



The

Gems of Pike County Arkansas

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**I want air, and sunshine, and blue sky,
The feeling of the breeze upon my face,
The feeling of the turf beneath my feet,
And no walls but the far-off mountain tops.**

Longfellow

GEOLOGIC FORMATION

PIKE County in its northern part is composed of tolerably high ranges of sandstone, and shales of the mill-stone grit, which extend south nearly to *Murfreesboro*. South of this the *Little Missouri* winds through the cretaceous formation.

At the Plaster Bluff, on the *Little Missouri*, on Sections 29 and 30, Township 8 south, Range 25 west, are valuable beds of gypsum. This plaster-bed must become of some practical importance, from the fine quality of the plaster-stone that may be obtained here, and from the associate limestone, both highly useful to the agriculturist as mineral fertilizers.

Royston's chalybeate spring is situated on the east half of the southwest quarter of Section 33, Township 7 south, Range 25 west. It is a saline chalybeate, and possesses good medicinal properties. The hard shell limestone of the cretaceous formation shows itself frequently in the vicinity of *Murfreesboro* but it is mostly covered by a quaternary gravel. There is also cretaceous limestone on the north side of *Prairie Creek*, bearing south of west, which extends two or three miles, and is then succeeded by sandstone and slate. No limestone was observed from the mouth of *Prairie Creek*, on the *Little Missouri*, to the extreme southeastern limit of this county.

SOURCES OF REVENUE - PRODUCTS ADVANTAGES FOR RESIDENTS

Along the valleys of *Pike County* are found some of the most fertile farming lands in Southern Arkansas,

narrow bottoms between the hills, on which the farmers have no trouble to raise a bail of cotton every year. The bottom lands along the *Little Missouri River* are of considerable extent, covering much of the southern and southwestern parts of the country. Not more than a sixth of these magnificent lands is under cultivation, while the extensive tracts yet awaiting occupation are ample to support a population equaling all the inhabitants of the county now. *Pike County* may justly be called a good farming country, though the northern portions are hilly, broken and rough; the other parts have a good sandy soil, running into a sandy loam, with clay subsoil, with large tracts of the celebrated red lands, which are the most productive of all uplands soils. All these lands are very easily cultivated, not requiring more than a third of the labor which the planters of the Mississippi River bottoms are compelled to bestow on theirs to make crops; for this reason, the farmer in the uplands of *Pike County* realizes as much, in proportion to the labor expended, as the planter in more fertile localities. This fact, coupled with the more favorable conditions of health and good water, show the advantages of *Pike County* as a place of permanent residence. Cotton is the principle crop, and an average yield for bottom lands is 1,400 pounds, and the uplands 800 pounds per acre. The people of this county also raise almost everything that is needed for home consumption in the way of vegetables and fruits, and nearly all their meat, which shows the independent position of the people here. With the introduction of fertilization, and a more careful, and possibly a more scientific method of farming, *Pike County* would at once show what her productive capacities are. Fruit here may be depended on to yield abundant crops every year, and some sorts, as the peach and plum, reach a degree of per-

fection that few other localities can show. With railroad communication to the north, all kinds of berries might be raised and placed on the early markets at a high price, which would insure a large profit to the grower. No county is better adapted for extensive engagement in this industry.

The timber districts of the county embrace all its territory, except those portions under cultivation and may be estimated at three quarters of its entire area. On this many square miles of primitive forest lands are found some of the finest timber of which Arkansas can boast. There is a belt that crosses the county about ten miles north of the county seat that is absolutely unsurpassed, and on the advent of a railroad through the county would at once figure as a great wealth producing source. The most valuable timber trees are short leaf pine, of which there is an immense quantity, oak of several varieties, hickory, walnut, ash, maple, sycamore, and red gum. Very little timber has ever been cut and sold from this county, none except what was rafted down the *Little Missouri River*, and that industry was discontinued many years ago.

Gypsum, or plaster stone, is found in this county in quantities so large that it may be said to be inexhaustible. A ledge of this rock rises from the river two miles below Murfreesboro. It is in a wonderful state of purity, and only needs transportation to be placed on the markets of the world.

Kaolin, or porcelain clay, is found in wonderful abundance in several places, but principally in a locality eight miles east of *Murfreesboro*. This is in a degree of purity rarely seen, and from the extent of the deposit will become a valuable source of revenue to the county when it can be placed on the market.

HEALTHFULNESS

Pike ranks with other counties in Southern Arkansas in the favorable conditions of the people's general health. Children are particularly free from fatal diseases, and among this class there are few deaths. Statistics from physicians reveal an annual death rate of about thirteen to the thousand inhabitants of the county, a lower rate than will be found in almost any other part of the country.

