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TSLAFriends

Friends of the Tennessee State Library and Archives

issue 17

Issue 21

Winter 2016

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President's Letter



MEMBERSHIP DUES: It is renewal time!

It's "that time of year again" as the 2017 dues are now due and payable either by check or by PayPal from the TSLAF website. Select a category from our "Membership" tab on our website and help the Friends to support TSLA and all its many projects that will benefit us all.

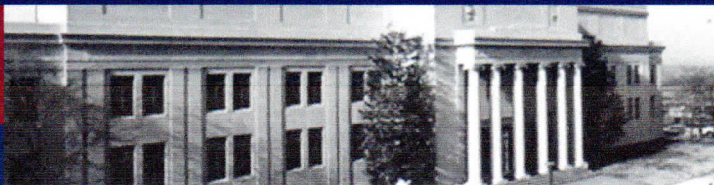
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Dear TSLAFriends,

Although our unseasonable weather reminds us of the summer months, the calendar says Fall and soon Winter will be here. The cooler months are a prime time to visit those cemeteries in areas where chiggers and snakes dwell. It seems that so many records created by our ancestors and their neighbors include a mention of a family cemetery that is no longer identified or noted on the map. Virginia Gooch Watson shares her Favorite item from the collection of the Tennessee State Library and Archives with us in this edition, and that includes a cemetery.

We still are learning about the wonderful items purchased at a recent auction now a part of the collection at the Tennessee State Library & Archives. Visit our Facebook page in the next few days to see part of the collection and why it has value to so many Tennessee residents. If you have questions about the Friends organization, or would like to become more involved, just let us know through our social media outlets or our website. Thank you for supporting the valuable stories of our great state storied in our Library & Archives. I look forward to see you searching in the Archives or in one of our amazing cemeteries. Stay safe, and keep the stories flowing.

J. Mark Lowe,

President, TSLAFriends

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My TSLA Favorite

Virginia Gooch Watson, Past President of the Tennessee State Library & Archives, and former staff member

In 1963 while a staff member at TSLA, Dr. Dan Robison, the immediate past TN State Librarian, was compiling biographical information on TN Legislators for the first "Biographical Directory ..." Dr. Dan asked me for information on two Gooch men who'd served in the Legislature from the Nolensville area in Williamson County. Being young and not yet attuned to genealogy, I told him I never heard of them but I'd ask my father, Johnny Gooch who he knew, and see what I could find out for him. I asked my father and found he knew them well and told me of a cousin to contact in Nolensville. After contacting my newly found Gooch cousin, he told me about both men and took me to the Gooch cemetery that housed the first Gooch to that area and a brother to my ancestor who settled not far away in Rutherford County. Dr. Dan's question sparked my interest in my fraternal Gooch line as my mother's Omohundro family history had been researched/published by my great great uncle and my grandfather Omohundro.



It's me, taken Nov 1964 before I married, so I was a Gooch, standing between the markers of my 3d great grandparents (Nathaniel & Martha "Patsey" (Tait) Gooch) & 1st Gooch to Rutherford Co, TN. My husband, George thought it would be good to have me standing between them!!! They're in Cannon Cem, Smyrna, TN.

I returned to my father to learn where "my" direct Gooch ancestor had lived and was buried and found he was in the cemetery I'd been going to all of my life for funerals and special events - Cannon (Cannon) Cemetery in Smyrna, TN which was directly behind the old Sewart Air Force Base in Smyrna and adjoined the property of another great great grandfather, John Edmondson. When going to the cemetery, we usually went to my uncles who then owned the property, parked the car, and walked to the cemetery entering from the north end instead of the main southern entrance. I proceeded to visit the cemetery which had ceased to be used after 1951 when my great aunt was buried there so it was overgrown and neglected but untouched by vandals at that time. I found the tombstone of the FIRST Gooch to settle in Rutherford County in 1814, my 3d great grandfather Nathaniel Gooch, and his wife, Martha (Patsey) Tait, along with one of their sons, Dr. John Claiborne Gooch and his family and some of

his wife's family. Nathaniel was from Hanover Co, VA, his father being a Revolutionary War veteran, went to Caswell Co, N.C. with his father and family and then came to Rutherford Co, TN. In 1963, the U.S. Corp of Engineers had surveyed the one acre Cannon Cemetery for partial/complete removal for the proposed Percy Priest Dam and Lake. The actual removal only involved the northern portion of the cemetery, about one fourth of the burials, but these included my father's parents, grandparents, and other family members on several lines but Nathaniel Gooch was not re-interred much to the my father's regret as

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TSLA welcomes interns and volunteers who would like to be involved in aspects of library and archival work.

All interested candidates should be detail-oriented and have some background in history or library work.

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later vandals took sledge hammers to the beautiful monuments, tombstones & even foot-markers leaving only pictures of destroyed markers and partial markers. Luckily I had taken pictures of all family members I knew of before that happened and later wrote an article on Cannon Cemetery listing all of those removed and the families that weren't.

Armed with the death date of Nathaniel Gooch, I went back to TSLA and used for "my first time" the Rutherford County, TN county records which had been a part of TSLA's project to microfilm all TN county records in the early 1950's. I had been a staff member when this program was implemented although I was in the Cataloging section rather than the Restoration and Reproduction Division which directed the program but in those days, TSLA was smaller and staff members all knew and helped other divisions/sections if there was a need. The microfilm readers were in the main Reading Room which is now the South Reading Room so armed with the Rutherford Co, TN Index to the Record Books (the location of many different records in the county including wills, deeds, court, etc) I cautiously began to read the index for anything under Nathaniel Gooch who had died 30 October 1841. Not knowing if he had a will, I began at the beginning of the index and read until I found an entry for Nathaniel Gooch. From there I went to the county record index and found the entry should be on mf reel 261 for the Rutherford Co, TN. Record Books, 1840 - 1847 in Record Book 12, pp.53, 55, 125, 460 & 490. The will had been written 24 June 1836 and recorded 10 December 1841. THAT was my first find and experience of an ancestor "coming to life" from a cold granite stone to his actual words - needless to say, the entire Reference Section knew of my find and in particular the Genealogy Librarian, Mrs. Hermione Embry who immediately wanted me to join her DAR chapter which I did.

When I simmered down and read the will, I learned Nathaniel had two sons and two daughters; directed that his property be equally divided between the two sons (I descend from one of them), and left the two daughters \$500 and a slave each. Nathaniel directed his 228 acres property be sold which it was in 1844 and the money divided between the two sons. Finding that will inspired a long pathway of Gooch research, discovering many kinspeople in other cities and states, finding a close kinsman who had original deeds in Hanover Co, VA from the Revolutionary War veteran, William Gooch and other records. That will is my TSLA favorite even though the document is not unusual but to me it will always hold a special place as I remember so well the excitement of finding it at TSLA without having to drive to Murfreesboro and search the original books.

There have been many other discoveries at TSLA through the years but finding that from a date on a tombstone for a novice who'd never thought of family research even though I worked in the middle of it at TSLA and

often helped patrons, youth never realizes gold mines that are under their noses!

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