

Barbara J. Myers  
823 Dutchtown Rd.  
Tracy City, TN 37387

## Tales of Pigeon

By Barbara Mooney Myers

Tracing my mother's roots took me back to such an amazing story. It touched me to learn of the Indian descent and of the lives of my ancestors as I searched back into our family's history. Just a few days ago, a group and I had the opportunity to visit with Grady Ward Partin. The ancestral Partin family was very much a part of Grundy County's development. Grady Ward had built a cabin on Partin Farm Road, which is the road that leads to Pigeon, a wooded area with springs and is actually a finger of the Cumberland Plateau with bluffs on either side. If you look off to the left, you are looking down on the Big Fiery Gizzard Creek, and off to your right would be Hargis' Cove, Ladd's Cove, Cape's Cove and Martin Springs Cove. This area sits near the Grundy/Marion County line, but is largely in Marion County. Families who lived here were more closely allied to Grundy County, however, since it was situated on top of the Plateau. Seeing the Partin cabin took me back many years to an earlier time when we would visit the Pigeon to see Lem Headrick, who was my mom's uncle, and his family.

The Headrick cabin was really a large log house made from hewn logs put together with sod and a shingle roof, an open hallway or dogtrot which separated two distinct parts of the home. Doors off the open dogtrot were directly across from one another. Glancing at Grady's cabin, I could recall many of the things that I loved about this old Headrick home place. Our family from the Pigeon was of Cherokee/Chikamaka descent.

By 1838 when the Trail of Tears began here in the South, most of the Pigeon area was full of Indians living from areas near the Little Sequatchie River to hidden caves along the plateau where there was running water. Marion County was full of these Cherokee/Chikamakas at the time. By the years 1838-1840, Indians were being removed to Indian Territory via the Trail of Tears. Some Native Americans escaped the forced move by living with and as whites who had moved into the Pigeon and Gizzard area. Some of these Indians married white settlers while other Indian groups remained segregated from the white population hiding out in caves and remote areas that offered any type of protection from authorities.

One of our ancestors Jacob and Anna (Roland) Headrick arrived in the Pigeon to settle on the land he had purchased. Jacob was from Virginia; Anna from Rowan County North Carolina. Here in the Pigeon, they chose to live and it was here that the Headrick family had its beginnings in the Grundy/Marion County area.

Many called the area "Pigeon Springs". The Indians gave it the name "Woyi" which means "God County". Some called it part of the Cumberland Plateau, while many just called it home. My great-great grandfather and others who bought land here like the Anderson brothers began roaming these woods seeking food, firewood and herbs for medical needs. They built homes from hewn logs that they harvested from their own land. They also built corncribs for storage, barns for livestock; they raised chickens, hogs and planted gardens to help feed their families. Water came from hand dug wells or from nearby creeks such as the Fiery Gizzard and springs that flowed from the mountainsides.

Census records report that William Henry Headrick was born in the early 1800's. His first wife Mary C. Ray was born in 1815. There were 5 children born to William Henry and Mary: Nancy, Thomas Alexander, Napolian, Charlotte, and Amanda Headrick, all ~~not~~ born in Marion County. In 1843, William Henry married a full blood Cherokee, Mary Polly King, who was born in 1830. She was only 13 at the time of their marriage. William Henry and Mary Polly Headrick had Thomas William, Rachel, Joseph, Elijah Duncan, John and Joe Headrick. This brood totaled 11 children for William Henry Headrick by two different wives.

William Henry Headrick and his wife bought 100 acres from brothers T.W. and John Anderson for \$700. It was at the edge of Anderson Cove which was near Pigeon Springs. Here water flowed from the springs along the mountainside.

Thomas William Headrick was my great grandfather who was born July 17, 1848. He married Elizabeth "Eliza" Anderson, daughter of Hezekiah and Martha Anderson. She was the granddaughter of Samuel and Jane (Hargis) Anderson of the Gizzard in Marion County. Samuel owned the first drugstore in Grundy County and was the druggist there. He and Jane are buried at the Headrick Cemetery or the Charles Dykes Cemetery, both alternate names for the Pigeon Springs Cemetery. Just up the hill from the cemetery was where the old William Headrick home place was. Thomas and Elizabeth Headrick had eight children: William Henry II, Lemuel, Robert, Nicholas, Mack, Barbara, Cecilia, and Mary. My grandmother was Mary Headrick. She married David Dove. All these children were reported to have been born in Marion County. There was a little place at the head of the Cove in the Gizzard that was named Dove, TN. The first family living there was Gilbert and Martha Anderson Dove. She was a descendant of John and T.W. Anderson, two brothers who became the first owners of most of the Gizzard Cove area in Marion County.