SITUATION

Pike County is situated in the southwestern part of Arkansas, between the thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth degrees of north latitude, and ninety-third and ninety-fourth degrees of west longitude.

HOW BOUNDED

It is bounded on the north by Montgomery, on the east by Clark, on the south by Nevada and Hempstead, and on the west by Hempstead and Howard Counties. It has an area of 620 miles.

SURFACE CONSTRUCTION

The topography of this county is much varied. The northern and central portions are quite mountainous, some of the highest hills rising to an elevation of 300 feet above the *Little Missouri*. These ranges of hills have a general trend of northwest and southeast, and amid them are many beautiful valleys noted for their fertility. The southern part of the county is much more regular in surface, and abounds in broader valleys, along the larger streams. There is much bottom land in this section, a great deal of which equals the Arkansas River Valley in fertility and productiveness, and is much more easily cultivated.

STREAMS

The county is thickly traversed by many streams, of which the *Little Missouri River* is the largest and most important. This stream rises in Polk County, enters Pike in the extreme northwestern corner, flows southeast, and after forming a portion of the southern boundary line leaves the county at its southeastern corner. The bottoms lands along the valley of this beautiful river are very fertile, and will rank in productiveness with any in the State. *Antoine Creek* is formed by the union of three small streams in the northeastern part of the county, and flows south, forming a portion of the county's eastern boundary, and empties in the *Little Missouri River*, at the extreme southeastern part of the county. *Saline Creek* rises near the central part of the county, flows south about fifteen miles and empties in the *Little Missouri*. *Wolf Creek* rises near the central part of the county, flows southeast and empties in the *Antoine Creek*. *Rock Creek* rises in the northern part of the county, flows southeast and empties in the *Caddo*. *Caddo River* flows for a short distance through the northeastern part of the county. The *Muddy Fork* of the *Little Missouri River* rises in Howard County, flowing east into the *Clear Fork* of the *Little Missouri*, near *Murfreesboro*. *Woodall Creek* rises near the center of the county, flows northeast and empties into *Antoine Creek*.

SOME OLD SETTLERS

The early land entry books were destroyed by fire, so it is (difficult) to ascertain who were positively the first settlers here. The following list, though incomplete, is of some who were living here prior to 1830: *Jeremiah Davis, Joseph Davis, ... John Hughes, James Hughes, Oliver Brewer Sr., Henry Brewer, ... David*

Dickson, ... John Blocker, ... the Kelleys - Elijah and William, Isaac White. None of these men are now living, but descendants of nearly all are to be found here enjoying health and happiness, and nearly all prosperity.

FAMILIAR NAMES

A list, also incomplete, of some living here prior to 1840: *Asa Thompson, the McDonald family, John White, George Hensley, Jesse Jenkins, William Bizzell, David Huddleston, James H. Kirkham, William Stone and Pleasant White.* To continue the list of later arrivals in full, would make such a long report that a few names are selected of those who were found to be prominent in the county's early history, and who arrived here prior to 1860: *Henry Merrill, John Matlock, Taylor Polk, Edwin Owens, William Cooley, John R. Rodgers, H.H. Meredith, James Scott, Thomas McClure, Jordan Reese, Sloman Reese, Levi Davis, Hiram Stell and family, the Wingfields, the Eppersons, John Gillam, the Foresters, Ewing Alford, William Orrick, Abner Henderson Sr., Josiah Corbell, Dr. Thomas Conway, Henry Lynn, Henry Carter, the Huddlestons.* Many of these men are still living, and enjoying the repose of a well-spent life, after the cares and fatigues of pioneer settlement. and usefulness is undoubted. My first appointment as examiner of this county was in January, 1878, and during that year I licensed six teachers. Every district was in debt, and hostility to public schools was universal and outspoken. Last year I issued thirty-nine certificates to teachers, and this year have issued forty-five. The districts are all out of debt, and men who, a few years ago, worked against school tax, now vote and work for it. There are no denominational schools in the county, and not many private schools are taught."

It will be seen from the above that the public schools of *Pike County* are rapidly improving, and from the almost universal desire of the people to still advance the grade and standard, we may soon expect to see a much greater and more favorable change. There are several excellent schools in the county, and the school at *Murfreesboro*, especially, shows most favorably. There are taught besides the required branches, Latin, algebra, analysis and physiology. This school is in charge of *J.B. Thomasson*, and has an enumeration of eighty-seven. After the free session of four months expires, he conducts a private term of six months.

