.

George Hale Grisham apparently signed on with his son in some capacity. He isn't listed on any of the muster rolls but there is a claim that he served in this unit on the widow's pension application filed on behalf of his wife, Mary. The pension claim was based on his service in the War of 1812 but there is a note that he served in the 8th Cavalry from September 5, 1863 to January 6, 1864. There is no record that this service was proved or that it had any bearing on the pension award.

WAR OF 1812.		
NUMBERS	SOLDIER	BOUNTY LAND
SO 122	GRISHAM, GEORGE	32496 40 50
SC 470	WIDOW	21929 120 55
	SERVICE PVT CAPT DAVID G VANCE'S CO TENN MIL	
	ENLISTED OCT 16 1813 DISCHARGED JAN 22 1814	
RESIDENCE 1851 1855 WASHINGTON CO TENN OF SOLDIER 1871 WASHINGTON CO (PO JONESBORO) TENN		REMARKS
RESIDENCE OF WIDOW		SOLDIER'S DISCHARGE CTF FILED IN THE BRIEF
MAIDEN NAME OF WIDOW WIFE MARY B HASS		SOLDIER ALSO SERVED IN CAPT GEORGE E GRISHAM'S CO 8 TENN
MARRIAGE OF WIFE SOLDIER AND WIDOW WCH 10 1814 WASHINGTON CO TENN		CAV FROM SEPT 5 1863 TO JAN 6 1864 (CIVIL WAR)
DEATH OF SOLDIER		
DEATH OF WIDOW		

Widow's Pension Application

During most of this time period, the recruits remained at Jonesborough. They didn't leave until December of that year, arriving at Camp Nelson on December 30. It is quite possible that the only "action" that George saw was to assist his son in signing on other recruits and he probably did not make the journey to Camp Nelson. Other than the notation in the pension application, there is no record of the elder George Grisham serving in the Union Army.

There were soldiers who fought on both sides during the civil war. Many of these were prisoners of war who were offered the opportunity to avoid imprisonment by enlisting on the side of their captors. Confederate soldiers who signed on with the Union army were called "Galvanized Yankees." The term "galvanized" was also applied to Union soldiers who joined the Confederate army. Toward the end of the war there was a Union regiment comprised entirely of former Confederates. The regiment included at least 250 men who had started with the Union Army, joined the Confederate Army to avoid becoming a prisoner of the CSA and had again joined the Union side to avoid being a prisoner of the USA.

There were others who switched sides for other reasons including those whose convictions regarding the war and its goals changed and perhaps pragmatists who began to view the prospects of a southern victory as unlikely.

It doesn't seem credible to consider George in any of these categories. Rather, it seems that his concern was with the soldiers more than with the army. His motivation was to meet their individual needs more than the ideological tenants of either side. When

George saw his family members involved in war, he stepped in to help them regardless of side. He seems to have been a man of strong conviction and concern for others, so it is not likely that he was ambivalent as to the outcome of the war. He came from a long line of patriots and he himself had signed up to fight at an earlier age. His actions were not indicative of a lack of loyalty to his country or its cause but a display of loyalty to his family regardless of which side of the conflict he was on. He probably never fired a shot in battle. The Texas Frontier Cavalry never actually engaged in a battle with the Union Army during the time George was among them and his “term of service” in the Union Army ended before the unit actually began their military campaign. In fact, there is no record of George claiming service in either army; both claims were made by others and there is no way to know what he would have thought of those claims. All we know is that he loyally served his family on both sides with a dedication that appeared to others to be as a soldier would.

After the war, George continued to live in the Buffalo Ridge area until his death on May 7, 1878. He is buried in Gresham cemetery on Buffalo Ridge. His gravestone is engraved with quotation of John 17:20-21.

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

The selection of this passage typifies his commitment to spreading the gospel of Christ and echoes Jesus’s desire for unity among believers. Perhaps this desire for unity extends beyond the church to the country whose division George witnessed for a time. It could be that he joined both sides of the conflict in an effort to bring both sides back together.



~10-5~

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