In 1868, Thomas Headrick had inherited land from his family and later bought land from his wife's family, the Samuel Anderson family. They sold timber off their land as well as built homes on the tracts of land they owned.

Thomas Headrick married for the second time to Fannie Clepper Morgan, who had daughters Florence and Althea Morgan. Other children listed in the 1910 census with Fannie who was by then a widow the following: Lula, age 19; Dewey, age 12; Alta, 10; Florence, 8; twins Thomas and Jessie James, age 4. Also living with the family was Robert "Bob", age 25 who was a stepson.

On May 13, 1909, Thomas Headrick was accidentally killed while hauling logs from the Pigeon.

By the 1860's and 1870's, there were many descendants who owned land and lived in the Gizzard and Pigeon areas. Names like Headrick, Hargis, Ben Wooten, Harris, Braden, Anderson and Dove were common. Later, as years passed the Martins from whom

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Martin Springs in Marion County was named moved to the Pigeon rocks on the mountainside.

Several stories are told about the origin of the name "Pigeon" given to an area in Marion County off Partins Farm Road. One is that it was named for all the many pigeons which inhabited the points along the bluff areas. After reading an account from a diary written in 1870 by Dennis Priest Curtis one can imagine that this may be true. The author of the diary was a twenty-two year old man traveling through Tennessee in a wagon on his way to settle in Coalmont, TN. He writes, " We drive through a deep valley between two small mountains. Then we begin to 'raise snow hills'.....we have a view of the valley, streams, farms and hills and rocks and other romantic scenes in the valley below. When we have gone up a mile or two where we come to where the pigeons are flying across the road by the millions to go to roost.....Father and I shoot into them..."

My grandmother Mary Headrick and her husband David Dove bought a 50-acre tract of land from the Headrick family, later Lemuel and Mattie Braden Headrick bought between them and the Michael E. James Braden family tract there in the Pigeon. Here was the start of my remembrance as a child and the many visits to the old log house built by the Headricks themselves. Earlier the structure had been used as a stagecoach stop.

The stagecoach would come up the mountainside, stop there, water the horses, rest and have a cup of Aunt Mattie's hot coffee and a biscuit as they rested on the long benches that were placed in the open door hallway. The old house sat on the line between Marion and Grundy Counties. The stage traveled from Marion County to Grundy County and on to Franklin County and others further away. There was once an old school built at the Pigeon. Here, children from nearby areas like Hargis Cove, Headrick Point, Braden Ridge and other parts of the Gizzard Cove would attend the school. The little schoolhouse burned around 1920. Many back then had very little education.

In the early 1950's I had the opportunity to live at the old Headrick home place after Carl "Bernice" Myers and I married. He hauled timber for my uncle and helped cut timber as well. We also lived at the old Wooten place just a short distance out from the Headrick homestead which is now owned by Daryl and Patricia Street. I go back and remind myself again of this land and how proud the Indians were of this homeland with its flowing streams, wild berries, herbs, roots, and the beautiful mountain sights. The valleys below must have seemed to be enclosed by the mountains. Being there I never felt afraid for many of my ancestors had once been a part of this beautiful land created by God himself.

The Headricks came to American from Germany on a ship called the Elizabeth "Lizzie" in 1733. They first landed in Stanton, Virginia, and later some of them moved to Chapel Wears Valley in North Carolina. There's a Headrick Cemetery there where many of Jacob Headrick's ancestors are buried along with Anna Roland Headrick;

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Thanks to Jacob and Anna Headrick, who moved to Pigeon and added new branches to our family tree, I can proudly say that I am a part of this history of hearty settlers and native Indian people who settled in this wild and beautiful land. Our tree has many branches now, but many descendants of these early settlers still live on the Plateau. The Allen Hargis family, also descendants of those early settlers, now lives on the Headrick home place in a new home that has been built there.

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