OFFICIALS OF THE COUNTY

The county officers called upon to occupy positions of usefulness are given in - "**The Gems**" - Volume III, No. 4, Fall 1992, "A Pictorial History of Arkansas by *Fay Hempstead* (1890), *Pike County, Arkansas*, revised and edited by *David L. Kelley*, pp. 70-72.

Pike County has been represented in the General

SCHOOL INTERESTS

From the report of County Examiner *Charles E. Stelle*, made to the State superintendent of public instruction in 1888, the following copy is taken, referring to the condition of schools here:

"Enumeration - White, 3,020; colored, 156. During the year ending June 30, 1888, there was expended: For schools, \$4,788.79; for teacher's salaries, \$4,775.29; the average monthly salary paid teachers, \$31.48; number of teachers, 48; number of colored teachers, 2; average term of schools, 3 months; number of districts, 39; number voting tax, 15; average tax voted, 4 2/5 mills; number of school-houses, 12; value of school-houses, \$1,240."

"A majority of the schools were taught in houses used also for churches, and that are not the property of the district, and hence are not reported as public school houses."

A GOOD SHOWING

"That the public schools are increasing in popularity Assembly by the following members:

Asa Thompson, 1836-1838
John Wilson, 1840
William Bizzell, 1842-1843
Elijah Kelley, 1846
William Gilmer, 1848-1851
Samuel Kelley, 1852-1853
William B. Gould, 1854-1855

Elijah Kelley, 1856-1857
Gideon Mason, 1858-1859
Willis Jones, 1860-1862
William B. Gould, 1862
M. Stennette, 1864-1865
William B. Gould, 1865
J.A. McCollum, 1866-1867

J.R. Bush, 1868-1869
John Wagner, 1871
Booker D. Brock, 1877
Henry W. Carter, 1879
J.A. Davis, 1881-1885
J.P. Copeland, 1885
J.P. Dunn, 1887-1890

In the Senate of the State are found the following members from this county:

James H. Howard, 1871-1873
O.D. East, 1874-1877
J.P. Copeland, 1887-1890

Mr. *James H. Howard* was prosecuting attorney of this, the Eighth Judicial District, in 1873-1875.

The member to the Constitutional Convention of 1836 was *Elijah Kelley*; in 1874, *Henry W. Carter*.

DURING WAR TIMES

The military operations in *Pike County* consisted in supplying the Confederate army with two full companies, raised and dispatched to the front in 1861, and many recruits, both volunteers and conscripts, at later periods in the strife. A large number of men, estimated by some as many as 200 left the county, presumed to join the Federal army; many of these, however, went North, and engaged in civil pursuits till the fighting was over, when they returned, and many are living here at the present time.

TROOPS FOR SERVICE

The first company for the Confederate army was recruited in the summer of 1861. At its organization Mr. *Frank Black* was elected captain, *William B. Gould*, first, *J.N. McCollum*, second, and *Henry C. Polk*, third lieutenant. This company left Murfreesboro in July of 1861, and marched to Van Buren, where they were organized into the Fourth Arkansas Regiment Infantry, and dispatched to Southwestern Missouri; from that State fell back to Northwestern Arkansas, and participated in the battle of Pea Ridge. They were then sent east of the Mississippi River, where they were attached to the army of Gen. *Joseph E. Johnston*, under whom they served until his surrender in North Carolina, in 1865.

Capt. *Black* died at Cross Hollow, Ark., in 1862, and Lieut. *Gould* was promoted to the vacant office; he resigned soon after, on account of ill health, when Sergt. *Booker D. Brock* was elected to the command, and led the company in many closely contested battles, till the surrender. Lieut. *McCollum* resigned some time in 1862, and soon after joined the Federal army, with whom he fought till the end of the strife. Less than a dozen veterans of this company are living in *Pike County* now, among whom are Dr. *William D. Alford*, Rev. *George W. Brock*, *Moses K. Brock*, *Eri*

Webb and *Cyrus McRae*.

Later in 1861, another company was recruited, by *William J. Kelley*. At the organization, Mr. *Kelley* was elected captain, and *William M. Gilmer*, first, *Grandison D. Preston*, second, and Dr. *Beverly R. Dickson*, third lieutenant. This company was organized in the Sixth Arkansas Infantry. After the battle of Pea Ridge, in which they were engaged, they proceeded across the Mississippi River. After several engagements they were with the army at the defense of Port Hudson, and sustained the noted siege of that place; at its fall, they were paroled, and very few ever joined the army again.

