

The Old House

by Bettye Wooten Sherwood

The residents of the Hubbard's Cove community were awakened early Monday morning March 23, 2009, by the screaming of sirens as the Altamont Fire Department responded to a structure fire at the corner of Highway 108 and Wooten Road. The blazes consumed a historic old house leaving the community with only memories of what was.

The old house was built by John Henderson "Hence" Brawley shortly after he married Sarah Elizabeth "Lizzie" Lusk on February 13, 1878. Soon after the one-room frame structure was completed Lizzie gave birth to their first child. Sadly they lost that baby, but in 1884 their next child, George Norman, arrived. The family continued to grow with the births of Willie Ann in 1891 and Lucy May in 1894. As the family grew so did the house. Additions to the house included several rooms and even an upstairs.

Hence Brawley, a valued member of his community, represented Hubbard's Cove as Justice of the Peace for a few years. One of his actions occurred during a trying time in Grundy County and was documented in the Grundy County Court Minutes. On April 29, 1929, the Court met for the purpose of electing a sheriff to succeed the deceased Sheriff John A. Cline, who had been brutally murdered on April 15th. At that time Hence nominated Isaac M. Sartain as sheriff. At the same time John Cline's son, Graham, was also nominated, and Graham won the position and filled out his father's unexpired term.

Hence and Lizzie's children grew up and eventually left the old home place. Their son, Norman, became a buggy salesman. He traveled to Tracy City frequently, and there he met his future wife, Lou Ermine Henley. Norman and Lou married on December 7, 1903, and made their home in Hubbard's Cove. Polly, one of their five children, married Albert Baggenstoss of Tracy City. A few years ago Polly and I reminisced, and she shared her fond memories of the old house where her grandparents, Hence and Lizzie, had lived.

Hence Brawley died at his home on October 31, 1937, just thirteen days after the death of his beloved Lizzie. After the deaths of Hence and Lizzie the Brawley house became the Hixson house. Walter C. Hixson and his wife, Tiney Pearl, bought the house and moved to the cove from Hamilton County. Walter and Tiney were the parents of four children, Floyd, Kenny, Mary Ellen, and Vernie. Walter Hixson was also an active member of the Grundy County Court. He represented Hubbard's Cove as Justice of the Peace for several years and served as County Judge in 1965 - 66.

Tiney Hixson died December 7, 1946, and was buried in the Hixson Cemetery in Hamilton County. After Tiney's death Kenny and Opal (Miller) Hixson and their children lived in the old house with his father. Then in 1952 Walter remarried. His new wife, Callie Fulton, came from Mississippi and brought with her three teenage sons, Sherman, Harold and Jesse. That was a good thing because the boys gave new life to the

old house. Then in the 1970's the old house got a new look when Walter remodeled it and added green siding.

Walter died in November 1982, and Callie returned to Mississippi to live with her daughter, Cumberleen. Walter and Tiney's son, Kenny, became the next owner of the old house. The old house has been the home for several tenant families since Walter's death. Recently, the old house had been the victim of abuse. The present owner, Raymond McCormick, was in the process of making repairs and restoring the old house when it went up in smoke. One of the oldest houses in the community is now gone, and the community is left with the old barn and sheds standing alone near where the old house once stood.