Capt. *Kelley* had resigned, on account of bad health, soon after the troops reached the front; he returned home, and lived in *Pike County* till his death in 1872.

FINANCIAL SHOWING

Pike County has but a small indebtedness, and that is being rapidly paid off; were it not for a constitutional provision, limiting the amount per cent of the tax levy, the people would be glad to liquidate the total sum in a few years. The debt stood \$10,000 at the beginning of 1889, and during that year it was reduced to \$2,000. At the close of the war the county debt was very small, but during reconstruction days it was considerably increased. The erection of a new jail in 1884 added some \$6,000, to the amount, but it may be safely predicted that during the next four or five years this will all be obliterated.

The highest rate of taxation was in 1878, when there was a levy of 12 mills for county and State purposes. From 1868 to 1874 county scrip fell in value to, in many cases, no more than 10 cents on the dollar, but now it has a cash value of about 50 cents. The assessed value of county property, both real and personal, was, in 1889, \$756,177. In 1874 the total assessment was \$342,379; an increase, it will be seen, in fifteen years, of \$422,798. This healthy growth is simply the increased value of farm property, and may be counted on to increase, in even a more rapid proportion, in the future, as much land is being reduced to a state of cultivation by both the native citizens and immigrants, and of the home seekers in Arkansas, *Pike County* is receiving quite a liberal share.

The former system of the farmers placing their growing and prospective crops under mortgage, to run them till harvest time, is becoming much less prevalent every year. But little real estate is under mortgage, and the rich agricultural resources of the county are bringing independence to the people.

MATTERS OF LEGAL IMPORTANCE

Pike comprises one of the seven counties of the Eight Judicial District, over which Judge *Rufus D. Hearn* now presides, with *W.M. Greene* prosecuting attorney. Its

legal talent in early days was mostly supplied by lawyers from the Hempstead County bar, so we do not find a very strong showing in point of numbers among its lawyers, though several names from this county became prominent in later years.

Hon. *A.B. Williams*, at present a member of the Utah Commission, was born in Hempstead County, and settled at Murfreesboro, Pike County, where he was admitted to the bar, and became the first resident attorney. He lived and practiced here for many years, and was known as one of the most brilliant lawyers of the State. During and since the war *William J. Kelley* practiced at this bar. Among others was *J. H. Lathrop*. *J.H. Howard*, a citizen of the county, held office of country clerk and State Senator, and was admitted to the bar here in 1870; this gentleman now resides in Oklahoma. Hon. *L.S. Corbell* was admitted to the bar here in 1873; he has mainly resided in this and Hempstead County, and is at present the only resident attorney in the county.

JUDICIAL AFFAIRS

There has been but one legal execution in the county, and this was the hanging of *Tyre O'Neal* for horse stealing on October 20, 1837.

John M. Dickson, a constable, while attempting to seize a horse belonging to *E.K. Williams*, against whom he held an execution for debt, was shot and killed on the spot by the latter. *Williams*, whose true name was afterward discovered to be *E.W. Kerr*, escaped, and was never apprehended. This happened on July 2, 1836.

A.M. Lester was hanged during the war by a posse of men termed "independent soldiers." Mr. *Lester* had become obnoxious to these people, with whom he had had repeated difficulties. He had been warned to leave the county, but had been promised protection by the governor. He was, notwithstanding, taken by force one day, while in Murfreesboro, and hanged to a tree near the bank of the *Little Missouri River*.

James Kimbrough and *Henry Jenkins*, two boys, each about sixteen years of age, had a quarrel which resulted in a fight, in 1862. *Kimbrough* seized a stone, with which he struck *Jenkins* on the head, inflicting fatal injuries. *Kimbrough* was indicted, and tried at the next term of court, but was acquitted.

In the fall of 1869, *William Brewer*, while in a drunken altercation with *John D. Hancock*, in a store in Murfreesboro, stabbed him in the throat, inflicting a wound from which he died at once. *Brewer* was indicted, and the case was continued in the circuit court for several years, but he died a natural death before he was brought to trail.

One day, in 1873, Mr. *W.W. Creecy* was plowing in his field, he was shot and killed by *George Lee*. *Lee* was arrested and indicted, but soon made his escape.

The Rev. *John Alford*, a highly respected citizen of this county, was shot and killed while standing in the doorway of his home in Murfreesboro, on April 30, 1874. Positive proofs as to who did this deed were lacking; yet suspicion pointed *W.R. Hall* and *A.H. White*. *Hall* was arrested first, and after preliminary examination, was placed in jail, from which he was promptly released by his friends. He left the county, and has never returned. *White* was afterward arrested on indictment and placed in jail, but was permitted to go out under guard. He had been privately furnished with a revolver, and one day he made an assault on the guard and succeeded in making his escape. A reward of \$1,000 was offered for his capture, but for over a year he roamed at large. In July, 1875, two of his friends, *J.J. Cox* and *H.D. Cox*, concluded to hand him over to the authorities for the reward, but in attempting to secure his capture they killed him.

In the fall of 1875 *Riley Thomas* killed *W.W. Kitchens*, by knocking him on the head with a shovel. *Thomas* made his escape, and was never brought to justice.

In 1885 *W.M. Wallace* killed *George Douglas*, shooting him from the window of a house, as he passed along the road. *Wallace* was at once arrested and bound over by the examining court, but was not indicted by the grand jury, who looked upon it as justifiable homicide, from the fact that *Douglas* had repeatedly made threats to take *Wallace's* life.

In 1886 *Art Miller* was shot by unknown parties. *John Brooks* was arrested, indicted and tried for the crime, but acquitted, as the State could produce no evidence of his guilt.

The murder of *Frank Ward* in Howard County, and the burning of his murderers in the Murfreesboro jail are well remembered.

On April 5, 1884, *Frank Ward* was murdered in Howard County, by *Henry Polk*, *Sylvester Polk* and *Monroe Kuykendall*. The facts of the killing and the incidents of the arrest of the murderers, were as follows: *Ward* was a peddler, who was on a trip through Howard County. He was gone so long that his brother, a resident of Prescott, Nevada County, started to follow him up. He was easily traced to the home of the *Polks*, but from that place the trail was lost. The men, *Henry Polk*, *Sylvester Polk* and *Monroe Kuykendall*, were soon arrested on suspicion, and searching parties began a vigorous search for the body, for which a reward of \$50 had been offered. No trace of it was discovered until one of the prisoners voluntarily suggested that they look in a heap of ashes in

the woods. This was done, and examination revealed ample proof that the body had been consumed by fire, and from time to time, as much was admitted by the prisoners. These three men were promptly indicted, but a change of venue was taken from Howard to *Pike County*, and the prisoners were brought to *Murfreesboro*. The jail at this place being very insecure, the prisoners were taken to Little Rock, and placed in the penitentiary for safe keeping, and while there *Monroe Kuykendall* died. At the April term of (the) circuit court in 1885, the other two, *Henry Polk* and *Sylvester Polk*, were placed on trial separately, both were convicted, *Sylvester Polk* was sentenced to be hung, and *Henry Polk* to twenty-one years' imprisonment in the penitentiary. From a technical error in the proceedings of this court the prisoners were granted a new trial. This proceeding, which promised the possible defeat of justice, and the escape from well-merited punishment of the perpetrators of a heinous crime, must have outraged the feelings of some of the people, for after two unsuccessful attempts had been made by armed mobs to take the prisoners from the jail, a third was made on the night of September 5, 1885, when, as they could not be taken from the iron cell, a fire was started, which partially consumed the jail, and burned the two prisoners confined within to death.

After this tragedy, there was a mass-meeting held at *Murfreesboro*, which was largely attended by the citizens, who strongly condemned the action of mob law, and all acts of violence, that might place the county under an unenviable stigma. Public opinion and the hostility of the people at once became so pronounced against the perpetrators of such diabolical deeds, that it is thought most of those concerned have moved away. At least, to the credit of *Pike County*, may be said that few lawless acts, of even the most trivial nature, have since occurred (except the case of *Sylvester Churchill*). The law is rigidly enforced and quietly obeyed, and the citizens of all sections are earnest in their efforts to show the world that no one can condemn mob violence, and its attendant evils, more vigorously than they.

The governor offered a reward of \$250 each for the arrest of every person concerned in this affair, but no evidence was ever secured to justify the apprehension of any one.

Dennis Brooks was murdered in 1885, at *Langley*, in the northern part of this county, by *Sylvester Churchill*, his nephew, who shot him in the back with a Winchester rifle, as he was riding away on a horse. There had been no recent difficulty between the parties, but it was supposed to be in revenge for fancied wrongs inflicted on *Churchill* when a boy. After the shooting, *Churchill* mounted his horse and rode off toward his home in Scott County. He was immediately pursued by several parties, and soon captured by Constable *James Epperson*, who brought him back to this county and confined him in the old jail at *Murfreesboro*. On the night of October 20,

1885, the jail was burned by unknown incendiaries, and *Churchill* perished in the flames. A reward of \$500 was offered by Gov. *Hughes* for the apprehension of any person concerned in this crime, but no arrests were ever made. With the exception of these two cases of mob violence, *Pike County* can show a wonderfully clear record of criminal cases; in proof of this, it is proper to state that the grand jury's report at the January term of the circuit court of 1890, reveals but five indictments, and these for but very paltry offenses against the law.

ORGANIZATION

Pike County was organized by an act of the Territorial Legislature, November 1, 1833, and *Elijah Kelley*, *Rice Stringer* and *John Dickson* were elected January 6, 1834 as commissioners to locate the seat of justice for the county.

JUDICIAL CENTER

At that time but three settlements had been made within the county limits - *Wolf Creek*, east, and the Brewer settlement on *Muddy Fork*, west, and a few families at the point of the place selected for the county seat. A log court-house, and a small frame building for the clerk's office, were at once erected. Mr. *Asa Thompson* lived in the immediate vicinity of the new county seat on the *Clear Fork* of the *Little Missouri River*, where he secured a post office at his house in 1834 that was given the name of *Zebulon*. This post office was later moved to the court-house in *Murfreesboro*. In October, 1834, the commissioners to locate the seat of justice reported that a house was ready for the reception of the court in the town of "*Murfreesborough*" the county seat of *Pike County*. The people, who were mostly natives of Tennessee, wishing to perpetuate some memory of their native State, selected the name of *Murfreesboro*. The change of the name of the post office from *Zebulon* to "*Murfreesboro*" was secured on October 8, 1851. The county boundaries have been somewhat changed, but its area is about the same as it was at first.

On February 13, 1855 the clerk's office was burned, destroying all the county records up to that date. In 1856, the county needing more commodious quarters for both county offices and court purposes, the county court ordered the erection of a new court-house. The contract was given to *Brock Bros.* - *Moses Brock* and *Jackson Brock*. This building is still in use, and in very good repair. It is a large two-story frame, surmounted by a cupola, the upper story being devoted to the use of the circuit court, while on the lower floor are the office for the county officers, and the jury-rooms. The first jail is believed to have been erected in 1834 at the time of the locating of the county seat. An act of the General Assembly of the State of Arkansas in 1836, provided for the erection of a court-house and "jail" in *Pike County*.

This jail would likely have been built in 1837. Nonetheless the early jail was badly ventilated and was used till 1884, and at the complaint of the physicians of the county, was condemned by the grand jury, whereupon the county court ordered a new one to be erected. The contract for the brick work was given to *Wright & Buckston*, of Nashville, and the iron and cell work to *P.J. Pauley & Bro.*, of St. Louis. It was finished in 1884, and was complete, with all modern improve-ments, accepted for the county by the county court, and cost \$6,150. This jail was partially destroyed by a mob, on the night of September 5, 1885.

The old log jail was destroyed in the same manner, and as elsewhere stated, one prisoner burned within it. The present jail occupies the site of the one that was partially destroyed in 1885. The brick work was repaired by the is *R.M. Sanford*.

Mount Zion Methodist Protestant Church

Situated in *North Brewer Township* and organized in 1868 by Rev. *William Alford*, some of the original members were: *Thomas McClure* and wife, *Joseph Scott*, *John Tallant* and wife, *John Sharp*, wife and three daughters, *Mrs. Ruthie Denham*, *Mrs. John Lingo*, and *John Carroll*, some twenty in all. The present membership is about thirty, and the pastor, Rev. *Robert Sanford*. The membership of this church has reached 104. The organization of other churches has drawn from and reduced its present numerical strength.

Muddy Fork Methodist Episcopal Church, South

This church, held at *Central Academy* near the center of *Muddy Fork Township*, was organized in 1888 by Rev. *Amariah Biggs*. Among the early members were *Henry W. Carter* and wife, *George Porterfield* and wife, *William Porterfield* and wife, *C.W. Phillips* and wife, *John McBay* and wife, *Miss Malinda Jones*, and others, about fifteen in all. This church has a present membership of seventy-six members. Rev. *E. Rushing* presided here in 1889, and Rev. *Riley* is the present pastor.

Sweet Home Missionary Baptist Church

Situated in the southwestern part of *Muddy Fork Township*, this church was organized about 1881 by Rev. *E. Merrill*, assisted by Rev. *John Cornish*. The first members were *H.G. York* and wife, *John Canady*, *Mrs. Cornish*. They have a present membership of eighteen, and worship in a good frame building 30 x 50 feet. The present pastor is *H.G. York*. In connection with the church is a flourishing Sabbath-school.

Oak Hill Methodist Episcopal Church

original contractors, *Wright & Buckston*, the cell was but slightly injured, and was soon made as good as new. It is well ventilated, commodious and secure, and recently was the only unoccupied building in *Murfreesboro*.

CHURCH AND LODGE HISTORY

Mount Tabor Methodist Protestant Church

Organized in 1878 by Rev. *L.S. Nabors*, some of the original members were: *Mrs. Nancy Stewart*, *Mrs. Mary Hunt*, *Mr. A. Sandford* and wife, *Mr. Joseph M. Scott* and family, *Davis Hutson* and family, and several others, about twenty in all. This church, situated in the eastern part of *Brewer Township*, is a good frame building 30 x 15 feet. The present pastor

Organized in 1889 by Rev. *G. H. Gideon*, with a membership of the following twelve: *W.N. McClure* and wife, *Mrs. Strawn*, *William Hurdie* and wife, *T.P.D. Stevens* and wife, and *Mrs. B.S. Flaharity*. They have a very good box house 30 x 40, and a present membership of twenty-one. The present pastor is *O.P. Noble*. This church is situated in the southeastern part of *Thompson Township*.

The Missionary Baptist Church of Missouri Township

This church was organized in 1850 by Rev. *Samuel Kelley* who was also its first pastor. *I.F. Welch* is the present pastor.

Wolf Creek Baptist Church

Organized in 1872 by *James P. Copeland* who was also the first pastor, it had but five members originally, who were *Moses Brock*, *Amanda Brock*, *W.P. Henderson* and wife, and *John H. Brock*. Now their membership is sixty-five.

Murfreesboro Methodist Episcopal Church

Organized in 1841 by the Revs. *Jesse Jenkins* and *Madison E. Alford* with Rev. *Benedict* as first pastor, some of the earliest members were Rev. *Madison E. Alford* and family, Rev. *Jesse Jenkins* and wife, *Mrs. Lucinda Davis*, *William Orrick* and wife, and *William Kizzia* and wife. This society held services in the old log court-house for several years. After the erection of the Academy in 1869, they worshipped there till 1888, when they completed their present commodious church edifice, erected at an expense of \$800. The present pastor is *J.W. Davis*. A large and strong membership composes this organization.

Hickory Plains Methodist Episcopal Church South

SUBSCRIPTION

\$10. per year

Pike County, Arkansas 1815-1899, a quarterly published each *November, February, May, and August* contains information that is generally difficult to obtain and obscure. It is designed to restore and preserve much of the county's lost history because of the destruction of the official county records in 1855 and 1895. There is a query section available. It is free to subscribers. Back issues are available from November 1990 to current issue @ \$2.50 each.

Order from:

**Pike County, Arkansas
P.O. Box 1135
Salt Lake City, UT 84110-1135**

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David L. Kelley
Editor and Publisher

Located in the northeastern part of *Thompson Township*, this church was organized in April, 1882, by Rev. *George W. Logan*. Some of the first members were *C.B. Willett* and wife, *J.T. Goulding* and wife, *T.T.L. House* and wife, *F.P. Hughes* and wife, *William Greene* and wife, and others, about twelve in all. The present membership is fourteen, presided over by Rev. *W.L. Davis*.

Pike Lodge No. 91, A.F. & A.M.

Pike Lodge No. 91, A.F. & A.M., was organized at *Murfreesboro*, November 8, 1855, with the following

station officers: *A.B. Williams*, master; *James M. Evans*, senior warden; *George R. Mauney*, junior warden. This lodge soon acquired a large membership, many of whom were bright and highly learned in Masonic lore. In 1869 they erected a two-story lodge building, the lower floor of which they donated to the *Murfreesboro* school district for an academy, and it is still used for that purpose.

The officers elected for 1890 were: *William D. Alford*, master, *John F. Davis*, senior warden; *W.N. McClure*, junior warden; *Owen B. Owens*, secretary; *John Branch*, treasurer; *C.P. McGraw*, senior deacon; *J.A. Alford*, junior deacon; *George W. Brock*, chaplain, and *Mike Branch*, tyler. The membership at this time is twenty-four.

Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Southern Arkansas, Chicago, Nashville and St. Louis: The Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1890, revised and edited by *David L. Kelley*, 1992.

**A Publication of History and Genealogy
Pike County, Arkansas 1815-1899**

J.M. Fox Married 50 Years

Mr. and Mrs. J.M. Fox, now residing three miles east of Kirby, near the place where they were married, celebrated their 53rd wedding anniversary October 28, 1933. They were married October 28, 1880.

Mr. Fox was born at *Murfreesboro*, November 26, 1856. *Mrs. Fox*, the former *Miss Herron*, was born at *Alpine*, August 23, 1861. They are the parents of 15 children, eight of whom are yet living.

Mr. Fox attended his first school at *Murfreesboro*. Captain *Bill (William J.) Kelley* was his teacher in this school. After completing his work at *Murfreesboro*, he attended classes at one of the colleges at *Arkadelphia*, and since that time has taught in many different places in *Pike county*.

The Glenwood Herald, November 16, 1933.

PCAHS PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE

- "THE EARLY HISTORY OF PIKE COUNTY ARKANSAS - The First One Hundred Years"**, originally published 1978 - reprinted 1989, now includes INDEX and CORRECTIONS ... \$12.00
- 1870 PIKE COUNTY ARKANSAS PRINTED U S CENSUS** by Dorothy Kennedy Partain - indexed ... \$15.00
- "THE DIARY"** (Family History) by Carlton Denny of Delight, Arkansas ... \$3.00
- A Reconstruction of the "1890" CENSUS OF PIKE COUNTY ARKANSAS** by Russell P. Baker ... \$15.00
- "SWEET REMEMBRANCE - Caney Valley Childhood Memories of Flora Adelia Adams Cosby"** compiled by Karen Cosby Roy, published 1984 ... \$10.00
- CEMETERY RECORDS of PIKE COUNTY ARKANSAS** compiled by the Pike County Extension Homemakers Council, copyright 1986 ... Sold Out
- INDEX TO VOLUME 1 NUMBERS 1, 2, 3 and 4 of "THE GEMS of PIKE COUNTY ARKANSAS"** ... \$3.00
- BACK ISSUES of "THE GEMS of PIKE COUNTY ARKANSAS"** Vol. 1, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4 ... Each Issue \$2.00
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Please make check or money order payable to Linda Wilson, Treasurer of PCAHS and mail along with the following information to: Linda Wilson, Treasurer of PCAHS, P.O. Box 179, Delight, AR 71940
Regular Annual membership rate is \$7.00, Senior Citizens annual membership rate is \$5.00 and Lifetime membership rate is a one time fee of \$100.00

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Are you interested in HISTORY ___ GENEALOGY ___ BOTH ___ ? Please mark one or both of the above. If you are interested in genalogy please list the Surnames you are researching below or if you need more space, use a separate sheet of paper and mail along with your membership application. You are also encouraged to include a Pedigree Chart and Family Group Sheets with your Membership Application. All surnames submitted to PCAHS will be placed in our Surname File. Queries submitted to "THE GEMS" are FREE to members and will be published as space permits. Please be specific when writing your query regarding names, dates, places and the information you are seeking.

SURNAMES BEING RESEARCHED

PIKE COUNTY ARCHIVES and HISTORY SOCIETY

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PCAHS MEETING TIME

The Pike County Archives and History Society meets the first Thursday night of each month from 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm in the Murfreesboro Municipal Building. The 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm time period is set aside for members and guests to discuss and exchange ideas on history, genealogy and effective ways to do research. Business meeting is held from 7:30 pm to 9:30 pm. Annual membership dues are \$7.00. If you are 65 years old or older, you are eligible for our "Senior Citizens" discount membership of \$5.00 annually. Lifetime membership dues are \$100.00.

The Pike County Archives and History Society was founded in 1986 and is a non-profit organization dedicated to the purpose of collecting and preserving primary source materials which bring together the unique history of Pike County, Arkansas and its people. The Pike County Archives is located on the third floor of the Pike County Courthouse in Murfreesboro, Arkansas. Presently, the Pike County, Archives may be opened, Monday thru Friday BY APPOINTMENT ONLY. The archives CAN NOT BE OPENED on SATURDAY, SUNDAY or HOLIDAYS. If you wish to use the research rooms of the Pike County Archives you must contact one of the Officers of PCAHS or write or call, Dorothy K. Partain, P.O. Box 238, Murfreesboro, AR 71958, Telephone (501) 285-3528. Upon request, an attempt will be made to arrange for a PCAHS volunteer to open the archives to our members for research purposes. Please call or write, well in advance of your planned trip to Murfreesboro, as all our volunteers have jobs, families, and other obligations and can not leave in a moments notice. We regret any inconvenience this may cause our patrons and members.

" ... you must know the past - to determine the future."

**Pike County Archives and History Society
P.O. Box 238
Murfreesboro, AR 71958**